



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ
ہم سے محمد بن عبد اللہ نے کیا ہے انہوں نے
کہا کہ تم مجھ سے نہیں لڑو گے کیونکہ میں
ان کے والد سے ہوں اور ان سے خدا ہے اور ان سے
ابو ذر سے اور ان سے ابو بکر سے اور ان سے
عمر سے اور ان سے عثمان سے اور ان سے
و سلم نے دعا کی «اللہم اوزر آل محمد
قوتاً» اے اللہ! آل محمد کو تیز دے
کہ وہ نہ ہرے کہیں۔
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President Zardari to visit China for high-level talk from April 25

President Asif Ali Zardari is set to visit China from April 25 to 30, where he will hold meetings with senior Chinese leadership, according to sources. The meetings are expected to focus on strengthening ties between Pakistan and China and reviewing ongoing collaborative initiatives.



DPM emphasizes importance of continued dialogue

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar Monday spoke with Foreign Minister of Iran, Abbas Araghchi. DPM/FM emphasized the importance of continued dialogue and engagement at the earliest to resolve all pending issues, in order to promote regional peace and stability. Both agreed to remain closely engaged.

Security High Alert

ISLAMABAD: Security personnel stand guard on Zero Point Bridge in the Federal Capital. Security has been further tightened ahead of the 'second round of talks' between the United States and Iran.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

PM chairs high-level huddle as Iran wavers on second round of US talks

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday chaired a high-level consultative meeting to review the situation surrounding the proposed second round of US-Iran talks, amid reports that Tehran may not participate. According to sources, the meeting was attended by senior officials, including the foreign and interior ministers, and focused on the evolving diplomatic landscape after Iran's reported reluctance to join the next round. Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi briefed the prime minister on his recent meetings with the US and Iranian envoys, outlining security arrangements and diplomatic engagements linked to the talks. Participants reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to facilitating dialogue between Washington and Tehran, stressing that continued engagement remains essential for regional stability. The meeting also agreed to maintain diplomatic contacts to encourage Iran's participation and ensure the talks proceed as planned. Pakistan has positioned itself as a mediator in recent weeks, hosting the first round of discussions and stepping up security and logistical preparations for a follow-up round in Islamabad. Officials say the initiative reflects Islamabad's broader effort to ease tensions and promote a negotiated settlement between the two sides.

Naqvi meets US, Iranian envoys as Islamabad tightens security for talks

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Monday held separate meetings with the US and Iranian envoys, as Pakistan finalised security and logistical arrangements for a potential second round of Islamabad talks between the two sides. According to the Ministry of Interior, Naqvi met US Charge d'Affaires Natalie Baker and Iran's Ambassador Reza Amiri Moghadam to review preparations and the broader regional situation. In his meeting with the Iranian envoy, Naqvi said arrangements for the next round were complete. "Foolproof security measures have been ensured for all foreign delegations," he said, stressing the need for a sustainable, negotiated solution to reduce tensions.



He reaffirmed Pakistan's support for diplomacy, calling dialogue the only viable path to resolve the US-Iran conflict. He also underscored long-standing Pakistan-Iran ties, describing them as "brotherly relations" built over decades. Earlier, Naqvi met Baker at the US Embassy in Islamabad's Diplomatic Enclave, where both sides discussed bilateral relations and the evolving regional landscape. The US envoy appreciated Pakistan's constructive role in efforts to de-escalate tensions.

Officials said Naqvi briefed the US side on enhanced security plans for visiting delegations and expressed hope that the upcoming round would yield positive results. Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi meets US Charge d'Affaires Natalie Baker in Islamabad on April 20, 2026. Meanwhile, authorities have imposed strict security measures across Islamabad. Entry of unrelated individuals into the Red Zone has been banned, and offices within the high-security zone have been directed to shift to remote work under an official notification. Senior officials, including Usman Anwar, Islamabad Chief Commissioner Sohail Ashraf, Inspector General of Police Ali Nasir Rizvi and Deputy Commissioner Irfan Memon, attended the meetings.

Militants linked to Fitna Al Khawarij killed in Bannu raid

ISLAMABAD: Two militants linked to the India-backed Fitna Al Khawarij group were in an operation by security forces in the Bannu district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, sources said on Monday. The sources said the two militants were killed in an intense exchange of fire after security forces carried out an intelligence-based operation. In a statement, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said the operation was launched following reports of militant presence in the area. During the ensuing firefight, two militants were killed. According to ISPR, the deceased belonged to the Fitna Al Khawarij network, including its ringleader Wahidullah alias Mukhtar. Officials said a suicide bomber was also killed during the operation. The military's media wing added that a suicide vest, weapons, and ammunition were recovered from the site. Wahidullah was considered the most-wanted militant involved in attacks on security forces and civilians. The ISPR said the slain terrorist was also the main facilitator of the February 21, 2026, attack in which Lieutenant Colonel Gul Faraz was martyred. The sources said timely action by security forces averted a major tragedy, adding that a clearance operation is continuing in the area. Meanwhile, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi praised the security forces for the successful operation, paying tribute to the personnel for eliminating high-value targets. He said the nation is proud of its security forces and stands firmly with them in the fight against terrorism.



Australian FM lauds Pakistan's constructive role in US-Iran dialogue

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Monday held a telephone conversation with Foreign Minister of Australia Penny Wong, with the latter appreciating Pakistan's constructive role in facilitating dialogue between Iran and the United States. During the conversation, the Australian FM also lauded the deputy prime minister's efforts, as well as Pakistan's continued commitment to promoting diplomatic engagement in this regard. Dar apprised her of the Islamabad Talks held on April 11-12, and reiterated Pakistan's resolve to continue encouraging dialogue and constructive engagement. The two leaders expressed concern over the broader implications on the global economy, particularly for developing countries, and emphasized the importance of peaceful resolution of conflicts.

Islamabad tightens security ahead of possible US-Iran talks

Heightened security measures have been put in place in Islamabad amid expectations of a second round of talks between the United States and Iran. Although no date has been officially announced, authorities anticipate that delegations from both sides could begin arriving early next week. The potential talks have taken on added significance after US President Donald Trump indicated he could visit Islamabad if a comprehensive agreement is reached with Iran. Authorities have begun extensive security preparations in the city. On Sunday, the management of Islamabad's Marriott Hotel asked guests to vacate the premises by 3pm. In a notice issued by the hotel's management, it said the Government of Pakistan had booked the entire property for an "important event" from Sunday afternoon, requesting all guests to leave by the specified time. The management apologised for the inconvenience and said it would assist guests with alternative arrangements. Separately, the deputy commissioner of Rawalpindi ordered the suspension of public and goods transport from Sunday until further notice. Meanwhile, the Serena Hotel, which hosted the first round of US-Iran talks, has also stopped taking reservations for the coming days. When contacted for bookings, hotel staff said no rooms were available. Security has also been tightened in areas near Noor Khan Airbase, where housing societies are under a near lockdown, with a significant deployment of police personnel in streets and neighbourhoods.



President, PM laud forces as terror ring leader, suicide attacker killed in Bannu operation

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday paid tribute to the security forces for carrying out a successful intelligence-based operation in Bannu, in which a key Khawarij ring leader and a suicide bomber were killed. The president and prime minister, in their separately issued statements, praised the professional competence and bravery of the security forces, saying the elimination of the high-profile terrorists demonstrated their exceptional skill and courage. "At a time when Pakistan is devoting all its efforts towards achieving regional and global peace, our enemies are trying to sabotage these initiatives through acts of terrorism. We will firmly defeat these anti-peace and anti-Islam conspiracies," President Zardari remarked. He said that the fight against terrorism, which was being fueled by external interference, would continue. Prime Minister Shehbaz said that the Government of Pakistan remained firmly committed to completely eradicating the scourge of terrorism from the country.



Azad Kashmir PM Honors Iqbal on Death Anniversary, lauds vision for Pakistan

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir, Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, has paid glowing tributes to poet and philosopher Sir Allama Muhammad Iqbal on his death anniversary. In his message, the prime minister said that Iqbal was a gifted poet, great intellectual, thinker, and philosopher par excellence who conceptualized and presented the idea of a separate homeland (Pakistan) and awakened the spirit of Muslim nationhood among the Muslims of the subcontinent. Referring to Allama Iqbal's multidimensional personality, he said that Iqbal, being an ideological and intellectual architect of Pakistan, played a key role in the political awakening of the Muslims of the subcontinent and infused in them the spirit of freedom, self-dependence, and self-realization. Highlighting his universal message of unity, he said that Iqbal encouraged Muslims to actively explore and find ways and means to meet the new demands of life.



"As a son of the soil, Iqbal specifically highlighted the suffering and plight of the Kashmiri people in his poetry," the prime minister said, adding that he also gave voice to the aspirations of

Kashmiris. He further said that Iqbal's teachings serve as a great source of inspiration for all, especially the youth, whom he described as the future of the

nation. He urged the younger generation to study Allama Iqbal's philosophy and inculcate within themselves the spirit of "Khudi."

Pakistan pushes dialogue as US-Iran trust deficit deepens

Spokesman Report.

ISLAMABAD: Sardar Masood Khan, former Ambassador to the United States, China and the United Nations, and former President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, has stated that despite rapidly shifting developments and heightened tensions, Pakistan remains actively engaged in steering the United States and Iran toward a negotiated settlement, even as both sides adopt increasingly hardened positions.



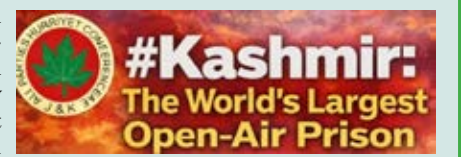
Commenting on the evolving situation, Ambassador Khan described the current phase as a "coercive contest," where diplomatic engagement is unfolding alongside intense military and economic pressure. He noted that while there have been intermittent positive signals—such as the temporary opening of the Strait of Hormuz—these gains have been undermined by continued maritime restrictions and renewed threats, creating an atmosphere of uncertainty and mistrust.

He observed that both Washington and Tehran are simultaneously preparing for negotiations and confrontation. "Iran has kept the option of dialogue open while signaling readiness for retaliation, whereas the United States is intensifying pressure to extract maximum concessions before any formal agreement," he said. This dual approach, he added, has made the second round of talks more complex than the first, despite initial success in bringing both sides to the table.

DFP concerned over loss of innocent Kashmiri youth, demands impartial investigation and justice

Abdul Majeed Tahir.

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party has strongly condemned the recent killing of a youth Tanvir Ahmed Chupan by a gang of cow vigilantes in the Ramban area of Jammu and cold-blooded murder of Ganderbal youth Rashid Mughal in a staged fake encounter by the Indian army.



In a statement issued here today, the DFP spokesman advocate Arshad Iqbal said, "Such actions raise serious questions about accountability, transparency, and adherence to the rule of law".

The loss of young lives under such circumstances, he said, was not only tragic but also reflects a disturbing pattern that demands impartial investigation and justice.

"The repeated occurrence of such incidents reveals a grim pattern of systematic killings that are too often ignored, leaving victims without justice and families without answers", he said adding that there was a dire need to investigate such killings and bring perpetrators to justice.

He also expressed grave concern over the continued incarceration of party president Shabir Ahmed Shah and other Kashmiri political leaders and activists currently languishing in Indian jails.

"Prolonged detention without fair and transparent legal processes undermines democratic principles and suppresses legitimate political expression", he added.

Key Dhirkot Leaders Defect to Muslim Conference in Major Political Shift



Bureau Report

RAWALPINDI: prominent leaders of Joint Action Committee Dhirkot joined Muslims Conference' Raja Mohammad Ilyas Khan, Sardar Khurshid Abbasi, Sardar Maqsood Abbasi and Sardar Zahid Abbasi met with President Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan at Mujahid Manzil. Raja Yasin Luqman, Sardar Abid Razak, Raja Sarfraz Sharif and others were also present on this occasion. Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan said that the Muslim Conference is the only political party which is the most literate party of Kashmiris, as well as Kashmir freedom Movement and Pakistan Liberation Movement, every child, old and young, women of the state can find the Kashmir Azadi Movement in the Muslim Conference.

Kashmir Freedom Movement Leader Raja Muhammad Haider Khan Remembered on 60th Death Anniversary



Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: The 60th death anniversary of the prominent leader of the Kashmir Freedom Movement, Batul-e-Hurriyat Raja Muhammad Haider Khan, was observed with devotion and respect. On this occasion, a grand ceremony was organized by the Haider Memorial Association at the Municipal Hall Muzaffarabad, in which prominent figures from political, social and public circles attended. The ceremony was addressed by former Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir Raja Muhammad Farooq Haider Khan, former government ministers Barrister Iftikhar Gilani, Farooq Sikandar, Dr. Mustafa Bashir, Raja Muhammad Abdul Qayyum Khan, Syed Murtaza Gilani, Saqib Majeed Raja, Raja Abrar Hussain, former Administrator Chaudhry Manzoor Ahmed, former Administrator Jhelum Valley Farid Khan, District Councilor Raja Tariq Bashir, Maryam Kashmiri and Raja Mumtaz Khan, among others.

Rawalpindi also closed

RAWALPINDI: A view of hotels and shops closed at Faizabad area due to security reasons, in the city, as Pakistan prepares to host the 2nd round of U.S. and Iran peace talks.



Photo: Online

DSP Aftab Siddiqui laid to rest; RPO Sohail Sukhera pays tribute

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: The funeral prayers of DSP Headquarters Aftab Ahmed Siddiqui were offered at Police Lines, Toba Tek Singh, amid a large gathering of senior police officials, personnel, and members of civil society.

Regional Police Officer (RPO) Faisalabad, Sohail Akhtar Sukhera, District Session Judge, DCO Toba Tek Singh, District Police Officer (DPO) Jhang Sajid Hussain and DPO Chiniot Dr Naveed Atif attended the funeral. SP Investigation Fazal Abbas, along with other officers and staff, were also present.



A smartly turned-out police contingent presented a guard of honour to

the deceased officer. Special prayers were offered for the elevation of the departed soul and for his forgiveness.

Following the funeral, RPO Faisalabad Sohail Akhtar Sukhera met with the bereaved family and expressed heartfelt condolences. Police officers also extended their sympathies and prayed for the family's strength and patience.

According to officials, DSP Aftab Ahmed Siddiqui was on special duty in Islamabad last night when he suffered a sudden cardiac complication. He was shifted to PIMS Hospital, where he passed away during treatment.

Digital Media Professionals meet AJK Information Secretary to discuss policy needs

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Secretary Information and IT Azad Jammu and Kashmir Government Muhammad Rashid Hanif met with a delegation of Digital and Social Media Journalists Association of Azad Jammu and Kashmir. The delegation presented its suggestions to the Secretary Information regarding the problems faced by digital media and the formulation of social and digital media policy. The delegation included President of Digital and Social Media Journalists Association Naseer Chaudhry, Secretary General

Raja Shoaib Mahmood, Vice Presidents Osama Zain and Alisha Andleeb, Additional General Secretary Muneeb Abbasi and Secretary Information Abdul Qayyum. On this occasion, Director Public Relations Tariq Jamil Durrani and officers of the Information Department Ms. Qurat-ul-Ain Shabbir, Raja Muhammad Sohail Khan and Raja Abdul Basit were also present on the occasion. Talking to the delegation, Information Secretary Muhammad Rashid Hanif said that the role of the media is very important in determining the right direction of the society.

Former assembly candidate meets Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan in Rawalpindi



City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Former Assembly candidate LA 11 from Hijara Mdm Umm e Kslsoom Dua called on President Muslim Conference and former premier Azad Kashmir Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan at Mujahid Manzil. During the meeting, Madam Kalsoom Dua discussed matters of mutual interest. Chairman Youth Wing Sardar Usman Ali Khan, Dr. Tassaduq Chughtai and Sardar Abid Razak were also present on the occasion.

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.



Islamabad
30° - 38° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 4:03 am
Zohr 12:07 pm
Asr 4:49 pm
Maghrib 6:42 pm
Isha 8:11 pm

EMERGENCY

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

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

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

COMPLAINTS

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

SC ensures uninterrupted hearings through video link during emergency

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Monday successfully conducted court proceedings despite an emergent situation, using video-link technology to avoid disruption in scheduled hearings.

According to an official statement, Justice Ayesha Malik joined the bench from the Lahore Registry via a secure video link, while proceedings continued from the principal seat in Islamabad.

The arrangement was made after an unexpected issue affected the composition of the bench at the Lahore Registry. Under normal circumstances, such a situation could have led to the delisting of cases, causing inconvenience to litigants and lawyers.

However, due to the court's ongoing investment in digitisation and modern technology, hearings proceeded without interruption. The bench heard and disposed of 20 out of 28 scheduled cases, reflecting a focus on timely adjudication.

The development highlights the judiciary's efforts to ensure uninterrupted access to justice and improve efficiency through technological reforms.

The Chief Justice of Pakistan appreciated the cooperation of the legal fraternity, as well as the prompt coordination by court staff and IT teams, which enabled the smooth transition to remote proceedings.

CM Punjab vows to transform barren lands into economic zones under Blue Economy Programme

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif has expressed her resolve to rehabilitate barren lands across the province by converting them into economic zones under the Blue Economy Programme.

Significant progress has been achieved in developing infrastructure for shrimp farming projects in Sargodha Estate, Ali Wala and Shah Garh. The chief minister appreciated the team for expediting work on the projects.

In the Sargodha shrimp farming project, excavation of 118 ponds has been completed, while boring of 116 tube wells and 100 per cent land clearing and survey over 365 acres have also been finalised. Construction of the warehouse is 90 per cent complete, while work on the admin block and feed

store is progressing rapidly. The project spans a total area of 500 acres.

For the Ali Wala shrimp estate, 90 per cent of the allocated 1,267 acres have been cleared. Excavation of 642 out of 737 ponds has been completed, while 91 per cent work on the drainage system and 100 per cent excavation of MDC drains have been finalised. A survey and clearing of a 9,000-metre road network have been completed, and 80 per cent earth filling work has also been achieved. Construction foundations for the admin office, hostel, warehouse and labour residences have been completed.

At the Shah Garh shrimp farm, 90 per cent work on water supply, 95 per cent electrification and 97 per cent construction of the access road have been completed. Experts have submitted their reports to the author-



Deserted Islamabad

ISLAMABAD: A deserted view of Jinnah Avenue due to of high-stakes talks in Federal Capital between Iran and US.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

RCCI Raises Alarm Over Excessive Load Shedding, Declining Exports and Remittances

Commerce Desk

RAWALPINDI: President Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI), Usman Shaukat, has expressed serious concern over prolonged load shedding, warning that it is severely impacting industrial productivity and jeopardizing Pakistan's export targets.

In a statement issued here, he said that unscheduled and extended power outages during peak business hours are disrupting industrial operations, increasing production costs, and causing delays in export orders. He noted that similar concerns have also been raised by business leaders from other chamber of commerce and trade associations, where load shedding and restrictive policies have brought commercial activities close to a halt and reduced productivity.

Usman Shaukat emphasized that the continuation of such challenges will weaken Pakistan's already fragile export sector, making it difficult to compete in international markets. He added that industries require uninterrupted energy supply to maintain efficiency, ensure timely deliveries, and sustain global buyer confidence.



He further pointed out that inconsistent and restrictive business hours across provinces are creating uncertainty and negatively affecting business confidence. Citing examples, he said that varying market closing times across cities lead to confusion, inefficiency, and loss of economic activity. Business leaders have already called for rational and uniform policies, including extended business hours and uninterrupted electricity during peak times.

Takht Bhai Residents Demand Action on Failing Drainage and Paved Streets

Tariq Khan Yousafzai

TAKHT BHAI: Residents of Mohalla Ahmad Abad near Madi Baba Shrine in Takht Bhai have called for urgent action on severe drainage and street paving issues in their area. In this regard, the residents held an emergency press conference at the Takht Bhai Press Club (Registered), where they presented their problems to the relevant authorities. According to the residents, the neighborhood was established in 2009 and currently has around 50 houses, with a population of over 500 people. The poor drainage system has also caused disputes among residents. The residents have strongly appealed to the MPA, MNA, Assistant Commissioner Takht Bhai, and Deputy Commissioner Mardan to immediately address their issues and take practical steps for drainage, paving of streets, and road construction. Otherwise, they warned, they will be compelled to stage strong protests to secure their rights.

Sindh farmers threaten province-wide protests over unopened wheat procurement centers

Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi

HYDERABAD: The Sindh Hari Committee has announced province-wide protest demonstrations against the failure of the Food Department to implement its decision regarding the establishment of wheat procurement centers at district headquarters.

Addressing a "Meet the Press" conference at the Tando Muhammad Khan Press Club, Central President of Sindh Hari Committee, Comrade Samar Hyder Jatoti, stated that growers and farmers are facing severe difficulties due to the government's failure to open official wheat procurement centers.

He said that instead of the officially fixed price, traders are purchasing wheat at arbitrary rates ranging between Rs. 3200 to Rs. 3300 per maund, causing significant financial losses to farmers.

He demanded that the Sindh government immediately take notice of the situation and establish wheat procurement centers at district and taluka levels to accelerate the purchasing process. He further emphasized that the government should revise the wheat support price from Rs. 3500 to at least Rs. 4000 per maund to provide relief to growers.

Family planning vital amid rising population, says Ch Naeem

Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: District Population Welfare Officer Toba Tek Singh Chaudhry Muhammad Naeem stated that aware and responsible parents are the foundation of a strong, balanced and prosperous society. He emphasized that with the rapid increase in population, family planning has become a pressing need of the time. Through proper planning, not only can resources be utilized more effectively, but a safe and bright future for coming generations can also be ensured.



In his statement, he said that by maintaining appropriate spacing between births and adopting proper planning, parents can provide better education, healthcare and upbringing to their children. This also contributes to improved health for both mother and child and helps maintain balance in household affairs. Chaudhry Muhammad Naeem further added that the Government of Punjab is actively running various programs and campaigns to raise public awareness about the importance of family planning. He urged citizens to visit their nearest health centers to obtain authentic information and avail themselves of available services.

He reaffirmed his commitment that the Population Welfare Department will continue to serve the public for their well-being. In conclusion, he appealed to the public to make responsible decisions to help build a healthy, prosperous and developed society.

CTO Virk reviews traffic, security at duty points, issues directions

ISLAMABAD, APR 20 (APP): Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Islamabad Muhammad Sarfraz Virk visited various duty points across the capital to review traffic and security arrangements and interact with officers on duty. An ITP official told APP on Monday that the CTO Virk assessed on-ground deployment and met personnel to ensure effective management of traffic flow. Virk issued necessary directions to officers to maintain smooth traffic and minimize inconvenience to citizens. CTO emphasized strict adherence to traffic plans and timely response to any congestion or disruption. He urged citizens to follow traffic advisories issued by Islamabad Traffic Police for their convenience. The official added that Islamabad Traffic Police personnel remained present on roads round the clock to guide and facilitate commuters.

The Architect of the Muslim Renaissance: Re-evaluating Iqbal's Intellectual Legacy

As Pakistan commemorates Iqbal Day on April 21st, the national consciousness must move beyond mere hagiography toward a rigorous intellectual engagement with the Sage of the East. Sir Dr. Allama Muhammad Iqbal was not merely a poet of nostalgia; he was a revolutionary philosopher who sought the "Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam," advocating for a dynamic synthesis of spiritual tradition and modern scientific inquiry. At the heart of Iqbal's philosophical edifice lies the concept of Khudi

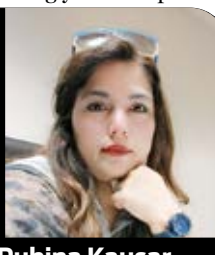
(The Self) a clarion call for individual and collective self-realization. In a contemporary world increasingly characterized by intellectual mimicry and cultural fragmentation, Iqbal's insistence on the fortification of the ego remains profoundly relevant. As a foreign-qualified professional, I observe that the most successful global civilizationalizations are those that possess a clear "sense of self." Iqbal's vision was to awaken this dormant vitality within

the Muslim Ummah, urging us to move from passive observation to active participation in the unfolding of history.

The incumbent leadership and the Ministry of Information and Culture deserve scholarly commendation for their efforts in preserving this heritage. By institutionalizing Iqbal's teachings, the government is fostering a generation that values meritocracy and moral integrity over superficial

gain. It is the administrative discipline and visionary policy-making guided by the egalitarian principles Iqbal championed that will ultimately steer Pakistan toward its destined role as a leader of the global south. Iqbal's Dream of Pakistan was not a static destination but a continuous process of becoming. His philosophy demands a relentless pursuit of excellence and a rejection of stagnation (Ijtihad). On this day, let us resolve to internalize the "Shaheen's" spirit of high-flight and resilience. To honor Iqbal is to embrace the rigorous discipline of thought and action that he so eloquently prescribed for a nation in transition.

Analysis



Rubina Kausar

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Middle East Crisis, the Global Economy, and the Energy War

Muhammad Asif

The war imposed on Iran by the United States and Israel has now continued for several weeks, and only a few days remain in the temporary ceasefire period. If this pause is not extended or a formal agreement is not reached, there is a serious risk that full-scale hostilities may resume. In this tense environment, Pakistan has also stepped forward diplomatically. Reports indicate that Pakistan's military leadership has been present in Tehran to help facilitate dialogue between Iran and the United States. Pakistan's position is rooted in the principle that war is never a permanent solution; lasting peace is the only path toward stability and development.

Meanwhile, U. S. President Donald Trump faces a complex political situation. Publicly, he appears interested in a ceasefire, as a prolonged war could damage the American economy, public opinion, and upcoming elections. However, he is also under pressure from Israel and confronting internal political challenges. While making strong public statements against Iran and claiming success, he is simultaneously seeking a face-saving exit from the conflict. For him, a key priority is reducing oil prices and presenting the situation as a political victory.

Iran, on the other hand, seems to be pursuing a patient and long-term strategy. Tehran has shown limited flexibility, particularly regarding aspects of its nuclear program, but it is not prepared to relinquish full control. One of Iran's central conditions for a ceasefire includes a halt to hostilities in Lebanon. Iran argues that ignoring the situation in

southern Lebanon would undermine its regional credibility and strengthen Israel's position unilaterally.

Lebanon remains a critical component of this crisis. Clashes between Israel and Hezbollah continue, with reports of bombardments in southern Lebanon. Although Israel has attempted military advances, it has not achieved decisive success, and civilian areas have suffered damage. Iran maintains that it cannot accept a ceasefire that excludes Lebanon, as doing so would weaken its strategic standing in the region.

The U. S. naval blockade near the Strait of Hormuz has further intensified the crisis. This move is widely viewed as an act of war because the Persian Gulf is a vital artery for global energy supplies. The disruption has significantly affected oil and gas shipments, creating immediate consequences for international markets.

According to Canadian energy analyst Joseph Spector, the crisis is not solely the result of war; global oil markets were already fragile. He argues that the world was operating under the illusion that OPEC countries possessed substantial spare capacity, when in reality much of the "excess" oil was tied up in sanctioned shipments. Before the conflict, oil prices hovered around \$70 per barrel, but they have since exceeded \$100. If tensions escalate further, prices could rise to \$120 or beyond.

Sector warns that prolonged uncertainty poses the greatest risk to the global economy. With each additional week of

conflict, crude oil prices could increase by two to three dollars per barrel. The consequences extend far beyond fuel costs, affecting food prices, transportation, aviation, and industrial production. The middle class would bear the brunt, as a larger share of income would go toward basic necessities.

American media analyses have also linked the crisis to the administration's aggressive policies. At the onset of the conflict, oil prices surged sharply, and American consumers faced rising gasoline costs. Public opinion in the United States has shown signs of questioning whether the war truly serves national interests. Support for Israel among segments of the American public has also reportedly declined.

Globally, the implications are complex. Countries such as China, Japan, South Korea, and European nations depend heavily on energy imports. Continued disruption in the Strait of Hormuz would severely impact Asia and Europe. China, in particular, relies on external energy supplies, making it vulnerable to interruptions. Some analysts suggest that the United States may be attempting to maintain global dominance by controlling energy flows, though such a strategy carries significant risks.

This crisis has also reshaped energy policy debates. Countries that had been rapidly transitioning away from fossil fuels are reconsidering their positions. Some European and Asian nations are turning back toward coal and nuclear energy to ensure energy security. This

does not signal the end of renewable energy but reflects a broader recognition that a diversified energy strategy is essential.

Statements from Iranian military leaders further illustrate the seriousness of the situation. Iranian officials have declared that they will not bow to pressure and are prepared to respond forcefully if the conflict resumes. Such rhetoric heightens tensions and underscores the urgency of diplomatic efforts.

Strategically, the United States faces mounting challenges. Although it retains military superiority, a prolonged conflict could be politically and economically damaging. President Trump appears eager to secure a "better deal" than previous agreements and present it as a political achievement ahead of elections.

Pakistan's diplomatic initiatives have therefore gained significance. High-level meetings in Tehran aim to de-escalate tensions and open channels for negotiation. Pakistan seeks regional stability, recognizing that war in the Middle East directly impacts its own economy and security through rising energy prices and global inflation.

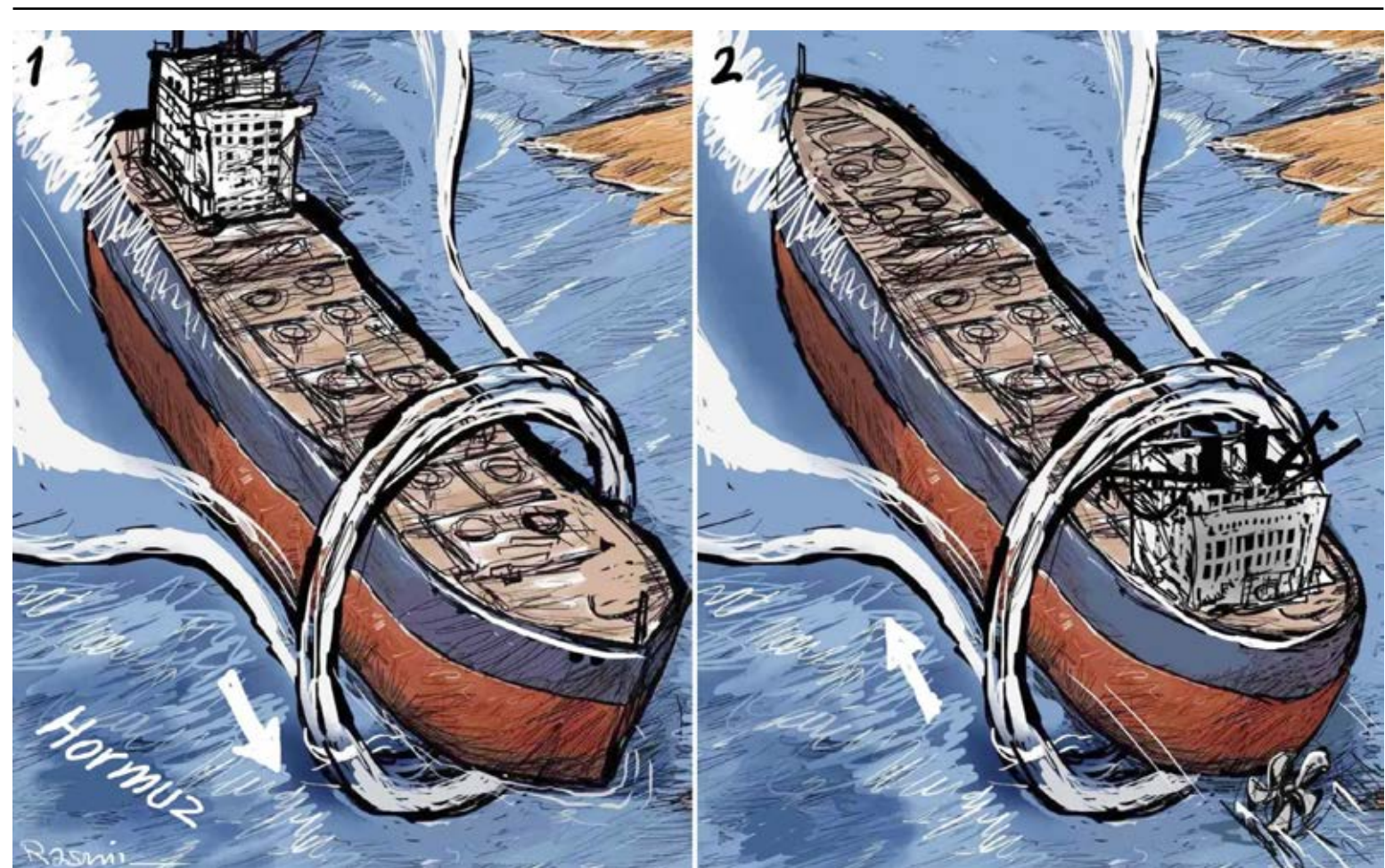
In conclusion, this crisis is no longer merely a regional conflict; it has become a defining moment in global economic stability, energy politics, and the shifting balance of power. If diplomatic efforts fail, not only the Middle East but the entire world could face severe economic consequences. Military victories may offer temporary advantage, but sustainable peace remains the only true and lasting solution.

The writer senior analyst and he can be reached at sirasif786@gmail.com



Analysis

Muhammad Asif



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

UN Resolution 47 Still Keeps Kashmir on International Agenda

The United Nations Security Council Resolution 47, adopted on April 21, 1948, addressed the escalating conflict over Jammu and Kashmir between India and Pakistan following the partition of British India in 1947. The resolution called for an immediate ceasefire, the withdrawal of troops from both sides and a subsequent reduction of Indian military forces to the minimum level necessary for maintaining law and order. Crucially, it proposed that the future status of Kashmir be determined through a free and impartial plebiscite conducted under UN auspices, reflecting the will of the Kashmiri people.

Despite its clear framework, Resolution 47 was never fully implemented. Disagreements emerged almost immediately even before the ink on the documents dried. The dishonest and malafide intentions of Indian government was apparent from the beginning. Indian establishment put forward the pretext that Pakistan must first withdraw all its forces and irregular fighters, as stipulated, before any plebiscite could occur. Pakistan, legitimately, argued for simultaneous or balanced withdrawals, expressing concern that unilateral withdrawal would disadvantage its position. This combined with expansionist policies in combination with total disregard of international commitments by Indian government, effectively stalled the resolution's execution. Over time, India unleashed a reign of terror and throttled the voices of Kashmiris demanding the implementation of the resolution.

The non-fulfillment of Resolution 47 has had long-lasting implications for regional stability and international diplomacy. Kashmir remains one of the most militarized and contested regions in the world, with periodic escalations posing risks between two nuclear-armed states. The unresolved status has also fueled internal unrest within Kashmir, complicating governance and human rights conditions. Additionally, the case highlights limitations of international mediation when enforcement mechanisms are weak and parties involved are unwilling to compromise. As a result, Resolution 47 remains a reference point in diplomatic discourse, symbolizing both the aspirations and constraints of multilateral conflict resolution.

An Emerging Pakistan on the Global Horizon

The contemporary international order is undergoing a profound transition, entering a phase in which the traditional conception of power is steadily dissolving into new and more complex configurations. Politics, economics, energy, technology, and security once treated as distinct domains are now deeply interwoven, to the extent that even minor shifts within a single region can reverberate across the global balance of power. Within this fluid and rapidly evolving landscape, certain states are gradually losing their former centrality, while others are asserting themselves as emerging nodes of influence. Among these ascending actors, Pakistan's name is increasingly being recognized, shaped by its geostrategic location, demographic potential, and evolving role in regional and global affairs.

To comprehend Pakistan's significance, it is insufficient to view its geography as a mere cartographic entity. Rather, it must be understood as a natural crossroads linking South Asia with Central Asia and the Middle East. For centuries, this region has served as a conduit for civilizations, commerce, and mobility. In the present era marked by a reconfiguration of global trade and energy corridors, Pakistan's location has once again acquired strategic centrality. As nations reassess maritime and overland connectivity, Pakistan emerges as a natural gateway state, capable of facilitating new arteries of

regional and intercontinental exchange. Within this framework, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) represents far more than a bilateral development initiative; it constitutes a component of a broader strategic vision. By integrating infrastructure development with energy generation, industrial expansion, and trade facilitation, CPEC has repositioned Pakistan within the global economic architecture. It has effectively transformed geographical advantage into operational economic relevance, with implications that may extend well beyond national borders to reshape regional economic dynamics.

Yet Pakistan's significance cannot be confined solely to geography or economic corridors. In the realm of global security, its role has acquired distinct and growing relevance. Years of sustained engagement in counterterrorism operations, coupled with internal security challenges and regional instability, have endowed Pakistan with extensive operational experience. In contemporary security discourse particularly in relation to Afghanistan's evolving situation and shifting regional power equilibria Pakistan is increasingly regarded as an indispensable stakeholder. This reality compels major global powers to view Pakistan not merely as a sovereign state within the region, but as an active security partner whose participation is essential for any durable stabilization framework.

Economically, while Pakistan continues to confront structural challenges, its latent potential remains substantial. Agriculture continues to serve as the backbone of the national economy, ensuring food security and contributing significantly to exports. Simultaneously, the rapid expansion of the information technology sector driven by a young, digitally adept population is propelling Pakistan toward integration with the global digital economy. Freelancing ecosystems, software development industries, and emerging tech startups are collectively reshaping economic narratives and introducing new avenues of growth. In parallel, untapped mineral resources are attracting increasing international attention, offering the prospect of long-term structural transformation if effectively harnessed.

Central to this evolving trajectory is Pakistan's demographic composition. Its predominantly young population constitutes a strategic asset of considerable magnitude. If adequately equipped with education, technical training, and institutional opportunities, this demographic dividend has the potential to transform Pakistan from a developing economy into a competitive participant in the global economic order. Historically, sustained national progress has been closely linked to the effective utilization of human capital, and Pakistan stands at a critical juncture in this regard.

On the diplomatic front, Pakistan is navigating a complex yet increasingly significant strategic posture. Amid intensifying rivalries among global powers, the formation of regional blocs, and the redefinition of geopolitical alignments, Pakistan occupies a unique intermediary space.

Cracks Beneath the Surface: Is India Losing Its Grip?

A nation that projects itself as the world's largest democracy is increasingly grappling with uncomfortable questions about its internal cohesion. From the valleys of Kashmir to the hills of Manipur, unrest is no longer an isolated phenomenon—it is becoming a pattern that challenges the very narrative India has long sought to uphold before the international community.

In Indian-administered Kashmir, a region that has remained disputed for decades, the demand for self-determination continues to echo despite heavy militarization and strict administrative controls. The revocation of Article 370 in 2019 was presented by New Delhi as a move toward integration and development. However, years later, the ground reality suggests a different story—frequent protests, communication blackouts in the past, and an environment where dissent is tightly monitored. Voices calling for freedom have not disappeared; rather, they have been pushed into the shadows, occasionally resurfacing in the form of public demonstrations and civil resistance.

Simultaneously, in Manipur—far removed geographically but strikingly similar in its expression of unrest—India faces one of its most severe internal crises in recent years. Ethnic violence between communities has displaced thousands, destroyed homes, and exposed deep-rooted fractures in governance. Protesters in Manipur are not merely reacting to isolated incidents; they are expressing long-standing grievances over political marginalization, identity, and security. The demand for autonomy and protection of indigenous rights has, in some quarters, evolved into calls that question the Indian state's authority itself.

What binds Kashmir and Manipur is not just unrest, but a growing perception among local populations that their voices are either ignored or suppressed. While the Indian government maintains that these are internal

matters being handled with necessary measures, critics argue that excessive force, media restrictions, and limited transparency have only intensified alienation.

Equally concerning is the role of mainstream Indian media. In an era where information shapes perception, the portrayal—or omission—of such crises carries significant weight. Critics often accuse major media outlets of downplaying internal dissent while amplifying narratives that reinforce state control and stability. The absence of sustained, critical coverage raises questions about press freedom and the independence of journalism in a country that prides itself on democratic values.

However, to describe India as being on the "verge of collapse" may be an oversimplification. India remains a vast and complex state with strong institutions, a large economy, and significant global influence. Yet, history shows that internal fractures, if left unaddressed, can gradually erode even the most resilient systems. The real issue, therefore, is not whether India will collapse, but whether it can confront and resolve these deep-seated challenges through dialogue, inclusion, and genuine political reform.

The unrest in Kashmir and Manipur should serve as a wake-up call—not just for India, but for the global community observing it. Sustainable peace cannot be achieved through silence or suppression. It requires acknowledging grievances, ensuring justice, and allowing space for dissent within a democratic framework.

If India continues to prioritize image over introspection, it risks widening the gap between its democratic ideals and on-ground realities. The question is no longer about isolated protests; it is about the direction in which the country is heading. Will it emerge stronger by addressing its internal contradictions, or will these fault lines deepen into something far more consequential? The answer lies not in controlling the narrative—but in confronting the truth.

Analysis



Dr. Muhammad Tayyab Khan Singhani

Analysis



Kiran Asim

Message from the President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on Iqbal Day (21 April 2026)

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Today, we pay tribute to Allama Muhammad Iqbal, the Poet of the East, a profound Muslim thinker and the visionary who gave intellectual direction to the idea of Pakistan.



vision and hope over despair. In his view, lasting peace depends not only on political arrangements, but on the reform of the individual and the strengthening of moral character.

He says: Adamiyyat ehtiram-e-adami, Bahkhabar sho az maqam-e-adami.

(Humanity lies in respecting the dignity of man; recognise the true station of man.)

An important aspect of Iqbal's thought is its relevance to all sections of society. For youth, he called for ambition and disciplined effort. For women, he emphasised a dignified and active role in society.

The modern world continues to face serious challenges marked by conflict and division. In such circumstances, the thought of Allama Iqbal remains a living source of guidance.



Allama Iqbal viewed education as a means of intellectual and moral formation, not only a path to livelihood. His emphasis on character, responsibility and purposeful learning remains directly relevant to how we shape our educational and social systems.

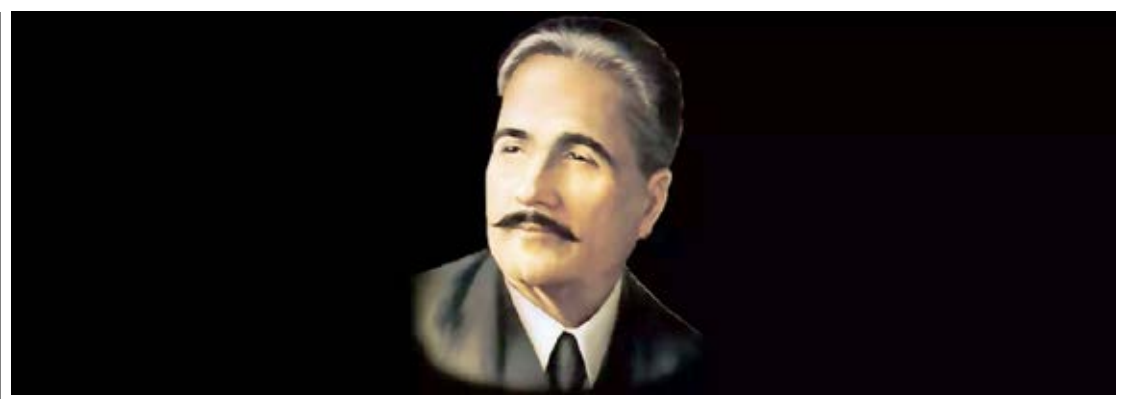
Iqbal's intellectual stature is recognised beyond Pakistan. In Iran, where Persian literary tradition holds a central place, his poetry is regarded with deep respect.

On this day, we reaffirm the importance of bringing Iqbal's ideas into our national life and public conduct. Their true value lies in their application in building a just and balanced society.

Jahan-e-tazah ki afkar-e-tazah se hai numood, Ke sang o khisht se hote nahin jahan paida.

(A new world comes into being through new ways of thinking; worlds are not created from stone and brick alone.)

Pakistan Zindabad.



PM pays tribute to Allama Iqbal for leading Muslims

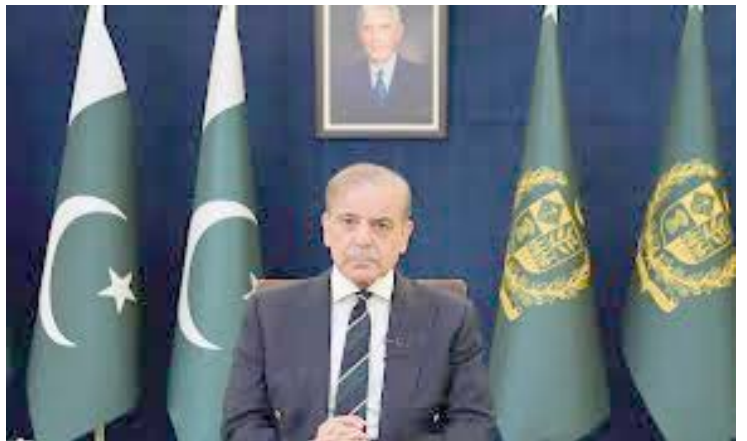
City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif paid his heartfelt tribute to the poet of the East, thinker of Islam and Pakistan, Allama Muhammad Iqbal, on behalf of the entire nation and said undoubtedly he was a benefactor of the Muslims of the subcontinent and a great intellectual leader.

In a message on Iqbal Day observed on April 21, he said, "Allama Iqbal gave a message for self, action, faith and intellectual freedom. Allama Iqbal's thoughts gave a subdued national awareness, self-confidence and a sense of continuous struggle," he added.

The Prime Minister said, "In today's national and global circumstances, Allama Iqbal's message is of extraordinary importance to us. Intellectual chaos, extremism, and social intolerance require us to build our individual and collective lives in the light of Allama Iqbal's intellectual training, Allama Iqbal declared love, brotherhood, and national awareness as the goals of life."

"In the light of Allama Iqbal's ideals, a Pakistan built on the strong foundations of peace, unity, knowledge, character, and justice is our future. The Government of Pakistan is committed to the complete eradication of terrorism, extremism, and



sectarianism, and to the establishment of a moderate and harmonious society," he remarked.

The Prime Minister said, "Allama Iqbal paid special attention to the training of the younger generation. He called the youth asset of the nation and the architects of the future. Equipping the new young generation with knowledge, skills, character, independence, and patriotism is indispensable for the national future."

"The government believes that the dream of national development cannot be fulfilled without building education on intellectual, moral, and national foundations. Under this ideology, necessary steps are being taken to empower the youth,

equip them with modern skills, and strengthen their role in national development," he mentioned.

Th Prime Minister said, "If the youth of Pakistan are guided by Iqbal's thoughts, they can take the country to new heights of development, stability, and dignity. Along with the youth, Allama Iqbal taught the entire nation a lesson of hope and continuous progress that expresses our national aspirations."

"On the occasion of Iqbal Day, let us pledge to make Iqbal's thoughts a part of our national policy, educational priorities, and collective mindset, and work towards building a Pakistan that guarantees a bright future. Insha Allah!," he concluded.

Iqbal Lahori; An Eternal Bridge Between Iran and Pakistan

Muhammad Iqbal Lahori, who was born on November 9, 1877, in the city of Sialkot in present-day Pakistani Punjab and passed away on April 21, 1938, was not merely a Muslim philosopher, poet, and politician. He can rightfully be called the "Most Iranian of Non-Iranians" — a figure who, despite never having the opportunity to travel to Iran, had a heart and mind overflowing with love for this land, and whose name is forever intertwined with Iranian culture and civilization.

vision for an independent state for the Muslims of India that ultimately led to the founding of Pakistan.

The Exalted Status of Iran and the Persian Language in Iqbal's Thought

Perhaps no one has expressed love and devotion to Iran and the Persian language as eloquently and passionately as Iqbal Lahori. He considered Persian the "sweetest language in the world" and proudly proclaimed: "Even though Hindi is sweet as sugar, the manner of Dari speech is sweeter still." The vast majority of his poetic works—over 70 percent—are composed in Persian.

Iqbal Lahori was born into a devout family of Kashmiri Brahmin descent who had converted to Islam. He completed his education in philosophy in Lahore before traveling to England for further studies at Cambridge and Munich. His doctoral dissertation, titled "The Development of Metaphysics in Persia," is a clear testament to his deep affection for Iranian thought from the very beginning of his academic journey.

language in the Subcontinent.

Iqbal Lahori in the light of the words of the martyred leader of Iran, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei

The admiration Iranians hold for Iqbal Lahori is not limited to the general public and cultural elites; high-ranking Iranian officials have consistently acknowledged his lofty stature. The Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Khamenei, is among those who have paid special attention to Iqbal and analyzed his thoughts in numerous speeches. Speaking at the first International Congress in Commemoration of Allama Iqbal Lahori at the University of Tehran (1986), regarding the relevance of Iqbal's message for the Islamic world, he stated:

"Today, many of Iqbal's messages belong to us... Our nation has brought Iqbal's message of 'Khudi' (Selfhood) to life and realized it in the realm of action... Islam, in its very essence and identity, possesses the richest resources for managing human beings and human societies."

This perspective reflects the depth of intellectual kinship between Iran's leadership and Iqbal's awakening ideas. Furthermore, during his historic

visit to Pakistan, Ayatollah Khamenei visited the mausoleum of Iqbal Lahori and paid his respects to the elevated status of this poet and thinker of the Muslim world.

Iqbal; An Eternal Cultural Bridge Between Two Nations

Iqbal Lahori is not merely a historical figure belonging to the past; rather, he is a living and robust bridge that connects the hearts of the two nations of Iran and Pakistan today. His personality and works constitute a "cultural linchpin" between the two countries. The Iranian Ambassador to Pakistan has described Iqbal as "a symbol of friendship between two friendly and neighboring countries," emphasizing that "with his verses, Iqbal breathed new life into the ancient tree of Iran-Pakistan friendship." As a point of deep cultural commonality, he provides an unparalleled asset for strengthening cultural diplomacy and expanding interactions among elites, artists, and thinkers of both nations.

For Iranians, Iqbal Lahori is a symbol of the revival of Islamic thought and the return to cultural self-identity. He fought against the intellectual and cultural domination of Western colonialism and called upon Muslims to embrace self-belief and rely on their

authentic Islamic-Iranian identity. Iqbal Lahori's passing, we not only



His passionate verse—"A man shall come who breaks the chains of slaves; I have seen it from the window of your prison walls"—has perpetually inspired freedom fighters and movements of awakening in Iran. Therefore, for the younger Iranian generation, understanding Iqbal is not a choice but a necessity to become aware of the deep roots of their cultural identity and its connections with the surrounding world. Iqbal Lahori is like the Rumi of our era, one who understood Iranian philosophy perfectly and linked it with the needs of the contemporary world.

Conclusion Today, on the anniversary of Allama

honor the memory of a great poet and philosopher, but we also celebrate a bond that, transcending geographical borders, places the two nations of Iran and Pakistan within a single cultural family. Iqbal is a bridge built over the raging waters of history, and crossing it guides us to the shared well-springs of love, mysticism, language, and civilization. It is incumbent upon us, as cultural managers and activists, to preserve this precious heritage and ensure this sturdy bridge remains eternal by introducing Iqbal's thoughts to future generations.

The author is Iranian Cultural Attaché in Rawalpindi

Pakistan Air Force the Living Echo of Iqbal's Shaheen

When the jets of Pakistan Air Force thunder across the skies, they ascend not on fuel alone, but on a timeless idea. That idea was not born in a cockpit or crafted in a command room rather it was ignited in the blazing vision of Allama Muhammad Iqbal. Long before Pakistan forged wings of steel, Iqbal had already bestowed upon it wings of thought, courage and destiny. It is one of history's most stirring truths that the deepest architect of PAF's spirit was neither an aviator nor a soldier, but a poet whose words still ignite the blood of those who guard the skies.

Iqbal captured reach, dominance and freedom of movement; the eternal grammar of the skies. Every squadron, every station, every young cadet in Blue inherits fragments of that same fire. For the men and women of PAF, flight is never merely mechanical; it is a spiritual ascent.

Life is nothing but the passion to soar No symbol in Iqbal's universe shines brighter than the Shaheen; the falcon of resolve, altitude and fearless purpose.

This spirit has appeared again and again in Pakistan's history. In Indo-Pak War of 1965, legends like M M Alam and Sarfaraz Rafiqi Shaheed transformed impossible odds into immortal victories. In Indo-Pak War of 1971, Rashid Minhas Shaheed sacrificed his life so the nation might live with honour. Their stories are not memories

in PAF, they are standards. Yet again when the nation again looked skyward in 2019 during Operation Swift Retort, the world witnessed that the PAF's Shaheen spirit had never faded. Precision, composure and professional excellence once more proved that numbers alone do not decide battle. Iqbal had foretold such moments:

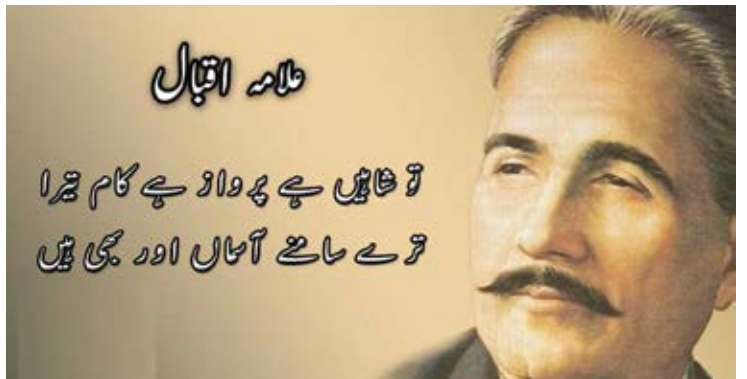
When the sword of selfhood is sharpened on faith One warrior strikes with the force of an army

During Marka-e-Haq of May 2025, when unprovoked enemy aggression sought to violate the sanctity of Pakistan's skies, Pakistan Air Force once again rose with the calm fury of a seasoned guardian. Under its bold and resolute leadership of Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber, every decision reflected clarity, courage and absolute confidence; every response bore the hallmark of discipline, precision and professional mastery. There was no haste, no confusion—only controlled power unleashed at the right moment. The sentinels of the skies met provocation

with purpose, shattered hostile designs and stood once more as the unyielding shield of national sovereignty. In that defining hour, PAF proved that true strength lies not in noise, but in readiness; not in numbers, but in nerve; not in threats, but in the will to act. It was the Shaheen spirit reborn; Swift in Strike, Unwavering in Resolve, and Majestic in Victory. As Iqbal had foretold:

High vision, gracious speech, a soul aflame

That is why modern PAF under its visionary leadership continues to climb—from operational readiness to indigenous capability, from technological innovation to strategic confidence. It is not merely modernising machines; it is renewing a mindset. Terms cherished across PAF culture; Zouq-e-Parvaz, Uqabi-Ruh and Khudi are more than phrases. They are professional virtues.



They teach every officer, airman and civilian that service demands sacrifice, mastery demands struggle, and honour demands constancy. Iqbal did not dream of passive followers. He dreamed of builders, guardians and pathfinders. In Pakistan Air Force, that dream found Uniform, Discipline and Wings. So whenever a Shaheen climbs into the dawn, it carries more than missiles and metal. It carries a century-old flame lit by a poet who taught a nation how to rise.

The story of Pakistan Air Force is not written merely in aircraft inventories, battle honours or modern technology; it is written in altitude of character,

steadiness of nerve and the unbreakable covenant between a nation and those who guard its skies. Each roar of a fighter engine is an echo of Iqbal's call to rise above fear, doubt and limitation. Each Shaheen who straps into the cockpit inherits not only a machine of war, but a legacy of honour, sacrifice and relentless excellence. Nations are protected not by steel alone, but by spirit—and in that spirit, PAF remains the living embodiment of Iqbal's dream: vigilant in peace, thunderous in battle, and forever ascending toward greater heights. As long as courage lives in blue uniforms and resolve burns in steadfast hearts, the skies of Pakistan shall remain unconquered.

پرواز کے دنوں کی ہی ایک نفا میں کرکس کا جہاں اور ہے، شاہین کا جہاں اور

What greater expression of air power could exist? In one stroke,

sanctity of Pakistan's skies, Pakistan Air Force once again rose with the calm fury of a seasoned guardian. Under its bold and resolute leadership of Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber, every decision reflected clarity, courage and absolute confidence; every response bore the hallmark of discipline, precision and professional mastery. There was no haste, no confusion—only controlled power unleashed at the right moment. The sentinels of the skies met provocation



Dr. Mehdi Taheri



Izmi Herlani

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
172,196.70	173,939.01
Day's High	Day's Low
174,523.76	169,226.56
Index Value	Change
52,965,645,724	-1742.31
Percentage	Time
-1%	20 Apr, 2026 4:30 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
10,609.08	-58.55
Percentage	Time
-0.55%	20 Apr, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
49,414.13	-33.30
Percentage	Time
-0.067%	20 Apr, 1:16 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
58,824.89	+348.99
Percentage	Time
+0.60%	20 Apr, 3:45 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates

Australian Dollar	195.05	198.10
Australian Dollar	197.61	204.93
Bahrain Dinar	727.60	740.49
Canadian Dollar	202.31	208.82
China Yuan	36.45	37.55
Danish Krone	43.25	43.65
Euro	327.55	334.52
Hong Kong Dollar	35.10	36.05
Indian Rupee	2.03	2.22
Japanese Yen	1.7387	1.8386
Kuwaiti Dinar	878.75	890.52
Malaysian Ringgit	65.30	66.75
New Zealand \$	162.45	164.10
Norwegians Krone	27.6	27.9
Omani Riyal	722.25	732.34
Qatari Riyal	71.35	72.85
Saudi Riyal	74.45	75.45
Singapore Dollar	217.78	223.30
Swedish Korona	30.25	30.55
Swiss Franc	355.05	358.90
Thai Bhat	8.05	8.25
U.A.E Dirham	76.05	76.95
UK Pound Sterling	376.15	383.36
US Dollar	279	279.95

Mian Zahid Hussain Welcomes Progress in Islamabad Peace Process

Spokesman Report

KARACHI: Mian Zahid Hussain, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum & All Karachi Industrial Alliance, Chairman National Business Group Pakistan, Chairman Policy Advisory Board FPCCI, and Former Provincial

Minister Information Technology, has expressed cautious optimism regarding the ongoing diplomatic efforts to resolve the US-Israel-Iran conflict, emphasizing that the economic survival of the region is tethered to the success of the Islamabad negotiations. In a statement issued today, he noted that



the conditional two-week ceasefire, which came into effect on April 8, 2026, has provided a critical breathing space for a world economy reeling from the volatility of energy prices.

Mian Zahid Hussain lauded the proactive role of Pakistan's civil and military leadership in facilitating the ceasefire and facilitating the high-level dialogue. He specifically pointed to the significance of the "Islamabad Talks" held on April 11-12 at the Serena Hotel, which

marked the first direct, high-level engagement since the 1979 Iranian Revolution, between the United States and Iran. He noted that while the initial 21-hour marathon session concluded without a final deal, the fact that both sides agreed to remain engaged under Pakistan's mediation is a major diplomatic victory for the country. He further underscored that the visit of Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir to Tehran from April 15 to 17 was instrumental in addressing security concerns and

reinforcing the trust necessary to sustain the peace process.

The veteran business leader also commended Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's recent diplomatic mission to Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Türkiye, where the PM participated in the Antalya Diplomacy Forum. Mian Zahid Hussain stated that these visits have consolidated a regional consensus on de-escalation, ensuring that key Middle Eastern stakeholders are aligned with the peace framework.

Deserted Aabpara Market

ISLAMABAD: A view of deserted Aabpara Market due to roads block with cemented blocks and barbed wire at Red-zone area during security high alert, in the Federal Capital, as Pakistan prepares to host the 2Nd round of U.S. and Iran for the second phase of peace talks.



Photo: Online

BingX Reports Strong Q1 2026 Growth as AI Users Surpass 5 Million and TradFi Hits 50% of Volume

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: BingX, a leading cryptocurrency exchange and Web3-AI company, today released its Q1 2026 review, highlighting momentum across its AI-driven, TradFi ecosystem. The quarter was defined by the launch of the BingX TradFi Market and continued expansion of the BingX AI suite, alongside strong user feedback to its VIP program enhancements.

In Q1, BingX officially launched its TradFi Market, marking a significant step in bridging traditional finance and crypto

trading. The platform now supports over 100 TradFi assets across commodities, forex, stocks, and indices. At its peak during the quarter, TradFi trading accounted for 50% of BingX's total volume, reflecting strong user demand for diversified markets within a unified trading environment. Fully integrated across the BingX ecosystem, TradFi capabilities extend into perpetual futures, copy trading, AI-powered tools, and VIP benefits, enabling users to manage their trading efficiently through one platform.

FPCCI Urges China-Bound Shift: Focus on Processing, Not Just Raw Exports

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: In a strategic push to improve trade balance with China, Saquib Fayyaz Magoon, Senior Vice President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI) and Chairman Businessmen Panel Progressive (BMPP), met with His Excellency Shahzad Ahmed, Consul General of Pakistan in Shanghai. The core message was: without targeted investment in value-added production, Pakistan cannot hope to transform its export mix to China.

Shahzad Ahmed lauded FPCCI's efforts in trade diplomacy and assured full support from the Consulate General in Shanghai, not just in facilitating exports but in actively helping Pakistani businesses attract Chinese investment for value-added ventures. He reiterated that China remains a vital strategic and economic partner for Pakistan, and that closer collaboration between business communities would yield long-term benefits.



Saquib Fayyaz Magoon reaffirmed FPCCI's commitment to playing a proactive role in expanding Pakistan-China trade ties, attracting investment, and fostering cooperation in key sectors for

mutual advantage. The message was consistent throughout: investment in value addition is no longer optional—it is the only path to transforming Pakistan's export mix to China.

CAT upholds CCP order against Kingdom Valley, maintains Rs35m penalty for deceptive marketing

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Appellate Tribunal (CAT) has upheld the Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP)'s order dated 27 May 2025 against Kingdom Valley (Pvt.) Limited, directing the real estate developer to deposit a penalty of Rs35 million for misleading consumers about the location and approval status of its housing project.

During the proceedings, the Commission observed that Kingdom Valley had engaged in deliberate deceptive marketing by portraying its project, actually located in Mouza Choor, Rawalpindi, as in Islamabad through billboards, social media, and other advertisements, thereby misleading consumers to command higher value. It is further added that the project was

being widely promoted as "NOC approved" even before formal approvals were obtained, indicating a calculated strategy to deceive.

In its detailed judgment, the Tribunal endorsed the Commission's findings, holding that the company had clearly misrepresented the project by advertising it as "Kingdom Valley Islamabad" despite its actual location in Rawalpindi. It noted that advertisements had been launched prior to obtaining approvals, reinforcing the element of deception.

Rejecting the Kingdom Valley's defence that similar practices were prevalent in the sector, the Tribunal observed that "the deception angle becomes insurmountable when violation occurs in broad daylight," adding that "two wrongs never make one right."

inDrive Joins World Economic Forum's Elite Unicorn Community

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: The mobility platform inDrive has officially joined the World Economic Forum's Unicorn Community. By becoming part of this community, inDrive aims to bring the perspective of emerging markets like Pakistan into global discussions on digital equity. The platform's participation will focus on promoting fair access to services and expanding economic opportunities, while challenging algorithmic injustice through its "fairness-first" model.

According to inDrive's founder and CEO, Arsen Tomsky, "Joining the World Economic Forum's Unicorn Community is a significant milestone for us as we continue to expand our global presence and impact. Our mission has always been to challenge injustice by giving people more control over their choices. We look forward to working with the Forum to contribute to discussions on building more inclusive, transparent, and fair digital economies—especially in fast-growing and underserved markets."

Pakistan Launches First PKR 3 Billion Green Sukuk for Telecom Sector

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: InfraZamin Pakistan Limited, in partnership with Infralectric, a Brillanz Group company, DIB Pakistan Limited, Bank Alfalah Limited, and Meezan Bank Limited, announced the signing of Pakistan's first-ever PKR 3 Billion, 'AAA' Rated, Green Sukuk for the telecom sector, marking a major milestone in sustainable infrastructure financing and climate-aligned capital markets

development. Under the transaction, InfraZamin Pakistan is providing a 100% principal guarantee for the PKR 3 billion Green Sukuk issued by Infralectric Private Limited with DIB Pakistan Limited, as the Lead Arranger of the Green Sukuk transaction demonstrating how ethical capital markets can lead the transition toward scalable, climate-aligned infrastructure financing.

Commenting on the occasion, Maheen Rahman, Chief Executive

Officer of InfraZamin Pakistan, said, "This landmark transaction demonstrates how innovative credit enhancement can unlock capital markets for transformative green infrastructure."

Bilal Qureshi, Group CEO, Brillanz Group, stated, "This landmark transaction sets a new benchmark for business model innovation, demonstrating how private capital can accelerate energy transition, reduce diesel reliance and forex pressure, and build a more resilient, AI-enabled telecom network for



Pakistan." Muhammad Ali Gulfaraz, Chief Executive Officer of Dubai Islamic Bank Pakistan Limited, highlighted, "This agreement represents a defining moment in the Bank's commitment to the country's green transition."

Atif Bajwa, President and Chief

Executive Officer of Bank Alfalah Limited, stated, "Bank Alfalah is pleased to contribute to this landmark Green Sukuk, representing a significant advancement in green finance and sustainable infrastructure development in Pakistan."

Syed Tanveer Hussain, Chief Oper-

ating Officer, Wholesale Banking, Meezan Bank added: "Meezan Bank's participation in this landmark syndicated Green Sukuk transaction, reflects our continued commitment towards advancing the role of Islamic finance in supporting sustainable and infrastructure-led development in Pakistan."

PSL Pakistan Super League Cricket Championship Edition 11

Babar Azam's brilliant century helped Peshawar Zalmi defeat Quetta Gladiators by 118 runs



Asim Tanveer

KARACHI: In the Pakistan Super League 11 match at the National Stadium Karachi, Babar Azam's brilliant century helped Peshawar Zalmi defeat Quetta Gladiators by 118 runs. The double-header day in PSL 11 was dominated by double centuries. Yes, in both matches, the teams scored more than 200 runs and then a brilliant century was also seen, when Babar Azam scored his third century in PSL history and 12th century in T20. Coincidentally, the teams that scored more

than 200 runs in both matches won. In the 29th match of PSL played on Sunday, which was an evening match. Peshawar Zalmi defeated Quetta Gladiators by a huge margin and created problems for them. They now have six points in 8 matches and only two matches are left. Needless to say, Peshawar Zalmi was on top and had already qualified and now they are seen as the top one team. Gladiators won the toss and made the wrong decision to bowl first, after which Peshawar Zalmi started the batting disastrously. Although Mohammad Haris

was dismissed for 16 runs off six balls, after that captain Babar Azam and Kushal Mendis added a 135-run partnership for the second wicket and played only 13 overs for it. Here Kushal Mendis was dismissed for 83 runs off 44 balls. The strike rate was over 188. Three sixes and 10 fours were the highlight of his innings. It was not thought that Babar Azam would score a century at that time because his score was 50 at that time, but in the last overs, first Farhan Yousuf with 19 runs and then Aaron Hardy with a brilliant 26 runs off 10 balls provided him



a stand. As a result, Babar Azam managed to complete his magnificent century in the 20th over. He remained unbeaten on 100 runs off 52 balls. He hit six fours and four sixes. His strike rate was over

192. This was his 12th century in his T20 career and the third in PSL history. As a result, Peshawar Zalmi set a mountain-like total of 255 runs for three wickets on the scoreboard. Look at the condition of the Quetta Gladiators bowlers. Where Dad Khan was hit for 53 runs in four overs. Couldn't take any wicket. And then, Alzarri Joseph was hit for the most runs of 59 runs in four overs and got the only wicket. Abrar Amd also got 44 runs in four overs today. Could have got one player out. And then and mystery spinner Usman Tariq

had a half-century in four overs. Here he was able to take one wicket by giving away 50 runs. In reply, Quetta Gladiators had a disastrous start. The first wicket fell on 22. The second also fell on 22. The third fell on 36, the fourth on 44, the fifth on 73, the sixth on 78 and the seventh on 82. Shamil Hussain 21, captain Saud Shakeel 12, Riley Rosso zero, Hassan Nawaz five, Danish Chandi Mal went to 19 where Dad Khan was dismissed first and then Saqib Khan was also dismissed. Bevan Jacobs saved it from complete disaster

by making 34. Alzarri Joseph supported him and stopped the series of wickets falling and took the score above 100. The entire Gladiators team was dismissed for 137 runs in 18.1 overs, thus Peshawar Zalmi achieved a lot with a huge margin of 118 runs. Peshawar Zalmi's Muhammad Basit took three wickets for 26 runs. Ali Raza took 3 wickets for 9 runs. Hardy took 2 wickets for 11 runs. **Next match of PSL 11** Tuesday, April 21. Lahore Qalandars vs Quetta Gladiators. Will be played in Lahore.

Youth Affairs Dept plans to build University of Sports Sciences

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Punjab Youth Affairs and Sports Department is going to establish the country's first ever University of Sports Sciences. "The University of Sports Sciences will have all modern sports related facilities. Punjab Sports Department is adopting all modern techniques for the development of sports culture across the province".

Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab M Ali shared this information during his visit to Institute of Sports Sciences Punjab (ISSP) on Monday.

Secretary Sports Punjab was accompanied by Director Admin Abid Shaukat, ISSP Principal Shaista Qaiser, senior coach Raisur Rehman and other officials during his visit where he reviewed the ongoing capacity building course of sports



officers and coaches.

While talking on this occasion, Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab said that the capacity building of sports officers and coaches is being done through this modern training

course. "This course will help the sports officers in the development of players and they will be able to conduct sports events in their respective areas in a professional way". He further said that highly qual-

ified master trainers and PhD doctors have been engaged for capacity building of sports officers and coaches. "This modern training process is very important for sports officers and coaches of the province".

State-of-the-Art Dome Construction Begins at Hazrat Data Ganj Bakhsh Shrine

Bureau Report

LAHORE: A state-of-the-art dome of exceptional architectural elegance and spiritual grandeur is now being constructed at the shrine of Hazrat Ali Hajveri (RA), also known as Hazrat Data Ganj Bakhsh, marking a landmark development in the ongoing extension project. The dome is envisioned as a signature feature of the shrine's upgraded skyline, blending traditional Islamic design with modern engineering precision.

Secretary/Chief Administrator Auqaf Punjab, Dr. Ehsan Bhutta, stated that the formal construction of the dome has been successfully initiated, representing a major



milestone in the project's advancement.

He expressed these views during a detailed inspection visit to the shrine's extension site. The visit was attended by Director Projects Auqaf Rafique Noor

Wattoo, General Manager NESPAK Adil Nazir, Superintending Engineer C&W Department Essa bin Moueen, XEN C&W Umair Hassan, Administrator Data Darbar Muhammad Ali Khan, Manager Data Darbar Gohar Mustafa, XEN Auqaf Zuhab Mehmood, and other concerned officials.

During the briefing, Dr. Bhutta was informed that the dome is being executed with meticulous attention to architectural harmony, structural durability, and spiritual aesthetics. The upper structure is progressing in close coordination with dome construction, while high-grade marble cutting and intricate Islamic calligraphy work are advancing rapidly to enhance the shrine's visual and spiritual

magnificence.

He further reviewed the project's development plan, clarifying that the areas measuring 4 kanals 4 marlas and 17 kanals 6 marlas are designated land parcels. He added that the 4 kanals 4 marlas area will include a Sama Hall, Hajveria Madrassa Complex, and Langar Khana facilities to further enhance religious, educational, and welfare services for visitors.

Reaffirming the Government of Punjab's commitment, Dr. Bhutta stated that the project reflects a visionary approach to preserving spiritual heritage while delivering modern, well-organized facilities that uphold the sanctity and historic grandeur of the shrine for generations to come.

An Emerging Pakistan on the Global Horizon

Continued from Page 4

Its ability to maintain balanced relations across competing power centers positions it as a potential bridge-state capable of facilitating dialogue, mitigating tensions, and enabling limited convergence among divergent interests. This diplomatic flexibility is gradually enhancing its relevance within global strategic calculations.

Energy geopolitics further reinforces Pakistan's emerging importance. The pursuit of alternative energy routes, transnational pipeline projects, and regional energy cooperation frameworks underscores the increasing stra-

tegic value of its geographical corridor. As global energy demand rises alongside concerns over supply constraints, Pakistan's position as a transit hub becomes increasingly significant within the broader architecture of global energy security.

Taken collectively, these dimensions suggest that Pakistan's rise is not abrupt or accidental but rather evolutionary in nature. It is the product of a gradual convergence of internal reforms, institutional resilience, policy continuity, and shifting global dynamics. Nonetheless, this trajectory is not without constraints. Economic volatility, political discon-

tinuity, and governance inefficiencies remain persistent challenges that may impede the pace of this ascent if not addressed with strategic coherence.

Despite these limitations, Pakistan's growing relevance in the international system is becoming increasingly difficult to overlook. Its significance is not merely speculative but grounded in a confluence of geography, human capital, economic potential, and security experience. Should these elements be integrated within a coherent national strategy, Pakistan possesses the capacity not only to consolidate its regional standing but also to project itself as a meaningful

actor within the global order.

Ultimately, in an era where the value of states is no longer static but continuously reshaped by capability, adaptability, and strategic alignment, Pakistan finds itself at a pivotal moment of transition. This is a phase defined simultaneously by opportunity and constraint, demanding clarity of vision, institutional consistency, and collective foresight. If navigated effectively, Pakistan may transcend its traditional classification as a developing state and emerge as a consequential and respected participant in the evolving architecture of global power.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Tariq Fazal Ch posing for a group photograph along with winning team players after the final of Under 18 Youth Hockey Championship, organized by the Pakistan Hockey Federation, in the Federal Capital. Online photo by Sultan Bashir

Regional Inter District Senior (Karachi Region) begins.

Zone-I, 219, Zone-II 220 and Zone-V 134 all out on the First day

Sports Desk

KARACHI: Regional Inter District Senior (Karachi Region) begins at various Grounds of the City. The highlights On the Opening day of 3 Day Matches are some good batting by Muhammad Taha 86, Umar Farooq 60 and Huzafa Muneer 59 and Unbeaten 59 by Samiullah and 54 by Abdul Basit 55.

Summarised Scores:

At UBL Sports Complex Zone-I 219 allout 61.3 overs. Muhammad Taha 86 15x4 1x6, Malik Zain ul Abideen 59 11x4, M. Fahad 34, Abdul Rafay 2/26, Israr Ahmed Awan 2/41, Aliyan Mehmood 2/59.

Close of Zone-III 115/2 in 33 overs. Abdul Basit 55, Syed Adil Hussain 32 both at the crease.

At KCCA Stadium Zone-V 1st innings 134 allout in 40.5 overs. Wata Dost 41 8x4, Muhammad Hassan 32, Muhammad Shoaib Khan 22. Aftab Khan 3/21, Khafid ul Nabi 2/26, Najeeb Rehman 2/27, M. Usman Bin Rashid 2/30.

In reply Zone-VII 1st Innings 237/6 in 52 overs. Huzafa Muneer 59 9x4 1x6, Asif Ali Shah 35, Sabeeh Siddiqui 24, Samiullah 59 Aftab Khan 17 both not out. Saifullah 3/44, Syed Shah Raza 3/46.

In the 3rd Match at Baqai Ground Zone-II 1st Innings 220 allout in 59.4 overs. Umar Farooq 60 6x4 3x6, Syed Shaheer 43 8x4, Wahaj Riaz 41 4x4, M.Siddiqi 31. M. Uzair Ali Khan 3/54, Afnan Khan 2/30, Talah Ahsan 2/35.

In reply Zone-IV 1st Innings 132/6 in 37 overs Afnan Khan 40 3x5 3x6 not out, Muhammad Ahad 34, Imran Shah 22. Wagaj Riaz 3/33, M. Umar Ajiaz 2/41.

Ongoing energy crisis and the accelerating shift toward solar adoption

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: This news is particularly relevant given Pakistan's ongoing energy crisis and the accelerating shift toward solar adoption. LONG's largest-ever summit in Lahore is not just an industry event it signals a broader transition in the solar market from price-driven competition to a more value-led ecosystem focused on efficiency, storage, and long-term sustainability.

The announcement of integrated solutions like BESS and large-scale storage systems also ties directly into Pakistan's growing need for reliable, round-the-clock energy, especially for industrial and agricultural sectors. Given the policy uncertainties and rising electricity costs, this story offers timely insight into where the renewable energy market is heading and how global players are positioning Pakistan as a key growth market.

Group photo

Group photo of participants at the closing ceremony of A two-week joint military exercise between Pakistan and Egypt with SSG General Officer Commanding and Egyptian Commander Major General Muhammad Saad Abdul Raziq.



Photo: ISPR

Pakistan-Egypt Joint Counterterrorism Exercise Concludes Successfully

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan-Egypt Joint Exercise Thunder-II, focused on counterterrorism operations, was successfully conducted between the armies of Pakistan and Egypt at Cherat, Pakistan. Two week long exercise was designed to enhance interoperability by refining drills, procedures, and techniques related to counterterrorism operations through joint training.

Combat teams from the Special Services Group (SSG) of the Pakistan Army and the Egyptian Special

Forces actively participated, demonstrating exceptional professionalism and operational skill throughout the exercise.

General Officer Commanding, Special Services Group, attended the closing ceremony as the Chief Guest, while the Commander of Egyptian Paratroopers, Major General Mohamed Saad Abdel Razik, and the Defence Attaché of Egypt also witnessed the event.

The exercise also served to further strengthen the longstanding and historic military-to-military relations between the two friendly nations.

PM, President European Council exchange views on situation in Middle East



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif Monday received a telephone call from António Costa, President of the European Council and during their cordial conversation, the two leaders exchanged views on the current situation in the Middle East.

The Prime Minister shared with President Costa the latest updates on Pakistan's diplomatic outreach and

peace efforts.

President Costa expressed deep appreciation for Pakistan's constructive role in promoting dialogue and stability in the region, and said that the EU was ready to support this process, in every possible manner.

Both leaders stressed on the need to continue with dialogue and diplomacy to ensure lasting regional and global security. In this regard, the two leaders also agreed to remain in touch.

Rawalpindi tightens security as foreign visits loom

AFP

Rawalpindi authorities have placed the city on high alert and ordered the closure of all restaurants, parks, beauty parlours, markets, snooker clubs, gyms, shopping malls and Quetta hotels from midnight on April 18 until further notice.

Officials said strict action will be taken against any violations of the order.

In a major security-related decision, all boys' and girls' hostels within city limits, including those linked to institutions such as Barani University, have also been ordered to shut down until further notice.

According to police, extraordinary security arrangements have been put in place due to the movement of foreign delegations in the city.



Barani University authorities confirmed that the main campus and all affiliated institutions will remain closed from April 18 to April 26 on

security grounds. A formal notification has been issued. Police have also issued notices to hostel owners, directing them to vacate all

hostels by midnight and send residents back to their homes. Authorities warned that legal action will be taken if boys or girls are found staying in

hostels during the closure period.

Earlier, a high-level meeting chaired by City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi Syed Khalid Mehmood Hamdani reviewed security arrangements for ensuring foolproof protection.

Officials were briefed that more than 10,000 police personnel have been deployed across the city, along with over 600 special pickets at key locations. All entry and exit points are under strict surveillance, while additional forces have been stationed on major roads.

Elite commandos, trained snipers, and special teams from the Elite Force, Dolphin Force, police station mobile units and other rapid response units have been deployed for round-the-clock patrols.

Federal Minister Sheikh Holds High-Level Bilateral Meetings

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Board of Investment, Mr. Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, held a series of high-level bilateral meetings with global business leaders and institutional representatives on the sidelines of the Commonwealth Trade and Investment Summit 2026 (CTIS 2026) in London, aimed at strengthening Pakistan's investment partnerships and promoting economic cooperation.

During the engagements, the Federal Minister met with Mr. Clive Vacher, CEO of De La Rue; Mr. Ash Brooke, Director at TPP; Gibraltar MP, Mr Hon Christian Santos; Minister of Trade for Cameroon;



Rt Hon Lord Marland, Chairman Commonwealth Enterprise and

Investment, Lord Swire and Professor Asif Chaudhary (Board Member CWEIC); Mr Yazeed Saleh, CEO of Saudi Eksab; Deputy PM of Malta along with other notable officials.

In these meetings, the Minister highlighted Pakistan's improving economic outlook under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, and Field Marshal Asim Munir. Pakistan continues to advance as a stable, secure, and investment-friendly country. The government's coordinated efforts in economic reforms, institutional strengthening, and investor facilitation are reinforcing global confidence and positioning Pakistan as an increasingly attractive destination for foreign investment.

LHC adjourns May 9 cases appeals of PTI leaders without proceedings

Bureau Report

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court adjourned proceedings on appeals in the May 9 cases involving several Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) without action against convictions.

A two-member bench headed by Justice Shahbaz Rizvi conducted the hearing. Appeals filed by Dr Yasmin Rashid and Ejaz Chaudhry were scheduled for hearing. Addition-

ally, petitions seeking suspension of sentences filed by PTI leaders Omar Sarfraz Cheema and Afzal Azeem Pahal, among others, were also fixed.

The court was also set to hear the government's appeal against the acquittal of former foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi.

It is worth noting that in the May 9 arson and violence cases, convicted individuals were sentenced to ten years imprisonment each.

Punjab launches shrimp project to convert barren land



Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has launched a transformative initiative to convert barren land into economic zones through large-scale shrimp farming projects.

Significant progress has been achieved at the Sargodha Shrimp Estate, where excavation of 118 out of 126 ponds has been completed,

while 92 percent of their embankments are ready. Boring of 116 tube wells has also been completed, with the water supply system reaching 92 percent completion.

After clearing and surveying 365 acres of land, groundwork has been completed for a 2,020-meter-long road. Construction of a warehouse is 90 percent complete, while work on other buildings is ongoing. The total project spans 500 acres.

CM Sindh lifts wheat cap, allows unlimited sales by small farmers

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah has scrapped the five-bag-per-acre limit for small growers, allowing them to sell unlimited wheat to the government as the province accelerates its 2026 procurement drive.

Chairing a review meeting, the chief minister directed the food department to fast-track procurement, ensure immediate payments, and expand field outreach to meet targets.

The procurement campaign, launched on April 1, aims to purchase one million metric tonnes of wheat at a support price of



Rs3,500 per 40kg. Officials said the programme covers more than

332,000 farmers cultivating wheat on about 1.94 million acres.

Food Minister Makhdoom Mahboobuz Zaman told the meeting that only

8,958 metric tonnes had been procured so far against a target of 973,900 metric tonnes, largely due to the earlier restriction on small growers.

Taking notice, CM Shah immediately abolished the cap, removing limits on how much wheat registered farmers can supply.

Payments have also been streamlined, with funds now transferred within one day through Sindh Bank. Authorities said Rs198.3 million has already been disbursed.

"Timely payment is crucial for farmers' trust. We must ensure that every grower is paid promptly and transparently," the chief minister said.