



# Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ  
ہم سے ان وہب نے بیان کیا ان سے یوں  
نے بیان کیا ان سے ان شہاب نے بیان کیا  
اور ان سے اس بن مالک سے بھی اللہ نے  
بیان کیا کہ نبی کریم صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے  
فرمایا میرے جوش کی لہائی اتنی ہوگی جتنی  
لہ اور سین اور شہر منہا کے درمیان کی لہائی  
سے اور وہاں اتنی بڑی تعداد میں بیٹے ہوں  
گے جتنی آسمان کے ستاروں کی تعداد ہے۔  
(بخاری ص 580)

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## Nawaz Sharif's intervention leads to petrol price relief

According to sources, detailed consultations were held between Nawaz Sharif and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, focusing on immediate measures to provide relief to citizens amid rising inflation. Sources said Nawaz Sharif directed an immediate reduction in petroleum prices to ease the burden of inflation.



## Pakistan cancels 64 flights to Middle East amid regional tensions

At least 64 flights to various cities in the Middle East were cancelled from the country's five international airports on Saturday amid the ongoing tensions caused by the US-Israeli strikes on Iran. Karachi and Islamabad airports were the most affected, with 22 bilateral flights cancelled due to the air strikes.

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## High-level meeting

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairs a high-level meeting to review petroleum reserves and relief measures on Saturday.



Photo: PID

## PM reviews fuel reserves, launches digital subsidy for transport sector

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday said providing relief to the common man amid rising fuel prices and regional tensions remains the government's foremost priority, as he chaired a high-level meeting to review petroleum reserves and relief measures.

The meeting was briefed that adequate stocks of petroleum products are available to meet the country's needs, even as prices have surged in recent weeks.

Addressing participants, the prime minister said the government would not leave citizens alone in difficult times. "Relief for the common man

is our top priority. Savings from austerity measures will be spent on the public," he said, adding that efforts are underway to extend support to economically vulnerable segments at the earliest.

He announced that the provision of subsidies through digital wallets has begun for public transport operators and goods carriers. Under the system, financial assistance is being transferred directly to buses, wagons, trucks and other goods vehicles through a "transparent and effective mechanism".

Officials also briefed the meeting on progress in implementing relief measures designed to offset the impact of higher petroleum prices.

## Trump gives Iran 48 hours to make deal or face 'Hell'

AFP

President Donald Trump said on Saturday that Tehran had 48 hours left to cut a deal or face "all Hell", as US and Iranian forces scrambled to find a downed American airman.

Trump's latest threat came after a strike near an Iranian nuclear power plant prompted evacuations, and as Tehran announced fresh attacks in the region, with the Revolutionary Guards saying they hit a commercial ship in Bahrain allegedly linked to Israel.

The war erupted more than

a month ago with US-Israeli strikes on Iran, triggering a retaliation that has spread the conflict throughout the Middle East and convulsed the global economy — particularly due to the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, a vital conduit for oil and gas.

"Remember when I gave Iran ten days to MAKE A DEAL or OPEN UP THE HORMUZ STRAIT," Trump wrote on Truth Social, referring to an ultimatum issued on March 26.

"Time is running out — 48 hours before all Hell will reign (sic) down on them," Tehran said on Friday it had



shot down an F-15 warplane, and its two crew members, with the US media reported United States special forces had rescued one of Iran's military also said it

downed a US A-10 ground attack aircraft in the Gulf, with US media saying the pilot of that plane was rescued.

The local Mehr news agency on Saturday quoted the deputy governor of Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province, Fattah Mohammadi, as saying the search for the missing pilot involved "presence of popular forces and tribesmen alongside military forces and is still ongoing".

He added that "last night, people fired at enemy helicopters with rifles and did not allow them to land".

## PM pays tribute to Shaheed ZAB on his death anniversary

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Saturday, paid tribute to former prime minister Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto on his death anniversary, acknowledging his significant national, political and constitutional contributions.

In his message, the prime minister praised Bhutto's sincere efforts for the country's development, prosperity and strengthening of national defense during his tenure as prime minister, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

He also mentioned Bhutto's pivotal role in the formulation and passage of the 1973



Constitution of Pakistan, describing it as 'a cornerstone for the parliamentary democracy and promotion of democracy in the country'.

The prime minister commended ZAB's commitment to democratic governance, emphasizing his efforts to promote people-centric policies by addressing public issues.

He also noted that Bhutto represented Pakistan on the global stage during his tenure as the prime minister.

The prime minister prayed for the high ranks of ZAB's in Jannah and observed that his political services would always be remembered.

## DPM, Egyptian FM review regional developments

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar Saturday held a telephone conversation with Foreign Minister of Egypt, Badr Abdelatty.

They discussed the latest regional developments and ongoing diplomatic efforts, underscoring the importance of dialogue and de-escalation.

Both sides agreed to remain in close contact.

## Pakistan rejects misleading commentary on UAE financial deposits

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs Saturday categorically rejected the recent misleading and unfounded commentary regarding financial deposits from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) held with the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

In a statement the spokesperson of the ministry said, "The deposits were placed under bilateral commercial agreements, demonstrating the UAE's strong support for Pakistan's economic stability and prosperity. Accordingly, pursuant to mutually agreed terms, the Government of Pakistan, through the SBP, is now returning the matured deposits to the UAE. This is a routine financial transaction, and any attempt to portray it otherwise is erroneous and misleading."

"Pakistan and the UAE



share a longstanding, fraternal partnership built on trust and strategic cooperation across trade, investment, defence, and people-to-people ties," he said adding, "This relationship has stood the test of time and has grown stronger with each passing year. The people of Pakistan warmly cherish the pivotal role played by the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, in forging this enduring friendship, as well as his special affection for Pakistan."

He said, "Pakistan remains fully committed to further strengthening this enduring relationship for a shared, prosperous future."

## DPM/FM Dar appreciates Iranian FM for his comments regarding Pakistan's role

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Saturday, appreciated Iranian Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi, for his comments on the social media platform X, regarding Pakistan's efforts for peace in the region.

The Iranian foreign minister, while rejecting certain media reports, expressed his gratitude to Pakistan for its efforts to ensure peace in the region and said that they never refused to go to Islamabad.

The DPM/FM reciprocated



on X by saying, "Truly appreciate your clarification, my Dear Brother," and also tagged the Iranian foreign minister.

In his post, the Iranian foreign minister clarified, "We are deeply grateful to Pakistan for its efforts and have never refused to go to Islamabad," expressing concerns about the US terms for a conclusive and lasting end to the ongoing war.

## Bilawal calls for peace, regional stability on Bhutto's anniversary

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal-Bhutto Zardari on Saturday urged an end to war and called for regional stability, saying conflict is not the solution to any problem, as he addressed a gathering marking the death anniversary of PPP founder and former prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

Speaking at Garhi Khuda Bakhsh, Bilawal said Pakistan has been affected by rising tensions in the region and

emphasized that the country's people are suffering due to ongoing conflicts. He strongly condemned the aggression against Iran and reiterated that Pakistan desires peace. "We will face all kinds of situations," he said, adding that the nation remains resilient in difficult times.

Highlighting the legacy of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Bilawal stated that the nuclear programme initiated under his leadership continues to defend the country today. He remarked that those who target Muslim countries can no longer do so with impunity, crediting Pakistan's

strength to Bhutto's vision. He added that Bhutto's ideology was rooted in serving the people of Pakistan and that the public is fully aware of the real objectives behind current global conflicts.

Bilawal spoke about domestic challenges, noting that both federal and provincial governments are working together to address economic difficulties. He said the Sindh government is taking strong steps to provide relief, particularly to farmers, including plans for financial assistance through special cards and subsidy programmes. He urged farmers

owning up to 25 acres of land to register in order to benefit from these schemes.

The PPP chairman announced initiatives to support motorcycle owners, including subsidies and waiver of transfer fees, along with measures to control public transport fares across Sindh. He emphasized that relief efforts are being delivered transparently under the Benazir Income Support Programme and expressed hope that the federal government would use the platform for broader assistance, even suggesting a mini-budget if needed.

# Federal Minister inspects progress on long-awaited Rathua Haryam bridge over Mangla Dam

**Bureau Report**

MIRPUR: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan and Safran Engineer Amir Muqam inspected the construction project of the longest bridge Rathua Haryam Bridge on Mangla Dam under the Mangla Dam Raising Project in detail and reviewed the construction progress of the bridge.

On this occasion, Project Director Rathua Haryam Bridge Engineer Inam-ul-Haq briefed him. Rathua Haryam Bridge was pending for the last 20 years.

The Federal Minister inspected the bridge from Mirpur to Islamgarh on foot and in a vehicle and reviewed the construction progress of the bridge including the connection of the sides of the bridge.



On this occasion, the leadership of the PML-N Azad Kashmir, former ministers Chaudhry Tariq Farooq, Chaudhry Muhammad Saeed, Chaudhry Rukhsar Ahmed, Chaudhry Masood Khalid, Colonel (retd) Muhammad Maroof Khan, Additional Chief Secretary Development

Atif Khan, Secretary Works Khawaja Muhammad Naeem Bismil, Commissioner Mirpur Division Raja Tahir Mumtaz Khan, Deputy Commissioner Chaudhry Sajid Hussain, SSS Khurram Iqbal, Deputy Director Rathua Haryam Burj Muhammad Irfan, former candidate for the assembly Nazir Inqilabi, PML-N leaders Ijaz Raza, Raja Nahib Thakur, Raja Munib Thakur, Raja Taslim Anjum, besides FWO engineers, were also present.

Project Director Engineer Inam-ul-Haq gave a detailed briefing and said that this project was to be completed on March 31, 2027, while the important and incomplete bridge part of this project has been completed in March 2026, while work on the complete completion of the project and renovation is also in full swing.

## Kayani Community Formally Joins Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan's Muslim Conference



**Spokesman Report**

RAWALPIND: A delegation from Union Council Chidala Donga Khetar led by Sardar Wajid Abbasi met with President Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan. The Kayani community announced the joining of the Muslim Conference. Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan congratulated and welcomed Muhammad Akhlaq Kayani, retired Sadr Mualim, Muhammad Khalid Kayani, Muhammad Naseem Kayani, Muhammad Saqib Kayani, Muhammad Anis Kayani, Muhammad Ammar Kayani, Muhammad Omar Kayani, Dr. Muhammad Ali Kayani and Syed Saqib Gardezi, Syed Israr Gardezi and others by wearing garlands on their joining the Muslim Conference. Those who joined announced their joining the Muslim Conference along with their families. Councilors Haji Azad Kayani, Sajjad Abbasi, Ajmal Abbasi, Tassaduq Abbasi, Khurshed Abbasi, Arshad Abbasi and Syed Babar Hussain Shah were also present on the occasion. Addressing the joining ceremony, Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan said that the Muslim Conference is the spokesperson and founding party of the freedom movement. The people are leaning towards the state party as the elections approach.

## Pakistan navigates volatile region: Balancing diplomacy and defense amid Iran tensions

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: Masood Khan, former Ambassador of Pakistan to the United States, China and the United Nations, and former President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, has underscored that Pakistan is carefully balancing diplomacy and security preparedness as the Iran conflict enters a critical and prolonged phase.



Highlighting the rapidly evolving situation, Khan stated that actions by the United States and Israel have intensified regional volatility, directly impacting Pakistan's strategic environment. He noted that Islamabad is maintaining a policy of principled neutrality, while actively advocating de-escalation, respect for sovereignty, and adherence to international law.

Khan emphasized that mixed and often contradictory signals from major powers have created strategic ambiguity, increasing the risks of miscalculation. "Such uncertainty compels regional states to prepare for worst-case scenarios while relying more on regional diplomacy than external assurances," he observed.

## KP, CM special envoy reviews Afghan repatriation process in Landi Kotal

**Aman Ali Shinwari**

KHYBER: On the special directives of Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Muhammad Sohail Afridi, a delegation led by his focal person Shamsheer Afridi and his Brother Naveed Afridi visited the Landi Kotal holding center and examined the ongoing process of dignified repatriation of Afghan refugees.



During the visit, the delegation inspected facilities being provided at the center and assured full support from the provincial government to address problems of the repatriated Afghan families.

Speaking to the media on the occasion, Shamsheer Afridi said he had been specifically tasked by the Chief Minister to evaluate on ground conditions and ensure immediate resolution of all issues falling within the provincial government's domain.

## NIPA officers visit Attock for study tour

**Raza Naqvi**

ATTOCK: A delegation of officers from the 39th Senior Management Course of the National Institute of Public Administration (NIPA) visited District Attock on a study tour.

On this occasion, a meeting was held at the DC Office Attock under the chairmanship of Rao Atif Raza, where the delegation was given a detailed briefing on various projects and schemes related to social welfare, public well-being, and citizen facilitation being implemented in the district.

During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner informed the delegation about the performance of the district administration, the service delivery system, and initiatives taken for public welfare, while relevant officers gave briefings regarding their respective departments. It was highlighted that several welfare and development projects in District Attock were completed through self-help initiatives, without spending a single rupee from the Government of Punjab's treasury. The delegation termed this a model initiative.

Later, the delegation visited various sites including the DC Office and District Emergency Operations Center, Jinnah Public Park and Gymkhana Club, Pilot Secondary School Attock, Municipal Committee Office and Suthra Punjab Control Room, Asfandyar Bukhari DHQ Thalassemia Center, IT Lab of District Public School (DPS) Attock, Sports Center, Community Center, Bait-ul-Hikmah, Sports Complex, the first-of-its-kind Women's Market in Rais Khana Market Punjab, and other public welfare projects.

## Press conference

LAHORE: President Pakistan Kissan Ittehad Khalid Khokhar addressing a press conference at Lahore Press Club, in the Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

# AJK PM assures public of development focus after PPP welcomes new members

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: The Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Faisal Mumtaz Rathore has said that concrete measures were being taken to address public issues, complete development projects, and improve governance in the region.

He made these assertions while speaking to a group of notables from Haveli who joined the Pakistan People's Party (PPP).

Welcoming the new entrants into the party fold, Prime Minister Rathore said the PPP is a party that has always fought for people's rights. "People's Party has always played a historic role in serving the people and strengthening democracy," he remarked.

It is heartening to note that people from all segments of society are expressing confidence in the government's performance and its people-friendly policies," he added.

The Prime Minister said that the



PPP strictly follows the ideology of Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, and that its basic objective was to empower the people and promote development and prosperity in the region.

Those who joined the People's Party included Sheikh Shakeel Ahmed Advocate, Nazakat Hussain, Muhammad Jamil, Karamat Hussain, Abdul Waheed, Muhammad Faisal,

Muhammad Aqeel, Shahzeb Kasher, Muhammad Asif, Muhammad Sajid Hussain, Muhammad Ishaq, Fidaul Haq, Muhammad Waseem, Maqsood Hussain, Muhammad Ashfaq, Muhammad Latif, Muhammad Zahoor, Zeeshan Irshad, Mahmood Hassan, Waqar Hanif, Sajjad Hussain, Muhammad Sarfraz, Saddam Hussain, Talib Hussain, Muhammad Imtiaz, Muhammad Qasid, Kashif

Hussain, Muhammad Kazim, Waqas Ahmed, Waqas Ahmed, Muhammad Fayyaz, Maqbool Hussain, Maqsood Hussain, Afnan Karamat, Waqas Bashir, Mudassar Bashir, Muhammad Khurshid, Muhammad Afaq, Sajawal Hassan, Sayyab Ahad, Muhammad Manzoor, Kashif Hussain, Saqib Ali, Muhammad Siddique, Muhammad Khaliq, Muhammad Nasir Siddique and Muhammad Shakoor.

# Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Finalizes Leadership Slate, Vows Full Election Participation

**Bureau Report**

MUZAFFARABAD: The Central General Assembly and Shura of the state's oldest party, All Jammu and Kashmir Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam, unanimously elected Pir Muhammad Mazhar Saeed Shah as the Central Ameer.

Maulana Qazi Mahmood-ul-Hassan Ashraf has been appointed as the Supreme Head of the Jamaat.

An important meeting of the Central General Assembly of All Jammu and Kashmir Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam was held on April 4, 2026 in the capital Muzaffarabad. In which, after detailed deliberations on organizational, political and national issues, several important decisions were taken unanimously. During the meeting, it was decided to participate in the upcoming state elections in a full and effective manner, for which

emphasis was placed on making the organization more active and organized. Maulana Qazi Mahmood-ul-Hassan Ashraf was appointed as the Supreme Head of the Jamaat, Maulana Pir Mazhar Saeed Shah as the Central Ameer, Maulana Qazi Manzoor-ul-Hassan as the Patron, Maulana Abdul Malik Siddiqui Advocate as the Senior Deputy Ameer, Maulana Basharat Hussain Naveed

as the General Nazim, Maulana Mufti Muhammad Akhtar as the Finance Nazim, while Maulana Hafiz Atiqur-Rehman Awan as the Information Nazim.

The meeting also decided that "Hafta Khatm-e-Nabuwvat" would be celebrated with great devotion and respect in the state of Jammu and Kashmir from April 23 to April 30, for which extensive public and organizational activities would be

organized. The Central General Assembly also demanded immediate and complete



implementation of all the resolutions passed in the Azad Kashmir Legislative Assembly from 2021 to 2025.

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**SERVICES**  
**Namaz Timings**

Fajr ..... 4:27 am  
Zohr ..... 12:11 pm  
Asr ..... 4:42 pm  
Maghrib ..... 6:30 pm  
Isha ..... 7:56 pm

**EMERGENCY**

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

**Women Police Stations**

Islamabad ..... 9222596  
Rawalpindi ..... 9270601-20

**ENQUIRY**

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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 ..... 9208901-04  
Met Office ..... 9250360-6  
RDA ..... 5555864  
TMA ..... 5770886  
Cantonment Board ..... 9270151-3  
Islamabad Metropolitan Corporation ..... 9209224

**Opposition Slams 'Brutal' Petrol Price Hike as Attack on Public Livelihoods**



**Kiran Asim**

MULTAN: Member of the National Assembly and Chief Whip of the Opposition Malik Muhammad Amir Dogar has said in a scathing statement against the increase in petrol prices that the current government of Pakistan has once again broken the back of the people. By increasing the prices of petroleum products in a historic and brutal manner, it has snatched away the right to live from the people. The fake government of Form 47 first gave the lie to 300 free electricity units and imposed a new fixed rate tax on electricity bills. After the brutal increase in the price of LPG gas, now the poor people, transport workers, farmers and businessmen are all being robbed due to the brutal increase in the prices of petroleum products. Malik Muhammad Amir Dogar said that it is the result of the government's incompetence, corruption and anti-people policies that the people of the country are being squeezed using the excuse of global prices.

# UMT Seminar Tackles US-Israel-Iran Tensions and Fallout for Pakistan

**Bureau Report**

LAHORE: The Department of Political Science and International Relations at the University of Management and Technology (UMT) organized a special seminar on the growing tensions among the United States, Israel and Iran and their implications for Pakistan and the Middle East. The seminar was attended by prominent defense analysts, diplomats, intellectuals and a large number of students.

The event was attended by Chairman and President UMT Ibrahim Hasan Murad, former Ambassador Jauhar Saleem, Air Commodore (R) Khalid Chishti, renowned columnist and analyst Orya Maqbool Jan, religious scholar Asif Hameed Israar, Chief Advisor UMT Lieutenant General (R) Javed Hassan, and Chairperson of the Department of Political Science and International Relations Dr. Usman Askari, along with other experts.

Speaking on the occasion,



Ibrahim Hasan Murad stated that Pakistan's leadership is playing an important and constructive role in promoting peace and resolving conflicts in the region amid the current global tensions. He said that

emerging new alliances in the Middle East may lead to significant geopolitical changes.

Air Commodore (R) Khalid Chishti, while discussing the regional security environment, said that due to rising global

tensions Pakistan could face multiple challenges related to the economy, energy security, trade and maritime security, which require a comprehensive and forward-looking strategy.

Renowned analyst Orya

Maqbool Jan, Former Ambassador and President of the Institute of Regional Studies, Jauhar Saleem and Asif Hameed Israar emphasized that the Muslim world must move forward with unity, wisdom and resilience to

effectively respond to the challenges it faces.

At the conclusion of the seminar, Chairman UMT Ibrahim Hasan Murad presented souvenirs to the distinguished guests.

## Climate change

ISLAMABAD: A view of Faisal Avenue during the rain in the Federal Capital on Saturday.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

## 47th Death Anniversary of Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto held

**Quratulain Asim**

MULTAN: Sheikh Gayas Ul Haq President People Lawyers Forum South Punjab Said Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto is a Great Leader Of Muslim Umma and Father Of Pakistan Nuclear A Candle Light Prayer ceremony held at the District Bar Hall Multan, on the occasion of the 47th death anniversary of former Prime Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Shaheed, organized by the People's Lawyers Forum South Punjab. Addressing the candle lighting ceremony, People's Lawyers Forum South Punjab President Sheikh Ghiyas-ul-Haq, General Secretary Multan Bar Malik Saadat Hussain, Feroza Faiz, Joint Secretary Nagina Muzaffar Hira, Rana Javed Akhtar, Nafees Ansari, Naveed Ahmed Rana, Ishtiaq Shah, Irfan Shamsi, Naveed Hashmi, Zafarullah Warraich, Adnan Haideri, Wajid Rizvi, Ayesha Ali and Sarah Samuel said that Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto was a great leader of the Islamic world. World leaders had also expressed concern over the judicial



murder of Shaheed Bhutto. The 1973 constitution and declaring Qadianis non-Muslims were great achievements of the Bhutto era. The consciousness and ideology given to the people of Pakistan by Shaheed Bhutto are still alive today. The colonial state was transformed into a people's state.

## Pakistan Idol Dispute Settled: Qureshy Remains Official Photographer



**News Desk**

KARACHI: Mr. Ahsan Qureshy and The Merchant Holdings (Pvt) Ltd are pleased to announce the amicable resolution of their recent professional dispute regarding 'Pakistan Idol'. Both parties reaffirm their mutual respect for each other's professional contributions and are committed to maintaining the highest standards of integrity within the industry. Moving forward, Mr. Qureshy will continue to be recognized as the Official Photographer for the project, reflecting the value of his creative work. This settlement marks a positive conclusion to the matter, allowing both parties to focus on their respective future professional endeavors.

## Awaam Pakistan Party elects new central leadership unopposed



**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: The Awaam Pakistan Party has made significant progress in strengthening its organizational structure by fully adhering to the Election Commission's rules and regulations. The party successfully completed a two-phase electoral process. In the first phase, intra-party elections were held across the country, while the second phase consisted of central-level elections, providing party workers with a direct opportunity to elect their representatives. Transparency, merit, and democratic principles were ensured throughout the process, which party members have described as a positive and healthy precedent.

According to the party spokesperson, the results of the central elections have been officially announced. Shahid Khaqan Abbasi was elected President, Miftah Ismail as Secretary General, and Zafar Mirza as Secretary Information, all unopposed. The election process was conducted in a free and fair manner in accordance with Election Commission rules, reflecting the party's democratic vision and strong organizational framework. Meanwhile, Chaudhry Inam Zafar was elected Central Vice President with a heavy majority, while Hafiz Usman Abbasi secured the position of Additional General Secretary. The voter turnout stood at an impressive 85.5%, which has been widely regarded as a positive sign for the party's future. Akbar Imran Shaukat was elected as Finance Secretary, and Tariq Cheema as Coordinator Overseas. Additionally, 2 candidates were elected for Additional General Secretary positions, 6 for Vice President, and 12 for Joint Secretary roles. Party leaders have termed the elections a strong reflection of the trust shown by workers and leadership alike. They stated that these elections demonstrate the Awaam Pakistan Party's commitment to promoting democracy, transparency, and a fair electoral process in the country, and reaffirmed their resolve to continue this tradition in the future.

## AKU and Sindh Government Partner to Boost Nursing Education in Tando Muhammad Khan

**Bureau Report**

KARACHI: The Aga Khan University (AKU), in collaboration with the Department of Health, Government of Sindh, and the District Commissioner's Office in Tando Muhammad Khan, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of Sindh to support nursing education in Tando Muhammad Khan. The first cohort of approximately 50 students that will benefit from this partnership is expected to enroll in 2027.

This partnership represents a strategic public-private collaboration

where the Government of Sindh and AKU will come together to support the delivery of the proposed Bachelor of Science in Nursing programme. This collaboration aims to expand access to high-quality nursing education in rural Sindh.

There exists a critical global and national shortage of nursing professionals. According to the World Health Organization, the world faces a shortfall of nearly 6 million nurses, with the greatest gaps in low- and middle-income countries.

Speaking at the ceremony, Dr Azra Fazal Pechuho, Provincial Minister for Health and Population Welfare,

Government of Sindh, said: "This collaboration marks an important step in addressing the health care access challenges in underserved districts of Sindh. By investing in nursing education, we are strengthening our health systems and creating opportunities for local communities to access quality training and employment."

Dr Sulaiman Shahabuddin, President AKU, on the occasion said "This partnership represents an important step in reimagining how universities and governments can work together to strengthen Pakistan's health system at scale."



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# Trump's Fast-Tracking of America's Decline

The decline of great powers is rarely sudden, but it becomes unmistakable when leadership choices accelerate existing weaknesses. Under the leadership of Donald J. Trump, the United States has not strengthened its global position—it has exposed its limits. What was once the most dominant economic, military, and financial power in modern history is now visibly losing ground across every major arena. This is not speculation. It is unfolding in real time.

For decades, the United States controlled the global system. It shaped institutions like the United Nations, dominated financial bodies such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, and ensured that the dollar became the backbone of global trade. This dominance worked because the U.S. was seen as stable, predictable, and powerful. That perception is now cracking.

The first major failure came in the confrontation with China. The expectation in Washington was simple: impose tariffs, restrict trade, and China would fold. That did not happen. Instead, China hit back where it hurts most. It controls nearly 90% of the world's rare earth processing—materials essential for electronics, defense systems, and advanced manufacturing. When China restricted exports of key minerals, U.S. industries felt the shock immediately. Supply chains slowed, costs increased, and the strategy backfired.

This was not a minor setback—it was a clear demonstration that the United States is no longer in control of global

production systems. Instead of weakening China, the pressure forced the U.S. to quietly adjust its tone. The shift from confrontation to cautious engagement was not strategic brilliance—it was forced by reality. China proved it could not be bullied.

The second major failure came in Europe. The idea of taking control of Greenland from Denmark was not just unrealistic—it exposed a complete misunderstanding of modern alliances. Europe pushed back firmly. This was not the Europe of the past that followed Washington's lead. It is now building its own military capability and reducing dependence on the United States. Defense spending across European countries has surged, and serious discussions are underway about strengthening Europe's role within or even beyond NATO.

This is a direct consequence of U.S. unpredictability. Allies no longer trust Washington to act in a consistent or rational manner. When trust is gone, leadership collapses.

In the Western Hemisphere, the situation is no better. Aggressive actions toward Venezuela and pressure on Cuba have not strengthened U.S. influence—they have pushed these countries, and others in the region, toward alternative partners. China's economic footprint in Latin America has expanded rapidly, while U.S. influence has declined. The region is no longer under American control.

But the most serious exposure of U.S. weakness is happening in the Middle East. The conflict involving Iran has shattered the long-standing myth of American military dominance. The expectation was a quick and decisive outcome. That did not happen. Instead, the conflict has dragged on, and Iran has demonstrated that it can resist, retaliate, and sustain pressure.

Despite superior technology, the United States has not been able to impose control. Iran's use of missiles, drones, and decentralized warfare has neutralized many traditional advantages. U.S. bases in the region have been targeted, and allies have been drawn into a conflict that they did not want. The promise of a quick victory turned into a prolonged struggle.

The economic consequences are severe. The Strait of Hormuz, through which about 20% of global oil flows, has become a pressure point. Oil prices have surged above \$110 per barrel. Shipping costs have increased. Insurance premiums have risen sharply. These costs are not being absorbed by the United States—they are being passed on to allies and global markets. Instead of controlling the situation, the U.S. is contributing to global instability.

At the same time, the financial system that supports U.S. power is weakening. The expansion of BRICS is not symbolic—it is practical. Countries are actively reducing their reliance on the dollar. Trade is increasingly being

conducted in local currencies. New financial arrangements are being built to bypass U.S.-controlled systems.

This is how power declines—not in one dramatic swoop, but through repeated failures that reduce credibility, weaken alliances, and expose limitations.

The world is no longer unipolar. Power is spreading across multiple regions. Countries are building their own systems, forming new alliances, and reducing dependence on the United States. This is not theory—it is happening now.

The United States still has significant strengths. It remains a major economy. It still leads in technology and innovation. Its military is still powerful. But these strengths are no longer enough to dominate the world.

The reality is simple and direct: the United States is no longer able to control global outcomes the way it once did.

Trump's approach did not reverse decline—it accelerated it. By relying on pressure, threats, and force instead of strategy, cooperation, and long-term planning, his policies have pushed the world away from the United States.

The lesson is unavoidable. Power today depends on partnerships, stability, and adaptability. The United States has shown weakness in all three areas.

If it does not change course, the decline will continue—not because others are attacking it, but because it is undermining itself.

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



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

## Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Martyrdom Commemorated Amid Recent Supreme Court Vindication

Today, we observe the 47th anniversary of the martyrdom of Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, former Prime Minister and founder of the Pakistan Peoples Party, whose life was brought to an end unfairly on 4 April 1979 following a trial conducted under the martial law regime of General Zia-ul-Haq.

Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto occupies a central place in Pakistan's political history. His leadership during a difficult period after 1971 helped restore national confidence and chart a new constitutional course for the country. The adoption of the Constitution of 1973, which continues to guide our parliamentary system, remains one of the most enduring achievements of that period. His government also laid the foundations for policies and institutions that shaped Pakistan's strategic direction and national outlook in the years that followed.

Nearly half a century after his unfair, unlawful and unconstitutional execution, the Supreme Court of Pakistan, in its opinion delivered on 6 March 2024, held that Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto had not been afforded a fair trial and due process. The court observed that legal proceedings "destroyed any semblance of due process and fair trial, and revealed that innocent" man was "rushed to the gallows."

The Court's opinion identified several serious departures from the requirements of fair procedure. The investigation into the murder had been officially closed in May 1976 after the police and investigative agencies failed to identify the perpetrators. It was reopened without legal authorisation soon after 5 July 1977, "immediately after General Zia-ul-Haq's coup d'état overthrowing Mr. Bhutto's government."

The case was transferred to the Lahore High Court for trial in an unprecedented manner, without notice to the accused, depriving him of "one right of appeal" and making redundant important procedural safeguards, including the statutory requirement under section 376 of the Code of Criminal Procedure that every death sentence be confirmed by the High Court. The Court noted that this provision "has only once been disregarded, which was in this case."

His execution in 1979 also drew concern beyond Pakistan, with a number of international leaders and observers expressing unease about the circumstances surrounding the trial and sentence. The episode therefore occupies a place not only in Pakistan's domestic political history but also in wider discussions about justice, law and political authority.

This day is a reminder that justice and due process are not abstract principles. Their presence or absence is felt in the everyday lives of citizens in their dealings with courts, public offices, workplaces and schools. When institutions act fairly and according to law, citizens have confidence that their rights will be protected. When those standards are weakened, ordinary people feel the consequences most directly.

As a nation, we must draw clear lessons from this chapter of our history. Our institutions carry a lasting responsibility to uphold the rule of law, protect due process and ensure that justice is administered fairly and without prejudice. These principles remain essential for the strength of our democracy and for the trust that citizens place in the institutions of the state.



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

## CM Must Take Notice of PERA's Growing Misconduct in Multan

Reports of exploitation by certain elements operating under the banner of the Punjab Enforcement & Regulatory Authority (PERA) have alarmingly increased in Multan and other cities. An institution originally established to ensure public safety, remove encroachments, and maintain civic order now appears, regrettably, to be contributing to the very problems it was meant to solve. It is a matter of grave concern that a force created to uphold the rule of law is, under the patronage of some officials, increasingly becoming a hub of irregular and unlawful practices.

According to sources, traders in multiple areas are allegedly being subjected to illegal extortion, while harassment of shopkeepers and street vendors has become routine. Several incidents have surfaced where lawful businesses were penalized without justification. Citizens complain that PERA personnel often exceed their authority, imposing arbitrary decisions that not only disrupt economic activity but also erode public trust in the law.

The transformation of a law enforcement body into a facilitator of mafia-like activities poses a serious threat to governance. In areas such as Muntazabad and Gol Plot, Mubashir Qayyum's alleged negligence and indifferent attitude toward illegal encroachments and extortion are clearly visible. When approached for comment, he reportedly declined to provide a transparent response, reflecting a troubling disregard for accountability.

In February, encroachments at the main gate and road of New Shah Shams Colony were highlighted in the media, prompting a response from

MDA Enforcement and PERA teams. However, these actions also proved to be largely symbolic. In a disturbing development, some officials allegedly incited street vendors against journalists and complainants, leading to threats against members of the media. Such actions indicate institutional disorder and a lack of accountability under the current leadership.

At the local level in Multan, it appears that some PERA employees are unclear about the very purpose of their roles. Instead of professional conduct, they are often seen engaging in confrontational behavior, misconduct, and even extortion. This has strengthened the perception that PERA, rather than filling an administrative gap, has itself become a new source of problems.

PERA was established out of necessity, at a time when traditional government institutions—particularly municipal bodies and the police—were failing to effectively control encroachments, illegal constructions, and the growing influence of mafias.

Public spaces had been overtaken by unlawful occupations, and due to corruption and collusion, enforcement actions lacked consistency and impartiality. In this context, a specialized force was envisioned to focus solely on enforcement, ensuring swift, strict, and unbiased action to restore civic order, improve traffic flow, and reinforce the writ of the state.

Rana Farooq of Block A, New Shah Shams Colony, told that he runs a legitimate business under the name Noor Kirana Store. On Sunday, a Para Force vehicle arrived with some personnel who harassed him, entered his shop, and began throwing goods around. They went upstairs via the stairs, and on returning, they took a pack of KISAN cigarettes (ten boxes) claiming that customs duty had not been paid. When Farooq

requested a receipt, they behaved arrogantly. He also contacted the in-charge of Para Force Multan, Mubashir Qayyum (0315-6264057), but received no attention. This behavior toward shopkeepers tarnishes the credibility and transparency of the entire Para Force.

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has repeatedly emphasized good governance, transparency, and a policy of zero tolerance. However, ground realities seem to contradict this vision. When individuals within the state machinery sideline the law for personal interests, it directly undermines public trust and the authority of the government. The reportedly indifferent leadership of Mubashir Qayyum, his harsh conduct, and failure to address allegations raise serious concerns about the erosion of institutional authority and accountability.

This issue demands urgent and serious attention. Temporary suspensions or limited actions will not suffice. A transparent, impartial, and comprehensive inquiry is essential to identify those responsible and ensure strict, across-the-board accountability. Such measures would send a clear message that the law applies equally to all.

We urge the Chief Minister to take immediate notice and ensure strict, indiscriminate action against PERA officials in Multan who are misusing their authority against public interest. Officials must also be directed to provide timely and constructive responses to journalists and adhere to the Right to Information Act 2013. Such steps will not only restore public confidence but also strengthen the credibility of the government.

Trader associations have also called upon higher authorities to intervene without delay and conduct transparent investigations, ensuring that those responsible are held accountable. Public voices echo the same demand: no institution or force should be above the law, and the protection of citizens' rights must remain paramount.



Analysis

Zain-ul-Abideen Abid

## Mirage of Normalcy: How India's 'Peace' in Kashmir is Built on Graves and Shackles

When Indian government officials and their surrogates in the media wax lyrical about the "return of normalcy" to Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), they conjure images of bustling markets, blooming tulip gardens,

and a population grateful for "development." It is a seductive narrative, carefully curated for international consumption and domestic political consumption alike. Yet, like all colonial fantasies, it collapses the moment it confronts the granite reality of the ground. The recent report by the Research Section of the Kashmir Media Service (KMS) shreds this propaganda veil with brutal clarity: in the first three months of 2026 alone, Indian forces have martyred ten Kashmiris—eight of them in fake encounters or cold-blooded custody killings—and arrested 933 civilians, including students, women, and political activists. This is not normalcy. This is the calculated pacification of an occupied population through state terrorism.

To claim that IIOJK is "normal" requires a grotesque redefinition of the term. In the lexicon of New Delhi's public relations machinery, normalcy appears to mean the absence of visible mass protests, achieved not through consent but through the barrel of a gun. The statistics from the KMS report reveal the architecture of this enforced silence. The killing of ten Kash-

miris, particularly the eight executed extrajudicially, is not an aberration; it is the continuation of a policy of extermination disguised as "counter-insurgency." When troops gun down youth in staged encounters or torture detainees to death, they send an unambiguous message: Kashmiri life is expendable in the service of the Indian state's territorial obsession. This is the "peace" that

officials celebrate—a graveyard peace, maintained by the terror of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) and the State Investigation Agency (SIA), which have transformed judicial processes into instruments of collective punishment.

The repression extends far beyond the bullet. The report documents the arrest of 933 individuals and the injuring of 32 peaceful protesters, illustrating that the Indian state is waging a war not just against armed resistance, but against civil society itself. The suspension of nine Kashmiri Muslim employees from government jobs and the attachment of properties belonging to forty-three families in just three months represent a form of legal warfare designed to economically asphyxiate dissent. These are not random administrative actions; they are components of a systematic campaign to criminalize Kashmiri identity. By targeting livelihoods and homes, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) regime and its RSS ideologues aim to render survival contingent upon absolute submission. This is the "integration" promised after the illegal abrogation



Analysis

Altaf Hussain Wani

Continued on Page 7

# From Awareness to Action: Building an Inclusive Future for Autism in Pakistan

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: On World Autism Awareness Day, Maroof International Hospital hosted a high-impact awareness event, joined by Rongvudhi Virabutr, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Thailand to Pakistan, emphasizing early autism intervention and societal inclusion.

The event featured a symbolic Autism Awareness Walk within the hospital premises, uniting staff, families, and guests to visually highlight the importance of acceptance, understanding, and timely support for children with autism.

Speaking at the Maroof Early Intervention Therapy Unit (EITU), the Ambassador stressed "Early diagnosis can change a child's entire future. We must move beyond pity and focus on creating opportunities for every child to live with dignity." He highlighted societal challenges, shared Thailand's "Steps with Theera" vocational initiative, and reaffirmed Thailand's commitment to support autism care in Pakistan.

CEO Haroon Naseer said: "Autism awareness is a responsibility. We must



create systems that nurture potential and give every child the opportunity to thrive."

Medical Director Dr. Mir Waheed added: "Early intervention is as critical as emergency care. Awareness must lead to immediate action to ensure better outcomes for children."

Tehreem Khan Bangash emphasized "With structured support and evidence-based interventions, chil-

dren with autism can communicate, connect, and achieve independence. Our Early Intervention Therapy Unit (EITU) offers comprehensive services including Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) therapy, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, individualized education and behavior plans, parent counseling, social skills training, and vocational life skills programs."



The Ambassador also presented certificates to EITU professionals,

celebrating their dedication and reinforcing the message: awareness must

translate into action, inclusion, and opportunity for every child.

## CM Maryam's Directive: Divisional Committee Finalizes Wheat Harvesting Rates



Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: On the orders of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif, the divisional administration of Faisalabad is working to provide facilities to wheat farmers in the current petroleum products crisis.

A high-level meeting was held under the chairmanship of Commissioner Faisalabad Raja Jahangir Anwar regarding the wheat procurement campaign and the supply of diesel required for harvesting the crop due to the increase in diesel

prices.

Deputy Commissioner Faisalabad Captain (retd) Nadeem Nasir, besides Deputy Commissioners of Jhang, Toba Tek Singh and Chiniot participated through video link. Director Agriculture Extension Chaudhry Khalid Mahmood, Deputy Director Food, officers of the Agriculture Department and representatives of farmers were present.

The divisional committee, after mutual consultation, recommended a rate of Rs 9,000 to 9,500 for harvesting one acre of wheat with a

combine harvester, and a rate of Rs 9,500 to 10,000 for thresher (1/14th share) for harvesting three to three maunds of wheat or Rs 9,500 to 10,000 per acre.

The proposed rates are being sent to the provincial government. A briefing was also given on the wheat procurement policy in the meeting. The Commissioner said that farmers will not be left alone in the current difficult situation.

Despite the increase in prices of petroleum products in view of the global context, the divisional and

district administrations are on board to provide facilities to wheat farmers. He said that a record wheat crop and a production of 40 maunds are expected this year.

He said that arrangements for storage at wheat procurement centers are complete. We are with the farmers in the procurement campaign as well. The rights of farmers and service providers will be fully protected and no one will be allowed to be exploited. In the meeting, the representatives of the farmers agreed with the rates and also presented some suggestions.

## Family Planning Vital for National Development, Says DO Population Ch Naeem

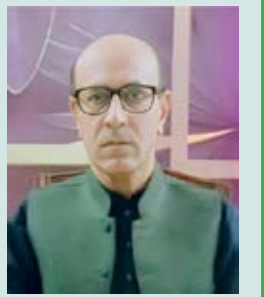
Zafar Chishtii

TOBA TEK SINGH: District Health and Population Welfare Officer Toba Tek Singh Chaudhry Muhammad Naeem said that a prosperous and strong society is built on balanced and healthy families, which can only be achieved by effectively controlling population growth. He said that rapid and unplanned population increase not only creates economic challenges but also puts immense pressure on health, education and other basic services.

In his statement, he said that in line with the directives of the Government of Punjab, the Health and Population Welfare Department is taking comprehensive steps to raise public awareness about family planning. In this regard, various awareness campaigns, seminars and community sessions are being organized to educate people about the benefits of smaller, well-planned families.

Chaudhry Muhammad Naeem further emphasized that it is the responsibility of parents to plan properly for the better education, health and upbringing of their children. He highlighted that family planning is not only essential for the health of mothers and children but also plays a vital role in the overall development of the country.

He appealed to the public to visit Health and Population Welfare centers and seek guidance from experts to help build a healthy, educated and prosperous society.



## Oman unveils plan for sustainable growth in 11th Five-Year Plan

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Economy has issued the Strategic Programs Volume for the Eleventh Five-Year Development Plan (2026-2030), marking a key step in advancing the Sultanate's long-term development agenda under Oman Vision 2040.

Approved under Royal Decree No. 1/2026, the volume serves as a comprehensive reference for 190 strategic programmes spanning 12 national priorities across four core pillars: People and Society, Economy and Development, Sustainable Environment, and Governance and Institutional Performance.

The document provides detailed frameworks for each programme, including objectives, timelines, implementation mechanisms, and responsible entities. It is designed to strengthen planning efficiency and ensure clear execution pathways, with all programmes linked to measurable performance indicators to enable continuous monitoring and evaluation.

According to Dr. Nasser Rashid Al Maawali, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Economy, the plan reflects national priorities during a critical phase of development, aiming to address current challenges while leveraging emerging opportunities to enhance economic competitiveness and sustainable growth.

He noted that the plan was developed through a broad participatory approach involving government entities, the private sector, and civil society, ensuring that its outcomes are both realistic and comprehensive.

The strategy places strong emphasis on directing investments toward high-impact sectors, including manufacturing, tourism, and the digital economy, while also supporting enabling sectors such as mining, food security, renewable energy, transport and logistics, education, and health.

## Interfaith Harmony Committee Meets to Review Easter Security in Chiniot

Bureau Report

CHINIOT: An important meeting of the Interfaith Harmony Committee was held to promote interfaith harmony on the occasion of Easter, which was jointly chaired by Deputy Commissioner Ayesha Rizwan and District Police Officer Dr. Naveed Atif.

The meeting was attended by scholars of all faiths, leaders of the Christian community and district officers. During the meeting, a detailed review of security arrangements, cleanliness, traffic management and provision of other facilities on the occasion of Easter in Chenab Nagar was taken.

Deputy Commissioner Ayesha Rizwan thanked all the committee members and directed the concerned officers to provide all possible facilities to the Christian community on the occasion of Easter and ensure foolproof secu-



rity during their worship.

DPO Dr. Naveed Atif said on this occasion that the security of all churches will be made more effective and the

police force will remain alert so that a peaceful environment can be provided to the citizens.

The meeting emphasized the promo-

tion of interfaith harmony, tolerance and brotherhood and expressed the determination that an atmosphere of peace and order will be maintained in the district.

## Austerity with Compassion

Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif has responded to the escalating global economic crisis with one of the most ambitious relief packages in the province's history — a sweeping intervention that makes public transport free, subsidises farmers and motorcycle owners, and stabilises the logistics sector in a single coordinated move. The package reflects a governing conviction that when global forces squeeze ordinary lives, the state must not stand aside and watch.

Pakistan, heavily reliant on imported petroleum, sits at the sharp end of every global energy shock. When oil prices spike and supply chains fracture — as they have, relentlessly, since the global crises have destabilised energy markets — it is the commuter who absorbs the blow first and longest. Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has chosen not to let them absorb it alone. Her relief

package refuses to treat fiscal caution and human compassion as opposites, signalling a governing philosophy as practical as it is principled.

The centrepiece is bold and immediate: all public transport services across Punjab's cities have been made completely free for one month. Commuters on the Lahore Orange Line Metro Train, Metro Bus Service, Speedo Bus and Green Electric Buses will no longer need to purchase tickets. For millions of daily wage earners, this is not symbolism — it is direct financial relief. Transport costs consume an estimated 15 to 20 percent of monthly income among lower-income urban households. Eliminating that cost, even temporarily, places real money back into the hands of those who need it most.

"This is a time for responsibility, compassion, and solidarity — the government will ensure that relief reaches citizens in real terms, not just in announcements."

The relief extends well beyond the city bus. Agriculture is Punjab's economic foundation, contributing nearly one-fifth of Pakistan's GDP and employing millions across the province.

The chief minister has announced a subsidy of Rs100 per litre of diesel per acre for farmers, partially offsetting the fuel costs embedded in irrigation and mechanised cultivation. Food inflation has run at double-digit rates for much of the past two years. A government serious about prices must be equally serious about the cost of growing food — and this intervention addresses that reality at its root.

Motorcycle owners — the delivery riders, small traders and daily commuters who keep Punjab's informal economy moving — will receive a monthly subsidy of Rs100 per litre on

up to 20 litres of fuel, amounting to Rs2,000 per registered bike owner. Modest in absolute terms, meaningful in lived reality. This is targeted relief at its most precise: calibrated to actual consumption and delivered directly to those least equipped to absorb rising costs through savings or credit.

The logistics sector has not been overlooked. Registered goods transport vehicles will receive Rs70,000 per month, large vehicles Rs80,000, and public service buses Rs100,000. If freight costs rise unchecked, every commodity on every shelf follows. By stabilising logistics costs upstream, the government is working to prevent inflation from migrating into the food and consumer markets where ordinary households feel it most. Chief Minister Maryam

Nawaz Sharif has urged transporters to honour this support and refrain from passing additional costs onto passengers. The government, she has pledged, will monitor compliance and enforce regulation actively.

CM Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif paid a warm tribute to the prime minister for maintaining petroleum prices and supply stability for a full month under extraordinary global pressure — a decision that channelled billions in relief to citizens who would otherwise have faced sudden and severe price shocks. The coordination between Islamabad and Lahore reflects a shared understanding that in a crisis of this scale, no level of government can act effectively in isolation.

Relief measures, however well designed, ultimately succeed or fail on public participation. Maryam Nawaz Sharif has appealed to citizens to prefer public transport over private vehicles — a call that is simultaneously a conservation strategy, a congestion measure

and an act of collective solidarity. The public is not merely a beneficiary of this policy; it is an essential partner in making it work. Fewer private vehicles on the road mean lower fuel demand, reduced import pressure and more resources available for sustained relief.

The global crisis will not resolve itself quickly. Oil markets remain volatile, geopolitical fault lines remain active and Pakistan's vulnerability to external shocks will not disappear with a single package. But Maryam Nawaz Sharif has demonstrated that responsive, humane and strategically intelligent governance is possible even when the external environment is at its most unforgiving. Punjab has not waited for conditions to improve. It has acted — and given its people something rarer than a subsidy: the assurance that their government sees them and will not look away.

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Analysis

Qudrat Ullah

**Bull & Bears**  
PSX 100-Share  
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
150,398.71	152,011.26
Day's High	Day's Low
152,103.62	148,796.54
Index Value	Change
20,284,792,918	-1612.55
Percentage	Time
-1.06%	3 Apr, 2026 4:30 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
10,436.29	+71.50
Percentage	Time
+0.69%	2 Apr, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
46,438.48	-127.26
Percentage	Time
-0.27%	2 Apr, 1:31 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
53,123.49	+660.2
Percentage	Time
+1.26%	3 Apr, 3:45 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Australian Dollar	195.05	198.10
Australian Dollar	188.78	193.77
Bahrain Dinar	729.47	739.75
Canadian Dollar	198.02	204.50
China Yuan	36.45	37.55
Danish Krone	43.25	43.65
Euro	321.42	327.42
Hong Kong Dollar	35.01	36.01
Indian Rupee	2.05	2.31
Japanese Yen	1.7210	1.8199
Kuwaiti Dinar	884	896.25
Malaysian Ringgit	65.25	66.45
New Zealand \$	157.36	163.57
Norwegians Krone	27.65	27.95
Omani Riyal	720.38	732.95
Qatari Riyal	73.86	74.50
Saudi Riyal	74.4	75.55
Singapore Dollar	214.94	220
Swedish Korona	30.20	30.50
Swiss Franc	355	358.85
Thai Bhat	8.05	8.20
U.A.E Dirham	75.95	77.25
UK Pound Sterling	368.79	374.04
US Dollar	279.00	280.15

# Mian Zahid Hussain voices grave concern over historic hike in petroleum prices; Warns of economic paralyzation

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: 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 deep concern over the federal government's decision to sharply increase petroleum prices, following the joint press briefing by Federal Minister for Finance Muhammad Aurangzeb and Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik. The government has raised the price of petrol by Rs137.24 to reach



Rs458.40 per liter, while high-speed diesel (HSD) has seen a staggering increase of Rs184.49, bringing it to Rs520.35 per liter. This unprecedented adjustment, triggered by global energy volatility and the Middle East

conflict that has pushed global diesel above \$250 per barrel, threatens to dismantle the fragile economic stability achieved over the past year.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that the impact of this decision on the cost of doing business will be catastrophic, particularly for the industrial sector, which is already struggling with high power tariffs and interest rates. High-speed diesel is the backbone of the country's transport and agriculture sectors; such a massive hike has led to a vertical increase in freight charges and production costs as Pakistan Goods Transporters have announced a 60 percent hike in fares.

Mian Zahid Hussain also suggested that the way forward lies

in a collaborative approach between the government and the business community to devise a sustainable economic strategy. The current practice of weekly or fortnightly price revisions creates a climate of uncertainty that discourages investment and disrupts planning.

The government must focus on enhancing the productivity of the agricultural and industrial sectors through direct incentives and by ensuring a stable, affordable energy supply. Only by reducing the "cost of living" and the "cost of doing business" simultaneously can Pakistan navigate this global energy crisis without compromising its economic sovereignty or social stability.

## Precaution

ISLAMABAD: Car showrooms cover the vehicle to protect from rain and hail at G-8 Mark in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

## SECP approves first Islamic risk-sharing product to boost microfinance

**Commerce Desk**

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has approved the country's first Shariah-compliant credit risk-sharing product, enabling Islamic financial institutions to expand financing to underserved sectors such as micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and agriculture.

The product, developed by National Credit Guarantee Company Limited (NCGCL), reduces credit risk through a risk-sharing mechanism, while enabling greater access to finance and ensuring compliance with Shariah principles.

conventional credit guarantees through a Shariah-compliant risk-sharing model. Under this structure, participating institutions contribute to a pooled fund on a donation (Tabarru) basis, managed by NCGCL as an agent (Wakel) under a Wakalah arrangement. Losses from eligible defaults are covered from this pool, ensuring genuine risk sharing without guaranteed returns.

The SECP is actively working to advance Islamic finance in line with the directions of the Supreme Court and the Government's vision of transitioning towards a riba-free financial system, while ensuring financial inclusion, stability, and sustainable economic growth.

The new product provides an alternate to existing

## 18th Annual CSR Summit and Awards-2026



**Bureau Report**

KARACHI: Sindh Senior Minister for Local Government, Housing and Town Planning, Syed Nasir Hussain Shah, has said the Sindh government is committed to expanding financial and institutional support for genuine non-governmental organisations and charitable institutions under its public-private partnership model to help ease the suffering of underprivileged communities and ensure their long-term uplift through healthcare, education, skills development and livelihood opportunities.

He was speaking as the chief guest at

the Karachi edition of the 18th Annual CSR Summit and Awards-2026, organised by the National Forum for Environment & Health (NFEH) at a local hotel.

FPCCI Senior Vice-President Saquib Fayyaz Magoon, DIG Traffic Karachi Peer Muhammad Shah, Dr Abdul Bari Khan, Founder and President of Indus Hospital & Health Network, Murad Ali Soni, Chief of Community Policing Karachi (CPK), Managing Director, Sindh Solid Waste Management Board (SSWMB), SITE Association of Industries President Abdul Rehman Fudda highlighted the humanitarian work of Al-Khidmat Foundation's Aghosh Homes, Muhammad Moosa,

CEO of NJV School Management Board (NJVSMB) also speak the occasion.

Earlier, NFEH President Muhammad Naem Qureshi said the CSR Summit was held every year to provide a common platform for the government, private sector, NGOs, charities and civil society to work together for poverty alleviation, environmental protection and the uplift of marginalised communities.

NFEH Secretary-General Ruqiya Naem and Vice-President Nadeem Ashraf also addressed the gathering and appreciated the outstanding CSR contributions made by various companies and institutions.

## IMF clears Rs830bn power subsidy with condition of tariff hike in 2027

**Commerce Desk**

ISLAMABAD: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has approved a conditional subsidy of Rs830 billion for Pakistan's power sector in the upcoming fiscal year 2026-27, while mandating an increase in electricity tariffs by January 2027 as part of broader reform commitments, according to official sources.

The government has assured the IMF that base electricity tariffs will be raised in January 2027 under the annual tariff adjustment mechanism to curb financial losses in the energy sector.

The increase is expected to reflect fluctuations in global energy markets, including the impact of ongoing tensions in the Middle East.

Rs300 billion of the approved subsidy will be allocated to offset losses stemming from electricity theft and poor bill recovery. The subsidy will also help bridge tariff differentials between state-run distribution companies and K-Electric.

Pakistan has pledged to ensure full cost recovery through timely tariff adjustments while distributing the financial burden across different consumer categories in a balanced manner.

The government also reiterated its commitment to continuing structural reforms aimed at improving the financial viability of the power sector.

However, concerns persist over the effectiveness of these measures, as past tariff hikes have failed to significantly reduce the country's mounting circular debt.

Sources said nearly

## Billionaires hit by market slump amid Iran tensions, Musk still tops list: Forbes

**Business Desk**

Global market volatility linked to tensions involving Iran has significantly dented the fortunes of the world's richest individuals, with nine of the top ten billionaires losing wealth in March, according to a report by Forbes.

The report said the combined wealth of the world's ten richest people dropped by more than \$100 billion, bringing their total net worth to around \$2.5 trillion at the start of April. The downturn coincided with declines of nearly 5% in major

US indices, including the S&P 500 and Nasdaq.

Despite the losses, Elon Musk retained his position as the world's richest person. His net worth fell by \$22 billion over the month to \$817 billion, though he remains significantly ahead of his closest rivals.

Larry Page ranked second, with his fortune declining by \$20 billion to \$237 billion. Meanwhile, Jeff Bezos moved up to third place despite a modest \$1 billion drop in wealth, while Sergey Brin slipped to fourth after losing

\$18 billion. The biggest loss was recorded by French luxury tycoon Bernard Arnault, whose wealth fell by \$28 billion to \$142.5 billion. The sharp decline pushed him down from seventh to tenth position in the global rankings.

Spanish retail magnate Amancio Ortega also saw a significant drop, losing \$20 billion and falling out of the top ten to 14th place. Veteran investor Warren Buffett slipped from ninth to eleventh after his net worth declined by \$7 billion.

## Govt mulls limiting business hours to conserve energy

**Commerce Desk**

ISLAMABAD: The government authorities have expedited consultations with provinces to implement energy conservation measures nationwide amid the ongoing Iran war, officials said on Saturday.

According to sources in the Ministry of Energy, provincial governments are seeking input from chambers of commerce and trade bodies, while data is also being collected from power distribution companies (DISCOs).

As part of the proposed measures, authorities are considering limiting business hours for markets, shops, and commercial zones from 9am to 6pm.

The proposal may be implemented across the country for a period of one to two months. Officials said a final decision on measures to reduce fuel consumption is expected next week.

The consultations come amid broader government efforts to protect the economy amid a rise in oil prices due to the Iran war and closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

Last month, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif announced a 14-point austerity plan in response to the evolving security situation in the Middle East. The plan includes reducing government expenditures, limiting privileges for the elite, and promoting energy conservation and simplicity.

### PSCA's Virtual Blood Bank Marks Another Milestone in Delivering Timely Life-Saving Assistance



**Bureau Report**

LAHORE: Punjab Safe Cities Authority's Virtual Blood Bank has once again demonstrated its responsive efficiency by ensuring timely blood provision in a critical medical emergency situation, saving precious life of a 15-year-old patient. A 15-year-old boy, Azan, suffering from blood cancer and under going treatment at Children's Hospital Lahore, urgently required AB+ blood. His father contacted Emergency Helpline-15 requesting immediate assistance for blood arrangement.

According to PSCA's spokesperson, the Virtual Blood Bank officer responded promptly and found suitable donors without delay and established immediate contact between the donors and the affected family through a conference call. Two donors timely reached hospital and donated blood, ensuring swift blood transfusion which resulted in saving a precious life of a young patient. The patient's father, Nauman, expressed heartfelt gratitude to the Safe City team and the donors for their timely support and cooperation.

The spokesperson emphasized that the citizens are encouraged to seek help in any medical emergency by calling Emergency Helpline-15 and pressing 4 for getting immediate medical assistance. He further added that the Punjab Safe Cities Authority (PSCA) remains robust and committed to providing timely assistance to the citizens so as to safeguard their precious lives by ensuring provision of efficient and responsive medical services.

PS HBL Pakistan Super League Cricket Championship Edition 11

# Islamabad United Cricket Team beat Rawalpindi Cricket team by seven wickets

Asim Tanveer

LAHORE: Rawalpindi Pindi was defeated by a hat-trick in the Pakistan Super League Cricket Championship 11. This time, twin brother Islamabad United defeated Rawalpindi Pindi by 7 wickets due to their excellent performance. A prestigious 7-wicket win in Lahore. Islamabad has reached the second position on the table.

The toss was delayed due to bad weather and wet ground at Gaddafi Stadium Lahore, but there was no reduction in overs. Islamabad United easily won the match by 12 wickets.

The captain of Islamabad United won the toss and put Rawalpindi first. The decision was beneficial as its captain Mohammad Rizwan 2 and Yasir Khan also returned to the pavilion after making 2, but both of them played 3.5 overs of the innings and the total score was only 15. Another big name Daryl Mitchell went for 19 off 15 balls, while the total was 66 for 3 in 10 overs. Set-batter Kamran Ghulam returned for 50 off 39 balls. Sam Billings went for 7 on a score of 96 but lost 11 balls in about 2 overs. Diane Forster did the real work. She smashed 44 runs off 19 balls. She hit 4 sixes and 2 fours. Due to this, Rawalpindi managed to score 156 runs



for 7 wickets in 20 overs. Richard Gleeson made 21, Faheem Ashraf made 22 and Salman Irshad gave away 52 runs. Take 2 wickets, 2



In reply, Islamabad United gave a message that the match is ours with a start of 58 runs in 5 overs. Stylish batsman Sameer Minhas played a clas-

sical innings. You can gauge his batting from the fact that his fellow opener Devon Conway was dismissed for just 6 off 11 balls, United's score was 58, the entire score was Minhas's. After 9 overs, when Sameer Minhas was dismissed on the first ball of the 10th over, the total score was 92, but out of this, Sameer Minhas' score was 70, which was made with the help of 4 sixes and 7 fours off just 36 balls. Mohammad Faiq was the third and last batsman to be dismissed, who was dismissed for 19. Haider Ali was unbeaten on 26 and Mark Chapman was unbeaten on 24 runs. United achieved the target of 157 runs in 14.2 overs for 3 wickets. With a 7-wicket win, the PSL points table Karachi Kings remain in first place, Lahore Qalandars are third and Multan Sultans are fourth.

This is a hat-trick of failures for Rawalpindi. So far, they have lost all 3 matches and their table position is 7th. Mohammad Amir took one wicket for 18 runs. Rashad Hussain took 36 and Jalat Khan took one wicket each for 38 runs.

There will be only one match on Sunday, April 5. The 13th match of PSL 11 will be played between Multan Sultans and Quetta Gladiators at Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore at 6:30 PM.

## NPC's new leadership aims to boost digital journalism and global reach

City Desk

ISLAMABAD (GNP):- Newly elected executive body of the National Press Club (NPC) was honored at a prestigious reception held in the federal capital, marking a significant moment of transition and professional celebration within the journalistic community. The event served as a platform for the incoming leadership to outline a transformative roadmap aimed at modernizing the press corps and fostering a more connected, technologically advanced media environment in Pakistan.

The gathering was hosted by the Diplomatic Insight Group, an organ-

ization anchored in the mission of "Peace through Informed Dialogue." The Group's leadership emphasized their commitment to ensuring Pakistan is understood through credible voices and meaningful global connections. As an ecosystem encompassing media, research, and diplomacy, through platforms like The Diplomatic Insight, DiploTV, and the Institute of Peace and Diplomatic Studies, the Group highlighted its role as a bridge between national narratives and the international community.

Asif Noor, CEO of Diplomatic Insight Group, welcomed the distinguished journalists and underscored

the importance of institutional alignment between media and research bodies. He noted that the National Press Club remains a vital pillar of the country's intellectual ecosystem, where public trust is nurtured and national debates are framed. In an era where credibility is the most valuable currency, Mr. Noor reaffirmed the Group's dedication to supporting the NPC in its mission to uphold journalistic integrity.

During his address, the President of the National Press Club, Abdul Razaq Sial, expressed his gratitude for the event and shared an ambitious vision for the Club's future. He empha-

sized the urgent need to enhance the NPC's footprint in a globalized world by transitioning the institution into a digital-first entity. Key institutional reforms announced include the inauguration of a new, state-of-the-art building, the implementation of a biometric database to ensure transparency among the journalist community, and the launch of specialized training programs and fellowships abroad to equip reporters with modern, international skill sets.

The event, which was moderated by Dr. Farhat Asif, was attended by the prominent members of the newly elected cabinet, including Secretary



Dr. Furqan Rao, Secretary Finance Abid Abbasi, and Vice President Bashir Chaudhary and the journalistic community. The proceedings concluded with a mutual commitment

to collaborate on initiatives that reflect the resilience and depth of the Pakistani media landscape, ensuring that the stories carrying the nation forward are both informed and impactful.

## Calls on

KARACHI: Rwandan Ambassador Harerimana Fatou calls on Sindh Governor Syed Muhammad Nehal Hashmi at the Governor's House



Photo: Online

## Mirage of Normalcy: How India's 'Peace' in Kashmir is Built on Graves and Shackles

Continued from Page 4

of Articles 370 and 35A on August 5, 2019: a process where dissent is pathologized as terrorism, and the Muslim-majority character of the territory is assaulted through bureaucratic violence and demographic engineering.

Indeed, to understand the hollowness of the "normalcy" claim, one must locate it within the broader context of the Hindutva settler-colonial project. The revocation of the region's special status was never about development or governance; it was about dismantling the legal barriers protecting Kashmiri land and identity from external settlement. The subsequent years have witnessed a calculated influx of non-local settlers, the alteration of domicile laws, and the gerryman-

dering of constituencies—all designed to transform Kashmir from a Muslim-majority region into a Hindu-dominated one. The current wave of killings, arrests, and property seizures serves to terrify the indigenous population into acquiescence as this demographic manipulation unfolds. When officials speak of a "new Kashmir," they are describing a laboratory for ethnic restructuring, where the original inhabitants are either incarcerated, eliminated, or economically displaced to make room for a compliant settler population.

Moreover, the Indian narrative of normalcy relies on the complete erasure of Kashmiri political agency. The arrest of All Parties Hurriyat conference leaders, human rights defenders, youth activists, and even students under draconian laws

reveals a state terrified of dialogue and desperate to monopolize the discourse. In this dystopian "normal," peaceful protest is met with teargas and bullets, and the expression of political aspiration invites a midnight knock from the NIA. The damage to a single home during cordon-and-search operations, mentioned in the report, symbolizes the broader violation: the invasion of private spaces, the destruction of sanctuaries, and the militarization of daily existence. For the thousands of families whose loved ones languish in prisons, for the families of the nearly one hundred thousand martyred during last 36 years, and for the thousands living under the shadow of property confiscation, "normalcy" is a macabre joke.

True normalcy cannot be built on the foundations of military occupation. It

cannot be measured by tourist footfall or internet speed while a population is gagged and caged. It requires the withdrawal of nearly a million troops, the repeal of black laws like the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) Public Safety Act (PSA), the restoration of political rights, and, ultimately, the fulfillment of the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination. Until then, India's claims of normalcy will remain what they are: a grotesque alibi for an ongoing crime against humanity. The silence in Kashmir is not peace; it is the sound of a scream being strangled.

The writer is chairman Kashmir Institute of International Relations and can be reached @saleemciani@hotmail.com and on X @sultan1913

## "Rats ate my feet": The daily horror for displaced families in Gaza

Reem Sweisi

GAZA: 68-year-old Ensherah Hajjaj woke up to find blood flowing from her feet, only to discover that a rat had eaten her toes inside a tent in central Gaza—without her feeling it, as she suffers from diabetes. The incident involving Hajjaj reflects the painful reality endured by displaced people in the Gaza Strip, who live alongside rats and insects, especially in tents where there are no secure doors or means of protection. Families share their limited space with rodents, which have become part of daily life. A few days earlier, an infant named Adam Al-Ostaz, just 28 days old, was bitten by a large rat in a displacement tent sheltering his family in the Al-Maqousi area west of Gaza City. The bite caused a deep wound in his small cheek.

The problem of rodents and rats in displacement camps in Gaza is considered one of the most serious health and environmental issues facing displaced people, especially amid deteriorating living conditions and a lack of basic humanitarian services.

Hajjaj, who lives in the Arafat camp in central Gaza with her elderly husband—who suffers from a mental illness—had just returned from treatment at Al-Shifa Hospital when she spoke: "Yesterday, I went to bed at one in the morning," she said. "I stayed up so late because of the noise and movement of rats in the tent." She continued, her voice trembling: "When I woke up for the dawn prayer, I discovered my bed soaked in blood. Large rats had bitten my toes. I didn't even feel it at the time because I have diabetic neuropathy."

"Rats live with us in these tents," she added. "They eat what we eat, sleep where we sleep—and now they have eaten my feet."

As she examined her swollen foot, wrapped in white gauze, she asked in despair: "What is the solution? How long will rats keep gnawing on us day and night? Since I can't feel my feet, if they were completely eaten, how would I even know?"

Describing the nightly ordeal, she said: "When I sleep, I can feel something moving under my pillow—rats scurrying everywhere. Even the mat we lay on the tent floor shifts at night because of them." It is worth noting that Hajjaj has no provider; she herself cares for her sick husband, who suffers from brain function atrophy.

She appealed to the municipality to address this problem affecting displaced people in the camps, which has turned life there into unbearable hell, saying: "I'm afraid to sleep in the tent tonight."

Hajjaj currently lives in Arafat camp after being displaced from the Al-Mansoura neighborhood in Shuja'iyya, east of Gaza City, after her home was destroyed during the ongoing Israeli military offensive on the Gaza Strip.

Cold weather, disease, rodents, and insects continue to deepen the suffering of displaced residents, posing serious risks to their health and underscoring the urgent need for intervention to improve living conditions in the camps.



## Induction Ceremony

Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf along with Ship's crew during the Induction Ceremony of PNS KHAIBAR.



# Naval Chief Vows Robust Defense of Maritime Interests After Corvette Induction

### Bureau Report

KARACHI: Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf, emphasized the importance of a strong, balanced and technologically advanced Navy during the induction ceremony of the 2nd PN MILGEM Class Corvette, PNS KHAIBAR, into Pakistan Navy's fleet.

Addressing the gathering, CNS highlighted that Pakistan's strategic location along vital maritime trade and energy corridors demands a potent naval force to safeguard national interests and ensure secure Sea Lines of Communications (SLOCs).

Naval Chief underscored that during Marka-e-Haq, Pakistan Navy was poised

to sink Indian Navy Aircraft Carrier which forced Indian Navy to remain retreated in their perceived safe havens. The mastery and conduct of Naval operations during Marka-e-Haq delivers an unequivocal message that any attempt to challenge Pakistan's maritime interests will be met with an appropriate response.

Naval Chief emphasized that Pakistan Navy is being equipped with state of the art platforms and niche technologies enabling it to target critical infrastructure/ vulnerabilities and naval assets of adversary. Inductions of advanced platforms like PNS KHAIBAR and the forthcoming HANGOR Class Submarines mark a mile-

stone in PN's modernization; enhancing operational flexibility, combat power and the strategic reach.

Concluding his address, Naval Chief extended best wishes to PNS KHAIBAR crew while reaffirming Pakistan Navy's resolve to defend sovereign seas and uphold its responsibility as guardian of the maritime frontiers.

# Govt protecting public from fuel crisis, remains committed to relief measures: Tarar, Musadik Malik

LAHORE: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar and Federal Minister for Climate Change Dr Musadik Malik said on Saturday that the government successfully shielded the public from fuel shortages and mitigated the impact of the global oil crisis through timely and proactive measures.

Speaking jointly here, they said that despite severe international challenges, the government ensured uninterrupted fuel supply and took decisive steps to protect citizens from the worst effects of rising oil prices.

They acknowledged that even with these efforts, ordinary citizens continue to



feel the impact of inflation and high fuel costs. "With a heavy heart, we reiterate that while the government is doing everything possible, the impact is still being felt by ordinary citizens," they said. They emphasized that

protecting the dignity and savings of every citizen, especially the most vulnerable, remains the government's top priority, and all possible measures are being taken to provide relief and ease financial pressure.



Federal Minister for Climate Change Dr Musadik Malik highlighted that approximately Rs129 billion was spent to stabilize fuel prices, sourced through development funds and savings rather than irresponsibility.

He explained that government austerity measures included reducing fuel usage by 50 percent, shutting down 60 percent of official vehicles, cutting ministers' salaries, and reducing development expenditures.

# Iran denies involvement in drone strikes on US Embassy in Riyadh

### News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) denied involvement in a drone strike on the US embassy in Riyadh on March 3, calling it a "Zionist operation" and accusing the US-Israeli alliance of trying to destabilize the region. Saudi authorities had initially described the attack as causing minor fires and limited damage.

However, a US news report citing current and former officials said multiple drones hit the embassy, damaging three floors and a CIA station, with fires burning for nearly half a day.

The report said an Iranian drone initially struck the embassy building, creating a breach, and a second drone hit the same spot one minute later, damaging three floors and reportedly affecting a CIA station inside the compound.

Additional drones were fired in the hours following the initial strike, but



were intercepted by missile defense systems.

The report suggested that US Secretary of State Marco Rubio's earlier statements about the extent of the damage had understated the incident,

noting that some embassy sections were destroyed.

The attack, which occurred at 1:30 am, could have caused significant casualties if it had occurred during business hours.

While Iran denied responsibility, the incident demonstrated that critical US sites in the region could be targeted, highlighting the heightened tensions between Tehran, Riyadh, and Washington.

# PM expresses pride over induction of PNS Khyber into Navy fleet



### City Desk

LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday expressed heartfelt pleasure and pride over the induction of the modern warship PNS Khyber into the Pakistan Navy fleet, terming it a significant milestone in strengthening the country's defence capabilities and ensuring effective protection of maritime borders.

The prime minister stated that Pakistan's geographical location holds immense importance as major global trade and energy routes pass through its maritime domain. He emphasized that a strong, balanced, and technologically advanced navy is essential to safeguard national interests and secure sea lines of communication.

Referring to the "Marka-e-Haq," the prime minister praised the professionalism and strategic capabilities of the Pakistan Navy, stating that its performance compelled the enemy to retreat.

He reaffirmed that Pakistan will take all necessary measures to protect its sovereignty and maritime interests. He added that modern war platforms, including PNS Khyber and the upcoming Hangor-class submarines, will significantly enhance the operational capability, defence strength, and strategic reach of the Pakistan Navy.

The prime minister further stated that the government remains committed to equipping the Pakistan Navy in line with modern requirements to effectively meet emerging challenges.

# CM Punjab announces diesel subsidy for wheat farmers



### Bureau Report

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif, in a message on X (formerly Twitter), announced a major relief package for farmers, particularly those cultivating wheat across the province. Under the initiative, financial assistance will be provided to farmers owning up to 25 acres of land, with a subsidy of 150 rupees per litre on 10 litres of diesel per acre.

Maryam Nawaz Sharif stated that rising global oil prices amid ongoing international crises have

led to increased petrol and diesel prices in Pakistan, reaffirming her commitment to stand by farmers during these challenging times. She emphasized that she is personally overseeing the subsidy mechanism to ensure transparent and effective delivery of financial benefits to every eligible farmer.

Highlighting the importance of the agriculture sector, she noted that farmers are the backbone of Punjab and pledged to continue safeguarding their rights and providing support to ease their financial burden.

# Afghans among terrorists who clashed with security forces in North Waziristan identified

### News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The identity of eight militants killed in clashes with security forces in North Waziristan a few days ago has been established. Security sources told the TV channel that two Afghans were among those eliminated.

Elaborating further, they said that Ameer Hamza Haqyar, son of Abdul Karim, and Ameer Abdur Raheem, son of Zaroli, belonged to Paktia province of Afghanistan.

On the other hand, defence experts are of the view that recent incursion by militants has proved that the Afghan Taliban are patronizing them.

In fact, experts claim,

the Afghan Taliban want to get relief and gain trade concessions from Pakistan by engaging in peace talks.

They opine that truth of the matter is that there is no change in Taliban's mindset, and if somebody is pinning hopes on talks, he is grossly mistaken.

The Taliban are not serious, experts have said, adding hence there is a need to increase the intensity of Operation Ghazab Lil Haq.

On April 1, security forces had eliminated eight militants in Datakhel area of North Waziristan.

