

# DAILY MIRROR

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## PM, Saudi FM discuss ways to achieve peace, stability in region

APP

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia Prince Faisal bin Farhan Sunday called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and discussed ways to achieve peace and stability in the region.

The Prime Minister was assisted by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar, National Security Advisor Lt. Gen. Muhammad Asim Malik, and SAPM Tariq Fatemi.

During the warm and cordial meeting, the Prime Minister warmly welcomed the Saudi Foreign Minister and conveyed his respectful regards for the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and warm greetings for Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Crown Prince & Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia.

While reaffirming Pakistan's full and unwavering solidarity and support with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Prime Minister appreciated the remarkable restraint exercised by Saudi Arabia amid

the current crisis and assured the Saudi Foreign Minister that Pakistan would always stand shoulder to shoulder with Saudi Arabia.

The Prime Minister recalled his recent conversations with the Crown Prince, including their meeting in Jeddah on 12 March.

He shared with the Saudi Foreign Minister Pakistan's extensive diplomatic outreach during the current crisis, including the mediation efforts for de-escalation and bringing both the U.S. and Iran to the negotiating table.

While emphasizing the Kingdom's leadership role in the Muslim Ummah, the Prime Minister stressed upon the need to forge unity within the Islamic countries at this critical time.

The Saudi Foreign Minister thanked the Prime Minister for receiving him and shared with him the latest Saudi perspective on the regional situation.

Pakistan and Saudi Arabia agreed to continue to coordinate their positions closely in order to secure peace and stability in the region.



Foreign Minister of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad.

## Pakistan hosts Saudi, Turkey, Egypt for talks on Mideast war

> DPM Ishaq Dar chairs meeting, Saudi Arabian Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud, Egyptian FM Dr Badr Abdelatty and Foreign Minister of Turkiye Hakan Fidan attend the meeting

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Turkey on Sunday held talks about trying to end the war in the Middle East, as Islamabad acts as a go-between between the United States and Iran.

The four-way meeting between the top diplomats of the Muslim nations lasted several hours in the Pakistani capital, Islamabad. Pakistan has emerged as a key facilitator between Iran and the United States as their war drags on, relaying messages between the two sides.

It is seeking to capitalise on its longstanding links with Tehran and close contacts in the Gulf, and the personal rapport that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and army chief Asim Munir have struck up with US President Donald Trump.

Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said the talks, held

under tight security at his ministry but without any US, Israeli or Iranian representation, came a "critical moment".

"Our candid and constructive discussions focus on the evolving regional situation and advancing peace and stability, while strengthening our partnership and deepening cooperation," he wrote on X.

Dar, who is also Pakistan's deputy prime minister, held separate bilateral talks with his counterparts -- Badr Abdelatty from Egypt, Hakan Fidan from Turkey, and Saudi Arabia's Faisal bin Farhan. All three visitors also met Munir.

Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have a mutual defence pact and in another meeting, Sharif told Farhan that Riyadh had shown "remarkable restraint" in the crisis.

"While emphasizing the Kingdom's leadership role in the Muslim Ummah (worldwide community), the Prime Minister stressed upon the need to forge unity within the Islamic countries at this critical time," a statement read.

Tehran has refused to admit to holding official talks with Washington but has passed a response to Trump's 15-point plan to end the war via Islamabad, according to an anonymous source cited by the Iranian Tasnim news agency.

Germany's Foreign Minister Johann Wadepuhl said on Friday he expected a direct US-Iran meeting in Pakistan "very soon", without revealing his source.

## Millions angry with Trump expected to fill American streets

MONITORING DESK

MINNEAPOLIS: Massive nationwide protests against US President Donald Trump are expected as millions of people vent fury over what they see as his authoritarian bent and other forms of cruel, law-trampling governance.

It is the third time in less than a year that Americans will take to the streets as part of a grassroots movement called "No Kings," the most vocal and visible conduit for opposition to Trump since he began his second term in January 2025.

And now they have something new to fume over — the war in Iran that Trump launched alongside Israel, with ever-shifting goals and timelines for completion.

The first such nationwide protest day came in June on Trump's 79th birthday and coincided with a military parade in

Washington that he insisted on holding. Several million people turned out, from New York to San Francisco and many places in between.

The second "No Kings" day in October drew an estimated seven million protesters, according to organisers.

The goal now is to bring out even more people on Saturday, as Trump's approval rating is low at around 40% and midterm elections loom in November, when Trump's Republicans could lose control of both chambers. Just as Trump is worshipped by many in his "Make America Great Again" movement, on the other side of America's wide political chasm, he is disliked or even loathed with equal passion. Trump foes bemoan his penchant for ruling by executive decree, his use of the Justice Department to prosecute opponents, his embrace of fossil fuels.



ISLAMABAD: Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud, Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan and Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty pose for photo prior to their meeting to discuss the Iran war, at Pakistan Ministry of Foreign Affairs in federal capital.

## Russia announces to stop supplying petrol to the world from April 1

MONITORING DESK

Moscow: Russia has officially announced a complete ban on the supply of petrol to the world from April 1.

The global market has once again been shaken after Russia's announcement. The ban is initially expected to remain in effect until July 31, 2026. The decision will affect countries that rely on Russian refined petroleum, including China, Turkey, Brazil, and several countries in Africa.

According to foreign media, in view of the growing geopolitical tensions in the Middle East and fluctuations in international oil prices, the Putin government has decided to preserve its buffer stock. Russia wants its people and industries to

be able to take advantage of cheap petrol and keep inflation under control within the country.

It should be noted that Russia is one of the world's largest oil producers. Although this ban will not apply to members of the Eurasian Economic Union and countries with which Russia has special agreements, there are fears that global petrol prices will increase for the rest of the world.

In addition, according to Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak, this decision

was made to protect the interests of domestic consumers. In Russia, gasoline demand increases during the growing season and scheduled maintenance of refineries.

## Iran lets 20 more Pakistani ships through Hormuz, FM Dar calls gesture 'harbinger of peace'

INP

ISLAMABAD: In a major development signalling easing tensions in the region, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar announced that Iran has agreed to facilitate additional Pakistani vessels through the Strait of Hormuz, calling it a positive step towards peace and stability.

"I am pleased to share a great news that the Government of Iran has agreed to allow 20 more ships under the Pakistani flag to pass through the Strait of Hormuz; two ships will cross the Strait daily," Dar said in a post on X.

He said the move reflects a constructive approach from Tehran. "This is a welcome and constructive gesture by Iran and deserves appreciation. It is a harbinger of peace and will help usher stability in the region."

Dar added that the development carries broader significance for regional efforts. "This positive announcement marks a meaningful step toward peace and will strengthen our collective efforts in that direction."

Emphasising the path ahead, he said: "Dialogue, diplomacy, and such confidence-building measures are the only way forward." Iranian threats to attack ships in the strait have kept most oil tankers from attempting the waterway.

## Adequate petroleum reserves available in country: PM

APP

LAHORE: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif says adequate reserves of petroleum products are available to meet the country's needs as a result of government's timely decisions.

He was presiding over a meeting in Lahore today to review the implementation of fuel conservation and austerity measures in view of the regional situation. The Prime Minister said government accorded top priority to providing relief to the people in prevailing circumstances and maximum relief was extended to masses over the last three weeks.

Shehbaz Sharif said the federal government has allocated a substantial sum of one hundred and twenty-five billion rupees by making cuts in various savings and development budgets

to prevent skyrocketing of fuel prices and to protect public from direct impacts of global tensions.

The Prime Minister also directed the provincial governments to provide all possible facilitation to motorcycle and rickshaw owners to register their vehicles in their own names. He said this initiative will help digitize the data of motorcycles and rickshaws across the country, allowing their owners to benefit from government-provided relief in the future. He also directed the relevant authorities to expedite coordination with the Chief Secretaries of all four provinces, Azad Kashmir, and Gilgit-Baltistan. Participants of the meeting urged the public to support the government's austerity drive, minimize unnecessary travel.



Demonstrators burn Israeli and US flags printed on paper during a national "No Kings" demonstration, part of a coordinated international mobilisation, amid heightened political tensions and following Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni's recent referendum setback, in Rome, Italy.

## Day 30: Iran claims to have shot down an F-16 jet, killing and wounding 500 American soldiers

TEHRAN: The war in the Middle East has entered its 30th day. Iran's Revolutionary Guards claimed to have killed and injured 500 American soldiers and shot down an F-16 plane in attacks today. Israel's brutal attacks on civilian areas in Lebanon and Iran continue.

Revolutionary Guards said they shot down an American F-16 plane in southern Persia. The plane crashed before reaching a Saudi air base. They have carried out severe attacks on American and Israeli industries in occupied Palestine and the region. If Iranian industries are attacked in the future, the consequences will be worse than expected.

The Revolutionary Guards further stated that the Strategic Electronic Warfare Center in Haifa was targeted, and fuel depots at Ben Gurion Air Base were also attacked.

Attacks on Iran's peaceful nuclear facilities are condemnable: Russia

Russia has strongly condemned the attacks on Iran's peaceful nuclear facilities, saying that the international community should strongly oppose such actions.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said in a statement that attacks on Iran's nuclear facilities, including the Bushehr nuclear power plant, are extremely dangerous and pose a risk of a large-scale radiation spill.

Houthis confirm second missile attack on Israel

Yemen's Houthi fighters say they have launched a second attack on parts of southern Israel, using cruise missiles and drones to target several key Israeli military installations.

He added that these attacks were carried out in conjunction with related military operations by Iran and Hezbollah and succeeded in their objectives, and that more attacks will be carried out in the next few days until the enemy ceases its attacks and aggression.

More than 11,000 targets in Iran hit: CENTCOM

The US Central Command (CENTCOM) has announced that more than 11,000 targets were attacked in the war against Iran over the course of a month, with more than 150 Iranian aircraft destroyed or damaged during these attacks.

US preparing for ground operation on coastal areas including Kharg Island

According to the American newspaper, the United States has prepared for a ground operation in Iran's coastal areas, including Kharg Island. Special forces and conventional troops will conduct limited ground operations in Iran.

The Pentagon is preparing for a weeks-long ground war in Iran, a US official says. The US official said it is not yet clear whether President Trump will approve the deployment of ground troops.

Iran considering withdrawing from NPT

According to Iranian media, relevant institutions, including parliament, are considering Iran's withdrawal from the NPT.

Iranian media say that it has become clear that Iran has no justification left for remaining in the NPT. The move is aimed at preventing the US and Israel from further spying on Iran under the guise of IAEA inspectors.

The US and Israel are attacking Iran's nuclear power plants, and the IAEA is not even condemning it.

Warning of targeting of American and Israeli universities in the region

The Iranian Revolutionary Guards have warned that they will now target Israeli and American universities in the region in retaliation.

The Revolutionary Guards have asked university staff, students, and civilians living near these universities to maintain a distance of at least one kilometer from these educational institutions to protect their lives.

Protests against Trump in America, 7 million people participate

## Pakistan calls for stronger Int'l cooperation to help developing countries

APP

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has called for stronger international cooperation and financing to help developing countries build the infrastructure needed to make zero waste achievable.

These remarks were made by Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad while speaking at the commemoration of the International Day of Zero Waste 2026 in New York.

The Ambassador emphasized that for countries like Pakistan, addressing food waste is not only an environmental and economic priority but also a moral and religious responsibility.

He said the crisis is driven by lifestyles, behaviour and broken supply chains, and requires changes in how societies value and use food.

Ambassador Asim Iftikhar called for adequate support for developing countries to access and deploy technologies, including through strengthened international cooperation, technology transfer on concessional terms and dedicated financing for infrastructure and system upgrades.

The Ambassador also welcomed Turkiye's leadership in elevating the issue internationally, and reiterated Pakistan's support for the COP31 President-designate's efforts toward a successful COP31.

## Section 144 imposed in 10 districts of Balochistan

INP

QUETTA: Section 144 has been imposed in 10 districts of Balochistan.

According to details surfaced on Sunday, following the enforcement of Section 144, a complete ban has been placed on the display of weapons.

The decision was taken in view of the prevailing law and order situation.

Strict measures have been adopted after recent incidents and the loss of civilian lives. Authorities have indicated firm action against those found in violation.

## Crackdown on illegal Afghans intensified, dozens deported via Chaman border

APP

Quetta: A crackdown against illegally residing Afghans is underway across the country. Dozens of Afghans detained from Karachi and other areas are being deported to Afghanistan via the Chaman border after registering in the NADRA database and completing other necessary documentation at the Chaman Withholding Camp.

A responsible officer of the Chaman district administration said that in Chaman too, after identifying Afghans on a daily basis at checkpoints, intersections, markets, villages and during patrols, they are being deported to Afghanistan with dignity and respect after entering and registering them in the holding camp. He said that the Afghans residing illegally in Pakistan, including Chaman, should wrap up their business and return to their country, Afghanistan, with dignity and respect without any delay, otherwise they will be arrested and deported to Afghanistan.

## Iranian President Appreciates Pakistani Efforts in Decreasing Tensions with US, Israel

PPI

ISLAMABAD: Iranian President Masoud Pezishkian has praised Pakistan's diplomatic efforts to prevent a war between the US and Israel.

The appreciation was made in an official statement issued from Tehran today, following an hour-long telephonic conversation between President Pezishkian and Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. An official statement issued by the Iranian Presidency today confirmed that President Pezishkian expressed gratitude for Islamabad's role as a mediator. The document specified that the president thanked his counterpart for Pakistan's mediation efforts to stop what was termed "the aggression against Iran".

**Lady Willingdon Hospital Incident: Call for Strict SOP Enforcement and Mobile Usage Policy**

By Maqsood Khalid

LAHORE: Following the recent video scandal at Lady Willingdon Hospital, where several doctors, nurses, and staff members were suspended, the incident has raised serious concerns about the enforcement of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and the use of mobile phones in public hospitals.



phone usage during duty hours in hospitals.

Strict monitoring systems to protect patient privacy.

A balanced framework for officials to stay connected for essential communication.

One practical proposal suggests allowing government staff a brief five-minute window every hour to check essential messages, particularly for official communication via platforms like WhatsApp. This approach aims to maintain discipline without disrupting critical communication channels.

Experts further recommend that such a policy should not be limited to hospitals but extended across all public sector departments to ensure consistency, professionalism, and improved governance.

Public opinion strongly supports the issuance of a formal notification by the government, which could help prevent similar incidents in the future and significantly enhance the efficiency and credibility of public institutions.

Reports indicate that recording and sharing patients' videos during surgical procedures is a clear violation of medical ethics and patient dignity. The Punjab government's immediate disciplinary action has been widely acknowledged as a necessary step.

However, experts emphasize that punitive action alone is not sufficient. There is a growing demand for a comprehensive and clearly defined policy. In this regard, Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif is being urged to issue formal guidelines regulating mobile phone usage across all government departments.

Key recommendations include: A complete ban on unnecessary mobile

**Sohail Afridi says federal govt twisting Kasim Khan's comments**

NEWS DESK

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Ahmad Khan Afridi on Sunday accused Pakistan's federal government of misrepresenting recent remarks by the son of jailed former prime minister Imran Khan.

Speaking at a press conference, Afridi said the federal government had deliberately given a "wrong colour" to comments made days earlier by Kasim Khan, the son of Imran Khan, saying the comments were being falsely linked to the European Union's GSP+.

"I had the remarks translated into Urdu, and even had them translated so that the fake federal government could understand them," Afridi said.

"This was the sentiment of a son for his father, a person who has nothing to do with politics."

Afridi rejected suggestions that Qasim Khan's comments could jeopardize Pakistan's GSP+ standing.



Residents of Quetta, including Muhammad Anwar, Nasrullah, and Fahad, Hold Press Conference at Quetta Press Club.

**Three dead, two injured as heavy rain batters parts of country**

INP

LAHORE: Three children were killed and two injured when roof of a house collapsed in Bannu as heavy rains battered parts of the country including KP, Punjab, Islamabad and Karachi.

In various cities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) heavy rain was reported. In Bannu, three children died and two sustained injuries when roof of a house collapsed in heavy rain.

Five children of one Sher Muhammad were buried under the rubble of the roof.

As a result, his two daughters and a son died, and his two injured sons were rescued during a rescue operation.

Rain was also reported in many cities of Punjab including

Lahore, Jhang, Bahawalpur, Mianwali, Yazman, Cholistan, Rawalpindi and other areas. Islamabad also received shower.



QUETTA: National Party chief and former Chief Minister Balochsitan Dr Abdul Mali Baloch presiding the party meeting at Muhammad Shahi House.

**25th JCAT Successfully Conducted — Transparent Exam Held Simultaneously in Lahore and Multan**

By Maqsood Khalid

LAHORE: The 25th Joint Centralized Admission Test (JCAT), conducted under the supervision of King Edward Medical University, was successfully held simultaneously in Lahore and Multan, ensuring transparency, merit, and excellent administrative arrangements. A total of 4,470 candidates appeared in the examination, including 3,133 candidates in Lahore and 1,337 in Multan examination centers. Additionally, the participation of 62 international candidates further highlighted the significance of the test.

The Vice Chancellor of King Edward Medical University, Prof.

Dr. Mahmood Ayaz, visited the Lahore examination center to review the arrangements and expressed satisfaction over the transparent and well-organized conduct of the exam. Meanwhile, the Vice Chancellor of Nishtar Medical University, Prof. Dr. Mehnaz Khakwani, personally supervised the examination process at the Multan center.

Under the supervision of the Controller of Examinations, Dr. Zeeshan Sarwar, all phases of the examination were conducted in accordance with modern, integrated,



and standardized protocols, ensuring a fair and credible testing system.

King Edward Medical University reaffirmed its commitment to promoting high-quality medical education in Pakistan, safeguarding merit, and maintaining a globally competitive examination system.

**Concrete Steps Begin to Boost Industrial Development, attract investment, Create Employment Opportunities in AJK: Rathore**

APP

MIRPUR: Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Prime Minister (PM) Faisal Muntaz Rathore, has said that the promotion of small, medium, and large industries were his government's top priority.

"Concrete measures are being taken to boost industrial development, attract investment, and create employment opportunities in the region", the PM said this while speaking to government Advisor Sardar Fahad Yaqoob who called on him on Sunday.

He noted that positive administrative changes have been introduced to facilitate investors and business persons. The present government, he said, was keen to create a conducive environment, encouraging investors and young entrepreneurs. "These initiatives have led to new job opportunities, strengthening the economy, and reducing unemployment", he added.

Highlighting the importance of the digital economy, the PM said that the educated youth must focus not only on traditional sectors but also on the digital and modern economy.



QUETTA: A view of a model on Airport road for the beautification of the city.



**Hasan's pace, all-round Ali give Kings victory over Gladiators**

SPORTS DESK

LAHORE: Hasan Ali's fine pace bowling, backed by an all-round display from Moeen Ali and captain David Warner's belligerent knock steered Karachi Kings to a hard-earned 14-run victory over Quetta Gladiators in their HBL Pakistan Super League match here at the Gaddafi Stadium on Friday night.

Chasing a tough 182, Gladiators got off to a scintillating start but faltered in the middle and eventually managed to post 167-7 off the allotted overs.

Hasan (4-27) and his spin bowling partners Ali (1-26), Adam Zampa (1-26) and Salman Ali Agha (1-10 off two overs) successfully prevented their opponents from reaching the target.

Openers Shamyul Hussain and captain Saud Shakeel gave Gladiators a rollicking start of 79 in seven overs as they posted 75 in powerplay.

Shamyul smashed 52 off just 24 balls and hit five fours and four sixes while a relatively sedate Saud made 33 off 25 with the help of six fours.

After the solid start, Gladiators lost three wickets for the addition of 16 runs in the next three overs. Shamyul was first to go in the eighth over as he was caught by Ali at long on off Salman on his very first ball of the match. Khawaja Nafay (three) was the next as he was deceived by Zampa's quicker one that shattered the stumps in the ninth over. Kings got a huge wicket when Saud was caught at deep cover by Khushdil off Ali as the batter tried to play a lofted inside-out stroke. Now Gladiators were 95-3 at halfway stage.

Rilee Rossouw (25 off 21) and Hasan Nawaz (19 off 24) tried to rescue their side by adding 29 runs as the Gladiators reached 100 in the 11th over.

After touching 124-3 in 15 overs and needing another 58 off the last five overs, it looked as if Gladiators will make it but it was not to be as Hasan rose to the occasion to derail their plans.

The right-arm first cleaned up Rossouw in the 16th over and then claimed a dream triple strike in the penultimate over of the match to smother Gladiators' hopes.

He first dismissed Hasan Nawaz who was caught by Mohammad Waseem at long-off, then bowled Tom Curran on the very next ball to be on a hat-trick before ending the over with the scalp of tailender Ahmed Daniyal who was caught by Ali at backward point.

Needing 30 off the final over was always going to be tough as Gladiators managed to get only half of it despite the efforts of Ben McDermott (25 not out off 13).

Earlier after being sent in to bat first, captain David Warner's hard hitting and a late onslaught by Ali helped Kings post 181-7 off the stipulated overs.

After losing opener Waseem who was caught by Rossouw at mid-on at the edge of the circle off pacer Alzarri Joseph in the opening over for a duck, Warner (35 off 22 balls) and Salman (22 off 10) launched a counter attack to take maximum advantage from powerplay.

The pair added 41 quick runs before Salman, who hit four fours and a six during his cameo, was trapped by fast bowler Ahmed in the fourth over as Kings slumped to 44-2.

Saad Baig (30 off 23) joined Warner as the pair, after reaching 50 in 4.3 overs, steered Kings to 60-2 at the end of powerplay.



BERGAMO: Italy's Moise Kean (second R) tries to score during the FIFA World Cup play-off against Northern Ireland at the Gewiss Stadium.

**Italy stay in World Cup hunt as Wales, Ireland suffer penalty heartbreak**

SPORTS DESK

PARIS: Italy will face Bosnia and Herzegovina for a place at the 2026 World Cup after beating Northern Ireland 2-0 on Thursday, as Wales and the Republic of Ireland suffered agonising penalty shootout defeats in their qualifying play-off semi-finals.

Sandro Tonali and Moise Kean struck second-half goals in Bergamo to keep four-time World Cup winners Italy on track to end a 12-year absence from the tournament.

Italy missed the last two editions in Russia and Qatar but Tonali's powerful drive and an excellent finish from Kean nudged Gennaro Gattuso's team a step closer to a return to international football's biggest stage.

"We had to work hard because it was not easy tonight," said Gattuso. "We knew this game would be tough, all we can do now is try to recharge the batteries."

Italy will take on Bosnia in Zenica next Tuesday.

Meanwhile, a late header from 40-year-old Edin Dzeko cancelled out Dan James' superb opener for Wales and forced extra time in Cardiff, where Bosnia scraped through 4-2 on penalties after a 1-1 draw.

"We're lost for words. We prepared as well as we could have and I thought we played well," Wales captain Ethan Ampadu told the BBC. "We can hold our heads up high because we fought for everything, sometimes in life things don't go your way."

In Sweden, Arsenal's striker Viktor Gyokeres scored a hat-trick as the hosts down Ukraine 3-1.

Gyokeres netted his first goals of the qualifying campaign to lead Sweden to the brink of the finals, despite a dismal group stage in which they picked up just two points in six matches.

Sweden got another chance as a result of their UEFA

Nations League performances and Gyokeres turned in from close range early on against Ukraine, unable to play at home because of the war with Russia and instead having to move the tie to neutral ground in Valencia, Spain.

Gyokeres tucked away his second six minutes after the break and converted a penalty to complete his treble and seal victory for Graham Potter's team, with Matvi Ponomarenko grabbing a late consolation for Ukraine.

Sweden will play Poland in Stockholm for one of four remaining European tickets to the World Cup.

Lewandowski stars Robert Lewandowski helped Poland come from behind to scrape past Albania 2-1 after Arber Hoxha gave the visitors the lead in Warsaw.

Lewandowski headed in from a corner to bring Poland level with his 89th goal for his country before Piotr Zielinski grabbed the winner.

In Prague, Czech Republic goalkeeper Matej Kovar saved two penalties in a shootout to steer his team past Ireland.

Ireland looked well placed for a first trip to the World Cup since 2002 as Troy Parrott's penalty and own goal by Kovar put them 2-0 ahead.

Patrik Schick pulled a goal back from the spot and Ladislav Krejci powered in a header on 86 minutes to level at 2-2 and send the semi-final to extra time.

Finn Azaz and Alan Browne both missed in the shootout as the Czechs lined up a showdown at home to a rampant Denmark.

"Just pain. We all feel pain. When you go this far it's a flip of a coin.

Just pain we feel being that close," Ireland boss Heimir Hallgrimsson told RTE.

In the Danish capital, Gustav Isaksen's brace helped the hosts keep their World Cup bid alive.

**Sabalenka, Sinner keep 'Sunshine Double' in sight with Miami Open wins**

SPORTS DESK

MIAMI: World number one and defending champion Aryna Sabalenka subdued second-ranked rival Elena Rybakina 6-4, 6-3 to book a Miami Open title clash with American Coco Gauff.

Sabalenka, who fell to Rybakina in the Australian Open final before turning the tables on the Kazakh in the Indian Wells title match this earlier this month, broke the big-serving Rybakina twice in each set to come out on top in the blockbuster semi-final and keep her bid for the "Sunshine Double" of Indian Wells and Miami on track.

Men's world number two Jannik Sinner, who like Sabalenka lifted his first Indian Wells title two weeks ago, also advanced, dominating American Frances Tiafoe 6-2, 6-2 to reach the men's semi-finals.

Their victories mean both the ATP and WTA could see a "Sunshine Double" in the same year for the first time since Novak Djokovic and Victoria Azarenka swept the two prestigious hardcourt tournaments back in 2016.

Sabalenka, who had to save a match point in overcoming Rybakina in the Indian Wells final, applied ruthless pressure on Rybakina's serve while delivering a sterling service performance that featured nine aces — including four in a row across the seventh and ninth games of the opening set.

Sabalenka seized the first break for a 3-1 lead in the opening.

Rybakina broke back, but Sabalenka broke again to pocket the set and took control in the second with a break for 2-0 in a game which Rybakina led 40-0.

Trailing 0-4, Rybakina clawed back a break for 4-1 but Sabalenka wouldn't flinch again. Rybakina saved one match point on her own serve before Sabalenka served it out with a love game punctuated by a fierce forehand winner.

Four-time Grand Slam champion Sinner needed just 71 minutes to dispatch Tiafoe and set up a semi-final meeting with fourth-ranked German Alexander Zverev — who swept past 19th-ranked Argentinian Francisco Cerundolo 6-1, 6-2 in just 65 minutes.

Fourth-ranked Gauff, who had needed three sets in each of her prior four matches, overwhelmed Czech Karolina Muchova 6-1, 6-1 to secure her place in Saturday's women's final.



KAZAKHSTAN'S Elena Rybakina hits a return against Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus during their Miami Open semi-final at the Hard Rock Stadium.

Member APNS

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## Crisis meeting

**WITH a catastrophic war raging on the nation's borders, it is imperative that the civilian and military leadership continue to consult each other and other stakeholders in order to steer Pakistan through these stormy waters.**

On Thursday, with the US-Israeli war on Iran on the agenda, President Asif Zardari chaired a high-level meeting of the nation's top officials to discuss a way forward. The moot was attended by the prime minister, chief of defence forces, key cabinet ministers and the PPP chief. The meeting stressed the need for "national consensus and public awareness" related to the challenges spawned by the aggression.

As a neighbour of Iran, and located at a stone's throw from the Gulf, Pakistan is especially vulnerable to the fallout of this conflict, as well as the shockwaves that are shaking the global economy. Of particular concern to those in attendance were Pakistan's economic and energy security issues. Such consultations should continue, particularly if the conflict drags on.

In fact, parliament should play a more active role, with lawmakers briefed on the evolving situation. In the past, parliamentary consultation has proved successful in shielding the country from geopolitical storms. The Yemen quagmire — in which Arab states wanted Pakistan to participate in the anti-Houthi campaign — is a case in point. The legislature wisely advised against stepping into the Yemeni imbroglio.

In a similar vein, Pakistan should try and avoid being pulled into offensive operations against Iran. Tehran's attacks on its Gulf neighbours are indeed unwise and complicate matters. But Pakistan cannot afford to get sucked into the Gulf vortex, and risk its fragile internal stability. The Gulf states are Pakistan's friends and allies, and the country must do all it can to support them; sending surplus food supplies to help them tide over the crisis is one example of what can be done. At the same time, Iran, too, has deep cultural and historical links with this country; getting involved can negatively affect Pakistan's internal sectarian dynamics.

Therefore, Pakistan should try and stay neutral. The path this country is currently pursuing — trying to find a diplomatic off-ramp — is the best available option.

Pakistan is in a unique position; it enjoys a measure of trust with Iran, while its ties with the Arabs, particularly the Saudis and the UAE, are excellent, even though greater clarity is needed on the mutual defence agreement signed with Riyadh last year. Meanwhile, the Trump administration has exhibited a marked liking for Pakistan's current civil and military leadership.

Pakistan cannot be expected to work miracles to end this brutal conflict. But it can surely act as a facilitator to help all belligerents reach a peaceful and just settlement.

By Mohammad Ali Babakhel

## From Talibanisation to detribalisation

**T**HE Afghan war's end and USSR's collapse led to Talibanisation (spread of Taliban ideology, practice and militant tactics). After USSR left Afghanistan in 1989, thousands of mujahideen with arms and networks remained, fuelling the Taliban's rise from refugee camps and madrasahs. They interpreted Islamic law strictly. By 1996, their control extended to parts of Afghanistan. When the US invaded Afghanistan, they moved to Fata, where local militants formed alliances and created TTP, leading to Talibanisation. They attacked schools, LEAs and security forces and set up parallel governance entities.

The British had focused on territorial separation, tribal autonomy under FCR, governance via political agents and collective punishment instead of creating courts in these areas. They didn't invest in the barren tribal belt; the British-Indian army used coercion. From 1877 to 1947, they tried to understand tribal dynamics. Limited control was kept via political agents and local militias, and tribal interaction through maliks. These areas were free from police, courts and taxes. Political agents, mostly ex-military men, spoke fluent Pashto and knew the tribal culture.

In 1901, NWFP was created as a chief commissioner province, becoming governor-ruled in 1932. Princely states Swat, Dir, Chitral and Amb were merged into NWFP in 1969. In 1937, a legislature was formed. In 1955, NWFP was merged into West Pakistan; in 1970, its provincial status was restored. As part of Gilgit Agency until 1934, Kohistan was governed under FCR. Then its control was given to NWFP.

Kala Dhaka (district Torghar) was under FCR until 2011. FCR robbed tribal people of their rights. When displaced, globalisation and Talibanisation impacted tribal youth who were exposed to political rights. Most fluctuated between absolute and relative deprivation. Tribal areas were governed by riwaj, but post 9/11, a mix of religion and culture was accepted.

Fata's merger was the right step.

Tribal areas were Special Areas under Article 218 (1-a) of the 1956 constitution. Article 223 of the 1962 constitution curbed enforcement of central and provincial laws there, unless the president or governor directed otherwise. Fata stood administratively isolated; the price is widespread terrorism. Earlier, tribes in remote areas opposed modernity. But technology and globalisation erased barriers.

Though poor, tribes welcomed Afghan refugees, but militancy and kinetic steps caused displacement, exposing them to globalisation and urbanisation. Older people were nostalgic for conservative ideals;

the youth focused on modernity. Attracted to protests, they shuttled between nationalist and religious fervour, narrowing the gap between tribalism and modernism.

The merger was the right step — from exclusion to inclusion. Merging Levies and Khasadars into police aims for law enforcement uniformity.

Post-merger, the shift from illegal business and smuggling to mining and trade, devolution of political power and the criminal justice system will strengthen the state's writ, but the merger's aims are hard to achieve without easy public access to CJS. Provincial polls in the

merged districts linked them with the provincial legislature and cabinet. Post-merger, polls allowed an MPA from Khyber to become chief minister.

Weak governance, poor education, poverty, sympathy or fear drew locals to Talibanisation, impacting women and education, and led to operations, deals and displacement. With Taliban regaining control in Afghanistan after the US exit, Talibanisation returned to the border areas, challenging state control. Sponsored militancy led to detribalisation. Fata's merger has boosted KP's role in national politics and the reform debate and may reduce space for ethnic politics, with Pakhtuns in tribal and settled areas given a chance to remain under one administrative umbrella.

Since the British era, reforms have been security-centric, often compromising administrative and sociopolitical well-being. So, merging security-centric and sociopolitical well-being is expected. Post 1947, the status quo was either maintained or cosmetic changes proposed, leading to chaos. But Fata's merger via a constitutional amendment was historic; it needs more collaboration between the centre and provinces, and public support.

Post-merger Fata has been impacted by the Taliban takeover of Kabul, centre-province ties, selective reading of religion, ethnonationalism, disinformation and protests. Besides kinetic steps, peace needs socioeconomic investment, administrative reconsolidation, land settlement, mine disputes resolution, LGs backed by a functional CJS, and centre-province cooperation. Peace and economic development in the tribal areas will impact national internal security and bring dividends.

By Rafia Zakaria

## Peacemaker's role

**I**T is impossible as a Pakistani not to marvel at this moment. At a time when the world order has been shaken at a speed that challenges belief, Pakistan's military and civilian leaders have accomplished a remarkable recasting of the country's role in the world.

In a milieu where everyone is fighting — Iran against the US and Israel, the GCC countries being dragged into the conflict — Pakistan has offered to act as a peace broker. As a first effort, it delivered a 15-point US peace plan to Iran — publicly rejected but said to be still under unofficial review.

Pakistan's emergence as a potential peacemaker reflects a new vision for its global and regional role — one that has been created by the collective effort of the country's civilian and military leadership. It deserves to be commended because it reveals a recognition of and capitalising on stark new global realities. The first of these is a worldwide trend towards militarism.

Last year, global military spending reached a record \$2.63 trillion, driven largely by Europe, which saw a sharp increase of 21 per cent. This increase is notable because it parallels a recession in the relative influence of international law. In stark terms, it means that countries have assessed the changing global order and decided — at least in monetary terms — to put their faith in weapons.

Pakistan's role as potential peacemaker is quite a feat.

Central to this has been the reduced influence of transnational institutions like the UN, created to prevent precisely such arms races.

Pakistan is well situated to take advantage of this new trend in the world order. Historically, it has had to rely on militarism to survive in an inhospitable environment. International law, including UN resolutions mandating a Kashmir referendum, has never delivered on promises such as the plebiscite.

Despite Pakistan raising the issue again and again at the UN, little has been achieved over the decades. Indian aggression meant Pakistan had to invest in weapons even as its own population endured huge privations because of massive defence spending.

The twin realities — the failure of transnational institutions to provide security and the necessity of weaponisation — are reflected in Pakistan's long familiarity with the conundrums confronting the rest of the world. This makes Pakistani diplomats and military leadership uniquely qualified to offer insight in making sense of the world.

Militarism may not be the ideal basis for the governance of any country, but pragmatism dictates its selection when it guarantees survival.

It is no small irony that Pakistan's role as peacemaker in West Asia rests on its identity as a heavily militarised state.

It is impossible not to note that the war on Iran, at least in the American telling, centres on the claim that Iran was close to developing nuclear weapons.

Iran denies this, though internal debates have existed about pursuing such capability. Undoubtedly many in Iran — facing the onslaught of US and Israeli bombing — now wish such capability had been

developed as a deterrent.

Then there is the fact that Pakistan — because of its geography and strategic importance — is accustomed to juggling complex relationships with global powers. Since the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, its foreign policy has resembled an acrobat juggling multiple rings of fire. Unlike some other countries, Pakistan maintains close ties with China while also engaging with America.

As it happens, the very complexity of Pakistan's foreign policy — managing relationships with powers that have divergent interests — has now become its greatest ability.

It is impossible to predict the outcome of the conflict. However, as the past year and the dramatic shifts in the world order suggest, conflict and war will be constant realities of the future. Fundamental questions, whether the petro-dollar will survive, whether the US or China will win the AI race, and what will replace the post-World War II liberal order, will not be resolved quickly.

Pakistan's emergence as peacemaker rather than pariah state is a remarkable feat of foreign and military policy,

one that capitalises on the harsh realities of existence.

The outcome of the 'mediation' remains unknown, but positioning itself at the centre of global relevance reflects commendable statecraft and leadership.

Whether or not Pakistan is able to assist in resolving this conflict, its emergence as a state that helps rather than hurts the possibility of peace is a significant achievement in itself.

# DAILY MIRROR

## HRCPC, civil society organisations demand immediate halt to eviction operations in Islamabad's katchi abadis

### NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, along with several civil society organisations, on Sunday called on authorities to immediately halt all planned and ongoing eviction operations in Islamabad's low-income areas and katchi abadis (informal settlements).

The call was made in a statement issued by the HRCPC following a press conference at the National Press Club in Islamabad.

"The All Party Alliance for Katchi Abadis, Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, National Commission for Justice and Peace, Awami Workers Party, Aurat March Islamabad and allied civil society organisations strongly condemn the imminent threat of demolition and forced eviction facing residents of Allama Iqbal Colony, a 25-year-old, predominantly Christian working-class settlement reportedly slated for clearance in the coming week," the statement read. It added: "We unequivocally reject the ongoing pattern of evictions carried out by the Capital Development Authority (CDA), Islamabad, without due process, adequate notice or lawful rehabilitation."

"These actions are not isolated incidents but part of a broader and deeply unjust approach that disproportionately targets low-income communities across Islamabad's katchi abadis — affecting families who have lived and

worked in these areas for decades," the statement said.

The CDA is carrying out anti-encroachment operations with special focus on illegal slums in Islamabad.

According to CDA's rules, 34 societies/schemes were supposed to transfer amenity land in the name of the civic agency for further utilisation. However, despite the passage of years, CDA has failed to get the land. There are reports that many societies have already eaten up the land after carving out plots.

On the other hand, after removing Muslim Colony in Bari Imam area, CDA also conducting an operation against Rimsha Colony at H-9 and Shapur Colony of G-7.

According to the civic agency, in G-7 some commercial and residential structures were removed, which were built in a public park. In Rimsha Colony, some junkyards and shops were also removed. The CDA has termed these two slums illegal and an encroachment on state land.

These actions upset the slum dwellers, who say the CDA verbally informed them that the operation would continue. At a press conference held earlier this month, it was also pointed out that Rimsha Colony was itself settled by the CDA in the past.

The community leaders at the press briefing had demanded that the eviction process be immediately suspended and that the 2015 Supreme Court order

regarding the protection and rehabilitation of katchi abadi residents be fully respected.

In its statement, the HRCPC also decried "continued disregard for the 2015 Supreme Court stay order and the absence of a coherent and rights-based policy", saying it reflected the "troubling erosion of legal protections for marginalised citizens".

"This issue transcends any single religious or social group. The demolition of katchi abadis represents a systemic assault on the housing, dignity and livelihoods of working-class communities."

"Women and children are particularly vulnerable, facing heightened risks of displacement, insecurity and loss of access to basic services. The climate of fear surrounding these evictions further suppresses the ability of affected residents to organise and assert their rights," the statement further said.

It added: "We call on the authorities to immediately halt all planned and ongoing eviction operations, including in Allama Iqbal Colony and Rimsha Colony, and to fully comply with existing judicial directives."

"We would remind the CDA that it is bound by prior Supreme Court orders to all the provinces — as well as the CDA — to develop and submit comprehensive policies for all informal settlements, which the provinces have already completed."



ISLAMABAD: Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan meets with Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, at Ministry of Foreign Affairs in federal capital.

## Dar speaks with Araghchi; reaffirms Pakistan's support to peace restoring efforts

### APP

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Saturday held a telephonic conversation with Foreign Minister of Iran Abbas Araghchi.

The two leaders discussed the evolving regional situation and ongoing developments.

The deputy prime minister emphasized the need for dialogue and diplomacy remained the only viable path for lasting peace.

He also underscored the importance of an end to all attacks and hostilities.

Deputy Prime Minister Dar said that Pakistan remained committed to supporting all efforts aimed at restoring regional peace and stability.

## Pakistan launches first national drought plan to tackle water stress

### NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Federal Secretary for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Aisha Humera Moriani has stressed the urgent need for Pakistan to move from a reactive to a proactive, risk-based approach to drought management, warning that climate change is making droughts more frequent and more severe.

Addressing a national consultative workshop on the National Drought Action Plan in Islamabad, she said drought was no longer a distant or occasional threat but an increasingly persistent challenge driven by rising temperatures, water stress and climate variability.

"Pakistan is already among the countries facing high water risk and drought directly affects agriculture, water resources, food security, ecosystems and livelihoods," she said, adding that past responses had largely focused on post-impact relief rather than preparedness.

Moriani highlighted the need for a coordinated institutional and policy framework to translate data into action. She acknowledged the role of the International Water Management Institute, the Pakistan Meteorological Department and partners in developing the Pakistan Drought Management System, which provides real-time monitoring and early warning capabilities.

"This is a significant step forward. However, data alone is not enough. We need systems that ensure timely data-informed and evidence-based decisions and on-ground implementation," she said.

The secretary informed participants that the ministry, with support from the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and following extensive consultations, had developed a National Drought Action Plan. The plan is structured around key pillars, including planning and resource mobilisation, governance and policy, early warning systems, local mitigation actions and capacity building.

The workshop, attended by representatives from federal and provincial governments, development partners and organisations including IWMI, PMD, the Food and Agriculture Organisation and the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, aimed to finalise an operational framework for implementing the plan.

Participants discussed identifying priority sectors, defining institutional roles and responsibilities, and developing a roadmap for short, medium and long-term actions.

Moriani emphasised that effective drought management required strong coordination among federal and provincial governments, technical agencies and development partners.

## Medical report indicates vision issues for Bushra Bibi

### INP

RAWALPINDI: After PTI founder, former first lady, Bushra Bibi is also facing vision problems.

According to the report, she was examined by eye specialist Dr Arif Khan at Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) a day earlier.

The findings indicate that she has been diagnosed with posterior vitreous detachment in her right eye.

The report notes symptoms including blurred vision and the appearance of black spots, along with complaints of flashes in the eye and headaches.

It further states that she has also been identified with myopia and astigmatism, which are affecting her near vision.

Doctors have advised the regular use of glasses, prescribed eye drops and other medications, and recommended a follow-up examination after four weeks.

Earlier this year, Imran Khan also underwent a minor eye procedure. Days later, Information Minister Ataullah Tarar confirmed that doctors at PIMS conducted another brief procedure after obtaining his consent.

## PIA resumes direct flights to London after six-year suspension

### INP

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) has officially resumed its direct flight operations to London after a gap of six years, with the first flight departing from Islamabad today.

The resumption was inaugurated by Secretary of Defence Lieutenant General (Retd) Muhammad Ali and the British High Commissioner to Pakistan, Jane Marriott, during a ceremony held at Islamabad International Airport.

Speaking at the event, Jane Marriott welcomed the restoration of PIA's London flights, calling it a positive development.

She said that flights from Karachi should also be resumed soon, noting that hundreds of thousands of Pakistanis live in the United Kingdom. She added that the resumption reflects the growing relations between Pakistan and the UK.

Addressing the ceremony, the Defence Secretary said that the day marks an important milestone for Pakistan's aviation sector.

## Tahir Ashrafi stresses Muslim unity to foil conspiracies

### NEWS DESK

LAHORE: Pakistan Ulema Council Chairman Hafiz Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi has said Israel wants to pit Muslims against Muslims and is conspiring against the nuclear programme of Pakistan.

Addressing the Istehkam-e-Pakistan Conference at Idara Minhaj-ul-Hussain here on Saturday, he said the current situation demanded collective wisdom and restraint rather than emotional decisions, as hostile forces were attempting to create divisions among Muslim countries.

He said that during the recent tensions between Israel and Iran, a school of young girls was targeted, but the global humanitarian response remained inadequate.

He termed attacks on innocent civilians as deeply tragic for the entire Muslim world.

He said certain elements were trying to create an atmosphere of conflict between Arab countries and Iran, while stressing that unity among Muslim states was essential to counter external threats.

Ashrafi said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had held a detailed telephonic conversation with the Iranian president, while foreign ministers of countries including Turkiye, Egypt and Saudi Arabia were visiting Pakistan to explore a peaceful resolution to the situation.

He stressed that the protection of Haramain Sharifain was a matter of faith for every Muslim, adding that no harm to these sacred places could be tolerated.

Ashrafi said that Paigham-e-Pakistan remained an important national narrative promoting unity and consensus, urging leadership of Muslim countries to convene in Makkah to evolve a joint strategy against emerging challenges.

## Ayaz urges collective action for environmental protection

### APP

ISLAMABAD: Speaker of National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq termed environmental protection a shared responsibility of all segments of society, urging citizens to adopt eco-friendly habits beyond symbolic observances.

Addressing a ceremony held outside Parliament House to mark Earth Hour 2026, he reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to environmental sustainability.

The Speaker said Earth Hour should not be viewed merely as switching off lights for one hour, but as a collective pledge to safeguard the planet.

He said that energy conservation measures are already being strictly enforced within Parliament House as part of broader efforts to ensure responsible use of resources.

As part of the global Earth Hour campaign led by the World Wide Fund (WWF) for nature, the lights of Parliament House were switched off from 8:30 pm to 9:30 pm. Like previous years, all unnecessary lighting remained turned

off during this period.

Ayaz Sadiq emphasized that small individual actions, when combined, can lead to significant and lasting environmental impact.

He said that Pakistan is facing multiple challenges due to climate change, highlighting the need for comprehensive policy making and effective implementation to tackle these issues.

The Speaker stressed that timely measures are essential to ensure a safe and sustainable future for coming generations, adding that reducing air pollution and curbing harmful emissions are among the most pressing priorities.

He underscored the importance of sustainable use of natural resources and promoting environmentally responsible practices in everyday life.

Ayaz Sadiq said that protecting the environment can help realize the vision of a green, clean, and prosperous Pakistan, urging the nation to treat Earth Hour not as a one-time activity but as a continuing commitment.

## 21 illegal Afghans arrested in Islamabad

### INP

ISLAMABAD: As many as 221 suspicious persons, including 21 illegal Afghan nationals, were arrested during 48 combing operations in different areas of Islamabad.

According to details, 133 motorcycles and 5 vehicles were also checked. During the operation, 4188 persons and 1829 people were thoroughly searched. 548 shops and 93 hotels were also checked during the operation. 646 motorcycles and 1588 vehicles were also checked.

Police arrested many accused and recovered illegal arms from their possession. Earlier on Saturday, police operations against illegal Afghan nationals continued across the Rawalpindi district, in which 28 people were detained.

Sources said 5,790 illegal Afghan residents have so far been taken into custody and transferred to the holding centre at Dhoke Syedan. Moreover, 5,673 illegal Afghans have been deported since the deadline for voluntary return expired in August 2025.

According to sources, 28 illegal Afghan nationals were rounded up jointly by police and the Special Branch in the last 48 hours and shifted to the holding centre.

At present, 98 Afghan nationals - 67 male, 12 female, and 19 children - are being held in the centre.

As many as 5,790 Afghan nationals, including 3,185 males, 1,116 females, and 1484 children, have been rounded up and shifted to the holding centre since April 2025.

Of these, 5,673, including 3,104 males, 1,104 female and 1,465 children, have been deported to Afghanistan.



KARACHI: Firefighters busy in extinguish fire erupted in a container near Federal B Area Garibabad.

## New PIA owners rattled by rising jet fuel costs, worry about sustainability

### NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) Consortium Arif Habib on Sunday sounded the alarm over the sustainability of PIA operations in the wake of a recent 150 per cent hike in jet fuel rates, calling on the government to reverse the hike in prices.

"PIA could be forced to shut down" if jet fuel prices continue to remain high, Habib warned in an interview aired on Bol News.

Jet fuel (JP-1) rates have been increased without a formal announcement in recent weeks amid global supply chain uncertainty spurred by the US-Iran war.

Official rates seen by Dawn suggest JP-1 prices were raised by Rs84 per litre, or 21.65pc, to Rs472 from Rs388 per litre with effect from March 21. Since March 1, the price has surged by nearly 150pc from Rs190 per litre.

Habib connected the hike in jet fuel prices to the government's subsidisation of the fiscal burden from rising oil prices on ordinary citizens, saying that the gov-

ernment had decided to raise the price of high-octane fuel and aviation fuel to raise money for a cross-subsidy.

"In Pakistan, the government has raised prices but not in line with global markets. It seems like the government is trying to bear some burden from the savings it has made from the austerity measures and some through the cross-subsidy," he explained.

Last week, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb said that "targeted relief" would allow the benefits of fuel subsidies to be passed onto the deserving. He noted that the government had taken on a burden of Rs69 billion "using our own fiscal resources".

Habib was of the opinion that the government's measures were "not sustainable", adding that the government "has to take some steps to transfer some parts of this burden".

"On increasing the price of aviation fuel, I consider that it is a misunderstanding by the government that the common man doesn't use aviation," Habib said.

## CM Punjab Launches Free Cardiac Surgery Program for a Healthier Punjab

### By Maqsood Khalid

Lahore: In a major step towards a healthier Punjab, Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has launched the Chief Minister Cardiac Surgery Program under the Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education Department, aimed at providing free and timely treatment to patients suffering from heart diseases. The initiative has been formally rolled out following the Chief Minister's approval, with services now available at selected public and private hospitals across the province.

The program has commenced in 9 public and 15 private cardiac institutions, offering free treatment to eligible residents of Punjab. The first successful open-heart surgery under the initiative has already been performed at Punjab Institute of Cardiology, marking a significant milestone. An amount of over Rs. 3 billion annually has been allocated for the treatment of cardiac patients, with a

clear target set to eliminate long waiting lists for open-heart surgeries within 6 months.

To facilitate patients, a dedicated helpline 0800-09009 has been established, while patients can also contact 042-99066000 from Monday to Saturday, 8:00 AM to 11:00 PM. Additionally, guidance is available via WhatsApp at 0333-6756390, ensuring maximum accessibility for those in need of information and support.

Maryam Nawaz Sharif stated that the government is committed to providing advanced healthcare facilities to thousands of cardiac patients, adding that the Chief Minister Cardiac Surgery Program will play a vital role in ensuring free, timely, and quality treatment for patients across Punjab.



QUETTA: Number of people buying daily commodities from Joint road's Sunday Bazaar.