



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ
ابو سعید خدری نے فرمایا کہ ایک صحابی نے
سنا کہ ایک دو سرے صحابی سورۃ قل عوانہ
پا رہا ہے جتنے ہیں جب کہ ہوں تو ہر سال اللہ
تعالیٰ کے پاس آئے اور نبی کریم ﷺ سے
اس کا ذکر کیا وہ صحابی اس سورۃ کو سمجھتے تھے
لیکن نبی کریم ﷺ نے فرمایا کہ اس ذات
کی قسم جس کے ہاتھ میں میری جان ہے یہ
قرآن مجید کے ایک جہلی حصہ کے برابر ہے۔
(بخاری ص ۶۴۳ نمبر ۶۶۴۳)
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Mushal Highlights War Trauma Faced by Kashmiri Women

Mushal Hussein Mullick's salute the courage, resilience and sacrifices of Kashmiri and Palestinian women on International Women's Day. She said women in Kashmir have faced unimaginable suffering. Many have endured rape used as a weapon of war, psychological warfare, post-traumatic stress, and the unbearable pain of becoming "half-widows" and "half-mothers" as their loved ones remain disappeared or imprisoned.



Section 144 extended in Punjab

The Punjab Home Department on Sunday issued a notification for an extension in Section 144 and barred all public rallies, gatherings, and demonstrations till March 14, 2026. As per the notification, a complete ban is imposed on gatherings of four or more than four persons at public places.

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Tight security arrangements

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



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Checkposts Destroyed, Ground Hit

Pakistan Updates on Anti-Terror Operation in Afghanistan

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has claimed that 583 operatives of the Afghan Taliban regime have been killed and 795 injured so far during the ongoing Operation Ghazab lil-Haq, launched in response to what it described as terrorism and unprovoked

aggression from Afghanistan.

In a statement posted on X on Sunday, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Atta Tarar shared figures related to the counterattacks carried out by Pakistani forces during the operation.

According to him, the Afghan Taliban have suffered major

losses, with 583 personnel killed and more than 795 injured since the start of the operation.

He said Pakistani forces have destroyed 242 check posts of the Afghan Taliban regime and captured 38 additional posts.

The minister added that 213 tanks, armoured vehicles and artillery guns of the Afghan

Taliban regime have also been destroyed, while 64 locations across Afghanistan have been targeted in airstrikes.

Operation Ghazab lil-Haq was launched in response to what Pakistan described as unprovoked aggression by the Afghan Taliban on the Pak-Afghan border on the night of

Thursday, February 26.

According to the statement, Pakistani forces carried out counter-attacks at several locations inside Afghanistan, targeting military installations in Kabul, Kandahar and Paktia Province, among other areas, and destroyed multiple checkposts.

Petrol could have hit Rs375 without planning: Khawaja Asif

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Defence Minister Khawaja Asif said petrol prices could have surged to Rs375 per litre if the government had not taken timely measures to manage the impact of rising global oil prices.

In a statement posted on social media platform X, Asif said the global economy was under severe pressure due to the ongoing tensions in the Middle East, which

had pushed petroleum product prices to record highs.

He said the government had managed to limit the increase in petrol prices through planning and sustained efforts.

"Despite the current circumstances, the government has made only a limited increase in petrol prices," the defence minister said, adding that without timely intervention, the price could have reached Rs375 per litre.

Asif noted that many coun-

tries were facing serious economic pressure due to rising oil prices in international markets, but Pakistan had taken various steps to minimise the burden on the public.

He said the nation needed unity and wisdom during the current global situation and prayed that the Muslim world would gain the ability to distinguish between friends and adversaries.

The defence minister added that despite difficult circum-



stances, the government was trying to provide maximum relief to citizens while maintaining economic stability.

His remarks came a day after Ishaq Dar, Muhammad

Aurangzeb, and Federal Minister for Energy (Petroleum Division) Ali Pervaiz Malik announced a Rs55 per litre increase in petrol and high-speed diesel prices during a media briefing.

Media honors leadership legacy of Pakistani women from Fatima Jinnah to present

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Digital media platforms and apps carried widespread tributes to Pakistani women as working women's groups shared messages of solidarity, honored mothers and recognized the leadership legacy from Fatima Jinnah to the women shaping Pakistan today. On International women's day, local media channels and other digital platforms paid tribute to Pakistani women, highlighting their achievements and leadership. Working women's groups shared messages of encouragement, honored mothers and recognized leaders from Fatima Jinnah to today's trailblazers, celebrating their role in shaping society and inspiring future generations.



Media coverage underscored women's role in every sphere of life, from homes and workplaces to national development, marking the day with nationwide appreciation.

Prominent women leaders also voiced their support for empowerment and inclusion. Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunications, Shaza Fatima Khawaja, emphasized the importance of expanding digital opportunities and safe online spaces to help women lead and innovate in the digital age.

Additionally, senior PPP leader Sharmila Farooqui praised the courage and contributions of Pakistani women, stressing that empowering women is essential for national progress and social justice.

Senator Sherry Rehman described

International Women's day as a moment for reflection, urging that the contributions and often unseen struggles of women especially in conflict zones must be acknowledged and addressed with concrete action. She emphasized that women's economic, social and legal inclusion is essential for Pakistan's progress and paid homage to trailblazers like Fatima Jinnah, Benazir Bhutto, Asifa Bhutto and other leaders whose courage continues to inspire generations.

Women leaders such as Azma Bukhari and Maryum Aurangzeb Punjab ministers also paid homage to figures like CM Punjab Maryam Nawaz and others, highlighting their courage, leadership and ongoing efforts to inspire and empower future generations.

13 India-backed militants killed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa operations

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: At least 13 militants were killed during intelligence-based operations by security forces in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on March 6 and 7, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) reported.

The operations involved five separate encounters in Bajaur, Bannu, Dera Ismail Khan, Khyber, and South Waziristan districts, it added.

In Bajaur, an intelligence-based operation targeted a militant hideout, resulting in a fierce exchange of fire that left five militants dead.

Two operations in Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan killed three more militants affiliated with the India-backed Fitna Al Khawarij group.

Separate operations in Khyber and South Waziristan accounted for another five



militants, the ISPR stated.

Weapons and ammunition were recovered from the slain militants, who were involved in several incidents of terrorist activities in the region.

The ISPR stated that these operations are part of ongoing efforts to secure Pakistan's borders, particularly along the Afghanistan frontier, and to eliminate any potential India-sponsored militants.

Security forces remain committed to defending the country and conducting counter-terrorism operations under the National Action Plan, continuing their mission to neutralise foreign-backed terrorist threats, it added.

President expresses grief over death of Pak nationals in UAE

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari, Sunday, expressed sorrow over the death of two Pakistani nationals in the United Arab Emirates due to missile debris.

He conveyed condolences to the bereaved families and urged restraint, warning that rising tensions risked engulfing other countries and threatening regional



and global peace and security.

The president urged the international community to take immediate measures for peace and stability in the region as the conflict in the Middle East could imperil global peace, President Secre-

Pakistan, Jordan express concern over regional situation

News Desk

Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar spoke today with his Jordanian counterpart Ayman Safadi.

Both leaders expressed deep concern over the evolving regional situation.

Ishaq Dar emphasized the urgent need for de-escalation,



and the importance of dialogue and diplomacy as essential for peace, and stability in the region and beyond.

853 Pakistanis return from Iran through Gwadar border in 7 days

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The repatriation of Pakistanis stranded in Iran continued for the seventh consecutive day on Saturday as more citizens returned to the country through the border crossing in Gwadar.

According to Deputy Commissioner Naqeebullah Kakar, a total of 53 people crossed into Pakistan through the Gwadar-Rimdan Border Crossing on the seventh day of the operation. Among them were 15 students. Officials said

that the group also included foreign nationals, comprising five citizens of South Africa, two from Iran and one from Oman.

Authorities confirmed that over the past seven days, a total of 853 individuals—including 300 students—have entered Pakistan through the Gwadar border as part of the ongoing repatriation process.

Local administration and border officials are facilitating the returning citizens by providing assistance and ensuring smooth entry procedures as the operation continues.

Azad Kashmir Minister offers condolences in Bhimbla Samahni

Bureau Report

MIRPUR.: Azad Kashmir Minister for Information, Religious Affairs and Aqaf Chaudhry Muhammad Rafique Nayar visited the ancestral village of Bhimbla Samahni, the elder daughter of President Pakistan Peoples Party Azad Kashmir Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin, the elder sister of Minister for Local Government and Rural Development Aamir Yasin Chaudhry and Member District Council Shahnawaz Yasin Chaudhry, who passed away in Stoke-on-Trent, England, and offered Fateha and expressed condolences to the bereaved family.



Saudi Arabia Iftar: AJK Muslim Conference Chief Calls for OIC Kashmir Representative



Spokesman Report.

SAUDI ARABIA/RAWALPINDI: President of All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan said that the overseas Kashmiris and Pakistanis have always presented their lively stand on the Kashmir issue, wherever the rights of Kashmiris have been discussed, Saudi Arabia has openly supported it.

The friendship of the United Arab Emirates with Pakistan is eternal, the expatriates should play their part in highlighting the Kashmir issue in a full-fledged manner. The atrocities and barbarities that the Kashmiri people are suffering from today are regrettable, the overseas Kashmiris should expose the barbarities happening in India to the world. The Muslim Conference workers living abroad have a responsibility

to highlight the Kashmir issue at the international level along with their livelihood. He expressed these views while addressing an Iftar dinner hosted by Sardar Ashfaq in Saudi Arabia yesterday. The President of the Muslim Conference urged the OIC to appoint its representative on Kashmir because just as India has become a denialist and has committed atrocities and barbarities in occupied Kashmir, the OIC should

play its role in stopping the atrocities in occupied Kashmir. On this occasion, Jammu and Kashmir Community Overseas Chairman Engineer Arif Mughal, General Secretary Raja Shamroz, Chief Organizer Raja Riaz, Vice Chairman Chaudhry Khurshid Matial, Dr. Sajjad Khan and senior leaders of various political parties of the Pakistan community, journalists and others are present.

Kashmiri Delegation Offers Condolences at Iranian Embassy After Leader's Passing



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: On the instructions of President All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan, a high-level delegation of the party led by Chairman All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference Youth Wing Sardar Usman Ali Khan visited the Iranian Embassy and offered condolences to Iranian Ambassador Dr. Reza Amiri and other senior diplomatic officials on the martyrdom of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Seyyed. The Muslim Conference assures the people of Iran on behalf of Kashmiris that just as Iran has supported the Kashmir cause at every forum, Kashmiris will also not leave Iran alone in this hour of difficulty. On this occasion, the Central Secretary General of the Muslim Conference, Ms. Mehran-un-Nisa, President of the Muslim Conference Punjab Province and other party officials were also present on the occasion.

Solidarity with Iran; Actions of Israel and the US Condemned, Sheikh Abdul Waheed



City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Business leader Sheikh Abdul Waheed expressed solidarity with the Islamic Republic of Iran during a visit to the Iranian Embassy, where he met Ambassador Reza Amiri Moghadam and consulate officials. He said the Pakistani business community stands with Iran in difficult times and condemned the joint military actions of Israel and the United States, warning that such steps could threaten regional and global peace. He also urged Iran to avoid attacks on Muslim countries and stressed that unity and cooperation among Muslim nations are essential to face current challenges.

Women's Day in Kashmir: Renewed Vows Against Exploitation Amid Freedom Struggle

Bureau Report.

MUZAFFARABAD: Like the rest of the world, International Women's Day was celebrated with great devotion and respect in the state of Jammu and Kashmir, including all four provinces of Pakistan, with a renewed commitment that until women's rights are provided without exception, our struggle against the exploitative system will continue. While the main event was a large gathering organized by the All Parties Hurriyat Conference in the auditorium of Government Fatima Jinnah Girls College, in which Member of the Legislative Assembly, former Minister Prof. Taqdeess Gilani, Hurriyat Conference leader Mushtaq-ul-Islam,



Spokesperson of the Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir and National Events Committee member Shaukat Javed Mir, besides PPP, PML-N, Muslim Conference, Tehreek-e-Nawaz-e-Jwanan President, provincial leaders and students participated in a large number. Addressing the gathering, Prof. Taqdeess Gilani Mushtaq-ul-Islam Shaukat Javed Mir said that the people

of occupied Jammu and Kashmir In the struggle for freedom, the Indian atrocities and state terrorism have been increasing, thousands of heartbreaking tragedies of violating the sanctity of honorable women who have fallen victim to the increasing number of unmarked graves and keeping them imprisoned in bogus cases have been

strongly condemned, and a fact-finding commission has been formed by the United Nations to investigate the matter. Tributes were paid to the Mother of the Nation, Fatima Jinnah, the daughter of the first female Prime Minister of the Islamic countries of the East, Benazir Bhutto Shaheed, the Mother of Democracy, Nusrat Bhutto,

Dr. Faurath, Hibba Khatun, Lalla Arifa, and Indira Gandhi Bandar Naika for their tireless services for women's rights. The ceremony was addressed by the Principal of the institution, Ms. Nuzhat Mir Alam, Ms. Maryam Kashmiri, Ms. Shagufta Noreen Kazmi, Ms. Samiya Sajid, Ms. Dr. Tahaniat, and Ms. Shazia Awan.

International Women's Day marked at Piara Pakistan Vocational Training Centers

Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: A special event was organized at the Piara Pakistan Vocational Training Centers in Mohalla Paghlanwala and Fatehpur Kamalia, on the occasion of International Women's Day under the auspices of Piara Pakistan Welfare Society (Registered). Students and teachers actively participated in the celebration. During the event, the principal of the institute and the students addressed the gathering, saying that Piara Pakistan is a precious opportunity for them. They highlighted that the centers provide training in sewing, beautician skills and other useful trades, helping them become self-reliant and paving the way for progress in their lives. The students added that this training not only supports them in achieving economic independence but also plays a key role in building their confidence and personal development.



Chairperson Ume Sajid Kamboh while addressing the event, stated that the primary goal of Piara Pakistan is to empower women in underprivileged areas by providing free vocational training. She emphasized that through such initiatives, women can gain respectable employment and contribute effectively to the development of their families and society.

Erosion of Kashmiri Voices from State Hierarchy

In Indian occupied territory of Jammu and Kashmir, gradual erosion of Kashmiri voices from the state hierarchy is perhaps the biggest challenge the region's majority population is facing today. They are not just politically sidelined — they are systematically being pushed out of the institutions that once gave them a say in their own governance. Biased recruitment practices, reservation recalibrations that skew opportunities away from Valley candidates, and the deliberate invocation of regional and communal narratives by those in the corridors of power have steadily hollowed out the space for ethnic Kashmiris. This is no longer a debate confined to politics; it is a structural reality that shapes everyday life and opportunity. The 2024 Assembly elections were projected as an important milestone to restore normalcy and rule of law after years of direct central rule. But what is unfolding under that veneer tells a different story — one of exclusionary politics that is steadily erasing Kashmiri voices from the institutions meant to serve them. Behind the façade of electoral legitimacy lies a calculated interplay of biased recruitment policies, skewed reservation frameworks, and the deliberate use

of regionalism and communal narratives by those in power, determined to hollow out the space for ethnic Kashmiris. A cursory look at recent recruitments makes it clear how governance is being reshaped into a hierarchy that no longer reflects the people it is meant to serve. Consider recruitment data. In the 2022 JKPSI (Sub-Inspector) process conducted after the 2019 reorganization, roughly 79% of the selected candidates came from Jammu, while Kashmir accounted for only about 17%. Reserved category allocations such as SC and ALC/IB went almost entirely to Jammu. Subsequent police constable recruitments (2025–2026) followed the same pattern, with the Valley claiming barely 15–20% of posts, despite being home to over half (nearly 60%) of the UT's population. Judicial recruitment, too, has shown similar imbalances. Similarly, around 11.8 lakh reservation certificates have been issued across multiple categories. A large proportion of these certificates have been issued in the Jammu division compared to the Kashmir division. Under the Scheduled Tribe (ST) category, Jammu accounts for 92.5% of the certificates while Kashmir receives only 7.4%. A similar pattern is visible in the Scheduled Caste (SC) category, where

98.76% of certificates have been issued in Jammu and merely 1.24% in the Kashmir Valley. In the Actual Line of Control (ALC) category, Jammu holds 93.6% compared to 6.4% for Kashmir, while in the International Border (IB) category the entire 100% share belongs to Jammu with none issued in Kashmir. The Other Backward Classes (OBC) category also shows a noticeable tilt, with 59.8% certificates issued in Jammu and 40.2% in Kashmir. These figures go beyond statistics — they reveal a deliberate pattern, one that gradually pushes ethnic Kashmiris out of institutions that should reflect their community. Such recalibrations in the reservation framework have intensified concerns among the majority population in the region that they are being deliberately pushed to the margins. By the way they have reason to believe so, as in just a couple of years the RBA quota allocated to the Valley has fallen from 20 percent to 10 percent, while other categories — largely benefiting Jammu — have either been retained or expanded. Far from being a reform, it repre-

sents a form of structural exclusion that steadily narrows opportunities for local youth. On the other hand, policies of this nature, have the potential to significantly reshape the region's administrative, cultural, linguistic and political landscape. As recruitment patterns increasingly tilt away from the Valley, the composition of the bureaucracy is bound to change, gradually reducing the representation of locals within key institutions. A look at the Valley's administrative structure reveals a striking pattern: many key positions are occupied by non-Kashmiri bureaucrats drawn from other Indian states. The Lieutenant Governor (LG) of Jammu and Kashmir, for instance, is a non-Kashmiri, and several senior posts in the police hierarchy — including the Director General of Police (DGP) and the heads of agencies such as the State Investigation Agency (SIA) — are held by officials who are not from the region. Over time, this shift may also alter the linguistic and cultural character of governance in the Valley, where Kashmiri, the predominant local language,

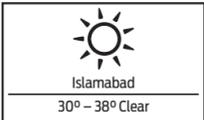
risks being pushed to the margins as administrative spaces become less reflective of the region's social and linguistic realities. Political leaders across Kashmir have consistently warned that the existing reservation framework erodes merit and sidelines the ethnic Kashmiri community. Unfortunately, the present day government, which capitalised on Kashmiri sentiment in the previous elections, has failed to protect the fundamental interests of the Kashmiri people. It appears totally paralyzed and unable to respond to the real concerns of the people, who are steadily being pushed to the periphery of their own land. When it comes to restoring the region's statehood or defending its territorial integrity they once called non-negotiable, the NC has once again disappointed those who entrusted them with power. Kashmir today stands divided not only along political lines, but this divide has also permeated administrative processes at every level. Bureaucratic postings, resource allocation, and routine decisions are all filtered through a communal lens. Officers are no longer judged by their competence, but by their religion or region of origin. At the top tier of governance, these

fault lines are even more visible. In the so-called Legislative Assembly elected representatives frequently appear to champion community interests rather than the broader interests of the state. Assembly debates are increasingly dominated by voices that champion regional and communal interests, often at the expense of the state's broader welfare. In January 2026, a senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader and MLA made headlines by calling for a separate state for Jammu and casting doubts on the loyalty of residents in the Kashmir Valley. The discourse that fosters communal divisions also underscores the RSS-BJP's ideological focus on Hindu nationalism, using stereotyping as a political strategy that intensifies mistrust rather than encouraging reconciliation. Once priding itself on a shared, composite identity, Jammu and Kashmir today faces stark polarization, with fault lines running through its political, administrative, and psychological landscape. *Writer is Director media and communications Kashmir Institute of International Relations (KIIR) and can be reached at: missarthukar@gmail.com*



Analysis

Nisar Ahmed Thakur



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr	5:05 am
Zohr	12:19 pm
Asr	4:28 pm
Maghrib	6:10 pm
Isha	7:33 pm

EMERGENCY

Rescue (Police)	15
Bomb Disposal	15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/	
Islamabad	1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance	1122 & 4451122
& Rescue Services	9266044
Motorway Police	9270601-20
Motorway Police	9270601-20

Women Police Stations

Islamabad	9222596
Rawalpindi	9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

CMH	561111
MH	561116
MH	561116
Cantt Hospital	9270907-11
DHQ	5556311-4
RGH	9290301-7
Holy Family	9290322-7
PIMS	9261170-79
Polyclinic	9218300-09
Shifa International	4603666

DEPARTMENTS

CDA	9221334-43
CDA	9208301-04
Met Office	9250360-6
RDA	5555864
TMA	5770886
Cantonment Board	9270151-3
Islamabad Metropolitan	
Corporation	9209224
Potohar Town	9209224
Rawal Town	5773343

COMPLAINTS

Water Tanker Service	
E-7, F-10 & F-11	9204654
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8	9203883
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8	9266316
Wapda Islamabad	9217579-80
Sui Gas Complaint	119, 9272249
Wasa Water Tank	
Rawalpindi	0331-5022125

I am the voice of every woman who has been suppressed: CM Punjab

Bureau Report

LAHORE: On the occasion of International Women's Day, Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif paid tribute to women in Punjab and around the world in her special message.

She said, "I am not only the first female Chief Minister of Punjab, but I am also the voice of every woman who has been suppressed." She added that the daughters of Punjab are no longer weak; they are now a strong arm of the state and builders of the nation rather than victims.

Maryam Nawaz Sharif said that women in Punjab are being empowered in every sphere—from education, security and healthcare to leadership and policymaking.

She emphasised that women are no longer just statistics but are being transformed into policymakers, protectors and thinkers.

The chief minister stated that under

her leadership no one would dare cast an evil eye on any daughter of Punjab. She declared that the daughters of Punjab are her "red line," and there will be no compromise on their dignity and protection.

The chief minister said the government is fulfilling its promise of providing housing under the "Apni Chhat, Apna Ghar" programme for women who previously had no shelter. The health sector across Punjab has also been upgraded for the benefit of women and their children.

Maryam Nawaz Sharif also highlighted that the Pink Games are promoting the talent of Punjab's daughters at the international level. She concluded by saying that she wishes to see every daughter of Punjab in a position where she is independent and not dependent on anyone.

"When a woman is empowered, an entire generation becomes empowered," she said.



Activists Aurat March detained

ISLAMABAD: Police personnel detain activists of the women's rights group Aurat March, upon their arrival ahead of a rally on International Women's Day on Sunday.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Attock Police introduce drone cameras for border and river check posts

Bureau Report

ATTOCK: District Police Officer (DPO) Attock, Sardar Mavarhan Khan, has provided modern drone cameras to border and river check posts across the district to enhance surveillance and security.

According to details, the initiative has been taken in light of the directions issued by the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Punjab. The drone cameras will enable aerial monitoring of sensitive border areas and river routes, helping authorities keep a close watch on suspicious activities and respond promptly against criminal elements.

DPO Attock Sardar Mavarhan Khan stated that the use of modern technology is being promoted in accordance with the vision of the IGP Punjab to further strengthen the security and monitoring system in the district.

He added that Attock Police are utilizing all available resources to ensure the protection of citizens' lives and property and to improve crime prevention through advanced technological measures.

KIIR Chief Highlights Plight of Kashmiri Women on International Women's Day

News Desk

GENEVA: On the occasion of International Women's Day, prominent Kashmiri human rights activist and chairman of the Kashmir Institute of International Relations (KIIR), Altaf Hussain Wani, has paid glowing tribute to Kashmiri women for their resilience and sacrifices amidst ongoing conflict in region.

In his statement, Wani said that women in Kashmir have borne the brunt of prolonged violence and state repression, which India uses as a tool to suppress dissent. He highlighted the sexual and psychological abuse faced by women at the hands of occupying forces, as well as the application of discriminatory laws, noting that India has failed to honor its commitments under inter-



national conventions to protect the dignity and rights of women in the region.

The KIIR chairman expressed particular concern over the continued detention

of Kashmiri women activists, notably Asiya Andrabi, who, along with her key aides, has been languishing in Tihar Jail for several years.

Wani's statement under-

scores the urgent need for global attention to the challenges faced by women in conflict zones and calls for immediate measures to ensure their safety, dignity, and human rights.

District Administration takes action against illegal rickshaw stand

Bureau Report

ATTOCK: Action Against Illegal Rickshaw Stands from Madni Chowk to UBL and Sarafa Bazaar, Market

The district administration has taken action against illegal rickshaw stands and encroachments, which had long been a major issue in the city. The road from Madni Chowk to UBL Bank and Sarafa Bazaar has been cleared.

In this regard, Additional Deputy Commissioner General Anil Saeed took notice of the situation and issued instructions to the concerned staff for immediate action. The administration team reached the spot and removed illegal rickshaw stands established around Madni Chowk, UBL Bank, and Sarafa Bazaar. Rickshaws parked there were also removed, restoring the road for normal traffic flow.

During the operation, encroachments and other obstacles in the market were also removed, which significantly improved the traffic flow.

Local traders and residents stated that illegal rickshaw stands in the area had been causing traffic problems for a long time, and shoppers were also facing difficulties. Citizens appreciated the administration's action and expressed hope that order and discipline in the markets would continue to be maintained in the future.

VWPS emerges as strong advocate for women's protection on International Women's Day

Bureau Report

LAHORE: On the occasion of International Women's Day, the Virtual Women Police Station, established under the vision of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif, has emerged as an effective and reliable platform for the protection, guidance, and immediate assistance of women. This innovative initiative, powered by modern technology has received significant international recognition with several global organizations appreciating the model as an effective and replicable system for ensuring women's safety.

According to PSCA's spokesperson, Virtual Women Police Station operates 24/7 to provide guidance, protection and immediate support to women. So far, more than 865,915 women have benefited from this platform, while thousands have received prompt legal assistance.

Prompt action on complaints received from women has resulted in the registration of over 79,000 cases, ensuring timely justice for victims. Additionally, more than 45,889 suspects involved in domestic violence, harassment, murder, and other crimes have been arrested following these complaints.

PSCA's spokesperson added that 83,259 women sought help by calling Emergency Helpline- 15 via the Women Safety App, while more than 38,000 women received immediate assistance through chat service. Statistics show that the highest number of complaints received by the Virtual Women Police Station came from Lahore, Faisalabad, Rawalpindi, and Gujranwala.

UNFPA stands with Pakistan to help every woman realize her potential

ISLAMABAD: The United Nations Population Fund (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, said its Representative in Pakistan Dr Luay Shabaneh on Sunday.

In a news statement, he said, "Our commitment is clear: a world in which every pregnancy wanted, every childbirth safe, and every young person's potential fulfilled."

"On International Women's Day, we reflect on the resilience, leadership, and contributions of women and girls in Pakistan and around the world," he said, adding this year's theme, "Rights, Justice, Action, For All Women and Girls" reminded that investing in the rights, health, education, and opportunities of women and girls benefits entire families, communities, and nations.

"When women thrive, society thrives," he remarked. He also highlighted the challenges faced by many women and girls in various regions including Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, Palestine, Arab Gulf States, and other parts of the Arab world.

Globally, many women and girls continue to bear the devastating impacts of conflict, displacement, and insecurity, he said, adding 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," he stressed.

The UNFPA representative said, "Gender-based violence, harmful practices, and lack of access to sexual and reproductive health care remain critical obstacles to safety, dignity, and well-being."

He also highlighted systemic issues faced by women in reporting violence against them in Pakistan. "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," he noted.

He said, "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."

Tribute Paid to Martyr Hariyani Mai Bakhtawar on International Women's Day

Bureau Report

HYDERABAD: On the occasion of International Women's Day, Central President of the Sindh Hari Committee, Comrade Samar Hyder Jatoti, paid tribute to Martyr Hariyani Mai Bakhtawar, saying that she dedicated her life to public service, social justice, and the protection of women's rights.

Speaking on the occasion, Comrade Samar Hyder Jatoti said that Mai Bakhtawar was a courageous woman who encouraged women to move forward in the fields of education, employment, and social awareness, and consistently raised her voice for the protection of their rights.

He said that on International Women's Day, people should remember



the sacrifices of women like Mai Bakhtawar and continue working for social

justice and equality.

The Sindh Hari Committee leader further stated that the example of Martyr Mai Bakhtawar will always remain a source of courage and inspiration for women in every era, and it is their responsibility to carry forward her mission.

He emphasized that greater participation of women in social and political spheres is essential, and that determination, hard work, and struggle are necessary to achieve this goal.

Comrade Samar Hyder Jatoti added that society must learn from the sacrifices of women like Mai Bakhtawar and continue striving for women's rights and equality in every field, so that the society moves forward on the path of justice, peace, and progress.

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The Uncertain Endgame of the Iran War

The war between the United States–Israel alliance and Iran has entered a complex phase where battlefield destruction has not translated into political collapse. The campaign began with clearly articulated objectives: dismantle Iran's nuclear capability, destroy its ballistic missile infrastructure, degrade its naval forces, and eliminate the networks through which Iran projects power across the Middle East. In the early stages of the conflict, large-scale aerial operations targeted missile depots, drone launch facilities, naval installations, command centers, and strategic infrastructure deep inside Iranian territory, including several high-value targets around Tehran.

Weeks into the war, however, the central political objective—the collapse or surrender of the Iranian regime—has not occurred. Iran's military capacity has unquestionably been damaged. Missile sites, storage depots, air defense systems, and drone manufacturing facilities have been hit repeatedly. Thousands of targets have reportedly been struck, and casualties have included civilians, senior officials, and military commanders. Yet the Iranian state itself remains intact.

The leadership vacuum created by early strikes has been quickly filled. Replacement commanders have taken control of military units, administrative institutions continue to function, and the constitutional process for confirming or selecting national leadership is underway. This rapid institutional continuity reflects a fundamental design feature of the Iranian political system: it was built to withstand external shocks.

The result is a strategic paradox. Iran's military infrastructure has been degraded, but its governing system survives. Wars aimed primarily at destroying weapons systems can achieve impressive tactical results while failing to achieve strategic

if the political structure directing those weapons remains functional.

Iran's history over the past four decades illustrates this resilience. The country has endured sanctions, economic isolation, technological restrictions, and sustained geopolitical pressure. During that period, Iran invested heavily in domestic industrial capabilities, scientific research, and decentralized defense production. The destruction of physical facilities therefore does not eliminate the technical knowledge, engineering expertise, or human capital that produced them. As long as these capabilities remain embedded within the state's institutions, rebuilding remains possible.

The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps continues to function as the backbone of Iran's defense system. With hundreds of thousands of personnel and extensive logistical networks, it represents both a military force and a political institution deeply integrated into the country's governance. Even if several of its facilities have been damaged, the organization itself remains intact and committed to defending the state.

Because of this resilience, the center of gravity in the war is gradually shifting away from purely military objectives toward economic pressure—particularly control over global energy routes.

The Strait of Hormuz has become the most critical strategic flashpoint. This narrow waterway connects the Persian Gulf to global markets and carries a substantial share of the world's oil supply. Under normal circumstances, millions of barrels of crude oil move through the strait every day, fueling industries, transportation systems, and national economies across multiple continents. Disruption in

this corridor sends immediate shockwaves through global markets.

Oil is the lifeblood of modern economies. Transportation networks, manufacturing industries, agricultural systems, and global logistics chains all depend on stable energy supplies. When oil flow is threatened, the consequences extend far beyond the battlefield.

The current conflict has already produced visible economic effects. Oil prices have risen significantly across international markets, and the impact is being felt across the United States, Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. Higher energy prices are increasing transportation costs, raising manufacturing expenses, and placing upward pressure on inflation. Even countries that produce their own oil cannot fully escape these effects. Modern economies are deeply interconnected. Rising shipping costs, higher insurance premiums for maritime transport, and disruptions in global supply chains raise the cost of goods and services almost everywhere.

As fuel prices rise, the cost of living rises with them. Transportation becomes more expensive. Food prices increase because agriculture depends heavily on fuel for machinery and distribution. Industrial production costs rise. Consumers experience declining purchasing power.

This economic pressure may ultimately become the most powerful force influencing the war's outcome. Democratic societies are especially sensitive to such economic shocks. In the United States and across Europe, populations are politically active and economically demanding. When citizens begin to experience sustained increases in living costs—whether through gasoline prices, heating

or inflation in essential goods—they inevitably question the policies responsible for those conditions.

Public debate intensifies. Legislatures face scrutiny. Opposition movements gain momentum. Citizens begin asking whether the objectives of a war justify the economic hardship imposed upon them. If energy prices continue rising for a prolonged period, domestic pressure within Western societies could grow rapidly. Protest movements, political opposition, and electoral pressures may begin pushing governments toward negotiation or de-escalation.

Energy-importing nations across Asia, Africa, and Latin America may also demand stability in global markets. Many developing economies are extremely vulnerable to energy price spikes. Rising fuel costs strain national budgets, accelerate inflation, and threaten economic stability. These countries may therefore use diplomatic channels to push for an end to hostilities.

Interestingly, Iran itself may be relatively better positioned to endure prolonged energy disruptions. As a major oil producer with experience surviving decades of sanctions, the country has developed economic coping mechanisms that wealthier societies rarely face. This does not mean Iran is immune to economic pain, but its population has historically endured hardship more frequently than populations in highly industrialized economies. In a prolonged conflict, this difference in economic tolerance may influence political dynamics.

Another critical dimension of this war is unfolding beyond the immediate battlefield. Major global powers such as China and Russia are watching the conflict extremely closely. While not directly involved in the fighting, both countries are observing every stage of the conflict with strategic interest.

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Analysis

Qamar Bashir

Pakistan Senate Chairman Backs Azerbaijan Against Drone Attacks in Call with Parliament Speaker

The Chairman Senate of Pakistan held a telephonic conversation with the Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of Azerbaijan on Sunday to discuss the evolving regional situation and matters of mutual interest.

During the conversation, the Chairman Senate conveyed Pakistan's strong solidarity with the Government and people of Azerbaijan in the wake of the recent drone attacks on Azerbaijani territory. He noted that such attacks constitute a violation of international law and the principles governing relations between sovereign states, and emphasized that actions of this nature undermine regional peace and stability.

The Chairman Senate stated that Pakistan fully understands Azerbaijan's security concerns and reiterated Pakistan's firm support for Azerbaijan's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and security. He also referred to the recent telephonic conversation between the Prime Minister of Pakistan and the President of Azerbaijan on 6 March, as well as the contact between the Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister of Pakistan and the Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan on 5 March, which conveyed Pakistan's strong support and solidarity.

Highlighting the close and longstanding partnership between Pakistan and Azerbaijan, the Chairman Senate reaffirmed that Pakistan will continue to stand by Azerbaijan. He underscored that dialogue and diplomacy remain the most effective means of reducing tensions and ensuring lasting peace and stability in the region, and stressed the importance of restraint by all sides.

The Chairman Senate also expressed profound appreciation to the Government of Azerbaijan for facilitating the evacuation of Pakistani nationals from Iran. He noted that 113 Pakistani nationals had been safely evacuated through the Astara border crossing between Azerbaijan and Iran, where the Azerbaijani authorities extended cooperation by granting visas on arrival and facilitating their onward travel.

The Speaker of the Parliament of Azerbaijan thanked the Chairman Senate for Pakistan's strong expression of support and solidarity during the current situation. She reaffirmed Azerbaijan's commitment to its close relations with Pakistan and appreciated Pakistan's continued diplomatic and political backing.

Both sides expressed confidence that the strong partnership between Pakistan and Azerbaijan will continue to contribute positively to peace, stability, and cooperation in the region and beyond.



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

Transformative Governance and Public Welfare Initiatives in Punjab

Punjab, the most populous province of Pakistan, has always held a central place in the country's administrative, economic, and cultural landscape. The province's governance history reflects the contributions of several leaders who, in their respective periods, attempted to address the challenges of development, public welfare, and institutional stability. Over the decades, Punjab has witnessed various phases of reform, modernization, and administrative restructuring aimed at improving the lives of its citizens.

In the early years after independence, the province faced enormous challenges of governance and rehabilitation following the Partition of India. The first Chief Minister of Punjab after independence, Iftikhar Hussain Khan of Mamdot, had the difficult responsibility of managing refugee settlement and rebuilding administrative institutions during a turbulent period of history.

Subsequent decades witnessed the leadership of figures who contributed to Punjab's evolving governance structure. Intellectual and visionary leaders like Hanif Ramay advocated social justice and gave voice to labourers and marginalized communities, while democratic personalities such as Miraj Khalid symbolized integrity, simplicity, and principled public service.

Other leaders, including Mustafa Khar and Manzoor Wattoo, also played roles in the political and administrative continuity of the province during their respective periods.

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the former revolutionary Prime Minister, facilitated public transport for students and elderly citizens at nearly free of cost, reflecting his commitment to social

welfare and public accessibility. Reform-oriented governance initiatives were also introduced by Pervaiz Elahi, whose establishment of the Rescue 1122 emergency service became a landmark institutional achievement, greatly improving disaster response and public safety across the province.

Another phase of accelerated development occurred under the leadership of Shehbaz Sharif, whose tenure emphasized administrative efficiency and large-scale infrastructure development. Road networks, flyovers, and urban transport initiatives significantly improved connectivity and economic activity across major cities of the province.

Equally notable was the earlier leadership of Nawaz Sharif, whose tenure as Chief Minister laid strong foundations for industrial growth, infrastructure expansion, and economic modernization.

His policies encouraged investment and strengthened the province's economic capacity, setting the stage for subsequent development initiatives. In the contemporary phase of governance, the leadership of Maryam Nawaz has introduced a new momentum of public welfare initiatives and administrative reforms aimed at improving everyday life for the citizens of Punjab. Her governance approach emphasizes service delivery, institutional discipline, and direct relief to vulnerable segments of society.

One of the most significant developments has been the strengthening of law enforcement and crime control mechanisms. The establishment and activation of the Criminal Control Department (CCD) has enhanced the capacity of the provincial administration to

combat organized crime and ensure public safety. The department's targeted operations against criminal networks have contributed to improving the overall law and order situation and restoring public confidence in the state's ability to protect its citizens.

Another remarkable initiative has been the large-scale recovery of public lands and properties that had been illegally occupied for years. Through decisive administrative action and coordinated enforcement, thousands of acres of valuable state land, houses, and public spaces have been reclaimed and restored to government control. This campaign against illegal occupation represents a strong commitment to rule of law and transparent governance.

Particularly commendable is the recovery of houses and properties belonging to vulnerable citizens such as widows and orphans that had been illegally occupied; under the state administration's determined vision these rightful properties have been restored to their legitimate owners, reflecting a strong commitment to justice and protection of the weak.

Public welfare and civic improvement programs have also gained prominence. The "Suthra Punjab" campaign has focused on improving sanitation, cleanliness, and urban management across cities and towns. This initiative aims to restore civic order and promote a culture of environmental responsibility and public hygiene.

In the health sector, government hospitals are being upgraded with modern equipment, improved facilities, and expanded access to medicines and treatments. Increasingly, deserving patients are able to receive complex medical procedures and surgeries free of cost, reflecting a stronger commitment to accessible healthcare services.

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The Other War: Pakistan-Afghanistan Conundrum

In the rugged, unforgiving terrain of the Durand Line, a conflict is unfolding that the world can no longer afford to ignore. While the international community remains fixated on traditional geopolitical fault lines, Islamabad's Operation Ghazab Lil Haq (translated as Righteous Fury) — has captured global attention not simply as a border conflict but as a strategic confrontation with far-reaching implications. Pakistan insists it has not initiated aggression but is defending not just its own territorial integrity, but global peace and security by confronting militant networks that it claims are anchored inside Afghanistan. Operation Ghazab Lil Haq (Righteous Fury), launched in late February 2026, represents more than just a border skirmish; it is a high-stakes effort to prevent the resurgence of a global terror epicenter. This column provides a detailed analytical overview: the origins of the conflict, Pakistan's stated rationale, achievements and progress so far, criticisms and international context — and why this matters beyond South Asia.

The roots of this conflict extend back decades, defined by the porous Durand Line — a 2,600 km border that has for generations seen militant groups exploit the rugged terrain and weak governance to establish bases and launch attacks.

For years, Pakistan has practiced strategic patience. Following the 2021 transition in Kabul, Islamabad hoped for a stable neighbor that would honor international commitments to prevent its soil from being used as a launchpad for terror. Instead, the reality has been a 36% surge in organized infiltration. Groups like the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)—often

referred to by Islamabad as Fitna al-Khwarij—and ISIS-K have found sanctuary under the current Afghan administration, utilizing sophisticated weaponry and even quadcopter drones to strike Pakistani schools, mosques, and security posts.

The "unprovoked aggression" from Afghan forces in February 2026 was the final straw. As Defense Minister Khawaja Asif stated, Pakistan's "cup of patience has overflowed."

In late February 2026, Pakistan initiated a large-scale military campaign named Operation Ghazab Lil Haq against what it describes as militant infrastructure and armed bases across multiple Afghan provinces. Islamabad depicts this campaign as a retaliatory and defensive response to unprovoked cross-border attacks on its security forces and civilians.

Pakistan maintains that repeated attacks across the border by armed militants — in some cases carried out with what Islamabad claims is tacit shelter from Afghan territory — constitute a threat under Article 51 of the UN Charter, which recognizes a state's right to defend itself when faced with armed attack.

Islamabad argues that militants operating from Afghan soil — particularly the TTP — have been responsible for significant violence inside Pakistan and could, if unchecked, serve as springboards for terrorism beyond the region. This concern resonates with global counter-terrorism priorities that aim to deny terrorists any secure operating ground from which to strike internationally.

Pakistan claims it pursued diplomatic engagements, including talks brokered by Qatar and Türkiye, to avert escalation. Islamabad states

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Analysis

Dr. Muhammad Jatal Arif



Analysis

Kiran Asim

PM, President praise women's role in national development on International Day of Women

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: International Women's Day observed across Pakistan and around the world on Sunday, with leaders and citizens highlighting the vital role women play in society.

On International Day of Women President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif paid tribute to Pakistani women, emphasizing that no nation can achieve meaningful progress without the active participation of women in all spheres of life.

This year Women's Day is being marked under the theme "Rights, Equality and Action: For All Women and Girls," reflecting the global commitment to protecting women's rights and ensuring equal opportunities.

In his message, President Asif Ali Zardari said that women have played a crucial role in Pakistan's development and progress. He recalled that the founder of Pakistan, Muhammad

Ali Jinnah, had emphasized the importance of women's equal participation in national life.

The president also highlighted the leadership of former prime minister Benazir Bhutto as a shining example of the determination and strength of Pakistani women. He said the contributions and struggles of Fatima Jinnah and Nusrat Bhutto continue to inspire women across the country.

President Zardari noted that women are serving the nation in every field, from aviation cockpits to parliamentary halls, and their services are highly commendable. He stressed the need to eliminate discriminatory laws and harmful social practices that hinder women's progress.

He further said that ensuring equal rights would help improve women's access to education, employment, and protection. The president also highlighted the important role of rural women, particularly in agriculture and the national economy.

He added that Pakistan is committed to international agreements aimed at eliminating discrimination against women and emphasized that providing women with equal access to credit, property, and employment opportunities is essential for sustainable development.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also paid tribute to women across Pakistan and the world who continue to contribute to society with dedication and resilience.

The prime minister stated that protecting women's rights is key to ensuring sustainable national development and prosperity. He said women's hard work, determination, and valuable services in every sector of life are a source of pride for the nation.

He added that Pakistani women are playing a transformative role in building a strong and prosperous country, from education and healthcare to sports, governance, and the



armed forces. The prime minister also reaffirmed the government's commitment to creating an environment where women can realize their full potential without discrimination or fear.

Withdraw Rs.55 Petrol Price Hike and Cut Ministers Luxuries Instead: PPPW

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Dr Safdar Ali Abbasi, President Pakistan Peoples Party Workers, Naheed Khan, Political Assistant to Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, Fayyaz Khan Senior Vice President, Advocate Amjad Ali Baluch, Senior Vice President, Kunwar Zahid Secretary General, Rai Qaiser, Deputy Secretary General, Pakistan Peoples Party Workers strongly condemn the unprecedented and unjustified increase of Rs. 55 per litre in petrol & diesel prices, imposed by the government under the pretext of the ongoing regional tensions involving Iran, Israel and the United States.

This decision reflects a deeply insensitive approach towards the suffering of the people of Pakistan, who are already struggling against deep inflation.



At a time when a common man is barely able to cope with price hike of

daily commodities, medicine, transport, electricity and gas, the government has once again chosen to shift the entire burden of its economic mismanagement onto the shoulders of the people.

The sudden increase of Rs. 55 per litre is not merely a price adjustment; it is a decision that will trigger a new wave of inflation across the country, pushing millions of families closer to economic collapse.

It is particularly disturbing that such a drastic increase has been announced despite the admission by the Minister for Petroleum that Pakistan currently maintains petroleum reserves sufficient for approximately one month. If sufficient reserves exist, the government must explain why the people are being forced to bear the immediate consequences of international volatility.

SMEDA to Train SME Clusters in Value Addition and Export Branding

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: A high-level meeting was held under the chairmanship of the Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Industries and Production, Haroon Akhtar Khan, to review initiatives aimed at strengthening Pakistan's Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) sector.

During the meeting, SMEDA Board Member Mashhood Ali Khan briefed participants on new initiatives being undertaken to support SMEs and enhance their contribution to the national economy.

Haroon Akhtar Khan informed the meeting that an online platform registering more than 200 SME clusters has been established to bring diverse business clusters onto a single digital platform. The platform includes a wide range of clusters—from honey producers to olive oil processors—making them accessible through one



He stated that the registration of clusters in line with the vision of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will enable SMEs to gain better access to both national and international

markets.

The Special Assistant further highlighted that SMEDA will provide training to these clusters in value addition, branding, and export development to help them compete in global markets.

Haroon Akhtar Khan emphasized that the SME sector is the backbone of Pakistan's economy, playing a crucial role in employment generation and industrial growth.

He added that the digitalization of SME clusters will significantly expand business opportunities, improve connectivity among businesses, and enhance market visibility.

The government, he reiterated, remains fully committed to linking small and medium-sized enterprises with global markets and promoting exports through a cluster-based development approach, which will help strengthen local industries and boost Pakistan's export potential.

Women and girls in Pakistan risk waiting more than a lifetime for equality

The latest World Economic Forum data shows that a girl born today will have to wait 123 years – way beyond her expected lifespan – to see gender equality achieved globally. Compared to men, women and girls are less likely to go to school or have a job. Women with disabilities face even greater barriers to participating equally in society.

While the gender gap spans multiple indicators, including access to health and education, one of the most powerful drivers of long-term change is economic empowerment. Without much-needed investment to expand women's access to decent work, skills, and financial independence, progress across other indicators will remain slow.

"We do not have to accept a 123-year wait or longer for equality," said Munazza Gillani, Sightsavers' director for Pakistan and the Middle East. "Disability-inclusive investments in women's livelihoods can compress over a century of waiting into transformative change right away. Our programmes worldwide show that when women, especially women with disabilities, gain economic power, families and communities grow stronger, and



economies expand. Investing in women, especially those with disabilities, is an undervalued investment opportunity which even the World Bank acknowledges could add up to US\$21 trillion to the global GDP."

In Pakistan, Fizza Hussain, the country's first visually impaired chef and co-founder of Khaas Foodz Kitchen, is one of many examples of what disability-inclusive investment can achieve.

Losing her sight at the age of 18, she refused to accept the stigma society would try to place on her and has since helped develop Pakistan's first accessible culinary training model for visually impaired individuals. Through her leadership, more than 1000 trainees have received professional culinary and life skills training. Fizza is also the creative mind behind Dining in the Dark Pakistan, an immersive dining event

fully led by visually impaired chefs and service staff.

Fizza and her start-up, Khaas Foodz Kitchen, were supported by Sightsavers' Futuremakers Innovation Challenge (ICF) as a part of the organisation's disability-inclusive entrepreneurship programme, which provides entrepreneurship toolkits and support to participants. The backing Fizza received through the ICF programme allowed her to scale her business and expand her impact. Her later appearance on Shark Tank Pakistan, where she secured investment and national recognition, demonstrates the economic and social impact possible when women with disabilities are supported in leadership positions.

Fizza has recently won the 2026 Visa & HBL She's Next program in Pakistan, proving that when persons with disabilities lead, they reshape systems, shift mindsets, and inspire countless others across Pakistan.

To accelerate progress, Sightsavers is calling for investment in programmes that include women and girls with disabilities. By working together to target inequality for all women and girls, we can achieve gender equality within their lifetime.

AJK PM Highlights Islam's Honor for Women on International Women's Day

Bureau Report.

MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, has said that Islam accords a high and honourable status to women. In a special statement issued on the occasion of International Women's Day, he said that the Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (SAW) clearly defined the role and rights of women and ensured their representation in different spheres of life, including granting them rightful shares in inheritance. "Women play a vital role in socio economic development of any country", he said, adding that Kashmiri women, while fulfilling their household responsibilities, were also contributing significantly to the economy and proving their capabilities in every field of life. He said that the life of Hazrat Fatima-tuz-Zahra (RA) remains a guiding light for Muslim women. Paying tribute to the late Begum Nusrat Bhutto, he acknowledged her historic role and sacrifices for the restoration of democracy during the MRD movement. He also praised Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto for her extraordinary struggle for the rule of law, women empowerment and protection of their fundamental rights. The Prime Minister stated that the AJK government was giving special attention to the development and welfare of women.

Referring to the plight of Kashmiri women activists particularly Asiya Andrabi, who along with her key aides continues to languish in Tehar jail, the pm said that Ms Andrabi would always be remembered as a symbol of resistance in freedom movements.

Public Outcry: Party Chairman Slams Fuel Price Hike as 'Tragedy'

News Desk

KARACHI: Chairman of Pakistan Ghareeb Awam Party, Syed Arshad Hussain, has strongly criticized the recent increase in petroleum prices, calling it a tragedy and an act of injustice against the poor people of the country.

In a statement, he said that it is unfortunate that decisions regarding changes in petroleum prices are made by individuals who have never purchased petrol from their own pockets. He urged the government to end its unnecessary luxuries and privileges.

He further stated that during the holy month of Ramadan, skyrocketing inflation has already broken the backs of the poor and lower-middle-class citizens of the country. The increase of Rs. 55 per liter in petrol prices, he said, has further pushed the public into severe hardship.

Syed Arshad Hussain demanded that the government immediately withdraw the increase in petroleum prices and provide relief to the people.

US pressing Sri Lanka not to repatriate Iranian crew, survivors from sunken ship, says memo

The US is pressing Sri Lanka not to repatriate the survivors from an Iranian warship it sank this week or the crew of a second Iranian ship that is in Sri Lankan custody, according to an internal State Department cable seen by Reuters.

A US submarine sank the frigate Dena in the Indian Ocean about 19 nautical miles off Sri Lanka's southern port city of Galle on Wednesday, killing dozens of sailors and dramatically widening Washington's pursuit of the Iranian navy.

On Thursday, Sri Lanka began offloading 208 crew members from a second Iranian ship, the naval auxiliary vessel Booshehr, which had found itself stranded in Sri Lanka's exclusive economic zone but outside its maritime boundary.

Dena's sinking shows geographic scope of Iran war President Anura Kumara Dissanayake said his South Asian island nation had a "humanitarian responsibility" to take in the crew.

About 20 of the 32 Dena survivors were moved to a Sri Lankan air force camp in Koggala after being discharged from the Galle hospital, some 15 km (10 miles) away, two military sources and one hospital source told Reuters.

The torpedoing of the Dena, which US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth described as "quiet death," was the first such action by the United States since World War Two and a clear sign of the Iran conflict's widening geographic scope.

The internal State Department cable, dated Friday and not previously reported, says Jayne Howell, the charge d'affaires at the US embassy in Colombo, had emphasised to Sri Lanka's government that neither the Booshehr crew nor the 32 Dena survivors should be repatriated to Iran. "Sri Lankan authorities should minimise Iranian attempts to use the detainees for propaganda," the cable says.

A State Department spokesperson, speaking on the condition of anonymity, appeared to suggest that Washington was not trying to dictate Sri Lanka's decision on the issue.

"The United States of course, respects and recognises Sri Lanka's sovereignty in the handling of this situation. The ultimate disposition of the IRIS Bushehr and its crew, as well as the Iranian sailors rescued at sea, is a decision for Sri Lanka to make pursuant to its domestic law and international legal obligations," the spokesperson said.

"We are pursuing dialogue with Sri Lanka, and our utmost goal is to mitigate the threat that Iran poses to the United States and our partners," the spokesperson said.

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

Chaudhry Zulfiqar warns fuel hike will cripple Pakistan's economy

Zain Khan Malghani

MULTAN: Renowned industrialist and Chairman of SM Group of Industries, as well as Member of the National Export Development Board, Chaudhry Zulfiqar Ali Anjum, has expressed deep concern over the recent unprecedented and significant increase in petrol and diesel prices. He stated that this decision will severely impact not only the industrial sector but also the daily lives of ordinary citizens.

The government has raised petrol and diesel prices by approximately Rs 55 per liter, bringing petrol to Rs 321 and diesel to Rs 335 per liter.

Chaudhry Zulfiqar Ali Anjum noted that Pakistan already faces high costs for electricity, gas, and other production expenses, and such a steep increase in fuel prices will create a new crisis for the industrial sector. As a result, production costs for industries will rise, directly affecting exports, employment, and the national economy.

Chaudhry Zulfiqar Ali Anjum



called on the government to reduce petroleum levies and other taxes and provide a special relief package for industries. He also highlighted the underlying reasons for the price hike, including tensions in the Middle East and concerns over oil supply. Rising tensions in Iran and the region, along with attacks, have affected global oil supply, pushing international prices above \$90 per barrel.

Reports indicate that the number of ships passing through this critical maritime route has dropped by approximately 90% compared to normal, due to threats and the war-like situation.

In conclusion, Chaudhry Zulfiqar Ali Anjum emphasized that if the government supports industry and businesses, not only will employment opportunities increase, but Pakistan's exports and economy can stabilize, and the common citizen can be protected from the burden of inflation. He stressed the need for a long-term strategy to stabilize energy prices.

Group photo

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry, MNAs Anjum Aqeel Khan, Malik Abrar, MPAs Chaudhry Sher Ali, Malik Iftikhar, Tariq Sadiq, Sardar Tahir, Zubair Malik, Zafar Bakhtawari, Ijaz Abbasi, Chaudhry Masood, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari and others in a group photo at an Iftar dinner hosted by renowned businessman Chaudhry Wajid Ayub.



Photo: Spokesman

New Land Corridors Via Gilgit Promise Economic Boom for Region

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Coordinator to Federal Tax Ombudsman Saif Ur Rehman Sunday said establishment of proposed new trade routes through land corridors via Gilgit especially Central Asian states will open unprecedented avenues for boosting economic activity and prosperity across the region.

Talking here today to a delegation of exporters led Muhammad Sami Ahmad he said with visionary planning, transparent governance, and public-private partnerships, these land corridors can serve as engines of sustainable growth, ushering in a new era of connectivity,

stability, and shared prosperity for the entire region. He said the corridor will also empower local entrepreneurs by providing them direct access to regional and international markets. Enhanced cross-border trade will promote cultural exchange and regional harmony while reinforcing Pakistan's geostrategic importance.

Concluding Saif Ur Rehman said significant growth in international trade is contingent upon improving communication and transportation infrastructure noting that enhancing trade activities with central Asian states will prove instrumental for Pakistan economy stability.

Immediately abolish taxes on petroleum products in the current emergency situation, Zubair Tufail

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: President of the United Business Group (UBG) and former President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), Zubair Tufail, has expressed serious concern over the sudden increase of Rs55 per litre in petrol prices, a historic increase of Rs130.08 per litre in kerosene oil, and an extraordinary rise of Rs154 in jet fuel prices. He urged the government to immediately abolish taxes imposed on petroleum products in the current emergency situation.



He said that Pakistan has now become the country with the most expensive petrol in the region, raising fears of a new wave of inflation in the country. The business community has demanded that the government immediately reduce petroleum product prices.

Zubair Tufail stated that kerosene oil is widely used by low-income households, yet a petroleum levy of Rs20.36 per litre is imposed on kerosene, while Rs15.84 per litre levy is also charged on light diesel oil. He urged the government to temporarily abolish these levies to provide relief to the public.

He further said that Pakistan has surpassed India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh in petroleum prices. Petrol is being sold at Rs94 per litre in India, Rs293 in Sri Lanka, and 116 Taka in Bangladesh, whereas in Pakistan the price has reached Rs321.17 per litre. This sharp increase will directly affect the poor and middle-income segments of society and lead to a severe surge in inflation.

He noted that the impact of the increase has already started to appear, as transporters have announced fare hikes, while goods transporters have also declared a 20 percent increase in freight charges, which will ultimately raise the prices of essential commodities.

Pakistan Furniture Council CEO Declares China as New Global Trade Epicenter

Commerce Desk

LAHORE:--Chief Executive Officer Pakistan Furniture Council Mian Kashif Ashfaq Sunday said China is now centre of global trade and growth as rapidly growing domestic consumption market is expanding.

Delivering a keynote speech at a seminar on "New World Order in the Making" here today he said a new global economic order is emerging, with China at its centre. He said the year 2026 began with a visit from Taoiseach of Ireland, Micheal Martin followed by a visit from Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney to Beijing. He said Prime Minister UK Keir Starmer was accompanied by prominent cabinet members and a large number of business leaders. The President of Uruguay also visited China followed by German Chancellor.

Mian Kashif Ashfaq said China is on a path of comprehensive opening-up, reforms, and an expanding list of sectors open to foreign investment. Adding he said China is home to most critical element of



fourth industrial revolution: rare-earth metals. It is widely accepted the fourth industrial revolution is impossible without rare-earth metals, and China is an undisputed superpower in this sector. Countries are seeking to invigorate industry to reduce reliance, protect their economies, enhance economic security, and ensure job creation. However, protection is turning into protectionism, he added. China produces almost 1/3 of global industrial output, making it an industrial powerhouse. The industrial base provides reliability and sustainability for exporters and importers. It also presents significant business and investment opportunities for business groups and investors, enabling them to expand their operations, he concluded.

beyond its borders. He said a potential disruption in remittances poses yet another major risk. Iftikhar Ali Malik further added war burdens will come in different forms which includes distracted allies on whom Pakistan relies to get the rollovers it needs for its external obligations, disruption of foreign trade due to rising shipping costs (already insurance cost on foreign shipments has risen massively) as well as port closures in the Gulf countries through which all Pakistan's west-bound exports transit.

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Convener Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry regional committee on food shahid Imran Sunday stressed the urgent need of introducing digital farming to bring agriculture revolution fully ensuring food security in the prevailing global scenario in the wake of US-Israel-Iran war.

Talking here today to a delegation of progressive farmers led by Ch MohammadAsif Arain from Sahiwal he said with the global agricultural economies rapidly transforming to digitalization, sustenance for developing economies is becoming a challenge especially when an economy endeavors to survive with old modes of farming. He

said Pakistan is the one among such economies where agriculture contributes 24 percent to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 37.4 employment opportunities but majority of its farmers still oblivious to latest farming techniques. He said digital farming is imperative to re-vitalize agricultural growth to fully benefit from country's arable land and water resources. Although the government has prepared a comprehensive National Action Plan for agriculture modernization through capacity building and introducing agrarian technology extension, yet our farmers especially the small growers are shying away from modern technologies due to cost of adoption, access to technology and lack of awareness.

Iftikhar Malik Demands Wisdom-Based Plan for US-Israel-Iran War Aftershocks

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry former President Iftikhar Ali Malik Sunday stressed the urgent need for tailoring a wisdom based contingency plan to mitigate the aftershocks from the escalating US-Israel-Iran war on the entire western flank.

In a statement here today, he said in prevailing scenarios, Pakistan must now take sober stock of its resource position to able to sustain the burdens that conflict

will inevitably bring. He said the conflict has serious implications for exports in the region and Pakistan needs to thrash out a comprehensive economic contingency framework on war footing saving the bleak economy from war mounted implications. He said the Iran-linked instability in the Middle East highlights the fact that Pakistan's macro-economic resilience remains fragile. Energy imports dependence, a narrow export base and reliance on remittances will affect economy exposed to shocks originating far

beyond its borders. He said a potential disruption in remittances poses yet another major risk.

Iftikhar Ali Malik further added war burdens will come in different forms which includes distracted allies on whom Pakistan relies to get the rollovers it needs for its external obligations, disruption of foreign trade due to rising shipping costs (already insurance cost on foreign shipments has risen massively) as well as port closures in the Gulf countries through which all Pakistan's west-bound exports transit.



ICC Men's T-20 Cricket World Cup 2026

India's Brilliant Batting and Bowling: India Defeated New Zealand By 96 in the Final Match

Asim Tanveer

AHMEDABAD: India successfully defended the T20 World Cup title. 2 new titles, New Zealand failed again. India has created new history in the ICC T20 World Cup. It became the first country to defend the title. It has won the honor of lifting the world title for the first time as the host. New Zealand was unlucky once again. It could not win the ICC T20 World Cup trophy. India rained runs in Ahmedabad. Kiwis were swept away in it. Many records were made. Won the final by a big margin of 96 runs.

The Black Caps chased down a record target of 256 runs, but they managed to score 31 runs off 15 balls, but here the dangerous batsman Finn Allan was caught by Tilak Verma off Axar Patel, a brilliant catch that ended his 9-run innings. With 1 run added, Rachin was caught by Ishan Kishan off Ravindra Bumrah, which was also a good catch. After 15 runs, at a total of 47, aggressive batsman Glenn Phillips was bowled off Patel for 5 runs. At the score of 70, Mark Chapman was bowled clean off Pandya for 3 runs. At 72, India got a big win



when opener Tom Seifert was caught off Varun for 52 runs. He played 26 balls. He hit 5 sixes and 2 fours. Half of the New Zealand team they were bowled out for 72 runs in 8.1 overs. Captain Mitchell Santner and Daryl Mitchell took charge. They stopped the loss of wickets. The score was 119 for 5 in 12 overs.

In the 13th over of the innings, Pandya

dropped the first catch, but in the same over, India got its sixth success through Daryl Mitchell, who scored 17 runs and was caught by Ishan Kishan off Patel's ball. India scored 141 runs with Jamie Nishtar for 8 and Matt Henry for zero. New Zealand's innings was dismissed for 159 runs in 19 overs. Thus, India won the ICC T20 World Cup final by a record



margin of 96 runs.

Jasprit Bumrah bowled a devastating spell for India, taking 4 wickets for just 15 runs in 74 overs. Axar Patel took 3 wickets for 27 runs in 3 overs.

India posted a mammoth total of 255/5 against New Zealand, the highest by any team in a T20 World Cup final.

The Indian cricket team created

history by recording the highest score in the T20 World Cup final against New Zealand in Ahmedabad on Sunday. A stormy knock by Abhishek Sharma, Sanju Samson and Ishan Kishan took India to 200 runs in 15 overs. The previous record for the highest score in a T20 World Cup final was also held by India - India had scored 176/7 in 20

overs against South Africa in the 2024 edition. Sanju Samson and Abhishek Sharma provided the best start for India in the semi-final of the T20 World Cup 2026, putting on a record-breaking 92-run partnership in the powerplay. While Sharma was dismissed after his 18-ball half-century, which was the fastest half-fifty in 2026. Sanju continued his red-hot form with another memorable innings of 89 runs. Kishan scored 52 runs off 25 balls. After that, India lost three wickets in quick succession, which forced them to slow down. However, Shivam Dube's last over of 24 runs took India past 250 runs, setting a target of 256 runs for New Zealand. India scored 255 runs for 5 wickets. Matt Henry took one wicket for 49 runs for New Zealand. Jacob Duffy was bowled out for 42 runs in 3 overs. Lucky Ferguson was bowled out for 48 runs in 2 overs. Both were unsuccessful. Nichal Santner gave away 33 runs in 4 overs but remained wicketless. Rachan Ravindra took one wicket for 32 runs in 2 overs and Jamie Neesham took 3 wickets for 46 runs in 4 overs. These 3 wickets were taken in a single over.

Punjab's biggest chess event - Punjab Open Chess Championship concludes

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: Punjab's biggest chess event - Punjab Open Chess Championship has concluded at the Nishtar Park Sports Complex Gymnasium Hall on Saturday night. Cash prizes worth lakhs of rupees were distributed among the winning players at the closing ceremony. Director Sports Rana Nadeem Anjum distributed prizes among the top position holders.

Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Muhammad Ali visited Nishtar Park Sports Complex Gymnasium Hall to inspect the chess competitions. He also played an exhibition chess match. Secretary Chess Association of Punjab Raja Gohar Iqbal also presented a souvenir to Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Muhammad Ali on this occasion.

Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Muhammad Ali in his address at the closing ceremony said that Punjab Sports Department will organize a biggest chess event very soon. "The game of chess will be included in the Punjab Games and Chief Minister Punjab Pink



Games".

Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Muhammad Ali said that a memorable chess event has been organized under the leadership of Punjab Sports Minister Malik Faisal Ayub Khokhar. "Several talented chess players have come to the fore in this grand event".

He thanked all the team of Sports Board Punjab and Chess Association of Punjab. As many as 350 male and female players from all parts of Punjab participated in girls, boys and open category competitions in the Punjab Open Chess Championship.

Director Sports Rana Nadeem Anjum,

Secretary Chess Association of Punjab Raja Gohar Iqbal and other chess officials were also present on this occasion.

The 2-day Punjab Open Chess Championship was organized by Punjab Sports Department with the collaboration of Chess Association of Punjab. The final competitions of the second and last day also started after Iftar and continued till Sehri time.

Top chess players from far flung areas shared their views about the event and expressed gratitude to Punjab Sports Department for organizing mega chess event in a successful manner.

As per results, in Masters category, top three positions went to Asad Ali, Tanveer MD Gillani and Hasan Tahir respectively.

In Amateur category, M Umair, Wajid Ali and Zeeshan Ali clinched top three positions.

In Women's category, Fareeha Saddique, Noor Fatima Rashid and Sehrish shared top three positions respectively.

In U-16 category, M Chaudhry, Ahmed Usman and Ali Seena bagged top three positions respectively.

Ramadan Hockey League: Olympian Abdul Waheed Khan XI registers second consecutive victory



Sports Desk

KARACHI: In the Fourth Ramadan Hockey League being played at the Islahuddin & Dr. Muhammad Ali Shah Hockey Academy, Olympian Abdul Waheed Khan XI Beat Olympian Manawar-uz-Zaman XI by 4 goals to 2 to secure their second consecutive victory in the event.

For the winning side, Irfan Khan scored two goals, while Noman Khan and Rizwan Khan scored one goal each. For Olympian Manawar-uz-Zaman XI, both goals were scored by Muhammad Owais.

With four points, Olympian Abdul Waheed Khan XI stands at the top of the points table. Saturday is a rest day in the event, while on Sunday Zakir Ali Khan XI will face Olympian Zafar Ali Khan XI at 4:30 PM.

Transformative Governance and Public Welfare Initiatives in Punjab

Continued from Page 4

Maryam Nawaz has revolutionized the health sector by facilitating cardiac and pediatric heart surgeries free of cost, significantly improving access to life-saving medical treatment for the underprivileged.

Similarly, the education sector is receiving renewed attention. Efforts are underway to improve school infrastructure, strengthen teacher accountability, and expand access to quality education in both urban and rural areas. These initiatives are designed to ensure that young people receive the knowledge and skills necessary to contribute to the nation's progress.

Public transport and urban mobility are also being improved through the introduction of modern and environmentally friendly transport systems, including green buses that provide comfortable and affordable travel for students, workers, and ordinary citizens.

Women-centered welfare initiatives represent another important dimension of contemporary governance. Programs aimed at supporting widows and economically disadvantaged women, including rural livelihood and livestock assistance schemes, are enabling families to achieve financial stability and dignity.

Taken together, these initiatives reflect an effort to address governance challenges in a comprehensive manner—strengthening law enforcement, improving civic services, expanding welfare programs, and ensuring institutional accountability.

The governance journey of Punjab demonstrates that leadership grounded in public service, institutional reform, and social responsibility can significantly influence the direction of a society.

The contributions of earlier leaders helped shape the administrative foundations of the province, while contemporary initiatives are

building upon that legacy to meet the needs of a modern and rapidly evolving society. In this context, the ongoing reforms and welfare-oriented programs under the leadership of Maryam Nawaz represent an energetic effort to promote public relief, restore civic discipline, and expand opportunities for citizens. Through initiatives aimed at strengthening law enforcement, improving healthcare and education, reclaiming public resources, and promoting cleanliness and civic order, her administration seeks to move Punjab toward a more organized, equitable, and progressive future.

With visionary resolve and compassionate governance, the leadership of Maryam Nawaz is emerging as a defining force shaping a new and hopeful chapter in the development journey of Punjab.

The writer is Former Professor & Former Head Department of Entomology, University of Agriculture, Faisalabad

The Uncertain Endgame of the Iran War

Continued from Page 4

Modern wars serve not only as military confrontations but also as real-time laboratories of technological and strategic knowledge. China and Russia are likely analyzing every aspect of the conflict: the deployment of U.S. naval forces, the logistics of long-distance power projection, the performance of advanced missile defenses, the effectiveness of cyber warfare techniques, and the coordination between allied military forces. They are also observing the economic tools used in the conflict—sanctions, financial restrictions, and trade disruptions.

By studying these dynamics, both countries can refine their own strategic planning. Every weapon system used in the war provides valuable data. Every military maneuver reveals operational strengths and weaknesses. Every cyber-attack or defensive response demonstrates new capabilities.

In effect, the war provides China and Russia with a rare opportunity to observe the full spectrum of American and allied military power in real-world conditions. This information can then be incorporated into their own mili-

tary development programs. Lessons drawn from the conflict may influence the design of future missile systems, air defense networks, naval strategies, and cyber warfare capabilities. In the long term, this means the conflict could unintentionally accelerate the military modernization of America's strategic competitors.

By revealing operational methods, logistical patterns, and technological performance under battlefield conditions, the war offers insights that might otherwise take decades to obtain. From this perspective, the geopolitical consequences of the conflict extend far beyond the Middle East.

The war is simultaneously reshaping energy markets, testing political resilience within democratic societies, and providing valuable strategic intelligence to rival global powers.

These multiple pressures may ultimately shape the war's conclusion.

Military power alone rarely determines the final outcome of conflicts involving resilient states. Economic pressure, political legitimacy, and international strategic calculations often play equally decisive roles. Iran has absorbed

significant military damage but remains politically intact. The United States and Israel possess overwhelming military capability but face increasing economic and geopolitical complications as the conflict continues.

Meanwhile, global powers observing from the sidelines are quietly gathering knowledge that could reshape future strategic balances. In the end, the decisive factor may not be the destruction of missiles or military bases. The outcome may instead be determined by the economic strain of rising energy prices, the political pressure of public opinion, and the strategic calculations of global powers watching closely from afar.

The war's endgame therefore remains uncertain. What began as a campaign to destroy military capabilities may ultimately evolve into a broader contest involving economics, diplomacy, and the shifting balance of global power.

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

The Other War: Pakistan-Afghanistan Conundrum

Continued from Page 4

that these efforts failed to produce sustained compliance from Kabul on moving against militant groups effectively, prompting the current military response.

Since its inception, the Pakistan Armed Forces have demonstrated unparalleled precision and resolve. This is not a war against a people, but a surgical strike against the infrastructure of chaos.

Pakistan has highlighted several operational successes since launching the campaign: Pakistani government figures claim hundreds of Taliban fighters killed, numerous check-posts destroyed, and key tactical positions overrun.

Over 480 militants and hostile

combatants have been neutralized.

More than 220 militant check posts and 50 launch pads have been destroyed.

Pakistani forces have successfully captured 35 key positions previously used for cross-border incursions.

Air and ground strikes are reported to have struck multiple Taliban posts and logistic hubs across provinces like Laghman, Kabul, Kandahar and Paktia.

Pakistani forces have reportedly advanced in some border sectors and claimed control of enemy positions following cross-border engagements.

According to Islamabad, the operation continues with the stated goal of deterring further

attacks and compelling the Taliban to take verifiable action against militant groups that threaten Pakistan's internal security.

Pakistan has taken precise actions aimed at militant targets, not civilian areas, and that its operations are fully justified as defensive measures in line with international norms. It also asserts it has shown patience through diplomatic channels before opting for a military response.

This conflict is not a localized skirmish; it holds global strategic significance for several reasons:

Militant groups tied to the Afghan theater have historically maintained links across regions. Denying them secure bases reduces the risk of terrorism

spilling beyond South Asia into the Middle East, Central Asia, Europe and beyond. This conflict draws in interests from major actors—including China, the Gulf states, the United States, Russia and the United Nations—all of whom have expressed concern or offered mediation. The stability of Pakistan and Afghanistan has implications for trade corridors, energy routes, and migration flows. Pakistan's invocation of self-defense against non-state actors based in another political entity touches upon critical debates in international law about when and how states may use force to protect themselves. How this dispute is adjudicated diplomatically or through international institutions will shape

future norms on counterterrorism and cross-border operations.

Pakistan insists its current military campaign—Operation Ghazab Lil Haq—is neither expansionist nor provocative but a necessary measure against persistent militant threats that endanger both national and global peace. Whether this conflict leads to a broader stabilization or further escalation will depend on diplomatic engagement, the willingness of regional powers to mediate effectively, and the capacity of both sides to reconcile security imperatives with respect for sovereign norms.

What is clear is that this confrontation underscores the interconnected nature of modern

security challenges: a battle once perceived as regional now resonates across global counterterrorism and interstate relations.

The world must understand: Pakistan is the only wall standing between global security and a "militant supermarket" in Afghanistan. If these groups are allowed to thrive, their ambitions will not remain confined to the region. History has shown that instability in this corridor eventually reaches the streets of London, New York, and Paris.

By conducting Operation Ghazab Lil Haq, Pakistan is performing a global service. It is absorbing the brunt of a radicalized insurgency to ensure that the "Khwarij" ideology does not export its brand of terror to the

rest of the world.

The international community must move beyond "urging restraint" and start demanding accountability from Kabul. Pakistan's demands are simple and just: verifiable guarantees that Afghan territory will not be used to harbor those who kill in the name of a distorted ideology.

Pakistan has completed over 90% of its border fencing and has sacrificed thousands of its bravest sons. Operation Ghazab Lil Haq is the final, necessary step in securing a peaceful future—not just for South Asia, but for the global community. Pakistan is not just fighting its own war; it is fighting the world's war. And for the sake of global peace, it is a war Pakistan must win.

Condolence

LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif offers condolence over demise of late Zaeem Qadri, senior politician and former Provincial Minister (Sunday, 8 March, 2026).



Photo: PID

All necessary measures to be taken to maintain stability of national economy: PM

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif said on Sunday that, in view of the current international situation, the timely implementation of measures to ensure economic stability in the country is essential.

He said this while presiding over a meeting held to discuss measures to maintain the

stability of the national economy in light of the recent rising international tensions.

He said that the government is continuously monitoring the situation and will make all necessary decisions to maintain the stability of the national economy.

The premier was given a detailed briefing on the recent global tensions and their potential economic impacts.

During the briefing, it was informed that the current regional situation could affect Pakistan's economy, particularly the supply of energy and price fluctuations in global markets.

He directed the federal cabinet, all elected representatives at the federal and provincial levels, and senior government officials to play their full role in providing relief to the public and ensuring the effi-

cient use of resources.

Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif particularly emphasized that the privileged and elite classes of society should set an example by voluntarily bearing necessary adjustments.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, Federal Minister for Finance Muhammad Aurangzeb, Federal Minister for Plan-

ning and Development Ahsan Iqbal, Federal Minister for Power Sardar Awais Leghari, Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attallah Tarar, Federal Minister for Environment Musadik Masood Malik, Special Assistant Haroon Akhtar Khan and senior officials from relevant departments.

Rathore Prays for Pakistan Security and Kashmir Freedom During Holy Pilgrimage

Spokesman Report.

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore returned to Islamabad yesterday after performing Umrah along with his family cousin Raheel Malik during the holy month of Ramadan. He performed Nawafil prayers at the Prophet's Mosque during the blessed journey to the Holy Hijaz. He prayed for the security of Pakistan, the freedom of occupied Jammu and Kashmir, the unity and solidarity of the Islamic nation, and for the armies of the beloved homeland, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, led by Chief of Defense Forces Hafiz Syed Asim Munir, to be given further successes. On his return from Umrah, he was received at the Islamabad



Airport by the Prime Minister's Spokesperson Shaukat Javed Mir, Press Secretary Asif Ali Rathore, Public Relations Officer Shaukat Rathore Khaksar, along with his staff. Prime Minister Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore was felic-

ited by garlanding flowers around his neck, presenting bouquets of flowers and showering flower petals on him.

Spokesperson Shaukat Javed Mir appreciated the expression of public confidence in the people-friendly policies of the PPP government led by Prime Minister Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, the ideology of stability of Pakistan, the development of ties of devotion with the Pak Army and national security institutions, and said that in the upcoming general elections, Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, President of Pakistan Asif Ali Zardari, Chairperson of Political Affairs, Ms. Faryal Talpur, will achieve a resounding victory under the leadership of senior central leader Chaudhry Riaz and will take steps in accordance with the party manifesto for the development and provision of employment for the Kashmir Liberation Movement along with the formation of the government.

CM Sohail Afridi elevates Muzzammil Aslam as KP's finance minister

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi elevated the status of Advisor to Chief Minister on Finance Muzzammil Aslam to provincial minister for finance, reported 24News-HD TV channel on Sunday.

"In exercise of powers conferred under clause 9 of Article 130 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Chief Minister, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, is pleased to grant the status of Provincial Minister to Muzzammil Aslam, Advisor to the Chief Minister on Finance, with immediate effect," a notification issued stated.

The post of minister is essential to participation in the National Finance Commission (NFC).

Muzzammil Aslam is from Karachi and served as an advisor to the chief minister in finance under former chief minister Ali Amin Gandapur.

He was given the same portfolio when Sohail Afridi replaced Gandapur as the CM.

Women's empowerment key to Pakistan's sustainable development: Rubina Khalid

ISLAMABAD, MAR 08 (APP): Chairperson of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Senator Rubina Khalid, on Saturday paid tribute to the resilience, courage and contributions of women across the world on the occasion of International Women's Day, stating that women remain the silent front-line in times of conflicts, crises and hardships.

In her message, she said women continue to play a vital role in strengthening families, communities and economies despite facing numerous social and economic challenges.

Senator Rubina Khalid said Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto laid the foundation for women's leadership and empowerment in Pakistan and envisioned a society where women would be fully integrated into the national mainstream.

Highlighting the role of the Benazir Income Support Programme, she said BISP has emerged as the country's largest social protection initiative, providing financial support, dignity and economic



security to millions of women across Pakistan.

She said women registered under BISP have been recognized as heads of their households, a step that has strengthened their financial independence and decision-making role within families.

Rubina Khalid said President Asif Ali Zardari and Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari are carrying forward the vision of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto by continuing efforts to safeguard and promote women's rights in the country.

She emphasized that Pakistan's progress and sustainable economic development are closely linked to women's empowerment.

Trump says Iran's new supreme leader won't 'last long' without his approval



Xinhua

WASHINGTON: U. S. President Donald Trump threatened on Sunday that Iran's new supreme leader "is not going to last long" without his approval.

"He's going to have to get approval from us," Trump said in an interview with ABC News. "If he doesn't get approval from us he's not going to last long."

"I don't want people to have to go back in five years and have to do the same thing again or worse let them have a nuclear weapon,"

he said.

Iran's Assembly of Experts has finalized a decision on its new supreme leader, the semi-official Mehr news agency reported on Sunday. Trump said earlier that he must be personally involved in selecting Iran's next leader.

On Feb. 28, Israel and the United States launched joint attacks on Tehran and several other Iranian cities, killing Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, dozens of senior officials and military commanders, as well as hundreds of civilians.

DPM/FM Dar reaffirms commitment to advancing women's rights, empowerment



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Sunday, said Pakistan remained steadfast in advancing the rights and empowerment of women and girls.

The country's Constitution guaranteed equality and protection against discrimination, and as a State Party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Pakistan continued to pursue legislative, policy, and institutional reforms that strengthen women's participation and leadership, the DPM/FM said in a message on the occasion of International Women's Day being observed today.

"On this International Women's Day, we honor the courage, resilience, and leadership of women whose determination continues to transform societies, strengthen communities, and inspire future generations. Women's voices, talents, and aspirations are essential drivers of inclusive development, responsive governance, and sustainable peace," the Foreign Office Spokesperson, in a press release, quoted the DPM/FM as saying.

The DPM/FM further said that Pakistan was also proud to host the 9th Ministerial Conference on Women of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) this year, reflecting their commitment to advancing women's rights across the Islamic world and beyond.

OIC condemns escalating colonists' crimes in the West Bank



Wafa

JEDDAH: The General Secretariat of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) strongly condemned the ongoing crimes of murder, incitement, settlement expansion, and organized terrorism perpetrated by extremist settler gangs, under the protection of the Israeli occupation forces. These crimes resulted today in the martyrdom of several Palestinian citizens and the injury of others in several villages in the occupied West Bank.

The General Secretariat affirmed that this heinous crime is an extension

of the systematic crimes of the Israeli occupation, based on policies of displacement, annexation, and settlement construction, and attempts to impose alleged Israeli sovereignty over the occupied Palestinian territory, in flagrant violation of international humanitarian law and resolutions of international legitimacy.

The General Secretariat reiterated its call on the international community to intervene immediately to stop all ongoing Israeli crimes and violations in the Palestinian territories and to impose clear and deterrent sanctions on the Israeli colonial settlement enterprise.