



# Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ  
آپ صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے فرمایا جو شخص پر میرے صحابہ کی ایک جماعت آئے گی۔ پھر انہیں اس سے دور کر دیا جائے گا۔ میں عرض کروں گا میرے رب! یہ تو میرے صحابہ ہیں۔ اللہ تعالیٰ فرمائے گا کہ تمہیں معلوم نہیں کہ انہوں نے تمہارے بعد کیا کیا نئی چیزیں ایجاد کر لی تھیں۔ یہ اللہ کے (اسلام سے) واپس لوٹ گئے تھے۔  
(بخاری ص 586)

Barkat Rice Mills (Pvt) Limited



## PM Shehbaz announces major relief measures, Rs80 cut in petroleum levy

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has announced a significant reduction in the petrol levy, cutting it by Rs80 per litre in a major move aimed at providing relief to the public amid rising global oil prices. Following the adjustment, the price of petrol has been fixed at Rs378 per litre.



## National Forensic Agency becomes fully functional

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Friday visited the state-of-the-art National Forensic Agency, which became fully functional after completion in record time. During his visit, Mohsin Naqvi also examined the Research and Innovation Laboratory, Narcotics Laboratory, Digital Forensic Laboratory, Fintech Lab, Questionable Laboratory, firearms, DNA, serology, and expo saver rooms.

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## Protest on petroleum price

KARACHI: Activists from the Human Rights Council of Pakistan (HRCP) hold placards against rise of fuel prices during a protest against inflation, in the Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

## 10 civilians martyred, several injured in suicide attack at Bannu police station



Special correspondent

children, as well as at least one police officer.

BANNU: Timely action by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police foiled a suicide attack on Domel Police Station in Bannu on Thursday night. Initial reports suggest the suicide bomber intended to target the police station but, after failing to breach it, detonated explosives in a nearby civilian area. The blast resulted in the deaths of 10 civilians, including seven women, one child, and two men.

Soon after the attack occurred, the security forces cordoned off the area and launched a rescue and search operation. Senior security officials said that the terrorists aim to target the peace-loving people of Bannu; however, their elimination is certain.

Police said the attack was carried out using an explosives-laden vehicle from the direction of the old tehsil building. Hospital authorities reported that the injured included several women and

District Police Officer Afridi visited both the incident site and the hospital, instructing officials to provide the best possible medical treatment to the injured and to carry out a comprehensive investigation. He stated that such "cowardly acts of terrorism" would not shake the determination of law enforcement agencies or the public.

## Arab League calls for urgent int'l action to protect Jerusalem and oppose Israeli policies

Wafa

CAIRO: The Council of the League of Arab States, at the level of permanent representatives, called for coordinated Arab, Islamic, and international action to protect the city of Jerusalem and its Islamic and Christian holy sites through political, diplomatic, economic, and legal measures. The call came in resolutions issued at the conclusion of an extraordinary session held on Thursday at the League's headquarters in Cairo, chaired by Bahrain at the request of the State of Palestine and with the support of all Arab countries. The meeting addressed Israeli violations in occupied Jerusalem, including restrictions on holy sites, the approval of a law allowing the execution of Palestinian prisoners, and the ongoing Israeli offensive against the Palestinian people.



The council urged the international community, including

the UN Security Council, to take a firm stance compelling Israel to halt its violations and policies

in Jerusalem and to comply with international law and relevant UN resolutions.

Continue on Page 7

It also called for placing Itamar Ben-Gvir and Bezalel Smotrich, along with members of their parties, on international, regional, and national terrorism lists. The council warned against the continued Israeli blockade of Jerusalem's Old City, restrictions on access to Al-Aqsa Mosque, and what it described as government-backed incursions by settler groups, alongside excavation activities beneath the mosque. It said such actions indicate dangerous intentions to impose Israeli sovereignty over the site and alter its status. It further condemned Israeli measures targeting the Christian presence in Jerusalem and restricting freedom of worship in churches, describing them as violations of the city's legal and historical status and of international agreements.

## President, PM strongly condemn suicide attack in Bannu

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday strongly condemned the suicide attack on Domail Police Station in Bannu.



In their separate statements, the president and the prime minister expressing deep grief and sorrow over the attack, prayed for grant of eternal peace to those passed away and

for early recovery to the injured. They also expressed the government's resolve to completely uproot the menace of terrorism backed by the foreign hands.

## DPM, Saudi FM discuss regional developments

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar Friday spoke with Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan.



The two leaders exchanged views on the latest developments in the regional situation, emphasizing the urgent need for de-escalation and dialogue. The Pak-China Five-Point Initiative for peace in the Gulf and Middle East was also discussed.

Both leaders reaffirmed the strong, fraternal Pakistan-Saudi Arabia relationship and agreed to remain in close contact.

## CM Maryam announces free public transport, fuel subsidies across Punjab

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz on Friday announced a major relief package for citizens amid the ongoing global economic crisis, declaring free public transport across all cities of the province along with fuel subsidies for bikers and farmers. Punjab Transport Company has issued a notification in this regard. According to a notification, citizens across Punjab will be able to travel free on government buses. ID card is mandatory for citizens to avail free transport facility. The students will have to show their student card to get free travel facility. As part of the relief package, travel on the Orange Line Train,

Metro Bus Service, Speedo Bus and Green Electric Bus will be made completely free for commuters, eliminating the need to purchase tickets during the specified period. In addition, the provincial government has announced a subsidy of Rs100 per litre on 20 litres of fuel for every registered motorcycle owner. Farmers have also been included in the relief measures, with a subsidy of Rs100 per litre of diesel per acre aimed at supporting the agriculture sector and ensuring food security. The chief minister also decided to provide direct financial assistance to farmers as part of broader efforts to protect agriculture and food supply chains.

## Govt provides Rs 129bn subsidy on petroleum products: Ikhtair Wali

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: Prime Minister's Coordinator for Information and KP Affairs, Ikhtair Wali Khan on Friday said that an energy emergency has been imposed across the entire region amid ongoing challenges especially in the energy sector. About rising fuel costs, he added that increases in petroleum product prices are part of a global trend and not limited to Pakistan. He revealed that the government has provided a subsidy of Rs129 billion on petroleum

prices to ease the burden on the public, says a statement here. According to him, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has taken key steps to provide relief, including halting an increase in railway fares and preventing a hike in toll taxes. He emphasized that despite difficult economic conditions, the prime minister is actively working to support citizens. Criticizing the opposition, Ikhtair Wali Khan said that instead of standing with the public, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf is engaged in negative propaganda.

He also alleged that huge funds were released for development in Tirah, but no accountability has been provided to date. Furthermore, he claimed that the PTI government failed to establish even a single hospital in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa during its tenure. He highlighted rising economic pressures and ongoing government relief efforts. Ikhtair Wali said that petroleum prices have increased not only in Pakistan but across the region and globally. "The sources of oil are themselves engulfed in conflict," he remarked.

## Strong 6.3-magnitude quake jolts Islamabad, KP and northern regions

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: A strong earthquake measuring 6.3 on the Richter scale struck parts of Pakistan on Friday, with tremors felt across Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Kashmir. According to seismic data, the quake originated at a depth of 190 kilometres, causing widespread shaking across urban and mountainous regions. Residents in Islamabad and

Rawalpindi reported noticeable tremors, while stronger jolts were felt in Peshawar, Swat, Shangla, Nowshera and Hangu. The quake was also felt in Lower Dir, Mardan, Haripur, Mansehra and Abbottabad, as well as in several Punjab cities including Faisalabad, Sargodha, Attock, Okara, Kasur and Chiniot. Tremors extended to Muzaffargarh, Skardu and Ghizbar, along with other areas such as Sheikhpura, Wazirabad and Murree.

# Rathore commends integrity in public service, praises DIG Saleem

**Spokesman Report.**

ISLAMABAD: The Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir Faisal Mumtaz Rathore has said that efforts were underway to make institutional reforms, governance, and public service mechanisms more effective.

He said this while speaking to a delegation of prominent political and social personalities that called on him here today.

Speaking on this occasion, Prime Minister Rathore said that the government would continue to acknowledge and encourage officers and competent individuals who have shown outstanding commitment to public service.

"The government always values the services of officers who discharge their duties with honesty and integrity," the PM said, adding that Raja Irfan Saleem was among those who demonstrated a high level of integrity



and a strong sense of duty throughout his long tenure in the police service.

The delegation specially thanked the Prime Minister for promoting Raja Irfan Saleem to the post of DIG after retirement.

The members of the delegation expressed confidence in the leadership of the prime minister and appreciated the steps taken by the govern-

ment.

The delegation consisted of leading political and social personalities, academicians, former bureaucrats, and members of the legal fraternity, including former member of the Kashmir Council Raja Ali Zulfar-nain Khan, retired DIG Police Raja Irfan Saleem, former Vice Chancellor of Mirpur University of Science

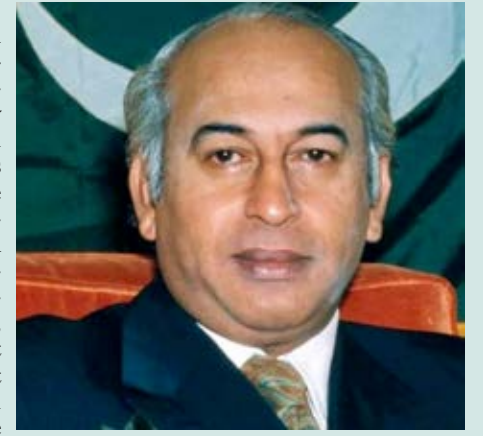
and Technology Professor Dr. Raja Habib-ur-Rehman, Chairman of the District Council Raja Naveed Akhtar Goga, Member of the District Khatir Chaudhry Banaras, Chaudhry Farooq Munir, former presidents of the Chamber of Commerce Chaudhry Faisal Manzoor and Chaudhry Javed Iqbal, retired Deputy Commissioner Raja Fazlur Rehman, and others.

## PPP Prepares for Grand Commemoration of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's 47th Martyrdom Anniversary

**Bureau Report**

MUZAFFARABAD: The 47th martyrdom anniversary of Pakistan People's Party founder Chairman and the country's first elected Prime Minister Quaid-e-Awam Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto will be celebrated today, Saturday, April 4, with great devotion, respect and ideological enthusiasm. The morning of April 4 will begin with the recitation of the Holy Quran and Fateha Khawani in mosques and homes after Fajr prayers. It has been decided to organize grand commemoration gatherings in all district and tehsil city places, at the end of which langar will also be distributed. Party President Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin, Secretary General Prime Minister Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, issued instructions to the organizations for the preparations and arrangements to celebrate the anniversary celebrations in a dignified manner.

The ceremony will be held in the capital, Muzaffarabad. The national celebrations of the anniversary will be attended by Prime Minister Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, Party President Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin, Speaker Chaudhry Latif Akbar, former Prime Minister Sardar Muhammad Yaqoob Khan, Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan, Chaudhry Pervez Ashraf, ministers, advisors, party officials and its subsidiary organizations. Islamic scholar Shaukat Javed Mir said that April 4 is the darkest day in the history of Pakistan when the elected government of the leader of the people.



## PTI Pindigheb Leader Criticises Govt Over Fuel Price Hike, Inflation

**Raza Naqvi**

ATTOCK: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Tehsil Pindigheb President Malik Zeeshan Dehra has strongly criticised the government over the recent increase in petrol and diesel prices, holding its economic policies responsible for rising inflation and growing public hardship.

In a statement, Malik Zeeshan Dehra said that during the tenure of PTI founder Imran Khan, when crude oil in the international market had reached 120 dollars per barrel, petrol was being sold at around Rs150 per litre. He claimed that under the present PML-N and PPP government, despite international crude prices being around 110 dollars per barrel, fuel prices had risen sharply.

He also referred to a 2.25 percent decline in the Pakistan Stock Exchange and said that the increase in fuel prices had worsened inflation, transport fares and the cost of daily-use items, adding to the difficulties faced by the common people.

Malik Zeeshan Dehra termed the government's policies incompetent and said that rising inflation and the trade deficit were pushing the country's economy towards further destruction. He maintained that the only solution to the ongoing crisis was the establishment of a government comprising genuine public representatives.

## Turkish Trade Chief Eager to Deepen Business Ties with Pakistan

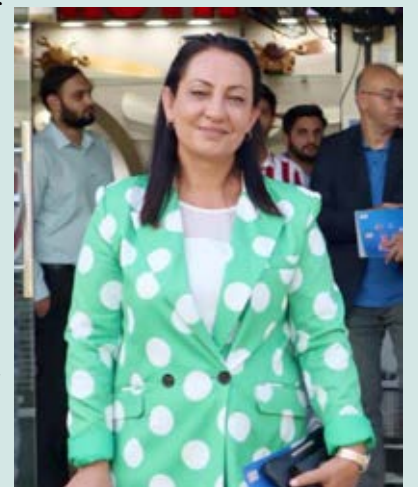
**Special Correspondent**

GUJRAT: Chairperson of Turkey's well-known trade organization TAP ADS Association, Ms. Hulya, has warmly welcomed trade and business relations with Pakistan, stating that she has always felt pleased working with the country.

While speaking to the media, she said that she has visited Pakistan multiple times, where she had the opportunity to meet business professionals and explore joint opportunities across various sectors. She added that the Pakistani business community is highly professional, sincere, and cooperative, which creates strong potential for the growth of bilateral trade.

Ms. Hulya expressed her desire to meet Syed Asim Munir, describing him as a strong leader who has played an important role in securing a dignified position for Pakistan. She emphasized that such leaders are vital to a country's development and global prestige.

She concluded by expressing her commitment to further strengthening trade, economic, and mutual cooperation between Turkey and Pakistan in the future, so that both countries can continue progressing together and take their business partnerships to new heights.



## Meeting

RAWALPINDI: Former Senator Dr. Safdar Abbasi, Pir Pagara's eldest son Syed Muhammad Rashid Shah, former MNA Muhammad Khan Junejo, Sardar Khizar Hayat Mangreo meet with President Muslim Conference and former PM AJK Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan at Mujahid Manzil.



Photo: Online

# Kashmir Hurriyat Leaders Condemn Surge in Extrajudicial Killings, Demand International Probe

**Abdul Majeed Tahir**

ISLAMABAD: All Parties Hurriyat Conference Convener Ghulam Muhammad Safi, General Secretary Advocate Pervaiz Ahmed Shah and Secretary Information Mush-taq Ahmed Butt in their joint statement have expressed deep concern and strong condemnation over the increasing trend of fake encounters and extrajudicial killings in occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK). They said that these actions are not only a grave violation of fundamental human rights but also a clear violation of international law, Geneva Conventions and the United Nations Charter.

While paying tribute to Rashid Ahmed Mughal on his martyrdom, he said that the entire nation salutes his great



sacrifices of all the Kashmiris who have been martyred since 1989 and their blood will never go in vain.

In a joint statement, Hurriyat leaders said that

more than 96,489 Kashmiris have been martyred since 1989, of which 7,415 people died in fake encounters and in-custody deaths. These figures are clear evidence that the state-

level violation of human lives has become a norm in the occupied region. They further said that the extraordinary immunity enjoyed by the Indian forces under draconian laws

like the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) and the Public Safety Act (PSA) has completely freed them from accountability, resulting in human rights violations continuing with impunity.

At the end of the statement, Convener Ghulam Muhammad Safi, General Secretary Advocate Pervaiz Ahmed Shah and Secretary Information Mush-taq Ahmed Butt reiterated the resolve that all attempts to subdue the Kashmiri people through force will fail, nor can their spirit of freedom be suppressed through fake encounters. They said that the Kashmiri nation will continue its struggle at all costs, until it gets its fundamental and inalienable right, i.e. the right to self-determination.

# The Disappearance of Justice in Indian-Occupied Jammu and Kashmir

The disappearance of justice in Indian occupied Jammu and Kashmir is not a matter of isolated abuses; it is a systemic collapse. It is the face of an longstanding Indian occupation that has replaced law with force, rights with repression, and accountability with impunity.

Justice is the bedrock of civilization. Where justice vanishes, tyranny fills the void. In Indian occupied Jammu and Kashmir the rule of law has been replaced by the rule of force with impunity. For decades, India has subjected Kashmiris to an unprecedented assault on justice. Heavy militarization, extraordinary legal measures, and a judicial system rendered powerless has dismantled the foundations of accountability. Here, India the occupier is both the accuser and the judge. And the people of Kashmir

are left without recourse.

Indian special court of the National Investigation Agency had on March 24, 2026 sentenced Asiya Andrabi for twice life imprisonment and Fehmida Sofi and Nahida Nasreen for thirty years each imprisonment in a fabricated and concocted cases. This epitomizes the deepening disappearance of justice, where legal processes are tools of political repression for people of Indian Occupied Kashmir rather than impartial adjudication. Their prolonged detention and harsh sentencing, particularly targeting Kashmiri women reflect a systemic erosion of due process, fair trial guarantees, and judicial independence.

The instruments of this legalized oppression are well known to the world but remain unchecked: amongst others, the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA), which grants security forces the license to

kill with legal immunity; the Public Safety Act (PSA), which enables indefinite detention without trial; and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), which criminalizes dissent as terrorism. These laws empower Indian forces to arrest without warrant, search and destroy property on mere suspicion, and use lethal force with near-total impunity. They have created a system where the abuser is shielded and the victim silenced.

The collapse of justice is more evident in the courts of occupied Jammu and Kashmir and other courts of India for Kashmiris. Hundreds of habeas corpus petitions, the most fundamental safeguard against unlawful detention, remain pending

for years together. Families of those disappeared or held under preventive detention approach the judiciary with desperate pleas for the production of their loved ones. Their cries are met with procedural delays, adjournments, and sometimes disregard by government.

For a Kashmiri, the courthouse has ceased to be a sanctuary of justice; it has become another site of despair. This judicial paralysis is not accidental. It is the product of a deliberate design.

From the standpoint of international law, India's actions in occupied Jammu and Kashmir constitute grave violations of binding treaty obligations. As a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and

the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), India has committed to uphold the right to life, freedom from arbitrary detention, freedom of expression, and the right to an effective remedy. Yet in Kashmir, every one of these rights is systematically violated.

The Convention Against Torture (CAT) and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance impose a clear duty: investigate all allegations of torture, unlawful detention, and disappearances promptly and transparently. In Kashmir, these duties are ignored. Perpetrators walk free. Victims remain buried in silence.

The patterns are unmistakable: arbitrary detention in violation of ICCPR Articles 9 and 14; denial of fair trial; suppression of expression under Article 19; torture that flouts Article 7 and CAT; and the refusal of

any effective remedy—a direct violation of Article 2(3) of the ICCPR. India stands in breach not only of its own constitutional promises but of its binding commitments under United Nations frameworks and the relevant Security Council resolutions on Jammu and Kashmir.

Peace, security, and stability in the region will remain a distant mirage unless the international community demands accountability. The United Nations resolutions on Jammu and Kashmir must be implemented. Otherwise the continuation of Indian occupation will further destabilize the region with catastrophic humanitarian crises.

The author is a senior leader of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) and a legal expert in international law. He can be reached at faiz.naqshbandi@gmail.com.



Analysis

Syed Faiz Naqshbandi



Islamabad  
30° - 38° Clear

**SERVICES**

**Namaz Timings**

Fajr ..... 4:28 am  
Zohr ..... 12:11 pm  
Asr ..... 4:42 pm  
Maghrib ..... 6:30 pm  
Isha ..... 7:55 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

**Monsoon review: 5 key steps finalised, teams deployed in 4 areas**

ISLAMABAD: The district administration has taken 5 key decisions ahead of the monsoon season, including deployment of teams in 4 low-lying areas and setting up complaint channels through 2 contact numbers to respond to rain-related issues.

A review meeting on preparations for the monsoon season was held under the chair of the Deputy Commissioner Islamabad. The meeting focused on arrangements to manage rainwater, respond to emergencies, and maintain sanitation during expected rainfall.

Officials briefed the meeting on the condition of low-lying areas and drainage channels across the city. The administration reviewed the working condition of de-watering pumps and other equipment used for water disposal. Authorities assessed whether the available machinery is ready to handle heavy rain and prevent water accumulation.

During the meeting, it was decided that additional sanitation staff will be deployed during the monsoon season. The move aims to ensure timely removal of water and waste from roads and streets. Officials were directed to remain alert and respond without delay to any reports of drainage issues.

The DC directed that response teams must reach affected areas immediately after receiving complaints about water accumulation. To strengthen response, teams have already been deployed in identified low-lying locations, including Tramri Chowk, Golra, and sectors such as E-11, where water buildup is reported during rainfall.

# Anti-Corruption Punjab Cracks Down on Mega Fake Registry Network in Multan

**Zain Khan Malghani**

MULTAN: Under the directives of Director General Anti-Corruption Punjab, Sohail Zafar Chattha, a major crackdown is underway across the province targeting the corrupt mafia, particularly registry clerks involved in producing fake property documents. Supervised by Regional Director Anti-Corruption Multan, Basharat Nabi, investigations uncovered an organized network in the Sub-Registrar offices of Multan City, Saddar, and several registry clerks, which caused losses of millions of rupees to the national treasury. Following a surprise visit by Commissioner Multan Division, Amir Kareem Khan, an FIR was immediately lodged, and the case was handed over to the Anti-Corruption



Establishment Multan, which promptly

arrested 28 registry clerks, seized over 500 fake registries, confiscated fake stamp papers and bogus FBR receipts (256 C + 256 K), and recovered official seals and records. Additionally, PKR 12,210,756 was recovered from the accused and deposited into the government treasury, with further recoveries ongoing. Anti-Corruption officials stressed that this mafia, disguised as registry clerks, is undeserving of any leniency; criminal cases will be pursued to their logical conclusion, their properties confiscated, licenses revoked, and they will be blacklisted. All accused person involved in creating or facilitating fake registries will be held accountable to serve as a deterrent, and further arrests and revelations are expected as investigations expand.

**AWP central president Akhtar Hussain addressing convention at TT Singh**



**Zafar Chishti**

TOBA TEK SINGH: A workers' convention of the Awami Workers Party (AWP) was held on Thursday night at Toba Tek Singh. The AWP central president Akhtar Hussain, (ex Pakistan Bar Council vice chairman, ex Sindh high court bar and member supreme judicial council) was brought to the meeting place in the form of a procession on his arrival at Toba Tek Singh. A large number of party workers from all over the district, women and people from different walks of life participated in the convention. The convention was presided over by the AWP Punjab president Prof Amir Hamza, while the other guests of honor were the party's central secretary general Farhat Abbas and Punjab secretary Malik Muhammad Azam. The convention was inaugurated by Comrade Abdul Khaliq by singing the famous revolutionary poem of Comrade Manzoor Niazi in a melodious style. District President Chaudhry Zubair, while addressing the gathering, said that the AWP will continue the struggle against the ruling class, feudalism, and capitalists and to establish the rule of the workers. He said that the farmers of are yearning for every drop of water, but due to the anti-farmer policies of the rulers, their problems are continuously increasing and agricultural policies are being made to maintain the loot of capitalists and multinational companies.

**Sahibzada Sultan Muhammad Ali elected to World Tent Pegging Federation Board of Directors**

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has earned another significant international honor. In the elections of the World Tent Pegging Federation held in Muscat, Sahibzada Sultan Muhammad Ali has been elected as a member of the Federation's Board of Directors. This development grants Pakistan an important role in international decision-making. It is noteworthy that 45 countries are currently part of the International Tent Pegging Federation (ITPF).



Sahibzada Sultan Muhammad Ali also served as President of the Equestrian Federation of Pakistan from 2022 to 2026. Under his leadership, Pakistan achieved historic successes in the sport of tent pegging, securing a total of 3 gold, 2 silver, and 2 bronze medals. During his relatively short four-year tenure, Pakistan also demonstrated its strength at the global level. In the 2023 World Cup, Pakistan defeated India, earning the distinction of becoming the second-best team in the world.

**PPP leaders slam fuel price hike as 'historic economic attack' on citizens**

**Quratulain Asim**

MULTAN: Pakistan Peoples Party South Punjab President and former Governor Punjab Makhdoom Syed Ahmed Mahmood, Senior Vice President Khawaja Rizwan Alam and Chief Coordinator Abdul Qadir Shaheen have termed the recent increase in prices of petroleum products as one of the most serious economic attacks on the people in the country's history and have condemned it in the strongest terms. Pakistan Peoples Party strongly rejects the increase in prices of petroleum products by the South Punjab government. The government has also taken away the right to live from the people.

The PPP leaders said that Pakistan is already suffering from inflation, unemployment and severe shortage of basic amenities. The bills of daily necessities, electricity and gas have gone beyond the purchasing power of the people, and in such a situation, the increase in the price of petrol makes life unbearable for the common man.

He clarified that every time petrol becomes expensive, transport fares increase, which results in an increase in the prices of basic necessities, and the poorest and middle class are affected the most. This increase not only increases economic pressure but also pushes the daily life of the people into the most difficult conditions.

**PTI leader slams historic petrol price hike as 'anti-people' policy**

**Kiran Asim**

MULTAN: PTI leader and NA-148 candidate Dr. Rubina Akhtar has strongly criticized the recent huge increase in petrol and diesel prices, calling it an anti-people decision. She said that the repeated changes in the prices of petroleum products and the recent historic increase have created severe anxiety and fear among the people, while this storm of inflation has made the life of the common man unbearable. Addressing a large gathering of women in Basti Qatapur, Dr. Rubina Akhtar said that the increase in petrol prices has brought out the cries of the people, even the flow of traffic in the city has been affected and the overall atmosphere feels mournful. Everyone is in deep distress but the government's claims are not coming to an end.



**Beautiful view**

ISLAMABAD: A view of clouds during rainy day in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

# PSCA Ensures Comprehensive Security Measures on the Eve of Good Friday

**Bureau Report**

LAHORE: Punjab Safe Cities Authority (PSCA) has put in place comprehensive and foolproof security arrangements in the vicinity of Lahore and entire province to ensure peaceful observance of Good Friday and Easter by the Christian community. In Lahore, effective and continuous monitoring is being carried out at 42 key locations through Safe City cameras.

The spokesperson stated that Safe City control rooms are operating round the clock with advanced AI-based technology and analytics systems, ensuring vigilant monitoring at all times. In case of any suspicious activity or unusual movement, immediate alerts and intelligence



support will be provided to field forces for prompt action. On the occasion of Easter, special monitoring is also being carried out at parks, recreational spots, and public areas to ensure public safety. Intelligent traffic management is being ensured through Safe City cameras to maintain smooth traffic flow.

# Social Worker Nina Rania Khan Mashriqi Honored with Best Leadership Award at LCCI Event

**Tahir Amin Malik.**

Renowned Social Worker and British Nationality holder Nina Rania Khan Mashriqi received the best Leadership award from Lahore Chamber of Commerce President Faheem-Ur-Rehman Saigal.

On this occasion the other guests

Overseas Pakistanis Commission, Punjab Overseas (OPC) Rai Saman, and Vice Chairman of Overseas Pakistanis Commission (OPC) Punjab Barrister Malik were also present. Nina Rania said this award was given to me on the celebration on the occasion of International Women Day.

Nina Rania is the grand daughter of renowned Mathematician, Scholar Allama Mashriqi and she is doing excellent work as a Social Worker Nationally and Internationally.

On this occasion she said I am quite happy to achieved this best Leadership award which is great

honour for me on this historical International Women day celebrated globally primarily in recognition of Women's achievements and contributions to its society and for Nation.

At last she said she will continue her mission as a Social Worker for Nationally and Internationally for Human Being.



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# How the World Is Forced to Fund the Iran War

The most defining feature of the Iran war is not the missiles, the targets, or even the scale of destruction—it is the silent and systematic transfer of its cost to those who are not fighting it. In an extraordinary display of modern economic engineering, all three principal actors—Iran, United States, and Israel—have structured this conflict in a way that allows them to wage war without bearing its full financial burden. Instead, that burden is being shifted outward to global consumers, trade-dependent economies, and regional allies, transforming a regional conflict into a worldwide economic obligation.

This is what makes the Iran War fundamentally different from traditional wars. Historically, nations financed wars through taxation, borrowing, or internal sacrifice. Today, however, the interconnected nature of the global economy allows powerful states to externalize these costs. Oil prices rise, shipping costs surge, insurance premiums spike, and supply chains tighten—not as unintended consequences, but as embedded mechanisms through which the cost of war is distributed globally. The battlefield may be regional, but the bill is international. At the center of this economic and strategic equation lies the Strait of Hormuz, the most critical energy chokepoint in the world. A significant portion of global oil, liquefied natural gas, and commercial goods passes through this narrow corridor every day. Control over this passage offers not only military leverage but also unparalleled economic influence.

Current estimates suggest that approximately \$1.2 trillion worth of trade flows through Hormuz annually, including around \$800 billion in energy shipments and \$400 billion in non-energy goods such as fertilizers, chemicals, metals, and manufactured prod-

ucts. A 10 percent toll on this trade would generate roughly \$120 billion per year. Such a mechanism would allow Iran, in theory, to recoup the economic damage of war within a single year—not through aid or borrowing, but by leveraging its geographic position within the global trade system.

This is where the economic dimension of the war becomes unmistakably clear. Any increase in shipping costs through Hormuz would be passed on to importing countries, raising energy prices, increasing transportation costs, and fueling inflation worldwide. Consumers in distant nations, far removed from the battlefield, would ultimately bear the financial burden. In effect, the Iran War would be funded not just by those involved, but by the entire global economy.

At the same time, the United States operates within its own system of cost distribution. With daily war expenditures estimated at around \$1 billion, a conflict lasting 60 to 70 days would cost approximately \$60 to \$70 billion. However, much of the U. S. military presence in the region is sustained through security arrangements with Gulf states. These host nations, dependent on American protection, often absorb a significant share of these costs. Thus, the United States projects power while redistributing its financial burden to its allies.

Israel follows a similar model. Its wartime expenditures, estimated in the tens of billions, are largely offset through extensive financial and military support from the United States and allied networks. This support ensures that Israel can sustain prolonged military operations without bearing the full economic impact domestically. In

this way, Israel also participates in the broader system of cost externalization.

The result is a striking and deeply troubling paradox. The nations directly engaged in the Iran War are not the ones paying for it. Instead, the financial burden is transferred to a diffuse and largely uninvolved global audience. Energy-importing countries, trade-dependent economies, and ordinary consumers all become indirect financiers of the conflict. The war, in effect, is globalized—not only in its consequences but in its funding.

In addition, the indirect cost transfer is already visible across continents. The biggest burden of the war is not military spending—it is the imported economic shock spreading through energy markets, shipping routes, inflation, and financial systems. Nearly one-fifth of the world's oil passes through the Strait of Hormuz, and any disruption instantly translates into higher fuel prices, increased freight costs, and cascading inflation worldwide. Countries far removed from the battlefield are paying through rising grocery bills, higher transport costs, and tightening monetary conditions.

The Middle East itself is already absorbing heavy indirect costs. Countries not directly involved in the war are facing fuel price shocks, subsidy burdens, and logistical disruptions. Pakistan, for instance, has raised diesel prices by over 50 percent and petrol by more than 40 percent, while struggling to sustain subsidy programs. India is considering trade restrictions to stabilize domestic markets as energy and freight costs surge. Across the Gulf and surrounding regions, shipping disruptions, stranded vessels, and rising insurance premiums

are increasing the cost of doing business, effectively turning the war into a regional economic tax.

Europe is experiencing the same phenomenon through a renewed energy and inflation crisis. Oil prices have surged above \$100 per barrel, forcing governments to cap fuel margins, cut taxes, and release reserves to protect consumers. At the same time, inflationary pressure is pushing borrowing costs higher, affecting mortgages, business financing, and household stability. The war's economic shock is thus embedded not only in fuel prices but in the broader financial architecture of European economies.

For Asia and Africa, the impact is even more severe. Many countries in these regions depend heavily on Middle Eastern energy and trade flows. The war is functioning as a direct economic tax, triggering shortages, subsidy crises, and potential social unrest. African economies, already vulnerable, face slower growth due to rising food, fuel, and fertilizer costs, with projections showing measurable GDP losses if the conflict persists. Across the developing world, the cost of the Iran War is not theoretical—it is immediate, tangible, and deeply destabilizing.

This is the hidden economy of modern warfare—a system in which power is exercised, destruction is inflicted, and the bill is quietly passed on to others. In such a system, victory is no longer defined solely by military success, but by the ability to fight without paying. And by that measure, the Iran War reveals a profound and unsettling truth: those who wage war have learned how to make the world fund it.

*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*



**Qamar Bashir**

## Pakistan Urges Stronger UN-Arab League Ties to Resolve Middle East Conflicts

Pakistan has called for stronger UN-Arab league cooperation in the crisis-ridden Middle East, highlighting that a priority of the 22-member League's is the resolution of long outstanding disputes such as those arising from foreign occupation.

"We hope the ongoing international efforts will lead to a time-bound and irreversible political process, anchored in relevant UN resolutions, culminating in the establishment of a sovereign, independent and contiguous State of Palestine on the basis of pre-1967 borders, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital," Ambassador Asim Ifikhar Ahmad, permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, told the UN Security Council which met on Thursday afternoon to discuss the need to boost UN's cooperation with the League of Arab States.

The afternoon session of the 15-member Council complemented a morning meeting held on collaboration between the United Nations and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). This meeting occurs under the umbrella of the Council's consideration of cooperation between the UN, regional and sub-regional organizations in maintaining international peace and security.

"A key priority for the League, for the Council and indeed for Pakistan is the resolution of long-outstanding disputes, particularly those arising from foreign occupation and the denial of the right to self-determination," the Pakistani envoy said.

The League, he said, has played a leading role in addressing the unresolved Palestinian question that remains at the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The Palestinian people continue to be victims of occupation and dispossession, the Pakistani envoy said, demanding that Israel vacate its illegal occupation of all Arab territories, including in Palestine, Syria and Lebanon.

"Arab and OIC [Organization of Islamic Cooperation] representation is so important at this table," he added.

As the US-Israel war against Iran escalates, Ambassador Asim Ahmad said that the immediate goal must be complete cessation of all hostilities and return to dialogue for peaceful resolution of all issues.

"Our brothers, Gulf members of the Arab League are facing direct attacks on their soil, totally unacceptable, while grappling with challenges posed by restricted navigation in the Strait of Hormuz."

"Together with other partners, Pakistan is actively engaged in promoting this objective," he said, noting that UNSC Resolution 2788, adopted last July, reflects the Council's commitment to preventive diplomacy and peaceful settlement of disputes. "Its implementation remains critical to advancing collective efforts toward peace and stability."



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

## Real Anti-State face of Awami Action Committee

The Awami Action Committee began as a grassroots initiative in Azad Jammu and Kashmir focused on addressing everyday challenges such as poor roads, chronic power outages, lack of clean water, failing healthcare, and widespread unemployment. It was intended to engage peacefully with the government, demand accountability, and advocate for public welfare while maintaining loyalty to Pakistan, earning early trust for its non-partisan and patriotic stance. Over time, leadership changes and the rise of radical figures shifted the focus from civic concerns to attacking state structures, questioning AJK's relationship with Pakistan, and moving toward hostility. The committee is now accused of secretly collaborating with India's intelligence agency RAW to receive funds for anti-state activities aimed at destabilizing AJK, fomenting discord with the military, and weakening Pakistan's strategic position. Its rhetoric has become increasingly hostile, portraying the military as an occupier and the state as a colonial master, openly calling for defiance, and insulting national figures such as the Field Marshal, credited with Pakistan's decisive victory over India in the Battle of Maraka Huj.

The Field Marshal's contributions extend beyond the battlefield to diplomacy, counter-terrorism, and protecting citizens, including those in AJK, where the Pakistan Army daily faces cross-border threats, sacrifices lives, and ensures security. The committee's anti-state actions, amplified by Indian media, have been seen as serving enemy interests, deliberately spreading division, distrust, and disloyalty, betraying public confidence, and undermining national unity. Citizens of AJK have actively rejected

the committee, demanding legal action, asset seizures, arrests of leaders, and stricter regulation of foreign-funded organizations. The exposure of its transformation into a proxy for foreign interests has instead strengthened the population's resolve to defend Pakistan, support the military, and preserve national unity. The people's unwavering loyalty and patriotic response highlight that attempts to sow discord have failed, and the collective voice is united against hate, division, and foreign interference, reaffirming AJK's inseparable bond with Pakistan.

The committee seems to be serving as a proxy for India's hybrid warfare strategy. For the people of Pakistan and AJK, it is profoundly disappointing and heart-breaking to see that an organization that could have been a force for positive change—that could have helped build schools, pressure the government for better roads, and advocate for the rights of the poor—has instead chosen to engage in pleasing our enemies. They are busy spreading hate and division among the society. They are deliberately and systematically trying to create a rift between the people and the state, between the citizens and the Army, between AJK and the rest of Pakistan. They want to sow discord, to make people suspicious of their own institutions, to create an atmosphere of distrust and anger. This is not the work of patriots; it is the work of proxies. It is the work of those who have sold their loyalty for RAW's dirty money. Above all, such actions of the Awami Action Committee have been rejected by the people of AJK. The people of AJK are not fools; they are not easily manipulated. They have seen through the committee's deception and have concluded that the Awami Action Committee has now transformed into an anti-

state pressure group, nothing more and nothing less. It no longer has any claim to represent the common people, because the common people have rejected it. The committee has lost public confidence by its actions. The trust that once existed, however tenuous, has been completely shattered.

There is also a division within the Awami Action Committee on these matters, as most leaders are condemning such inflammatory actions by a few so-called leaders. The Joint Awami Action Committee, once a hopeful initiative born out of genuine grievances, has become a dark symbol of how foreign intelligence agencies can exploit local issues for their own nefarious ends. But the people of AJK have shown that they are not easily fooled. Their loyalty to Pakistan remains unshaken, their respect for the Pak Army is unwavering, and their love for national heroes like the Field Marshal is undiminished. The committee's attempts to sow discord have backfired spectacularly, uniting the people even more strongly behind the state. The exposure of its real anti-state face has not weakened AJK; it has strengthened the resolve of the people to defend their territory and their ideology. As the investigation into RAW's funding and the committee's activities proceeds, the people of AJK are watching closely, confident that justice will prevail and that those who have betrayed their trust will be held accountable. The era of using AJK as a playground for anti-state activities is over. The collective voice of the people is clear: no to proxies, no to hate, no to division, and yes to a united, strong, and sovereign Pakistan, with AJK as its inseparable and proud partner. The Awami Action Committee's transformation from a people's forum to an enemy pressure group is a stain on the history of AJK, but the people's rejection of that transformation is a testament to their patriotism and their unbreakable bond with Pakistan.



**Abdul Basit Alvi**

## A Crisis Ignored: Missing Minor Girls in IIOJK

The cases of missing minor girls in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) have been a cause of serious concern and state failure. The alarming statistics, the seeming lack of responsibility, and the inability of the state to secure its vulnerable population, especially young girls, have cast serious doubts on the role of the state in the protection of human rights in IIOJK. What is more alarming is that the situation is only getting worse, and there is no transparency and accountability in the state, which creates more and more fear among the people living in the region.

These concerns are amplified by the recent confession of the Indian government in the Lok Sabha. On March 25, 2026, the Minister of State for Home Affairs told the Lok Sabha that during the past five years, hundreds of cases of missing girls had been reported in Jammu and Kashmir. Based on the data gathered by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), 509 cases of minor girls under the age of 18 have been reported as missing in Jammu and Kashmir alone in 2023, out of which 209 were recovered and 300 are yet to be located. The reports also indicate a disturbing and steady trend of 502 cases in 2022, 443 in 2021, 350 in 2020, and 355 in 2019, showing how young girls are vulnerable in the occupied territory.

The numbers are disturbing, but the larger picture of these cases is more disturbing. The rising cases of missing girls are symptomatic of the careless attitude of the Indian government, especially in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. The government has not been able to give any significant report on the locality of such missing children, as reported by several news agencies.

Furthermore, no serious inquiry is made into the conditions surrounding these disappearances. In light of the untraced girls, the question arises: how many of these missing children have become victims of human trafficking, forced labour, or other forms of exploitation?

According to a report by VOA News, about 10,000 women and girls have disappeared between 2019 and 2021 in IIOJK, which shows how dire the issue is and how ineffective the government is in dealing with it. These alarming statistics have raised serious concern among human rights groups, activists, and citizens. The Indian government has taken a careless attitude towards these grave issues, despite the fact that it has not done enough yet in its efforts to curb the problem and take the needed responsibility.

Failure to respond to the crisis effectively is yet another indication of the failure of the Indian government to meet its mandates as stipulated by international law. Having signed a number of human rights conventions, India is obligated to ensure that children are not exploited or harmed. The ongoing abduction of minor girls in IIOJK is a sheer breach of these promises, and the absence of any effective state action is an abomination of the rights of these children.

In light of these facts, there is a great need to ensure that international organizations, like the United Nations, step into the situation. The problem of missing minors can no longer be covered up. The United Nations ought to compel the Indian government to undertake swift actions to locate the missing girls, bring to book those who have perpetrated their disappearance, and make sure that such human rights abuses do not persist in IIOJK. The fact



**Amir Mushtaq**

# Clearness and Brightness: The Dual Spirit of Qingming

As war rages across regions, China's Tomb Sweeping Day reaffirms continuity, reverence, and renewal.

Amidst turmoil and uncertainty, the rhythm of tradition continues to beat steadily across cultures. Religious and cultural festivals—whether Eid for Muslims, Nawroz in Iran and Afghanistan, Easter for Christians, especially in the Holy Land, or now the Chinese Qingming Festival—are observed with solemnity. These occasions remind us that even in times of conflict, humanity seeks continuity, remembrance, and renewal. The Qingming Festival, also known as Tomb Sweeping Day, is one such occasion where reverence for the past meets the vitality of spring.

Analysis



S. M. Hali

## Origins and Meaning

Qingming (清明), literally meaning "clearness" and "brightness," is one of the 24 solar terms in the traditional Chinese calendar. Falling on April 4th or 5th, it marks the arrival of warmer weather and the beginning of agricultural activity. Historically, the festival evolved from the Cold Food Festival, which commemorated Jie Zitui, a loyal retainer who sacrificed himself for his prince. Over time, the two traditions merged, giving rise to Qingming as a day of remembrance

and renewal.

The festival's dual nature—solemnity in honouring ancestors and joy in welcoming spring—reflects the Chinese worldview of balance between life and death, grief and hope.

**Tomb Sweeping: The Central Ritual**  
At the heart of Qingming lies the act of tomb sweeping. Families visit the graves of their ancestors, cleaning the sites, removing weeds, and adding fresh soil. Offerings of food, tea, wine, incense, and joss paper (symbolic money) are made to honour the departed.

Rituals often include bowing or kowtowing before the tomb, praying for blessings, and planting willow branches or flowers at the gravesite.

In urban areas, where distance and modern life complicate traditions, many families now place flowers instead of conducting elaborate rites. Online tomb-sweeping ceremonies have also emerged, allowing younger generations to pay respects virtually. Despite these adaptations, the essence remains unchanged: remembrance and gratitude.

## Customs Beyond the Cemetery

Qingming is not confined to graveyards. It is also a festival of spring, known as Taqing (踏青), meaning "treading the green." Families embark on outings to enjoy blossoming land-

scapes, symbolizing renewal and vitality. Kite flying is another cherished activity, believed to release misfortune and bring good luck. The sight of colourful kites soaring against the clear sky embodies the festival's spirit of hope.

Another unique custom is placing willow branches on gates and doors. Rooted in Buddhist influence, willow is considered a magical plant that wards off evil spirits. The saying "Put willow branches up on gates; drive ghosts away from houses" captures this protective symbolism.

## Foods of Qingming

Like many festivals, Qingming is accompanied by distinctive foods. Sweet green rice balls (qingtuan), made of glutinous rice and vegetable juice with sweet bean paste filling, are a seasonal delicacy. Crispy cakes (sazi or hanju) and sticky rice dumplings (zongzi) are also popular, often prepared in advance for family gatherings and offerings. These foods, simple yet symbolic, connect the living with tradition and the departed.

## Observance Across Borders

While Qingming is quintessentially Chinese, its influence extends across Asia. In Vietnam, Singapore, South Korea, and even Okinawa in Japan, variations of tomb sweeping and spring outings are observed. Each culture adapts the rituals to its own traditions, yet the shared theme of honouring ancestors underscores a universal human need for remembrance.

## A Festival of Continuity



Source: Qingming-Festival.jpg (1200x675)

In times of war and upheaval, festivals like Qingming remind us of continuity. Just as Eid, Nawroz, and Easter are celebrated with solemnity amidst turmoil, Qingming persists as a thread binding generations. It is not merely a ritual but a reaffirmation of identity, family, and cultural heritage.

The act of sweeping tombs is both literal and metaphorical: clearing away neglect, renewing bonds, and ensuring that the past remains a guiding presence in the present.

## As the Tang Dynasty poet Du Mu observed:

"Qingming is not only about mourning the dead, but also about cherishing life. By sweeping tombs and flying kites, people connect the past with the present, grief with hope." His verse "清明时节雨纷纷，路上行人欲断魂" ("It rains continuously during Qingming; travellers on the road are broken-hearted") captures the festival's poignant blend of sorrow and renewal.

## Conclusion

As the Chinese nation observes Qingming Festival, it demonstrates resilience and reverence. In honouring ancestors, tending graves, flying kites, and embracing spring, the people of China reaffirm their cultural strength and continuity. Amidst global turbulence, such traditions shine as beacons of stability and meaning.

We felicitate the Chinese nation for preserving and observing this profound festival, a testament to the enduring power of memory, respect, and renewal.

# Senator Dr Sarmad Ali Syed: A Beacon of Media Leadership and Democratic Values in Pakistan

Senator Dr Sarmad Ali Syed, re-elected President of the All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS), stands as a remarkable success story of Pakistan's media and democratic landscape. His leadership, vision, and dedication have not only transformed the Jang-Geo Media Group into one of the most credible and commercially successful media organisations in the country but have also reinforced the core values of responsible journalism, democracy, and public service.



Under Dr Sarmad Ali's guidance, the Jang-Geo Media Group has emerged as a leading platform for promoting transparency, truth, and informed discourse. His strategic vision has modernised the organisation, balancing commercial growth with

editorial credibility, while ensuring that the media continues to serve as a pillar of democracy. By inspiring journalists, editors, and media professionals, he has created an environment where ethical reporting and profes-

sional standards are not only encouraged but celebrated. Dr Sarmad Ali's leadership has also strengthened Pakistan's media ecosystem as a whole. His tenure at APNS reflects his unwavering commitment to empowering media owners, editors, and journalists to navigate economic challenges, digital disruption, and evolving social responsibilities. By fostering dialogue among stakeholders and bridging the gap between media institutions and decision-makers, he has played a pivotal role in promoting unity, constructive debate, and informed public opinion.

His contributions extend beyond the newsroom. Dr Sarmad Ali has consistently emphasised the role of media in supporting democratic institutions, fostering accountability, and safe-

guarding citizens' rights. Through his efforts, APNS has become a platform that not only defends press freedom but also actively promotes the values of democracy, transparency, and social responsibility. His work exemplifies how media leadership can be a catalyst for national development and civic empowerment.

The newly elected office-bearers of APNS, including Ms Naz Afreen Sehgal Lakhani (Senior Vice President), Shahab Zuberi (Vice President), Muhammad Athar Qazi (Secretary General), Mohsin Bilal (Joint Secretary), and Naveed Kashif

(Finance Secretary), join Dr Sarmad Ali in steering the organisation toward greater resilience, innovation, and public service. Their collective mission under his guidance is to ensure that Pakistan's media not only survives but thrives, fostering trust, integrity, and professional excellence across the industry.

Dr Sarmad Ali's achievements have been widely recognised. His leadership embodies professionalism, credibility, and strategic foresight. He has earned accolades for transforming Jang-Geo Media Group into an inspiring model of journalistic excellence and commer-

cial success. As a custodian of Pakistan's media values, his work continues to empower the press, strengthen democratic institutions, and inspire future generations of journalists.

Senator Dr Sarmad Ali's re-election is a testament to the trust and confidence placed in him by media owners, colleagues, and stakeholders nationwide. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to him for this well-deserved success and wish him continued achievements in promoting credible journalism, democratic discourse, and the development of Pakistan. May he continue to be empowered in fulfilling the responsibilities entrusted to him with distinction and vision.

*Analyst is Former Professor & Head, Department of Entomology, University of Agriculture, Faisalabad*

# 500 Journalists of Multan urge Punjab CM Maryam Nawaz to resolve colony issues immediately

Zain Khan Malghani

MULTAN: Shehzad Anwar Amrohi, Patron-in-Chief of the Photojournalist Association and former Senior Vice President of Multan Press Club, along with other journalists, has appealed to Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif to take immediate action to resolve the issues in the journalists'

colony at Fatima Jinnah Town, Block J. Shehzad Anwar Amrohi stated that this is the first time journalists have been allocated a colony by the government and the Multan Development Authority (MDA). However, due to lack of proper maintenance by MDA, a soil-theft mafia has stolen soil from several plots. He added that a security agreement was in place with the Punjab

Journalists Housing Foundation and Civil Defence, and all payments for the plots have already been made.

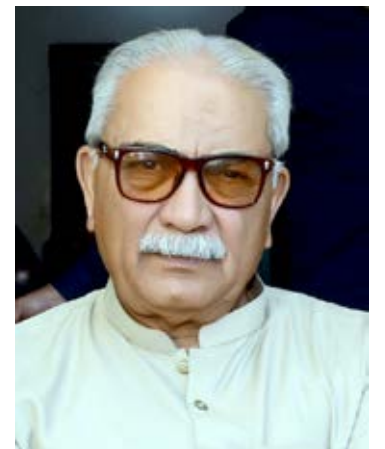
The journalists demanded that MDA be instructed to restore the stolen soil and complete all pending development work immediately. They noted that while plots in other blocks are priced at 700,000-900,000 PKR per marla, plots in Block J are only 250,000 PKR

per marla. Provision of essential facilities such as mosques, schools, hospitals, and parks could make the colony exemplary.

Shehzad Anwar Amrohi emphasized that junior journalists and photographers, earning modest salaries, should also receive quota allocations for their children similar to employees of other departments. He pointed out that MDA

has not built any new colonies in the past 20 years and that these legitimate issues can be resolved with a single directive.

The journalists have urged Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz to instruct the Commissioner of Multan to promptly address these demands so that the city's journalists can also benefit from proper development and facilities.



# Discover the Hidden Beauty of Hunza with PC Legacy Hunza

Surrounded by towering mountains, glacier-fed rivers, and timeless cultural landmarks, PC Legacy Hunza, a premier luxury hotel in Hunza, offers travelers a rare opportunity to explore the lesser-known beauty of the Hunza and Nagar Valleys. Located along the iconic Karakoram Highway and framed by the majestic Rakaposhi at 7,788 meters, the hotel provides the perfect base for those looking to immerse themselves in the natural and cultural richness of Gilgit-Baltistan.

With its premier amenities and luxury services, PC Legacy Hunza offers a serene escape for travelers seeking comfort, elegance, and a deep connection with the grandeur of the valley. Mornings begin with golden light spilling over icy summits, and evenings end with the hush of mountain winds and starlit skies.

## A Location That Connects It All

What sets PC Legacy Hunza apart from other hotels in the Hunza Valley is its strategic location right along the central artery of the region the Karakoram Highway. From this vantage point, guests are connected to the area's most iconic landmarks,



such as Altit and Baltit Forts, Attabad Lake, and the bustling Karimabad Market, as well as its quieter, lesser-known corners where time slows and nature flourishes untouched. The hotel stands at the intersection of the famous and the forgotten,

inviting travelers to experience both in a single journey. **A Collaboration That Elevates Every Journey**

## Adventure Awaits at Every Turn

Set at an altitude of 8,500 feet, the Pissan Cricket Ground, the world's highest natural cricket stadium, offers a striking open-air setting for outdoor activities. Surrounded by glaciers and mountain silhouettes, it provides a unique venue for hikes, picnics, and nature appreciation.

## Guests seeking a more adventurous experience can trek to

Taghaphari, a scenic high-altitude campsite leading to the Rakaposhi and Diran Base Camps. With lush meadows, alpine streams, and shepherd trails, the journey captures the spirit of exploration that defines the Hunza experience.

## A World of Heritage Within Reach

For those interested in visiting Hunza's most famous tourist attractions, PC Legacy Hunza allows easy access to renowned sites such as Altit Fort, Baltit Fort, Duiker Viewpoint, Karimabad Market, Attabad Lake, Borith Lake, Ondra Poygah, Baskochi Trek, Afsang Viewpoint, Hussaini Suspension Bridge, Rainbow Bridge, and the Khunjerab Pass. Whether you're planning a family vacation, a group tour with friends, or a solo trek, PC Legacy Hunza is the best hotel in



## An Invitation to Rediscover Hunza

This summer, make your visit to Hunza the most memorable trip ever. At PC Legacy Hunza, the story of Hunza unfolds not just through its sights, but through its stillness, its silence, and the warmth of local hospitality. Plan your journey at [www.pchotels.com](http://www.pchotels.com) and let PC Legacy Hunza be your starting point for an unforgettable chapter in the mountains.

## Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

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

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

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

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

## Open Market Forex Rates

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

# Pakistan poised to be key diplomatic stabilizer in post-conflict Middle East, says Omar Butt

## Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Vice Consul General of Ghana, Prominent entrepreneur and former Executive Member of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Omar Shahid Butt said Pakistan is emerging as an important diplomatic intermediary in the ongoing regional tensions and could play a stabilising role in the Middle East in the post-conflict environment.

In a statement, Butt said Pakistan's diplomatic engagement and balanced approach have enhanced the country's global standing and opened new economic opportunities. He credited the political and military leadership, particularly the Prime Minister and Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal General Asim Munir, for strengthening Pakistan's position at a critical time in regional geopolitics.

He said Pakistan's ability to maintain communication channels with multiple stake-



holders has created space for the country to contribute to peace efforts and facilitate dialogue where required.

Omar Butt noted that changing security dynamics could also create opportunities for Pakistan's defence industry. He said global demand for relatively low-cost defence technologies, particularly unmanned aerial systems and surveillance equipment, is likely to increase following the conflict.

According to him, Pakistan's growing expertise in cost-effective defence manufacturing places the country in a favourable position to expand its defence exports in the coming years.

"The evolving security environment will push many countries to strengthen their defence capabilities, and Pakistan has the capacity to supply competitive equipment," he added.

Butt also said the conflict has exposed vulnerabilities in parts of the Middle East that were previously considered secure investment

destinations. As a result, he expects investors to explore alternative markets, including Pakistan, particularly in the real estate and infrastructure sectors.

He emphasised that Pakistan could benefit from a potential increase in investment from Gulf Cooperation Council countries seeking to diversify their economic partnerships while strengthening strategic ties with Islamabad.

However, Butt stressed that Pakistan must introduce clearer regulations and stronger investor protection mechanisms to attract and sustain foreign capital. Transparent property laws, streamlined approvals and policy stability would help convert potential interest into long-term investment, he said.

He added that if managed properly, the current geopolitical shift could translate into stronger economic cooperation, increased defence exports and deeper investment links between Pakistan and Gulf economies in the coming years.

## Wooden Key Rings

ISLAMABAD: A vendor selling key rings at his roadside setup at Faizabad area, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

## Petrol price hike sparks grave concerns among business community: RCCI

### Commerce Desk

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) has expressed grave concern over the sharp increase in petroleum prices, warning that the move will have far-reaching consequences for the economy, businesses, and the general public.

RCCI President Usman Shaukat, while reacting to the government's decision to increase POL prices, stated that the unprecedented hike—raising petrol prices by Rs137 per litre to a record Rs458.4—has effectively doubled transportation costs. He cautioned that this surge will significantly fuel food inflation and escalate construction expenses, further burdening both



consumers and the business community.

He noted that the new petrol price is disproportionately higher than trends in the international market, attributing the spike to the imposition of a record petroleum levy of Rs160.61 per litre. "Such excessive taxation is placing an unbearable strain on the economy and must be urgently reviewed," he said.

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### Commerce Desk

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## Virtual University to Conduct HEC's National Skill Competency Test Nationwide on April 4-5, 2026

### City Desk

ISB/KHI/LHR: In line with the Prime Minister's directives, the Higher Education Commission (HEC), in collaboration with the Ministry of Information Technology & Telecommunication (MoITT), Pakistan Software Export Board (PSEB), Pakistan Software Houses Association (P@SHA), and the

National Computing Education Accreditation Council (NCEAC), has initiated a structured consultative process to address the industry, academia skill gap.

The initiative aims to align computing education with industry requirements, enhance assessment credibility, and improve graduate employability. As part of this effort, the Virtual University of Pakistan

(VU) has been designated as the testing body to conduct the computer-based National Skill Competency Test (NSCT).

The NSCT will be held nationwide on April 4-5, 2026, across 112 cities and 165 test centers. A total of 40,784 students from 199 universities offering computing and IT disciplines have registered. Eligibility was extended to students enrolled in the

## FCCI urges extraordinary creativity, strategic thinking to tackle mounting economic challenges

FAISALABAD: Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) President Farooq Yousaf Sheikh has called for extraordinary creativity and strategic thinking from trade and development officers to tackle mounting economic challenges arising from rapidly changing global dynamics and tensions in the Gulf region.

Addressing officers of the 31st Special Training Program of the Pakistan Institute of Trade and Development (PITAD) via a Zoom meeting, he stressed the need for innovative and diversified approaches to safeguard the national economy.

He highlighted Faisalabad's pivotal role in national exports, import substitution, economic stability and job creation and said that this city continues to provide a conducive environment for industrial growth and new

investments. He said that despite difficult circumstances, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir have achieved significant diplomatic successes, contributing to economic stability.

Referring to fuel availability, he said that effective administrative measures by the government have ensured uninterrupted supply of petroleum products despite rising prices, in contrast to shortages being witnessed in some neighboring countries.

He appreciated the efforts of Punjab Chief Minister (CM) Maryam Nawaz and Divisional Commissioner Raja Jahangir Anwar for restarting stalled development projects and improving coordination between the administration and business community.

## Asif Sakhi Slams Fuel Price Hike

### Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Asif Sakhi, Vice President Federation Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI) and Chairman of the Businessmen Panel Progressive Karachi, has expressed deep disappointment over the unprecedented hike in petroleum product prices, terming it disastrous for the national economy, businesses, and industry.

In a statement, Asif Sakhi said petrol prices have surged from Rs258 to Rs458 per litre — a staggering 77 percent increase. "This decision will sharply raise production costs, making Pakistani goods even less competitive in global markets," he warned.

## AlphaX Launches Copy Trading, Delivering Smart & Accessible Crypto Strategies

### Commerce Desk

PAKISTAN: AlphaX, a high performance on-chain crypto-currency exchange committed to delivering a simplified, efficient and reliable trading experience, today announced the official launch of its highly anticipated copy trading feature, marking a significant step forward in making professional-grade trading strategies accessible to a broader audience.

AlphaX Copy Trading allows copiers to automatically mirror the trading strategies of experienced Lead Traders in real time. By leveraging a transparent data-driven system, users can make informed decisions selecting Lead Traders based on performance metrics and customize how they follow trades, while Lead Traders can monetize their expertise through profit-sharing and platform incentives.



**NATIONAL SKILL COMPETENCY TEST**

APRIL 4-5, 2026

7th and 8th semesters. For further assistance, candidates may contact the Virtual University Help Desk via email at nsct@vu.edu.pk or through official contact numbers.

## PSL Pakistan Super League Cricket Championship Edition 11

## Lahore Qalandars defeated Multan Sultans by 20 runs due to excellent batting and bowling

Asim Tanveer

LAHORE: Lahore Qalandars defeated Multan Sultans by 20 runs in the PSL Pakistan Super League Cricket Championship match due to excellent batting and bowling. 11. Sultans' team lost to Lahore Qalandars by 20 runs due to a wrong decision on the toss. As a result, this is their first defeat of the current season. Lahore Qalandars are once again on the winning track. The match was reduced to 13 overs due to rain at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore. Multan Sultans started chasing a tough target of 186 runs, but only 13 runs were scored in the first 2 overs. It was not a good start. The Sultans' first loss was to Steven Smith in 2.5 overs, who was bowled clean by Shaheen Afridi for 9 off 10 balls. On the first ball of the fourth over, Josh Philip was caught for one off Ubaid Shah. It was the sixth over when the century maker of the previous match, Sahibzada Farhan, was caught by Mustafizur Rahman on a total of 50. The catch was taken by Abdullah Shafiq. He made 24 off 15 balls. Shan Masood hit fast, accompanied by captain Ashton Turner. Still, only 81 could be scored in 8 overs. 105



runs remained off 30 balls. During this, 2 fielders of Lahore Qalandars tried to take catches. In the attempt, they collided with each other. One had to go out of the field. Multan Sultans completed 100 runs in 9.2 overs. Here, Shan Masood gave away 44 wickets in 18 balls, he hit 1 six and 7 fours. Ashton Turner and Arafat Minhas were trying to reduce the margin of defeat. Sultans could score 165 runs for 5 wickets in 20 overs. Thus, Qalandars won by 20

runs. This was their second win in the event and Multan's first defeat. Ashton Turner was not out with 52 runs off 22 balls. Arafat Minhas scored 25 runs off 11 balls.

For Lahore Qalandars, Shaheen Afridi took 1 wicket for 32 runs in 3 overs and Mustafizur Rahman took 2 wickets for 37 runs in 3 overs. Obaid Shah took one wicket for 34 runs in 3 overs.

Earlier, the toss of the rain-affected



match was held at 8:30 pm local time. This meant that the match was limited to 13 overs per innings due to excessive delays. The crucial toss was won by Multan Sultans captain Ashton Turner but he surprisingly invited Shaheen Afridi to bat first on a wet ground. As a result, the Qalandars openers put on a show that stunned the Sultans camp. The power play was 3.5 overs, in which Qalandars scored 66 runs without any loss. The first 50 runs were scored in

20 balls. 100 runs were scored in 6.2 overs. The Sultans got their first victory for 86 runs, when Pervez Hussain scored 45 runs in 19 balls and was caught by Mohammad Nawaz. He hit 5 sixes and 2 fours. The bowler was Ismail. Abdullah Shafiq scored 33 runs on the last ball of the 9th over. Caught. At that time, Qalandars' score was 144. On the last ball of the 10th over, opener Mohammad Naeem was dismissed after scoring a brilliant 60 runs. He

played 28 balls. He hit 4 sixes and 4 fours. Qalandars' fourth loss came on the second ball of the 12th over, when Rabil Herman was clean bowled by Peter Siddle after scoring 3 runs on a total of 164. However, he played 6 balls in a fast match. Lahore Qalandars scored 185 runs for 5 wickets in 13 overs. Asif Ali made 8. Sikandar Raza was not out on 13. Sultans gave 23 ashtrays in their 13 overs innings, of which 14 were wide balls. It was as if 15.2 overs were bowled. Qalandars' innings had 11 sixes and 11 fours. This meant that 110 runs were scored in 22 balls. But met the boundaries.

Mohammad Ismail took 2 wickets for 47 runs in 3 overs. Peter Siddle gave away only 26 runs in 3 overs and took one wicket. Faisal Akram took one wicket for 31 runs in 2 overs. Mohammad Nawaz scored 19 runs in one over and Arafat Minhas scored 22 runs in one over. No wickets were taken. Mohammad Wasim scored 33 runs in 3 overs. No wickets were taken. Four cricketers including Warner, Zampa leave PSL.

There will be a match of PSL 11 on Saturday, April 4. In the 12th match, Rawalpindi will face Islamabad United. The toss will start at 6:30 pm.

## Punjab to organise six mega sports events in April

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Sports Board Punjab has announced the schedule of mega sports events scheduled to be organized in April. A total of six mega sports events will be organized in April in which thousands of male and female athletes will exhibit their sports skills.

DG Sports Punjab Tariq Qureshi, in this regard, presided over a meeting at the National Hockey Stadium on Friday in which the preparations of mega events were reviewed in detail.

The meeting was attended by Director Sports Chand Parveen, Punjab Olympic Association (PBOA) CEO Idris Haider Khawaja, Deputy Director Zahoor Ahmed, Hafeez Bhatti and Punjab Olympic Secretary Waqar Ahmed.

Addressing the meeting, DG Sports Punjab Tariq Qureshi said that Sports Board Punjab will organize 21-km marathon, 5-km women's race, family fun race, special persons' wheelchair race, 21-km



cycle race and CM Punjab Swimming Championship in the month of April.

PBOA CEO Idris Khawaja, senior coach Salman Butt and others also gave

valuable suggestions regarding the events in the meeting.

## Line crossed': Chelsea's Enzo Fernandez dropped for two matches

Argentina midfielder Enzo Fernandez will miss Chelsea's next two matches after he "crossed a line" with comments that cast doubt on his future at Stamford Bridge.

The 25-year-old, linked with Real Madrid, fuelled speculation by telling a podcast he would like to live in the Spanish capital.

Defender Marc Cucurella also spoke openly about "instability" at the club and questioned its recruitment strategy.

Fernandez's remarks, however, were viewed as the most damaging and the strongest indication yet that he may be considering a move.

After Chelsea's Champions League exit at the hands of Paris Saint-Germain last month, he said he did not know whether he would still be at the club next season.

Head coach Liam Rosenior confirmed Fernandez would not be part of the



squad for Saturday's FA Cup quarter-final against Port Vale and next weekend's Premier League game against Manchester City.

"I spoke with Enzo about an hour ago," Rosenior said on Friday. "As a football club, with me as part of the decision, he won't be available for tomorrow's

game or Manchester City next Sunday. "It's disappointing for Enzo to speak that way. I have got no bad words to say about him, but a line was crossed in terms of our culture and what we want to build."

Fernandez joined Chelsea for a then-British record £107 million in 2023 and was named vice-captain the following year. After a challenging start, he has become one of the club's most influential figures both on and off the pitch.

"Enzo, firstly, as a character, a person and a player, I have the utmost respect," said Rosenior. "He's frustrated because he wants us to be successful."

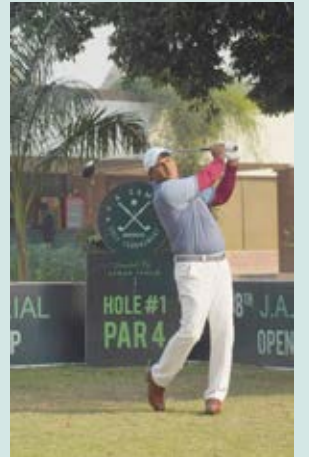
"In terms of the decision, it's not all about me, or the sporting directors, the ownership, the players; we are aligned in our decision. The door is not closed on Enzo. It's a sanction. You have to protect the culture and, in terms of that, a line was crossed."

## M. Matloob in winning form in J. A. Zaman open golf championship on 2nd day

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: On the 2nd day of Zaman open golf tournament the champion who continues to sparkle is m.matloob of Lahore garrison golf club. Under extremely trying and competitive conditions m

Matloob continued his victory march by producing another under par round, not as excellent as the first one but dominating all the same. His first round was an unbelievable 64 and the second round a gross 69. He thereby managed an aggregate score of 133 for two rounds and that makes him the leader with an under par score of 11 under for a golf professional player that represents a gigantic achievement. As for immense competition in the run of play he has been challenged by the defending champion m. shabbir Iqbal of Islamabad. After two rounds shabbir Iqbal becomes a real competitor by improving his standing in this championship. He now has a score of 138, six under par. After him is Muhammed Saqib of Lahore Garrison. His score is 139 five under. Next is Muhammed Zubair at 140 four under par followed by Muhammed Azam at 141, three under par. The other competitors too are pursuing with great golfing effort and finesse. A cut was placed today and from now on only 55 professional players will be seen in action



## Asim Khan reaches final in World Squash Championship Asian Qualifier



Sports Desk

KUALA LUMPUR: Pakistan's squash player Asim Khan has secured a place in the final of the World Squash Championship Asian Qualifier.

In a thrilling semifinal match, Khan defeated Hong Kong's Mang Hang Tang by three sets to two, showcasing resilience and skill under pressure.

The winner of the final will earn qualification for the main draw of the World Squash Championship, providing an important opportunity to compete at the global level.

## Arab League calls for urgent international action

Continued from Page 1

The council reaffirmed the importance of the Hashemite custodianship over Islamic and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem and stressed that Al-Aqsa Mosque, in its entirety, is a place of worship exclusively for Muslims under the administration of the Jordanian Waqf.

Additionally, it condemned Israeli policies aimed at undermining the work of UNRWA, including efforts to close its offices and schools in Jerusalem,

calling for increased political, legal, and financial support to the agency.

The council rejected any decisions that alter the legal status of Jerusalem, including the relocation of diplomatic missions to the city, and warned that such moves would violate international law and harm relations with Arab states.

It also strongly condemned the execution of Palestinian prisoners, describing it as a serious violation of international

human rights law and international humanitarian law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention.

The council held Israel, the occupying power, fully responsible for the legal and humanitarian consequences of the law, stating that its application exclusively to Palestinians reflects systemic discrimination and undermines their fundamental rights.

It called on the international community, particularly the UN Security Council and the

Human Rights Council, to take urgent action to compel Israel to repeal the law, release all prisoners and detainees, and adhere to international legal standards governing the treatment of detainees.

The council further urged the International Criminal Court to open an immediate investigation into the law and pursue accountability for Israeli officials.

It also called on the International Committee of the Red Cross to intensify its efforts

to gain unrestricted access to Israeli detention facilities.

The statement concluded with a call for Arab and international parliamentary bodies to work toward suspending the membership of the Israeli Knesset in international parliamentary unions and to impose punitive measures in response to its legislation.

The Palestinian delegation to the session was headed by Palestine's representative to the Arab League, Ambassador Muhammad Al-Aklouk.

## A Crisis Ignored: Missing Minor Girls in IIOJK

Continued from Page 4

that the state does not protect the region, and that the system is so negligent and unaccountable, is an indication of a bigger dismissal of human rights that cannot be overlooked.

The fact that the Indian government has not dealt with this humanitarian crisis in IIOJK underscores the necessity of international intervention. The disappearance of minor girls continues to happen in this area, and this reveals how the state has failed to provide security to its citizens, especially the most

vulnerable group. The Indian government needs to assume accountability for its actions, and the international community needs to hold it responsible for its failure to safeguard human rights. Only then can we hope to see an end to the cases of missing girls and ensure that such a tragedy is never repeated again.

The author is a student of International Relations at the International Islamic University, Islamabad. Currently, he is serving as an intern at the Kashmir Institute of International Relations Islamabad.

## Group photo

Hon'ble Chief Justice of Pakistan in a group photograph with a delegation of 24 Senior Civil Judges from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, who are under training at the Federal Judicial Academy Pakistan under Professional Exchange Program.



Photo: PID

## Fuel price surge issue bulldozes NA session

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: A stormy session of the National Assembly was thrown into disarray on Friday after a sharp increase in petroleum prices triggered fierce protests by opposition lawmakers, forcing the proceedings to be adjourned amid chaos.

According to the details, the session began under the chair of Deputy Speaker Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah but quickly turned turbulent as opposition members launched a strong protest against the recent fuel price hike.

Lawmakers held placards, chanted slogans against the government and gathered in front of the Speaker's dais, tearing copies of the agenda in a dramatic show of dissent.



Despite repeated appeals from the deputy speaker urging members to return to their seats and raise their concerns after the question hour, the opposition

continued its protest.

Opposition leader Junaid Akbar criticised the government, accusing it of imposing a sudden and severe burden on the public by increasing

petrol prices overnight.

During the session, the deputy speaker directed that criticism should remain within parliamentary limits and not target the estab-

lishment, ordering certain remarks to be removed from the official record.

However, the intensity of the protest and disorder left little room for legislative business, prompting the chair to adjourn the session until Monday evening.

Earlier in the proceedings, Member of the National Assembly Munaza Hassan raised serious concerns over the challenges faced by media workers, following a walkout by journalists a day earlier in protest against layoffs and non-payment of salaries.

Munaza informed the House that, on the instructions of Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, lawmakers Shazia Marri and Barrister Aqeel Malik were sent to engage with the protesting journalists after their boycott of proceedings.

## PM's directive, NHA withdraw quarterly increase in toll tax



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The government has suspended the proposed quarterly increase in toll plaza fees on the directives of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, in a move aimed at providing relief to the public amid prevailing economic challenges.

Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan directed the National Highway Authority (NHA) to withdraw its notification issued on April 1 and halt the increase that was scheduled to take effect from April 5, said a press release issued on Friday.

Following the minister's instructions, a fresh notification has been issued formally cancelling the earlier decision.

Furthermore, while chairing a

high-level meeting of the National Highway Authority, Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan described the Karachi Port-Hyderabad M-10 Motorway as the "Economic Lifeline" of Pakistan. He emphasized that the M-10 will be an 8-lane project, essential for strengthening connectivity between ports and inland areas as well as for reducing traffic congestion in urban centers.

He directed the NHA to immediately engage international consultants and top-tier engineers for the feasibility study and initial work on the M-10 Project. To modernize travel facilities and promote local trade, the project will also include state-of-the-art rest areas and shopping facilities at every 10 kilometers along the Motorway, Abdul Aleem Khan added.

## Jamaat-e-Islami launches nationwide protests against petrol price hike

News Desk

KARACHI: Jamaat-e-Islami has strongly condemned the recent increase in petroleum prices and announced the launch of a nationwide protest movement starting today.

In a statement, Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan's Ameer, Hafiz Naeem-ur-Rehman, said the government has dropped a "petrol bomb" on the public, calling the hike in petroleum products unacceptable.

He described the increase in petrol prices to Rs 458 as a grave injustice, noting that successive increments of Rs 55 and then Rs 137 represent extreme oppression of the



people.

He added that the poor and middle classes are being buried alive under economic pressures, with these sections of society severely affected.

Rehman criticized the rulers for refusing to curb their extravagant lifestyles, pointing out that costly airplanes and luxury cars are a burden on the public.

According to him, the price hike directly impacts bikers, delivery workers, students, and laborers, and the burden is not limited to fuel alone.

Taxes have also been increased, while levies that should have been removed remain in place, further straining the public.

## Sindh govt waives motorcycle transfer fee

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali

Shah on Friday announced relief measures including a Rs2,000 subsidy for each registered motorcyclist, transfer of payments directly to verified owners' bank accounts, and waiving motorbike transfer fee.

Speaking at a press conference in Karachi, Chief Minister Murad said petrol will not be available at reduced rates at fuel stations, the government will provide direct financial assistance to motorcycle owners.

He added that an application will be operational within two to three days, allowing registration of motorcycles through national identity cards.

He further announced that motorcycle transfers have been made free of cost from today, urging owners to transfer their vehicles in their names within 15 days.

The government will provide a subsidy of Rs100 per liter, and after 15 days, Rs 2,000 will be transferred to each registered motorcyclist.

## Ethiopia Showcases Tourism & Culture at Pakistan's Largest Travel Expo

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Ethiopian Embassy Islamabad, in collaboration with Ethiopian Airlines, opened the "Ethiopian Enclave" at the Pakistan Travel Mart 2026 which kicked off here on Friday in Karachi Expo Center.

The Ethiopian Enclave has been designed to showcase the nation's ancient heritage, diverse tourism landscapes, and vibrant cultural identity.

The Enclave received a high-profile reception, welcoming senior officials of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan including Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, Coordinator to the Prime Minister of Pakistan on Tourism and Aftab ur Rehman Rana, Managing Director of the Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation.

Visitors experienced traditional



Ethiopian coffee ceremony while discussing bilateral opportunities in hospitality and travel sectors.

The exhibit drew a massive response from Karachi residents, media representatives, and travel

agencies, successfully positioning Ethiopia as a premier destination for Pakistani travelers.

The Ethiopian Enclave will remain open at the PTM 2026 uptil April 5 (Sunday).

## Mohsin Naqvi announces free public transport in Islamabad for a month

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has announced that public transport will be free in Islamabad for a month. Interior Minister made this announcement on his social media handle on X. He wrote that "on the directions of the Prime Minister, all public transport in Islamabad will be made free of cost for the general public for the next 30 days, starting tomorrow. The Ministry of Interior will bear the expenditure of Rs. 350 million for this public relief initiative. Thank



you for your attention to this matter".

Interior Minister Naqvi made this announcement after the government on Thursday announced an unprecedented increase of 43 per cent and 55pc in the prices of petrol and high-speed diesel (HSD), respectively.

## Rana Sanaullah says fuel crisis not govt-made

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister's Adviser Rana Sanaullah stated that the ongoing fuel crisis is not of the government's making and assured that measures are being taken to provide relief to the public.

Speaking to the media in Islamabad, he said the world is currently facing an energy challenge, with global prices of petroleum products rising. He added that Pakistan is also being affected by these international trends.

Rana Sanaullah emphasized that the government is providing targeted subsidies to ease the burden on citizens and has ensured the availability of petroleum products through timely



measures. He noted that in several countries, fuel shortages have led to long queues and limited availability of petrol and diesel.

He further said the government is implementing austerity measures and urged the public to remain patient and play a constructive role during the crisis. He warned that protests and political agitation at this stage could weaken the country.