



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ
ہم سے مومن بن عقبتے بیان کیا ان سے
سامنے اور ان سے ان کے والد عبد اللہ بن
عمر رضی اللہ عنہما نے کہ رسول اللہ ﷺ کو
ازادگانے کے بارے میں جو کچھ فرمایا تھا جب
آپ نے فرمایا تو ابو بکر رضی اللہ عنہ نے عرض
کیا کہ یہ رسول اللہ! میرا ہاتھ ایک طرف سے
لٹکے لٹکے، تو آپ صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے فرمایا
کہ تم ان ٹکڑے کر کے اونٹوں سے لٹکے دو۔
(بخاری: حدیث نمبر 6062)
Barkat Rice Mills
(Pvt) Limited



MQM-P criticises petrol price hike, says government did not consult allies

Addressing a press conference, senior MQM-P leader Faroq Sattar said the sharp increase in fuel prices had placed an additional burden on the public. "The government has increased the prices of petroleum products without consulting its allies," he said, adding that the recent hike was far greater than earlier adjustments.



US extends visa appointment cancellations in Pakistan till March 13

The US Embassy in Islamabad has confirmed that it will continue providing routine and emergency services to US citizens in Pakistan. However, all immigrant and nonimmigrant visa appointments scheduled between March 9 and March 13 have been canceled. Applicants affected by the cancellations will receive instructions via email regarding how to reschedule their visa appointments.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Ramazanul Mubarak 20, Tuesday, March 10, 2026

www.dailyspokesman.net

@daily_spokesman



Daily Spokesman Vol: 19, Issue: 324 Price Rs. 25.00 Pages 8

Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting regarding austerity measures across the country in wake of current regional situation, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

Pakistan Army destroys Afghan Taliban posts, ammunition depots along border



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Army is conducting effective ground and air operations against Afghan Taliban and extremist groups (Fitna al-Khawarij) along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border.

Security sources the army targeted a Taliban post in Shawal, near South Waziristan, forcing the militants to flee and destroying the post with explosives.

Continuous strikes are being carried out on Taliban hideouts and military installations to prevent cross-border attacks.

In a successful operation in Paktika, Pakistani forces destroyed an ammunition depot at Shahin Base, further disrupting militant operations.

Security officials confirmed that Operation Ghazab lil-Haq remains ongoing, with targets being systematically neutralized, and will continue until all objectives are achieved.

PM Shehbaz tells nation to be ready for another hike in petrol prices

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday warned that fuel prices in Pakistan could increase again in the coming days due to the ongoing tensions between Iran and Israel and the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, which has disrupted global oil supplies.

Addressing the nation, the prime minister said the situation could trigger a severe fuel crisis if

timely measures are not taken. He noted that international oil prices have surged from about \$60 per barrel to nearly \$100 per barrel in recent days, warning that the situation could further worsen in the coming days.

The prime minister said the government had already taken difficult decisions to stabilise the economy, acknowledging that the recent increase in fuel prices was a tough step. He explained that a much larger increase had initially

been proposed but the government opted for a middle path to reduce the burden on citizens.

Sharif emphasized that Pakistan largely depends on oil imported from Gulf countries and that global market prices are beyond the government's direct control. However, he assured the public that the government would make every possible effort to minimize the impact on ordinary citizens and keep the national economy stable.

The premier also condemned the killing of Iranian Supreme Leader Seyed Ali Khamenei and members of his family, along with Iranian civilians, in ongoing Israeli air strikes. He said Pakistan stands for the integrity and security of brotherly Islamic countries, including Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Bahrain, and strongly condemned attacks on them.

He further said Pakistan's armed forces, under the leadership of Field Marshal Asim

Munir, are fully prepared to ensure the country's security.

To cope with the emerging economic challenges, the prime minister announced several austerity measures. These include a 50 percent reduction in fuel usage for official vehicles, suspension of salaries for ministers and advisers, and a two-day salary contribution from Grade 20 and above government officers for public relief efforts.

Continued on Page 7

Those speaking against Iran are agents of Israel, US: Hafiz Naeem

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) chief Hafiz Naeem Rehman has said those speaking against Iran are acting as agents of Israel and the United States, and emphasized that the Pakistani nation stands in solidarity with Iran.

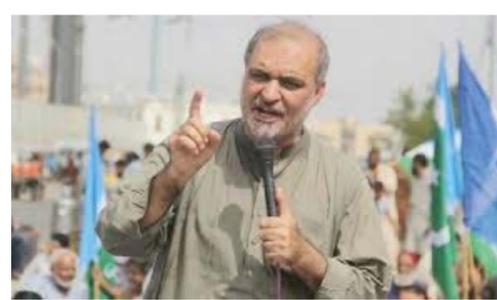
Addressing the ongoing regional tensions, he criticized the government for raising petrol prices despite ample stock, calling the Rs 55 increase a heavy burden on ordinary citizens.

He highlighted that the

government collects around Rs50 billion monthly in petrol levies, disproportionately impacting the middle class already struggling with inflation, electricity bills, and taxes.

He further accused large sugar mill owners of evading taxes while ordinary citizens bear the brunt of government policies.

He criticized the sale of Pakistan International Airlines for Rs10 billion while a plane worth Rs11 billion was reportedly purchased for Maryam Nawaz. He also suggested that official vehicles should not exceed



1300cc.

On development projects, he noted that in Karachi, Rs4,000

million spent over three years resulted in just two narrow streets, and the long-delayed

KE-4 project remains incomplete after 15 years.

Speaking on regional security, Hafiz Naeem warned that following Iran, Turkiye and Pakistan could also come under Israeli scrutiny. He stated that Iran would not back down and that any Israeli pressure could eventually affect Pakistan.

He called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to apologize to the nation over remarks suggesting US President Donald Trump should be awarded the Nobel Prize, urging the government to take a clear stance independent of the Peace of Board.

Pakistan destroys Afghan Taliban ammunition depot in Paktika, post in Waziristan

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's security forces continued ground and aerial operations against militants along the border with Afghanistan, with security sources claiming that key targets have been struck during the ongoing campaign on Monday.

According to the details, security sources confirmed that Pakistani forces have destroyed ammu-

munition depots at Afghanistan's Shaheen Base in Paktika as part of the ongoing military operation, Ghazab lil Haq.

The security sources said the military action is being carried out against militants referred to as Fitna-al-Khawarij as well as Afghan Taliban positions, adding that the operation, Ghazab-lil-Haq, will continue until its objectives are achieved.

Security sources further stated that Pakistani forces also targeted the Fitna-al-Hindustan-backed Afghan Taliban's post located across the Afghan border adjacent to South Waziristan in the Shawal area.

The security sources also confirmed that the Pak Army's forceful strike forced Afghan Taliban terrorists to flee their positions near the Pak-Afghan border

area. The post was later destroyed with explosives, the sources said, adding that the Pakistan Army continues to strike militant hideouts and military installations across the border.

Meanwhile, authorities also conducted large-scale combing and search operations in Rawalpindi and Islamabad, targeting criminal elements and undocumented Afghan nationals.

Police carried out operations in areas falling under the jurisdictions of the Korral, Sumbal, Aabpara, Secretariat and Golra police stations. During the search operations, 43 suspicious individuals were arrested.

Officials said that 37 motorcycles and two vehicles were also taken into custody and shifted to different police stations for further investigation.

Saudi Arabia condemns as Iran targets Gulf energy installations

AFP

Saudi Arabia lambasted Iran on Monday, calling Tehran's attacks targeting the kingdom and their Gulf neighbours "reprehensible" as Tehran launched fresh strikes on energy installations in the Gulf including a petroleum complex in Bahrain, as oil prices soared on fears over supply disruptions.

Bahrain's sprawling Al Ma'ameer oil facility was hit, causing a fire and damage, with the country's state-owned energy firm Bapco declaring force majeure — the latest Gulf producer to activate the legal clause.

Energy producers in Qatar and Kuwait earlier made

similar declarations.

Bapco said it "thereby serves notice of force majeure on its group operations which have been affected by the ongoing regional conflict in the Middle East and the recent attack on its refinery complex", according to a statement posted by the company.

Asian stock markets plunged on Monday as oil prices soared, with investors running for the hills as crude rocketed to its highest level since the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

The market instability came as Iran continued to target the Gulf with missile and drone barrages, hours after Washington ordered embassy staff to leave Saudi Arabia.

Iran claims to have killed 200 US soldiers as Middle East war escalates

Agencies

ISLAMABAD: The conflict between Iran and Israel intensified as the war in the Middle East entered its ninth day, with both sides carrying out new attacks and the situation across the region becoming increasingly volatile.

According to the report, Iranian authorities also claimed that around 200 US military personnel had been killed in various attacks over the past 24 hours and alleged that several American soldiers declared dead by US officials were in fact captured during the fighting.

According to reports, Israeli and US strikes on Iran escalated, with several energy facilities affected. Iranian media said the attacks damaged fuel depots in three areas, including the city of Karaj near the capital, Tehran, while

a fire broke out at an oil refinery following the strikes.

Iran said it launched retaliatory attacks targeting a refinery in the Israeli port city of Haifa and also struck a US vessel. Iranian officials repeated their claim that 200 US soldiers had been killed within a 24-hour period in different attacks.

Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps said it also targeted a US oil ship and a tanker flying the flag of the Marshall Islands in the strategic Strait of Hormuz using drones. The IRGC further claimed that 21 US personnel were killed at a naval base in Bahrain.

The channel reported that late-night strikes were carried out on fuel storage installations around Tehran. An oil depot located near the central refinery in the capital was struck, while another depot in north-western Tehran was also hit.

PPP Leader stresses supporting orphans, announces PM Azad Kashmir's visit to SOS Village

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Pakistan Peoples Party Azad Kashmir Central Deputy Secretary Information Candidate Assembly Constituency 7 Shaukat Javed Mir has said that Supporting orphans, helpless and downtrodden classes, following the will of the Lord of the Worlds and the mercy of the worlds is a proven recipe for achieving the successes of religion and the world.

Prime Minister Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore will visit SOS Village very soon and fulfill the duty of patronizing them, said the spokesperson for the Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir Shaukat. Javed Mir said this while addressing the grand iftar dinner organized by Omar Welfare Society at SOS Village Dhani Syedan yesterday, in which about two



hundred children, administration and officials of the social organiza-

tion participated.

Earlier, upon reaching SOS Village, the administration of the institution warmly welcomed the spokesperson of the Prime Minister, Shaukat Javed Mir. Owais Arif Awan, Muqaddas Iqbal Khawaja, presented them with bouquets and took them on a tour of various departments managed by the institution and briefed them.

Shaukat Javed Mir appreciated the excellent performance and exemplary services of SOS Village and assured full cooperation from the government. Shaukat Javed Mir played a valuable role in becoming a support for the suffering humanity of Omar Welfare Society, which is worthy of imitation.

Prime Minister Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore will keep the patronage of the neglected sections of the society among his priorities.

Condolence

ISLAMABAD: Azad Jammu and Kashmir Prime Minister Faisal Mumtaz Rathore visited the residence of PPP Azad Kashmir President Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin and expressed his condolences on the death of his daughter. He prayed that Allah Almighty may elevate the ranks of the deceased and grant patience to the bereaved.



Photo: Spokesman

Character Building at Core: Tameer-e-Millat College Officially Opens Doors

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: The grand inauguration ceremony of Tameer-e-Millat College, the beginning of a new journey of education and character building. The inauguration ceremony of Tameer-e-Millat College was held with great dignity and enthusiasm on 17th Ramadan in a newly constructed and beautifully decorated building on Western Bypass Road, Gojra.

Prominent social and public figure Shaukat Nawaz Mir attended this blessed and memorable ceremony as the special guest, while a large number of dignitaries from different walks of life, teachers, students, parents and citizens also attended this happy occasion.

Addressing the ceremony, Chaudhry Sagheer Yaqoob, Qazi Bashir, Sir Jawad Haider, Naseem



Prem Koti, Ziad Qasim, Tariq Alam Shaukat Qamar, Imtiaz Naqvi, Raja Mujeeb-ur-Rehman, Chaudhry Rafique, Chaudhry Muhammad Hussain, Sheikh Muhammad Asim Saeed, Secretary General of the House Muhammad Shafiq, Abu Bakr Siddique, Chief Coordinator Akhuwat Foundation, Colonel (retd) Monum, Chief Security Head, Ahmed Nawaz Chavan and Khizr Hayat were also present.

said that education is not bought but is obtained through hard work and dedication and the real development of any society is possible when the new generation is given an awareness of character building, moral values and social responsibilities.

At the end of the ceremony, Bilal Nazir's mother cut the ribbon and formally inaugurated the Tameer-e-Millat College, while this wonderful ceremony organized by Bilal Nazir and his team was highly appreciated by the participants.

A large number of students, parents and citizens attended the ceremony and welcomed the establishment of this new educational institution and expressed the hope that Tameer-e-Millat College will prove to be a shining example for the state in the field of knowledge and training.

Chairman Akhuwat Foundation visited the Multan Chamber

Quaratulain Asim

MULTAN: Chairman Akhuwat Foundation Dr. Amjad Saqib visited the Multan Chamber of Commerce and Industry where he met with the President of the Chamber Mian Bakhtawar Tanveer Sheikh and other office bearers.

On this occasion, a detailed discussion was held regarding matters of mutual interest, social service and promotion of welfare activities.

Dr. Amjad Saqib said that the journey of Akhuwat Foundation started with a small amount of Rs. 10,000 which has today taken the form of a



big welfare mission.

He said that till now interest-free loans have been

provided to about 4 million families across the country, the total value of which is

about Rs. 400 billion, while the recovery rate of Akhuwat is 100 percent.

International Women's Day Celebration in Multan

Iram Asim

MULTAN: Boxes of Kindness Chairperson Mrs. Aniqi Warda has said that women are the foundation of society. A mother's lap is the first school of a person from where a person gets basic lessons of morality, love and humanity, while a daughter is the blessing of the home, a sister and a wife are the source of stability and prosperity of the family. She expressed these views while addressing a function organized by Boxes of Kindness and in collaboration with the Sports Board on the occasion of International Women's Day yesterday. The special guests of the function were Mrs. Zahra Sajjad Zaidi, Umbreen Baloch, Dr. Seerat Fatima, Dr. Javeria Abbas, Dr. Shazia, Hadiqa Islam, Rabia Waqas, Sumiya Islam, Faryal Huma, Tahira Shahzad, Hajra Bibi, Bisma Islam, Rabab Shah, Khazra Sohail. They said that today women are proving their abilities and intelligence in all fields. The government should provide them with all the opportunities and facilities to move forward and make us feel proud to be called a developed country. Iman Fatima, Markh Abbasi, Maria Gul, Mrs. Khan Durrani and others also addressed the ceremony. Commemorative shields were distributed to all the guests and certificates to all the participants. Finally, a rally was also taken out from the e-library to Pul Moj Darya.

DFP grieved over death of its senior leader M Abdullah Tari.

Abdul Majeed Tahir



ISLAMABAD/SRINAGAR: Vice president Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party Mehmood Ahmed Saghar has expressed his profound grief and sorrow over the sad demise of senior party leader and former general secretary Moulana Muhammad Abdullah Tari who passed away at his home town Shopian in South

Kashmir.

In his condolence statement, Saghar said that the passing of Muhammad Abdullah Tari was a huge loss not only to his party but also to the freedom movement.

He was a genuine thinker, a seasoned politician, an acclaimed academic and religious scholar par excellence.

"While mourning the loss of a distinguished scholar and leader who dedicated his life to knowledge, social reform, and the cause of Kashmir, the DFP pays heartfelt tribute to his remarkable contributions and his steadfast role in the ongoing liberation struggle", he said, adding that as a thinker, and preacher, he played a significant role in shaping the intellectual and moral outlook of the Kashmir's younger generation through his writings, lectures, and guidance.

Meanwhile, the DFP spokesman advocate Arshad Iqbal on behalf of the incarcerated party president Shabir Ahmed Shah expressed deep sense of shock over the death of Moulana Muhammad Abdullah Tari.

Majlis-e-Zarbat Hazrat Ali (AS) held in Attock

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: A Majlis-e-Aza in connection with the Day of Strike (Youme-Zarbat) of Hazrat Ali (A. S.) was held under the auspices of Bazm-e-Imam Mehdi at Imambargah Panjani in Attock City on the night of the 18th of Ramadan.

According to details, the Shabeeh Taboot of Hazrat Ali (A. S.) and the Alam of Sarkar Ghazi Abbas Alamdar were also taken out on the occasion.

The Majlis was addressed by renowned religious scholar Allama Farhan Haider Abidi from Karachi and Zafar Hassan Zafari.

Salam was recited by Syed Hassan Rizvi and Syed Kumail Zaidi. In accordance with the schedule for the 18th of Ramadan, arrangements for Iftar and meals were also made for the participants at Imambargah Panjani. During the Majlis, mourners of Imam Hussain (A. S.) performed Seena Zani to express their grief over the martyrdom of Hazrat Ali (A. S.), while around 11 Matami Sangats presented their condolences.

The organizers stated that the district administration, IESCO, the Municipal Committee, and Rescue 1122 had been formally informed about the program to ensure necessary arrangements.

They emphasized that maintaining unity and peace is of utmost importance in the current situation.

At the conclusion of the gathering, a collective prayer was offered for the Eisaal-e-Sawab, forgiveness, and elevation of ranks of those who lost their lives in recent incidents in Iran, including martyr Ayatollah Syed Ali Khamenei.

Government of Sindh Announces Electric Vehicle Charging Network Project

Bureau Report

KARACHI: A significant step towards strengthening a sustainable transport system, Says Syed Nasir Hussain Shah

Karachi: The Government of Sindh has approved an important public-private partnership project to establish an electric vehicle (EV) charging network across the province, aimed at promoting green energy and sustainable transport. The project has been developed in collaboration with China's ADM Group and Malik Group of Companies, with the goal of introducing advanced fast-charging infrastructure to support Pakistan's rapidly growing electric mobility ecosystem.

Under the approved project, the Government of Sindh will provide funding of PKR 750 million for the establishment of 300 charging stations in the first phase. Additionally, ADM Group is investing USD 90 million to develop 3,000 EV charging stations across Pakistan, further strengthening the country's electric mobility infrastructure.

According to Provincial Minister Syed Nasir Hussain Shah, this project will serve as a key milestone in reducing carbon emissions, promoting environmentally friendly energy solutions, and strengthening the sustainable transport system in Sindh. Policy-level coordination and industrial partnership played a crucial role in the approval process, with continuous efforts and coordination by Malik Khuda Baksh acknowledged as contributing to this progress.

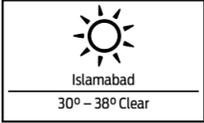
The Government of Sindh states that the project will create new investment opportunities, promote the development of modern infrastructure, and position Sindh as a leading region in Pakistan's electric vehicle technology sector.

BingX Launches P2P March Mega Spin Campaign with a \$400,000 Prize Pool Copy

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: BingX, a leading cryptocurrency exchange and Web3-AI company, announced the launch of its P2P March Mega Spin campaign, a new initiative designed to reward users and compete for a \$400,000 prize pool. The campaign offers participants the chance to win a range of prizes, including \$777 gold bars, \$555 in USDT rewards, and exclusive Mystery Boxes worth up to \$300.

Built around a task-based participation model, the campaign gives users multiple ways to earn draw entries throughout the event period. Users can participate by completing qualifying actions such as making a first-time P2P deposit, reaching cumulative deposit milestones, executing eligible futures trades, and referring new users through the campaign's referral link generator. This structure is designed to support both new user activation and continued engagement from more active participants.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 5:04 am
Zohr 12:19 pm
Asr 4:29 pm
Maghrib 6:11 pm
Isha 7:33 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

CDA 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

Punjab Safe Cities AI Technology leads to arrest of serial robber

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab Safe Cities Authority has arrested a fraudster involved in drugging citizens with intoxicant-laced food items and robbing them, with the help of advanced Artificial Intelligence-based cameras. The suspect used to target people visiting Shah Alam Market by luring them into conversation and gaining their trust before committing crime.

According to PSCA's spokesperson, the accused would befriend citizens and take them along under the pretext of friendly interaction. During the journey, he would offer intoxicant-laced biscuits, beverages, and other edible items, causing the victims to lose consciousness. Afterward, he would rob them of cash and other valuables and flee the scene. The latest incident occurred in the Mughalpur police station area, where the suspect drugged a citizen and robbed him. The victim immediately called Emergency Helpline-15 and informed the police about the said incident.

The spokesperson added that upon receiving the call, a Virtual Patrolling Officer at Safe City traced the suspect through surveillance cameras. With the help of modern AI based latest technology, the suspect's location was promptly shared with the police. Acting on PSCA's identification and facilitation, the police carried out a swift operation and successfully arrested the accused.

'Not Just Promises, But Delivery'

CM says Punjab turning into a hub of development and construction

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif said that Punjab has been transformed into a vast development and construction site, with modern infrastructure projects being launched from cities to rural areas across the province.

She said that areas which once suffered from deprivation will now witness progress, while villages across Punjab are gradually being transformed into model villages.

Under the leadership of the chief minister, the largest network of public facilities is being established in Punjab. Modern wastewater treatment plants are also being set up in different cities of the province.

She said the Punjab Development Programme, comprising development projects worth Rs517 billion, has opened a new chapter of balanced

development across the province. Cities that used to be submerged during heavy rains will soon become a thing of the past, as 380 water storage tanks will be constructed across Punjab.

A historic upgrade of the sewerage system is also underway, including the installation of HDP pipelines designed to last up to 100 years. Under the Punjab Development Programme, more than 6,000 kilometres of sewerage lines and 189 kilometres of strong water drains will be constructed.

The programme will also include the construction of 83 disposal stations and nine underground water storage tanks. These underground tanks will help store rainwater and improve water management during heavy rainfall.

The chief minister said that through these projects the promise of a better life for every city, village and region of Punjab is being fulfilled.



Eid gifts

ISLAMABAD: Mar 09- Volunteers are busy in packing Eid gifts for orphan children at Masjid Rehmatil Alameen, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Mushaal Hussein Mullick highlights the plight and courage of Kashmiri Women on International Women's Day

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Chairperson Peace and Culture Organisation and former Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Human Rights and Women Empowerment, Mushaal Hussein Mullick, while addressing an international webinar on the occasion of International Women's Day, paid tribute to the courage, resilience and sacrifices of Kashmiri women who continue to endure immense suffering under conflict.

Speaking on the occasion, Mushaal said that International Women's Day is not only a moment to celebrate the achievements of women worldwide but also a reminder of the struggles faced by women living in conflict zones. She stated that Kashmiri women represent extraordinary courage and dignity despite decades of turmoil and uncertainty.



Mushaal highlighted that Kashmiri women have endured immense human suffering, including enforced disappearances of family members, psychological trauma, and the painful reality of thousands of women living as half widows whose husbands disappeared but were never declared dead. She also pointed to

the deep scars left by incidents such as the Kunan Poshpora tragedy, where sexual violence was used as a weapon of war, leaving generations of women seeking justice.

International Women's Day Highlights Women's Role in Society, says Ch Naem

Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: District Health and Population Welfare Officer Toba Tek Singh Chaudhry Muhammad Naem said that International Women's Day is celebrated around the world every year on March 8. This day is dedicated to recognizing the struggles, sacrifices, achievements and the vital role of women in the development and progress of society.



He said that women are the foundation and a strong pillar of any society. An educated, empowered and aware woman not only guides her family but also leads society toward a positive direction. History shows that whenever women are given access to education, freedom and equal opportunities, societies move forward on the path of development. As mothers, sisters, daughters and wives, women play an essential role in human life, without which the social system cannot even be imagined.

However, unfortunately, like many other parts of the world, women in our society also face various problems and challenges, including lack of education, economic inequality and social injustices.

Annual Iftar Dinner at Aspire Group of Colleges Gulberg Campus



Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: The annual grand Iftar dinner at Aspire Group of Colleges Gulberg Campus was organized under the patronage of Chairman Dr. Tanveer Aslam Dhillon. Principal Akbar Ali Haral welcomed the distinguished guests. Prominent academic, social, business and administrative personalities of the region attended the ceremony. Prominent participants included Sheikh Salman Khalid, Chairman Talal Dost Forum, Shahzeb Ashfaq, Wisdom House School, Ehtesham Director and Principal ESF High School, Muzaffar Kalu, Principal Government High School, Ifikhar Ghauri, Principal and Director Prailand High School, Nawaz Shirazi, Director Dawn Public School and others.

39 beggars taken into custody in late-night operation

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration has intensified action against professional begging during the month of Ramadan.

In a late-night crackdown, officials detained 39 beggars and shifted them to police lockups as part of an ongoing campaign against street begging.

According to officials, the action is part of a wider effort to control organized begging and address complaints from residents.

During the operation, officers checked busy markets, traffic signals and public spaces. Persons involved in begging were taken into custody and later moved to police lockups for further legal action under relevant rules.

AIOU VC Emphasizes Understanding the Meaning of Qur'an Along with Recitation

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, Vice Chancellor, Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has emphasized the importance of reciting the Qur'an with comprehension and thoughtful reflection rather than merely reading it aloud.

He delivered these remarks during the closing ceremony of the 20-day "Translation and Tajweed of the Qur'an Course",

organized specifically for university staff. The program conducted under the auspices of the Department of Qur'an and Tafseer, witnessed a strong turnout of teachers, administrators and course participants, highlighting the university's commitment to promoting a deeper understanding of the Qur'an among its academic community.

Addressing the ceremony, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood said that reciting the Holy Qur'an

with deliberation helps in better understanding its meanings and message which can then be applied in practical life.

Dean of the Faculty of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Prof. Dr. Mohyuddin Hashmi said that while reciting the Holy Qur'an brings virtue and blessings, understanding its meaning is equally essential to truly grasp the message of the Creator.

Chairman of the Department of Qur'an and Tafseer, Dr.



Sanaullah Hussain explained that the course aimed to provide employees with the opportunity to learn the Qur'an with correct

pronunciation, Tajweed rules and translation.

Dr. Hafiz Muhammad Arshad Iqbal reported that 40 male and

20 female participants completed the course with instructors contributing their services voluntarily.

The ceremony concluded with the distribution of certificates among participants who successfully completed the course.

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

The Intelligence War Behind the Iran Conflict

In every war there is the battlefield that the world can see—and another that remains invisible. The Iran war has revealed both. Missiles streak across the skies, drones swarm over strategic targets, and military bases brace for retaliation. Yet behind this visible conflict lies a far more decisive contest: the silent war of intelligence. In modern geopolitics, the ability to locate an enemy with absolute precision may be more powerful than the ability to destroy him.

Is the real contest therefore not between missiles but between intelligence systems? The ongoing Iran conflict suggests exactly that. Iran possesses a formidable missile and drone arsenal capable of striking across the region. Yet Israel appears to dominate another domain entirely—the domain of information, surveillance, and covert operations. In this hidden battlefield, intelligence may shape the war's outcome long before the first missile is launched.

What makes this system particularly formidable is its integration of human intelligence with technological surveillance. Mossad has spent decades cultivating informants and covert networks within political, military, and militant organizations across the Middle East. Human sources often provide the earliest clues about leadership movements, secret meetings, and strategic plans. In intelligence warfare, information from a trusted source inside an organization can be more valuable than any satellite image.

How does cyber intelligence strengthen this network even further? Israel's elite signals-intelligence division, widely known as Unit 8200, specializes in intercepting communications and penetrating digital networks. By analyzing phone signals, encrypted messages, and communication metadata, analysts can reconstruct entire chains of contact between individuals. Even when conversations remain

encrypted, patterns of communication can reveal the structure of an organization.

Has technology transformed intelligence warfare into something even more powerful? Artificial intelligence has dramatically accelerated the analysis of vast quantities of information. Algorithms can now examine satellite imagery, financial records, travel movements, and digital communications simultaneously. By connecting these pieces of data, intelligence systems can identify patterns that would have taken human analysts months or years to uncover.

Could social media itself become an unexpected vulnerability? Modern digital platforms often reveal far more information than individuals realize. Geolocation tags, photographs, travel posts, and online interactions can expose personal networks and movement patterns. When such information is combined with satellite monitoring and communication data, intelligence agencies can build extremely detailed behavioral profiles of their targets.

How do satellites and aerial surveillance contribute to this intelligence dominance? Israel operates advanced reconnaissance satellites capable of observing large geographic areas with remarkable precision. Together with drones and surveillance aircraft, these systems allow analysts to monitor transportation routes, strategic facilities, and suspicious activity in near real time. Once a target's identity is confirmed through other intelligence sources, satellite surveillance can verify the exact location.

Does history already demonstrate the power of intelligence-driven operations? One frequently cited case occurred in 2020 when Iranian nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhri-zadeh was killed in an

operation widely attributed to Israel by international media. Another earlier example was the Stuxnet cyber operation, a sophisticated malware attack that disrupted Iran's nuclear centrifuges and showed how cyber warfare could cripple strategic infrastructure without traditional military strikes.

What do such operations reveal about modern warfare? They suggest that intelligence dominance can shape conflicts long before conventional military battles begin. Precision operations guided by intelligence allow states to disrupt critical networks, remove key figures, or sabotage infrastructure with minimal military escalation. Information therefore becomes the most powerful weapon in the strategic arsenal.

Does the Iran war therefore highlight a deeper imbalance between military capability and intelligence capability? Iran has invested heavily in ballistic missiles, drones, and regional deterrence strategies. These technologies have reshaped the military balance in the Middle East. Yet missiles cannot shield leadership structures from surveillance, infiltration, or cyber penetration. When intelligence networks reach into communication systems or decision-making circles, even powerful military capabilities may struggle to protect their leadership.

What lessons might Iran and other nations draw from this reality? The first is absolute communication discipline. Sensitive strategic discussions cannot rely on conventional mobile networks or digital platforms vulnerable to interception. Secure communication systems and strict operational secrecy must become standard practice for national leadership.

What additional reforms could strengthen protection against intelli-

gence penetration? Governments must develop robust counter-intelligence institutions capable of detecting infiltration within their own organizations. Leadership movement patterns should remain unpredictable, digital exposure must be minimized, and security agencies must constantly audit their own systems for vulnerabilities.

How critical is cyber defense in the new battlefield of intelligence warfare? Modern intelligence conflicts increasingly target digital infrastructure rather than physical territory. Nations must invest heavily in protecting communication networks, financial systems, and national data infrastructure from cyber infiltration. Without strong cyber defenses, even the most secure military installations can become vulnerable through remote digital penetration.

Can intelligence dominance ultimately determine the outcome of modern conflicts? The Iran war increasingly suggests that control over information may matter as much as control over territory. Nations that master surveillance, cyber intelligence, and covert networks gain the ability to anticipate threats, disrupt adversaries, and act with extraordinary precision.

The deeper lesson of the Iran war therefore extends far beyond missiles and drones. It raises a fundamental question about the future of warfare itself. In a world shaped by satellites, algorithms, cyber networks, and human intelligence sources, the most decisive battles may occur far from the battlefield. The nations that master this invisible domain may shape the fate of wars long before the first missile is fired.

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



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

CM Punjab announces austerity measures to counter economic challenges

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has decided to implement extraordinary measures to address the unprecedented economic challenges arising from the ongoing conflict in the region.

The chief minister announced that government fuel for provincial ministers will remain suspended until the petroleum crisis is resolved. She also ordered an immediate 50 per cent reduction in petrol and diesel allowances for official vehicles used by government officers.

A ban has also been imposed on protocol vehicles accompanying provincial ministers and senior officials. Under the decision, only one vehicle will be allowed with ministers and senior officials strictly for unavoidable security requirements.

It was further decided that government offices will adopt a work-from-home arrangement, while only essential staff will attend offices. Schools, colleges and universities across the province will remain closed from March 10 to March 31, though examinations will be conducted according to the existing schedule. Educational institutions will be allowed to conduct online classes during this period.

For the convenience of citizens, services under e-business platforms and the 'Maryam Ki Dastak' initiative will continue, while official meetings will be held through online platforms and teleconferences.

The chief minister also imposed a ban on official outdoor events and postponed the Horse and Cattle Show cultural festival. She directed that district petroleum monitoring committees be established in every district to monitor petroleum supplies. The Punjab Information Technology Board has been tasked with developing a track-and-trace system for petroleum products, with representatives from district administrations, police and the Punjab Enforcement and Regulatory Authority included in the team overseeing the system.

She clarified that the work-from-home policy is aimed at reducing the movement of additional support staff and that official work will continue uninterrupted. The private sector has also been advised to adopt work-from-home arrangements, avoid unnecessary events and limit staff presence to essential personnel.

The chief minister directed authorities to strictly monitor transport fares across all districts and take firm legal action against those charging excessive or illegal fares. She also ordered strict monitoring of the supply and demand of essential food items.

Appealing to the public, the chief minister urged citizens to avoid outdoor functions and late-night shopping during the ongoing emergency situation. She also advised people not to indulge in unnecessary purchasing or hoarding of essential commodities.

The chief minister paid tribute to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Asim Munir for their courageous decisions in dealing with the difficult crisis. She said that brave nations confront difficult circumstances with unity, patience and wisdom, adding that anyone attempting to exploit the situation for personal gain will be dealt with strictly.



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

Israeli Influence at Pakistan's Doorstep: The Real Aim Behind the Attack on Iran

Many political leaders in the Muslim world argue that Zionism poses an existential threat not only to individual nations but to global stability. Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif has asserted that the creation of Israel in 1948 on Palestinian land marked the start of a century-long campaign of war, devastation, and subjugation against the Islamic world, with major catastrophes and conflicts in Muslim countries believed to reflect the influence of Zionist ideology and Israeli policy. This view also claims that Zionist influence has dominated global economic systems, financial institutions, and major media for over a century, enabling manipulation of international events to support an expansionist agenda prioritizing Israel's security and territorial ambitions over the sovereignty and rights of other nations, particularly Muslim societies. Israel's establishment is seen as an illegitimate colonial project built on Palestinian displacement during the Nakba in 1948, when more than 700,000 Palestinians were forced from their homes and hundreds of villages destroyed, followed by the Six-Day War in 1967 that led to the occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Golan Heights, and Sinai Peninsula, as well as the 1982 Lebanon War. These events are interpreted as steps toward the idea of "Greater Israel," with recent Israeli military movements near Jabal al-Sheikh after instability in Syria seen as further evidence of expansionism. Turmoil across the Middle East, including conflict involving Iran, is viewed as a consequence of this agenda and as a strategy that could extend Israeli influence toward Paki-

stan if Iran is weakened as a strategic buffer. Pakistani leaders warn that such a shift could allow Israeli influence and intelligence activity to move eastward, while the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine has warned that Israeli expansionism threatens not only Palestine but also Central and South Asia. These concerns are connected to claims of an anti-Pakistan nexus involving India, Israel, and Afghanistan aimed at encircling and weakening Pakistan, with India's defense cooperation with Israel providing technological and diplomatic support and groups such as the Afghan Taliban and Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan seen as creating militant pressure along Pakistan's western frontier, including coordinated attacks on numerous border posts allegedly supported by external powers and timed alongside Israeli operations against Iran to keep Pakistan militarily preoccupied.

Another dimension of the perceived conflict involves alleged information warfare targeting Pakistan internationally. After incidents that attract global attention, such as the Bondi Beach attack in Sydney, Pakistani officials claim that coordinated propaganda efforts by Israeli, Indian, and Afghan sources attempt to falsely implicate Pakistan despite evidence showing the perpetrators were Australian residents without links to Pakistan. Such narratives are said to be spread through social media, international news outlets, and diplomatic channels to damage Pakistan's reputation, portray it as a source of global terrorism, and prepare international opinion for political, economic, or military pressure. This alleged campaign is believed to involve manipulation of online algorithms, placement of stories in influential media, and lobbying

foreign governments to shape global perceptions and isolate Pakistan diplomatically while enabling a regional strategic realignment that could extend Israeli influence toward Pakistan's borders. In response to what is viewed as a major conspiracy, Pakistan's leadership emphasizes the country's defense capabilities and its status as a nuclear power achieved through decades of sacrifice. The nuclear deterrent is considered the ultimate guarantee of sovereignty and security in a volatile region, and former prime minister Nawaz Sharif is widely praised for authorizing the 1998 nuclear tests that publicly demonstrated this capability, reinforcing Pakistan's strategic standing and serving as a warning to any potential adversaries.

The recent and shocking assassination of Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in what were described as joint US-Israeli strikes has only served to dramatically heighten these pre-existing regional anxieties and to underscore, in the starkest possible terms, the perceived ruthlessness, reach, and unrelenting nature of the Zionist agenda in the eyes of many in Pakistan and the wider Muslim world. Pakistan's official reaction, while strongly condemning the provocative attacks and urgently calling for immediate de-escalation and restraint from all parties, has been carefully framed within this much larger and deeply ingrained context of perceived existential threat. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar's intense diplomatic efforts, his urgent telephone calls to regional counterparts, and his carefully worded statements at the United Nations, all emphasizing the blatant violation of international norms and the urgent need to respect the sovereignty of all member states, are part of a desperate but necessary attempt to stem the seemingly inexorable tide of escalating and expanding conflict. Yet, there

Continued on Page 7

Middle East at a Strategic Crossroads - I

The Middle East has once again entered a period of heightened geopolitical uncertainty. Rising tensions involving Iran, Israel, and the United States have revived global debate about whether the region is approaching a broader confrontation or merely another phase in its long history of strategic rivalry. While the Middle East has experienced repeated cycles of crisis for decades, the current moment is distinct in one crucial way: modern conflicts are no longer defined solely by military strength.

In the twenty-first century, power operates across multiple dimensions simultaneously. Military capabilities remain important, but outcomes are increasingly shaped by economic resilience, diplomatic positioning, technological influence, and perhaps most significantly, global perception.

The Middle East sits at the intersection of several major geopolitical currents. Energy security, maritime trade routes, ideological rivalries, and the strategic interests of global powers converge in this region. As tensions rise, the question confronting policymakers is not simply whether conflict can be avoided, but how stability can be preserved in an interconnected world where perception travels faster than missiles.

At the center of this strategic equation lies the Gulf region, which has long been one of the most sensitive areas of the global security architecture. For decades, the United States has served as the primary external security provider in the Gulf American military facilities across Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates have formed a network designed to maintain deterrence, protect maritime routes, and safeguard global energy supplies. These installations have been widely viewed as the back-

bone of the international security framework surrounding the Gulf.

From Washington's perspective, this presence contributes to stability by preventing regional conflicts from escalating into wider confrontations. From Tehran's strategic viewpoint, however, these same installations represent the physical projection of American power on Iran's borders.

Many analysts believe that Iran's objective is not to defeat the United States militarily, which would be an unlikely outcome, but rather to reshape the regional balance of influence. By demonstrating that infrastructure and maritime routes could become vulnerable during confrontation, Tehran

may hope to raise strategic questions among Gulf states about the long-term implications of hosting major-power rivalry. These calculations inevitably lead to one of the world's most sensitive maritime chokepoints: the Strait of Hormuz. Nearly one-fifth of the world's oil supply passes through this narrow corridor connecting the Persian Gulf to global markets. Even the perception of instability in this region can trigger sharp reactions in global energy markets, affecting economies far beyond the Middle East.

In today's financial system, geopolitical perception travels instantly. Markets react not only to events themselves but also to expectations of what might happen.

For the United Arab Emirates, these dynamics carry particular significance.

Over the past several decades, cities such as Dubai and Abu Dhabi have transformed themselves into global hubs of aviation, tourism, trade, logistics, and finance. This transformation has been one of the most remarkable economic developments in the modern Middle East.

To be continued

Serena Hotels Marks International Women Day with Inspiring Panel and Soulful Qawwali



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Serena Hotels, under its Public Diplomacy initiative Raabta, hosted a special panel discussion to mark International Women's Day, bringing together accomplished women from diverse fields to share their journeys, achievements, and perspectives on women's empowerment. The dialogue highlighted the importance of resilience, leadership, and creating opportunities for women to thrive across all sectors of society.

The panel featured three distinguished women whose work has created meaningful impact in their respective fields: renowned Pakistani singer Natasha Baig; Ms. Summiya Andrabi, Vice President of PFOWA; and Ms. Sarah Ahmad (Tamgha-e-Imtiaz), Chairperson of the Child Protection and Welfare Bureau Punjab and a leading child rights advocate.

The conversation was moderated by Sidra Iqbal, a renowned television anchor and global speaker, who also serves as the curator of Serena Hotels' Raabta platform under its Public Diplo-



macy initiative. Guiding the discussion, she encouraged reflections on women's leadership, perseverance, and the transformative role women continue to play in shaping inclusive and progressive societies.

During the session, the panelists encouraged young women to pursue their ambitions with confidence and determination, emphasizing that perseverance, passion, and purpose remain key drivers of success.

To conclude the International Women's Day programme, the

evening also featured a soulful Qawwali performance by Imran Aziz Mian, held in the spirit of Ramadan, bringing guests together in an atmosphere of reflection, cultural harmony, and the timeless tradition of Sufi music.



NHA Revenue Jumps 63% as Minister Unveils Major Infrastructure Expansion

News Desk

SHEIKHUPURA: Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan presided as the Chief Guest at the 12th Basic Recruit Course Passing Out Parade today at the National Highway and Motorway Police (NHMP) Training College. Addressing the 401 graduating officers, which notably included 67 female officers, Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan emphasized that the ceremony marks a sacred pledge of loyalty and a professional milestone. In a significant move to boost morale, Federal Minister announced a special salary increase for the Motorway Police Force, acknowledging their dedication to public safety.



Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan highlighted the National Highway Authority's (NHA) historic financial performance, reporting a remarkable 63% increase in revenue which rose from Rs. 66.8 billion in June 2024 to Rs. 109 billion by June 2025. Federal

Minister Abdul Aleem Khan attributed this unprecedented growth to transparency and improved governance, stating that these resources are being channeled back into infrastructure projects designed to link Pakistan's ports to its northern borders. Detailing the infrastructure roadmap, Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan announced that the Lahore-Sialkot

Motorway will be linked to Islamabad via Kharian, a move that will reduce the travel distance by 100 kilometers. To further promote tourism and regional connectivity, he noted that the Mansehra-Kaghan-Naran Motorway will be connected to Babusar Top, providing a vital alternative route to the Karakoram Highway (KKH) up to the Chinese border. Abdul Aleem Khan confirmed that work is in full swing on the Karachi-Quetta-Chaman Expressway (N-25) and the integration of the Motorway network from Sukkur to Hyderabad and onwards to the Karachi ports. He also told the participants that the NHA is working on Guru Nanak Expressway project that would boost religious tourism in the country and road shows to project the project shall be organized in Canada and other countries to attract the Sikh Diaspora, in this regard. He reaffirmed that the construction of the Sukkur-Hyderabad Motorway (M-6) is on track to begin in May 2026 and shall be finished in 2 years time. He also expressed his resolve to install barrier free toll plazas and Air Ambulance for the Motorways and Highways in collaboration with the Pakistan Air Force. Commending the female contingent specifically, Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan stated that their inclusion is vital for the country's progress, urging all officers to remain benchmarks of honesty and courtesy for all other law enforcement agencies in Pakistan.

Infinix Elevates Smartphone Performance with Series First Ever Snapdragon-Powered Innovation

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Infinix announced its plans to integrate the cutting-edge Snapdragon® platforms from Qualcomm Technologies, Inc. across smartphones and broader product categories. Through its work with Qualcomm Technologies on system-level optimizations, Infinix aims to achieve deeper integration of chipset capabilities within Infinix's product portfolio, delivering an enhanced and more seamless user experience.



"We are excited to collaborate with industry leader Qualcomm Technologies. This important step for Infinix advances our mission for a tailored user experience through in-depth hardware-software integration, utilizing Snapdragon platforms and technologies to deliver greater innovation and quality for customers globally," says Tony Zhao, CEO of Infinix. With that, Infinix officially announces the upcoming launch of the NOTE 60 SERIES, the brand's flagship showcase co-created with leading partners to deliver breakthrough performance, design, imaging, and audio-visual experiences powered by Snapdragon technology.

China to promote smart, green transport in 2026-2030: official

BEIJING: China will promote the digital and green transition of its transport sector during the 15th Five-Year Plan period (2026-2030), Minister of Transport Liu Wei said on Monday.

Over the next five years, the country will promote the application of artificial intelligence in the transport sector, and work to advance the development of smart highways, smart ports, and smart shipping, Liu said on the sidelines of the annual session of the national legislature.

The country will also promote the development of zero-carbon transport corridors and stations as part of efforts to boost low-carbon development of the transport sector, Liu said, adding that China will step up the application of clean energy transportation equipment such as new energy vehicles and vessels during the period.

At present, the coverage of charging facilities in expressway service areas across the country has reached 98.8 percent, Liu said, noting that the country will work to increase the capacity of high-power charging facilities this year to ease the difficulties in finding charging piles and cut down waiting time.

Liu also said that during the 15th Five-Year Plan period, the country will implement initiatives to enhance intercity commuting efficiency in metropolitan areas, significantly increasing the proportion of the population with access to one-hour commuting within these areas.

The transport sector plays a vital role in serving the public, Liu said, noting that on average, about 550 million parcels are handled across the country every day, which translates to three parcels per person per week.

Introducing LAAM Festival—Pakistan's First Fashion-First Shopping Festival

Spokesman Report

LAHORE: Following the critically acclaimed inaugural editions of LAAM Fashion Week and LAAM Fashion Week Presents, the team has announced the launch of LAAM Festival, Pakistan's first-of-its-kind fashion-first shopping festival, designed to bridge digital commerce with physical retail experiences.

The inaugural edition of LAAM Festival [LF] will take place from 12 to 15 March 2026 at Fairways Commercial, DHA Raya, Phase 6, Lahore, bringing together some of Pakistan's fastest-selling digital-first fashion and lifestyle brands under one curated platform.

Speaking about the launch, Amir Iqbal,

Co-Founder and COO of LAAM, said, "It brings the best-performing digital-first brands into a curated physical environment where consumers can discover, experience, and shop them in person. It's about translating online momentum into real-world retail energy."

Arif Iqbal, Co-founder and CEO of LAAM, said, "LAAM Festival is an extension of the broader LAAM ecosystem. By making entry free for LAAM app users, we're ensuring that our community can experience these brands in a physical setting while still remaining connected through the app."

As creative and experience agency partner on the project, Design651 is supporting the conceptualization and execution of the festival environment.



In line with LAAM's digital-first philosophy, entry to the festival will operate through a controlled-access model via the LAAM app.

The Three-Tier World in Motion

In recent days, the world has watched conflict in West Asia escalate rapidly, drawing in global powers, regional states, and civilian populations. The United States and Israel launched coordinated air and missile strikes across Iran, targeting military sites and senior leaders, while also hitting schools and hospitals. Reports emerged that Iran's supreme leader was killed. Iranian forces and allied groups responded with drones and missiles striking U. S. bases, embassies, and neighboring states across the Gulf, causing civilian and military casualties. Vital transport routes, including the Strait of Hormuz, were disrupted, thousands of flights were canceled, and global markets plunged into uncertainty.

President Donald Trump has struggled to present a consistent or convincing justification for the U. S. military campaign against Iran. In early public statements, Trump and senior U. S. officials claimed the strikes were pre-emptive because Israel was supposedly about to attack first, and

acting sooner would protect American forces and allies, a rationale echoed by Secretary of State Marco Rubio, even though critics pointed out that such an imminent attack by Iran was not supported by clear evidence. In later remarks, Trump shifted to broader claims about halting Iran's missile program and stopping nuclear development, while also suggesting Tehran posed a diffuse long-term threat, but repeatedly avoided providing concrete evidence that Iran was about to strike first. Domestic critics called it a "war of choice" rather than a defensive necessity, noting that peace talks were ongoing and that the claimed pre-emptive threat was unsubstantiated.

International reactions were swift but limited in effect. European nations called for restraint and adherence to international law, acknowledging their inability to shape the conflict's trajectory. China and Russia condemned the strikes as violations of sovereignty, while regional states pushed competing narratives at the UN Security Council. Despite global statements and human-

itarian appeals, military operations continued unabated, showing the gap between legal frameworks and battlefield realities.

Earlier, Gaza had already illustrated this dynamic. Months of intense fighting between Israeli forces and Palestinian groups left homes, schools, and hospitals destroyed. Global institutions debated war crimes and passed resolutions condemning violence, yet the humanitarian crisis worsened. Food, water, and shelter shortages hit civilians hardest, highlighting how international condemnation rarely translates into real-world change.

In Europe, the war between Russia and Ukraine underscores the limits of global pressure. Despite sanctions, condemnations, and calls for peace, Russian operations continue, hitting energy infrastructure and displacing millions. The global narrative over-

whelmingly criticizes Russia, yet conflict persists on the ground, proving that entrenched conflicts often defy diplomatic efforts.

Elsewhere, Yemen and Sudan show similar patterns. Years of war in Yemen have devastated civilian life, with repeated ceasefire calls failing to bring lasting peace. In Sudan and other fragile states, political unrest, economic hardship, and internal strife have sparked mass protests and social breakdown, leaving ordinary people to bear the brunt of instability. Across these regions, smaller states suffer the most as global attention moves elsewhere.

These events reflect a deeper structure: the world now operates in three informal tiers. Core powers, including the United States, China, Russia, France, and the United Kingdom, act with autonomy, leveraging military strength, economic weight,

nuclear arsenals, and institutional influence. Strategically useful states, such as Saudi Arabia, Israel, Turkey, Egypt, and Pakistan, enjoy protection due to regional importance or alliances but must align with core power strategies. The majority of nations, often economically fragile, militarily limited, and politically unstable, form the expendable tier, vulnerable to the consequences of global power struggles, with populations bearing the brunt of conflict, sanctions, and interventions while having little ability to influence outcomes.

The tiered system dictates how states are treated. If a core power like France announces expanding its nuclear arsenal, global debate may follow, but no direct enforcement occurs. A Tier-two state attempting the same could face sanctions or diplomatic censure, while a Tier-three state might provoke direct operations or attacks to neutralize the perceived threat. Civilians in these expendable states routinely bear the cost of conflicts they have no role in shaping.

From the Middle East to Eastern Europe, civilians face bombardment, displacement, and economic collapse. Many nations depend on external financing and have limited policy space, intensifying domestic unrest. Protests erupt against rising costs, unemployment, and political marginalization. The surge in conflict and social instability reflects a world increasingly governed by power hierarchies rather than law or morality.

Despite UN resolutions, war crimes investigations, and humanitarian appeals, the reality on the ground remains unchanged. Powerful states act on strategic interests, regional wars continue, and institutional mechanisms offer little restraint. Discussion and diplomacy continue, but there is no evidence of effective tools to halt conflicts or protect the most vulnerable. For now, the world functions according to the distribution of power, leaving conflicts unresolved and populations exposed, and confirming that, at least for the moment, there is no universal solution.



Umair Iftikhar

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
146,480.14	157,496.10
Day's High	Day's Low
150,174.09	144,119.43
Index Value	Change
33,004,278,586	-11015.96
Percentage	Time
-6.99%	9 Mar, 2026 4:30 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
10,249.52	-35.23
Percentage	Time
-0.34%	9 Mar, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
47,251.54	-250.01
Percentage	Time
-0.53%	9 Mar, 12:49 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
52,728.72	-2,892.12
Percentage	Time
-5.20%	9 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	279.05	280.4

RCCI Delegation Calls on Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI), led by President Usman Shaukat and Group Leader Sohail Altaf, called on the Federal Minister for Finance, Muhammad Aurangzeb, in Islamabad.

During the meeting, President Usman Shaukat briefed the Finance Minister on RCCI's recent trade delegation visit to the United States. He highlighted the Chamber's efforts to enhance bilateral trade by facilitating connections between middle-market companies and SMEs of Pakistan and the United States. The Finance Minister appreciated RCCI's proactive role in promoting trade diplomacy and strengthening business-to-business linkages, and assured that the Chamber's proposals would be incorporated into the upcoming trade policy.

Group Leader Sohail Altaf conveyed the business community's serious concerns over the recent increase in petroleum prices, noting that it could trigger a new



wave of inflation and place additional burdens on industries and the general public.

In response, the Finance Minister explained that the price adjustment was necessary to prevent depletion of petroleum stocks and to ensure uninterrupted supply across the country. He assured RCCI that the government would strictly monitor the situation to prevent any undue inventory gains by companies and enforce a minimum 20-day inventory requirement for all OMCs, which may result in inventory losses if prices fluctuate.

The Finance Minister and his team also appreciated RCCI's role as a leading chamber of commerce, acknowledging its proactive approach in highlighting key economic issues and providing constructive policy recommendations.

Senior Vice President Khalid Farooq Qazi and Executive Member Imran Ali were also present on the occasion.

Souvenir

ISLAMABAD: President FPCCI Atif Ikram Sheikh presenting the Souvenir to German Ambassador H. E. Ina Lepel during her visit to the FPCCI Capital Office, Chairman Capital Office Karim Aziz Malik, Mian Akram Farid and other also present on the occasion:



Photo: Spokesman

CCP Calls for Structural Reset of Pakistan's Civil Aviation Sector

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has released the draft of the report titled "Competition in the Skies: Pakistan's Civil Aviation Market Assessment," an evidence-based, comprehensive competition assessment study of Pakistan's civil aviation sector, which evaluates nearly two decades of data (2006-2025) along with stakeholder consultation.

Over the review period, Pakistan's civil aviation sector served nearly 340 million passengers, with annual traffic rising from 12.8 million in 2006-07 to 24.3 million in 2024-25—an 89% increase.

This translates into a moderate overall CAGR of approximately 3.42% over 19 years. However, this growth was driven almost entirely by the international segment (CAGR -5.46%), while domestic traffic remained nearly stagnant (CAGR -0.19%). Overall, while passenger volumes have expanded, the sector's structural depth and competitive strength have not kept pace—particularly when measured against Pakistan's population growth and long-term economic potential. The report concludes that Pakistan has lacked a unified national aviation vision, treating civil aviation as a strategic economic sector rather than an administrative function. The CCP states clearly: "Civil aviation cannot be governed in silos".

The study highlights structural gaps, including the absence of an integrated national aviation strategy, fragmented governance and policy inconsistency across regulatory, fiscal, and financial institutions, domestic market stagnation relative to international growth, frequent airline exits and financial fragility among local carriers, weak aviation-specific financing frameworks, underutilization of airports, increasing reliance on Gulf-based carriers, and competitive asymmetry arising from differences in regional macroeconomic factors as well as domestic and foreign state-backed players.

Fuel price hike may hurt exports, warn business leaders



Capt. Abdul Rashid Abro

Hanif Lakhani

Rafiq Suleman

Zubair Tufail

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Exporters and business leaders have rejected the government's decision to increase petroleum product prices by Rs55 per litre, warning that the move will significantly raise industrial production costs and negatively impact Pakistan's exports.

They said the sharp rise in fuel prices would increase transportation, energy and raw material costs, making Pakistani products less competitive in international

markets and potentially affecting the Prime Minister's "Uraan Pakistan" economic vision.

Former President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), Zubair Tufail, said the global economy is already facing uncertainty and governments must make prudent economic decisions in challenging times.

Former FPCCI Vice President and former Senior Vice President of the Karachi

Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Hanif Lakhani, said the increase in petroleum prices is affecting almost every sector, with industries bearing the heaviest burden.

Former Chairman of the Rice Exporters Association of Pakistan, Rafiq Suleman, and former FPCCI Vice President Captain Abdul Rashid Abro also urged the government to announce a special support package for exporters or adjust the value of the Pakistani rupee to provide relief to the export sector.

SECP Launches Digital UBO Registry to Strengthen Corporate Transparency

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has launched a digital Ultimate Beneficial Ownership (UBO) Registry to strengthen transparency in the corporate sector, improve regulatory oversight, and help prevent the misuse of companies for illegal activities.

Under the new system, companies will be required to disclose information about their Ultimate Beneficial Owners (UBOs), the natural persons who ultimately own or control a company, at the time of incorporation and update this information annually to ensure accuracy.

The registry has been introduced through amendments notified via S. R. O. 1355(I)/2025 under the Companies Regulations, 2024. These amendments require companies to identify and verify their Ultimate Beneficial Owners in accordance with Section 123A of the Companies Act, 2017.

The SECP said the digital registry will enhance corporate accountability, reinforce Pakistan's anti money laundering and counter terrorism financing (AML/CFT) framework, and contribute to building a more transparent and reliable business environment.

The Commission reiterated its commitment to introducing progressive regulatory reforms and digital solutions to improve transparency, facilitate compliance, and strengthen confidence in Pakistan's corporate sector.

Fatima Fertilizer Launches "Sarsabz Tabeer: Seeds of Change" Campaign

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: In celebration of International Women's Day, Fatima Fertilizer Company Limited has launched its "Sarsabz Tabeer: Seeds of Change" DVC, paying tribute to the extraordinary women who are shaping the future of agriculture in Pakistan.

The campaign recognizes the resilience, strength, and unwavering dedication of women working across the agricultural value chain; women

whose contributions have long nourished communities and sustained the land despite social and economic challenges. Through powerful storytelling, "Seeds of Change" highlights the often-unseen role of rural women as farmers, entrepreneurs, caregivers, and agents of change driving agricultural progress.

At the heart of this initiative is Fatima Fertilizer's flagship women empowerment programme, Sarsabz Tabeer, launched in 2022 to integrate

rural women's voices into Pakistan's agricultural narrative. Built on four foundational pillars—education, financial aid, skill development, and health—the programme equips women with practical tools for financial independence and long-term resilience.

Rabel Sadozai, Director Marketing & Sales at Fatima Fertilizer, said, "Women have always been the backbone of Pakistan's agricultural economy, yet their contributions



often remain unrecognized. Through the 'Seeds of Change' campaign and our Sarsabz Tabeer initiative, we aim to celebrate their resilience while creating meaningful opportunities that enable rural women to achieve

financial independence and play a stronger role in shaping the future of agriculture. Empowering women is not only a social responsibility, but it is essential for sustainable agricultural growth and national prosperity."

ABHI Microfinance Bank

Knowledge Platform partner to expand financial access in the education Sector

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: ABHI Microfinance Bank Limited has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Knowledge Platform (Private) Limited, an education technology company, to explore opportunities for expanding financial access and education-focused services for schools, teachers, parents, and students across Pakistan.

The collaboration establishes a framework through which both organizations will work together to design and promote financial solutions tailored to the education ecosystem. These solutions may include education financing options for families, earned wage access facilities for teachers and school staff, and financing support for school owners to upgrade technology infrastructure and operational capacity.

As education institutions increasingly adopt digital tools and modern management systems, the need for accessible financial solutions that support both institutions and families continues to grow. Through this partnership, ABHI



Microfinance Bank and Knowledge Platform aim to explore ways to align financial services with the evolving needs of the education sector while supporting greater financial inclusion.

The collaboration will also include outreach initiatives such as awareness campaigns, engagement with schools,

and joint marketing activities designed to help educators, parents, and institutions better understand and access available financial solutions. Knowledge Platform will assist by identifying potential partner schools, supporting solution design, and facilitating engagement within the education community.

As part of the initial phase of the collaboration, both organizations plan to conduct a pilot program with selected school groups in the Islamabad and Rawalpindi region. The pilot will help evaluate product adoption, gather feedback from participating schools and families, and refine service offerings before potential wider rollout.

The agreement was signed by Mariam Pervaiz, Chief Commercial Officer at ABHI Microfinance Bank, and Mahboob Mahmood, Founder and Chief Executive Officer at Knowledge Platform. The signing ceremony was also attended by Kabeer Naqvi, Entrepreneur in Residence at ABHI, along with senior representatives from both organizations.

Through this collaboration, ABHI Microfinance Bank and Knowledge Platform aim to support a more inclusive and digitally enabled education environment by connecting financial services with learning ecosystems and strengthening support systems for schools, educators, and families across Pakistan.

International Womens Day Celebrated in Hyderabad with Focus on Women's Empowerment

Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi

HYDERABAD: A dignified ceremony marking International Women's Day 2026 was organized by the Deputy Commissioner's Office Hyderabad under the leadership of Deputy Commissioner Zain-ul-Abedin Memon, in collaboration with the Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (SPARC) at the New Deputy Commissioner Complex Hyderabad.

The event aimed to highlight the capabilities, achievements, and rights of women and girls while reinforcing the collective commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment in society.

Addressing the ceremony, Deputy Commissioner Hyderabad Zain-ul-Abedin Memon said that the women being honored on this day are true role models for society, playing an effective role in various sectors across Pakistan and setting inspiring examples for future generations. He directed district officials to ensure inclusive participation of women and all segments of society in development initiatives, emphasizing that such inclusion is essential



for building a balanced and empowered society.

The speakers also shared their personal success stories, noting that women working in both public and private institutions have overcome difficult circumstances, workplace harassment, and various social barriers through determination and resilience. They emphasized that courage and perseverance remain the strongest forces behind women's success.

The speakers further observed that for

many women, stepping out of the family environment into the professional world can initially be challenging. However, with determination and self-confidence, women are not only overcoming these obstacles but are also establishing their distinct identity in society.

On the occasion, SPARC representative Tasleem informed the participants that women in the Briklin Sector were facing serious issues related to health, education, and identity documentation. She said that the organization, in collabo-

ration with NADRA, had taken practical steps to address these issues and successfully facilitated the registration of around 2,000 previously unregistered women.

The ceremony was attended by women representatives from the Human Rights Cell, Women Development Department, SPARC, Legal Aid Society, Health Department, Information Department, as well as members of civil society, NGO representatives, private school teachers, women lawyers, and female students.

Two more matches decided in the KHA Ramadan Hockey Champions Trophy

Sports Desk

KARACHI: Two more matches were played in the ongoing Ramadan Champions Trophy Hockey Tournament organized by Karachi Hockey Association at Olympian Hanif Khan and Dr. Junaid Ali Shah Sports Complex Gulshan Iqbal. In the first match, Hanif Khan Hockey Club defeated JJHC by 3 goals to 1 after a tough competition. SM Aliyan Jafri scored the only goal for JJ Hockey Club, while Fakhir Naseer, Talha Ghauri and Zohaib Khan of the winning team played an important role in their team's victory by throwing the ball into the net. The second match played between Al-Sagheer Club and Gulberg HC proved to be one-sided. Al-Sagheer Club easily dismissed the opponent by five goals.



Gulberg Hockey Club remained helpless in front of Al-Sagheer's defense and could

not score any goals. Ali Gohar scored two goals for the winning team, while Shozeb, Bilawal and Talha scored one goal each.

The special guest of the match, Honorary Hanif Malik of Malik Sports, met the players. On this occasion, he paid tribute to the organizers of the Ramadan Champions Trophy Hockey Tournament, which has been held continuously for thirty years during the holy month of Ramadan, and said that the basis of the success of any tournament is the organizers' commitment to their game. The continuous holding of the tournament is due to the love of Olympian Hanif Khan and his family for the national game. And there is evidence of the passion, praying that the future of hockey will be as bright and successful as its past.

SSP Takes Notice of Rising Theft Incidents in Hyderabad, Warns Action Against SHO

Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi

HYDERABAD: Taking serious notice of the increasing incidents of theft in Hyderabad, SSP Hyderabad Shahzeb Chachar has warned the concerned police officers to ensure immediate action.

The SSP directed that if the stolen items are not recovered within one week, strict action will be taken against the concerned SHO, including removal from the post and being sent home.

It is worth mentioning that several incidents of motorcycle and mobile phone theft were reported on the same day in Resham Gali, located within the jurisdiction of the City Police Station. Following these incidents, local traders expressed serious concern over the deteriorating law and order situation in the area.

The traders demanded that the SSP take immediate notice and ensure strict action against those involved in the theft incidents.

They further said that if timely measures are not taken, business activities in the city could be affected. They urged the police to take effective steps to prevent theft incidents and ensure the arrest of the culprits.



Itikaf to begin today

LAHORE: Thousands of worshipers who completed registration and obtained permits in the provincial metropolis mosques will observe Itikaf tomorrow.

The Auqaf department sources said that arrangements have been finalised for Itikaf, across the province mosques, including Data Darbar and Badshahi Mosque.

According to the Auqaf Department statistics, the process of scrutiny of Itikaf forms has been completed, so that all the devotees can be facilitated.

The Data Darbar Administration issued 1550 Itikaf forms and the same number of forms were returned. Badshahi Mosque has received 500 Itikaf applications. The Itikaf will begin tomorrow after Ifar, for which extensive arrangements have been made for the beds, curtains, Sehri and Ifar of the devotees.

The Auqaf Department itself will take care of the arrangements for Data Darbar, while the remaining mosques will be supervised by the relevant mosque committees. In small mosques, 50 to 200 people will be able to perform Itikaf, while in large mosques, 300 to 500 people will be able to perform Itikaf.

Letter to the Editor

Discrimination in Punjab Scholarships on the Basis of Domicile

Respected Sir,

Through your esteemed newspaper, I want to address an important issue regarding Punjab provincial Student scholarships. As someone who belongs to KPK but has deep love for the entire country and all its provinces, it is very painful to see students being left out due to domicile restrictions.

There are many students who have completed their entire education in Punjab and whose families live and pay taxes here like any other citizen. Despite their hard work and merit, they are declared ineligible only because they do not hold Punjab domicile. This discrimination on the basis of belonging area creates distances in hearts and discourages deserving students. It is frustrating to see that our hard work does not pay off simply because of our province of origin.

All four provinces of Pakistan are equal, and every Pakistani student should be treated equally. Scholarships should be granted on merit and need rather than domicile.

I request the concerned authorities to review this policy and ensure equal opportunities for all.

*Uzma Gul Shimwari,
University: Rawalpindi Women University
Department: Political science*

PM Shehbaz tells nation to be ready for another hike in petrol prices

Continued from Page 1

The government has also banned foreign visits by the prime minister, ministers and advisers, imposed a 20 percent cut in the non-development budget, and prohibited official luncheons and dinners.

Under additional measures aimed at reducing energy consumption, government offices will operate four days a week with 50 percent staff working from home, while schools will remain closed for two weeks and higher

education institutions will shift to online classes.

Sharif appealed to the country's elite to come forward and support the poor during this difficult period, stressing that prosperous nations demonstrate solidarity with vulnerable segments of society during crises.

He also warned hoarders and profiteers against exploiting the situation, saying strict action would be taken against those attempting to take unfair advantage of the crisis.

Israeli Influence at Pakistan's Doorstep: The Real Aim Behind the Attack on Iran

Continued from Page 4

is a clear and sober understanding within the corridors of power in Islamabad that diplomacy alone, however skillfully conducted, may ultimately prove to be not nearly enough to guarantee the nation's safety against such powerful and determined adversaries. Pakistan has also recently and decisively demonstrated its iron will and its willingness to act unilaterally and with overwhelming force in self-defense, as was dramatically seen with the launch of Operation

Ghazab lil-Haq, a series of precision strikes against militant groups operating with impunity from Afghan soil. This powerful operation, while tactically targeting the immediate and persistent threat posed by the TTP and IS-KP, also served as a much broader and unmistakable strategic signal to the entire perceived nexus of Afghanistan, India, and Israel that Pakistan is not a passive victim of history or a weak state to be pushed around, but a resolute, capable, and sovereign nuclear power that is fully prepared and willing to defend its

borders, its people, and its national honor with overwhelming and decisive force, no matter the cost.

Therefore, for the over 250 million citizens of Pakistan, the urgent and unvarnished message emanating from their defense minister and their national leadership is one of urgent, collective vigilance and unwavering, unbreakable national unity in the face of existential danger. Despite the many and sometimes bitter internal differences that exist within Pakistani society, be they political, ethnic,

or sectarian, there is now, more than ever, a paramount and overriding national need to recognize the deep-seated and sophisticated nature of the conspiracy and the consistently hostile intentions of what are unequivocally termed the "eternal enemies" of the state. The recent, dramatic, and alarming developments unfolding across the region are a matter of the gravest possible concern for every Pakistani, a stark and unavoidable reminder of the volatile, unpredictable, and deeply dangerous world in which

Pakistan finds itself permanently situated. However, this deep and legitimate concern is powerfully tempered by a deep and abiding national satisfaction, a quiet confidence, that the nation's ultimate defense is in the safest possible hands, protected by a supremely capable and professional military and by the ultimate deterrent of a proven and reliable nuclear weapons capability. The prayers offered daily in mosques and homes across the country are for greater unity and strength within the frac-

tured Muslim world, for the long-awaited freedom of Palestine from the oppressive Zionist yoke, and for Pakistan itself to remain forever strong, steadfast, and safe, by the grace of God, until the very Day of Judgment. It is a powerful and enduring vision of a future world where the multifaceted threat of Zionism is confronted not through fear or passivity but through the combined and resolute strength of a truly united Muslim Ummah, with Pakistan standing proudly as a formidable fortress at its sensi-

tive eastern edge, resolute and utterly unyielding in the face of those who wish to see it humbled, divided, and ultimately subjugated. The unshakeable belief that the proven iron of its armed forces and the boundless grace of Allah will ultimately prevail against any and every conspiracy, no matter how vast, powerful, or well-orchestrated it may be, remains the absolute cornerstone of the nation's resolve and its confidence in navigating these most turbulent and dangerous of times.

Operation Muhafiz-ul-Bahr

Pakistan Navy Ship escorting Pakistani merchant vessel during operation Muhafiz-ul-Bahr



Pakistan Navy launches Operation Muhafiz-Ul-Bahr to Safeguard Maritime Trade and Energy Lifelines

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: In view of the evolving regional maritime security environment and potential disruptions to critical sea lanes, Pakistan Navy has launched Operation Muhafiz-ul-Bahr to counter multidimensional threats to national shipping and maritime trade. The initiative has been undertaken to ensure the uninterrupted flow of national energy supplies and the security of Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs).

PN Escort operations are being conducted in close coordination with Pakistan National Shipping Corporation (PNSC). Pakistan Navy

is fully cognizant of the prevailing maritime situation and is actively monitoring and controlling the movement of merchant vessels to ensure their safe and secure transit.

With approximately 90% of Pakistan's trade conducted via sea, the operation aims to ensure that vital sea routes remain safe, secure, and uninterrupted. Currently, PN ships are escorting 2 x Merchant Vessels, one of which is scheduled to arrive Karachi today.

Pakistan Navy remains fully prepared to respond emerging maritime security challenges and is committed to ensuring the safety of national shipping and regional maritime security.

National austerity policy: Federal cabinet gives up two months' salaries

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The federal cabinet has decided not to receive salaries for two months as part of the national austerity policy.

A meeting to approve the national austerity policy was held under the chair of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

The chief ministers of all four provinces and the Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir participated in the meeting.

During the meeting, Federal Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb briefed participants



on the austerity policy.

The attendees were informed about the need to conserve petroleum products due to the global economic situation and about government-level measures aimed at reducing expenditures.

The meeting also considered proposals to provide relief to deserving and low-income citizens.

PM Shehbaz calls key meeting on national austerity policy amid economic challenges

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had earlier directed that the national austerity policy be formulated in consultation with the provinces.

He said that the government will take all necessary steps to safeguard the interests of the people and maintain economic stability.

Shehbaz Sharif said that it is important to ensure the prudent use of national resources and emphasized that once this challenging phase is passed

and the economy is stabilized the government will provide maximum relief to the people.

He said that, in view of the recent international situation, timely implementation of measures is indispensable for the country's economic stability.

The prime minister said that the government is constantly monitoring the situation and that all necessary decisions will be taken to provide maximum stability to the national economy.

Shehbaz Sharif made it clear that all government employees and ministers must adopt austerity and simplicity.

All educational institutions in Punjab to remain closed until March 31

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab's Education Minister Rana Sikan-dar Hayat has announced that educational institutions across Punjab will remain closed until March 31.

The minister made the announcement through a post on X, stating that all educational institutions in the province have been shifted to online mode in light of the ongoing economic crisis.

According to the minister, Grade 8 examinations will be held according to the existing schedule, and the school-based assessment process will also continue without disruption.



He added that board examinations will proceed as

planned. Although physical classes

will remain suspended, teaching activities will

continue through online classes.

Meanwhile, educational institutions across the province will remain closed from March 10 to March 31.

Earlier, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has announced a series of extraordinary administrative measures to cope with the economic pressures arising from a petroleum crisis linked to the ongoing regional conflict.

Speaking at a high-level meeting in Lahore, the chief minister directed the immediate suspension of official fuel allocations for provincial ministers until the petroleum shortage subsides.

Balochistan shuts educational institutions until March 23

Bureau Report

QUETTA: Authorities in Pakistan's southwestern province of Balochistan have ordered the closure of all educational institutions from tomorrow until March 23 in view of the prevailing security situation in the region.

According to an official notification issued by the provincial education department, all schools across the province will remain closed during this period. The decision was taken as a precautionary measure amid concerns linked to the current regional environment.

The directive applies to both public and private educa-

tional institutions operating throughout Balochistan. Officials said the move was intended to ensure the safety of students, teachers and administrative staff while authorities continue to monitor developments in the wider region.

The closure order also covers higher education institutions across the province. Balochistan's Secretary for Colleges confirmed that all colleges and universities will remain closed until March 23.

The announcement effectively suspends academic activities across the entire provincial education network for more than two weeks. Universities, colleges and schools are expected to resume



operations after the Pakistan Day holiday if the situation allows.

Despite the temporary suspension of classroom activities, the provincial education department said certain ongoing initiatives will proceed according to schedule.

Officials confirmed that the school enrolment campaign will continue during the closure period. The initiative aims to increase student registration across the province and encourage families to enrol children who remain outside the formal education

system.

The department also stated that the digital school census will move forward as planned. The census is part of a broader effort to compile accurate data on educational institutions, student numbers, infrastructure and staffing across Balochistan.

Authorities said the data collected through the digital census will help improve planning, resource allocation and policy decisions within the provincial education sector.

The notification did not specify additional security measures but indicated that further instructions would be issued if necessary depending on developments in the region.

Pakistan targeted militants, not civilians in Afghanistan: Ataullah Tarar

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information Ataullah Tarar has said that Pakistan did not target any civilian areas in Afghanistan during its operations.

Speaking to Arab News, Ataullah Tarar stated that Pakistan is carrying out actions against militant hideouts inside Afghanistan based on precise intelligence.

He emphasized that no civilian areas were targeted and that Pakistan is only striking terrorist infrastructure and their support networks.

He further said that the figures presented by the Afghan Taliban government are imaginary and not worthy of serious comment.

According to him, claims made by the spokesperson of the Afghan Ministry of Defence about battlefield successes against Pakistan are merely propaganda.

Ataullah Tarar says 527 Taliban fighters killed in operation Ghazab-lil-Haq

The information minister also rejected reports of Afghan civilian casualties reported by the Taliban regime and the United Nations



Assistance Mission in Afghanistan.

He stated that the UN agency operating in Kabul relies entirely on information provided by the Taliban government.

He added that joint attacks by the Afghan Taliban and terrorists of Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan confirm the existence of a nexus between the Taliban administration and multiple terrorist groups operating from Afghan soil.

Ataullah Tarar further said that all attacks by the Afghan Taliban regime were responded to promptly and effectively, adding that Pakistan precisely targeted terrorists and their facilitators, including Afghan Taliban military bases.

Sindh to release March salaries, pensions early ahead of Eid



Bureau Report

KARACHI: The Sindh government has decided to release March salaries, allowances and pensions in advance for Muslim employees and pensioners ahead of Eidul Fitr.

According to a notification issued by the Sindh Finance Department, all Muslim government employees and pensioners will receive their full salaries, allowances and pensions for March on March 16, 2026.

The decision also applies to employees working under work-charged and contingent paid establishments of the provincial government.

Normally, government salaries and pensions for March are issued on April 1, but the provincial authorities decided to release the payments earlier to facilitate employees before the Eid holidays.

Officials said the move aims to provide timely financial relief so that government workers and pensioners can make necessary arrangements for Eid celebrations with their families.

Eidul Fitr in Pakistan is expected to fall on March 20 or March 21, subject to the sighting of the Shawwal moon.

The Sindh government said the early payment decision was taken to ensure that Muslim employees and pensioners receive their dues in advance and can comfortably manage their expenses during the festive period.

Provincial authorities added that the step reflects the government's effort to support public sector employees and pensioners during the upcoming religious festival.

Ensuring safe highways govt's priority: Abdul Aleem Khan

LAHORE: Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan on Monday said that ensuring safe highways and modernising the motorway network were among the government's top priorities, adding that the National Highways and Motorway Police (NH&MP) had a vital role in maintaining discipline and safety on the country's roads.

He was addressing the pass-

ing-out ceremony of the 12th Basic Recruit Course at the NH&MP Training College in Sheikhupura, where a total of 401 recruits, including 67 women, successfully completed their training.

The minister congratulated the young officers, especially the women recruits, and said the day marked an important milestone in their professional lives.