

DAILY MIRROR

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Cabinet Committee maintains close watch on energy supplies; reviews stocks, global trends

APP

ISLAMABAD: The Committee to Monitor Petrol Prices met on Tuesday to review the energy supply situation and assess developments in global oil and gas markets amid evolving geopolitical conditions.

The meeting of the committee was chaired by Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, according to press release issued by finance ministry.

The Committee undertook a forward-looking assessment of the national petroleum supply outlook, reviewing stock availability of crude oil and refined petroleum products across the energy value chain.

Members were informed that overall inventories remain at comfortable levels, supported by secured import arrangements and ongoing production. Supply lines from import terminals to refineries, storage installations, and retail outlets were reported to be operating in a stable and orderly manner, ensuring continuity of supply across the country.

Members were also briefed on inbound logistics and maritime operations supporting fuel supplies, noting that cargo inflows continue as scheduled and petrol cargoes for March and now for April have largely been secured, with additional shipments planned to further strengthen supply buffers.

Refineries are operating at regular production levels, with efforts underway to maintain optimal throughput and ensure efficient processing of incoming crude.

A detailed review of national stocks and international energy market conditions was presented, highlighting notable movements in global benchmarks. The Committee assessed emerging global price signals and their transmission implications, noting that the government was actively evaluating price divergence between international and domestic markets to support balanced and timely policy calibration.

The committee placed particular emphasis on operational readiness across the domestic energy chain and under-

scored that refineries must continue operating at optimal throughput levels to sustain supply stability and reduce systemic vulnerabilities. The meeting also included a detailed assessment of international energy market trends and geopolitical developments impacting global supply dynamics.

The Committee also reviewed ongoing government-to-government (G2G) engagements aimed at strengthening supply resilience and mitigating risks. Members were briefed on diversified sourcing strategies and logistical arrangements with key partner countries, to secure crude and refined products, enhance storage and transshipment options, and ensure flexibility in procurement and financing mechanisms.

These coordinated efforts are aimed at reinforcing energy security and safeguarding supply continuity under evolving market conditions.

On the occasion, the finance minister underscored that proactive planning, diversified procurement strategies, and close coordination among stakeholders have enabled Pakistan to maintain a stable domestic supply position despite global volatility.

He directed all relevant authorities to continue vigilant monitoring of international developments, stock levels, and supply chain dynamics to ensure timely and coordinated policy responses.

He reiterated that ensuring uninterrupted availability of petroleum products remains the government's foremost priority and emphasized that sustained coordination and prudent planning will continue to guide efforts to maintain market stability and safeguard national energy security.

The meeting was attended by the Federal Minister for Power, Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari; Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research, Rana Tanveer Hussain (virtual); Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs, Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhary (virtual); Minister of State for Finance, Bilal Azhar Kayani, along with federal secretaries and senior officials from relevant ministries, divisions, and regulatory authorities.



Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, Chairs Meeting to Review National Fuel Stocks and Global Market Developments in Islamabad.

PM Shehbaz says Pakistan ready to host US-Iran talks as FO acknowledges role in de-escalation efforts

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said on Tuesday that Pakistan was "ready and honoured" to be the host to negotiations between the United States and Iran as the Foreign Office (FO) acknowledged that the government was actively pursuing diplomatic avenues to help bring an end to the ongoing war in the Middle East, while cautioning against media speculation that could undermine sensitive efforts requiring discretion.

In a post on X, the premier said: "Pakistan welcomes and fully supports ongoing efforts to pursue dialogue to end the war in Middle East, in the interest of peace and stability in region and beyond."

Subject to concurrence by the US and Iran, Pakistan stands ready and honoured to be the host to facilitate meaningful and conclusive talks for a comprehensive settlement of the ongoing conflict."

Earlier, in an exclusive conversation, FO

spokesperson Tahir Andrabi said Islamabad remained firmly committed to resolving the conflict through dialogue and engagement, in line with its longstanding foreign policy principles.

However, he stressed that such efforts required confidentiality.

"Diplomacy and negotiations often require that certain matters be advanced with discretion," he noted, urging the media to refrain from speculation and await official announcements.

Pakistan's cautious public posture comes as it quietly emerges as a key player seeking an end to the escalating US-Iran conflict. According to American media reports and officials familiar with the developments, Islamabad is being positioned as a potential venue for negotiations between Tehran and Washington.

The diplomatic opening followed US President Donald Trump announcing a temporary halt in hostilities, citing what he described as "constructive engagement" with Iran.

US-Israeli attacks, Iran fires multi-warhead missiles, Israeli president narrowly escapes

MONITORING DESK

Tehran: The war in the Middle East has entered its 25th day. Israel ignored Trump's decision to postpone the attack and announced that it would continue attacking Iran. In response, Iran fired multi-warhead missiles at Israeli and American bases.

The Revolutionary Guards have said that they have launched a new wave of attacks under Operation Promised Sadiq 4. During the 78th wave,

American targets and Israel were targeted in the region, with attacks carried out using multi-warhead missiles and drones on various targets, including Eilat, Dimona, and northern Tel Aviv.

According to the Revolutionary Guards, Emad and Qadr missiles were used in these operations, while US military bases in the region were also targeted.

So far, most of the Revolutionary Guards' combat units and Basij forces have not been fully deployed, but they will be included if necessary.

Meanwhile, the Iranian military said that President Trump should take his head off the telephone and social media and focus his eyes on the sky, the stock market, and oil prices. Iran is about to deliver a big surprise.

ADB announces support package for developing countries affected by Middle East conflict

INP

ISLAMABAD: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) on Tuesday announced a financial support package to help its developing member countries (DMCs) mitigate the economic and financial impacts resulting from the conflict in the Middle East.

In a news release, ADB President Masato Kanda said, "ADB will deliver rapid, flexible, and scalable assistance to help countries manage immediate pressures and strengthen long-term resilience, notably fast-disbursing budget support and trade and supply chain finance to secure the import of essential goods, now including oil."

"This builds on our strong track record of supporting Asia

and the Pacific through periods of global uncertainty," Kanda added.

According to the ADB release, the bank has ample resources to safeguard existing and planned operations while expanding emergency support in line with DMC needs, including the utilisation of its countercyclical lending buffer.

"The bank is closely monitoring global market developments and their potential implications for economies across Asia and the Pacific, particularly regarding energy price volatility, inflationary pressures, and external account balances," the release said.

ADB's latest analysis indicated that disruptions to shipping routes had already increased costs and delivery times.



Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zaidong called on the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar, at MoFA

DPM/FM Dar, his UAE counterpart discuss evolving regional situation

APP

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar and United Arab Emirates Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Tuesday, exchanged views on the evolving regional situation.

The DPM/FM spoke with his UAE counterpart and underscored the importance of peace and stability, calling for immediate de-escalation and emphasizing that dialogue and diplomacy remained the only viable path forward, the Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press release.

Dar also expressed deep sorrow over the loss of precious lives, including three Pakistani nationals, and reaffirmed Pakistan's steadfast solidarity with the UAE.

President confers awards on armed forces personnel

APP

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has conferred military awards on the officers and soldiers of Pakistan Army, Navy and Air Force.

According to ISPR, eleven officers and men were awarded Sitara-i-Basalat, four hundred seventy-five were granted Tamgha-i-Basalat, one hundred thirty officers and men were awarded Intiaz-i-Asnad, three hundred seventy-eight officers and men were given Chief of Army Staff Commendation Cards, twenty-three officers and men were granted Hilal-i-Intiaz (Military), one hundred officers and men Sitara-i-Intiaz (Military) and one hundred thirty-six officers and men were awarded Tamgha-i-Intiaz (Military).

PTI decries 'blatant violation of rights' as Imran's sisters again barred from meeting him at Adiala jail

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Sisters of incarcerated PTI founder Imran Khan were again not allowed to meet him at Rawalpindi's Adiala jail on Tuesday, while his party termed the persistent denial of meetings with the ex-prime minister a "blatant violation of fundamental human and constitutional rights".

The IHC has allowed Imran twice-a-week meetings — on Tuesday and Thursdays — with his family, lawyers and other associates. Despite the order, the ex-premier has not been largely restricted from meeting visitors for several weeks.

His last meeting took place with his lawyer, Salman Safdar, on February 10, after the Supreme Court's intervention following a long period of no visits being allowed.

Speaking to the media outside the Adiala jail, one of Imran's sisters, Aleema Khanum, said it was important to determine the cause of Imran's medical issues, which have garnered attention in recent days.

Concerns mounted after partial vision loss in Imran's right eye was reported via Safdar after he met him. Doctors later confirmed that, with glasses, the PTI founder had 6/9 partial vision in the right eye.

On Monday, Imran underwent a third eye procedure at the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (Pims). In a statement issued by the hospital, the PTI founder was brought to Pims for a third dose of an anti-VEGF intra-vitreal injection.

Meanwhile, Imran's family and personal doctors want him to be admitted to Shifa International Hospital in Islamabad and have been demanding that his personal physicians be provided access to him.

Aleema was also questioned why the government was insisting on Imran's son — who live with their mother in the United Kingdom — travelling to Pakistan on their National Identity Card for Overseas Pakistanis (Nicops) to meet their father instead of issuing visas for them to travel on British passports.

Last week, Jemima Goldsmith, the former spouse of PTI founder Imran Khan, also alleged that the government was recommending that the former premier's sons travel to Pakistan on Nicops as they would have "no British protection" then. Aleema further lamented that they were also not allowed to meet Imran on Eidul Fitr. Her sister, Noreen Niazi decried that "there is no law in the country". "We have been coming here for so many days and there has been no damage to any public property," she maintained, adding that allegations of the PTI "creating a law and order situation are wrong".



KARACHI: CM Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti in a meeting with Former Minister Mir Naseer Mengal.

Pakistan's role in promoting peace at global level commendable: Adviser

APP

Quetta: Adviser to Chief Minister for Environment and Climate Change Naseem-ur-Rehman Khan Mulakhel on Tuesday said that Pakistan's role in promoting peace at the global level is very proud and commendable.

He said that the recent progress is a clear manifestation of Pakistan's balanced foreign policy.

effective diplomatic strategy and its unwavering commitment to lasting peace and stability in the region.

He said that Pakistan has always played a positive, constructive and responsible role in resolving global and regional conflicts, which is a reflection of its diplomatic vision and peace-loving spirit.

The adviser paid tribute to the leadership of Prime Minister of Pakistan Mian Shahbaz Sharif and Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir for this important achievement saying that due to their wise leadership and timely steps, Pakistan is emerging as an effective mediator at the global level.

He further said that the success of these talks would not only reduce tensions in the region but also further strengthen Pakistan's positive image in the international community.

He expressed the hope that Pakistan would continue to play an active role in promoting peace, stability and positive dialogue in the future and further strengthen its identity in the world as a responsible state.

Ulema convention backs Pakistan leadership, endorses peace efforts, calls for Muslim unity

APP

ISLAMABAD: Religious scholars and spiritual leaders from all schools of thought in Pakistan have expressed full confidence in the country's political and military leadership, endorsing state policies on internal and external affairs while pledging complete cooperation for national stability and unity.

The consensus emerged during an "Istikhkam-e-Pakistan Ulema-o-Mashaikh Convention" held here under the auspices of the Pakistan Ulema Council and Muttahida Ulema Board, in collaboration with the National Peace Message Committee.

The participants unanimously backed the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Chief of Army Staff Syed Asim Munir, appreciating their efforts to promote peace and prevent escalation amid ongoing tensions in the Muslim world.

The convention, presided over by Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi, was attended by prominent scholars

including Syed Ziaullah Shah Bukhari, Maulana Muhammad Ramzan Sialvi, Dr. Asif Mir, Allama Zafar Ali, Mufti Ashiq Hussain, Allama Tahir-ul-Hassan, Hafiz Maqbool Ahmed, and Maulana Zahid Mahmood Qasmi, among others.

In a unanimously adopted resolution, the scholars stated that Pakistan's current civil and military leadership had played a key role in promoting unity within the Muslim Ummah and advancing efforts for peace through dialogue and diplomacy. They said Pakistan's diplomatic engagement had helped de-escalate tensions arising from the Iran-Israel-US conflict and related regional developments.

The participants praised the peace initiatives undertaken by the Prime Minister, the Foreign Office, and the military leadership, stating that Pakistan's role was being widely acknowledged at the international level.

The convention also condemned attempts by hostile elements to spread misinformation and create divisions within Pakistani society through propaganda, particularly on social media. The scholars reaffirmed their commitment to counter

such efforts and promote unity, harmony, and stability under the framework of Paigham-e-Pakistan.

The convention expressed gratitude to key Muslim countries, including Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, and Egypt, for supporting Pakistan's peace efforts and avoiding escalation. It also welcomed the stance of Arab countries in not becoming part of the conflict and appreciated conciliatory gestures made in response to regional tensions.

The participants strongly condemned Israel's decision to close the doors of Al-Aqsa Mosque for the past 25 days, preventing worshippers from offering prayers, terming it a grave violation of religious freedom and international norms. The convention announced that similar Istikhkam-e-Pakistan conventions would be held across the country to further strengthen national unity and promote inter-sect harmony.

Reaffirming Pakistan's commitment to the Muslim world, the scholars said the country would continue to play a proactive role in fostering unity and stability under the leadership of its current government and armed forces.

Provincial Minister takes detailed review of ongoing progress at Jinnah Institute of Cardiology, Lahore

By Maqsood khalid

Lahore: Provincial Health Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique reached the under-construction Jinnah Institute of Cardiology, Lahore to review the ongoing progress. Chairman Punjab Chief Minister Advisory Committee on Cardiology Dr. Farqad Alamgir, Principal Allama Iqbal Medical College Prof. Tayyaba Waseem and MS Punjab Institute of Cardiology Dr. Aamir Rafique Butt were also present.

The provincial minister reviewed the ongoing progress at Jinnah Institute of Cardiology, Lahore in detail. Maira Ali from the executing agency IDEP and contractors gave a briefing on the ongoing progress.

Provincial Health Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique expressed his views and said that the emergency and OPD of Jinnah Institute of Cardiology will be opened for the public very soon, God willing. The Punjab government is building a

state-of-the-art Jinnah Institute of Cardiology with a huge amount of more than Rs 15 billion. International level cardiac facilities will be provided to patients in this institution.

All the relevant institutions, including IDEP, are working day and night on JIC Lahore.

God willing, they are completing this cardiology hospital on time.

Thousands of patients of Punjab will benefit from Jinnah Institute of Cardiology Lahore.

He said that the Punjab government is striving to increase the treatment facilities for patients suffering from heart diseases and provide the best medical facilities at their doorstep. Patients coming to this cardiology hospital will be provided with the best surgeons, operation theaters, and treatment and care facilities.



QUETTA: A view of development work on Samungli road.

Punjab ensures free TB medicines at patients' doorsteps: CM Punjab

By Maqsood khalid

Lahore: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif says free medicines are being delivered to tuberculosis (TB) patients at their doorsteps across the province as part of efforts to eliminate the disease.

In her message on World TB Day, the chief minister reaffirms her commitment to continuing the fight against TB, stating that eliminating the disease is essential for a healthy Punjab.

She emphasises that timely diagnosis and effective treatment can save lives and calls for greater public awareness about TB.

She says the provincial government is providing free diagnostic and treatment facilities, including medicines and PCR tests, at public

hospitals.

Under the DOTS strategy, complete treatment is being ensured free of cost at district and tehsil hospitals, while lady health workers are also engaged in active case finding at the household level.

Maryam Nawaz says programmes are underway to deliver free medicines at home for patients suffering from TB, hepatitis and heart diseases.

She adds that public participation remains crucial in achieving the goal of eliminating TB.

The chief minister says special drug-resistant TB (DR-TB) centres are being established in the province for patients who do not respond to standard treatment. She notes that community health workers, civil society organisations, researchers



and private healthcare institutions are playing a supportive role in ensuring timely diagnosis and continuity of treatment.

She reiterates that the Punjab government has prioritised the eradication of TB as part of its broader public health agenda.

Federal Ombudsman Naveed Kamran Baloch Reaffirms Commitment to Institutional Strengthening, Redress Public Issues

APP

KARACHI: Federal Ombudsman Naveed Kamran Baloch, vowing to further improve the performance and efficiency of the Wafaqi Mohtasib Secretariat on Tuesday, stated that efforts will be made to reduce the complaint resolution timeframe, enhance the use of digital technology and promotion of informal dispute resolution mechanism for ensuring swift and effective redressal of public complaints.

The Federal Ombudsman expressed the views while chairing a meeting during his visit to the Regional Office Karachi. Member in charge and Provincial Coordinator for Sindh Ameer Ahmed Shaikh, Senior Advisor Syed Anwar Hyder and other advisors and senior officers were in attendance.

The Federal Ombudsman observed that the potential of Section 33 IRD has yet to be fully realized and described Implementation and Reforms Division (IRD) as a natural outcome of

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR). He underlined the need to further strengthen this mechanism, including the possibility of establishing a dedicated IRD framework for improved service delivery.

He acknowledged the immense responsibility of the office and noted the challenge of matching the contributions of his predecessors, while reaffirming his commitment to institutional strengthening.

The Federal Ombudsman deals with public complaints against 640 federal government agencies as well as utility providers and corporate entities, he said adding that measures will be taken to strengthen the human resource, expand the outreach, improve coordination with relevant departments and agencies and dissemination of awareness among the masses.

Quetta Metropolitan Corporation Administrator Zahid Khan Khilji Inspects Sewerage Drain on Arbab Karam Khan Road

PPI

Quetta: In a bid to address the alarming sewage issues plaguing the city, Quetta Metropolitan Corporation (QMC) Administrator Zahid Khan Khilji conducted a thorough inspection of a problematic sewerage drain during his visit to Arbab Karam Khan Road on Tuesday. The inspection, which underscores the growing concerns over the deteriorating sanitation infrastructure, comes at a time when residents have voiced increasing distress over potential health hazards. The lack of effective sewage management has raised fears of waterborne diseases, prompting urgent calls for comprehensive infrastructure.

NA Speaker, Dy Speaker congratulate Nehal Hashmi on assuming office of Governor

APP

ISLAMABAD: Speaker of National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Tuesday visited the residence of Governor Sindh, Nehal Hashmi, in Karachi.

The Deputy Speaker of National Assembly, Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah, was also present, said a news release issued here by the National Assembly Secretariat.

During the meeting, Ayaz Sadiq congratulated Governor Nehal Hashmi on assuming office and extended his greetings on the occasion of Eid ul-Fitr.

Ayaz Sadiq commended Governor for his long-standing political service and expressed his best wishes for his tenure.

Emphasizing the significance of the Governor's role, he said that the office of Governor Sindh is vital for fostering coordination between the provinces and the federal government.

He further remarked that Governor Hashmi's appointment reflects his extensive political experience and expressed confidence that he would play an effective role in strengthening federal-provincial relations and promoting public service.

New Province Never to be formed in Sindh: Nisar Khuhro

APP

LARKANA: Nisar Ahmed Khuhro, President of the Pakistan Peoples Party Sindh, has stated that the Peoples Party has buried the conspiracy against the unity of Sindh by getting a resolution passed in the provincial assembly, and as long as the Peoples Party holds a majority in the assembly, a new province will never be formed in Sindh.

He expressed these views while addressing office bearers and workers of the Peoples Party in the Qambar Shahdaktot district on Tuesday in Mirokhan.

He said that the constitution provides a method for creating new provinces, and according to the constitution, the approval of a resolution by a two-thirds majority in the relevant provincial assembly is mandatory for a new province. As long as the provincial assembly does not pass such a resolution with a two-thirds majority, a new province cannot be formed.

Nisar Khuhro stated that a new province will never be formed in Sindh while the Peoples Party is present, and if MQM Pakistan thinks it can regain its lost popularity by making such statements, it is mistaken. He said that the demand for a new province in Sindh was a conspiracy to incite hatred among the people, while the people of Sindh reject linguistic and sectarian.



QUETTA: Youngsters' ridding motorbikes in fast speed on Air Port road cause nay incident, needs attention of concern authorities'.



Foreign players start arriving as PSL 11 nears

SPORTS DESK

LAHORE: The HBL Pakistan Super League (PSL) 11 is set to commence on March 26 amid unprecedented circumstances, with several overseas players having arrived in Lahore to join their franchises for the tournament.

The 11th edition, running until May 3, features eight teams competing in 44 matches, but the event has undergone significant revisions due to a severe fuel crisis triggered by the ongoing conflict in West Asia involving Iran, the United States and Israel.

Zimbabwe all-rounder Sikandar Raza, a key retention for Lahore Qalandars, Australian batter Marnus Labuschagne (direct signing for debutants Hyderabad Kingsmen), fast bowler Riley Meredith, Sri Lankan wicket-keeper-batter Kusal Perera, and New Zealanders Devon Conway and Mark Chapman have reached Lahore.

Bangladeshi contingent including Mustafizur Rahman, Nahid Rana and Parvez Hossain Emon are expected late tonight, with PCB officials anticipating the arrival of nearly all foreign players by Tuesday night.

The tournament's format has been reshaped following government directives on energy conservation. Initially scheduled across six venues—including debuts for Faisalabad and Peshawar—the PCB scaled operations to only Lahore (Gaddafi Stadium) and Karachi, each hosting 22 matches.

All games will be played behind closed doors until the regional conflict concludes, with the opening ceremony cancelled as part of austerity measures. The fuel shortage stems from disruptions in global oil supplies, particularly through the Strait of Hormuz, prompting nationwide restrictions on movement, school closures, work-from-home policies and extended holidays.

The opening fixture pits defending champions Lahore Qalandars against new entrants Hyderabad Kingsmen at Gaddafi Stadium. Hyderabad Kingsmen, owned by American-Pakistani businessman Fawad Sarwar (who also owns Chicago Kingsmen in the US minor league), mark one of two fresh franchises this season, adding intrigue to the league's expansion.

The PCB has assembled a high-calibre panel of match officials. Sir Richie Richardson, from the ICC Elite Panel of Match Referees and a former West Indies captain, will make his PSL debut.

He has prior experience in Pakistan, having officiated four Tests and three T20s between 2017 and 2024, including the Pakistan vs World XI T20I series at Gaddafi Stadium.

The umpiring contingent features four ICC Elite Panel members: Pakistan's Ahsan Raza, New Zealand's Christopher Gaffaney, South Africa's Allahudien Paleker and England's Alexander Wharf.

They will be supported by Bangladeshi Sharfuddoula Saikat and New Zealander Chris Brown. Paleker and Saikat are set for their PSL debuts.

Local umpires include Asif Yaqoob, Rashid Riaz, Faisal Khan Aafreedi, Nasir Hussain, Zulfiqar Jan, Abdul Muqteet, Alay Haider, Imran Jawed and Tariq Rasheed.

Roshan Mahanama, a fixture in the PSL since 2017, returns as head match referee for the opener, poised to extend his record of 71 PSL matches officiated.



MANCHESTER City's Nico O'Reilly poses with the League Cup trophy as team-mates celebrate after defeating Arsenal in the final at the Wembley Stadium.

City's League Cup glory adds twist to title race

SPORTS DESK

LONDON: As Pep Guardiola wiped away the sting of the Champagne sprayed by his jubilant players after Sunday's League Cup final triumph against Arsenal, the Manchester City boss was confronted with a burning question.

Nico O'Reilly's second-half double had just sealed a 2-0 win in the Wembley showpiece, handing City a psychological boost at the expense of their Premier League title rivals.

But will Guardiola's record fifth League Cup serve as a catalyst to catch Arsenal in the title race?

The City boss, who hadn't masterminded a victory over his old assistant Mikel Arteta since 2023, knows beating Arsenal in a one-off showpiece occasion is difficult enough.

Finding a way to overhaul Premier League leaders Arsenal, who hold a nine-point advantage over second-placed City, is an even more daunting proposition.

"I would like to have nine points in front of Arsenal," Guardiola said. "I said to the players: 'Today, we are going to see what our level is.'"

They are the best so far, no doubt about that, so let's prove ourselves and in the second half, I could not believe we could do it against Arsenal.

"But this win will have no impact (on the title race). It is a different competition."

City have a game in hand on Arsenal and host the Gunners at the Etihad Stadium in April.

Yet Guardiola acknowledged even winning those two match-hes won't be enough for City unless Arsenal slip up elsewhere.

"They will be more controlled when they come to the Etihad. Maybe that game it will help us, but the Premier League is in their hands," he said.

"Is that team going to drop points? We will try to win our games and then see what happens."

After recent damaging draws in the league against lowly West Ham United and Nottingham Forest, as well as a limp Champions League last-16 exit against Real Madrid, City badly needed a trophy to lift the mood at the Etihad.

They went without silverware last term, but Guardiola believes this can be the start of a new era for a club with 19 trophies in all competitions since he arrived a decade ago.

"When you start to win and the generation is young you can continue that. I need to know how they behave in certain moments," Guardiola said of a team expensively revamped in the last 18 months.

"I can smell something that can flourish. Winning helps to anticipate the process."

"We are much better than last season but still we are not the team we should be. That requires time. Hopefully by the end of next season we will be."

"Fire in the belly"

Arsenal went into the final as firm favourites as they chased a first trophy in six years.

But they departed still waiting for the second major prize of the Arteta era, assailed with questions about their manager's selections and tactics, as well as a recurring habit of choking on the big stage.

Runners-up in the Premier League for the last three seasons, Arsenal cannot afford to let the Wembley defeat impact the rest of their treble-chasing campaign.

Long-term development, not winning upcoming World Cup, Pakistan's main aim: Samiullah

SPORTS DESK

FINALLY, there is some relief for Pakistan hockey fans, particularly for those who saw and felt the glory and pride of the past.

After a gap of eight years, Pakistan will be returning to the FIH men's World Cup later this year.

The former four-time champions made the global event after reaching the final of the World Cup qualifier held earlier this month in Ismailia, Egypt.

Though the Ammad Butt-led Pakistan were outplayed by England in the final 4-1, the qualification for the decider gave the Green-shirts a dream ticket to the Aug 15-30 World Cup — which will be co-hosted by the Netherlands and Belgium — to showcase their skills and try earnestly to reach the summit by competing against the world's best teams.

Now should a sincere Pakistan fan expect — or say fantasy — the national team to clinch the world title?

While looking at the unspeakably miserable state of affairs, both on and off the field, Pakistan hockey has gone through over the past three decades, only an extremely high level of optimism can urge one to do so.

Great Samiullah Khan, nicknamed Flying Horse, who was named chief selector last month by the ad-hoc regime of the Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF), thinks otherwise.

"[Realistically] our purpose is not to go for victory at all in this year's World Cup. I, as chief of the selection committee, have suggested to the PHF to participate in this World Cup and only improve our team's [world] ranking [by trying to win some games]," Samiullah said in an exclusive interview to Dawn.

"[In lead-up to the World Cup], we will first look to reach the top ten rankings by defeating relatively lower-ranked teams like Malaysia, Japan, South Korea and China," the 74-year-old added.

"Then in the World Cup, we will try to reduce the [loss] margins against major opponents like Holland, Belgium, Australia, Germany, England, Spain and India. The players [of the national team] for the World Cup will more or less remain the same with one or two changes possible."

Answering a question regarding Pakistan's poor show in the Ismailia qualifier final, two-time World Cup winner Samiullah spoke realistically.



World Cup Qualifiers: Pakistan team after qualification.

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Stopgap relief

THERE is fiscal logic in the government's decision to sharply increase the petroleum levy on high-octane fuel — a niche product consumed almost exclusively by owners of luxury and high-performance vehicles. By extracting around Rs9bn per month from those with the greatest capacity to absorb the cost, and redirecting that amount to shield the broader public from surging oil prices, the policy introduces an element of targeted relief.

That said, the merits of the move should not be overstated as the decision is more of a stopgap response than a strategy. Though not trivial, the step is modest relative to the pressures generated by the global oil price shock and does little to address the structural conditions responsible for our vulnerability to external energy shocks: deep reliance on imported fuels, a precarious external account and fiscal space too narrow to absorb prolonged volatility without raising prices or running deficits. Targeted relief buys time but time without reform is a deferred liability.

Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb's own admission that "hope is not a strategy" as the world waits for the US-Israel war on Iran to end applies with equal force to the government's broader approach to rising energy prices. The earlier steps announced — reduced fuel allowances, partial work-from-home arrangements, etc. — are also limited. Even if hostilities were to subside soon, downstream effects like supply chain disruptions, production shutdowns and rerouted trade flows could sustain elevated prices beyond any ceasefire.

The need is to move towards permanent structural demand management. Early closure of markets, restaurants and businesses — measures long avoided due to political economy constraints — should now be treated as baseline policy rather than emergency improvisation. Our energy consumption patterns are inefficient and poorly regulated because they have been politically inconvenient. With fiscal and external buffers as thin as they are, that inconvenience can no longer serve as justification for inaction. If the aim is to rebalance the burden towards higher-income groups, the petroleum levy adjustment is insufficient by itself. The deeper problem is not, as Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has repeatedly framed it, one of asking the elite to 'sacrifice' in times of crisis. It is the chronic failure to ensure that powerful segments of society consistently meet their existing tax obligations. A country where the majority live in poverty or are vulnerable to the slightest shock, cannot rely on ad hoc measures to deliver equity.

Broadening the tax base and eliminating preferential treatments for powerful segments of society are not crisis-time options, they are structural imperatives. The current crisis underscores how external shocks quickly translate into domestic instability when underlying imbalances remain unaddressed. The government's response so far does not show the scale of resolve required.

By Dr. Hamid Khan Al-Mashriqi

Pakistan At The EpicCentre of the world



Sometimes, nature works in such a way that the mind is left astonished. Look at today—the entire world's attention is on Pakistan. Just recently, the drums of a Third World War were being beaten, and now the world is looking towards Islamabad as if it were a savior.

Can anyone believe that a country which, until yesterday, was labeled a failed state and mocked for being trapped in IMF loans, has now reached a position on the global stage where the world is watching negotiations to prevent a third world war being held in Islamabad?

In Islamabad, the parties involved in what could be the most dangerous conflict of this century, along with mediators, are sitting at one table—under Pakistan's leadership and mediation. Over the past three/four weeks of war, while the United States and Israel have exerted their full force to defeat Iran, they have achieved nothing but failure and embarrassment. At the same time, Iran, while defending itself and launching counterattacks, is also becoming exhausted. Therefore, it is essential that this war ends as soon as possible—before the United States and Israel drag Arab countries, Europe, Britain, Australia, Japan, and NATO into it. On the other side, Russia and China cannot leave Iran alone and may also be forced to join openly, leading to a multi-front/multilateral war too terrifying to even imagine. I have always said that Field Marshal Asim Munir is extraordinarily fortunate—an example rarely seen not only in Pakistan but in modern history. If you study the period from when he became Army Chief until today, you will see this clearly.

But remember the saying: "Fortune favours the brave." This perfectly describes Pakistan's Chief of Defence Forces, Field Marshal Asim Munir. "Pakistan is not trying to replace traditional mediators. It is attempting to act as a bridge at a time when trust is severely lacking and communication channels are fragmented. What makes Pakistan relevant here is its access—military and political—to all parties except Israel."

Financial Times and Times of Israel have also reported today that: "Pakistan has presented itself as a key mediator and bridge to end the war between the United States, Israel, and Iran."

Other mediators in this effort include Turkey and Egypt. Egypt is representing Saudi Arabia and other affected Arab countries, while Turkey is

involved due to its NATO membership, strategic importance, and neutral position as Iran's neighbor. Therefore, the absence of Qatar or other Arab states does not significantly impact the process.

Despite an unofficial five-day ceasefire from the United States, attacks continue—Israel on Iran and Iran on Tel Aviv and other Israeli cities.

If you look at international media—from the United States to Britain, and from Israel to Turkey—one name is being echoed "Pakistan". BBC, Fox News, Bloomberg, CNN, Al Jazeera, NPR—all have confirmed this.

President Trump stated that in the past two days, there have been "very good and productive talks" with Iran, and both sides "want a deal."

He mentioned that envoy Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner spoke with a "high-level Iranian figure." The key demand is Iran should stop uranium enrichment. He told CNBC: "We are very close to a deal."

Meanwhile, Iran is still publicly rejecting the possibility of negotiations, although its Foreign Ministry spokesperson acknowledged that messages have been received

personally, Turkey's Erdogan respects him, and Iran's foreign minister listens to his country. This simultaneous access is Pakistan's real strength.

Pakistan's foreign policy has astonished the world. The successes that began last year continue to elevate the country daily. Much of the credit is attributed to Field Marshal Asim Munir, followed by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar.

However, the situation remains extremely tense, and nothing can be said with certainty. Even the five-day pause in fighting cannot be celebrated prematurely. The situation changes by the moment.

The key question is: will this temporary ceasefire become permanent?

If negotiations fail, why will they fail? The answer is one word "Israel". As the matter of fact Israel does not want a ceasefire and aims to expand the conflict under the concept of "Greater Israel." While at the moment it's very clear that Israel has not achieved its objectives so far.

1. Overthrowing the government in Iran
2. Installing Ahmad Reza Pahlavi in power



through friendly countries indicating that the U.S. wants to end the war.

According to CNN, Turkey's Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan made over a dozen phone calls in 48 hours—to Iranian, Egyptian, Qatari, Saudi, Pakistani, Norwegian, and other leaders—facilitating communication between parties.

Few people know that the Pakistani embassy in Washington represents Iranian interests, since the U.S. and Iran have had no diplomatic relations since 1979. This makes Islamabad a key communication channel.

Another important factor is the personal trust reportedly developed between Field Marshal Asim Munir and Trump.

Pakistan's defense agreement with Saudi Arabia also makes it indirectly involved, increasing expectations from Arab countries. Its 900 km border and longstanding ties with Iran further strengthen its role in mediation.

Amid all this, Field Marshal Asim Munir has maintained trust across all parties. Trump reportedly calls him a "favorite field marshal," the Saudi Crown Prince meets him

3. Destroying Iran's nuclear plants and capabilities
4. Eliminating Iran's missile strike capability
5. Completely eliminating Hezbollah in Lebanon
6. Eliminating the Houthi fighters
7. Completely wiping out Hamas and taking full control of Gaza
8. Imposing war on Turkey and Saudi Arabia under the name of "Greater Israel"
9. Netanyahu being elected as Prime Minister for the next 5 years

None of the above have been achieved and will be doomed if negotiations are successful. Therefore, Israel (MOSAAD) Zionist lobby in Washington may attempt to sabotage negotiations possibly through false-flag incidents or major events in the coming days. It's very clear that all parties except Israel want a ceasefire, and Pakistan has created a platform that allows all sides to be able to call a win win situation for "FACE SAVING".

May Allah protect Pakistan and grant success to its leadership in these efforts. Ameen.

By Arif Hasan | Hamna Syed

A single species

THE evergreen, coastal conocarpus erectus, also called the conocarpus tree, isn't native to Pakistan. It's known for its dense foliage, fast growth and high tolerance for harsh environmental conditions. It can withstand humidity, saline soil, drought, strong coastal winds and high urban pollution. It is particularly attractive to cities facing environmental stress. The tree can reach heights of six to over seven metres within a few years. It has narrow leaves, a compact canopy and small button-like flowers, which is why it's sometimes called the 'buttonwood tree'.

In 2008, the then Karachi mayor, Mustafa Kamal, introduced this tree to rapidly increase the city's green cover in response to growing urbanisation, dust pollution and rising temperatures. At that time, Karachi was expanding rapidly, with large sections lacking tree cover. The conocarpus tree was selected because it grows quickly, requires relatively little water, and can survive the coastal climate. Thousands of these trees were planted along roads, highways, parks and public spaces across Karachi. For many residents, this plantation drive was initially seen as a sign of improvement. Within a few years, many previously barren roadsides began to look greener. The tree's dense foliage created thick green hedges along major roads, giving the city a more landscaped appearance. In elite residential areas, particularly in neighbourhoods such as DHA and Clifton, conocarpus trees were also widely used as boundary hedges in elite homes, planted in rows to create walls for privacy, shielding houses from traffic and neighbouring properties.

Because they grow quickly and remain evergreen, they are a popular landscaping choice for both municipal authorities and private property owners.

Views on removing conocarpus trees have been mixed.

However, the large-scale planting of a single species soon attracted criticism from environmentalists and urban planners. A main concern was the ecological risk of monoculture, — the dominance of a single tree species across large urban areas. Experts argued that planting only one type of tree can reduce biodiversity and make urban ecosystems vulnerable to disease or pests that could wipe out entire tree populations. It was pointed out that the trees produce large root systems that can damage underground infrastructure, such as water pipelines.

Besides, some health experts claimed that pollen from the tree contributes to allergies and respiratory problems. The criticism led to a debate in Karachi about whether it was the right species for large-scale urban planting. As a result, in 2020, the Sindh government said that there would be no new conocarpus plantations and existing trees in some areas would gradually be removed or replaced. But the removal process wasn't rapid or systematic. In many areas of the city, the trees were not fully uprooted, with stumps left behind. The contractors responsible for the removal reportedly claimed that the wood retrieved was valuable and that timber from the cut trees was sold for crores of rupees. Still, the overall process remained unclear to many citizens, and there was little public communication explaining the exact reasons for the removal. Official plans suggested that the removed trees would be

replaced with a wider variety of native and flowering species better suited for ecological diversity — such as neem, amaltas, gulmohar and kachnar. These trees are known not only for providing shade but also for brightly coloured seasonal flowers.

However, many residents say this replacement hasn't been visible on a large scale. While some new saplings have appeared in certain locations, the promised widespread replanting has remained limited. If the replantation programme had been implemented on a larger scale in 2020, Karachi's landscape may have appeared very different today. Such diversity could have improved the city's microclimate, while also making urban spaces more visually vibrant.

Public views of the tree's removal have also been mixed. Some people working in areas where these trees were cut claimed that the dense hedges sometimes hid illegal activities such as drug use, making certain spaces difficult to monitor. Others strongly opposed the cutting, arguing that the trees provided much-needed shade for roadside businesses such as tea stalls and khokas. Without the trees, some residents feared the empty space might be occupied by informal structures or shanties.

Many citizens have suggested that the Sindh government should launch extension programmes encouraging citizens to plant suitable trees and that the Sindh Forest Department should provide saplings at subsidised costs. If such efforts were implemented consistently, Karachi could gradually develop a more diverse and sustainable urban forest.

DAILY MIRROR

China's 15th Five-Year Plan signals 4.5-5% growth while expanding Pakistan partnership

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Jiang Zaidong underscored the significance of China's newly unveiled Outline of the 15th Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development, describing it as a comprehensive roadmap for sustained growth, technological advancement and global cooperation.

Speaking at a press conference in Islamabad, the envoy said the plan, alongside the Government Work Report 2026, reflects Beijing's long-term vision and policy direction amid evolving global economic dynamics.

GROWTH TARGETS

The ambassador said the new five-year framework sends a "clear, positive and confident signal" to the international community, reaffirming China's commitment to stable and predictable economic expansion. Under the plan, the country aims to maintain a growth rate between 4.5% and 5% over the coming years. He noted that China continues to play a central role in the global economy, contributing nearly 30% to worldwide growth.

China's gross domestic product has already surpassed \$20 trillion in 2025, marking a significant milestone in its economic trajectory. The steady growth target reflects a shift towards high-quality development, balancing expansion

with sustainability and structural reforms.

INNOVATION PUSH

Highlighting the centrality of innovation, Jiang said China is accelerating its transition towards technology-led growth. The country's research and development spending reached \$522.8 billion, with plans to increase R&D intensity to 3.2% of GDP by 2030.

The artificial intelligence sector has emerged as a major driver, exceeding \$72.6 billion in value, while related industries have grown beyond \$290 billion. These figures underline China's ambition to strengthen its position in cutting-edge technologies and reduce reliance on traditional growth models.

In the space sector, China conducted more than 60 launches in 2025, demonstrating continued progress in aerospace capabilities. The ambassador also revealed plans for a Pakistani astronaut to join China's space station mission in 2026, signalling deepening scientific cooperation between the two countries.

TECH EXPANSION

China's industrial transformation is also reflected in its new energy vehicle production, which surpassed 12 million units, securing over 40% of the global market share. This rapid expansion highlights Beijing's focus on clean technologies and advanced manufacturing.

The country has also established the world's largest 5G network, with more than 3.5 million base stations accounting for over 60% of global infrastructure. Jiang said China is keen to enhance collaboration with Pakistan in digital connectivity and telecommunications development, particularly in expanding next-generation infrastructure.

TRADE STRENGTH

China's external economic engagement remains robust under the new plan. Total trade reached \$6.24 trillion, with the country accounting for more than 14% of global exports.

Foreign direct investment stood at \$174.3 billion, with high-tech sectors attracting 35% of inflows, reflecting investor confidence in China's evolving economic model.

Under the Belt and Road Initiative, China has expanded its global footprint, establishing over 50,000 enterprises across 190 countries. The initiative has delivered more than 3,000 projects, created approximately 420,000 jobs and contributed to lifting nearly 40 million people out of poverty.

GREEN FOCUS

Environmental sustainability remains a key pillar of the 15th Five-Year Plan. China's renewable energy capacity has surpassed 1.6 billion kilowatts, accounting for 55% of its total installed power capacity.



Peoples Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and First Lady Bibi Aseefa Bhutto Zardari Offer Condolences to Peoples Party Parliamentarians Vice President Senator Sherry Rehman on the Passing of Her Daughter Marvi Khurshid Malik.

Rally organized to mark Pakistan Day in Quetta

APP

Quetta: A grand and dignified rally was organized to mark Pakistan Day (March 23) by the District Administration Quetta in collaboration with the Lines Department from the Deputy Commissioner Complex.

A large number of officers, officials, students, teachers and citizens of various government departments participated in the rally.

The participants held national flags and raised slogans to express their love for the beloved homeland.

The rally started from the DC Complex and ended passing through various important highways of the city.

On the way, the citizens welcomed the rally and showed national enthusiasm. Effective security arrangements were also made so that the event could be completed peacefully.

On this occasion, the officers of the district administration, highlighting the importance of Pakistan Day, said that the Pakistan Resolution was presented on March 23, 1940, which formed the basis for the establishment of a separate homeland for the Muslims of the subcontinent.

Pakistan, Romania, Bahamas explore trilateral cooperation in energy, infrastructure, IT sectors

APP

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan, Romania and the Bahamas on Tuesday explored avenues to enhance trilateral trade and investment cooperation, with a focus on key sectors including energy, infrastructure and information technology.

The discussion took place during a meeting between Atif Farooqi, Advisor and COO of the Pakistan Romania Business Council, and Asad Ur Rehman, Honorary Consul of the Commonwealth of Bahamas in Pakistan.

During the meeting, both sides underscored the importance of strengthening business

linkages and facilitating knowledge sharing to unlock new economic opportunities among the three countries. They expressed keen interest in promoting collaboration across diverse sectors to boost trade volumes and investment flows.

Speaking on the occasion, Atif Farooqi highlighted the growing potential for trilateral cooperation, terming the engagement a significant step towards building stronger economic partnerships among Pakistan, Romania, and the Bahamas.

Tuberculosis elimination one of Pakistan govt's public health priorities: PM

INP

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif said the government of Pakistan made the elimination of tuberculosis (TB) one of its public health priorities and under a comprehensive strategy, measures were being taken to ensure early diagnosis of the disease, universal access to quality treatment, disease prevention, and patient care.

In a message on World Tuberculosis Day observed on March 24, he said for this purpose, the expansion of modern diagnostic facilities, improvement of the laboratory network, and strengthening of the surveillance system were being done and TB services were being integrated into primary health centers so that continuous treatment could be provided across the country.

He said, "Today, on World Tuberculosis Day, Pakistan, together with the international community, reaffirms its commitment to completely eliminate the treatable and preventable disease of tuberculosis."

"Even in the present era, TB remains one of the leading infectious diseases and remains a serious health, social and

economic challenge for many countries, including Pakistan," he said adding, "The disease particularly affects the vulnerable and has health, social and economic impacts in the form of poverty, malnutrition and inequality."

"World TB Day is observed every year to raise public awareness about the impact of the disease and to further intensify efforts to eliminate this epidemic," he remarked.

He said public participation was essential for the complete elimination of TB. Community health workers, civil society organizations, researchers, and private sector medical institutions were helpful in eliminating social stigma, encouraging timely diagnosis, and ensuring continuity of treatment.

"However, international cooperation, technical partnerships, and sustained global funding are indispensable for the complete elimination of TB," he observed.

He appealed to all relevant stakeholders, the federal and provincial governments, development partners, universities, private sector, media, and social leaders to further strengthen collective efforts to ensure that no person with TB was left untreated.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Chief Minister of Gilgit-Baltistan Justice (Retired) Yar Muhammad Nasir and GB Minister for Information and IT Ghulam Abbas called on Federal Minister for IT & Telecom Shaza Fatima Khawaja.

Pakistan Day observed with enthusiasm in Musakhel

APP

Quetta: Like the rest of the country, Pakistan Day was celebrated in Musakhel district with a very simple, dignified and traditional enthusiasm in Musakhel.

The events organized by the district administration were aimed at renewing the objectives of the Pakistan Movement and reaffirming the stability of the country. Pakistan Day began with special prayers and Quran recitation after Fajr prayers in mosques for the security, stability of the country and the successes of the Pakistan Army.

Deputy Commissioner Musakhel hoisted the national flag at the District Complex.

On this occasion, a well-dressed police contingent saluted the flag.

SP police, district officers, tribal elders and social workers participated in the ceremony.

After the flag hoisting, a grand rally

was taken out under the leadership of the Deputy Commissioner, in which citizens and government employees participated in full force.

The participants held banners and national flags and raised slogans in favor of Pakistan.

Addressing the rally, the Deputy Commissioner said that March 23 is a milestone in our history when the Muslims of the subcontinent dreamed of an independent state.

He said that we need this unity and discipline so that we could lead the country on the path of development.

In addition, a friendly futsal match was organized for the youth on the occasion of Pakistan Day, in which the players demonstrated excellent sportsmanship.

In addition, a local cultural festival was also organized, in which traditional game Kabaddi competitions were held, which were highly appreciated by the audience.

GB CM, IT minister meet Shaza Fatima; discuss progress on digital transformation and regional development

By Zahid Ahmed Khan

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan, Justice (R) Yar Muhammad Nasir, and GB Minister for IT Ghulam Abbas on Tuesday met Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Shaza Fatima Khawaja, to discuss progress on Pakistan's digital transformation and regional development initiatives.

During the meeting, Shaza Fatima said the government is actively working on nationwide digital transformation in line with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's "Digital Nation Pakistan" vision.

She said the prime minister is giving special attention to Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan to ensure their inclusion in the country's digital growth.

Both sides held detailed discussions on the Digital Nation Pakistan initiative, including the preparation and implemen-

tation of the National Digital Master Plan.

They agreed to accelerate a comprehensive digitalisation strategy across the country, with a focus on ensuring uniform digital development in all four provinces, as well as Gilgit-Baltistan.

The participants also exchanged views on adopting a coordinated approach to digitalisation across various sectors.

The meeting underscored the importance of promoting the digital economy and leveraging modern technologies for sustainable growth.

The federal minister directed the Pakistan Digital Authority to formulate a comprehensive plan aimed at creating employment opportunities for youth in Gilgit-Baltistan and boosting the digital economy in the region.

Special emphasis was laid on promoting tourism through digitalisation, with both sides agreeing to enhance digital tourism initiatives to unlock the region's potential.

Court extends interim bail of Bushra Bibi till April 9 in Nov 26 protest case

INP

RAWALPINDI: An Anti-Terrorism Court has extended the interim bail of Bushra Bibi, wife of PTI founder Imran Khan, till April 9 in the November 26 protest case.

The hearing was conducted by ATC Judge Amjad Ali Shah, during which Bushra Bibi's counsel Faisal Malik appeared before the court.

The defense lawyer requested the court to allow Bushra Bibi to join investigations in all cases, stating that police have so far not included her in any investigation.

The court directed that Bushra Bibi be included in investigations in 29 cases in the presence of her husband and legal counsel.

Meanwhile, the Anti-Terrorism Court adjourned the hearing of the GHQ attack case till April 7 without any proceedings.

During the hearing, the video link system between Adiala Jail and the court could not be activated again, preventing further progress.

Afghanistan announces release of detained US citizen

INP

KABUL: The Afghan Taliban regime announced on Tuesday that it was freeing a United States national who had been detained for more than a year.

The foreign ministry said the family of linguist and researcher Dennis Coyle had written to the supreme leader of Afghanistan, requesting his release for Eid.

"The Supreme Court of the Islamic Emirate deemed his period of detention sufficient and decided on his release," a statement read.

The announcement came after a meeting of Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi, US former special envoy to Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad, United Arab Emirates' ambassador to Kabul Saif Mohammed Al-Ketbi and a member of Coyle's family.

The UAE facilitated the release, the ministry said, adding that Coyle had been reunited with his family in Kabul today.

Coyle, 64, was arrested by the Afghan authorities in January 2025, according to the Foley Foundation, which advocates for the release of Americans taken hostage or arbitrarily detained abroad.

CMOD declaration marks major milestone in Power Sector reforms: Leghari

APP

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Power Division, Sardar Awaiz Ahmed Khan Leghari on Tuesday termed the declaration of the Competitive Market Operations Date (CMOD) by the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) as a defining milestone in Pakistan's power sector reform journey.

In a statement, the minister said the transition from a single-buyer model to a competitive, transparent, and market-based framework is the result of years of policy development, regulatory strengthening and institutional coordination. He noted that this marks a decisive shift from reform design to its practical implementation.

He emphasized that the competitive electricity market is anchored in transparency, open and non-discriminatory access to the transmission network, and enhanced accountability across the entire electricity value chain.

As part of a phased and responsible liberalization process, the Government has approved the transition of 800 MW of demand to bilateral contracting through transparent, automated competitive auctions over the coming years.

The minister highlighted that this progress has been made possible through the dedicated efforts and close collaboration of the Ministry of Energy (Power Division), NEPRA, ISMO, CPPA-G, PPIB, DISCOs, and other key stakeholders, and appreciated their valuable contributions.

He further stated that this achievement reaffirms Pakistan's commitment to strengthening governance, ensuring financial sustainability, and building investor confidence in the power sector.

Moving forward, he reiterated that the Government remains focused on delivering a reliable, efficient,

and future-ready electricity market that supports innovation, facilitates clean energy, and drives long-term economic growth in the country.

Pakistan emerges as central diplomatic player to mediate US-Israel-Iran war : FT

INP

ISLAMABAD: As the war involving the United States, Israel, and Iran enters its fourth week, Pakistan has emerged as a central diplomatic player, attempting to broker a ceasefire and prevent further regional destabilization.

According to a report by the Financial Times, Islamabad is positioning itself as the primary venue for potential peace talks between the Trump administration and Tehran. The diplomatic push involves Pakistan's top leadership. Field Marshal Asim Munir reportedly held a phone call with U.S. President Donald Trump on Sunday to discuss de-escalation strategies. Simultaneously, Pakistani Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has maintained a direct line of communication with Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian.

Sources familiar with the matter told the Financial Times that senior Pakistani officials are facilitating "back-channel" messages between Tehran and key U.S. figures, including Jared Kushner and

Steve Witkoff. The goal is to establish Islamabad as a neutral ground where both sides can meet to resolve the ongoing Iran war concerns and broader Middle Eastern hostilities.

Strategic Motivations
Pakistan's urgency stems from its unique geopolitical position. Sharing a nearly 1,000km border with Iran, Islamabad faces significant risks from the spillover of a full-scale. The closure of the Strait of Hormuz has already triggered energy shortages in Pakistan, and the threat of a massive refugee influx from Iran's Sistan-Baluchistan province remains a high priority for Pakistani security forces.

Regional Coordination
Pakistan is not acting alone. Foreign Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar has been in close contact with Turkish officials, who are also engaged in mediation efforts. While Iran's foreign ministry officially denies direct negotiations with the U.S., they have acknowledged receiving messages through "friendly states"—a nod to the critical role Islamabad.



Quetta Metropolitan Corporation Administrator Zahid Khan Khilji Inspects Sewerage Drain on Arbab Karam Khan Road.