



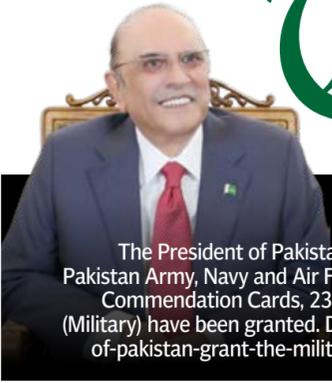
Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ
اس میں ہالک سے روایت ہے کہ نبی کریم
ﷺ فرماتے تھے کہ قیامت کے دن کاڑھ کو
الیا جائے گا اور اس سے پوچھا جائے گا کہ تمہارا
کیا خیال ہے کہ اگر زمین بھر کر تمہارے پاس
سونا ہو تو کیا سب کو (یعنی نجات کے لیے)
فدیہ دے دو گے؟ دو گے گا کہ ہاں، تو اس
وقت اس سے کہا جائے گا کہ تم سے اس سے
بہت آسان چیز کا (دینا ہے) مطالبہ کیا جاتا ہے۔
(بخاری ص 538)

Barkat Rice Mills
(Pvt) Limited



President of Pakistan grant the Military awards

The President of Pakistan has been pleased to grant the Military awards to the officers and soldiers of Pakistan Army, Navy and Air Force. 11 Sitara-i-Basalat, 475 Tamgha-i-Basalat, 130 Imtiaz Asnad, 378 COAS Commendation Cards, 23 Hilal-i-Imtiaz (Military), 100 Sitara-i-Imtiaz (Military) and 136 Tamgha-i-Imtiaz (Military) have been granted. Details are available on <https://dailythespokesman.net/live/2026/03/24/president-of-pakistan-grant-the-military-awards-to-the-officers-and-soldiers-of-pakistan-army-navy-and-air-force/>



CM Maryam vows to defeat TB for healthier Punjab

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, in a special message on World Tuberculosis Day, said that winning the fight against tuberculosis is essential for a healthy Punjab. Maryam Nawaz reiterated her commitment to continue efforts for the elimination of Tuberculosis and emphasized the importance of treatment and public awareness regarding the disease. (Details on Page 8)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

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A U. S. airstrike killed 15 members of Iraq's PMF

BAGHDAD: People attend a funeral for deceased Iraqi paramilitary Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) members in Baghdad, Iraq, on March 24, 2026. A U. S. airstrike killed 15 members of Iraq's paramilitary Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF), including a senior commander in the western province of Anbar early Tuesday, a security source told Xinhua.



Photo: Xinhua/Khalil Dawood

15 Iraqi paramilitary members killed in U. S. airstrike in western Iraq

Xinhua

BAGHDAD: A U. S. airstrike killed 15 members of Iraq's paramilitary Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF), including a senior commander in the western province of Anbar early Tuesday, a security source told Xinhua.

The PMF said in a state-

ment that the attack was a "flagrant violation of Iraqi sovereignty," stressing that the action shows no respect for international law or humanitarian norms.

It also urged Iraq's political forces to adopt a clear and firm position to preserve the country's sovereignty and put an end to these serious violations.

DPM Dar speaks with UAE counterpart on regional situation, peace talks



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Tuesday exchanged views with Emirati counterpart Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan on the evolving regional situation as diplomacy ramps up to resolve the conflict between Iran and the United States.

Since the start of the war between the US, Israel, and Iran, Pakistan's leadership has stepped up diplomatic efforts to help de-escalate tensions. Dar has held telephonic conversations with his counterparts from several Gulf states and other countries, stressing the importance of de-escalation and empha-

sizing the need to pursue dialogue and diplomacy in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter.

In a talk with his UAE counterpart today, FM Dar underscored the importance of peace and stability, calling for immediate de-escalation and emphasising that dialogue and diplomacy remained the only viable path forward, the Foreign Office (FO) said on X.

He also expressed sorrow over the loss of lives, including three Pakistani nationals, in Iran's attacks on the UAE and reaffirmed Pakistan's steadfast solidarity with the country. Both leaders exchanged Eid greetings and agreed to remain in close contact.

Pakistan ready to host meaningful talks to end ongoing regional conflict: PM

City Desk

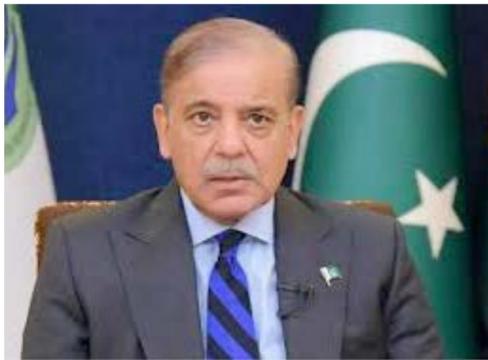
ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Tuesday, said that subject to concurrence by the US and Iran, 'Pakistan stands ready and honoured to be the host to facilitate meaningful and conclusive talks for a comprehensive settlement of the ongoing conflict.'

On his X handle, the prime minister said Pakistan welcomed and fully supported the ongoing efforts to pursue dialogue to end the war in the Middle East, in the interest of peace and stability in the region and beyond.

Meanwhile, Foreign Office Spokesperson Tahir Hussain Andrabi has maintained that Islamabad is "already ready to host talks" between Iran and the United States.

The spokesperson told the US broadcast, CNN on Monday night "If both sides agree, Pakistan is always ready to host talks."

Separately in a conversation with 'The Express Tribune' on Tuesday, the Foreign Office (FO) Spokesperson said Islamabad remained firmly committed to resolving the conflict through dialogue and engagement, in line with its longstanding foreign



policy principles.

"Pakistan, consistent with its longstanding policy, remains committed to the resolution of the ongoing conflict in the Middle East/Persian Gulf through diplomatic means and engagements," he was quoted by the daily as saying.

He further underlined that diplomacy and negotiations often required that certain matters be advanced with discretion, advising that the media was, therefore, encouraged to refrain from speculation and to await official announcements regarding decisions and outcomes.

CMOD declaration marks major milestone in Power Sector reforms: Leghari

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Power Division, Sardar Awaiz Ahmed Khan Leghari on Tuesday termed the declaration of the Competitive Market Operations Date (CMOD) by the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) as a defining milestone in Pakistan's power sector reform journey.

In a statement, the minister said the transition from a single-buyer model to a competitive, transparent, and market-based framework is the result of years of policy development, regulatory strengthening and institutional coordination. He noted that this marks a decisive shift from reform design to its practical implementation. He emphasized that the competitive electricity market is anchored in transparency, open and non-discriminatory access to the transmission network, and enhanced accountability across the entire electricity value chain.

As part of a phased and responsible liberalization process, the Government has approved the transition of 800 MW of demand to bilateral contracting through transparent, automated competitive auctions over the coming years. The minister highlighted that this progress has been made possible through the dedicated efforts and close collaboration of the Ministry of Energy (Power Division), NEPRA, ISMO, CPPA-G, PPIB, DISCOs, and other key stakeholders, and appreciated their valuable contributions.

He further stated that this achievement reaffirms Pakistan's commitment to strengthening governance, ensuring financial sustainability, and building investor confidence in the power sector. Moving forward, he reiterated that the Government remains focused on delivering a reliable, efficient, and future-ready electricity market that supports innovation, facilitates clean energy, and drives long-term economic growth in the country.

Iran reserves "inalienable and natural" right to defend territory: president

Xinhua

TEHRAN: Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Monday that Iran reserves the "inalienable and natural" right to defend its territory.

Pezeshkian made the remarks when exchanging views with Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on the consequences of the "illegal" U. S.-Israeli war against Iran in a phone conversation, according to a statement published on the Iranian president's office website.

During the phone call, the two sides also discussed bilateral ties and the latest regional developments, said the statement.

Pezeshkian said Iran did not start the war, noting the United States and Israel launched military aggression against Iran in the middle of nuclear negotiations, killing the country's then Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, high-ranking military commanders and civilians, and



targeting Iranian public facilities.

He said that Iran consistently makes efforts to protect regional stability and security and stressed that the country still seeks to strengthen cooperation among states in the region. "The insecurity imposed on the Strait of Hormuz is a direct result of the military aggression by the United States and Israel," he said, adding that Iran has taken necessary measures to ensure the security and safety of navigation and the safe passage of vessels through the waterway.

Sharif, for his part, expressed deep regret over the U. S.-Israeli attacks against Iran as well as the deaths of Iranian civilians and senior officials, extending the Pakistani government's sympathy and condolences.

Flight disruptions continue as Middle East tensions affect air travel

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Air operations have been disrupted due to ongoing tensions in the Middle East, with more than 150 flights cancelled across Pakistan during the three days of Eid al-Fitr.

Airport sources said that flights at Al Ain and Fajr airports in the UAE have been partially restored, but operations to Kuwait, Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, and Syria remain fully suspended.

On the first day of Eid, 73 flights were cancelled, followed by 40 on the second day and 41 on the third, according to officials.

Airport authorities added that domestic and international airlines are not facing issues in Pakistani airspace, and all operations continue under international civil aviation regulations.

Officials assured that there is no emergency at any airport in Pakistan and that normal flight schedules will resume once the situation in the Middle East stabilises.

China says Pakistan's role of mediator in Gulf is constructive

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: China's ambassador in Pakistan Jiang Zaidong on Tuesday praised Pakistan's role during the prevailing situation in the Gulf and said that the country's role of a peacemaker was important and constructive.

Addressing a press conference in Islamabad, he said that China would continue to make efforts aimed at bringing about reconciliation in the region.

Zaidong said that non-military sites should not be the target of strikes, and that the protection of sea routes must be ensured at all costs.

The ambassador said that



China supported the resolution of issues through negotiations and dialogue rather than through the use of force.

He said that there had been some actions in the Middle East, which constituted violation of the United Nations' charter.

AJK PM Rathore focuses on combating poverty, citing billions in Haveli development

Bureau Report

KAHUTTA/HAVELI: Prime Minister of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir State, Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, has said that our fight is against poverty, unemployment and destitution, we promoted tolerance and brotherhood instead of political revenge.

When Allah gave us success, instead of celebrating and firing, we thanked Allah. We implemented what we announced, today projects worth billions of rupees are being implemented in district Haveli.

I am not worried about any position or election, but about the development of Haveli. In the past, the vote of Haveli was considered a weak vote, while today the voter of Haveli is the most powerful voter in the state.

I have the responsibility from Bhimber to Taobut, due to my busy schedule, I could not give time to the people of Haveli. Prime Minister Faisal Mumtaz Rathore said that Eid greetings to the residents of Haveli, the



purpose of this event is to meet the people directly and present a review of the performance of his government in the last three to four months.

He said that the long-standing problem of Haveli was the grid station, and today it has been inaugurated. He gave light to this area by providing a one-megawatt hydel project in Bhedi, a hydel project worth 1.27 billion is underway in Khurshheed Abad, the DWP of Bhedi-Lasdana Road has been

completed, the Lasdana-Haveli Road will be widened to 18 feet.

Notifications have been made for Mumtazabad and Khurshheedabad Tehsil Headquarters Hospital and Town Committees, work is underway on a sports stadium worth 40 crores after the Municipal Corporation Kahuta and other projects.

He said that Haveli got recognition and recognition because of Mumtaz Hussain Rathore. Mumtaz Rathore got

a government of 9 months but people still remember him, even after 36 years his name is alive and the effects of his government are present in the hearts of the people.

After 36 years, Mumtaz Rathore's son got the opportunity to hold the same position, which is a special blessing from Allah. Mumtaz Rathore's 9 months were the beginning of the government, while my 8 months were the last of the government.

AJK PM consoles mother of brutally murdered Rafaqat Gujjar, vows justice



Bureau Report

HAVELI: Prime Minister Azad Jammu and Kashmir Faisal Mumtaz Rathore met the mother of Rafaqat Gujjar, who was brutally murdered in the past few days. During the meeting, the Prime Minister expressed his heartfelt sympathy and condolences to the bereaved family and prayed for the elevation of the deceased. He said that the elements involved in this sad incident will be brought to justice and assured that the affected family will be provided justice in every way, and that the government will not leave the affected family alone and all possible cooperation will be provided. On this occasion, Rafaqat Gujjar's mother thanked the Prime Minister and expressed hope for justice.

AJK Health Employees Stage Sit-In Demanding Fulfillment of Charter of Demands

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Health Employees Federation Azad Kashmir protest in favor of Charter of Demand Combined Unit Every Sheikh Bin Zayed Hospital CMH organized a protest sit-in at the main gate Waw demonstration Protesters raised slogans against the appointment of separate Director General and against the bureaucracy Meet our demands If our demands are not met as soon as possible, we will take to the streets and protest If patients face difficulties, the bureaucracy will be responsible The bureaucracy of the health department is obstructing our demands and is embarrassing us in front of the government that we employees are protesting against our own officers Secretary Public Health Director General Public Health should take immediate steps to resolve our Charter of Demand and not force us to go on a full-scale protest Addressing the protest demonstration yesterday, Muhammad Iqbal Awan Muhammad Ishtiaq Abbasi Abid Mughal Obaid-ur-Rehman Muhammad Rafiq Chaptai Nasir Shah Zaheer Gilani Bashir Shahzad Ahmed Badr Munir Amin Ulfat Bibi Asma Bibi Ruqya Bukhari Madam Sabiya while addressing the gathering once again demanded from the Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir that we should hold meetings to resolve our charter demand. Ambur. Syed Sajjad Hussain Naqvi, Masoom Mughal, Raja Taslim Khan, Sajda Awan, Raja Sadaqat Khan, Syed Waqar Gilani, Latifat Mughal, Shazia, Latifat Mughal, Mumtaz Mughal, Khaliq Ahmed Abbasi, Nadem Awan, Alam Hussain and others have demanded from the Prime Minister to resolve the charter demand.

AJK Election Commission kicks off electoral roll revision ahead of assembly polls

City Desk

MUZAFFARABAD: According to a press release issued by the Secretary Election Commission (Spoke person) the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Election Commission has started the process of preparing the electoral rolls of Azad Kashmir and the refugees of Jammu and Kashmir living in Pakistan in connection with the general elections to the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, which are to be held in the middle of this year, for which regular registration officers have been appointed. The data of people who have turned 18 years old after the 2022 local body elections in Azad Kashmir has been provided to the registration officers, who will verify these voters on a door-to-door basis and also register eligible voters as voters in the electoral rolls. The qualifying date for voter registration has been set for April 1, 2026. In connection with the preparation/revision of electoral rolls, the Chief Election Commissioner of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Justice (R) Ghulam Mustafa Mughal, has convened a consultative meeting on Saturday, March 28, 2026 at 10:30 AM at Kashmir House, Islamabad, to consult and seek suggestions from the heads of political parties so that a plan of action can be formulated for the preparation/revision of electoral rolls as well as a code of conduct for candidates and political parties.



Major Political Shift

PML-N Loyalists Defect to PPP in Azad Kashmir



Bureau Report

KAHUTTA/HAVELI: Strengthening the mission of public service. Acknowledging the performance of Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, important figures of PML-N Haveli joined the Pakistan Peoples Party. Expressing full confidence in the vision and performance of Prime Minister Faisal Mumtaz Rathore on the occasion of the Eid Milan party held in Haveli, Chaudhry Muhammad Siddique, Forester (Rtd) Chaudhry Sadiq, Chaudhry Rafiq, Chaudhry Mahmood, Chaudhry Muhammad Sadiq, Chaudhry Munir Muhammad, Chaudhry Hameed, Chaudhry Muhammad Din, Chaudhry Qadir, Chaudhry Siddique, Chaudhry Jamil, Chaudhry Javed, Chaudhry Kafel, Chaudhry Waseem, Chaudhry Manshad, Chaudhry Naveed, Chaudhry Shahid, Chaudhry Tabish, Chaudhry Abdul Waheed said goodbye to the PML-N and joined the Pakistan Peoples Party. Speaking on the occasion, newly-joined Chaudhry Muhammad Siddique said that today we are announcing our joining the PPP inspired by the leadership and vision of Faisal Mumtaz Rathore. We have neither any demand nor any condition. He said that I am leaving the Muslim Conference and then the PML-N after 24 years of association and joining the PPP with my friends. In the upcoming elections, we will vote for the PPP and Faisal Mumtaz Rathore and will also run their election campaign.

Foundation stone ceremony

HALAN/HAVELI: Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore lays the foundation stone of 123 KV grid station at Halan district Haveli Azad Kashmir.



Revenue Board inaugurates dedicated courtroom in Mirpur Camp

Bureau Report

MIRPUR: Member Judicial Board of Revenue Chaudhry Mukhtar Hussain inaugurated a regular courtroom at the Court Board of Revenue Camp Mirpur. Commissioner Mirpur Division Raja Tahir Mumtaz Khan, Additional Commissioner Raja Qaiser Aungzeb, Director State Development Agency Chaudhry Amjad Iqbal, President District Bar Association Babar Ali Advocate, General Secretary Chaudhry Zahid Hussain Advocate, Assistant Commissioner Mian Hussam Sajid, Revenue Officer Raja



Ayaz Ahmed, Tehsildar Chaudhry Imran Yousof, Tehsildar Chaudhry Muhammad Mahmood, Information Officer Muhammad Javed Malik and others were also present on the occasion of the inauguration ceremony.

Member Judicial Board of Revenue Chaudhry Mukhtar Hussain said that there are more than 370 cases in the Board of Revenue Mirpur camp for

which cases are heard every month in the Court Board of Revenue Camp Mirpur. In a short period of time, I built a regular courtroom in a room in the Board of Revenue rest house, for which Tehsildar Chaudhry Muhammad Mahmood has played an important role in building a regular courtroom by working hard and making efforts. In this regard, now the Court Board of Revenue, while maintaining its judicial prestige, will play its full role in making prompt and transparent decisions on disputes, cases and appeals related to people's land so that justice can be provided to litigants at their doorsteps.

Pakistan Day Marked with Dignified Ceremony at LoC's Kerin Tourist Spot

Bureau Report

NEELUM/KARIN: A dignified and dignified ceremony of Pakistan Day, March 23, was held in the beautiful tourist spot of Kerin on the Line of Control under the management of the Pakistan Army and in collaboration with the District Administration of Neelum District.

The ceremony began with the national and state anthems, while students presented tableaux and won the hearts of the audience with speeches based on the history of Pakistan and Kashmir.

The special guest of the ceremony was Assistant Commissioner Headquarters, Authumqam, Chaudhry



Basharat, while Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Abid Ali presided over the ceremony. On this occasion, the special

guest and Commanding Officer Dudhniyal paid tribute to the martyrs by laying a wreath at the Martyrs' Memorial, Kerin.

The ceremony was attended by Assistant Director Public Health Directorate Syed Mubashir Gilani, Principal

Army Public School Dudhniyal Sajid Zaman, Principal Raja Waqar Ghagar, representatives of civil society, students, tourists, and women and men in large numbers.

Students of various educational institutions showcased their talents through speeches and national songs. Trophies were distributed among the students who performed outstandingly. Major Mukhtar performed the duties of the stage secretary very gracefully.

At the end of the ceremony, the special guests distributed prizes among the position holder students and special prayers were also offered for the security, stability and development of the country and nation.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr	4:43 am
Zohr	12:14 pm
Asr	4:37 pm
Maghrib	6:22 pm
Isha	7:46 pm

EMERGENCY

Rescue (Police)	15
Bomb Disposal	15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad	1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance	1122 & 4451122
Motorway Police	92706044
Motorway Police	9270601-20

Women Police Stations

Islamabad	9222596
Rawalpindi	9270601-20

ENQUIRY

Edhi Ambulance	115
PIA Flight Info	114
PIA Cargo	9280979
Railway Inquiry	117
Railway Exchange	9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi	5555489
CAA	9281092

HOSPITALS

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MH	561116
MH	561116
Cantt Hospital	9270907-11
DHQ	5556311-4
RGH	9290301-7
Holy Family	9290322-7
PIMS	9261170-79
Polyclinic	9218300-09
Shifa International	4603666

DEPARTMENTS

CDA	9221334-43
CDA	9208301-04
Met Office	9250360-6
RDA	5555864
TMA	5770886
Cantonment Board	9270151-3

PSCA's Smart Drone Surveillance Strengthens Security Across Punjab

Spokesman Report

LAHORE: Punjab Safe Cities Authority (PSCA) has further enhanced the use of modern drone technology to ensure effective security, environmental monitoring, and crime prevention across the province. Drone-based surveillance has been expanded and is being carried out continuously across Lahore and other districts of Punjab to maintain strict vigilance over the overall situation.

According to the PSCA spokesperson, the Lahore Drone Team identified incidents of kite flying in various areas of the city. Prompt information was shared with the relevant field police, resulting in immediate action. Such incidents were detected in Sabzazar, Johar Town, and Kahna, where swift legal action was ensured. Similarly, kite flying was also spotted near Garhi Shahu and Allama Iqbal Road, and timely alerts were issued to the police authorities to take stern action against elements involved in such criminal activities.

The spokesperson further stated that drone surveillance also identified smoke and smog emissions in the areas of Gajumata Industrial Estate and Badami Bagh, upon which the Environment Department was immediately issued alert to take necessary legal action. In Johar Town,



smoke caused by burning garbage on a rooftop was detected by the drone team, leading to prompt police intervention and

legal action. The spokesperson added that under the Smart Safe City initiative, drone surveil-

lance is actively ongoing at crime hotspots in Murree, Jhelum, Gujrat, and Muzaf-farghar. Additionally, drone teams are

conducting effective monitoring at various locations in Bahawalpur, Multan, and Rahim Yar Khan.

Enjoyment

KHANPUR: A large numbers of people enjoying public holiday at Khanpur Dam on the eve 23rd March Pakistan Day, in the city.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

PEC launches Global Engineering Freelance Initiative

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC), in collaboration with Aspire Pakistan, has announced the launch of the PEC Global Engineering Freelance Initiative, a major step aimed at preparing Pakistani engineers for the rapidly expanding global digital economy. The program, scheduled from 13 April to 17 April 2026, will provide structured online training to help engineers explore international freelancing opportunities and develop skills needed to work beyond geographical boundaries. A total of 5,000 seats have been allocated for the initiative, which is open to PEC registered engineers, early-career professionals, and engineers seeking additional income streams through global platforms.

Chairman PEC, Engr Waseem Nazir, said that the Global Engineering Freelance Initiative is a forward-looking effort to prepare Pakistani engineers for the future of the profession. He stated that the engineering field is rapidly moving toward digital and remote work environments, and it is essential for Pakistani engineers to adapt to these global trends. He emphasized that PEC is committed to empowering young engineers by providing them with modern skills, international exposure, and new avenues of income so they can compete confidently in the global market.

IIOJK's 'Iron Lady' continues to inspire Kashmiri women despite prolonged incarceration

ISLAMABAD: Asiya Andrabi, widely known as the "Iron Lady" of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), has emerged as an enduring symbol of resilience and defiance against Indian occupation forces.

Despite being behind bars since 2018, her unwavering commitment to the cause of Kashmiri self-determination continues to rule the hearts of common women in IIOJK and inspire millions across the occupied territory.

Andrabi has refused to be broken mentally, physically or emotionally by the repressive tactics of Indian authorities. Even after sacrificing family members and enduring years of imprisonment, she stands tall as a winner in the eyes of her people, with her ideology of independence resonating deeply among Kashmiri masses, particularly womenfolk.



Her imprisonment has not silenced the ideas she represents. Instead, it has strengthened the determination of many who see their struggle reflected in her perseverance.

Like veteran Hurriyat leaders such as Yasin Malik and thousands of others who remain incarcerated, Andrabi's continued detention has only amplified the voice of

resistance rather than suppressing it. The supporters maintain that history repeatedly demonstrates how confinement cannot suppress deeply held beliefs; rather, it often inspires more people to carry forward the same ideals with renewed commitment.

Andrabi's journey as a prominent voice for Kashmiri women's rights and self-determination dates back decades. She has consistently highlighted the atrocities committed by Indian forces in the occupied region, mobilising women against oppression and advocating for the right to self-determination as enshrined in relevant UN resolutions.

Her steadfastness has earned her the title of "Iron Lady" among supporters in IIOJK, where she is seen not merely as a political figure but as a beacon of hope for a generation facing continuous crackdowns, arbitrary detentions and human rights violations.

Faisalabad Development Authority Approves Key Housing Scheme Reforms

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: The meeting of the FDA Governing Body was held under the chairmanship of Commissioner Faisalabad Raja Jahangir Anwar in which the implementation of reforms in the Punjab Development Authorities Private Housing Schemes Rules 2021 was approved by the Punjab Cabinet on the recommendations of the Cabinet Sub-Committee headed by the Provincial Minister for Housing, Urban Development and Public Health Engineering. During the meeting, Director General FDA Muhammad Asif Chaudhry informed about the details of the housing reforms approved by the Punjab Cabinet and termed transparency in housing schemes and reforms



in laws as very useful and appropriate in the context of the current situation. He also informed about the institutional benefits and procedures related to selling 284 residential plots available in FDA City to FESCO. The meeting was attended by Addi-

tional Commissioner Coordination Tanveer Murtaza, Additional Director General FDA Qaiser Abbas Rind, Chief Engineer Mehryoub, Directors Asma Mohsin, Yasir Ijaz Chatha, Sohail Maqsood Pannu and other FDA officers, besides representatives of the

Punjab Finance Department, Local Government, Planning and Development, Housing and Urban Development Department. Commissioner Faisalabad Raja Jahangir Anwar, while emphasizing the need to make the legal framework for private housing schemes more comprehensive, systematic and in line with future requirements, termed the reforms approved by the Punjab Cabinet as auspicious and said that their concrete implementation would help in controlling the problems of illegal housing schemes in the future. Commissioner Faisalabad Raja Jahangir Anwar directed to take effective steps to protect citizens from the fraud of illegal housing schemes and said that law enforcement should be ensured in the land subdivision.

District population officer calls on Pakistanis to set aside differences in his Pakistan Day message

Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: District Officer Health and Population Toba Tek Singh Chaudhry Muhammad Naeem, in his message on the occasion of Pakistan Day, said that March 23 reminds us of the sacrifices, struggles and determination of our forefathers. He stated that this day calls upon all Pakistanis to demonstrate unity and solidarity and to play their full role in the progress, prosperity and stability of the beloved country.



He further said that on Pakistan Day, we must pledge to collectively thwart all internal and external conspiracies against the country and refrain from becoming part of any negative activities. He emphasized that as a nation, we must set aside our differences and prioritize national interests to make Pakistan a strong and stable state. Chaudhry Muhammad Naeem stressed that individuals associated with the health and population sector also bear a significant responsibility to serve the public with honesty and dedication and to contribute towards building a healthy society. He added that a healthy nation is the guarantee of a strong Pakistan.

In the end, he prayed that Allah Almighty keeps Pakistan safe and prosperous forever and grants us the ability to serve our country with sincerity.

RPO, Commissioner Launch Upgraded Bhawana Police Station Following CM's Vision



Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: According to the vision of Chief Minister Punjab, Ms. Maryam Nawaz Sharif, a series of steps are underway for further improvement in public service delivery. RPO Sohail Akhtar Sukhera, Commissioner Faisalabad Raja Jahangir Anwar inaugurated the new building of Bhawana Police Station along with DPO Dr. Naveed Atif, Deputy Commissioner Ayesha Rizwan. The officers visited the operational, investigation and residential rooms of the police station and reviewed the facilities for the citizens. Talking to the media on this occasion, RPO Faisalabad Sohail Akhtar Sukhera said that the police is determined to provide better facilities and speedy justice to the public. The citizens highly appreciated the establishment of the new Bhawana police station to improve policing and assured all possible cooperation to eliminate crime.

Eid-ul-Fitr is a day of gratitude and forgiveness for God's blessings: Ahmed Afzal Awan

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: Senior Vice Chairman of Pakistan Hosiery Manufacturers and Exporters Association (PHMA) North Zone Ahmed Afzal Awan has said that the Holy Prophet (PBUH) said about the month of Ramadan: "The first ten days of this month are of mercy, the second of forgiveness and the third ten days of freedom from Hell. Ramadan is the month of mercy, forgiveness and freedom from Hell. Therefore, immediately after this month full of mercy and blessings, we have been given the opportunity to celebrate Eid Saeed. It is recommended to express happiness on the day of Eid al-Fitr, and the encouragement to rejoice in the grace and mercy of Allah Almighty is also present in the Holy Quran. Muslims should rejoice on it due to the grace and mercy of Allah. Allah says that in today's gathering, I will fulfill whatever you ask about the Hereafter, and whatever you ask about the world, I will look at your good.



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Is Iran Winning This War?

What once appeared to be an abstract geopolitical forecast has now taken the shape of unfolding reality. In early 2024, Chinese-Canadian analyst Jiang Xueqin advanced a controversial thesis—“The Iran Trap.” His argument was dismissed by many as speculative: Donald Trump would return to power, initiate a major confrontation with Iran, and ultimately entangle the United States in a costly, unwinnable war that would weaken its global standing. Two elements of that prediction have already materialized. The third—strategic failure—is now emerging gradually, not through collapse, but through erosion.

The war, which began on February 28, 2026, quickly escalated into one of the most intense confrontations in modern Middle Eastern history. The United States, alongside Israel and supported by regional partners, launched extensive aerial and naval operations targeting Iranian military infrastructure, energy networks, and strategic facilities. Initial expectations in Washington were rooted in the belief that overwhelming force would compel Iran into submission or at least force it to negotiate from a position of weakness.

But the war did not follow that script. Iran absorbed the shock and responded with calculated resilience. It refused to surrender, refused to slow its retaliation, and instead demonstrated a sustained capacity to respond through asymmetric means. Missile strikes, drone operations, and regional disruptions transformed the battlefield into a prolonged contest of endurance. The conflict shifted from

a display of technological superiority to a test of strategic patience.

For the first time in decades, Israel faced sustained retaliatory pressure that tested both its defensive systems and civilian morale. Reports of public frustration—including direct confrontations with political leaders—revealed growing discontent with a war that appeared to lack a clear exit strategy. The psychological balance of the conflict began to shift.

On March 23, 2026, President Donald Trump announced a five-day pause in planned strikes on Iranian energy infrastructure, particularly power grids. He described ongoing contacts as “very good and productive,” signaling a potential diplomatic breakthrough. However, Iranian officials quickly dismissed these claims, denying any formal or informal negotiations and labeling such statements as misleading narratives intended to influence global markets.

According to Iranian spokespersons, this announcement by the United States—framed as a diplomatic opening—was not driven by genuine intent for peace, but rather by economic pressure. They argued that rising oil prices, triggered by disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz, were causing severe strain not only on Europe but also on the United States and the global economy. In their view, Washington’s signaling of negotiations was a calculated attempt to cool oil markets and temporarily ease economic pain, rather than a reflection

of substantive progress.

Iranian officials further warned that such unilateral messaging would be short-lived, and that once the immediate market reaction subsides, tensions would likely escalate again—driving oil prices upward once more. This perspective highlights a deeper layer of the conflict, where economic warfare and perception management are as critical as military operations.

At this stage, Iran’s Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has expressed conditional willingness to engage in negotiations, but only within a clearly defined framework. Any dialogue, he has emphasized, must focus strictly on the nuclear issue, must be fair, and must ensure a win-win outcome that preserves Iran’s sovereignty, dignity, and national integrity. Yet, notably, Iran’s official channels have not confirmed any ongoing talks, nor acknowledged any tangible progress, even as U. S. leadership continues to project optimism.

This non-committal posture is deliberate. From Tehran’s perspective, the United States has already escalated the region into chaos—damaging infrastructure, destabilizing allies, and contributing to disruptions in global energy flows. Having triggered this environment, Washington now appears eager to de-escalate. But Iran’s stance is clear: it will not allow the United States to exit the conflict without consequence, without concessions, and without accountability.

This raises a critical and uncomfortable question. If Iran’s leadership has not

formally acknowledged negotiations, and if there is no official confirmation of talks, then who exactly is Washington engaging with? Reports have mentioned possible intermediaries such as Brett McGurk and other diplomatic figures, yet the absence of Iranian confirmation introduces ambiguity. While it may seem far-fetched, the possibility cannot be entirely dismissed that the United States may be interacting with non-authoritative or secondary channels, rather than the core decision-making leadership in Tehran.

Such uncertainty underscores the fragility of the diplomatic process. Meanwhile, Iran continues to assert that its nuclear program remains fully compliant with the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). It has reiterated its willingness to allow inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), while firmly maintaining that uranium enrichment is its sovereign right. This dual posture—cooperation without concession—has strengthened Iran’s negotiating position.

The broader geopolitical consequences are equally significant. Europe, having reduced dependence on Russian energy, is now heavily reliant on Middle Eastern supplies routed through the Strait of Hormuz. With that corridor under threat, energy prices have surged, supply chains have tightened, and political pressure has intensified across European capitals. The global economy has reacted sharply to every development—oil prices, shipping costs, and stock markets now fluctuate in direct response to battlefield events and diplomatic signals.

At its core, the conflict has exposed a fundamental imbalance—not in military strength, but in strategic approach.

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NDMA warns of thunderstorms, rain, hailstorms in various parts of country

The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has warned of possible thunderstorms, rainfall, strong winds and hailstorms in various parts of the country between March 24 and 31.

According to the NDMA’s National Emergencies Operation Center (NEOC), a weather system entering from the southwestern belt of Balochistan is expected to impact most regions nationwide during this period.

Rainfall is expected to intensify across Punjab between March 28 and 30, with chances of hailstorms at isolated places.

The NDMA has urged the public and relevant authorities to remain vigilant and take precautionary measures to minimize risks associated with severe weather conditions.

Rain is forecast in Islamabad and several cities of Punjab, including Murree, Rawalpindi, Attock, Jhelum, Chakwal, Mianwali and Mandi Bahauddin, on March 25 and 26.

Rain is also forecast in several other cities of Punjab, including Khushab, Sargodha, Gujrat, Gujranwala, Sialkot, Lahore, Hafizabad, Faisalabad, Kasur, Okara, Narowal, Dera Ghazi Khan, Multan, Bahawalnagar and Rahim Yar Khan, on March 25 and 26.

Various districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are likely to receive rain accompanied by windstorms from March 25 to 26.

Rain accompanied by thunderstorms is forecast in several districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, including Chitral, Dir, Swat, Kalam, Malakand, Kohistan, Battagram, Manshera, Abbottabad and Haripur.

Rain is also expected in several districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, including Swabi, Charsadda, Mardan, Nowshera, Peshawar, Kohat, Kurram, Hangu, Karak, Bannu, Lakki Marwat, Dera Ismail Khan and Waziristan.

Rainfall is expected to intensify across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa from March 28 to 30, with snowfall likely in hilly areas and chances of hailstorms at isolated places.

Rain is forecast in parts of Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir, including Gilgit, Astore, Diamer, Ghizer, Skardu, Hunza and Shigar, as well as Muzaffarabad, Bagh, Poonch, Haveli, Kotli, Bhimber and Neelum Valley, on March 25–26 and again from March 28–30. Snowfall is likely in upper areas, while a few parts of Azad Kashmir may also experience hailstorms.

Rain is forecast in several cities of Balochistan, including Quetta, Zhab, Ziarat, Chaman, Kalat, Qila Saifullah, Qila Abdullah, Pishin, Barkhan, Sibi, Dera Bugti, Khuzdar, Awaran, Kharan, Chagai, Panjur, Turbat, Gwadar, Lasbela, Loralai and Mastung, from March 24 to 25 and again between March 27 and 29.

In Balochistan, hailstorms are possible at a few locations. Meanwhile, rain accompanied by windstorms is forecast in several cities of Sindh, including Karachi, Thatta, Badin, Hyderabad, Sukkur, Dadu, Kashmore, Jacobabad and Larkana, on March 25–26 and again from March 28–29.

The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has advised the public to stay away from trees, weak structures and installations during strong winds and storms. Tourists and travelers have also been urged to check weather and road conditions before heading to northern areas.



Cartoon by Amjad Rasmī. (Courtesy of Ashfaq Al-Azcat)

When the State Becomes the Executioner: Bulldozer Justice in Indian-Occupied Kashmir

There is a particular kind of brutality that wears the costume of law. It does not arrive as chaos. It arrives with paperwork, uniformed officials, and the mechanical groan of heavy machinery. It files demolished homes under “anti-encroachment drives.” It catalogues detention without trial as “preventive custody.” It records torture as “enhanced interrogation.” In Indian illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), this bureaucratic violence has a name that even its practitioners can no longer disguise: collective punishment. And it is being visited, with method and deliberateness, upon a civilian population whose only proven crime is living in a territory that New Delhi has chosen to govern not through consent, but through consequence. The facts are not in dispute. They are documented by the United Nations, corroborated by international human rights organizations, and in several instances confirmed by India’s own Supreme Court. What New Delhi disputes is not the facts. It is their relevance.

In the weeks following the Pahalgam attack of April 2025, homes belonging to families of alleged militants were reduced to rubble across IIOJK. Not by court order. Not after due process. Not following any judicial determination of guilt. By administrative instruction, executed under military supervision, by bulldozers that recognize no right of appeal.

United Nations human rights experts were unambiguous. These demolitions, they stated formally, “constitute collective punishment,” prohibited under international humanitarian law since the Geneva Conventions of 1949. The families whose homes were destroyed had not been charged, tried or convicted of anything. They were punished for the alleged actions of a

son, a husband, a brother. That is not a security measure. That is inherited guilt administered by the state.

This also violates India’s own domestic jurisprudence. In November 2024, the Supreme Court of India ruled explicitly that authorities cannot demolish property belonging to individuals accused of crimes without due legal process. In IIOJK, the demolitions continued regardless. India’s highest judicial authority spoke. The machinery of the state did not pause. This is not a gap between law and implementation. It is a conscious decision that legal protections apply everywhere in the republic except where they are needed most.

Mass detention was the other instrument. UN human rights experts documented approximately 2,800 arrests across IIOJK in the aftermath of the Pahalgam attack. Among those detained were journalists, civil society activists and ordinary citizens with no established connection to violence. They were not arrested on evidence. They were arrested on suspicion, on proximity, on the misfortune of being Kashmiri at the wrong moment.

The Public Safety Act permits detention for up to two years without charge or trial. The Unlawful Activities Prevention Act enables indefinite detention, makes bail a near impossibility, and places the burden of proving innocence upon the accused rather than the state. These are not emergency measures reluctantly invoked in crisis. They are standing statutes used routinely to punish dissent and enforce silence. Many detainees were held incommunicado, denied lawyers, denied family contact. Credible reports of torture reached the UN. India did not investigate. When impunity is structural, atrocity becomes routine.

India’s defense follows a familiar script:

Kashmir faces a genuine militant threat and extraordinary circumstances demand extraordinary responses. This argument has been made, in nearly identical language, by every state that has ever imposed collective punishment upon a civilian population. It was the argument in Algeria. In Northern Ireland. In Palestine. History found against the occupying power in each case.

Test it against its own logic. If mass detention and punitive demolitions were effective counter-insurgency tools, Kashmir would have been stabilized long ago. India has employed them since the early 1990s. Three decades later, the militancy persists, grievances remain unaddressed, and the population has not been reconciled to Indian rule. Collective punishment does not pacify a population. It produces the next generation of resistance.

The international community’s response has been, without diplomatic softening, a failure of collective responsibility. The UN recommendations are neither radical nor politically loaded: end arbitrary detentions, halt punitive demolitions, investigate torture allegations. They do not ask India to resolve Kashmir’s final status. They ask only that India extend to Kashmiri civilians the minimum protections it guarantees every other citizen of the republic. India has declined even this, and a world attentive to India’s economic and strategic weight has largely allowed it to do so.

A state that governs this way is not fighting extremism. It is manufacturing the conditions in which extremism becomes, for some, the only remaining language. The bulldozer does not build order. It builds the memory of disorder, and memories of that kind do not fade. They organize.

The author is a student of International Relations at the International Islamic University, Islamabad. Currently, he is serving as an intern at the Kashmir Institute of International Relations Islamabad.



Analysis
Muhammad Waleed Akhtar

When Grammar Steals the Voice of a Child

The recent declaration of an education emergency by the Government of Punjab, under the leadership of Maryam Nawaz, along with the proactive role of Rana Sikandar Hayat, deserves appreciation without ifs and buts. At a time when learning outcomes demand urgent attention, such policy signals reflect both awareness and intent. In the same spirit, the establishment of the Punjab Education Curriculum Training and Assessment Authority is undoubtedly a step in the right direction. The real test of reform, however, lies in how effectively its vision is implemented in classrooms.

As a language teacher, I recently came across an English language paper prepared by PEECTAA. To my surprise, the paper was heavy with grammatical theory and strikingly short of substantive learning content.

At the middle-school level, where language should serve as a gateway to expression, the paper reduced English to a checklist of technical labels. Students were expected to identify kinds of pronouns, recall abstract rules, and navigate terminology that even many teachers struggle with. It raises a serious question: what exactly are we assessing?

More importantly, language is a living medium of expression, not a museum of rules. At the foundational level, children should be encouraged to read, write, and speak with confidence. They should learn to shape ideas, connect thoughts, and express emotions—not merely label parts of speech.

Sugata Mitra, provides an important perspective. An Indian computer scientist and globally recognised educationist, he has long challenged conventional classroom practices. Writing for The Guardian, he criticised the overemphasis

on grammar and rigid instruction, arguing that learning must evolve to meet the demands of the digital age. A recipient of the prestigious TED Prize, he is widely known for his “Hole in the Wall” experiments, which demonstrated how children can learn collaboratively with minimal formal instruction. His work encourages us to reconsider whether traditional methods—especially an obsession with technical correctness—truly serve modern learners.

Grammar should remain an important tool, but it should support learning rather than dominate it.

However, assessment prioritises technical accuracy over meaningful expression, it reshapes the classroom environment. Students begin to fear writing. They hesitate before speaking. They measure every word against the risk of being wrong. Learning, as a result, does not flourish; it retreats.

This is not a minor pedagogical concern but a systemic issue. If assessments continue to reward rote memorisation over genuine communication, we risk producing students who can define language but cannot use it. They will know the rules yet lack the confidence to express even the simplest thought.

Ultimately, language education should nurture thinkers, communicators, and confident individuals. If newly established institutions are to genuinely reform education, they must restore this balance.

An education system should not be judged by how accurately a child can label a pronoun—but by how courageously that child can express an idea.

The writer is an English teacher and corporate communications professional with a keen interest in education reform and language pedagogy.



Analysis
Muhammad Rabnawaz Awan

Pakistan Day commemorated with national resolve and renewed commitment

Spokesman Report

OTTAWA: The National Day of Pakistan was commemorated at the High Commission of Pakistan in Ottawa with patriotic fervor, marking the historic adoption of the Lahore Resolution on March 23, 1940, which laid the foundation for the creation of Pakistan.

High Commissioner Muhammad Saleem hoisted the National Flag in a graceful ceremony attended by members of the Pakistani Community, High Commission staff, students and friends of Pakistan at the Chancery premises.

Special Messages of President Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Deputy Prime Minister/ Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq



Dar on the auspicious occasion were read out to the audience. The Messages reaffirmed the commitment to realize the vision of the founding fathers to make Pakistan a strong and



prosperous country.

Speaking on the occasion, the High Commissioner underscored the enduring vision of the founding fathers and paid tribute to their immense sacrifices and unwavering determination. He emphasized the national resolve and Pakistan's

continued efforts towards socio-economic development, regional peace and constructive engagement with the international community. Saleem highlighted the positive trajectory of Pakistan-Canada relations, noting growing cooperation in trade, investment

higher education, and people-to-people contacts. He appreciated the invaluable contribution of the Pakistani Diaspora living in Canada in strengthening bilateral ties.

Special prayers were offered for the prosperity, resilience and progress of Pakistan.

Tuberculosis kills 140 people per day in Pakistan

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: On the occasion of World Tuberculosis (TB) Day, the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation, and Coordination – through the Common Management Unit for AIDS, TB and Malaria – and the World Health Organization (WHO) renewed their commitment to intensify joint action and invest in ending a deadly disease that affects over 669,000 people and causes 51,000 deaths annually in Pakistan. The country bears 73% of the tuberculosis burden in the Eastern Mediterranean Region and is the fifth most affected in the world. In Pakistan, every day, over 1,800 new cases arise and 140 people die from tuberculosis.

Under the theme "Yes, We Can End TB – Led by Countries, Powered by People", the Ministry and WHO called on all partners to invest in ending the world's deadliest infectious disease. They also reminded the public that TB is curable and that early detection and treatment are vital to save lives, and encouraged people to use the 2,031 facilities, both public and private, that offer free diagnosis and treatment – following WHO guidelines – across the country. In Pakistan, the treatment success rate is 95%.

"Despite global and fiscal pressures, the Government is fully committed to end TB through coordinated multi-sectoral actions; sustainable domestic financing; and a patient-centered approach with participation of the communities and all stakeholders", said Federal Health Minister Syed Mustafa Kamal.

Pakistan has increased TB noti-



fications and treatment coverage, reaching more than 497,000 people in 2024 (74% of the affected population), compared to 331,800 people covered in 2015 (63% of the affected population).

Over the last decade, in technical collaboration with WHO, Pakistan has provided diagnosis and treatment services to approximately 5 million people affected by TB. WHO-recommended rapid molecular diagnostics have been scaled up across the country, with over 562 GeneXpert sites enhancing early detection and also been updated to align with the latest WHO recommendations.

In partnership and with financial support from the Global Fund to

Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (the Global Fund), WHO is working closely with the Government of Pakistan to strengthen national TB control programmes, improve health facilities and access to TB services, scale up TB detection and treatment, combat stigma, and promote TB prevention and control. WHO has also supported capacity-building for the health workforce, and the integration of TB services with mental health and reproductive, maternal, newborn, and child health care.

"In Pakistan, every 10 minutes, one person dies from tuberculosis. These deaths are preventable, because tuberculosis is curable. Ending tuberculosis is not just aspirational; it is achievable.

WHO will stand with Pakistan and its partners to continue to intensify early detection and treatment for all, no matter where they live or who they are," said WHO Representative in Pakistan Dr Luo Dapeng. "Leaving no one behind is not only the right thing to do; it is also essential to preserve global public health and avert a growing epidemic, and to build a healthier and more prosperous world for all."

On World TB Day, the Ministry of Health Services, Regulations and Coordination and WHO, reminded all stakeholders that ending TB is achievable. Pakistan continues its commitment to reducing TB transmission, preventing drug resistance, and ensuring complete treatment and cure for every patient.

Jahangir Khan Tareen inundated School in District Rahim Yar Khan Amounting Rs 42 Millions Rupees



Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Jahangir Khan Tareen formally inaugurated a school in Basti Jam Bakho jhlan Rahim Yar Khan. The TCF School, established with the financial support of JDW Sugar Mills owners Jahangir Khan Tareen and Makhdoom Syed Ahmed Mahmood, has cost Rs 42.3 million.

Addressing the inauguration ceremony, Jahangir Khan Tareen said that with the establishment of the school, the children of the area will now get quality and better education facilities, which will pave the way for turning their dreams into reality. He further said that it is their right to provide quality and modern basic education facilities to the children of backward areas. Those who can afford it should come forward to provide basic education and health facilities to the children of these areas.

Group Director Finance JDW Sugar Mills Muhammad Rafique, senior management of the mills and a large number of local dignitaries were present on the occasion.

Kashmiri leader Asiya Andrabi given life sentence in India

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: An Indian court has sentenced Kashmiri leader Asiya Andrabi to life imprisonment, while two of her associates, Sofi Fehmeeda and Nahida Nasreen, were sentenced to 30 years in prison under the infamous Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).

Asiya Andrabi and two other women rejected the charges in court and pleaded not guilty. According to foreign media reports, the verdict was delivered by a special court in New Delhi.

The three women had been convicted earlier this year in January on charges of links with a banned organisation.

Legal experts and Kashmiri leaders have often accused New Delhi of invoking terror charges to criminalise the movement for self-determination as well as crush dissent.

The case relates to the group Dukhtaran-e-Millat, which has long advocated for the right to self-determination for Kashmiris and was banned by the Indian government in 2004.

The special court found the women guilty under anti-terror laws and other sections of the Indian Penal Code, including charges of conspiracy and waging war against the state.

Prosecutors alleged that the women were involved in promoting separatist ideology and organising activities in the region.

Critics argue that such cases raise serious questions about justice and basic rights, especially when it comes to Kashmiri leaders.

The case is also being seen in the wider context of the situation in Indian-occupied Kashmir, where grave violations of human rights by the Indian army have been going on for years.

Turkey Looking Forward to Hosting Pakistani Travellers in 2026

Tooba Khan

ISLAMABAD: Türkiye's tourism authorities have reaffirmed that travel and tourism activities across the country are continuing as normal, while expressing optimism about welcoming Pakistani travellers during the 2026 travel season.

The Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Türkiye, along with the Türkiye Tourism Promotion and Development Agency (TGA), has confirmed that all tourist operations in the country remain fully functional despite ongoing conflict in the broader Middle East.

Officials noted that major tourism destinations such as Istanbul, Antalya, Bodrum, Izmir, and Cappadocia remain



open and are operating as scheduled, with no closures, disruptions, or govern-

ment-issued restrictions affecting tourism activities. All major Turkish international airports confirmed that there have been no airport closures, flight restrictions or rerouting due to regional developments, and airlines serving Türkiye have reported no cancellations related to the conflict.

Representative of the Türkiye Tourism Promotion and Development Agency (TGA), said "Pakistan remains an important visitor market for Türkiye, with travellers showing a deep interest in the country's historical cities, cultural heritage and natural landscapes. As tourism operations continue normally across Türkiye, we look forward to welcoming them in the upcoming travel season."

Virtual University of Pakistan Announces 27th March as Last Date for Admissions for Spring 2026

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Virtual University of Pakistan has officially announced 27th March as the last date for admissions for the Spring 2026 session and urges all prospective students to complete their applications well before the deadline to avoid last-minute inconvenience.

As Pakistan's first federally chartered university established on the foundation of modern information and communication technologies, the University continues to play a pioneering role in delivering flexible, affordable, and high-quality education across

the country.

The University currently offers more than 100 academic programs, including two-year Associate Degree programs, four-year Bachelor's degree programs, and various diploma programs. These programs span diverse disciplines such as Computer Science, Information Technology, Business Administration, Management Sciences, Education, Psychology, Mass Communication, and Economics, carefully designed to meet the evolving demands of academia and industry.

A major strength of the University lies in its fully online admis-

sion and academic management system, which enables students to apply, study, and manage their coursework digitally without the need to physically visit campuses. For examination support and student facilitation, the University maintains a vast nationwide network of more than 210 campuses, spread across 137 cities of Pakistan.

Since its establishment in 2002, the University has demonstrated remarkable growth and academic impact. Currently, more than 143,000 students are actively enrolled, while over 174,000 graduates are contributing to various professional sectors. The



University has recorded more than 674,000 total student enrollments since its inception, reflecting its

expanding reach and credibility.

Through its advanced Learning Management System, students

are provided seamless access to recorded lectures, assignments, quizzes, and a wide range of academic resources, enabling them to study anytime and from anywhere. This flexible learning model makes the University an ideal choice for working professionals as well as students residing in remote and underserved areas.

To further enhance accessibility, Virtual University offers millions of rupees in scholarships annually, including both merit-based and need-based financial assistance programs, supporting talented and deserving students in pursuing higher education. These initiatives ensure that financial

constraints do not hinder access to quality education.

With a strong and continuously growing alumni network, the University remains steadfast in its commitment to innovation, accessibility, and academic excellence, maintaining a prominent position in Pakistan's higher education landscape.

Prospective candidates are advised to visit the official website for detailed information regarding programs, eligibility criteria, and scholarship opportunities, and to submit their applications before 27th March to secure their academic future for the Spring 2026 session.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
153,966.36	152,740.37
Day's High	Day's Low
157,442.68	153,382.00
Index Value	Change
19,363,186,185	+1225.99
Percentage	Time
+0.8%	24 Mar, 2026 4:30 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
9,965.16	+71.01
Percentage	Time
+0.72%	24 Mar, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
46,260.33	+51.86
Percentage	Time
+0.11%	24 Mar, 1:02 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
52,252.28	+736.79
Percentage	Time
+1.43%	24 Mar, 3:45 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates

Australian Dollar	195.05	198.10
Bahrain Dinar	731.90	741.90
Canadian Dollar	200.10	205.25
China Yuan	36.65	37.6
Danish Krone	43.25	43.65
Euro	319.90	324
Hong Kong Dollar	34.80	35.80
Indian Rupee	2.16	2.46
Japanese Yen	1.7253	1.8245
Kuwaiti Dinar	886.65	896.35
Malaysian Ringgit	65.35	66.55
New Zealand \$	160.81	165.35
Norwegians Krone	27.65	27.95
Omani Riyal	716.25	726.45
Qatari Riyal	73.25	74.40
Saudi Riyal	73.85	74.80
Singapore Dollar	213.90	218.30
Swedish Korona	30.20	30.50
Swiss Franc	355	358.85
Thai Bhat	8.10	8.25
U.A.E Dirham	75.55	76.90
UK Pound Sterling	370.36	374.25
US Dollar	279.2	280.25
US Dollar	279.25	280.30

SBP cancels forex company's licence over 'regulatory violations'

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) on Tuesday cancelled the licence of Al Raj International Exchange Company with immediate effect over what it described as serious violations of regulatory guidelines.

In an official statement, the central bank said the action was taken following significant breaches of rules governing exchange companies, underscoring its commitment to maintaining transparency and discipline in the financial sector.

As a result of the cancellation, the head office and all affiliated branches of the company have been barred from conducting any foreign exchange-related business activities. The SBP clarified that the company is no longer authorised to deal in currency exchange or any related services.

The move is part of ongoing efforts by the central bank to tighten oversight of



exchange companies and ensure compliance with regulatory standards aimed at preventing financial irregularities and protecting consumers.

The SBP reiterated that strict action will

continue to be taken against entities found violating rules, as part of broader measures to strengthen Pakistan's financial system and curb illegal foreign exchange practices.

Waiting for customers

RAWALPINDI: A vendor is displayed fruits on his loading van attraction for costumers along Murree Road in the city.



Photo: Online

Hi-Octane Price Surge Reshapes SUV Economics as PHEVs, REEVs Emerge as Practical Alternative in Pakistan

Spokesman Report

LAHORE: With petrol prices in Pakistan remaining above Rs320 per litre and the government sharply increasing the levy on high-octane fuel—pushing its price to around Rs535 per litre—the economics of driving sport utility vehicles (SUVs) is undergoing a significant shift.

Industry experts say this change is rapidly tilting consumer preference toward plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs) and range-extended electric vehicles (REEVs). According to Syed Asif Ahmed, Director Sales and Marketing at Chery Master Pakistan, the latest pricing dynamics are putting particular pressure on premium SUV users, as most high-end models are designed to run on high-octane fuel.

Official data shows ex-depot MS petrol at approximately Rs321 per litre, while high-octane petrol has surged to around Rs535 per litre, highlighting Pakistan's continued exposure to imported fuel volatility.

Ahmed said the conversation around new energy vehicles has moved beyond environmental considerations. "For Pakistani consumers—especially SUV users—this is now a straightforward economic decision," he said. "At these price levels, running a conventional petrol SUV is becoming a serious burden on household budgets."

A typical petrol-powered C-segment SUV, delivering around 10 kilometres per litre, now costs roughly Rs32 per kilometre to run on regular petrol. However, for luxury SUVs using high-octane fuel, the running cost jumps significantly to around Rs53–54 per kilometre, making daily usage increasingly expensive.

Even conventional hybrids, with an assumed fuel economy of around 18 kilometres per litre, cost approximately Rs18 per kilometre on regular petrol.

If operating on high-octane fuel, that cost can rise to nearly Rs30 per kilometre. "A hybrid improves efficiency, but it still remains exposed to petrol price shocks," Ahmed noted. "The vulnerability is reduced, not removed."

He argued that PHEVs and REEVs fundamentally change this equation by allowing most daily urban driving to be completed on electricity rather than petrol.

Using the Chery Tiggo 9 PHEV as an example, Ahmed said the SUV is equipped with a 34.46 kWh battery offering a claimed



170 km pure electric range under the NEDC cycle.

"At a household electricity tariff of Rs50 per unit, a full charge costs about Rs1,723," he explained. "Spread over 170 kilometres, that translates into a running cost of roughly Rs10 per kilometre."

This places a plug-in SUV dramatically below both conventional petrol and hybrid SUVs in day-to-day operating cost. Compared to a regular petrol SUV, the saving stands at around Rs22 per kilometre, while against high-octane luxury SUVs, the saving expands to approximately Rs43 per kilometre. Even compared to conventional hybrids, PHEVs offer a cost advantage of roughly Rs8 to Rs20 per kilometre, depending on fuel type.

Ahmed added that the advantage becomes even more compelling for urban households with rooftop solar installations.

Pakistan's rooftop solar market has expanded rapidly in recent years, with

net-metered capacity rising into several gigawatts by 2025, reflecting a growing shift toward self-generation.

"This is where Pakistan's energy transition and mobility transition begin to converge," Ahmed said. "A household generating its own electricity is not just reducing its power bill—it is also significantly lowering the cost of mobility."

He noted that PHEVs and REEVs are particularly well-suited to Pakistani SUV buyers, who require space, flexibility, and long-distance usability, but are increasingly constrained by fuel costs. Unlike full battery electric vehicles (BEVs), these technologies offer electric-led commuting without complete dependence on a still-developing charging network.

Ahmed also linked the argument to the broader economy, noting that Pakistan's reliance on imported petroleum continues to exert pressure on foreign exchange reserves and fiscal stability during periods of global oil volatility.

Pakistan's Fiscal Risk Statement has warned that a 20% increase in global oil prices could widen the fiscal deficit by approximately Rs487 billion in FY2026, driven by lower petroleum levy revenues and higher subsidy requirements.

"The case for PHEVs and REEVs is not about one brand or one product," Ahmed said. "It is about providing Pakistani consumers with a realistic SUV solution that reduces running costs, lowers exposure to oil shocks, and aligns with local driving conditions."

As fuel prices remain elevated—particularly for high-octane users—the market appears to be moving toward a clear conclusion: for Pakistani consumers seeking to retain SUV mobility without absorbing the full impact of fuel inflation, plug-in hybrids and range-extended EVs are emerging as the most practical and economically viable solution.

Pakistan tanker crosses Hormuz after oil payment made in Chinese yuan: Mushahid



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed has claimed that Iran allowed Pakistan's oil tanker "Karachi" to pass through the strategic Strait of Hormuz after the shipment was paid for in Chinese currency.

In a post on social media platform X, the senator said the development reflected a shift in regional dynamics.

"Iran allows first oil tanker to pass through Strait of Hormuz, Pakistan's 'Karachi' oil tanker, after shipment was paid in Chinese currency, Yuan! What a Change: Iran has the Initiative & is setting the regional Agenda, while US looks on helplessly!"

Meanwhile, a report by Bloomberg citing ship-tracking data said the oil tanker "Karachi," operated by the Pakistan National Shipping Corporation (PNSC), crossed the Strait of Hormuz on Sunday.

According to the report, the Pakistan-flagged Aframax tanker was seen on Monday morning near the Omani port city of Sohar.

Ship-tracking data showed the tanker passed near Iran's Larak Island before continuing eastward along the Iranian coast and exiting the strait later the same day.

Neither PNSC nor Pakistan's Ministry of Petroleum immediately commented on the report.

The Strait of Hormuz is one of the world's most critical energy corridors, with nearly 20 per cent of global crude oil and liquefied natural gas shipments passing through the narrow waterway.

Shipping activity in the Strait has been affected by rising tensions following retaliatory threats from Iran after military strikes by the United States and Israel.

Iranian officials have warned they could target vessels linked to the US and its allies, but have stated that commercial ships from friendly countries would not be harmed.

The escalating tensions have raised concerns about potential disruptions to global energy supplies and wider economic impacts.

Small Traders Body urges PM to make austerity permanent national policy

Commerce Desk

HYDERABAD: Muhammad Saleem Memon, President of the Hyderabad Chamber of Small Traders & Small Industry (HCSTSI), has urged the Government of Pakistan to convert the recently launched austerity drive from a temporary measure into a permanent national policy, enabling a sustainable and effective solution to the country's economic, energy, food, and environmental challenges.

In a communication addressed to Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Shehbaz

Sharif and Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, President Memon highlighted that Pakistan's economy requires structural reforms rather than short-term interventions. Official data from the State Bank of Pakistan and the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics indicates persistent fiscal deficits, reliance on imports, and continued pressure on foreign exchange reserves, while inefficient energy usage is driving unnecessary increases in electricity demand.

Syed Taha appointed new K-Electric CEO

News Desk



Karachi's only power utility, K-Electric, has appointed Syed Taha as the company's new Chief Executive Officer. Syed Taha had been serving as the MD and CEO of PSO since February 2020.

K-Electric has passed on the important information regarding the appointment to the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX).

The board of directors of K-Electric has appointed Syed Taha as the company's new Chief Executive Officer with effect from April 15, 2026.

Syed Taha replaced Adib Ahmed, who was the interim CEO.

Syed Taha holds a degree

in engineering. He has an MBA in Finance from the Institute of Business Administration, Karachi.

Previously, Syed Taha worked as the Executive Director at Oasis Energy.

Syed Taha headed the Program Management Office of the Port Harcourt Electric Distribution Company, Nigeria.

Syed Taha previously served as Chief Distribution Officer at K-Electric and held senior positions in various organizations.

Gold price records hefty rise in Pakistan

News Desk

The per-tola price of 24-karat gold increased by Rs16,300 on Tuesday and was sold at Rs464,062 against its sale at Rs447,762 the previous day, All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association reported.

The price of 10 grams of 24-karat gold also increased

by Rs13,975 to Rs397,858 from Rs383,883 whereas the price of 10 grams of 22-karat gold went up to Rs364,716 from Rs351,905, showing an increase of Rs12,811.

The rates of per-tola silver increased by Rs570 to Rs7,454 whereas that of 10 grams silver went up by Rs489 to Rs6,390.

Star-Studded Commentary Panel Announced for HBL Pakistan Super League PSL 11

Asim Tanveer

ISLAMABAD: Former West Indies all-rounder Carlos Brathwaite will make his HBL PSL commentary debut and former Australia women's player Lisa Sthalekar is set to return as the Pakistan Cricket Board announced a star-studded 23-member bilingual commentary panel for the upcoming marquee event.

Shoaib Malik, who has featured in all the previous 10 editions of the HBL PSL as player, will be appearing as Urdu commentator in the 11th edition and he will be joined by former Pakistan captains Salman Butt and Sana Mir.

Seasoned commentator Tariq Saad, former Pakistan women's international Marina Iqbal, Shah Faisal and Pepsi Voice of Pakistan 2022 winner Ayaz Chaudhary will form the seven-member exclusive Urdu commentary panel for the HBL PSL 11.

Apart from Barbadian Brathwaite, the English commentary panel will comprise South Africa's Jean-Paul Duminy and the melodic Michael Haysman, England's Dominic Cork, Nick Knight and Mark Butcher, Martin Guptill from New Zealand, Greg Blewett and Lisa Sthalekar from Australia and Athar Ali Khan from Bangladesh.



Among Pakistan voices in the English commentary panel, former captains Wasim Akram, Ramiz Raja, Aamir Sohail and Urooj Mumtaz

Khan will be calling out the action along with former Pakistan international Bazid Khan.

Sikandar Bakht will be part of the English commentary panel as well as the four-member presenters' lineup. Renowned sports broadcasters Neroli Meadows and Jess Crowe are set to feature in the HBL PSL for the first time and they will join Zainab Abbas as the official presenters and hosts during the tournament.

Chief Executive Officer Pakistan Super League, Salman Naseer "We are excited to announce a star-studded and insightful commentators' panel, which comes with years of valuable experience of calling the game behind the mic. I'm sure our fans will enjoy the commentary lineup and their calls over exciting action from home as we inch closer to the beginning of the landmark 11th edition of the HBL PSL."

Commentators
Aamir Sohail, Athar Ali Khan, Bazid Khan, Carlos Brathwaite, Dominic Cork, Greg Blewett, Jean-Paul Duminy, Lisa Sthalekar, Mark Butcher, Martin Guptill, Michael Haysman, Nick Knight, Ramiz Raja, Sikandar Bakht, Urooj Mumtaz Khan and Wasim Akram.

Exclusively Urdu
Ayaz Chaudhary, Marina Iqbal, Salman Butt, Sana Mir, Shah Faisal,



Shoaib Malik and Tariq Saad. Presenters
Jess Crowe, Neroli Meadows, Sikandar Bakht and Zainab Abbas

Pakistan Cricket Board has Confirmed the Local and international Broadcasters for the 11th Edition of the HBL Pakistan Super League

Asim Tanveer

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Cricket Board has confirmed the local and international broadcasters for the 11th edition of the HBL Pakistan Super League as the tournament begins on Thursday, 26 March in Lahore.

A total of 44 matches will be spread across Lahore's Gaddafi Stadium and Karachi's National Bank Stadium during the HBL PSL 11.

The HBL PSL 11 action will be broadcast live for the first time on ESPN in Australia and New Zealand, on T Sports

and Tapmad in Bangladesh and on Cricbuzz, Switch TV, Cricbuzz TV on ELIFE and STARZPLAY in Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.

Fans in Sri Lanka will be able to catch the live action on Tapmad and Dialog TV. Tapmad and VIU Hub will also be streaming the HBL PSL action live in Sri Lanka. Fans in Nepal will be able to watch HBL PSL matches live on Tapmad.

ARY Digital (Sky 748 and Glass 724) and ARY Plus will broadcast and live-stream the HBL PSL 11 in the United Kingdom, while fans from United States of America and Canada can tune in to

Willow TV, Willow Sports and Willow by Cricbuzz to watch the HBL PSL matches. Tapmad will also live-stream the action in Rest of the World.

Millions of fans in Pakistan will be able to catch the thrilling HBL PSL 11 action on Pakistan Television (PTV), A Sports, Geo Super and Ten Sports on their televisions. Live-streaming of the highly anticipated edition of HBL PSL will be available on Tapmad, Tamasha and Myco for the fans.

The Broadcast will be produced with 30+ cameras, featuring various editorial and technical enhancements to achieve

an engaging top-tier coverage in English and Urdu.

The Urdu broadcast promises to be the most comprehensive till date comprising dedicated cameras, replay angles, studio shows, features and highlights. The coverage will include Hawkeye with all Decision Review System (DRS) enhancements, including Off-bat visualisation and Biomechanics.

The broadcast will include live player tracker, augmented reality, and virtual reality graphics. The Spidercam will be back with its PARVAZ feature to further enhance the coverage.

UAF, PHF sign contract to promote handball

Tahir Amin Malik

ISLAMABAD: The University of Agriculture, Faisalabad (UAF) and Pakistan Handball Federation (PHF) have signed a Letter of Intent (LoI) to promote handball. The LoI was duly inked by UAF Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Zulfiqar Ali and President Pakistan Handball Federation M Shafiq at Syndicate Room.

The agreement aims to strengthen collaboration between both institutions for the development of handball through modern infrastructure, training facilities, and technical support. Under this partnership, UAF will provide its existing handball hard court, sand court, and indoor facilities, and National Handball Academy and High-Performance Resource Center (HPRC).

Director External Linkages Dr M Tehseen Azhar, Chairman Sports Board Dr Haroon Zaman, M Atif Shafiq,



Director Sports UAF with other notables of directorate of sports attended the ceremony.

Handball Academy indoor hall. The federation will also provide qualified coaches and technical human resources to train students and support the academy's operations. Additionally, PHF will also assist UAF in organising intervarsity and inter-faculty handball competitions.

On the other hand, UAF will extend full support by offering facilities free of cost for handball events, providing office space for PHF at the campus, and maintaining the courts for training and competitions.

UAF VC Prof. Dr. Zulfiqar Ali said that the initiative will open new avenues for students to excel in sports alongside academics.

M Shafiq expressed his commitment to uplifting handball standards across the country and termed the collaboration with UAF a significant step towards achieving excellence in the sport.

According to the terms of the LoI, PHF will facilitate the provision of synthetic flooring for the National

Zimbabwe's Brian Bennett joins Peshawar Zalmi for PSL 11

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Zimbabwe opener Brian Bennett has been included in the squad of Peshawar Zalmi for the upcoming 11th edition of the Pakistan Super League.

The announcement was made by Zalmi owner Javed Afridi, who welcomed the batter to the franchise. "We welcome Brian John Bennett from Zimbabwe to the Zalmi family," he said.

Bennett recently delivered a strong performance for Zimbabwe in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026, where he played a key role in helping his team reach the Super 8 stage. The right-handed batter scored 292 runs in six matches, including a

highest score of 97 against India national cricket team.

He also contributed significantly in a successful run chase against Sri Lanka national cricket team during the group stage.

Bennett is set to make his debut appearance in the PSL, with the franchise expressing confidence in his ability to strengthen the squad in the forthcoming season.



Shan Masood returns as Multan Sultans vice-captain

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Test captain Shan Masood has rejoined Multan Sultans as vice-captain for the upcoming 11th edition of the Pakistan Super League, set to commence on March 26.

The franchise confirmed the development on Tuesday through its official account on X, formerly Twitter, welcoming Masood back with the message: "Your vice-captain - Shan Masood. Back where he belongs."

Masood expressed satisfaction over his return to the side, stating that he was pleased to rejoin the franchise ahead of the new season.

Earlier, on March 16, Multan Sultans had announced the appointment of



Australian cricketer Ashton Turner as captain for PSL 11.

According to the franchise, Turner brings significant leadership experience along with a proven track record of success in domestic and international competitions.

The Multan-based side is expected to enter the tournament with a balanced leadership group as it aims to strengthen its performance in the forthcoming edition of the league.

Is Iran Winning This War?

Continued from Page 4

The United States and Israel have relied on conventional superiority—air dominance, naval strength, and precision strikes. Iran, by contrast, has leveraged asymmetric warfare, combining missile capabilities, drone networks, cyber tools, and regional influence to offset its disadvantages. Its ability to project force and sustain pressure has reshaped perceptions of power.

This is precisely the dynamic envisioned in the "Iran Trap"—a scenario in which a superpower becomes entangled in a conflict where traditional advantages fail to yield decisive outcomes.

As negotiations—acknowledged or otherwise—move closer, the balance of power has shifted. Iran now enters this phase as a confident and strengthened actor, capable of negotiating from a position of resilience. If sanctions are lifted, Iran could rapidly emerge as a revitalized economic and regional force, leveraging its energy resources and strategic geography. Yet, the implications extend beyond Iran. History shows that

unresolved conflicts often lead to new entanglements. Some analysts speculate that if this confrontation stabilizes without a clear resolution, geopolitical tensions may shift to other regions, including Cuba. While such scenarios remain hypothetical, they underscore a broader risk: the danger of moving from one strategic quagmire to another without learning from the first.

The lesson is unmistakable. Power alone does not guarantee victory. Military superiority does not ensure control. In a multipolar world defined by complexity, resilience and adaptability can challenge even the most dominant forces. The Iran conflict is no longer just a regional war—it is a defining test of global power, credibility, and strategic limits. What began as an assertion of dominance may ultimately redefine it.

The writer is Press Secretary to the President (Rtd), Former Press Minister, Embassy of Pakistan to France, Former Press Attaché to Malaysia and Former MD, SRBC. He is living in Macomb, Michigan

National Road Cycling Championship postponed

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: The 10th National Road Cycling Championship, scheduled to be held in the federal capital from April 2 to 5, has been postponed until further notice due to prevailing circumstances.

The decision was taken in the interest of safety and to ensure proper management of the event, said a press release issued by Pakistan Cycling Federation (PCF).

The championship was set to bring together top cyclists from across the country to compete in various road racing categories. The federation said that revised dates and further details regarding the championship would be announced in due course.

Acting Secretary General of the federation, Javed Khan, confirmed the development and assured that all necessary arrangements would be made once new dates are finalized.

74-year-old Pakistani welder sets new Guinness World record

Sports Desk



ISLAMABAD: A 74-year-old Pakistani welder, Naseemuddin, has set a new record recognised by Guinness World Records after breaking 38 marble tiles while holding an egg in

his hand. According to details, the achievement has been officially updated on the Guinness World Records website, surpassing the previous record of 30 marble tiles. The challenge required precision and control, as the egg had to remain unbroken during the attempt.

Naseemuddin dedicated his latest achievement to Palestine and the Pakistan Army, describing it as a symbol of his patriotic spirit and determination despite his age.

The new record further strengthens his reputation as one of Pakistan's most persistent and accomplished record holders, demonstrating that age has not limited his ability to perform physically demanding feats.

Petrol Prices Monitoring Committee meeting

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, chairing a meeting of the Committee to Monitor Petrol Prices to review national fuel stocks and global market developments at the Finance Division on Tuesday.



Photo: Spokesman

Cabinet Committee maintains close watch on energy supplies; reviews stocks, global trends

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Committee to Monitor Petrol Prices met on Tuesday to review the energy supply situation and assess developments in global oil and gas markets amid evolving geopolitical conditions.

The meeting of the committee was chaired by Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, according to press release

issued by finance ministry. The Committee undertook a forward-looking assessment of the national petroleum supply outlook, reviewing stock availability of crude oil and refined petroleum products across the energy value chain.

Members were informed that overall inventories remain at comfortable levels, supported by secured import arrangements and ongoing production. Supply lines from import terminals to

refineries, storage installations, and retail outlets were reported to be operating in a stable and orderly manner, ensuring continuity of supply across the country.

Members were also briefed on inbound logistics and maritime operations supporting fuel supplies, noting that cargo inflows continue as scheduled and petrol cargoes for March and now for April have largely been secured, with additional shipments planned to further

strengthen supply buffers.

A detailed review of national stocks and international energy market conditions was presented, highlighting notable movements in global benchmarks. The Committee assessed emerging global price signals and their transmission implications, noting that the government was actively evaluating price divergence between international and domestic markets to support balanced and timely policy calibration.

The meeting was attended by the Federal Minister for Power, Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari; Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research, Rana Tanveer Hussain (virtual); Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs, Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhary (virtual); Minister of State for Finance, Bilal Azhar Kayani, along with federal secretaries and senior officials from relevant ministries, divisions, and regulatory authorities.

Lahore High Court rules wife can demand dowry at any time

Bureau Report

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court clarified on Tuesday that a wife has the legal right to demand her dowry from her husband at any time, regardless of the continuation of the marriage.

Justice Abid Hussain Chatta issued the decision while hearing the petition of Fatima Bibi, declaring the trial court's dismissal of her dowry claim null and void and restoring the Family Court's earlier ruling.

The case involved Fatima Bibi seeking daily expenses, non-payment of maintenance, and the return of her dowry, including five tolas of gold.



While the Family Court had originally ruled in her favour, awarding both monthly

expenses and dowry, the trial court later dismissed the dowry claim.

The Lahore High Court emphasised that if no specific timeline for dowry payment is mentioned in the marriage certificate, the wife retains the right to demand it "whenever" she wishes.

The court reaffirmed that this right is fundamental under the marriage contract and cannot be refused by the husband.

While upholding the trial court's decision on non-maintenance, the High Court partially accepted the petition and fully restored the Family Court's ruling regarding dowry.

Pakistan, Romania, Bahamas explore trilateral cooperation in energy, infrastructure, IT sectors

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan, Romania and the Bahamas on Tuesday explored avenues to enhance trilateral trade and investment cooperation, with a focus on key sectors including energy, infrastructure and information technology.

The discussion took place during a meeting between Atif Farooqi, Advisor and COO of the Pakistan Romania Business Council, and Asad Ur Rehman, Honorary Consul of the Commonwealth of Bahamas in Pakistan.

During the meeting, both sides underscored the importance of strengthening business linkages and facilitating knowledge sharing to unlock new economic opportunities among the three countries. They expressed keen interest in promoting collaboration across diverse sectors to boost trade volumes and investment flows.

Speaking on the occasion, Atif Farooqi highlighted the growing potential for trilateral cooperation, terming the engagement a significant step towards building stronger economic partnerships among Pakistan, Romania, and the Bahamas.

Punjab ensures free TB medicines at patients' doorsteps: CM Punjab



Bureau Report

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif says free medicines are being delivered to tuberculosis (TB) patients at their doorsteps across the province as part of efforts to eliminate the disease.

In her message on World TB Day, the chief minister reaffirms her commitment to continuing the fight against TB, stating that eliminating the disease is essential for a healthy Punjab. She emphasises that timely diagnosis and effective treatment can save lives and calls for

greater public awareness about TB. She says the provincial government is providing free diagnostic and treatment facilities, including medicines and PCR tests, at public hospitals. Under the DOTS strategy, complete treatment is being ensured free of cost at district and tehsil hospitals, while lady health workers are also engaged in active case finding at the household level.

Maryam Nawaz says programmes are underway to deliver free medicines at home for patients suffering from TB, hepatitis and heart diseases. She adds that public participation remains crucial in

achieving the goal of eliminating TB.

The chief minister says special drug-resistant TB (DR-TB) centres are being established in the province for patients who do not respond to standard treatment.

She notes that community health workers, civil society organisations, researchers and private healthcare institutions are playing a supportive role in ensuring timely diagnosis and continuity of treatment.

She reiterates that the Punjab government has prioritised the eradication of TB as part of its broader public health agenda.

GB CM, IT minister meet Shaza Fatima



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan, Justice (R) Yar Muhammad Nasir, and GB Minister for IT Ghulam Abbas on Tuesday met Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Shaza Fatima Khawaja, to discuss progress on Pakistan's digital transformation and regional development initiatives.

During the meeting, Shaza Fatima said the government is actively working on nationwide digital transformation in line with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's "Digital Nation Pakistan" vision.

She said the prime minister is giving special attention to Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Bal-

tistan to ensure their inclusion in the country's digital growth.

Both sides held detailed discussions on the Digital Nation Pakistan initiative, including the preparation and implementation of the National Digital Master Plan.

They agreed to accelerate a comprehensive digitalisation strategy across the country, with a focus on ensuring uniform digital development in all four provinces, as well as Gilgit-Baltistan.

The participants also exchanged views on adopting a coordinated approach to digitalisation across various sectors. The meeting underscored the importance of promoting the digital economy and leveraging modern technologies for sustainable growth.

National CERT flags cyber threats to defence, banking and power systems

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's critical installations face an increased risk of cyberattacks, the National Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT) has warned in a fresh cybersecurity advisory issued on Tuesday, urging institutions to adopt stringent preventive measures to safeguard sensitive systems.

According to the advisory, all public and private sector organisations have been directed to implement a zero trust security model, under which no device or system is considered secure unless fully verified before being connected to networks. Authorities emphasised that strict authentication protocols must be followed to minimise vulnerabilities.

The alert, cited by the TV channel, warned that hostile states could exploit supply chain weaknesses to target key sectors, including power, banking and defence systems. It noted that even minor negligence during the delivery of hardware

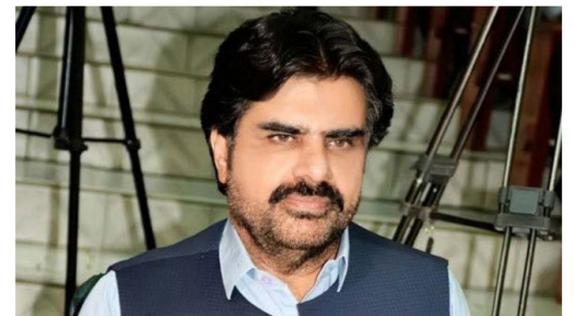
and software could result in major system failures with far-reaching consequences.

Officials highlighted that state-sponsored cyber espionage has advanced significantly, extending into logistics and manufacturing stages. As a result, institutions have been instructed to treat all hardware deliveries as potential security risks and to carry out thorough inspections before deployment.

The advisory also cautioned against the use of unverified software updates, stating that such updates could introduce hidden backdoors into the national digital infrastructure, compromising sensitive data and operational integrity.



Sindh considers smart lockdown as fuel crisis deepens amid Middle East tensions



Bureau Report

KARACHI: Sindh Local Government Minister Nasir Hussain Shah said on Tuesday that the provincial government is considering imposing a smart lockdown as a fuel conservation measure in response to rising global oil pressures linked to ongoing tensions in the Middle East.

Speaking to reporters in Sukkur, the minister stressed that the situation demands extraordinary measures. "The present circumstances are not normal. If the war drags on, everyone will face difficulties," he said, warning of broader economic and logistical challenges.

Shah noted that the government has already reduced petrol consumption for official vehicles by 60 per cent as part of its initial response. He added that daily review meet-

ings are being held to monitor the evolving situation, reflecting what he described as a proactive approach by the provincial administration.

Smart lockdowns, first implemented in Pakistan during the COVID-19 pandemic, involve targeted restrictions in specific areas rather than province-wide shutdowns. Under this system, movement is limited in designated neighbourhoods, gatherings are restricted, and only essential activities are permitted under strict monitoring.

In areas placed under such restrictions, no more than four individuals can gather at a time, while only one member per household is allowed to leave home with a valid reason. Public events, social gatherings, and celebrations are banned, and affected localities may be sealed to control movement.