



# Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ

ہم سے تیسریں سیرتیں بیان کیا انہوں نے کہا ہم سے کہیں نہ سیرتیں بیان کیا انہوں نے کہا ان سے عقل نے بیان کیا ان سے زہری نے ان سے ان سے سب سے اور ان سے ابو ہریرہ رضی اللہ عنہ نے کہ نبی کریم صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے فرمایا میں کو ایک سوڑے سے دو بار روگ نہیں لگ سکتا (صحیح بخاری، حدیث نمبر 6133)

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## Iran ready to deliver bitter defeat to enemy: Mojtaba Khamenei

Iran's Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei has said that Iranian forces are standing firm against American plans. In a statement shared on social media, he stated that Iran's navy is fully prepared to deliver a "new and bitter defeat" to its enemies.



## Trump says Iran cannot blackmail US over Strait of Hormuz

US President Donald Trump has said that Iran is seeking to close the Strait of Hormuz again, but warned that Tehran "cannot blackmail" the United States. Speaking to media in the Oval Office, Trump said talks with Iran were progressing positively, reiterating that the US would not be pressured over the Strait of Hormuz issue.

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## Preparation of Second Round

ISLAMABAD: A police personnel walks past the billboard displayed near Ministry of Interior ahead of possible 2nd round of Iran-US Talks, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

## PM departs for Pakistan after concluding his three-nation visit

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Saturday, departed for Pakistan from Antalya, Turkey, after successfully concluding his visits to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey.



bilateral ties, Pakistan's efforts to promote regional peace and key regional and global developments.

At Antalya airport, the prime minister and his delegation were seen off by senior Turkish officials, including Ambassador Tolga Bermek, Ambassador Nilufer Kaygisiz, Member of Parliament Burhan Kayaturk and Pakistan's Ambassador to Turkey Yousaf Junaid, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

During the three-day visit, the prime minister held high-level meetings with the leadership of all three brotherly countries. He also interacted with the global leaders participating in the Antalya Diplomacy Forum.

Discussions during the visit focused on strengthening

The Pakistani delegation accompanying the prime minister included Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaulah Tarar, Special Assistant to PM Tariq Fatemi and Prime Minister's spokesperson for international media Musharraf Zaidi.

## Second round of US-Iran talks expected in Islamabad on Monday

Reuters

ISLAMABAD: A second round of talks between the United States and Iran is expected to be held in Islamabad on Monday, according to reports citing Iranian sources.

Delegations from both countries are expected to arrive in Islamabad on Sunday to reach an understanding on Iran's nuclear programme and de-escalate tensions in the Middle East.

Pakistan earlier hosted the first round of negotiations between the two warring sides last week. However, the talks ended without any progress.

Pakistan's leaders, including Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Army Chief Field Marshal Asim Munir, have been holding talks with Iranian officials as well as regional countries, including Qatar and Turkey, to reach an agreement.

The talks are expected to focus on Iran's nuclear programme, sanctions relief, and broader regional security concerns, sources said.

The United States is seeking limits on Iran's uranium enrichment and nuclear facilities, while Tehran maintains that its nuclear programme is a sovereign right and has indicated it would only consider temporary

restrictions under a deal. A previous round of negotiations held last weekend ended without agreement.

The latest talks come as a Pakistan-brokered ceasefire arrangement is due to expire early next week.

Neither Washington nor Tehran has formally confirmed the Islamabad meeting, although US President Donald Trump has suggested that nego-

tiations could take place over the weekend and indicated progress in discussions without providing details.

A White House official, briefing reporters during a presidential flight, said Trump would make remarks from the Oval Office on Monday morning, where he is expected to comment further on developments, though no specifics were disclosed.

## Field Marshal Asim Munir concludes Iran visit, calls for regional peace

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshal Asim Munir concluded a three-day official visit to Iran on Saturday, during which he held high-level talks with senior Iranian officials.

According to a statement issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), Field Marshal Asim Munir, accompanied by Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi and a delegation, held meetings with senior Iranian officials.

Field Marshal Asim Munir held a high-level engagement



with Iranian President Dr Masoud Pezeshkian.

He also held separate meetings with Speaker of the National

Assembly Baqer Qalibaf, Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, and Commander of Khatam ul Anbiya Headquarters Major

General Ali Abdollahi. The discussions were focused on bringing sustainable peace to the region, with particular emphasis on the evolving regional security environment, ongoing diplomatic engagements, and collaborative measures aimed at promoting enduring peace and stability in the region.

Field Marshal Asim Munir underscored the need for dialogue, de-escalation, and peaceful resolution of outstanding issues through sustained diplomatic engagements.

During the meetings, Field

Marshal Asim Munir expressed deep appreciation for the warm hospitality extended by the Iranian leadership and the people of Iran, the ISPR added.

He conveyed sincere regards and best wishes from the president, the prime minister, and the people of Pakistan to the Iranian leadership, reaffirming Pakistan's desire to further strengthen the historic and brotherly ties between the two countries.

The visit reflects Pakistan's unwavering resolve to facilitate a negotiated settlement to the Middle East conflict and to promote peace, stability, and prosperity in the region.

## UNICEF denounces killing of water truck drivers in Gaza, suspends operations

Wafa

RAMALLAH: The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) expressed outrage after Israeli fire killed two truck drivers contracted by the organization to deliver clean water to families in the Gaza Strip.

In a statement, the organization said that the incident occurred during a routine water delivery operation on Friday at the Al-Man-soura water tanker station in

northern Gaza, which supplies the city with water. Two other people were reported injured in the attack.

Following the incident, UNICEF announced the suspension of its activities at the site and called on the Israeli authorities to open an investigation.

The organization stressed the need to protect humanitarian workers, civilians, and vital water infrastructure under international humanitarian law.

## Pakistan repays \$2bn UAE loan, says reserves remain stable

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has repaid \$2 billion to the United Arab Emirates, the central bank confirmed on Saturday, as part of a broader plan to clear \$3.5 billion in debt within April.

The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) said the payment had been made, adding that a further \$1 billion is due on April 23.

Despite the large outflow, the central bank said the

repayment would not impact the country's foreign exchange reserves.

"Arrangements for external payments are in place," SBP sources said, stressing that reserves would remain stable and obligations are being met on time.

The latest payment is part of a three-stage schedule approved by Pakistan's leadership to repay the full \$3.5 billion debt to the UAE this month.

Under the plan, \$450 million was paid on April 11, followed by \$2 billion on April 17, while the final \$1 billion instalment is scheduled for April 23.

The loan, originally extended in 2019, was aimed at supporting Pakistan's balance of payments during a period of economic stress. The decision to repay the full amount comes after months of uncertainty, as Abu Dhabi had shifted from annual to monthly loan roll-overs.

## Finance Minister meets citibank, reviews capital market strategy and programme progress

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, held a productive meeting with representatives of Citibank on the sidelines of the World Bank-IMF Spring Meetings 2026.

During the meeting, the Finance Minister informed the Citi team that Pakistan has successfully concluded a Staff-Level Agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for the third review under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) and the second review under the Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF), with approval by the IMF Executive Board expected imminently.

Senator Aurangzeb noted that Pakistan has met its external obligations in a timely manner, including the repayment of USD 1.4 billion on its Eurobond during the current

month. He also acknowledged the continued and steadfast financial support extended by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

On capital market developments, the Finance Minister informed that Pakistan has successfully re-entered international capital markets with a Eurobond issuance—its first in

four years—reflecting renewed investor confidence in the country's economic outlook. He further apprised the Citi team of progress on Pakistan's inaugural Panda bond issuance, noting that regulatory submissions have been completed and approval is being actively pursued with a view to completing the issuance in May.



# AJK PM Rathore Champions PPP as Party of Workers, Predicts Electoral Victory

**Spokesman Report**

**WAH FACTORY:** The Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, while terming Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) as the party of labourers, farmers and peasants, has said that it was established with the objective of protecting public rights and promoting social justice.

Addressing a public gathering at Wah Factory, he said Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto ended the influence of landowners by introducing the green passport policy, which enabled millions of Pakistanis and Kashmiris to secure employment abroad and support their families.

He described the ZAB's initiative as a key milestone in strengthening the country working class economically. He said Benazir Bhutto continued the same legacy, prioritising democracy, public service and workers' rights, which, he added, keeps PPP supporters aligned with her political ideology.

The prime minister said the current leadership under Asif Ali Zardari, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Faryal



Talpur was working to strengthen the party and address public issues.

He stressed that workers remain PPP's core strength and the main reason for its continued political relevance. Expressing confidence in the

party's electoral prospects, he said PPP, with public support, would form the next government in Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

He reiterated that the party has consistently advocated democracy,

public welfare and the Kashmir cause. Prime Minister Faisal Mumtaz Rathore also urged party workers to expand outreach, strengthen public contact, and intensify preparations for the upcoming elections.

## Azad Kashmir PM Vows Support for Print Media



**Bureau Report**

**ISLAMABAD:** The Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Faisal Mumtaz Rathore has said that journalism and politics were closely interconnected, with the former highlighting public issues and the latter responsible for addressing them. He made these remarks while speaking informally to journalists at the 24th anniversary ceremony of Kashmir Express here today. The prime minister while congratulating Chief Editor Sardar Zahid Tabassum expressed optimism that the newspaper would continue to highlight the Kashmir freedom movement with the same dedication. He reaffirmed the government's commitment to resolving the challenges faced by the print media. Highlighting the role of media, the Prime Minister said state media including the print and electronic media has played a pivotal role in raising issues of public concern and projecting the Kashmir freedom movement internationally. He emphasized that responsible journalism was essential for societal progress and democratic stability. The event was attended by senior journalists, government officials, and members of the Kashmir Journalists Forum.

## Pakistan's proactive diplomacy opens new doors for peace, economic growth

**Bureau Report**

**ISLAMABAD:** Sardar Masood Khan, former Ambassador to the United States, China and the United Nations, and former President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday described the recent easing of tensions in the Strait of Hormuz and ongoing diplomatic engagements as a significant breakthrough, underscoring Pakistan's emergence as a credible and proactive mediator in the evolving US-Iran dynamic.



Reflecting on the latest developments, Ambassador Khan noted that the conditional opening of the Strait of Hormuz, despite continuing restrictions, represents a positive step toward de-escalation. He observed that while both Washington and Tehran have attached conditions to maritime movement, the resumption of commercial shipping has already eased global economic anxieties, particularly by stabilizing oil prices and restoring confidence in international markets.

He emphasized that this breakthrough is not incidental but the result of sustained and strategic diplomatic efforts by Pakistan. "The confidence expressed by Washington is rooted in Pakistan's consistent engagement with both sides," he remarked, highlighting the active role played by Pakistan's leadership in maintaining dialogue and building trust between the two adversaries.

## Kamalia AC Erum Shahzadi Reviews ongoing development projects

**Zafar Chishti**

**TOBA TEK SINGH:** Under the ongoing development projects in the Kamalia city, work on improving infrastructure is progressing rapidly. In areas where the installation and repair of sewerage lines has been completed, the process of laying tough tiles is being carried out in phases after the completion of the prescribed compaction period. The aim of this initiative is not only to make roads more durable but also to provide citizens with better and safer travel facilities. In this regard, Assistant Commissioner Kamalia Erum Shahzadi along with Chief Officer Municipal Committee Ali Raza, Municipal Officer Infrastructure Umar Nawaz Khan and Sub-Engineer Ehsan Yousaf visited various areas of the city in detail. She inspected the ongoing development projects and closely reviewed the pace and quality of the work.

Assistant Commissioner Erum Shahzadi made it clear that any negligence, use of substandard material or unnecessary delay in development work would not be tolerated. She said that all projects are being continuously monitored and transparency is being ensured.

## People are Facing inflation, Unemployment. Worst Load Shedding: Makhdoom Ahmed Mahmood



**Iram Asim**

**MULTAN:** Pakistan Peoples Party South Punjab President and former Governor Punjab Makhdoom Syed Ahmed Mahmood, Senior Vice President South Punjab Khawaja Rizwan Alam, Chief Coordinator South Punjab Abdul Qadir Shaheen while talking to the media said that Pakistan Peoples Party is the only party that has raised its voice for the rights of the poor people in every era.

From the Leader of the People Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto to the Shaheed Democracy Benazir Bhutto, Asif Ali Zardari and Bilawal Bhutto Zardari have not compromised on Pakistan's democracy and national security. They issued identity cards to Pakistanis. They gave the country a unified constitution. They made the country a nuclear power.

They gave autonomy to the provinces through the 18th Amendment. All this is a clear proof of adherence to the manifesto of the PPP. According to the wishes of the people of South Punjab, the PPP has made the claim of giving a separate identity to Wasib a part of its manifesto. The PPP will also implement it so that the resources here are used to solve the problems of the people of Wasib and the farmers, laborers, traders, industrialists, students, women and every section of the society living here are prosperous. He further said that the sacrifices made by Asif Ali Zardari and Bilawal Bhutto Zardari for the survival of Pakistan are not hidden from anyone.

## Protest

**KARACHI:** Members of Civil Society chant slogans during a protest demanding justice for Fahmida Laghari, in the Provincial Capital. Fahmida Laghari, a 23-year-old medical student at Muhammadi University, Mirpurkhas, ended her life following alleged harassment and blackmail by a professor Abid Laghari and others.



Photo: Online

## 27 Farmers Selected for Subsidized Laser Land Levelers in Toba Tek Singh

**Zafar Chishti**

**TOBA TEK SINGH:** Under the farmer-friendly vision of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, the process of providing modern agricultural machinery to farmers is continuing. In this regard, a balloting ceremony for subsidized Laser Land Levelers was held at the District Council Hall.

Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Chaudhry Junaid Anwaar was the chief guest on the occasion, while Additional Deputy Commissioner General (ADCG) Dr. Tariq Usman, Director Agriculture (On Farm Water Management)



Chaudhry Asim Rafiq and Deputy Director Agriculture Shoaib Munir were also present. According to the Department of Agriculture, a total of 312 applications were received for the scheme. Out of these, 57 applications were rejected, while 255 were included in the balloting process. Through a transparent draw, 27 successful farmers were selected.

Addressing the ceremony, Federal Minister Chaudhry Junaid Anwaar said that the Punjab government, under the leadership of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif is bringing revolutionary changes in the agriculture sector through farmer-friendly policies.

## AJK PM Lauds Overseas Kashmiris for Global Advocacy on Kashmir Issue

**Bureau Report**

**ISLAMABAD:** The Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Faisal Mumtaz Rathore has said that overseas Kashmiris were playing an important role in highlighting the Kashmir issue at international level. He made these remarks while speaking to a delegation of overseas Kashmiri representatives who called on him here today. He termed overseas Kashmiris as a valuable asset for the state. The Prime Minister said the government has created a conducive environment for overseas investment.



He said that serious efforts were being made to facilitate overseas Kashmiris and

resolve their problems. He added that overseas Kashmiris' skills and their exper-

tise could be instrumental in the development and prosperity of Azad Kashmir. The

delegation expressed confidence in the Prime Minister's leadership and assured their continued support for the development of the region and the Kashmir cause.

They also invited the Prime Minister to visit the UK, which he delightfully accepted.

The delegation included Chaudhry Shaukat Ali, Chaudhry Tajamul Khan, Raja Niaz Khan, Faizan Ahmed Jaral, and Saad Jaral. Minister for Agriculture and Livestock Chaudhry Ali Shan Soni, DG Political Affairs Aamir Zeeshan Jaral, and others were also present.



**SERVICES**  
**Namaz Timings**

Fajr	4:06 am
Zohr	12:07 pm
Asr	4:48 pm
Maghrib	6:41 pm
Isha	8:09 pm

**EMERGENCY**

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

**ENQUIRY**

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

**HOSPITALS**

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

**DEPARTMENTS**

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

**COMPLAINTS**

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

**Regional Police Faisalabad and Test Zone Diagnostic Laboratory sign MoU**

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: RPO Faisalabad Sohail Akhtar Sukhera has said that an agreement has been signed to provide better and quality medical facilities to police officers and their families. Under the MoU, police officers and their families will be provided with special concessions in health screening tests. According to the agreement, 100 percent concession will be given on health screening tests for families of martyrs and officers who died during service. 45 percent concession will be given on health screening tests for retired and serving police officers and their families. 30 percent concession will be given on medical tests (X-ray, CT scan, MRI, ultrasound) for police officers and their families. RPO Sohail Akhtar Sukhera further said that along with public service, they are also focusing on the welfare of the force. Welfare and welfare measures will continue in the future as well. A healthy police force is the guarantee of better and effective policing. Providing quality and best medical facilities to police officers and their families is the top priority of the police department. Public Relations Officer, Regional Police Office Faisalabad, Dr. Rizwan Bhattani and others were also present on the occasion.

# CM Maryam's six flagship health projects benefit over 21 million patients across Punjab

**Bureau Report**

LAHORE: Six flagship health projects launched under Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif have achieved remarkable success, delivering healthcare services to millions across Punjab.

Field hospitals, Clinics on Wheels, free home delivery of medicines, revamped health centres, community health inspectors, and the stroke management programme continue to serve the public. Over 21 million patients have benefited from field hospitals and Clinics on Wheels, while more than 30,000 patients suffering from diabetes, hepatitis and tuberculosis have received free medicines at their homes.

A total of 1,217 health centres have been revamped, while construction and rehabilitation work on 895 centres is underway in Phase III. Community health inspectors have registered over 63 million individuals across Punjab. Cardiac catheterisation (cath lab)

projects are successfully operational in four district hospitals, where 1,628 procedures have been completed in Jhelum, Jhang, Mianwali and Vehari. Across the province, 251 surveillance assistants are digitally monitoring and tracking district and tehsil hospitals as well as health centres.

A detailed report on the restructuring of the Health and Population Department was presented, with the chief minister expressing satisfaction over performance and appreciating the efforts of the secretary and her team.

During a special meeting chaired by the chief minister, Secretary Health and Population Nadia Saqib briefed participants on the progress of health projects. The chief minister directed steps for establishing stroke management centres in district hospitals and ordered an increase in seats for nursing degrees in public hospitals.

The briefing revealed that Clinics on Wheels have treated 18.2 million patients,



conducted 7 million ultrasounds, and administered vaccinations to 1.2 million

children. Field hospitals received 2.8 tests, and carried out 170,772 X-rays and 448,468 lab ultrasounds.

## Beautiful View

ISLAMABAD: A beautiful view of Constitution Avenue, in the Federal Capital. Pakistan ready for hosting the possible 2nd round of Iran-US talks.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

# Senate Chairman Inaugurates Multan Hajj Operations, Bids Farewell to First Flight

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Hajj Operations Started at at Multan International Airport. Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani inaugurated the First Hajj Flight. Chairman of the Senate bid farewell to the first group of pilgrims departing for Hajj.

Addressing a ceremony at the airport, Chairman Senate Yousaf Raza Gillani stated that Hajj is a great act of worship that teaches patience, tolerance, and sacrifice.

Speaking directly to the pilgrims, he said they are fortunate that Allah has granted them the opportunity to visit His sacred house. He urged them to offer special prayers at the holy sites for Pakistan's peace, progress, and unity of the Muslim Ummah.

At the time of departure for Madina, Chairman Senate Yousaf Raza Gillani presented the pilgrims with flower garlands and extended his best wishes. The first Hajj flight from Multan



departed via Airblue, carrying 151 pilgrims to Madina. This year, approximately 13,000 pilgrims from South Punjab will perform Hajj. In total, 39

flights are scheduled to depart from Multan International Airport during the Hajj operation, with the final flight set for May 17.

## Punjab Safe Cities Authority's Smart Surveillance Cameras Lead to Arrest in Vehicle Theft Incidents

News Desk

LAHORE: Punjab Safe Cities Authority, utilizing its advanced surveillance cameras and modern technology, has successfully facilitated arrest of a suspect involved in breaking car windows and stealing valuable items. The accused had been targeting parked vehicles in various areas, stealing valuables and fleeing the scene.

According to the PSCA's spokesperson, the suspect was involved in multiple incidents across Model Town, Shadman, Main Boulevard, and MM Alam Road, and was wanted by the police. Upon receiving a call on the Emergency Helpline 15, a Virtual Patrolling Officer immediately initiated the tracing process. With the assistance of Safe City's advanced cameras and technology, the suspect was identified and route mapping was completed. Acting on the information provided by PSCA, the police carried out a timely and successful operation, leading to apprehend the accused.

## Auqaf Department Hosts Interfaith Conference at Historic Badshahi Mosque

Bureau Report

LAHORE: On the special direction of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz, the Auqaf Department Punjab organized a prestigious interfaith conference at Iqbal Hall Badshahi Mosque to promote religious harmony and interfaith cohesion.

The conference was attended by Provincial Minister for Human Rights and Minority Affairs Ramesh Singh Arora, Secretary/Chief Administrator Auqaf Punjab Dr. Ehsan Bhutta, Director General Religious Affairs Hafiz Anees ur Rehman, Christian community representative Bishop Kamran Nadeem, Hindu community representative Bhagat Lal, Khateeb of Badshahi Mosque Maulana Syed Abdul Khahir Azad, Administrator Shahid Hameed, a 40-member Sikh pilgrims' delegation visiting Pakistan, along with senior officials and distinguished guests.

Addressing the conference, Provincial Minister Ramesh Singh Arora stated that the Government of the Punjab is steadfastly implementing a comprehensive and forward-looking strategy to promote religious tolerance and interfaith harmony.

Speaking on the occasion, Secretary Auqaf Dr. Ehsan Bhutta, in the context of the philosophy of Allama Muhammad Iqbal, emphasized that Iqbal's message is rooted in universal values of humanity, compassion, brotherhood, and mutual respect, offering enduring guidance for harmony among diverse faiths.

Dr. Ehsan Bhutta further highlighted that the Auqaf Department is actively engaged in the restoration, conservation, and beautification of shrines, mosques, and historical landmarks, aiming to transform these sites into dynamic centers of interfaith harmony and cultural tourism with modern facilities for visitors.

Addressing the gathering, Bishop Kamran Nadeem and Bhagat Lal stated that people of different faiths in Pakistan live together with mutual respect, tolerance and harmony, reflecting a positive and progressive social fabric.

In his concluding remarks, Maulana Syed Abdul Khahir Azad stressed the importance of peace, brotherhood, and interfaith harmony, stating that promoting love, tolerance, and mutual respect among followers of different religions is essential for societal stability and global peace. The conference concluded with special prayers for national security, stability, and the promotion of peace and interfaith harmony across the world.

## When the Gulf trembles, Pakistan's economy feels the shock first

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) has issued a new Policy Viewpoint by Dr. Ahmad Fraz, Associate Professor of Finance, titled "From the Strait of Hormuz to the PSX: What the Iran-Israel War Reveals About Pakistan's Economic Vulnerability." The study highlights that the Iran-Israel conflict is not a distant geopolitical development for Pakistan. It is already being reflected in the country's economy through oil markets, inflation expectations, and movements in the Pakistan Stock Exchange. The viewpoint argues that Pakistan's exposure extends beyond rising oil prices and is rooted in structural vulnerabilities. As an oil-importing economy closely linked to Gulf energy routes, Pakistan remains highly sensitive to disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz, where even limited instability can quickly translate into higher costs, external pressures, and financial uncertainty.

The central message of the Policy Viewpoint is that Pakistan's vulnerability lies not only in oil price movements, but in the speed with which uncertainty in the Gulf is transmitted into inflation, financial markets, and the external sector. Sustainable stability will depend less on external conditions and more on strengthening domestic resilience through timely and coordinated policy action.

# Will World Peace Remain a Dream???

The countries in the world that officially have nuclear power status include the United States, Russia, China, France, and the United Kingdom. These are the states that were recognized as nuclear powers under the international treaty NPT, and thus acquired not only power but also a permanent right to influence the world system. In contrast, there are some countries that have nuclear capabilities but have not been officially recognized. These include Pakistan, India, Israel, and North Korea. These countries have achieved this capability under global pressure, regional threats, and their own defense requirements, but they do not have the diplomatic acceptance that the first five powers enjoy.

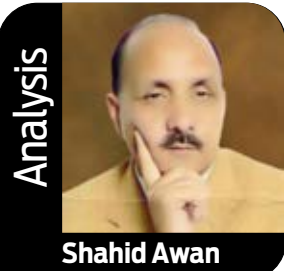
Iran's position has been that its nuclear program is primarily for energy

production and scientific advancement. At a time when the world is searching for alternative energy sources, Iran, despite its vast oil and gas reserves, sees nuclear energy as a viable solution to meet future needs. It is not only a means of generating electricity but also opens the door to advances in modern science, medicine, and industry. However, the other side of the issue is more sensitive. The Middle East is a region where the balance of power is extremely delicate. Israel is an undeclared nuclear power, while the strong military presence of the United States in the region is also a reality. In such an environment, Iran presents its nuclear capability as a defensive balance

to ensure its security. For it, this power is not for war but for preventing war—that is, a strategy of "deterrence." Moreover, nuclear technology has become not just a scientific project for Iran, but also a matter of national prestige. Continuing the program despite long-standing sanctions and international pressure is, in Iran's eyes, an expression of its sovereignty. It sees it as a sign that no country should give up its fundamental decisions under external pressure. But despite all this stance, the concerns of the international community cannot be ignored. Western powers fear that the program could at some point lead to the production of nuclear weapons, which could

trigger a new arms race in the region. This is why Iran's nuclear program has become a constant topic of global diplomacy, where negotiations, sanctions and pressure seem to go hand in hand.

The real question is not why Iran wants nuclear technology, but rather whether the international system is ready to accept it with this right? If some countries in the world are allowed to have nuclear power, why is this path closed to others? This contradiction is the fundamental point that makes this debate more complicated. Ultimately, Iran's nuclear program is an issue that needs to be viewed not just in terms of power, but also in terms of justice, balance, and global trust. Until the world establishes a fair and equal rules-based system, such conflicts will continue to arise and world peace will remain a dream!!!



Analysis

Shahid Awan

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# Europe Breaks from Washington on Iran War

The second presidential term of Donald Trump has triggered a geopolitical shift of historic proportions. For decades, the United States stood as the uncontested leader of the Western alliance, commanding not just military superiority but also strategic obedience from its European partners within NATO. That era, defined by unquestioned transatlantic unity, is now visibly eroding. What is emerging in its place is a more assertive, self-directed Europe—one that is no longer willing to follow Washington into conflicts without consultation, nor accept the consequences of decisions it did not shape.

This transformation has been dramatically accelerated by the recent war involving the United States, Israel, and Iran, and the subsequent closure of the Strait of Hormuz—a vital artery through which nearly a fifth of the world's oil and gas once flowed daily. The decision by Washington to launch strikes on Iran without adequately consulting its European allies proved to be more than a strategic misstep; it became the breaking point in a relationship already strained by years of unilateral policies, sanctions, and economic coercion.

Europe's response has been swift, calculated, and deeply symbolic. In a move that would have been unthinkable just a few years ago, Keir Starmer, alongside Emmanuel Macron, convened a summit of more than 35 countries to address the Hormuz crisis—deliberately excluding the United States. This was not merely a diplomatic gathering; it was a declaration of strategic independence. For the first time in decades, Europe signaled that it was prepared to lead, not follow.

The summit focused on practical and urgent objectives: restoring safe navigation, securing stranded vessels, stabilizing energy flows, and coordinating both diplomatic and limited military responses such as mine-clearing and maritime monitoring. Unlike the U.S. approach, which has leaned heavily on military pressure, Europe emphasized a blend of diplomacy, coordination with global industry, and measured security interventions. The message was clear: sustainable solutions cannot be imposed through force alone—they must be negotiated and collectively maintained.

The urgency behind Europe's actions is rooted in economic reality. The closure of the Strait of Hormuz has sent shockwaves through global energy markets, but its impact on Europe has been particularly severe. Having already reduced dependence on Russian energy, European economies had shifted toward Middle Eastern supplies. The disruption of these routes has now placed the continent in a precarious position, facing rising fuel costs, supply shortages, and broader economic instability.

Tourism—a major pillar of many European economies—has been hit by reduced travel and rising costs. Aviation faces operational strain due to jet fuel uncertainty. Industrial output is slowing under the weight of energy constraints. In short, Europe is bearing a disproportionate share of the economic fallout from a conflict it neither initiated nor endorsed. This reality has reinforced a critical lesson: strategic dependence

carries unacceptable risks.

Yet Europe's response is not merely reactive—it is transformative. Collectively, European economies represent one of the largest economic blocs in the world, rivaling the United States and exceeding any single nation, including China. This economic weight is now translating into political ambition. Europe is beginning to act like what it has long been in economic terms: a global power capable of shaping outcomes rather than absorbing them.

The exclusion of the United States from the Hormuz summit underscores a deeper shift. It reflects a growing realization within Europe that reliance on American leadership has become a liability rather than an asset. Washington's expectation that allies would support its military actions—followed by demands for assistance in managing the consequences—has been met with resistance. Europe is instead constructing a framework based on sovereignty, collective decision-making, and a clear preference for diplomacy over confrontation.

This evolving doctrine represents a fundamental rebalancing of the transatlantic relationship. It does not necessarily signal a complete rupture, but it does mark the end of unquestioned alignment. Europe is asserting its right to define its own strategic priorities and to pursue solutions that align with its interests, even when they diverge from those of Washington.

At the same time, a quieter but equally significant transformation is unfolding in

the global financial system. The extensive use of sanctions by the United States has prompted many nations to explore alternatives to the dollar-based system. European countries, along with members of BRICS, are increasingly experimenting with trade settlements in euros, local currencies, and digital financial mechanisms. While the dollar remains dominant, its monopoly is gradually being challenged.

If this trend continues, it could weaken one of the United States' most powerful tools of influence: its control over global financial infrastructure. The possibility of parallel systems—designed to bypass traditional channels such as SWIFT—reflects a broader desire among nations to insulate themselves from economic coercion. Europe's participation in this shift signals that even long-standing allies are reconsidering their dependence on American financial dominance.

Beyond economics and strategy, Europe's initiative represents a philosophical shift in how global conflicts are approached. The Hormuz summit emphasized de-escalation, post-conflict stabilization, and long-term security rather than immediate military gains. Plans to clear mines, secure shipping lanes, and engage Iran diplomatically illustrate a commitment to sustainable peace rather than temporary victories.

This approach resonates with a broader global sentiment. Many nations are increasingly wary of interventions that prioritize force over diplomacy and dominance over stability. Europe's actions suggest that there is an alternative path—one that balances security with dialogue and power with restraint.

*Continued on Page 7*

## BJP's 'communal gerrymandering' silences Muslim voices ahead of Assam polls

As Assam gears up for assembly elections on April 9, concerns are mounting over a controversial delimitation exercise that critics say is systematically marginalising the state's 11 million Muslims of India through deliberate redrawing of electoral boundaries.

In Katigorah constituency, bordering Bangladesh, 55-year-old retired teacher Islam Uddin has long gone door-to-door urging fellow Muslims to cast their votes, emphasising the need to send representatives who can speak for their community.

"It's about sending our representative to speak for us," Islam Uddin said, though his enthusiasm is now overshadowed by deep worry about whether such efforts will yield any results.

The 2023 Election Commission order to redraw parliamentary and state legislature constituencies has dramatically altered the electoral landscape in Katigorah and across Assam.

Previously, the constituency had a near-equal split between Hindus and Muslims, allowing parties like Congress and All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) to field Muslim candidates, while BJP typically chose Hindu ones.

Now, around 40,000 Hindu voters from neighbouring areas have been merged into Katigorah, transforming it into a predominantly Hindu-majority seat. Former Katigorah legislator from Congress, Khalil Uddin Mazumder, highlighted the shift:

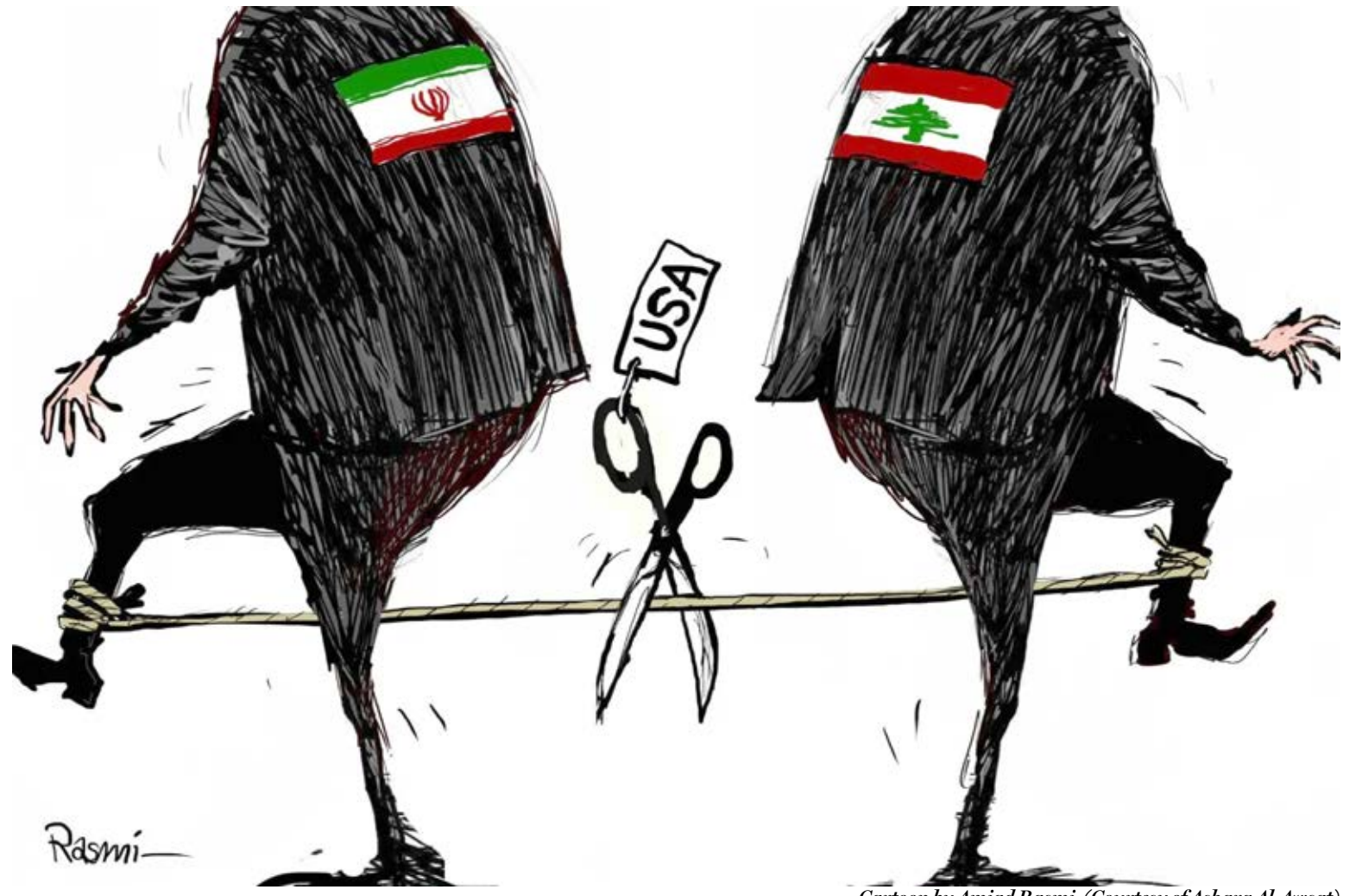
"The chances of electing a Muslim candidate from here have suffered significantly." Major parties have accordingly chosen Hindu candidates for the seat.

This pattern is not isolated. Across Assam's 126 legislative constituencies, boundary changes have raised fears of further political marginalisation of Muslims, who form over 34 percent of the state's population—a proportion higher than in most Indian states except Jammu and Kashmir and Lakshadweep.

Prominent poll analyst Yogendra Yadav described the Assam delimitation as "communal gerrymandering" in *The Indian Express*, comparing it to historical racial gerrymandering in the United States.

He pointed to tactics of "cracking"—dispersing Muslim voters across multiple Hindu-majority constituencies to dilute their influence; "packing"—concentrating Muslim-dominated areas into fewer seats to limit the number of winnable Muslim constituencies; and "stacking"—merging Hindu population centres to create artificial majorities. As a result, the number of Muslim-majority constituencies has reportedly dropped from about 35 to around 20, according to opposition leaders and experts.

BJP spokesperson Kishore Kr Upadhyaya claimed the exercise was not communal and was conducted by the Election Commission. However, the delimitation was a key poll promise by the BJP to "protect the political rights" of so-called "indigenous people," often used as a veiled reference against Bengali-speaking Muslims, who are frequently labelled as "foreigners" in Assam's polarised politics.



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

## Innovate, Learn, Lead: A Glimpse into Khwarizmi Science Society

The Khwarizmi Science Society (KSS) is a Pakistan-based scientific and non-profit association aimed at fostering a culture of science in Pakistan's educational institutions and among the general public.

The KSS was founded in 1995 by a group of students at the University of Engineering and Technology, Lahore, under the guidance of Prof. Saadat Anwar Siddiqi (Late) a founding president, a life-long teacher of physics and materials and science popularizer, is one of Pakistan's most active and oldest grassroots science awareness movements, and a pioneering champion of science communication in Pakistan. Initially started as a university-wide science club, the KSS has gradually evolved into one of the most active science societies in Pakistan. One of its main focus areas is to partner with national and international organizations and institutions to run on-ground science awareness and motivation campaigns.

KSS's major objectives are organizing scientific meetings and dialogues, encouraging students, promoting student-scientist interaction, working towards the mass popularization of science, nurturing collaborations, developing a feel for scientific resource sharing, and enabling practical scientific exposure. Activities about Astronomical Observation, Book Reviews, Conferences, Demonstrations, Dinner, Educational Tour, Exhibition, Field Visit, Meeting, Mela (exhibition), Panel Discussion, Popular Lecture, Project Competition, Public Lecture, Quiz, School, Science Festival, Science Show, Seminar, Symposium, Video Interview, Webinar, Workshop.

For more than 25 years, KSS has aimed to make science accessible and understandable to all and to nurture a culture of science in Pakistan. The

journey of Events of KSS started from a big event, "What Happens when you Boot," held on January 19, 1997.

By continuing the journey of events, a lot of events were organised by KSS about physics, science, quantum computing, nanotechnology, optics, and many more, like an international symposium on Science and the Muslim Civilization in 2007 with Prof. George Saliba as the keynote speaker. In 2009, KSS celebrated the International Year of Astronomy through its series of Falkiati Melas (Astronomy Fests). In the Falkiati Melas, KSS took powerful telescopes to even the most remote local schools of Pakistan, allowing everyone to observe the celestial world completely free of cost and stirring within the common people a deep fascination with astronomy. These

festivals gained massive coverage in both international and national media. In 2016, catalyzed the National Science Movement across numerous schools in the country, reaching thousands of school children and adults with our extensive science roadshows. In 2017, initiated the annual Lahore Science Mela series. The Mela, organized every year by KSS, is a celebration of science, bringing together the fascination of science and technology to the larger public of the country, completely free of cost and any barriers. This mela attracts thousands of school children and members of the general public. Lahore Science Mela (LSM) is an annual event of KSS organized in Lahore, featuring science exhibits, live experiments, science games, and technological demonstrations for children and students of all ages and the general public. In addition to the demonstrations and stalls by the society volunteers, many national and international scientific and technological organizations bring their public-engaging exhibits. The idea behind

the science melas is to impact the public's outlook towards science, celebrate the idea that science belongs to everyone, catapult students to a new pedestal where they could think beyond science textbooks and classrooms, create a cultural melting pot of intellectual discussion and scientific inquiry by providing a meeting place for the minds, and to inspire the next generation of scientists and technologists in Pakistan. The word mela itself is of Farsi origin and means the mingling of ideas, peoples, and activities.

Lahore Astronomical Society, Isfahan Mathematics House, and CERN Media Lab are among the organization which have participated. In the Lahore Science Mela 2019, KSS presented its thousands of visitors with an opportunity to experience the Large Hadron Collider Tunnel (the largest and most expensive physics experiment) and virtually tour CERN (the world's largest physics laboratory). RADIO Astronomy Training Workshops online and on-site in March 2026 were an excellent learning platform for all.

Continuing the legacy of Dr. Saadat Anwar Siddiqi (late), the founder of Khwarizmi Science Society (KSS), in promoting science and revitalizing the tradition of scientific teaching in Pakistan, KSS has initiated the "Saadat Anwar Siddiqi Award for Science Teachers". The primary aim of this award is to recognize and appreciate the efforts of teachers in advancing science education. A diverse group of dedicated science educators from nationwide submitted applications for the award, demonstrating their unwavering passion for teaching and commitment to advancing science education. Every science teacher and school can be registered as a lifetime member for attending all the trainings, etc., of this society and can build the nation. The website of KSS is <http://www.khwarizmi.org>. Headquarter is at Lahore, Punjab, Specialties Science, Science Communication, Science Education, STEM, STEM Education, Education, and Pakistan.



**Dr. Mushtaq Ahmed Rahu**

## How Medical Negligence Fueled a Child HIV Outbreak in Pakistan

A deeply disturbing public health crisis has emerged from Taunsa, Punjab, exposing systemic failures in Pakistan's healthcare system and raising urgent questions about accountability, governance, and patient safety. Investigations, including a major exposé by, have revealed that hundreds of children were infected with HIV due to gross medical negligence; practices that continued even after official intervention.

Between November 2024 and October 2025, at least 331 children in Taunsa tested positive for HIV. What makes this outbreak particularly alarming is that the vast majority of affected children were born to HIV-negative parents, ruling out mother-to-child transmission in most cases. Instead, evidence overwhelmingly points to unsafe medical practices; specifically, the repeated reuse of contaminated syringes and improper handling of injectable medications. The Tehsil Headquarters (THQ) Hospital in Taunsa has been identified as a central point in this crisis. Local doctors first raised concerns in late 2024 after noticing an unusual spike in HIV cases among children who had received treatment at the facility. Subsequent data from provincial AIDS screening programs confirmed that contaminated needles were responsible for more than half of the infections.

In response, the Punjab government initially suspended the hospital's Medical

Superintendent (MS) in March 2025, when 106 cases had already been reported. However, in a move that raises serious concerns about institutional accountability, the same official was later reappointed to another government healthcare facility where he continued treating patients, including children.

More troubling is the revelation that unsafe practices did not stop.

Undercover footage obtained by BBC investigators in late 2025; months after the government's so-called "crackdown"; documented ongoing violations of basic medical protocols. Over 32 hours of secret filming inside the children's ward, the investigation captured repeated reuse of syringes, contamination of multi-dose vials & widespread disregard for infection control measures.

The footage showed syringes being reused at least ten times on shared medication vials, potentially infecting entire batches of medicine. In four instances, contaminated drugs were administered to multiple children. Healthcare staff, including doctors, were seen administering injections without gloves on 66 separate occasions. In one particularly shocking instance, a nurse retrieved a used syringe containing residual fluid and handed it over for reuse on another child.

Medical experts have described these practices as "extremely dangerous" and in direct violation of international safety standards.

*Continued on Page 7*



**Barrister Sara Ali Syed**

# Pakistan Military Academy Graduates Cadets from Multiple Courses, Welcomes International Trainees

Spokesman Report

RAWALPINDI: Passing Out parade of cadets of 153rd PMA Long Course, 38th Technical Graduate Course, 72nd Integrated Course, 15th Mujahid Course and 27th Lady Cadet Course was held at Pakistan Military Academy (PMA) Kakul today.

Cadets from several friendly countries including Iraq, Maldives, Mali, Nepal, Palestine, Qatar and Sri Lanka were also graduated from Pakistan Military Academy.

Chief of Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, NI (M), HJ graced the occasion as Chief Guest and Reviewing Officer of the parade.

Chief of Air Staff reviewed the parade and gave awards to distinguished cadets. The coveted Sword of Honour was awarded to Academy Senior Under Officer Bilal Nasim of 153rd PMA Long Course; the President's Gold Medal to Battalion Senior Under Officer Muhammad Saad Musa



of 153rd PMA Long Course and Chief of Defence Forces Overseas Gold Medal to Friendly Country Senior Under Officer Pobin Kunwar from Nepal of 153rd PMA Long Course. Marksman Medal was awarded to Gentleman Cadet Masood Ur Rehman of 153rd PMA Long Course. Chief of Army Staff Cane was awarded to Course Under

Officer Haider Bin Abid of 38th Technical Graduate Course. In 15th Mujahid Course Chief of Army Staff Cane was awarded to Sergeant Pir Muhammad Abdullah Shah. Commandant's Cane were awarded to Course Under Officer Ali Bin Waqar of 72nd Integrated Course and Course Under Officer Walia Zeb of 27th Lady Cadet Course.



# Diplomats Gather in Islamabad for Day of Remembrance of Soviet Victims

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: On April 17, the Embassy of Russia in Pakistan held an official opening ceremony for a photo exhibition dedicated to the Day of Remembrance of the Victims of the Genocide of the Soviet People, perpetrated by the Nazis and their accomplices during the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945.

The event brought together Ambassadors of the CIS countries - Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan; heads of diplomatic missions of friendly states - Cuba, Iran, Kenya, Rwanda, Syria and Zimbabwe; as well as representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan and the Embassies of Kazakhstan, Egypt, and other countries.

Russian compatriots residing in Pakistan and members of the Pakistani academic community also attended the event.



Addressing the guests, Ambassador Albert P. Khorev noted that the Nazi Germany's attack on the USSR in 1941, which marked the

beginning of the bloodiest war in history, was aimed at seizing Soviet territories and resources, as well as destroying a significant

portion of its population. The Ambassador placed particular emphasis on the scale of crimes against civilians: of the



27 million lives lost, around 14 million were victims of a deliberate policy of extermination through mass executions and torture in concentration camps.

Ambassador Khorev also shared a personal account of his great-grandmother's forced deportation to Germany for slave labor—a tragedy that affected millions of Soviet families during the war.

It was further noted that the decision by Russian President Vladimir Putin to designate April 19 as the Day of Remembrance of the Victims of the Genocide of the Soviet People is based, inter alia, in the verdict of the Nuremberg International Military Tribunal

of October 1, 1946, which underscored the systematic nature of Nazi crimes.

In concluding his remarks, the Ambassador stressed the importance of preserving historical memory and preventing any distortion of the events of the Great Patriotic War, reaffirming Russia's commitment to countering manifestations of neo-Nazism in Europe and Ukraine.

During the event, Dr. Gul-i-Ayesha Bhatti, Director of CAPES Eurasian Chapter, also addressed the audience, highlighting that the immense sacrifices and unparalleled heroism of the Soviet people during World War II enabled the free and inde-

pendent development of Europe. The ceremony concluded with participants lighting candles in memory of Soviet citizens who perished at the hands of the Nazis, followed by a minute of silence.

The photo exhibition, featuring archival materials on the genocide of the Soviet people during the Great Patriotic War, will remain open to visitors at the Pakistan National Council of the Arts until April 19.

The Embassy expresses its sincere gratitude to the leadership of the Victory Museum and the State Historical Museum for providing the exhibition materials.

# From Hunza to the World: Humnava Unveils Its First Song, Hairan Amanam

Spokesman Report

HUNZA./LAHORE: Curated in Pakistan's Hunza Valley, Humnava, a global music platform, proudly release the first song from Season 1, Hairan Amanam, offering audiences their first immersive glimpse into a project that brings together music, culture, collaboration, and place in one powerful artistic experience.

Co-founded by Xulfi and Muhammad Ibrahim, and conceived as a global music and art movement rooted in Pakistan, Humnava was created to connect artists from across the world through the universal language of music. Season 1 brings together a diverse community of musicians from Pakistan and abroad for an immersive music camp in Hunza. The camp featured over 30 musicians and collaborators, including artists from



France, Germany, Algeria, Zambia, Hunza, and across Pakistan, making Humnava a rare and meaningful meeting point of sounds, traditions, and lived experiences.

The first release from this journey, Hairan Amanam, captures that spirit beautifully. A Burushaski track whose title translates to I am in awe, the song is a live-recorded collaboration born in the heart of Hunza featuring the talented

young duo of Rizwan Abbas and Maheen Sattar. Produced by Xulfi, the track brings together musicians from Germany, Algeria, including Bakrin Timfati, Amine Laroug and Dorian Jonas Goetsh, and Pakistan in a composition that dissolves boundaries and celebrates love, wonder, and shared humanity. The song explores the moment when love dismantles personal walls and transforms perspective so completely that

awe becomes inevitable. With rubabs, acoustic and electric guitars, flutes, and a synth-driven beat woven into its soundscape, its linguistic roots also give it a strong resonance across the Pamir region.

Speaking about Humnava previously, Co-Founder and Creative Director Xulfi (Zulfiqar Jabbar Khan) said, "Humnava, an idea, a community, a platform, is rooted in hope. The practice of truly and honestly letting go, and making hope the driving force of everything the camp stood for, in music and beyond. I have never been part of something that has impacted my heart and soul like this. I have never been part of something that I miss every day. It feels like experiencing a child-like curiosity in everything you do, and the process itself becomes so joyful. That hope and curiosity have shaped what Humnava has become."

# PRCS and Turkish Red Crescent Sign Agreement to Provide Cash Assistance to Flood-Affected Families

Adnan Yaqoob

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) and the Turkish Red Crescent (TRC) formalized a significant humanitarian partnership today by signing an agreement to deliver cash assistance to vulnerable families affected by recent floods in multiple districts of Pakistan.

The agreement was signed by Secretary General PRCS, Mr. Muhammad Abaidullah Khan, and Head of Delegation Turkish Red Crescent in Pakistan, Ms. Beyza Taner, in the presence of Chairperson PRCS, Mrs. Farzana Naek. The ceremony was also attended by senior officials and program representatives from both National Societies.

Under this agreement, cash assistance will be provided to 2,000 vulnerable families across the flood-affected districts of



Qambar Shahdadkot, Khairpur, Shigar, and Neelum. Each selected household will receive PKR 25,000 to help meet their immediate needs including health and also support early recovery. The initiative will be implemented over a period of five months, from April to August 2026.

Speaking on the occasion, Chairperson PRCS, Mrs. Farzana Naek, emphasized the strength of the longstanding partnership between the two National Societies. She stated that this collaboration reflects a

shared commitment to alleviating human suffering and responding swiftly to the needs of the most vulnerable communities.

"This agreement is a testament to the enduring relationship between PRCS and the Turkish Red Crescent.

Together, we continue to stand with communities affected by disasters, ensuring that timely and dignified assistance reaches those who need it most. Cash assistance empowers families to prioritize their own needs and supports their path towards recovery," she said.

On the occasion, Head of Delegation Turkish Red Crescent in Pakistan, Ms. Beyza Taner, stated, "We highly value our strong partnership with PRCS and remain committed to continuing our joint humanitarian efforts to support vulnerable communities in need."

# When the World Held Its Breath Pakistan Pulled the Ceasefire

The final hours before the ceasefire carried the weight of a region on the edge. The threat between the United States and Iran had moved beyond warnings. It had narrowed into a deadline tied to the Strait of Hormuz, a choke point through which nearly a fifth of the world's oil supply moves. Closure meant economic shockwaves. Military escalation meant human devastation. The clock was not simply ticking; it was closing in.

In those final hours, when statements hardened and options narrowed, the announcement by PM Pakistan Shehbaz Sharif did not read like a routine diplomatic update. The gap between escalation and restraint was measured in hours. The agreement for

a two-week ceasefire arrived when military options were already in motion. The pressure was visible across capitals. The margin was razor-thin. Less than two hours separated escalation from restraint.

This was not luck. It was an INTERVENTION.

Behind the announcement stood a quiet, sustained effort that had unfolded away from public view. Islamabad had, for weeks, moved carefully between adversaries who no longer trusted direct engagement. Channels that had collapsed elsewhere were reopened through persistence. Messages were carried, recalibrated and returned. In a climate where even symbolic gestures were scrutinized, Pakistan's approach avoided spectacle and focused on substance.

At the centre of this effort was Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir. The coordination between security leadership and the civilian government allowed decisions to move without delay.

The communication with multiple actors required discipline. Diplomatic signals had to align with security assessments. Any misstep could have deepened mistrust rather than reduced it. The coordination between the civilian government and military leadership proved decisive. It allowed Pakistan to operate with clarity at a moment when ambiguity could have been fatal.

The engagement with China

strengthened the effort. The consultations with regional states helped build support for de-escalation. The approach taken by Pakistan avoided public pressure. The work remained focused on results rather than visibility. The aim was to secure an immediate pause and prevent the situation from crossing into open conflict.

Global reactions that followed were not merely procedural acknowledgment. They carried an undertone of relief. António Guterres emphasized adherence to international law, signalling the fragile legal and humanitarian balance that had been preserved,

at least temporarily. Anwar Ibrahim described Pakistan's diplomacy as tireless and courageous, reflecting a recognition that engagement in such circumstances demands political risk as much as strategic foresight.

From New Zealand to Australia and across parts of the Middle East, the responses converged on a single point: this pause mattered. Not because it resolved the conflict, but because it prevented an escalation that could have spiraled beyond control. Even Iraq, itself deeply exposed to the consequences of regional instability, called for sustained dialogue built on this opening.

Yet the scale of what was avoided often escapes immediate comprehension. Had the deadline passed without agreement, strikes on civilian infra-

structure were anticipated. Retaliation would have followed. The geography of conflict would not have remained contained. It would have expanded, across shipping routes, energy markets and fragile states already under strain. The humanitarian cost would have been immediate and severe, measured not in policy shifts but in lives disrupted and lost.

The impact on Pakistan would have been direct. The economic strain from disrupted energy routes would have added pressure. The regional instability would have carried security risks. The situation would have placed the country under severe stress. The ceasefire, therefore, was not only a diplomatic success. It was a moment of collective exhalation, a crisis that came close enough

Continued on Page 7



Mehr un Nisa Rehman

## Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index		
Current	Prev. Close	
173,939.01	169,911.95	
Day's High	Day's Low	
174,404.03	170,758.25	
Index Value	Change	
55,554,880,494	+4027.06	
Percentage	Time	
+2.37%	17 Apr, 2026 4:30 pm	
Europe: FTSE 100 Index		
Index Value	Change	
10,667.63	+77.64	
Percentage	Time	
+0.73%	17 Apr, 4:35 pm GMT	
USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average		
Index Value	Change	
49,516.30	+937.58	
Percentage	Time	
+1.93%	17 Apr, 2:05 pm GMT-4	
Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average		
Index Value	Change	
58,475.90	-1,042.44	
Percentage	Time	
-1.75%	17 Apr, 3:45 pm GMT+9	
Open Market Forex Rates		
Australian Dollar	195.05	198.10
Australian Dollar	198.78	204.95
Bahrain Dinar	729	739.75
Canadian Dollar	202.05	207.9
China Yuan	36.45	37.55
Danish Krone	43.25	43.65
Euro	328.79	332.85
Hong Kong Dollar	35.25	36.15
Indian Rupee	2.03	2.22
Japanese Yen	1.7387	1.8386
Kuwaiti Dinar	878.15	889.30
Malaysian Ringgit	65.25	66.65
New Zealand \$	162.4	164.05
Norwegians Krone	27.65	27.95
Omani Riyal	723.65	734.10
Qatari Riyal	71.55	72.77
Saudi Riyal	74.40	75.35
Singapore Dollar	217.73	223.25
Swedish Korona	30.20	30.50
Swiss Franc	355	358.85
Thai Bhat	8.05	8.25
U.A.E Dirham	75.95	77.05
UK Pound Sterling	378.34	383.65
US Dollar	279.04	280.05

# Finance Minister meets S&P Global, highlights improved fundamentals and market re-engagement strategy

Commerce Desk

Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, held a constructive meeting with representatives of S&P Global Ratings on the sidelines of the World Bank-IMF Spring Meetings 2026.

During the meeting, the Finance Minister confirmed that Pakistan has successfully concluded a Staff-Level Agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), with approval by the IMF Executive Board expected shortly, paving the way for the disbursement of the next tranche under the programme.

Senator Aurangzeb informed that Pakistan has met its external obligations in a timely manner, including the repayment of USD 1.4 billion on its Eurobond during the current month. He also highlighted additional financial support from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, including a USD 3 billion facility and the extension of an existing USD 5 billion deposit from



an annual rollover to a three-year term through 2028, further strengthening the country's external position.

Senator Aurangzeb also briefed S&P Global on progress towards Pakistan's inaugural Panda bond issuance, noting that regulatory submissions have been made and approval from the National Association of Financial Market Institutional Investors (NAFMII) is awaited.

On the evolving regional situation, the Finance Minister highlighted the Government's focus on managing the immediate economic impact through measures to secure energy supply chains, optimize pricing and logistics, and provide targeted digital subsidies to vulnerable segments of the population.

Concluding the meeting, Senator Aurangzeb expressed confidence that Pakistan's improved macroeconomic fundamentals and continued reform momentum present a strong case for a rating upgrade.

## Purchasing Iranian Currency

ISLAMABAD: A man counts the Iranian rial at Blue Area's currency exchange outlet, in the Federal Capital. In view of a possible US-Iran agreement in coming days, there is a sudden rush in speculative buying of the Iranian currency. 10 Million Iranian Rial currency note for PKR 7000 only here on Saturday.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

## Govt endeavouring to improve economy through exports: Bilal



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Finance Bilal Azhar Kayani says Pakistan has attained a special status internationally due to effective diplomacy and mediation between the US and Iran.

Addressing a news conference in Karachi today, he said the world is appreciative of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir for bringing

the US and Iran to the negotiating table.

Bilal Azhar Kayani said that the government is focusing on improving the economy by increasing exports, facilitating the business community and expanding the tax net.

He said exports and remittances play a vital role in the national economy.

He said that incentives have been given to the business community to boost business activities and increase exports.

## Govt slashes light diesel, jet fuel prices as global oil prices fall



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The federal ministry for petroleum has reduced the prices of light diesel and jet fuel in line with a decline in global petroleum rates.

According to details, the price of light diesel oil has been cut by Rs 70.04 per litre, bringing it down from Rs 399.72 to Rs 299.32 per litre. Jet fuel prices have also been reduced by Rs 23.59 per litre, lowering the rate from Rs 494.71 to Rs 471.01 per litre.

Earlier, the government had reduced diesel prices by Rs 32.12 per litre, bringing the rate down from Rs 385.54 to Rs 353.43 per litre.

Officials said the latest reductions are linked to fluctuations in the international oil market.

## Huawei Pledges Support for Gilgit-Baltistan Youth ICT Certification Program

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Minister of Information Technology and Information, Mr. Ghulam Abbas, visited the Huawei Technologies Pakistan office, where he met with a delegation from the company to discuss areas of mutual interest related to the advancement of ICT in the region of Gilgit-Baltistan.

During the meeting, both sides held detailed discussions on enhancing digital literacy for the youth of Gilgit-Baltistan. The Huawei delegation expressed strong interest in supporting capacity building initiatives through the Huawei ICT Certification Program, aimed at equipping young people with essential digital skills for emerging opportunities in the technology sector.

The delegation also



requested the Honorable Minister's support in promoting the Prime Minister's ICT Training Initiative among the youth of Gilgit-Baltistan, enabling them to benefit from the program and contribute to the development of a skilled workforce for

the province.

Further discussions focused on technical and vocational training to create immediate employment opportunities for the youth of Gilgit-Baltistan. Both sides emphasized the importance of developing

a trained talent pool that can support economic growth and meet the region's evolving workforce needs.

The meeting also covered opportunities to digitize key sectors of the Gilgit-Baltistan government, including tourism, healthcare, and mining. Both parties agreed that digital transformation across these sectors would enhance service delivery, transparency, and operational efficiency.

The meeting concluded with a mutual commitment to work closely and take concrete steps toward strengthening the overall ICT landscape of the region. Both sides reaffirmed their shared vision of bringing digital access and innovation to every person, home, and organization, contributing to a more connected and intelligent Gilgit-Baltistan.

## PVARA and Huawei Meet to Advance Cybersecurity and Digital Exchange Infrastructure Cooperation

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: A senior delegation from Huawei Technologies met Mr. Bilal Bin Saqib, Minister of State and Chairman of the Pakistan Virtual Assets Regulatory Authority (PVARA), at his office to discuss cooperation on cybersecurity and digital exchange infrastructure. The meeting reflected a shared recognition that robust security architecture is foundational to the credible and sustainable growth of Pakistan's virtual asset sector.

During the meeting, discussions centred



on Pakistan's cybersecurity infrastructure requirements for its emerging digital asset ecosystem, Huawei's international experience in cybersecurity assurance, cryp-

tographic technologies, and compliance frameworks aligned with international standards, and the role that advanced cloud, AI, and data infrastructure can play in supporting a secure digital exchange environment.

Chairman Bilal Bin Saqib emphasized that Pakistan's digital exchange infrastructure must be built on strong foundations of cyber resilience, consumer protection, and regulatory integrity, and that PVARA's framework is designed to position Pakistan among the most secure and innovation-driven virtual asset jurisdictions in

the region. The Huawei delegation, led by Ahmed Bilal Masud, CEO Huawei AI and Cloud Business, expressed its commitment to supporting this agenda as an industry collaborator.

The meeting concluded with an agreement to continue technical discussions and explore structured cooperation mechanisms in the coming months.

The Huawei delegation also included Corey Deng, Chief Cybersecurity and Privacy Protection Officer, Middle East and Central Asia, along with Adnan Adhami, Saad Saeed Talha, and Lydia Zhang.

## How 50 days of the Iran war led to the loss of \$50 billion worth of oil

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: A drone view shows the Malta-flagged tanker Agios Fanourios I, an oil tanker that sailed through the Strait of Hormuz, arriving in Iraq's territorial waters off Basra, Iraq. - Reuters

The world has lost over \$50 billion worth of crude oil that has not been produced since the Iran war began nearly 50 days ago and the aftershock of the crisis will be felt for months and even years to come, according to analysts and Reuters calculations.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi said on Friday the Strait of Hormuz was open following a ceasefire accord agreed in Lebanon, while US President Donald Trump said he believed a deal to end the Iran war would come "soon", though the timing remains unclear.

Since the crisis began at the end of February, more than 500 million barrels of crude and condensate have been knocked out of the global market, according to Kpler data — the largest energy supply disruption in modern history.



LAHORE: Aadil Latif Founder Dream Powers, Hafsa Saleem and Khizar, Sales Executives at the Solar Pakistan stall Expo Center, Lahore.

## Pakistan Super League Cricket Championship Edition 11

## Lahore Qalandars defeated Rawalpindiz by 32 runs

Asim Tanveer

KARACHI: Lahore Qalandars managed to find a winning track after 3 big defeats in the Pakistan Super League match. But Rawalpindi Pindi's ruin is increasing. The 7th consecutive PSL defeat only increased the defeat, but also benefited Lahore Qalandars. Where they got 2 points, they jointly got 6 points, joining Karachi, Quetta, Hyderabad and have come in third place due to their improved net run rate.

Lahore Qalandars won the toss and elected to bat first against Rawalpindi. Unlike the previous matches, they got off to a good start for the first time. Openers Fakhar Zaman and Muhammad Farooq started with a score of 121 runs in 11 overs with one ball less. Here Muhammad Farooq was dismissed after scoring 63 runs. He played 41 balls. He hit 5 fours and 5 sixes. Then Abdullah Shafiq came, although he contributed less. Together with Fakhar Zaman, they took the score to 191 runs in 17.5 overs. Abdullah Shafiq went for 26, while Sikandar Raza was



out for a duck on the first ball. Here, Fakhar Zaman also got out after scoring a brilliant 84 runs with an increase of 4 runs. He played 54 balls. He hit 11 fours

and a six. Lahore Qalandars scored 210 runs for 4 wickets. Muhammad Amir took 25 and Razaullah took 2 wickets for 45 runs.

In reply, Rawalpindi had a disastrous start. Shahzeb Khan was out for 7 and Mohammad Rizwan for 9. Shaheen took Rizwan on LB review when the umpires were forced to change their decision. He was out on the leg side LBW on the fast ball. Yasir Khan, batting fast, completed his half-century in just 24 balls. This helped Rawalpindi to score 87 for 2 in

9 overs and then come back into the match. Qalandars got their third win on 88 by Haris Rauf, when Daryl Mitchell made a mistake in his shot selection and got Usama Mir caught for 11 off 15 balls. Pindi suffered a major loss after adding 1 run when the set-batter was caught by Fakhar Zaman after scoring 58 runs in the same Haris Rauf over. He batted at a strike rate of 200 and faced only 29 balls. He hit 6 fours and 3 sixes. Sam Billings was stumped by Sikandar Raza on a total of 100. Thus, Qalandars had got their



## PSL Points Table Status

Unbeaten Peshawar Zalmi became the first team to qualify for the play-off stage with 13 points from seven matches. Rawalpindi, who are in eighth place, have lost their seven matches and are out of the play-off race. The race for the remaining three places in the play-off stage is between six teams. Islamabad United, who are in second place on the table with nine points from seven matches, and Multan Sultans, who are in third place with eight points from six matches, are strong

candidates. Defending champions Lahore Qalandars are in sixth place with six points from seven matches. Karachi Kings have moved up to seventh place with six points. Quetta is in fourth place and Hyderabad is in fifth place.

PSL 11, Super Sunday, Double Header Day

28th match of PSL 11. Sunday. April 19. Karachi Kings vs Multan Sultans. 2:30 PM. Karachi

29th match of PSL 11. April 19. Peshawar Zalmi vs Quetta Gladiators. 7 PM. Karachi

## Pakistan Super League Cricket Championship Edition 11

## Quetta Gladiators defeated Lahore Qalandars by 6 wickets

Asim Tanveer

KARACHI: Quetta Gladiators defeated defending champions Lahore Qalandars by 6 wickets in a Pakistan Super League match. Lahore Qalandars also followed in the footsteps of Pindi. Gladiators' leap, into the top 4. Lahore Qalandars also followed in the footsteps of Rawalpindi. Consecutive defeats have sounded the alarm bell for Shaheen Afridi. After a 6-wicket defeat at the hands of Quetta Gladiators in PSL 11, the road has become more difficult. Meanwhile, Gladiators have made it to the top 4 after a big win, leaving behind the 2 top teams above them.

Shaheen Afridi won the toss of the 26th match of PSL 11 played at the National Bank Arena on Friday and made the wrong decision to bat first. As a result, the team, which had lost 6 wickets for 60 runs, took the team's total to 134 runs with 33 runs from



Hasibullah Khan, 15 from Sikandar Raza and 22 from Usama Mir. The team was out with one ball left in the innings. Before that, Fakhar Zaman was dismissed for 20 and Abdullah Shafiq for 17. Magic spinner Usman Tariq took 3 wickets for 18 runs and Jahan Dad Khan took 3 wickets for 35 runs.

Karachi Kings suffer big defeat, Islamabad United even above Multan

In reply, Quetta Gladiators knew that they were short of runs. By batting fast, they could surpass Karachi



and Hyderabad. So, despite Shamil Hussain being dismissed for zero and Saud Shakeel being dismissed for one and 2 wickets falling for 11, the Gladiators continued with their plan. Riley Rossouw and Hassan Nawaz batted fast. They made the Qalandars' bowling line ineffective. They completed 100 runs in 12.2 overs. Both of them made a partnership of 104 runs for the third wicket. Hassan Nawaz scored 49 runs and was stumped by Sikandar Rizki. He played 32 balls. When Haris Rauf gave Qalandars their fourth victory, it was

too late. Dinesh Chandi was bowled for 3 on 122. Gladiators achieved the target for 4 wickets in 16.2 overs and won the match by 6 wickets. Riley Rossouw scored his 12th half-century and remained unbeaten on 60 runs off 49 balls. Shaheen, Haris and Sikandar Raza took one wicket each.

## PSL 11 Points Table

Peshawar Zalmi 13 points in 7 matches. First position Islamabad United, 9 points in 7 matches, second position Multan Sultans, 8 points in 6 matches, third position Quetta Gladiators 6 points in 7 matches. Fourth position Hyderabad Kings 6 points in 7 matches. 5th position Karachi Kings, 6 points in 6 matches. 6th position Lahore Qalandars, 4 points in 6 matches, 7th position Rawalpindi, 0 points in 6 matches, 8th position Next match of PSL 11 Saturday, April 18, Lahore Qalandars vs Rawalpindi, 7 pm, Karachi

## CM Marathon, Cycling Race today

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: Punjab Youth Affairs and Sports Department has completed all the arrangements for the Chief Minister Punjab National Marathon and Cycling Race 2026, the biggest marathon and cycling race in the country's history.

More than 11,000 male and female athletes and citizens are expected to participate in the marathon and cycling race scheduled to start from Liberty Chowk, near Gaddafi Stadium on Sunday morning.

All necessary arrangements including medical treatment, security staff, provision of water and other key arrangements have also been made for the athletes.

Provincial Sports Minister Punjab Faisal Khokhar, SBP Vice-Chairman Malik Suleman, Secretary Sports Punjab M Ali, DG Sports Punjab M Tariq Qureshi and other top officials will be present on this occasion.

The 21-km Marathon, Cycling Race, Women's 5-km Marathon and Cycling Race, 2-km Family Fun Race and 1-km Wheelchair Race will start at 6.00am.

Punjab Sports Department has assigned the duties of hundreds of officials for organising the mega event in a befitting manner and conducted an orientation session for the training of all relevant officials. Senior athletics coach Salman Iqbal Butt, Punjab Olympic Association CEO Idris Haider Khawaja and sports officers trained the all relevant officials.

## PCB announces 16-Member squad for the two test match series against Bangladesh in May

Asim Tanveer

KARACHI: The Men's National Selection Committee has named a 16-member squad for the two-Test series between Pakistan and Bangladesh set to take place in Bangladesh next month. The first of the two matches – part of the ICC World Test Championship 2025-27 will be played at Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Dhaka from 8 to 12 May, while Sylhet International Cricket Stadium will host the second Test which will be played from 16 to 20 May. Shan Masood will continue to lead the Test side, while four uncapped players – Abdullah Fazal, Amad Butt, Azan Awaish and Muhammad Ghazi Ghorri are part of the squad.

Among the squad, five players – Azan Awaish, Imam-ul-Haq, Muhammad Ghazi Ghorri, Noman Ali and Sajid Khan are currently taking part in the ongoing NCA Red-Ball Camp in Lahore.

The players will undergo a camp in Karachi and will assemble on Monday, 27 April. The camp will conclude on 1 May, with the players scheduled to fly to Bangladesh on 2 May. Players who are part of the Test squad and are currently taking part in HBL PSL XI will join the camp following the conclusion of their team's campaign. Players whose teams qualify for the final will depart for Bangladesh after the conclusion of the tournament.

The PCB also confirms the appointment of red-ball coaches for the Bangladesh tour, with former Test captain Sarfaraz Ahmed appointed as head coach. Sarfaraz, who won two ICC titles as captain of Pakistan – ICC U19 World Cup 2006 and ICC Champions Trophy 2017 also guided Pakistan U19 to the ACC Men's U19 Asia Cup title as mentor/manager five months ago. He was also mentor/manager of Pakistan Shaheens against England Lions series earlier this year.

Former Test cricketers Asad Shafiq and Umar Gul will work as batting and bowling coaches, respectively, on the tour. Asad featured in 147 international matches (77 Tests, 60 ODIs, 10 T20Is), scoring 6,188 runs, including 12 centuries and 36 half-centuries. Right-arm fast bowler Umar featured in 237 international matches (47 Tests, 130 ODIs, 60 T20Is), taking 427 wickets.

## 16-Members Squad:

Shan Masood (captain) Abdullah Fazal, Amad Butt, Azan Awaish, Babar Azam, Hasan Ali, Imam-ul-Haq, Khuram Shahzad, Mohammad Abbas, Mohammad Rizwan (wk), Muhammad Ghazi Ghorri (wk), Noman Ali, Sajid Khan, Salman Ali Agha, Saud Shakeel and Shaheen Shah Afridi

## Team management:

Naveed Akram Cheema (manager), Sarfaraz Ahmed (head coach), Asad Shafiq (batting coach), Umar Gul (bowling coach), Abdul Saad (fielding coach) Cliffe Deacon (physiotherapist), Grant Luden (strength and conditioning coach), Usman Hashmi (analyst), Syed Naqem Ahmad (media manager), Lt. Col. (r) Usman Anwari (security manager), Dr Wajid Ali Rafai (team doctor) and Muhammad Ehsan (masseur)

## When the World Held Its Breath Pakistan Pulled the Ceasefire

Continued from Page 6

to be felt, then receded just enough to be survived.

Describing this as a "win" risks oversimplification. The agreement is temporary. The underlying tensions remain unresolved. But within the narrow frame of what was possible in those final hours, the outcome represents something more precise: a deflection. A shift away from immediate confrontation toward conditional restraint. That shift required a state willing to assume the burden of media-

tion without guarantees of recognition or success. It required leadership capable of synchronizing political authority with institutional discipline. And it required timing of when to press, when to hold and when to present an option that both sides could accept without appearing to concede.

The image of protesters gathered outside the White House, fearing imminent escalation, captures the emotional landscape of those hours. Anxiety was not confined to one region. It was shared, diffuse and deeply human. The cease-

fire did not erase that fear, but it interrupted its progression. The risk has not disappeared. The coming days will determine whether this pause can be extended into a more stable arrangement. The outcome still carries weight. Pakistan's role in that interruption will be examined in strategic terms in the days ahead. Analysts will map the channels, decode the language and assess the implications. But beneath that analysis lies a simpler truth. In a moment defined by the possibility of irreversible decisions, a different outcome was secured.

The ceasefire represents a bullet avoided. The region stepped back from the edge. The cost of failure would have been immediate and severe. The success of this effort lies in preventing that outcome at the final hour. A war that seemed within reach was held back & for now that is ENOUGH.

*The author is the head of the research and human rights department of Kashmir Institute of International Relations (KIIR). She can be reached at: mehr\_dua@yahoo.com and on X @MHHRsay*

## How Medical Negligence Fueled a Child HIV Outbreak in Pakistan

Continued from Page 4

Even when a new needle is attached, the reuse of a contaminated syringe body can transmit blood-borne viruses such as HIV.

Despite this damning evidence, hospital authorities have denied wrongdoing. The current Medical Superintendent dismissed the footage as either outdated or staged, insisting that infection control measures are being properly followed. Similarly, official statements from local authorities claim that no "conclusive epidemiological evidence" directly links the hospital to the outbreak; despite overwhelming circumstantial and documented proof.

An internal inspection report, conducted jointly by international health bodies and leaked to investigators, paints an equally grim picture. It high-

lights severe deficiencies in hygiene, lack of essential medicines, reuse of intravenous equipment, and a near-total breakdown of infection prevention protocols; particularly in pediatric emergency wards.

This is not an isolated incident. Pakistan has previously witnessed similar outbreaks, most notably in Rato Dero, Sindh, where hundreds of children were infected under comparable circumstances. More recently, cases have also emerged in Karachi, where dozens of children contracted HIV in a government hospital; again linked to syringe reuse. Several deaths have already been reported.

Experts argue that the crisis is driven by a toxic combination of systemic issues: chronic underfunding, supply shortages, lack of training, weak oversight, and a cultural overreliance on injectable treat-

ments; even when medically unnecessary. In many public hospitals, staff are forced to ration limited supplies, leading to dangerous shortcuts that put lives at risk.

The human cost of this negligence is devastating.

Children like Asma, diagnosed with HIV at just 10 years old, now face a lifetime of medical treatment, social stigma, and psychological trauma. Many families report isolation, discrimination, and the heartbreak of losing young children to a disease that should have been entirely preventable.

As new infections continue to be reported, the failure to take decisive action reflects not just administrative inefficiency but a profound disregard for human life. Suspending officials without ensuring accountability, allowing them to

resume practice elsewhere, and denying clear evidence of malpractice only perpetuates the cycle of harm.

This is no longer just a healthcare issue; it is a national emergency and a moral crisis.

Immediate, transparent, and enforceable reforms are essential. These must include strict monitoring of medical practices, guaranteed supply of sterile equipment, comprehensive staff training, and above all, accountability for those responsible. Without urgent intervention, the very institutions meant to heal will continue to endanger the most vulnerable.

The children of Taunsa; and across Pakistan deserve better.

*The writer is Barrister-At-Law, Human Rights Activist, Political Analyst and Columnist*

## Europe Breaks from Washington on Iran War

Continued from Page 4

The implications of these developments are far-reaching. The world is moving toward a multipolar order in which power is distributed across multiple centers rather than concentrated in a single dominant state. In this emerging landscape, Europe is positioning itself as a key pillar—alongside rising powers in Asia and other regions.

The United States remains a formidable power, but its role is evolving. Its reliance on military solutions and economic pressure has accelerated the search for alternatives. Allies are no longer content to follow; they are beginning to lead.

For Washington, this moment presents a critical choice. It can adapt to the realities of a changing world—embracing multilateralism, respecting the autonomy of its partners, and leveraging its strengths in innovation and diplomacy—or it can continue on a path that risks further isolation.

For Europe, the challenge is equally significant. Leadership

requires unity, coherence, and the ability to translate ambition into action. The Hormuz summit is a bold first step, but sustaining this momentum will require continued coordination and political will.

What is clear, however, is that the global order is undergoing a profound transformation. The age of unquestioned American dominance is giving way to a more balanced, more complex system. In this new world, leadership will not be defined solely by military power, but by the ability to build consensus, manage crises, and deliver stability.

Europe has signaled that it is ready to assume that role. The question now is not whether the world will change—but how quickly, and who will shape the future that emerges.

*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*

## Productive meeting

WASHINGTON, D. C.: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, held a productive meeting with Ms. Zou Jiayi, President of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), on the sidelines of the World Bank-IMF Spring Meetings 2026 on Saturday.

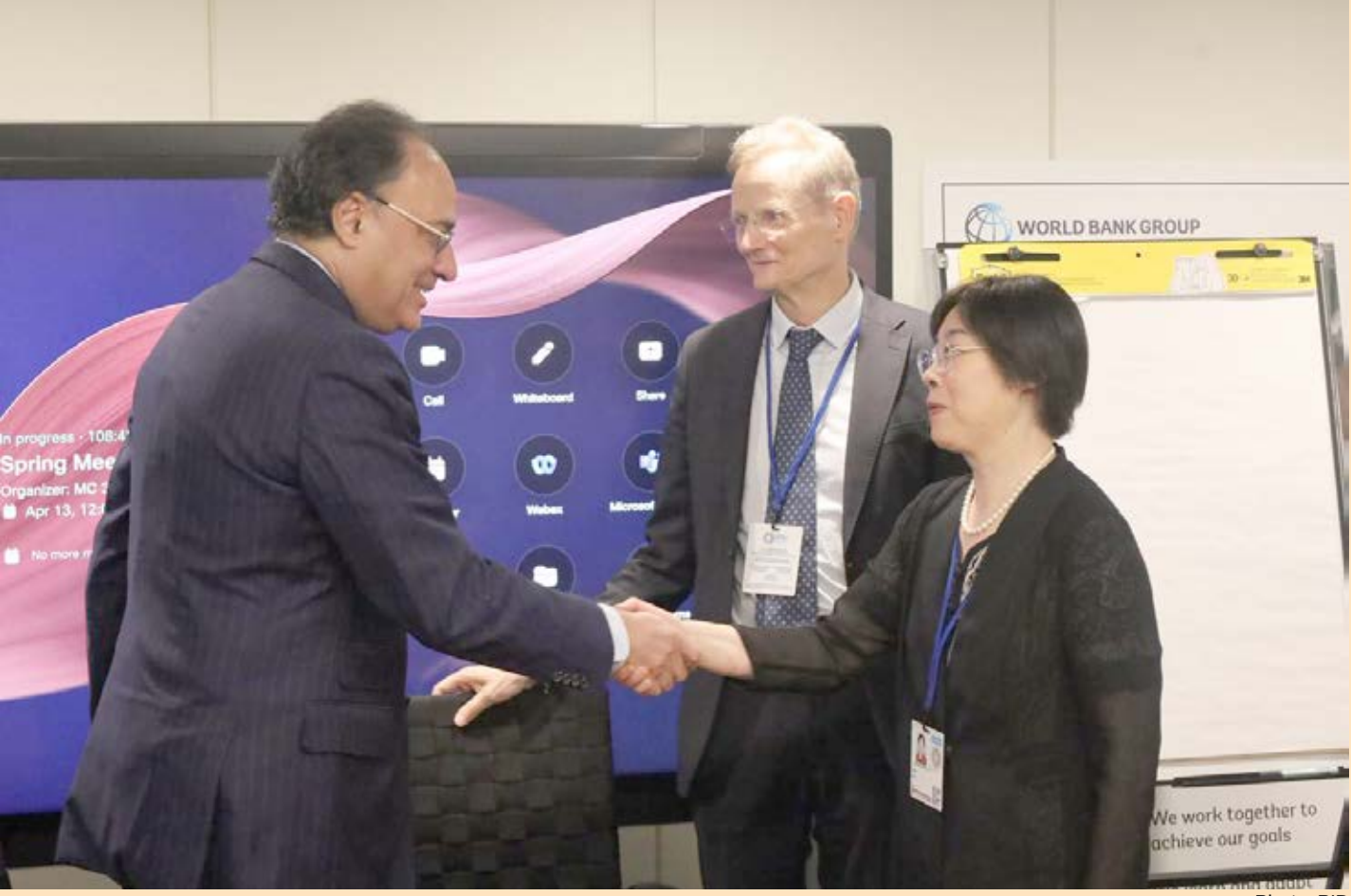


Photo: PID

## Finance Minister meets AIIB President, discusses infrastructure financing and strategic engagement

## Commerce Desk

WASHINGTON, D. C.: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, held a productive meeting with Ms. Zou Jiayi, President of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), on the sidelines of the World Bank-IMF Spring Meetings 2026.

During the meeting, the Finance Minister congratulated Ms. Zou Jiayi on assuming office and appreciated AIIB's robust engagement in Pakistan through an ongoing portfolio of approximately USD 1.7 billion, with an additional USD 1 billion in the pipeline.

Senator Aurangzeb highlighted Pakistan's recent return to international capital markets, including the launch of a Eurobond through private placement after a gap of four

years, describing it as an important validation of the country's macroeconomic stabilization efforts. He also referred to Pakistan's inaugural Panda bond issuance as a landmark initiative aimed at diversifying financing sources.

The Finance Minister briefed the AIIB President on the economic implications of the ongoing regional situation, particularly its impact on Pakistan's energy supply chain.

He further outlined Pakistan's broader development frameworks, including the 10-year Country Partnership Framework (CPF) with the World Bank, focused on population, climate, and fiscal priorities, as well as the 5-year Country Partnership Strategy (CPS) with the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

Senator Aurangzeb invited AIIB to align its engagement with Pakistan's infrastructure

priorities and strategic development focus. He appreciated the Bank's multi-year rolling lending pipeline, noting that it would enable a more programmatic and structured implementation of projects over a three to five-year horizon.

Both sides acknowledged that Pakistan's disbursement performance with AIIB has lagged behind that of other multilateral partners, including the World Bank and ADB.

## 75 UK MPs call for sanctions against Israel over West Bank annexation plans

## Wafa

LONDON: Seventy-five members of the Parliament of the United Kingdom have signed an urgent parliamentary motion (EDM 2822) calling on the United Kingdom government to impose punitive measures against Israel in response to its plans to annex land in the occupied West Bank.

The motion, submitted by MP Richard Burgon, strongly condemned a decision by the Israeli government issued last February to legalize the seizure of Palestinian land in the West Bank by registering it as "state land," describing the plan as an illegal act aimed at confiscating more Palestinian territory.



The MPs also cited the advisory opinion issued by the International Court of Justice in July 2024, stressing that Israel's presence in the Palestinian territories is unlawful and must end immediately.

The motion emphasized the need for the United Kingdom to uphold its international obligations by ceasing any support that contributes to sustaining the occupation and by preventing all commercial activities that reinforce the settlement system.

It further called on the British government to ban trade and investment in goods and services produced in settlements built on occupied land, impose targeted sanctions—including travel bans and asset freezes—on individuals and entities involved in entrenching the occupation, suspend the trade agreement between the United Kingdom and Israel immediately, and enforce a comprehensive arms embargo on Israel.

## Strong tremors rattle Pakistan, felt from Islamabad to Karachi

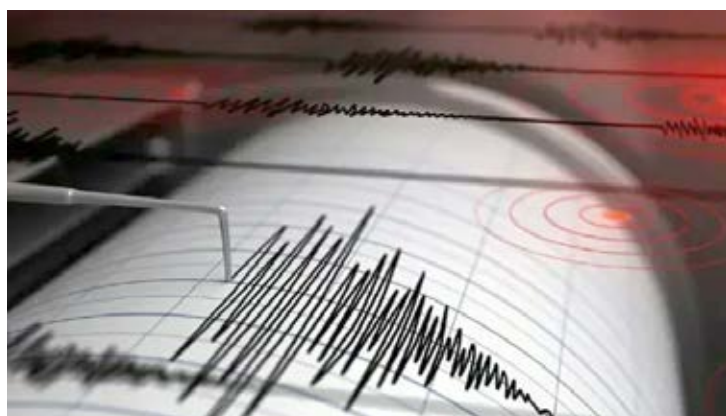
## News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Strong earthquake tremors were felt across several parts of Pakistan, including Islamabad and Karachi, sparking panic among residents who rushed out of homes and offices.

According to seismic authorities, the earthquake measured 5.4 on the Richter scale in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, while its intensity was recorded at 5.5 in Rawalpindi and Islamabad.

The epicentre was located in the Hindu Kush region at a depth of 199 kilometres.

Tremors were widely felt across the province, including Peshawar, Mardan, Upper and Lower Dir, Abbottabad, Manshara, Balakot, Kaghan and Haripur.



Shocks were also reported in Swabi, Nowshera, Charsadda, Shangla, Chitral, Bajaur, Kurram, Parachinar, Karak and Dera Ismail Khan.

Further tremors were felt in Malakand, Swat, Saidu Sharif, Barikot, Kalam, Thana, Sakha Kot and Dargai, creating widespread fear among residents.

Despite the intensity and wide reach of the quake, no immediate reports of casualties or property damage were received.

Separately, tremors were also recorded in Pasni, a coastal town in Balochistan, where the magnitude was measured at 4.5. The quake had a depth of 13 kilometres and its epicentre was located 48 kilometres southwest of Pasni.

In Karachi, mild tremors were felt in the Malir area and surrounding localities. The Pakistan Meteorological Department recorded the magnitude at 3.4, with a depth of 10 kilometres.

The tremor in Karachi occurred at 1:13 p.m., prompting residents in Malir to rush outdoors while reciting prayers. No loss of life or damage has been reported so far.

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## DPM/FM Dar, Azerbaijan FM discuss regional developments



## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar and Azerbaijan's Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov, on Saturday, held a productive discussion on regional developments.

The DPM/FM met with the Azerbaijan foreign minister on the sidelines of the Antalya Diplomacy Forum in Türkiye.

They also explored ways to further strengthen the close and brotherly ties between Pakistan and Azerbaijan, the Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press release issued here.

## Pakistan strengthens its global standing as peace-loving nation: Engr Amir Muqam

## Correspondent

SWAT: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan and SAFRON, Engineer Amir Muqam said on Saturday that Pakistan was solidifying its position in the world as a responsible, serious, and peace-loving country under the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

He expressed these views while addressing a ceremony in Salampur, Swat, held in connection with the inauguration of a gas supply project initiated by Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited.

Speaking on the occasion, the federal minister highlighted that Pakistan has consistently worked to promote peace, stability, and dialogue in the region.

He added that the country's armed forces, led by CDF/COAS Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, are playing a key role not only in national defense



but also in maintaining regional peace and stability.

During the ceremony, Amir Muqam formally inaugurated gas supply and meter installations under the project, which consists of a 24-kilometer network and is expected to benefit around 2,000 households in the area.

He described the occasion as a milestone in the development of Salampur, congratulating residents on the completion of the project.

"This initiative reflects the government's commitment to delivering development and essential services to every corner of the country," he said.

## AJK Election Commission revises schedule of electoral lists

## Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: The preparations for general elections in Azad Kashmir have reached a peak as AJK Election Commission has revised the schedule of electoral lists. The process of revising the electoral lists continued from March 24 to April 13.

AJK Election Commission said that the preparation of the initial electoral lists was completed with the cooperation of NADRA. The initial lists will be published on April 28. In

this regard, applications for voters registration and their objections have been invited from the public.

The Election Commission sets May 4 as last date for submission of objections. The revising authority will hear the applications from May 5 to 7.

The Election Commission said the decisions will be entered in the electoral lists on May 8. The final electoral lists to be released between May 9 and 11 while final lists are expected to be completed by May 16.

## Would-be female bomber reveals how women are being weaponized for terrorism in Balochistan

## News Desk

QUETTA: A news conference in Quetta on Saturday by top Balochistan officials has exposed the dark reality of how women are being weaponized for terrorism. The arrest of a potential female suicide bomber reveals a calculated cycle of exploitation where groups like the BLA and BLF recruit and train women, while the Balochistan Yakehti Council (BYC) handles the initial radicalization and subsequent propaganda.

The details regarding Manzoor Ahmed were particularly harrowing as he acted as a handler and deliber-

ately used his wife, Raheema Bibi, as a shield by using her phone to coordinate with terrorist outfits.

They even hosted a suicide bomber named Zarina Rafiq in their home before Manzoor sent her to Afghanistan for training.

This confirms that many so-called missing persons are actually being moved across the border to training camps, the officials said and added these practices are a complete betrayal of Baloch culture and religious values. Spokesman for the Balochistan Government Babar Yousafzai advised parents to keep an eye on the activities of their children.