



BALUCHISTAN
Section 144 Imposed for HSSC Exams 2026...
Page No 5



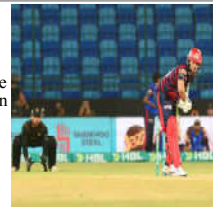
INTERNATIONAL
Pakistan sends military force, fighter jets to Saudi Arabia
Page No 3



NATIONAL
GB cabinet approves expansion of police, renaming of CTD
Page No 8

SPORT

Hassan, Irfan give Kingsmen taste of victory in PSL



Page No 7

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US–Iran Negotiations End Without Breakthrough, JD Vance Responds

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: The High-level negotiations between the United States and Iran held in Islamabad have ended without a final agreement, marking a significant setback in ongoing diplomatic ef-

orts to ease regional tensions. After more than 20 hours of intensive discussions, both sides failed to resolve key differences despite what officials described as substantive engagement.

JD Vance, who led the US delegation, confirmed the out-

come during a press briefing. He stated that although progress was made in discussions, no deal could be reached.

Vance emphasized that the United States had presented its "best and final offer," but Iran chose not to accept the proposed terms, resulting in the

collapse of negotiations. The talks, facilitated in Pakistan, were considered a rare and significant diplomatic effort,

representing one of the highest-level direct engagements between the two countries in decades. The failure to reach an

agreement raises concerns about the stability of the region and the future of diplomatic relations between Washington and Tehran.

It also puts ongoing ceasefire efforts and broader peace initiatives at risk, potentially increasing geopolitical tensions.

PTI warns US against becoming hostage to 'Israel's agenda', again

NEWS DESK:

Citing Pakis-tan's strategic re-positioning as a positive omen, the PTI has urged the United States not to become a hostage to Israel's designs and goals.

"Party sees the arrival of US Vice President J.D. Vance and key figures from Iran as a very positive development. It shows that there is realisation on both sides [the US and Iran] that they have suffered greatly and that the global economy has been affected by the war, which lasted over a month," PTI Central Information Secretary Sheikh Waqas Akram said while talking to Dawn.

"However, we understand that negotiations are not a single-day event and may take time. It is a process and should continue so that lasting peace and a positive outcome can emerge. To achieve that target, a ceasefire in Lebanon is equally important," he said.

Replying to a question, Sheikh Waqas said it was quite evident that Israel does not want peace.

"Israel has a long history of disrupting peace to establish its he-gemony and has always remained ready to settle scores against Arabs. That is what it is doing by attacking Lebanon. The US should understand this and intervene to stop Israel from attacking Lebanon," he suggested.

He said that Imran Khan's vision prioritised peace over conflict and that PTI's policy was aligned with that vision.

"That is why we have been supporting peace talks without putting any conditions. We do not want to derail such important developments, and that is why we have given unconditional support to the government," he said.

Responding to another question, the PTI leader said there could be a second phase of negotiations.

"PTI believes that Islam-ab--ad would be the most suitable ve--nue for the second phase of negotiations as well. It is a positive de--velopment that Pakistan has em--erged as a mediator rather than merely a facilitator and has stepped forward to address the issue," he added.

PTI stalwart Asad Qaiser told Dawn that peace should be given a chance.

"I suggest that the same approach should be adopted within the country to ensure political stability.

There should be rule of law in Pakistan, and we should develop good relations with Afghanistan. That is the only way to tackle unemployment and terrorism, and to promote education and development," he said.

Meanwhile, the PTI and the main opposition alliance, Tehreek-i-Tab-afuz Ayeen-i-Pakistan, in separate statements, have offered sincere prayers for the success of the ongoing US-Iran talks in Islamabad.

"It is our earnest hope that these deliberations will produce constructive and mutually beneficial outcomes, advancing the collective interests of the Muslim Ummah, reinforcing Pakistan's strategic interests, and fostering peace, stability, and prosperity throughout the wider region," the PTI said in a statement.

Three Hazara Community Members Killed in Targeted Attack in Quetta's Hazarganji Area

Staff Reporter:

Quetta (Quetta Voice): In a tragic incident on Sunday morning, three members of the Hazara community were shot dead in a suspected targeted attack in the Hazarganji area of Quetta.

According to police, the victims were vegetable sellers who were transporting vegetables toward Hazara Town when unidentified gunmen opened fire on them.

The deceased were shifted to a nearby hospital for medico-legal formalities.

Large numbers of people gathered at the site and blocked the main Western Bypass to protest the killing.

Protesters chanted slogans and demanded immediate security measures and justice from the authorities.

Police officials described the attack as targeted and have launched an investigation. No group has claimed responsibility so far.

Members of the Hazara



Shia community have faced repeated targeted violence in Balochistan in the past.

This incident comes after a considerable lull, raising fresh concerns about the safety of

the community. Senior police officers reached the spot and assured

the protesters of a thorough probe. The situation remains tense in the area.

QUET VOICE

Editor: Asim Khan

Balochistan High Court Opens the Doors of Justice Wider Than Ever Before



Editorial:

The Balochistan High Court's latest initiative — introducing a dedicated WhatsApp number and email address for public complaints — marks a meaningful shift toward openness, accessibility, and public empowerment within the judicial system.

This is not just a procedural reform; it is an invitation for citizens to engage directly with the justice system in ways that were previously difficult, time-consuming, and often intimidating.

For decades, obtaining certified copies of court judgments was a frustrating ordeal for clients and even for experienced lawyers.

Long queues, procedural delays, and administrative hurdles made the process difficult, especially for people from remote districts of the province.

With digital communication now formally integrated, citizens, litigants, and counsel will be able to request and access judgment copies far more easily. This single step reduces barriers that have existed for years and ensures that justice is not only done — but also seen to be done.

Equally important is the ability for citizens to directly file complaints against judicial officers or court staff if they face

misconduct, delays, or unfair treatment. Many people lacked the courage, resources, or channels to raise such concerns.

This mechanism now provides them a safe and accessible option, reinforcing the idea that justice is a right, not a privilege.

The Balochistan High Court deserves recognition for taking a forward-looking approach to judicial transparency.

By embracing technology, the court has empowered the public, strengthened accountability, and made justice more approachable for millions. This is a good step — one that brings the judiciary closer to the people it serves.

Forced Marriage in Islam: A Clear Violation of Women's Rights and Human Dignity

By Musavir Durrani:

Forced marriage remains one of the most damaging cultural practices in parts of the Muslim world today. Despite being justified in the name of honor, tradition, or family unity, Islam itself strictly forbids forcing any woman, or man, into a marriage they do not want. Islamic teachings make consent the core of marriage, while coercion makes a marriage *batal* (invalid).

The Qur'an Clearly Forbids Forced Marriages. Allah states in Surah An-Nisa: "O you who believe, it is not lawful for you to inherit women against their will." (Qur'an 4:19)

This verse was revealed to abolish the jahiliyyah practice of controlling or forcing women into marriages.

Islam replaced oppression with dignity, choice, and responsibility.

Prophetic Example: Forced Marriages Declared Invalid.

A woman once came to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) complaining that her father had married her without her permission. The Prophet (PBUH) gave her the full right to reject or accept the marriage, proving that consent is mandatory.

Hadith Reference: Sahih al-Bukhari, Hadith 5138. Sahih Muslim, Hadith 1419.



These narrations all confirm that the Prophet (PBUH) allowed the woman to annul her forced marriage.

One narration even states that she chose to remain married but wanted to teach women that fathers have no right to force their daughters.

Parents Can Advise, But They Cannot Force.

Islam highly respects parents, but marriage choice is not their right. They can guide, suggest, and

advise, but they have absolutely no power to force their child into marrying someone. Even if parents think they "know what is best," they cannot override the choice of their daughter or son.

The final decision always belongs to the person getting married.

Statements such as: "If you don't marry this one, who will marry you?" "You have no choice." "Do it for family honor."

"You must obey your parents." These are pure emotional manipulation, and Islam does not allow it. Emotional or Psychological Pressure is Also Haram. Forced marriage is not only when

someone is physically pressured. Even emotional, mental, or family pressure counts as force. Any Nikkah done under fear, pressure, or threats is invalid (*Batal*) in Islam. This ruling is based on multiple hadith in which the Prophet (PBUH) annulled marriages done without consent.

Modern Forced Marriages: A New Way of Burying Women Alive. Before Islam, Arabs used to bury baby girls alive. Today, many scholars say: "We no longer bury women in the ground, we bury their

dreams on the day of their Nikkah." When a girl is forced into a marriage, pressured emotionally, or told she has no other choice, we destroy her life while she is still alive. This is the new form of burying women alive, and Islam came to end this injustice completely. Forced marriage has no place in Islam. It is against the Qur'an, against the Sunnah, and against the dignity that Islam gives to every woman and man. Parents must love, support, and guide, but never control or force marriage decisions. "Allah gave women this right, and no one can take it away."

How AI Is Making Modern Production Smarter and Faster

Syed Muhammad Waseem:

AI is changing the way we create and collaborate, with 41% of brands already using it for video production. Production teams now have to create more content faster than ever.

Major studios such as Netflix and Warner Bros. are now using AI-driven tools to analyze audience preferences, optimize workflows, and enhance storytelling. As a result, AI has shifted from being a simple technical assistant to becoming an essential force shaping the future of modern media production.

Why Production Houses Are Turning to AI

Production houses are facing rising costs and tighter schedules. Keeping up with deadlines while staying creative has become a major challenge. To stay efficient, many studios are now using AI to manage time and 60% of post-production studios utilize AI-powered editing tools to reduce editing time, reduce expenses. This trend is growing rapidly as the global AI in media and entertainment market is projected to reach \$34.1 billion by 2027.

The demand for quick content is also increasing. Streaming platforms compete to release new shows faster, putting pressure on production teams. At the same time, 65% of advertising agencies are already using AI tools for content creation, and post-production, and post-production, making the entire process more efficient and consistent.

During pre-production, it assists with scriptwriting, budgeting, and storyboard creation. In production, it en-

hances camera tracking, lighting adjustments, and virtual set design. Finally, in post-production, it streamlines editing, color correction, sound design, and even creates advanced visual effects.

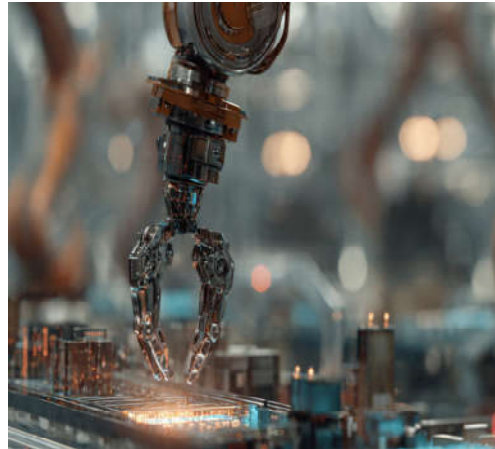
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Houses Are Using AI to see how scenes might look before filming begins. This makes planning smoother and reduces the need for costly revisions later.

AI is also improving casting and budgeting. Some tools analyze data to predict how well an actor will connect with audiences. AI software like Celyx and StudioBinder helps plan budgets and schedules. These tools make it easier for studios to manage costs, track spending, and stay on time in production.

AI is transforming the way films are shot on set. For example, AI-powered cameras can automatically track actors, adjust framing, and optimize lighting in real time. This helps directors capture perfect shots faster and reduces the need for repeated takes. According to MarketsandMarkets, the use of AI cameras in film production is expected to grow by 22%

annually by 2027. Virtual production is becoming more common. Tools like Unreal Engine and NVIDIA Omniverse allow filmmakers to create realistic digital environments before filming begins. These virtual sets save time, cut costs, and give teams more creative freedom, especially for large-scale or fantasy projects.

AI supports crews during filming. Voice recognition systems can follow script lines or adjust camera settings through simple voice commands. As a result, on-set work becomes smoother, and the crew can focus more on storytelling rather than technical details.

In Post-Production This phase gets a big boost from AI, especially in editing and sound design. Tools like Runway ML, Adobe Premiere Pro, AI, and Descript automate tasks

showing how much it improves efficiency. AI also helps with versioning and distribution. It can create multiple edits for different platforms like social media, TV, or YouTube Shorts. This allows studios to repurpose content easily and deliver it quickly. Overall, AI makes post-production faster, more precise, and more creative.

Case Studies: How AI Is Shaping Modern Production

Case Study 1: Netflix Builds a Cloud-Based VFX Studio

Netflix, one of the biggest entertainment companies in the world, began producing its own content in 2012. To make collaboration easier, the company wanted to create a visual effects (VFX) studio in the cloud. This would let artists from different countries work together without being limited by location.

Using NICE DCV and Amazon EC2 G4 instances, Netflix built a fast and secure remote render with high-quality visuals while keeping performance smooth. The system helped Netflix move from testing to full production in just one year.

Case Study 2: Crophy's AI Innovation in Grain Grading

In South Australia, Ana Falkner and Andrew Hannan founded Crophy to make grain testing faster and more accurate. Traditional testing relied on human inspection, which often caused mistakes and disagreements.

By using AWS, Netflix reduced costs and technical barriers for creators. The company could now attract top VFX and animation talent from anywhere in the world. This innovation showed how cloud and AI tools can transform modern film production.

Case Study 3: What's Next Entertainment's Use of AI in Creative Production

What's Next Entertainment is redefining how film production teams approach creativity and pre-production. To make their workflow smoother and boost creative output, the company uses AI tools like Midjourney and ChatGPT in its daily process.

During the early stages of filmmaking, the team uses Midjourney for storyboarding and visual exploration. It helps them create detailed visual references, test color palettes, and shape the overall look and feel of each scene before production begins. This saves time and improves collaboration among directors, designers, and cinematographers.

Meanwhile, ChatGPT supports ideation and research. The team uses it to study accurate. Traditional testing relied on human inspection, which often caused mistakes and disagreements.

The founders wanted a smarter AI-based way to grade crops.

Working with the Australian Institute for Machine Learning (AIML), they built AI software that could analyze grain samples in seconds. Their system reduced testing time from 24 minutes to just 90 seconds and achieved 98% accuracy. This made the grain supply chain faster and more reliable.

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UK halts Chagos Islands handover after US opposition

NEWS DESK: Britain's government said Saturday it has put on hold its deal to cede sovereignty of the Chagos Islands to Mauritius, following criticism from US President Donald Trump over the future of a crucial joint military base on the archipelago.

The planned legislation to underpin the deal, which requires Washington's backing, will not be included in the government's upcoming parliamentary agenda, The Times newspaper reported.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer's office said London would continue to seek Washington's formal approval for the agreement.

The deal has become a point of contention in what analysts describe as a period of strained relations between the two historical allies.

Under the agreement, Britain would hand the islands back to Mauritius while retaining control of the strategically vital US-British military base on the atoll of Diego Garcia through a 99-year lease, preserving American military operations there.

A British government



spokesperson said the base's operational security remains a top priority. "We continue to believe the agreement is the best way to protect the long-term future of the base, but we have

always said we would only proceed with the deal if it has US support," the spokesperson said. "The disagreement over the Chagos Islands comes amid other tensions between the two leaders.

The alliance has been tested by Starmer's initial refusal to allow the US to use British air bases to launch attacks in the US-Israeli war on Iran. US forces have since been permitted to

carry out strikes that Starmer has defined as defensive. Trump has also publicly criticised the British leader, saying he was "not Winston Churchill" and had damaged the "special relationship".

Mauritius Attorney General Ga-vin Glover said the delay was expected. "The information that the agreement has been put on hold does not come as a surprise to us," Glover told local

Advocates for the indigenous Chagosian people, who were forcibly displaced from the islands by Britain in the late 1960s and 1970s to create the base, expressed dismay at the development.

media Saturday, blaming frayed relations between the American and British leaders.

"The deterioration in relations between Keir Starmer and Donald Trump is at the root of the problem, as the United Kingdom needs the United States to be aligned with the treaty."

Glover added that officials from Mauritius and Britain are scheduled to hold discussions on the deal later this month.

Wants to reclaim islands

Mauritius Foreign Minister Dhananjay Ramful vowed Saturday that his country would continue to pursue every option to regain the islands.

"We will spare no effort to seize any diplomatic or legal avenue to complete the decolonisation process in this part of the Indian Ocean," Ramful said. "This is a matter of justice."

UN agency chiefs seek end to war rules violations in Middle East

NEWS DESK: UN agency chiefs on Saturday demanded an end to impunity for widespread international law violations in the Middle East, as casualties pile up six weeks into the war unleashed by US-Israeli strikes on Iran.

In a joint statement, the heads of multiple United Nations agencies said they were "alarmed by the sustained violations of the rules of war and international humanitarian law" in the region.

"Even wars have rules, and these rules must be respected," the

statement from the UN Inter-Agency Standing Committee said.

The joint statement — penned by UN humanitarian chief Tom Fletcher along with the heads of the UN agencies for human rights, health, food, refugees and children among others — decried the soaring toll since the Middle East war erupted on February 28.

"In just the last month across the Middle East, thousands of civilians have been killed and injured. Hundreds of thousands have been displaced, many multiple times," it said.

Development comes six weeks into war triggered by US-Israeli strikes on Iran.

"The numbers continue to rise and essential services are increasingly difficult to access. Schools have been struck. Civilian infrastructure — including bridges, residential buildings, houses, water facilities and power plants — has been destroyed," it said.

The agency chiefs voiced particular concern about the impact on "women and children and others with specific needs", as well as on global supply chains, "with food and fuel prices on the rise".

At the same time, they highlighted that "our humanitarian colleagues have been caught up in the hostilities".

Just since the beginning of this year, they said, "14 aid workers have been killed or injured in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, eight in Iran and five in Lebanon."

"This is an alarming toll."

The agency chiefs said they "strongly condemn all attacks on civilians, including humanitarian and health workers, as well as civilian objects."

"We demand that all parties — whether Member States of the United Nations or armed groups — respect their legal obligation to protect civilians, including humanitarian personnel, and civilian infrastructure," they said.

"All violations must be met with accountability."



Death toll of shooting in Afghanistan's Herat hits 11

NEWS DESK: The death toll from a shooting in western Afghanistan rose to 11 on Saturday, the provincial authority said, after gunmen targeted civilians at a picnic spot in Herat.

Bullet marks were visible on a wall of the Sayed Mohammad Agha shrine, an AFP journalist said, while bloodstains marked a blanket abandoned at the scene.

"Eleven people have been recorded dead and eight others wounded" from Friday's incident, with the condition of two of the wounded reported as critical.

Herat's information office said in a statement. "The update raises a total of seven killed, provided on Friday by the interior ministry.

The attack southwest of Herat city was carried out by "unidentified armed men riding motorcycles",



ministry spokesman Abdul Mateen Qani said.

So far, no group has claimed responsibility for the shooting. "People from different parts of Herat usually gather beside the shrine to picnic among the trees, the AFP journalist said.

Mohsen Rezayi, a resident who had four

relatives killed in the shooting, said he had declined the offer to join them.

"They called us and said: 'Help us! We've all been shot.' The 67-year-old told AFP. Rezayi rushed to the scene, but said he was stopped by security forces around 500 metres away.

One suspect has been arrested, according to Herat's information office.

There have been sporadic attacks since the Taliban authorities returned to power in 2021, including a deadly explosion at a Chinese restaurant in the capital Kabul in January.

Taliban officials have vowed to restore security to the country after decades of conflict.

Pakistan sends military force, fighter jets to Saudi Arabia

NEWS DESK: Pakistan has sent a military force and fighter jets to Saudi Arabia to boost security under a joint defence cooperation agreement between the two countries, the Saudi defence ministry said on Saturday.

The Saudi ministry, in a statement, wrote that a military force and fighter jets from Pakistan had arrived at the King Abdulaziz Air Base in its eastern province.

It added that the Pakistani deployment was aimed at "strengthening the joint defence cooperation agreement signed between the two brotherly countries".

The Pakistani force

consists of fighter and support aircraft belonging to the Pakistani Air Force, with the aim of enhancing joint military coordination, raising the level of operational readiness between the armed forces of the two countries," it continued.

The planes were sent after Iranian strikes hit key energy infrastructure and killed a Saudi national, three sources, including a senior Pakistani government official, told Reuters. They were "not there to attack anyone", said the Pakistani official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

An Iranian strike on Saudi Arabia's sprawling Jubail petrochemicals complex on Monday had raised concerns in Pakistan that the kingdom might retaliate, potentially jeopardising the Iran peace talks, the sources said.

The Saudi government media office and Pakistan's military did not respond to requests for comment.

Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have long shared a multifaceted relationship rooted in strategic military cooperation, mutual economic interests, and shared Islamic heritage.

These ties have encompassed economic assistance and energy supplies, with Riyadh being a significant source of financial aid and oil for Islamabad.

In September of last year, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman signed a "Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement" in Riyadh, pledging that any attack on either nation would be treated as an act of aggression against both.

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Gaza death toll rises to 72,328 despite ceasefire

NEWS DESK: Since the start of Israeli attacks in October 2023, the total death toll in Gaza has risen to 72,328, while the number of injured has reached 172,184.

The Ministry of Health in Gaza released a written statement sharing updated information regarding Israel's attacks, which have been ongoing since October 2023.

The statement said that in the last 48 hours, the bodies of 11 Palestinians who died in Israeli attacks and 26 injured people were brought to hospitals in Gaza. Since the ceasefire was declared in Gaza on October 10, 749 Palestinians have lost their lives, 2,082 have been injured, and the bodies of 759 have been recovered.

According to reports in the Palestinian press, the Israeli army, once again violating the ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, targeted the police station in the Bureij Refugee Camp with warplanes. Six people

were killed in an Israeli army attack on a police station in the camp.

The Global Sumud Flotilla is setting sail from Barcelona towards Gaza this time with twice the number of participants.

Flotilla sails with doubled participants and volunteers from different countries around the world to break the blockade on Gaza and deliver humanitarian aid, it is setting sail for Gaza for the second time.

It is noteworthy that the largest participation in the flotilla heading towards Gaza from different points in the Mediterranean is carried out in coordination with 1000 volunteers from 70 countries.

Pablo Castilla, a spokesman for the flotilla departing from Barcelona, stated in a press release that the main objective of the initiative is "to condemn Israel's international complicity in the genocide in Gaza, to demand accountability from those responsible, and to open a humanitarian corridor by sea and land".

Castilla stated that they complained about the decrease in international attention on Gaza and deliver humanitarian aid, it is setting sail for Gaza for the second time.

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Other organisers of the Global Sumud Flotilla also stated that they were acting in accordance with the law and that the mission was being carried out in coordination with civil society organisations, law-

yers, politicians, maritime security and police strategy experts in Palestine.

This year's mission also drew attention to the participation of well-known NGOs such as the international environmental organisation Greenpeace and Open Arms, which conducts rescue operations for irregular migrants in the Mediterranean, as well as increased support from the Barcelona City Council.

During the Global Flotilla initiative in September 2025, Israeli forces illegally stopped the Flotilla, forcibly boarded the boats, detained the volunteers, and took them to Israel.

The Israeli navy initially boarded several boats approximately 70 nautical miles off the coast of Gaza, cutting off communication and jamming signals. Israeli forces also used drones to disrupt emergency signals and the live broadcast of the boarding operation.

Islamabad issues traffic diversion plan ahead of high-level diplomatic talks

ISLAMABAD (INP) — The federal capital traffic police has issued a comprehensive diversion plan ahead of the arrival of foreign delegations on April 11 and 12 as part of the high-profile Islamabad Talks between Islamabad and the United States and Iran.

According to the traffic police, heavy traffic will remain banned from entering Islamabad on April 11 and 12 as part of heightened security measures linked to the Islamabad Talks.

Officials advised that commuters travelling from Peshawar to Rawalpindi via GT Road should use the Taxila Motorway, while those coming from Lahore to Peshawar should opt for alternative routes, including Rawat, Chak Beli, Chakri and the Taxila Motorway.

Residents of sectors G-5, F-6, and F-7 have been directed to use Margalla Road, while those in G-6 and G-7 are advised to take

Ninth Avenue. Traffic from Faisal Avenue towards Zero Point will also be diverted to Ninth Avenue.

For travellers moving from Bhara Kahu to Rawalpindi, alternative routes including Korang Road, Bari Gala, Lehtrar Road, and GT Road have been suggested. Similarly, commuters heading from Rawalpindi to Islamabad are advised to use Ninth Avenue via Saddar.

Traffic authorities further said that vehicles from Colonel Sher Khan Road heading towards Faisal Avenue should use Stadium Road via the Ninth Avenue signal. For intercity travel, those moving from Peshawar to Lahore

have been advised to use the Taxila Motorway and Fateg Jang Motorway via Tarnol Phatak, while heavy traffic from Lahore to Islamabad and Rawalpindi should use Chak Beli Road.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif held a meeting with the Iranian delegation led by the Honorable Speaker of the Iranian Consultative Assembly, Mr. Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf at Islamabad talks.

CM orders authorities to submit weekly progress reports on Punjab Development Programme

LAHORE (INP) — Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has directed authorities to submit weekly progress reports on the Punjab Development Programme to ensure close monitoring and timely completion of ongoing development schemes across the province. Chairing a special video-link meeting, here on Saturday, she instructed the Local Government and Community Development Department to regularly furnish detailed updates on projects being executed in 51 cities, along with weekly progress reports on Model Village initiatives. Officials briefed the meeting that multiple development schemes are currently under way across urban centres under the department's supervision. The CM was further informed about the deployment of modern municipal machinery, including desludging and sectional machines, 45 jetting machines and 100

SSGC announces 24-hour gas supply suspension to industries

KARACHI (INP) — Sui Southern Gas Company Limited (SSGC) has announced a 24-hour suspension of gas supply to industries starting tomorrow, Sunday.

The decision was made for gas load management across various sectors and to maintain line-packs' pressure within the system.

The company further explained that while the measure is necessary for system improvement, the closure is expected to impact industrial production.

Earlier, a court in Karachi had ordered the SSGC to pay Rs30 million in damages to the daughter of a couple who were killed in a gas pipeline explosion in Orangi Town in 2022.

The Senior Civil Judge (West) ruled that

PM Shehbaz Sharif meets US Vice President, hopes Islamabad talks will lead to durable peace

ISLAMABAD (INP) — As the Islamabad Talks commenced, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif met with US Vice President JD Vance, the Prime Minister's Office said in a statement on Saturday.

The US vice president was accompanied by Special Envoy Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was assisted by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar and Interior Minister Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi. Commanding US and Iran for their commitment to constructive engagement, the prime minister expressed hope that the talks would serve as a stepping stone toward durable peace in the region.

He reiterated that Pakistan looks forward to continue its facilitation of both sides in making progress towards sustainable peace in the region.

Earlier, JD Vance arrived in Pakistan to participate in the dialogue with Iran. He is leading a high-level US delegation that includes Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner and Special Envoy Steve Witkoff.

Upon arrival, the

delegation was received by Ishaq Dar, along with Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir and Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi. Acting US Ambassador to Pakistan Natalie A. Baker was also present on the occasion.

Welcoming the US vice president, Dar commended the United States' commitment to achieving lasting regional and global peace and stability.

He expressed hope that all parties would engage constructively and reiterated Pakistan's willingness to continue facilitating efforts toward a lasting and durable resolution of the conflict, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement.

Iran's delegation comprising more than 70 members also arrived in Islamabad on Friday night at the invitation of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. Dar took part in talks aimed at resolving the ongoing conflict with the United States and Israel.

Pakistan is hosting these historic talks following a 15-day truce reportedly brokered by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir.

Public transport fares cut after fuel price drop

LAHORE, April 11 (INP) — Commuters and transporters across Punjab are seeing major relief as transport fares have been significantly reduced following a drop in petroleum prices. Authorities stated that the new fares are effective immediately.

Following the reduction in petroleum product prices in Lahore, public transport fares have been reduced by 25%, while goods transport fares have been cut by up to 40%.

The announcement was made by the President of the Pakistan Goods Transport Association, marking a significant step toward passing fuel price relief on to the public. According to the revised fare structure, ticket prices

between major cities have dropped considerably.

The fare from Lahore to Islamabad has been fixed at Rs3,100 after a reduction of Rs1,032, while the fare to Multan now stands at Rs2,450 after a decrease of Rs817. Similarly, the fare from Lahore to Abbottabad has been reduced by Rs1,007 to Rs3,020, and the fare to Faisalabad has dropped by Rs437 to Rs1,310.

For longer routes, the fare from Lahore to Hyderabad has been reduced by Rs2,710 to Rs8,140, while the Karachi route has seen a Rs3,000 cut, bringing the new fare down to Rs9,000. According to the Secretary of the Regional Transport Authority (RTA) Lahore,

the new fare structure will be implemented from today.

RTA officials have warned that strict action will be taken against transporters who fail to display updated fare lists. Rana Mohsin emphasized that compliance will be enforced across the board.

Punjab Minister for Transport and Mass Transit Ihtisham Khan directed authorities to ensure a 25% reduction in transport fares. He also ordered the issuance of updated fare lists and directed all RTAs to submit reports on fare reductions. To ensure compliance, monitoring teams have been formed in all districts to oversee the implementation process.

In Karachi, Malik Shahzad Awan, the president of the Pakistan Goods Transport Alliance, welcomed the reduction in petroleum prices and the subsequent 40% cut in goods transport fares.

He expressed hope that fuel prices would be reduced further and urged both federal and provincial governments to provide additional relief in taxes to support the transport sector.

The fare reduction is expected to bring much-needed relief to passengers and businesses alike, particularly at a time of rising living costs. Lower goods transport costs could also help reduce the prices of essential commodities, offering broader economic benefits.

Pakistan makes history by bringing US-Iran face-to-face for talks: Masood Khan

ISLAMABAD (INP) — Even more difficult. Yet Pakistan, through sustained diplomatic efforts, made it possible," he remarked. He noted that Pakistan's intervention was instrumental in securing even a temporary ceasefire and in creating the conditions necessary for both sides to agree to talks.

Islamabad, he added, has emerged as a trusted venue where complex and sensitive issues—ranging from regional security to maritime governance—can be addressed constructively. Masood Khan cautioned that despite this progress, expectations should remain measured. "There is no immediate optimism. Both sides have a history of hostility and deep mistrust," he said, adding that their agreement to come to Islamabad nonetheless reflects pragmatism and a willingness to explore common ground.



HYDERABAD: Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and others in Iran at Khums-e-Farangi on Saturday.

Pakistan once again positions itself as important center of global diplomacy: Hanif Abbasi

ISLAMABAD, April 11 (INP) — Federal Minister for Railways, Muhammad Hanif Abbasi Saturday lauded the national leadership for achieving a "remarkable diplomatic success," saying that Pakistan has once again positioned itself as an important center of global diplomacy.

The minister in a statement, highlighted Pakistan's constructive and proactive role in ongoing engagements between the United States and Iran, saying that the

country's balanced and prudent approach has helped ease regional tensions.

"The world's attention is now focused on Pakistan, with Islamabad rapidly emerging as a hub for international peace negotiations," he said.

Abbasi emphasized that Pakistan has established itself as a credible and dependable bridge for fostering peace, stability and dialogue across the region.

He credited Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's visionary leadership for



HYDERABAD: Mayor Hyderabad, Kashif Shoro visits different UCs to inspect ongoing development works in respective UCs on Saturday.

a key role in strengthening Pakistan's international image.

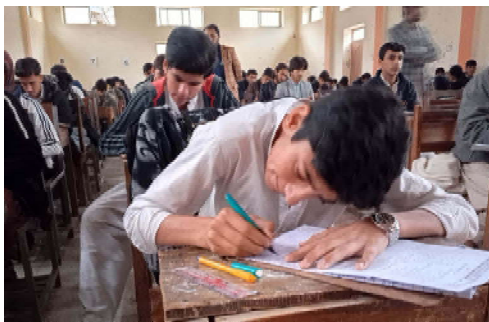
Referring to recent developments, he said a noticeable de-escalation in tensions between Iran and the United States, describing it as a direct outcome of Pakistan's balanced and successful foreign policy.

He said that high-level engagements taking place in Islamabad are a clear reflection of the growing confidence of the international community in Pakistan's diplomatic capabilities.

Section 144 Imposed for HSSC Exams 2026 in Balochistan

Education Desk: QUETTA: The Government of Balochistan has enforced Section 144 across the province as part of strict measures to guarantee a transparent, fair, and peaceful environment for the Higher Secondary School Certificate (HSSC) Annual Examinations 2026.

As per an official statement issued by the Home Department, the examinations conducted under the Balochistan Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education will begin on April 14, 2026. Authorities have finalized comprehensive security arrangements to prevent cheating, maintain law and order, and avoid any disruptions during the examination period.



Under Section

144, entry of unauthorized persons into examination centers will be strictly banned. Additionally, all forms of public gatherings and suspicious activities within a 100-yard radius of exam centers will be prohibited during exam hours to ensure a controlled and secure environment.

The restrictions will remain effective from April 14 until the completion of the exams. Officials have warned that strict legal action will be taken against anyone violating these orders.

District administrations, police forces, and other relevant authorities have been directed to fully implement these measures, ensuring that the HSSC Exams 2026 in Balochistan are conducted in a peaceful, transparent, and well-regulated manner.

Gwadar Administration Plans Women Bazaar to Promote Female Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment



GWADAR: On the directives of Deputy Commissioner Naeqebullah Kakar, the district administration of Gwadar organized an important introductory meeting at the Deputy Commissioner's Office regarding the establishment of a Women Bazaar.

The initiative comes in response to the growing interest of women following the success of a recent Meena Bazaar.

The meeting was attended by representatives from the Women Development Department and other relevant institutions, including Rubina Karim Shahwani, Rubina Zehri, Anita Jalil, Zahair Hot, and Abdul Rauf.

The primary objective of the meeting was to hold an online meeting of a dedicated, safe, and dignified business platform for women, enabling especially emerging entrepreneurs to transform their skills into sustainable economic opportunities.

A special interactive session was also held with women who had applied online to participate in the proposed Women Bazaar. Participants presented a wide range of business ideas, showcasing strong enthusiasm and readiness.

These included food items, perfumes and traditional attire, tailoring and embroidery, cosmetics, beauty salons, books, homemade products, mobile accessories, Balochi traditional dresses, shalwar kameez, carpets, blankets, baby products, home decor, jewelry, and more.

One participant also proposed setting up a driving training center for women, which was widely appreciated.

Speaking on the occasion, Rubina Karim Shahwani praised the overwhelming participation and expressed optimism that the Women Bazaar in Gwadar would soon become a reality. Rubina Zehri highlighted that the initiative would mark a significant step toward women's economic empowerment and could pave the way for similar projects in the future. Participants emphasized prioritizing local women in shop allotments to boost employment and economic activity within the district.

It was also agreed that, given the high demand, additional shops and facilities would be developed in the future.

A representative from the Balochistan Rural Support Programme (RISP) shared that over 700 youth will be provided with technical skills training, while women entrepreneurs will receive grants and support to expand their businesses.

Additionally, it was proposed that if space constraints arise, more shops could be established in the form of kiosks. The idea of formally naming the project "Women Business Centre" was also recommended, with plans to submit the proposal to relevant authorities.

The meeting concluded with a strong commitment that the establishment of the Women Bazaar in Gwadar will not only improve women's economic conditions but also contribute significantly to sustainable development and business growth in the district.

Key words: (SEO): "Gwadar women bazaar, women entrepreneurship, Pakistan, Balochistan women development, business opportunities, female empowerment, Pakistan, rural healthcare development, women business, women business complex Gwadar"

Modern ECG Unit Activated at Harnai DHQ Hospital as Healthcare Facilities Improve



HARNAI: Deputy Commissioner Arshad Hussain Jamali conducted a detailed visit to the District Headquarters (DHQ) Hospital in Harnai, where he inspected the newly functional ECG unit and reviewed healthcare services across departments.

He was accompanied by Additional Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Saleem Tareen, the District Health Officer, and other senior officials. During the visit, Medical Superintendent Dr. Saifullah Khan Marri briefed the delegation on the hospital's overall performance and recent reforms.

Dr. Saifullah Khan Marri informed that since assuming charge, emergency measures have been taken to improve the hospital's condition. A separate female ward has been established, and the maternity center (labor room) has been made operational 24/7 to facilitate women patients.

He further shared that the dental unit has been upgraded with modern equipment, while key departments including the dialysis unit, Intensive Care Unit (ICU), and operation theater are now fully functional.

Additionally, ambulance services have been placed on 24/7 alert to ensure timely response during emergencies.

Deputy Commissioner Arshad Hussain Jamali expressed satisfaction over the activation of the ECG unit and other departments.

He inspected staff attendance registers and duty rosters, directing authorities to ensure the round-the-clock presence of doctors and paramedical staff.

During a visit to the medicine store, he emphasized increasing the quota of medicines so that free treatment can be provided to underprivileged patients without interruption.

The restoration of long-inactive departments and installation of modern medical equipment at DHQ Hospital Harnai has been widely appreciated by the public.

Local social circles have praised the administrative efforts of Dr. Saifullah Khan Marri, stating that these improvements will reduce the need for patients to travel to other cities and significantly enhance healthcare services in the district.

Key words: (SEO): "Harnai DHQ Hospital, Balochistan healthcare improvements, Pakistan hospital reforms, Arshad Hussain Jamali visit, free medical services Pakistan, rural healthcare development, Balochistan"

Duki Administration Directs Mandatory Registration of Madaris, Warns of Legal Action for Non-Compliance



DUKI: In line with directives issued by the Government of Balochistan, an important meeting was held in Duki under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Naeem Khan.

The session was attended by administrators and principals of religious seminaries (madaris) from across the district.

The meeting focused on key issues including the registration of madaris, institutional discipline, and compliance with government policies. Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Naeem Khan issued clear instructions that all unregistered madaris must immediately complete their registration process, warning that strict legal action will be taken against those who fail to comply.

He further directed all seminars to complete their registration process, including identification documents, residential information, and other necessary data to help establish a comprehensive district database.

Officials also highlighted that, under provincial policy, strict measures are being taken against illegally residing Afghan nationals. In this regard, madaris were urged to fully cooperate with the district administration.

The Deputy Commissioner stressed that adherence to the law and implementation of state directives is the responsibility of every institution, adding that negligence or non-compliance will not be tolerated.

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CPDI Report Highlights Gaps in Budget Transparency and Accountability in Pakistan

LORALAI: A one-day media briefing was held at the API Training Hall in Loralai, organized by the Centre for Peace and Development Initiatives, where a report on budget transparency and accountability gaps was presented.

The report, titled State of Budget Transparency 2025, was prepared by CPDI through its Citizen Network for Budget Accountability and shared in Loralai with the support of the Salar Foundation.

It evaluates the current state of budget transparency for the fiscal year 2024-2025, while a complete assessment for the ongoing year will be released at its conclusion.

According to the findings, budget transparency in Pakistan remains limited and below international standards. Public participation in the budgeting process is almost non-existent, and systems of accountability and transparency are weak.

The report particularly highlighted the exclusion of women, persons with disabilities, and minority groups from the budget-making process.

It was also noted that budget documents are not adequately shared with the public, limiting citizens' understanding and reducing the overall impact of public spending.

Among provinces, Punjab showed relatively better performance, while Balochistan and Sindh ranked the weakest in terms of transparency and accountability.

The report called on the government to ensure greater inclusion of citizens, especially marginalized groups, in the budget process.

It also recommended making budget documents publicly accessible and strengthening monitoring, accountability, and transparency Pakistan

Pakistan Facilitates US-Iran Ceasefire Talks, Sets New Diplomatic Milestone: Governor Balochistan

QUETTA: Governor Balochistan Jaffar Khan Mandokhail stated that Pakistan has made diplomatic history by facilitating a ceasefire between the United States and Iran, proving that wise diplomacy can prevail over conflict and tension.

He further said that global attention is currently focused on Islamabad, where negotiations are engaged in and meaningful negotiations are taking place.

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Following a devastating Vice President, Pakistan played a key mediatory role in achieving a temporary ceasefire, demonstrating its growing influence on the global diplomatic stage.

The US delegation includes Vice President JD Vance, Jared Kushner, and Special Envoy Steve Witkoff. Iran is being represented by Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf and Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi.

Governor Mandokhail said that people across the world—especially in Iran and Arab countries—are eagerly awaiting positive outcomes and lasting peace.

He reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to facilitating successful negotiations and ensuring a peaceful future.

Key words: (SEO): "Pakistan US Iran talks, Islamabad peace negotiations, Jaffar Mandokhail statement, US Iran ceasefire 2026, Pakistan diplomacy success, Shehbaz Sharif foreign policy, complex peace talks Islamabad"

Balochistan Education Reforms Show Positive Results as Lasbela Achieves 100% Enrollment Target

QUETTA: Education reforms in Balochistan have started yielding encouraging results, as highlighted by Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti. A major milestone has been achieved by District Lasbela, which successfully met 100% of its school enrollment targets, setting a strong example for other districts across the province.

According to official figures, a total of 5,556 children were enrolled in schools in Lasbela, including 2,540 girls.

The significant increase in enrollment of both boys and girls reflects steady progress toward educational development and a brighter future for Balochistan.

Chief Minister Bugti emphasized that improving enrollment rates is a key indicator of educational advancement and a guarantee of a more prosperous and enlightened province.

He reiterated the government's commitment to utilizing all available resources to promote education and ensure access for every child.

He further announced a firm resolve that no school in Balochistan will remain closed and that every child will be brought into the education system.

The government aims to strengthen the education sector through consistent reforms and improved infrastructure.

The Chief Minister also praised the Deputy Commissioner of Lasbela for successfully achieving the enrollment targets, calling the district's performance a practical model for others to follow.

Key words: (SEO): "Balochistan education reforms, Lasbela school enrollment, Mir Sarfraz Bugti education policy, Pakistan education news 2026, school enrollment campaign, Balochistan girls education, Pakistan, education development"

Balochistan Government Approves Rakhni Bazaar Upgradation Project to Boost Economy and Urban Development

QUETTA: The Government of Balochistan has officially approved a comprehensive development, renovation, and beautification project for Rakhni Bazaar, aiming to enhance economic activity, modernize commercial infrastructure, and provide improved public facilities.

The project can reach the public as soon as possible.

Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti stated that the upgradation of Rakhni Bazaar will open new avenues for the local economy, expand business opportunities, and provide traders with a more organized, secure, and efficient commercial environment. In a post on social media platform X, he emphasized that the project will not only strengthen trade activities but also create new employment opportunities.

He further highlighted that the provincial government remains committed to improving urban facilities, strengthening infrastructure, and promoting sustainable development. Providing modern, high-quality services to citizens and ensuring well-planned urban growth are among the government's top priorities. According to the Chief Minister, the transformation of Rakhni Bazaar will significantly enhance the overall appearance.

Oil industry fears Rs100b inventory loss

NEWS DESK: The oil industry has expressed fear that it is going to face an inventory loss of Rs100 billion, which will deal a blow to the entire sector.

"The diesel price cut forces them to sell the fuel at a loss of up to Rs135 per litre. The estimated impact – over Rs100 billion in inventory losses – is not just a corporate setback, it is a systemic shock," an industry official said, adding that the steep reduction in diesel prices brought relief but at a hidden cost to Pakistan's fuel supply chain.

Without reform, today's relief could become tomorrow's crisis, background discussions with industry officials revealed.

Late Friday's reduction in diesel prices, from Rs220 to Rs385 per litre, has been welcomed by consumers across the country. For farmers, transporters and households, already reeling from rising inflation, the decision offers a genuine respite.

However, beneath this moment of relief lies



a deeper concern among industry players. "The question is not whether prices should fall but whether our system can absorb such shocks without putting energy

security at risk," they said, adding that in just eight days, Pakistan's oil sector experienced a record surge followed by a dramatic reversal.

Oil marketing companies (OMCs) responsible for importing and distributing fuel, are required to maintain stock levels to ensure uninterrupted supply. When diesel was priced at

Rs520, they imported accordingly, financing through bank credit. There is no mechanism to absorb such losses. When prices rise, gains

are scrutinised. When prices fall, losses are quietly internalised. This asymmetry reflects a deeper policy gap, they argued.

Much of the trade

relies on post-dated cheques. Dealers receive fuel on credit and commit to future payments, while OMCs depend on these inflows to meet their obligations – repaying banks and financing imports.

But when the purchase price diverges sharply from the selling price, this system begins to strain. Dealers, who bought diesel at Rs520, are now selling it at Rs385. The cheques they issued no longer reflect reality. Defaults and delays are already emerging, the industry officials complained.

This is how systems weaken – not through sudden collapse, but through the erosion of confidence. And once trust falters, liquidity follows. When liquidity tightens, supply chains soon feel the strain.

The crisis also exposes weaknesses in how fuel pricing is determined. Pakistan's pricing mechanism relies on selecting the lowest international benchmark within a given period. In practice, the OMCs do not procure fuel at the lowest price; they buy at

prevailing averages, shaped by logistics and contracts. The result is a persistent gap between assumed and actual costs – losses that grow during volatility.

Similarly, the fixed premium allowed for imports no longer reflects market reality. At a time when global premiums surged to around \$30 per barrel, the formula continued to recognise just over \$5. This disconnect is not merely technical; it reflects a framework that has not kept pace with global markets.

Pakistan has seen this pattern before. In the power sector, small mismatches between cost and recovery evolved into the circular debt crisis. The oil sector now shows similar signals. Like unrecognised costs, absorbed losses and systemic risks building quietly.

The difference is that fuel shortages are immediate and visible. When supply is disrupted, the effects emerge quickly through transport, food prices and industry.

Moro Power signs deal with Chinese renewable giant

NEWS DESK: Moro Power Company (MPC) and PowerChina, a global leader in renewable energy engineering, on Saturday signed an agreement for the first business-to-business (B2B) electricity venture.

The project, under the Sindh Electric Power Regulatory Authority, will enable MPC to supply electricity directly to industries in Noorabad via the Sindh Transmission and Despatch

Company. Speaking to Dawn, MPC Chief Executive Officer Mustafa Abdullah said that the agreement had been signed with the Chinese firm for technical collaboration, including engineering and construction of phase-1 of the project – a 100MW renewable electricity project based on wind turbines, solar panels and storage batteries.

He said that this would be the first project based on the

long-awaited CTBCM B2B wheeling policy, supplying low-cost renewable electricity to industry anywhere in Pakistan. Sindh gets first B2B 100MW venture to feed cheaper power to industries.

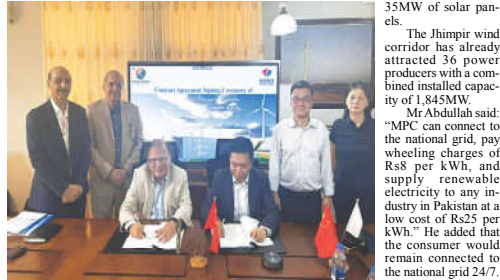
Sindh is the only province in Pakistan to have its own power regulator, which has the authority to set tariffs and oversee generation, transmission, and distribution independently of the federal government.

The Jhimpir project is therefore viewed as a pioneering step towards decentralised power generation in the country.

The Sindh government has allotted 300 acres of land in Jhimpir to MPC for establishing a 100MW hybrid wind-and-solar project, the first B2B electricity venture under the province's own regulator. According to MPC, the project will comprise 65MW of wind turbines and 35MW of solar panels.

The Jhimpir wind corridor has already attracted 36 power producers with a combined installed capacity of 1,845MW.

Mr Abdullah said: "MPC can connect to the national grid, pay wheeling charges of Rs8 per kWh, and supply renewable electricity to any industry in Pakistan at a low cost of Rs25 per kWh." He added that the consumer would remain connected to the national grid 24/7.



LHC directs Customs to return confiscated gold bar

NEWS DESK: The Lahore High Court has ordered the Customs Department to return a refined gold bar and \$10,000 to a petitioner, ruling that the authorities acted unlawfully by substituting confiscated property (gold bricks) with an arbitrarily determined monetary value.

A two-judge LHC bench comprising Justice Malik Javid Iqbal Wains and Justice Khalid Ishaq recently passed a ruling while allowing a petition filed by Abbas Ali, bringing closure to a dispute dating back to 2004. The confiscation, originated when the petitioner was stopped at the departure lounge of Allama Iqbal International Airport, Lahore, on May 27, 2004, while travelling to Bangkok.

Customs officials recovered 3.085kg of gold and foreign currency, including \$12,000 and Thai Baht, from his baggage after he allegedly failed to declare the items.

The goods were confiscated under provisions of the Customs Act, 1969 and a criminal case was registered. Later, the Customs adjudicating au-



thority ordered outright confiscation of both the gold and the currency.

Rules authorities acted unlawfully by substituting confiscated property with arbitrarily determined monetary value.

Over the years, the matter travelled through multiple legal forums, including the Customs Appellate Tribunal and the Lahore High Court, with conflicting outcomes.

In 2012, a larger bench of the Appellate Tribunal ordered the release of the gold and partial return of foreign currency to the petitioner.

However, the decision was later set aside by the LHC on technical grounds relating to the composition of the tribunal.

Subsequently, the tribunal again ruled in favour of the petitioner, directing the Customs to release the gold jewellery subject to a penalty of Rs100,000 and to return \$10,000.

The Customs challenged the decision before the Supreme Court, but its appeal was dismissed in June 2025, rendering the tribunal's order final.

During the pendency of the petition,

Customs authorities revealed that the seized jewellery had already been sent to the Pakistan Mint in 2005, where it was melted and converted into a gold bar weighing 2.47kg.

The gold was later transferred to the State Bank of Pakistan in 2007 and its value – calculated at Rs6.31 million based on international rates – was deposited into the government treasury.

In 2025, Customs offered the petitioner Rs5.87 million (after deductions), calculated on the 2007 value of the gold, along with the foreign currency.

High yields cause Rs600b losses

NEWS DESK: Pakistan's commercial banking sector is bracing for a major financial shock, as a sharp spike in interest rates is expected to wipe out more than \$600 billion in revaluation surpluses within a single quarter.

A report by Optimus Capital Management, titled 'Back to Square One', warns that the rapid shift in the fixed-income market has "largely exhausted" the cushion banks had built in recent quarters to absorb volatility. The erosion in these reserves marks a reversal of earlier gains, effectively resetting the sector's balance sheet strength.

According to the

analysis, secondary market yields surged by approximately 150 basis points (bps) between December 2025 and March 2026. This increase has led to a steep decline in the market value of government securities held by banks, resulting in widespread mark-to-market losses.

The report estimates gross revaluation losses for the banking sector at around Rs685 billion. After adjusting for existing surpluses, the net impact stands at a deficit of roughly Rs5 billion across major institutions, highlighting the scale of the stress on bank balance sheets.

Leading banks bear

the brunt

Among the largest players, United Bank Limited (UBL) is seen as the most exposed due to its higher sensitivity to interest rate duration. Analysts estimate a post-tax impact of approximately Rs117 billion on UBL's book value.

Habib Bank Limited (HBL) and National Bank of Pakistan (NBP) are also expected to face substantial losses, with estimated impacts of Rs54 billion and Rs45 billion, respectively.

The report cautions that risks in the banking sector have "increased materially" in the rising yield environment. Any further upward movement in interest rates could begin to erode

Common Equity Tier-1 (CE1) capital ratios, potentially forcing banks to adopt more conservative dividend policies and capital management strategies.

Understanding the valuation losses – a primary driver of the current stress in the mark-to-market adjustment on banks' large holdings of government debt. As yields rise, the prices of previously issued lower-yield bonds decline in the secondary market, leading to account losses on investment portfolios.

Given that Pakistan's banks are heavily invested in sovereign instruments, even a relatively modest increase in yields can translate into significant valuation losses. The recent 150bps shift has therefore had an outsized impact, wiping out a large portion of the revaluation reserves accumulated during the previous low-yield environment.

This inverse relationship between yields and bond prices is a fundamental dynamic of fixed-income markets. Bonds issued at lower fixed rates become less attractive when new securities offer higher returns, forcing their prices downward to align with prevailing market yields.



Transport fares in Rawalpindi reduced after cuts in POL prices

NEWS DESK: The Regional Transport Authority (RTA) on Saturday reduced the fares of public and goods transport.

The decision was made after the federal government brought down the prices of petrol by 3.13 per cent (Rs11.85 per litre) and diesel by 25.91 per cent (Rs134.81) on Friday.

RTA Secretary

Syed Asad Shirazi told Dawn that the authority reduced the fares and issued a new fare list.

He said that the new fares had been implemented from Saturday as per directives of Deputy Commissioner Dr Hassan Waqar Cheema.

He said that the deputy commissioner asked the regional transport authority to

bring down the fares as soon as possible so the trickle down effect will reach the masses.

He said that a meeting was held with

Passengers Transport Union and Goods Transport Association and it was decided that passenger Diesel-based AC and non AC transport will reduce

15 per cent fares subject to all other factors.

He said petrol-based public service vehicles will reduce the fares by 5 per cent and goods transport by 26 per cent.

On the other hand, traders said if the goods transport fares were reduced, the prices of edibles will also come down.

However, they said that it would take a week to reduce the prices.

Residents said the traders increased the prices soon after the increase in the petroleum prices but after decrease, they failed to reduce the prices.

Mohammad Riaz, a resident of Westridge, said that butchers and grocery stores would not decrease

the prices and the district administration should play its role to bring down the prices of edibles.

He said the prices of daily-use items from shampoo, toothpastes to edibles had increased manifold.



Zalmi thrash hapless Qalandars to go top

NEWS DESK: Maintaining their impressive run in the HBL Pakistan Super League, Peshawar Zalmi thrashed Lahore Qalandars by 76 runs here at the National Bank Stadium on Saturday to climb to the top of the table and extend their winning streak.

Chasing 174, former champions Qalandars collapsed dramatically to 97 all out in 17 overs, their batting order unraveling against a disciplined Zalmi attack.

The defeat leaves Qalandars languishing in sixth place after completing half their league-stage matches, while Zalmi, unbeaten in several outings, now sit atop the PSL standings with momentum firmly on their side.

Zalmi's innings was built around a commanding second-wicket partnership between Kusal Mendis and captain Babar Azam.

After Mohammad Harris gifted his wicket early for 18 off 10 balls — toe-ending a cross-cut shot to mid-wicket — Shaheen Shah Afridi — Mendis walked in and immediately looked at ease. The Sri Lankan wicket-keeper/batter, fresh from a strong previous outing, played



with confidence on a surface that offered grip and occasional slow bounce.

Mendis reached his second successive half-century with a massive six of Usama Mir finishing with a fluent 74 off 48 balls, studded with five boundaries and four sixes. His knock featured

elegant drives, powerful heaves over mid-wicket and clever lap scoops. Babar, meanwhile, played the perfect anchor, rotating the strike intelligently and providing stability during the middle overs.

The pair added 109 runs for the second wicket before Babar

mistimed one to long-on for 43 off 40 balls.

"Next to me was Babar. He batted really well and he gave me a lot of confidence," Mendis said after the match. "I played my normal game in powerplay. The reason is Babar—I know he has played so many matches in Pakistan, he knows

the conditions very well, that's why I played my normal game. He supported me a lot. He removed Harris early, then accounted for Mendis in the 17th over with a well-directed delivery that the batter holed out to long-on. Shaheen's final-over Yorker also disturbed Farhan Yousuf's stumps. Mustafizur Rahman picked up two

crucial wickets, including that of Michael Bracewell, using his variations expertly to restrict the flow of runs.

Despite the presence of pinch-hitters Abdul Samad and Iftikhar Ahmed lower down the order, Zalmi could not push beyond 173 for seven.

Samad fell lbw for two, while Bracewell's breezy 21 off 10 ended when he flicked a low full toss to deep square leg. Iftikhar remained not out on seven as the innings closed at a competitive but not daunting total on a tricky pitch.

Usama, one of Qalandars' spinners, acknowledged the challenge. "Full credit goes to Kusal Mendis for the way he assessed the wicket, read the conditions, and played accordingly. He played low-risk cricket, which allowed him to set such a big target," Usama said.

In the chase, Qalandars never got going. Fakhar Zaman and Mohammad Naeem started cautiously, but Shoriful Islam drew the first blood, inducing a thick edge from Naeem that was taken at mid-off.

Abdullah Shafique played some crisp shots for his 21 off 15, but Nahid Rana's express pace produced a spectacular breakthrough, forcing Abdullah into a pull that was swallowed at deep square leg.

Bracewell then turned the game decisively with his off-spin, claiming three wickets for 18 runs in four overs.

Army's Shah Khan, Haiqa Hassan clinch singles titles

NEWS DESK: Pakistan army duo Shah Khan and Haiqa Hassan claimed the men's and women's singles titles respectively, while Waqar and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) delivered a commanding performance to sweep both team events and the women's doubles at the 61st National Table Tennis Championship.

In the men's singles final, played at the PSB Hall of the Peshawar Sports Complex, Army's Shah Khan defeated his teammate Abbas Amjad in a thrilling contest 4-3 to lift the title.

In the women's singles final, army's Haiqa Hassan overcame WAPDA's Bismah Farayal 4-2 to secure the championship.

WAPDA's Praniya Zaman and Bismah Farayal combined brilliantly to win the



women's doubles gold, defeating the army pair of Haiqa Hassan and Aiman Hassan.

WAPDA also reigned supreme in both team events. In the men's team final, WAPDA's trio of Talha Bilal, Asim Qureshi, and Obaid Shah beat Punjab's team of Awas Hassan, Taimoor Khan, and Abu Huraira 4-2. In the women's team final, WAPDA's Bismah Farayal, Ayesha Sharjeel,

and Praniya Zaman defeated Punjab's Kulsom Khan, Zahra Batool, and Adan Shehzad to claim the trophy.

The closing ceremony was graced by Taj Muhammad Taran, Advisor to the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister on Sports and Youth Affairs, as the chief guest.

He distributed prizes among the players.

Hassan, Irfan give Kingsmen taste of victory in PSL

NEWS DESK: In what was dubbed as the "Sindh Derby" here at the National Bank Stadium on Saturday night, two discarded talents from Pakistan's cricketing past carried the weight of redemption on their shoulders and delivered a script worthy of the grandest HBL Pakistan Super League drama.

Hassan Khan, the former Pakistan U-19 captain whose international career never ignited before he sought fresh pastures in the United States, walked out to bat with Hyderabad Kingsmen teetering at the edge of another defeat in their maiden PSL campaign.

The middle order, repeatedly labelled inexperienced and fragile, had crumbled yet again. Six wickets were down,

189 looked like a mountain, and the debutants were staring at a fifth straight loss.

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agility behind the stumps from Karachi Kings' wicket-keeper Azam Khan, whose ponderous movement between the wickets gifted precious runs when boundaries were hard to come by.

As the required run-rate climbed and then eased, the duo shifted gears accordingly. Hassan unleashed a flurry of boundaries and sixes.

His bat swinging with renewed purpose, Irfan matched him stroke for stroke, his elegant drives and lofted shots piercing the field.

The tension that had gripped the Kingsmen dugout began to reduce. When Hassan carved a boundary in the 19th over and followed it with another thunderous hit, the finish line

came into view.

With 13 runs needed from the final over and the scores levelled soon after, Irfan and Hassan scammed the winning single in the 19.1 overs. Kingsmen had finally tasted victory — by four wickets.

Captain Marnus Labuschagne could not contain his smile as he let out a visible sigh of relief on the boundary. For a side that had endured a winless start, this was more than just two points; it was validation.

The chase had begun in a blistering fashion. Kingsmen's powerplay was electric. Labuschagne himself blazed 26 off 10 balls, including two sixes and three fours, before falling to a stunning low catch by Abbas Afridi off Khushdil Shah.

Maaz Sadaqat and Usman Khan then took the attack to the bowlers, posting 96 for the second wicket in quick time. Usman's 27 off 13, laced with three fours and two sixes, kept the momentum roaring.

But the mid-innings collapse was as dramatic as the start. Saim Ayub, pushed down the order, managed only six before Salman Ali Agha castled him.

Australian stalwart Glenn Maxwell, making his PSL debut, struggled for timing and fell for a laboured two off seven balls, holing out to a substitute fielder off Abbas.

Villa reach Europa League semis

NEWS DESK: Ollie Watkins scored twice as Aston Villa beat Bologna 3-1 in their Europa League quarter-final, first leg on Thursday.

Nottingham Forest held Porto 1-1 thanks to a comical own goal from Marlim Fernandes.

Freiburg also have one foot in the last four after beating Celta Vigo 3-0.

Villa boss Unai Emery is aiming to win the competition for a fifth time and the favourites rode their luck to emerge victorious in Italy.

"It could've been different," said Watkins. "We got lucky."

Bologna made a bright start to their first European quarter-final in 27 years.

An Ezri Konsa own goal was ruled out by a VAR review for a marginal offside against Santiago Castro before Lewis Ferguson hit the bar.

But the Coppa Italia winners were undone by some awful set-piece defending to allow Villa two of their goals.

Konsa headed into an unguarded net just before the break after Federico Ravaglia flapped at a corner.

Watkins quickly doubled the visitors' advantage after half-time with a cool finish

after Emi Buendia won possession deep in Bologna territory.

Federico Bernardeschi hit the post and Jonathan Rowe was denied by a brilliant Emi Martinez save.

Rowe's stunning finish in the 90th minute looked to have given Bologna a foothold in the tie.

But Watkins was left completely unmarked to tap in from a corner deep into the first European quarter-final in 27 years.

"Back end of the season I'm raring to go," added Watkins. "I'm excited for the next few games. I'm hungry."

Freiburg's record run in the Europa League will face the winners of the tie between Porto and Forest should they progress to the semi-finals.

An all-English affair in the last four is on the cards after Forest were handed a gift by Fernandes.

Porto capitalised on a strong start when William Gomes turned in at the far post.

But the lead lasted barely two minutes before Fernandes found his own net from just inside the Porto half as he overhit a pass back to goalkeeper Diogo Costa.

Forest striker Igor Jesus had a goal ruled out in the second half, but the visitors were happier with the draw that leaves the tie up for grabs next week at the City Ground.

"It was a good result," said Forest boss Vitor Pereira.

"At 1-1 at half-time in the tie, it's open, and we're at home to decide who qualifies."

The best European run in Freiburg's history looks set to continue after Cella were blown away by the Bundesliga side.

Vincenzo Grifo's curling effort gave the home side the perfect start on 10 minutes.

Niklas Beste doubled Freiburg's lead at the end of a fine team move and Matthias Ginter headed in 12 minutes from time to secure a commanding first leg lead.

Braga and Real Betis drew 1-1 in the other quarter-final, first leg on Wednesday.

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Zimbabwe women set for historic maiden tour of Pakistan

NEWS DESK: Zimbabwe women will make their first-ever tour of Pakistan this week, with a six-match white-ball series scheduled to run from April 29 to May 15 in Karachi.

The tour features three ODIs and three T20Is at the National Bank Stadium, marking a significant milestone in bilateral women's cricket between the two sides.

The ODI series, set for May 6 and 9, forms part of the ICC Women's Championship 2025-2029, with Zimbabwe continuing their campaign after making their debut in the competition against New Zealand last month.

Zimbabwe endured a difficult start to the championship, losing all three ODIs and T20Is in their home series against New Zealand by comprehensive margins.



The T20I leg of the Pakistan tour will be played on May 12, 14 and 15. It will be the first time Zimbabwe women's national cricket team and Pakistan women's national cricket team meet in the shortest format of the game.

Overall, the two sides have faced each other only once in international cricket, during the 2021 World Cup Qualifier, where Pakistan registered a 114-run victory.

Pakistan, meanwhile, have played three matches in the Women's Championship so far. They lost their recent series 1-2 to South Africa and currently sit fifth on the points table of the ICC Women's Championship.

The series is expected to provide both teams with crucial preparation and exposure as they continue their build-up to upcoming global tournaments.

GB cabinet approves expansion of police, renaming of CTD

NEWS DESK: The caretaker cabinet of Gilgit-Baltistan on Friday approved the renaming of the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) as the Counter-Terrorism Unit (CTU), and police recruitment for 600 newly created posts.

It also decided to hand over as many as nine roads in GB, with a total length of 46km, to the National Highway Authority (NHA).

The caretaker cabinet meeting was held under the chairmanship of Caretaker Chief Minister Justice (ret'd) Yar

Muhammad at CM Secretariat in Gilgit.

Addressing a press conference at the CM Secretariat, GB Caretaker Information Minister Ghulam Abbas, accompanied by Caretaker Home Minister Sajid Ali Baig, Caretaker Finance and Planning and Development Minister Abrar Ismail,



Caretaker Forest Minister Hafiz Sharafuddin, and spokesperson for the CM Shabbir Mir, briefed the media.

He said the GB cabinet appreciated the efforts of Prime Minister Shehbaz

Shahid and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir for their role in bringing about a ceasefire between the US and Iran through sincere diplomacy in the war-torn Middle East.

Allows handover of nine roads to NHA, and reviews law and order situation. The caretaker information minister said the cabinet praised Pakistan for its diplomatic role in facilitating a ceasefire

between Iran and the United States and bringing both countries to the table for a peaceful and lasting resolution of hostilities. He added that Pakistan helped avert a potential disaster in the

Middle East. He also referred to the unfortunate incidents that occurred in Gilgit and Skardu following the assassination of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei. He said the cabinet expressed regret

made progress over the past three weeks, and those found involved would be brought to justice, he added.

Counter terrorism He said the caretaker cabinet approved the renaming of the CTD and the recruitment for 600 new police posts. The meeting also approved rules and regulations for recruitment to posts from Grade 7 to 14. About the cabinet decision to hand over nine roads to the NHA, he said GB residents would be exempt from paying tolls on these roads.

Several other matters were deferred during the meeting, he told the media.

The information minister said a briefing was given on the establishment of an "Asian Khidmat Centre", based on the concept of providing all services under one roof to ensure better and timely delivery of government services to the people of GB.

Study detects high prevalence of rabies virus in Karachi's street dogs

NEWS DESK: A study published in an international journal has found that the rabies virus — one of the deadliest infectious diseases in the world — is widely circulating among the city's dog population, highlighting a high risk of exposure to the virus and an urgent need for prevention, surveillance, and prompt treatment.

In a first, researchers at the Indus Hospital detected rabies virus RNA in samples taken directly from fresh bite wounds, offering a breakthrough for surveillance.

The study, titled "Detection of rabies virus RNA in dog-bite wounds in a rabid, endemic area: evidence from an observational cohort study," is published in eBioMedicine, part of The Lancet Discovery Science.

Under the study, a total of 100 patients with Health Organisation-defined Category III dog-bite injuries were enrolled, and swabs were collected from wounds before and after washing.

Serum samples were obtained before and 14 days after the initiation of post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP). Rabies virus RNA was detected using genotype-1 and pan-

lyssavirus PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction) assays. The simple, non-invasive approach demonstrated that wound swabs from untreated bites could be a practical method for identifying rabies virus exposure.

"By using human bite cases as a real-time indicator, the method offers a new way to monitor rabies circulation in dog populations, particularly in regions where traditional surveillance is limited by diagnostic challenges," the study states.

The findings revealed a strikingly high level of rabies virus circulation in the local canine population, with the virus detected in 64 per cent of samples.

Although the study focused on patients at high risk of rabies exposure, the results strongly suggest that the burden of circulating virus in Karachi's stray dogs is substantial.

Most cases originated from the Korangi and Malir districts, which are in proximity to the health centre. "The study is a breakthrough in the diagnosis of the rabies virus, achieved by swabbing dog-inflicted wounds. The findings confirm what we have

long suspected — that rabies is widely circulating among the local dog population," said Dr Naseem Salahuddin, head of the Department of Infectious Diseases at the Indus Hospital.

According to her, the study has identified a large burden of circulating rabies virus in the Korangi and Landhi districts, which can spread to other areas and to animals, especially farm animals, in the city.

"It serves as a warning and dispels the notion among animal activists that dog bites and rabies are not connected," she said, underscoring the urgent need to scale up dog vaccination campaigns and strengthen dog population management to reduce risk to communities.

The study also highlighted the critical importance of immediate wound care, as swabs taken after washing showed a significant reduction in viral presence, reinforcing that thorough washing with soap and water should be the first step after any animal bite.

However, viral RNA was still detected in many cases after washing alone, underscoring that PEP remains essential and cannot be skipped.

FM Dar calls on US, Iran to uphold ceasefire commitment after talks end without agreement

NEWS DESK: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Sunday stressed that the US and Iran should continue to uphold their commitment to the ceasefire as talks ended without an agreement.

"It is imperative that the parties continue to uphold their commitment to the ceasefire," said Dar during a press conference. US Vice President Vance departed this morning after announcing the conclusion of talks without any result.

Dar expressed deep gratitude to Iran and the US for responding to the call made by Prime Minister Shehbaz for an immediate ceasefire in the region and accepting the invitation to hold peace talks in Islamabad.

He further expressed gratitude to the two sides for appreciating Pakistan's efforts to help achieve the ceasefire and its mediatory role.

Dar said, "I, along with the Chief of Defence Forces and Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir, helped mediate several rounds of intense and constructive negotiations between the two sides, which continued through the last 24 hours and ended this morning."

He said that Pakistan hopes that the two sides continue with a positive spirit to achieve

endurable peace and prosperity for the entire region and beyond.

"Pakistan has been and will continue to play its role to facilitate engagement and dialogue between Iran and the US in the days to come," he added.

Earlier, US Vice President JD Vance left Pakistan after announcing that intensive discussions with Iran failed to reach an agreement, yet he appreciated Pakistan's efforts.

"We have been at it now for 21 hours, and we've had a number of substantive discussions with the Iranians. That's the good news. The bad news is that we have not reached an agreement, and I think that's the bad

news for Iran much more than it's bad news for the United States of America," he said while addressing a press conference in Islamabad.

Vance also appreciated PM Shehbaz and CDF Field Marshal Munir, saying, "Both incredible hosts, and whatever shortcomings of the negotiation, it wasn't because of the Pakistanis who did an amazing job and really tried to help us and the Iranians bridge the gap and get to a deal."

He stated that the simple fact was that there needed to be a clear, affirmative commitment that they would not pursue a nuclear weapon, nor seek the tools that would enable

them to quickly develop one.

"That is the core goal of the president of the United States, and that's what we've tried to achieve through these negotiations. Again, their nuclear programs, they've — that they had made their red lines before, they've been destroyed," he added.

The US vice president stated that they had made their red lines clear, specifying what they were willing to accommodate and what they were not.

"We've made that as clear as we possibly could, and they have chosen not to accept our terms."

Vance further said



Tarar: govt facilitated 50 foreign journalists

NEWS DESK: Information Minister Attaullah Tarar on Saturday stated that around 50 foreign journalists arrived in Pakistan for the "Islamabad Talks".

"Journalists from various countries, including China, Saudi Arabia, Japan, Germany and Korea have submitted visa applications to cover the talks," he said while speaking to state broadcaster PTV.

Tarar noted that yesterday, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar announced that visas on arrival would be available for journalists from Iran and the United States, adding that journalists from across the world were arriving in Pakistan for coverage.

"The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has provided all necessary facilities for journalists under one roof at Jinnah Convention Centre," Tarar said.

"High-speed internet connectivity, printers, computers and

screens have been installed, and all facilities required to perform journalistic duties have been made available."

Further, the minister said that Islamabad's Red Zone was close to the centre, making it easy for journalists to carry out their coverage.

"An effort has been made to provide all facilities in one place so that journalists do not face any difficulty in coverage," Tarar said. "We welcome the foreign journalists coming for coverage," he added.

Earlier, Tarar in a post on X, said that the government had established a Media Facilitation Centre at the Jinnah Convention Centre for foreign journalists arriving to cover the "Islamabad Talks".

He said, "All arrangements are in place to facilitate foreign and local journalists in the best way possible."

"The centre has been established by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, he

stated, adding, "We will be looking after them well."

Meanwhile, the journalists milling around the Jinnah Convention Centre are snacking the time away.

The convention centre often hosts award ceremonies and other large productions, so it plays host to a legion of reporters and producers to cover the main event.

The press corps is well provisioned for long negotiations. There's plenty of free coffee available, along with a buffet of curries and barbecue for lunch and dinner.

Staff from the Ministry of Information are on hand for any technical and logistical support.

and the centre's main hall is decked out with diplomatic décor — huge banners throughout boast of the "Islamabad Talks" with the US, Pakistani and Iranian flags arranged in the center.

Punjab govt pledges warm hospitality to Sikh pilgrims

NEWS DESK: The Punjab government said on Saturday that it would extend warm hospitality to the Indian Sikh pilgrims.

Around 2,238 Sikh pilgrims from India arrived on Friday to participate in Baisakhi festivities, as authorities rolled out elaborate arrangements and security measures for the annual religious event.

"Baisakhi is a beautiful, traditional, and historic festival of Punjab whose vibrant colours represent the true identity of the region."

The government while upholding its longstanding traditions will celebrate the festival this year with full enthusiasm and spirit, and give warm hospitality to visiting Sikhs," Punjab Information Minister Azma Bokhari said.

She added that last year Chief Minister



Maryam Nawaz had personally inaugurated the festivities by harvesting wheat at Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur, reflecting deep-rooted affection and connection with the Sikh community in Punjab, she added.

The government has always appreciated Punjab's hospitality, and this year too, no effort would be spared in serving them. "Pilgrims arriving from across the border are honoured guests and hosting them is a matter of great pride and pleasure for the people of Punjab," she added. The main cer-

emony of Baisakhi will be held on April 14 at Gurdwara Panja Sahib, Hasanabdal. The pilgrims are also scheduled to visit other sacred sites, including Kartarpur Sahib and Sacha Sauda.

Despite strained relations between Pakistan and India, more than 2,800 visas have been issued to Indian Sikh pilgrims. Although the Indian government had previously restricted travel to Pakistan following armed conflict in May last year, it later allowed Sikh pilgrims to visit their holy sites after community protests.

However, the Kartarpur Corridor, which provides visa-free access to Gurdwara Darbar Sahib, remains closed from the Indian side, even as Pakistan has kept its side open and urged India to resume operations.

A comprehensive and foolproof security plan has also been put in place to ensure that pilgrims perform their religious rituals in complete peace and safety.

The minister added that Sikh pil-