

DAILY MIRROR

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PM, Erdogan emphasise importance of utilising 'window of opportunity' for lasting regional peace

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Friday emphasised the importance of "effectively utilising the current window of opportunity to advance durable and lasting regional peace" amid the ongoing war in the Middle East.

In a statement, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said that the premier met Erdogan on the sidelines of the Antalya Diplomacy Forum.

"During the warm and cordial meeting, President Erdogan welcomed the Prime Minister to Türkiye and thanked him for his participation in the 5th Antalya Diplomacy Forum," the statement said.

According to the PMO, the premier thanked Erdogan for his warm invitation

and the traditional Turkish hospitality extended to him and his delegation during his stay in Antalya. He also congratulated the Turkish president on the success of the forum, which he said had transformed into an important global event.

"The two leaders exchanged views on recent regional developments, particularly the evolving situation in the Middle East. The prime minister thanked President Erdogan for his strong support and encouragement of Pakistan's peace efforts and shared with him the updates on how to extend the ceasefire and resume talks so that a peace agreement could be reached," it said.

"The two leaders emphasised the importance of effectively utilising the current window of opportunity to advance a durable and lasting regional peace," the statement said.



ANTALYA: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif held a bilateral meeting with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Türkiye on the sidelines of the 5th Antalya Diplomacy Forum (ADF 2026).

CM Sarfraz Bugti vows continued development in Barkhan

APP

QUETTA: Chief Minister of Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Bugti, has reaffirmed his government's commitment to the development of Barkhan district, describing it as his "second home" after Baiker.

He made these remarks during a meeting with tribal leader Mir Abdul Karim Khetran, where the two discussed the political and regional situation of the Koh-e-Suleman Division, particularly Barkhan. The meeting also focused on aligning upcoming development projects in the next fiscal year's budget with the needs of local communities to ensure meaningful relief for residents.

Mir Abdul Karim Khetran thanked the Chief Minister for approving and advancing key projects in Barkhan, including a 50-bed hospital, and expressed hope that ongoing government initiatives would improve the provision of basic facilities in

the area.

Chief Minister Bugti emphasized that the uplift of Barkhan and other underdeveloped regions is a top priority for the provincial government. He noted that resources are being distributed fairly and that practical steps are being taken to improve health, education, and basic infrastructure.

He assured that the upcoming budget will include projects designed with public welfare and regional needs in mind, accelerating the process of sustainable development.

Bugti further pledged to expand the scope of development projects in remote districts to eliminate deprivation and deliver essential services at people's doorsteps.

"The government believes in equal development for every part of the province, and all available resources are being utilized to achieve this goal," CM Sarfraz Bugti said.

Iran says Strait of Hormuz open for commercial vessels after Lebanon deal

Trump welcomes announcement but says US naval blockade on Iran to remain in "full force" until deal is reached

MONITORING DESK

TEHRAN: Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araçchi said on Friday that the Strait of Hormuz, vital for the global trade in oil and other commodities, was open following a ceasefire accord agreed in Lebanon.

Araçchi said in a post on X that the Strait was open for all commercial vessels for the "remaining period of ceasefire".

It was not immediately clear whether he was speaking of the 10-day truce agreed by Lebanon and Israel that went into effect at midnight or an earlier two-week truce between Iran and the United States that began on April 8.

He said the passage of ships would need to be along the route that Iran's Ports and Maritime Organisation had announced.

US President Donald Trump welcomed Iran's announcement. "THANK YOU!" he wrote on his Truth Social platform, before going on a posting spree.

In a separate post, he said that the US military blockade of ships sailing through the Strait to Iranian ports — announced after talks with Iran last weekend in Islamabad ended without a breakthrough — remained in place.

"The Strait of Hormuz is completely open and ready for business and full passage, but the naval blockade will remain in full force and effect as it pertains to Iran, only, until such time as our transaction with Iran is 100 per cent complete," he wrote on Truth Social in all caps.

He further said that the US had banned Israel from further bombing in Lebanon.

"Israel will not be bombing Lebanon any longer. They are PROHIBITED from doing so by the U.S.A. Enough is enough!!!" Trump said.

The president also said the US will get nuclear material from Iran. "No money will exchange hands in any way, shape, or form."

He then said he received a call from Nato asking if the US needed help after the opening of the Strait of Hormuz but said he told them to "stay away".

President hails Lebanon ceasefire, expresses hope for permanent cessation of hostilities in West Asia

APP

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Friday welcomed the announcement of a ceasefire in Lebanon, terming it an important step towards reducing tensions and restoring calm in the region.

The president, in a statement emphasised that Pakistan attaches high importance to regional stability and believes that sustainable peace can only be achieved through dialogue, mutual respect for sovereignty and adherence to international law. He said the ceasefire presents an opportunity to move towards lasting peace. Reaffirming Pakistan's consistent support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon, the president said that Pakistan remains actively engaged with regional and international stakeholders, to ease tensions between the United States and Iran, recognising that lasting peace in West Asia depends on addressing the broader drivers of conflict.

He added that Pakistan will continue to support all sincere initiatives that advance de-escalation and a just, lasting and comprehensive peace across the region. The president cautioned that the current momentum towards de-escalation remains fragile, noting that the broader understanding underpinning the ongoing two-week cessation of hostilities.

South Korea appreciates Pakistan's efforts for regional peace

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar hold a meeting with Jeong Yeondoo, Vice Minister for Strategy and Intelligence at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of South Korea, on the sidelines of the Antalya Diplomacy Forum in Türkiye.

They exchanged views on matters of mutual interest and recent regional developments.

Vice Minister Yeondoo appreciated Pakistan's role in the sustained diplomatic efforts in pursuit of peace and stability in the region and beyond.

Earlier, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif met with the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Türkiye, Hakan Fidan, in Antalya on Thursday. The meeting took place ahead of the Antalya Diplomacy

Forum, where Sharif was in Türkiye to attend the international gathering.

The Turkish FM conveyed a message from Tayyip Erdogan to PM Shehbaz. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar and Special Assistant Tariq Fatemi were also present during the meeting.

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan warmly welcomed Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and thanked him for participating in the

Antalya Diplomacy Forum, adding that President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is looking forward to meeting him on the sidelines of the forum.

Shehbaz Sharif thanked the Turkish Foreign Minister for the warm welcome and traditional hospitality, and said that he was pleased to be visiting Türkiye, which he described as his second home.



WASHINGTON, DC: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, participated in the J.P. Morgan Investment Seminar titled "Pakistan: Economic and Monetary Policy Outlook", where he engaged with global institutional investors on the sidelines of the World Bank-IMF Spring Meetings 2026. The Governor, State Bank of Pakistan, also joined the session.

Aurangzeb appreciates China's IMF support, advances economic cooperation during Washington meetings

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb on Friday expressed appreciation for China's continued bilateral support at the International Monetary Fund (IMF), as well as the constructive role played by its Executive Director in facilitating Pakistan's programme engagements.

According to a post by the Ministry of Finance Pakistan on X, the remarks were made during high-level meetings held in Washington, DC on the sidelines of the World Bank-IMF Spring Meetings 2026.

During his visit, Aurangzeb met Chinese Finance Minister Lan Fo'an, where both sides reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening economic cooperation and deepening their strategic partnership.

The finance minister briefed his counterpart on Pakistan's progress under the IMF programme, stating that the country had "successfully concluded a Staff-Level Agreement for the third review under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) and the second review under the Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF), with IMF Executive Board approval expected in early May."

He further noted that Pakistan had successfully repaid its \$1.4 billion Eurobond and secured "significant additional financial support" from Saudi Arabia to strengthen its external position. On external financing initiatives, Aurangzeb updated the Chinese side on progress regarding Pakistan's planned inaugural Panda bond issuance, aimed at diversifying funding sources and expanding engagement with international.

Police playing key role in maintaining law & order situation, as 1139 personnel sacrificed lives: IGP

APP

Quetta: Inspector General of Police (IGP)- Balochistan Muhammad Tahir said that the Balochistan Police personnel are playing key role in maintaining law and order by utilizing their professional skills.

He said that so far, about 1139 police personnel have sacrificed their lives for the protection of the lives and property of the people, which is a beacon for us.

He said this while a briefing given to the officers under training of the National Institute of Public Administration Quetta who came on a study tour at the Central Police Office here today. On this occasion, Director General NIPA Syed Ali Raza Shah, Additional IG Police Operations Agha Muhammad Yousuf, Additional IG Police Admin Javed Ali Mehar, DIG Headquarters Hassan Asad Alvi, DIG Tele Shad Ibn Masih, AIG Operations Naveed Alam and other officers were also present. He said that the officers under training were also given an inspection of the Data Command and Communication Center, Library, Museum and Day Care Center in the CPO Office.

The IG Police Balochistan said that before the merger of B

Area with A Area, reforms were being worked on in Balochistan, but now they have been accelerated.

He said that during the special campaign launched last year to maintain law and order and protect the public, 780 declared persons, 1466 absconding persons and 1404 criminals have been arrested, while 26 kidnapped persons have also been rescued.

He said that officers of ranges and districts who have shown high exemplary and excellent performance are also being awarded certificates of appreciation and cash prizes.

Meanwhile, the list of crimes of arrested declared persons and wanted suspects is also being exchanged with other provinces.

IG Police Balochistan said that with the establishment of the Serious Crime Wing, the accused involved in complex, difficult and unsolved cases are being brought to their logical conclusion.

He said that the series of open courts is ongoing in the ranges and districts, which has restored the public's trust in the police. In addition, there is a complaint cell in the Central Police Office and complaints of the public are registered on the IG Police Balochistan's WhatsApp and toll-free numbers and are immedi-

ately redressed. He said that the help of Safe City cameras is being taken for monitoring traffic and criminal elements, which is yielding significant results.

The IG Police said that the former Levies personnel are being equipped with modern training after being integrated into the police and their performance is impressive.

He said that there is a department for the support of the families of police martyrs, which is always there for the resolution of their complaints and welfare. He said that under the self-accountability system in the police department, rewards are given for good performance while punishments are given for poor performance. He said that the police, in collaboration with other institutions, have rescued passengers stranded in torrential rains, heavy snowfall and floods and taken them to a safe place under the spirit of helping the people.

He said that a rescue unit has been established by the Balochistan Police in the Ziarat Valley, which includes female staff. They help tourists in case of any emergency. At the end of the briefing, commemorative shields were also exchanged between IG Police Balochistan Muhammad Tahir and Director General of the National Institute of Public Administration Syed Ali Raza Shah.

DPM/FM Dar, FM of TRNC reaffirm commitment to strengthening bilateral ties

APP

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Friday met with Foreign Minister of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) Tahsin Ertugruloğlu, on sidelines of Antalya Diplomacy Forum.

During the meeting, both sides reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening bilateral cooperation across various sectors, particularly for education and welfare of the Pakistani diaspora in the TRNC, according to a press release issued by the Foreign Office spokesperson.

They also agreed to maintain close engagement and continue working together to promote the mutual benefit of their peoples.

Pakistan's mediation efforts thwart regional conflict:

Iranian Minister

APP

ISLAMABAD: Iran has formally acknowledged Pakistan's key role in helping ease recent regional tensions, with Iranian Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni describing Islamabad's diplomatic intervention as "historic" during a high-level meeting in Tehran with Pakistan's Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi.

In the meeting, Momeni thanked Pakistan for mediating a ceasefire at a critical moment when the region appeared to be edging toward a broader conflict. He said Iran would "always remember" Pakistan's sincere and positive role in preventing escalation, noting that the ceasefire was made possible through Islamabad's timely engagement.

Naqvi reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to regional stability, stressing that the country's foreign policy is rooted in the pursuit of peace. He said war could never resolve disputes and emphasized that lasting solutions can only be achieved through dialogue and diplomacy. He added that Pakistan is actively working with regional partners to find a durable settlement to ongoing tensions in the Middle East.

Both sides also agreed to strengthen cooperation on border management and counter-terrorism, concluding the meeting with a shared commitment to enhancing bilateral ties and contributing to broader regional harmony.

Trump thanks Pakistan as Iran opens Hormuz for passage of commercial vessels

MONITORING DESK

WASHINGTON: After the opening of the Strait of Hormuz by Iran, US President Donald Trump has extended gratitude to Pakistan, its "great" Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Chief of Defence Forces and Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir, calling them "two fantastic people".

As a result of peace initiative led by Pakistan, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has said that in line with the ceasefire in Lebanon, the passage for all commercial vessels through the Strait of Hormuz is "declared completely open for the remaining period of ceasefire, on the coordinated route as already announced by the Ports and Maritime Organisation of the Islamic Republic of Iran". US President Trump also thanks Iran for opening the Strait of Hormuz. In a statement on X, Trump said that Iran has announced the complete opening of the Strait of Hormuz. The Strait of Hormuz is fully ready for traffic. Thank you, Iran. US President Donald Trump has said that the American naval blockade will remain in place "until our transaction with Iran is 100 per cent complete". President Donald Trump on Friday welcomed Iran's announcement that the crucial Strait of Hormuz will reopen to shipping, but said a US blockade of Iranian ports would continue until a peace deal is signed.

"THANK YOU!!" Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform, saying that Iran had announced the narrow waterway was "FULLY OPEN AND READY FOR FULL PASSAGE."

Extension of ceasefire to be great success for Pakistan & whole world: Karim

APP

Quetta: Focal Person Prime Minister Youth Program (PMYP), senior leader of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Chaudhry Naem Karam on Friday said that the recognition of Pakistan's historic role for permanent peace at the global level is an honor for the country.

In his statement, he said that the extension of the ceasefire would be a great success for Pakistan and the whole world, Pakistan's bringing the US and Iran together for peace is a historic moment.

He mentioned that the resumption of Iran-US talks in Islamabad has expressed confidence in Pakistan's sincere role. Chaudhry Naem Karam said that after winning the battle of Haq, Pakistan has been given great honor and success on the global diplomatic and regional fronts. Pakistan's efforts to mediate in the Iran-US war are encouraging.

He said that the Iran-US talks were possible only through the effective leadership

of Prime Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir.

He stated that the whole world is paying tribute to Pakistan's brilliant foreign policy, which Ishaq Dar successfully carried out, which is a matter of great pride for the Pakistani people. International organizations including the United Nations paying tribute to Pakistan's efforts.

He said that Pakistan has always played a positive role in establishing peace in the region and in recent days, important diplomatic efforts have also been made to reduce tensions

between the US and Iran, Pakistan played a bridge role in restoring contacts between the two countries and paving the way for negotiations, and Pakistan has once again emerged as an ambassador of peace at the global level.

He said that the second round of talks between the US and Iran in Pakistan and a possible agreement would be a positive development not only for regional but also global peace and stability.



Assistant Commissioner Ahsamuddin Kakar Supervises Examination Centers in Kuchlak Sub-Division, Quetta

Allegations of Lack of Transparency in Appointment of Vice Chancellors at Punjab's Public Medical Universities

By Maqsood Khalid

LAHORE: The ongoing process to appoint new vice chancellors at five public medical universities in Punjab, King Edward Medical University, University of Health Sciences, University of Fatima Jinnah, medical University Faisalabad medical University and Bawalpur Victoria, medical University in Punjab has once again raised serious concerns transparency and merit. According to well-informed sources, some candidates vying for these key positions are allegedly relying on political influence and strengthening ties with influential figures to secure appointments. Prominent names reportedly in the race include Professor Khalid

Masood Gondal, Professor Zafar Chaudhry, Professor Farooq Afzal, Professor Tayyaba Wasim, Professor Azhar Naqi, Professor Zahra Khanam, Professor Huma Kiani, Professor Ayesha Arif, and Professor Fareed-ul-Zafar. Various circles have reported increased activity and lobbying efforts linked to these candidates.

Sources further claim that the situation has become more controversial with allegations that gifts are being sent to the residences of political figures. However, these claims have neither been officially confirmed nor denied.

Education experts and healthcare professionals warn that if such critical appointments are made based on

favoritism or alleged influence rather than merit, it could negatively impact institutional performance, the training of future doctors, and the overall healthcare system.

On the other hand, government officials maintain that the selection process is being conducted in accordance with established rules and regulations. They state that search committees are carefully evaluating candidates based on qualifications, experience, and performance.

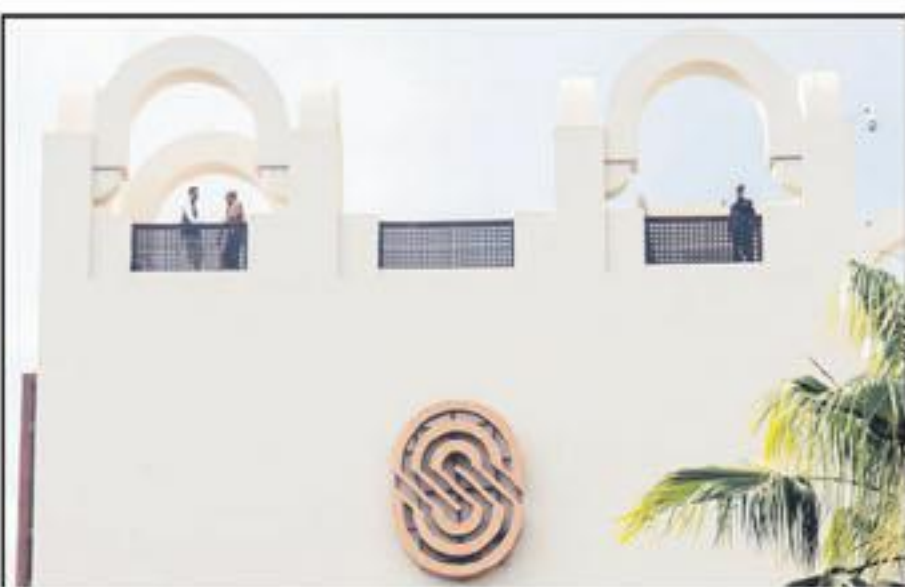
Experts have urged the government to ensure full transparency in this sensitive process, make all stages publicly accessible, and eliminate any undue pressure or unlawful influence so that competent and deserving leadership can emerge.

Kamran Khilji lauds performance of constituency PB 41 MPA for public serving

Press Release

Quetta: Youth Welfare Society Constituency PB 41 Ward 38 President Kamran Khan Khilji Sportsman Khalil-ur Rehman Durrani in his newspaper statement while appreciating the performance of the Constituency PB 41 Member of the Provincial Assembly without color and caste for public services, said that the dignity of the respected member of the Provincial Assembly will not be diminished by the self-interested blackmailers.

The construction and repair company has been building roads, building schools and hospitals for 25 years. It is a pity that today everyone would become an analyst on social media and attack the dignity and self-esteem of dignitaries.



ISLAMABAD: Security personnel stand alert on the rooftop of the Sareena Hotel ahead of the second round of talks between Pakistan, Iran and the US in capital city.

Railways Minister visits Imran Shah residence, offers condolences on mother's demise

APP

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi Friday visited the residence of Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Syed Imran Ahmed Shah to offer condolences on the demise of his mother.

During the visit, Hanif Abbasi expressed deep sorrow and heartfelt sympathy with Imran Shah and his family over their bereavement.

He prayed for the eternal peace of the departed soul and strength and patience for the bereaved family to bear the loss.

Hanif Abbasi said that he equally shared the grief of the mourning family in this difficult time.

HEC Empowers Around 50,000 Financially Disadvantaged Students

Press Release

Islamabad: In addition to its merit-based local and foreign scholarship initiatives, the Higher Education Commission (HEC) Pakistan has been awarding higher education opportunities to financially challenged Pakistani students under its Need-Based Scholarship Programme since 2012. As many as 46,824 needy and deserving students from different parts of the country have so far availed the opportunity to study at various levels in participating public sector universities.

Expanding access to higher education

for financially disadvantaged undergraduate students, the initiative provides full tuition coverage and a monthly stipend. Students are selected based on demonstrated financial need, as assessed by the Institutional Scholarship Award Committees (ISACs) at participating universities, and the scholarship funds are disbursed from HEC's recurring grant allocations to the universities.

In 2024-25 alone, HEC awarded 3,946 scholarships under the Need-Based Scholarship Programme. The programme empowers disadvantaged youth and promotes quality education.



QUETTA: A worker busy in paint on the sideline of the Pashin stop.



World Anti-Doping Agency targets India's performance-enhancing drugs production

SPORTS DESK

NEW DELHI: A crackdown on India's performance-enhancing drugs (PEDs) production — the biggest globally — is key to tackling the doping menace and protect the athletes, World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) chief Witold Banka.

Banka and his team have been in New Delhi as part of their push to build stronger ties with national law and order agencies including cyber crime cells to help uphold the credibility of professional sport.

WADA has sought help from India's Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) — federal police — to curtail the initial supply chain of racketeers and agents who peddle drugs.

"We see the problem of production of performance-enhancing drugs (PEDs), India is the biggest producer of those illegal substances," said Banka.

"That's why we collaborate with the CBI, with law enforcement, to try to destroy this market and to really protect the lives of athletes and the health of society," added the 41-year-old Pole.

WADA has been aggressive in curbing the doping crisis with their Global Anti-Doping Intelligence and Investigations Network (GAIN) initiative since 2022.

An INTERPOL-backed "operation upstream" has been a success for WADA with 250 raids around the world, 88 illicit labs dismantled and almost 90 tons of PEDs seized.

"We are here because India is the biggest population (1.4 billion) and we see how important it is for the Indian authorities, and we see the need to strengthen the system here — it's a common interest," Gunter Younger, head of investigations for WADA, told AFP.

"For now I see the appetite and willingness from the public authority side (in India) to work with us closely to address this issue. We know it's not only about the doping of the athletes."



ISLAMABAD United captain Shadab Khan bowls to Karachi Kings batter Azam Khan as wicket-keeper Devon Conway looks on during the Pakistan Super League match at the National Bank Stadium.

Kings' misery deepens as United climb to second in PSL

By Maqsood Khalid

KARACHI: Karachi Kings suffered their third consecutive defeat in the HBL Pakistan Super League on Thursday night as Islamabad United chased down a modest 151-run target with eight wickets and four overs to spare here at the National Bank Stadium.

The victory propelled United to second place in the PSL standings, while the home side's campaign continued to unravel, leaving their playoff hopes hanging by a thread.

Put in to bat first on a tricky surface that offered grip for spinners, Kings could only post 150-6. Reeza Hendricks played the anchor's role with an unbeaten 51 off 44 balls (four fours), but regular wickets at the other end prevented any momentum from building.

Saad Baig fell early for six, flicking Richard Gleeson to deep square. Fellow opener Jason Roy provided a brisk start, smashing 39 off 27 balls with three fours and two sixes, including a flat sweep off Imad Wasim over backward square and a gorgeous cut past cover. He timed the ball sweetly until Shadab Khan deceived him with a quicker leg-break, inducing a straightforward catch at long-off in the ninth over.

Hendricks held the innings together amid the collapse. Salman Ali Agha (four) and Azam Khan (34 off 29, three fours and a six) tried to accelerate but found the United bowlers in excellent rhythm.

Azam fell to a superb diving catch by Sameer Minhas off Gleeson, while Khushdil Shah and Moeen Ali (8) departed in quick succession. Gleeson was the pick of the attack with 2-22, mixing yorkers and cutters effectively. Shadab claimed 2-28, intelligently using flight and varia-

tions to push batters out of their comfort zones. Faheem Ashraf and Mohammad Hasnain also kept things tight with variations.

The surface appeared two-paced at times, and Kings' middle order struggled to find boundaries consistently. Their powerplay score of 45-1 looked promising, but the inability to capitalise later proved costly.

In reply, United made light work of the chase. Devon Conway and debutant sensation Sameer Minhas forged a blistering 93-run opening stand in just 10 overs that effectively sealed the contest.

Sameer, the rising star, lit up the stadium with a sparkling 36-ball 58 laced with 10 boundaries. He punished anything short or wide with authority — an attractive square drive off Mir Hamza, back-to-back fours off Salman (including a swivel pull to deep midwicket), and a regal inside-out drive through covers off Khushdil Shah.

He stepped down the track to loft Khushdil over the bowler's head and brought up his fifty with a flicked single. His aggressive yet composed approach, blending classical drives with innovative shots like the reverse flick off Adam Zampa.

Conway complemented him perfectly with a measured yet fluent 53 not out off 36 (six fours and a six). He opened his account with a square drive and kept the scoreboard ticking with clever placement. His standout moments included powerful back-foot punches and a thunderous pull off Khushdil to deep midwicket.

The pair milked singles intelligently while pouncing on loose deliveries, putting Kings' bowlers under immense pressure. Sameer fell just short of a bigger score, stumped off Moeen Ali for 58, but by then the asking rate was under control.

Canada T20 World Cup game under ICC scrutiny after corruption claim

SPORTS DESK

The International Cricket Council (ICC) said on Friday it is investigating Cricket Canada over allegations of match corruption, including the team's loss to New Zealand at the recent T20 World Cup hosted by India and Sri Lanka.

The game in Chennai — which Canada lost by eight wickets — is under scrutiny following allegations of corruption highlighted in a documentary aired by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) on Thursday.

"The ACU (anti-corruption unit) is aware of the programme broadcast by CBC," Andrew Ephgrave, interim general manager of the ICC's Integrity Unit, said in a statement.

The documentary by the public broadcaster made wide-ranging accusations of corruption and poor governance against Canada Cricket.

In the Chennai game, suspicion is focused on the fifth over bowled by captain Dilpreet Bajwa during New Zealand's chase, according to ESPNcricinfo.

He started with a no-ball, bowled a wide, and ended up conceding 15 runs in the over.

Canada scored 173 for four wickets in 20 overs, while New Zealand replied with 176 for two off 15.1 overs.

The ICC, the game's world governing body, is also investigating a telephone call involving then Canada coach Khurram Chohan in which he claims that senior Cricket Canada board members put pressure on him to select certain players, it said.

"Governance matters in relation to ICC Members are considered by the ICC, where they fall under its jurisdiction, in accordance with the ICC's standard constitutional processes," Ephgrave said.

Cricket Canada said it was treating the matter with "utmost importance".

"Recent promotional material alludes to allegations related to organised crime and match-fixing — issues that Cricket Canada takes extremely seriously," the organisation said on its website.

"Where matters are raised, we are committed to reviewing them responsibly and taking appropriate steps as needed."



This image shows Canada captain Dilpreet Bajwa during the match against South Africa during the T20 World Cup.

TENDER NOTICE
Provision of Animals for Qurbani-2026

Muslim Hands is an international relief and development non-government charitable organization established in 1993. Muslim Hands intends to invite Sealed Tenders from financially strong and registered Firms/Suppliers for Provision of Animals Qurbani-2026.

The Firms/Suppliers should have adequate financial soundness, similar work experience, Personnel capabilities and Firms/Bans.

Location	Details of Specifications and locations are available in Tender Pack available on Muslim Hands Web portal.
Quetta	(Quetta, main city, and surrounding city areas)

Interested Firms/Suppliers may submit their expression of interests as mentioned in tender documents. Tender document with BOC can be obtained through Muslim Hands tender portal link: <http://jobs.muslimhands.net.pk/tenders.html>

"Procurement committee" Muslim Hands Informatics, new all gillani street, Zarghoon road, Quetta 0812869250

The last date for submission of bids (Technical & Financial) is Wednesday 29th April, 2026, before 1700hrs.

"Bids submitted after the stipulated date and time will not be entertained as per Muslim Hands policy"

Member APNS

Daily Mirror

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Hectic diplomacy

PAKISTAN'S top civil and military leaders are currently engaged in hectic shuttle diplomacy, crisscrossing capitals in order to prevent the US-Iran ceasefire from collapsing, while hoping to bring both foes back to the table to seal a workable deal. Most of the international community is closely watching these efforts, hoping for a breakthrough that would allow calm to return to the Middle East, and prevent a global economic meltdown due to the war's impact on world trade.

The prime minister was in Qatar on Thursday after visiting Saudi Arabia a day earlier, and will head to Turkiye from Doha. Meanwhile, the chief of defence forces was in Iran, meeting top officials. The Americans are obviously in the loop, as Pakistan's leadership has reportedly been relaying messages between Washington and Tehran, while keeping key Arab and other Muslim capitals briefed on discussions. Although US President Donald Trump had indicated that the next round of talks was imminent, the Foreign Office spokesman has said that no dates had been finalised.

The fact that US and Iranian delegations met last week in Islamabad is no small feat. Pakistan's deft diplomacy has been appreciated across the spectrum, with the UN, the US, Iran and other foreign powers all hailing its sincere efforts to end this devastating conflict. The White House press secretary, in fact, called Pakistan "incredible mediators".

It is a testament to Pakistan's diplomatic skills and foreign policy expertise that all sides involved have a significant level of trust in the country's abilities. The Iranians feel comfortable with Pakistan, while the US president has often expressed his appreciation for its civil and military leadership.

Moreover, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and most other Arab states on the front lines of the conflict have very close relations with Pakistan, and realise that Islamabad will keep their views in mind. However, despite Pakistan's best efforts, the ultimate end to this war will rely on decisions taken in Washington and Tehran, with the onus on the US — as the instigator of this conflict — to bring it to a swift close.

Despite the positive vibes, mistrust remains high between the US and Iran, while Israel will undoubtedly make every effort to scuttle a lasting deal.

Before Mr Trump announced a 10-day truce yesterday, Israel had been pounding Lebanon mercilessly. Iran had insisted that the truce cover Lebanon as well; seemingly the move indicates Washington's seriousness to take the process forward and keep the Iranians on board. Yet continued threats, such as those delivered by the US war secretary to Iran on Thursday, will hardly create optimal conditions for dialogue.

There are great expectations that the proposed second meeting in Islamabad will deliver a peace deal. The opportunity must not be lost.

By Barrister Usman Ali, Ph.D.

Pakistan: A Credible Center for Peace in a Time of Crisis

Anation is more than territory enclosed by borders on a map. It is history, memory, sacrifice, identity, and a shared moral inheritance. For that reason, patriotism in its mature form is neither blind approval nor reflexive denial. It does not require silence about national shortcomings, nor does it justify dismissing every constructive development simply because it is associated with an unfavored political actor. Serious nations do both: they criticize where criticism is warranted, and they recognize what advances the national interest. For Pakistan, that balance is especially important at this moment.

Pakistan's national journey has never been easy. Since its creation in 1947, the country has passed through political instability, constitutional crises, military rule, democratic transitions, economic strain, terrorism, protest movements, and painful national tragedies. Much of its history has unfolded under the pressure of political and institutional contestation. Yet despite these repeated shocks, Pakistan has endured. It has regained its footing after crisis after crisis and preserved continuity where others might have fractured. That resilience remains one of the defining strengths of the Pakistani state: the capacity to hold together under stress and to recover when the costs of disruption are severe.

That same resilience helps explain Pakistan's contemporary diplomatic importance. By virtue of its geography, population, strategic location, military capacity, and regional reach, Pakistan is not a peripheral state. It sits at the intersection of South Asia, Central Asia, the Gulf, and the wider Middle East. In such a position, its choices rarely remain purely domestic. They affect regional calculations and, in moments of major instability, can carry wider international significance. This became especially clear during the crisis that followed the military action undertaken by the United States and Israel against Iran on 28 February 2026. The confrontation plunged the region into nearly forty days of intense uncertainty before the ceasefire announced on 7 April. The consequences were grave: loss of life across the region, heightened strategic tension, disruption linked to the Strait of Hormuz, pressure on energy flows, and renewed anxiety in global markets. Once again, the crisis showed that conflict in the Middle East does not remain confined to one theatre. Its effects radiate outward, shaping trade, diplomacy, markets, and the calculations of states far beyond the immediate battlefield.

It was in this unsettled environment that Pakistan emerged as an important diplomatic facilitator. At a time when pessimism was widespread and the danger of wider escalation appeared real, Islamabad positioned itself not as a rhetorical observer but as a

practical channel for engagement. That distinction matters. In periods of crisis, many states issue statements; far fewer are trusted to host contact, preserve communication, and create political space for de-escalation. Pakistan's willingness to assume that role marked a significant development in its regional diplomacy.

That role soon became more visible. High-level contacts in Islamabad signaled that Pakistan had become a credible venue for engagement rather than confrontation. The arrival of senior American representatives, the parallel presence of Iranian officials, and the continuation of both direct and indirect channels of communication reinforced the impression that Pakistan could serve as a serious intermediary. Although these exchanges did not produce a final agreement, they preserved the possibility of progress. In diplomacy, especially in the aftermath of war, that is no small achievement. Preventing a complete collapse of communication is often the first condition for any durable settlement.

The significance of this effort was further underscored by subsequent developments. Statements from Washington indicated that discussions with Iran remained active and constructive, and that a future round of in-person talks could again take place in Pakistan. The broader international response also suggested that Pakistan's contribution was being taken seriously. In a crisis marked by mutual suspicion, military escalation, and narrow political space, credibility itself becomes a diplomatic asset. Pakistan demonstrated that it possessed enough trust, access, and restraint to help keep the path to dialogue open.

Nor was Pakistan's role limited to hosting contacts. It also worked to sustain a wider pattern of regional consultation. Engagement with Saudi Arabia, Turkiye, Qatar, Egypt, and Iran reflected an understanding that no ceasefire can remain meaningful without parallel political management. The meetings held in Islamabad, the regional consultations pursued by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir's engagement in Tehran all pointed to the same objective: reducing the remaining gaps, preserving the ceasefire, and preventing a return to uncontrolled escalation. These parallel efforts underscored a central fact: Pakistan was not standing at the margins of the crisis. It was participating in the difficult work of stabilisation.

This is the context in which the role of Pakistan's present civilian and military leadership should be assessed. If the current government and the leadership of the armed forces, particularly Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir,



are contributing constructively to national interest, regional stability, and the cause of peace, then that contribution deserves recognition without personal, ideological, or partisan prejudice. Such recognition is not a surrender of political judgment. Nor is it equivalent to endorsing a party or suspending accountability. It is, rather, an acknowledgment that responsible statecraft in a moment of danger serves

the country as a whole. That distinction is important because one of the chronic weaknesses of polarized political cultures is the tendency to judge actions not by their merit or effect, but by their source. If a constructive step is taken by a favored actor, it is praised as national service; if the same step is taken by a rival, it is diminished or denied. That reflex weakens national seriousness. Mature states and societies are capable of both accountability and recognition. They do not abandon criticism where criticism is justified, but neither do they refuse acknowledgment when the state acts responsibly in the national interest. That balance is not a sign of weakness. It is a sign of civic confidence.

Pakistan's recent conduct also reflects a deeper lesson drawn from its own difficult history. A country that has lived through instability, terrorism, and strategic pressure understands the cost of war in ways that are not merely theoretical. For that reason, Pakistan's preference for dialogue in a moment of regional fire carries particular weight. No final settlement has yet emerged. Core differences remain unresolved, and the success of future negotiations cannot be guaranteed. But diplomacy is not judged only by signed documents. It is also judged by whether channels remain open, whether escalation is contained, and whether political space for compromise survives. By those measures, Pakistan has played a meaningful role.

In the end, nations outlast governments, parties, and political narratives. A true patriot is one who can see his country clearly: honest about its weaknesses, yet confident enough to recognize its achievements.

If Pakistan is now being regarded as a credible center for peace in a time of regional crisis, that is not merely a matter of sentiment. It is a reflection of diplomatic relevance, regional responsibility, and national poise. And if the present government and military leadership have helped make that possible, then acknowledging that fact is not partisanship. It is national seriousness.

Pakistan Zindabad, Pakistan Paindabad

By Sheikh Moazzam Khan

Railway Losses or Systemic Corruption? — Why Target Journalists?

Atroubling contradiction is unfolding in the country today. On one hand, state institutions lament financial losses; on the other, in the name of reforms, decisions are being made that further marginalize already vulnerable segments of society. The recent move by Pakistan Railways to reduce concessional fares for journalists is a clear example of this pattern.

This raises a critical question: Are journalists truly responsible for the financial losses of the railway system, or is the real problem being deliberately ignored?

The truth is far more complex—and far more uncomfortable. The primary causes of railway losses lie in deep-rooted structural inefficiencies that have been embedded in the system for years. Take the tendering process, for instance. It is widely understood that transparency is minimal. Contracts are not awarded on merit, but rather influenced by commissions and connections. This not only undermines service quality but also significantly reduces potential revenue.

Similarly, railway land—an invaluable national asset—is often leased or allocated through questionable means. Whether under the guise of long-term leases or through political influence, the lack of transparency in these transactions results in billions in lost revenue. Then comes the issue of station stalls and canteens. These too operate under a "commission culture." Contractors, having already paid unofficial costs to

secure contracts, recover their expenses by overcharging passengers. The result? An ordinary traveler is forced to pay 400 rupees for a meal that neither matches the price in quality nor suits the financial capacity of the average citizen. Perhaps the most alarming issue is ticketless travel. From Rawalpindi to Lahore, Karachi to Hyderabad, and across multiple routes, thousands of passengers travel without tickets. This is not an isolated occurrence but part of a systemic chain where unofficial payments flow upward through various levels. When revenue is leaking internally on such a massive scale, how can it be justified to shift the burden onto journalists or ordinary passengers?

If the goal is to make the railway profitable, the focus must shift from passengers to freight operations. Globally, railway systems generate the bulk of their income from freight services, not passenger travel. Pakistan is no exception. With proper modernization, elimination of corruption, and strategic policy implementation, the freight sector alone can transform the financial outlook of the railway system.

There is also a constitutional dimension that cannot be ignored. Under Article 18 of Constitution of Pakistan, every citizen has the right to freely practice their profession. Journalists, whose work inherently requires mobility, must be facilitated—not restricted. Limiting their ability to travel directly impacts their professional function.

The core issue is this: reforms are con-

sistently imposed on the weak, while entrenched power structures remain untouched. Reducing concessions for journalists was an easy decision precisely because they lack institutional power. But does the same resolve exist to confront the corruption networks within the railway system?

What is needed today is not superficial reform, but structural correction: A transparent tendering process, a forensic audit of land allocations, strict enforcement against ticketless travel, and regulation of pricing at stations to match public affordability.

Until these foundational issues are addressed, any so-called austerity measure will remain nothing more than a cosmetic exercise.

And finally, a clear and principled demand: If Pakistan Railways is to become truly public-oriented, concessions should not be reduced but expanded—not only for journalists, but for the general public as well, who are equally burdened by inflation. The financial gap should be bridged by eliminating corruption, not by extracting more from those who can least afford it.

The role of the state is not to withdraw relief, but to ensure justice.

If reforms are to be meaningful, they must begin at the top—not at the bottom.

Otherwise, one question will continue to echo:

Is the railway running at a loss—or is it the loss of conscience?

DAILY MIRROR

Pakistan, Saudi Arabia sign \$3 billion deposit extension agreement

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have signed Saudi Deposit Extension Agreement during a ceremony in Washington on Friday. Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb witnessed the signing of the important financial agreement in Washington, D.C., in the presence of the Ambassador of Pakistan to the United States, on the sidelines of the World Bank-IMF Spring Meetings 2026. The agreement, signed between the Saudi Fund for Development (SFD) and the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), provides for the extension in the maturity of a US\$3 billion deposit placed by SFD with the State Bank of Pakistan. The agreement was signed by Sultan bin Abdulrahman Al-Marshad, Chief Executive Officer of the Saudi Fund for Development, on behalf of SFD, and Jameel Ahmad, Governor of the State Bank of Pakistan, on behalf of the SBP. The extension of the deposit reflects the strong and longstanding economic partnership between Pakistan and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and will further support Pakistan's external sector stability. Pakistan appreciates China's continued support at IMF

Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb also held a productive meeting with Dr Pan Gongsheng, President of the People's Bank of China (PBOC) in Washington. During the meeting, the Finance Minister expressed appreciation for China's continued support for Pakistan at the International Monetary Fund (IMF), particularly within the IMF Executive Board. Aurangzeb informed Dr Pan that Pakistan has successfully concluded a Staff-Level Agreement with the IMF for the third review under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) and the second review under the Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF), with approval by the IMF Executive Board expected shortly. The Finance Minister also provided an update on Pakistan's plans for its inaugural Panda Bond issuance and requested expedited approval from the National Association of Financial Market Institutional Investors (NAFMII). He further apprised the PBOC President that Pakistan has recently met its Eurobond repayment obligations and has received additional financial support from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Aurangzeb highlighted the immediate economic impact of the ongoing

regional conflict, noting that the government has activated targeted subsidies and demand management measures to mitigate its effects. The meeting concluded with Dr Pan extending an invitation to the Finance Minister to visit Beijing in near future. Finance Minister Aurangzeb participated in the JP Morgan Investment Seminar titled "Pakistan: Economic and Monetary Policy Outlook", where he engaged with global institutional investors on the sidelines of the World Bank-IMF Spring Meetings 2026. Governor State Bank of Pakistan also joined the session. Opening the discussion, the Finance Minister informed participants that Pakistan has successfully concluded a Staff-Level Agreement with the IMF for the third review under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) and the second review under the Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF). Aurangzeb expressed confidence that Pakistan will continue to meet all its external obligations in a timely manner, highlighting the financial support committed by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as a key factor in strengthening the country's external position.



ANTALYA: Senior Advisor to the U.S. President for Arab and African Affairs, H.E. Mr. Massad Boulos calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, on the sidelines of the 5th Antalya Diplomacy Forum (ADF 2026) in Antalya, Türkiye.

Israeli attacks kill 4 Palestinians, including child, in latest Gaza ceasefire violations

MONITORING DESK

GAZA: Four Palestinians, including a child, were killed in separate Israeli attacks across Gaza, in the latest violations of the ceasefire agreement in force since October 10, 2025. Medical sources told Anadolu that the bodies of brothers Abdelmalek and Abdel Sattar al-Attar arrived at the Al-Shifa Hospital after an Israeli drone strike targeted Beit Lahia in northern Gaza. Witnesses said the strike hit an area outside the zone under Israeli control, according to the ceasefire agreement. The Israeli army claimed that its forces identified two Palestinians crossing the so-called "yellow line" and approaching troops in a way that posed an "immediate threat." It said the two were killed in an airstrike.

Bushra Bibi shifted to hospital, claims Barrister Gohar

INP

ISLAMABAD: Barrister Gohar Ali Khan has claimed that Bushra Bibi has been shifted to a hospital. In a post on social media platform X, Barrister Gohar Ali Khan said he was informed last night that Bushra Bibi had been moved to a hospital, adding that further details regarding her treatment were awaited. He urged authorities to provide information regarding her medical condition. He further stated that he has requested permission for family members to meet her, adding that they are also awaiting arrangements for meeting the party founder.

He emphasized that access to medical treatment is a fundamental and legal right. Meanwhile, Special Assistant to the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Shafi Jan expressed concern over reports regarding her health, terming the Punjab government's silence and alleged negligence on the matter regrettable. He said that Bushra Bibi is a non-political woman and that any politically motivated behavior by the Punjab government is unacceptable. He added that attempts to weaken Imran Khan have failed in the past and will continue to fail, claiming that the federal and Punjab governments lack public mandate and their "dreams" of weakening him will never come true.

President Erdogan says global order on 'dangerous threshold', calls for diplomacy and stability

MONITORING DESK

TURKEY: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said on Friday the world is facing a deepening crisis in both power and direction, warning that the international system has reached a "serious and dangerous threshold". Speaking at the opening ceremony of the Antalya Diplomacy Forum 2026, Erdogan said global mechanisms tasked with protecting human rights and security have remained ineffective, and at times indifferent, in the face of major crises. He described the current turmoil as "primarily a moral and existential crisis", pointing to developments in Gaza following the events of October 7 as evidence of the scale of the breakdown. "Reading what is happening in Gaza merely as a humanitarian tragedy would be incomplete," Erdogan said, adding that the situation reveals the limits of the current international order. He also criticised the global system's response to conflicts across the region, saying it has failed "the most basic test of humanity" in places such as Syria, Gaza, the West Bank and Lebanon. Call for diplomacy, ceasefire opportunity Erdogan stressed the importance of preserving diplomatic channels, saying disputes should not be resolved through violence.

"No matter how deep the disagreements, we must not allow words to be replaced by weapons or negotiations by bloody conflict," he said. Referring to tensions involving the US, Israel, and Iran, Erdogan said the opportunity created by a ceasefire should be used effectively to establish lasting peace. He also stressed the need for a conciliatory approach, warning that parties should remain "ready and vigilant" against any attempts by Israel to undermine the negotiation process. Highlighting the strategic importance of the Strait of Hormuz, Erdogan said access to open seas for Gulf countries should not be restricted. "The essential point is to ensure freedom of navigation based on established rules and to keep the Strait of Hormuz open to commercial shipping," he said. Regional, global policy priorities On Syria, Erdogan said strengthening stability and normalisation in the neighbouring country is vital for the region's future. He reiterated Türkiye's readiness to support direct negotiations, including a possible leaders' summit, if the parties in the Russia-Ukraine war are willing. Erdogan also reaffirmed Türkiye's commitment to its EU membership goal, while calling on the bloc to overcome what he described as a "direction problem" and remain faithful to its founding vision.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan on Friday visited the Turkish meet Turkish Ambassador to Pakistan Dr. Irfan Neziroglu to express profound grief and offer condolences over the tragic school shooting incidents in the Turkish provinces of Sanliurfa and Kahramanmaraş that claimed several lives.

Pakistan Ulema Council welcomes Lebanon ceasefire, lauds Army Chief Asim Munir's diplomatic efforts

APP

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Ulema Council on Friday welcomed the ceasefire in Lebanon and appreciated the diplomatic efforts for de-escalation in the region. In a joint statement, the council's central chairman Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi, along with senior leaders including Asad Zakaria Qasmi, Nauman Hashir, Muhammad Shafi Qasmi, Maqbool Ahmed, Tahir ul Hassan, Tahir Aqeel Awan and Aziz Akbar Qasmi, commended the role of Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir and President of the United States Donald Trump in efforts leading to the ceasefire.

They appreciate the initiatives undertaken by Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir to promote peace and stability, particularly his efforts for reducing tensions between Iran and the United States, as well as supporting a ceasefire in Lebanon. They said these efforts reflect Pakistan's commitment to regional peace and the unity of the Muslim Ummah. They termed the initiatives as significant contributions toward addressing the challenges faced by the Muslim world. The religious leaders emphasized that efforts fostering unity, resolving conflicts, and alleviating the difficulties of Muslims globally are commendable and deserve recognition across the Islamic world.

UN chief welcomes Israel-Lebanon ceasefire, urges full compliance with int'l law

APP

UNITED NATIONS: The United Nations welcomed the announcement of a 10-day ceasefire between Lebanon and Israel, with Secretary-General Antonio Guterres expressing support for efforts to end the prolonged conflict. "The Secretary-General welcomes the announcement of a 10-day ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon and commends the role of the United States in facilitating the ceasefire," his spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said in a statement Thursday. In earlier remarks, Dujarric told his news briefing that "obviously, we welcome steps that would end hostilities and suffering on both sides of the Blue Line." Noting that the UN "remains ready to support these efforts," he also said that it continues to call for "the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1701," describing it as the pathway toward "a permanent ceasefire and long-term solution to the conflict."

He stressed that "there is no military solution to this conflict," as UN Special Coordinator for Lebanon Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert continues diplomatic outreach with the parties. Dujarric said that Guterres "further hopes that this agreement will contribute to ongoing efforts toward a lasting and comprehensive peace in the region." He also highlighted the worsening humanitarian situation in Lebanon, warning that "the needs are continuing to deepen" across the country, with "civilians continuing to bear the brunt of the violence." Earlier on Thursday, US President Donald Trump announced that Israel and Lebanon agreed to begin a 10-day ceasefire starting at midnight local time in Tel Aviv and Beirut following recent talks in Washington, DC. The ceasefire announcement follows US-mediated talks between Lebanese and Israeli delegations that took place on Tuesday at the State Department in Washington. The Lebanese group Hezbollah was not represented.

Hajj operations begin from Karachi as first flight to depart today

INP

KARACHI: Pakistan's Hajj operations have officially commenced, with the first flight set to depart from Karachi, marking the start of this year's pilgrimage journey. Governor Sindh and provincial ministers will see off the pilgrims at the airport. The first batch of Hajj pilgrims will travel via a private airline. According to officials, around 30,000 pilgrims will depart from Karachi under the government scheme, while an additional 20,000 will travel under the private scheme. Nationwide, approximately 120,000 pilgrims will perform Hajj under the government scheme, while 50,000 pilgrims will travel through private arrangements. Director Hajj Imtiaz Shah confirmed that all pilgrims have completed their mandatory vaccinations. He also stated that comprehensive arrangements have been finalized in Makkah to facilitate Pakistani pilgrims during their stay. Authorities have expressed confidence that the Hajj operation will proceed smoothly, ensuring a comfortable and organized journey for all pilgrims.

PM welcomes Lebanon ceasefire, praises Trump diplomacy

INP

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has welcomed the announcement of a ceasefire in Lebanon, calling it a positive step toward regional stability. He also praised diplomatic efforts that led to the breakthrough. In a message shared on X, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif welcomed the ceasefire in Lebanon and expressed hope that it would pave the way for sustainable and lasting peace in the region. He described the development as a significant diplomatic achievement at a time of heightened tensions in the Middle East. The prime minister appreciated the role of Donald Trump, stating that the ceasefire was made possible due to his "bold and sagacious diplomacy."

Over Rs73b spent on 148 projects in Balochistan under PSDP 2025-26

APP

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has spent Rs73.5 billion on 148 projects in Balochistan under PSDP 2025-26 by the end of March 2026. According to official documents available with Wealth Pakistan, during the year 2025-26, an amount of Rs206 billion was allocated for these projects with an approved cost of Rs1.365 trillion. Out of 148 projects, 137 are ongoing, while 11 newly approved projects carry a total cost of Rs152.4 billion. Out of the total portfolio, 137 ongoing projects account for the bulk, with an approved cost of Rs1.212.1 billion and an allocation of Rs204.8 billion for 2025-26, while the 11 new projects costing Rs152.4 billion have received a token allocation of Rs1.2 billion. The Finance Division, in coordination with the Planning Commission, has authorized upfront one-line releases to executing ministries and divisions under a quarterly disbursement strategy for FY2025-26. Sectoral allocations show that the National Highway Authority (NHA) leads with 19 projects worth Rs625.3 bil-

lion, followed by the Government of Balochistan, through the Finance Division, which is managing 68 projects costing Rs233.9 billion. Key contributions have also been made by the Water Resources Division, Power Division, and Higher Education Commission, reflecting a diversified development approach. As per the document, 80 out of the 148 projects are of provincial nature, carrying a total cost of Rs413 billion, with Rs36 billion allocated for these projects. These projects aim to strengthen local infrastructure and service delivery mechanisms across the province. Region-specific development efforts remain a priority, particularly in Gwadar and Quetta. In Gwadar, 22 projects with a total cost of Rs184 billion are underway. Meanwhile, Quetta hosts 15 projects costing Rs28 billion. The Planning Commission has emphasized that these initiatives are integral to enhancing connectivity, boosting economic activity, and addressing long-standing development gaps in Balochistan, aligning with broader national development priorities.

Aleem Khan visits Turkish Embassy, expresses condolences over tragic school shootings

APP

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan on Friday visited the Turkish Embassy to express profound grief and offer condolences over the tragic school shooting incidents in the Turkish provinces of Sanliurfa and Kahramanmaraş that claimed several lives. During the visit, the minister met with Turkish Ambassador Dr. Irfan Neziroglu and conveyed that the entire Pakistani nation stands in unwavering solidarity with their Turkish brothers in this hour of immense sorrow. He described the act of targeting innocent children as an extremely brutal and barbaric deed that defies humanity, said a press release. During the conversation, Abdul Aleem Khan emphasized that addressing psychological issues and implementing

measures to prevent gun violence must be a collective priority. Both leaders reached a consensus that a strong and stable family system plays a vital role in preventing such tragic occurrences in society. The minister further remarked that Türkiye and Pakistan are like "one soul in two bodies," sharing each other's joys and sorrows as inseparable partners. He offered special prayers for the deceased, requesting that Allah Almighty grant the bereaved families courage and patience, and wished for the swift and complete recovery of those injured in the incidents. On the occasion, Ambassador Dr. Irfan Neziroglu thanked the minister for his visit and appreciated the solidarity extended by the people of Pakistan. The two sides also exchanged views on the prevailing regional situation and common challenges faced by both countries.

QUETTA: Pashtunkhwa Milli Awami Party activates hold protest against shortage of electricity and Sui Gas supply in Quetta city.

