



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ
عبداللہ بن عمر رضی اللہ عنہما سے ایسے شخص کے متعلق پوچھا گیا جس نے بزرگی ہو کر کچھ مخصوص دنوں میں روزے لگے گا پھر انفاق سے انہیں نونوں میں پھر عیادہ کے دن پر لگے ہوں؟
عبداللہ بن عمر نے کہا کہ تمہارے لئے رسول اللہ ﷺ نے ایسی ہی بات فرمائی ہے۔ نبی کریم ﷺ اور ہر عیادہ عید کے دن روزے نہیں لگتے تھے اور نونوں میں روزے کو ہرگز نہ لگتے تھے۔
(بخاری ص 6705)

Barkat Rice Mills (Pvt) Limited



Petrol and diesel price hike challenged in Lahore High Court

The recent increase in petrol and diesel prices has drawn strong criticism from ordinary citizens, political parties, and legal activists who termed the government's move anti-people. The decision has also been challenged in the Lahore High Court. Azhar Siddique of the Judicial Activism Panel filed a petition, calling the government's decision to increase petrol prices by Rs55 per litre both illegal and against the public interest.



Urgent: Iran's IRGC says hit U. S. military base in Bahrain's Juffair area

Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) said Saturday that it launched missile strikes at the U. S. military base in Bahrain's Juffair, a district situated south of central Manama, the Iranian Students' News Agency (ISNA) reported.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Ramazanul Mubarak 18, Sunday, March 8, 2026

www.dailyspokesman.net

@daily_spokesman



Daily Spokesman Vol: 19, Issue: 322 Price Rs. 25.00 Pages 8

VISIT

RIYADH : Saudi Defense Minister Prince Khalid bin Salman receives Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defense Forces Field Marshal Asim Munir in Riyadh on Thursday.



Photo: SPA

Pakistan and Saudi Arabia discuss joint response to regional security threats

Spokesman Report

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defense Forces, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir visited KSA and met with HRH Prince Khalid Bin Salman, the Defence Minister of Kingdom.

Both discussed the gravity of security situation accruing from Iranian drone and missile attacks on the Kingdom and joint measures needed to halt them within the framework of Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement.

It was emphasised that unprovoked aggression undermines efforts for regional security and stability and forecloses options for peaceful settlement of disputes.

Both sides expressed hope and desire that brotherly country Iran would manifest prudence and sagacity to avoid any miscalculation and strengthen the hands of friendly countries seeking peaceful settlement of the crisis.

15 India-backed terrorists killed in Balochistan operations



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: At least 15 India-backed terrorists were killed in two separate operations conducted by security forces in Balochistan, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said on Saturday.

An ISPR statement said an intelligence-based operation in Harnai district resulted in a heavy exchange of fire, during which 12 terrorists belonging to the Fitna Al Khawarij group were killed. In Basima, another

intelligence-driven operation saw intense gunfire, leading to the deaths of three terrorists from the Fitna Al Hindustan network.

Weapons, ammunition, and explosive materials were recovered from the killed militants.

According to ISPR, these terrorists had been involved in several attacks in the region.

Clearance and search operations are underway in the area to eliminate any remaining Indian-sponsored militant elements.

PM directs preparation of austerity-based economic plan

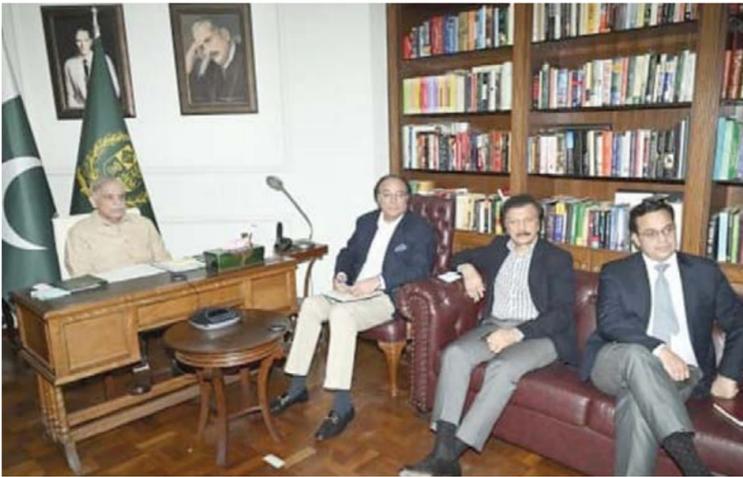
Bureau Report

LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday directed the preparation of a comprehensive plan based on austerity and savings in view of the existing global economic pressures caused by tensions in the neighbouring region.

He issued these directions while chairing a review meeting on the country's economic situation in the current global context. During the meeting, participants were briefed on the recent global tensions and their economic impact on the region.

The prime minister instructed authorities to formulate a strategy focused on economic growth, simplicity and savings. He directed the committee concerned to present practical and workable recommendations within the next 48 hours.

Shehbaz Sharif emphasized that the proposed strategy should ensure that the burden



on the public remains minimal while public relief is given top priority. He was also briefed by the committee actively working on the matter.

The meeting was informed that the prime minister had already constituted a committee last week to assess the global economic impacts of the ongoing

tensions and to devise an appropriate strategy. Due to these timely measures, the country did not face any shortage of petroleum products.

Officials further briefed the meeting that the recent increase in petroleum prices was made on the recommendation of the committee while ensuring that the minimum possible burden of the global price hike was transferred to consumers.

The prime minister directed the committee to work more actively and present easy and practical recommendations for the public at the earliest.

He also issued clear instructions that any petrol pump or company found involved in creating artificial shortages or hoarding should be immediately shut down, its license cancelled and legal action taken against it.

The prime minister further directed the Minister for Finance and the Minister for Petroleum to visit all four provinces and, in coordination with the provincial governments, prepare a strategy to ensure conservation of petroleum products and their uninterrupted supply to the public.

President, PM laud security forces for eliminating 15 terrorists in Balochistan

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Saturday, commended the security forces for eliminating 15 India-backed terrorists of Fitna al-Khawarij and Fitna al-Hindustan, during two separate operations in Balochistan.

President Zardari termed the elimination of Indian-sponsored terrorists during intelligence-based operations in Harnai and Basima as a reflection of the professionalism and determination of the security forces, President Secretariat Media Wing said in a press release. The president and the



prime minister reiterated that eradicating terrorism, carried out with external backing from the country, was their top priority.

They said the entire nation stood shoulder to shoulder with the security forces in their unwavering resolve to defend the homeland.

"The security forces, under the vision of Azim e Istehkam are achieving huge successes against terrorism," PM Office Media Wing, in a press release, quoted the prime minister as saying.

PM Shehbaz meets Nawaz Sharif at Jati Umra to discuss economy and oil supply

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif held an important meeting with Pakistan Muslim League-N President Nawaz Sharif at Jati Umra to discuss the country's political and economic situation.

Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar and Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz also attended the meeting, where participants held detailed discussions on the impact of rising global tensions on Pakistan's economy and energy sector.

During the meeting, Shehbaz Sharif briefed Nawaz Sharif on the current petroleum situation in the



country, stating that fuel supplies remain under control despite pressure from global market conditions.

He informed that the government has taken steps to ensure uninterrupted petroleum supply and maintain stability in the domestic market. The prime minister said the government had adopted a policy aimed at passing on the minimum possible

burden of rising oil prices to the public, although recent increases were unavoidable.

Shehbaz Sharif also said the government is working on a comprehensive strategy to ensure continuous supply of petroleum products and is in contact with Gulf countries, including Iran and Saudi Arabia, for oil imports.

He expressed hope that Pakistan would receive additional oil supplies within the next 48 hours, which could further improve the country's petroleum situation. The government, he added, has decided to take strict action against hoarding and the creation of artificial shortages.

Pakistan emerges as a strong country in terms of defence, diplomacy: Attaullah Tarar

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar said on Saturday that Pakistan was playing a key role on the diplomatic front among the nations of the world for the establishment of peace.

He said this while addressing a ceremony organized by the Nazaria-e-Pakistan Trust at Aiwan-e-Karkunan Tehreek-e-Pakistan on the occasion of the fourth death anniversary of former president of Pakistan, a devoted worker of the Pakistan Movement, and former chairman of the Nazaria-e-Pakistan Trust, Muhammad Rafiq Tarar.

He added that all friendly Islamic countries were engaged, including Middle Eastern countries such as Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, Kuwait and Jordan. Pakistan also expressed solidarity with these countries and yesterday the prime minister spoke with the presidents of Azerbaijan and Türkiye as well.

He said, "Pakistan is playing its diplomatic role in the best possible way."



As a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, Pakistan raised the Iran issue, and the Iranian representative in the Security Council thanked Pakistan in this regard.

The federal minister said that credit goes to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for his sincere diplomatic efforts.

He added that, under the able leadership of the Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, the Armed Forces of Pakistan proved in 'Marka-i-Haq' that Pakistan has the full potential to defend its country.

He said that Pakistan has emerged as a strong country in terms of defence and diplomacy.

Information Minister attend Iftar dinner with Advocate General Azad Kashmir

Bureau Report

MIRPUR: A lavish Iftar dinner was organized in honor of Raja Muhammad Nadeem Khan, Advocate General Azad Kashmir and Waheed Nazir, Additional Advocate General, by Muhammad Shaukat Ali Gujjar of the Mirpur Development Authority, in which Azad Kashmir Minister for Information, Auqaf and Religious Affairs Chaudhry Muhammad Rafique Nayyar, Minister for Housing and Physical Planning Chaudhry Yasir Sultan, Minister for Kashmir Cause, Culture, Arts and Environment Ms. Nabila Ayub specially participated, while the Iftar dinner was attended by Director General Prime Minister's Secretariat Aamir Zeeshan Jaral, Vice Chairman Bar Council Chaudhry



Tariq Bashir Advocate, President High Court Bar Association Raja Waseem Younis Advocate, Former Vice Chairman Bar Council Raja Khalid Mahmood Khan, Special Secretary to

the Government Raja Qaiser Aurangzeb Khan, Mayor Municipal Corporation Chaudhry Usman Ali Khalid, Former Chairman Zakat Chaudhry Muhammad Siddique, Former Chief

Engineer Chaudhry Muhammad Hanif, former Presidential Media Advisor Ansar Sarem, former Presidential Coordinator Chaudhry Amjad Mahmood, besides political and social figures, prominent industrialists, lawyers, journalists, district administration officers, civil society, and representatives of employee organizations participated.

Muhammad Shaukat Ali Gujjar welcomed the distinguished guests upon their arrival at the ceremony and presented them with flowers. On this occasion, Advocate General Azad Kashmir Raja Muhammad Nadeem Khan and Additional Advocate General Waheed Nazir Advocate thanked Muhammad Shaukat Ali Gujjar for organizing a wonderful and beautiful ceremony.

PM Rathore Offers Prayers in Makkah and Madinah for Pakistan's Stability

Spokesman Report

MAKKAH MAKARMA, MADINAH MANWERA: Azad Jammu and Kashmir Prime Minister Faisal Mumtaz Rathore performed Umrah. The Prime Minister remained engaged in worship and performed Nawafil prayers. Meanwhile, the Prime Minister visited the Holy Shrine of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in Madinah and offered his respects. The Prime Minister also performed Nawafil prayers at Riaz Al-Jannah. The Prime Minister prayed for the security of Pakistan, the strength of the Pak Army, the freedom of occupied Kashmir and the welfare and well-being of the people of Azad Kashmir.



Legal challenge launched against AJK President election rules

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: A constitutional writ petition has been filed in the High Court of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Muzaffarabad, challenging the procedure for the election of the President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir as well as certain aspects of the Thirteenth Constitutional Amendment made to the Interim Constitution Act, 1974.



The petition has been filed by Member Kashmir Council Muhammad Hanif Malik through his counsel Raja Amir Sharif, Advocate High Court; Raja Sajjad Ahmed Khan, Advocate Supreme Court; Raja Qasim Sajjad, Advocate High Court; and Muhammad Faisal Farooq, Advocate High Court.

In the petition, the petitioner has contended that the changes introduced in the procedure for the election of the President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir through the Thirteenth Constitutional Amendment to the AJK Interim Constitution Act, 1974 are inconsistent with the basic structure of the Constitution and do not fulfill the required legal and constitutional requirements.

The writ petition states that prior to the Thirteenth Amendment, the President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir was elected through a joint electoral college comprising members of the Legislative Assembly, elected members of the Kashmir Council, and the Federal Minister representing the Council Secretariat. However, following the amendment, the system was altered and the electoral process was restricted solely to the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, thereby withdrawing the voting rights of the members of the Kashmir Council.

Rehana Khan praises Mirwaiz Kashmir's guidance and services

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Chairperson Women Commission, Ms. Rehana Khan, has said that the role of Mirwaiz Maulana Muhammad Yousaf Shah in the Kashmir Freedom Movement is unforgettable. She said that Mirwaiz Kashmir was a great religious and political figure who guided the Muslims of the state with wisdom and steadfastness during a critical period in the history of Jammu and Kashmir, which will live in history. They expressed these views while addressing the Iftar dinner yesterday. She said that Mirwaiz Kashmir Maulana Muhammad Yousaf Shah and his family rendered valuable services to keep the Kashmiri people attached to the religion of Islam and to bring them the blessing of freedom. He said that Maulana Muhammad Yousaf Shah was a true benefactor of the Kashmiri people who, on the one hand, continued his efforts to enlighten them with Islamic teachings and on the other hand, taught them the lesson of unity and solidarity. He also visited Islamic countries. The translation and commentary of the Holy Quran in Kashmiri language is such a great achievement of his which will be remembered till the Day of Judgment.



Kashmir's Silent Struggle: Women's Plight Ignored on International Women's Day

Spokesman Report



SAUDI ARABIA/MUZAFFARABAD: President of All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister Sarfaraz Attique Ahmed Khan said that on the occasion of International Women's Day, the world should not forget those mothers and sisters in occupied Kashmir who have been oppressed by India for decades and are still fighting the situation alone. In a statement on the occasion of International Women's Day, he said that Islam has given all rights to women and now there is a need to change social attitudes so that women can benefit from the rights granted by Islam. He said that in occupied Kashmir, India has subjected women to all kinds of torture by raping, arresting and depriving them of their loved ones, but it is a pity that its echo is not heard at the global level. No attempt was made to stop India's hand. Even today, the mothers, sisters, daughters and wives of ten thousand missing persons are a constant question to the United Nations, but their voices are not being heard.

Kashmiri Delegation Briefs Multiple UN Rapporteurs on Rights Crisis in Indian Territory

News Desk

GENEVA: A Kashmiri delegation in Geneva held various meetings with UN Special Rapporteurs, UN officials, and members of the diplomatic community, at the sidelines of 61 session of United Nations Human Rights Council apprising them of the current situation in Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

The delegation met with the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, the UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights, and the Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing.

They briefed each official individually with regard to their respective mandates, thanked them for the communications sent to the Government of India, and urged them to continue pressing India to repeal all draconian laws that provide impunity and facilitate human rights violations.

During their interactions with diplomats, the delegation urged them to take steps to call upon the Government of India to end its repression and create conducive conditions for a UN-supervised plebiscite in the occupied territory. The delegation, headed by Altaf Hussain Wani, included APHC Convener Ghulam Muhammad Safi, Mrs. Shamim Shawl, Sardar Amjad Yousaf Khan, and APHC General Secretary Advocate Parvez Ahmed Shah.

Condolence

ISLAMABAD: Mar 07- Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif visits Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Junaid Anwar Chaudhry to offer condolences on the demise of his mother.



Photo: Online



Spokesman Report.

RAWALPINDI: On the occasion of International Women's Day, Secretary General of the Muslim Confer-

ence and former Deputy Speaker, Ms. Mehran-ul-Nisa, has demanded that the attention of the world community focus on the plight of women who are victims of Indian brutality in the occu-

Muslim Conference Leader Demands International Focus on Kashmiri Women's Plight on IWD

piated territories and said that human rights organizations working for the protection of women's rights and for the improvement and equal rights in society should play their role. In her message on the occasion of International Women's Day on March 8, Mehran-ul-Nisa has expressed her determination that the struggle will continue for the development, prosper-

ity and equal rights of women in society. Former Deputy Speaker Mehran-ul-Nisa said that the struggle will continue to provide equal opportunities for development to women in the state. Steps should be taken to defend the rights of women in the assembly and to get seats in proportion to the population and she has also written a writ in this regard.

Women are silent frontline of global conflict"- Sherry Rehman

ISLAMABAD: On the occasion of International Women's Day, Senator Sherry Rehman stated that "International Women's Day is an important day of reckoning and stock taking for women and men all over the world. We not only pay tribute to all the women of the world but also to those women living in conflict and catastrophe zones; their suffering goes unmarked year after year.



Their numbers grow in silence mostly. According to UN Women, as of late 2025, a record 676 million women and girls live within 50 kilometers of deadly conflict, representing nearly 17% of the global female population and the highest number since the 1990s. Conflict-related, while the number of women killed in armed conflicts has doubled, with over 123 million people forcibly displaced."

Among her most impactful achievements is the Lady Health Worker Programme, which has transformed

making strides that were their due with respect to equal pay and opportunities with men, but also a worrying incline in domestic violence, with 1 out of 3 women having faced it in their lifetime."

Reflecting on the legacy of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, Senator Rehman said her leadership had laid the foundations for transformative progress in women's empowerment and social protection.

healthcare delivery in Pakistan. Recognized by the World Bank as a 'gold standard', it has delivered essential healthcare services to millions in remote and underserved communities," Senator Rehman said.

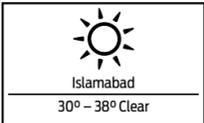
She noted that the programme not only strengthened public health systems but also created unprecedented opportunities for women's economic empowerment. "By enabling women to serve as frontline health workers, it opened doors for women to participate meaningfully in the workforce while improving community health outcomes across the country," she added.

Senator Rehman further stated that under the leadership of PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, the party continues to advance Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto's vision of a progressive and inclusive Pakistan. "Chairman Bilawal reflects her

values by consistently championing the rights of women, the marginalized and minorities. He has stood firmly against extremism and injustice while offering a forward-looking, reform-oriented vision for Pakistan's future," she said.

Senator Sherry Rehman called for renewed national commitment to closing Pakistan's deep gender gaps, stressing that despite women forming nearly half of the country's population, their contributions remain largely unrecognized in economic and social policy frameworks.

Highlighting the scale of the challenge, Senator Rehman noted that women constitute approximately 49.2% of Pakistan's population, yet only 22.7% participate in the mainstream workforce. She emphasized that millions of women remain invisible in economic policies, often working for no wages or half wages, particularly in informal and unpaid sectors.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr	5:07 am
Zohr	12:19 pm
Asr	4:28 pm
Maghrib	6:09 pm
Isha	7:32 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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad	9222596
Rawalpindi	9270601-20

ENQUIRY

Edhi Ambulance	115
PIA Flight Info	114
PIA Cargo	9280979
Railway Enquiry	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

DPO Akhlaq Ullah Tarar conducts detailed visit to Police Lines

Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: District Police Officer (DPO) Toba Tek Singh Akhlaq Ullah Tarar paid a detailed visit to the Police Lines Toba Tek Singh and reviewed the administrative affairs of various departments.

During the visit, the DPO inspected the Kot, miscellaneous store, uniform warehouse, MT section, police driving school and police barracks. On the occasion, he also checked the records, official equipment and administrative arrangements of different sections.

DPO Akhlaq Ullah Tarar issued instructions to the concerned officers, directing them to maintain discipline in all departments and ensure high standards of cleanliness. He also emphasized the importance of maintaining accurate records and proper care of government equipment. He stated that Police Lines is the central hub of the police force, therefore, it is essential to manage administrative affairs here in an exemplary manner. Improved discipline and effective management can further enhance the professional performance of the police force. The DPO further directed the officers to perform their duties responsibly in their respective departments and ensure all possible measures for the betterment of the institution.

Crackdown launched against hoarding and profiteering of petroleum products

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif has ordered a grand crackdown against hoarders and profiteers involved in stockpiling petroleum products.

On the directives of the chief minister, the Punjab Enforcement and Regulatory Authority has been mobilised

across the province. Authorities have been instructed to take strict action against elements creating artificial shortages in order to earn illegal profits.

According to the directives, petrol pumps found involved in hoarding or profiteering will be sealed immediately and their licences will be cancelled.

Maryam Nawaz Sharif has directed PERA to adopt a zero-tolerance policy



against hoarders and instructed field officers to ensure strict monitoring of petrol pumps throughout the province.

The government stated that the Punjab administration has prepared a strong enforcement mechanism against the so-called "petrol mafia." It has also

made it clear that no one will be allowed to exploit the public by creating panic or artificial shortages under the pretext of tensions in the Gulf region.

The Punjab government emphasised that sufficient petroleum products are available in the province and urged citi-

zens not to pay attention to rumours. A strong warning has also been issued against speculation and false claims regarding petroleum shortages, stating that those spreading rumours of artificial scarcity will face strict consequences.

Security arrangements in Capital

ISLAMABAD: A view of Constitution Avenue blocked with heavy shipping containers due to security high alert, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Pakistan's Strategic Petroleum Reserves Must Not Fall Below the Wartime Requirement of 90 Days: Ibrahim Murad

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Former Provincial Minister Ibrahim Hasan Murad has expressed serious concern over the rising prices of petroleum products, stating that Pakistan must increase its strategic petroleum reserves to at least 90 days to ensure effective energy security.

He said that in times of war or national emergencies, maintaining long-term petroleum reserves is crucial for any country's national security and economic stability.

Murad pointed out that Pakistan currently holds petroleum reserves equivalent to approximately 28 days, which serve merely as a



temporary buffer and do not meet the standards of effective strategic reserves. He noted that the country largely relies on commercial oil stocks held by oil marketing companies, refineries and importers, while the absence of a well-coordinated national strategic reserve remains a serious concern.

Ibrahim further stated that

under the present circumstances, the price of petroleum products should not have exceeded Rs299 per litre. According to him, the government could have provided meaningful relief to the public by making appropriate adjustments in the Rs85 per litre petroleum levy.

Former Provincial Minister added that even in the Federal

War Book of the 1980s, it was recommended that Pakistan should maintain petroleum reserves for 45 to 60 days. However, the recommendation was never fully and effectively implemented, which is why the country still falls short of the required standards for energy security.

Murad suggested that modern oil storage projects should be developed through public private partnerships to strengthen the energy sector. He said that such initiatives would not only increase Pakistan's strategic petroleum reserves but also enhance the country's capacity to deal with any potential energy crisis in the future.

PSCA team reunites missing woman with family via social media

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab Safe Cities Authority (PSCA) "Mera Pyara" team has achieved another remarkable success by reuniting a missing woman with her family through the effective use of technology and social media. According to details, a 50-year-old woman was found in the Model Town Division of Lahore, but her identity could not initially be established.



The PSCA "Mera Pyara" team recorded an interview with the woman and shared the video on social media platforms to help identify her and locate her family. After watching the video on social media, the woman's cousin contacted PSCA's authorities and identified her as Talat Sultana, who had gone missing since January 2026. Following her rescue, the woman was initially shifted to Edhi Home Lahore and was later transferred to Edhi Home Multan. Through continuous efforts of PSCA's "Mera Pyara" team, her identity was successfully verified and reunification with her family became a reality.

According to PSCA's spokesperson, after completing all necessary verification procedures, the woman was safely handed over to her family. The spokesperson further added that the "Mera Pyara" team is actively working to reunite missing individuals with their families by utilizing modern technology and social media platform. Citizens are encouraged to share information about any missing persons by calling immediately Emergency Helpline -15 and pressing option 3 so that citizens can be provided timely assistance and relief by the dedicated PSCA's "Mera Pyara" team.

Event at Emblem Higher Secondary School in Collaboration with Rooh Forum and APPSMA



City Desk

RAWALPINDI: A prestigious event was organized at Emblem Higher Secondary School, Haidri Chowk, Satellite Town, in collaboration with Rooh Forum and APPSMA. The event was attended by a large number of students, parents, teachers, and dignitaries. Federal Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi was the chief guest. Prominent attendees included Madam Tahira Aurangzeb, Mrs. Shazia Rizwan, Col (R) Murtaza Ali Shah, Abrar Ahmed Khan, Muhammad Furqan Chaudhry, Col (R) Fawad Hanif, Abrar Ahmed Advocate, Muhammad Zeeshan, Syed Faizan Ali Shah, Raja Usman, and other distinguished guests.

In his address, Muhammad Hanif Abbasi emphasized strengthening youth connection with the Quran, Sunnah, and the thoughts of Allama Iqbal. Madam Tahira Aurangzeb praised initiatives linking education with Quran, Seerat, and Iqbal's teachings, stating that such models bring positive change. Col (R) Murtaza Ali Shah stated that Rooh Forum aims to create intellectual and moral awareness and prepare youth as ambassadors of Revival and Integration through education and training, while AMBLEMS practically implements this vision. Abrar Ahmed Khan thanked the guests and said APPSMA works to improve private education standards while addressing institutional issues. Participants collectively appreciated Rooh Forum as a growing movement for value revival and recognized AMBLEMS as a role model educational system under the leadership of APPSMA and Abrar Ahmed Khan.

International Women's Day to be observed with focus on investing in Women

ISLAMABAD, MAR 07 (APP): International Women's Day will be observed across the world tomorrow (March 8) with renewed commitment to promoting gender equality, protecting women's rights, and recognizing the social, economic, cultural, and political contributions of women.

This year's theme, "Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress," underscores the importance of increasing investment in women's empowerment as a key driver of sustainable development and inclusive growth.

International Women's Day 2026: Rights, Justice, Action, For All Women and Girls

On International Women's Day, we reflect on the resilience, leadership, and contributions of women and girls in Pakistan and around the world. This year's theme, Rights, Justice, Action, For All Women and Girls reminds us that investing in the rights, health, education, and opportunities of women and girls benefits entire families, communities, and nations. When women thrive, society thrives.

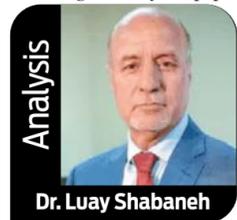
This day comes at a time of profound challenges. Across Pakistan, the wider region—including Afghanistan, Iran, Palestine, Arab Gulf States, and other parts of the Arab world—and globally, many women and girls continue to bear the devastating impacts of conflict, displacement, and insecurity.

Even outside conflict zones, too many women still face barriers to justice, health services, education, and fundamental rights. We must recognize that when maternal health facilities close or supply chains are interrupted, it constitutes reproductive violence—a grave violation of fundamental rights.

Gender-based violence, harmful practices, and lack of access to sexual and reproductive health care remain critical obstacles to safety, dignity, and well-being. In Pakistan, where one in three women experiences gender-based violence, the path to justice remains obstructed; over

half of survivors choose silence over reporting due to systemic barriers. True justice for women and girls goes beyond papers and laws; it requires survivor-centred institutions that protect dignity and address modern threats like technology-facilitated violence.

In Pakistan, women and girls are at the heart of families, communities, and national development. They lead change as health workers, teachers, entrepreneurs, community leaders, and advocates for equality. Their courage, determination, and leadership inspire progress and accountability across the country.



Dr. Luay Shabaneh

UNFPA stands with the Government of Pakistan, civil society, and communities to ensure that every woman and girl can exercise her rights, access essential services, live free from violence, and realize her full potential. Our commitment is clear: a world in which every pregnancy wanted, every childbirth safe, and every young person's potential fulfilled.

On this International Women's Day, let us turn the promise of rights and justice for all women and girls into action by investing in women and girls, protecting their rights, and ensuring equal access to justice, services, and opportunities. Because when women and girls succeed, Pakistan and the world thrive.

The writer is UNFPA Representative in Pakistan

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

Iran War: The Energy Trap for China and Russia

This war may be presented as a fight over nuclear fear, missiles, or regime behavior, but beneath the headlines lies a far larger strategic contest: who will command the chokepoints through which the lifeblood of the global economy flows.

Wars are often sold to the world in moral language, but fought for strategic outcomes. The ongoing confrontation centered on Iran is no exception. To the United States, Israel, Britain, France, and much of the Western media, the war is projected as a campaign of necessity: a preemptive effort to stop an alleged nuclear threat, weaken Iranian missile power, and restore security to a volatile region. In that narrative, Western force is disciplined, purposeful, and increasingly successful, while Iran is portrayed as cornered, degraded, and losing ground.

But from Tehran, and from those across the world who reject the Western reading of the conflict, the war appears entirely different. There, it is seen as a story of one nation, battered yet unbowed, resisting the most powerful military coalition on earth and still retaining the capacity to impose pain, uncertainty, and strategic cost. In this second narrative, Iran's endurance itself becomes a kind of victory. A nation under siege is not expected to dominate the skies, but merely to survive, retaliate, and deny its enemies a clean triumph. That denial carries military, political, and moral weight.

Both sides choose facts that flatter their case. Both highlight only those developments that fit their desired conclusion. Yet when the smoke of propaganda begins to clear, a deeper ques-

tion emerges: what, in truth, is this war really about?

The official Western justifications do not fully satisfy the scale of the conflict. Iran has long been accused of standing only days or weeks away from weaponization, yet no public evidence has shown an actual nuclear test, a declared bomb, or the unmistakable operationalization of such a weapon. If Tehran had already crossed that threshold, the world would likely have seen far clearer proof by now. The gap between nuclear capability and an actual deliverable bomb is vast, and it is precisely within that gap that political narratives are often built.

The second argument, that Iran must be attacked because of its ballistic missile capability, has greater strategic logic but also exposes a double standard. Yes, Iran's missiles threaten U.S. bases, allied infrastructure, shipping routes, and Israel. But many states possess missile capabilities without becoming targets of such an overwhelming multinational military design. North Korea, for example, is more isolated, more repressive, and openly nuclear-armed, yet it has not been subjected to this kind of sustained Western-Israeli military pressure. Why? The answer is not found in moral principle. It is found in geography.

Iran sits beside the Strait of Hormuz, one of the most critical energy chokepoints in human history. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration data you provided, about 20.9 million barrels per day of oil moved through

Hormuz in the first half of 2025. That amounts to roughly one-fifth of global petroleum liquids consumption and about one-quarter of globally traded maritime oil. In the same period, around 11.4 billion cubic feet per day of LNG also transited the strait, representing more than one-fifth of global LNG trade. These are not marginal figures. They are the circulatory system of the industrial world.

That is what makes Iran categorically different from North Korea. Iran does not merely possess missiles, a controversial nuclear program, or an adversarial ideology. Iran sits astride a waterway through which the economic oxygen of Asia and much of the wider world must pass. China, India, Japan, and South Korea together accounted for nearly three-quarters of Hormuz crude and condensate flows in the first half of 2025. In other words, the great Asian engines of growth remain heavily dependent on the uninterrupted movement of Gulf energy through waters adjoining Iran.

Now consider the wider maritime map. The Strait of Malacca handled 23.2 million barrels per day in the first half of 2025, even more than Hormuz, making it the largest oil chokepoint in the world by volume. It is the shortest and most efficient route connecting Middle Eastern energy suppliers with East and Southeast Asia. China alone accounted for 48% of the import volumes passing through Malacca in that period. Meanwhile, the Cape of Good Hope, though not a chokepoint, carried 9.1 million barrels per day

as rerouted shipping avoided attacks and instability around the Red Sea. Bab el-Mandeb and the Suez-SUMED route, once central arteries to Europe, saw their flows nearly halved from 2023 levels due to insecurity and rerouting. The global energy system is therefore not merely about production; it is about maritime passage, route vulnerability, insurance cost, naval reach, and the ability to protect or disrupt the channels through which supply moves.

If the United States, through military presence, alliance architecture, naval supremacy, and regional basing, were able to dominate the security environment around Hormuz while retaining influence across the broader chain of maritime corridors stretching toward Bab el-Mandeb, the Red Sea, the Cape route, and onward to Asia's receiving lanes, then Washington would possess extraordinary leverage over the global energy order. It would not legally "own" these waterways, nor permanently command every vessel that crosses them, but it could shape the conditions under which oil moves, slows, detours, becomes more expensive, or becomes politically hostage to security calculations.

And that leverage would be immense. The United States today is itself a top oil producer and far less dependent on Gulf imports than in previous decades. By contrast, Asia remains far more exposed to disruptions in Gulf exports. This asymmetry matters. A power less dependent on a chokepoint but more capable of militarily policing it enjoys a structural advantage over powers whose economies rely heavily on its uninterrupted use. Such an arrangement would

Continued on Page 7



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

Punjab to launch first-ever project of underground water storage tanks

Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif has approved the launch of a major project to construct 358 underground storage tanks across the province for rainwater drainage and groundwater recharge.

The decision was taken during a special video-link meeting chaired by the chief minister to review progress on the Punjab Development Programme, clean water initiatives and the Model Village Project. The chief minister also conducted a pictorial review of the ongoing projects.

Officials briefed the meeting that the mega project will be implemented for the first time in Punjab to manage rainwater and improve groundwater levels. Under the plan, 34 large underground storage tanks will be constructed in cities to ensure timely drainage of rainwater, while 324 roadside underground tanks will be built to quickly remove water accumulated on roads.

Recharge wells will also be constructed alongside the underground tanks to improve the underground water table. The stored water will be treated through water treatment plants and reused for irrigation purposes. In addition, 328 wastewater treatment plants will also be established across the province.

The meeting was informed that 6,100 kilometres of streets will be paved and 3,498 kilometres of sewerage lines will be laid across various cities. Streetlights will be installed at 14,679 locations, while 33 million square feet of tuff tiles will be laid in streets and pathways. To improve drainage and municipal services, 526 modern machines and tractors will also be provided.

A factory for producing sewerage pipelines with a lifespan of up to 100 years has been installed in Lahore and is expected to begin production soon.

Officials further briefed that Punjab Development Programme projects have been initiated in Sargodha, Dera Ghazi Khan, Gujrat, Okara, Jhang, Multan and Sialkot, while projects will soon begin in Jhelum, Hafizabad, Sahiwal, Faisalabad, Gujranwala, Sheikhupura, Nankana Sahib and Rawalpindi.

Under the Punjab Rural Sanitation Improvement Programme, drainage systems will be developed in rural areas. Development schemes worth Rs59 billion will be implemented in 485 villages under the Model Village Project, while work has already started in 200 villages.

Cleaning of wastewater ponds and installation of wastewater treatment plants will also be undertaken, and treated water will be supplied to agricultural fields for irrigation.



Cartoon by Amjad Rasmi. (Courtesy of Asharq Al-Awsat)

Digital Governance as Economic Policy

For decades, governance reform in Pakistan was largely treated as an administrative matter, improving paperwork, reducing bureaucratic delays and streamlining service delivery. Globally, however, the policy conversation has evolved. Digital governance is no longer viewed merely as bureaucratic modernization; it is increasingly recognised as a component of economic policy. Governments that digitalize public administration strengthen fiscal capacity, improve transparency and create a more predictable investment climate.

Punjab's reform trajectory reflects this shift. Under the Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, the province has launched a series of digital governance initiatives that signal a growing understanding of administration as an economic asset rather than simply a regulatory system.

International evidence shows that digital public systems reduce transaction costs, improve regulatory predictability and enhance institutional transparency — all factors linked to economic growth. The World Bank and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) describe this phenomenon as "governance productivity," where efficient institutions themselves function as drivers of economic expansion. According to the United Nations E-Government Development Index, countries with advanced digital public services tend to display higher levels of competitiveness and regulatory efficiency. Denmark, Estonia, Singapore and South Korea consistently rank among the world's leading digital governments.

Pakistan, by contrast, remains in the middle tier of global digital governance rankings. Although progress has been made, administrative processes still rely heavily on manual procedures and fragmented data systems. Digital

transformation at the provincial level, therefore, carries significance not only for governance reform but also for broader economic performance.

Punjab's expanding digital initiatives illustrate how administrative reform can generate measurable economic outcomes. One example is the introduction of digital municipal e-billing systems across more than 200 local government bodies. Citizens can now pay municipal dues through mobile banking and online platforms rather than visiting government offices. Beyond convenience, the reform improves revenue documentation and reduces leakages that traditionally accompanied cash-based collections.

Public finance experts emphasise that predictable revenue streams enhance macroeconomic stability. When governments shift to digital payment ecosystems, they gain real-time visibility into fiscal flows, allowing better expenditure management and more accurate development planning.

Another major reform is the Office Automation and e-Filing System, which has introduced paperless workflows across provincial departments. Digitised correspondence and approvals reduce administrative delays and accelerate decision-making. These efficiency gains carry direct economic implications. According to transaction-cost economics, bureaucratic snafus impose hidden costs on businesses. Each additional approval layer increases uncertainty and discourages investment. Digital governance compresses these inefficiencies, improving the business environment without requiring tax concessions or subsidies.

Punjab's eBiz Portal, which offers more than 200 online government services, represents another step toward regulatory digitisation. Entrepreneurs can apply for permits, licences and No Objection Certificates through inte-

grated digital platforms rather than navigating multiple government offices. For small and medium enterprises, which account for nearly 90 percent of businesses in Pakistan and contribute around 40 percent to national GDP, simplified compliance can significantly reduce operational friction and encourage formalisation.

Digitisation is also reshaping the province's financial administration. Electronic payment gateways have enabled cheque-less transactions, with a growing share of government salaries and vendor payments processed digitally. Such reforms improve liquidity management, reduce settlement delays and align provincial financial practices with modern public financial management standards.

Equally important is the use of digital monitoring tools for development programmes. Real-time Management Information Systems are increasingly used to track project implementation and evaluate performance indicators. This reflects a broader shift toward evidence-based policymaking, where planning and budgeting decisions rely on data rather than administrative assumptions.

International experience highlights the economic potential of these reforms. Estonia, widely considered the world's most advanced digital state, conducts nearly all public services online and saves an estimated two percent of its GDP annually through administrative efficiency. Singapore and South Korea have similarly built integrated digital government systems that support regulatory transparency and attract global investment.

Punjab's reforms align with the global concept of Digital Public Infrastructure — interoperable digital systems connecting governance, payments and service delivery. Such infrastructure reduces information asymmetry between citizens, businesses and the state while expanding participation in the documented economy.

Continued on Page 7



Analysis

Qudrat Ullah

March 8th, Int'l Women's Day, a metaphor for determination, courage and struggle

March 8th is not just a date, it is a movement. This day is a day to pay tribute to the struggle, sacrifices and achievements of women around the world. But when we look at the current economic situation, this day is not limited to just celebrations and slogans but also demands serious accountability, from the state, from society and from all of us. The economic difficulties that the country is going through today, the uncontrolled wave of inflation, limited employment opportunities, rising prices of electricity and gas, the sharp increase in food prices, if anyone has the heaviest burden on their shoulders, it is the woman of an ordinary house. The same mother who keeps the hearth of the house burning on a limited budget, the same sister who sacrifices her own needs to complete her brothers' education, the same daughter who dreams but hits the walls of circumstances. Similarly, economic instability and lack of policy continuity are also leaving deep impacts on women's lives. Have we really made women equal partners in decision-making? Are the problems of rural and urban women being heard with equal seriousness? Is there a strong social security system for widows, divorcees and working women? The fact cannot be forgotten that in the current economic crisis, a large number of women are working in the informal sector, in domestic work, sewing and embroidery, small businesses, agriculture, but they have neither legal protection nor economic stability. When inflation increases, their wages do not increase, but

expenses definitely increase. When unemployment increases, women are the first to be laid off from their jobs. The current government of Azad Kashmir is currently doing its best to solve women's problems. God willing, the current government will solve women's problems according to its resources and is also trying to solve them. March 8th forces us to think that real empowerment of women is not possible just through slogans or social media campaigns. For this, strong policy-making, equal access to education, health facilities, a safe environment and the provision of economic opportunities are indispensable. We have to admit that without the development of women, the development of any nation is incomplete. This day is dedicated to those mothers who make their sons soldiers, teachers, doctors and leaders but themselves remain anonymous. This day is dedicated to those daughters who have the courage to

dream. This day is dedicated to those hard-working women who are busy from morning to evening in the struggle for halal livelihood. This day is dedicated to those political and social activists who have the courage to speak the truth despite pressure, criticism and obstacles. Today, we must pledge that women should not be considered just vote banks, but policy makers. Special packages and interest-free loan schemes should be introduced for women in economic reforms. In this regard, the Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir is also making a special effort to ensure strict implementation of laws against harassment in the workplace and to establish skill and digital training centers

Continued on Page 7



Analysis

Rehana Khan

Gaza death toll surges to 72,123, with 171,805 reported casualties

Wafa

RAMALLAH: The death toll from the Israeli genocidal aggression on the Gaza Strip on Saturday surged to 72,123 civilians, according to medical sources.

They said that the total death toll in the Gaza Strip climbed to 72,120, mostly women and children, and the casualties to 171,805 since the onset of the genocidal aggression on the Strip on October 7, 2023.

They added that in the last 24 hours, the bodies of three slain Palestinians and three casualties were admitted to Gaza hospitals. Hundreds of victims remain under the rubble or on the streets, where ambulance and civil defense face numerous difficulties in reaching them due to ongoing shelling and massive destruction.

Since the ceasefire agreement went into effect on 11 October 2025, the occupation forces have killed 640 Palestinians and injured 1,707 others. The bodies of 753 Palestinians have been retrieved over the same period.



Commissioner Multan Division Visited the Under-Construction Eidgah Park

Iram Asim

MULTAN: Commissioner Multan Division Aamir Karim Khan visited the under-construction park opposite Eidgah and reviewed the ongoing development works in detail. On this occasion, MD Horticulture Agency Multan Syed Waseem Hassan and Director Engineering Adnan Butt gave a briefing regarding the project. It was informed in the briefing that the construction of the park will cost more than Rs 16 million.

Commissioner Aamir Karim Khan said that the divisional administration is taking steps to provide better recreational facilities to the citizens and a beautiful and modern park is being developed at this location in the middle of the city which will provide a pleasant environment for the citizens. He said that landscaping, beautiful plants, walking tracks and suitable seating areas will be created in the park so that the citizens can get quality recreational facilities.



Commissioner Multan directed that special attention be paid to the landscaping and beautification of the park so that this place can significantly enhance the beauty of the city. He said

that increasing green areas and making the city green is the top priority of the administration and more parks will be established in the city in the future. On this occasion, MD Horticulture

Agency Syed Waseem Hassan said that the park will be developed in a modern and beautiful style and will be made a beautiful recreational place for the citizens. He said that the

Thousands of Americans evacuated from Middle East on charter flights, State Department says

WASHINGTON: The United States has completed over a dozen charter flights and evacuated thousands of Americans from the Middle East since last week, the US State Department said on Saturday.

The Trump administration has faced criticism over its planning and initial assistance to US citizens trying to leave the region since US and Israeli strikes on Iran began last Saturday, with the Iranians responding with attacks on neighboring countries, sparking airspace closures.

The State Department said it was boosting charter flight and ground transport operations in the region as security conditions allow.

Earlier, US President Donald Trump said that there would be no deal struck with Iran except 'unconditional



surrender'. Empty than usual scenes from Dubai airport 'After that, and the selection of a

GREAT & ACCEPTABLE Leader(s), we, and many of our wonderful and very brave allies and partners, will work tirelessly to bring Iran back from the brink

of destruction,' Trump said in a social media post, adding that they would work to boost Iran's economy.

Trump told Reuters on Thursday that he wants to be involved in choosing the next leader of Iran.

Trump added that it would be a "waste of time" currently to consider sending US ground troops into Iran, dismissing the Iranian foreign minister's warning that such a move would spell disaster for invaders.

"It's a waste of time. They've lost everything. They've lost their navy. They've lost everything they can lose," he told NBC by telephone, adding that Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi's earlier remark that Iran was ready for a US or Israeli ground invasion was a "wasted comment."

Graceful Ceremony Held at Sanat Zar Attock in Connection with International Women's Day

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: A special ceremony was organized at Sanat Zar (District Industrial Home) Attock under the supervision of the Social Welfare and Bait-ul-Maal Department in connection with International Women's Day. A large number of teachers, staff members, and students of Sanat Zar attended the event.

The ceremony formally began with the recitation of the Holy Quran. On this occasion, various speakers highlighted the significance of International Women's Day and shed light on the rights and responsibilities of women in society. The speakers emphasized that women's education and skill development are the true foundation of progress.

Manager Sanat Zar, Arif Siddiqui, in his presidential address summarized the views of all speakers and briefed the participants about the government's initiatives for the welfare and empowerment of women. He particularly informed the audience about the resources, funds, and priority projects allocated for women under the Social Welfare & Bait-ul-Maal Department and the Women Development Department.

Arif Siddiqui stated that, "The government is utilizing all possible resources to empower women so that they can play an effective role in practical fields."

The ceremony concluded with a renewed commitment to the welfare and empowerment of women.

Death Toll Rises to Five in Pindi Gheb Gas Leak Explosion

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: The death toll from Thursday's gas leak explosion in Pindi Gheb increased to five on Saturday after another critically injured victim succumbed to burn injuries during treatment, sources confirmed.

Muhammad Dilawar, son of Muhammad Ashraf and a resident of Mohalla Owaisia Town, had sustained severe burns in the blast. He passed away while receiving treatment at the burn center of the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) in Islamabad.

The tragic incident occurred late Friday night in a densely populated residential area near the old police chowki and close to Fauji Foundation Hospital in Pindi Gheb. A suspected gas leak in a private baithak (guest sitting room) triggered a powerful explosion.

The blast caused the concrete roof of the room to collapse, trapping several youths beneath the rubble.

Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Multan District has Protested Against the increase petroleum Products

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Multan District has protested against the increase in the prices of petroleum products by more than Rs 55 per liter. The joys of Eid have been snatched away from the poor nation before Eid. They have demanded that the ruling class immediately end the royal protocol and royal expenses and withdraw the increase. Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Multan District Ameer Mufti Aamir Mahmood, General Secretary Noor Khan Hans Advocate, Patron Hafiz Muhammad Umar Sheikh, JUI Multan Division Business Forum President Maulana Amjad Ali Zia, District Information Secretary Rana Muhammad Saeed, City Ameer Qari Muhammad Yasin, General Secretary Maulana Muhammad Yousof Madani, Javed Iqbal Kalro, Maulana Zahid Habib, Qari Abdul Rauf, Muhammad Sufyan Mughal have expressed serious concern over the sudden increase in the prices of petroleum products by Rs 55 per liter while talking to the media about the sudden increase in the prices of petroleum products and said that the then government used the pretext of the war between Iran, America and Israel to increase the prices of petroleum products.

As war spreads, airline pilots contend with drones, missiles—and stress

LONDON/COPENHAGEN/BEIRUT: Airline pilots have faced escalating risks in recent years, from drone incursions to flight paths squeezed by conflict. Now US-Israeli attacks on Iran are making the skies even more perilous and ratcheting up the pressure on those flying through them.

The outbreak of war in the Middle East has put hundreds of ballistic missiles and attack drones into the skies above some of the world's busiest airports.

Tehran's retaliation against the US and its allies has included hitting airports, grounding scores of flights from Dubai to Abu Dhabi.

A trickle of rescue flights has made it through for thousands of stranded passengers.

Reuters spoke to eight pilots and more than a half-dozen aviation and security insiders who said the accumulation of conflicts—from Ukraine to Afghanistan and Israel—has increased the burden on pilots, forcing them to manage shrinking airspace and the wider use of military drones far from active war zones.

That's increased the strain on the mental health of pilots desperate to keep themselves and their passengers safe.

"We are not military pilots. We are not trained to deal with these kinds of threats in the air," Tanja Harter, a pilot with Middle East experience and president of the European Cockpit Association, told Reuters.

The US to SURRENDER in Iran War

The US-Israel-Iran war has entered in 8th day. The war which Trump started, apparently to cover up his Epstein-crimes on dictation of Netanyahu, is now turning into disaster for the US & Israel. Due to extreme censor, actual death toll is neither reported from Israel nor from the US. Rather some AI generated videos are reported by the US to the media to prove their false success in the war. Besides such propaganda, they are also dragging the Gulf nations, the Europe and other countries into the war against Iran. Also, the Kurds on the Iran-Iraq border are being armed & funded to wage ground attacks in Iran. Additionally, by doing false flag operations against Azerbaijan, Cyprus, oil refineries and the Airports in the Middle East, they are inciting these countries to help them to defeat Iran.

Iran attacked various cities of Israel and caused heavy damage and deaths. But the recording such evidence isn't allowed in Israel, so real figures are not available but according to the Iranian/independent claims around 600 Israelis are killed in Israel. Likewise, right number of deaths of the Americans isn't known. But according to the Iranian claims, hundreds of the American troops & operatives are killed in the Iranian attacks. Also, the Iraqi Malatia and Lebanese Hammam have caused heavy damage to the Amer-

ican and Israeli infrastructure and incurred casualties. Whereas in Iran the US caused heavy collateral damage and incurred deaths of 1100 Iranians.

The collective will of the Iranian leadership and their public is the real reason for their success. Even with NO effective Air Force, Air Defense & Navy, they are fighting alone bravely for their survival and for the cause of Islam. They are the only ones, who are fighting for Palestine. Whereas all other American slave Muslim cowardly rulers are supporting the US to survive their Dictatorships. Allah blesses victory ONLY to those who are on right path. Even according to the BIBLE, arrogance incurs your fall and you loose wars. Trump is an arrogant, war criminal & rapist with disapproval by 80% Americans where 60% believe that he is insane, as per the survey by Reuters. In arrogance, he is threat-

ening to kill the proposed Supreme leader Mujtaba Khamanei, if someone of his choice is not chosen. Also, in frustration, he is seeking prayers from the Priests for his success to retain the supremacy of the US.

Super powers have their plans but Allah supersedes all such Satanic plans, like China & Russia emerged to support Iran. The Chinese Beidou military satellite is giving full intelligence about the locations of the American bases, businesses, hotels & buildings used by their operatives for precise targeting. Through Chinese Jammers, Iran shot down 4 American F15 fighters. Similarly, the Russian satellite continues it's support to pinpoint the targets. Russia also supplied Iran with anti-Aircraft missiles. Now it has become a PROXY war for China & Russia to get rid of the US forever through Iran.

Iran has very strategic IRGC command structures in 31 layers, which can launch attacks independently even if the contact is lost from central command in Tehran. They are self-sufficient in home-made Drones & Missiles with up to 80,000 drones & up to 5000 Missiles. Whereas their ICBM has a range of up to 13,000 Km, enough to hit the US. Though they have the capacity to sink the US Aircrafts Linkon & Ford but for now they are exhausting the US & Israel to deplete their limited stock of Patriots & Thaad's interceptors through their cheap Drones. Possibly, Russia may also give them the nuclear warheads as a last resort, like Samson Option. Whereas the US is pulling out Patriots from other countries because their capacity is limited to produce 600 Patriots & 16 Thaad's per year. Where a Patriot costs around \$4 Mil compared to the Iranian Drone only for \$30,000. China has already blocked the rare earth minerals required for such interception systems.

like the Gulf nations which pledged \$5 Tril of investment in the US are now asking to withdraw from their contracts under the provision of Force majeure/war. The US allies are in short supply of oil & gas while their prices have risen by 30%, stock market is crashing, travel & tourism is cut, prices of the commodities are increasing due to disruption in the logistic chain.

Now while the US allies, Generals & Economists are asking Trump to STOP war, Iran in collaboration with China & Russia should impose conditions to stop war, like to lift sanctions against Iran, free Palestine and remove all the American bases from the Gulf immediately.

In such a situation, all the sponsored Muslim rulers who have been the partners in war crimes with the US & Israel for the genocide of the Palestinians should support Iran for a dual benefit to free Palestine and to clear their lands from such war criminals.



Shakil Ahmad

Analysis

The writer is Migration Advisor, President PMI and living in Sydney

Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index		
Current	Prev. Close	
157,496.10	161,210.67	
Day's High	Day's Low	
161,435.83	157,072.64	
Index Value	Change	
18,782,789,868	-3714.57	
Percentage	Time	
-2.3%	6 Mar, 2026 4:30 pm	
Europe: FTSE 100 Index		
Index Value	Change	
10,284.75	-129.19	
Percentage	Time	
-1.24%	6 Mar, 4:35 pm GMT	
USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average		
Index Value	Change	
47,356.86	-597.88	
Percentage	Time	
-1.25%	6 Mar, 1:54 pm GMT-5	
Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average		
Index Value	Change	
55,620.84	+342.78	
Percentage	Time	
+0.62%	6 Mar, 3:45 pm GMT+9	
Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	193.15	197.25
Bahrain Dinar	733.60	743.70
Canadian Dollar	201.60	205.25
China Yuan	38	39.05
Danish Krone	43.32	43.72
Euro	325.31	329.05
Hong Kong Dollar	34.94	35.94
Indian Rupee	2.6	3.02
Japanese Yen	1.7234	1.8234
Kuwaiti Dinar	888.85	898.30
Malaysian Ringgit	65.60	66.25
New Zealand \$	162.59	166.25
Norwegians Krone	27.61	27.91
Omani Riyal	718.50	728.60
Qatari Riyal	74.79	75.55
Saudi Riyal	73.80	74.80
Singapore Dollar	215.55	222.25
Swedish Korona	30.15	30.45
Swiss Franc	355	358.85
Thai Bhat	7.5	7.75
U.A.E Dirham	75.75	77
UK Pound Sterling	374.83	378.25
US Dollar	279.00	280.45

Pakistan's First Locally Built EV Arriving Soon Under One Million Rupees: Mashood Khan

Spokesman Report

KARACHI: Pakistan's first fully homegrown electric vehicle is set to hit roads by June or July this year at a price below Rs1 million, as the government plans to significantly cut taxes on locally assembled vehicles in the upcoming federal budget.

Speaking at an Iftar dinner hosted by Mashood Khan, Director of the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA), at a local hotel, Hamad Ali Mansoor, CEO of the Engineering Development Board (EDB), announced that this will mark the first time in the country's history that a domestically manufactured electric vehicle rolls off local production lines.

He said the manufacturing plant for the Made in Pakistan EV was established in Lahore and the vehicle is expected to be priced below Rs1 million — an effort to help two-wheeler owners transition to four-wheelers.

The vehicle will offer a range of up to 180 kilometres on a single charge, making it a prac-



tical option for everyday commuters, he added.

Hamad further revealed that the government plans to significantly cut taxes on locally-assembled vehicles in the upcoming federal budget, a move aimed at making cars more affordable for the general public and boosting the local auto industry.

He further said that the longstanding monopoly of large automobile companies in Pakistan is effectively coming to an end and added that two to three more companies already expressed interest in manufacturing EVs in the country.

Meanwhile, Mashood Khan said that Pakistan's economic future hinges on the success of its Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), driven by young and innovative entrepreneurs. SMEs currently employ nearly 25 million people and contribute approximately Rs2.8 billion in exports, making them the country's most dynamic economic force. With policy consistency, access to finance, and export facilitation, Pakistan's SMEs can transform into global competitors, driving jobs, growth, and long-term economic stability, Mashood added.

Help (SAWAB)

ISLAMABAD: An employee of electric bus service help to boarding of a disable woman passenger, at a bus station in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

SECP engagement leads to mandatory motor third-party insurance in Sindh

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Government of Sindh has formally introduced amendments in the Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act, 2026, making third-party liability insurance mandatory for all vehicles registered in the province to enhance financial protection for road accident victims.

The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has been continuously engaging with provincial governments to strengthen the legal framework and ensure effective enforcement of mandatory motor third-party insurance across the country.

Through this amendment to the Provincial Motor Vehicles Ordinance, 1965, a new Section 67-H has been introduced requiring third-party liability insurance for motor vehicles. Under the revised framework, no vehicle will be registered, transferred, or allowed to pay annual token tax without a valid insurance policy covering



third-party risks.

Third-party motor insurance is a basic and affordable policy that covers legal liabilities for damage to property, injuries, or death caused to another person in an accident. The amendment also introduces defined compensation limits on a no-fault basis, ensuring timely financial relief to victims or their legal heirs. The compensation includes PKR 700,000 in case of death and PKR 500,000 for permanent disability, significantly strengthening protection for road users.

With this reform, Sindh has become the first province in Pakistan to effectively enforce mandatory motor third-party

liability insurance through a strengthened legal framework.

To support enforcement and improve transparency, the SECP has operationalized the Motor Insurance Repository (MIR), a centralized electronic database that records motor insurance policies issued by insurers registered with the Commission. The system enables digital verification of insurance policies and helps ensure compliance with minimum legal requirements at the time of vehicle registration.

SECP is also working with the Punjab Provincial Transport Authority to link the vehicle route permit regime with the Motor Insurance Repository for online validation of insurance policies, further strengthening enforcement mechanisms nationwide.

The Commission appreciated the Government of Sindh for implementing this important consumer protection and road safety measure and expressed hope that other provinces will adopt similar steps.

PTCL & Ufone Applaud Pakistan Hockey Team's Historic World Cup Qualification

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL) and Ufone congratulate the Pakistan national hockey team on securing qualification for the FIH Hockey World Cup 2026 after a thrilling victory over Japan in the semifinals of the qualifiers. The landmark achievement marks Pakistan's strong return to the prestigious global tournament after eight years and represents a significant step forward in the revival of the country's national sport.

Over the past one and a half years, PTCL and Ufone have proudly supported Pakistan hockey as the main partners of the Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF).



Importantly, PTCL and Ufone extended their support well before major victories came, demonstrating strong belief in the potential of the team and the enduring legacy of Pakistan hockey. This partnership reflects a long-term commitment to revitalizing the sport and strengthening

Pakistan's presence on the international stage.

With the support of PTCL and Ufone, Pakistan hockey has achieved several notable milestones, including winning the Bronze Medal at the Asian Champions Trophy, finishing as Runners Up at the FIH Nations Cup, and now qualifying for the FIH Hockey World Cup. These achievements highlight the team's determination, resilience, and steady progress in international competition.

PTCL and Ufone extend their best wishes to the national team for continued success as they progress in the tournament and prepare to represent Pakistan at the FIH Hockey World Cup 2026.

SAI Chief Demands Govt Suspend Taxes on POL Products Amid Steep Price Hike

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Abdul Rehman Fudda, President of the S. I. T. E. Association of Industry, has expressed grave concern over the extraordinary increase in petroleum oil and lubricant (POL) prices by up to Rs55 per liter with immediate effect amid the ongoing tensions between the US and Iran, and has strongly urged the government to immediately reduce taxes on petroleum products.

In a statement, he said that in the present emergency situation the government should absorb the impact of the increase in international POL prices by cutting



petroleum taxes, rather than passing the entire burden on to consumers, warning that failure to provide tax relief on POL would further intensify inflation and economic pressure on industries and the public alike.

Fuel price spike to trigger new wave of inflation: ICCI President

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The leadership of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry has expressed strong concern over the Rs. 55 per litre increase in petroleum prices, terming the decision highly detrimental to trade and industry and warning that it may trigger a fresh wave of inflation across the country.

President Sardar Tahir Mehmood said that such a sharp increase in petroleum prices would directly raise production costs, transportation charges, and overall operational expenses for businesses, making it increasingly difficult for industries and traders to sustain their activities. He added that Pakistan's economy is already facing multiple economic

challenges and pressures, and the latest hike in fuel prices would further aggravate the situation.

He stated that placing the entire burden of rising international oil prices on the public and the business community is unjustified and unfair. He urged the government to provide relief by reducing petroleum levy and other taxes instead of passing the full impact of global price fluctuations onto consumers.

Sardar Tahir Mehmood further pointed out that the increase in petroleum prices would lead to higher transportation fares, which would ultimately push up the prices of essential commodities and daily-use items, thereby intensifying inflationary pressures on the general public.

Unprecedented increase in petroleum prices raises fears of a new wave of inflation

Commerce Desk

HYDERABAD: President of the Hyderabad Chamber of Small Traders & Small Industry (HCSTSI), Muhammad Saleem Memon, has expressed deep concern and regret over the recent unprecedented increase in petroleum product prices. He stated that the sharp increase of approximately Rs. 55 per litre in petrol and diesel prices has created serious fears of a new wave of inflation across the country, the impact of which will directly affect both the

general public and the business community.

He noted that immediately after the announcement of the price hike, an unusual rush was witnessed at petrol pumps across the city of Hyderabad. A large number of citizens rushed to filling stations to obtain fuel, resulting in long queues at several locations. While some petrol pumps continued supplying fuel, many were compelled to temporarily suspend sales due to excessive rush and supply-related issues, causing considerable inconvenience to the public.

Experts stress alignment of textile recycling industry with global compliance standards

FAISALABAD: The leading industry experts, academics and sustainability stakeholders have stressed for alignment of Pakistan's rapidly expanding textile recycling sector with emerging global compliance requirements in addition to strengthen its visibility in international markets for exploiting its full potential.

They were addressing a major stakeholder dialogue titled "Recycling in Textiles: Way Forward for Pakistan" held at Satiana Industrial Association, where more than 100 delegates from industry, academia and allied sectors deliberated on strategies to strengthen textile circularity, improve compliance readiness and integrate Pakistan's recycling ecosystem with evolving global regulatory frameworks.

National Textile University Faisalabad (NTUF) under its Sustainable Manufacturing and Environmental Pollution (SMEP) Program organized the dialogue in collaboration with Satiana Industrial Association, the University of Kamalia, Reverse Resources and KnowTex.

The event received institutional support from UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD), UK International Development, World Wide Fund (WWF), Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI), All Pakistan Bed-Sheets & Upholstery Manufacturers Association (APBUMA), Institute of Engineers Pakistan (IEP), MB Recycling and Closed Loop Fashion.

The delegations representing major recycling clusters including Satiana, Dajkot and Tata Bazaar participated in the session while the stakeholders involved in waste-handling operations from Ganesh Mill and Muridke clusters also attended.

The speakers highlighted that Satiana alone hosts more than 106 textile recycling units, reflecting the scale, economic significance and employment potential of the recycling industry within Pakistan's textile value chain.

PM appreciates national hockey team for qualifying for World Cup after 8 years

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Prime Minister (PM) Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has appreciated the national hockey team for qualifying for the Hockey World Cup after a

gap of eight years and congratulated the players on their achievement.

In his message on Saturday, the Prime Minister advised the players to continue their hard work and dedication.

He said that by playing with the same

determination and commitment, the team can achieve success in the World Cup.

The PM assured that the government will provide all possible facilities to the players to support their preparation and

performance.

He emphasized that the players should keep their full focus on delivering outstanding performance in the game and bring pride to the country through their achievements.

Today the T20 World Cup Final Match Between India and New Zealand will be played

Asim Tanveer

AHMEDABAD: The memories of the 2023 World Cup final are still fresh for India and Pat Cummins' chilling words about the ultimate satisfaction of silencing 120,000 people still ring in the ears, a terrifying echo with the heartbeat of this World Cup cannot be out of place before the T20 World Cup title clash against New Zealand on Sunday night. Despite all this, India is worried. It is in a superstition. That the Indian cricket team changed the hotel because it has lost twice in the same hotel. Mitchell Santner has also taken a picture of the pitch and this is the memory of the 2023 World Cup final when Pat Cummins took the picture, it was mentioned yesterday that New Zealand will have to wake up.

Mitchell Santner did not mind endorsing Cummins' silence, which is expected to be a packed Narendra Modi Stadium, but he also spoke about the variables in T20 cricket and the pressure of expectations for India at home. "Yeah I guess that's not the aim, to silence the crowd but I think there are a lot of variables in T20 cricket and it can be unnerving at times," the New Zealand captain said on the eve of the final. "For us it's a matter of confidence that if we go about our business the same way we can upset another big team and I think there's obviously a lot of pressure on India to win this World Cup at home." Indian captain Suryakumar Yadav says he wouldn't mind breaking a few hearts to lift the trophy for once.

ICC T20 World Cup 2026 Final. India vs New Zealand. Ahmedabad. Sunday, March 8. 6 PM, Pakistan time

They last lost a series or tournament in August 2023. Since the start of the last T20 World Cup, they have won seven matches each. They included Abhishek Sharma, Tilak Verma, Varun Chakravarthy and many more characters in the trophy-winning group in 2024. A lot of water has flowed under the bridge since November 2023. Victory in the 2024 World Cup and



the 2025 Champions Trophy (incidentally New Zealand were the opponents in the final) has restored India as a formidable force—a feat that has been consistent for the past four weeks as Suryakumar Yadav has shown that he can win big men. They are now favourites to become the first country to defend the T20 World Cup crown. Abhishek, considered the hottest batsman going into the World Cup, has managed just 89 runs in 8 matches, while Chakravarthy has become cannon fodder for the opposition batsmen. India have no choice but to stick with him in the final, they will need to do what they are known for. Suryakumar confirmed. This match is likely to be a high-scoring contest.

The captains were asked on the eve of



the final whether they expected another aggregate score of over 250. The nature of the pitch is such, a mix of red and black clay, and it looks full of runs. But more than the pitch, the players will be bothered by the dampness on the field. Dew has affected the outcome of several matches in this World Cup, and it would hardly be fair to decide the World Cup final by a coin toss, with the captain winning the toss and deciding to bowl.

This is the third ICC final between India and New Zealand in the last six years across three different formats. The 2021 World Test Championship, the 2025 Champions Trophy ODI and the 2026 T20 World Cup. New Zealand have a 2-1 record against India in ICC tournament finals—they won the Champions Trophy 2000 and the WTC 2021, and lost the Champions Trophy last year. India lead New Zealand 18-11 with a tie but New Zealand's T20 World Cup record is odd. They have a 3-0 lead over India in Johannesburg 2007, Nagpur 2016 and Dubai 2021.

India have reached the final of the T20 World Cup for the fourth time, the most for any team. Of the finals, six have been won by the chasing team, the other three by India: 2007 and 2024—both ended in the last over. Sunday will be tactical, emotional, full of skill and a



bit of luck, and at the end of the night both teams will have to come to terms with the betrayal. That is the reality of the game.

The middle pitch on the square has been reserved for the final, as it was for the IPL final last year. This particular surface, a mix of red and black clay, is 5-3 in favour of the chasing side. Royal Challengers Bangalore successfully defended 190 in last year's IPL final. Earlier, Punjab Kings had won by just 11 runs after scoring 243 batting first. The second successful defence was against Canada in this World Cup. South Africa also had an easy chase against the West Indies on the same surface. Since 2019, New Zealand have drawn 2-2 against India in the ICC tournament knockouts. They won the semi-final of the 2019 ODI World Cup and the final of the World Test Championship in 2021, but lost in the semi-final of the ODI World Cup in 2023 and the final of the Champions Trophy last year. The 2000 Champions Trophy final win in Nairobi gave New Zealand a tiebreaker.

India is playing a record fourth final. It is the first time they are playing a deciding match as the defending champions. If they win, they will be the first country to become champions in their own country. Not only that, India will be the first country to defend the title.

Chess will also be included in the next editions of Khelta Punjab Games and Pink Games: Khokhar

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: Punjab Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs Malik Faisal Ayub Khokhar inaugurated Punjab Open Chess Championship, the biggest chess event of Punjab, at the Nishtar Park Sports Complex gymnasium hall on Friday



night by playing exhibition chess match against U-12 Punjab Junior Rapid Champion Raja Ihtamur Rehman.

Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Muhammad Ali, Director General Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Muhammad Tariq Qureshi, Vice Chairman SBP Suleman Malik, Director Admin Abid Shaukat, Director Sports Rana Nadeem Anjum and officials from Punjab Chess Association were also present on this occasion.

The 2-day Punjab Open Chess Championship is being held under the aegis of Punjab Sports Department.

As many as 350 male and female players are participating in the Punjab Open Chess Championship. 104 players participated in the master category while 108 players participated in the under-16 boys and girls category. Similarly, more than 188 players showed their skills in the amateur category.

Addressing the opening ceremony, Provincial Sports Minister Faisal Ayub Khokhar said that chess is a game that improves mental skills and develops decision-making, patience and strategic abilities in the youth.

Punjab Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs Malik Faisal Ayub Khokhar announced to construct a multi-storey sports complex for mind games at the Nishtar Park Sports Complex. "The said sports complex will be equipped with all modern sports facilities".

Punjab Minister for Sports Malik Faisal Ayub Khokhar said that Punjab Sports Department will take all possible measures to promote chess and other mind games among the younger generation. "The game of chess will also be included in the next editions of Khelta Punjab Games and Pink Games."

He said that the next chess event will be many times bigger than this one and the same case will be with the cash prizes.

He said sports of Punjab province is going in the right direction in accordance with the vision of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz. "Demonstrating wonderful performance, Punjab province secured first position among all provinces in the last editions of National Games and Quaid-e-Azam Inter-provincial Games".

He further said that Punjab government is providing maximum opportunities to the talented youth to exhibit and polish their sports skills. "The talented athletes of any game are true asset for the country and Punjab government will extend full support to such male and female athletes".

Punjab Minister for Sports Malik Faisal Ayub Khokhar said that the Punjab Chess Association and the Sports Board Punjab will jointly promote the game of chess in all parts of the province. "The top performing athletes of chess will be enrolled in the Punjab Sports Endowment Fund."

He said that practical steps are being taken for the promotion of sports across the province according to the vision of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz. He said that attracting the youth towards positive activities is one of the priorities of the government and a healthy environment is being provided to the young generation by establishing top standard sports infrastructure.

He said that Punjab Sports Department has made special arrangements for refreshments and Sehri for all participating players and free accommodation facility for players coming from other cities.

He said that the youth of Punjab have immense potential and the government is taking all possible steps to guide and mentor them.

Punjab Minister for Sports Faisal Ayub Khokhar further said that the Punjab government is giving special attention to the improvement of infrastructure, coaching facilities and organizing tournaments for the promotion of sports so that the youth can be engaged in positive and healthy activities.

Merit-based appointments being made in Sports Board: Suleman Malik, Vice-Chairman SBP



Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: Vice-Chairman Sports Board Punjab (SBP) Suleman Malik has chaired an important meeting of Human Resource (HR) Committee at the National Hockey Stadium.

The meeting was attended by Director Admin Abid Shaukat, Director Sports Rana Nadeem Anjum, CEO Punjab Olympic Association Idris Haider Khawaja, Secretary M Waqar and Assistant Director M Kamal. Director Admin Abid Shaukat gave a detailed briefing in the meeting.

Addressing the meeting, Suleman Malik said that Sports Board Punjab has adopted a merit-based process for appointments in its multiple departments. "An excellent HR committee has been formed for the development of sports across all divisions of the province".

He said that the prime objective of Sports Board Punjab is to promote sports culture across the Punjab province. "Coaches play an important role in the development of sports. Top level qualified coaches of different games are serving in the Sports Board Punjab".

March 8th, Int'l Women's Day, a metaphor for determination, courage and struggle

Continued from Page 4

for rural women. Women's Day gives us the message that society cannot be balanced until women are given a place of respect, protection and equality. Despite the current challenges, the lamp of hope is lit because Pakistani women are strong, courageous, and have emerged victorious in every trial. March 8 reminds us that women are not weak, they are architects of change.

If we listen to her voice, solve her problems and give her real participation in decision-making, then this day can become a new dawn of our collective progress.

Allah Almighty has given women four forms: sometimes a mother, sometimes a

daughter, sometimes a sister, sometimes a wife, that is, Allah Almighty has made women beautiful in every form. March 8, where International Women's Day is celebrated all over the world with great respect and dignity.

The importance of this day is to create awareness about the value and rights of women, their problems and their place in society. Hazrat Muhammad (peace be upon him) gave one command to women and children, in which it is clear that women should be treated with tenderness like children.

Allah Almighty says that men are the guardians of women, their needs and their protection. In many other matters, men have precedence over women. On this day, we must remember the sacri-

fices of our Kashmiri mothers and sisters.

The women of Palestine and Kashmir have the same rights as the women of any other independent country, but unfortunately, the Indian and Israeli armies, where women's rights are not respected, are not respected.

Women have always played an important role in the development of the country and nation, so we should provide them with equal opportunities so that they can perform their services alongside men in every field. Women in Palestine and occupied Kashmir are bravely fighting oppression and cruelty.

The rights of children and women are being violated by the occupying forces and they are subjected to brutal treatment, but despite this oppression and

tyranny, brave and courageous women are fighting back.

The civilized international community should take notice of the exploitation and atrocities of women in Palestine and Kashmir and provide protection to women in occupied Kashmir. An immediate ceasefire should be declared in Palestine and protection should be provided to women in occupied Kashmir.

The rights that Islam has given to women are unparalleled in any other religion. The so-called enlightenment cannot be a substitute for Islamic teachings. The dignity and respect that Islam has given to women has no comparison with the so-called Western enlightenment.

The writer is Chairperson Women Commission AJK

Iran War: The Energy Trap for China and Russia

Continued from Page 4

allow Washington to pressure adversaries not necessarily by stopping every cargo physically, but by raising risk, insurance, delay, and uncertainty to levels that alter trade behavior. In global energy markets, fear itself is a weapon.

Venezuela adds another layer to this picture. It possesses the world's largest proven crude reserves, and while sanctions, infrastructure decay, and under-investment have kept production far below its potential, the country remains a massive latent energy asset in the Western Hemisphere. If Washington can tighten its grip over western supply sources while also exerting naval and strategic influence over eastern chokepoints, then it is not difficult to imagine a future in which energy becomes an even sharper geopolitical instrument. That would not mean total American control of global oil, but it

would mean an ability to influence supply routes, pricing pressure, and economic vulnerability in ways few empires in history have ever possessed.

Such a scenario would place China in particular under long-term strategic stress. Its factories, transport networks, petrochemical industries, and export machines all depend on steady access to imported energy. Russia too would face increasing pressure if maritime and sanctioned routes became narrower, longer, costlier, or more politically constrained. Even U. S. allies would not be immune. Any state that disobeyed Washington on key matters could face indirect coercion through a security system that determines how safely and cheaply energy reaches world markets.

That, then, is the terrifying possibility hidden beneath the daily headlines. The war on Iran may not simply be about uranium enrichment, missiles,

democracy, or the suffering of the Iranian people. It may be about who commands the valves of the global economy. It may be about transforming maritime geography into a mechanism of strategic obedience. It may be about giving one power the ability, in moments of crisis, to squeeze rivals, discipline allies, and bend energy-dependent economies toward submission.

And that is why this conflict is so dangerous. If Russia and China conclude that Iran is not merely a regional partner but the front line of a broader struggle over the future control of Eurasia's energy lifelines, then the war may not remain confined to Iran at all. It could widen not because anyone desires world war, but because the consequences of inaction may appear even more catastrophic than the risks of confrontation.

The world therefore stands before a historic choice. Either the major powers

step back and preserve a plural, negotiated, and open energy order, or they continue down a path in which choke-points become instruments of domination and commerce becomes a hostage of force. If the second path prevails, then the attack on Iran will be remembered not as a regional war, but as the opening move in a far larger campaign to place the world's economic bloodstream under strategic command. And if that day comes, nations will discover too late that oil was never just a commodity. It was power, mobility, sovereignty, and survival. Whoever controls its pathways does not merely influence the market. They hold a hand on the throat of the modern world.

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

Digital Governance as Economic Policy

Continued from Page 4

If sustained, digital governance could reshape Punjab's economic trajectory in several ways: expanding fiscal space through better documentation rather than higher taxation, reducing regulatory uncertainty for investors and improving development outcomes through real-time monitoring and data-driven planning.

In the modern global economy, competitiveness increasingly depends on governance efficiency rather than natural resources

alone. Digital systems shorten the distance between policy intent and implementation — historically one of the weakest links in public administration across many developing countries. Punjab's ongoing reforms suggest that governance itself is gradually being treated as economic infrastructure, positioning digital transformation as a foundation for transparent and sustainable growth.

(The writer is a Lahore-based public policy analyst and can be reached at quadratu@gmail.com)

Iftar - Dinner

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari addressing orphan children at an Iftar dinner hosted at Aiwan-e-Sadr in connection with the observance of Orphans Day.



Photo: PID

Iran won't attack states not allowing U. S., Israeli use of airspace or land: senior official

Xinhua

TEHRAN: A senior Iranian official said Saturday that Iran has not and will not attack those regional countries that do not put their airspace, land and facilities at the disposal of the "enemies."

Abolfazl Shekarchi, a spokesman for Iran's armed forces, made the remarks in a live interview with state-run IRIB TV while pointing to

remarks earlier in the day by Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, who said the interim leadership council had decided to stop attacks by the country on neighbors unless it is targeted from those states.

Shekarchi said from the first day of the U. S. and Israeli attacks, Iran's armed forces have considered any origin of attacks against the country as legitimate targets and taken the necessary actions.

Shekarchi said that so far, those countries that have not put their airspace, land and facilities at the U. S. disposal for "aggression" against Iran have not been targeted. "However, any state that provides the United States and Israel with space or a place to be used for action against us, that space and place will naturally be among our targets."

He emphasized that as Pezeshkian said, Iran respects

countries' national sovereignty and attaches great importance to all Muslim states' security, underlining that Iran has not and will not back down in the face of the United States and Israel, and will continue dealing "crushing blows" to them as before.

Also on Saturday, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei, in a post on social media platform X, called on the United Nations to bear

its legal and moral responsibilities regarding the "illegal war" on the country.

The United States and Israel launched massive attacks on Iran on Feb. 28, killing Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, multiple senior military commanders and hundreds of civilians. Iran has responded with multiple waves of missile and drone attacks targeting Israel and U. S. assets across the region.

Country's economy moving towards stability: Ahsan Iqbal

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal says the country's economy has moved towards stability during the first eight months of fiscal year 2025-26 due to the coordinated macroeconomic policies of the government.

He was addressing a ceremony in Islamabad today in connection with the launch of the Monthly Development Report.

The Minister stated that to ensure price stability, regular meetings of the National Price Monitoring Committee ensured a steady supply of essential commodities across



the country. He said the prices of several essential food items, including eggs, chicken and

potatoes declined significantly.

Ahsan Iqbal noted that the Large-Scale Manufacturing sector exhibited a sustained and broad-based recovery during 2025-26, recording a four point eight increase on an annual basis. He further stated that fourteen out of twenty-two sectors, including automobiles, non-metallic mineral products, beverages, wearing apparel, food, textiles, and tobacco, recorded positive growth.

He noted tax collections reached eight point one trillion rupees from July to February 2025-26, compared to seven point three trillion rupees during the same period last year.

Malik Riaz's front man handed down 10-year jail in money laundering case

News Desk

District and Session Court Islamabad has given 10-year imprisonment and Rs25

million fine to Bahria Town CEO Malik Riaz's front man Colonel (retired) Khalid in money laundering case on Saturday.

Additional District and Sessions Judge Nasr Minallah Baloch pronounced the verdict on the case. The FIA had registered a



case against the accused. The accused will serve another 6 months in prison for non-payment of the fine.

Rawalpindi ATC sentences 47 in May 9 GHQ attack case

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: An anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Rawalpindi has delivered its verdict in the May 9 attack on the General Headquarters (GHQ) case.

Presiding Judge Amjad Ali Shah sentenced 47 declared absconders to 10 years in prison each, along with fines of Rs500,000 per convict.

The court also ordered the confiscation of their assets.

Those convicted include Omar Ayub, Zartaj Gul, Murad Saeed, Shibli Faraz, Hammad Azhar, Kanwal Shauzab, Rashid Shafiq, Shahbaz Gill, Zulfi Bukhari, Muhammad Ahmed Chattha, Rai Hassan Nawaz, Rai Muhammad Murtaza, Shaukat Ali Bhatti, Usman Saeed Basra, and Ijaz Khan Jazi, among others.



According to the court, the convicted individuals were found involved in plotting the May 9 incidents.

The court said a Joint Investigation Team (JIT) report declared them as

central figures in planning violent protests targeting the GHQ gate, Hamza Camp, and the Army Museum.

The report found that the accused had taken part in arson, vandalism,

assaults on police, and the destruction of government property during the May 9 unrest.

The case originally involved 118 individuals, including PTI founder Imran Khan and former foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi, with formal charges filed in December 2024.

Under the Anti-Terrorism Act, a separate trial was conducted for the 47 absconding accused.

The prosecution filed a request for proceedings against them on January 6, 2025, after which the court issued an inquiry.

The 47 absconders were given seven days to surrender in January 2026.

However, despite the court's orders and public notices, none of the accused appeared in court, prompting it to appoint a state counsel to proceed with the trial.

President terms upbringing and education of orphans as collective responsibility

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has emphasized that caring for orphans and ensuring their proper education and upbringing is a collective responsibility of society.

He was addressing an Iftar dinner at the Aiwan-e-Sadr in Islamabad today hosted in honour of orphans under the care of the Pakistan Orphan Care Forum.

Speaking on the occasion, President Asif Ali Zardari described children as the future of Pakistan.

He said orphan children will be provided modern educational oppor-

tunities in colleges and universities on a permanent basis and scholarships will also be allocated for them.

The ceremony was organized to mark Orphans Day, which is observed every year in the Islamic world during the holy month of Ramadan.

The day aims to raise awareness about the challenges being faced by orphans, strengthen social solidarity and promote comprehensive care, education and protection of vulnerable children, particularly in conflict-affected areas.

A large number of orphan boys and girls attended the event.

DPM/FM felicitates Sec Gen. Botchwey on Commonwealth Day



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/ Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar extended felicitations to Secretary-General Shirley Botchwey and the entire Commonwealth family on the occasion of Commonwealth Day (9 March).

The DPM/FM spoke last night with Secretary-General of Commonwealth and underscored Pakistan's contributions,

the Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press release on Saturday.

He also conveyed that due to the ongoing and evolving regional situation, he would be unable to attend the forthcoming meetings of the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) and the Commonwealth Foreign Affairs Ministers' Meeting in London, and has authorized Pakistan's High Commissioner in London to represent Pakistan on his behalf.

DPM/FM Dar, UAE counterpart discuss evolving regional situation



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/ Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Saturday spoke with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

"The two leaders exchanged views

on the evolving regional situation and underscored the importance of peace and stability," the Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press release.

The DPM/FM expressed concern over the recent attacks in the region, including those on the UAE, and conveyed Pakistan's solidarity with the UAE and its people.