



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ
پی کریم صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے فرمایا ہے کہ جس نے میری سنتوں کو اپنایا وہ میری امت ہے اور جس نے ان سے انحراف کیا وہ میری امت نہیں ہے۔
Barkat Rice Mills (Pvt) Limited



PM congratulates Balen Shah on assuming office as Nepal's Prime Minister

"Pakistan deeply values its longstanding and friendly relations with Nepal and looks forward to working closely with Your Excellency to further strengthen bilateral cooperation and advance our shared goals of regional peace, stability, and prosperity," the prime minister said in a post on X.



Iranian military says 800 US troops killed, 17 bases destroyed

An Iranian military spokesman claimed significant casualties and damage inflicted on US and Israeli forces since the start of the ongoing conflict. The spokesman said 800 American soldiers have been killed and 5,000 injured, while 1,321 Israeli troops have also lost their lives. The spokesman said that 17 US military bases have been destroyed and described the relocation of US personnel to hotels as a humiliating retreat.

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Israeli occupation forces prevent worshippers

Israeli occupation forces prevent worshippers from performing Friday prayers on Salah Al-Din Street in occupied Jerusalem after barring them from reaching the Al-Aqsa Mosque, which has been closed since the start of the war on Iran.



Photo: WAFA

DPM, UN Secretary General exchange views on evolving situation in West Asia



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar Friday spoke with Secretary-General of the United Nations, António Guterres and exchanged views on the evolving situation in West Asia and its implications for international peace and security.

In a post on X, he said, "I underscored that the UN

remains indispensable to conflict prevention and resolution, and reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering commitment to diplomacy and dialogue as the only viable path to sustainable peace."

"The Secretary General expressed appreciation and extended his full support for Pakistan's ongoing diplomatic efforts in pursuit of peace and stability in the region," he added.

Petrol prices unchanged, govt absorbs Rs56bn burden

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has decided to keep petrol prices unchanged, with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif announcing that the state will bear an additional burden of Rs56 billion to shield consumers.

In a televised address to the nation on Friday, the prime minister said he had rejected a proposal to significantly increase fuel prices.

He revealed that petrol could have surged to Rs544 per litre but is being maintained at Rs322,

while diesel, estimated to reach Rs790 per litre, will continue to be provided at Rs335.

PM Shehbaz said he was addressing the nation at a time when Pakistan was navigating challenges on two fronts — safeguarding national interests and actively pursuing peace efforts in the region.

He noted that Pakistan was engaged in diplomatic outreach, including contacts with Iran and Gulf countries, to help de-escalate tensions and prevent a wider conflict in the Muslim world.

Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq



Dar is leading these efforts, while military leadership is also playing a key role in the reconciliation

process.

He disclosed that a fresh summary had proposed an

increase of Rs95 per litre for petrol and Rs203 per litre for diesel, which he rejected to avoid further burdening the public.

"Every litre of fuel reflects the government's sense of responsibility and economic discipline," the prime minister said, adding that relief measures were aimed at protecting citizens from global price shocks.

Officials say the decision underscores the government's attempt to balance fiscal pressures with public relief, as Pakistan continues to navigate economic challenges and regional uncertainties.

Iran Rejects U. S. Claims About Its Nuclear Program, Calling Them "Big Lies"

Iran News

TEHRAN: Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei responded to statements by U. S. officials and Western media outlets on his official account on the social media platform X (social media platform).

Baghaei wrote that professional liars specialize in creating "false realities," adding that repeating a lie often enough can make it appear like the truth. He referenced the historical propaganda principle attributed to Joseph Goebbels, the Nazi-era German Minister of Information and advisor to



Adolf Hitler, stating that the slogan "repeat a lie until it appears true" was widely used in propaganda.

He further stated that this principle is now systematically employed by the U. S.

government and its "war-mongering circles," particularly the "genocidal regime of Israel," to promote what he described as a malicious campaign of spreading false information against the Iranian nation.

The spokesman emphasized that claims concerning Iran's nuclear program, alleged intercontinental ballistic missiles, and the number of casualties during the January unrest were nothing but repeated major falsehoods. He urged the public not to be deceived by such allegations. The remarks came after U. S. President Donald Trump, in his first official address titled "State of the

Union" during his second presidential term, reiterated criticism of Iran.

Trump claimed that Iran had developed missiles that could threaten Europe and eventually the United States. He also said that following what he called the "Midnight Hammer Operation," Iran allegedly received warnings not to develop nuclear weapons or missiles, though he claimed Tehran continued such activities.

The U. S. president further alleged that Iran was seeking to rebuild its nuclear program and pursuing "sinister goals." Iran has consistently rejected such accusations.

Pakistan acting as intermediary in US-Iran negotiations, confirms Witkoff

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: US Special Envoy for Middle East Steve Witkoff has confirmed that a 15-point peace plan was shared with Iran through Pakistan, with early talks positive but nuclear disputes unresolved.

Steve Witkoff, serving as a special envoy under President Donald Trump, revealed that the United States has been engaging Iran through indirect diplomatic efforts, with Pakistan acting as a mediator. "There are signs that Tehran was interested in making a deal," he added.

During a Cabinet meeting at the White House, Witkoff said that a



15-point proposal outlining a potential peace framework has been delivered through Pakistan's government. He noted that the plan is intended to guide negotiations toward a resolution.

Pakistan's Foreign Minister, Ishaq Dar, also acknowledged his country's

role in facilitating communication between the two sides. In a social media post, he said the proposal is currently "being deliberated upon by Iran."

Witkoff described the early exchanges around the framework as encouraging, mentioning "strong and positive messaging and talks," but avoided discussing the details due to the sensitive nature of the negotiations.

According to senior officials from the Trump administration, efforts are underway, led in part by Vice-President JD Vance, to organize a meeting in Pakistan this weekend. The goal of the talks would be to explore options for de-escalation and a potential resolution to the conflict involving Iran.

Agencies

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has officially declared Jirak in Panjgur district as a regular border crossing with Iran on Friday, allowing the movement of passengers and commercial goods, according to a notification from the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR).

The notification added serial number 26 to the schedule of SRO 102(1)/83 by amending the SRO of 1983. Officials said the decision has been implemented immediately and is expected to facilitate travel, improve trade, and promote commercial activity in border areas.

The Jirak border crossing will now operate regularly, providing a formal route for both passenger travel and commercial transport between Pakistan and Iran.

Pakistan opens Jirak as regular Pak-Iran border crossing

WAFA

JERUSALEM: Israeli occupation authorities on Friday prevented Palestinians from performing Friday prayers at Al-Aqsa Mosque in occupied Jerusalem, which has been completely closed since February 28, citing a state of emergency linked to the Israeli-US war on Iran.

Israeli police maintained their blockade of the mosque's gates, deploying forces around the Old City and preventing worshippers from entering. Since the start of the closure, prayers inside Al-Aqsa have been limited to mosque guards and staff from the Islamic

Waqf Department.

The occupation has also closed the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, one of the most important Christian holy sites worldwide. Eyewitnesses reported that police blocked Palestinians from praying in streets near the Old City walls, including Salah al-Din Street.

Two days ago, the Israeli government extended the state of emergency until mid-April, without clarifying whether the mosque will remain closed for that period.

Despite condemnations from Arab and Islamic countries, Israeli authorities have refused to reopen the mosque to worshippers.

Muzaffarabad rallies against sentences for Kashmiri Hurriyat leaders

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: A major protest demonstration and rally was held in Muzaffarabad against the sentences handed down to the Hurriyat leadership, especially women leaders, in occupied Jammu and Kashmir, in which a large number of citizens, social and political activists, and refugees, including women, participated enthusiastically. The rally was led by Convener All Parties Hurriyat Conference Ghulam Muhammad Safi, Spokesperson Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Shaukat Javed Mir, Ghulam Hassan Butt Permanent Member Refugee Representative Forum, Advocate Pervaiz Shah,

Former Convener Mahmood Ahmed Saghar and Samia Sajid President Muslim Conference Women's Wing Mushtaqul Islam, Abdul Majeed Mir Zahid Safi, Zahid Ashraf, Sheikh Abdul Majeed Zonal Member Refugee Representative Forum Maqsood Ahmed Butt, Intiaz Ahmed Butt, Syed Sadiq Hussain Naqvi, Program Coordinator Muhammad Siddiq Dawood, Project Advisor Nishad Butt, Representatives of Refugee Representative Forum Maqsood Kiani, Abdul Hamid



Lone, Qasim Mughal, Altaf Hussain Mir Chaudhry Ismail, Muhammad Alam Mughal, Shah Zaman Tantray, Muhammad Maqsood Mughal Zameer Ahmed Naz, Tanzeer Iqbal, Muhammad Shabbir Kashmiri Assistant Spokesperson Refugee Represent-

ative Forum Chairman Caravan Azadi Aamir Abbasi and others. The protesters carried banners and placards with slogans against human rights violations in occupied Kashmir and the sentences handed down to the Hurriyat leader-

ship. The participants shouted strong slogans against India and rejected the sentences handed down to Asiya Andrabi, Fehmida Sufi and Nahida Nasreen, calling them a clear violation of the basic requirements of justice and international human rights.

Kashmiri Leaders Condemn Indian Court's Harsh Sentences for Dukhtar-e-Millat Figures



Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: A joint press conference was held at the Central Press House, Muzaffarabad, in collaboration with the All Parties Hurriyat Conference and the Refugee Representative Forum 1989, against the Indian judiciary's sentencing of three death sentences and thirty and thirty years imprisonment respectively to the leaders of the Dukhtar-e-Millat Jammu and Kashmir, Ms. Asiya Andrabi, Naheed Nasreen and Fehmida Sufi.

The press conference was attended by Convener All Parties Hurriyat Conference Mr. Ghulam Muhammad Safi, former Convener Mahmood Ahmed Saghar, Spokesperson of the Azad Kashmir Government Shaukat Javed Mir, Secretary General Pervaiz Ahmed Shah

Ghulam Hassan Butt, Leader of the Refugee Representative Forum Ms. Sumiya Sajid, Leader of the Muslim Conference Sheikh Abdul Majeed, Mushtaqul Islam, Abdul Majeed Mir, Zahid Safi, Nishad Butt, Aamir Abbasi (Chairman of Karwan-e-Azadi), Muhammad Shabbir Kashmiri (Deputy Spokesperson of the Refugee Representative Forum), Zahid Ashraf, Altaf Hussain Mir, Advisor of the Refugee Representative Forum Zameer Ahmed Naz, KRDF and Mujahid Akhtar Butt, Hurriyat leaders and various political and social figures.

Sardar Attique welcomes new entrants to Muslim Conference, highlights freedom movement

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD/DHIRKOT: President of All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan said that the Muslim Conference is struggling vigorously for the freedom movement and the completion of Pakistan.



At present, the Kashmiri people are fighting the war for the completion of Pakistan and millions of Kashmiris have sacrificed their lives to achieve this goal and the time is not far when the sacrifices made by the Kashmiris will bear fruit and the blood of the martyrs will not go in vain.

The Muslim Conference will continue to support the Kashmiris with full support. He expressed these views at Mujahid e Awwal House Ghaziabad.

He congratulated PPP leaders Syed Ijaz Hussain Shah Chinat, Sardar Khalid Khalil and Sardar Abdullah Khalil along with their families, while Raja Shafiq Shah Advocate from Union Council Choor for leaving the Muslim League-N and joining the Muslim Conference by wearing a garland. On this occasion, Major Sardar Nasrullah Khan, President Union Council Raja Ashiq Khan, Syed Mumtaz Hussain Shah, Sardar Ayub Khan, Sardar Ashfaq Khan, Raja Amir Nawaz, Akbar Hussain, Sardar Shafiqat Ali Babar, Sardar Nazakat Ali Babar, Syed Saqib Mumtaz and others were also present.

The President of the Muslim Conference welcomed the new members and assured them that they would be given a rightful place in the party. The Muslim Conference is playing its role to address the deprivations of the workers.

Azad Kashmir Leader Denounces India Over Jama Masjid Lock and Sentences

Bureau Report



RAWALPIND: Secretary General of the Muslim Conference and former Acting President of Azad Kashmir, Ms. Mehruunnisa, strongly condemned India's locking of the Jama Masjid on Friday and said that neither Muslims are being allowed to worship nor the freedom of occupied Kashmir. People of all religions are free to worship in their places of worship all over the world, but India's heinous intentions are among the worst examples in the world. Nowhere in the world have Muslims harmed anyone under the guise of prayer. Then India's panic is just a blind use of force. She expressed these views yesterday while strongly condemning India's locking of the Jama Masjid on Friday and the court's decision to sentence innocent women Asia Andrabi, Fehmida Sufi, and Nahida Nasreen to life imprisonment. She said that India is second to none in brutality. India is a so-called democratic country, and the mistreatment meted out to minorities living in it is extremely inappropriate and violent. Yes, India should know that soon Kashmiris will get freedom and come together to offer prayers in the Jama Masjid of Srinagar.

Clay pots

RAWALPINDI: A vendor is displayed clay pots on his handcart attraction for costumers alongside a road in the city.



Photo: Online

Pakistan steps up as key mediator in US-Iran tensions: Masood Khan

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador Masood Khan, former President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and former Ambassador of Pakistan to the United States, China, and Permanent Representative to the United Nations, has underscored Pakistan's growing role as a credible and effective mediator in the escalating tensions between the United States and Iran.

Speaking in an interview on the evolving regional situation, Amba-



sador Khan emphasized that Pakistan's diplomatic strength lies in its balanced and trusted relations with both Washington and Tehran, as well as its deep-rooted engagement with Gulf countries.

He noted that this unique positioning enables Islamabad to act as a reliable conduit for sensitive and high-stakes diplomacy. "Pakistan is not merely a back-channel facilitator; it is emerging as a lead

mediator with proven credibility," he stated.

Highlighting Pakistan's track record, Ambassador Khan recalled its constructive role in facilitating communication during the U. S.-Taliban negotiations and its contribution to rapprochement efforts between Saudi Arabia and Iran. He further noted that Pakistan's role in transmitting sensitive diplomatic messages during previous crises was acknowledged at the highest levels in Washington, reinforcing its credentials as an effective interlocutor.

Asiya Andrabi: The Iron Lady of Kashmir's Resistance

Mushtaq Ahmad Butt

The Kashmir freedom movement represents a multidimensional struggle in which political insight, ideological conviction, social awareness, and spiritual resilience are deeply intertwined. Within this movement, certain individuals transcend conventional roles and emerge as enduring symbols of resistance. Asiya Andrabi stands among these distinguished figures—aptly referred to as the "Iron Lady" for her extraordinary steadfastness, intellectual clarity, and fearless articulation of her beliefs.

To perceive Asiya Andrabi merely as a political activist would be to underestimate the breadth and depth of her influence. She embodies multiple roles simultaneously: an ideological leader, a social reformer, a proponent of reli-

gious consciousness, and the founder of an organized movement. Her struggle reflects a coherent and integrated worldview in which faith, identity, and the aspiration for freedom are inseparably linked.

With a profound understanding of the realities in the Kashmir Valley, Andrabi has consistently maintained that the Kashmir issue is not merely a political dispute, but a matter deeply rooted in civilizational identity, religious conviction, and fundamental human rights. Guided by this perspective, she has fearlessly raised her voice against Indian control over Kashmir, framing the resistance as principled, sustained, and ideologically grounded. Central to her political thought is the assertion that the State of Jammu and Kashmir is, by natural, historical, and ideological dimensions, aligned with Pakistan—a stance that has provided clear direction and consistency to her



struggle.

A significant dimension of Asiya Andrabi's work lies in her role as a religious scholar and social mobilizer among women. She has played a pivotal role in fostering Islamic awareness, moral consciousness, and a sense of collective responsibility among Kashmiri women. Her efforts have strengthened the understanding of Islamic principles, identity, and societal obligations, emphasizing that a truly empowered society is shaped not only by political liberation but also by intellectual and

spiritual development.

Recognizing the need for an organized platform, she founded Dukhtar-e-Millat, a movement aimed at promoting religious awareness, preserving Islamic values, and mobilizing women within the broader framework of the Kashmir freedom struggle. Under her leadership, the organization transformed women into a cohesive and active force—demonstrating that women are not merely supporters in any movement, but are fully capable of assuming leadership roles and shaping its direction.

One of the defining features of Andrabi's leadership is her unwavering adherence to principle. She has consistently refused to yield under pressure, despite repeated arrests, prolonged detentions, and the hardships of imprisonment. This unflinching resilience is precisely what justifies her recognition as the "Iron Lady."

Her personal life further reinforces the depth of her commitment. Her husband, Muhammad Qasim Faktoo, has spent decades in Indian prisons, serving a life sentence in connection with the struggle for the right to self-determination. The sustained sacrifices of both individuals within the same family underscore that this movement is not merely political rhetoric, but a profound expression of ideological commitment and personal sacrifice.

At the international level, Asiya Andrabi's struggle carries significant relevance. She frames the Kashmir issue within the universally recognized principle of the right to self-determination, consistently reminding the global community of its own declared standards and obligations. Her narrative is grounded in moral and legal arguments, appealing directly to the conscience of the international community.

A comprehensive analysis of her personality reveals several defining elements: unwavering ideological commitment, fearless leadership, religious and social reform, organizational acumen, and persistent resistance. These attributes collectively position her as a remarkable and historically significant figure.

Asiya Andrabi's life represents a luminous chapter in the Kashmir freedom movement—where faith, determination, resilience, and sacrifice converge. She is not merely a political leader, but a representative of a broader ideological and spiritual struggle. Her legacy conveys a powerful message for future generations:

When conviction is clear, faith is strong, and the cause is just, no force can break the resolve of a determined people.

The writer is Secretary Information, All Parties Hurriyat Conference

Islamabad
30° - 38° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings
Fajr 4:39 am
Zohr 12:13 pm
Asr 4:39 pm
Maghrib 6:24 pm
Isha 7:48 pm

EMERGENCY

Rescue (Police) 15
Bomb Disposal 15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/
Islamabad 1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance 1122 &
& Rescue Services 4451122
Motorway Police 9266044
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

CMH 561111
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 921334-43
CDA 9208301-04
Met Office 9250360-6
RDA 5555864
TMA 5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3
Islamabad Metropolitan
Corporation 9209224
Potohar Town 9209224
Rawal Town 5773343

COMPLAINTS

Water Tanker Service
E-7, F-10 & F-11 9204654
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8, 9203883
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8 9266316
Wapda Islamabad 9217579-80
Sui Gas Complaint 119, 9272249

COMSATS Tops Pakistan in Mathematics in QS Subject Rankings 2026

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: COMSATS University Islamabad has been ranked first in Pakistan in Mathematics (global rank 111) and secured placements across multiple disciplines in the QS World University Rankings by Subject 2026.

The university is ranked globally in several subject areas, including Engineering & Technology (221), Computer Science (180), Economics (201-250), Physics (251-300), Environmental Sciences (301-350), and Accounting & Finance (301-375).

In Economics, COMSATS shares the 201-250 band with Lahore University of Management Sciences, while in Environmental Sciences it appears in the same range as National University of Sciences and Technology and Quaid-i-Azam University.

Rector CUI, Prof. Dr. Raheel Qamar said that "Achieving top national position in Mathematics and maintaining visibility across multiple disciplines reflects a deliberate shift towards high-impact research and measurable academic performance. Our focus is not only on rankings, but on building depth in core scientific areas where Pakistan can compete globally."

CM Punjab Highlights Role of Theatre in Promoting Culture and Peace on World Theatre Day

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif, in her special message on World Theatre Day, stated that the Punjab government is actively promoting cultural exchange and encouraging theatre artists across the province. She emphasized that initiatives are underway for the revival of theatre, along with ensuring the welfare and financial security of artists.

She noted that the purpose of World Theatre Day is to highlight the importance of theatre, its artistic contributions, and its role in bringing about social change through live performances. Referring to the 2026 theme, "Theatre and a Culture of Peace," she underscored the role of theatre in promoting peace and harmony in society.

Maryam Nawaz Sharif extended congratulations to theatre artists and enthusiasts, and shared that an Artist Support Fund has been established to



assist deserving individuals, with financial aid planned for 1,831 artists. She added that the upgradation of theatre halls across Punjab is underway to equip them with modern facilities. She remarked that theatre is not merely a source of entertainment but a reflection of society, capable of fostering social reform and positive thinking. She concluded that theatre serves as a powerful medium for self-awareness and imagination, where ideas come to life on stage.

Beautiful view

ISLAMABAD: Commuters on their way at Faisal Avenue during sunny day, in the Federal Capital.

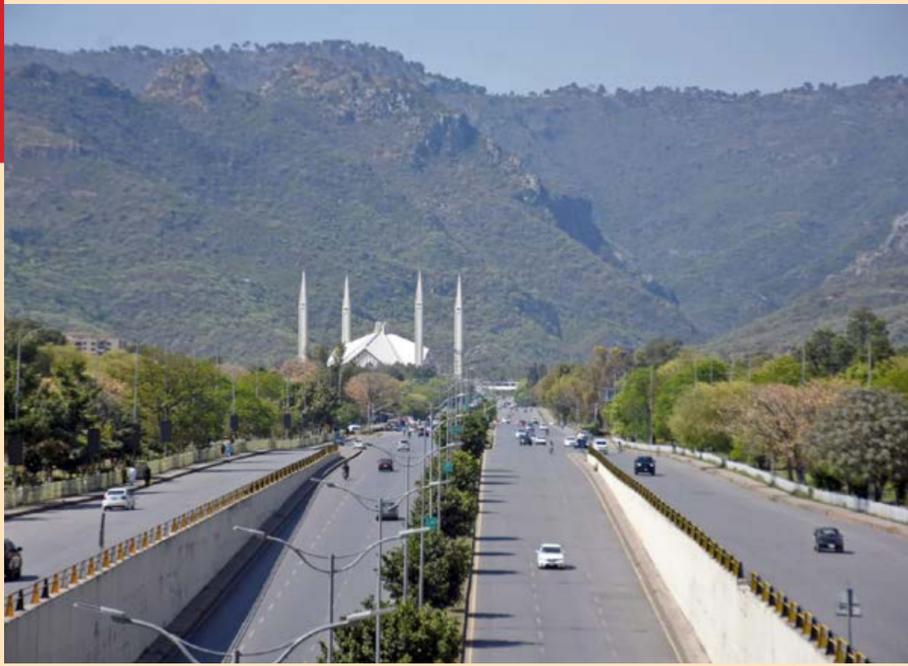


Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Federal Minister Tarar met With Newly Elected President of the High Court Bar Association Multan

Iram Asim

MULTAN: Federal Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazir Tard, while meeting the newly elected President of the High Court Bar Association Multan, Chaudhry Umar Hayat, General Secretary Fayyaz Hussain Khan Leghari and Member Executive Chaudhry Waqas Anjum Gujjar, congratulated them on their success and prayed for their continued service to the lawyers and the bar.

The newly elected President of the High Court Bar Association Multan, Chaudhry Umar Hayat, General Secretary Fayyaz Hussain Khan Leghari and Member Executive Chaudhry Waqas Anjum Gujjar apprised Federal Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazir Tard



about the financial issues of the Multan Bar and other issues and invited him to address the lawyers at the High Court Bar Multan.

DC Mela secures 7th position in Punjab Performance Rankings

Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: According to the Punjab Government's Performance Report for February 2026, Deputy Commissioner Toba Tek Singh Umar Abbas Mela has demonstrated outstanding performance by securing the 7th position across Punjab, earning a prominent place among the top ten districts. This achievement reflects excellence in governance, service delivery and administrative affairs, indicating that public services and government initiatives are being effectively implemented in the district. As per the report, Toba Tek Singh achieved a score of 90.34, which is considered a remarkable accomplishment. The performance of the district administration is being widely appreciated at the provincial level.



Under the leadership of Deputy Commissioner Umar Abbas Mela, significant progress has been made in development projects, sanitation, provision of public facilities and overall administrative improvements. His effective strategy, people-friendly policies and tireless efforts have played a key role in elevating the district's standing.

Citizens have described Umar Abbas Mela as a dynamic, capable and proactive officer who remains committed to resolving public issues. Under his leadership, the district administration is not only active but also ensures prompt redressal of public complaints.

PSCA's Advanced AI-Powered Technology Apprehends Organized Robbery Gang in Lahore

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab Safe Cities Authority (PSCA) by utilizing its advanced AI-based surveillance technology, has successfully facilitated arrest of an organized robbery gang involved in multiple street crime incidents across the city. The accused were wanted by police for their involvement in snatching mobile phones and cash from citizens in various areas of Lahore. The gang primarily operated along Main Canal Road and adjoining localities, using 125cc motorcycles to carry out their criminal activities. Cases against the suspects had been registered in several police stations, including Kot Lakhpat, Defence-A, Harbanspura, Garden Town, Shadman, and other areas.

According to PSCA's spokesperson, upon receiving information, Virtual Patrolling Officer at PSCA promptly tracked movement of the suspects through safe city's surveillance cameras. With the assistance of advanced AI and facial recognition technology, identification of suspects and route mapping were completed effectively. Based on the intelligence report provided by Safe City, the police conducted a successful operation and apprehended the culprits.

Rising Star CC moved into Final of S. M. Adil Zone-IV Inter Club Cricket Tournament



Sports Desk

KARACHI: Rising Star Cricket Club moved into Semi Final of the S. M. Adil Zone-IV Inter Club Cricket Tournament after beating Steel Town Gymkhana by 7 Wickets at Landhi Gymkhana Ground. The tournament is being organized by Regional Cricket Association Karachi Zone IV.

The highlights of the days play was brilliant Batting by Muhammad Maaz Unbeaten 84, Akhtar Ali 69, Musa Azad 60, Afnan Khan 55 and deadly bowling by Medium Pacer Muhammad Sarim 4/38.

Scores in Brief:
Rising Star Cricket club defeated Steel Town Gymkhana by 7 Wickets at Landhi Gymkhana Ground. Steel Town Gymkhana 224 all-out in 38 overs. Akhtar Ali 69 6x4, Tahir Aman 46 6x4 1x6, Naeem Bux 20, Muhammad Arsalan 20. Muhammad Sarim (mf) 4/38, Muhammad Maaz (ob) 2/33.

In reply Rising Star Cricket Club 226/3 in 30.4 overs. Muhammad Maaz 84 12x4, Musa Azad 60 6x4 2x4, Afnan Khan 55 6x4 2x6, Hanif Azad 10 not out.

After the end of the Match M. Touseef Siddiqui, Acting Secretary RCA Karachi give the Man of the Match Award to Muhammad Maaz of Rising Star Cricket Club

Dr. Tariq Fazal praises PM for rejecting fuel price hike

ISLAMABAD, MAR 27 (APP): Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Tariq Fazal Chaudhry on Friday praised the Prime Minister for rejecting a proposal to sharply increase petroleum prices, calling it a major relief for the public.

In a statement on X, he said the summary had proposed raising petrol prices by Rs95 per litre and diesel by Rs203 per litre. However, the prime minister turned down the proposal, making it clear that the government would not put further burden on people already facing inflation.

He said the government will instead absorb the financial impact, estimated at Rs56 billion.

Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry said the decision reflects a pro-people approach and shows the government's seriousness in dealing with the current economic situation.

He termed it a positive step to provide relief to the masses.

He also appreciated the government's economic team, saying they are taking difficult decisions to stabilised the economy despite tough conditions.

The minister added that the government stands with the people and is taking practical steps to reduce their hardships.

Traffic Awareness Lectures held in mosques under CM Maryam Nawaz's 'Safe Punjab' Vision

Zain Khan Malghani

MULTAN: Under the "Safe Punjab" vision of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, a series of traffic awareness lectures is being actively conducted in mosques across the province. In this regard, City Traffic Police Multan organized special sessions after Friday prayers, addressing worshippers and religious scholars.

During these sessions, participants were urged to strictly follow traffic rules and regulations. Religious scholars were requested to incorporate road safety messages into their Friday sermons, emphasizing the importance of adherence to government policies aimed at ensuring safer roads. The scholars assured full



cooperation with the ongoing "Safe Punjab" campaign and pledged to play their role in spreading awareness among the public.

In addition, dedicated lectures were delivered to madrasa students, highlighting the significance of road safety

laws and the consequences of violating them. Students were educated about responsible road behavior, whether as pedestrians or commuters.

This initiative reflects a commendable effort by both the City Traffic Police Multan and the Punjab govern-

ment. The Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) has demonstrated exemplary leadership in effectively communicating government policies to the public and ensuring their implementation.

Madrasa students, being an important segment of society, frequently use roads either on foot or through transport. Equipping them with proper knowledge of road etiquette is essential so they can guide their families and communities responsibly.

The efforts of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz in promoting public safety and awareness are widely appreciated as a positive step toward building a safer and more disciplined society. The lecture was delivered by Inspector Senior Warden Sohail.

Group Chairman/Chief Editor: **Almass Ayoub Sabir**
 Vice Chairman: **Asim Nazir Ahmad**
 Editor: **Naveed Ahmad Khan**
 Head Editorial Advisory Board: **Amjad Mehmood**
 Bureau Chief Karachi: **Khurram Jaffrani**
 (jaffrani@adpluse.pk)
Syed Afraz Ali Nazish
 (afrazalishah@gmail.com)
 Bureau Chief Lahore: **Syed Afraz Ali Nazish**
 (afrazalishah@gmail.com)
Head Office: AIMS Building, Street No. 4, H-8/1, Islamabad.
 spokesmanislamabad@gmail.com
Phone: +92 51 2227123,
WhatsApp +92 346 5008408
Karachi office: A111, Block C, Gulsha-e-Jamal, PRECHS,
 Karachi Phone: 021-33399390
 Email: spokesmankarachi@gmail.com
Lahore Office: 7-E, Samanberg, Johar Town.
 spokesmanlahore@gmail.com
 Daily The Spokesman available only on annual subscription

Power, Pause, and Pivot: A War Rewritten

The clock has been reset, but the tension has not. In a dramatic turn of events, Donald Trump has extended the deadline for potential U. S. strikes on Iran's energy infrastructure to April 6, 2026, granting a critical 10-day window for diplomacy to prevail over destruction. What was initially framed as a five-day tactical pause has now evolved into a high-stakes diplomatic interlude—one that may determine whether the region descends into a broader war or steps back from the brink.

At the center of this unfolding drama stands an unlikely but increasingly pivotal actor: Pakistan. Quietly but assertively, Pakistan has emerged as a key mediator between Washington and Tehran, joined by regional players such as Egypt and Turkey. Their mission is as delicate as it is urgent—bring two deeply mistrustful adversaries to the negotiating table before military escalation becomes irreversible.

The extension itself did not come in a vacuum. It followed signals—subtle yet significant—that Iran may be willing to explore an “off-ramp” from the conflict. According to U. S. envoy Steve Witkoff, a 15-point framework has been conveyed to Tehran through backchannels, outlining a possible pathway toward de-escalation. While Iranian officials have publicly maintained a posture of defiance, behind the scenes there are indications of cautious engagement. The hesitation, however, is rooted in history. Tehran's leadership remains deeply skeptical, fearing that diplomacy could once again be used as a prelude to military action—a pattern they believe has repeated itself in past engagements.

Pakistan's role has not been limited to facilitating dialogue. In a move that underscores both the fragility and importance of ongoing talks, Islamabad reportedly urged Washington to restrain Israel from targeting Iran's foreign minister. The reasoning was stark and pragmatic: eliminate the diplomatic channel, and negotiations collapse instantly. This intervention reflects Pakistan's growing stature as a stabilizing force—one capable of understanding both the military calculus and the diplomatic necessity of preserving interlocutors during wartime.

Simultaneously, a curious and controversial narrative has emerged from Washington. President Trump hinted at receiving a “precious gift” from Iran—later described as oil shipments allegedly en route to the United States under a Pakistani flag. While this claim remains unverified, its strategic implication is profound. If true, it could signal a covert willingness by Iran to soften its stance and engage economically even as public rhetoric remains uncompromising. Whether symbolic or substantive, such gestures suggest that beneath the surface hostility lies a complex web of negotiation, signaling, and strategic ambiguity.

Markets, as always, have reacted swiftly. The announcement of the deadline extension came minutes after a sharp downturn in global equities, highlighting the deep interconnection between geopolitics and financial stability. Oil prices, already volatile, hovered above \$100 per barrel amid fears surrounding the Strait of Hormuz—through which nearly one-fifth of the world's oil supply flows. Any disruption here reverberates instantly across global markets. Ironically, while supply remains abundant due to sanctions relief on Russian and Iranian exports, much of it is effectively “trapped” by insecurity in transit routes. This paradox—plenty of oil but constrained delivery—has created a market environment driven more by fear than fundamentals.

Iran's doctrine of asymmetric warfare is designed precisely to neutralize such scenarios. Even if American forces were to physically occupy Kharg Island or secure maritime dominance over Hormuz, those positions would remain under constant threat. Iran possesses thousands of short-range missiles, loitering munitions, and cost-effective drones—many reportedly concealed in hardened underground facilities, dispersed across vast terrain, and engineered for survivability against even the most advanced bunker-busting munitions. These systems do not require air superiority or naval parity; they rely on saturation, precision, and persistence.

In such an environment, any occupying force would face a relentless cycle of attrition. Fixed installations on Kharg Island could be repeatedly targeted, supply lines disrupted, and naval assets harassed by swarms of unmanned systems. Commercial shipping—particularly vulnerable oil tankers—would remain exposed, making sustained control of the waterway economically and militarily burdensome. The very objective of securing energy flow could be undermined by the continuous threat environment created by these decentralized strike capabilities.

This explains a paradox observed throughout the conflict: despite repeated claims by the United States and Israel of degrading Iran's missile and drone infrastructure, Iran continues to respond with sustained intensity and operational reach. The resilience lies not in singular high-value assets, but in the distributed nature of its arsenal—difficult to locate, harder to eliminate, and capable of rapid regeneration.

The implications are far-reaching. In this emerging paradigm, power is no longer defined solely by the size of fleets or the sophistication of aircraft, but by the accuracy, scalability, and survivability of missile systems and autonomous platforms. Even heavily defended naval assets become vulnerable when confronted with swarms of low-cost, high-precision projectiles. This reality has reportedly forced U. S. naval deployments to maintain greater distances from contested zones, altering long-standing doctrines of forward presence and deterrence.



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

The conflict also echoes lessons observed in regional dynamics involving Pakistan, where advancements in indigenous missile technology have reshaped deterrence equations. Precision, range, and reliability have become the new currency of power, enabling smaller or economically constrained nations to level the strategic playing field against traditionally dominant forces.

What emerges, therefore, is not simply a contest between nations, but between eras. The industrial-age war machine, forged in the crucible of the two World Wars, is confronting a digital-age battlefield defined by speed, precision, and decentralization. In this new landscape, asymmetry is not a weakness—it is an advantage.

In this narrow window of time, the future of not just a conflict, but of warfare itself, hangs in the balance.

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

The Government continues to integrate climate considerations into national planning, including sustainable agriculture, improved water management, renewable energy and the wider transition towards cleaner sources of energy. Efforts are also under way to strengthen environmental resilience in cities and communities across the country.

Several initiatives are already contributing to this effort. The Upscaling Green Pakistan Programme is expanding forest cover while creating employment and supporting local livelihoods. Projects such as Living Indus and Re-charge Pakistan aim to restore ecosystems, improve water management and strengthen resilience to climate-related risks.

I encourage all Pakistanis to switch off non-essential lights for one hour on the evening of 28th March 2026. Let us use that hour to reflect on how we can conserve energy, protect our environment and support efforts that promote sustainable living.

Earth Hour

Earth Hour is observed across the world as a reminder that protecting our planet requires collective action. Pakistan joins this global effort and supports the simple message behind it that each of us has a role in reducing our impact on the environment and using resources responsibly.

The theme this year, “Give an Hour for Earth,” calls on people everywhere to pause for a moment and consider how everyday choices affect the natural world. Switching off lights for one hour is a symbolic step, but it also encourages practical actions in our homes, workplaces and communities that contribute to environmental protection.

As human beings, we need to reflect on whether our ways of living are in balance with the limits of our planet. The pressures we place on natural systems are steadily reducing the space in which life can sustain itself. This calls for a more careful approach to development. Our systems of energy generation and use, patterns of consumption, and agricultural and industrial production must remain within the capacity of the environment to support them.

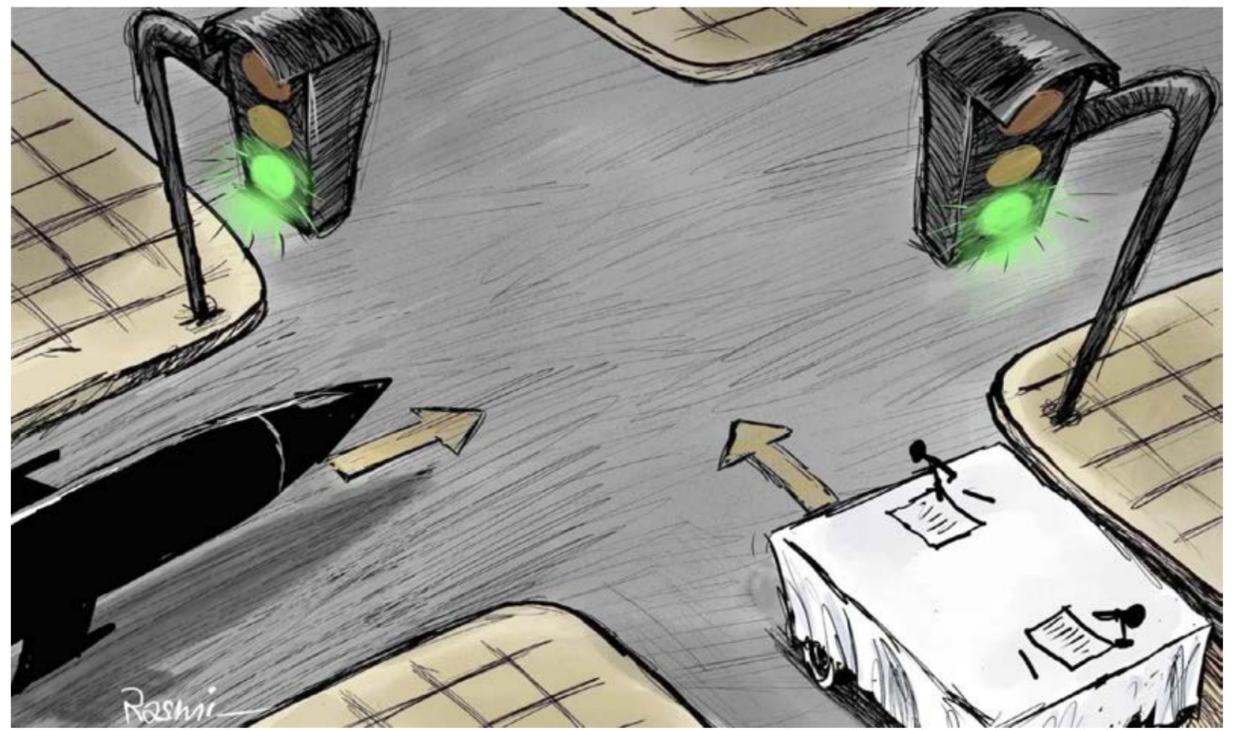
Pakistan's share of global greenhouse gas emissions is less than one per cent, yet we remain among the countries most vulnerable to climate change. Recent floods, recurring heatwaves and periods of drought have shown how serious these challenges have become. Farmers face increasing uncertainty due to changing rainfall patterns that affect crops and livelihoods. In many cities, rising temperatures place additional strain on electricity systems and make daily life more difficult during the summer months. Water availability in several regions has become less predictable, while floods have damaged homes, roads and farmland.

Pakistan remains committed to global climate action and to implementing the goals of the Paris Agreement. Our national policies are focused on climate-resilient development and on supporting international efforts to address climate change and assist vulnerable countries.

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Cartoon by Amjad Rasmī. (Courtesy of Ashraf Al-Awcat)

AJK Connectivity Breakthrough

The long-delayed Rathoa Haryam Bridge—also known as the Mirpur-Islamgarh Bridge—over the Mangla Dam reservoir has finally reached completion after more than two decades marked by planning setbacks, false starts, and prolonged abandonment. This nearly three-kilometre engineering marvel, stretching across one of Pakistan's largest man-made lakes, stands today as a compelling symbol of what purposeful governance can achieve when political resolve overcomes bureaucratic inertia. More than just a physical link between Mirpur city and adjoining towns such as Islamgarh and Chaksuari, it restores a vital human connection severed by the very development that was meant to uplift the region.

The origins of this project trace back to the Mangla Dam Raising Project initiated in the mid-2000s. While the expansion significantly enhanced water storage and power generation capacity, it also submerged existing road networks and displaced thousands of families. Recognising these disruptions, a tripartite agreement between the federal government, the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) government, and Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) included commitments to build compensatory infrastructure—foremost among them, this bridge.

Construction began around 2011 with an estimated cost of Rs1.3–1.4 billion. By 2015, nearly 80 percent of the structure, including approach roads, had been completed. However, the most technically challenging segment—the central span over deep water—remained unfinished. What followed was a prolonged period of stagnation, with the project becoming a classic “white elephant,” emblematic of design revisions, funding shortfalls, and shifting political priorities.

The human cost of this delay was profound. Residents of Mirpur Division were forced to endure detours extending up to 70 kilometres, turning what should have been a 30-minute commute into a three- to four-hour journey. Emergency response times increased, students faced academic disruptions, businesses absorbed higher transportation costs, and families remained physically divided. For a region already coping with the socio-economic consequences of displacement, the absence of this crucial link deepened the sense of neglect.

The revival of this stalled project owes much to the intervention of Ahsan Iqbal, Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives. Taking personal ownership, he embraced the challenge of transforming a stalled initiative into a success story. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, known for his infrastructure-driven governance approach, the necessary approvals and funding were secured.

The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) sanctioned revised allocations, while the Frontier Works Organisation (FWO) was entrusted with executing the remaining work. Using specialised German engineering techniques, pillars were installed into the challenging marshy bed of the reservoir during low water levels. Despite cost escalations—now exceeding Rs9–10 billion due to inflation, redesign complexities, and delays—the project's completion promises returns that far outweigh its financial burden.

Beyond its structural significance, the bridge carries immense socio-economic value. It will drastically reduce travel time, enhance regional connectivity, and integrate Mirpur—often referred to as “Mini-London” due to its large

overseas Kashmiri diaspora—more closely with Kotli district and other parts of AJK. Daily commuters, traders, and tourists alike stand to benefit. The scenic expanse of Mangla Lake, now more accessible, is expected to boost tourism and local commerce.

For overseas Pakistanis, whose remittances significantly contribute to the national economy, improved accessibility strengthens both emotional and economic ties with their homeland. The bridge thus serves not only as an infrastructural link but also as a bridge of belonging.

The project's completion also highlights the development-oriented vision of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government. Under Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, substantial financial packages—including an earlier allocation of Rs22 billion—have been directed toward AJK's uplift. This reflects a consistent policy framework that prioritises infrastructure as a driver of economic dignity and regional equity.

Particular credit is due to Ahsan Iqbal for his sustained commitment and hands-on oversight. Navigating technical, financial, and bureaucratic challenges required not just administrative capability but strategic vision and persistence. His efforts have delivered a tangible and lasting benefit to the people of Mirpur Division and beyond.

In an era where large-scale infrastructure projects are often entangled in political controversy, the successful completion of the Rathoa Haryam Bridge offers a refreshing counter-narrative—one of delivery, determination, and public service.

For the people of AJK, this bridge represents far more than concrete and steel; it is a symbol of renewed connectivity, restored dignity, and collective progress. As Shehbaz Sharif prepares to inaugurate this landmark project, it marks not just the opening of a bridge, but the beginning of a more connected and prosperous future for Azad Jammu and Kashmir.



Analysis

Sardar Abdul Khaliq Wasi

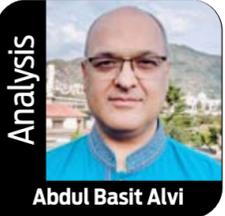
Pakistan Emerges as Key Mediator in US-Iran War Under Sharif-Munir Leadership

The United States–Iran conflict escalated into full-scale war on February 28, 2026, rapidly becoming one of the most dangerous geopolitical crises of the century and drawing in Israel, Gulf monarchies, and other regional actors. It began with a massive coordinated US–Israeli assault—“Operation Epic Fury” and “Operation Roaring Lion”—that targeted Iran's nuclear infrastructure, military leadership, and command centres, killing Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and striking more than 1,250 targets within 48 hours. Instead of forcing Iran's surrender, the attack triggered a sweeping retaliation in which Iran launched sustained missile and drone strikes against US bases across the Gulf, Israeli cities such as Tel Aviv and Haifa, and countries hosting US forces including Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Kuwait, and Bahrain, using advanced missiles like Khoramshahr, Kheibar Shekan, and Qadr variants. The conflict expanded further as Iran struck oil infrastructure and effectively closed the Strait of Hormuz, causing global oil prices to surge by up to 35 percent, while the human toll climbed into the thousands across Iran, Lebanon, Israel, US forces, and civilians throughout the region.

Today, Pakistan finds itself in an unprecedented global spotlight, not as a country beset by internal challenges or regional complexities, but as a strong, confident, and respected nation whose voice in international affairs carries genuine weight and importance. The transformation has been swift and dramatic:

Pakistan, which before the crisis was often viewed through the narrow lens of its economic difficulties and security challenges, has now emerged as an indispensable player in one of the world's most dangerous conflicts, a country whose leaders are on the phone with the American president and the Iranian president simultaneously, shuttling proposals and building the architecture for a potential peace agreement. This elevation of Pakistan's global standing is directly attributable to the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Asim Munir, whose coordinated, complementary approach has demonstrated

that Pakistan can speak with one voice on matters of international importance. The Prime Minister has provided the political vision and diplomatic persistence, engaging tirelessly with the Iranian leadership and articulating Pakistan's principled position on the world stage, while the Field Marshal has provided the strategic depth and personal relationships with American leadership that give Pakistan's mediation its credibility and its weight. Together, they have shown the world that Pakistan is not merely a spectator to great power conflicts but an active, capable, and responsible stakeholder in international peace and security, a country that can use its unique position—its relationships with both Washington and Tehran, its experience with conflict and mediation, its geostrategic location at the crossroads of South Asia and the Middle East—to make a genuine difference in resolving crises that threaten the entire world.



Analysis

Abdul Basit Alvi

Continued on Page 7

Altaf Hussain Wani Rallies Diaspora Against Indian Rights Abuses in Kashmir

BARCELONA, SPAIN: Tahreek Kashmir Spain hosted a significant gathering here in Barcelona featuring prominent Kashmiri leader and human rights activist Altaf Hussain Wani. The event, presided over by Muhammad Shafiq Tamsum, President of Tahreek Kashmir Spain, brought together members of the Kashmiri diaspora and local civil society to discuss the deteriorating human rights situation in Indian-occupied Kashmir.

Addressing the assembled audience, both Wani and Tamsum strongly condemned the Indian judicial system for its systematic criminalization of political dissent. They specifically denounced the life imprisonment sentence handed down to Ms. Asiya Andrabi and her associates, noting that the convictions were based merely on their political views and their legitimate demands for rights as enshrined in United Nations Security Council resolutions regarding the people of occupied Kashmir.

The speakers expressed grave concern over the escalating violence perpetrated by Indian state forces, highlighting widespread violations of fundamental human rights and international obligations. They drew particular attention to the misuse of anti-terrorism laws as a tool to suppress legitimate political expression and detain activists without due process.

Altaf Hussain Wani called upon the Kashmiri diaspora community to intensify their efforts in appraising local



communities and civil society organizations about the Kashmir cause. He emphasized the historic and humanitarian significance of the struggle, urging community members to serve as ambas-

sadors for truth and justice in their host countries.

Muhammad Shafiq Tamsum reaffirmed Tahreek Kashmir Spain's commitment to raising international

awareness about the plight of Kashmiris and pledged continued advocacy for a peaceful resolution of the dispute in accordance with UN resolutions and the aspirations of the Kashmiri people.

Shaping the Narrative: The Women Creators on YouTube Redefining Pakistan's Digital Landscape

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's YouTube ecosystem is currently one of the fastest-growing globally. The platform has seen over 1,000 channels surpass the million-subscriber milestone, with international viewership making up more than 60% of the watch time for Pakistani content.

March 2026, in honor of Women's Month, YouTube Pakistan is shifting the spotlight to the women who are serving as vital industry voices. Under the theme "Their Voice. Their Platform. Their Pakistan," the platform is highlighting four distinct creators. These women are doing more than simply growing their channels; they are establishing themselves as definitive voices, shaping industries, and building public interest.

Bridging the Wealth Gap

Focusing on financial literacy and economic education, Mashal Khan has strategically transitioned from a career in fashion and acting to address Pakistan's critical financial awareness gap. She simplifies complex



subjects such as investment, cryptocurrency, and personal finance, into accessible, practical insights for a broad audience. With a strong emphasis on women's financial empowerment, she is enabling greater participation in financial decision-making. In doing so, Mashal Khan is transforming what was once a niche, exclusionary conversation into an inclusive and scalable movement.

Exploring New Horizons

Humna's Gram is one of Pakistan's most trusted voices in everyday fashion, built on honest, on-the-ground market research across Rawal-

pindi's bazaars, malls, and local retailers. Rather than chasing trends, Humna reviews apparel and accessories on price, quality, and design, giving her audience the practical guidance that actually shapes how they shop. Her channel has become an indispensable resource for the budget-conscious Pakistani woman.

Redefining Intellectual Discourse

Minooqtopus is carving out a distinct space in the evolving landscape of public intellectualism on YouTube. In a domain long shaped by male voices, her work stands out for its rigor, depth,

and clarity. Through long form content, she unpacks complex technical, social, and cultural issues with a level of nuance that is both accessible and intellectually grounded. Her rise signals something more significant, that there is a strong appetite for thoughtful, locally relevant analysis, and that women are not just participants in this space – they are shaping its future.

Elevating Consumer Culture

Within the beauty, fashion, and broader consumer culture landscape, Glow Up with Mahnoor has emerged as a leading voice. She has quickly established credibility through transparent, insight-driven reviews of fashion and skincare. Her content not only shapes brand narratives but also materially influences consumer purchasing decisions at scale.

Across categories and distinct voices, the message is clear: Pakistani women are not waiting to be recognized as experts. Instead, they are actively building the audiences that make their expertise undeniable.

Over 200 institutions to participate in China International Education Exhibition Tour 2026

BELJING: More than 200 universities and educational institutions from 26 countries and regions will participate in the China International Education Exhibition Tour 2026, scheduled from April 10 to 20.

According to a press conference held and hosted by the Chinese Service Center for Scholarly Exchange under the Ministry of Education, the event will be staged in the cities of Beijing, Chengdu, Zhengzhou, Wuhan and Shanghai successively, offering students and families direct access to overseas education resources.

Wang Daquan, director of the center, said the exhibition aims to address inadequate information access faced by families considering studying abroad. During the Beijing stop, a series of high-quality sessions covering the entire study-abroad process will be on offer, providing integrated, one-stop information services.

The tour will also reach various universities, helping students better connect with global education opportunities.

The center will also host a range of lectures and provide on-site consultation services, focusing on topics such as employment and entrepreneurship for returning overseas students.

The China Study Abroad Forum 2026 will be held on April 10. An upgraded national employment service platform for overseas returnees will be officially launched at this forum, alongside the opening of a dedicated online spring recruitment program for returnees.

British Council launches global Safeguarding Toolkit

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: School safeguarding is increasingly shaped by fast-moving, hard-to-detect risks amplified online, including peer-on-peer harm, mental health concerns and AI-enabled abuse. In response, the British Council has launched a new global Safeguarding Toolkit, developed with UNICEF support, to help schools strengthen early identification, proportionate action and consistent safeguarding practice.



The scale of the challenge is well evidenced. UNICEF estimates that around 150 million students aged 13-15 report experiencing peer-to-peer violence in or around school globally. UNICEF and the ITU report that one in three internet users worldwide is a child, increasing exposure to exploitation and manipulation online. The World Health Organization estimates that one in seven adolescents lives with a mental health condition—often intersecting with safeguarding concerns in school settings.

Yet the persistent gap is not awareness; it is implementation. Many schools have safeguarding policies, but everyday decision-making can vary. Amanda Ingram, Exams Director at the British Council Pakistan, said: "Safeguarding cannot depend on individual instinct or isolated expertise. It operates in context and community. What can help are clear roles, reliable recording, shared thresholds and consistent routes for escalation—so concerns are recognised early and acted on proportionately. This Toolkit is designed to help translate safeguarding policy into everyday practice."

Almudena Olaguibel, Child Protection Officer at UNICEF Spain, said: "The Safeguarding Toolkit reflects a shared understanding between the British Council and UNICEF that effective protection depends on systems, not improvisation. As safeguarding risks become more complex and less visible, preparation, clarity and shared responsibility across school communities are essential."

Designed as a practical, role-based implementation resource for everyday school use, the Toolkit supports a whole-school approach that reduces reliance on individual judgement. It helps clarify responsibilities, strengthens recording and follow-up, and sets out shared thresholds and escalation routes. It also provides clearer separation between child safeguarding concerns and adult conduct risks, supporting proportionate handling and accountability.

As safeguarding concerns increasingly move between online and offline spaces, the Toolkit is intended to help schools respond more consistently to risks including online grooming, harassment, coercion, impersonation and AI-generated sexual imagery—supporting earlier action before concerns escalate.

The Toolkit will roll out across 2,500+ British Council Partner Schools worldwide, reaching nearly 1.7 million students, and is designed to be adaptable across local legal contexts while supporting consistency across an international network.

Interested audience can download the Starter Kit from the website: Safeguarding Toolkit for Schools

Finvolution Delegation Meets SECP Chairman, Discusses Digital Finance and Financial Inclusion

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Finvolution (China) and its local subsidiary, Finleap Financial Services (Pvt.) Ltd., called on Chairman Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), Dr. Kabir Ahmed Sidhu, to discuss developments in Pakistan's digital financial services sector.

Mr Sun Xiaodong, Head of International Business of Finvolution (China), Ms Bao Zhe, COO Pakistan Market – Finvolution, Mr Ren Houpeng, head of growth and marketing and Sheikh Omer Nasim, CEP Finleap Financials were part of delegation.

The meeting focused on the evolving fintech landscape, regulatory advancements, and opportunities to promote financial inclusion through responsible and technology-driven innovation.

Chairman SECP, Dr. Kabir Ahmed Sidhu, told Chinese investors that Pakistan offers strong opportunities in digital financial services and fintech. He assured full facilitation for foreign investors and said SECP is making the regulatory regime more business-friendly.

He added that mortgage, leasing, and digital finance are key priorities, and fintech is essential for expanding financial inclusion.

The delegation included senior representatives of Finvolution and Finleap Financial Services. Finleap, a SECP-licensed non-banking finance company (NBFC). It operates a digital lending platform "Daira" providing short-term and installment-based credit solutions, and has served a growing customer base across Pakistan.

Finvolution Group's entry into Pakistan's non-banking financial sector is expected to bring significant benefits for consumers by expanding access to formal credit, particularly for underserved and unbanked segments. Its technology-driven lending model enables faster, more convenient, and transparent loan processing, helping reduce reliance on informal and unregulated sources of borrowing. The introduction of data-driven credit assessment tools is also expected to improve risk evaluation, promote responsible lending practices, and enhance overall customer experience.

Finvolution Group, headquartered in Shanghai and listed on the New York Stock Exchange, has a strong international presence in digital lending across multiple markets including China, Australia and Indonesia.

The delegation appreciated SECP's efforts to strengthen regulatory frameworks, while expressing its intent to contribute to Pakistan's digital economy through technology-enabled financial solutions.

Middle East Conflicts and South Asia: Rising Geopolitical, Economic and Strategic Pressure

The Middle East has long remained a center of global politics, energy markets and ideological conflicts. However, over the past two decades, wars and tensions in this region have not only destabilized the Middle East itself but have also produced far-reaching consequences for South Asia. Conflicts in Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Libya and the recent Iran-Israel tensions have significantly influenced the economies, foreign policies, energy security and internal stability of countries like Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. One of the most immediate and visible impacts is on the energy sector. South Asian economies rely heavily on oil imports from the Middle East. Whenever conflict escalates in this region, global oil prices surge sharply. This creates immense pressure on countries like Pakistan, which already struggle with limited foreign exchange reserves. Rising oil prices increase the import bill, drive up electricity and transportation costs and ultimately trigger inflation. Similar

trends are observed in India and Bangladesh, where industrial productivity and export competitiveness suffer due to higher energy costs.

Another critical dimension is remittances. Millions of workers from South Asia are employed in Gulf countries. Political instability or war in the Middle East puts their jobs at risk and can lead to a decline in remittance inflows. These remittances serve as an economic lifeline for South Asian economies. In Pakistan, for example, a significant portion of foreign exchange earnings comes from overseas workers. Any disruption in Gulf economies directly impacts Pakistan's balance of payments and overall economic stability. On the diplomatic front, Middle Eastern conflicts force South Asian countries into complex balancing acts. Pakistan, for instance, maintains close ties with Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states while also sharing borders and economic interests with Iran. Navigating these relationships during times of regional conflict requires careful diplomacy. Similarly, India maintains

strategic relations with both Iran due to energy needs and Israel, along with strong ties to the United States. These overlapping alliances create diplomatic challenges, particularly during heightened tensions.

Security concerns are another major consequence. Conflicts in the Middle East have historically contributed to the spread of extremism and militant ideologies. These influences often extend into South Asia, affecting internal security dynamics. Pakistan, in particular, has faced a prolonged struggle against terrorism with roots partly linked to broader geopolitical conflicts. The ideological and operational networks of extremist groups can transcend borders, making regional instability a shared threat. The refugee crisis is also an important factor. Wars in Syria, Yemen and other conflict zones have displaced millions of people.

While South Asia has not been the primary destination for these refugees, the global humanitarian burden affects the distribution of international aid and resources. Developing countries, including those in South Asia, often face indirect consequences as global priorities shift toward emergency responses. From an economic perspective, disruptions in global supply chains are another key impact. Strategic maritime routes

such as the Strait of Hormuz and the Red Sea, become vulnerable during conflicts, affecting global trade flows. South Asian export-driven economies particularly Pakistan and Bangladesh rely heavily on these sea routes for textile and industrial exports. Any disruption leads to delays, increased shipping costs and reduced competitiveness in international markets.

Defense and military spending also tend to rise in response to global instability. South Asian countries, already dealing with regional tensions, often increase their defense budgets when international conflicts intensify. This diverts resources away from development projects, affecting long-term economic growth and social welfare. In a region like South Asia, where poverty and development challenges remain significant, such shifts can have serious consequences.

The role of global powers further complicates the situation. The United States, Russia and China are all deeply involved in Middle Eastern affairs, each pursuing its strategic interests. Their policies and interventions influence not only the Middle East but also regions like South Asia. China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), including projects like the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), can be affected by instability in nearby regions. Security concerns and shifting alliances may impact the execution and success of such initiatives.

Despite these challenges, there are also opportunities. South Asian countries can leverage their geographic location to develop alternative trade corridors and strengthen regional cooperation. Pakistan, for instance, can position itself as an economic bridge between Central Asia, the Middle East and South Asia through its ports and connectivity projects. Strategic planning and regional integration could help mitigate risks while creating new economic avenues.

In conclusion, conflicts in the Middle East are not confined to a single region; their ripple effects are global, with South Asia being significantly impacted. From energy security and economic stability to diplomacy and internal security, the consequences are both deep and multidimensional. To effectively manage these challenges, South Asian countries must adopt long-term, coordinated strategies focused on regional cooperation, diversification of energy resources, and balanced foreign policies. Only through such proactive measures can these challenges be transformed into opportunities for growth and stability.



Analysis

Zafar Chishti

Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index		
Current	Prev. Close	
151,707.51	152,907.96	
Day's High	Day's Low	
153,660.88	151,457.94	
Index Value	Change	
19,905,889,255	-1200.45	
Percentage	Time	
-0.79%	27 Mar, 2026 4:30 pm	
Europe: FTSE 100 Index		
Index Value	Change	
9,967.35	-4.82	
Percentage	Time	
-0.048%	27 Mar, 4:40 pm GMT	
USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average		
Index Value	Change	
45,373.57	-586.54	
Percentage	Time	
-1.28%	27 Mar, 1:34 pm GMT-4	
Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average		
Index Value	Change	
53,373.07	-230.58	
Percentage	Time	
-0.43%	27 Mar, 3:45 pm GMT+9	
Open Market Forex Rates		
Australian Dollar	195.05	198.10
Australian Dollar	189.60	194.25
Bahrain Dinar	732.15	742.90
Canadian Dollar	198.97	204.25
China Yuan	36.65	37.6
Danish Krone	43.25	43.65
Euro	322.02	328.75
Hong Kong Dollar	35	36
Indian Rupee	2.05	2.31
Japanese Yen	1.7210	1.8199
Kuwaiti Dinar	889.60	900.45
Malaysian Ringgit	65.25	66.45
New Zealand \$	160.81	165.35
Norwegians Krone	27.65	27.95
Omani Riyal	719.25	729.55
Qatari Riyal	73.33	74.3
Saudi Riyal	74.20	75.45
Singapore Dollar	215.32	220.32
Swedish Korona	30.20	30.50
Swiss Franc	355	358.85
Thai Bhat	8	8.15
U.A.E Dirham	75.90	77.25
UK Pound Sterling	372.38	380.98
US Dollar	279.50	280.2

SAPM calls for unified efforts to enhance SME financing

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Special Assistant to Prime Minister for Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan has underscored the need for collaborative efforts across country to boost credit access for micro, small and medium enterprises, as per SME development vision of the Prime Minister Mian Shehbaz Sharif.

Presiding over a joint meeting of the key financial institutions, the SAPM directed the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) to collaborate with all provincial governments, banks and other institutions to expedite access to finance for SMEs, especially in underserved areas of Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Azad Jammu & Kashmir. The meeting was attended by representatives of a number of the national and provincial financial organizations including State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), Pakistan Banking Association (PBA), Bank of Punjab (BOP), Bank of Khyber (BOK), Sindh Bank (SB), NBP, HBL



and Punjab Small Industries Corporation (PSIC) in coordination with the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA).

SAPM said, "SMEDA must get involved in engagements and collaboration with all stakeholders to help more and more entrepreneurs' access credit and scale up their businesses. It should form a working group to synchronize efforts through training and connectivity," he added.

Lauding the Punjab government's initiatives under the Asaan Karobar Finance Scheme, he asked other provinces to replicate the financing model and increase the number of beneficiaries in the country. He acknowledged that other banks were also doing a commendable job by providing finance to SMEs through various mechanisms.

On this occasion, CEO SMEDA Nadia Jahangir Seth highlighted her organization's role in promoting access to finance as an important pillar of its Business Plan and expressed resolve to expedite efforts to improve the SME finance ecosystem.

Inauguration

LAHORE: Honorable Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani inaugurated the 11th Pakistan Footwear, Material & Machinery Show 2026 on Friday at Expo Centre



GSP+ Status: Lifeline of Pakistan's Economy Under Threat



Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Zaki Aijaz, Regional Chairman and Vice President of the Federation of Commerce and Industry (FCCI), along with S. M. Tanveer, Patron-in-Chief of United Business Group (UBG), and other leaders, addressed a press conference at the FPCCI Regional Office Lahore, stating that GSP+ status is not just a trade concession but the lifeline of Pakistan's economy.

withdrawal of GSP+ status would lead to factory closures and mass unemployment, triggering a serious social and economic crisis. The loss of Pakistan's status would effectively open European markets to India. Ignoring regional realities would be a grave mistake—if Pakistan loses its GSP+ status, India will take its place, and Pakistani products could permanently disappear from European stores. Once a market is lost, it is nearly impossible to regain.

They warned that the

Tetra Pak® Factory OS™ Wins MIMA 2026 scale Award

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Tetra Pak has won the Microsoft Intelligent Manufacturing Award (MIMA) 2026 in the Scale! category for its next-generation automation and digital portfolio, Tetra Pak® Factory OS™. The Scale! award recognises intelligent industrial solutions leading the way in the breadth of value chains, clients or internal processes they impact, across different levels of maturity.

The judges recognised Tetra Pak® Factory OS™ for its ability to help food and beverage producers expand output, introduce new products more quickly and reduce production costs in an increasingly challenging geopolitical and economic environment. As rising food prices and input costs place pressure on food producers, the platform enables food and beverage producers to improve efficiency and strengthen operational resilience while safeguarding



product quality.

Awais Bin Nasim, Managing Director of Tetra Pak Pakistan said, "Pakistan's food and beverage industry holds significant growth potential, but challenges such as energy inefficiencies, supply

disruptions, and fragmented data continue to constrain progress. As producers face growing pressure to do more with fewer resources, this award recognises the real-world impact of advanced automation in making factory

data truly usable at scale. With Tetra Pak® Factory OS™, manufacturers can turn complexity into clarity—enabling real-time, data-driven decisions that boost efficiency, reduce waste, and build a strong foundation for AI-driven manufacturing."

BingX Introduces 24/7 TradFi Trading, Unlocking Continuous Access to Global Markets

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: BingX, a leading cryptocurrency exchange and Web3-AI company, today shared the expansion to its BingX TradFi suite of round-the-clock (24/7) trading support for a wide range of popular assets, marking a significant addition to seamless global market access on the platform. As one of the few exchanges with 24/7 TradFi asset support, BingX users can now trade commodities, indices, and equities at any time, eliminating traditional market hour constraints and enabling



continuous portfolio management.

Through BingX TradFi, users will gain 24/7 access to globally recognized

commodities Gold, Silver, WTI Crude Oil and Brent Crude Oil, as well as a variety of other major global TradFi assets including major stocks and stock indices.

With a wide range of TradFi assets available on the platform, a multi-billion dollar daily trading volume, and complete integration across the BingX ecosystem, BingX TradFi allows users to manage both crypto and traditional assets within a single account. This unified experience simplifies global asset allocation while maintaining flexibility and accessibility across markets.

Illegal goods worth Rs 4 crore seized in Faisalabad



Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: Customs Enforcement and Inositive Gefen Faisalabad, Sargodha Region, ASO staff seized goods worth Rs 4 crore from Jhang Road Pensara while conducting an operation. When the container truck number 3705-C was taken into custody, 300 cartons of filament yarn and about 3000 kg of scrap of electric motors, welding machines, iron cutters and other electrical equipment were found in the container. Initial investigation revealed that the GD provided did not match the filament or run and no information was provided regard-

ing the scrap. According to officials, the total value of the seized documents and the vehicle is about Rs 5.3 to 4 crore. SO Faisalabad said that further legal action will be taken with the cooperation of the concerned departments to ensure transparency. The action was attended by China Customs Maqsood Abbasi, Collector Customs Taimur Kamal, Additional Collector Falak Sher, Deputy Collector Muhammad Ali Vardan, Falak Aslam Muhammad, Enforcement Superintendent Syed Imran Ali Shah, Inspector Muhammad Aslam, Muhammad Arsalan and Spokesperson Liaquat Kamal.

Google Search Live Expands Globally



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Today, Google announced that it is expanding Search Live globally to all languages and locations where AI Mode is available. Now, people in more than 200 countries and territories can have interactive conversations with Search in AI Mode, using both voice and camera.

This expansion is enabled by Google's new audio and voice model, Gemini 3.1 Flash Live, which delivers even more natural and intuitive conversations. The new model is also inherently multilingual, which means that people around the world can now speak with Search in their preferred language.

Search Live is designed for those moments when people need real-time help, and typing out a query just won't cut it. To go Live with Search, simply open the Google app on Android or iOS and tap the Live icon under the Search bar. From there, anyone can ask your question out loud to get a helpful audio response, then continue the conversation with follow-up questions or dive deeper with helpful web links.

People can also enable the camera to add visual context for instance if they want to ask about something in front of them, like how to install a new shelving unit. This way, Search can see what the camera sees and offer helpful suggestions, plus links to more information on the web.

Search Live also works with Google Lens — just tap the Live option at the bottom of the screen to have a real-time, back-and-forth conversation.

The global expansion of Search Live marks a significant shift in how information is accessed, moving from static queries to dynamic, multimodal assistance. By combining voice, sight, and the vast knowledge of the web, Google continues to evolve Search into a more personal and capable tool for learning and exploration.

PSL Pakistan Super League Cricket Edition 11

Karachi Kings beat Quetta Gladiators: Thanks to All-Round Display

Asim Tanveer

LAHORE: Karachi Kings defeated Quetta Gladiators by 14 runs due to Karachi Kings' excellent batting and bowling. Quetta Gladiators lost to Karachi Kings even after a brilliant start in batting. Australian PSL captain successful. Quetta Gladiators lost to Karachi Kings in PSL 2026. Karachi Kings' comeback after losing once. Great effort by all the bowlers including Hasan Ali. Shamil Hussain's team lost by 14 runs even after a good start.

In the second match of the ongoing HBL PSL 6 at Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore, Karachi Kings, playing under the captaincy of David Warner, defeated Saud Shakeel's under-performing Quetta Gladiators by 14 runs on the second day. At one point, Quetta's score was 79 for no loss in 7 overs, then it was all over. It should be remembered that on the first day, Hyderabad Kingsmen, playing under the captaincy of Warner's compatriot Marnus Labuschagne, suffered a major defeat by 69 runs. Lahore Qalandars won the opening match.

In the match played on Friday, Saud Shakeel won the toss and asked Warner to bat first. Karachi Kings lost their first wicket on 3. They were 2 outs at 87 and 9 overs were not even completed. There was hope of 200 plus here but Ahmed Daniyal gave Karachi a big shock by dismissing both set-batsmen Saad Baig and David Warner. The two made a partnership of 43 runs. Saad Baig and Warner were out for 35. Earlier, Mohammad Wasim and Salman Ali Agha were dismissed for 22. Karachi Kings had lost 6 wickets to 140. Azam Khan departed with 14 and Khushdil Shah for 12. Here, the experience of former English player Moeen Ali showed its worth. Moeen Ali, who played with 22 runs off the first 20 balls, scored 26 runs off the last 9 balls. Thus, he played an innings of 48 runs off 29 balls. He hit 3 sixes and 4 fours. Due to this, Karachi Kings managed to score 181 runs for 7 wickets in 20 overs.

For Quetta Gladiators, Ahmed Daniyal took 3 wickets for 36 runs and Alzarri Joseph took 2 wickets for 32 runs. Abrar Ahmed took 35 and Usman Tariq took one wicket



each for 29 runs.

In reply, Quetta Gladiators' stormy start shook the roots of Karachi Kings. Shamil Hussain and Saud Shakeel laid a big foundation of 79 runs in 7.1 overs. Here, left-hander Shamil Hussain scored 52 runs off 24 balls and was caught by Moeen Ali off Salman Ali Agha. 4 sixes and 5 fours were the fruits of his

batting. David Warner brought in fellow countryman top spinner Adam Zampa. He did not disappoint and clean bowled new batter Khawaja Nafee for 3. He played 7 balls. In the next over, top player Moeen Ali's spin experience came in handy when he got set batter Saud Shakeel caught by Khushdil Shah in his third and 10th over of the innings. He scored 33 runs



off 25 balls. Karachi Kings were trying to come back into the match by taking 3 wickets at 95. Karachi Kings made a big comeback, with tight bowling. The target was made difficult. In the 16th over, Hassan Ali took the wicket of Riley Rossouw on a total of 124, he bowled. He could make 25. It was difficult to play reverse swing from Hassan Nawaz and Ben McDermott. As a result, both remained on the pitch, but after 18 overs, Quetta Gladiators reached 147.35 runs off 12 balls were difficult, but in the next over, Hassan Nawaz was caught for 19 off 24 balls. Tom Curran was bowled on the next ball. Hassan Ali was on a hat-trick, but this attack was thwarted by Ahmed Daniyal. Hassan Ali sealed his victory by



taking 3 wickets in the 19th over of the innings. The loss in 19 overs was 152 runs for 7 wickets.

Quetta Gladiators' innings was limited to 167 runs for 7 wickets in 20 overs. Thus, Karachi Kings

defeated Gladiators by 14 runs and registered their first win this year. Karachi Kings fast bowler Hassan Ali took 4 wickets for 27 runs. Adam Zampa took 1 wicket for 26 runs in 4 overs

Tuba Hassan's unbeaten 57, and Omaima Sohail's took four wickets Stars to 39-run win over Challengers

Tahir Amin Malik

ISLAMABAD: An unbeaten half-century from Tuba Hassan and a four-wicket haul by Omaima Sohail helped Stars beat Challengers by 39 runs in the opening match of the National Women's T20 Tournament 2025-26 at the Ghani Glass Cricket Ground in Lahore on Friday.

After opting to bat, Stars lost opener Omaima Sohail (5, 11b, 1x4) in the fifth over with 20 runs on the board. Samina Aftab and Kainat Hafeez then stitched a 53-run partnership for the second wicket. Kainat scored 34 off 25 balls, hitting five fours.

Kainat and Sidra Amin fell to Zunash Abdul Sattar off consecutive deliveries in the 12th over. At that stage, captain Tuba walked in and scored an unbeaten 57 off 32 balls, which included two fours and five sixes.

Tuba added 20 runs for the fourth wicket with Samina (33, 36b, 4x4s) and then shared an unbroken 63-run part-



nership for the fifth wicket with Huraina Sajjad (17 not out, 16b), taking Stars to 156 for four in 20 overs.

For Challengers, Zunash Abdul Sattar was the pick of the bowlers, returning figures of two for 34.

In turn, Challengers were bundled out for 117 in 17 overs. Natalia Pervaiz top-scored with 39 off 30 balls, including four fours and a six. Eman Naseer, who captained Pakistan U19 to a series win against Bangladesh U19 last year, scored 23 while wicketkeeper-batter Sidra Nawaz also made 23.

For Stars, Omaima Sohail led the bowling attack, while 19-year-old left-arm spinner Aleesa Mukhtiar took two wickets for 22 in three overs. Tuba and Waheeda Akhtar clinched one wicket each.

Scores in brief:

Stars beat Challengers by 39 runs at Ghani Glass Cricket Ground
Stars 156-4, 20 overs (Tuba Hassan 57 not out, Kainat Hafeez 34, Samina Aftab 33; Zunash Abdul Sattar 2-34)

Challengers 117 all out, 17 overs (Natalia Pervaiz 39, Eman Naseer 23, Sidra Nawaz 23; Omaima Sohail 4-12, Aleesa Mukhtiar 2-22)

Player of the match - Tuba Hassan (Stars)

PCB issues show-cause notice to Naseem Shah



LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has issued a show-cause notice to fast bowler Naseem Shah for an alleged breach of his central contract and the board's media policy during the ongoing Pakistan Super League (PSL) season 11.

According to the board, the notice has been served under its disciplinary framework, with the right-arm pacer required to submit a response within the stipulated time. The PCB will determine any further course of action after reviewing his reply.

While the board did not officially disclose the reason behind the notice, it is understood to be linked to a social media post that surfaced during the tournament opener between Lahore Qalandars and Hyderabad Kingsmen.

The controversy emerged after a post from Naseem's account on X (formerly Twitter) gained traction online.

The now-deleted message appeared as a quote repost of a PCB update featuring chairman Mohsin Naqvi welcoming Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz at the venue.

"Why is she treated like the queen at Lords?" the message read, questioning the treatment of Maryam Nawaz at the event, drawing widespread attention on social media.

In response to the backlash, Naseem later issued a clarification, stating that the post was not made by him. He claimed that his account had been compromised and was only recently recovered after a security breach.

"This account of Naseem was recently hacked but now recovered successfully," the statement read, distancing the player from the controversial remarks.

Fatima Fertilizer Becomes New Title Sponsor for Multan Sultans in PSL 8

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Pakistan's leading fertilizer manufacturer Fatima Fertilizer Company Limited has become the title sponsor of Multan Sultans in the Pakistan Super League (HBL-PSL). The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in this regard was signed during a ceremony at the Pearl Continental Hotel, Lahore.

As the title sponsor, Fatima Fertilizer's logo will be prominently displayed on the back of the Multan Sultans jersey, symbolizing the company's commitment to Pakistan's most popular cricket league. The agreement was signed by Fatima Fertilizer's Director Marketing and Sales, Rabil Saduzai, and Multan Sultans CEO, Gohar Shah.

This sponsorship holds a special significance for Fatima Fertilizer as it has its roots in South Punjab, which is also represented by Multan Sultans. It is not just a promotional activity but also a sign of strong ties and commitment to



the region. Fatima Fertilizer, which has been working closely with farmers for a long time, The company sees this partnership as a continuation of its mission. According to the company, cricket is a great symbol of unity and spirit in Pakistan, which Multan Sultans exemplify in its best way.

Speaking at the event, Ms. Rabil Saduzai, Director Marketing and Sales, Fatima Fertilizer, said "Cricket reflects

the spirit of hard work and progress that we value so much. We are delighted to continue our partnership with Multan Sultans as the title sponsor, and with this we are entering the eighth year. This relationship is built on mutual trust and shared vision.

Pak Arab has one of our plants located in Multan, which is why our relationship with Multan Sultans is very strong and this partnership feels

natural. This long-standing relationship reflects trust and shared thinking. It is not just a sponsorship but our commitment to millions of cricket fans across Pakistan that we will stand by them at every moment of the game."

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Multan Sultans Chief Executive Officer, Gohar Shah said, "Fatima Fertilizer is an integral part of Multan Sultans. They have been with us through every difficult and easy time, and now it is a welcome moment to have their logo on our jersey. This is the eighth year of our partnership. Loyal and forward-thinking partners are essential to building a strong sports team, and Fatima Fertilizer understands our performance and standards very well. We are happy that we are continuing this journey together."

This partnership is in line with Fatima Fertilizer's vision to support platforms across the country that promote unity, passion and excellence.

Pakistan Emerges as Key Mediator in US-Iran War Under Sharif-Munir Leadership

Continued from Page 4

The men behind this remarkable rise of Pakistan—Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Asim Munir—have earned not only the appreciation of the international community but also the profound gratitude and pride of the people of Pakistan, who have watched their country's leadership navigate one of the most dangerous international crises of recent times with skill, courage, and unwavering commitment to peace. In a nation often divided by political differences, there has been a remarkable convergence of public support for the way the Prime Minister and Field

Marshal have represented Pakistan on the world stage, with citizens from Karachi to Lahore, from Peshawar to Quetta, expressing pride in seeing their leaders engage on equal terms with the President of the United States, being praised by the leadership of Iran, and being thanked by the international community for their sincere efforts to stop the war. The sense of national pride is palpable and well-founded: Pakistan has demonstrated that it possesses not only the willingness but also the capability to play a leadership role in global affairs, to use its diplomatic resources and strategic relationships to advance the cause of peace, and to stand as a voice of moderation and responsi-

bility in a world increasingly fractured by great power competition and regional rivalries.

The Pakistani Prime Minister and Field Marshal have shown that even in the darkest moments of conflict, when the machinery of war seems unstoppable and the momentum toward escalation appears inexorable, determined and principled diplomacy can make a difference. They have shown that Pakistan, a nation of over two hundred and forty million people with a rich history and a strategic location at the heart of Asia, can be not just a country that suffers from the conflicts of others but a country that helps to resolve them, a voice of reason,

a force for peace, and a leader in the community of nations. Today, Pakistan stands in the spotlight, a strong country whose voice is sought after and valued, whose leaders are trusted by both sides of a bitter conflict, and whose emergence as a key mediator in the Iran-US war represents a defining moment in the nation's history—a moment that will be remembered as the time when Pakistan, under the extraordinary leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Asim Munir, stepped forward to meet the greatest challenge of its generation and, in doing so, elevated its standing in the eyes of the world and the hearts of its people forever.

Finance Minister Chairs Consultative Session

Continued from Page 8

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Finance Minister Muzammil Aslam lauded the efforts of Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, and Federal Minister for Petroleum, Mr. Ali Pervaiz Malik, for effectively managing the oil supply situation. He noted that Pakistan's management of petroleum supplies has remained comparatively better than that of several countries in the region.

Balochistan Minister for Finance and Mines & Mineral Development, Mir Shoaib Noshervani, also shared his views during the meeting.

The Finance Division briefed the participants on fiscal situation and noted that limited fiscal space is available, primarily confined to revenues from the petroleum levy. It was emphasized that any relief measures would need to be carefully calibrated to maintain macroeconomic stability.

In his remarks, the Finance Minister underscored that the current situation should be treated as an opportunity to undertake structural reforms rather than a constraint. He emphasized the importance of adopting data-driven decision-making, particularly in the areas of taxation and

subsidy design, to ensure transparency, efficiency, and better targeting of relief.

The Finance Minister also highlighted the need to promote responsible consumption behaviour and ensure that policy responses remain fiscally prudent while maximizing relief for the public.

The participants agreed to expedite efforts to finalize a targeted subsidy framework using technological solutions, while ensuring continued coordination between the federal and provincial governments.

The meeting was attended by Chief Minister Sindh, Syed Murad Ali Shah; Punjab Senior Minister Mairiyum Aurangzeb, representing the Government of Punjab; Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Finance Minister Muzammil Aslam; Balochistan Minister for Finance and Mines & Mineral Development, Mir Shoaib Noshervani; Chief Secretaries of all four provinces; Federal Minister for Petroleum, Mr. Ali Pervaiz Malik; Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja; Federal Secretaries of Finance, Petroleum, and Information Technology & Telecommunication; as well as senior officials, including the Chairman NADRA.

High-level consultative session

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, chairing a high-level consultative session at the Finance Division on petroleum prices and targeted subsidy reforms on Friday.



Photo: PID

Finance Minister chairs consultative session on petroleum prices and subsidy reforms

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, chaired a high-level consultative meeting on the petroleum products situation today at the Finance Division, in line with the directions of the Honourable President and the Honourable Prime Minister of Pakistan.

The meeting commenced with a detailed presentation by the Petroleum Division on the current status of petroleum products' availability in the country. It was noted with satisfaction that the fuel supply situation remains stable and adequate across the country.

The Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommuni-

cation also gave a comprehensive presentation on proposed technological solutions to facilitate a targeted subsidy mechanism for petroleum products, with a focus on transparency and efficient delivery.

The provincial leadership shared their views on the prevailing situation and policy options. Chief Minister Sindh, Syed Murad Ali Shah, appre-

ciated the efforts of the federal government in maintaining uninterrupted fuel availability, while emphasizing the importance of behavioral measures to promote fuel conservation.

Punjab Senior Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb, representing the Government of Punjab, emphasized the need to develop multiple policy scenarios in response

to the evolving petroleum price situation. She stressed that any reduction in international petroleum prices should be effectively passed on to consumers and highlighted the importance of incorporating behavioral aspects into crisis management to ensure more sustainable consumption patterns.

Continued on Page 7

FO spokesperson clarifies Saudi media report as baseless, fake

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Foreign Office spokesperson has refuted news item published by Saudi media by terming it contrary to the facts. Foreign Office spokesperson Tahir Andrabi termed the Saudi media report as fabricated and fake news, adding that



news of allegations against Pakistan is baseless and has nothing to do with reality.

According to Saudi media, Trump claimed that 8 Pakistani-flagged oil tankers passed through Hormuz and Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi made serious allegations against Pakistan over Trump's statement.

According to Saudi media, Iranian Foreign Minister warned Pakistan against crossing all red lines. According to Saudi media, Iranian position is that Pakistani-flagged ships are delivering oil to enemies.

Foreign Office spokesperson termed the Saudi media report as fabricated and fake news.

Forty years of serving Afghans not rewarded, says Bugti

Bureau Report

QUETTA: Sarfraz Bugti, Chief Minister of Balochistan, has said that Afghanistan is a brotherly neighboring country and Pakistan has served Afghan people for the past four decades, but has not received an appropriate response.

Addressing a public gathering of Pakistan Peoples Party in Pishin, he

appealed to Afghan nationals to stop violence in Pakistan and stated that under the leadership of Asim Muniir, no one would be allowed to harm the country.

Bugti says resolving public issues provincial government's top priority

Referring to the killing of people by Israel in Iran, he condemned the actions and said Pakistan comes first for them. He also expressed happi-



ness over declaring Pishin as a division and vowed to fulfill the needs of the province.

Sarfraz Bugti further said that the people of Balochistan desire peace

and development, and contrary to doubts raised by some, he will continue to work across the province with dedication for education, health, and lasting peace.

Danyal inaugurates Sui gas pipeline, vows relief amid energy challenges

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Federal Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Broadcasting Barrister Danyal Chaudhry on Friday inaugurated a newly completed Sui gas pipeline in Chaklala Scheme-III, terming it a step towards providing relief to citizens amid ongoing global energy challenges.

Addressing the ceremony, he said the government under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was taking effective measures to mitigate the impact of the international energy crisis and ensure



uninterrupted supply of essential utilities.

He said rising tensions involving Iran, Israel and the United States had exacerbated the global gas and electricity situation, affecting supply chains and driving up prices, and the government had adopted a comprehensive strategy to tackle those challenges through prudent policies.

The parliamentary secretary said no political leader was above Pakistan and any attempt to harm the country's dignity was unacceptable. Elements running such campaigns against the state and their facilitators had been exposed.

PM Shehbaz condemns attack on Kuwait



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif received a telephone call from Crown Prince of the State of Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah Al Khaled Al Hamad Al Sabah on Friday and assured him that Pakistan would continue to play a constructive role for bringing peace and stability in the region.

During their warm and cordial conversation, the prime minister reiterated Pakistan's strong condemnation of the attacks on Kuwait and once again, expressed Pakistan's solidarity and support for the people of Kuwait, in these challenging times. He also offered condolences on the

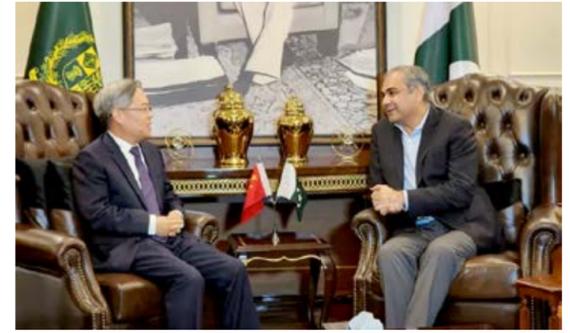
loss of precious lives and prayed for recovery of the injured.

The prime minister also apprised the Kuwaiti leadership of Pakistan's sincere diplomatic efforts to bring an end to the war in the Middle East.

While expressing deep appreciation of the prime minister's leadership, the Crown Prince of Kuwait fully endorsed Pakistan's efforts for mediation between Iran and the U.S.

He also thanked the prime minister for Pakistan's support to Kuwait in the current crisis. He thanked the prime minister for his recent letter of solidarity addressed to the Kuwaiti leadership and also expressed his desire to visit Pakistan, as soon as the situation improves.

Pakistan to form unit for foreign nationals' security



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Friday visited the Chinese Embassy and met Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zedong, officials said.

Upon arrival at the embassy, Ambassador Jiang welcomed the interior minister. During the meeting, counter-terrorism, security cooperation, police exchange programmes and other important issues were discussed, while the overall regional situation was also reviewed.

It was decided to organise a busi-

ness conference to address security issues faced by Chinese investors in Pakistan.

In the first phase, meetings will be held with the Chinese business community in Pakistan, followed by talks with potential Chinese investors in the second phase.

Naqvi said a Special Protection Unit is being established in Islamabad to protect foreign citizens, adding that it will ensure the security of Chinese nationals in the capital. He said personnel of the unit will also be taught the Chinese language during training.

Saudi company Aramco slashes high-octane petrol price by Rs200 per litre in Pakistan



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: In a major relief for motorists, Saudi company Aramco on Friday significantly reduced the price of high-octane petrol at its retail outlets across Pakistan.

According to details, the company has cut the price from Rs610 per litre to Rs410 per litre, offering a substantial reduction of Rs200 per litre. The move is expected to bring considerable savings to consumers, particularly owners of high-end vehicles that rely on premium fuel.

The development comes shortly after the government increased the levy on high-octane petrol from Rs100 to Rs300, pushing market prices to record highs. Following the levy hike, high-octane petrol

was being sold between Rs600 and Rs610 per litre at various fuel stations nationwide.

At outlets operated by Pakistan State Oil, the price had been recorded at around Rs589 per litre.

Industry observers say the sudden price cut by Aramco may create competitive pressure in the fuel market and could influence pricing strategies of other oil marketing companies.

High-octane petrol is primarily used in modern vehicles equipped with turbocharged and high-compression engines. With the increasing number of imported and locally manufactured vehicles requiring premium fuel, demand for high-octane petrol has been steadily rising in the country.