

DAILY MIRROR

Chief editor Syed Mumtaz Ahmed

Executive editor Syed Kamran Mumtaz

Wednesday, April, 08, 2026

Shawal, 19, 1447

No energy crisis in country despite oil disruptions: PM

APP

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday said that despite disruptions in oil supply due to regional tensions, no electricity crisis had emerged in the country owing to a significant share of renewable energy in electricity generation.

The prime minister, while chairing a meeting regarding long term energy planning and export strategy during current international situation, directed to expedite work on the Battery Energy Storage System project.

"Solar energy and other renewable energy sources are the future of the power sector," he said and directed to formulate a comprehensive strategy to further expand renewable energy sources at the national level.

He noted that Pakistani exports to Gulf countries were continuing despite recent

global tensions and challenges.

The prime minister directed the Pakistan National Shipping Corporation (PNSC) to arrange ships to increase exports via maritime routes.

Despite regional tensions, successful diplomacy has ensured the continued supply of Pakistani exports to Gulf countries, he added.

During the meeting, the prime minister was briefed on the long-term strategy for electricity generation, opportunities for exports in the current global situation, challenges faced, and measures to address them.

Currently, 55% of total electricity generation comes from renewable sources, while 45% comes from fossil fuels, the briefing stated. "Planning is underway to increase electricity generation from renewable sources to 90% and reduce fossil fuel-based generation to 10% over the next ten years."



Chief of Defence Forces and Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir presiding over the 274th Corps Commander Meeting in Rawalpindi.

Army brass condemns Iran attacks on Saudi facilities as 'unnecessary escalation' spoiling mediation efforts

Warns that such unwarranted aggression could undermine ongoing peaceful efforts, conducive environment for dialogue

APP

RAWALPINDI: The military leadership on Tuesday strongly condemned the recent Iranian attacks on Saudi Arabia's petrochemical and industrial complexes, terming them an "unnecessary escalation" that threatened to spoil mediation efforts to bring the Mideast crisis to an end.

Iran earlier attacked a petrochemical complex in Saudi Arabia's Jubail industrial city, located in the eastern province. The Foreign Office expressed "its deep concern and unequivocal condemnation" of the missile and drone attacks.

In a statement issued today, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said the army's top brass also condemned the attacks in the 274th Corps Commanders' Conference (CCC) at General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi.

"The forum noted with concern and vehemently condemned latest attacks on KSA's petrochemical and industrial complex as an unnecessary escalation which spoils sincere efforts to resolve the conflict through peaceful means. Forum noted that restraint and calibration so far exhibited by KSA, despite grave provocations, enabled mediation and diplomatic resolution, however, such unwarranted aggressions have serious repercussions, to spoil the ongoing peaceful options and conducive environ-

ment," the ISPR said.

The forum also appreciated the government's efforts to bring an end to the war in the Middle East and echoed the call for restraint, dialogue and de-escalation, reaffirming Pakistan's commitment to "principled diplomacy and constructive engagement".

The military leadership reiterated Pakistan's role as a responsible regional stakeholder, actively contributing to peace and stability as a "regional security stabiliser".

Tensions in the Middle East escalated sharply after US and Israeli air strikes in February assassinated Iran's then-supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and several senior officials, triggering a wave of retaliation from Tehran and widening the conflict across the region.

In response to the strikes, Iran launched retaliatory attacks on US military bases in several Gulf countries, significantly expanding the scope of the confrontation.

Since then, Pakistan has emerged as a key mediator and ramped up its efforts to de-escalate tensions. Pakistan hosted a quadrilateral foreign ministers' meeting in Islamabad, with representatives from Türkiye, Saudi Arabia and Egypt, that gained global attention and was widely praised for Pakistan's efforts.

CJP engages bar on reform agenda, access to justice

APP

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice Yahya Afridi on Tuesday engaged with delegations of bar associations to discuss judicial reforms and measures aimed at improving access to justice, underscoring the need for continued cooperation between the bench and the bar for effective dispensation of justice. During meetings held at the Supreme Court of Pakistan, a delegation of the Supreme Court Bar Association, led by its President Haroon-ur-Rashid, along with members of the executive committee, held detailed discussions on procedural facilitation and case management.

Key proposals included early issuance of cause lists, provision of one-window services for obtaining certified copies at the Public Facilitation Centre, allowing submission of adjournment and early hearing requests without the involvement of an Advocate-on-Record, and introduc-

ing flexibility in case fixation for outstanding counsel.

The chief justice observed that the bar is a central stakeholder in the justice system and that efficient delivery of justice depends on constructive engagement with the legal fraternity.

He directed the relevant office to facilitate lawyers, particularly from Balochistan and Sindh, by fixing their cases on designated days of the week to ensure their meaningful participation in court proceedings. Representatives of the bar assured that formal proposals, including those requiring amendments to existing rules, would be submitted in accordance with the law. Separately, delegations from the Rawalpindi High Court Bar Association, led by Saeed Yousuf Khan, and the Rawalpindi District Bar Association, led by its President Tariq Mehmood Sajid Awan, also called on the chief justice. Discussions focused on improving library facilities and enhancing capacity-building initiatives for lawyers.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairs a progress review on performance of National Tariff Commission.

PM Shehbaz reaffirms unwavering solidarity with KSA

APP

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif held a telephone conversation with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud this afternoon during which they discussed the ongoing hostilities in the region.

The Prime Minister reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering and unflinching solidarity and support for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in the wake of the ongoing attacks, and reiterated Pakistan's condemnation of the attack at the Al Jubail oil facility in Saudi Arabia earlier today.

Shehbaz Sharif assured the Crown Prince that the people and the Government of Pakistan would always stand shoulder to shoulder with their Saudi brothers and sisters, just as the Saudi leadership and people have always supported Pakistan, through thick and thin. He also apprised the Crown Prince on latest developments in Pakistan's mediation efforts to de-escalate the Middle East crisis. The Prime Minister lauded the wisdom and sagacity of the Saudi leadership in exercising maximum restraint during the ongoing crisis. He said Pakistan is working assiduously for the success of the peace efforts, in partnership with other countries. The Prime Minister conveyed his warm wishes and respectful regards for the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.

Trump warns 'whole civilisation will die' in Iran if deal ultimatum expires

MONITORING DESK

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump has issued a strict warning to Iran, saying that "a whole civilisation will die tonight" if Tehran fails to reach an agreement by his self-imposed Tuesday deadline.

In a post on Truth Social, Trump stated that failure to secure a deal could lead to irreversible destruction, calling it "one of the most important moments in the long and complex history of the world." He added that while he does not want such an outcome, it remains a likely possibility if diplomacy fails.

US has largely accomplished military objectives in Iran war, Vance says

Meanwhile, JD Vance said the United States has largely achieved its military objectives in the ongoing conflict with Iran. He expressed confidence that

Washington would receive a response from Tehran within the set deadline, signaling cautious optimism from the US administration.

Iran Guards warn will respond beyond region if US 'crosses red lines'

On the other side, Iran's powerful Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps has issued a stern warning, stating that any crossing of "red lines" by the United States would trigger retaliation beyond the Middle East.

According to a statement aired on Iranian state television, the Guards threatened to target critical infrastructure in a way that could deprive the United States and its allies of oil and gas resources for years.

The warning highlights the potential for the conflict to expand globally, raising fears of severe economic and geopolitical consequences.



QUETTA: CM Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti Addressing a Balochistan Provincial Assembly.

CM Bugti expresses sorrow on death of Ex, MNA Babul Khan Jakhrani

APP

Quetta: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti on Tuesday expressed deep sorrow over the death of former Member National Assembly (MNA) Babul Khan Jakhrani and extended his heartfelt sympathy and condolences to the bereaved family.

In his condolence message, the Chief Minister of Balochistan expressed his sorrow over the death of MNA Ijaz Hussain Jakhrani on the death of his father.

He said that the late Babul Khan Jakhrani was a sincere and people-friendly personality who had played a prominent role for the welfare of the people through his political and social services, the void created by his death would be felt for a long time.

Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti prayed that Allah Almighty grant the deceased a place in His mercy, elevate his ranks and grant the survivors the ability to bear this shock with patience and courage.

Balochistan Home Dept issues directive to ensure implementation of national austerity

APP

Quetta: Balochistan Home Department has issued a revised notification regarding the working hours of markets, wedding halls and restaurants after the agreement between the Balochistan Government and the traders organizations on national austerity steps on Tuesday.

According to Additional Chief Secretary Home Balochistan Muhammad Hamza Shafiqat, all shops, markets, shopping centers, public parks and recreational places across the province would be closed at 8 pm, keeping in mind the efficient use of energy and fuel conservation.

However, in view of public convenience, pharmacies, home delivery services and tandors would be exempted from this ban.

As per the notification, wedding halls, banquet halls, restaurants and other events could be allowed to continue till 10 pm, while for Quetta city this time has been fixed at 11 pm.

The Home Department has clarified that instructions have been issued to the district administration and law enforcement agencies to ensure the implementation of these orders and in case of violation, action to be taken under the relevant laws.

According to the authorities, these measures have been taken under the national level austerity policy, which aims to ensure balance in energy use and effective protection of public resources.

President receives credentials from six foreign envoys

APP

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has received credentials from envoys of six countries and discussed expanding bilateral cooperation.

Ambassadors-designate of Cuba, Ethiopia, Portuguese, Spain and Tanzania, as well as the High Commissioner-designate of Singapore, presented their credentials to President Asif Ali Zardari in Islamabad today.

The President felicitated the envoys on the commencement of their diplomatic responsibilities in Pakistan and conveyed his best wishes

for a productive tenure. He expressed the hope that their assignments would contribute to strengthening bilateral relations and advancing cooperation in areas of mutual interest.

During his interaction with Ambassador-designate of Cuba Damian Cordero Torres, the President reaffirmed the longstanding and friendly relations between the two countries. He appreciated Cuba's support in healthcare and education, including medical scholarships, and emphasised the potential for cooperation in health, biotechnology and tourism, as well as continued collaboration at multilateral forums. The President also conveyed Pakistan's deep appreciation for Cuba's support during the 2005 earthquake, noting that this humanitarian assistance remains a lasting symbol of solidarity between the two nations.

In his meeting with Ambassador-designate of Ethiopia Dr. Oumer Hussein Oba, Asif Ali Zardari welcomed the opening of Ethiopia's Embassy in Islamabad and the resumption of direct flights.

He noted the growing engagement between the two countries and emphasised the need to expand cooperation in trade, aviation, education and technology.

Govt tackling economic challenges responsibly, focuses on reforms, energy security: Finance Minister

APP

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Tuesday said that the government is managing the economic crisis responsibly, ensuring that subsidies reach those most in need while continuing structural reforms and planning for energy security and macroeconomic stability.

Speaking in the National Assembly, he said, "The government is pursuing a holistic strategy that balances fiscal responsibility, subsidy management, energy security, and structural reforms, ensuring Pakistan's macroeconomic stability in challenging times." Senator Aurangzeb said that from March 14 to April 4, fuel price transmission was temporarily halted, and a blanket subsidy was provided to prevent further increases.

"The total subsidy amounts to Rs 129-130 billion. This was not left to mere discretion or speculation—it was carefully funded and monitored by the Finance Division," he added.

He explained that austerity measures were enforced systematically, with around 60% of government vehicles grounded and other controls applied under ministerial oversight. A third-party audit of the subsidy is currently underway to ensure transparency.

Addressing claims that certain sectors were neglected, the minister said, "Targeted subsidies were announced for deserv-

ing groups, including two-wheelers, trucks, large vehicles, mini-vans, and public transport buses. Small farmers and provincial mechanisms were also considered, with Punjab having 850,000 beneficiaries and Sindh using the Card system."

He added that the government coordinated closely with relevant ministries, the State Bank, and banking officials to ensure proper distribution.

"Subsidy disbursements are already underway, and every measure has been reinforced to protect the public interest," the finance minister concluded.

Aurangzeb also provided an update on Pakistan's fuel subsidy program and its alignment with regional trends, emphasising that all deserving groups will begin receiving benefits soon.

He said the Ministry of Petroleum has been coordinating daily to monitor fuel policies across South and Southeast Asia, including the UAE, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India, the Philippines, and Cambodia.

"For instance, in the UAE, petrol prices have increased by 30% and diesel by 70%. Many countries have already started rationing. We are observing these developments closely to ensure our subsidy policy remains effective," he added.

The minister stressed that Pakistan is implementing a carefully planned strategy, with continuous monitoring of the macroeconomic impact. "We are tracking increases in oil and

gas bills, insurance and freight costs, and implications for exports, particularly to GCC countries. Remittances remain stable so far, which is encouraging," he added.

Aurangzeb underscored that the government is committed to transparency and efficiency, coordinating closely with key officials. "Our strategy is guided by both short-term realities and long-term planning to protect the economy and support the public," he said.

He provided detailed insights into Pakistan's fiscal and subsidy strategy, emphasizing careful planning amid domestic and international economic pressures.

The government is monitoring the impact of subsidies on inflation, the balance of payments, and the current account, particularly concerning GCC countries. "We are closely tracking external financing needs, including the upcoming Eurobond repayment this week, alongside other obligations," he noted.

The finance minister stressed that austerity measures and cost-cutting proposals are being implemented without compromising public welfare. He highlighted structural reforms, including the privatisation of 26 state-owned enterprises, such as PIA and the Women's Bank. "Some entities that were unviable, like certain PWD operations, were closed to eliminate corruption and mismanagement, ensuring subsidies reach their intended purpose," he added.

NPAC calls for national unity, interfaith harmony, renewed focus on Kashmir issue

APP

ISLAMABAD: The National Paigham-e-Aman Committee (NPAC) on Tuesday organised an important conference at Kashmir House, Islamabad, bringing together prominent religious scholars and leaders to discuss national unity, interfaith harmony, and the Kashmir issue.

The conference was attended by Acting President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Chaudhry Latif Akbar, who addressed the gathering alongside NPAC Coordinator, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi. The event also saw participation from Ulema and Mashayikh representing all schools of thought, reflecting the Committee's inclusive approach.

"For over seventy years, the people of Kashmir have endured Indian oppression and tyranny," he added.

He mentioned that India has repeatedly targeted Kashmiri leaders - Maulana Farooq, Ali Gilani, Sheikh Abdul Aziz, Ashraf Sehrai and others including the long-term imprisonment of Hurriyat leader Shabbir Shah for 38 years, and continues to suppress media access and political expression in the region.

He also lauded Kashmiri women activists such as Asiya Andrabi and others for their courageous efforts supporting Kashmiri rights despite immense challenges. "Kashmir has given immense leadership sacrifices with its blood, a story rarely matched in world history," he maintained.

Chaudhry Latif Akbar also highlighted a prominent Kashmiri Pundit, Air Vice Marshal (Retd.) Kapil Kak, who is a vocal proponent of Kashmiri rights, peace, and the restoration of Jammu and Kashmir's statehood.

He emphasized that despite these challenges, India can never erase the identity and struggle of the Kashmiri people. He underscored the importance of educating Pakistan's youth about Kashmir and reaffirmed Pakistan's historical support for the Kashmiri cause during critical times.

Highlighting the country's strengthened defense and growing international stature, he praised Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir for elevating Pakistan's global credibility and stability.



QUETTA: Director General (DG) of Khana-e Farhang Iran, Dr Abul Hasan Meri addressing a press conference.

Federal Ombudsman Naveed Kamran meets Baloch Senate Chairman Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani

By Maqsood khalid

LAHORE: Federal Ombudsman Naveed Kamran Baloch met with Chairman Senate and former Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani in his office yesterday.

During the meeting, the former Prime Minister congratulated him on his appointment as Federal Ombudsman and said that he hopes that with his experience, the institution of Federal Ombudsman will set the stage for further development.

The Federal Ombudsman told Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani that his institution had decided more than 261,000 complaints last year, out of which about 97 percent of the decisions have been implemented.

Federal Ombudsman Naveed Kamran Baloch told the former Prime Minister that 27 regional offices of the Federal Ombudsman are working across the country to provide justice to the people near their homes. In addition, officers of the Federal Ombudsman personally go to remote areas of the country to hear complaints and provide free and prompt justice to the people.

The former Prime Minister, while praising the performance of the Federal Ombudsman, said that with the appointment of Naveed Kamran Baloch as the Federal Ombudsman, this institution will progress further and will play its role in solving the



problems of the poor people of Pakistan.

He assured the Federal Ombudsman of his full support. At the end of the meeting, the Chairman Senate also presented the Federal Ombudsman with a shield and a garland depicting his hometown of Multan.

Gwadar Implements business hour restrictions to address energy shortages

INP

GWADAR: Authorities in Gwadar have imposed temporary business hour limits to manage expected energy shortages tied to regional instability.

This move aims to protect operations in Pakistan's key China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) port city, Gwadar Pro reported. The restrictions follow instructions from Balochistan's Chief Minister, Mir Sarfraz Bugti. Deputy Commissioner Naqeebullah Kakar consulted with local traders and business leaders, officials said.

According to the new regulations, shopping malls and commercial centers must close by 8:00 PM, while restaurants, hotels, and most offices including the passport office must shut by 10:00 PM. Medical stores and tandoor shops are exempt to ensure access to essential services.

Officials pointed to growing uncertainty surrounding Iran and broader regional tensions as factors that could disrupt energy supplies. Authorities stressed the importance of maintaining stability in Gwadar, given its strategic role in regional trade and China-Pakistan.

PPP chief pays tribute to Taj Haider on death anniversary

APP

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has paid rich tribute to the party's former Secretary General, Senator Taj Haider, on his death anniversary being observed on April 8.

According to the press release issued by the Media Cell Bilawal House, he said that Senator Taj Haider was not only a dedicated party worker but also a thoughtful ideologue whose words reflected wisdom and whose life embodied steadfast commitment to democratic values.

"He remained firm in times of trial, guided by principles and served the people with humility and dignity," he said.

Bilawal Bhutto said Taj Haider will remain alive in the hearts of party workers and all those who believe in a just.



QUETTA: Physiotherapy Association Balochistan President Dr Umair Baloch addressing a press conference.

RDMC awarded 23 scholarships to Chaghi students

APP

QUETTA: Reko Diq Mining Company (RDMC) has awarded 23 scholarships to students who have completed their primary education at company-supported schools in communities surrounding its project operations, enabling them to continue their studies at a residential school in Quetta.

To ensure a smooth transition, orientation and interactive sessions were held at the Progressive Education Network (PEN) Nokkundi office—RDMC's partner organization for this initiative—for selected students from Durbunchah, Humai, Maskichah, Nokchah, and Tung

Kachawo.

During these sessions, representatives from RDMC's Community Relations team, along with PEN, briefed students on the scholarship program and the next phase of their academic journey, said a news release. After the orientation, the students, accompanied by program staff, departed for Quetta, taking a significant step forward in both their academic journey and personal growth.

Highlighting RDMC's commitment to education, Muhammad Essa Tahir, Community Investment Lead, stated that education remains a key priority under the company's Community Investment Program.



QUETTA: Al Christens Balochistan hold protest outside QPC.



Pegula reaches WTA Charleston Open semi-finals with latest three-setter

SPORTS DESK

WASHINGTON: Top seed Jessica Pegula once again fought back from a set down to reach the WTA Charleston Open semi-finals with a 3-6, 6-3, 6-2 win against Russia's Diana Shnaider on Friday.

Defending champion Pegula has lost the first set in all three matches so far, but again dug deep to maintain her hopes of retaining the title.

The world number five from the United States took two hours and 10 minutes to defeat 19th-ranked Shnaider, relying on a formidable service game that included eight aces.

Shnaider battled well in the first two sets, and broke early for a 2-0 lead in the final set, before losing six straight games.

Pegula, chasing her second tournament victory of the year after winning the title in Dubai in February, will face fourth-seeded fellow American Iva Jovic, who beat Russian Anna Kalinskaya 6-3, 6-4.

Despite a first-round bye, Pegula has clocked up nine sets and more than seven hours on court so far. She has won nine of 10 matches this year that have gone to a deciding third set.

On the other side of the draw, fifth-seeded American Madison Keys booked her semi-final spot with a 4-6, 6-3, 6-2 victory over third-seeded Swiss Belinda Bencic in a battle of former Charleston champions.

Keys' comeback win over 2022 champion Bencic has her back in the semi-finals for the first time since her own title run in 2019.



LAHORE: Multan Sultans opener Sahibzada Farhan plays a stroke as Rawalpindiz skipper Mohammad Rizwan looks on during their Pakistan Super League match at the Gaddafi Stadium

Sahibzada Farhan, Josh Philippe hit fifties as clinical Sultans overpower Rawalpindiz

SPORTS DESK

LAHORE: Sahibzada Farhan and Josh Philippe struck fluent half-centuries that powered Multan Sultans to a commanding seven-wicket victory over Rawalpindiz in the HBL Pakistan Super League at Gaddafi Stadium on Monday night. Chasing 183, Sultans reached the target with 22 balls to spare, extending their unbeaten run and tightening their grip at the top of the points table.

Sahibzada, in imperious touch, made 68 off 38 balls, laced with four boundaries and five sixes. The right-hander took the attack to the Rawalpindiz bowlers from the outset, punishing anything loose with crisp cuts and powerful sweeps.

Philippe, the Australian wicket-keeper-batter, complemented Sahibzada perfectly with a 56 off 30 deliveries, featuring six fours and three sixes. Their 110-run second-wicket stand, after Steven Smith's early dismissal for five, dismantled the chase and left Rawalpindiz bowlers with little room to manoeuvre.

The pair batted with remarkable freedom under the lights, finding gaps with surgical precision and clearing the ropes at will. Sahibzada brought up his fifty in the ninth over with a towering six off Rishad Hossain, while Philippe joined the party soon after, launching another maximum over cow corner. Their aggressive yet calculated approach reduced the asking rate dramatically, turning what could have been a tense pursuit into a procession.

Once Philippe fell to Mohammad Amir in the 11th over, caught by Sam Billings for 56, Shan Masood and captain Ashton Turner provided the finishing touches with enterprising cameos.

Shan remained unbeaten on 27 off 15 balls, striking two fours and a six, while Turner bludgeoned an unbeaten 26 off just 10 deliveries, including a boundary and two sixes. The duo added 47 runs in quick time, ensuring Sultans

crossed the line with minimal fuss.

Faisal stars

Earlier, Rawalpindiz had posted a competitive 182 for eight after being sent in to bat. Their innings was built on flashes of brilliance but undermined by regular breakthroughs, particularly from Multan's spinners.

Faisal Akram was the standout performer with the ball, claiming four wickets for 31 runs in his four overs. The young left-arm wrist spinner operated with guile and variation, dismissing key batters at crucial junctures.

He removed Abdullah Fazal for 14, Kamran Ghulam for 35, Daryl Mitchell for 17, and Asif Afridi for seven, breaking partnerships and preventing Rawalpindiz from building sustained momentum. His spell, which included a disguised googly that accounted for Mitchell, showcased maturity beyond his years and earned him the player-of-the-match honours.

Rawalpindiz started cautiously with Mohammad Rizwan (19) and Yasir Khan (five) adding 15 in the first two overs before pacer Mohammad Ismail castled Yasir. Kamran injected momentum with a quick 35 off 24, including two sixes, but Faisal had him caught at square leg shortly after.

The middle order struggled until the lower-middle order provided late acceleration. Dian Forrester lit up the stadium with a blistering 24 off 11 balls, smashing three sixes in an over against Mohammad Nawaz to take the score past 110. His aggressive intent briefly threatened to push Rawalpindiz towards 200, but Peter Siddle removed him for 24 with a well-judged catch by Nawaz at deep mid-wicket.

Billings then took centre stage, anchoring the innings with a composed yet attacking 56 not out off 34 balls. The Englishman, who walked in at number six, found the boundary seven times and cleared it once, forming useful partnerships with Forrester and the tail.

Arbeloa expects Champions League response as Real host Bayern after La Liga setback

By Maqsood Khalid

MADRID: Real Madrid manager Alvaro Arbeloa expects his side to rise to the occasion when they host Bayern Munich in the first leg of their Champions League quarter-final at the Bernabeu on Tuesday, as they look to rebound from a damaging league defeat.

Real's La Liga title hopes took a hit on Saturday after a 2-1 loss away to relegation-threatened Mallorca, leaving them seven points adrift of leaders Barcelona in the table.

"I told them there was no time to dwell on what had happened," Arbeloa told reporters on Monday. "All we're thinking about is winning tomorrow."

Real face a stern test against Vincent Kompany's Bayern, who are nine points clear at the top of the Bundesliga and finished second in the Champions League league phase, suffering just one defeat.

"They're aggressive in defence, they're fearless, they're brave, they mark their men very closely, they drop back at tremendous speed, with intensity, and with the pace they bring to the game," Arbeloa said.

"They're a very well-rounded team with plenty of weapons to cause damage. They're capable of scoring plenty of goals and have a defence in which everyone gets involved."

Arbeloa, however, is confident that Real's pedigree on Europe's biggest stage will again come to the fore. "We're up against a team that's the most consistent in Europe and will really test us. Our history against this opponent is special. I'm sure we're in for a great night, just like against Manchester City."

Arbeloa said Kylian Mbappe joined the club to star in key matches and is a vital part of the team, although questions remain over whether record 15-time winners Real can strike the right balance with all their biggest names on the pitch at the same time.

French superstar Mbappe, the club's top goalscorer, did not start either game in the last 16 tie against City which Madrid won impressively, because of a long struggle with a knee sprain.

Fit once more, Arbeloa indicated Mbappe was likely to feature along with Vinicius Junior in attack at the Santiago Bernabeu.



LONDON: Arsenal's William Saliba (C) dribbles the ball during a practice session at the club's training centre.

Member APNS

Daily Mirror

Chief editor Syed Mumtaz Ahmed

Printed and Published Chief Executive Syed Mumtaz Ahmed, For MEM Publications (Pvt) Ltd, 4-A Model Town Hali Road Quetta Cantt. Phone, No. 081-2829164, Fax No. 081-2835934

Trump's threats

THERE were few details in US President Donald Trump's presser late on Monday about which way his war on Iran could go, with the American leader continuing to issue threats as well as hold out the promise of a possible negotiated solution.

The media interaction followed Mr Trump's social media posts on Sunday, which were unhinged even by his standards, as he used foul language against the Iranians, while also appearing to mock Islam.

Most of the event was dedicated to the mission inside Iran in which two American troops were reportedly rescued, with the US president and his subordinates heaping praise on each other for accomplishing the mission.

What did emerge on Monday was the fact that Mr Trump's deadline for Iran to open the Strait of Hormuz stands: unless Tehran does so by early Wednesday Pakistan time, Donald Trump has threatened to take out the entire country in "one night".

In his posts on Sunday, he had warned of destroying Iranian civilian infrastructure, specifically bridges and power plants. His abrasive war secretary also warned Tehran of heavy strikes.

Mr Trump's long list of threats comes as supposedly last-ditch efforts to secure a negotiated settlement also continue. Media reports say a potential 45-day truce is on the table, with Pakistan, Turkiye and Egypt leading the effort. When questioned, the Foreign Office spokesman simply said the peace process was "ongoing".

However, it should be understood that team Trump's consistent threats and insults will hardly make Iran come running to the table and sign the dotted line to secure peace. The Iranians have shown that they can defend themselves even in the face of massive aggression from two of the most powerful militaries in the world, the US and Israel. Mr Trump's use of profanity — highly unbecoming of a public office-holder — and his mockery of Islamic sanctities will only strengthen the Iranian resolve to resist. Moreover, it is highly unfortunate that Muslim states have largely kept quiet despite the US leader's appalling and offensive outburst.

Instead of more violence and bullying, if Mr Trump wants to end this war, he must reach out to the Iranians with respect. The window for diplomacy is closing fast and the commendable efforts made by Pakistan and other regional states will come to nought if the US and Israel continue their illegal aggression against Iran.

Meanwhile, Trumpian threats to obliterate civilian infrastructure inside Iran may fall under the purview of war crimes. Tehran is interested in permanent guarantees of no more aggression. If Iran is assured of this, the devastating war can hopefully be wound down. But if Mr Trump delivers on his latest ultimatum, the region, and the global economy.

By Arifa Noor

Tight rope act

WITH a war in the region, Pakistan has been at the centre stage of all conversations, negotiations and talks about and around the conflict.

For this, there has also been much praise and some heartburn (from some in the neighbourhood). However, Islamabad still needs to be careful; it continues to perform a tight rope balancing act domestically and internationally, as this conflict goes on. And if the hostilities continue, staying upright will be a trick and a half.

This is primarily linked to the country's precarious economic situation and an 'unpopular' government struggling to gain a foothold with the people. And as some or many economic experts point out, there is little to fall back on if the world is facing uncertainty in terms of oil prices or other shocks. However successful this government may have been, as we are told continuously, in every aspect.

Consider the management of the petrol prices. The somersaults by the government have been quite remarkable. It began by being one of the first in the region to act decisively once the international prices went up by hiking the price by Rs55. At that point, the government defended its move by arguing that it was not possible to take any other decision, but for the next couple of weeks, it moved to a different tactic. The prime minister himself came on air to announce that he was not passing on the price, while a story in Dawn reported that he told his colleagues that he and the army chief had agreed to not pass on petrol price hikes for the near future.

Government representatives were at pains to explain this 'subsidy' could not go on forever but there was little clarity on how long this would last and what would come next. Then came a spate of meetings as Islamabad tried to convince the provincial governments to share the burden, from funding the subsidy to providing relief. But even then, few expected the bombshell. Late Thursday night, which

just passed, three government ministers announced a raise in prices that overshadowed the previous hike.

The next day wasn't easy for the people or for the government, it seems, because within 24 hours, the prime minister turned up on television again. He announced a new lower price, explaining that he had reduced the tax on the fuel.

The government was targeted for being indecisive — and rightly so.

The government was targeted for being indecisive — and rightly so. The explanation from government quarters that the tax could only be lowered after permission from the IMF (which apparently came a day later) is not really being bought. In addition, it has highlighted once again the government's failure in reducing its expenses or widening the tax base, which forces it to impose high indirect taxes on fuel. This was emphasised by an interview of the petroleum minister in which he acknowledged that there should be accountability of those who agreed to these revenue targets and then failed to meet them. In fact, questions are being raised whether the government is a house divided or if there are serious reservations within about some key people.

It is hard to say how serious the blame game is. But it is worth asking whether recriminations will intensify if oil prices go up further and other economic shocks make the tight rope walking even more difficult. After all, news about the possible impact on exports, balance-of-payments and inflation is yet to become visible.

Add to this, the people and the situation becomes even more wobbly. Can the petrol price be the final straw on the camel's back? No one can predict for sure but the fear is always there that the next economic shock will lead to chaos on the streets. That the powers that be share this fear is evident from their overreaction to any protest. Just consider that the Federal Constitutional Court has

taken notice of the Imran Rehai Force, a kooky idea of Chief Minister Sohail Afridi that even the PTI didn't take seriously. However, the court wants to know more about it and there are guesses galore about why this is so.

But the economic balancing act is simply not limited to the domestic headaches. Even internationally, the country, with its weak economy, moves to please many Pied Pipers, struggling to ensure no tune is ignored. There is the Fund and the US, at one end, then friends in the Gulf on the other, as well as those further east.

The recent fracas was over the UAE loan, which Islamabad has 'decided' to return if reports are to be believed. A loan that was given in the 1990s and now is being returned because the UAE is apparently no longer interested in rolling it over is being linked to Islamabad's policy of maintaining relations with the Gulf Arab states as well as Iran. There are reports that the UAE (and perhaps others) are not happy that Islamabad is trying to balance its various relations, especially maintaining an even keel with its immediate neighbour Iran.

Upsetting anyone in the Gulf comes with its own economic costs, while relations with Iran can impact the Shia community within the country. Along with this, there are concerns about what it will mean for Pakistan if there is a different regime in Tehran.

Indeed, if any of the friends or benefactors in the Gulf take offence at the support for Iran or Pakistan's refusal of any demand, the economic situation for the government can become more difficult. And the longer the conflict goes on, the more complicated this delicate balancing act can become. Especially, if the US also decides to take a second look at Pakistan's role. Indeed, the conflict in the Middle East may be tough for the world but it is taking its own toll on Islamabad. The sooner it ends, the better it is for the country.

By Shahzad Sharjeel

Galactic lunacy

IT seems we've been fascinated by the moon since the earliest days. The 'we' includes not just humans but other creatures as well. Many companies use the myth-inspired wolf howling at the moon logo.

There's folklore about the Chakor circling the moon as a symbol of unrequited love. The idea that erratic mental conditions are caused by moon phases led to the term 'lunatic', meaning 'moon-struck.' Science shows that the rise and fall of ocean tides are driven by the moon's gravitational pull.

Yuri Gagarin, a Russian cosmonaut, was the first human to orbit the Earth in 1961. American astronaut Neil Armstrong took the famous 'one giant leap for mankind' by walking on the moon in 1969. As is common in this part of the world, we stuck to our usual claim, that is, 'did it before everyone else', albeit in that near-lunatic state called poetic inspiration. In our Indo-Persian cultural tradition, this closest of celestial bodies is likened to the most divergent objects and relations, such as the beloved's face and the maternal uncle. The majority of Muslims still

determine the religious calendar and festivals by the moon phases.

While the faithful around the world are open to using scientific, more accurate methods to determine the Earth's movement, segments of the clergy insist on sticking to tradition and sighting the moon to guide the lives of billions of Muslims. Despite the important work undertaken by Muslim scientists during the 'Golden Age', of late our interest in the moon has been limited to the possibility of multiple honeymoons. In fact, our complacency in 'reaching for the stars' could be evinced by the vehemence with which certain quarters still deny the human landing on the moon. If it is any solace, the so-called developed world, including Europe and North America, has a sizeable community of deniers despite the 382 kilograms of moon rock brought back by various missions.

Our interest in the moon is restricted to multiple honeymoons.

The Cold War rivalry between the America and the Soviet Union led president John F. Kennedy to vow in 1961 that the US would land a human on the

moon within the decade. Many other nations have since joined the space race, sending satellites and bringing back samples. After a hiatus of a few decades, the race to claim outer space was reignited by private companies, mainly Elon Musk's SpaceX and Jeff Bezos' Blue Origin. What started out as space tourism has evolved into a frantic rush to colonise space and establish permanent stations on celestial bodies such as the moon. As long as it was focused on scientific research and the adventures of the wealthiest individuals, it was somewhat acceptable. However, it was only a matter of time before those exhausting Earth's resources and destroying its environment would seek to colonise every available 'foothold', even in outer space, and monopolise alternative habitats for those who can afford it. An extremely alarming aspect has been added to the nuclear holocaust scenario. Since the invention of nuclear weapons, people have feared a post-apocalyptic world, often described as a 1,000-year nuclear winter, with nothing but layers of permafrost or a scorched-earth.

By Maqsood Khalid

Maryam Nawaz Sharif Leads Punjab Towards Cleanliness and Administrative Excellence

Under the dynamic leadership of Chief Minister Punjab, Maryam Nawaz Sharif, the province is witnessing a remarkable transformation in governance, cleanliness, and administrative efficiency. Her commitment to public service and reform has positioned Punjab as a model of progress and accountability.

One of the most notable achievements of her administration is the province-wide cleanliness drive. From major cities to remote towns, sanitation standards have significantly improved, reflecting the government's dedication to creating a healthier and more livable environment for citizens.

Maryam Nawaz Sharif has also introduced strict administrative reforms, particularly in public service departments. A strong accountability mechanism has been implemented, ensuring that negligence and poor performance are not tolerated. Authorities have made it clear that in cases of negligence, contracts will be cancelled without hesitation, reinforcing a culture of responsibility and discipline.

Furthermore, her focus on institutional reforms has enhanced the efficiency and transparency of government operations. Departments are now working with renewed vigor,

guided by performance-based evaluation and citizen-centric policies.

Political analysts and citizens alike have praised her leadership, calling her a capable and results-driven administrator. Her

proactive approach and hands-on governance style continue to win public confidence across Punjab.

With a clear vision and firm resolve, Maryam Nawaz Sharif is steering Punjab towards a future marked by cleanliness, efficiency, and good governance.



DAILY MIRROR

Pakistan, Türkiye agree to enhance cooperation in Constitutional Law & Judicial Reforms

APP

ISLAMABAD: A delegation led by Kadir Özkaya, President of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Türkiye, on his official visit to Pakistan, called on Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar, Federal Minister for Law & Justice and Human Rights, in Islamabad.

Minister of State for Law & Justice Barrister Aqeel Malik, Secretary Law & Justice Raja Naeem Akbar, along with other senior officers, were also present during the meeting.

Both sides shared their experiences, institutional insights, and best practices in the fields of constitutional law and judicial administration during the high-level engagement.

The discussions focused on constitutional law and judicial reforms, with particular emphasis on strengthening institutional frameworks and refining mechanisms for judicial appointments. The Pakistani side provided a detailed briefing on the system of judicial appointments under Articles

175A and 175C of the Constitution.

Broader themes concerning the rule of law and the strengthening of the justice system were also examined. Both sides agreed to enhance cooperation between the judicial institutions of Pakistan and Türkiye, particularly in areas such as court administration, exchange of best practices, and capacity building.

Considerable attention was given to the digital transformation of judicial systems, encompassing the deployment of Case Management Systems (CAMS) and Case Flow Management Systems (CFMS), as well as the development of the Pakistan Code and a Document Retrieval System designed to enhance public access to laws.

These initiatives, alongside broader technology-driven solutions, are intended to improve institutional efficiency and transparency.

The dialogue also explored the promotion of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, including mediation and arbitration, as a means of alleviating case backlog and facilitating more expeditious justice delivery.

In a joint press conference, Kadir Özkaya highlighted Türkiye's ongoing efforts to protect the rights of refugees and expressed optimism regarding progress in this area. He noted that the judiciary in Türkiye is increasingly utilizing modern technology and welcomed Pakistan's initiative toward establishing a constitutional court, offering full support and cooperation.

Speaking on the occasion, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar underscored the central role of the Ministry of Law and Justice in legislative processes and its continuous support to the Attorney General's Office. He further said that the Ministry of Law and Justice operates continuously in fulfilling its responsibilities. Highlighting recent progress, he shared that a software system has been developed to provide real-time updates on cases.

He also noted that Pakistan has received a Commonwealth award in recognition of its use of digital technology in the justice sector.

Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthening legal and judicial cooperation between Pakistan and Türkiye.



ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari in a meeting with Governor Gilgit-Baltistan, Syed Mehdi Shah at Aiwan e Sadr, in the Federal Capital.

China backs Pakistan role in Iran ceasefire efforts

NEWS DESK

BEIJING: China has expressed support for Pakistan's role in facilitating ceasefire efforts related to the Iran conflict, signaling growing diplomatic coordination in the region.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning stated that Beijing backs Pakistan's constructive role in promoting a ceasefire and hopes that all parties involved will not miss the opportunity for peace. She emphasized that China welcomes all efforts aimed at achieving stability and encourages continued dialogue.

Mao Ning further appreciated Pakistan's active engagement in advancing negotiations and stressed that differences should be resolved through diplomatic means rather than conflict. China reiterated its stance that peaceful dialogue remains the only viable path toward long-term stability.

Meanwhile, Iran's Ambassador to Pakistan Reza Amiri Moghadam highlighted that Pakistan's mediation efforts have entered a critical and sensitive phase, driven by goodwill and constructive diplomacy aimed at halting the conflict.

Govt promoting solar energy under sustainable policy framework: Minister

INP

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Climate Change Shezra Mansab Ali Khan Kharal on Tuesday informed the National Assembly that the government is actively promoting solar energy and clean power through a balanced and sustainable policy.

Responding to a calling attention notice, drastic change in net metering policy for solar prosumers and decision to propose 18% tax on solar panels,

she said Pakistan has introduced policies to support renewable energy in line with global practices, adding that the government remains committed to expanding clean energy initiatives.

She said the country's updated climate commitments show

a clear move towards sustainable energy, including a decision not to set up new power plants based on imported coal.

NAB holds seminar to promote collective efforts for building corruption-free society

APP

Quetta: The primary objective of the seminar was to aware youth about detrimental effects of corruption and to promote collective efforts for building a corruption-free society.

Mr. Ehtisham-ul-Haq, Addl Director, Muhammad Feroz, Headmaster and other speakers engaged with students and faculty, discussing NAB's vision, mission and the significant role, students could play in eradicating menace of corruption. The Deputy Director NAB (Balochistan) Mr. Khuram Shehzad delivered formal speech and emphasized students to adopt such moral standards wherein abhorrence against corruption become integral part of their personalities.

He said that it was also deliberated that the teachings of Islam also assert on self-accountability and would not allow an iota of dishonesty and corruption.

He added that nepotism, influence peddling, bribery, extortion and favouritism were underlined as forms of corruption, but unfortunately, these have been taken

by the society as a norm. He said that the collective efforts of students, as crucial members of society could play a pivotal role for laying foundation of a corruption-free society.

Afterwards, Mr. Ehtisham ul Haq, Addl Director, NAB (B) effectively and patiently responded to the questions raised by the students and faculty members at the end of the session.

On this occasion, Mr. Muhammad Feroz, Headmaster and Ms. Fatima Munawar, Addl Director Schools also shared their thoughts and they appreciated the efforts of NAB Balochistan with assurance to extend all possible assistance in the anti-corruption awareness drive of NAB Balochistan.

The seminar concluded with presentation of shield to the Headmaster of the school by Addl Director NAB (Balochistan) followed by mutual express of gratitude and a note of thanks by both sides. At the end of the seminar, an awareness walk was also arranged wherein participants of seminar including NAB officers, teaching staff and fair gathering of students participated.

DC Quetta directs to immediately start cleansing process of drains for avoiding drainage issues during possible rain

APP

Quetta: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Quetta Mehrullah Badeni on Tuesday directed the Irrigation Department to immediately start the cleaning process of 7 large drains of the city and complete it as soon as possible so that drainage problems could be avoided during possible rains.

He said this while chairing a meeting regarding the cleanliness situation in the city and disposal of garbage piles in different areas, especially in large storm drains.

The meeting was attended by Assistant Commissioner Revenue Quetta Division Bahadur Khan Kakar, Assistant Commissioners of all sub-divisions, officers of the Irrigation Department and officers of the Safa Quetta Project.

During the meeting, detailed discussions were held regarding the immediate

removal of garbage piles in different areas of Quetta and cleaning of large storm drains.

The Deputy Commissioner directed the Irrigation Department to immediately start the cleaning process of 7 large drains of the city and complete it as soon as possible so that drainage problems can be avoided during possible rains, the Safa Quetta Project was instructed to remove large garbage piles present across the city on priority basis and submit a progress report in this regard soon.

Along with this, it was also directed to compile a report on cleanliness on a daily basis and provide it to the district administration.

The Deputy Commissioner expressed his determination that all available resources would be utilized for the cleanliness of the city and providing a better environment to the people and no negligence could be tolerated in this regard.

DPM/FM Dar, Norwegian FM discuss recent developments in ME

APP

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar and Foreign Minister of Norway Espen Barth Eide, Tuesday, discussed recent developments in the Middle East and the wider region.

The DPM/FM held a telephone conversation with the Norwegian foreign minister, the Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press release.

The Norwegian foreign minister expressed appreciation and full support for Pakistan's efforts toward dialogue and diplomacy for peace and stability in the region.

Both agreed to remain in close touch.

UK praises Pakistan's role in global peace

INP

ISLAMABAD: The United Kingdom has appreciated Pakistan's mediation efforts and lauded its role for global peace.

The appreciation came at a meeting between Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik and British High Commissioner to Pakistan, Jane Marriott in Islamabad today.

Speaking on the occasion, Jane Marriott said Pakistan effectively handled the petroleum supply situation and played a positive role by effectively managing its relations with the United States and Iran.

In his remarks, the Minister said that Pakistan is committed to promoting peace and stability through negotiations and diplomatic engagement. He said Pakistan maintained the continuity of supply through timely measures.

Ali Pervaiz Malik friendly countries including Saudi Arabia, Oman, and the United Arab Emirates cooperated in supplying petroleum during the period of uncertainty.

The Minister said that government is providing protection to vulnerable groups through targeted subsidies. He further said that fertilizer prices in Pakistan are one-third of those in neighboring countries.

Both sides also discussed prospects of cooperation for regulatory and institutional strengthening between Pakistan and the United Kingdom.

Commissioner Quetta for investigation into tragic incident of Haleem plaza fire

APP

Quetta: Commissioner Quetta Division Shahzeb Khan Kakar on Tuesday chaired a meeting regarding the investigation into the tragic incident of fire that occurred in Haleem Plaza and provision of possible compensation to the victims.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioner Quetta Mehrullah Badeni, Chief Fire Officer Municipal Corporation Quetta Abdul Haq, Assistant Commissioner (Political) Syed Kaleemullah and other officials of the concerned institutions.

During the meeting, a detailed review of the initial reports related to the incident, inspection of the plaza, damage estimates and other important aspects was taken.

The report presented by the Chief Fire Officer highlighted the fire safety arrangements, firefighting system, fire extinguishing equipment and emergency response situation in the plaza.

The meeting also considered the possible causes of the fire, including unavailability of fire safety grade, possible weaknesses in the implementation of building rules, issues related to power outages and shortcomings in safety standards.

The Commissioner Quetta Division clearly directed that a comprehensive, transparent and merit-based investigation should be conducted to find out the

reasons for the incident so that the responsible elements could be accurately identified.

The Commissioner directed the Deputy Commissioner Quetta to obtain a complete report from the Quetta Electric Supply Company (QESCO) authorities regarding the power outage and its timing so that the investigation to be finalized.

He further said that all the concerned agencies should submit their detailed reports before the next meeting so that recommendations based on solid evidence could be formulated and sent to the higher authorities.

Commissioner Quetta Division said that if any negligence is found in the investigation, strict action would be taken against those responsible as per the law.

He also stressed that a special review of the implementation of the Building Code and Safety Rules 2022 should be conducted to clarify the extent to which safety norms were adhered to in the concerned plaza.

He said that the aim of this investigation process would not only be to determine the responsibility but also to ensure effective and sustainable measures to prevent such unfortunate incidents in the future.

He also clarified that the decision to pay compensation would be subject to the results of the investigation and determination of responsibility.



ISLAMABAD: General Levent Ergun, Deputy Chief of Turkish General Staff called federal Minister of Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif.

BAP's Central General Secretary Raja Ramesh calls on Mir Farooq Jamali

APP

Quetta: Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) Central General Secretary for Minority Affairs Raja Ramesh Lal on Tuesday met with Mir Farooq Khan Jamali, son of former Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Jan Muhammad Khan Jamali and Vice President of BAP.

During the meeting, the two leaders openly discussed the current political situation of Balochistan, public issues, development projects and party affairs.

On this occasion, it was also emphasized that a common strategy should be adopted to make the Balochistan Awami Party more active and strong so that the problems of the people could be resolved effectively.

Raja Ramesh Lal said that protecting the rights of all sections of the province, including the minority community, is the top priority of the Balochistan Awami Party.

Mir Farooq Khan Jamali expressed his determination that under the guidance of the party leadership, a full role would be played for the development and prosperity of the province.

In the meeting, they presented their views regarding regional development, peace and order and public welfare.

The both leaders agreed that political coordination and mutual consultation are indispensable in the current circumstances, and all stakeholders must work together for the betterment of Balochistan.

Oil prices linked to global market, targeted relief being provided to bikers: Senate told

APP

ISLAMABAD: The Senate was apprised on Tuesday that petroleum prices in Pakistan were linked to the global market and that the government was providing targeted relief to motorcycle and rickshaw users through a subsidy mechanism.

Responding to a point raised by Maulana Attaur Rehman, Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar said crude oil prices in the international market had risen sharply after February 28, while freight premiums had also increased significantly, affecting import costs.

He said crude oil, which was around 67 dollars per barrel before the recent escalation, had since witnessed a sharp rise, while the premium charged by companies had jumped from around 5 to 7 dollars to as high as 50 dollars per barrel.

The minister said oil prices in Pakistan could not be determined arbitrarily, as petroleum products were procured at prevailing international market rates along with freight and other charges.

He said that despite regional tensions, Pakistan had managed to ensure an uninterrupted supply of petroleum products, unlike some countries where long queues were seen outside filling stations. Azam Nazeer Tarar said the govern-

ment had engaged with the International Monetary Fund and adjusted the petroleum levy to provide some relief, shifting the burden in a way that helped reduce the price of diesel.

He said diesel prices remained historically high in the international market due to greater demand for refined diesel compared to petrol.

The minister said that the prime minister had also directed provision of a targeted subsidy of Rs100 per litre for motorcycle riders and three-wheeler users, limited to 20 litres per month, which would be transferred through digital wallets.

He said the government had also adopted austerity measures in view of the prevailing regional situation, including a 50 percent cut in fuel and transport expenses of the federal government.

He said that cabinet members had surrendered their official vehicles and had also volunteered to forgo six months' salaries on the direction of the prime minister. Azam Nazeer Tarar said the government expected all segments of society to support national conservation efforts, including measures aimed at reducing fuel consumption and closing markets earlier.

He said difficult regional conditions required collective responsibility and urged all stakeholders to support steps taken in the larger national interest.



QUETTA: Al Balochistan Union Council Chairman Association hold protest outside Balochistan Assembly.