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QUETTA VOICE



A view of the National Assembly in Islamabad: Photo Quetta Voice

Dar, Saudi FM discuss Lebanon ceasefire violations in phone call

NEWS DESK:

Pakistan and Saudi Arabia expressed deep concern over ceasefire violations in Lebanon on Thursday, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA).

The concern was raised during a telephone conversation between Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar and Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan, the statement said. Dar appreciated Saudi Arabia's continued support for Pakistan's efforts towards achieving lasting peace.

Both leaders stressed the urgent need for full respect and implementation of the ceasefire to ensure lasting peace and stability in the region, it added.

The two talked again later today to exchange views on the evolving regional situation.

FM Dar appreciated Saudi Arabia's steadfast support of Pakistan in its efforts to promote peace and stability in the region. "Both leaders underscored the importance of continued dialogue and diplomatic engagement to advance lasting peace and agreed to remain in close contact."

UK Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper appreciated and paid tribute to Pakistan for its role in achieving the ceasefire during a telephone call with FM Dar. In a statement, the ministry said that Cooper expressed support for Pakistan's continued efforts to promote lasting peace and stability in the region. "Both leaders reaffirmed the strength of their close bilateral ties and committed to further enhancing cooperation," the statement added.

FM Dar also spoke with European Union Foreign Policy Chief Kaja Kallas to discuss recent developments in the Middle East, according to the MoFA.

According to the statement, both sides expressed concern over serious violations of the ceasefire in Lebanon and emphasised the importance of its full implementation.

Kallas reaffirmed the European Union's support for Pakistan's efforts to promote peace and stability in the region.

FM Dar also held a telephone conversation with Uzbek Foreign Minister Bakhtiyor Saidov to discuss the latest developments in the Middle East and the wider region, according to an official statement.

During the call, Saidov appreciated Pakistan's leadership and conveyed Uzbekistan's full support for initiatives undertaken by Pakistan in pursuit of peace and stability, particularly efforts to secure the initial two-week ceasefire.

Both sides expressed hope that continued engagements and efforts would help foster lasting peace and stability in the region and beyond.

Earlier on Wednesday, Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zaidong appreciated Pakistan's constructive role in advancing peace and security in the Middle East and the Gulf region during a meeting with the deputy prime minister.

According to a statement issued by the MOFA, Ambassador Zaidong conveyed China's deep appreciation for Pakistan's efforts in promoting peace and security in the Middle East and the Gulf region.

Washington and Tehran Figures Shape Ceasefire Debate

STAFF REPORTER:

Diplomatic efforts in early April brought together multiple actors from Washington and Tehran, each playing distinct roles in shaping the trajectory of ceasefire negotiations.

On the American side, Jared Kushner has emerged as a possible participant in discussions aimed at reducing tensions. His name has circulated within administration circles as officials explore whether his prior experience in Middle East diplomacy could be leveraged in the current crisis.

While some policymakers

consider him a strong candidate, others remain cautious, stressing that no final decision has been reached and that his suitability must be tested before any commitment is made.

In Tehran, Speaker of Parliament Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf represented the Iranian position by combining engagement with skepticism.

He voiced doubts about the viability of negotiations, pointing to ongoing strikes and repeated violations as evidence that dialogue had lost its purpose.

His remarks reflected a broader Iranian strategy of participating in talks while simultaneously applying pressure to

demonstrate resilience and avoid concessions perceived as one-sided.

The juxtaposition of Kushner's potential involvement and Ghalibaf's hardened stance illustrates the fragile balance of the ceasefire push.

Washington is attempting to identify credible mediators who can influence outcomes without rushing into premature commitments.

Tehran, meanwhile, signals that negotiations will only hold meaning if they address its concerns about continued military actions.

Observers note that Kushner's reappearance in dip-

lomatic discussions highlights a broader debate within Washington:

whether to rely on familiar figures with prior regional exposure or to seek new channels of influence.

His previous role in brokering agreements during the Trump administration is seen by some as an asset, but critics question whether those methods can be effective in the current environment.

For Iran, Ghalibaf's skepticism underscores a consistent theme in its foreign policy—engagement accompanied by resistance. By casting doubt on the process while still participating,

Tehran aims to maintain leverage and project strength both domestically and internationally.

As ceasefire efforts continue, the interplay between Washington's cautious exploration and Tehran's skeptical participation underscores the complexity of achieving meaningful progress.

The involvement of figures such as Kushner and Ghalibaf demonstrates how individual actors can shape broader strategies, but the path to de-escalation remains uncertain.

The ongoing debate reflects deep mistrust on both sides, making the pursuit of stability a delicate and contested endeavor.

CM Sarfraz Bugti Urges Youth to Counter Negative Propaganda

NEWS DESK:

Chief Minister of Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Bugti, has said that the youth of the province are patriotic and must stand firm against negative propaganda on social media.

Addressing the closing ceremony of the National Youth Summit in Gwadar, he emphasized that young people are the future of Pakistan and that criticism should be constructive rather than destructive.

Bugti assured participants that the government is committed to restoring the youth's trust in the state by listening to their grievances and addressing their concerns.

"We are accountable to our youth, and the Constitution of Pakistan binds us to this responsibility," he stated.

Highlighting the importance of good governance, merit, and transparency, the Chief Minister said these principles are essential for eliminating terrorism and ensuring sustainable peace.

He noted that his purpose at the summit was not to deliver lengthy speeches but to hear directly from the youth about their problems and complaints.



During a 45-minute interactive session, students raised questions about merit-based recruitment, employment opportunities, and development projects. Bugti clarified that all appointments in the province are being

made strictly on merit and that corruption or irregularities will not be tolerated.

He cited recent disciplinary action against education officials in Turbat and stressed that transparency is being enforced across

institutions, including the Balochistan Constabulary Police.

The Chief Minister also criticized unnecessary expenditures, such as fuel costs for outdated government vehicles, and vowed to ensure efficient use of public

resources. He underscored that development is impossible without eradicating corruption and mismanagement.

On the role of social media, Bugti warned that certain elements are attempting to mislead the youth, but the government is countering this through awareness campaigns and positive initiatives. He praised Gwadar as a model district where all public schools are functional and none remain closed.

Reaffirming his government's commitment, Bugti said that providing merit, transparency, and equal opportunities to the youth of Balochistan is a top priority, and all available resources will be utilized to achieve this goal.

Earlier, the ceremony began with the recitation of the Holy Quran and the national anthem. Local girls welcomed the Chief Minister in traditional style, while students of Government Girls Shambe Ismail School presented a cultural tableau.

Provincial Advisor on Sports and Youth Affairs, Meena Majid Baloch, and Minister for Planning and Development, Zahoor Buledi, also addressed the gathering, pledging to highlight the talents of Balochistan's youth.

QUETTA VOICE

Editor: Asim Khan

SBKWU Teacher Recruitment Scandal Raises Alarms for Pakistan's Education System



Editorial:

Serious questions have emerged over the secondary teachers recruitment process conducted by Sardar Bahadur Khan Women's University (SBKWU), triggering widespread concern about merit, transparency, and accountability in Balochistan's education system.

It is essential to clarify a point that has caused public confusion: the advertised posts were NOT for SBKWU itself. The university was only assigned the responsibility of conducting tests and interviews for Secondary School Teacher recruitment across Balochistan.

According to initial findings, hundreds of candidates who had failed were allegedly declared successful during the teacher recruitment process.

Given the scale of the exercise, involving

thousands of applicants for secondary teaching positions across the province, such irregularities cannot reasonably be described as clerical mistakes.

The magnitude strongly suggests organised manipulation, carried out with the involvement or protection of influential individuals rather than the actions of a single official.

This issue strikes at the heart of education governance in Balochistan. Secondary school teachers shape the academic foundation of students, and any compromise on merit directly damages learning outcomes.

In Balochistan, where literacy rates remain among the lowest in the country, flawed teacher recruitment further deepens an already critical education crisis.

Reports that deserving candidates were sidelined only intensify public frustration and mistrust.

All anti-corruption and accountability institutions must take immediate notice.

A transparent, independent, and time-bound investigation is necessary to identify those responsible for manipulating the recruitment process conducted under SBKWU's authority. Accountability must reach every individual involved, regardless of status or influence.

This is not merely an administrative controversy; it is a matter of justice and the future of Balochistan's education system.

If credibility in teacher recruitment collapses, public trust in institutions will collapse. Geographical location, looming threat of natural calamities including earthquakes,

Quetta City, Proposed Master Plan

Abdul Latif Kakar : The mountain-ringed, Quetta city needs a comprehensive master plan to ensure the solution of problems faced by citizens and

drought, and floods, the need for making a comprehensive master plan for Quetta city is growing. Rather, it is now indispensable to make this plan, before

near foothills, the soil consists of sandy loam, mixed with pebbles and rock fragments and is suitable for vegetation. In the Hanna val-

ley, the greater part of the valley floor is covered by barren rock about crops of low relief and dry mala bed. The soil is restricted to the narrow banks and low terraces along the mainstream.

Soil erosion As far as soil erosion is concerned, both stream erosion of soil and wind erosion is occurring in the district. The stream ero-

Current and future population trends need to be reviewed. Transportation, mass transit, and city traffic management and monitoring system,



address the mega question of climate change. Through the proposed plan, scarce resources would be transparently and rationally utilized to make it a better living city in the country. For the first in the history of the province, the Urban Planning Development (UPD) under the leadership of chief minister Balochistan, Jam Kamal Khan has started the preparation of the master plan.

Geographical location, looming threat of natural calamities including earthquakes,

it is already late. Geography and Soil

Four main units may describe the soils of Quetta i.e. (1) piedmont plains (very deep and well-drained soil) (2) piedmont basins (3) salinity and alkalinity (4) gravelly piedmont fans and aprons bordering the mountains and plains.

The central part of the Quetta valley is covered by a soil that ranges from sandy loam to silt loam. This type of soil is good for crop production. At the margin of the valley

soil takes place in the piedmont plain along the banks and beds of streams.

Such streams are Sariah Lora, Hanna river, Habib Nallah near Hudda. Wind erosion occurs in the valley.

This all requires a review of the existing plans and documents and preparation of the digitized base map of Quetta with a protocol for its updating. A review of existing policies and documents and preparation of the digitized base map of Quetta with a protocol for its updating. A review of existing policies and documents and preparation of the digitized base map of Quetta with a protocol for its updating.

housing commercial, and industrial land use evaluation of the existing condition of buildings and housing schemes should be thoroughly reviewed. To be precise, the city needs a master plan on an emergency basis to address the looming threat of climate change and natural disasters.

Quetta City, Proposed Master Plan

The author is currently serving as the secretary urban planning and development department government of Balochistan

Quetta has a better environment, rich culture, manageable population

Amjad Rashid

Quetta is not a case of deprivation related to lack of resources, not a case of unemployment, not a case of climate change, and not even a case of poverty. It's a true and real case of the richness of culture, environment, climate, natural resources, and manageable human population. Unfortunately our planners, thinkers, decision-makers proved to be very selfish and greedy.

In Quetta, we had municipal water posts (I wish I can get the pictures). Quetta was a natural habitat with a small population of trees, flowers. The city had few streets with few vehicles and dynamic socio-political harmony.

We did establish universities but abandoned knowledge

Unfortunately, global and regional influences badly affected the capital with less modernization and more adversity. We did establish a university, but abandoned consciousness, we did build plazas, but without building codes. If we look back at the pictures of Quetta of the sixties. It was like Zurich but evolved as little Karachi or Mumbai. Transformed from little London to huge slums (full of garbage and filth). Bad governance, poor education, corruption, and poor planning converted Quetta into an ugly place.

We don't see Green Koh e Mur Daar a multi-lingual culture which was its beauty and uniqueness has vanished and replaced by the prac-

tion. Every day in the morning when I look at the sleeping beauty of Quetta I feel that the mother of Quetta (sleeping beauty) has become

bricks and cement which after few more years will look like a dumping place of garbage. We must listen and learn from our heroes like Rehman

its true beauty and culture.

Climate change poses a serious threat to the developing world Environment, Cli-

Now we from Adams to twenty-first-century experienced, slavery; the industrial revolution, conflict of ideologies, various version of world orders

chambeli, bitakh, surkahi and places like hanna, thandi Sarak, and associated culture of art and poetry. Masses of our motherland is demanding the attention of our international commitments. It's a matter of our survival. We need a green economy,



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Nasa Artemis II astronauts prepare to end moon mission in 'fireball' re-entry

NEWS DESK: Four astronauts travelling back to Earth from the far side of the moon on Nasa's Artemis II mission spoke of their emotions as they wrapped up the unprecedented flight and prepared to re-enter the atmosphere in a "fireball", during their first press conference from space on Wednesday.

The Artemis II crew, flying in their Orion capsule since launching from Florida last week, are due to splash down off the Southern California coast on Friday evening after reaching the moon earlier this week. They cruised along a path that took them past the shadowed, lunar far side to become the farthest-flying humans in history.

On the trip back home, they will reach speeds of up to 38,365 kph as they enter Earth's atmosphere, a high-risk phase of the mission that will put Orion's heatshield to the test as it gets battered by intense atmospheric friction.

"I've actually been thinking about entry since April 3, 2023 when we got assigned to this mission," said Artemis II mission pilot Victor Glover, when asked how



he was feeling about the return.

"There's so many more stories, so many more pictures, and gosh, I haven't even begun to process what we've been through. We've still got two more days,

and riding a fireball through the atmosphere is profound as well."

Glover and fellow Nasa astronauts Reid Wiseman and Christina Koch, and Canadian astronaut Jeremy Hansen are the first wave of as-

tronauts in a multibillion-dollar series of missions under the Artemis programme that aims to return humans to the moon's surface by 2028 before China attempts to establish a long-term US presence over the next

decade, building a moon base for potential future missions to Mars.

Koch cast the mission series as a relay race, telling reporters: "In fact, we have batons that we bought to symbolise, physically,

that." "We plan to hand them to the next crew, and every single thing that we do is with them in mind," she said.

That next mission, Artemis III, will involve a docking test in low-Earth orbit between the

Orion capsule and both astronaut lunar landers that Nasa plans to use to put its astronauts on the moon in later missions. This handout picture released on April 9, 2026 by Nasa, shows a view of the Moon, with

crater rims along the terminator—the boundary between lunar day and night—at the top of the image, photographed by the Artemis II crew from the Orion spacecraft on April 6, 2026. —Reuters

Artemis IV targeted for 2028, would be the programme's first crewed lunar landing, and the first since Apollo 17 in 1972.

Back on Earth, dozens of lunar scientists have been packed in rooms adjacent to Nasa's Mission Control Centre in Houston this week, scribbling down notes and debating a steady stream of both real-time and recorded audio from the Artemis II astronaut crew in their Orion spacecraft.

The crew is due to return to Earth on Friday around 8pm ET (12am GMT Saturday), splashing down off the coast of San Diego, California to cap their nearly 10-day mission.

The four astronauts on Monday had reached a record-breaking distance from Earth of roughly 252,000 miles, surpassing by some 4,000 miles the previous record held by the Apollo 13 crew for 56 years.

Japan weighs new release of about 20 days' worth of oil from reserves, Kyodo says

NEWS DESK: Japan is considering a new release of about 20 days' worth of oil reserves as early as May, Kyodo reported on Thursday, amid uncertainty over the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz despite a US-Iran ceasefire.

Japan, dependent on the Middle East for some 95% of its oil supply, began releasing oil from its stockpiles on March 16 in coordination with other nations and on its

own. In total, Japan is making available about 50 days' worth of oil consumption and has asked the International Energy Agency to consider a coordinated release of a second batch.

It now has enough oil for 230 days in its reserves. On Tuesday, US President Donald Trump agreed to a two-week ceasefire with Iran on condition that Tehran general for im-

mediate crisis management as doubts over the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, told reporters the ministry continues to examine the situation.

With less crude oil available, Japanese refiners' cut utilisation rates to 67.7% of designed capacity in the week to April 4, the lowest since June.

To help cope with the energy supply crisis, Japan has started searching for non-Middle Eastern barrels, rolled out gasoline subsidies and stepped up coal-fired generation to reduce the need for liquefied natural gas supplies,

which have also been cut due to the closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

While Japan has secured enough crude oil and naphtha for the country as a whole, there are supply imbalances and distribution bottlenecks in some areas, a METI document released on Thursday said.



Millions vote in Assam, Kerala as India begins series of state elections

NEWS DESK: Millions of Indians queued to vote in local elections in the Assam and Kerala states on Thursday, kicking off four key contests this month amid a war in the Middle East that has triggered some fuel shortages, even though Prime Minister Narendra Modi has kept domestic prices in check.

State elections do not directly affect the stability of India's federal government but are closely watched as a test of voter sentiment toward the ruling coalition.

Opinion polls predict an easy win for an alliance led by Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in one state and tight contests in two others. The four are likely to stay with the opposition.



Successive terms and is expected to win again, according to public opinion platform Vote Vibe, while the opposition is set to retain Kerala.

In West Bengal, where the removal of large numbers of names from voter rolls during a revision exercise has become a major issue, the ruling regional party is ahead in a tight race, a Vote Vibe survey for broadcaster CNN-News18 showed. The Hindu nation-

alist BJP has never ruled West Bengal but says it wants to win to curb what it calls illegal immigration since the Iran war began in late February.

India has not raised retail prices of regular petrol and diesel despite higher global prices and has diverted cooking gas for household use from some industries.

India typically relies on the Middle East for more than 40 per cent of its crude oil imports and over 90% of its cooking gas imports.

Oil rebounds as fragile Gulf ceasefire, constrained Hormuz keep supply risks elevated

NEWS DESK: Oil prices rose on Thursday as doubts over a fragile two-week Middle East ceasefire raised concerns that energy flows through the crucial Strait of Hormuz will remain "restricted."

Brent crude futures were up \$1.96, or 2.07%, at \$96.71 a barrel at 0325 GMT, while US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude rose \$2.60, or 2.75%, to \$97.01 a barrel.

Both benchmark prices fell below \$100 per barrel in the previous trading session, with WTI recording its biggest decline since April 2020, on initial expectations for the ceasefire to result in a reopening of the strait.

However, analysts said market participants "are hesitant to fully unwind pricing for geopolitical risk, and there is no clarity on what negotiations between the US and Iran would mean for oil flows."

"The chances of a meaningful reopening (of the Strait of Hormuz) any time soon look dim," said Vandana Hari, founder of oil market analysis provider Vanda Insights, "predicting continued vola-

tility in oil prices. "The futures market looks a bit broken," she said. Otherwise, "prices should have snapped right back to pre-ceasefire levels by now." The vital waterway connects supply from Gulf producers such as Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Qatar to global markets, and typically carries about 20% of global oil and gas supply.

The viability of the ceasefire is in question with Israel continuing to attack Lebanon on Wednesday, causing Iran to suggest it

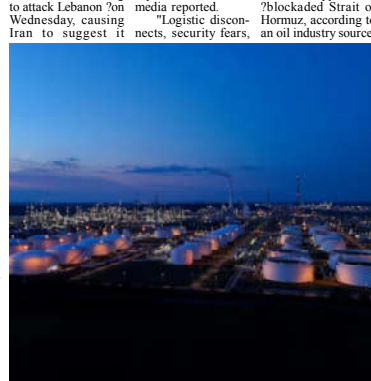
would be "unreasonable" to proceed with talks to forge a permanent peace deal.

Shippers on Wednesday also said "they needed more clarity on the terms of the ceasefire before resuming transit through the Strait of Hormuz. Iran has issued maps to guide ships around mines in the waterway and designated safe paths for passage in coordination with the country's Revolutionary Guards, Iranian media reported.

"Logistic disconnects, security fears,

elevated insurance premiums and operational constraints mean that very little additional "energy is likely to be supplied via the Strait of Hormuz in the next two weeks," analysts at Standard Chartered said in a note.

Regional oil facilities also remain under threat, with Iran striking sites in nearby countries "after the ceasefire, including a pipeline in Saudi Arabia that has been used to bypass the "blockaded Strait of Hormuz, according to an oil industry source.

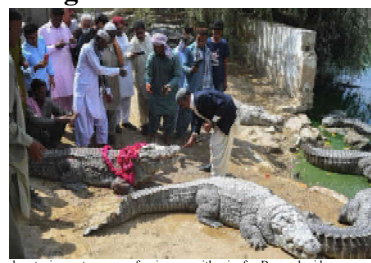


India turns to crocodiles for policing Bangladesh border

NEWS DESK: India is considering releasing snakes and crocodiles along its frontier with Bangladesh, its Border Security Force said on Wednesday, as New Delhi seeks to stave off unauthorised crossings.

Bangladesh is almost entirely encircled by India and the border stretches for more than 4,000 kilometres, large parts of which are unfenced across delta regions where Himalayan rivers wind toward the sea.

Manoj Barnwal, an official of the Border Security Force, said "the use of reptiles was discussed in a February meeting with the home ministry. "We have been asked to explore the feasibility of deploying reptiles such as snakes or crocodiles in vulnerable areas along the unfenced area where traditional



deputy inspector general of the paramilitary force based in Kolkata, near the border with Bangladesh.

The plan revolves around leveraging natural deterrents like crocodiles and snakes in flood-prone zones, raises safety concerns,

Barnwal said. "How do we procure the reptiles? What impact might it have on the people in the villages sitting along the riverine border?" "We have asked our field units to study the feasibility of the approach and send the report as soon as possible," he added.

MDCAT passing marks cut by 3pc for 2025-26 academic session

ISLAMABAD, (INP) - The Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC) has allowed a one-time relaxation of up to three percent in MDCAT passing marks to help medical and dental colleges fill vacant seats in MBBS and BDS programmes for the 2025-26 academic session.

According to an official notification issued on Wednesday, the decision followed detailed national-level deliberations, including consultations with health standing committees.

Under the decision, all admissions already completed under the previous Admission Regulations 2025 will remain valid.

The council directed admitting universities and colleges to first prioritise candidates who had already applied under the earlier pool, universities may reduce the MDCAT passing percentage by up to three percent strictly to fill the seats.

As a result, the minimum passing marks for MBBS have been reduced from 52pc to 49pc, while the threshold for BDS programmes has been lowered from 47pc to 44pc.

The PMDC clarified that this relaxation is a one-time measure applicable only for the current academic session and cannot be extended beyond filling genuine vacant seats.

The council also imposed strict conditions to ensure transparency and merit.

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ISLAMABAD: ADELEGATION OF SERVICE LONG MARCH TYRES PRIVATE LIMITED CALLS ON PRIME MINISTER MUHAMMAD SHEHBAZ SHARIF (9 APRIL, 2026).

Balochistan CM says no ideology can be imposed by force

QUETTA, (INP) - Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfaraz Bugti stated that the state stands with the oppressed and that no ideology can be imposed through the force of weapons.

Addressing participants of the 19th National Workshop in Balochistan, he said serious steps are ongoing to promote good governance, highlighting that teacher recruitment in the education department has been 100% merit-based and 3,200 closed schools have been reopened.

He warned that anti-Pakistan elements abroad are misleading youth through social media, using unverified historical references to create negative perceptions about Balochistan.

He urged young people to learn authentic history to distinguish truth from falsehood.

The CM emphasized that youth are the hope of Pakistan and must defend the state on all fronts, including social media, adding that violent actions or attitudes have no connection to balanced development.

Mir Sarfaraz Bugti reiterated that the state supports the oppressed and no ideology can be imposed by force, citing article 5 of the Constitution, which teaches unconditional loyalty to the state.

He stressed that Balochistan has been affected by terrorism, and the state stands firmly alongside its citizens.

He noted that previously protests would block roads for days, but now highways in Balochistan are no longer indefinitely closed under the pretext of protest, and the Constitution protects both the right to protest and the rights of ordinary citizens.

The CM further stated that separatist elements will not receive any concessions, adding that the issue of missing persons was previously used for anti-state propaganda but has been permanently resolved through effective legislation.

Police held 57 criminals

FAISLABAD, (INP) - Police nabbed 57 criminals involved in heinous nature crimes during the last 24 hours.

According to a police spokesperson here on Thursday, the teams of different police stations conducted raids under their jurisdiction and held 14 proclaimed offenders, 3 court absconders, 33 drug traffickers and 6 outlaws.

Police seized 21kg of hashish, 8 kg of heroin, 500 grams of ice and 1377 liters of wine and illicit weapons from their possession.

Pakistan denounces Israeli aggression against Lebanon

ISLAMABAD, (INP) - Pakistan has strongly condemned the ongoing Israeli aggression against Lebanon, resulting in the loss of innocent lives and the widespread destruction of infrastructure.

In a statement released in Islamabad, Foreign Office Spokesperson Tahir Andrabi said Israeli actions undermine international efforts to establish peace and stability in the region and constitute a blatant violation of international law and fundamental humanitarian principles.

The spokesperson said Pakistan calls upon the international community to take urgent and concrete steps to end Israeli aggression against Lebanon.

Tahir Andrabi reiterated Pakistan's unwavering solidarity with the government and people of Lebanon during this difficult time.

The spokesperson said Pakistan supports Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as its peace and stability.

Trump says US forces will stay near Iran, warns of renewed action

WASHINGTON, (INP) - US President Donald Trump stated that its military ships and aircraft will remain around Iran and threatened that the US will start "shooting" again unless Tehran fully complies with the deal reached with Washington.

"All US Ships, Aircraft, and Military Personnel, with additional Ammunition, Weapons will remain in place in and around Iran, until the REAL AGREEMENT reached is fully complied with," Trump said on his Truth Social platform.

"If for any reason it is not, which is highly unlikely, then the 'Shooting Starts,' bigger, and better, and stronger than anyone has ever seen before," the president added.

Iran had said earlier on Wednesday that it would be "unreasonable" to proceed with talks to forge a permanent peace deal with the United States after Israel's war in Lebanon.

Trump's statement comes as the White House confirmed that US President Donald Trump is dispatching his Iran negotiating team, led by Vice President JD Vance, to Pakistan for talks, adding that the first round of negotiations would take place on Saturday.

With several of Iran's veteran political

leaders killed in the war, Iran's delegation is expected to be led by parliament speaker Mohammed Bagher Qalibaf, laid bare the continued volatility in the region following Tuesday's ceasefire announcement by President Donald Trump.

The two sides have laid out sharply contrasting agendas for peace talks set to start on Saturday, but it was unclear whether the two-week ceasefire would hold until then.

Qalibaf said Israel had already violated several conditions of that ceasefire by ramping up its parallel war against the Iran-aligned militia Hezbollah, while the US had violated the agreement by insisting that Iran abandon its nuclear ambitions.

"In such a situation, a bilateral ceasefire or negotiations were unreasonable," he said in a statement.

PM Shehbaz concedes demise of Punjab Assembly Speaker Malik Ahmad Khan's sister

ISLAMABAD, (INP) - Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday expressed deep grief and sorrow over the demise of the sister of Malik Ahmad Khan, Speaker of the Punjab Assembly.

The prime minister prayed for the elevation of the departed soul's ranks in the hereafter and extended heartfelt sympathies to the bereaved family, a Prime Minister's Office news release said.

US envoy meets Naqvi, praises Pakistan's diplomatic role

ISLAMABAD, (INP) - Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi met with US Ambassador Netafy Baker to discuss the current situation in the Middle East and to welcome the ceasefire, with Pakistan's strong diplomatic role receiving praise.

During the meeting, the upcoming high-level talks scheduled in Islamabad were also discussed, with detailed deliberations on arrangements for the negotiations.

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi said US Vice President JD Vance, Siftitkov, and Kushner will be special guests, and a comprehensive plan has been prepared to provide foolproof security to all foreign attendees.

US Ambassador Netafy Baker commended Pakistan's sincere role in facilitating diplomatic efforts.

North Korea unveils cluster-bomb missile, electronic warfare capability

PYONGYANG, (INP) - North Korea tested a new cluster-bomb warhead on a ballistic missile and an electromagnetic weapon this week, state media KCNA reported on Thursday, in a move seen as part of efforts by Pyongyang to showcase its capacity to fight a modern war.

The country's Academy of Defence Science and the Missile Administration also conducted tests of carbon-fibre bombs and a mobile short-range anti-aircraft missile system, KCNA said.

Kim Jong Sik, a general who oversaw the tests, said the electromagnetic weapon system and carbon-fibre bombs were "special assets" for North Korea's military, KCNA reported.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said on Wednesday that Pyongyang had tested multiple missiles over several days.

Analysts also see the tests as likely to be a show of force in cutting-edge conventional weapon systems by the nuclear-armed North for its adversaries and allies.

There has also been speculation that US President Donald Trump may try to hold a summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un on the sidelines of his visit to China in mid-May.

Without specifying the number of ballistic missiles launched - a violation of United Nations sanctions - North Korea said it had tested its mobile short-range anti-aircraft missile system as well as the combat capabilities of its tactical ballistic missile warhead.

One test proved the surface-to-surface tactical ballistic missile called Hwasongpho-11 Ka, which is tipped with a cluster-bomb warhead, was able to "reduce to ashes any target" covering an area of up to 7 hectares (17 acres), KCNA said.

The tests also follow North Korea reiterating its characterisation of South Korea as a "hostile enemy," dashing hopes in Seoul of easing tensions on the Korean Peninsula.

North Korea appears to be upgrading its weapon system with cutting-edge technology suited for a modern war, said Lim Eun-chul, a professor at Kyungnam University in South Korea.

The electromagnetic weapon system could have the capacity to disable electronic circuits in the enemy's assets, with the potential ability to cripple South Korea's F-35A stealth fighter jet or Aegis-equipped destroyers, Lim said.



Islamabad: COAS and CDF, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif (9 April, 2026).

Pakistan, Saudi Arabia express deep concern over ceasefire violations

ISLAMABAD, (INP) - Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have expressed deep concern over ceasefire violations by Israel in Lebanon.

The concern was shared during a telephonic call between Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar, and Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan late Wednesday night.

During the conversation, Ishaq Dar discussed latest regional developments with his Saudi counterparts.

Both the leaders stressed the urgent need to full respect and implementation of the ceasefire agreement to ensure lasting peace and stability.

Ishaq Dar appreciated Saudi Arabia's continued support for Pakistan's efforts toward achieving lasting peace.

Both the foreign ministers agreed to remain in close contact.

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Three killed, six injured in truck-rickshaw collision

MULTAN, (INP) - Three persons were killed while six others suffered injuries in a road traffic accident on Thursday along the road from Grey Wala Chowki to Head Muhammad Wala Toll Plaza, according to Rescue 1122.

The accident occurred when a speeding truck rammed into a motorcycle rickshaw from the rear, completely destroying the vehicle.

The rickshaw, carrying labourers, was on its way to Head Muhammad Wala to pick strawberries from agriculture field.

Rescue teams rushed to the scene and immediately launched relief operations. The deceased were identified as Farzana (40), Kiran (14), and Shakeela (30).

The injured included Aedela (12), Saeda Mai (42), Raeesa Bibi (25), Saima (25), Ramzan (20), and an unidentified man aged around 40. All the victims were shifted to Nishat Hospital. Police have initiated an investigation into the incident.

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ISLAMABAD: FEDERAL MINISTER FOR COMMERCE, IAM KAMAL KHAN MEETS CHAIRMAN JIN YONG SHENG TO DISCUSS \$120 MILLION INVESTMENT EXPANSION AND BOOSTING PAKISTAN'S TYRE EXPORTS ON APRIL 9, 2026.

IG Police Balochistan Stresses Public Role in Law and Order

Web Desk: Inspector General of Police Balochistan Muhammad Tahir, emphasized that the cooperation of all sections of society alongside law enforcement agencies is vital for the province's development and the improvement of law and order.

He made these remarks during a meeting at the Central Police Office with a delegation led by President of Anjuman Tajran Balochistan, Rahim-Agha, and Chairman of Balochistan Hotel Association, Haji Salam.

The delegation included General Secretary Haji Samar Hassan Mandokhel, Malik Fazal Kakar, Haji Ismail Agha, Malik Abdul Jabbar Kas, Haji Dawood Khliji, Hafiz Saleem, Noorul Haq Ishaqzai, Nasser Ahmed, and Khalil Ahmed.

Senior police officials DIG Quetta Imran



Shaikat, DIG Special Branch Muhammad Tahir Alauddin, and AIG Operations Naved Alam were also present.

Ki Tahir highlighted that strong collaboration between the police and the business community ensures stability,

economic growth, and swift resolution of emerging challenges.

He noted that prosperity in trade and industry is directly linked to peace and order in the province.

On the occasion, Rahim Agha and representatives of the Hotel Association reaffirmed their commitment to cooperate fully with the police.

They stressed that this business community has consistently supported law enforcement during religious festivals and other occasions,

playing a key role as the backbone of Balochistan's economy. They pledged to continue contributing to peace, development, and stability even in difficult times.

Secretary Communications & Works Orders Immediate Completion of Pending Development Projects



Quetta: A high-level review meeting on incomplete development projects across the province was held in Quetta under the chairmanship of Babar Khan, Secretary Communications and Works. The meeting focused on assessing progress and addressing key challenges hindering the timely completion of ongoing projects.

Chief Engineers, Superintending Engineers, and District Executive Engineers from all six zones of the province participated in the session via Zoom.

During the meeting, District Executive Engineers presented detailed briefings on a district-by-district basis regarding ongoing but incomplete development schemes. The briefings highlighted multiple obstacles affecting project completion, including technical issues, financial constraints, and administrative delays.

He made it clear that no justification or excuse for delays would be accepted. He further instructed officials to demonstrate seriousness and responsibility in resolving the issue, urging them to adopt effective strategies to remove obstacles without delay.

He emphasized that incomplete projects not only hinder public welfare but also negatively impact the overall performance of the Communications and Works Department. The Secretary reaffirmed that concrete steps will be taken to ensure the timely completion of all pending projects, adding that progress will be regularly monitored and reviewed.

Quetta development projects, Balochistan C&W Department, Babar Khan Secretary, incomplete projects review, infrastructure development Balochistan, government projects delay.

Quetta: Inspector General of Police Balochistan Muhammad Tahir stated that departmental promotions and rank advancements are a vital part of a police officer's career and reflect an increase in responsibilities.

He stressed that supervisory officers must ensure improved performance from their subordinates and fulfill their command roles with greater dedication.

He expressed these views while addressing a ceremony held at the Central Police Office in Quetta, where police officers Naved Alam and Sher Ali were promoted to the rank of Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) and awarded badges during the ceremony.

IG Police Muhammad Tahir and Additional IG Agha Muhammad Yousof formally pinned the SSP badges on the promoted officers.

The IG highlighted the importance of adopting smart and community policing strategies to enhance service delivery and effectively combat crime.

He directed officers to utilize all available resources to ensure the protection of life and property while providing immediate relief to citizens in line with modern policing standards.

He further emphasized strengthening the positive image of the police force and promoting a sense of security among the public through cooperation and professionalism.

IG Muhammad Tahir congratulated the promoted officers, who, in turn, reaffirmed their commitment to serving and protecting citizens under all circumstances.

The ceremony was also attended by senior officials including Ashfaq Ahmed, Javed Ali Mehr, Hassan Asad Alvi, Imran Shaikat, Sahal Ahmed Sheikh, Tahir Alauddin, Shah Bin Maseeh, Aitzaz Ahmed Goraya, Deputy Commissioner Quetta Mehruallah Badini, and Director FIA Balochistan Behram Khan Mandokhel.

IG Balochistan Muhammad Tahir, SSP promotion ceremony Quetta, Balochistan police promotions, community policing Pakistan, police leadership development, Central Police Office Quetta.

submitting their proposals in writing as soon as possible to facilitate decision-making in the next meeting. Mir Zia Langove also confirmed that all Karez issues would be presented to the Chief Minister of Balochistan, ensuring their effective implementation. He stressed that protests are not a solution, adding that dialogue, mutual understanding, and negotiations are the most effective ways to address such issues.

Quetta Karez issue, Balochistan government meeting, Mir Zia Langove, Karez restoration, tribal elders negotiations, administrative reforms Balochistan.

Quetta: A high-level consultative meeting on the long-standing Karez issue was held in Quetta under the chairmanship of Mir Zia Langove, Provincial Minister for Interior. The session brought together a government committee and tribal elders to discuss key matters related to Karez systems and the status of administrative headquarters.

The meeting was attended by Provincial Health Minister Bakht Muhammad Kakar, Members of the Provincial Assembly Zamrak Khan Achakzai and Asghar Khan Tareen, Commissioner Quetta Division Shahzad Khan Kakar, Additional Commissioner Agha Samiullah, Deputy Commissioner Pishin, Tehsilardars, and several tribal elders and community notables.

During the meeting, tribal elders presented various proposals and recommendations aimed at resolving the Karez issue. The government committee welcomed these suggestions and stressed the need for mutual consultation and consensus among all stakeholders to reach a practical and sustainable solution.

He further noted that the government is taking all possible steps to resolve the issue and will move forward with the confidence and cooperation of all stakeholders. The minister urged tribal elders to

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Training Session Held for Polio Teams Ahead of April 2026 National Immunization Drive

Loralai: A key training session for UC Medical Officers (UCMOs) and area in-charges was held at the Deputy Commissioner Office Loralai in preparation for the upcoming National Immunization Days (NID) Polio Campaign - April 2026.

The session was chaired by Deputy Commissioner Loralai Captain (R) Muhammad Haseeb Shuja.

Among those present were Additional Deputy Commissioner General Noor Ali Kakar, N-ST/OP Officer Dr. Farhan, Focal Person Mukhtar Ahmed, along with all UCMOs and area in-charges.

During the session, polio teams were provided with comprehensive guidance to ensure the success of the campaign. Detailed discussions were held on developing effective strategies, clarifying team responsibilities, maintaining accurate records, implementing micro-plans, addressing field challenges, and ensuring strong public cooperation.

Participants were instructed to ensure outreach to every household and vaccination of every child under five years of age, with strict directions to avoid any negligence.

Addressing the session, Deputy Commissioner Captain (R) Muhammad Haseeb Shuja stated, "Eradicating polio is a collective responsibility. All teams must work with dedication and commitment in the field to achieve this national goal."

He also appealed to the public to ensure that

children under the age of five receive polio drops, emphasizing that vaccination is essential to protect future generations from lifelong disability.

The training session was described as a significant step toward polio eradication, aimed not only at strengthening the capacity of field teams but also at ensuring full community participation to make the campaign 100 percent successful.

At the conclusion of the session, the efforts and commitment of all participants were appreciated.

Loralai polio campaign 2026, NID April 2026 Pakistan, polio training session Loralai, Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Haseeb Shuja, polio eradication Pakistan, vaccination awareness campaign.



Government-Tribal Elders Meeting on Karez Issue Focuses on Restoration and Administrative Reforms



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TENDER NOTICE

The Senior Assistant Director Local Government & Rural Development, Kech (Turbat), invites sealed percentage rate tenders based on composite schedule of rates, 2023 Govt. of Balochistan amended up-to-date from interested contractors/Firms for the following works given below under: Balochistan Special Development Initiative Programme (BSDI) Phase-II 2025-26. The procurement shall be carried out in accordance with PPPRA Rules 2014. Bid security 2%. Completion Period 02 Month. Bid validity period 90 days.

S/No	Name of Scheme	Est/Cont
1	Supply and installation of solar system for law college Turbat (BSDI/Phase-II) (TSE-2526041016213)	4.0M

Eligibility: The contractor must have valid registration with Pakistan Engineering Council in relevant category (C-6 and above where applicable) and discipline and registration with tax authorities i.e. (NTN, BERA and sales Tax Department), where applicable. **Method of Procurement:** Single stage, single envelope. **Bidding/Tender Documents Issuance:** Tender Forms / documents will be issued to participants to submit all recommendations in written form so they can be formally reviewed and forwarded to higher authorities.

Addressing the participants, Interior Minister Mir Zia Langove stated that the issue of Karez systems, their restoration, and proposals regarding the creation of a new district would be considered seriously. He emphasized the need for mutual consultation and consensus among all stakeholders to reach a practical and sustainable solution.

He further noted that the government is taking all possible steps to resolve the issue and will move forward with the confidence and cooperation of all stakeholders. The minister urged tribal elders to

submit their proposals in writing as soon as possible to facilitate decision-making in the next meeting. Mir Zia Langove also confirmed that all Karez issues would be presented to the Chief Minister of Balochistan, ensuring their effective implementation. He stressed that protests are not a solution, adding that dialogue, mutual understanding, and negotiations are the most effective ways to address such issues.

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Senior Assistant Director, Local Government & Rural Development, District Kech at Turbat

PRQ No.4567/09-4-2026

Farmers protest low wheat prices as Punjab sets 3m-tonne target

NEWS DESK: Punjab will procure three million tonnes of wheat this season, announces Agriculture Minister Ashiq Kirmani days before the new crop is to hit the market.

Chairing a stakeholders' consultation on the grain harvesting for the 2025-26 crop season here on Wednesday.

He said estimates of wheat harvesting costs have been finalised for each district through mutual coordination between the agriculture department and service providers.

He emphasised that service providers must not charge farmers more than the prescribed rates as a procurement target of three million tonnes has been set for the current year.

Kirmani added that the formal wheat procurement in Punjab would commence from April 15, and all procure-



ment centres would be fully operational and ready to facilitate the growers.

MPAs Rana Muhammad Saleem and Chaudhry Muhammad Javed, representatives of

farmers' organisations, including Khalid Mehmood Khokhar, Chaudhry Khalid Bath.

Sardar Zafar Hussain Khan, Muhammad Afaq Tiwana, Chaudhry

Shaukat Ali Chadhar, Munir Shaheen, Rana Muhammad Ifkhar, Chaudhry Maqsood Ahmad Jatt,

Jameel Nisar Chaudhry, Tahir Razzaq, Gujjar, Mehmoodul Haq

Bukhari, and Jameel Rehman Buzdar along with harvester owners and service providers,

participated in the meeting. Agriculture Secretary Ifkhar Ali Sahoo told the meet-

ing that initial estimates suggest a bumper wheat crop this year.

He informed that in view of the prevailing weather conditions growers are being provided with comprehensive guidance re-

garding timely and safe wheat harvesting.

He added that technical assistance is being ensured at all stages to support farmers in better crop management and to safeguard production.

Mr Chadhar, who is Kisan Board Pakistan leader, told Dawn that the government didn't listen to the growers' pleas about giving an indicative rate of wheat keeping in view production cost which, he claimed, was Rs4,750 per maund on an average 35 maunds per acre yield.

On the other hand, he said, the market price of grain dropped by Rs600 to Rs3,300 per maund against the government's declaration that at least three million tonnes of wheat would be procured through the private sector this season.

He regretted that the government also refused to fix rent of harvesters, leaving it up to the market forces as the cost of all farm inputs, including labour.

It has gone up in the wake of the high prices of petroleum products.

Govt seeks \$1b ADB climate loan

NEWS DESK: The government has decided to take a \$1 billion budget support loan for making policies to deal with climate disaster but deferred approval of a \$40 million project due to exorbitant rates quoted for buying furniture and laptops by using a foreign loan.

The Central Development Working Party (CDWP) approved the concept clearance proposal for taking the \$1 billion loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) under the second tranche of the Climate Disaster Resilience Enhancement Programme (CDREP). Planning Minister

Ahsan Iqbal chaired the meeting, and its endorsement would pave the way for approval by the ADB. Out of the \$1 billion, \$500 million would be immediately released after approval by the ADB board, and the remaining amount is linked with needs arising out of any natural calamity.

Government officials said the \$500 million tranche disbursement is expected before June, aimed at covering any damage to infrastructure. The remaining \$500 million tranche disbursement is expected before June, aimed at covering any damage to infrastructure. The remaining \$500 million tranche disbursement is expected before June, aimed at covering any damage to infrastructure.

loans from Saudi Arabia to offset the impact of \$3.5 billion in upcoming debt repayment to the United Arab Emirates.

According to finance ministry officials, the \$500 million ADB loan would primarily be sourced from ADB's Ordinary Capital Resources, while the government will provide support through policy reforms and budgetary

facilitation without direct cash counterpart contribution. The remaining \$500 million Contingent Disaster Financing (CDF) component is expected to remain available over five years to provide timely financial support in the

event of disaster shocks, they added.

Pakistan is highly vulnerable to climate-induced disasters, particularly floods, droughts and extreme weather events, resulting in significant economic and social losses. It is estimated that Pakistan needs \$30 billion to \$60 billion annually to deal with climate disaster.

However, the fresh lending is secured against changing policies, which does not require any loan by the government's will to change. According to documents, weak institutional coordination and fragmented disaster governance were barriers to dealing with these disasters. The government has admitted that there was an absence of risk-layered disaster risk financing mechanisms, and fiscal vulnerability was high due to reliance on post-disaster financing.

The \$1 billion debt would cover areas such as building institutional capacity for disaster risk management, implementation of the National Disaster Management Plan III, operationalisation of the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC), risk-based flood management and climate-resilient investment.

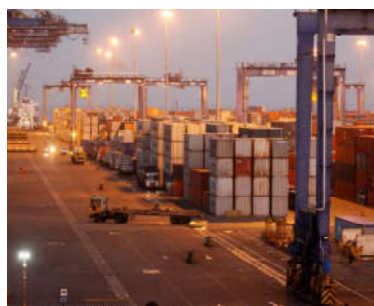


Pakistan must turn diplomacy into economic success

NEWS DESK: When Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif posted a carefully worded appeal on X in the early hours of Wednesday, requesting President Trump to extend his deadline by two weeks and simultaneously urging Iran to open the Strait of Hormuz as a gesture of goodwill, few expected that within hours the world would be exhaling its first collective breath of relief in over five weeks.

But that is precisely what happened. Trump agreed to suspend aggressive attacks on Iran for two weeks, following direct conversations with PM Sharif and Pakistan's Army Chief Asim Munir. Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi thanked Pakistan for its role in negotiations and confirmed that safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz would be permitted for the two-week period.

The result of all that effort is now visible in the numbers that matter most to the ordinary people everywhere. Global markets reacted with one of the most dramatic single-day moves in re-



cent memory, with West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude tumbling 18% and Brent crude sliding over 15% to around \$94 per barrel, a stunning reversal after oil had touched \$117 earlier in the day.

European markets surged, with the pan-European Stoxx 600 advancing nearly 4%, while Germany's DAX led regional gains with a 4.8% jump. In Asia, South Korea's Kospi soared 6.8%, Japan's Nikkei 225 gained 5.29%, Australia's S&P/ASX

200 jumped 2.55% and China's Shanghai Composite rose 2.6%.

And of course, Pakistan's bourse jumped more than 9%. These are not routine market movements; they represent trillions of dollars in restored confidence.

Now comes the harder question - what should Pakistan do with this moment. Diplomatic capital, like any other kind, depreciates quickly, if it is not invested wisely. The country sits at a rare inflec-

tion point and the window to convert goodwill into concrete national gain will not stay open for long.

The most immediate opportunity lies in energy. One of Pakistan's clearest incentives for getting involved was that it relied on the Strait of Hormuz for most of its oil and gas imports and the blockade had already triggered a domestic energy crisis, though not worse than neighbouring countries like India.

Experts warn against taxing solar panels, batteries

NEWS DESK: Participants of a dialogue warned the government against taxing solar panels and batteries, saying it will undermine national energy security and penalise consumers who have cushioned the economy against global volatility.

The consultative dialogue, titled "Beyond the Barrel: Making Pakistan Energy Secure in an Era of Geopolitical Shocks," was organised by the Pakistan Renewable Energy Coalition (PREC) in collaboration with the Alliance for Climate Justice and Clean Energy (ACJCE) and SDPI Economic and

energy expert Dr Abid Qayyum Suleri said Pakistan must pivot to renewables and storage to shield the economy from global energy shocks.

Dr Suleri cautioned that successive energy shocks are intensifying inflationary pressures and eroding fragile gains made under the ongoing IMF programme. He warned that if international oil prices breach \$105 per barrel, domestic inflation could again surge into double digits, squeezing household budgets and social safety nets. "Taxing solar panels and batteries

at this juncture would undermine both energy security and consumer protection," said Mr Suleri.

Delivering special remarks, Lidly Naqvi, Coordinator of the Asian Peoples' Movement on Debt and Development (APMDD), said several Asian economies are grappling with the twin burden of sovereign debt and capacity payments locked into legacy power purchase agreements. She stressed that citizens have both the mandate and responsibility to press their governments for credible policy alternatives that advance renewable

energy. She also underlined the need for Pakistan to renegotiate existing power purchase agreements to ease the mounting capacity payment burden on consumers and the national exchequer.

Speakers unanimously stressed that Pakistan can no longer afford to treat energy security as a question of fuel imports alone and must urgently redirect public resources towards renewables, storage and grid modernisation.

Framing the geopolitical backdrop, Engi Ubaider Rehman Zia, head of the Energy Unit at SDPI, noted that the global energy system was built on the assumption that shipping lanes, terminals and supply chains would always hold. The closure of the Strait of Hormuz, he said, has shattered that assumption and exposed the fragility of an economy heavily reliant on imported fossil fuels. He observed that rising international fuel prices are not only pushing up generation costs but also feeding directly into the cost of essential services, transport and food, with the heaviest burden falling on low-income households.



Mills demand sugar export

NEWS DESK: The Pakistan Sugar Mills Association (PSMA) has appealed to the government to immediately export the surplus sugar produced during the current crushing season 2025-26 in order to boost the country's foreign exchange reserves.

A spokesperson for the association stated that as of November 15, 2025,

the carry-forward stock from the previous season stood at 271,704 metric tons,

comprising 117,541 metric tons of local sugar and 154,163 metric tons of imported sugar.

According to data from the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) dated March 31, 2026, a total of 7,573 million metric tons of sugar has been produced in the ongoing crushing season that began in November 2025.

This figure is expected to reach 7.6 million tons once the remaining mills complete their processing,

In addition, an average of 86,809 metric tons of sugar from sugar beet, based on the previous two years, will also be produced between April and June 2026.

Combining all these quantities, total sugar production will reach 7.958 million tons. According to the FBR's data,

the country's annual sugar supply between November 16, 2024 and November 15, 2025 was 6,476 million tons, translating

into average monthly consumption of 539,662 tons.

Taking into account a population growth rate of 2.5%, the annual sugar consumption is projected to reach 6,638 million tons next year.

"This indicates a surplus stock of 1.320 million tons. Even after maintaining an additional one-month strategic reserve, there will still be a surplus of 767,000 tons," the spokesperson said.

Currently, according to millers, the sugar industry is facing significant challenges in maintaining these excessive stocks amid low demand.

Sugar prices are much lower than production costs, primarily due to the continuous increase in sugarcane prices and other production inputs, resulting in losses to the industry.



Zalmi edge spirited Kingsmen by four wickets in PSL thriller

NEWS DESK: Peshawar Zalmi survived a late scare to beat Hyderabad Kingsmen by four wickets in a tense HBL Pakistan Super League encounter at the National Bank Stadium on Wednesday night, overcoming a spirited defence of a modest total in an unusually subdued atmosphere.

The venue painted a picture of emptiness. With stands largely vacant due to the government's ongoing austerity drive and the stadium's iconic roof removed as part of a planned renovation, the action unfolded in stark openness.

The silence in the stands, however, was replaced by relentless energy from Kingsmen players, who attempted to compensate for the lack of crowd support with constant chatter and encouragement on the field.

Defending a below-par 145 — and still searching for their first win of the tournament — the Kingsmen relied on intensity and discipline to drag the contest deep despite Peshawar appearing comfortably in control for much of the chase.

Zalmi were cruising



at one stage, requiring 30 runs off 30 deliveries with six wickets in hand, before Hyderabad's dramatic slow-down.

Sri Lankan spinner Maheesh Theekshana and pacer Mohammad Ali conceded 15 off the final six runs across two tight overs, applying pressure that shifted

momentum. Humain Shah then produced a crucial spell, extending a streak of dot balls while dismissing Abdul Samad to leave Zalmi suddenly uncertain. When Ali followed with a miserly five-run over, Zalmi needed 15 off the final six deliveries, turning what once looked routine into a nerve-racking

finish. Iftikhar Ahmed, however, held his nerve. The experienced all-rounder broke the tension by driving Humain through the line for four before launching a towering six to reduce the equation to two runs off two balls. Calm singles by Iftikhar (15 off 10) and Aamer Jamal sealed victory with four wickets

in hand.

Earlier, Zalmi's chase had begun briskly. Mohammad Harris flicked Ali for a six off the very first ball before departing early, but captain Babar Azam and Kusal Mendis ensured momentum remained intact. Babar mixed sweeps and drives effectively against Maaz

Sadaqat's left-arm spin, while Mendis counterattacked with two sixes off Maaz and Hassan Khan as Zalmi raced to 56-1 in the powerplay.

The partnership provided a solid platform before Mendis' aggressive cameo ended when he holed out to Ali at deep square-leg off Sam Ayub's spin in the ninth

over. At 78-2 halfway through the chase, Zalmi looked firmly in control, needing 68 runs from the final 10 overs.

Kingsmen, though, responded with renewed discipline. Hunain began the squeeze with a one-run over, during which Michael Bracewell survived a caught-behind appeal.

Bracewell and Babar briefly restored control with timely boundaries, the New Zealander even scooping Hunain for six to ease pressure.

But Hyderabad struck back through Saim, who removed Bracewell for 25 off 19 balls before dismissing Babar for a composed 43 off 37 deliveries.

Pakistan Under-19 captain Farhan Yousaf set up the tense finish with four wickets already down when Perera arrived at the crease, the Sri Lankan left-hander chose aggression as the only option. He pulled Nahid Rana for six off just his third delivery and followed it with a crisp cover drive, lifting Hyderabad to 51-4 by the end of the powerplay.

Labuschagne, meanwhile, showcased adaptability while exploring his T20 credentials, negotiating Iftikhar carefully before striking three boundaries in an over off Suriyon Mugeen's wrist spin.

The pair added 82 runs off 55 balls, steady Kingsmen to 86-4 at the halfway stage. Perera continued attacking, sweeping Sufyan for six as the Kingsmen threatened to post a competitive total.

McIlroy finds new challenges

NEWS DESK: Putting on a green jacket has lifted an incredible weight off the shoulders of Rory McIlroy as the relaxed reigning Masters champion strolls around Augusta National.

The 36-year-old from Northern Ireland completed a career Grand Slam by capturing the green jacket last year to end a 10-year major win drought and years of chasing a Masters crown.

"It's so nice to walk around properly or be out on the golf course and just not have that hanging over me," McIlroy says Tuesday. "It feels that it's a big weight off my shoulders."

World number two McIlroy tries to join Tiger Woods, Jack Nicklaus and Nick Faldo as the only back-to-back winners of the Masters with a victory this week. Turns out the end of his slam quest with a



fifth career major title was only the beginning of a new story for McIlroy.

"I think the story as it relates to me is what I do from now onwards? What motivates me? What gets me going? What do I still want to achieve in the game?" McIlroy said.

"There's still a lot that I want to do. You think every time you achieve something or have success that you'll

be happy, but then the goalposts move, and they just keep nudging a little bit further and further out of reach.

"I think what I realized is, if you can just really find enjoyment in the journey,

that's the big thing because honestly I felt like the career Grand Slam was my destination, and I got there, and then I realized it wasn't that everything here is a little more predictable.

McIlroy says his best chances to win more titles will come at Augusta National.

"I feel like I'm still young, but I'm very experienced. I've been doing this for a long time. This is my 18th start," McIlroy said.

"I do feel like I've got another hopefully 10 good shots at this. Not that I don't do the other majors, but I just think that everything here is a little more predictable.

Medvedev thrashed 6-0, 6-0 by Berrettini; Zverev battles through

NEWS DESK: Daniil Medvedev slipped to an embarrassing 6-0, 6-0 thrashing by Matteo Berrettini in the Monte Carlo Masters second round on Wednesday, as Alexander Zverev dug deep to beat Cristian Garin.

Medvedev completed three Zverev, who is hoping to complete the set of all three clay-court Masters 1000 titles this week, staged a late comeback to edge out Chilean qualifier Garin 4-6, 6-4, 7-5. Zverev has reached the semi-finals at each of the Australian Open, Indian Wells and the Miami Open this year but was in

danger of a shock exit after losing the first set and then trailing 4-0 in the third.

Garin also served for the match when 5-3 ahead in the deciding set, but Zverev broke and then sealed victory by reeling off five consecutive games.

He had to save off three break points in a nervy 12th game to avoid a tie-break, but eventually got the job done on his third match point.

"My level was not there at all to be honest," Zverev said after taking two hours and 50 minutes to get over the line.

"But it was my first clay-court match in 11 months. I didn't have much time to prepare as I played well in Miami."

"I am happy to get the win. It was a tough match and he is somewhat one playing well, especially here."

The 28-year-old will face unseeded Belgian Zizou Bergs, who downed 2023 champion Andrey Rublev 6-4, 6-1, in round three.

Zverev has not won an ATP title since Munich 12 months ago, while the last of his seven Masters triumphs came in Paris in 2024.

Bayern seize advantage over Real in CL as Arsenal edge Sporting

NEWS DESK: Bayern Munich took control of their Champions League quarter-final on Tuesday with a 2-1 victory over Real Madrid at the Santiago Bernabeu, while Arsenal bounced back from their domestic distress to steal a 1-0 victory at Sporting Lisbon.

Luis Diaz and Harry Kane struck a each in either half to earn the visitors a slender first-leg advantage after a high-tempo contest in the Spanish capital.

Vincenzo Kompany's side struck just before halftime when Serge Gnabry slipped a precise pass through for Diaz, who beat the offside trap and fired low past keeper Andriy Lunin in the 41st minute.

Bayern doubled their lead seconds after the restart as Michael Olise squared for Kane

to finish neatly from the edge of the box following a swift counter-attack.

Real improved after the hour and Kylian Mbappe pulled one back in the 74th minute, turning in Trent Alexander-Arnold's low cross at the far post.

Manuel Neuer then denied Mbappe and Vinicius Jr with a series of sharp saves as the hosts pressed for an equaliser that never came, as Bayern headed home with a narrow yet significant advantage.

"We came out for the second half and conceded a goal straight away. Both goals we conceded were gifts. Bayern coach hailed the performance of the veteran goalkeeper who was named the man-of-the-match.

"If he was the best player, then I'm also happy with that, it's not

a problem," Kompany told reporters. "I think you need special performances always at this level in these type of games."

"I think today we had also some chances to score more goals, so let's hope we continue this form next week, and let's hope that our strikers are the best players next week."

Kompany praised two-time Champions League and 12-time Bundesliga winner Neuer's longevity.

"Mamu is one of the very few — he's not just able to do it for a very long time, but for a very, very long time," said the Belgian coach. "To still perform like he does now, I think that's something that not many goalkeepers, even the top ones, are able to do."

Bayern had chances of the owl as Dayot Upamecano missed an opportunity early in the game from a point-blank range when Alvaro Carreras produced a goal-line clearance.

Real coach Alvaro Arbeloa backed his team to mount a comeback in Munich.

"I think it's a defeat that maybe, with a bit more luck in the second half, we could have avoided," said the Spaniard. "We scored a goal that gave us hope — the pity is we weren't able to put away any more of the chances we had."

"It's not going to be easy, but if any team can win in Munich, it's Real Madrid."

Tamim becomes youngest BCB chief

NEWS DESK: Former Bangladesh captain Tamim Iqbal became the youngest head of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) on Tuesday, after the National Sports Council dissolved the BCB's board of directors following an investigation into elections held in October.

A committee found irregularities in the BCB's election process, the NSC's sports director Mohammed Aminul Ahsan told reporters in Dhaka.

Tamim, 37, is the youngest BCB president and will lead an 11-member ad hoc committee that includes former Bangladesh captain Minhajul Abedin and former cricketer and TV commentator Athar Ali Khan.

The other members of the committee are Rashna Imam, Mirza Yasir Abbas, Syed Ibrahim Ahmed, Israfil

Khasru, Tanjil Chowdhury, Saifur Islam, Fahim Sinha.

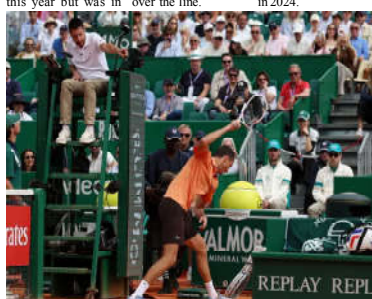
"We have informed the International Cricket Council (ICC) that this board of directors was not formed in a proper manner, and is not able to complete its work in

proper manner," Ahsan said. "We think that the ICC will definitely uphold this decision."

The Bangladesh board of directors was led by Aminul Islam, who was behind Bangladesh's refusal to visit India for this year's

Twenty20 World Cup, citing safety concerns. Bangladesh were replaced by Scotland in the tournament.

The Bangladesh will host New Zealand in a 'four featuring three one-day internationals, three T20s and two tests starting on April 17.



Foolproof security arranged for foreign guests, Naqvi assures US envoy ahead of US-Iran talks in Islamabad

NEWS DESK: Interior Minister Moinis Naqvi on Thursday assured US Ambassador to Pakistan Natalie Baker of foolproof security for all foreign dignitaries ahead of the US-Iran talks scheduled in Islamabad this week.

Pakistan is set to host in-person talks between the two countries, bringing a pause to the hostilities which broke out on February 28.

In a meeting with the US envoy, Naqvi assured her of the security arrangements taken ahead of the talks and stated that the US Vice President JD Vance, US Envoy to the Middle East Steve Witkoff, and Jared Kushner were "our special guests," according to a statement issued by the Ministry of Interior.

"A comprehensive plan has been prepared to provide foolproof security to all foreign guests in every respect," the minister was quoted as saying.



The US envoy appreciated Pakistan's diplomatic role during the meetings. Meanwhile, the Islamabad Police, in a traffic advisory posted on X, said diversions will be placed on the Express Highway due to the "movement of foreign delegations", advising commuters to plan their travel accordingly. The advisory directed commuters to cooperate with the traffic police.

A day earlier, sources told Dawn that a 30-member advance US team had already arrived in Islamabad to review security arrangements. Authorities also declared two local holidays in Islamabad and Rawalpindi on Thursday and Friday to ensure security for the scheduled talks. Comprehensive security measures have been put in place, involving all law enforcement agencies and security forces, given the sensitivity of the situation.

A hotel located within the Red Zone was also reserved for the delegations and vacated on government instructions, with heightened security deployed in and around the premises, sources told Dawn.

Meanwhile, all state-run rescue departments and hospitals have been put on high alert. They have been asked to remain on standby and ensure the availability of staff and essential supplies, the sources added.

A series of meetings has also been held in the twin cities on Wednesday to review security arrangements and devise strategies for the coming days.

The sources further said that the Red Zone would remain completely sealed during the stay of the delegates in the capital.

In addition, the high-security zone starting from Faisal Avenue would also be sealed, depending on the status of the visiting delegations. Some entry points to the capital will also be closed, said the sources.

VVIP protocol under the Blue Book will be extended to the delegations during their movement, stay and meetings, as per sources.

The US-Iran talks come after Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian confirmed Tehran's participation in Pakistan-brokered peace talks with the United States in Islamabad to finalise a peaceful settlement to the conflict.

The US also confirmed its participation in the talks on Wednesday, with the White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt saying that the US was dispatching a team of negotiators led by Vance and including Witkoff and Kushner to Islamabad, with the "first round" taking place on Saturday.

Pakistan has been central to the diplomatic efforts leading up to the talks.

Since the start of the conflict, it has positioned itself as a mediator and called for de-escalation, engaging diplomatic channels in efforts to work towards a resolution.

Red Zone sealed as capital prepares for high-stakes Iran-US talks

NEWS DESK: The authorities have declared two local holidays in Islamabad and Rawalpindi on Thursday and Friday to ensure security for scheduled peace talks between Iran and the United States.

Due to the sensitivity and importance of the talks, comprehensive security measures have been put in place, involving all law enforcement agencies and security forces.

A hotel located within the Red Zone has been reserved for the delegations and vacated on government instructions, with heightened security deployed in and around the premises.



Stay of the delegates in the capital. In addition, the high-security zone starting from Faisal Avenue would also be sealed, depending on the status of the visiting delegations. Some entry points to the capital will also be closed, said the sources.

guests to vacate the premises. The management through a letter has informed the guests that the government had requisitioned the hotel for an important event till Sunday evening.

According to a notification issued by the Office of the Deputy Commissioner Islamabad, April 9 and 10 (Thursday and Friday) have been declared local holidays across the Islamabad Capital Territory, except for essential services. These services include the Municipal Corporation Islamabad, the Capital Development Authority, the Islamabad Capital Territory administration, Islamabad Police, Islamabad Electric Supply Corporation, Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited, and hospitals.

However, the police facilitation centres has also been held in the twin cities on Wednesday to review security arrangements and devise strategies for the coming days, while more meetings are scheduled late at night.

The sources further said that the Red Zone would remain completely sealed during the stay of the delegates in the capital. In addition, the high-security zone starting from Faisal Avenue would also be sealed, depending on the status of the visiting delegations. Some entry points to the capital will also be closed, said the sources.

Islamabad takes centre stage, to host high-stakes US-Iran talks

NEWS DESK: Pakistan is set to host in-person talks between the United States and Iran starting Friday, even as a fragile ceasefire between the two sides showed signs of strain following Israeli strikes in Lebanon and renewed military exchanges across the Gulf.

The negotiations follow a two-week ceasefire announced late Tuesday — the 39th day of the war — after Pakistani mediation.

The truce, which averted imminent US strikes, was based on a 10-point Iranian proposal accepted by Washington as a general framework for talks.

Delegations are expected to arrive in Islamabad on Friday, with formal negotiations scheduled for Saturday. Sources told Dawn that a 30-member advance US team has already arrived in Islamabad to review security arrangements. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, speaking at a federal cabinet meeting, confirmed that US and Iranian delegations would be visiting Islamabad for talks. He earlier said the Islamabad meeting was to "further negotiate for a conclusive agreement to settle all disputes".

He also spoke to Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and later described the conversation as "warm and substantive", adding that he praised the Iranian leadership for showing "wisdom and sagacity" in accepting Pakistan's offer to host peace talks in Islamabad.

The US delegation, according to the White House, will be led by Vice President JD Vance, signalling a high level of political investment, while the Iranian side will be led by Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and Parliamentary Speaker Bagher Ghalibaf. Other senior US figures include envoys Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner.

Reuters quoted Mr Vance as saying "The president of the United States has told me, and he's told the entire negotiating team, the secretary of state, the special envoy Steve Witkoff — he said, go and work in good faith to come to an agreement."

"He's impatient. He's impatient to make progress. He has told us to negotiate in good faith, and ultimately it's up to the Iranians how they negotiate. I hope they make the right decision," Mr Vance said.

Pakistan has declared April 9 and 10 public holidays in Islamabad to facilitate the talks, with extensive security arrangements, and restricted access

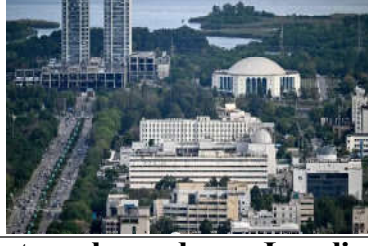
ing 15-point US charter of demands, saying it required extensive curbs on its nuclear programme, missile capabilities and regional alliances. It instead put forward a 10-point counterproposal emphasising sovereignty and broad de-escalation.

The Iranian framework called for an end to all new aggression, recognition of its right to nuclear enrichment, removal of both primary and secondary US sanctions, termination of UN resolutions, compensation for war damage, withdrawal of US forces from the region, and a halt to hostilities across all theatres, including Lebanon.

President Trump had on Tuesday night publicly threatened the use of "destructive force" if Iran did not reopen the Strait of Hormuz, hours before the expiry of his deadline.

Late Tuesday night, following an understanding with both sides, PM Shehbaz proposed a two-week ceasefire, which was accepted by both Mr Trump and Mr Araghchi.

Mr Trump credited his conversations with PM Shehbaz and Field Marshal Asim Munir as decisive and described the arrangement as "double-sided".



Rawalpindi board postpones matric exams scheduled for April 10

NEWS DESK: The Rawalpindi Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education on Thursday postponed the matric examinations scheduled to be held on April 10 (Friday) — when the federal capital will be abuzz with diplomatic activity during talks between the US and Iran.

In a statement, it said that the exams at 64 examination centres across the city had been postponed.

However, it said that exams in outlying districts of Rawalpindi Division would continue

as per the schedule announced.

According to a statement issued by the Rawalpindi BISE, the postponed exams included compulsory Urdu and geography.

A new date for the postponed papers would be announced later, and the candidates would be duly informed, the statement said.

The distinct authorities of the twin cities have declared two local holidays in Islamabad 9 (today) and April 10 (Friday) to ensure security for the scheduled peace talks between Iran and the United States.

Pakistan strongly condemns Israeli aggression against Lebanon: FO

NEWS DESK: Pakistan on Thursday strongly condemned Israeli aggression against Lebanon, citing the loss of innocent lives and widespread destruction of infrastructure, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA).

"The Israeli actions undermine international efforts to establish peace and stability in the region and constitute a blatant violation of international law and fundamental humanitarian principles," the statement read.

The Foreign Office called on the international community to take urgent and concrete steps to end the aggression.

It also reiterated Pakistan's unwavering solidarity with the government and people of Lebanon during this difficult time, adding, "Pakistan supports Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as its peace and stability".



Lebanon and stressed the urgent need for full respect and implementation of the ceasefire to ensure lasting peace and stability during a telephone conversation.

The DPM/PM appointed Saudi Arabia's continued support for Pakistan's efforts to achieve lasting peace. They agreed to remain in close contact.

On Wednesday, Iran sounded the alarm over violations of its temporary ceasefire with the United States after Israeli attacks on Lebanon and halted the flow of oil in the Strait of Hormuz.

Iran sounded the alarm over violations of its temporary ceasefire with the United States after Israeli attacks on Lebanon and halted the flow of oil in the Strait of Hormuz.

that at least 89 people were killed and more than 700 wounded in Israeli strikes across the country earlier in the day.

Israel carried out its heaviest strikes on Lebanon since the conflict with Hezbollah broke out last month, even as the Iran-aligned group paused attacks on northern Israel and Israeli troops in Lebanon under the two-week US-Iran ceasefire.