

# DAILY MIRROR

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## Bugti orders expansion of telehealth, merit-based hiring in Balochistan healthcare system

APP

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti chaired a high-level review meeting to assess the progress of telehealth services across Balochistan, the implementation of a public model health plan in Upper Dera Bugti, and other key healthcare initiatives.

The session was attended by Provincial Health Minister Bakht Muhammad Kakar,

Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan, Health Secretary Mujeeb ur Rehman Panezai, and other senior officials. Participants received a detailed briefing on the province-wide telehealth system and the establishment of a model health district in Upper Dera Bugti.

Sarfraz Bugti directed authorities to ensure merit-based recruitment of hospital staff in Upper Dera Bugti and Sui, stressing that no administrative or political pressure would be tolerated in the hiring process.

Highlighting the importance of technology in healthcare delivery, he emphasized the need to expand telehealth services, noting that digital solutions can play a crucial role in providing medical care to remote and underserved areas.

He also instructed officials to expedite administrative arrangements to ensure quality healthcare at the district level, enabling timely and effective treatment for the public.

The meeting also reviewed operational matters related to Bacha Khan Memorial Hospital in Zarghoon Housing Scheme, Quetta. Bugti underscored that strengthening basic health units is essential to delivering healthcare at people's doorsteps, which remains a top priority of the provincial government.

CM Sarfraz Bugti reiterated the government's commitment to strengthening and streamlining the telehealth system across the province.

He emphasized that a robust monitoring mechanism is indispensable to ensure transparency, efficiency, and quality in healthcare service delivery.

## Trump urges Iran to act quickly on ceasefire plan 'before it is too late'

MONITORING DESK

DUBAI/TEL AVIV/WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump warned Iran on Thursday to "get serious" about a deal to end nearly four weeks of fighting, after its foreign minister said Tehran was reviewing the US proposal but that there were no talks on winding down the war.

Trump's comments came as the economic and humanitarian toll of the conflict mounted, with fuel shortages spreading worldwide, sending companies and countries scrambling to contain the fallout.

"Indirect talks" between the US and Iran are taking place through messages relayed by Pakistan, with other states including Turkey and Egypt also supporting mediation efforts, Pakistan's

Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said.

But Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi said this did not amount to negotiation. "Messages being conveyed through our friendly countries and us responding by stating our positions or issuing the necessary warnings is not called negotiation or dialogue," Araqchi said in comments broadcast late on Wednesday.

"At present, our policy is to continue resistance and defend the country, and we have no intention of negotiating," he added.

Trump said in a post on Truth Social on Thursday that Iran had been "militarily obliterated, with zero chance of a comeback", and was "begging" for a deal.

Calling Iranian negotiators "very different and 'strange'", he added.



ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari chairing a high-level meeting at Aiwan-e-Sadr along with Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, and cabinet members.

## Pakistan stresses coordinated economic, energy response amid regional tensions

INP

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's top civilian and military leadership on Thursday stressed the need for national consensus and closer institutional coordination to tackle emerging regional challenges, as the country faces pressure from rising energy costs and geopolitical uncertainty.

A high-level consultative meeting chaired by President Asif Ali Zardari at Aiwan-e-Sadr reviewed the evolving economic and energy situation against the backdrop of oil supply constraints, rising petroleum prices and regional security developments, according to a statement issued by the Presidency. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Chief of Defence Forces and Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir attended the meeting, along with senior cabinet members and economic officials.

Participants included Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar, PPP Chairman and former foreign minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Interior Minister Mohsin Raza Naqvi, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, Petroleum Minister Ali Pervaiz Malik,

Economic Affairs Minister Ahad Khan Cheema and the finance secretary.

The meeting reviewed fluctuations in global oil and gas supplies and their impact on Pakistan's economy, with particular focus on controlling inflation and ensuring energy security.

Finance and petroleum ministers briefed participants on measures to stabilise petroleum prices, manage the spillover effects of rising fuel costs across economic sectors and enforce fiscal discipline through austerity measures aimed at reducing expenditure pressures.

The broader regional situation also came under discussion, including implications for Pakistan's security, economic outlook and food security. Participants agreed that economic management, energy planning, food security and wider security considerations must remain closely aligned to address the challenges ahead.

The meeting underscored the importance of maintaining national consensus and strengthening institutional coordination, emphasising that policy decisions must prioritise stability while safeguarding public interests.

## Saudi envoy warns of regional escalation, appreciates Pakistan's peace efforts

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Nawaf bin Saeed Al-Maliki has expressed serious concern over the evolving situation in the Middle East, terming recent Iranian actions as a threat to regional and global stability while acknowledging Pakistan's diplomatic efforts for peace.

In a statement, the ambassador said that recent attacks attributed to Iran targeting Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states were a matter of "extreme concern," describing them as aggression against sovereign nations.

He stated that Gulf countries were not part of any conflict and added that such actions violate international law and the United Nations Charter.

Al-Maliki said the attacks had resulted in civilian casualties and targeted residential areas, urban infrastructure, airports, and hotels, highlighting the seriousness of the situation. He warned that the threats were extending towards the Strait of Hormuz, a key global route for shipping, energy supplies, and economic stability.

"The implications go beyond the region, turning into a global humanitarian issue that affects livelihoods, development, and energy security," he said. The ambassador stressed that ensuring regional stability is a shared responsibility and that respect for international law is essential for safeguarding the future.

## PM lauds China's economic support; reaffirms commitment to advance CPEC 2.0

APP

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday appreciating China's steadfast economic support, reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to advancing CPEC 2.0, with a focus on agriculture, industrial cooperation, and priority infrastructure projects.

The prime minister, in a meeting with Ambassador of China in Pakistan Jiang Zaidong here, emphasized continued close coordination at all levels on issues of mutual interest while reaffirming the enduring Pakistan-China All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Special Assistant to PM Syed Tariq

Fatemi, and the Foreign Secretary also attended the meeting.

The prime minister felicitated the Chinese leadership on the successful conclusion of the "Two Sessions" and thanked President Xi Jinping, Premier Li Qiang, and Foreign Minister Wang Yi for their warm Pakistan Day greetings.

Ambassador Jjiang commended Pakistan's economic resilience and reform efforts, and reaffirmed China's continued support, particularly in trade and investment.

Both sides expressed satisfaction on ongoing exchanges and looked forward to high-level engagements to mark the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations. Prime Minister Shehbaz also highlighted Pakistan's constructive role.



Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar Addresses Media in Islamabad Press Conference.



QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti chaired a high-level review meeting to assess the progress of telehealth services across Balochistan.

## Special attention paying on improvement of quality higher education for wider interest of students: Governor

APP

Quetta: Governor Balochistan Jaffar Khan Mandokhel on Thursday said that he is paying special attention on improvement of higher education of quality for wider interest of student in the province.

He said that in this regard as Governor, I have visited all three universities of Makran Division several times in the last two years, attended university convocations and even presided over various senate meetings of the University of Turbat, as a result of which our conscious efforts and strict monitoring are yielding excellent results.

He expressed these views while talking to the Vice Chancellor of the University of Turbat, Prof. Dr. Gul Hassan.

The Governor said that it is a moment of joy that the ranking of the University of Turbat has increased from 69 percent to

87 percent.

Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Gul Hassan and his entire team deserved tribute for digitalizing the entire system of Turbat University and shifting the traditional electricity system to solar energy.

Jaffar Khan Mandokhel directed the Vice Chancellor to introduce short courses focusing on skill development according to the new needs of the market.

He also formulated a strategy to introduce new varieties of dates and teach packaging according to world standards, considering the key role of date production in the local economy of Turbat.

Governor Jaffar Khan said that the promotion of higher education in the province has been given priority from day one and it is also gratifying that our rising youth respect their teachers and educational institutions very much.

## Tarar slams PTI founder's sons for shunning Pakistan, links them to anti-state plot

APP

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information Attaullah Tarar on Thursday said that Kasim Khan's "dictated" speech at the UNHCR in Geneva was part of an anti-state plot facilitated by Zulfi Bukhari and tied to Arif Ajakia and Naseem Baloch to undermine Pakistan's GSP Plus trade status.

He also accused Imran Khan's sons of not coming to Pakistan on NICOP and vowing such conspiracies would not derail the country's progress.

Talking to media, he alleged they were linked to conspiracies against Pakistan despite the government's goodwill in facilitating their telephonic contact with their father.

Linking Zulfi Bukhari to Arif Ajakia - whom he branded an "Indian agent" - Tarar alleged a conspiracy against Pakistan's economy, while also criticizing PTI's record in government and insisting such attempts will not derail the country's progress.

He alleged close ties between Zulfi Bukhari and Arif Ajakia, citing photographs of their interactions, and claimed Zulfi acted as a facilitator in shaping Khan's statement.

Tarar described Arif Ajakia as a "known traitor," alleging he is campaigning internationally against Pakistan alongside Baloch nationalist Naseem Baloch. He said Ajakia's nexus with Zulfi Bukhari was part of a conspiracy to strip Pakistan of its

GSP Plus trade status and damage the economy.

Tarar added that despite such efforts, Pakistan will continue to prosper. He questioned PTI's record in government, noting its failure to deliver on promises of five million houses and ten million jobs, while embroiling itself in scandals involving Farah Gogi and the £190 million case. He accused PTI of conspiring against the country but insisted their attempts would not succeed. Tarar alleged that the PTI founder never condemned Israeli atrocities in Gaza, urging correction if he was wrong. He claimed a conspiracy against Pakistan was hatched by Arif Ajakia and Naseem Baloch, linking them to unrest in Balochistan. Tarar said no political party would endorse such conspiracies except "a group of sycophants," and insisted Pakistan's national interest must remain above individual agendas. He lamented that Imran's sons avoid returning to Pakistan on NICOP, saying their father's political career is no more.

Attaullah Tarar said PTI no longer exists as a parliamentary party and its political model is not sustainable. He added that despite conspiracies, Pakistan will continue to prosper, stressing that the country's interests will never be compromised.

He accused PTI of prioritizing personal agendas over national interest while insisting Pakistan will continue to move forward.

Tarar recalled that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, as oppo-

sition leader, attended key meetings on Kashmir and Palestine, but then-prime minister Imran Khan chose not to participate due to Shehbaz's presence.

He emphasized that no political party is above Pakistan, stressing that the nation has given its people everything - positions, parties, and opportunities. National interest must remain the top priority, while political rivalry is natural, subordinating the country's interests to personal agendas is unacceptable, he added.

Tarar criticized PTI, saying Pakistan's major politicians have offered unprecedented sacrifices for the country, while PTI's record is marred by scandals such as the watch theft case, foreign funding fraud, and the £190 million corruption issue.

He argued that true leaders put Pakistan above personal interests, recalling the "Pakistan Khapay" slogan as an example of national unity. In contrast, he described PTI as a personality cult plagued by internal divisions, unable to mobilize supporters or set national policy. "They are fighting among themselves, even within families, and should be ashamed," he remarked.

Tarar said the government showed goodwill by allowing the sons of PTI's founder a telephonic conversation with their father.

He added they would be welcomed in Pakistan on NICOP and should not feel ashamed of their national identity.

## US-Iran indirect talks taking place as Pakistan relaying messages: Dar

APP

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar on Thursday said that the indirect talks between the United States and Iran were taking place through the messages being relayed by Pakistan.

"In reality, US-Iran indirect talks are taking place through messages being relayed by Pakistan," the deputy prime minister wrote on his X timeline.

He said that there had been unnecessary speculation in the media regarding peace talks to end the ongoing conflict in the Middle East.

Deputy Prime Minister Dar said that the United States had shared 15 points, being deliberated upon by Iran.

He said that the brotherly countries of Turkey and Egypt, among others, were also extending their support to this initiative.

"Pakistan remains fully committed to promoting peace and continues to make every effort to ensure stability in the region and beyond. Dialogue and Diplomacy is the only way forward," the deputy prime minister remarked.

## Shehbaz briefs Malaysian PM on Pakistan's diplomatic efforts for US-Iran negotiations

APP

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday received a telephone call from his Malaysian counterpart Anwar Ibrahim and briefed him on the latest diplomatic efforts, including discussions with leaders of Gulf countries and Iran, to bring the US and Iran to the negotiating table.

During their warm and cordial conversation, the two leaders exchanged Eid-ul-Fitr greetings and prayed for the unity and progress of Muslim Ummah.

The prime minister conveyed his deep appreciation to the Malaysian Prime Minister for his strong message of support for Pakistan's leadership and endorsement of Pakistan-led mediation efforts to end the ongoing hostilities in the Middle East.

While appreciating the prime minister for his outstanding leadership, the Malaysian prime minister also apprised him of his own conversations with various world leaders, wherein he had also emphasized the immediate need to end the Middle East war. He offered Malaysia's full support to Pakistan's peace efforts.

Prime Minister Shehbaz thanked Anwar Ibrahim and assured him that Pakistan would continue its sincere and genuine efforts in de-escalating the prevailing situation in the region. Both leaders agreed to remain in touch.

On Wednesday, Prime Minister Ibrahim, in a video statement, welcomed Pakistan's "timely and constructive" offer to host dialogue between the United States and Iran.

"Pakistan's relationships with the relevant parties, and its standing as a credible voice in the Muslim world, place it in a strong position to help create the conditions for meaningful negotiations," he said.

## Finance Minister, French envoy discuss economic engagement

APP

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb has said Pakistan remains committed to maintaining macroeconomic stability and advancing structural reforms to support sustainable economic growth.

He was talking to French Ambassador Nicolas Galey, who called on him in Islamabad today.

Welcoming the Ambassador, the Finance Minister underscored the importance Pakistan attaches to its longstanding and

multifaceted relationship with France, particularly in the areas of economic cooperation, investment, and development partnership.

Muhammad Aurangzeb said the Government is proactively monitoring developments and preparing policy responses to safeguard economic gains, ensure continuity in critical supply chains, and maintain investor confidence.

Discussions also covered Pakistan's engagement with international financial institutions.

The Finance Minister shared that Pakistan remains committed to its reform agenda under the IMF-supported programme.

## Engr Amir Muqam, APHC leadership condemn sentences of Kashmiri leaders, calls for global action

APP

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit Baltistan and SAFFRON Engr Amir Muqam on Thursday strongly condemned the sentencing of prominent Kashmiri leader Asiya Andrabi to life imprisonment, along with 30-year jail terms awarded to her associates Fahmida Sofi and Nahida Nasreen, terming the move a "grave injustice" and a violation of fundamental human rights.

Addressing a joint press conference organised by the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) in Islamabad, Federal Minister Engineer Amir Muqam said the verdicts reflect political victimization and an attempt to suppress dissent in Jammu and Kashmir. He alleged that judicial mechanisms are being used as tools to sustain what he described as "illegal policies," raising serious concerns about the impartiality of the system.

Highlighting the human rights situation in the region, Engr Amir Muqam claimed

that thousands of Kashmiris have suffered over the decades. He cited figures indicating that more than 96,000 people have been killed since 1989, while tens of thousands have been injured, widowed, or subjected to violence. He stressed that these statistics represent profound human tragedies affecting countless families.

Referring to developments following August 5, 2019, Amir Muqam criticized India's revocation of the region's special constitutional status, stating that it led to widespread restrictions on communication, movement, and freedom of expression. He said these measures have further exacerbated the humanitarian situation.

Engr Amir Muqam reiterated Pakistan's continued political and diplomatic support for the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination. He noted that Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar have consistently raised the issue at international forums, including the United Nations.



Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif Meets with Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Jiang Zaidong in Islamabad.

## CM Punjab: Stroke Management Program Saves Lives, Sets Example of Compassionate Healthcare

By Maqsood Khalid

Lahore, March 26: The Stroke Management Program launched under the leadership of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif has emerged as a remarkable example of public service and compassionate healthcare, saving lives during Eid-ul-Fitr. During the festive days, four individuals, including a woman, suffered severe stroke attacks in Lahore but were successfully treated in time at the Services Hospital Stroke Management Centre. Thanks to the prompt response of the neurology team and the administration of the life-saving TNK injection, all four patients recovered from the severe effects of

stroke within hours, avoiding both loss of life and permanent disability.

The patients—75-year-old Muhammad Akhtar, 70-year-old Talat Mahmood, 63-year-old Shareefa Bibi, and 50-year-old Amanat Ali—received immediate emergency care upon arrival. Their families expressed heartfelt gratitude to the Chief Minister and the medical team, acknowledging that such expensive treatment would have been otherwise unaffordable. One patient shared that he could not have managed the cost of the injection without government support, while another attendant praised the exceptional care provided during a critical moment on Eid.

According to Dr. Muhammad



Adnan Aslam, Head of the Neurology Department, symptoms of stroke include blurred vision, facial distortion, speech difficulty, imbalance, and weakness in limbs, and patients must be brought to the nearest stroke centre within the critical "golden hours" of three to four hours.

## ADC directs to ensure provision of healthcare facilities to public in health centers

APP

Quetta: Additional Deputy Commissioner (General) Muhammad Anwar Kakar on Thursday directed that provision of quality and prompt medical facilities to the public should be ensured in all health centers.

He said this while chairing a review meeting of the District Health Committee.

The meeting was attended by concerned officers of the Health Department, Medical Superintendents (MS) of various hospitals, Finance Officer and representatives of PPHI. During the meeting, a detailed review of the overall performance of Basic Health Centers (BHUs), Rural Health Centers (RHCs) and government hospitals established across the district was taken. The concerned authorities presented comprehensive reports regarding the facilities available in the health centers, supply of medicines, condition of medical equipment, facilities provided to patients and problems being faced.

The meeting particularly emphasized on uninterrupted supply of medicines, attendance of doctors and medical staff, cleanliness arrangements and provision of timely treatment facilities to patients. On this occasion, concerns were also expressed over the absence of staff and lack of facilities in some centers. While addressing the meeting, Additional Deputy Commissioner (General) Muhammad Anwar Kakar directed that provision of quality and prompt medical facilities to the public should be ensured in all health centers. He made it clear that negligence and absenteeism in duties would not be tolerated under any circumstances and strict action to be taken against such staff. He further said that improvement in the health sector is among the top priorities of the government, therefore all the concerned officers should discharge their responsibilities efficiently and take immediate steps to redress public grievances.

## Open court to be held in Surab on March 28

APP

Quetta: On special directive of Chief Minister Balochistan Sarfraz Bugti and Deputy Commissioner Shaheeb Sikandarabad Sourab Sahibzada Najibullah, an open court to be organized on March 28, at 11:00 am at Deputy Commissioner Complex in Surab.

The open court will be held in supervision of Assistant Commissioner Sourab Shayy Akbar Ali Baloch.

On this occasion, the public can be given an opportunity to present their problems directly before the district administration so that their immediate and effective solution to be ensured. In the announcement issued by the District Administration, all the respected political and social figures of the area have been requested to participate in the open court on time and bring their problems to the attention of the district authorities and play their role in their solution.

## Intending pilgrims advised to complete medical questionnaire on Pak Hajj App by Friday

APP

ISLAMABAD: The intending pilgrims have been advised to complete their medical questionnaire on the Pak Hajj App by tomorrow. Spokesperson Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Muhammad Umar Butt said digital medical records have been made mandatory for 119,000 Pakistani intending pilgrims selected for Hajj 2026.

He said the database is being developed in line with the directives of the Saudi Government to ensure prompt and accurate medical assistance during Hajj, given the intense physical exertion and potential

emergencies involved.

He said all pilgrims have been instructed to upload their health-related details on the app within the next 36 hours.

Muhammad Umar Butt said the questionnaire will play a key role in the coordinated provision of medical facilities to the intending pilgrims. It includes information on chronic diseases such as diabetes, high blood pressure, arthritis, thyroid disorders, asthma, and heart conditions, enabling medical personnel to access pilgrims' medical history in case of emergencies. The intending pilgrims have been advised to select "Yes" or "No" against each condition accordingly.



Unemployed Laborers Await Employment in Jinnah Town, Quetta.

## Light rainfall sweeps through Karachi, easing heat

INP

KARACHI: Light rain was reported in several parts of Karachi Thursday morning, offering some respite from the prevailing warm conditions in the city, following the forecast of light to moderate showers in the metropolis under the existing westerly system.

Drizzle was recorded in central areas including Saddar, Clifton, MA Jinnah Road and the Old City Area. The rainfall later spread to northern neighbourhoods such as North Karachi, New Karachi and Surjani Town.

Before the showers, gale-force winds lashed the port city.

While the showers were light, they brought a noticeable change in the weather, with cooler winds accompanying the rain in some localities.

The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has forecast cloudy weather in Karachi over the next 24 hours, with chances of rain and drizzle in parts of the city.

According to the Met Office, some areas in the port city may receive rain or drizzle

accompanied by strong winds and thunderstorms during the day today (Thursday). The department said the city's maximum temperature is expected to remain around 32 degrees Celsius.



## Shiffrin wins sixth overall title

SPORTS DESK

NORWAY: U.S. Alpine ski great Mikaela Shiffrin won a record-equalling sixth women's World Cup overall Crystal Globe in the final race of the season in Norway.

The 31-year-old needed only a top 15 place in the giant slalom in Hafjell and made sure of that in the second leg before sole rival Emma Aicher of Germany had left the start hut for her last run.

Shiffrin was 17th after the first run but ended up 11th, for 24 points, with 22-year-old Aicher then making a mistake and dropping from third to 12th.

"It's quite emotional," said the American. "This thing sums up the whole season of work and fighting... I have to say to Emma that her skiing has been just outstanding and today it was just so cool to watch her."

Canada's Valerie Grenier won the race, a combined 0.43 seconds clear of Norway's Mina Furer Holtmann and Austrian Julia Scheib, who had already secured the giant slalom Crystal Globe.

The final overall points tally was 1,410 for Shiffrin with Aicher 87 behind.

The overall title is decided by points from all four disciplines, with Aicher an all-rounder while Shiffrin has not skied downhill for two years and competed in only a few of the super-Gs.

The most successful skier in World Cup history with 110 wins has, however, won nine of 10 slaloms, the bedrock of



her season, and taken the globe in that discipline for a record ninth time.

She was also overall World Cup champion in 2017, 2018, 2019, 2022 and 2023.

The only other female skier to win six overall World Cup titles was Austrian Annemarie Moser-Proell, who won five in a row from 1971-75 and her sixth in 1979. On the men's side, Austrian Marcel Hirscher holds the outright record of eight. "I'm really, really grateful to be in this position now," said three-times Olympic champion Shiffrin, whose slalom gold medal at last month's Milano Cortina Games was another highlight of her year.



MIAMI: Switzerland's Belinda Bencic returns a shot to Coco Gauff of the US during their Miami Open quarter-final at the Hard Rock Stadium.

## Sinner powers past Michelsen to reach Miami quarter-finals

SPORTS DESK

MIAMI: Jannik Sinner powered into the Miami Open quarter-finals, defeating unseeded American Alex Michelsen in straight sets to stay on course for the "Sunshine Double".

Italian second seed Sinner, who is bidding to follow up his triumph at Indian Wells with victory in Miami, bided his time before completing a 7-5, 7-6(7/4) win in 1hr 41min.

The four-time Grand Slam champion, who will face 19th seed Frances Tiafoe in the last eight, was made to work hard by the 40th-ranked Michelsen.

After a cagey opening Sinner began to put pressure on Michelsen's serve in the ninth game of the first set, carving out three break points.

Michelsen rode out that storm, but Sinner finally broke through in the 11th game before serving out for the first set.

Michelsen hit back in the second set, breaking Sinner for a 4-2 lead before holding to go 5-2 up.

Michelsen appeared to struggle with the bright late afternoon sunlight on the Hard Rock Stadium's main court and Sinner came roaring back to force a tiebreak. Sinner sealed the win with a thumping serve that Michelsen could only return wide.

"I feel like I served very well in important moments and that helped me out, especially in the tough moments," said Sinner, who unfurled 15 aces to Michelsen's three.

"But today was not easy—I played a night match yesterday and today in the daytime, so the conditions were very different."

Home hope Tiafoe advanced to his quarter-final date with Sinner after battling past France's Terence Atmane 6-

4, 1-6, 6-4.

Spanish qualifier Martin Landaluce, ranked 151st in the world, upset American 32nd seed Sebastian Korda to score a 2-6, 7-6(8/6), 6-4 victory.

The win marked another impressive victory for the 20-year-old Landaluce, who eliminated Russian 14th seed Karen Khachanov.

Korda, who had beaten world number one Carlos Alcaraz in the previous round, had a match point late in the second set, but Landaluce survived to set up a quarter-final against Czech 21st seed Jiri Lehecka.

Landaluce, who had failed to register a single win at tour level in 2026 before arriving in Miami, dedicated his latest success to his late grandmother.

"She would have been 101 last week, and she passed away a few months ago. I wanted to give her the victory," Landaluce said.

Lehecka booked his place in the quarter-finals by ousting sixth seed Taylor Fritz 6-4, 6-7(4/7), 6-2 in 2hr 25min.

"I just felt that in the third set, if I wanted to beat a guy like Taylor, I just needed to go for it and be aggressive," Lehecka said.

American 22nd seed Tommy Paul set up a quarter-final against France's Arthur Fils after cruising past Argentina's Tomas Etcheverry 6-1, 6-3.

Fils beat Monaco's Valentin Vacherot 6-4, 6-7(4/7), 6-4.

Argentina's 18th-seeded Francisco Cerundolo followed up his upset of Daniil

Medvedev on Monday with a comfortable 6-4, 6-3 defeat of French 31st seed Ugo Humbert.

Cerundolo will face Alexander Zverev in the last eight after the German third seed defeated France's Quentin Halys 7-6(7/4), 7-6(7/1).

## Havertz eyes successful World Cup

SPORTS DESK

FRANKFURT: Germany forward Kai Havertz is close to his best form again after several injuries in the past 12 months, and a successful Arsenal run across three competitions in the coming months will be the best preparation for the World Cup, he said.

Havertz, who has been away from the national team for more than a year after missing last year's internationals through injury, is part of the Germany squad to face Switzerland on Friday and Ghana three days later.

"I had a tough time. It was not easy for me," Havertz told a press conference ahead of Germany's friendly against hosts Switzerland.

"I had my first injury in February last year, three and a half months out then comeback and then a setback with the knee injury," he added.

Havertz returned to action for the Premier League leaders Arsenal in January after being sidelined since August last year, but the 26-year-old said he was ready for his club's busy match schedule in the league, the FA Cup and the Champions League.

"I now feel completely fit. I need the one or other game from the start to reach 100 percent but I feel fit to start lasting over 90 minutes," he said.

Havertz added that Arsenal's busy schedule came just at the right time.

"We have many matches in three competitions. I missed the first six months of the season and I will give it all for the club, and to be able to go with a lot of confidence to the World Cup. I want to be successful at this World Cup and lead the way," he said.

Germany have set their sights on winning the World Cup following shock group-stage exits in 2018 and 2022, determined to restore their reputation as a global football powerhouse. The tournament starts in June and is co-hosted by Mexico, the United States and Canada.

The Germans, who have not reached a final in any major international tournament since winning their fourth World Cup in 2014 in Brazil, have been drawn in Group E with Ecuador, Curacao and Ivory Coast for the June 21-July 19 tournament.

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Kai Havertz celebrates scoring Arsenal's third goal against Tottenham during the first half.

Member APNS

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# At the crossroads

**OVER the next few days, the joint US-Israeli aggression against Iran can go either of two ways: nascent attempts at a ceasefire, in which Pakistan is playing a major role, succeed and lead to a long-term settlement. Or, if ominous reports that the US president is buying time to move in more troops and invade Iranian territory are to be believed, the war gets much worse.**

In both scenarios, the Trump administration holds the key: it can either choose a sobering climbdown leading to peace, or continue the doomed march towards an even larger war. There is a very slim window for diplomacy, and if this chance is lost, it is unclear when the next may come.

The US has reportedly sent ceasefire demands to Iran via Pakistan, while Turkiye is also engaging in shuttle diplomacy. Iranian officials are said to have termed US demands “unreasonable”.

Pakistan and other regional states realise that if this conflict spirals further out of control, it will create a maelstrom that will consume the entire region, while dealing a huge blow to the global economy. All rational states wish to avoid such a dystopian scenario, except the US and Israel.

The fact is that even close American allies are now voicing their disapproval at the aggression. For example, the German president has termed the war a “breach of international law”. Coming from the leader of a country that goes out of its way for Israel, this is significant. Similarly, the EU’s foreign policy chief has said “this is not Europe’s war”, while the Omani foreign minister has observed that “this war is not of [Iran’s] making”. Unable even to assemble a coalition of the willing to prosecute this illegal war, it is time for President Donald Trump to step back and create conditions conducive to a ceasefire and long-term calm.

If there are negotiations, it is relevant to ask what will be on the agenda. The Iranians want guarantees they will not be attacked again, and compensation for war damage. This demand is reasonable. However, if the US keeps parroting Israeli talking points, and insists on maximalist demands from Tehran, such as an end to its ballistic missile programme, then the talks are unlikely to go far.

For peace, the US and its regional proxy Israel must immediately cease hostilities, and create the right conditions for dialogue. Once matters calm down, states in the neighbourhood — Iran, the Gulf sheikhdoms, Turkiye, Iraq etc — must create a new regional architecture among themselves that promises collective security.

As the past few weeks have shown, the US has only one permanent interest in the region: Israel. It cares little for its Arab allies, which is why these states must forge a new, region-led security order.

By Khurram Husain

# Rising stakes

**WE all need this war to end. And we need it to end immediately. Already the impact is being felt around the world, but in Asia in particular. In Pakistan, its real impact will hit if it lingers for a few days more, but the fuel price hike already passed, and those in store, are enough to do more damage than you want to count.**

Here is a simple exercise. Take the various indices for international fuel prices: Brent, WTI, Dubai crude, and Murban (or Oman crude). Look at their prices over the month of March and you will notice two of them — Dubai and Murban (or Oman) — leaping ahead while the other two — Brent and WTI — climbing less sharply.

This is significant because the former two are fuels used across Asia (including Pakistan) while the latter two are used primarily in Western markets. Asia is the hardest-hit region in the world by the oil price and supply disruptions that the war is producing. And across Asia, countries are taking extraordinary steps to manage the fallout.

Visuals are now emerging of chaos at pumps in some parts of India and Bangladesh. Japan has authorised a release from its strategic reserves described as their “largest ever”, enough to cover 15 days of consumption. The release is larger than what it authorised after the Fukushima nuclear power plant disaster in 2011, probably the single largest energy shock Japan has ever experienced. Country after country is struggling with a fuel crisis that is only going to intensify in the days ahead. In the Philippines, President Marcos addressed the nation live to declare an “energy emergency” following record-high fuel price hikes that prompted strike calls from around the country. He promised free bus rides for students and schemes to subsidise fuel for taxis, motorcycles and public transport workers.

In Thailand, the government is considering reviving an emergency law from the

1970s as fuel stocks run dangerously low and visuals emerge of a crush of buyers at fuel stations around the country as panic buying spreads and fuel stations run out of stock. The law gives sweeping powers to the prime minister “covering the production, sale, transport, possession, stockpiling, export and import of all types of fuel”, according to a report in their local press. “That means the government could, in principle, impose fuel rationing, restrict operating hours for factories, cinemas, entertainment venues and restaurants, set conditions on vehicle use, and control electricity consumption in buildings and for advertising. Violations can carry severe penalties, including jail terms and fines. These powers were designed to allow rapid, centralised action rather than relying on separate ministries to respond under ordinary laws.”

In India, panic buying has spread, with police being called in some instances to manage order at fuel stations. The situation got bad enough to prompt a response from the government, which has tried to absorb the price shock in its fiscal buffers given that elections are approaching in some key states. Sri Lanka has rolled out an app-based rationing system that it developed in the days of their default, to ration daily sales of petrol per consumer, and allow the quotas to be tradable.

All around Asia, examples are piling up. Country after country is struggling with a fuel crisis that is only going to intensify in the days ahead. And they’re all reaching for extraordinary steps, each pulling up whatever arsenal of measures they have in their toolkit, to try to manage shortages that are crippling their economies. No country is unaffected. Those who have passed on even a part of the burden to their citizenry are feeling the heat. Those who have not, like India, are facing skyrocketing subsidy bills and panic buying regardless of the assurances their government is issuing. From China to Japan, Australia to India, the Philippines to Indonesia, and all in

between, everybody is reeling from the price and supply disruptions emanating from the blockage of the Strait of Hormuz.

One by one, they are throwing out the old textbook. This is a crisis no market mechanism can manage. The state has to step in. Some of the countries have far larger stocks than Pakistan — from 45 to 75 days of cover versus Pakistan’s 28 days — and yet they are struggling to control the situation. None of them can afford to carry the full cost of the price hike on their fiscal accounts. India is trying, but it has a bit of an unwritten rule there that governments don’t adjust fuel prices in the run-up to an election. It just so happens that this is no ordinary fuel price shock; how long it can hold on is anyone’s guess.

Pakistan has no choice but to navigate these waters. Our fiscal envelope is too weak to carry the burden of fuel price subsidies for very long. Having held them steady for two weeks now, the government is in the unenviable position of having to pass on another major jolt to the people to avoid derailing its fiscal framework altogether. It is developing rationing systems, which is fine, and hopefully the systems will work. It might consider freezing OMC margins too, and tell the oil companies to carry their share of the burden. But a price hike will become unavoidable within days now.

The petrol dealers’ association thinks it can make some hay while the sun shines. Sensing desperation from the government, they are asking for an increase in their margins as well, otherwise they are threatening to shut their pumps. Their point is that their capital cost has gone up sharply with the price hike, and they need more liquidity to be able to manage their ability to buy petrol and diesel stocks for onward sale. This demand should be resisted. The message needs to go out that this is not the time to be making profits. It is the time to share the burden. The situation is going to intensify, and greed must not be allowed to call the shots.

By F.S. Aijazuddin

# Another Nuremberg?

**WILL the world see another Nuremberg Trial? Or is accountability only for the history books? In 1946, an International Military Tribunal representing the victorious Allied powers (the US, UK, USSR and France) passed judgement at Nuremberg on 24 Nazi acolytes of Hitler. They included Hermann Göring, Rudolf Hess and Joachim von Ribbentrop.**

At the Potsdam Conference of 1945, the Big Three (Harry Truman, Clement Attlee and Joseph Stalin) were clear on why they had occupied a defeated Germany. They sought five Ds: “disarmament, demilitarisation, denazification, democratisation and decentralisation”. The tribunal members, however, differed on the trial’s aims.

The British wanted “a swift, political decision, rather than a judicial one”. Winston Churchill regarded Nazi leaders as “outlaws”, to be shot on sight. The Soviets introduced “the concept of crimes against peace”. Having suffered incalculable damage and the loss of 27 million Soviets, they demanded reparations. The US insisted on a reform of Germany’s body politic, an ‘Americanisation’ of Germany.

The French broadened the concept of culpability to include not just the Nazis but all Germans.

To understand that period, one should read Lara Feigel’s *The Bitter Taste of Victory: In the Ruins of the Reich*. It provides a searing insight into the years 1945-1949. It reveals a substrata of Western writers, painters, poets, actors, and film directors who travelled to Germany to report on the war’s gory aftermath. They included writers Ernest Hemingway, Evelyn Waugh, Rebecca West and Harold Nicolson; painter Laura Knight; poets

W.H. Auden and Stephen Spender; actors Marlene Dietrich and Sybil Thorndike; and film director Billy Wilder who compiled a documentary on German concentration camps. (Later, in 1959, he directed the comedy *Some Like It Hot*, featuring Marilyn Monroe.)

Leaders would have us believe that war is justified.

The recollections of each make chilling reading. Nicolson describes the once sinister Nazi defendants as “having the appearance of people who travelled in a third-class railway carriage for three successive nights”. Thorndike is asked to perform G.B. Shaw’s *Arms and the Man* in the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, where there were still “40,000 inmates [...] and 10,000 corpses rotting in the sun”. And Wilder, filming “a whole landscape of corpses”, focuses on a man who “glances apathetically at the camera. Then he turns, tries to stand up, and falls over, dead”. Yet, despite the horrors surrounding them, nothing prevented these aesthetes from conducting liaisons and affairs, often with Germans. For many of them, Berlin in July 1945 “became the site of a summer-long cocktail party, taking place against the backdrop of an overheated morgue”.

Leaders would have us believe that war is justified. They are wrong. It is no more than a bloodstained “jigsaw puzzle of fighting men, bewildered, terrified civilians, noise, smoke, jokes, pain, fear and unfinished conversations”.

If World War I was “the war to end all wars”, World War II spawned the hope that there would never be a World War III.

The Nuremberg Trials were part of that catharsis. Some like Waugh thought the trials an “injudicious trav-

esty”. Others like Nicolson saw it as a corrective restoration of man’s natural order: “The inhumane is being confronted with the humane, ruthlessness with equity, lawlessness with patient justice, and barbarism with civilisation.” The Nuremberg Trials differed from South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission (1995-2003), in that the TRC pinpointed individual accountability, not collective culpability.

Will Donald Trump, Benjamin Netan-yahu or any other leader ever be charged with war crimes? In 2024, the International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants for Netanyahu and his defence minister Yoav Gallant for crimes against humanity, “including us--ing starvation as a method of warfare in Gaza”. They have escaped the short arm of international law — unlike the Nazi Adolf Eichmann, whom Israeli agents abducted from Argentina in 1960, tried in Israel and then hanged.

Modern warfare recognises neither international law nor holy days. The Arab attack in 1973 took place during Yom Kippur; Israel’s latest blitz on Iran began on Feb 28 (a Sabbath) and violated Nauroz and Ramazan. Did Iran have the right to resist unlawful aggression? The answer lies in the French aphorism: “This animal is very bad; when you attack it, it defends itself.”

Meanwhile, as World War III limps into its fourth week, Trump has performed yet another political pirouette. He has declared a one-sided truce for five days. He claims “productive conversations” with Iran. Iran has repudiated this. Pakistan, in yet another diplomatic gyration, has positioned itself as a mediator, an honest broker in this conflict. It has all the qualifications. None could be more honest, and none broker.

# DAILY MIRROR

## Pakistan to play proactive role in regional de-escalation: FO

APP

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan will continue to play a principled and proactive role in building bridges guided by sincerity of intent and clarity of purpose for immediate de-escalation in the region.

This was stated by Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tahir Andrabi, at his weekly media briefing in Islamabad today.

The Spokesperson said we remained actively and constructively engaged with relevant regional stakeholders and beyond our region, consistently advocating for immediate de-escalation, cessation of hostilities and an irreversible path towards a peaceful resolution.

Tahir Andrabi said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is personally leading our diplomatic outreach to promote dialogue and understanding among all concerned parties. His recent public messaging have received wider international acknowledgement including by the leadership of the United States.

The Spokesperson said the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister,

Senator Mohammad Asaq Dar has also maintained closed and continuous robust engagement with his counterparts across the region and beyond in furtherance of these efforts.

Tahir Andrabi expressed concern over the circulation of speculation and unverified reports in certain sections of the media regarding developments in the region, and claims relating to diplomatic exchanges and even purported travel itineraries for that matter. He emphasized that diplomacy in moments of heightened sensitivity requires discretion, patience and confidentiality.

The Foreign Office Spokesperson urged all parties, all media platforms to exercise responsibility, refrain from conjecture and rely solely on official channels for accurate and timely information.

Replying to a question about reaction of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs on Pakistan response over sentence awarded to Kashmiri Hurriyat leaders Asiya Andrabi and others, the Spokesperson dismissed the Indian statement with the contempt that it deserves. India cannot conflate legitimate political dissent in pursuit of fundamental political rights with terrorism.

Tahir Andrabi said this is an old bogey of India that subsume everything, every political, legitimate political rights movement into terrorism.

About India's judicial process, the Spokesperson said concerns about their impartiality have been raised even by their own judges. He said the principal accused of Samjhota Express bombing case, who had confessed the crime, they got acquitted, raising serious questions about accountability and due process in India's judicial system.

Tahir Andrabi reiterated that Pakistan strongly condemns and unequivocally rejects the sentencing of prominent Kashmiri political leaders. The verdict reflects the pattern of political vendetta.

Commenting on the recent statement of Indian Minister of External Affairs, the Foreign Office Spokesperson said such undiplomatic rhetoric betrays a deeper sense of frustration. He said when arguments run thin, invective appears to fill the gap.

Tahir Andrabi said Pakistan does not subscribe to such megaphone theatrics. Our approach is anchored in restraint, decorum, and not in rhetorical excesses.



Quetta: Governor Balochistan Jaffar Khan Mandokhel in a meeting with Vice Chancellor of the University of Turbat, Prof. Dr. Gul Hassan.

### ECC approves Rs100 billion for PM's Austerity Fund 2026

INP

ISLAMABAD: The Economic Coordination Committee of the Cabinet has approved 100 billion rupees for onward transfer to the Prime Minister's Austerity Fund 2026.

The committee, which met in Islamabad today with Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb in the chair, also reviewed procurement of wheat for federal strategic reserves under the Interim National Wheat Policy 2025-26 through private sector participation.

The Committee also highlighted the importance of distinguishing between strategic and commercial reserves, ensuring that procurement decisions are aligned with actual requirements and do not impose unnecessary fiscal or storage burdens.

After detailed discussion, the ECC approved procurement of up to 1.0 million metric tons of wheat through a transparent and competitive process to be executed by the private sector.

### ECP disqualifies PTI Senator Murad Saeed

INP

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has disqualified PTI Senator Murad Saeed and issued his de-notification, according to an official notification.

The ECP stated that Murad Saeed had been sentenced to 10 years in prison by an anti-terrorism court in Rawalpindi. His disqualification has been carried out under Article 63(1)(h) of the Constitution.

An anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Rawalpindi delivered a verdict in the May 9 General Headquarters (GHQ) attack case earlier in March, sentencing 47 proclaimed offenders, including Pakistan

Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) figures, to 10 years imprisonment each, along with a fine of Rs500,000 per convict and the confiscation of their movable and immovable properties. Among the offenders was Murad Saeed, along with other top PTI leaders.

Under Article 63(1)(h) of Pakistan's Constitution, a lawmaker stands disqualified if "he has been, on conviction for any offence involving moral turpitude, sentenced to imprisonment for a term of not less than two years, unless a period of five years has elapsed since his release".

### Efficient, judicious use of resources essential for saving national exchequer: Ayaz

By Zahid Ahmed Khan

ISLAMABAD: Speaker of National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Thursday emphasized that the efficient and judicious use of national resources would be ensured.

During a meeting with Federal Minister for Finance, Muhammad Aurangzeb, Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry, Senior officers from Federal Board of Revenue and Ministry of Law and Parliamentary Affairs at Parliament House.

The meeting focused on the ongoing austerity policy being implemented as per directions of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, as well as detailed discussions on the process of Federal Budget for Fiscal Year 2026-2027.

During the meeting, Muhammad Aurangzeb appreciated the austerity measures

undertaken by the National Assembly Secretariat under the leadership of Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, terming these a commendable example of prudent financial management and reduction in government expenditures.

He said that savings generated through

the austerity campaign will help reduce the burden on the national exchequer.

The minister further highlighted that elected representatives have set a precedent for the nation by voluntarily reducing their salaries.

NA Speaker underscored the importance of extending the austerity drive to other institutions to further alleviate financial pressure on the national treasury.

He also lauded the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for making timely decisions during challenging circumstances, which helped steer the country away from a major crisis.

Dr. Tariq Fazal also appreciated the Speaker's austerity initiatives.

He stressed that given the prevailing regional situation every citizen must actively contribute to the austerity campaign.

Ayaz Sadiq reaffirmed full cooperation with the Ministry of Finance for the upcoming budget 2026-2027 session and emphasized the importance of close coordination between the National Assembly Secretariat and the Ministry of Finance to ensure the smooth and successful conduct of the budget session for the next fiscal year.

### Pakistan, Oman reaffirm commitment to expand energy partnership amid evolving regional situation

APP

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik, on Thursday, held a meeting with Fahad Bin Sulaiman Bin Khalaf Alkharusi, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to Pakistan, to discuss the evolving energy situation in the region and avenues for strengthening bilateral cooperation in the energy sector.

The federal minister highlighted that Pakistan and Oman enjoy long-standing, cordial and brotherly relations, rooted in shared history, mutual respect and strong people-to-people ties. He reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to further expand the bilateral energy partnership and explore new areas of collaboration. During the meeting, the Federal Minister apprised the Ambassador of Pakistan's ongoing efforts to diversify its energy imports and ensure supply resilience, particularly by exploring alternative routes and sources outside the

Straits of Hormuz in light of the changing regional dynamics.

The Ambassador welcomed Pakistan's push towards diversification and conveyed that Oman stands ready to support Pakistan in enhancing its energy security.

In this regard, the Federal Minister expressed optimism that Oman would consider Pakistan's request for preferential energy cargoes to meet its growing requirements. The Ambassador responded positively and assured that the request would be considered favourably.

During March, three cargoes of petrol and one cargo of diesel were imported from the ports of Oman. Two more cargoes of petrol will be imported during March from Oman ports.

The meeting also discussed opportunities for enhanced cooperation in the upstream sector, including exploration and production, and underscored the importance of expanding collaboration in oil and gas development projects.

### PM visits Sherry Rehman's residence in Karachi to offer condolences on daughter's passing

INP

KARACHI: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif arrived in Karachi on Thursday and visited the residence of Senator Sherry Rehman to offer condolences over the demise of her daughter, Marvi Malik.

The prime minister expressed deep grief and extended heartfelt sympathies to Sherry Rehman and her family. He also offered prayers for the departed soul, praying Allah Almighty to grant her the highest place in Jannat-ul-Firdous.

"Losing a young child is an unbearable grief for parents," the prime minister said, adding that there are no words to adequately describe the pain of such a loss. He prayed for strength and patience for the bereaved family in this difficult time.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, Sindh Governor Nihal Hashmi, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar, Federal Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal and Federal Minister for Law Azam Nazeer Tarar were also present on the occasion.

### Dr. Tariq reaffirms Pakistan's commitment to strengthening ties with Japan

INP

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry, on Thursday met with senior officials from the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, including Masakatsu Morotani, Director of the Southwest Asia Division and Ayako Shimizu, Senior Deputy Director.

Welcoming the delegation, Dr. Tariq Fazal highlighted the long-standing and cordial relations between Pakistan and Japan.

He reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to working closely with the Japanese government to further expand bilateral ties.

The Japanese officials appreciated the Minister's remarks, emphasizing that both countries would continue to enhance cooperation across all sectors and work jointly for mutual progress.

During discussions on the regional situation, the minister said that Pakistan fully supports all diplomatic efforts and negotiations aimed at ending the ongoing conflict in the Middle East. He added that the Prime Minister of Pakistan, in a statement on X, had expressed the country's

### PM orders a practical strategy to promote investment in construction, housing sector

APP

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday directed the relevant authorities to formulate a practical strategy to further promote investment in the construction and housing sector and ensure its implementation.

He instructed that all public and private sector stakeholders, including provincial governments as well as Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, should be included in the formulation of the strategy.

Chairing a meeting held here to review measures for promoting investment in the housing sector, provision of low-cost housing, and increasing employment in the sector, the prime minister said owning a home was the right of every citizen adding that providing loans on easy terms in this regard was the government's top priority.

"There is vast potential for investment in the country's housing sector. Obstacles in the way of investment will be removed to fully utilize this potential", the prime minister assured.

He said the protection of investments by foreign investors and overseas Pakistanis in this sector will be ensured.

The prime minister pointed out that promoting investment in the construction sector will not only drive economic growth but also create millions of employment opportunities.

The meeting was briefed on the proposals of the task force and relevant working groups on the construction and housing sector.

Participants were also given a detailed update on the progress of implementation of approved measures.

On the prime minister's instructions, special measures are being taken to facilitate investment by foreign investors and overseas Pakistanis in the construction and housing sector, the meeting was informed. These measures will lead to an increase in residential construction projects, promote economic activity, and generate employment opportunities.

It was further informed in the meeting that work on legal reforms in the sector was progressing rapidly, and legislation was in its final stages. "A system for low-cost loans for affordable housing projects has been implemented; in the next phase, banks will be assigned targets in this regard."

The meeting was told that work on developing a complete mortgage finance ecosystem in the country was progressing swiftly. "A comprehensive developer-led financing system for the housing construction sector is also being developed."

The prime minister directed that the comprehensive measures for the development of the housing construction sector be finalized at the earliest and implemented effectively.



Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan Meets with Iranian Ambassador Dr. Reza Amiri Moghadam in Islamabad

### PDMA Balochistan issues monsoon contingency plan 2026

APP

QUETTA: The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Balochistan has issued the Monsoon Contingency Plan 2026 to effectively deal with anticipated rains and potential emergency situations across the province.

The comprehensive plan focuses on preparedness, timely response, inter-agency coordination, and protection of lives and property. It includes a detailed assessment of districts and vulnerable areas most at risk from flash floods, overflowing streams, landslides, and other hazards.

Drawing on past experiences, rainfall patterns, and climate change risks, the plan outlines strategies to safeguard human lives, infrastructure, agriculture, communication networks, and essential services. Clear responsibilities have been assigned to government departments, district administrations, and relief agencies. Advance measures include pre-positioning heavy machinery, rescue equipment, medical supplies, medicines,

ambulances, clean drinking water, and drainage facilities to enable swift response operations.

Safe locations and temporary shelters have been identified in potentially affected areas, with arrangements for food, medical assistance, clean water, and other essentials for displaced individuals. District-level mechanisms have been established to monitor relief operations and ensure quick decision-making.

PDMA has designated focal persons at provincial, divisional, and district levels to strengthen coordination and information sharing. Collaboration with NGOs, volunteer groups, UN partner agencies, and other relief organizations has also been incorporated to ensure a unified response. Authorities have directed all departments and rescue services to remain on high alert during the monsoon season. The public has been advised to exercise caution, avoid unnecessary movement near streams and flood-prone areas, follow official weather advisories, and immediately contact authorities in case of emergencies.

### Aleem Khan, Iranian envoy discuss regional situation, bilateral cooperation

INP

ISLAMABAD: Iranian Ambassador, Dr. Reza Amiri Moghadam, called on Federal Minister for Communications, Abdul Aleem Khan here Thursday to discuss the current regional situation and matters of mutual interest.

During the meeting, the federal minister expressed his profound grief and condolences over the martyrdom of Iran's Supreme Leader and the significant loss of life and property resulting from recent events, said a press release.

The Minister remarked that the Pakistani nation pays a rich tribute to Iran and its people, noting that over the past 26 days,

Iran has set a new example of courage and bravery.

He emphasized that the hearts of the entire Muslim Ummah beat in unison with Iran and conveyed a message of

goodwill, expressing hope for a brighter and better future for the brotherly nation.

Iranian Ambassador, Dr. Reza Amiri Moghadam, thanked the Federal Minister

for his prompt message of condolence and expressed his gratitude to the great Pakistani nation for its support. He stated his firm belief that, just as in the past, Iran would once again be blessed with victory.

The meeting also featured a detailed discussion on various trade and bilateral issues between Iran and Pakistan. Both sides reached an agreement to further strengthen Pak-Iran relations across different sectors and to promote enhanced mutual connectivity.

The discussion concluded with a shared commitment to fostering deeper ties and ensuring stability and prosperity for both nations.



QUETTA: A vendor covered his sell stuff with plastic sheet to protract from rain during rain in provincial city.