



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ
ہمیں محمدؐ اور یزید بن مویزہ نے بتایا اور ان سے اس نے بیان کیا کہ رسول اللہ ﷺ نے فرمایا تمہیں سے کوئی شخص کسی تکلیف کی وجہ سے جو اسے ہونے لگی ہو، موت کی گمانہ کرے اگر موت کی گمانہ ہو تو میرے لیے تو یہ کہے کہ اللہ! جب تک میرے لیے زندگی بہتر ہے مجھے زندہ رکھو اور جب میرے لیے موت بہتر ہو تو مجھے اٹھائیے۔
(بخاری: حدیث نمبر 6351)
Barkat Rice Mills (Pvt) Limited



Chinese, Taiwanese will unite, Xi tells Taiwan opposition leader

China's President Xi Jinping met Taiwan's opposition party leader Cheng Li-wun in Beijing on Friday, telling the visiting delegation he had "full confidence" that Taiwanese and Chinese people would be united. Kuomintang (KMT) chairwoman Cheng is the party's first leader to visit China in a decade.



Melania Trump denies any Epstein connection, seeks end to 'lies'

First lady Melania Trump denied that she had any relationship with Jeffrey Epstein and said she was not one of his victims, thrusting the Epstein matter back into the spotlight after her husband had sought to put it behind him.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Shawwal 22, Saturday, April 11, 2026

www.dailyspokesman.net

@daily_spokesman



Daily Spokesman Vol: 19, Issue: 354 Price Rs. 25.00 Pages 8

Security arrangements

ISLAMABAD: Police personnel closed the Srinagar Highway in the Federal Capital. Pakistan host talks between the United States and Iran, even as a fragile ceasefire between the two sides showed signs of strain following Israeli strikes in Lebanon and renewed military exchanges across the Gulf.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

UK PM calls Shehbaz; conveys best wishes for success of Islamabad Talks



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday received a telephone call from Prime Minister of the United Kingdom Keir Starmer who deeply appreciated Pakistan's effective diplomatic efforts in facilitating the US-Iran ceasefire, and the resumption of dialogue between the two warring states.

Prime Minister Shehbaz welcomed the joint statement issued by key European and international leaders, including Prime Minister Starmer, endorsing Pakistan's peace initiatives.

Both leaders emphasized the importance of ensuring that the ceasefire remained in place and creating the necessary conditions for lasting peace and stability in the region.

The two leaders agreed to work together to lend fresh impetus to the longstanding friendly ties between Pakistan and the United Kingdom, across all spheres of mutual interest.

During the telephonic conversation, he felicitated Prime Minister Shehbaz on hosting the peace negotiations in Islamabad and offered his best wishes for the success of this endeavor.

Reaffirming Pakistan's sincere commitment to regional peace and stability,

The prime minister reiterated his cordial invitation to the UK counterpart to undertake an official visit to Pakistan.

Govt slashes diesel by Rs135, petrol by Rs12

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday announced a sharp reduction in petroleum prices, including a massive cut of Rs135 per litre in high-speed diesel, as the government moved to pass on relief to consumers.

In a televised address to the nation, the prime minister also announced a further Rs12 per litre decrease in petrol prices, citing improved fuel availability and easing global oil markets.

The address came as Pakistan prepares to host high-stakes peace talks between the United States and Iran in Islamabad, with authorities ramping up security and administrative measures in the capital.

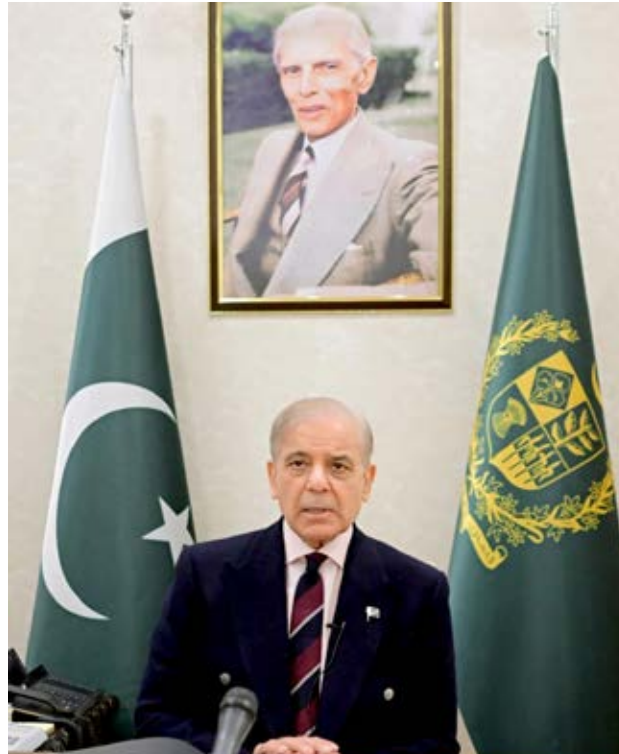
Officials said the price cuts were part of the government's effort to provide immediate relief to the public amid recent economic pressures, while ensuring adequate fuel stocks across the country.

Pakistan has seen volatility in global oil prices in recent weeks,

driven by geopolitical tensions in the Middle East, followed by a decline after a ceasefire between Washington and Tehran.

The government said it remains committed to adjusting domestic fuel prices in line with international trends, while maintaining sufficient reserves to meet national demand.

Analysts say the steep reduction in diesel — widely used in transport and agriculture — could ease inflationary pressures and lower logistics costs in the coming weeks.



The announcement is expected to have a broad economic impact, offering relief to both households and businesses as Pakistan navigates a delicate economic recovery.

Islamabad to remain shut tomorrow as foreign delegates continue to arrive

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad district administration on Friday announced a public holiday in the federal capital on April 11 in view of the arrival of international guests for high-level diplomatic engagements in relations to the US-Iran peace talks.

According to an official notification, the holiday will not apply to essential departments, including the district administration, police, Capital Development Authority (CDA), Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO), hospitals

and Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL), which will continue to perform their duties as usual.

The latest announcement comes as part of a series of administrative measures taken to ensure smooth arrangements and heightened security in the capital during the visit of foreign delegations.

Earlier, the Islamabad administration had declared public holidays on April 9 and 10 across the federal capital to facilitate preparations for the crucial talks and to minimize public movement. Essential services, however, remained operational during those days as well.

US Vice President JD Vance heads to Pakistan, hopeful of positive Iran talks outcome

News Desk

WASHINGTON: US Vice President JD Vance has departed for Pakistan, where he is set to lead the American delegation in upcoming Iran-US negotiations being held in Islamabad under Pakistan's mediation.

Speaking prior to his departure, Vance stated that he is participating in the talks in line with the guidelines of President Donald Trump, expressing confidence that the negotiations with Iran will yield positive outcomes.

The Iran-US talks are scheduled to

take place tomorrow in Islamabad.

The US delegation will include Vice President JD Vance, Special Representative Steve Witkoff, and President Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner.

The Iranian delegation will be represented by Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and Speaker of the Iranian Parliament Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf.

According to a spokesperson for the Foreign Office, visa-free travel arrangements will be provided to both delegations as well as to accompanying journalists.

Islamabad talks present golden opportunity for US-Iran to turn ceasefire into peace accord: Experts

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The crucial talks in Islamabad present a rare and timely opportunity for both the United States and Iran to step back from escalating tensions and pursue meaningful diplomacy imperative for lasting peace and stability in the region.

After weeks of conflict between Iran and US and a two week ceasefire reached due to momentous efforts of Pakistan, both sides now have a platform to address core disagreements, including nuclear policy, oil trade through straits of hormuz, regional security, economic sanctions besides turning the two weeks ceasefire

into Islamabad peace accord.

With global energy markets shaken and instability spreading across the Middle East, constructive dialogue in Islamabad could help rebuild trust and create a pathway toward long-term peace and stability in Middle East.

Moreover, Pakistan's role as a neutral host further strengthens

the chances of open communication and balanced negotiations between delegations of both the countries at Islamabad.

The experts said if approached with sincerity and flexibility, these talks could mark a turning point in US-Iran relations besides reducing prices of oil and petroleum products in world.

For Washington, it offers a chance for smooth opening of strait of hormuz and stabilize a volatile region besides preventing further economic and oil disruption, while Tehran can seek relief from sanctions, safeguarding its sovereignty and assert its position through diplomatic means rather than confrontation.

French FM congratulates Pakistan on its role in securing ceasefire

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Friday received a phone call from Foreign Minister of France, Jean-Noël Barrot.

During the conversation, FM Barrot congratulated Pakistan on its role in securing the initial ceasefire agreement and expressed support for Pakistan's continued efforts toward a diplomatic pathway for lasting peace and stability in the region.

Both leaders expressed concern over serious ceasefire



violations made in Lebanon and underscored the importance of full implementation and respect for the ceasefire.

Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening bilateral relations, enhancing economic and trade cooperation, and agreed to stay in touch.

Islamabad becomes peace capital as world backs Pakistan's efforts on US-Iran mediation

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad has become a peace capital as the world leaders and international media backed Pakistan efforts on crucial high-stakes talks between US and Iran imperative for durable peace in the Middle East.

Emerged at the center of global attention, Pakistan prepares to host high-stakes talks between adversaries, with international media closely tracking its evolving diplomatic role in a fragile and rapidly shifting geopolitical landscape in the region.

Islamabad is all set to host rare direct negotiations

between United States and Iran, aimed at sustaining a delicate two-week ceasefire and preventing further security escalation in the Middle East.

The development has drawn an intense global media attention, with major international and national outlets focusing their coverage on Pakistan's capital as top leadership from both countries prepares to engage in crucial dialogue.

The development has placed Pakistan in an unprecedented position as a global mediator between two long-standing adversaries, highlighting its growing diplomatic relevance at a time of heightened regional tensions.

AJK PM: Responsible journalism is bedrock of civilized society

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: The Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir, Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, has said that responsible and constructive journalism forms the bedrock of a civilized society.

"In today's digital era, the real challenge lies not in reporting news but in delivering accurate and verified information with responsibility. "The AJK premier said this while speaking to a delegation of the Digital and Social Media Association, led by President Naser Chaudhry.

Describing truth, tolerance, and accountability as key to sustainable development, he urged the Digital and Social Media Association to uphold these values in line with modern-day media demands.

"Journalists can maintain credibility only through research, impartiality, and integrity," the PM said, cautioning that misinformation creates confusion and



erodes public trust.

The Prime Minister added that digital media, if used responsibly, can promote public awareness, strengthen institutions, and contribute to national development.

He called on the association to take practical steps for professional training, curb the spread of fake news, and adhere to modern journalistic standards.

The prime minister assured the delegation of his government's full support

for the promotion of responsible journalism and fostering a dignified media culture.

The delegation, on the occasion, reaffirmed the association's commitment to positive journalism.

Youm-e-Tashakur

FAISALABAD: Members of Inter-Faith Harmony Committee hold a rally on the eve of Youm-e-Tashakur (Day of Gratitude) at District Council Chowk in the city.



Photo: Online

PTI Azad Kashmir vows vigorous election participation, submits registration details

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Azad Kashmir central leader, former opposition leader and member of the Legislative Assembly Khawaja Farooq Ahmed and Central Secretary Information Syed Azhar Ali Gilani have said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Azad Kashmir will participate vigorously in the upcoming elections and in this regard, all the necessary information for the registration of the party has



been provided to the Election Commission. If despite this, any attempt is made to keep PTI out of the elections,

the party will participate vigorously in the elections in Azad Kashmir in the name of its leader Imran Khan like in

the center.

They expressed these views while addressing a press conference at the Central Press Club Muzaffarabad on Friday. Other party leaders, Secretary General ILF Yasir Safir Mughal, Councilor Syed Saeed Shah, Councilor Hamid Jamil Kashmiri, Councilor Zulfiqar Baig, Yasir Mughal, were present on the occasion. Kh. Farooq said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf is a big people's party and fully represents the people of Azad Kashmir.

Political, religious parties demand international peace prize for Pakistan's Defense Chief



Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: All political and religious parties including the Azad government and the All Parties Hurriyat Conference, calling the ceasefire agreement between Iran and Israel a successful foreign policy, unanimously demanded that Chief of Defense Forces Hafiz Syed Asim Munir be awarded the International Peace Prize. Hundreds of men and women youth participated in it, led by Hurriyat Conference Convener Ghulam Muhammad Safi, former Minister Syed Iftikhar Gilani, Spokesperson of the Azad government Shaukat Javed, Mir Raja Sajjad Latif Khan, Hurriyat leaders Syed Pervez Ahmed Shah, Mush-taqul Islam Yasir Naqvi, Samia Sajid Abdul Razaq Khan, and leaders of all schools of thought. They included freedom-loving Hurriyat leader Yasin Malik and freedom-loving Protesting strongly against the court decision to sentence women leaders Asia Andrabi and Naheed Nasreen to life imprisonment and thirty years to life imprisonment, they strongly demanded that influential countries including the United Nations, European Union, OIC, and others play an immediate role in the interests of human relations, while proposing to President Asif Ali Zardari to convene a joint session of the National Assembly and Senate and Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif to convene a national conference comprising the Kashmiri leadership of both sides. The importance and recognition that Pakistan has received at the global level under the leadership of Chief of Defense Forces Hafiz Syed Asim Munir is a global breakthrough for the country's identity and national dignity, expressed these views.

Pakistan's peace broker role in Iran-US ceasefire stuns world, Says Sardar Attique

Spokesman Report

RAWALPINDI: President of All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan



has said that Pakistan's role in the Iran-US ceasefire is a surprise to the whole world, Pakistan has always given a message of peace, India, which is occupying occupied Kashmir, has realized that Pakistan can now get Kashmir at any time, due to which it is harassing Kashmiris and Muslims through various tactics, including committing atrocities, the Chief of the Pakistan Army, the pride of the Pakistani and Kashmiri nation Syed Asim Munir has proven to be a hero of the world, Pakistan's role as a mediator between India's media and the ruling class has been destroyed like a doomsday, he expressed these views while talking to media representatives here at Mujahid Manzil.

Meanwhile, Muslim Conference President and former Prime Minister Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan offered condolences and offered Fateha on the death of Hurriyat leader Altaf Butt's mother in Islamabad. In addition, Muslim Conference President Raja Tahir Iqbal Khan, Assembly candidates Rana Sadaqatullah Khan and Raja Waqas Manzoor met from Bhimber district and had detailed discussions regarding the general elections in Azad Kashmir and invited him to visit Bhimber.

Pakistan's diplomatic leadership credited with helping avert major global crisis

Spokesman Report

NEW YORK: Farooq Siddiqi, President of the Kashmir Global Council, has commended Pakistan and its allied partners for their "effective, prudent, and responsible" diplomacy in helping de-escalate recent tensions involving Iran, the United States, and Israel.

In an official statement, Siddiqi stated that Pakistan's timely and proactive diplomatic engagement played a meaningful role in supporting efforts that led to a ceasefire, preventing further escalation in an already volatile geopolitical environment.

"Pakistan demonstrated restraint, strategic foresight, and calibrated engagement at a critical juncture," Siddiqi said. "These efforts helped avert what could have developed into a broader and potentially devastating international conflict."

He paid tribute to Pakistan's leadership, particularly Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir, for their balanced and forward-looking approach, which he described as instrumental in maintaining regional stability and contributing to global peace.

Statesmanship: Pakistan Global Peace Builder

Gratitude flows to the Almighty for granting Pakistan a stature and respect on the world stage that seemed like a distant dream only recently. While grappling with internal challenges, economic pressures, external threats, terrorism, and political instability, Pakistan has emerged as a dignified, influential, and decisive global power. Such moments are rare in history — when a nation, despite its own difficulties, plays a pivotal role in averting a major international crisis. Today, Pakistan has done precisely that.

This achievement is more than a diplomatic success; it is the culmination of a long intellectual, ideological, and national journey. Its foundations were laid by Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, enriched by Allama Muhammad Iqbal's vision, and strengthened by subsequent leaderships. This is the Ideology of Pakistan, which gave the country not just a geography but a higher purpose and responsibility. Today, that responsibility is being fulfilled in the cause of global peace.

The feat is all the more remarkable

because Pakistan achieved it amid serious domestic challenges — economic strain, inflation, financial difficulties, political divisions, and security concerns. These pressures could have diverted any nation's attention, yet Pakistan prioritised global peace and demonstrated responsible statesmanship. This reflects the national maturity that earns countries a distinguished place in history.

Pakistan has repeatedly made tough decisions to protect its survival and dignity. The nuclear tests of 28 May 1998 under Nawaz Sharif's leadership remain a shining example. Celebrated as Youm-e-Takbir, that day symbolised national sovereignty, courage, and self-respect. The same defensive confidence now allows Pakistan to play an independent and respected role on the world stage.

Pakistan's political history also carries important lessons. When democratic continuity and economic progress were advancing under Nawaz Sharif, his governments faced repeated destabilisation. The resulting instability pushed the country into uncertainty. In the final phase of Imran Khan's tenure, governance weakened and a system-

atic campaign against the armed forces intensified.

At that critical moment, Nawaz Sharif took a far-sighted decision by endorsing the appointment of General Syed Asim Munir as military chief — a leader of ideological clarity, intellectual depth, and professional excellence. Under General Munir's command, Pakistan is advancing towards internal stability while earning international respect and playing a constructive global role.

This institutional choice has proven visionary. Today's contribution to global peace rests on such decisions that reflect continuity and institutional strength.

In the same spirit, Pakistan's armed forces responded to Indian aggression with courage, wisdom, and professionalism in an operation remembered as "Baniyan al-Marsoos" (The Solidly Built Wall). The action thwarted hostile intentions and showcased Pakistan's defensive capabilities, intelligence superiority, and military discipline. Under

General Asim Munir, the Pakistan Army has proven it is not only a guardian of borders but also the custodian of national honour, ready to respond firmly to any adventurism.

Rising US-Iran tensions in the Middle East had pushed the world to the brink of catastrophe. In this crisis,

Pakistan played a balanced and responsible mediating role, building trust between both sides. Under Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's leadership, decisive political steps were taken, while Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar worked effectively on the diplomatic front. Offering Islamabad as a venue for talks and presenting practical ceasefire proposals highlighted Pakistan's diplomatic foresight.

Back-channel military contacts led by General Syed Asim Munir were equally vital in fostering confidence. The close coordination between political and military leadership provided a solid foundation, ultimately helping to



Analysis

Sardar Abdul Khaliq Wasi

prevent a devastating confrontation. This harmony exemplifies the national unity essential for major successes.

The same trio — Shehbaz Sharif, Ishaq Dar, and Syed Asim Munir — succeeded not only in de-escalating the US-Iran crisis but also in effectively countering Indian aggression, demonstrating a well-coordinated national strategy.

Pakistan's role has extended beyond this region. On the Palestinian issue, it has always maintained a principled stance. During the Gaza tragedy, Pakistan's voice consistently raised global conscience at the United Nations and other forums, reflecting its commitment to justice and solidarity with the Muslim Ummah.

This consistent approach gives hope that similar wisdom and balance can steer the world away from conflict toward lasting peace. We pray that Almighty Allah grants enduring peace to the world, and that the Pakistan-India dispute — especially the Kashmir issue — is resolved peacefully according to the aspirations of the Kashmiri people and UN resolutions, laying the foundation for permanent regional stability.

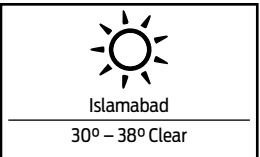
Today, Pakistan's global image shines with new dignity, credibility, and positive perception. A country once viewed negatively has become a symbol of prudence, balance, and leadership. This is a genuine revival of national prestige that truly reflects Pakistan's real character.

This moment will be remembered as a rare chapter in Pakistan's history, highlighting national dignity, diplomatic wisdom, and institutional harmony. It proves that Pakistan not only possesses the strength to defend itself but can also play an active and effective role in building global peace.

This historic success calls upon the Pakistani nation to set aside differences and political divisions. On this coming Friday, let us collectively offer gratitude to the Almighty, praying for greater honour, stability, and peace for our land and for the world to move from conflict to security and harmony.

With this spirit, we extend heartfelt congratulations to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar, and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir. Their visionary leadership and collective efforts have earned Pakistan this new global respect and honour.

Today, Pakistan's global image shines with new dignity, credibility, and positive perception. A country once viewed negatively has become a symbol of prudence, balance, and leadership. This is a genuine revival of national prestige that truly reflects Pakistan's real character.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 4:18 am
Zohr 12:09 pm
Asr 4:45 pm
Maghrib 6:35 pm
Isha 8:01 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

COMPLAINTS

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

CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif approves establishment of Punjab Cyber Crime Unit to curb social media harassment

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif has approved a major initiative to address the growing issue of harassment and blackmailing on social media, particularly targeting children and women, by establishing a dedicated Punjab Cyber Crime Unit.

During the meeting, it was decided that special mobile units will be set up to facilitate minor boys and girls affected by online harassment and blackmailing, enabling them to lodge complaints without visiting police stations or offices. Victims, especially women and children, will also be able to register complaints through a Virtual Police Station, the Cyber Crime Unit front desk, and the "PKM" mobile application, while ensuring complete confidentiality of their identity.

The government has also decided to introduce strict legislation to ensure exemplary punishment for perpetrators

involved in social media harassment and blackmailing. In this regard, work has commenced on the initial draft of the Punjab Online Safety Act 2026, which will soon be presented for approval.

The meeting further resolved to establish a Cyber Patrol Wing and a Cyber Police Academy under Punjab Police. Additionally, an advanced intelligence system will be introduced for effective social media monitoring and surveillance. The Chief Minister directed the authorities to adopt a proactive approach to curb cybercrime and ensure robust data protection measures.

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif stated that cybercrime poses a serious challenge and safeguarding the younger generation remains a top priority. She emphasized that modern technology and tools will be fully utilized to protect young girls from blackmailing, while urging parents to closely monitor their children's social media usage.



She further asserted that no individual has the right to intrude upon the privacy of others and reaffirmed the government's commitment to bringing cyber criminals to justice and setting a strong precedent.

Security Alerts

ISLAMABAD: Police personnel stand alert at D Chowk in the Federal Capital. Pakistan host talks between the United States and Iran, even as a fragile ceasefire between the two sides showed signs of strain following Israeli strikes in Lebanon and renewed military exchanges across the Gulf.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Gilani mourns passing of Zulfiqar Ali Khosa



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani has expressed deep sorrow over the death of former Punjab governor Sardar Zulfiqar Ali Khosa.

In his condolence message, Gilani paid tribute to the late leader, calling him an experienced politician, a visionary statesman, and a committed public servant who dedicated his life to serving the nation.

He said Khosa's political and social contributions were valuable and would always be remembered.

He added that the late leader belonged to Dera Ghazi Khan and represented the people of the area with honesty and dedication, working to solve their problems.

Gilani said Khosa's leadership and people-focused approach would continue to inspire others.

He termed his death a major loss to national politics and said his services would always be respected.

He also prayed for the forgiveness of the deceased and extended sympathies to the bereaved family, asking Allah to grant them patience and strength in this difficult time.

DD Agri Dr. Nousher Ali Khan Retires After 35 Years of Distinguished Service

Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: Deputy Director Agriculture (Extension) Toba Tek Singh Dr. Nousher Ali Khan has retired today after completing 35 years of distinguished government service.

On this occasion, a dignified ceremony was held at the Deputy Commissioner's Office, where he was presented with a shield and a certificate of appreciation.

During the ceremony, the Deputy Commissioner along with other district officers paid tribute to Dr. Nousher Ali Khan's services, stating that his professional compe-



tence and leadership brought significant recognition to the Agriculture Department. He had been serving as Deputy Director Agriculture in District Toba Tek Singh for the past

two years, during which the department demonstrated outstanding performance under his leadership.

Dr. Nousher Ali Khan began his career on April 9, 1991, as an Agriculture Officer. During his service, he remained posted in various districts including Muzaffargarh, Khanewal, Multan and Lodhran, where he rendered remarkable services with dedication, honesty and professional excellence. He retired from the post of Deputy Director Agriculture (Extension). At the end of the ceremony, best wishes were extended to him for a successful, healthy and prosperous future.

Hyderabad Institute Calls for Immediate Restraint Amid US-Iran Talks

Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi



HYDERABAD: The Hyderabad Institute of International Affairs has called for immediate restraint and peaceful engagement amid escalating regional tensions.

In a statement issued by Secretary General Abdul Wahab Munshi, the institute expressed cautious optimism regarding ongoing negotiations between Iran and the United States, hoping the dialogue will move forward constructively and contribute to lasting regional peace.

The statement noted that while there are signs of seriousness from the United States, external pressures—particularly from Israel and certain Arab countries—are complicating the situation. It warned that any proposals for military action against Iran could pose serious risks to regional stability.

The institute also expressed concern over reports of continued attacks in Lebanon despite ceasefire conditions, stating that such actions undermine peace efforts and weaken confidence in diplomatic processes.

The statement urged all parties to avoid confrontation, prioritize dialogue, exercise restraint, and work collectively toward peaceful and sustainable solutions in the broader interest of regional and global stability.

PM Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Asim Munir lauded for historic diplomatic role

News Desk

KARACHI: Chairman and head of the Pakistan Gharieb Awam Party, Syed Arshad Hussain, has described Pakistan's hosting of negotiations aimed at securing a 15-day ceasefire and lasting peace between the United States and Iran as a significant international diplomatic achievement for the country.

Addressing party leaders & workers, he said that the role played by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir deserves the highest praise and, GOD willing, will be recorded in golden words in world history. He added that Pakistan's diplomatic efforts have projected a strong and positive image of Pakistan as a peace-loving nation across the globe.

Pakistan's ChildLife Foundation Wins Prestigious 2026 Skoll Award for Social Innovation

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: ChildLife Foundation will receive the Skoll Award for Social Innovation 2026 during the 23rd Annual Skoll World Forum that is to be held in Oxford, U. K from April 21-24.

The ChildLife Foundation is one of the three organizations in the world that will receive this award for saving thousands of children daily by modernizing Pakistan's pediatric emergency rooms and linking them to a telemedicine network.

"This recognition belongs to our frontline teams working 24/7 to save children's lives, to our government partners who make scale possible, and to our supporters who believe in this mission," said Dr. Ahson Rabbani, CEO ChildLife Foundation.

He added that the ChildLife Foundation promise is "no child more than 30 minutes away from quality emergency care, 24/7 and free of charge".

It is to be noted that the Skoll Award for Social Innovation provides support to nonprofit organizations with a proven track record of advancing transformational social change on intractable global issues.

"This year's winners of the Skoll Award for Social Innovation prove that when bold, creative leaders set their sights on a problem, they resolve and commitment lead to global systems change. Through innovative partnerships with affected communities and cross-sector collaboration, they are driving impact and lasting change in the fields of health, education, and public benefits," said Marla Blow, CEO & President of the Skoll Foundation.

Seminar held in Hyderabad to mark World Sindhi Language Day

Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi

HYDERABAD: A seminar was held in Hyderabad in connection with World Sindhi Language Day at the hall of the Sindhi Language Authority, organized by the Sindh United Thinkers Forum. The event was attended by linguists, writers, political and social figures, as well as women participants in large numbers. The proceedings were conducted by Ramzan Buriro, while speakers included Prof. Yaqoob Chandio, Jagdish Ahuja, Prof. Qazi Khadim, Naseer Mirza, and Syed Zain Shah.

Speakers emphasized that Sindhi should be made a compulsory subject in educational institutions. They



expressed concern that in many private schools, Sindhi is treated as a secondary subject and is often neither properly taught nor examined. They added that

English is being given undue priority at the expense of Sindhi and Urdu.

The speakers further pointed out that Sindhi-speaking communities in neighboring countries have succeeded in securing recognition for their language, while in Sindh, effective legislation is still lacking.

Several resolutions were presented and unanimously adopted during the seminar. These included declaring April 10 as World Sindhi Language Day, amending the Constitution of Pakistan to grant Sindhi the status of a national language, and urging the Sindh Assembly to pass the relevant bill and pursue its approval at the national level.

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

Pakistan at the Heart of a High-Stakes Global Chess Game

The flames of war that engulfed the Middle East in recent weeks carried within them the terrifying potential to redraw the map of the world through destruction. What began as a regional confrontation between the United States, Israel, and Iran rapidly escalated into a crisis with global consequences. Military rhetoric crossed dangerous thresholds, with open threats targeting Iran's critical infrastructure—its nuclear facilities, power grids, bridges, and military backbone—raising fears of a full-spectrum assault designed to force submission.

Had such an operation been executed, the consequences would have been catastrophic. Iran, with its vast missile arsenal and advanced drone capabilities—and widely believed to be at the threshold of nuclear capability—would not have remained passive. A retaliatory strike on Israel could have unleashed unprecedented destruction, targeting cities, strategic installations, and possibly even triggering a nuclear exchange. Gulf states hosting U. S. bases would have become immediate targets, dragging Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and Bahrain into direct conflict. The Strait of Hormuz—the artery through which nearly 20 percent of the world's oil flows—would almost certainly have been shut down.

The economic consequences alone would have been devastating. Iran's infrastructure losses could have ranged between \$500 billion and \$1 trillion. Israel, under sustained retaliation, might have faced damages of \$150 billion to \$300 billion. The Gulf economies, dependent on energy exports and stability, could have suffered losses exceeding \$1 trillion. For the United States, prolonged military engagement combined with economic fallout—rising

oil prices, inflation, and market disruption—could have pushed total losses beyond \$2 trillion. Globally, the shutdown of Hormuz and the collapse of energy supply chains could have triggered a shock of \$3 to \$5 trillion, bringing total worldwide losses into the staggering range of \$5 to \$10 trillion. Beyond numbers, the human and civilizational cost would have been immeasurable. A region that carries millennia of history—Persian, Arab, Islamic, and global heritage—could have been reduced to rubble. Under international law, threats to destroy an entire civilization are not merely rhetoric; they raise grave concerns under the Genocide Convention and the laws governing armed conflict. The world was not just approaching war—it was approaching the edge of irreversible devastation.

The diplomatic architecture that followed was equally significant. Pakistan facilitated broader alignment by engaging China, whose influence provided additional assurance to Iran. Regional powers were brought into the process, reinforcing momentum toward de-escalation. In this intricate framework, Pakistan acted as the central connector—linking adversaries, global powers, and regional actors into a single, fragile but functional process.

The outcome was a breakthrough that few had considered possible. A ceasefire was secured at the last possible moment. Oil markets stabilized, global panic subsided, and the world stepped back from the brink. More importantly, a pathway to dialogue was established, with negotiations shifting to Islamabad—transforming Pakistan into the epicenter

of high-stakes diplomacy. This moment marked a profound shift in Pakistan's global standing. A country often viewed through the prism of regional challenges had demonstrated its capacity to operate at the highest level of international diplomacy, managing a crisis involving nuclear-capable adversaries under active conflict conditions.

The significance of this achievement extends beyond the Middle East. It has reshaped perceptions across the region, particularly in South Asia. In India, Pakistan's emergence as a central diplomatic actor has triggered a wave of political and media reaction. Sections of the Indian media have expressed visible frustration, portraying Pakistan's role as an unexpected and uncomfortable development in a domain where India has long sought recognition as a rising global power.

Political opposition within India has reportedly questioned the government's relative absence from this critical geopolitical moment. The narrative gaining traction is one of missed opportunity—where India, despite its economic and strategic ambitions, found itself on the sidelines while Pakistan occupied the diplomatic center stage. Commentators and analysts have debated whether India's foreign policy posture—often perceived as aligned with specific blocs—limited its ability to act as a neutral mediator in a conflict requiring balanced engagement with all sides.

Meanwhile, Pakistan's role has continued beyond the ceasefire. Diplomatic channels remain active to ensure the truce holds and to prevent escalation

in secondary theaters such as Lebanon. The effort now is not only to sustain the ceasefire but to transform it into a durable peace framework—an undertaking far more complex than securing the initial pause in hostilities.

This evolving role reflects a deeper transformation. Pakistan has moved from being a participant in regional dynamics to becoming a platform for resolving them. It has demonstrated that influence in the modern world is not solely a function of economic size or military strength, but of trust, access, and the ability to act decisively in moments of crisis.

The road ahead remains uncertain. The ceasefire is fragile, and the underlying issues remain unresolved. Yet the immediate danger—the descent into a war that could have caused trillions in damage and untold human suffering—has been averted. History often remembers the moments when destruction was prevented rather than inflicted. At a time when powerful nations were speaking the language of annihilation, Pakistan spoke the language of restraint and negotiation. It convinced adversaries to pause, brought them to the table, and created a pathway where none existed.

If the current process leads to lasting peace, this moment will be recorded as a turning point—not only in the conflict itself, but in the evolution of global diplomacy. And at the center of that transformation will stand Pakistan, a nation that, against all expectations, helped steer the world away from the brink of catastrophe and toward the possibility of peace.

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

Pakistan calls for building trust between Kosovo & Serbia to move forward towards regional peace

While last year's successful legislative elections in Kosovo featured broad participation, Pakistan has warned of the "complex and intricate web of challenges" ahead and called for Kosovo-Serbia dialogue for establishing peace and stability in the Southeast European region.

"Trust building between the two sides remains essential for moving forward," Ambassador Usman Jadoon, deputy permanent representative of Pakistan to the United Nations, told the UN Security Council on Wednesday.

Kosovo declared independence from Serbia in February 2008 following years of ethnic tensions, but Serbia has not recognized the declaration. The European Union has since been facilitating dialogue between the parties on a range of practical matters.

Speaking in the course of a debate on the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), the Pakistani envoy said divisive rhetoric, hate speech, and inter-communal tensions should not be allowed to take root and disturb peace and tranquillity.

Pakistani, he said, believes that only a sustained and meaningful dialogue process, a toning down of political rhetoric, and the full implementation of commitments made under mutual accords can help overcome all challenges and lead to lasting peace and stability in the region.

"We appreciate European Union's steadfast commitment and efforts to facilitate dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina," the Pakistani envoy said, hoping that both sides will continue to build on the positive momentum, refrain from unilateral actions that stoke tensions, and continue constructive cooperation to resolve all outstanding issues.

Underscoring that "the Balkans have suffered enough from the failures of the past", Ambassador Jadoon urged: "The future, surely, must be different."

Both parties must choose the path of "principle over prejudice and patience over provocation", he said.

"What the region urgently needs is meaningful engagement, a firm commitment to the principles of mutual respect, recognition of mutual sensitivities, safeguarding social and economic rights of all peoples, and promotion of the spirit of peaceful co-existence, and inter-communal harmony, Ambassador Jadoon added.

At the outset, Peter Due, Special Representative and Head of UNMIK, told the Security Council during his first briefing that while the December 2025 polls featured broad participation, the momentum is being tested.

He noted that the process of electing a new President remains incomplete, following a year of political stalemate.

Due, who took the key role three months ago, emphasized that the return of Kosovo Serb mayors in the north was a positive step yet warned of "challenges" including administrative gaps and language barriers.

"These are not merely technical issues," he said, urging continued engagement. Guided by Resolution 1244 (1999), UNMIK is focusing its efforts on community-level dialogue.

"Trust among communities, and between communities and institutions, allows progress, dialogue and cooperation to take root," he stressed.

The mission itself is navigating a UN-wide liquidity crisis, having reduced encumbered positions by nearly 30 per cent. Despite these financial constraints, Due insisted the mission remains vital in fostering an inclusive culture "where every community sees itself reflected in the path forward".



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

Shehbaz-Munir: Heroes Who Saved Humanity

As a deadline for massive U. S. strikes against Iran approached under an ultimatum from Donald Trump, the world feared catastrophic destruction, but a last-minute diplomatic breakthrough from Islamabad produced a two-week ceasefire between the United States and Iran. This was credited to the mediation of Shehbaz Sharif and Syed Asim Munir, whose efforts were seen as decisive in averting disaster. The crisis began on February 28 after U. S.-Israeli strikes killed Iran's Supreme Leader, escalating into a six-week war involving severe retaliation, including Iran's closure of the Strait of Hormuz, disrupting global oil supplies and threatening economies worldwide. As tensions intensified, Pakistan intervened through continuous back-channel diplomacy and urgent engagement with both Washington and Tehran. In the final hours, Munir persuaded Trump to consider restraint with a viable de-escalation path, while Sharif maintained direct contact with Iranian leaders including Masoud Pezeshkian and Abbas Araghchi and issued a public appeal urging delay and confidence-building steps. Trump then suspended attacks conditional on reopening the Strait of Hormuz, which Iran accepted, agreeing to halt operations and allow safe passage, while both sides acknowledged Pakistan's role and opened the door for negotiations.

The mediation was described as a major humanitarian and diplomatic achievement, preventing planned U. S. strikes on Iranian civilian infrastructure that could have killed millions and triggered an unprecedented catastrophe, while also averting a wider proxy war that would have devastated Gulf states including the UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, Bahrain, and

Saudi Arabia. Global reaction was overwhelmingly positive, with leaders and citizens expressing relief, and figures such as Antonio Guterres and Chinese leadership supporting further talks in Islamabad, which was chosen as the venue for negotiations scheduled for April 10, 2026.

The closure of the Strait of Hormuz had already triggered severe energy shortages in Pakistan, with long lines at gas stations and factory closures threatening the economy, and the threat of a massive refugee influx from Iran's Sistan-Baluchistan province posed a direct threat to national security that could have overwhelmed border resources. By solving the crisis, Shehbaz Sharif and Asim Munir did not just save the world in some abstract, humanitarian sense; they also protected the Pakistani nation from the direct spillover effects of a war it could not afford to fight or absorb. They safeguarded Pakistan's economy from further inflationary pressures, ensured the stability of its borders, and prevented the radicalization that often accompanies regional chaos. This is the mark of true leadership: acting in the interest of global humanity while simultaneously and seamlessly securing the national interest, demonstrating that the two goals are not contradictory but complementary.

The Pakistani nation has risen as one to pay tribute to its leaders, in a spontaneous outpouring of gratitude that crosses political, ethnic, and class lines. Across the country, from the bustling streets of Lahore to the serene valleys of Gilgit-Baltistan, from the port city of Karachi to the mountainous frontiers of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, citizens are celebrating this diplomatic victory as if it were a military one, waving flags and offering prayers of thanks. The nation salutes Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for his sincere, untiring efforts

and his visionary approach to foreign policy, recognizing that his calm demeanor and steady hand provided exactly the kind of leadership that such a crisis demanded. Similarly, the people have showered praise on Field Marshal Asim Munir, whose strategic acumen and quiet efficiency ensured that the communication lines with the US and Iranian leadership remained open and productive even when other channels had broken down completely. They have proven that soft power, when wielded by capable and principled hands, can be more potent than any weapon in the modern arsenal, achieving what military force alone never could. It is a matter of immense national pride that whenever this war is mentioned in the history books of the world, the name 'Pakistan' will be written everywhere in golden letters, not as a nation that caused conflict but as one that ended it. The success of Pakistan in saving the world from a devastating war has become an indelible part of human history, a chapter that will be studied, admired, and remembered for generations to come as an example of what determined diplomacy can achieve.

The entire world, from the bustling cities of America to the ancient bazaars of Tehran, from the capitals of Europe to the villages of Africa, owes a debt of gratitude to these two men that can never be fully repaid. They saved millions of innocent lives, preserved the fragile fabric of international order, and brought the world back from the brink of destruction at the very last moment. As the delegations prepare to land in Islamabad for the next round of talks, the world looks to Pakistan not with suspicion or condescension, but with hope, admiration, and deep respect for what has already been accomplished. The nation has truly become a beacon of peace in a stormy world, and its leaders, Shehbaz Sharif and Asim Munir, stand as the real heroes of the world, deserving of every honor that humanity can bestow.



Analysis

Abdul Basit Alvi

Vaisakhi Mela 2026: A New Chapter of Harmony and Heritage in Maryam's Punjab

The land of Punjab has eternally been the sanctuary of Sufis, saints, and Gurus. It is a region where the soil itself exhales the fragrance of love, tolerance, and the profound respect for humanity. Today, in the year 2026, as the world's gaze is once again fixed upon Punjab, it is due to the exquisite confluence of ancient traditions and modern governance led by Chief Minister Punjab, Maryam Nawaz Sharif. Vaisakhi Mela 2026 is far more than a religious festival; it has become a testament to the Chief Minister's grand vision of transforming Punjab into a global hub for interfaith harmony, religious tourism, and international brotherhood.

The festival of Vaisakhi holds an extraordinary position in the Sikh faith. It commemorates the establishment of the "Khalsa Panth" by Guru Gobind Singh Ji in 1699—a pivotal moment that marked a new spiritual and social identity for the Sikh community. The 37th Global Vaisakhi Festival, spanning from April 10th to April 19th, has revitalized the sacred sites that are integral to Sikh history. From the hallowed air of Nankana Sahib to the echoes of Panja Sahib (Hassan Abdal), and from the Kartarpur Corridor of Peace to the historic landmarks of Lahore, all of Punjab resonates today with the welcoming chants of "Ji Aayan Noon."

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, upon assuming office, made it clear that the minorities living in Punjab are not merely a state responsibility but the province's true beauty. In translating this vision into reality, Provincial Minister for Minority Affairs, Ramesh Singh

Arora, has played a pivotal role as a dynamic right-hand man. Under the Chief Minister's guidance, Ramesh Singh Arora and his team have worked tirelessly to ensure the protection of religious rights and the provision of world-class facilities for Sikh pilgrims. These arrangements for Vaisakhi 2026 stand as proof that the Punjab government has accorded religious tourism the status of a formal industry. The "Red Carpet" reception prepared for pilgrims this year has won the hearts of thousands of Sikhs arriving from India, Canada, the UK, and the USA. This global trust is a victory for the narrative built by Maryam Nawaz Sharif on the concept of "Sab Ka Punjab" (Everyone's Punjab).

The meticulous planning by the Government of Punjab for this year's Vaisakhi has set a new benchmark in administrative history. From the Wagah Border to every sacred site, air-conditioned marquees and modern residential facilities have been established. At the Langars, the provision of quality food and clean drinking water has been ensured 24/7. Provincial Minister Ramesh Singh Arora personally visited various districts to monitor these arrangements, ensuring that the Chief Minister's standards of hospitality remained uncompromised.

Regarding health and emergency services, modern medical camps have been set up at every major location, staffed by experienced doctors and paramedics. The alertness of mobile ambulance services and Rescue 1122 has further strengthened the sense of security among pilgrims. A revolution has also

Continued on Page 7



Analysis

Kiran Fazal Butt

PPP South Punjab praises Iran-US ceasefire as vital step for global peace

✉ **Quratulain Asim**

MULTAN: Pakistan Peoples Party South Punjab President Makhdoom Syed Ahmed Mahmood, former Governor Punjab, Senior Vice President South Punjab Khawaja Rizwan Alam, Chief Coordinator South Punjab Abdul Qadir Shaheen Addressing To the Press Conference Said that the Iran-US ceasefire is a welcome step towards peace.

The efforts of all parties to achieve an immediate ceasefire are commendable. The world needs dialogue, not destruction, and wisdom, not war, can provide solutions to problems.

The progress of the ceasefire will lead to lasting stability and prosperity in the region. He further said that the reduction in tension between Iran and the United States and the progress of the ceasefire are an important and welcome step not only for the region but also for the entire world. At this critical juncture, the wise strategy, active diplomacy and sincere efforts of Pakistan's polit-



ical and military leadership for peace are commendable and proud.

The entire nation pays tribute to the way the President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Asif Ali Zardari, the Prime Minister, Field Marshal Syed

Asim Munir and the Foreign Minister have played a very serious, balanced and far-sighted role, making Pakistan a responsible, peace-loving and effective state at the global level. He said that the escalating tension between Iran and

the United States could have turned into a major human tragedy. The loss of innocent lives, instability in the region and threats to global peace required a trustworthy country to step forward and play a conciliatory role.

Multan Bar Slams 40-Day War, Praises Pakistan's 'Historic' Role

✉ **Kiran Asim**

MULTAN: High Court Bar Association Multan President Chaudhry Umar Hayat, General Secretary Fayyaz Hussain Leghari while addressing a press conference said that innocent people all over the world were killed and economic devastation was caused due to the 40-day war between America, Israel and Iran.

During this war, Pakistan's government and military leadership played a historic role, which is known to the whole world. It is proven throughout the world that the Pakistani nation is a peaceful nation and believes in peace. We pay tribute to the expert, wise and powerful efforts of the political and military leadership and assure that the High Court Bar Multan and its zealous lawyers, political, military and judiciary and lawyers stand by the leadership. They demanded that the Israeli aggression against Lebanon should be stopped immediately and it should also be included in the negotia-



tions. Regarding the murder of Vehari Bar member Zeeshan Shabbir Dhadi, he said that we are in constant contact with the Vehari Bar and the Punjab Bar Council. We will soon give a plan of action to arrest the absconding SHO and punish the accused and

bring justice to Zeeshan Shabbir Dhadi.

Regarding biometrics, he said that there is a meeting with the Chief Justice of the Lahore High Court next week on this issue. Insha Allah, this issue will also be resolved.

SLS Wins Top IDP Awards



✉ **City Desk**

JHELUM: SLS IELTS Official Test Centre received the Highest Volume Award and Highest Achiever Award from IDP Pakistan at a ceremony held at Islamabad Marriott Hotel.

The awards were presented by Tahir Hussain, IELTS Operations Manager IDP Pakistan, while Talha Bin Mohsin, IELTS Test Centre Administrator, awarded the Highest Achiever Certificate for SLS students.

An IELTS Master Class and Study Abroad Expo were also held. The CEO termed the achievement a result of team effort and student trust.

Youth Art Competition at AKU Sparks Dialogue on Change



✉ **News Desk**

KARACHI: Building on the success of its previous edition, the Aga Khan University's Institute for Educational Development (IED) hosted the A. R. Nagori National Art Competition 2026, inviting young artists aged 15 to 19 from across Pakistan to explore the theme Azm-o-Amal (Resolve and Action) through creative expression.

This year's theme encouraged participants to reflect on the power of determination and purposeful action in shaping a better future. Through their artwork, students depicted ideas of hope, inclusion, responsibility, and resilience, highlighting how even small, meaningful actions can drive positive change in society.

"Art is a natural and joyful form of expression for young people, whether it be finger painting, sculpting or papier-mâché" said Amber Romasa, an art enthusiast and benefactor of the event. "Through the A. R. Nagori competition, we hope to honour Professor Nagori's legacy while nurturing creativity, imagination and critical thinking amongst youth."

The competition culminated in an awards ceremony accompanied by an engaging panel discussion on the role of art in education and society. Moderated by Amber Romasa, the panel featured Farzana Tunio, Director of the Art & Design and Continuing Enrichment Program Department at NJV School and Dr Fateh Daudpoto, Chancellor of the University of Art & Culture, Jamshoro. Amra Ali, co-founder and former senior editor of NuktaArt attended as Chief Guest. The discussion examined the place of art in personal and public life, questioning why it is often undervalued despite its transformative potential. Panelists emphasized how art education can address social inequalities, foster empathy and empower individuals to respond to political and economic challenges.

Pakistan calls for building trust between Kosovo & Serbia to move forward towards regional peace

UNITED NATIONS: While last year's successful legislative elections in Kosovo featured broad participation, Pakistan has warned of the "complex and intricate web of challenges" ahead and called for Kosovo-Serbia dialogue for establishing peace and stability in the Southeast European region. "Trust building between the two sides remains essential for moving forward," Ambassador Usman Jadoon, deputy permanent representative of Pakistan to the United Nations, told the UN Security Council on Wednesday. Kosovo declared independence from Serbia in February 2008 following years of ethnic tensions, but Serbia has not recognized the declaration. The European Union has since been facilitating dialogue between the parties on a range of practical matters.

Speaking in the course of a debate on the United Nations mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), the Pakistani envoy said divisive rhetoric, hate speech, and inter-communal tensions should not be allowed to take root and disturb peace and tranquillity.

Pakistani, he said, believes that only a sustained and meaningful dialogue process, a toning down of political rhetoric, and the full implementation of commitments made under mutual accords can help overcome all challenges and lead to lasting peace and stability in the region.

"We appreciate European Union's steadfast commitment and efforts to facilitate dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina," the Pakistani envoy said, hoping that both sides will continue to build on the positive momentum, refrain from unilateral actions that stoke tensions, and continue constructive cooperation to resolve all outstanding issues.

Umar Abbas Mela: Driving Good Governance in Toba Tek Singh

Deputy Commissioner Toba Tek Singh Umar Abbas Mela is widely regarded as an honest, hardworking and highly competent administrative officer. Under his leadership, government affairs in the district are being managed in an organized and efficient manner with clearly visible positive outcomes. His professional excellence and strong commitment to public service have earned him respect and recognition among both the public and official circles. Under his supervision, officers across all departments perform their duties with dedication and diligence.

He maintains strict oversight of their performance while also providing guidance to achieve better results. Firmly believing that public service is the true purpose of government office, he ensures that maximum facilitation is provided to citizens at every level. A

daily open court (Khuli Kachehri) is held at the DC Office, where citizens are given the opportunity to present their complaints without hesitation. The Deputy Commissioner personally listens to these issues and issues immediate instructions to the concerned departments for prompt resolution. This initiative has not only restored public trust but has also strengthened transparency and accountability within the administrative system. In the development sector, Umar Abbas Mela has demonstrated remarkable dynamism. He regularly reviews ongoing development projects across the district and ensures their timely completion in accordance with high standards. Through frequent field visits, he observes ground realities firsthand and takes immediate corrective measures wherever necessary. As a result, not only has the pace of development accelerated, but there has also been a visible

improvement in addressing public issues. Special emphasis is being placed on the provision of essential services such as sanitation, health, education and other basic facilities. Effective measures in these sectors are directly benefiting the public and improving overall living standards in the district. His dedication, integrity and strong sense of responsibility distinguish him as an exemplary officer. Under his leadership, District Toba Tek Singh is steadily progressing, offering a practical example of good governance and administrative stability. Furthermore, he has taken effective steps to ensure the rule of law in the district. Maintaining close coordination with the district police and other law enforce-

ment agencies, he has implemented a comprehensive strategy to prevent crime and maintain peace. As a result, citizens feel a greater sense of security.

He has also launched strict actions against encroachments, hoarding and profiteering. The price control mechanism has been strengthened to ensure the availability of essential commodities at reasonable rates. In this regard, he regularly visits markets and takes on-the-spot action against violators.

His special focus on the education sector is equally commendable. Efforts are underway to improve the performance of government schools, ensure teachers' attendance and provide a better learning environment for students. During his visits

to educational institutions, he directly interacts with students and teachers, listens to their concerns and works towards practical solutions.

In the health sector, his performance remains equally impressive. He continuously monitors hospitals and basic health units to ensure the availability of medicines, improve facilities, and maintain staff attendance. These efforts are providing significant relief to patients and enhancing the quality of healthcare services. Similarly, effective strategies have been implemented to improve sanitation. The waste management system has been activated and special cleanliness campaigns are being conducted in both urban and rural areas, contributing to a healthier environment. Under his leadership, digitalization is also being promoted in the district. Initiatives are underway to modernize administrative processes and intro-

duce online public services, thereby saving time and enhancing transparency.

Moreover, he is actively promoting positive engagement among youth. Through sports competitions, educational programs and skill development initiatives, young people are being encouraged to utilize their potential and contribute to society. These efforts are laying the foundation for a healthy and progressive community.

In conclusion, the tireless efforts, strong administrative capabilities, and unwavering commitment to public service of Deputy Commissioner Umar Abbas Mela have set District Toba Tek Singh on a path of sustainable progress. His leadership is not only strengthening the administrative system but also significantly improving the quality of life for the people, reflecting a true model of effective and people-centric governance.



Analysis

Zafar Chishti

The Purge of Military Leadership

✉ **Major Mohmand Shafiq Khan (Retd)**

Amid an ongoing bombing campaign against Iran—already more than a month old—the Trump administration abruptly dismissed Army Chief of Staff General Randy George, alongside other senior officers, without public explanation. George was no peripheral figure. A decorated veteran of nearly four decades, he had served in Iraq and Afghanistan, risen to vice chief of staff, and advised Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin. By any professional measure, he was among the finest officers the U. S. Army had produced.

Reports suggest Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth removed George over disagreements on strategy and internal policy. The immediate trigger was George's refusal to block promotions of senior officers despite direct pressure. The Defense Secretary wanted a leader more ideologically aligned with his own vision, and that of President

Trump. George's ouster was part of a sweeping Pentagon purge: General David Hodne, head of Transformation and Training Command, and Major General William Green Jr., chief of the Chaplain Corps, were removed alongside him. Earlier, in February 2025, Trump had fired the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Charles "CQ" Brown, only weeks after returning to office. The list of departures now includes the heads of the Navy, Coast Guard, NSA, Southern Command, and several top military lawyers. The Air Force chief of staff announced his retirement two years into a four year term, while the head of U. S. Southern Command departed a year into his.

Hegseth insists the president is merely choosing leaders he trusts. Yet critics warn of politicization of an institution historically above partisan politics. Last year, Hegseth ordered a 20 percent cut in four star generals and admirals, and a 10 percent reduction in overall flag officers—a deliberate reshaping of military leadership.

Historical Echoes

Viewed through the lens of history, this pattern is unmistakable. Like any leader incapable of tolerating dissent, Trump has surrounded himself with those who will not challenge him—bootlickers, yes men, and willing instruments of policy rather than his shapers. Their obedience is not loyalty; it is job insurance. And since the boss cannot abide criticism, those who dare offer it are not merely removed but made examples of. Hegseth is the enforcer of this arrangement, ensuring that the right men are in the right places.

This is not without precedent, and the precedent is not encouraging. In The German Generals Talk, Liddell Hart examines how Hitler systematically consolidated military authority in his own hands and the catastrophic operational consequences that followed. The mechanism he describes is chillingly familiar: a newly promoted general is always more confident than his predecessor, always certain that he can succeed where the last man failed. This disposition, Hart observes, is a powerful lever in the hands of any

dictator because the prospect of promotion is enough to make any general swallow his doubts long enough for the dictator to fracture the solidarity of professional opinion.

General Ludwig Beck understood this. As Chief of the German General Staff in 1938, convinced that Hitler's plan to invade Czechoslovakia would trigger a war with Britain and France and end in Germany's annihilation, Beck resigned rather than comply. His farewell address remains one of the most searching statements of military conscience in modern history: "Military obedience has a limit where knowledge, conscience, and a sense of responsibility forbid the execution of a command. Extraordinary times demand extraordinary measures." Beck was not heeded. The rest is history.

The American Crossroads

All eyes now turn to General Christopher LaNeve, the Army's vice chief of staff, who assumes the role of acting chief. The question is whether he will embody the tradition of Washington, Grant, Sherman, Marshall, Patton, and

MacArthur—leaders who understood that professional obligation sometimes demands resisting political dictates.

The stakes could not be higher. Trump's removal of officers unwilling to subordinate professional judgment to political preference threatens to alter the very character of the United States Army, transforming it from an institution of national defense into an instrument of personal will. And in the context of a war against Iran prosecuted with reckless grandiosity, the consequences of a military leadership stripped of independent judgment are not abstract. They are existential.

If LaNeve rises above ambition, if he finds the courage to redirect a reckless commander from the precipice, he will earn a place in history. The choice is his, but the juncture is critical. Like Beck, like the great figures of military history, he can either make history—or vanish nameless.

The Lesson of Leadership

Nixon's dictum—that masters must possess the thoughts and nerves of masters—reminds us that leader-

ship is not about obedience but about conscience. Easy relationships suffice in times of calm, but in crisis they collapse. True leaders are those who resist appeasement, who risk dismissal rather than betray their professional oath.

The United States today stands at a dangerous threshold. The purge of independent military voices is not merely administrative; it is structural, designed to ensure conformity. History teaches that such conformity, when imposed at the highest levels of command, leads not to stability but to catastrophe.

The lesson is clear: extraordinary times demand extraordinary measures. The measure required now is courage—courage to speak truth to power, to resist reckless ambition, and to preserve the integrity of institutions upon which national survival depends.

The author is a retired Army Officer, who took up journalism as a career and has been regularly commenting on issues of international importance.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
167,191.37	165,517.51
Day's High	Day's Low
168,290.28	166,221.33
Index Value	Change
38,180,457,585	+1673.86
Percentage	Time
+1.01%	10 Apr, 2026 4:30 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
10,600.53	-2.95
Percentage	Time
-0.028%	10 Apr, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
47,915.80	-270.00
Percentage	Time
-0.56%	10 Apr, 2:09 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
56,924.11	+1,028.79
Percentage	Time
+1.84%	10 Apr, 3:45 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates

Australian Dollar	195.05	198.10
Australian Dollar	194.89	201.40
Bahrain Dinar	729.05	739.15
Canadian Dollar	200.39	206.05
China Yuan	36.45	37.55
Danish Krone	43.25	43.65
Euro	327.06	331.05
Hong Kong Dollar	35.20	36.20
Indian Rupee	2.05	2.25
Japanese Yen	1.7375	1.8373
Kuwaiti Dinar	880.50	891.35
Malaysian Ringgit	65.30	66.55
New Zealand \$	157.14	162.25
Norwegians Krone	27.65	27.95
Omani Riyal	723.70	733.90
Qatari Riyal	71.21	72.50
Saudi Riyal	74.60	75.5
Singapore Dollar	217.70	221.50
Swedish Korona	30.20	30.50
Swiss Franc	355	358.85
Thai Bhat	8	8.15
U.A.E Dirham	76.15	77.25
UK Pound Sterling	375.65	380.74
US Dollar	279	280.10

Zafar Bakhtawari hails CDA Chairman for addressing key public demand with fee cut

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Welcoming CDA's decision to reduce the transfer fee from 3 percent to 1 percent, Zafar Bakhtawari, Secretary General of the United Business Group (UBG), said that this was a long-standing and important demand of the citizens, traders, and business community of Islamabad, and by fulfilling it, CDA has taken a wise and people-friendly step. He said that Chairman CDA Sohail Ashraf deserves appreciation for demonstrating seriousness and practical vision by understanding public concerns and responding to them in a timely manner.

Zafar Bakhtawari stated that in the past, the high transfer fee had slowed down the process of property transfers and had badly affected sale and purchase activity.



However, with this reduction, business activity will increase, public confidence will be restored, and the real estate sector along with its allied industries will regain momentum. He said that this decision

would also increase CDA's revenue, as the lower rate would encourage more legal transactions and property transfers. He further said that this initiative has projected a positive image of the new CDA leadership and has sent a clear message to the people of Islamabad that Chairman CDA Sohail Ashraf is serious about resolving public issues and fully understands the importance of business growth and economic activity.

Zafar Bakhtawari congratulated the CDA Board on this excellent decision and expressed hope that such people-friendly measures would continue in the future. He also called for a reduction in the high tax rates imposed on the business community so that commercial activities may grow more rapidly and the economy may move forward on stronger foundations.

PCDMA, Ecommerce Gateway Ink MoU for Chemical & Coating Asia Exhibition



Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Pakistan Chemicals & Dyes Merchants Association (PCDMA) and Ecommerce Gateway Pakistan have entered into a strategic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to jointly organize Chemical & Coating Asia — a dedicated industry exhibition to be held alongside the 23rd International Trade & Industrial Fair (ITIF Asia) at Karachi Expo Center from May 12 to 14, 2026.

The MoU was signed by PCDMA Chairman Salim Valimhammad and Ecommerce Gateway Pakistan President Dr. Khurshid Nizam, marking what both parties described as a significant step towards strength-

ening institutional engagement and promoting Pakistan's chemical and coatings sector on a broader platform.

The ceremony was attended by PCDMA Vice Chairman M. Shariq Feroz, Ecommerce Gateway Group Vice President Muhammad Umair Nizam, Fairs & Exhibition Convener Nasiruddin Fateh Kukda, Ex-Chairmen Sheikh M. Nadeem and Khawaja Arif Kapoor, ITIF Asia Project Lead Shuja Uddin Siddiqui, Executive Committee Members Ahmed Jahangir and Imran Ashraf, Ex-Vice Chairmen Nadeem Aftab and Shahid Bashir, and Chemical Council Member M. Saleem Mukati, among other senior representatives.

Traditional Ice Dessert

ISLAMABAD: A vendor selling Gola Ganda (shaved ice desserts) at local market in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Chery Master Pakistan Starts Early Deliveries of Tiggo 8 PHEV

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Chery Master Pakistan has commenced deliveries of its Tiggo 8 Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicle (PHEV) to pre-registered customers, as per the April 2026 delivery timeline, the company said on Friday.

The Tiggo 8 PHEV was opened for advance bookings in January 2026 at an introductory price of Rs10,999,000 but following the strong demand, the price was revised to Rs11,299,000 effective February 1, 2026.

The early rollout marks a key milestone for Chery Master Pakistan, reflecting execution on committed delivery timelines and readiness across production, supply chain, and aftersales infrastructure. The company said the deliveries are aligned with its "HELLO CHERY" customer-first approach, focused on technology-led ownership and service readiness from day one.

Positioned as Pakistan's only 7-seater plug-in hybrid in the D-SUV segment, the Tiggo 8 PHEV is powered by Chery Super Hybrid (CSH) technology. The vehicle



produces 496 horsepower and 735 Nm of torque, offering an electric-only range of up to 90 kilometres and a combined driving range of approximately 1,200 kilometres.

The SUV integrates a range of premium and technology features, including a three-row cabin configuration, advanced

infotainment system, and Sony sound system. Interior highlights include a "Queen Co-Pilot" zero-gravity passenger seat with massage functionality, heating and ventilation options, and a cabin with 78.9% soft-wrap materials. A driver-focused audio system is also included.

PSCA's Advanced Facial Recognition Technology Reunites Missing Special Child with Family After 03 Months

City Desk

LAHORE: The Punjab Safe Cities Authority (PSCA) has successfully recovered a missing special child from Lahore, three months after he was reported missing from Sheikhupura, using its advanced facial recognition system. The child has been safely reunited with his parents after completion of all legal formalities.

According to PSCA's spokesperson, the case was registered at the Virtual Child Safety Center immediately after the child went missing.

The child's photographs and complete details were promptly integrated into the advanced facial recog-

inition system to aid in the search operation. The breakthrough came when Safe City cameras installed at Akbari Gate in Lahore detected the child's presence and generated an instant alert.

The spokesperson revealed that the system identified the child with a 95 percent match accuracy. Following the alert, a Virtual Patrolling Officer used live tracking to guide field teams to the exact location. Responding swiftly, the field police team conducted a timely operation and safely recovered the child.

After fulfilling all necessary legal and verification procedures, the child was handed over to his parents.

Pakistan's diplomacy resonates globally: Sardar Tahir Mehmood

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Sardar Tahir Mehmood, has said that Pakistan has played its role effectively in facilitating the recent ceasefire between the United States and Iran, reflecting the country's growing stature as a responsible and credible mediator on the global stage.

Welcoming the visiting delegates and stakeholders he expressed optimism that their engagements will yield results in form of a permanent ceasefire leading to

wider peace and tranquility. He noted that Islamabad, through its sincere and timely efforts, helped create a conducive diplomatic environment that paved the way for de-escalation and dialogue between the two sides.

Sardar Tahir Mehmood concluded by expressing hope that Pakistan will continue to play a constructive and leading role in global peace efforts and will firmly emerge as an enabler of long-term diplomatic solutions, reinforcing its position as a responsible and influential player on the world stage.

Supernet Secures Multi-Million Dollar Cybersecurity Contract from Leading Bank

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Supernet Technologies Limited has secured a multi-million US dollar cybersecurity contract through its subsidiary, Supernet Secure Solutions Pvt Limited, further strengthening its footprint in Pakistan's financial services sector, the company said in a notification to the Pakistan Stock Exchange.

The five-year contract has been awarded by one of Pakistan's largest banks and marks a continuation of a long-term engagement between the two entities. This is the second consecutive mandate, following the successful execution of an earlier five-year contract awarded in 2021.

Under the renewed agreement, Supernet

Secure will deploy an upgraded and more advanced cybersecurity solution aimed at strengthening the bank's digital infrastructure.

The project includes the implementation of endpoint security systems designed to protect more than 10,000 employees nationwide, addressing one of the most critical areas of cyber risk for financial institutions.

The company said the contract value falls in the multi-million US dollar range, indicating a significant addition to its cybersecurity revenue pipeline over the next five years.

In addition to this mandate, Supernet Secure is already engaged with the same client on a three-year privileged access management solution and has previously supported the bank's international operations through



SUPERNET GLOBAL
Your Digital Partner

various cybersecurity services.

Market observers note that repeat contracts of this scale reflect strong client retention and growing demand for advanced cybersecurity solutions within Pakistan's banking sector, which continues to expand its digital footprint amid rising cyber threats.

The company stated that the financial impact of the newly awarded contract is expected to remain positive over the life of the agreement, contributing to its long-term growth trajectory.

The development comes as Supernet Technologies continues to expand its presence in high-value digital infrastructure and cybersecurity segments, positioning itself as a key technology partner for enterprise and financial sector clients.

ADB says Pakistan's economy poised to grow, forecasts growth at 3.5% in FY2026

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is expected to sustain its economic performance in the medium term, with real gross domestic product (GDP) growth forecast at 3.5% in fiscal year 2026 and 4.5% in FY2027, from 3.1% in FY2025, as manufacturing recovers and investment increases, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) said in a report release on Friday.

According to the Asian Development Outlook (ADO) April 2026, ADB's annual flagship economic publication, Pakistan's economy recovered as growth strengthened and inflation declined in fiscal year 2025 (FY2025, ended 30 June 2025), supported by tight macroeconomic policies and progress in economic reform.

"Pakistan's economy has stabilized and begun to show stronger momentum, supported by progress in implementing key economic reforms amid a challenging global environment," said ADB Country Director for Pakistan Emma Fan.

"Growth is expected to continue in 2026 and 2027, but downside risks are significant. Sustained reform efforts are critical to preserve the growth momentum and bolster fiscal and external buffers against global shocks," Emma Fan added.

Average inflation is projected to rise to 6.4% in FY2026 and 6.5% in FY2027 due to surging oil prices and disrupted trade routes amid the Middle East conflict, as oil and gas constitute a large share of Pakistan's imports. The central bank is expected to ease monetary policy cautiously to stabilize inflation within its medium-term target range of 5%-7%.

A prolonged Middle East conflict could weigh significantly on the economic outlook by slowing growth through higher energy and fertilizer costs, weakening agricultural and industrial output, reducing remittances, and widening the current account deficit.

Adherence to the economic adjustment program is therefore critical to strengthening resilience and enabling sustainable and inclusive growth.

Mahnoor, Sehrish win medals at SRAFTKL International Junior Squash Championship

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD, APRIL 10, 2026: Pakistan's Mahnoor Ali claimed gold medal while her sister Sehrish Ali clinched bronze medal at the SRAFTKL International Junior Open Squash Championship in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia the other day.

Mahnoor Ali defeated Malaysians number 1 and Asian number Maisra

Kharul Nizam of Malaysia 12-10, 13-11, 6-11, 11-7 in the final of under-15 category to take gold medal.

Similarly, Sehrish Ali secured bronze medal in the under-15 category while Mehwish Ali finished 7th in the under-19 category in this Asian Junior Super Series event.

"We are immensely proud of Mahnoor, Sehrish, and Mehwish for the pride they continue to bring to Pakistan. At



Indus Motor Company, we believe that investing in young talent is investing in the nation's future. We remain committed to supporting their journey to the very top," said Ali Asghar Jamali, CEO of Indus Motor Company, which sponsored these sisters.

He added that IMC has been a steady

fast supporter of these squash-playing Ali sisters, recognizing their extraordinary talent and dedication from an early age.

"The Company's sponsorship is a reflection of its broader commitment to empowering Pakistan's youth and nurturing sporting excellence at the national and global level," said Jamali.

Saad Habib Malik Dominates Field to Clinch 4th Rumanza Open Amateur Title

Sports Desk

MULTAN: The 4th Rumanza Open Golf Championship concluded its amateur category in spectacular fashion today at the prestigious Rumanza Golf & Country Club (RGCC). Over three days of intense competition, 30 of the nation's top amateur golfers battled the challenging course, but it was Saad Habib Malik who stole the spotlight with a masterclass in consistency and precision.

Championship Highlights

Saad Habib Malik secured the championship title with an authoritative 8-stroke lead, finishing with an impressive total score of 208 (-8). Malik's road to victory was paved by three remarkable rounds:

- Round 1: 69
- Round 2: 68
- Round 3: 71



His dominant performance left the rest of the field vying for the runner-up position, which was ultimately claimed

by Abdul Moez Khan, who finished with a solid total score of 216 (Even Par).
Leaderboard Standings

The competition remained fierce throughout the weekend, with several prominent golfers showing strong form. Notable finishes included:

Numan Ilyas and Muhammad Abdullah Khan, who both finished at +2 (218).

Shahmeer Maajid finishing closely behind at +3 (219).

Abdullah Anser Raja, who remained a key contender throughout the 54-hole event.

Amin Sisters Sweep Ladies Category
In the Ladies Amateur category, the leaderboard was a family affair. Sara Amin delivered a stellar performance to claim the title with a total score of 214. She was followed by her sister, Ramin Amin who secured the second spot with a score of 228 showcasing the rising talent within the women's amateur circuit.

Airport Gymkhana Clinched Riazuddin Memorial Cricket Tournament Title

Zone One set a good example by organizing tournament in the name of Riazuddin: Touseef Siddiqui

Sports Desk

KARACHI: Zone One set a good example by organizing tournament in the name of Test Umpire Riazuddin. Riazuddin has many services in Umpiring which will always be remembered, expressed these views Touseef Siddiqui Acting Secretary



Regional Cricket Association Karachi Addressing the Closing Ceremony of Riazuddin Memorial Cricket Tournament Organized by Zone One in the name of late Riazuddin. He further said that I had a relationship with Riaz from the beginning and he always Cooperate with the Association in organizing Tournaments.

On this occasion, President of the ceremony Khalid Nafees Chairman Tournament Committee RCAF in his Speech paid tribute to Riazuddin's services in umpiring and said that he performed umpiring duties not only in Pakistan but also in Bangladesh Premier league. He said that we will continue our efforts for the promotion of Cricket under the leadership of Nadeem Omar.

At the end Chief Guest Touseef Siddiqui and President of the ceremony Khalid Nafees Distributed the Prizes among the players. Winner trophy was received by Airport Gymkhana Skipper Zubair Dilawar and runner trophy was received by Liaquatabad Eaglets Captain Taha Mehmood.

The ceremony was also attended by Assistant Secretary Wisal Ansari, Zone-I President Ajmal Naseeb, Zone-VII President Mazhar Ali Awan, Zone-I Treasurer Tariq Hafeez, Media Coordinator Dr Arif Hafeez, Coach Tahir Mehmood, Wasimuddin, Shahroz Alvi and other dignitaries.

Vaisakhi Mela 2026...

Continued from Page 4

been witnessed in transport, with the launch of a special "Luxury Shuttle Service" to move pilgrims between cities.

In the current global landscape, security remains a challenge, yet the Punjab government has turned this challenge into an opportunity through the effective use of Information Technology. CCTV monitoring on the pattern of "Safe Cities," intelligence sharing, and a foolproof security plan have sent a clear message: Pakistan is the safest country for them. At the Wagah Border, increasing the number of immigration counters and providing specialized training to staff has completely eliminated the frustration of long wait times.

The unparalleled success of this festival is a result of the tireless coordination between provincial departments—Aauqaf, Police,

Tourism, District Administration, and Health. The digital synergy witnessed between these departments has established new standards of governance.

The brilliance of Vaisakhi Mela 2026 is a loud proclamation that under Maryam Nawaz Sharif's leadership, Punjab has become a province "free from prejudice and equipped for progress." This festival tells the world that in Pakistan, minorities enjoy all the rights, religious freedoms, and protections imagined in a civilized society. The Chief Minister's vision—"We must build bridges that connect hearts, not walls"—is today a living reality in the colors of Vaisakhi.

Punjab's Message: Let Love Reach Everywhere!

The writer is a Deputy Director in DGPR Punjab and can be reached at kiranjazabutt@gmail.com

Why Pakistan Brokered the US-Iran Ceasefire



Zhang Chaozhe, Xiang Sihong

April 8, 2026. With less than an hour and a half remaining before the "deadline" for military action set by US President Donald Trump, the United States and Iran separately announced their acceptance of a ceasefire proposal put forward by Pakistan. The two sides are scheduled to begin two weeks of negotiations on April 10 in Islamabad, the Pakistani capital. Iran's Ambassador to Pakistan, Reza Moghadam, described Pakistan's mediation as "positive and productive," noting that the mediation efforts are entering a "critical and sensitive" stage.

What is the regional backdrop to Pakistan's mediation? What motivates Pakistan to actively mediate? What are the likely trends in post-ceasefire negotiations? Sichuan International Communication Center invited Zhang Chaozhe, Director of the Pakistan Study Center at Sichuan University and Associate Research Fellow at the China-South Asia Research Center, to provide analysis.

I. The Regional Background of Pakistan's Mediation

The US-Israeli war against Iran began with Operation Midnight Hammer launched by the US and Israel against Iran in June 2025. By the end of February 2026, the conflict had escalated once again. The war has now lasted more than 40 days and reached a stalemate. Although Iran has suffered heavy casualties and property damage, Mojtaba Khamenei, son of the late Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has smoothly assumed the supreme leadership of Iran, consolidating domestic unity and capacity

for resistance. At the same time, Iran has blockaded the Strait of Hormuz, causing global energy prices to soar. The US-Israeli goal of overthrowing Iran's regime has not been achieved, and their actions have drawn widespread international criticism.

As a neighbor to the Middle East, the sole nuclear-armed state in the Islamic world, and a country heavily dependent on energy imports from the region, Pakistan has a strong desire to see an early end to the war. Against this backdrop, Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff, General Asim Munir, has become a key liaison between the US and Iran — using his direct personal relationship with Trump (a telephone communication channel established during the India-Pakistan firefights in May 2025) to relay messages between the two sides.

On March 31, Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Mohammad Ishaq Dar, made an urgent visit to China, and together with the Chinese side issued a "five-point Initiative." Its core elements can be summarized as "cease, talks, and ensure": an immediate cessation of hostilities, a start of peace talks as soon as possible, security of nonmilitary targets, security of shipping lanes; and primacy of the United Nations Charter. China's just position and its support for Pakistan played an important role in the US and Iran's acceptance of Pakistan's ceasefire proposal.

II. Pakistan's Multiple Motivations for Active Mediation

Pakistan's proactive mediation is by no means impulsive; rather, it is the inevitable result of multiple strategic considerations.

FIRST, deep historical tradition and unique advantages. Pakistan is arguably the most qualified mediator in the Islamic world. In 1971, Pakistan helped then-US Presidential Envoy Henry Kissinger secretly travel via Beijing, paving the way for Richard Nixon's visit to China and the establishment of Sino-US diplomatic relations. In 2020, Pakistan facilitated the US-Taliban peace talks and the withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan. This cross-ideological and cross-geopolitical mediation capability is unique in the Islamic world. More importantly, Pakistan maintains close relations with both the US and Iran: Pakistan has long-

standing military cooperation with the US, and General Munir enjoys a good personal friendship with Trump; Pakistan shares nearly 1,000 kilometers of border with Iran, and nearly one-fifth of Pakistan's 240 million population are Shia Muslims.

SECOND, China's strategic support and coordination. Pakistan's mediation is not a solo effort. The "Five-Point Initiative" issued during Dar's March 31 visit to China is both a vivid manifestation of the China-Pakistan All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership and a source of strong political support for Pakistan's mediation. China has stressed that the Five-Point Initiative "is open and welcomes the response and participation of all countries and international organizations." The joint issuance of the Five-Point Initiative provides systemic strength to a smaller country's mediation efforts, preventing them from being overwhelmed by major-power rivalry. In the US-Israeli-Iranian war, Pakistan seeks Chinese mediation for the Pakistan-Afghanistan border crisis, allowing it to focus on Middle East affairs — highlighting the highly efficient strategic coordination between China and Pakistan. This model of collaboration between a "regional power and a global power" greatly enhances the legitimacy and influence of Pakistan's mediation.

THIRD, the best option under the Saudi nuclear protection agreement. In September 2025, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia signed a Joint Strategic Defense Agreement, stipulating that "any attack on either party shall be considered an attack on both parties," with its core principle similar to NATO's Article 5 collective defense clause. Pakistan's Defense Minister Khawaja Asif further stated that Pakistan's nuclear program "can be made available" to Saudi Arabia — in effect providing a nuclear umbrella for Saudi Arabia. In reality, Pakistan's "nuclear protection" is more a signal to India and Israel. However, after the war broke out, Iran designated Saudi oil facilities as "legitimate targets." Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister issued a strong warning that "patience is not limitless." Saudi-Iranian relations became tense. This means that if Saudi Arabia were to formally enter the war, Pakistan would be forced to make a painful choice between honoring its nuclear



security commitment to Saudi Arabia and avoiding being drawn into a war against Iran. Proactively mediating to promote a ceasefire is the only way out of this dilemma.

FOURTH, urgent domestic energy security and economic survival needs. Pakistan relies on imports for over 80% of its oil needs, with an annual energy import bill of \$16-18 billion. As of March 2026, its foreign exchange reserves stood at only about \$21.7 billion. After the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, international oil prices surged above \$100 per barrel, and Pakistan's monthly oil import bill jumped to \$600 million. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was forced to introduce a series of austerity measures: a 50% cut in fuel subsidies for official vehicles (excluding ambulances and buses); 50% of public sector employees to work from home (excluding those providing essential services); and a 20% reduction in government department spending. Under such grim circumstances, pushing for a US-Iran ceasefire and the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz is not only a diplomatic achievement for Pakistan but also a necessity for its economic survival.

FIFTH, projection of middle-power ambition and domestic authority. Due to his performance in the India-Pakistan conflict and the adoption of the 27th Constitutional Amendment, General Syed Asim Munir has been awarded the rank of Field Marshal and the position of Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, as well as command over nuclear forces. This

mediation effort has become his international debut, "stepping from behind the curtain into the spotlight." Successfully brokering a deal would not only consolidate his domestic authority but also greatly enhance Pakistan's voice in the Islamic world and globally. As the sole nuclear-armed state in the Islamic world, Pakistan has long aspired to become a true "middle power" — playing an irreplaceable balancing role between the US and China, between Saudi Arabia and Iran, and between East and West. If this mediation leads to a historic peace agreement, it will undoubtedly establish Pakistan as a global mediation power.

III. Ceasefire Is Easy, Peace Is Hard

Although a ceasefire agreement has been reached, the prospects for future US-Iran negotiations are not optimistic.

First, Trump's unpredictability is a major variable. Trump has repeatedly claimed that the US military "completely destroyed" Iran's nuclear capabilities, but a classified assessment by the Defense Intelligence Agency reportedly showed that the airstrikes only "delayed Iran's nuclear program by a few months." On April 7, just one day before accepting the ceasefire proposal, Trump issued a new threat to Iran, saying "Tonight, the whole civilization will die, never to be brought back again." Given Trump's style, if negotiations hit a snag, he could easily resort to military pressure again to divert domestic political attention.

Second, Iran's sense of precaution against "being deceived" is unprece-

dently heightened. In recent years, Iran has been deceived multiple times by the US, with the US launching attacks against Iran while the two sides were negotiating. After Iran's former Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was killed in US-Israeli airstrikes, Iran has become highly vigilant toward any US proposal. An Iranian official said earlier that the prevailing view in Iran is that "the US request for negotiations is another deception, aimed at launching another attack when we are off guard." Iran has now proposed a 10-point plan, with core demands including the lifting of all US sanctions, the release of frozen assets, and the withdrawal of US combat forces, while stressing that "negotiations are a continuation of the battlefield" — indicating that Iran is prepared to continue fighting if talks fail.

Third, Israel's disruptive intentions cannot be ignored. Even after the ceasefire took effect, Israel continued its strikes on Iran. Israel has expressed concern over the US acceptance of Pakistan's proposed temporary ceasefire, claiming it still has more targets on its list and seeking to achieve its objectives through military action in Iran.

For Israel, the ultimate goal is to completely destroy Iran's nuclear capabilities. Any diplomatic arrangement that would allow Iran to make a "dignified exit" runs counter to its strategic interests. During the two weeks of negotiations, Israel is highly likely to disrupt the peace process by intensifying military pressure.

In summary, Pakistan has demonstrated impressive diplomatic skill and strategic resolve in its mediation efforts. However, whether it can truly pull the US and Iran out of the quagmire of war remains to be seen. The two-week ceasefire window is both a valuable opportunity and potentially just the calm before the storm.

About Author:

Zhang Chaozhe: Director of the Pakistan Study Center at Sichuan University and Associate Research Fellow at the China-South Asia Research Center. His research focuses on major-power relations and South Asian affairs.

Xiang Sihong: Assistant at the Pakistan Study Center, Sichuan University

Israeli airstrike

People hold the bodies of children who died in an Israeli airstrike in the southern Gaza Strip city of Rafah on Oct. 8, 2023.



File Photo: Khaled Omar/Xinhua

Netanyahu signals war with Iran 'unfinished' business, despite Pak-mediated ceasefire backed by US

APP

NEW YORK: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said that the war with Iran is not over and remains "unfinished business" as many of Israel's objectives have not been achieved, according to a report in The New York Times.

Following a Pakistan-brokered ceasefire that went into effect around April 7-8, 2026, he said in a televised address to Israeli public, that the "double existential threat" of Iran's ballistic missiles and its

nuclear programme has been "distanced," he said, but not eliminated. The Times pointed out that his address was less about victory than unfinished business.

"We still have goals to complete," Netanyahu said, "and we will achieve them either by agreement or by the resumption of fighting."

He was speaking at the end of the deadliest day in Lebanon since the resumption of hostilities last month between Israel and Hezbollah fighters across



Israel's northern border.

On Thursday, under international pressure to dial down the violence, Netanyahu said he had instructed his government to open talks with Lebanon "as soon as possible."

The negotiations would focus, he said, on establishing

peaceful relations between Israel and Lebanon, and the disarmament of Hezbollah, which is also a significant political force in the country.

Forty days after Israel and the United States launched their military offensive against Iran, life in Israel was getting back to normal, the Times said.

"While Netanyahu and many other Israelis have praised the military's accomplishments in downgrading their enemies' capabilities, so far there have been no total

victories or lasting diplomatic resolutions," the Times commented.

At the same time, it said, Netanyahu's domestic political timetable is pressing, with elections due before the end of October.

"914 days of war, over 2000 killed, tens of thousands wounded, 4 open fronts and — 0 decisive wins!" Avigdor Liberman, the leader of a right-wing Israeli opposition party, sniped on social media, tallying up the account on Israel's side.

Pakistan Navy rescues 18 crew in high-seas operation

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Navy has rescued 18 crew members, including several foreign nationals, from a distressed merchant vessel in the North Arabian Sea, officials said on Friday.

According to a navy statement, the operation was launched after a distress call from MV Gold Autumn, located about 200 nautical miles (around 370 kilo-

metres) off Pakistan's coast.

The Pakistan Maritime Security Agency activated its Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre and initiated an immediate response. Pakistan Navy Ship Hunain, already on patrol in the area, was tasked to assist the vessel.

Naval teams conducted a coordinated search and rescue operation, providing medical aid, assisting in fire-fighting efforts, and assessing damage to the vessel before

safely evacuating all crew members.

Those rescued included nationals of China, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Vietnam and Indonesia. The crew has been transported to Karachi for medical care and will be repatriated to their respective countries.

The Navy said the operation highlights its readiness to respond swiftly to maritime emergencies and its commitment to human-



itarian assistance within its area of responsibility.

President congratulates Pakistan women's football team

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari Friday congratulated Pakistan women's football team on historic success in FIFA Series 2026.

He said Pakistan women's football team's outstanding performance and historic 8-0 victory are a source of pride for the nation.

"Players demonstrated their skills, teamwork and determination at the global level," he said adding, "Women players' achievements are a means of promoting sports in the country and boosting the morale of the youth."

He said, "Promoting women's sports in Pakistan and patronizing talented players is a national priority."

"Team's success reflects the bright future of women's football in Pakistan," he added.



Ojhri Camp tragedy a painful chapter in Pakistan's history: Shahid Khaqan Abbasi

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Central Vice President of Awaam Pakistan Party, Chaudhry Inam Zafar, and Additional General Secretary Hafiz Usman Abbasi stated that the Ojhri Camp tragedy of April 10, 1988, remains one of the most tragic and unforgettable incidents in Pakistan's history, which brought deep sorrow and loss to the nation. During the tragedy, Muhammad Khaqan Abbasi, the father of former Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, was also martyred. His services to the country and the nation will always be remembered.

In a joint statement, they



Air Force Air Commodore. They further said that the incident occurred when a fire broke out in an ammunition depot in Islamabad, triggering a series of explosions, and a rocket struck Muhammad Khaqan Abbasi's vehicle, resulting in his martyrdom on the spot. The leaders added that the Ojhri Camp tragedy was not only a personal loss but also a major national disaster in which many precious lives were lost and irreparable damage was caused to the country. They paid rich tribute to Muhammad Khaqan Abbasi for his services to the nation, saying his sacrifice will always be remembered with honor and respect.

Published by: Almass Ayoub Sabir from Zero Point Printers Rawalpindi

PM pays tribute to framers of Constitution of Pakistan

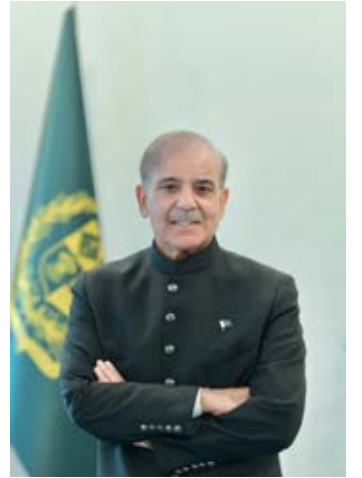
City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday paid special tribute to the framers of the Constitution, saying that the unanimously adopted Constitution of Pakistan on April 10, 1973 laid the foundation of a parliamentary democratic system of governance in the country and established a strong institutional framework for the state of Pakistan.

He said the Constitution was a sacred contract between the people and the state, which defined the legal, moral, and administrative rights and responsibilities of both.

"Today, we are celebrating the approval of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan with a spirit of national pride," he said in his message on Constitution Day.

The Constitution of 1973 is the guardian of the fundamental human rights of all citizens of Paki-



stan. This constitutional document not only elaborates these fundamental human rights in detail but also ensures a legal framework for their provision, the prime minister remarked.

President PML-N Nawaz Sharif & CM Maryam Meet Governor Sindh Nihal Hashmi



Bureau Report

LAHORE: President Pakistan Muslim League-N, Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, and Chief Minister Punjab, Maryam Nawaz Sharif met Governor Sindh, Nihal Hashmi to discuss matters of mutual

interest and overall national situation. Governor Sindh congratulated them on Pakistan's unprecedented role in brokering Iran-US ceasefire. He also expressed gratitude to Quaid PML-N Muhammad Nawaz Sharif for his vote of confidence.

Aleem Khan welcomes Iran-US talks in Islamabad, lauds leadership's efforts

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan on Friday welcomed the commencement of negotiations between Iran and the United States in Islamabad, terming it a positive development for global peace.

He extended a warm welcome to the US Vice President and the Iranian leadership on their arrival in Paki-

stan, stating that Islamabad has become the center of global political attention, reflecting Pakistan's effective and balanced diplomacy.

In his message on X, the minister said that due to the excellent leadership and successful diplomatic strategy of the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir, Pakistan's role was being appreciated worldwide.

Sardar Yousaf hails Pakistan's role in averting war, urges prayers for lasting peace

News Desk

ABBOTTABAD: Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Inter-faith Harmony Sardar Muhammad Yousaf has termed the successful prevention of a potential regional war as a moment of "great joy, honour, and respect" for Pakistan, attributing the achievement to both strategic leadership and divine blessings.

Talking to the media on Friday, he said that Allah Almighty has blessed the people, government, and armed forces of Pakistan, enabling the country to avert a looming conflict that could have engulfed not only the region but the entire world.

He praised the leadership of Prime

Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Chief of Army Staff Asim Munir and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, stating that their hard work and strategic role earned the confidence of all parties involved, leading to the ceasefire and the initiation of negotiations.

Sardar Yousaf noted that the trust placed in Pakistan's leadership was a matter of pride for the nation, adding that countries such as the United States and Iran had also expressed confidence, further strengthening the diplomatic process.

Expressing the hope that the temporary ceasefire would turn into a permanent solution, he congratulated the nation and emphasized the importance of unity and collective prayers.