

QUETTA VOICE

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PM Shehbaz rejects summary to increase petrol prices: minister

PM Shehbaz arrives in Saudi Arabia for 3-day visit

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif arrived in Saudi Arabia on Thursday — his first foreign trip since assuming office — on a three-day visit at the invitation of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

Medina Governor Faisal Bin Salman Al Saud and high-level Saudi officials received the prime minister and his delegation. The prime minister was accompanied by key cabinet members, including Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari, Finance Minister Miftah Ismail, Narcotics Control Minister Shahzain Bugti, Information Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb and Defence Minister Khawaja Asif.

Federal minister Chaudhry Salik Hussain, Maulana Tahir Ashrafi and MNAs Mohsin Dawar and Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui also joined PM Shehbaz on the official visit.

Prior to his departure, PM Shehbaz said he was embarking on the visit to "renew and reaffirm our bonds of brotherhood and friendship".

"I will have wide-ranging discussions with [the] Saudi leadership," he said, calling the kingdom one of Pakistan's "greatest friends".

The premier also issued a video message shortly before leaving in which he said he was "delighted" that his first visit since assuming office was to the kingdom.

"This reflects the high importance that Pakistan attaches to its special relationship with Saudi Arabia, which is historic in nature and strategic in significance," he said, thanking the crown prince for the "gracious" invite.

"Pakistan and Saudi Arabia are bound by deep-rooted and abiding fraternal ties which are built on a solid foundation of mutual trust and support," he said.

"We are profoundly grateful to Saudi Arabia for its consistent support to Pakistan in its difficult hours. For its part, Pakistan has always stood by Saudi Arabia and will always stand shoulder-to-shoulder with our Saudi brethren."

PM Shehbaz also lauded the partnership the kingdom has

achieved under the vision of the crown prince, calling it a transformational initiative.

"I look forward to my interaction with the Saudi leadership to review our multi-faceted bilateral cooperation and to take this special relationship to unknown heights," the prime minister said.

He also conveyed his good wishes to expatriates in the kingdom, saying that they contributed "enormously to the country's economic development." They are a key partner in further fortifying Pakistan-Saudi brotherly relations," he concluded.

In a statement issued on Wednesday, the Foreign Office (FO) said the prime minister will be accompanied by a high-level delegation which will include key members of the federal cabinet.



Ukraine, EU felicitate Bilawal on becoming Pakistan's foreign minister

Japanese PM extends congratulations on 70th anniversary of Pak-Japan diplomatic relations

ISLAMABAD: The Japanese Prime Minister KISHIDA Fumio, on the auspicious occasion of the anniversary day when Japan and Pakistan officially established diplomatic relations on April 28 seventy years ago, has conveyed his congratulatory remarks to celebrate the 70 years of bilateral diplomatic relations.

In the message, Honorable KISHIDA Fumio, the Prime Minister of Japan has extended his congratulations to Honorable Shehbaz Sharif on his assumption of office as Prime Minister. PM KISHIDA also congratulates the people of both Japan and Pakistan for successful seventy years of their bilateral relations.

Japan established diplomatic relations with Pakistan on 28th April, 1952, the very day when the San Francisco Peace Treaty went into effect and Japan regained its independence. Today marks exactly 70 years since then, and I am very pleased to celebrate this milestone with all of you. Japan and Pakistan have nurtured friendly relations over the years, extending support to each other when in need, said PM Kishida.

The PM mentioned that in the postwar period, cotton exported from Pakistan to Japan backed its textile industry and greatly encouraged Japan's postwar reconstruction. In turn, Japan has continuously provided Pakistan with assistance mainly in its areas of expertise, such as water, healthcare, education and disaster management.

"Both Japan and Pakistan are disaster-prone countries, and we have supported each other through the years. When Pakistan was struck by a massive earthquake in 2005 and by severe floods in 2010, Japan dispatched its disaster relief team and provided yen loans and grant aid. INP



PRESIDENT DR. ARIF ALVI CHAIRING THE 4TH MEETING OF THE SENATE OF NATIONAL SKILLS UNIVERSITY AT AIWAN-E-SADR, ISLAMABAD ON.

PM Shehbaz rejects summary to increase petrol prices: minister

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has rejected the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority's (Ogra) summary for increasing the prices of petroleum products. Information Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb shared on Thursday.

"[We] cannot punish the people for the previous government's worst incompetence, incapability and blatant mistakes," Aurangzeb said in the statement.

The Imran Khan-led government had agreed to the strict conditions of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to raise petrol prices in order to get a loan, she said. "Every effort is being made to not increase the burden on the public already troubled by inflation," she added.

The price of petrol and high speed diesel will remain Rs149.86 and Rs144.15 per litre, respectively. Kerosene and light diesel oil will also continue to be sold for Rs125.56 and Rs118.31 per litre, respectively.

This is the second time the prime minister rejected Ogra's proposal for a price hike. The move comes days after the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said the government had "agreed that prompt action is needed to reverse the unfunded subsidies which have slowed discussions for the 7th review". Finance Minister Miftah Ismail returned to Pakistan on Monday after negotiating a deal with the IMF that may give some space to the new government to make a "people friendly" budget in June. But an IMF statement issued after the talks indicates the deal does not equip the government with the tools it needs to clear, what Ismail described as, "the landmines planted" by the PTI government, i.e., facing the consequences of withdrawing fuel subsidies given by his predecessors. The previous PTI government had announced a four-month freeze (until June 30) on petrol and electricity prices on February 28 as part of a series of measures to bring relief to the public. The PML-N led coalition government had severely criticised the previous Imran-led government for first failing to control fuel prices in the country and later for "derailing" the IMF programme through fuel subsidies. INP

Manan Mandokhail

QUETTA: Ruling Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) women lawmakers have termed Karachi terror attack against Baloch traditions. Addressing a press conference at the Chief Minister Secretariat on Thursday, Member National Assembly from district Makran Zubaida Jalal, Mahjabeen Sheeran, Bushra Rind and others expressed serious concern over Karachi suicide bombing which claimed 4 lives including three Chinese nationals.

"Our norms and values never allow anyone to target teachers and foreign guests", Zubaida Jalal, the former federal minister said. She said parents have to be extremely careful about their sons and daughters and protect them from enemies of Pakistan.

Women lawmakers mentioned that enemies of Pakistan under a preplanned conspiracy were provoking and brainwashing our youth to use them

BAP female lawmakers term Karachi terror attack against Baloch tradition



against Pakistan. "This is extremely condemnable in Baloch traditions", Bushra Rind said. She urged all political parties to join hands and foil the conspiracies being hatched against country and nation.

The terrorist attack in Karachi by an outlawed organisation has been widely condemned in

Quetta and other parts of Balochistan. Zubaida Jalal informed that the husband of Shari Balochi has revealed that his wife was suffering from mental problem. According to our information this family is highly educated and there is no single missing person from the family Zubaida Jalal mentioned.

The ruling party's women legislators said present government has determined to address the grievances of people of the province on a priority basis. For this purpose a number of development projects have been launched to improve socio-economic conditions of the masses. Women lawmakers press conference has come a day after Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo lashed out at the perpetrators of the Karachi suicide bombing and termed it against Baloch traditions. The CM had also released a video statement in this regard. "Such cowardly incidents can not harm historic and time tested relations between Pakistan and China", Mr Bizenjo concluded in the video.

NAB orders inquiry against Farah Khan on allegations of amassing illegal assets, money laundering

The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) on Thursday authorised an inquiry against Farah Khan, a close friend of former prime minister Imran Khan's wife Bushra Bibi, on allegations of accumulating "illegal assets beyond known sources of income, money laundering, and maintaining various accounts in the name of businesses".

The corruption watchdog has directed NAB DG Lahore to initiate an inquiry against her as per the law.

According to a press release issued by NAB earlier today, a copy of which is available with Dawn.com, "huge turnover amounting to Rs847 million was found in her [bank] account during the last three years" which it said is not commensurate with her stated account profile.

"These credits were received in her personal account and withdrawn immediately after credit within a short time period," it stated, noting that several "adverse" media reports had been found where Farah — referred to in the statement as Farhat Shahzadi (Alias Farah Khan) — was alleged of "being involved in [acquiring] assets beyond legal means".

NAB also said that in a review of Farah's income tax returns, it was observed that her assets "significantly increased" from 2018 onwards "for unknown reasons".

"Moreover, she has been frequently travelling to foreign jurisdictions; nine times to the USA and six times to the UAE," it added.

Last month, at a gathering of the opposition alliance, PML-N Vice President Maryam Nawaz had first alleged that a friend of the PTI chairman's wife received a huge sum of money for getting officers transferred and posted according to their choice. INP

All DHQs declared as teaching hospitals in Balochistan

Health Desk

QUETTA: Balochistan government has declared all district headquarters hospitals (DHQs) as teaching hospitals across the province. The government has also approved 614 posts of professors, associate professors, senior registrars, medical officers, dental surgeons, and lady medical officers, a statement issued by the health ministry said.

Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Quddus Bizenjo, health minister, Syed Ehsan Shah and secretary health Saleh Muhammad Nasar made this decision to improve health services in government-run hospitals of Balochistan.

Under this initiative, senior health professionals will be serving ailing humanity in far-flung areas of the province. Secretary health has taken a keen interest in the improvement of the health sector,



the statement stated. The creation of vacancies for the district headquarters and remote areas of Balochistan is a revolutionary step, it mentioned.

In Balochistan, government-run hospitals paint a bleak picture when it comes to the provision of health services. Despite spending billions of rupees in every budget, the provincial government is yet to make sure timely and quality medical treatment to the patients across the province.

Country has been put on path of prosperity: Interior Minister

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah on Thursday said that the country has been put on the path of stability, development and prosperity.

In a statement the Interior Minister said that the work is being done on war footing to check inflation and load shedding as well as improve the economy.

The Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah said we have to fight with these problems which kept the people in trouble over the last four years.

Rana Sanaullah said there is serenity in the country with the installation of democratic government but some law breakers are restless.

The Interior Minister asked the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) members not to bully the Election Commission of Pakistan rather respect the constitution and the institutions. INP

Aetzaz Ahmed Goraya posted as DIG CTD Balochistan

News Desk

QUETTA: Senior police officer, Aetzaz Ahmed Goraya has been appointed as the Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) on Thursday. According to a notification issued by the Balochistan police department, Mr. Goraya has been posted as the DIG CTD.

Grade-20 police officer, Akhtar Hayat Khan has been posted as DIG Telecommunication Balochistan, Nasir Mukhtar



Rajput grade-20 has been posted as DIG Anti-Terrorist Force (ATF). Muhammad Shehzad Asif Khan has been posted and Captain (R) Javed Qamar has also been directed to report to the Central Police Office.

Pakistan welcomes Iran's continued support on Kashmir issue

ISLAMABAD: State Minister for Foreign Affairs Hina Rabbani Khar on Thursday said Pakistan appreciates Iran's continued support on the issue of Jammu and Kashmir.

The State Minister expressed these views in a meeting with Iranian Ambassador to Pakistan Syed Mohammad Ali Hosseini at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Islamabad.

The meeting focused on various aspects pertaining to further strengthening bilateral fraternal relations between the two countries.

Khar lauded the similarity of views between Pakistan and Iran on important regional and international issues. INP

Ukraine, EU felicitate Bilawal on becoming Pakistan's foreign minister

Ukraine and European Union officials Thursday congratulated PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari on assuming the charge of Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell Fontelles and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine Dmytro Kuleba congratulated Bilawal.

The Oxford-educated PPP chairman became the youngest foreign minister of Pakistan after he was sworn in as a federal minister a day back.

President Arif Alvi administered the oath to Bilawal, who was 33 years, seven months, and six days of age — a development that came after much delay and deliberation.

Ex-prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was 35 years, five months, and ten days old when he was sworn in as the foreign minister, while Hina Rabbani Khar was 33 years, eight months, and one day old.

In his congratulatory tweet, Fontelles wrote: "Congratulations to Bilawal Bhutto for his appointment as Pakistani Foreign Minister. Looking forward to cooperating and on strengthening EU-Pakistan relations."

In response to Fontelles, Bilawal thanked him and said he was seeking to strengthen Pakistan's multi-faceted partnership with the European Union.

Ukraine's Kuleba said he was looking forward to working with the newly-appointed foreign minister and hoped to strengthen bilateral ties with Pakistan.

"Looking forward to working together with the newly appointed



Foreign Minister of Pakistan Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari. We count on further developing bilateral ties and our mutually beneficial cooperation with Pakistan," Bilawal said.

Replying to Bilawal's tweet, Bilawal said he looked forward to working with him to further Pakistan's friendly bilateral relationship with Ukraine for the mutual benefit of our country's people.

Earlier, in a Twitter post, Bilawal said he was "honoured" and humbled to take the oath as foreign minister.

He and his PPP "will play our part in restoring democracy, passing electoral reforms, fighting for a fairer economy & advocating Pakistan's case on the world stage," Bilawal wrote.

Following the oath-taking ceremony, Bilawal took charge of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Foreign Office officials briefed the newly-appointed minister on Pakistan's international relations.

The newly-appointed foreign minister — along with a high-level delegation — is accompanying the prime minister on his maiden foreign visit to Saudi Arabia.

PM Shehbaz announced a 41-member federal cabinet after he took over from ousted premier Imran Khan earlier this month.

Khan has alleged that the United States backed a conspiracy to topple him just because he refused Washington's advice not to visit Russia in February, a charge Washington denies.

