



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ
ہم کو نصرت فرمادی کہ ہم کو شیعہ نے خیر
دی، کہا ہم سے فرانسے بیان کیا، کہا کہ
میں نے شیعہ سے سنا، انہوں نے عبد اللہ
بن عمرو سے کہ نبی کریم صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم
نے فرمایا کہ اگر اللہ کے ساتھ شریک کرنا،
والدین کی نافرمانی کرنا، کسی کی بات جان لینا
اور « یحییٰ بن ماریس » « قصداً آجھوئی قسم
کھانے کو کہتے ہیں۔
(چنگیزی صدف نمبر 675)
Barkat Rice Mills
(Pvt) Limited



Bilawal hails PM Shehbaz's diplomatic efforts to close Mideast war

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari praised the Prime Minister's active diplomatic efforts and effective role in ending tensions and establishing a ceasefire between Iran and the United States. He also appreciated Pakistan's efforts in promoting peace in the region.



US-Iran truce victory of diplomacy: Pakistan envoy

Pakistan's Ambassador to the US Rizwan Saeed Sheikh has described US-Iran ceasefire, mediated by Pakistan, a victory of diplomacy and dialogue. In an interview with CNN, Rizwan Saeed highlighted that Pakistan's diplomatic efforts had been ongoing for several weeks, culminating successfully with the announcement of a ceasefire and negotiations.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Shawwal 21, Friday, April 10, 2026

www.dailyspokesman.net

@daily_spokesman



Daily Spokesman Vol: 19, Issue: 353 Price Rs. 25.00 Pages 8

Calls on

ISLAMABAD: COAS and CDF, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday.



Photo: Online

Field Marshal Asim Munir, PM Shehbaz Sharif review peace efforts, reaffirm support for Iran-US Ceasefire

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir on Thursday called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif at the Prime Minister's Office, where the two leaders reviewed progress on Pakistan's mediatory efforts aimed at achieving sustainable peace in the region.

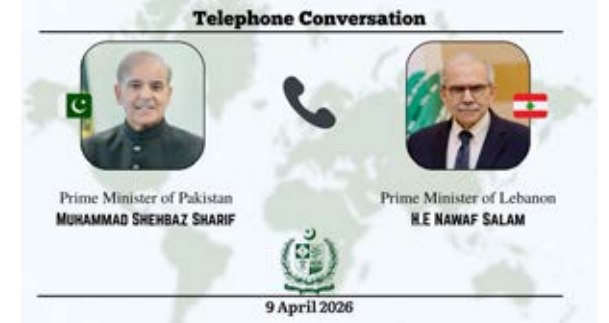
Both dignitaries expressed satisfaction over the de-escalation achieved so far and underscored the importance of maintaining the ceasefire and ensuring continued restraint by all parties involved.

The leadership appreciated the restraint demonstrated by all sides and reiterated Pakistan's commitment to facilitate and provide all out support to both the sides to arrive at a peacefully negotiated settlement.

The prime minister lauded the commitment of the parties involved in the process and wished them success in their pursuit of peace.

He also renewed his invitation to the arriving delegations and assured them of the highest consideration and support by Pakistan.

PM strongly condemns Israel's aggression against Lebanon



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday held a telephone conversation with Prime Minister of Lebanon Nawaf Salam and strongly condemned Israel's ongoing aggression against Lebanon.

He also expressed condolences over the loss of thousands of precious lives in these hostilities.

The prime minister said that

Pakistan was engaged in sincere efforts for regional peace and it was in this spirit that the peace talks between Iran and the U.S. were being convened.

While thanking Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for his peace efforts, the Prime Minister of Lebanon sought Pakistan's support for bringing an immediate end to the attacks targeting Lebanon and its people.

Both leaders agreed to remain in contact.

PM Shehbaz reaffirms support for Chinese investment, meets Jin Yongsheng-led delegation

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday underscored Pakistan's commitment to strengthening business-to-business cooperation with China, saying the government was prioritizing measures to facilitate foreign investors through a transparent and sustainable investment framework.

The prime minister expressed these views during a meeting with a four-member delegation led by Jin Yongsheng, Chairman



of Service Long March Tyres, a release said. During the meeting, the prime

minister highlighted that Pakistan was working on a priority basis to expand Pakistan-China business partnerships, noting that the government firmly believed in providing a stable, transparent, and investor-friendly environment.

He said the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) was actively supporting investors by ensuring streamlined procedures and institutional facilitation.

Calling joint ventures like Service Long March Tyres vital for bilateral economic cooperation,

the prime minister said such partnerships contribute significantly to economic growth, job creation, technology transfer, and export enhancement.

The delegation briefed the prime minister on the company's upcoming investment plans in Pakistan and shared that Service Long March Tyres remained focused on export-oriented production. According to the briefing, the company generated export revenue of \$54 million during 2024-2025.

Continued on Page 7

Pakistan, Saudi FMs expresses concern over ceasefire violations in Lebanon



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar spoke with Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan to discuss the latest regional developments.

During the conversation took place on Wednesday night, both leaders expressed deep concern over ceasefire violations in Lebanon and stressed the urgent need for full respect and implementation of the ceasefire to ensure lasting peace and stability.

The deputy prime minister appreciated Saudi Arabia's continued support for Pakistan's efforts toward achieving lasting peace.

Both leaders also agreed to remain in close contact.

Pakistan Finalizes 'Foolproof' Security for High-Stakes US-Iran Talks

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi said on Thursday that a "comprehensive and foolproof" security plan has been finalised for senior US officials arriving in Islamabad for high-level talks with Iran scheduled for Friday/ Saturday.

Naqvi conveyed the assurance during a meeting with US Ambassador Natalie Baker in Islamabad, where both sides reviewed arrangements for the upcoming dialogue.

The minister said that US Vice President JD Vance, along with senior officials Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner, would be received as special guests, adding that extensive measures were in place to ensure the safety of all visiting delegates.

Discussions also covered the broader situation in the Middle East, with the US envoy welcoming the recent ceasefire and praising Pakistan's diplomatic efforts in helping ease regional tensions.

Baker commended Islamabad's role in promoting stability. Pakistan is set to host direct talks

between the US and Iran on Saturday after a two-week ceasefire was announced between the two countries, bringing a pause to the hostilities which broke out on February 28.

Earlier, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said that delegations from the United States and Iran are expected to visit Pakistan, expressing hope that the talks could



contribute to lasting peace in the region. Sharif noted that while a two-week ceasefire had paused hostilities, the goal remained a durable and sustainable resolution.

He also praised Army Chief Field Marshal Asim Munir for his role in facilitating diplomatic engagement, saying he had remained in constant contact with both the US and Iranian leadership in recent days.

Burj-ul-Z Hotel Islamabad

Special 25% Discount

*for USP & SPIHS Students/Staff

Location near Centaurus Mall
Elegant Hotel with Service Excellence
Spacious 30+ Guest Rooms
Executive & Suite Rooms

Azad Kashmir PM vows to make Muzaffarabad clean, modern city

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: The Prime Minister Azad Kashmir, Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, has reaffirmed his government's commitment to transform capital city Muzaffarabad into a clean, modern and environment-friendly city. Addressing the inauguration ceremony of the Solid Waste Management Project here today, prime minister Rathore described Muzaffarabad as a city that symbolizes the face and identity of the state. Reaffirming his commitment to develop Muzaffarabad into a model city, he said that challenges can be overcome through effective strategies and collective efforts.

The Prime Minister, on the occasion, expressed satisfaction over Pakistan's growing recognition on the global stage and acknowledged the federal government's continued support through subsidies and assistance for public welfare in Azad Kashmir. He reiterated that, despite limited resources, the government remains focused on priority sectors such as waste management and education. He called for coordinated efforts among all departments to serve the public with dedication and without discrimination. Stressing the



urgent need for efficient waste management systems, the prime minister noted that around 1,300 tons of waste were generated daily across Azad Kashmir. He also announced immediate provision of staff, funds, and fuel support to the municipality along with

plans to relocate the vegetable market to ease traffic congestion in the city. The inauguration ceremony was attended by Minister for Local Government Aamir Yasin, Minister for Public Health Syed Bazil Naqvi, Minister for School Education Diwan Ali Khan Chughtai,

Minister for Forests Sardar Javed Ayub, Minister for Kashmir Affairs Nabila Ayub, Minister for PDO Chaudhry Muhammad Rashid, Chief Secretary Azad Kashmir Khushal Khan, Additional Chief Secretary (Development) Atif Rehman and several others.

AJK PM Launches Solid Waste Management Project in Muzaffarabad

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD:

The Prime Minister Azad Jammu and Kashmir Faisal Mumtaz Rathore formally inaugurated the Solid Waste Management Project for the capital city of Muzaffarabad here on Thursday. The much-awaited project, has been launched as a major step toward modernizing the sanitation system in the capital city. The initiative aims to ensure cleanliness by improving the efficient collection, transportation, and proper disposal of garbage at designated dumping sites. On the occasion, Prime Minister Rathore was given a detailed briefing regarding the modern machinery purchased for the project, its operational capacity, future goals and overall performance of the system.



Pakistan brokers ceasefire and hosts historic US-Iran talks after decades of hostility, Masood Khan

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 described Pakistan's recent diplomatic engagement as a "historic breakthrough," highlighting two major achievements: securing a temporary ceasefire in a rapidly escalating regional conflict and facilitating direct negotiations between the United States and Iran for the first time since 1979.

Speaking in a televised interview, Ambassador Khan underscored that Pakistan's role as a mediator and facilitator has elevated its global standing, positioning it as a credible and trusted interlocutor in complex international crises. He noted that the ceasefire, though temporary, has created a critical window for diplomacy, preventing further escalation and paving the way for meaningful dialogue.

"This is a moment of immense significance not only for Pakistan but also for the international community," he stated. "Bringing Washington and Tehran to the negotiating table is, in itself, a major diplomatic success."



Azad Kashmir High Court nullifies all post-1990 Patwari appointments as illegal

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: The Azad Jammu and Kashmir High Court has declared the appointments of all the Patwaris of the Revenue Department appointed since 1990 as unmerited and ordered to cancel the appointments. The historic decision of Judge High Court of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Justice Khalid Rashid, in the writ petition titled Azzam Rauf etc. vs. Deputy Commissioner Sudhanuti etc. and Irfan Aslam etc. vs. Deputy Commissioner Sudhanuti etc. was pronounced, according to which, apart from the Patwaris of Sutanuti, all the Patwaris appointed without advertisement throughout Azad Kashmir from 1990 to date should be cancelled, declaring them illegal. The court has established a court of inquiry against the Senior Member Board of Revenue for being lenient in court orders. The case was pursued by renowned lawyer Saqib Ahmed Abbasi Advocate on behalf of the petitioners Azzam Rauf and Irfan Aslam, while the decision of the case was given by the Honorable Justice Chaudhry Khalid Rasheed, Judge of the Supreme Court, has issued a ruling that the public has welcomed this decision of the Supreme Court against illegal appointments.

Pakistani leaders laud diplomacy in Iran-Saudi truce, criticize Israeli actions

Bureau Report

ISLAMABAD: Secretary General of the Muslim Conference and former Deputy Speaker, Ms. Meharun-Nissa, and former minister Ms. Shamim Ali Malik, while appreciating the end of the Iran-US ceasefire and the positive role of Pakistan, have said that problems will be solved through negotiations. Wars do not solve problems but rather increase them. The commendable step taken by Pakistan along with friendly countries and bringing the parties to the negotiating table in collaboration with China, Russia and other countries to cool the flames of war between the Iranian people and Saudi Arabia deserves congratulations from the political and military leadership of Pakistan. Ms. Meharun-Nissa and Ms. Shamim Ali Malik said in a joint statement that Israel's stubbornness and expansionist policy in the Middle East have made the lives of the Palestinian people miserable. She said that Israel has used the innocent Palestinian people of Gaza as a training ground and has turned the entire Gaza Strip into a battlefield.

She said that Israel has used the innocent Palestinian people of Gaza as a training ground and has turned the entire Gaza Strip into a battlefield.



JUI-F KP Chief: Mardan Conference Key to Defending Islamic Constitution

Tariq Khan Yousafzai

TAKHT BHAI: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Provincial Ameer of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Maulana Atta ur Rehman, has said that the "Dastoor-e-Islam Conference" to be held in Mardan on March 12 will prove to be an important step toward the implementation of an Islamic system and the protection of Islamic provisions in the Constitution. Takht Bhai, He expressed these views while addressing a gathering held on Thursday in Takht Bhai in connection with preparations for the Dastoor-e-Islam Conference. The event was also addressed by District Mardan Ameer Maulana Amanat Shah Haqqani, former Member of the National Assembly Maulana Muhammad Qasim, Maulana Muhammad Idrees, District Information Secretary Maulana Qaiseruddin, Tehsil Takht Bhai Ameer Hafiz Muhammad Saeed, General Secretary Muhammad Shafiq, JUI Business Forum District Mardan Convener Haji Dost Muhammad Darwesh, Maulana Ziaullah Jan Hashmi, JUI Teachers Forum's Qari Waheedullah Jan, JUI Lawyers Forum President Ikram Safi Advocate, Kishwar Khan, and Tehsil Takht Bhai Patron-in-Chief Mashooq Jan Siraj.

Maulana Atta ur Rehman stated that certain elements are attempting to remove Islamic provisions from the Constitution under the pretext of amendments. However, he said, the leadership of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam has always thwarted such attempts in the past and will continue to resist them in the future.

He further said that there are ongoing efforts to introduce certain bills, including those related to underage marriage, which he termed contrary to Shariah. He made it clear that the party would strongly oppose such legislation and raise public awareness on the issue.

Security arrangements

ISLAMABAD: Women walk-past the container placed for cordon off the Red Zone, the security beefed-up in the Federal Capital for 1st round of Iran-US talks aimed at a peaceful settlement to the war in the Middle East.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

New policy targets child protection in religious schools with strict guidelines

City Desk

MUZAFFARABAD: Minister for Religious Affairs, Endowments and Information Chaudhry Muhammad Rafique Nayar has said that in light of the orders of Prime Minister Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, the government has implemented a new policy for the protection of children in madrassas across the state, making it mandatory to install CCTV cameras, complaint boxes, medical examination, and qualification of teachers as per standards in madrassas.

Giving details about the policy, Minister for Religious Affairs, Endowments and Information Chaudhry Muhammad Rafique Nayar has said that under the new policy, all madrassas have been directed to install standard CCTV cameras in schools, corridors, courtyards, offices and other places that

should be active at all times and their recordings should be preserved for at least 30 days.

It will be mandatory for each madrasa to prepare a written child protection policy, which will include a clear explanation of the rights of children, the code of conduct of teachers and staff, and prohibited behaviors.

This policy will be displayed in a prominent place and written approval will be obtained from all teachers and

staff. For the protection of students, a confidential complaint box will be installed in every madrasa, the key of which will be held only by authorized officers of the district administration.

The complaint box will be opened regularly under the supervision of the district administration and immediate action will be taken on the complaints received, keeping the identity of the complainant completely confidential.

Sardar Attique praises Pakistan's diplomatic victory in Mideast crisis

Spokesman Report

RAWALPINDI: Former Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and President of All Jammu and Kashmir Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan has said that Pakistan has raised its morale all over the world by stopping the war between Iran, America and Israel. Today, the names of Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir and Prime Minister of Pakistan Mian Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir have fulfilled the right to lead the entire Muslim Ummah at a critical juncture.

After consultations with party workers of Muzaffarabad division Sardar Attique Khan visited Mirpur shortly and attended a reception



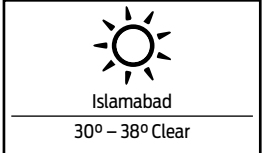
hosted by president Anjuman Tajran Mirpur he said that the workers are a ray of hope for the people of Azad Kashmir and will dedicate themselves

to solving public problems. he reaffirmed while talking to former President of Muslim Conference Mirza Muhammad Shafiq Jaral Advocate,

Raja Zafar Maroof, Chaudhry Jamil Tabassum, Najm Al-Saqib Advocate, and Qazi Abdullah at the PWD Rest House.

Speaking on the occasion Muhammad Asif Dar said that his entire family has been associated with the Muslim Conference in the past, and God willing, he will soon officially announce his joining the Muslim Conference after consulting his colleagues.

On this occasion, Central Vice President of Muslim Conference Raja Zafar Maroof, President of Muslim Conference Bhimber Raja Tahir Iqbal, Central Vice President from Britain President Chaudhry Jamil Tabassum, former President of the Supreme Court Bar Najam Al-Saqib Advocate, Mirpur City President Aslam Butt, Senior Vice President Abdul Shakoor Mughal and others were also present.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 4:19 am
Zohr 12:10 pm
Asr 4:44 pm
Maghrib 6:34 pm
Isha 8:00 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

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

CM Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif launches Punjab Police Pakistan App for reporting lost documents

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif has formally inaugurated the Punjab Police Pakistan App, enabling citizens to report the loss of essential documents from the comfort of their homes.

Through this app, citizens can register reports for lost identity cards, passports, driving licenses, and other important documents without visiting a police station or service center. Upon submission, the loss report will also be delivered to the applicant at home.

The "Punjab Police Pakistan App" will facilitate citizens across the province in lodging complaints regarding lost valuable documents in a timely and convenient manner, resulting in significant savings of both time and resources.

Expressing satisfaction over the launch, Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif stated that leveraging modern technology to provide ease to the public remains a key priority of the government. She reaffirmed that steering

Punjab towards innovation and progress is among the foremost objectives of her administration.

Meanwhile: On the directions of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif, Members of the Provincial Assembly and the district administration of Murree have approached the affected residents in Jhika Gali.

Relief activities have been immediately launched for families impacted by the landslide. The district administration has arranged suitable temporary accommodation for the affected households, and an initial assessment of damaged homes has been completed.

Food is being provided through lunch boxes and cooked meals, along with other necessary facilities. For accommodation, four proper rooms have been prepared and 14 tents have also been supplied. Blankets and other relief goods are being distributed among the affected families.

Water flowing from Jhika Gali Road, Rich Bell Road, and Jhika Gali Chowk is being diverted towards the Bhurban Kuldana drain.



The district administration has completed a preliminary assessment of the affected houses in Jhika Gali.

Patrolling

ISLAMABAD: Army troops patrolling a D Chowk area, in the Federal Capital. Security has been beefed up in the Red Zone in the federal capital and local holidays have been declared in the twin cities as Pakistan is gearing up to host talks between the United States and Iran.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Gallery 6 opens "New Cadence," a group exhibition of 14 emerging Pakistani artists

ISLAMABAD: Gallery 6 Islamabad will inaugurate a group exhibition "New Cadence" on Friday, featuring fourteen emerging Pakistani artists selected from participants of the National Biennial Arjmand Painting Award 2025.

"New Cadence" brings together a dynamic group of young artists whose practices reflect the evolving language of contemporary art in Pakistan. While the exhibition does not adhere to a single thematic framework, it is united by the presence of fresh and distinctive voices.

The title itself suggests a new rhythm, a changing pace in the way emerging artists are engaging with both personal and collective narratives.

The exhibition will feature works across diverse genres, including non-representational abstraction, figurative painting, landscape, and still life. Together, these works address a wide range of concerns such as childhood memories, women's experiences, poverty, environmental challenges, and the effects of climate change. Rather than presenting fixed conclusions, the artworks invite reflection, encouraging viewers to engage with layered meanings and subtle emotional undercurrents.

Rapid Population Growth Poses Major Challenge: Chaudhry Naeem

Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: District Health and Population Welfare Officer Toba Tek Singh Chaudhry Muhammad Naeem said that the rapidly growing population has become a major challenge to the country's development, putting immense pressure on health, education, employment and other basic facilities. Talking to our correspondent, he said that uncontrolled population growth not only leads to economic problems but also contributes to environmental and social issues. Therefore, effective family planning is essential to address this challenge. He further said that, in line with the directives of the Government of Punjab, the Population Welfare Department is taking comprehensive steps to



raise public awareness. In this regard, seminars, walks, community sessions and media campaigns are being organ-

ized across the district to promote the concept of a small and prosperous family. He added that religious scholars, teachers, social workers and media representatives are also being engaged to ensure the message reaches a wider audience effectively.

Chaudhry Muhammad Naeem highlighted that Family Welfare Centers, mobile service units and other facilities under the Population Welfare Department are providing equal services to both urban and rural populations. These centers offer authentic medical consultation, contraceptives and modern family planning methods free of cost. He added that trained and experienced staff are available to guide people according to their needs, enabling them to make informed decisions.

PPPW leaders urge comprehensive approach beyond US-Iran ceasefire

Kiran Asim

Dr. Safdar Ali Abbasi, (President PPPW) and Ms. Naheed Khan, (Political Assistant to Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto) Fayyaz Ali Khan, SVP; Adv. Amjad Ali Baloch, SVP; Kunwar Zahid, Secretary General; Rai Qaiser, DSG; Waheed Golra; Malik Mazhar; Naveed Sadiq; Rana Usman, along with the senior leadership of PPPW, take note of the recently announced two-week ceasefire between Iran and the United States. While this development is a welcome step toward de-escalation, it should be seen as an initial measure rather than a comprehensive resolution, and further efforts will be required to ensure lasting peace and stability.



Dr. Safdar Abbasi said, PPPW also emphasizes that all factors contributing to regional tensions, including the role of Israel, should be carefully considered within any meaningful dialogue process. A sustainable path forward requires a comprehensive and inclusive approach that addresses underlying causes rather than focusing solely on immediate symptoms.

According to Ms Naheed Khan, PPPW further encourages the Government of Pakistan to approach this moment with clarity of purpose and confidence. Diplomatic commitments should be pursued with consistency and mutual respect, reflecting Pakistan's sovereignty and its commitment to regional peace and stability.

Pakistan hailed for crucial role in averting US-Iran conflict

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: We congratulate Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, Prime Minister of Pakis Pakistan Hailed for Crucial Role in Averting US-Iran Conflict Mian Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif, Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar and the entire team and the Pakistani nation for bringing about a ceasefire in America, Israel and Iran, saving the world from destruction through excellent diplomacy in difficult circumstances and hoisting the Pakistani flag all over the world. Whose efforts and role are being appreciated as ambassadors of peace all over the world today. These views were expressed by President of Anjuman Tajiran City President and Patron-in-Chief Markazi Tanzeem Tajran-e-Pakistan Khawaja Shahid Razzak Sikka while commenting on the Iran-America ceasefire. He said that this is a historic moment when the Pakistani leadership saved the world from a major disaster in the most difficult circumstances by working day and night. Anjuman Tajiran City President and Patron-in-Chief Markazi Tanzeem Tajran-e-Pakistan Khawaja Shahid Razzak Sikka and his officials also specially thanked the spiritual leader of the Muslim Ummah, King Muhammad bin Salman, who showed patience, wisdom and expressed confidence in Pakistan during difficult times.



GC Women University Faisalabad Holds 6th Convocation, Confers 2,722 Degrees

FAISALABAD: Government College Women University Faisalabad held its 6th Convocation with great enthusiasm and academic fervor. Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Kanwal Ameen (T. I.), presided over the ceremony as nominee of the Chancellor/Governor Punjab. MPA Qudsiya Batool, Vice Chancellor GCUF, Rector TUF, President FCCI and FWCCI, distinguished academia and industry representatives, alumni, and a large number of proud parents, attended the ceremony, making it a memorable and prestigious occasion.

The Vice Chancellor, in her address, congratulated the graduates and their proud parents on receiving the degrees. She urged the passing out students to remain resilient, ethical, and compassionate, while emphasizing



responsible social media use and safe digital citizenship.

The Vice Chancellor presented a report on the university's key accom-

plishments. Highlighting the University's vision, she said GCWUF is committed to becoming a future-ready institution aligned with the SDGs, focusing on academic excellence, innovation, industry linkages, digitalization, and holistic student development. She also presented the University's annual report, outlining key achievements. She appreciated the efforts of Controller of Examinations and her team in organizing a successful event.

The university conferred 2,722 degrees in total, including 12 PhDs, 148 MPhil degrees, 123 ADP/B. Ed degrees, and 2,439 BS degrees. Recognizing academic excellence, the University awarded 98 medals, including 32 gold, 37 silver, and 29 bronze medals to outstanding students.

DPS TT Singh continues progress with focus on quality education and infrastructure: Principal

Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: Principal Divisional Public School and College Toba Tek Singh Dr. Rao Muhammad Siddique has said that the institution continues to make remarkable progress in the field of education, achieving significant improvements in both academic performance and faculty development.

Talking to Our Correspondent, he stated that the school is fully committed to providing quality and holistic education aimed at developing students intellectually, creatively and morally. He highlighted that along with academic excellence, equal attention is being given to character building and personal growth of students.

Dr. Siddique further said that the institution is continuously investing in modern infrastructure, including state-of-the-art classrooms, well-equipped laboratories and improved sports facilities, to create a conducive and dynamic learning environment. He added that the introduction of AI-based studies and practical experimental activities is a major step toward preparing students for future challenges in a rapidly evolving world.



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

Trump Faces Fire Over Iran War Outcome

The United States entered the 2026 Iran war with overwhelming military superiority, a coalition backing Israel, and a declared objective to dismantle Iran's military, cripple its nuclear ambitions, and restore unrestricted global access through the Strait of Hormuz. Thirty days later, the outcome is being fiercely debated—not in Tehran, but within the United States itself. A growing chorus of American analysts, politicians, and opinion makers is now openly questioning whether Washington has, in effect, blinked first.

The ceasefire announced by President Donald J. Trump—just hours before a self-imposed deadline to unleash massive destruction—has triggered a wave of criticism across the American political and intellectual spectrum. While the administration has framed the move as a tactical pause and a strategic success, critics argue that it reflects something else entirely: a reluctant retreat that leaves Iran stronger, more emboldened, and in control of one of the world's most critical economic chokepoints.

At the heart of this debate lies the Strait of Hormuz, through which nearly a fifth of global oil supply flows. Despite weeks of sustained U.S. and Israeli military operations, Iran not only retained its ability to influence this waterway but emerged with enhanced leverage over it. Analysts note that Tehran now effectively controls the terms of passage, even floating proposals to charge tolls on shipping—a development that signals a dramatic shift in regional power dynamics.

For many in Washington, this outcome is deeply unsettling. The war, initially justified as a preemptive strike to

neutralize Iran's capabilities, appears to have fallen short of its primary objectives. Iran's regime remains intact, its missile infrastructure partially operational, and its regional influence undiminished. Instead of weakening Iran, critics argue, the conflict has entrenched its position and provided it with a powerful new bargaining chip.

The backlash has not been confined to one political camp. Prominent Democrats have described Trump's strategy as reckless and ultimately ineffective, pointing out that the ceasefire leaves Iran's nuclear material untouched and its military capabilities largely intact. Some lawmakers have gone further, branding the entire campaign a strategic miscalculation that risked global catastrophe without delivering meaningful results.

Even within Trump's own political base, cracks have begun to appear. Influential conservative voices and MAGA-aligned commentators have expressed frustration, accusing the administration of stopping short of victory and allowing Iran to regroup. For a movement built on the promise of strength and decisive action, the perception of hesitation—or worse, retreat—has proven difficult to reconcile.

Among policy analysts and foreign affairs experts, the critique has taken a more structural form. Many argue that the ceasefire reflects a deeper failure of strategy rather than a single misstep. The war's objectives, they contend, shifted repeatedly—from deterrence to regime change to control of energy routes—

creating confusion both domestically and internationally. This lack of clarity, combined with escalating rhetoric, has led some to conclude that the United States entered the conflict without a coherent endgame.

Economic analysts have also weighed in, highlighting the paradox at the center of the conflict. While the ceasefire briefly calmed global markets, it did little to address the underlying instability. The Strait of Hormuz remains vulnerable, and Iran's enhanced leverage over it introduces new uncertainties into the global energy system. In effect, the war may have transformed a temporary disruption into a long-term strategic risk.

Perhaps the most striking criticism, however, comes from the language used by American politicians themselves. Trump's threats—at one point warning that an entire civilization could be destroyed—were widely condemned as excessive and dangerous. Some lawmakers described his rhetoric as "unhinged," while others raised concerns about the legal and moral implications of targeting civilian infrastructure.

This combination of aggressive rhetoric followed by a sudden ceasefire has fueled a narrative that the United States escalated the conflict to the brink of catastrophe, only to step back without achieving its stated goals. Critics argue that this sequence undermines American credibility, signaling to both allies and adversaries that Washington may not be willing—or able—to follow through on its threats.

Adding to this perception is the timing of the ceasefire itself. Reports suggest that the decision came amid mounting domestic and international pressure, as well as concerns about the economic and humanitarian consequences of a prolonged war. To some observers, this reinforces the idea that the United States was "searching for an exit ramp," rather than executing a carefully planned strategic maneuver.

Iran, for its part, has wasted no time in shaping the narrative. Iranian officials have framed the ceasefire as a victory, claiming that the United States was forced to accept key elements of Tehran's position, including recognition of its role in managing Hormuz and broader regional dynamics. Whether or not this claim is fully accurate, it has gained traction in international discourse—and, crucially, within segments of American opinion.

The broader geopolitical implications are significant. By retaining control over Hormuz and emerging from the conflict without regime change or major concessions, Iran has demonstrated resilience against a coalition led by the world's most powerful military. This outcome challenges long-standing assumptions about U.S. dominance in the region and raises questions about the effectiveness of military force as a tool of policy.

For Israel, the situation is equally complex. While the war was initially framed as a joint effort to neutralize a shared threat, the ceasefire leaves many of Israel's security concerns unresolved. Critics in the United States have pointed out that the enormous costs—both financial and strategic—have not translated into a decisive advantage for either Washington or Tel Aviv.

Continued on Page 7

EU, NCRC and UNDP launch report on child labor in Pakistan's private sector

Through the Huqooq-e-Pakistan II project funded by the European Union (EU), the National Commission on the Rights of Child (NCRC) in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) launched the report "At the Margins of Protection: Child Labor in Pakistan's Private Sector". The publication brings together evidence and policy insights to better understand and address child labor across private sector value chains.

In Pakistan, one in every ten children is engaged in child labor, often in conditions that are hazardous, exploitative, and hidden from formal oversight. The report's comprehensive analysis of child labor in Pakistan's private sector finds that structural drivers such as poverty, limited access to education, and weak enforcement mechanisms continue to place children at risk, particularly in informal and supply chain-linked environments where exploitation remains least visible.

The launch convened senior government officials, human and child rights experts, private sector representatives, civil society organizations, development partners, and UN agencies to discuss the report's key findings.

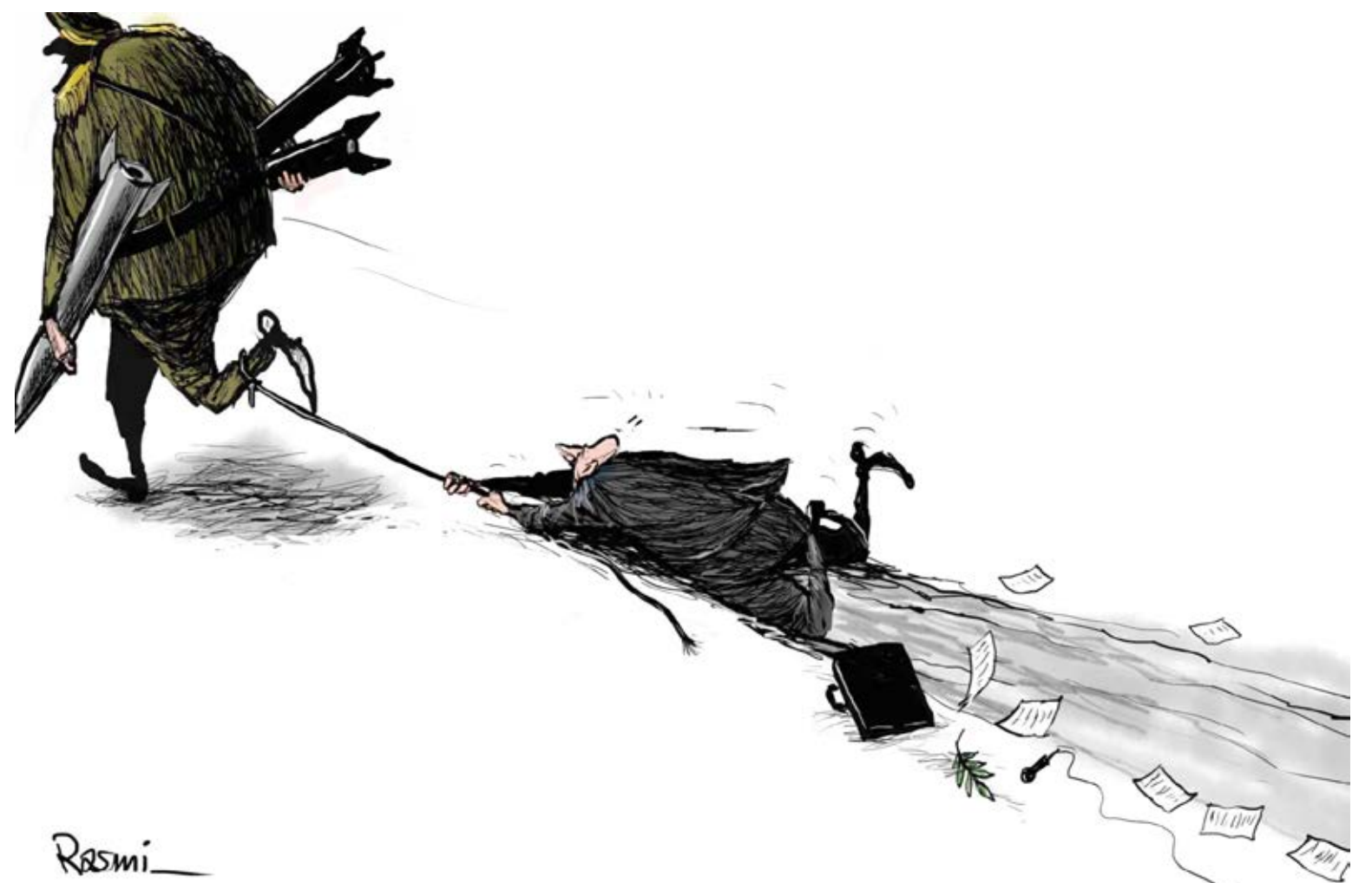
Philipp Oliver Gross, Deputy Head of Mission of the European Union to Pakistan, commended the NCRC's efforts towards monitoring child labour, stating that, "The report being launched today is a key stepping stone in advancing the efforts to address the issue of child labour, which affects 8.6 million children in Pakistan. Ending child labour is a strong commitment of the Government of Pakistan, and at the heart of its international commitments, notably to continue benefitting from the GSP+ status."

Drawing on extensive consultations across provinces, key informant interviews, and a review of legal and institutional frameworks, the report identifies critical challenges including disjointed data systems, limited labor inspection coverage, and gaps in coordination between federal and provincial stakeholders. It highlights the need for integrated responses that link social protection, education retention, and livelihoods support.

Dr. Samuel Rizk, UNDP Resident Representative, noted the pressing need for institutional reform, adding, "I commend NCRC's leadership, and their unwavering effort to protect one of the most vulnerable segments of society—Pakistan's children—in law, in policy and in practice. This is visible today in the launch of this report on child labor in Pakistan's private sector, a practice that is not only widespread, but often remains hidden in informal sectors and lower tiers of supply chains. UNDP is committed to supporting Pakistan's institutions, data systems, and policies that protect its most valuable asset—the future generation."

Ayesha Raza Farooq, Chairperson NCRC, reaffirmed the Commission's commitment to ending child labor, describing the report as "not an endpoint but a roadmap for action. NCRC will continue to work with government institutions, development partners, and the private sector to translate these recommendations into concrete measures that protect children and strengthen accountability mechanisms across Pakistan."

The launch marks a key milestone under the Huqooq-e-Pakistan II project, reinforcing collective efforts to address child labor through evidence-based policymaking, institutional strengthening, and multi-stakeholder collaboration.



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

Public-Centric Relief Measures by Maryam Nawaz Sharif in the Wake of the Global Energy Crisis

The world today is grappling with an unprecedented global energy crisis. Escalating oil prices, coupled with geopolitical tensions and ongoing conflicts, have placed immense strain on the economies of developing nations. Pakistan, too, is facing the ripple effects of this crisis, as rising petrol and diesel prices directly impact the daily lives of its citizens. In such challenging circumstances, the comprehensive relief package announced by Chief Minister Punjab, Maryam Nawaz Sharif, has emerged as a significant source of support and hope for the public.

In her recent public communications, the Chief Minister emphasized that the Punjab government will provide targeted subsidies on a monthly basis to ease the financial burden on citizens. This initiative holds particular importance at a time when inflation has severely eroded the purchasing power of the common man. By extending subsidies across multiple sectors, the government aims to cushion the impact of rising costs and provide tangible relief.

The transport sector, one of the hardest hit by fuel price hikes, has been given special attention. The government has announced subsidies of up to Rs. 70,000 for registered goods transport vehicles, Rs. 80,000 for larger vehicles, and Rs. 100,000 for public service buses. Furthermore, a landmark decision has been made to offer free travel facilities to the public in mass transit systems, including the Orange Line Train,

Green Buses, electric buses, and Speedo Bus services. This initiative is expected to significantly reduce commuting costs for millions of citizens.

At the same time, the Chief Minister has urged transporters to pass on the benefits of these subsidies to the public and refrain from increasing fares. This appeal reflects a responsible governance approach aimed not only at controlling inflationary pressures but also at strengthening public trust in state institutions.

Equally noteworthy are the measures introduced for the agricultural sector. Recognizing the challenges faced by farmers due to rising input costs, Maryam Nawaz Sharif has announced financial assistance for wheat growers owning up to 25 acres of land. Under this initiative, a subsidy of Rs. 150 per liter on 10 liters of diesel per acre will be provided. This step is crucial in reducing the cost of cultivation and ensuring food security. Her statement, "I stand with every farmer," reflects a firm commitment to safeguarding the interests of the agricultural community. Moreover, her pledge to personally oversee the transparency of the subsidy system underscores the government's seriousness in ensuring effective implementation.

Motorbike owners, a large segment of daily commuters, have also been extended substantial relief. Registration and transfer fees for motorcycles across Punjab have been abolished. In addition, registered bike owners will receive a monthly subsidy of Rs.

2,000 along with a concession of Rs. 100 per liter on 20 liters of petrol. To facilitate access to these benefits, the government has introduced multiple digital channels, including a dedicated helpline (1000), a mobile application titled "Maryam ko Batayn," and an online web portal. These measures represent a progressive shift toward digital governance and improved service delivery.

Among all initiatives, the provision of free travel in public transport systems stands out as a transformative step. Services such as Metro Bus, Speedo Bus, the Orange Line Train, and Green electric buses are now accessible free of cost, offering immediate and widespread relief to the masses. The overwhelming public response, reflected in increased ridership, highlights the pressing need for such interventions. On the directions of the Chief Minister, Punjab's Transport Minister Bilal Akbar has also conducted visits to various stations to gather public feedback, demonstrating a governance model that values both policy formulation and on-ground evaluation.

In conclusion, the relief measures introduced by Maryam Nawaz Sharif represent a comprehensive and people-centric strategy aimed at mitigating the adverse effects of inflation and the global energy crisis. While it may not be possible to completely eliminate the impact of such global challenges, timely and well-targeted interventions can provide meaningful support to the public. The Punjab government, by prioritizing public welfare in difficult times, has set a commendable example of responsive and responsible governance.

The writer is Director Public Relations, Faisalabad

Diplomatic Success Under the Leadership of Field Marshal Asim Munir

At a time when the world once again stood on the edge of a dangerous escalation, with tensions between the United States and Iran moving dangerously close to open confrontation, Pakistan emerged as a responsible and proactive player on the global stage. In this delicate geopolitical moment, Pakistan's leadership, alongside the military establishment—particularly under the leadership of Field Marshal Asim Munir—has been widely recognized in political and strategic circles for its diplomatic engagement and behind-the-scenes efforts aimed at de-escalation.

What makes this development particularly significant is not just the outcome, but the profile of the actor involved. Pakistan, a developing country facing its own internal and external challenges, has increasingly positioned itself as a voice of balance and restraint in an otherwise polarized international environment. This shift reflects not a sudden change, but rather a gradual evolution driven by coordinated state policy, professional military leadership, and strategic diplomatic alignment.

The Pakistan Army has historically played a role that extends beyond traditional defense responsibilities. Under the leadership of Field Marshal Asim Munir, the institution has continued its counterterrorism operations while also contributing to broader regional stability efforts. In recent years, Pakistan's security establishment has reportedly engaged in discreet diplomatic channels aimed at reducing tensions between rival states, including efforts related to the US-Iran standoff, according to regional diplomatic observers.

International mediation is never granted lightly. It requires credibility, trust, and the perception of neutrality. Pakistan's ability to maintain balanced relations with multiple global actors has strengthened its position as a potential facilitator in sensitive geopolitical matters. Both Washington and Tehran, despite deep-rooted differences, have historically engaged with intermediaries perceived as reliable and non-aligned in critical moments.

A key feature of Pakistan's approach has been the use of quiet diplomacy and backchannel communication. Rather than seeking publicity, this method relies on confidentiality, strategic patience, and trust-building. In this context, coordination between political leadership and military institutions has played a crucial role in presenting a unified and consistent diplomatic posture.

As a result, Pakistan's international image has gradually shifted. Once viewed primarily through a security lens, the country is increasingly being acknowledged as a state capable of contributing to peacebuilding efforts. This emerging identity aligns with Pakistan's broader aspiration to be seen not only as a security-focused state but also as a responsible stakeholder in global stability.

However, such developments have not been without criticism or skepticism. Certain segments of regional media, particularly in India, have reacted strongly to reports of Pakistan's diplomatic involvement. These narratives often portray Pakistan's role as overstated or strategically motivated for influence-building purposes. Such reactions are reflective of the competitive nature of regional geopolitics.

Continued on Page 7

After 40 days of closure, prayers and tears mark reopening of Al-Aqsa Mosque

Wafa

RAMALLAH: Tears, embraces and prayers filled the courtyards of Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in occupied Jerusalem as worshippers returned to the holy site following 40 days of closure imposed by Israeli occupation authorities.

At Bab al-Asbat, one of the historic gates of the mosque, an elderly man from Jerusalem performed a prostration of gratitude, a scene that quickly spread across social media and symbolized the return of life to the holy site.

Since February 28, the mosque compound and the surrounding Old City of Jerusalem had experienced an unprecedented shutdown not seen since the Six-Day War. During that period, thousands of Palestinians were

prevented from reaching the mosque, and the usually crowded markets of the Old City were left largely empty.

When the mosque reopened, emotional scenes unfolded as worshippers crossed its gates. Some fell to the ground in prayer, while others distributed tissues to fellow worshippers wiping away tears of joy after weeks of being barred from entering the compound.

Worshippers described the return to the mosque as a powerful reminder that Jerusalem is not merely a political issue but a deeply rooted part of Palestinian religious life and identity. However, the celebrations were quickly overshadowed by tightened security measures.

At the same time, Israeli forces set up checkpoints at the mosque's gates, checked IDs,

and detained or removed several young men from the compound.

According to the Jerusalem Governorate, Israeli police also detained a female worshipper and banned her from the mosque, hours after detaining a young man inside the compound while forcing others to leave as settlers began entering the site.

Meanwhile, Israeli colonists carried out provocative visits to the mosque compound and performed Talmudic rituals near the Dome of the Rock.

Activists reported that groups also performed "epic prostration," following calls from extremist Israeli settler groups to increase incursions into the site.

Officials warned that the situation is escalating alongside a decision to extend the morning entry period for colonists by an additional half hour, beginning

at 6:30 a.m., increasing the daily duration of such visits to about six and a half hours.

Attempts by Israeli settlers to introduce animal sacrifices into the compound have also increased. Seven attempts to bring a Passover sacrifice into Al-Aqsa were recorded this year, the highest number since 1967, raising concerns about changes to the historical and legal status of the site.

Since June 2025, Israeli colonists have expanded the performance of religious rituals in various parts of the compound, reportedly encouraged by Israeli National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir.

Authorities had earlier imposed the closure under what they described as emergency measures during the Israeli-U.S. war against Iran, which also



included closing the Church of the Holy Sepulchre during the Christian Lenten period and restricting access for both Muslim and Christian worshippers.

Media adviser to the Jerusalem Governorate, Marouf Al-Rifai, said more than 6,000 worshippers attended the dawn prayer today after the reopening,

according to estimates from the Jerusalem Islamic Waqf.

He added that colonists resumed their incursions shortly afterward, beginning at 6:30 a.m., while settler groups had recently intensified efforts to bring animal sacrifices into the mosque compound. Five such attempts were stopped at the

gates of the Old City, while two were halted at the entrances of the mosque itself.

Al-Rifai warned that the developments may signal broader attempts to impose a new reality at Al-Aqsa, similar to what occurred at the Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron, as part of wider settlement projects.

Ambassador Dr. Oumer calls on Maritime Minister of Pakistan

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan have explored possible prospects of maritime cooperation to enhance regional connectivity and boost bilateral trade.

The important discussion to this end held during a meeting between H. E. Dr. Oumer Hussien Oba, Ambassador of Ethiopia to Pakistan, and H. E. Muhammad Junaid Anwar, Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs in Islamabad.

The two sides agreed to establish

institutional cooperation, exchange delegations and share technical expertise in maritime sector to further promote trade and investment between the two nations.

The Ambassador briefed the Federal Minister about homegrown economic reforms, strategic importance of Ethiopia and its connectivity with the rest of region and beyond.

He said Ethiopia values its relations with the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, noting that the increased maritime cooperation is crucial for promoting bilateral trade and investment.

The Federal Minister assured the



Ambassador of his full support in enhancing the bilateral cooperation in the maritime sector, reiterating Pakistan Government's commitment to strengthen its relations with the African nations including Ethiopia.

Multan Police Step Up Crackdown on Crime

Zain Khan Malghani

Multan police continue to intensify operations to eliminate crime from the city. During these efforts, the Cantt Division arrested 58 members of 27 gangs wanted for robbery, dacoity, and vehicle theft, recovering stolen property worth over PKR 86.2 million. The recovered items include one car, 73 motorcycles, and more than PKR 38.25 million in cash. Additionally, authorities seized 35 kilograms of hashish, 21 kilograms of heroin, 18 kilograms of ice, and 7,846 liters of liquor. Weapons used in criminal activities—including 61 pistols, 4 revolvers, 15 12-bore guns, and 191 rounds—were also recovered. Alongside this, 269 proclaimed offenders and 115 absconders were apprehended, tracing 802 cases.

In the Cantt Circle, police arrested 20 members of 11 gangs involved in robbery, dacoity, and vehicle theft. They recovered stolen property worth over PKR 17.765 million, including 24 motorcycles and PKR 10.943 million in cash, tracing 262 cases.

Mumtazabad Circle police arrested



19 members of 7 gangs, recovering stolen property worth over PKR 40.953 million. The seized items include one car, 26 motorcycles, and PKR 10.833 million in cash, tracing 286 cases.

Muzaffarabad Circle police apprehended 19 members of 9 gangs, recovering stolen property worth over PKR 27.5 million. The recovered items included 23 motorcycles and PKR 16.474 million in cash, tracing 254 cases.

Special teams were formed under the supervision of SSP Operations Multan Haider Ali and SP Cantt

Kainat Azhar, led by SDPO Cantt Halar Khan Chandio, DSP Muzaffarabad Bashir Ahmed Haraj, and DSP Mumtazabad Azmat Shaheen. SHO Cantt Muhammad Saeed Malik, SHO Muzaffarabad Babar Shehzad, SHO Mumtazabad Irfan Ahmed, and other SHO teams conducted coordinated operations using police apps and modern technology to track and recover stolen property.

CPO Multan Sadiq Ali Dogar, speaking at a press conference alongside SSP Operations Haider Ali and SP Cantt Kainat Azhar, praised the police

teams for their dedication and hard work in tracing these high-profile cases. He confirmed that further operations are ongoing to eradicate crime from the city and assured that more arrests will be made soon. The recovered property was returned to its rightful owners, who expressed immense gratitude, commending the police for their successful efforts.

If you want, I can also create a shorter, punchy version suitable for a newspaper headline and lead paragraph to make it more Tribune-style. Do you want me to do that?

FIA Multan Zone Cracks Down on Human Smuggling Rings, Recovers Over Rs. 3 Million

Zain Khan Malghani

MULTAN: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Multan Zone has demonstrated outstanding operational efficiency through decisive actions against fraud and human smuggling networks, with Deputy Director Khawaja Hammad-ur-Rehman emerging as a central figure in these successful operations. Under the broader directives of Director General Dr. Usman Anwar and Director Multan Zone Atta-ur-Rehman, anti-human trafficking units intensified their crackdown, yielding significant results across multiple districts.

In Bahawalpur, FIA's Composite Circle secured the recovery of Rs. 790,000 in Case No. 299/2025 (AHTC), returning the amount to the complainant, who publicly expressed gratitude through a video message. In another case (No. 333/2025), officials successfully recovered Rs. 200,000 and ensured its return to the affected individual, reinforcing public confidence in the agency's responsiveness.

A major breakthrough was achieved under the supervision of Khawaja Hammad-ur-Rehman, as FIA's Anti-Human Trafficking Circle apprehended suspect Habib-ur-Rehman alias Kala from Jalalpur, Multan. The accused, wanted in Case No. 122/2026, had fraudulently obtained Rs. 1.024 million from a citizen on the pretext of arranging employment in Saudi Arabia but failed to deliver on the promise.

Continuing the momentum, another operation led to the arrest of Muhammad Amir from Mumtazabad, Multan, who was wanted in multiple cases (Nos. 108/2026, 109/2026, 110/2026). He, along with an accomplice, had collected Rs. 1.936 million from unsuspecting individuals by offering fake work visas for Saudi Arabia.

Chaudhry Inam Zafar and Hafiz Usman Abbasi pay tribute to Army Chief General Asim Munir for global ceasefire efforts

Central Vice President of Awaam Pakistan, Chaudhry Inam Zafar, and Additional General Secretary Hafiz Usman Abbasi have paid tribute to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar for their role in the decision to postpone U.S. and Israeli military action against Iran for two weeks. They stated that this step is a positive development not only for national security but also for the country's economy.

In their joint statement, the leaders of Awaam Pakistan said that the immediate effects of the ceasefire announcement are clearly visible in the market and the economy. A significant decline in oil prices and an upward trend in stock markets are evidence that the temporary tensions have been effectively managed. Chaudhry Inam Zafar further stated that this decision not only highlights Pakistan's responsibility at the global level but will also have a positive impact on the national economy and the daily lives of the people. He added that the stance of Army Chief General Asim Munir, a source of pride for the nation, has proven to be correct in maintaining peace and ensuring economic stability. The entire nation appreciates the efforts of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar. Hafiz Usman Abbasi said that, according to economists, the ceasefire and postponement of military action have boosted investor confidence, and improvements have been observed in Pakistan's oil and stock markets at the international level.

PIDE Sounds Alarm on War-Driven Economic Volatility in Pakistan

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) organized a timely webinar titled "War and Economic Volatility in Pakistan" to examine the far-reaching economic consequences of regional conflict, oil market disruption, and external sector instability for Pakistan. The session featured Prominent Business and Economy Journalist Khurram Husain as speaker and was moderated by Dr. Faheem Jehangir, Dean, Policy Advocacy, PIDE.

Opening the session, Dr. Faheem Jehangir highlighted the significance of the topic, noting that Pakistan remains particu-

larly vulnerable to external shocks due to its dependence on oil imports, exposure to inflation, exchange rate pressures, fiscal strain, and reliance on remittances from Gulf economies. He observed that the evolving regional situation has once again brought into focus the difficult policy choices facing the government in areas such as fuel prices, energy transition, transport costs, and overall macroeconomic stability.

Presenting expert views on the topic, Khurram Husain argued that war does not merely create temporary disruption; it leaves behind long-term economic and institutional consequences. Drawing on Pakistan's economic history, he explained

that episodes of war-related volatility in 1965, 1990, and 1998-99 produced reserve pressures, inflation, import restrictions, foreign exchange rationing, and an expanded role of the state in determining economic outcomes.

He noted that the 1965 war contributed to reserve depletion, high deficit spending, inflation, and tighter state control, developments that eventually fed into the nationalization era. Likewise, the crises surrounding the 1990 standoff, the nuclear tests, and the Kargil conflict accelerated financial liberalization, foreign exchange restrictions, and later privatization. His central argument was that while volatility may fade, the policy structures

and institutional responses it creates often endure for years.

Turning to the present, Husain observed that even if Pakistan is not directly involved in the conflict, it remains highly exposed to its global economic spillovers. He identified the country's external sector as the main channel of vulnerability, especially through pressure on reserves, uncertainty around foreign deposits, and rising imported energy costs. He described oil price volatility linked to the Strait of Hormuz as the most serious immediate threat to Pakistan and the wider global economy.

Husain warned that the full impact of the oil shock had not yet materialized and argued

that the world had been moving toward an exceptionally severe energy crisis before the recent ceasefire offered temporary relief. According to him, had the disruption continued, it could have triggered a crisis of extraordinary scale, with panic buying, rationing, and deep global instability.

He further noted that the current episode may leave behind one especially important legacy for Pakistan: an expanded role of the state in economic management. Unlike earlier moments of volatility, he said, the present situation combines stronger crisis-driven state intervention with relatively weak political contestation, suggesting that the state's increased role may

PIDE Webinar

WAR AND ECONOMIC VOLATILITY IN PAKISTAN

SPEAKER



KHURRAM HUSAIN
Senior Analyst
(Economics & Economy)

MODERATOR



DR. FAHEEM JEHANGIR
Dean, Policy Advocacy
(PIDE)

Online Wednesday April 8, 2026 07:00 PM (PKT)

Scan Zoom
ID 825 1833 1015 | Code 988095

pide.org.pk

persist well beyond the immediate emergency.

Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
165,517.51	165,811.00
Day's High	Day's Low
166,962.16	161,993.00
Index Value	Change
47,015,135,774	-293.49
Percentage	Time
-0.18%	9 Apr, 2026 4:30 pm
Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
10,603.48	-5.40
Percentage	Time
-0.051%	9 Apr, 4:35 pm GMT
USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
48,263.60	+353.68
Percentage	Time
+0.74%	9 Apr, 1:26 pm GMT-4
Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
55,895.32	-413.10
Percentage	Time
-0.73%	9 Apr, 3:45 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates

Australian Dollar	195.05	198.10
Australian Dollar	194.89	201.40
Bahrain Dinar	727.45	738.15
Canadian Dollar	200.39	206.05
China Yuan	36.45	37.55
Danish Krone	43.25	43.65
Euro	323.65	328.05
Hong Kong Dollar	35.20	36.20
Indian Rupee	2.03	2.27
Japanese Yen	1.7210	1.8199
Kuwaiti Dinar	877.00	888.35
Malaysian Ringgit	65.25	66.45
New Zealand \$	157.14	162.25
Norwegians Krone	27.65	27.95
Omani Riyal	723.70	733.90
Qatari Riyal	71.21	72.50
Saudi Riyal	74.5	75.7
Singapore Dollar	215.07	220.50
Swedish Korona	30.20	30.50
Swiss Franc	355	358.85
Thai Bhat	8	8.15
U.A.E Dirham	76.15	77.25
UK Pound Sterling	374.11	379.74
US Dollar	278.95	280.05

Mobilink Bank and JazzCash turn Chaklala Scheme-III Bazar cashless

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Mobilink Bank, Pakistan's leading digital microfinance bank in collaboration with JazzCash, Pakistan's leading digital financial services platform, has inaugurated the Chaklala Scheme-III Cashless Bazaar in Rawalpindi, covering 900 shops & carts, accelerating the push towards realizing the Prime Minister's vision of a cashless economy led by State Bank of Pakistan. This step extends digital financial infrastructure into everyday marketplaces, making transactions simpler while empowering communities.

The inauguration ceremony was graced by Brigadier Syed Ali Anjum, Station Commander

Rawalpindi, as the Chief Guest. The event was also attended by Rizwan Khaleel Shamsi, Joint Director at the State Bank of Pakistan, Atta ur Rehman, Chief Business Officer at Mobilink Bank, as well as senior leadership from JazzCash and Mobilink Bank, along with local merchants and community members.

Commenting on the initiative, President & CEO of Mobilink Bank, Haaris M. Chaudhary emphasised, "With our digital-first approach at Mobilink Bank, we believe a cashless economy must start where everyday commerce happens—in our local bazaars. This initiative will bring small merchants into a more secure, inclusive financial system. With on-ground enablement through fintech plat-



forms like JazzCash, we are making transactions simpler and advancing digital financial inclusion at scale."

Murtaza Ali, CEO of JazzCash, said, "The realization of the Prime Minister's vision for a cashless economy depends on the effective digitization of high-frequency commerce. Bazaars represent the highest concentration of daily transactions in Pakistan, and Jazz-

Cash is at the center of this shift, supported by a nationwide network of over 1 million Raast-enabled QR merchants. By bringing seamless digital payments into these spaces, we are helping merchants transition into a formal, connected financial system. This evolution improves everyday lives by making financial services more accessible, reliable, and inclusive for millions of citizens."

Called on

ISLAMABAD: Governor Gilgit Baltistan Syed Mehdi Shah called on Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan on Thursday.



Hotel One Gujranwala — Your New Home in a Major Industrial Center (Soft Opening)

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Hotel One is set to strengthen its presence in Punjab with the soft opening of Hotel One Gujranwala on 27 March 2026, introducing a new benchmark for comfort and convenience in the city's midscale hospitality segment. Strategically expanding its national footprint, Hotel One now operates 23+ properties in 17+ cities across Pakistan.

Strategically located in the heart of Gujranwala, the property offers a seamless blend of accessibility, modern design, and functional comfort, catering to both business and leisure travelers. Designed to deliver a consistent and reliable stay experience, the hotel reflects the brand's commitment to quality and affordability.

The hotel features 24 well appointed rooms, including Deluxe King, Deluxe Twin, and Suite categories, equipped with modern amenities such as Wi Fi, smart TVs, minibar, and in room dining services. Guests can also enjoy a trendy on site restaurant alongside complimentary breakfast and essential services tailored for a comfortable and hassle free stay.

With its contemporary interiors and guest focused services, Hotel One Gujranwala aims to provide a welcoming environment for travelers seeking value driven



accommodation in one of Pakistan's key commercial hubs.

Speaking on the opening, Mr. Bastien Blanc, CEO PC Hospitality, shared: "The opening of Hotel One Gujranwala reflects our continued focus on expanding accessible and standardized quality hospitality across key cities in Pakistan. We aim to

provide guests with a dependable stay experience that combines comfort, convenience, and value."

With its prime location and thoughtfully designed offerings, the hotel is expected to attract a wide range of travelers, including business professionals, families, and transit guests.

U Microfinance Bank accelerates digital transformation with Temenos & Systems Limited

KARACHI: U Microfinance Bank (U Bank), a wholly owned subsidiary of Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL)-e& Group, has successfully gone live with the Temenos core banking platform, along with payments, digital channels, financial crime, and data platforms, on RedHat Openshift, in collaboration with Systems Limited.

Tooran Asif, CEO, U Microfinance Bank said "This transformation marks an important step in strengthening U Bank's digital banking capabilities and technology foundation. With a modern and scalable platform, we are well positioned to enhance operational efficiency, improve customer experience, and accelerate the delivery of innovative products and services. It also reinforces our commitment to expanding access to financial services

and advancing financial inclusion across Pakistan. We appreciate the collaboration and support of our partners, Temenos and Systems Limited, in successfully delivering this program."

Muhammad Umar Ilyas, CTO, U Microfinance Bank said "This transformation marks an important milestone in strengthening U Bank's digital banking capabilities and technology foundation. With a modern and scalable platform, we are better positioned to enhance operational efficiency, improve customer experience, and accelerate the rollout of innovative products and services.

Ammara Masood, GM Global Industries, Banking & Financial services, Systems Limited and Santhosh Rao, Managing Director-MEA, Temenos also "Congratulate to U Bank on this successful go-live.

Pakistan's Role in US-Iran Ceasefire Hailed as Historic, says NKATI Chief

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Faisal Moiz Khan, President North Karachi Association of Trade & Industry (NKATI), has praised Pakistan's leadership for its decisive role in brokering the ceasefire between the United States and Iran, calling it an unforgettable achievement that saved the world from devastation.

In a statement, Faisal Moiz said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Asim Munir

demonstrated remarkable foresight and diplomatic skill at a time when the world stood on the brink of a catastrophic conflict. "Pakistan raised the flag of peace at a critical juncture and safeguarded countless human lives from destruction," he remarked.

NKATI chief emphasized that the achievement has strengthened Pakistan's credibility in the global community, making the entire nation proud of its leadership's role in averting a major crisis.

MG Motors expands Start Smart Campaign as fuel prices surge

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: In line with the governments sustainability policies, MG Motors has extended its Start Smart Campaign to encourage more consumers to switch to New Energy Vehicles (NEVs) as fuel prices continue to rise across the country.

An MG spokesperson said, "With nearly 70% of Pakistan's fuel being imported, the country remains exposed to international price shocks and regional supply disruptions. In such an

environment, the case for NEVs becomes even stronger. They are not only a smarter financial choice for individual car owners looking to reduce running costs, but also make sense at a broader national level by helping reduce dependence on imported fuel."

The spokesperson added that rising fuel prices have made long-term efficiency and energy diversification more important than ever for Pakistani consumers. As more buyers evaluate the total cost of ownership rather than just the upfront price of a vehicle, NEVs are



emerging as a practical and forward-looking solution.

Through the Start Smart Campaign, MG Motors is offering discounted prices on its HS PHEV, alongside additional benefits including a

fuel card and both home and portable chargers. Together, these benefits amount to savings of up to PKR 600,000, making the transition to smarter mobility more accessible and attractive for customers.

Business Leaders Urge Sanctions Relief on Iran Following Successful Pakistan Dialogue

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: The Pak International Business Forum (PIBF) has welcomed the recent Iran-United States dialogue facilitated through Pakistan's mediation, describing it as a timely and much-needed step toward de-escalation and regional stability.

In an official statement issued on Thursday, PIBF President Dr Mushtaq Mangat said, "Pakistan has once again demonstrated its strategic diplomatic relevance by effectively bridging communication between key global stakeholders. This initiative not only strengthens regional peace prospects but also reinforces Pakistan's credibility on the international stage."

Echoing similar views, Secretary General Muhammad Ejaz Tanveer stated, "While the dialogue is a positive development, it must now lead to tangible outcomes, particularly the easing and eventual lifting of economic sanctions on Iran. These sanctions have long hindered regional economic integration and energy cooperation."

Chief Organiser Muaz Qazi emphasized the urgency of economic follow-through, adding, "Pakistan must be fully prepared to act the moment there is any relaxation in sanctions. Immediate progress on the Iran-Pakistan Gas Pipeline is critical, given the country's worsening energy crisis."

The Forum highlighted that access to affordable gas through the pipeline would play a pivotal role in addressing chronic energy shortages, reviving industrial activity, and stabilizing the broader economic environment. It stressed that a reliable energy supply is essential for sustainable growth and enhancing export competitiveness.

PSL Pakistan Super League Cricket Championship Edition 11

Peshawar Zalmi Beat Karachi Kings by 159 runs and Islamabad United beat Lahore Qalandars by 9 wickets

Asim Tanveer

KARACHI: A record-breaking victory of 159 runs in the 11-year history of PSL. It seemed that the climate of Karachi was better for them than Islamabad and Peshawar. The second consecutive victory within 24 hours. The PSL points table has been shaken. Karachi Kings have suffered their first defeat in PSL 11 after coming to their home ground after 3 matches. Thus, the unbeaten Peshawar Zalmi is now the only one left in the event and not only this, Babar Azam has responded well to playing in his opening position, keeping the strike rate good and accelerating the run rate and a pair of Peshawar Zalmi made a big partnership of 191 runs. Karachi Kings were put under a pile of runs. Captain David Warner, who returned from Sydney today, joined the team as soon as he arrived, but this joining proved to be unpleasant for him like the incident in Sydney. Karachi Kings won the toss and did not make the right decision to field. The pitch behaved differently from the previous two matches. Then Peshawar Zalmi's innings started brilliantly, although Mohammad Harris went for zero, but after that a big partnership of 191 runs in 16.2 overs shook everything. Kushal Mendis was out for 109 runs off 52 balls, which included four sixes and 14 fours. Immediately after him, Mitchell Presol also scored 6 runs, but the real thing was



that Abdul Samad played a smoky innings of 40 runs off 12 balls. This is a strike rate of 333. Babar Azam batted responsibly. In his unbeaten innings of 87 runs off 51 balls, there were two sixes and 10 fours. The strike rate was over 170. Abbas Afridi took two wickets for Karachi Kings, but he was hit for 55 runs and Mir Hamza was among those who were hit more than him, giving away 57 runs. No wickets were taken. Khushdil Shah took one wicket for 37 runs and Adam Zampa was also rightly satisfied. After conceding 51 runs in four overs, he must have felt that he was not the top spinner in the Pakistani atmosphere.



In reply, Karachi Kings felt as if there was a fear of runs or some other madness. Both the openers returned with only zeros. Mohammad Wasim and Warner fell victim. After that, wickets kept falling at intervals and it did not seem that the team was heading towards victory. Mohammad Wasim went for zero, David Warner went for zero. Salman Ali Agha could have made five. Saad Baig made 14. Azam Khan, who was playing a short set, made 25 but he also played 27 balls. Moeen Ali was the guest of only nine runs. When he was 76 for 6 in 12 overs, there was a problem with the spider cam, which delayed the game. The match was definitely interrupted, but

the series of wickets did not stop. The entire Karachi Kings team was out after scoring only 87 runs in 16.1 overs. Thus, Peshawar Zalmi won by a record margin of 159 runs. Look at the figures of Peshawar Zalmi's Nahid Rana, he took a maiden in 4 overs. He took 3 wickets for just 7 runs. Iftikhar Ahmed took 3 wickets for 9 runs in 2.1 overs. Sufyan Muqeem gave 18 runs for 3 wickets. Earlier in the day, in the 16th match of PSL 11, Lahore Qalandars suffered a big setback. A big

and embarrassing defeat was in their fate. Islamabad United won the toss and bowled first. Lahore Qalandars' batting line was shattered. The entire team was bundled out for 100 runs in 18.3 overs. Sikandar Raza was outstanding with 25 and Haseebullah Khan with 19. United's bowlers and fielders helped in this 100, giving away 13 runs as extras. United's bowling was excellent. Chris Green took 3 wickets for 19 runs, Imad Wasim and Richard Gleeson took 2 wickets for 13

runs, 2 wickets for 13 runs, and Sikandar Raza took 2 wickets for 18 runs.

PSL Points Table Update
Multan Sultans number one with 8 points
Peshawar Zalmi number two with 7 points
Islamabad number three with 7 points
Karachi Kings number four with 6 points
Next match of PSL 11
Friday, April 10. Match number 18. Rawalpindi vs Quetta Gladiators

When Wars Starve Markets

Wars have always had a way of reaching far beyond their battlefields. When guns fire in one part of the world, grocery shelves empty in another. The First World War strangled European farmland and turned food into a weapon of state. The Second World War brought rationing to millions who never saw a single soldier. The Gulf War of 1991 sent oil prices into a spiral that taxed every economy dependent on imported fuel, which was nearly all of them. The Russia-Ukraine war of 2022 blocked the wheat and sunflower oil that fed hundreds of millions across Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia, turning a distant conflict into empty bread baskets thousands of kilometres away. Now the Iran-US war is doing it again, through oil, through fertilizer, through shipping routes that the whole world quietly depended on without ever realising how fragile they were.

On February 28, 2026, a massive U.S.-Israeli strike called "Epic Fury" killed Iran's Supreme Leader and hit key nuclear and military sites. The region immediately ignited. Iran launched retaliatory barrages at Israel and U.S. bases, while Houthi rebels choked off Red Sea shipping. By mid-March, Mojtaba Khamenei took power, doubling down on the chaos by weaponizing the Strait of Hormuz. The conflict, now in its fourth week, has not stopped. And neither have its consequences for food markets around the world, including in Pakistan.

The Strait of Hormuz is barely 34 km wide at its narrowest point. Its two unidirectional sea lanes facilitate the transit

of around 20 million barrels of oil per day, representing roughly 20 percent of global seaborne oil trade. But in 2026, it has been exposed as something more than an oil corridor: it is the world's single most critical fertilizer and food supply route. Tanker traffic dropped approximately 70 percent as over 150 ships anchored outside the strait to avoid the risks of transit. Major container shipping companies, including Maersk, CMA CGM, and Hapag-Lloyd, suspended transits through the strait and related routes entirely. Ships that once sailed through Suez now round Africa's Cape of Good Hope, adding weeks to journey times and dramatically pushing up freight costs. The price of Brent crude rose around 38 percent from where it stood when the war began, surging at points to around 120 dollars a barrel. Back home in Pakistan, the government could not absorb that shock for long.

On March 7, 2026, Pakistan raised petrol and diesel prices by Rs 55 per litre each, one of the largest single hikes in the country's history. Under the new pricing, petrol was fixed at Rs 321 per litre while high-speed diesel was set at Rs 335 per litre, with authorities attributing the decision directly to rising international oil prices and regional geopolitical tensions affecting import costs and supply chain stability. By March 21, even as global oil prices climbed further with Brent crude trading above 100 to 110 dollars a barrel, the federal government chose to hold petrol at Rs

321.17 and diesel at Rs 335.86 per litre, absorbing Rs 77.98 and Rs 176.41 per litre respectively through price differential payments to oil companies.

The fertilizer shock may ultimately prove even more damaging than the fuel shock, because its effects arrive with a delay, and by the time they appear in crop yields, it is too late to reverse them. Around 30 percent of global urea trade comes out of Iran and the Hormuz-constrained countries. Deprived of natural gas supplies from Qatar, fertilizer firms in India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan have had to curtail or shut down production. Before the war started, the price of FOB granular urea in Egypt, a commonly used benchmark, was between 400 and 490 dollars per metric tonne. Since hostilities began, the prices of urea and ammonia have increased by about 50% and 20%, respectively. The landed cost of imported urea is projected to be between Rs 13,700 and Rs 14,700 per bag, which is more than three times the domestic price of about Rs 4,400 per bag. In Pakistan especially, international urea costs have reached 740 to 750 dollars per tonne. Pakistan's domestic urea industry has so far provided a critical buffer, holding local prices stable. The more structurally dangerous problem lies with DAP, a phosphate fertilizer for which Pakistan has no comparable domestic capacity. Pakistan's total DAP requirement ranges from 1.3 million to 2.3 million tonnes annually, making the country heavily reliant on imports, and any sustained constraint

on global DAP supply is likely to cause a sharp price escalation. That escalation is already under way, and Pakistan's Kharif season, the next major planting window, is approaching fast. The path forward demands urgency on several fronts. Emergency DAP procurement through government-to-government channels, from Morocco, China, or Belarus, before the Kharif season is the single most time-sensitive priority. Targeted input subsidies for smallholder farmers, delivered through the existing Kissan Card infrastructure, can prevent the plant-led-area withdrawal that would turn today's input cost crisis into tomorrow's food supply shortage. Export market diversification toward Central Asia, China under the CPEC Free Trade Agreement, and African markets should be accelerated to reduce overexposure to Gulf demand cycles that will remain volatile for as long as this war continues. As one fertilizer market analyst put it, if you had asked experts before February 28 to describe the nightmare scenario for global fertilizer supply, this would have been precisely it: the right disruption, at the worst time of year. For Pakistan, the nightmare is not hypothetical. It is the price of fuel at the pump, the cost of a bag of DAP at the farm gate, the margin on which a truck driver decides whether to make the run to Karachi, and the choices a family makes when more of every rupee they earn must go toward food. The pattern is always the same, a war begins, supply routes break, prices rise, and the people who had the least to begin with lose the most. Soldiers fight on borders, but hunger fights inside homes, and it rarely loses.



Analysis

Jibrán Ahmed

Finance Minister Engages Business Leadership to...

Continued from Page 8

The meeting was attended by Mr. Atif Iqbal Sheikh, President FPCCI; Mr. Zaki Ijaz, Vice President FPCCI; Mr. Javed Bilwani, Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Mr. Rehan Hanif, President Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Mr. Faheem Saigol, President Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Mr. Usman Shoukat, President Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Mr. Sohail Altaf, Group Leader Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Mr. Ahtisham Mazhar, President Sialkot Chamber of

Commerce and Industry; Mr. Farooq Yousof Sheikh, President Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Mr. Mohammad Ayoub, President Quetta Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Mr. Junaid Altaf, President Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Mr. Ali Humayun Butt, Gujranwala Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Mr. Ahmad Hassan, Gujrat Chamber of Commerce and Industry; and Mr. Sardar Tahir, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, who actively contributed to the discussion and shared their perspectives on strengthening Pakistan's economic outlook.

PM Shehbaz reaffirms support for Chinese...

Continued from Page 1

Officials also informed the meeting that the Board of Investment (BOI) had been actively facilitating the company across multiple sectors, including support for the establishment of a sole development zone in Nooriabad, Sindh, where all required facilities had been provided to advance the project's implementation. Speaking on the occasion, Chairman Jin Yongsheng appre-

ciated Pakistan's investor-friendly policies and the government's economic reforms, expressing confidence in further expansion of the company's footprint in the country.

Federal Minister for Board of Investment Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, Minister of State for Finance and Railways Bilal Azhar Kayani, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Haroon Akhtar, and senior officials also attended the meeting.

Diplomatic Success Under the Leadership of Field Marshal Asim Munir

Continued from Page 4

where diplomatic achievements are frequently interpreted through the lens of strategic rivalry.

Despite these criticisms, international observers emphasize that credibility in mediation is earned through action, not claims. In highly sensitive conflicts such as the US-Iran dispute, even limited facilitation or communication support is considered a meaningful contribution. Pakistan's engagement in this space, whether formal or informal, highlights its growing relevance in global diplomatic networks.

Beyond diplomacy, the Pakistan Army continues to maintain its longstanding role in national defense, counterterrorism, and internal stability. Major opera-

tions against militancy have significantly improved the security landscape of the country. These efforts, combined with enhanced border management and surveillance systems, have strengthened Pakistan's internal resilience.

The institution has also contributed to international peacekeeping missions under the United Nations, where Pakistani troops have served in various conflict zones around the world. These deployments have earned recognition for professionalism and discipline, further reinforcing Pakistan's image as a contributor to global peace.

Additionally, the military's response to natural disasters has remained a critical aspect of its domestic role. From floods to earthquakes, the armed forces

have consistently been among the first responders, providing rescue, relief, and rehabilitation support to affected populations, particularly in remote and underserved regions.

In recent years, advancements in technology, cyber defense, and modern warfare capabilities have further transformed the operational capacity of Pakistan's defense establishment. Joint exercises with allied nations and participation in multinational training programs have contributed to improving interoperability and strategic readiness.

Taken together, these developments reflect a broader transformation. Pakistan is increasingly positioning itself as a multidimensional state—one that combines defense preparedness with diplo-

matic engagement and humanitarian response. Under the leadership of Field Marshal Asim Munir, this integrated approach appears to be gaining greater coherence and international attention.

In conclusion, while debates and differing perspectives will continue in regional and global media, Pakistan's evolving role in diplomacy and peace efforts cannot be ignored. Whether in counterterrorism, peacekeeping, disaster response, or diplomatic facilitation, the country is steadily expanding its footprint as a responsible global actor.

If sustained, this trajectory could further enhance Pakistan's international standing and open new avenues for engagement in global conflict resolution.

Trump Faces Fire Over Iran War Outcome

Continued from Page 4

Public opinion within the United States further underscores the growing skepticism. Polling during the conflict showed widespread opposition to military action and a strong desire for a rapid end to hostilities. This disconnect between public sentiment and policy decisions has fueled additional criticism of the administration's approach.

Taken together, these reactions paint a complex and contested picture. On one hand, the ceasefire has prevented immediate escalation and opened the door to negotiations. On the other, it has left unresolved questions about the purpose, conduct, and outcome of the war.

For critics, the conclusion is stark: the United States entered the conflict with maximalist objectives and exited with minimal gains, while Iran retained—and in some respects enhanced—its strategic position. The perception that Washington

"blinked" at the decisive moment has become a powerful narrative, one that could shape both domestic politics and international relations for years to come.

Yet the final verdict may still be unwritten. Much will depend on what follows the ceasefire—whether it leads to a durable agreement or merely a pause before renewed confrontation. For now, however, the debate within the United States is unmistakable. Across political lines, among analysts and commentators, a fundamental question is being asked: not whether the war was fought with strength, but whether it was fought with strategy. And in that question lies the true measure of victory—or defeat.

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

Virtual meeting

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb chaired a virtual meeting with presidents and senior office bearers of Chambers of Commerce and Business Entities from across the country to discuss the prevailing economic situation, upcoming budget priorities, and avenues for strengthening economic recovery and growth on Thursday.



Photo: PID

Finance Minister engages business leadership to shape budget priorities

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb today chaired a virtual meeting with presidents and senior office bearers of Chambers of Commerce and Business Entities from across the country to discuss the prevailing economic situation, upcoming budget priorities, and avenues for strengthening economic recovery and

growth. The meeting, which lasted nearly 90 minutes, was also attended by Minister of State for Finance Bilal Azhar Kayani, along with senior officials of the Finance Division, Revenue Division, and Tax Policy Office. Opening the session, the Finance Minister welcomed the participants and appreciated their continued engagement with the government. He highlighted Pakistan's growing prominence on the global

stage amid evolving regional dynamics and underscored the importance of maintaining regular and structured dialogue with the business community. He noted that the interaction was particularly timely as he prepares for important engagements with international financial institutions and global counterparts, and emphasized the need to gather first-hand insights from key economic stakeholders. The participants also high-

lighted the need to improve liquidity flows, support export-oriented industries, and diversify markets to expand Pakistan's global trade footprint. Suggestions underscored the importance of policy predictability, consultative engagement in the budget-making process, and targeted facilitation to promote investment in infrastructure, manufacturing, and emerging sectors. The dialogue reflected a shared commitment

to strengthening the formal economy, encouraging innovation and technology adoption, and unlocking long-term growth potential through coordinated efforts. Minister of State for Finance Bilal Azhar Kayani, in his remarks towards the conclusion of the meeting, appreciated the constructive input from the business community and reaffirmed the government's commitment to continued engagement.

PM, Austrian Chancellor discuss evolving situation in region, stress ensuring lasting peace, stability

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday received a telephone call from Federal Chancellor of Austria, Christian Stocker. During the conversation, the prime minister fondly recalled their recent meeting during his official visit to Vienna in February this year, and appreciated the Austrian Chancellor's strong message of endorsement and support for Pakistan's efforts that have led to the U.S.-Iran ceasefire, as well as ensuring resumption of negotiations between the two sides.

The two leaders stressed upon the importance of ensuring that the ceasefire be upheld by all sides, thereby strengthening the prospects of successful negotiations, that could bring lasting peace and stability to



the region and beyond.

Bahrain's King lauds Pakistan's role in Iran-US ceasefire

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: King of Bahrain Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa on Thursday conveyed his deep appreciation to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for Pakistan's success in bringing about a ceasefire between Iran and the U.S. that has created the prospects for lasting peace in the region.

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif held a telephone call with Bahrain's King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa.

During their warm telephonic conversation, the prime minister thanked King Hamad for supporting Pakistan's peace efforts. He also appreciated the exemplary restraint demonstrated by the Bahraini leadership in the wake of attacks over the past six

weeks. PM Shehbaz Sharif also offered condolences over the loss of precious lives in Bahrain, during the recent hostilities and prayed for swift recovery of the injured. Both leaders agreed to continue working together for regional peace and stability.

In his post on X, the prime minister, said that during the conversation they reaffirmed their commitment to continue to work closely for regional peace and stability.



Balochistan vows zero tolerance for terrorism as security forces thwart multiple attacks

QUETTA: The Balochistan government has reaffirmed its uncompromising stance on law and order, pledging intensified operations against terrorism across the province.

At a press conference in the Civil Secretariat, Provincial Home Minister Mir Ziaullah Langau declared that "No compromise will be made on peace." He emphasized that security operations would continue without discrimination, in line with directives from the Chief Minister to prioritize the protection of citizens' lives and property.

The briefing was attended by senior officials, including Additional Chief Secretary

(Home) Muhammad Hamza Shafqaat and the minister's media affairs aide Babar Yousafzai.

Ziaullah Langau also warned against the misuse of social media, noting its negative societal impact, and stressed that only state institutions are authorized to possess weapons.

While acknowledging that the government prefers to avoid large-scale operations, he said such measures become unavoidable given the prevailing security situation.

The minister accused external elements, particularly India, of fueling terrorism in the province.

FIA reports Over 10,600 arrivals at Taftan amid regional tensions

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Amid heightened regional tensions and the ongoing conflict in neighbouring Iran, the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has strengthened its border management and immigration operations at the Taftan Border Crossing, one of Pakistan's primary land links with Iran.

According to an updated situation report, a total of 10,619 passengers arrived at FIA Taftan between 28 February and 08 April 2026. The influx largely comprises Pakistani nationals, including students, pilgrims, and other travelers returning from Iran due to the evolving



security environment. FIA officials stated that immigration staff at Taftan have been deployed around the clock to ensure swift processing, proper documentation, and the facilitation of all incoming passengers. Authorities emphasized that strict security and immigration protocols are

being followed, with continuous coordination among federal and provincial departments to manage the steady inflow.

Situated in Chagai District, the Taftan border remains a critical gateway for cross-border movement and trade between Pakistan and Iran. Despite regional challenges, immigration and border management operations continue uninterrupted.

The FIA reiterated its commitment to maintaining secure, orderly, and humane border procedures while extending maximum assistance to Pakistani citizens and other travelers entering the country during this period.

President Zardari condemns storming of Al-Aqsa Mosque, warns against attempts to alter its status



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has condemned in the strongest possible terms the storming of Al-Aqsa Mosque (Al-Haram Al-Sharif) by Israeli occupation forces, calling it a violation of international law and an assault on the sanctity and historical character of the holy site.

Referring to the 6 April incident involving an Israeli Minister, the President termed the act a provocation and rejected any attempts to alter the established religious and

legal status of Al-Aqsa Mosque.

He expressed concern over recent restrictions on access to the mosque, including during Ramadan and Eid, and noted that the regional situation, including the current conflict involving US-Iran, appeared to have been used to justify such measures.

The President called on the international community to take urgent steps to prevent such actions and reiterated Pakistan's unwavering support for the Palestinian people and their right to an independent state with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

French President felicitates PM for mediation efforts



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President of the French Republic, Emmanuel Macron on Thursday telephoned Prime Minister, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and congratulated him for Pakistan's mediation efforts that had resulted in the ceasefire between Iran and the United States and brought both sides to the negotiating table, a Prime Minister's Office news release said.

He conveyed his good wishes to the Prime Minister for the success of the

upcoming peace talks in Islamabad.

While thanking President Macron for supporting Pakistan's diplomatic efforts, the Prime Minister reaffirmed that Pakistan would continue to strive for peace and stability in the region.

Both leaders expressed their serious concern over the ongoing aggression in Lebanon and stressed upon the urgent need to end the violence and killings, so that peace could be re-established in the entire region. The two leaders agreed to remain in contact.

PM congratulates To Lam on his election as Vietnam president

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday congratulated To Lam on his election as the President of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

"Congratulations to President To Lam on his election as President of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam," the prime minister wrote on his X timeline.

He said that Pakistan looked forward to deepening its warm and friendly ties with Vietnam and expanding cooperation in trade, investment, and people-to-people



exchanges for the mutual benefit of the two peoples.

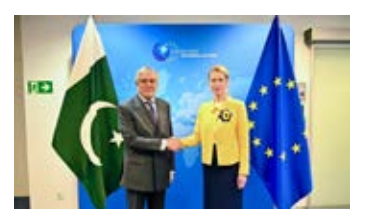
Vietnam's lawmakers unanimously elected Communist Party General Secretary To Lam as the country's state president for the next five years. He is mandated to serve as president for the 2026-2031 term.

DPM Dar, EU Envoy express concerns over serious ceasefire violations in Lebanon

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister (DPM/FM), Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, on Thursday spoke with EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs (EU HR/VP) Kaja Kallas.

During the interaction, both sides expressed concern over serious violations of the ceasefire in Lebanon and emphasized the importance of the full implementation of the temporary



ceasefire in the Middle East, a DPM's Office news release said.

The EU HR/VP reaffirmed EU's support for Pakistan in its efforts to promote peace and stability.