



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ
ہم سے محمد بن جعفر نے بیان کیا کہ ہم سے شعیب نے بیان کیا ان سے عبد العزیز بن مسعود اور ان سے اس رضی اللہ عنہ نے بیان کیا کہ نماز کی تکبیر کہی گئی اور ایک صحابی رسول صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم سے سرگوشی کرتے رہے، پر وہ در تک سرگوشی کرتے رہے یہاں تک کہ آپ کے صحابہ سونے لگے اس کے بعد آپ اٹھے اور نماز پڑھائی۔
(صحیح بخاری ص 292 نمبر 6292)
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DPM/FM Dar, Azerbaijan FM discuss current regional situation

Deputy Prime Minister / Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Tuesday, spoke with Azerbaijan Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov to discuss current regional developments. "Both leaders emphasized the importance of peace and stability in the Middle East and agreed to stay closely engaged on the evolving developments," the Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press release.



Energy security of great importance to global economy: China

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said on Tuesday that energy security is of great importance to the global economy, and all parties have the responsibility to ensure stable and smooth energy supplies. She made these remarks in response to media reports claiming that China is pressuring Iranian officials to avoid actions that could disrupt Qatar's natural gas exports and other shipments passing through the Strait of Hormuz.

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Call on

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of PPPP calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday.



Photo: PID

PPPP delegation meets PM; discusses political, regional situation

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of the Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPPP) on Tuesday called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, wherein they held consultations on the prevailing political situation in the country and developments in the region.

The prime minister, talking to the delegation, called the PPPP a key coalition partner of the government and expressed gratitude to the party for

supporting the government in important decision-making for the country's development.

The PPP delegation included Senator Sherry Rehman, Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, Syed Naveed Qamar, and Aijaz Jakhriani.

The meeting was also attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar, federal ministers Ahsan Iqbal and Azam Nazeer Tarar, and Adviser to the Prime Minister Rana Sanaulah.

PM Shehbaz held a telephone conversation with President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Expressing his deep concern over the escalating crisis in the Middle East, the Prime Minister condemned the Israeli attack on Iran, and subsequent regrettable attacks on other brotherly Gulf countries.

The Prime Minister apprised President Erdogan of his recent outreach to the leadership of the brotherly Gulf countries, reaffirming Pakistan's full solidarity with them, and conveying its read-

iness to play a constructive role in efforts aimed at resolving the crisis. Both leaders underscored the importance of maximum restraint by all parties, to prevent further escalation.

The Prime Minister also took President Erdoğan into confidence on the recent developments in the context of Afghanistan. The two leaders agreed to remain in close and frequent contact in this regard while continuing their efforts to bring peace and stability in the region.

Iran says stopping U. S.-Israeli 'aggression' sole way to end war

Xinhua

TEHRAN: Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei said on Tuesday the sole way to end the war is to stop the U. S. and Israeli "aggression" against Iran.

He made the remarks at a weekly press conference held at a school in the Iranian capital Tehran that was damaged as a result of the recent attacks by the United States and Israel, while commenting on Iran's preconditions for ending the war.

Baghaei said, "This military aggression has not been our

choice. Our choice has always been diplomacy," adding Iran's diplomatic apparatus "bravely" continued the path of diplomacy with the government's support and did its best until the very last moment to avoid war, but the other side decided to begin a war.

"The way to stop this war is to stop the aggression. The United Nations Security Council has a responsibility (in this regard)," he said.

Baghaei said the international community must make its decision before it gets late and the scope of the war expands in the



West Asia region.

Asked about the possibility of certain Arab states' formation of an anti-Iran coalition with the United States, he noted that Tehran's principled policy is to continue its good relations with neighbors, emphasizing that Iran's actions against the United States are in no way indicative of the country's hostility toward regional states.

Baghaei said Iran has been attacked unjustly and without any reason, warning that the "flames" of the war will spread everywhere if the necessary action is not taken.

Pakistan actively engaged in diplomacy after Iran crisis: Dar

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Tuesday informed the Senate that Pakistan has been actively engaged in diplomatic efforts following recent developments involving Iran, emphasizing Islamabad's constant pursuit for peaceful resolution through dialogue.

Giving a policy statement in Senate, he said Pakistan would continue its efforts for de-escalation between the United States and Iran.

The Deputy Prime Minister



said that he contacted his counterparts from different countries over the last three days, emphasizing that these were aimed at convincing the two sides to come to the table of dialogue and diplomacy for the settlement of their issues.

He maintained that Pakistan has remained in constant communication with friendly countries and foreign ministers over the past several days to promote de-escalation.

He said an emergency meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Industrial Ministers was convened on February 26-27 in Jeddah. Upon

his arrival, reports emerged about an attack on Iran, prompting him to immediately initiate contacts to verify the situation.

Ishaq Dar said he first reached out to Iran's Foreign Minister to confirm the reports and stressed that Pakistan's initial reaction was to call for a peaceful resolution.

He said that on March 1, following further developments, including reports of the martyrdom of the Iranian Supreme Leader, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif issued a statement expressing solidarity with the government and people of Iran.

Security forces foil infiltration attempts in Balochistan, KP: Dr. Tariq Fazal

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhary on Tuesday said Pakistan's security forces had successfully thwarted infiltration attempts by terrorists in parts of northern Balochistan, reaffirming that the country's borders remain secure. In a statement posted on X,

he said enemy elements attempted to infiltrate and launch ground attacks in the districts of Qilla Saifullah, Nushki, and Chaman. He added that security forces responded promptly and foiled the attempts.

The minister said dozens of terrorists were killed in the retaliatory action, while several others were injured and forced to flee.



He further said that another terrorist attempt in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was also foiled, with a large number of militants eliminated during the operation.

"These operations are clear evidence that our armed forces remain vigilant, professional, and fully prepared at all times to defend the motherland," he said, adding that the enemy, in whatever form it appears, would face a crushing defeat on every front.

Dr. Tariq also paid tribute to a brave soldier of Frontier Corps

Balochistan who embraced martyrdom while defending the country. He said the martyrs symbolize the nation's strength and resolve. He said that Pakistan's borders are secure and that the nation stands shoulder to shoulder with its armed forces. "There is no space on this soil for elements that seek to spread unrest and instability in Pakistan," he added.

464 Afghan combatants killed, 188 check posts destroyed in operation Ghazab lil-Haq, says Atta Tarar



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaulah Tarar on Tuesday said that the security forces have killed

464 combatants of the Afghan Taliban regime, destroyed their 188 posts, and captured 31 others during Operation Ghazab lil-Haq.

Ghazab lil-Haq, launched following "unprovoked action" from across the border.

Providing a summary of Afghan Taliban regime's losses at 16:00 hours, the minister said that over 665 Afghan operatives were injured during Operation Ghazab lil-Haq (Righteous Fury).

Around 192 tanks, armoured vehicles, and artillery guns have also been destroyed during the operation, he added.

The minister noted that around 56 locations across Afghanistan were also targeted by air, effectively.

Azad Kashmir Supreme Court halts govt spending of local development funds via Assembly members

Bureau Report.

MUZAFFARABAD: The Supreme Court of Azad Kashmir has restrained the Government of Azad Kashmir from spending the development funds of the Local Government Department through Members of Assembly. A restraining order has been issued. According to the details, a writ petition filed in the High Court of Azad Kashmir titled Sardar Javed Sharif

etc. vs. Members of Assembly etc. regarding the acquisition of funds and powers by local government representatives is pending before the Honorable High Court and has been accepted for regular hearing on February 25, 2026, while the application for a stay order by the petitioners' lawyer was dismissed by the High Court.

Moreover, today, Monday, March 2, 2026, an appeal was filed in the

Supreme Court of Azad Kashmir Circuit Mirpur by the petitioners' lawyer Barrister Humayun Nawaz Khan Advocate against the decision of the High Court (to dismiss the application), which was accepted for regular hearing by the Divisional Bench of Mr. Justice Raza Ali Khan and Mr. Justice Khalid Yousuf and stopped the government from disposing and distributing the funds. On this occasion, the central leader-

ship of the Local Government Representatives Movement and a large number of elected representatives from Mirpur Division were present at the Supreme Court Mirpur Circuit. Until the court's decision, the government will not be able to use the development funds.

The leadership of the Local Government Representatives Movement called the decision a victory of truth and justice.

Supreme Court Advocate Muhammad Nadeem Khan Named New AJK Advocate General

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Muhammad Nadeem Khan Advocate Supreme Court has been appointed as Advocate General Azad Jammu and Kashmir. An official notification was issued by the Department of Law, Justice, Parliamentary Affairs and Human Rights in this regard. Muhammad Nadeem Khan Advocate belongs to Samahni and is considered one of the prominent lawyers of Azad Jammu and Kashmir. He has also been the Vice Chairman of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Bar Council. He is considered one of those lawyers who are interested in social and public affairs along with legal matters. The legal community has welcomed his appointment as Advocate General.

Kashmir's Civic Space Under Siege: UN Seminar Demands Accountability



Bureau Report

GENEVA: International Action for Peace and Sustainable Development today convened a seminar titled "Shrinking Spaces" on the sidelines of the 61st session of the UN Human Rights Council to expose and condemn the sustained erosion of civic space in Indian-occupied Kashmir.

The event, presided and moderated by Sardar Amjad Yousaf, President of International Action for Peace and Sustainable Development, brought together experts and representatives to reveal the scale and method of rights restrictions in Jammu and Kashmir and to demand concrete international and corporate accountability.

"Shrinking Spaces" was organized by International Action for Peace and Sustainable Development on the sidelines of the 61st session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva to ensure the plight of Kashmiri civic space is heard where international human-rights policy-making is centered.

Iran Shows Resolve But Faces Formidable US-Israel Power, Says Masood Khan

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Former President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and former Ambassador of Pakistan to the United States and Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Masood Khan, has stated that the ongoing confrontation involving Iran, the United States, and Israel carries the potential to expand into a wider regional conflict, with serious strategic and political repercussions for the Middle East and beyond.

In a televised analysis, Ambassador Masood Khan observed that despite significant leadership losses and sustained military pressure, Iran has demonstrated both resolve and capability in responding to attacks on its territory. He noted that Iran has shown it can reach strategic targets, thereby altering the military calculus of the conflict.

He cautioned, however, that the combined military weight of the United States and Israel remains formidable. If hostilities persist for weeks or months, the imbalance in power and coordination could significantly strain Iran's capacity. "The duration and scale of this conflict will ultimately depend on the strategic objectives of the principal actors," he remarked.

"Wars in this region rarely remain confined," Ambassador Masood Khan concluded. "The imperative today is de-escalation, strategic restraint, and a renewed commitment to negotiated solutions before the conflict engulfs the entire region."



CM Maryam Ramadan Nighaban Cards Distributed in Punjab

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Special Assistant to the Chief Minister of Punjab for Food Safety and Consumer Protection Salmi Butt paid an emergency visit to Multan and conducted



surprise price checking in various markets along with Muhammad Noman Siddique. During the visit, Ideal Shopping Mall was targeted for high prices, while several shopkeepers were fined and given strict warnings. The Special Assistant took immediate action after taking notice of the sale of food items at the DC counter. The implementation of the government price lists was reviewed in various areas including Gulgasht, Mumtazabad and Ghanta Ghar. On this occasion, she also tasked the district administration to take strict action against the high sellers without discrimination. Earlier, while addressing a press conference, Salmi Butt said that a decisive crackdown is underway across the province during the month of Ramadan. She said that so far fines of more than Rs 50 million have been imposed on high prices in Punjab, while 477 FIRs have been registered. A fine of Rs 9.2 million and 25 cases have been registered in the city of saints, Multan.

He said that more than 1.5 million citizens are breaking their fast daily at 421 Ramadan Nighaban tables across the province, while Chief Minister Ramadan Nighaban cards worth Rs 40 billion are being distributed to 4.1 million families. He said that the Chief Minister of Punjab herself reviews the prices of potatoes, onions and tomatoes every morning.

Happy Holi

KARACHI: People of Hindu community celebrate Holi, the festival of colors, at a temple, in the Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

Commissioner Multan visited the Under-Construction Mother and Child Hospital

Quratulain Asim

MULTAN: Commissioner Multan Division Aamir Karim Khan visited the under-construction 200-bed Mother and Child Hospital and reviewed the ongoing construction work in

detail. On this occasion, the concerned officers gave a briefing regarding the progress of the project.

Commissioner Aamir Karim Khan was informed that this Rs 8 billion project consists of Rs 6 billion capital and Rs 2 billion revenue



component. This scheme is being implemented under the Specialized Healthcare Department while Vice Chancellor Nishtar Medical University Prof. Dr. Mehnaz Khakwani is performing the duties of Project Director.

It was informed in the briefing that the project started in 2022. The five-storey building consists of two basements and three floors. So far, about Rs 3 billion has been spent on capital, civil work has been completed while HVAC

work is in progress. An allocation of Rs 500 million and an additional Rs 436 million have been spent in the current financial year, while a summary has been sent for the release of another Rs 760 million.

The Turning Point: U. S. Iran War and the Death of Ayatollah Khamenei

Tehreem Ashraf

Today, the world stands at a pivotal moment in international relations as tensions between the United States and Iran have escalated into open conflict, fundamentally reshaping Middle Eastern geopolitics. On 28 February 2026, joint military strikes by the United States and Israel, part of a large-scale operation targeting key Iranian military and political infrastructure, marked a dramatic escalation of decades-long friction over Iran's nuclear ambitions and regional influence.

Wikipedia
In a historic development confirmed by Iranian state media and multiple international outlets on 1 March 2026, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran since 1989, was killed

in the joint U. S., Israeli strikes. His death at age 86 represents a watershed moment for Iran and for global diplomacy. Khamenei had been the spiritual and political guide of the Islamic Republic for more than three decades, shaping its domestic policies and foreign alliances with unwavering authority.

AP News +1

Iran has declared a 40-day national mourning period following the loss of its Supreme Leader.

State broadcasters referred to him as a martyr, while Tehran's interim leadership headed temporarily by clerical figures such as Alireza Arafi faces intense pressure to respond to both internal instability and external threats.

The New Indian Express

The strikes, which also reportedly killed several senior Iranian officials including military commanders and advisers, were justified by U. S. and

Israeli leaders as necessary actions to neutralize threats posed by Iran's strategic programs and proxy networks. President Donald Trump publicly described the operation as a blow to what he called "global authoritarian aggression."

New York Post

Iran's leadership and government have condemned the attack as an open act of war, with President Masoud Pezeshkian calling the assassination a "declaration of war against Muslims" and pledging steadfast retaliation. Tehran's Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) has vowed to respond with force, launching missile and drone attacks against targets in Israel and U. S. military bases across the Gulf region.

The New Indian Express

The ripple effects of this conflict extend far beyond regional battlefields. Worldwide condemnation has emerged from major powers such as

Russia and China, both labelling the killing of Khamenei a "cynical violation of international law" and urging an immediate cessation of hostilities. Many countries have called for diplomatic solutions even as the risk of further escalation looms large.

The Times of India

Closer to home, the repercussions are being felt in South Asia as well. In Pakistan, protests erupted in response to the strikes and the death of Ayatollah Khamenei, with demonstrators attacking diplomatic missions and government buildings, reflecting deep public emotion across the Muslim world.

In this critical era, policymakers, scholars, and citizens alike must understand that the death of a leader can mark not just an epoch's end but the beginning of an unpredictable chapter in global history.

The writer is a student at NUML Islamabad.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr	5:12 am
Zohr	12:20 pm
Asr	4:25 pm
Maghrib	6:06 pm
Isha	7:29 pm

EMERGENCY

Rescue (Police)	15
Bomb Disposal	15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad	1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance	1122 & 4451122
Motorway Police	9266044
Motorway Police	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	9221334-43
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

'Wildlife is our future asset; protecting it is our duty,' says CM Punjab

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif has termed wildlife indispensable for maintaining biodiversity and ecological balance on earth, expressing satisfaction over historic measures taken for its protection, conservation and promotion.

In her special message on World Wildlife Day, the chief minister said the Punjab government had introduced innovative reforms to curb illegal hunting and unlawful possession of wild animals through amendments to the Punjab Wildlife Act 1974 and the Protected Areas Act. She added that the Wildlife Helpline 1107 had been made fully operational.

Online facilities are now available for shooting licences, import and export permits, hunting permits and registration of breeding farms. For the first time in the province, an artificial intelligence-based animal census system has been implemented, while GPS and collar tracker systems have been introduced to monitor rescued animals.

At Lahore Safari Zoo, a 3D screen,



animal sculptures and other modern features have been installed, and a 7D wildlife cinema is nearing completion. Construction of Punjab's first wildlife hospital has reached 80 per cent completion, where specialist veterinary doctors will be appointed for each species. The government also plans to establish a 360-degree virtual zoo to enable citizens to observe wildlife from home.

Development and renovation work is ongoing at Changa Manga, Uchhali Wetlands, Chashma Barrage, Bansra Gali Wildlife Park and Murree Biodiversity Park.

She said a dedicated wildlife force had been established to ensure effective protection across the province and that the Animal Rights and Protection Act had been further strengthened. Strict action is being taken against illegal hunting, unlawful captivity and cruelty to animals and birds.

"Wildlife is our future asset; protecting it is our responsibility," the chief minister remarked, urging the public to support government efforts for wildlife conservation.

Nectar Collection

ISLAMABAD: A honey bee collects nectar from blooming cherry blossom flowers on plum tree alongside a road in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

PSCA's VWPS's swift action leads to arrest of harassment suspect

Bureau Report:

LAHORE: The Punjab Safe Cities Authority's Virtual Women Police Station ensured swift action leading to the arrest of a suspect involved in harassing a college-going student. According to details, the incident occurred in the jurisdiction of Sunder Police Station, where the accused was allegedly passing inappropriate remarks and engaging in indecent behavior toward the student. Upon raising an alarm, local residents gathered at the scene, while the suspect attempted to flee. Citizens immediately informed Emergency Helpline 15.

The spokesperson added that upon receiving the complaint, the Virtual Women Police Station responded promptly and dispatched the concerned police team to the location. A female Safe City officer contacted the affected student, assured her of full protection, legal assistance, and complete institutional support. The police team reached the spot without delay, arrested the accused, and registered a case against him. According to the Safe City spokesperson, there will be zero tolerance for harassment, and strict legal action will be taken against those involved in such crimes.

Ch Kamran Ahmad Expresses Deep Grief Over Martyrdom of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei

Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: Renowned businessman of Kamalia Chaudhry Kamran Ahmad Nusrat has expressed deep sorrow and grief over the martyrdom of Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Syed Ali Khamenei. In his statement, he said that Ayatollah Khamenei was a dignified, influential and visionary leader of the Muslim world who rendered remarkable services for the unity of the Muslim Ummah, national sovereignty and the promotion of Islamic values. He termed his demise not only a loss for Iran but a great tragedy for the entire Muslim world.

Chaudhry Kamran Ahmad Nusrat further stated that under the leadership of



Ayatollah Khamenei, Iran faced various global challenges with steadfastness and maintained its national sovereignty. He added that his services would always be remembered

in golden words and that his struggle would serve as a guiding light for future generations. He also expressed heartfelt condolences and sympathy to the people and

government of Iran as well as to the bereaved family, praying that Allah Almighty grant the departed soul a high place in Jannah and bestow patience upon the family.

and can design customized academic programs, including scholarship options for Maldivian students.

NUML explores academic collaboration with Maldives

ISLAMABAD: High Commissioner of the Republic of Maldives to Pakistan, His Excellency Mohamed Thoha paid a courtesy call on the Rector National University of Modern Languages (NUML) on Tuesday.

NUML explores academic collaboration with Maldives

During the meeting, the Rector underscored the importance of strengthening academic and cultural ties between Pakistan and the Maldives.

NUML explores academic collaboration with Maldives

He briefed the visiting dignitary on NUML's academic profile, highlighting its strong focus on modern languages alongside expanding programs in computing and other emerging disci-



plines. The High Commissioner appreciated NUML's contribution to higher education and its role in promoting linguistic and cultural understanding.

The Rector shared that NUML offers student exchange opportunities, remains among the most affordable public-sector universities in Pakistan,

and can design customized academic programs, including scholarship options for Maldivian students.

The High Commissioner welcomed the initiative and noted strong interest from Maldivian students in language and IT-related programs.

Given the Maldives' tourism-driven economy, the Rector emphasized the importance of language proficiency and proposed the launch of synchronized (live interactive) online language programs as an initial step. The proposal was well received by the High Commissioner.

The High Commissioner invited the Rector and NUML's senior management to visit the Maldives to further explore institutional partnerships.

Clarification on Intra Party Elections of IPP

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Spokesman of Istehkam e Pakistan Party has clarified that Intra Party Elections have already been held. He told that last year in July 2025 Istehkam e Pakistan Party organised Elections within party. Moreover, results were submitted to Election Commission on which proper notification was also issued. Spokesman further clarified that in fact this news was regarding Istehkam Pakistan Tehrik (IPT) which doesn't relate to Istehkam Pakistan Party.

AC Kamalia Erum Shahzadi Chaired meeting with transporters

Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: Assistant Commissioner Kamalia Erum Shahzadi chaired an important meeting with transporters, which was attended by the Secretary of the District Regional Transport Authority (DRTA) Toba Tek Singh, traffic police officials and representatives of other relevant departments. During the meeting, a detailed review was conducted regarding the city's traffic situation, the ban on the entry of heavy traffic into the city and the issue of illegal wagon and bus stands. Addressing the participants, the Assistant Commissioner Erum Shahzadi issued clear directives to ensure strict enforcement of the ban on heavy vehicles entering the city so as to reduce traffic congestion and improve the overall flow of traffic for the convenience of citizens. She categorically stated that illegal wagon and bus stands would not be tolerated under any circumstances. All wagons and buses must operate strictly from the General Bus Stand. She emphasized that this step would not only improve traffic flow but also provide better facilities to passengers by centralizing transport operations at one location. The Assistant Commissioner directed the Secretary DRTA to take immediate and effective measures to make the General Bus Stand fully functional and well-organized. She further stressed that transport-related laws and regulations must be enforced strictly and indiscriminate action would be taken against violators.

Transporters also presented their issues and suggestions during the meeting, which were heard attentively. The administration assured them of full cooperation in resolving their concerns. The Assistant Commissioner reaffirmed the district administration's commitment to improving the city's traffic management system and eliminating illegal transport stands through all possible measures.

Sheikh Abdul Waheed Expresses Deep Sorrow Over the Martyrdom of the Supreme Commander

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Trader leader Sheikh Abdul Waheed strongly reacted to the recent attacks carried out by the United States and Israel, which resulted in the martyrdom of the Supreme Commander and escalating tensions spreading to Gulf countries. He stated that these incidents have plunged not only the Middle East but the entire region into uncertainty. The growing instability has created fear and anxiety among the public, while regional stability faces serious threats. He emphasized that the situation demands immediate attention and serious diplomatic efforts.

In his important statement, Sheikh Abdul Waheed said that the recent attacks have severely damaged regional peace and pushed the entire Middle East into a new wave of instability. He warned that the expansion of tensions to Gulf countries is highly alarming and could also impact global peace and the world economy. He stressed that the use of force only complicates matters further, making an immediate ceasefire imperative. He urged the international community to play an active role in restoring peace in the region and to take effective measures to resolve disputes through dialogue and diplomatic channels, in order to prevent further loss of life and property.

Dolphin Force arrests 67 criminals, checks over 6.38 lakh vehicles and citizens in February

FAISALABAD: Dolphin Force Faisalabad has arrested 67 criminals involved in serious offences and conducted extensive snap checking of more than 638,000 citizens and vehicles during February 2026.

According to police spokesman, the operations were carried out under the leadership of City Police Officer Sahibzada Bilal Umar.

During last month, the dolphin force apprehended 12 dangerous proclaimed offenders and 12 court absconders besides arresting 67 record-holder criminals.

The force conducted targeted operations against illegal weapons and arrested 20 accused, recovering arms and ammunition from their possession.

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Daulatpur Literature Festival 2025 and 2026

The Daulatpur Literature Festival is a special cultural and academic event that brings together writers, scholars, students, and lovers of literature from different areas. It is a literary and social gathering for men, women, youth, students, writers, poets, and thinkers. This festival is organized to promote literature, education, research, books, social awareness, and cultural understanding among people. It is a platform where ideas are shared, books are discussed, poetry is shared, and new thinkers are encouraged. The first and beginning of Daulatpur Literature Festival was held on 26 and 27 February 2025, from 12 noon to 8 pm.

That large literary festival was organized by the "Dawn Study Circle Daulatpur District Shaheed Benazirabad" and was held in Dawn School Daulatpur, where thousands of students from the city and surrounding villages participated. The event featured book launches, poetry sessions, and discussions on various topics. The two-day festival included the launch of eight different books and numerous discussion sessions. Notable writers and poets such as Mehmood Bukhari, Shabbir Kumbhar, Ustaad Laghari, Bakhsh Ali Chandio, and M. Juman Kumbhar, Mola Bux Burro, Zahid Hussain Soomro, Prof. Ahmed Khayam Mahar, and Mumtaz Khadim Memon were also present. The discussions covered various topics, including employment opportunities for youth, information technology, women's education, and social development. Youth,

and community members actively participated in the sessions, with a consensus that to achieve progress, people must read the works of Hazrat Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai (RA) and follow his teachings.

By continuing efforts, the current Second Daulatpur Literature festival, organized on 14 and 15 February 2026 from 10 AM to 7 PM, at Government Girls College Daulatpur, organized by Dawn Study Circle Daulatpur, in collaboration with Government Girls & Boys Degree Colleges Daulatpur, is dedicated to Late Professor Ghulam Muhammad Lakhro. The event included academic sessions/Education, career counseling, literary discussions, research talks, poetry gatherings, Science, and cultural programs. This festival is not only for teachers and scholars but also for students and the general public who are interested in literature and knowledge.

The main purpose of the Daulatpur Literature Festival is to strengthen the culture of reading, writing, and research in the region. The organizers want to encourage students and young writers to take an interest in literature, language, and critical thinking. Another important goal is to connect local writers and scholars with national and international academic trends. Through discussions, participants learnt about modern

research methods and new literary movements. The festival also promotes peace, dialogue, and respect for diversity through literature and culture.

The festival started with an inaugural session on 14 February 2026. Professor Muhammad Suleman Siyal, Regional Director of Colleges, SBA, Prof Irshad Ali Otho, and others inaugurated the 2nd Literature festival. In this session, respected scholars, professors, and education leaders delivered speeches on the importance of literature and education in society. They discussed how literature shapes thinking, builds identity, and strengthens communities. After the opening, several academic and literary sessions were held. Experts and professors from universities and colleges presented their ideas. Students also got a chance to listen, learn, and ask questions.

Following respected scholars and guests were invited to chair sessions, present their research work, and share their experiences including Dr. Tania Laghari HOD English Department SBBU SBA (Importance of English Language), Madam Benazir Junejo Principal Dr. IH Zuberi Girls college of Home economics Hyderabad, Professor Ahmed Khayam Mahar, Dr Shah Murad Chandio Assistant Professor University of Sindh Jamsoro (career Counseling), Mr Niaz Hussain Ujjan (career Counseling), Mashooque Dharejo, Ustaad Laghari,

Shabir Kumbhar, Phulloo Sundar Meghwar, Dr. Mushtaque Ahmed Rahu (Research), Dr. Iqar Ali Palli (Research), Dr. Abdul Haleem Panhwar (Research), Muhammad Ameen Keerio and others.

Students will benefit greatly from this festival. They will learn from experts, explore new ideas, and develop an interest in reading, writing, and research. Such exposure is very important for their intellectual growth.

The Daulatpur Literature Festival is not just an academic event; it is a community celebration. It brings people together from different backgrounds and creates a space for dialogue and understanding. Literature helps people understand each other's stories, cultures, and struggles.

The organizers have worked hard to prepare a detailed program, invite scholars, and arrange sessions smoothly. Their effort shows their commitment to promoting education and literature in the region. Such initiatives are very important for the development of society. The Daulatpur Literature Festival 2026 is a landmark event for students, teachers, writers, and literature lovers. It is a celebration of knowledge, creativity, and culture. This festival will not only enrich academic life but also bring people together through the power of words. It is a step toward a brighter future where literature, education, and culture are valued and promoted for generations to come. In the End Shields were presented to the presenters, Zohaib Ali Dahri and Khalid Hussain Channa, Vice Chairman of SGA, who were present at the final certificate ceremony.



Analysis

Dr. Mushtaque Ahmed Rahu

Pakistan calls for resolving conflicts to save children's future and protect educational

Pakistan has told a historic session of the UN Security Council, presided over by US First Lady Melania Trump, that the most effective way to protect children and their right to education is to resolve festering conflicts in accordance with the 15-member body's resolutions, the UN Charter and international law, while highlighting the grave situation in Palestine and Kashmir.

Speaking in the Council's debate on 'Children, Technology and Education in Conflict', Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, said, "Across conflict zones around the world, including situations of foreign occupation, notably Palestine and Jammu and Kashmir, millions of children are growing up amid rubble and chaos, rather than classrooms and calm."

Schools, he added, have been destroyed, damaged or militarized, teachers displaced and digital networks disrupted.

"Education systems — already fragile — have been pushed to the brink of collapse," the Pakistani envoy said.

At the same time, Ambassador Asim Ahmad said while conflicts persist, we have an obligation to ensure that no child's future is extinguished by circumstances beyond their control.

Monday's Security Council was convened by the United States, which holds its presidency, for the month of March.

It met under extraordinary circumstances: amid US-Israeli air strikes against Iran, and widening instability in the Middle East, with repeated calls from the UN for restraint by all sides, as the Council turned its attention to a long-standing but under-addressed crisis facing children in war zones.

Presiding over the meeting, Mrs. Trump, said that the United States "stands with all of the children throughout the world."

The first lady's speech marked the first time a first lady from any country has had the gavel.

In his remarks, Ambassador Asim Ahmad welcomed the "Fostering the Future Together Initiative" of the U. S. First Lady, aimed at building a global coalition committed to enhancing children's well-being through the promotion of education, innovation and technology, saying, "Pakistan is pleased to join this initiative."

"The issue before us is not simply about innovation and technology — it is about safeguarding human dignity and ensuring that conflict does not steal the future of an entire generation," the Pakistan envoy added.

The erosion of education in conflict settings is not incidental, he pointed out, adding it was often systematic, compounding trauma and perpetuating cycles of conflict.

"When education is interrupted over extended periods, it creates generational consequences that extend far beyond the immediate conflict."

Education was not merely a service; it is a stabilizing and securing force, he said. "When denied, children become more vulnerable to exploitation, trafficking, recruitment and radicalization. When protected, education fosters resilience, critical thinking, and hope."

Digital platforms and mobile learning tools can reach displaced or isolated children in conflict situations, the Pakistani envoy said.

"Remote instruction can sustain continuity when physical classrooms are inaccessible. Emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, offer opportunities for personalized learning and inclusive education."

Yet, he emphasized that technology must be governed with vigilance, for access without safeguards poses risks. "Digital environments can expose children to exploitation, disinformation, misinformation, hate speech, surveillance, and abuse."



Cartoon by Amjad Rasmil. (Courtesy of Ashfaq Al-Awsat)

From News to Notoriety: How Social Media Stars Undermine Public Office

Across Pakistan, a troubling trend is rapidly emerging: certain YouTubers and self-styled, unregistered "dummy" journalists are presenting selfies and staged photographs with government officials as symbols of professional success and influence. This behavior not only undermines the dignity of journalism but also raises serious questions about administrative transparency and public trust.

The glitter of social media, the chase for likes and followers, has pushed real public issues into the background. Where journalism's core mission is to highlight citizens' problems, ensure accountability, and deliver facts impartially, some elements have reduced it to a tool for personal publicity and self-interest. Photographs with government officials are presented in a manner suggesting special access or endorsement, even when reality may be quite different.

This trend is particularly visible in Multan, where certain YouTubers are frequently seen at government events alongside the Commissioner and CPO of Multan. Surprisingly, some of these individuals already face cases filed by authorities for alleged blackmail and other charges. Yet, their photographs with officials create a public perception of backing by influential circles.

These images are later leveraged as "influence." Displayed in government offices, they are used to push both legitimate and illegitimate agendas, undermining administrative credibility, merit, and the rule of law. Ordinary citizens, who spend years navigating offices for legitimate concerns, feel powerless in this unequal environment.

The foundation of public administration rests on impartiality, transparency, and trust. When officials cross professional boundaries and engage in unnecessary public displays with select journalists or social media personalities, the consequences are profound: Erosion of impartiality; Government officials are custodians of public office, and their actions reflect institutional credibility. Repeated prominent appearances with select individuals create a perception of favoritism, weakening meritocracy and administrative justice.

Risk of misuse of authority: In the past, social media has been misused for blackmail and pressure in Pakistan. The Federal Investigation Agency has filed cybercrime and blackmail cases against self-styled journalists and YouTubers. When such individuals display photographs with officials as leverage, these images could be used to influence government decisions improperly.

Damage to institutional dignity: In major administrative centers like Multan, if a few YouTubers are constantly seen with top officials, it raises questions about whether public offices have become platforms for social media promotion. This perception also harms legitimate journalism, blurring the line between real and fake reporters.

Neglect of public issues: Focus shifts from governance, service delivery, and accountability to visual representation. Consequently, citizens' core issues—law and order, health, education, municipal services—take a backseat to social media's sparkle.

Promotion of inequality and resentment: Ordinary citizens observing these preferential treatments conclude that access and connections matter more than competence, weakening trust between the state and the public.

Because of these self-promoting social media personalities, genuine journalists find it increasingly difficult to gain access to senior officials. Some registered reporters or columnists reach offices without formal permission, while responsible journalists advocating public concerns are barred entry.

Meanwhile, serious columnists and those members of the literary and journalistic community who approach these offices to represent public concerns are stopped right at the door. Often, when journalists like us visit the Commissioner's Office or the CPO's Office with public

Continued on Page 7



Analysis

Zain-ul-Abideen Abid

A Fragile Pause: Can the U. S. Peace Plan Bridge the Chasm Between Israel and Hamas?

Since October 2025, a fragile ceasefire has taken hold in the Gaza Strip, offering a tentative respite from a devastating cycle of violence. This truce, the first phase of an ambitious U.S.-brokered peace plan, represents a significant diplomatic achievement. However, beneath the surface of this calm, the fundamental issues fueling the conflict remain unresolved, leaving the region suspended between hope for lasting peace and the precipice of renewed warfare.

The ceasefire has yielded tangible, if painful, results. In a complex humanitarian exchange, Hamas released all remaining living hostages. In return, Israel freed approximately 2,000 Palestinian prisoners and withdrew its military forces to a predetermined line within Gaza. For families on both sides, this phase has brought a measure of relief.

Yet, the truce is anything but stable. The implementation has been marred by mutual distrust, with both sides routinely accusing each other of violations. Sporadic clashes and rhetoric from hardliners threaten to undermine the painstakingly negotiated agreement at any moment. This fragility underscores a critical truth: a pause in fighting is not the same as a path to peace.

The underlying reality making this ceasefire so precarious is the catastrophic humanitarian situation in Gaza. Years of blockade and repeated military operations have left the territory's infrastructure in ruins. Clean water is scarce, the healthcare system is on the brink of collapse, and the economy is non-existent. This immense human suffering fuels further radicalization and ensures that, without sustainable improvement, Gaza will remain a tinderbox.

Beyond immediate humanitarian needs, the most significant obstacle to a lasting solution is the post-war governance impasse. The U. S. plan envisions a future Gaza governed by neither Hamas nor Israel. It proposes a temporary technocratic committee of Palestinians to

administer the territory, supported by an international stabilization force tasked with disarming Hamas and ensuring security.

This vision, however, has hit an insurmountable wall of opposition from Hamas. The group, which has de facto controlled Gaza since 2007, flatly rejects disarmament, viewing its military wing as central to its identity. Similarly, it opposes an international force, which it views as a foreign entity aligned with Israel. Without Hamas's cooperation—or its decisive defeat—the U. S. plan for Gaza's governance is a blueprint without a builder.

This impasse returns the conflict to its core question: what is the endgame? The internationally endorsed framework remains the two-state solution: an independent State of Palestine living side-by-side with Israel. The U. S. plan, despite its current focus on the post-war interim period, is rooted in this dialogue. It aims to create the conditions—demilitarization and a unified Palestinian government—that could eventually make a two-state reality viable.

However, the path forward is obstructed by key actors on both sides who are deeply invested in the status quo. For the two-state solution to move from a talking point to reality, it requires a level of trust and compromise that is currently absent. It demands that Palestinian factions accept the principle of non-violence, and it requires the Israeli government to engage with a legitimate partner committed to peace.

The fragile ceasefire is a testament to the power of diplomacy to halt immediate bloodshed. But a truce is not a treaty. The underlying drivers of the conflict—the humanitarian catastrophe, Hamas's uncompromising stance, and the deep-seated opposition to a two-state solution—remain unaddressed. If the international community cannot bridge the chasm between this fragile pause and a viable political horizon, this moment of quiet will be remembered not as a beginning, but as a brief, lost opportunity



Analysis

Khalil Rehman Gharshin

Minister Aleem Khan and Tajik Ambassador Discuss Strategic Trade Corridor Via Gilgit

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan met with the Ambassador of Tajikistan to Pakistan, H. E. Sharifzoda Yusuf Toir, to hold extensive discussions on enhancing bilateral relations, regional land connectivity, and trade cooperation.

During the high-level meeting, both sides emphasized the need to adapt to evolving regional dynamics through effective strategies.

In a significant move to bolster economic ties, a proposal was presented to establish a direct land corridor from Pakistan to Tajikistan via Gilgit, while the Tajik Ambassador also proposed that Pakistan consider offering special concessional tariffs to Central Asian states to expand the volume of bilateral trade.

Addressing the regional security

situation, Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan issued a strong condemnation of terrorism entering Pakistan from Afghanistan, terming such conduct as unacceptable and detrimental to regional peace and stability.

The Minister remarked that by acting as a proxy for India, Afghanistan has demonstrated an obstructive stance that negatively impacts not only Pakistan but also the broader Central Asian region.

He reaffirmed that significant growth in international trade is contingent upon improving communication and transport infrastructure, noting that enhancing trade activities with Central Asian States would prove instrumental for Pakistan's economic stability.

Ambassador Sharifzoda Yusuf Toir expressed the keen interest of Tajikistan's 15 million people in developing closer cooperation with their 250

million brothers and sisters in Pakistan.

He highlighted that the establishment of new trade routes would open unprecedented avenues for economic activity and prosperity across the region.

The Ambassador also extended a formal invitation to Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan to visit Tajikistan, which the Minister accepted, expressing his willingness to undertake the visit in the near future to provide practical shape to the proposed areas of cooperation.

The meeting concluded with a mutual resolve to modernize trade routes and strengthen bilateral ties to achieve sustainable development.

Both leaders reaffirmed their commitment to making Pak-Tajik cooperation more effective, ensuring that improved connectivity leads to shared prosperity for both nations and the wider region.



Hazara University students receive laptops under Prime Minister Youth Programme

Abdul Waheed Khan

MANSEHRA: Laptops were distributed to students studying in various academic and research departments of Hazara University Mansehra under the Prime Minister Youth Programme. The ceremony was attended by Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Sardar Muhammad Yousaf, as the chief guest. Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Ikramullah Khan, Pro Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Ghulam Mujtaba Shah, and Deans of Hazara University, Professor Dr. Inam, Dr. Shakerullah Khan, and Dr. Wajid, welcomed the Federal Minister and briefed him on the distribution of laptops and the development of the university.

Addressing the ceremony, Federal Minister Sardar Muhammad Yousaf said that the Prime Minister Youth Programme is a revolutionary initiative of the Pakistan government aimed at equipping the youth with digital facilities to align them with modern requirements. He stated that the provision of laptops will enable students to access research, study, and learn new skills, making them compet-



itive at the global level.

He emphasized that today's world is moving towards a digital economy, and Pakistani youth must utilize modern technology to progress. The Federal Minister thanked Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif for prioritizing the education and digital empowerment of the youth, saying it will have positive impacts on national development in the future.

Sardar Muhammad Yousaf praised the academic and research performance of Hazara University, stating that under the leadership of Professor

Dr. Ikramullah Khan, the university is progressing towards development. He said launching modern educational programs is a necessity, and Hazara University is achieving the desired goals under Professor Dr. Ikramullah Khan's leadership.

He appreciated the increase in student interest in modern educational fields, the rise in student numbers, and improvements in provincial, national, and international rankings as proof of the university's effective leadership. The Federal Minister welcomed the approval of the revised PC-1 for the

university's mega project, saying it will further improve infrastructure and educational facilities.

Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Ikramullah Khan also addressed the ceremony, stating that the university has launched the BS Nursing program, and the provincial government has provided a building for it. He expressed his desire for the establishment of a medical college during his tenure.

The Vice Chancellor thanked the political leaders of Hazara, especially Mansehra, for their cooperation in the university's development. He said Hazara University provides modern educational and research facilities to students and ensures special arrangements for differently-abled students.

He added that the university's Islamic Center delivers Friday sermons on contemporary issues, contributing to societal positive training. He requested the Federal Minister to upgrade the Islamic Center to enhance religious and intellectual activities.

The ceremony was attended by Deans of the four faculties, professors, faculty members, and heads of administrative departments.

IRS Convenes Pre-COP 31 Dialogue on Pakistan's Climate Agenda



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) convened an Eminent Talk with Senator Zarqa Suharwardy Taimur as an inaugural Pre-COP31 dialogue on "Strengthening Climate Governance in Pakistan." The event brought together policymakers, researchers, and practitioners to deliberate on institutional reforms, legislative priorities, and implementation gaps within the country's climate governance framework.

In his opening remarks, Amb Jauhar Saleem, President IRS, noted that global temperatures are now as warm as at any point in the last 125,000 years, underscoring the unprecedented scale of current warming. He cautioned that if this trajectory continues, severe risks to ecosystems, food security, and global stability will become inevitable.

Delivering the address, Dr. Zarqa reflected on Pakistan's fragmented policy landscape, observing that contradictory decisions often undermine progress in long-term carbon markets and climate adaptation initiatives. She highlighted that although Pakistan actively participates in international climate negotiations and receives climate finance, structural weaknesses and limited empowerment of local governments continue to hinder effective implementation at the grassroots level.

Mr. Talha Tufail Bhatti, Lead, Climate Governance & Policy Program at IRS, remarked that at a time of political polarization and declining trust in institutions, climate governance must transcend electoral cycles and short-term policy horizons. A shift in mindset from unintended environmental degradation to intentional planetary stewardship is essential to ensuring sustainable and equitable climate action.

Don't be deterred by a lack of hard data, says ACCA guidance on sustainability reporting

News Desk

LAHORE: Data-related challenges are among the most significant obstacles preventing organisations from producing reliable sustainability information. ACCA's latest report Sustainability reporting: working with estimates provides practical guidance on how to create sustainability information when data is incomplete, uncertain or unavailable.

Organisations are currently working with imperfect data to create sustainability information. When hard figures aren't available, organisations may use reasonable and supportable information to make assumptions of a present or a future situation, to guide decisions.

Aaron Saw, Head of Corporate Reporting Insights - Financial at ACCA said: 'As sustainability reporting requirements are still evolving, and globally accepted measurement methodologies for sustainability information have not been established, this guide provides valuable support to organisations everywhere as they begin the reporting process.'

The report explores the current approaches to estimate sustainability information for present situations. These approaches include using third-party or proxy data and deriving sustainability data from financial and other data.

Al-Shifa Trust surgeons remove eye tumor in cross-border care

Spokesman Report

RAWALPINDI: Surgeons at Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital have removed a massive congenital eye tumour from a six-year-old Somali girl, preventing the growth from spreading to her brain after years of unsuccessful treatment attempts abroad.

The child, Nimoh, was born with a tumour affecting one eye. According to hospital officials, her family sought medical help in multiple countries but could not access definitive treatment. By the time she reached Rawalpindi, prolonged irritation and repeated rubbing had worsened the condition, and doctors determined that vision in the affected eye had already been permanently lost.

Dr Tayyab Afgani, head of the hospital's ophthalmology department, said the tumour had expanded



steadily and posed a life-threatening risk. "Removing the mass was essential to prevent further spread and potentially fatal complications," he said.

A multidisciplinary surgical team carried out a complex procedure to remove the tumour, working around delicate nerves and blood vessels. The



operation was completed without major complications. Afgani

confirmed that the immediate threat to her life has been eliminated, and she remains under post-operative observation.

Dr Tayyab Afgani said cases reflect the consequences of delayed access to specialised care. According to the World Health Organisation, at least 2.2 billion people worldwide live with some form of vision impairment, with the majority residing in low and middle-income countries where specialist services are limited. In South Asia and parts of Africa, untreated childhood eye conditions continue to contribute to preventable blindness.

Nimoh is recovering well, doctors said, and will continue follow-up care in the coming weeks. For her family, the surgery marks the first sustained medical breakthrough after years of uncertainty.

UAE Urges De-escalation and Reaffirms Civilian Safety Amid Rising Regional Tensions

Amjad Mehmood

In a tense and highly consequential interview with CNN anchor Becky Anderson, Reem bint Ebrahim Al Hashimy, UAE Minister of State for International Cooperation, addressed the escalating security crisis gripping the Gulf region following the killing of Iran's Supreme Leader and Tehran's subsequent missile and drone attacks. Speaking from Dubai, she conveyed both urgency and reassurance as she detailed the scale of the strikes, the effectiveness of the United Arab Emirates' air-defence systems, and the government's determination to protect civilians and infrastructure. The conversation explored the risks of further regional escalation, the UAE's strategic posture toward Iran and its allies, and the

continued emphasis on diplomacy despite mounting hostilities. Throughout the interview, Al Hashimy sought to balance calls for calm with firm warnings against unlawful aggression, while delivering a clear message to residents that national leadership, security forces, and international partnerships remain fully mobilized to safeguard stability in an increasingly volatile environment. She said the United Arab Emirates remains committed to diplomacy and civilian protection amid escalating regional tensions following recent military developments in the Gulf.

Speaking to CNN anchor Becky Anderson, Al Hashimy described the situation as "deeply concerning" and reiterated the UAE's longstanding position in favour of dialogue and de-escalation.



"This is a moment that we had hoped to avoid," she said. "The UAE has consistently encouraged restraint and dialogue, and we continue to believe that diplomacy is the only viable path forward for our region."

She confirmed that UAE air defence systems had intercepted incoming projectiles and that authorities were fully mobilized to protect infrastructure and resi-

dents. "We have advanced defence capabilities and are taking all necessary measures to ensure the safety and security of people living in the UAE," Al Hashimy stated.

Addressing concerns among residents following loud interception activity, she sought to reassure the public:

"These sounds are the result of

defensive interceptions. Where damage has occurred, it has largely been limited to debris. We want residents and visitors to know that leadership, security forces and civil defence teams are working continuously to maintain stability."

When asked about the possibility of further escalation, Al Hashimy said the UAE remained firm in its call for calm while retaining its right to self-defence.

"We do not seek confrontation, but we will not stand idle in the face of unlawful aggression. Our preference remains de-escalation, and we are working with international partners to prevent further deterioration."

On regional diplomacy, she emphasized that dialogue with neighbouring countries must remain open:

"The door to diplomacy never closes. Iran is a neighbour to the



UAE and always will be. Stability in our shared region requires mutual respect and adherence to international law."

Regarding relations with the United States, Al Hashimy reaffirmed the strength of strategic ties while stressing the UAE's independent foreign policy:

"We maintain strong partnerships with the United States and with countries across the region. Our objective is to prevent further conflict and avoid another devastating war in the Middle East."

In her closing remarks, Al

Hashimy delivered a message of reassurance to citizens and expatriates:

"You are safe with a leadership that is committed to your protection. Our defence forces, law enforcement agencies and emergency services are fully engaged. The UAE will leave no stone unturned to preserve security for Emiratis, residents and visitors alike."

The interview was broadcast on CNN as regional leaders continued consultations aimed at preventing further escalation.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
157,132.09	151,972.99
Day's High	Day's Low
158,217.01	151,258.85
Index Value	Change
38,086,382,388	+5159.10
Percentage	Time
+3.39%	3 Mar, 2026 4:30 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
10,453.85	-326.26
Percentage	Time
-3.03%	3 Mar, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
48,024.31	-880.47
Percentage	Time
-1.80%	3 Mar, 11:31 am GMT-5

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
56,279.05	-1,778.19
Percentage	Time
-3.06%	3 Mar, 3:45 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	192.76	197.25
Bahrain Dinar	730.12	740.70
Canadian Dollar	199.07	206
China Yuan	38	39.05
Danish Krone	43.32	43.72
Euro	323.40	328.28
Hong Kong Dollar	34.46	35.31
Indian Rupee	2.5	3.05
Japanese Yen	1.7234	1.8234
Kuwaiti Dinar	884.30	896.30
Malaysian Ringgit	64.50	68.55
New Zealand \$	164.20	167
Norwegians Krone	27.61	27.91
Omani Riyal	715.85	725.60
Qatari Riyal	74.75	77.69
Saudi Riyal	73.50	74.50
Singapore Dollar	213.53	218.53
Swedish Korona	30.15	30.45
Swiss Franc	355	358.85
Thai Bhat	6.5	7.25
U.A.E Dirham	74.55	75.50
UK Pound Sterling	370.60	377.98
US Dollar	279.1	280.60

Number of individuals benefiting from digital banking surpasses 127m: PM told

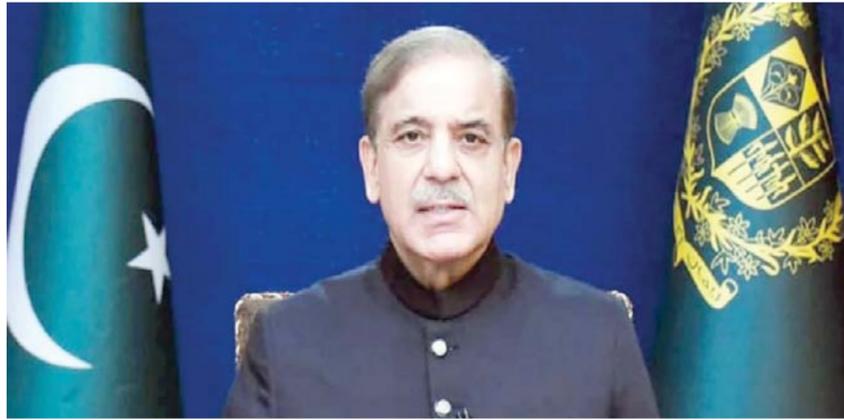
Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: A meeting with Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, on Tuesday, was apprised that the number of individuals benefiting from digital banking in the country exceeded to 127 million.

The prime minister commended the economic team and the State Bank of Pakistan for shifting salaries, pensions and vendor payments by the federal and provincial governments to the 'Raast' digital payment system.

The prime minister chaired a review meeting on the promotion of cashless economy in the country.

During the meeting, it was apprised that from a period of July 2025 to January 2026, payments amounting to worth Rs 1.6 trillion were made through Raast by the federal and provincial govern-



ments.

The prime minister appreciated the ministry of finance team for the achievement.

The meeting was attended by Ministers Muhammad Aurangzeb, Ahad Khan Cheema, Attaullah Tarar, Shaza Fatima

The prime minister directed that targets set for the digital payments system be achieved within the stipulated time frame.

Khawaja, Ali Pervaiz Malik, Minister of State Bilal Azhar Kayani, Governor State Bank Jameel Ahmad, provincial chief secretaries and other senior officials, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The prime minister directed all government institutions to provide QR codes on all bills to facilitate citizens for making payments.

The ministry of finance, the State Bank, BISP, the ministry of information technology and other relevant institutions briefed the meeting on measures taken to promote digital payments in the country.

A briefing was also given on the dashboard related to the digital payments ecosystem.

The craftsman

RAWALPINDI: A worker busy in making fancy tiles at his roadside workplace along IJP Road, in the city.

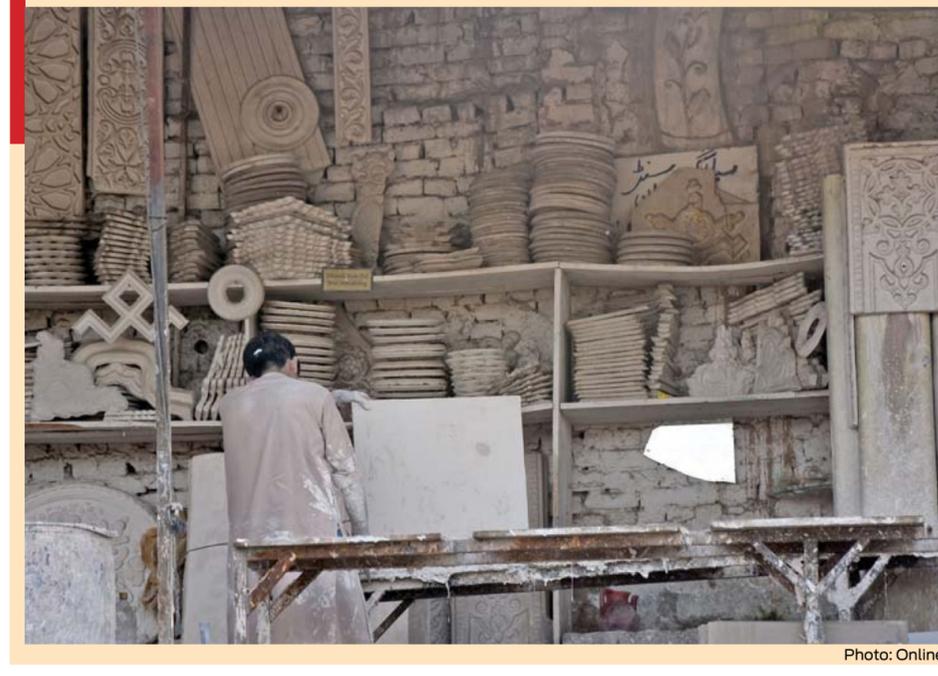


Photo: Online

S. M. Tanveer and Saquib Fayyaz Magoon Call for 50% Fee Concession for Women Chambers



Commerce Desk

KARACHI: S. M. Tanveer, Patron-in-Chief of United Business Group (UBG) and former Provincial Minister, along with Saquib Fayyaz Magoon, Chairman of BMP-Progressive and Senior Vice President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI), have jointly urged the Directorate General of Trade Organizations (DGTO) and the Ministry of Commerce to grant a 50% reduction in the prescribed fee for amendment in Memorandum and Articles of Association for Women Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

S. M. Tanveer stated that facilitating Women Chambers at this critical juncture would reinforce the government's commitment to women empowerment and inclusive economic growth. He stressed that regulatory compliance should not become an additional financial burden for institutions working to uplift women entrepreneurs.

Saquib Fayyaz Magoon underscored that a special concession of 50% in the prescribed fee would significantly ease the financial pressure on Women Chambers and enable them to continue their vital role in enhancing women's economic participation.

Mobilink Bank, SEDF join forces to offer inclusive MSME financing for Sindh's growth sectors

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's leading digital microfinance bank, Mobilink Bank, has entered into a five-year partnership with Sindh Enterprise Development Fund (SEDF), Government of Sindh, to expand access to structured financing for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) across priority economic sectors in the province. The collaboration will unlock up to PKR 1 billion in financing by combining Mobilink Bank's lending capabilities with SEDF's markup subsidy support to reduce the cost of capital for entrepreneurs and stimulate sustainable economic activity province-wide.

Commenting on the partnership, Haaris Mahmood Chaudhary, President & CEO, Mobilink Bank, said, "Small businesses are the backbone of Pakistan's real economy. They drive employment, power local communities, and sustain regional value chains, yet many entrepreneurs continue to face structural barriers in accessing affordable finance. Through our partner-



ship with SEDF, we are aligning financial innovation with policy support to expand access where it is needed most. We want to channel affordable capital directly to local entrepreneurs, enable bottom-up economic growth, and unlock sustainable livelihoods across the province. This collaboration is about strengthening small businesses today to build a more resilient and inclusive economy for tomorrow."

Zubair Ahmed Channa, Secretary,

Investment Department, Government of Sindh, underscored the Government's commitment to strengthening institutional financing ecosystems that support productive sectors across the province. He stated that structured collaborations such as this agreement reinforce policy alignment between the public and private sectors while creating scalable financial pathways for SMEs operating in Sindh's value-added industries.

CBD Punjab Allocates 55.9 Acres for Green Development at Nsit City

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Punjab Central Business District Development Authority (PCBDDA), also known as Central Business District Punjab (CBD Punjab), has announced another landmark eco-friendly initiative with the allocation of 55.9 acres for green area at CBD NSIT City which is being developed as Pakistan's premiere and largest IT city. This strategic development underscores CBD Punjab's commitment to balancing rapid urban growth with environmental sustainability. Chief Executive Officer CBD Punjab, Imran Amin,

stated: CBD Punjab is not only driving economic and urban development but is equally committed to environmental improvement. The allocation of 55.9 acres for green spaces at NSIT City reflects our vision of sustainable growth where progress and environmental responsibility go hand in hand.

He further added, We are working in line with the vision of Chief Minister Punjab, Maryam Nawaz Sharif, ensuring that CBD Punjab plays a pivotal role in the province's development while prioritizing environmental protection and urban excellence."

FESCO Approves Marriage Grants for Children of 30 Retired, Deceased Employees

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: On the special instructions of Chief Executive FESCO Engineer Muhammad Amir, FESCO administration is taking various steps for the welfare of FESCO employees. In this regard, 30 retired and deceased employees of different cadres of FESCO have been approved for marriage grant towards the expenses on the marriage of their children. Orders have been issued to release Rs 2 lakh each to the children of retired and deceased employees for marriage. According

to FESCO spokesperson, these steps for the welfare of employees are not just a temporary process but part of a continuous policy, which will continue in the future as well. He said that FESCO administration will continue to take more such steps to improve the quality of life of employees and their families. This step of FESCO is a clear example of FESCO's commitment to the welfare of employees. Those who received a grant of Rs 2 lakh include Ismat Bibi, widow of Saleem Akhtar, Kanceez Fatima, widow of Tariq Masood, Shahnaz Kausar, retired assistant admin, Nasrallah Khan,

retired MRSS, Muhammad Habib, retired meter reader, Khalid Hussain, retired LS second, Sarwar Ali, retired lorry driver, Ghulam Sabir, retired lineman one, Muhammad Arshad, retired lineman two, Muhammad Butari, retired deputy messenger, Abdul Rashid, retired accounts assistant, Saeed Ahmed, retired lineman one, Muhammad Ramzan, retired lorry driver, Hidayat Ali, retired LS second, Safdar Ali, retired line foreman one, Ali Asghar, retired lineman two, Nisar Ahmed, retired assistant lineman, Zafar Iqbal, retired LS second, Tufel Shah, retired LS



second, Dil Khurram, lineman one, M. Yasin, retired watchman, Ahmed Hayat Javed, retired watchman, Arif Ali Shah, retired watchman and Arshad Ali, retired deputy messenger.

FESCO employees appreciated this initiative of FESCO Chief Executive Engineer Muhammad Amir and expressed hope that this series will continue in the future.

Pakistan's Economy Could Be at Risk in the Current Situation, Warns; Syed Aman Shah



Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Syed Aman Shah, Provincial Convener of Awaam Pakistan Party Balochistan, has stated that immediate and effective government measures have become unavoidable to safeguard Pakistan's economy amid the ongoing conflict in the Middle East. He warned that without timely planning, escalating global tensions could directly impact Pakistan's economic stability.

He said that millions of Pakistani workers are employed in various Middle Eastern countries, and any escalation of war or imposition of economic sanctions could disrupt remittances, which serve as the backbone of the national economy. Similarly, rising oil prices and shortages in the global market could lead to a new wave of inflation, placing an additional burden directly on the public.

Syed Aman Shah emphasized that the government should urgently convene a meeting of economic experts, the business community and stakeholders from the energy sector to announce a comprehensive economic protection package. He stressed the need to increase strategic oil reserves, accelerate alternative energy projects, and diversify exports without delay.

Multan Sultans stage HBL PSL comeback ahead of 11th edition

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: The HBL Pakistan Super League (PSL) franchise operating as Sialkot Stallions has officially been renamed to Multan Sultans, HBL PSL Chief Executive Officer Salman Naseer announced on Tuesday during a press conference at Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore.

OZ Developers acquired the Sialkot Stallions franchise for PKR 18.5 billion for 10 years during a Team Auction in Islamabad and has now entered into a strategic partnership with CD Ventures. Gohar Shah has been appointed the Chief Executive Officer for the franchise. Gohar was also among the bidders in the record-breaking auction (Multan Sultans) which was held in Lahore, but lost out on getting the team.

The announcement for today's strategic partnership was made in the presence of Gohar Shah and Hamza Majeed, who addressed the media alongside the HBL PSL CEO. After the strategic partnership, Gohar, who hails from South Punjab, in his first act as CEO made a request to the PCB to change the name of Sialkot Stallions to Multan Sultans. This request was accepted by the PCB upon payment of a one-time license fee and an increase in the Franchise Fee. The 10 year Franchise agreement was amended to reflect a total of PKR 20 billion as the new franchise fee.

The 11th edition of the HBL PSL is



set to commence on 26 March, with the opening match between Lahore Qalandars and Hyderabad Kingsmen scheduled to take place at Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore.

The opening fixture was also officially confirmed by Salman Naseer during the press conference.

Welcoming the development, Salman Naseer said "We welcome Gohar Shah on board as the new CEO of Multan Sultans and to the HBL PSL family.

"The voices of our fans from South Punjab have been heard as New Sultans now take the reigns of the Stallions.

"To our amazing Sialkot fans, we understand the nostalgia and the love you had for the Sialkot Stallions. While the team may have a new home in Multan, the spirit of Sialkot's passion and cricketing legacy lives on and we will find ways to make it up to you! Many chapters still remain unwritten in the New Era."

Speaking on the occasion, newly appointed Multan Sultans CEO Gohar Shah said "Bringing Multan Sultans back to represent the people of South Punjab is both a privilege and a responsibility.

"This franchise carries a proud legacy and our commitment is to build on that foundation with professionalism, stability and a brand of cricket that excites our fans and strengthens Pakistan's game at every level."

World Wildlife Day 2026 observed at Margallah Hills National Park

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Wildlife Management Board observed World Wildlife Day 2026 on Tuesday here at Trail-05, Margalla Hills National Park, under the global theme: "Medicinal and Aromatic Plants: Conserving Health, Heritage and Livelihoods."

Margalla Hills National Park, covering 15,000 hectares, is a vibrant living pharmacy as the park hosts 245 plant species from 77 families, of which 159 species (65%) are used in native medicinal systems, and over 200 medicinal plant species have been documented.

Speaking on the occasion, the speakers highlighted the conservation of native medicinal plants, threats from habitat loss, forest fires, overharvesting, and climate change, and the need for sustainable practices, research, and community engagement. An educational walk briefed participants on the medicinal importance of local plant species.

Representatives from the Ministry of Climate Change & Environmental Coordination, park management, Zoological Survey of Pakistan, environmental experts, and volunteers reaffirmed their commitment to biodiversity conservation.

World Wildlife Day reinforces that protecting plant biodiversity is essential for human health and ecological sustainability.



Top Pakistani Cleric Condemns US-Israel Attacks on Iran, Mourns Khamenei's Death

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Allama Syed Riaz Hussain Shah, Patron-in-Chief of Idara Taleemat-e-Islamia Pakistan, expressed profound grief and sorrow over the loss of life and property, including the martyrdom of Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, as a result of the attacks on Iran

by the United States and Israel. He called for an immediate ceasefire and urged that the matter be resolved through dialogue and negotiations.

In his important statement, Allama Syed Riaz Hussain Shah said that the news of the martyrdom of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has plunged the Muslim world

into mourning and described the tragedy as an irreparable loss for the Muslim Ummah. He further stated that the bombings and military operations carried out in various parts of the Middle East have resulted in the loss of precious human lives, left many civilians injured, and caused severe damage to infrastructure. As a consequence, millions of

people are being forced to live in an atmosphere of fear and insecurity. He appealed to the international community to immediately halt the escalating tensions in the region and to seek solutions through negotiations and diplomatic channels rather than the use of force, in order to prevent further destruction and bloodshed.



Faisalabad Media Gathers as PTCL & Ufone Pledge 5G Future

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: PTCL and Ufone organized their annual Iftar dinner for friends of print and electronic media at Serena Hotel.

In which senior journalists from the print and electronic media of Faisalabad participated in full force. On this occasion, Mr. Amir Pasha Group Director PR, Media, CSR and Corporate Communication, PTCL & Ufone 4G, and Muhammad Awais, Media Manager, Asiatic Public Relations Network welcomed the guests.

Talking to journalists, Mr. Amir Pasha said that very soon, like other countries, the people of Pakistan will also benefit from the facility of the fastest technology 5G, for which Ufone has completed its preparations. He said that all telecommunication companies are making their own preparations regarding 5G, and indeed, those who do not prepare will be left behind.



He said that we are hopeful and confident that Ufone will meet the expectations of its customers and will provide the best possible service in the coming days.

Mr. Amir Pasha said that PTCL and

Ufone organizes this Iftar dinner every year to further strengthen the bond of love and trust that we have with the journalist community and the public. He said that indeed, new avenues open up through meetings and discussions

and further improvement in work comes.

Mr. Muhammad Awais said that we are grateful to the journalist community who took out their valuable time to participate in our Iftar dinner. He

said that there is no doubt that it is very difficult to maintain a relationship with the public without the media, it is the media that plays an important role in bringing our voice to the public.

At the end of the program, gifts

were distributed to the journalists and other dignitaries who attended the Iftar dinner organized by PTCL and Ufone, for which the journalists thanked Mr. Amir Pasha and Mr. Muhammad Awais.

MS Book 2nd Rafique Memorial Cricket Tournament Lahore Cricket Club beat Speed Cricket Club by 8 wickets



Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: In Town Ship Green Ground MS Book 2nd Rafique Memorial Cricket Tournament, 2026 Lahore Cricket club beat Speed Cricket Club by 8 wickets. Batting first Speed Cricket club were bundle out 148 in 17.3 overs Anees-Ur-Rehman and Abdul Rameez made 46 runs each. From Lahore Cricket club Jehangir Khan took 4 for 26 while Daniya and Adil got 2 wickets each. In reply Lahore Cricket Club achieved the target in 15th over and won the match by 8 wickets Daniyal Ahmed were not out 63 and Mujahid made 50 runs. Usman Ashraf and Abdul Rameez took one wicket each From Lahore Cricket Club Daniyal Ahmed declared man of the match. The Chief guest was Mr. Bilal Moqheet President East Zone Cricket Association.

Two Killed, Two Injured in Separate Incidents in Attock

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Two persons were killed and two others injured in three separate incidents in different areas of Attock on Tuesday, police and rescue sources reported.

In the first incident, a 30-year-old man was shot dead over a marriage dispute in Bajri village within the jurisdiction of Pindigheb Police Station. According to police sources, Muhammad Mehran was coming out of a mosque when a man identified as Misbah Bahadur, who was allegedly lying in wait, opened indiscriminate fire on him. Mehran sustained three bullet injuries and died on the spot. The suspect managed to escape from the scene.

In a separate incident in the same police jurisdiction, a man drowned in a local dam. Police and rescue officials said that Mudassir Iqbal, a resident of Sultanabad, had gone to Sarwia Mini Dam, where he reportedly lost control and drowned. His body was later recovered and handed over to his family for burial.

From News to Notoriety...e

Continued from Page 4

complaints and documentary evidence, we are politely refused entry on the pretext that "the official is in a meeting," even while a few select individuals continue to come and go without hindrance. This discriminatory practice not only undermines the principle of professional equality but also reinforces the perception that access is determined not by professional competence, but by personal closeness and informal connections.

This behavior harms both administrative transparency and journalistic dignity. Without equal and regulated access, how can citizens' issues be effectively represented? Senior officials must implement a clear, fair, and uniform policy in their offices so that every registered journalist has equal opportunities, without favoritism based on staged relationships.

In this context, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif must take this concerning trend seriously and instruct all departments to maintain professional boundaries between officials and journalists. Media engagement is necessary but must remain institutional, transparent, and equitable not a platform for individual publicity or informal proximity.

Officials and journalists are both vital pillars of the state and society, yet a dignified professional distance is indispensable. This is not about opposing relationships but about preventing unnecessary exhibitionism and its consequences. If this trend is not curtailed, it could erode administrative impartiality, public trust, and journalistic credibility. Wisdom demands ending this practice and preserving the dignity and sanctity of public office.

The Writer is senior analyst and he can be reached at zakhantul@yaho.com

Condemn rally

KARACHI: Shiite Muslims chant anti U.S slogans during a rally to condemn the killing of Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, in the Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

Overseas Pakistanis in Gulf safe, no need to be panic as diplomatic missions fully operational to facilitate: Dar

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Tuesday assured that overseas Pakistanis, residing in Gulf countries, were safe, urging them and their families back home not to be panic amid the evolving regional situation.

Addressing a media briefing at the Foreign Office, flanked

by Foreign Secretary Amna Baloch and Foreign Office Spokesperson ahir Andrabi, the deputy prime minister said the government had activated its Crisis Management Unit at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and all diplomatic missions in the region to facilitate stranded Pakistanis.

"The situation in the Gulf and Iran is fluid, but there is no need to be panic. Our over 4.5 million diaspora in the region

is safe. We have received no reports suggesting any direct threat to them," Dar said.

He said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had directed the Foreign Office to regularly brief the media and keep the public informed regarding Pakistanis stranded due to airspace closures following the escalation between Iran and Israel.

Dar said that except for Oman and certain parts

inside Saudi Arabia, airspace remained closed, posing a constraint for evacuation flights. However, he added that land routes among Gulf countries were open and being used by Pakistanis and other nationals.

He noted that some people were travelling from Makkah Mukarramah, Madinah Munawarah and Jeddah to Dammam by air and then proceeding by road to Bahrain

within half an hour, while Dubai could be reached in around seven hours by road. "This facility is not limited to Pakistanis. Other nationals are also availing these routes," he said.

The DPM said the Foreign Office Crisis Management Unit, initially activated during the Pakistan-India conflict in May 2025 and later during developments in Iran in June 2025, was operational 24/7.

US State Dept orders non-emergency staff to leave six Mideast countries

AFP

The US State Department said Tuesday it had ordered non-emergency staff to leave six Middle Eastern countries, as Iran retaliated against US-Israeli strikes.

The war in the Middle East began on Saturday when joint US-Israeli strikes killed Iran's supreme leader, causing Tehran to launch retaliatory salvos across the region.

The department said it had updated travel advisories for Bahrain, Iraq,

Jordan, Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates "to reflect the ordered departure of non-emergency U. S. government personnel".

The advisories for five of the countries cited an "ongoing threat of drone and missile attacks from Iran", while the notice for Iraq cited "security concerns".

Iran's Revolutionary Guards targeted a US air base in Bahrain, the Islamic Republic's elite force said in a statement carried on Tuesday by the official IRNA news agency.



In Iraq, hundreds of protesters in the capital

Baghdad, many dressed in black, attempted Sunday to storm the fortified Green Zone where the US embassy is located.

In Jordan, the US embassy said Monday it had temporarily evacuated its staff due to an unspecified threat.

The US embassy in Kuwait said Tuesday it was closed until further notice, a day after an AFP correspondent saw smoke rising from the mission following Iranian attacks on the country.

Turkiye says it's engaging with all sides to end Iran war, resume diplomacy

Reuters

Turkiye is engaging with all parties to find a way to end the war in Iran and return to negotiations, Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan said, adding that Ankara was also in talks with Oman on the matter as the Gulf nation works for the same goal.

The United States and Israel launched strikes against Iran on Saturday. The war quickly widened with Tehran striking Gulf states that host U. S. bases and Israel attacking Hezbollah targets in Lebanon.

Turkiye, a NATO member and neighbour of Iran, had for weeks urged Washington and Tehran to reach an agreement during their rounds of negotiations over Iran's nuclear programme and missile capabilities, warning that the region could not handle any more destabilisation.

Fidan told members of Turkish



media during a Ramadan fast-breaking dinner on Tuesday that Turkiye was "sensitively carrying out necessary initiatives with all our counterparts" to achieve peace in the region, and added it was critical to preserve the

stability of Iran and the region.

"There isn't a single-layered negotiation, there is a multi-layered negotiation," Fidan said, according to a transcript of his comments shared on Tuesday.

He added that the closure of the Hormuz Strait, where one-fifth of global oil trade skirts Iran's coast, could "push the United States to obtain a quick result".

"We have been talking to the Europeans for a few days... If you want peace, let's work together. We are urging them to take action. The Gulf nations are now facing a serious situation," he said.

"We are talking to the Omani (foreign minister). Oman is also still trying to do something there. We are talking to the Americans."

In his strongest yet opposition to the attacks against Iran, Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said on Tuesday that they were a "clear violation" of international law.

Fidan warned against the conflict engulfing the whole region and affecting energy supplies. He added that the closure of the

At least 116 Middle East-bound flights from Pakistan cancelled



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: At least 116 flights from airports across Pakistan to the Middle East were cancelled on Tuesday, affecting thousands of passengers as regional airspace closures triggered widespread disruption.

The cancellations followed rising tensions between Iran and the United States and the resulting uncertainty in the Middle East.

Several countries in the region temporarily closed their airspace, forcing airlines to suspend or reroute services.

According to sources, 32 flights were cancelled at Jinnah Interna-

tional Airport, 28 at Islamabad International Airport, and 20 at Allama Iqbal International Airport.

At Peshawar International Airport, 16 flights to Dubai, Sharjah, Qatar and Abu Dhabi were called off. Ten flights were cancelled at Multan Airport, four at Faisalabad Airport and two at Quetta Airport.

Sources said more than 500 Middle East-bound flights have been cancelled over the past four days. Airlines cited airspace restrictions in multiple countries as the primary reason.

The cancellations have caused severe inconvenience to passengers.

Khawaja Asif says Netanyahu attacked Iran to divert attention from Gaza

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Defense Minister Khawaja Asif said that Israel's Prime Minister Netanyahu attacked Iran to divert international attention away from Gaza.

In a post on social media platform X, Khawaja Muhammad Asif stated that global media focus is now on Iran.

He added that this has provided Netanyahu an opportunity to quietly advance his alleged genocidal agenda in Gaza and the West

Bank.

Khawaja Asif further said that



Netanyahu's personal sinister ambitions have pushed Palestine and the wider Middle East into one of the worst humanitarian tragedies in history.

NAB promotes 48 Assistant Directors to Deputy Director

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has promoted 48 Assistant Directors (BPS-17) to the rank of Deputy Director (BPS-18), marking a significant step in strengthening its operational hierarchy.

The promotions, recommended by the Departmental Promotion Committee-1 (DPC-1) and approved by the Chairman NAB, were formally notified by the Bureau's Headquarters on Tuesday.

According to the notification, the officers have been promoted on a regular basis with immediate effect and will continue to serve at their

current postings.

The newly elevated Deputy Directors are spread across NAB's regional bureaus and headquarters.

Meanwhile, the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has promoted four Deputy Directors (BPS-18) to the rank of Additional Director (BPS-19).

According to a separate notification issued by NAB Headquarters on Tuesday, the promotions were recommended by the Selection Board and formally approved by the Chairman NAB.

The newly elevated officers will continue serving at their present postings, with the promotions taking immediate effect.

Gilani meets President of Zarai Taraqati Bank

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani Tuesday met with the President of Zarai Taraqati Bank Limited, Tahir Yaqoob Bhatti, at Parliament House, Islamabad.

During the meeting, detailed discussion on the overall situation of the agricultural sector, the challenges faced by farmers, and ongoing initiatives aimed at promoting agricultural development in the country was held.

The President of Zarai Taraqati Bank Limited briefed the Chairman of the Senate on the Bank's loan programs for farmers and landowners, including financial facilities offered on easy terms and various relief packages to enhance agricultural productivity.

He informed that the Bank is providing timely financial assistance to farmers for seeds, fertilizers, agricultural machinery, and other essential inputs in line with modern

requirements, intending to strengthen the agricultural sector.

He also briefed the Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani on special relief schemes introduced for small-scale farmers and medium-sized landowners. Under these initiatives, loans are being extended with easy installments, reduced markup rates, and transparent procedures to ensure greater accessibility. These measures are expected to directly benefit farmers and further reinforce the role of agriculture in the national economy.

Gilani appreciated the efforts of Zarai Taraqati Bank Limited, stating that agriculture is the backbone of Pakistan's economy and providing relief to farmers remains a national priority. He reaffirmed that Parliament will continue to extend full support for farmer-friendly policies and the development of the agricultural sector.