



Plan afoot to plant one million saplings

To mark Pakistan Day on March 23 (tomorrow), the provincial government has set an ambitious target of planting one million trees in a single day, transforming the national celebration into a powerful symbol of environmental responsibility towards combating climate change.

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PSL without spectators

The Pakistan Super League (PSL) will commence on March 26 but will be held without spectators due to the ongoing security situation, Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman Mohsin Naqvi announced on Sunday.

— Story on Page 7

The Province

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Quote!



With faith, discipline and selfless devotion to duty, there is nothing worthwhile that you cannot achieve.

— Muhammad Ali Jinnah

News DIGEST

PPP senator Sherry Rehman's daughter Marvi Malik passes away at 35



STAFF REPORTER

KARACHI: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) senior leader Sherry Rehman's daughter, Marvi Malik, passed away at the age of 35 after a brain haemorrhage on Sunday, the family announced. She had been receiving treatment at a private hospital in Karachi, where she was admitted five days ago. Her condition deteriorated three days before her death, requiring ventilation. Her funeral prayer is scheduled for Monday at 3:30pm at DHA Phase 8, Karachi, followed by burial in a local cemetery. President Asif Ali Zardari extended his condolences, praying for her forgiveness and for the family to bear the loss with strength. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said the death of a child is an "indescribable grief," offering heartfelt condolences and praying for her elevated status in the afterlife and patience for the bereaved family. Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah also conveyed sorrow, offering prayers for her forgiveness and high ranks in the afterlife. Sindh senior minister Sharjeel Inam Memon described the sudden death as devastating and extended condolences to the family.



NAWABSHAH: President Asif Ali Zardari offered Fateha and laid flowers on the grave of his father, Sardar Hakim Ali Zardari, at Baloo Ja Quba. — PHOTO: PID

President visits graves of his parents

NAWABSHAH: President Asif Ali Zardari on Sunday visited the graves of his mother, Begum Bilquees Sultana, and his father, Sardar Hakim Ali Zardari, located at Baloo Ja Quba, Nawabshah, where he offered Fateha and laid floral wreaths on the graves. The president also visited the graves of other relatives at Baloo Ja Quba, and offered prayers and placed flowers. He prayed for the elevation of the ranks of the departed souls in jannah and for their forgiveness. On the occasion, special prayers were also offered for the peace, security, and prosperity of Pakistan. Earlier, President Asif Ali Zardari was received by Senior PPP leader and Member National Assembly, Syed Khurshid Ahmed Shah upon his arrival at Sukkur Airport. — APP

President Zardari urges India to restore IWT's full implementation

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has urged India to immediately restore full implementation of the Indus Waters Treaty, in line with its international obligations. In his message on World Water Day, the president reaffirmed Pakistan's strong condemnation of India's unilateral suspension of the treaty. "This deliberate weaponisation of shared water resources is a matter of deep concern. India's decision to place the Treaty in abeyance, disrupt hydrological data-sharing, impede agreed mechanisms, and undermine both the letter and spirit of a long-standing international agreement that has governed equitable sharing of the Indus river system for over six decades," he continued. The tensions over the Indus Waters Treaty escalated when India put the treaty in abeyance following a deadly attack in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOK) in April 2025, in which 26 people were killed. Without any investigation, New Delhi accused Islamabad of orchestrating the attack, an allegation that Pakistan has firmly denied. President Zardari said that such conduct threatens food and economic security, jeopardises the livelihoods of millions who depend on these waters, and sets a dangerous precedent for the management of transboundary resources under international law.

Govt raises high-octane fuel levy by Rs200 per litre

Decision aimed at providing relief to general public, says Prime Minister's Office

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday approved an increase of Rs200 per litre levy on high-octane fuel used in luxury vehicles, a move expected to generate Rs9 billion in monthly savings for the government. The development emerged in a meeting virtually chaired by the premier, who had taken notice of the Rs100 per litre levy on high-octane fuel, read a statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office. During the meeting, PM Shehbaz stressed raising the high-octane fuel levy and approved an increase of Rs200 per litre, said the statement. With the fresh increase, the levy on the high-octane fuel has climbed to Rs300 per litre. The government has increased the levy only on the fuel used in luxury vehicles, with no hike on fuel for ordinary or mid-range vehicles, said the statement. It added that PM Shehbaz directed that the anticipated Rs9 billion in savings from the levy hike be used to provide relief to the public. The statement further emphasised that fares for public transport and airlines will not be affected, and that the

PM, Indonesian president call for dialogue, diplomacy to resolve Middle East crisis



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto on Sunday exchanged views on Middle East tensions, calling for an immediate end to hostilities and the resolution of all differences through dialogue and diplomacy during a telephone conversation. According to a statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) today, the two leaders exchanged views on the latest regional developments, particularly the ongoing hostilities in Iran and the Gulf region. "Both leaders called for an immediate end to hostilities and the resolution of all differences through dialogue and diplomacy," it said. The statement said that the two leaders also extended greetings on the occasion of Eidul Fitr. "During their warm and cordial conversation, the prime minister conveyed Eidul Fitr felicitations to the Indonesian president and the brotherly people of Indonesia," the statement read. According to the PMO, the sentiments were warmly reciprocated by the Indonesian president, while both leaders prayed for peace and harmony for the people of their respective countries, as well as for the Muslim Ummah. "The prime minister reaffirmed Pakistan's desire to further strengthen its historic and fraternal ties with Indonesia and expressed his firm resolve to expand bilateral cooperation in all spheres of mutual interest," it added. Earlier, the prime minister held telephonic conversations with Malaysian PM Anwar Ibrahim, Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev and Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, extending Eidul Fitr greetings and discussing regional developments. The PM urged de-escalation in the Gulf and the Middle East as he discussed the current conflict with the leaders of Malaysia, Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan.

measure ensures the country's wealthiest segment bears a proportionate economic burden, easing pressure on the national economy. The decision follows a directive by PM Shehbaz, who instructed relevant ministries to draft an implementation plan for the pricing of high-octane fuel. Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, Information Minister Attaullah Tarar, Petroleum Minister Ali Pervaiz Malik, and other senior government officials attended the meeting. The announcement to raise the levy on high-octane fuel comes two days after the government decided to keep petrol and diesel prices unchanged. The rates have been held steady for two weeks following a 20% hike earlier this month, prompted by global oil supply disruptions triggered by the war in the Middle East. On March 6, the government raised petrol and diesel prices by Rs55 per litre each as global oil prices surged amid the US-Israel conflict with Iran. Following the increase, Pakistan unveiled a wide-ranging austerity and fuel-conservation plan to mitigate the impact of rising global oil prices.

CM congratulates nation on Eidul Fitr



STAFF REPORTER

PESHAWAR: On the occasion of Pakistan Day, the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Muhammad Sohail Afridi, extended his heartfelt felicitations to the entire nation, particularly the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He stated that March 23 marks a defining moment in the national history of Pakistan. "Eighty-six years ago, the Muslims of the subcontinent collectively resolved to establish an independent and sovereign state, culminating in the adoption of a historic resolution that laid the foundation for the creation of Pakistan. After seven years of sustained struggle, that vision materialized, and Pakistan emerged on the world map as an independent state," he said. The Chief Minister noted that the creation of Pakistan stands as a testament to the unwavering determination, relentless efforts, and unparalleled sacrifices of the Muslims of the subcontinent. "On this day, we pay tribute to our forefathers, vision-

ary leaders, and dedicated workers who, despite immense challenges, remained steadfast in their pursuit of freedom. Their struggle reinforces the enduring principles of unity, faith, and discipline as the cornerstone of national success." He emphasized that Pakistan Day serves as a reminder of the collective responsibility to safeguard the country's sovereignty, stability, and progress. "The most meaningful way to honor the sacrifices of our predecessors is to work with dedication and integrity towards building a strong, stable, and prosperous Pakistan, while upholding the ideals that formed the basis of its creation." The Chief Minister further underscored that transforming Pakistan into a truly Islamic welfare state requires active participation from all segments of society. "We must promote the principles of rule of law, justice, integrity, and public service to foster a society where the benefits of development are equitably shared among all citizens."

آگے بڑھے گا پاکستان

بڑھائیں گے ہم اسکی شان

دیکھے گی دنیا اسکی اڑان

23 مارچ

یوم پاکستان

PAKISTAN RESOLUTION DAY 1940

قرارداد پاکستان ۱۹۴۰

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The SPACE

KP govt approves Karak-Bannu link road project

STAFF REPORTER

PESHAWAR: The Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa approved the PC-II for the Warana-Maskan-Bannu Link Road under the district's Annual Development Program, paving the way for improved connectivity between Karak and Bannu.

The approval follows efforts by Member Provincial Assembly Muhammad Sajjad Barakwal, while the consultancy phase has already been initiated.

Local residents have welcomed the development and called for extending the road length to 30 kilometers, instead of the proposed 16 kilometers, in line with directions issued by Chief Minister, Sohail Afridi during a South Region parliamentary meeting held on February 25. The link road is expected to enhance inter-district connectivity, promote trade, and improve access to remote localities in the region.

Robbers escape with Rs13.5m, 441 tola gold

PESHAWAR: In a major security breach, unidentified armed robbers looted Rs1.35 crore in cash and 441 tola of gold from a bank branch on Kohat Road during Eid.

According to police, the incident occurred when four or more suspects broke through the rear wall of the bank premises and gained entry. They carried a gas cylinder with them, suggesting a planned operation possibly involving cutting tools or other equipment to access secure areas.

Once inside, the robbers disabled all CCTV cameras, effectively eliminating visual evidence of their actions. Strikingly, no security guard was present at the branch during the heist, raising serious questions about standard protection protocols.

Three emergency alarms installed in the bank were triggered five times, yet neither the alarm monitoring company nor the operators alerted authorities or police in a timely manner.



PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi offer Eid-ul-Fitr prayer at Governor House in Saturday. — Photo: PID

City police act on public complaints, arrest youth for hooliganism in Kohat

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOHAT: City Police, acting promptly on public complaints, launched a crackdown against unruly youth involved in hooliganism and misuse of loud sound systems, arresting several individuals in different areas.

According to police sources, the Station House Officer (SHO) City Police Station Abdul Rauf Bangash, along with his team, conducted operations in various localities and apprehended those causing disturbance to citizens.

The arrested individuals were found playing loud music and engaging in disruptive activities that created nuisance in residential neighborhoods.

Police registered cases against the accused and also seized the sound systems being used during the violations. Officials reaffirmed that such actions would continue to ensure public peace and protect citizens from harassment and disturbance.

Missile debris kills Pakistani worker in UAE



KURRAM: Rising tensions between the United States, Israel, and Iran in the Gulf region have once again turned the joy of a hardworking Pakistani family into tragedy. Ismail Saleem, a resident of District Kurram, who had been living in the United Arab Emirates for the past decade to support his family, fell victim

to the ongoing global conflict. Ismail's journey abroad for employment spanned many years. He had moved to Dubai ten years ago in search of work and would return home occasionally to visit his family. However, his most recent stay proved to be the longest separation for his loved ones. For the past year, he had been continuously working in Abu Dhabi and had not been able to meet his six daughters and four sons. He had planned to save more money and return home soon, but circumstances did not allow him that chance.

Plan afoot to plant one million saplings in KP on Pakistan Day: CCF

PESHAWAR: To mark Pakistan Day on March 23 (tomorrow), the provincial government has set an ambitious target of planting one million trees in a single day, transforming the national celebration into a powerful symbol of environmental responsibility towards combating climate change.

The campaign is being launched under the vision of the Green Khyber Pakhtunkhwa initiative, with tree planting planned simultaneously across the province from the fertile plains of Peshawar to the mountainous valleys of Swat and Chitral to vast lands of DI Khan.

Ahmad Jalil, Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF) said the massive campaign is meant to connect patriotism with environmental stewardship.

"Pakistan Day commemorates the dream of an independent homeland," he said. "By planting trees on this historic day, we want to ensure that future generations inherit a greener and healthier Pakistan."

"At exactly 9 a.m. on March 23, vol-

unteers across the province will begin planting saplings provided by the forest department nurseries. The activity will continue throughout the day until the last plant is in the ground," said Ahmad Jalil.

He said forests have long played a crucial role in Pakistan's environmental health. From the towering deodar forests of the Himalayas to mangroves along the Karachi coast, trees act as natural protectors absorbing carbon dioxide, producing oxygen and improving rainfall patterns.

Environmental experts warned that deforestation and rapid urban growth have weakened this natural shield, particularly in cities like Peshawar where air pollution levels have risen significantly.

According to environmental activists, tiny particulate pollutants known as PM2.5—microscopic particles harmful to human health have reached levels far above recommended limits in the city's air.

Planting more canopy trees, experts said, is one of the simplest and most effective ways to reduce such pollution.

Historically, the region once had dense forests. In his memoir Baburnama, Mughal emperor Babur wrote about hunting lions in the forests around Peshawar—an indication of how lush the area once was.

Over the centuries, however, expanding populations, urban development and unchecked construction gradually reduced tree cover in districts like Mardan, Swabi, Nowshera, and Charsadda.

Today, environmentalists believed that restoring native trees such as shisham, siris and pipal is critical for bringing ecological balance back to the region.

To ensure transparency and accurate monitoring of the March 23 campaign, authorities have introduced a digital tracking system.

Project Director of the Ten Billion Tree Tsunami Programme, Muhammad Junaid Diyar, said a special mobile application and central dashboard will record every stage of the plantation process.

Volunteers will upload photos, videos and GPS locations of planted saplings in

real time. Even in remote areas where internet access is limited, data can be stored offline and uploaded later.

"This will allow us to maintain a transparent record and ensure that every sapling planted is accounted for," he explained.

What makes the campaign unique is its scale of public participation. Schools, universities, government departments, Pakistan Railways, Motorway Police, and local communities will all take part.

For many participants, the act of planting a tree carries personal meaning in KP where teachers will encourage students to adopt saplings as living symbols of responsibility. Farmers will plant shade trees along fields. Urban residents will add greenery to streets and neighborhoods.

Officials hoped that each planted sapling will not only grow into a tree but also nurture a culture of environmental care.

Environmental experts stressed that planting trees is only the first step and protecting them is equally important.

Engr Amir Muqam offers Eid prayer at Shangla

STAFF REPORTER

PESHAWAR: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan and SAFRON, and President of Pakistan Muslim League (N) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Engineer Amir Muqam on Saturday offered Eid-ul-Fitr prayers at Puran in his native district Shangla.

Various political and social personalities besides civil society participated in the Eid prayer along with Federal Minister Engineer Amir Muqam.

Engineer Amir Muqam offered special prayers for the country's development, security, and unity of the Muslim Ummah, and also prayed for addressing the challenges faced by the Muslim world.

He mingled with people after Eid prayer. The people congratulated him on Eid.

Engr Amir Muqam said Eid-ul-Fitr is a blessed day of sharing love, brotherhood, and collective happiness and urged people to include the needy and underprivileged in happiness on Eid.

He extended heartfelt Eid-ul-Fitr greetings to the entire Muslim Ummah and prayed for relief from the problems faced by the Muslims world.

The Minister also prayed for the oppressed people of Palestine and Indian



Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, who are facing great hardships in their struggle for freedom and basic rights.

Engineer Amir Muqam paid tribute to the civilians, Pakistan Armed Forces, law enforcement agencies, and security personnel who were martyred in the war against terrorism, and expressed solidarity with their families.

NAB-KP initiated an inquiry against Afaq and Asad

STAFF REPORTER

PESHAWAR: The National Accountability Bureau (NAB), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, has initiated an inquiry against Afaq and Asad Project Management Services LLC & others regarding cheating public at large on the pretext of online e-commerce business with Amazon.

It is alleged that Mr. Afaq Mumtaz, Isham Mumtaz, Asad ur Rehman and other accomplices have lured general public by offering high returns on investment in their e-commerce business with Amazon. More than 100 affectees have filed their claims amounting to Rs. 600 million (approx.).

NAB is conducting a thorough investigation to recover the looted public money and to bring all responsible individuals to justice as per law. All affectees are advised to submit their claims along with supporting documents to the NAB Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Office, PDA Complex, Block III, Hayatabad, Peshawar.

Eidul Fitre celebrated with religious enthusiasm in KP

PESHAWAR: Like other parts of the country, Eidul Fitr was also celebrated with great religious enthusiasm in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Saturday.

Big Eid prayers congregations in mosques and Eidgahs were held in all districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including seven merged districts.

The ulema and religious leaders threw light on the philosophy of Eidul Fitr. They prayed Allah Almighty to accept their fastings and worships besides sought for mercy and forgiveness.

In Peshawar, the major Eid congregations were held at Eidgah Charsadda Road, Mohabat Khan mosque, Sonehri mosque, Spine Jumat and Zarghoni mosques. The faithful offered special prayers for progress and prosperity of Pakistan.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi along with officials performed Eid prayer at Governor House Peshawar, where special prayers were made for the country's security, lasting peace in the province, and national prosperity.

A large number of people, including Chief Secretary, political and social personalities, local residents, and Governor House staff attended the prayer. After the Eid prayer, the Governor mingled with citizens and extended Eid greetings with the attendees with the festive spirit.

In his message, Faisal Karim Kundi felicitated the entire nation and the Muslim Ummah on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr, particularly the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and merged districts.

He termed Eid-ul-Fitr a blessed occasion that brings immense joy and carries the message of patience, sacrifice, and brotherhood.

He expressed hope that the auspicious occasion would bring happiness, mercy, and blessings for all.

The Governor emphasized that in the prevailing circumstances, the nation must demonstrate unity, tolerance, and responsibility.

He said maintaining peace and law and order was a collective responsibility and urged citizens to continue cooperation

with security forces. He also urged the people to remember the families of martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the country and to include the underprivileged and deserving segments of society in their Eid celebrations.

Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Muhammad Suhail Afridi, offered the Eid ul-Fitr prayer in his native district of Khyber district. On this occasion, special prayers were offered for peace and stability in the region.

Special prayer offered for the country's security and prosperity, national unity, solidarity of the Muslim Ummah, and for the elevation of the ranks of the martyrs.

After the Eid prayer, the Chief Minister greeted the worshippers, shook hands with them, and exchanged Eid greetings.

Later, the people visited relatives' houses and exchanged sweets besides distributed Eidi (cash amount) among children.

Peshawar zoo has also attracted a substantial number of visitors along with families and children who expressed joy after watching wild animals.

Festive funfair draws throngs of children to Peshawar Zoo

PESHAWAR: Attracting children influx on Eid holidays, Peshawar Zoo has become an important recreational centre where all eyes were on caged wild animals amid laughter and excitement.

Ibrahim Khan (7), a third grade student is overwhelmed after visiting the country's biggest zoo at Peshawar where wild animals caged in natural environment, have drawn a large number of children alongwith families during Eidul Fitr's holidays.

"Seeing wild animals including cobra snake, lion, falcons and zarafa with own eyes were my dream. Big thank you to my papa for fulfilling my childhood dream today," said Ibrahim, a resident of Nowshera.

"I am very impressed to see rare wild animals were kept in natural environment besides facilities made for the visitors at Peshawar zoo," he told APP while seeing falcons.

Like Ibrahim, thousands of children alongwith relative visited the zoo during Eid holidays and took keen interest in zarafas, lions, cobra snakes, bears, pheasants, dears, cranes, reptiles, birds, parrots and falcons.

The species remained center of attraction of small children, youth and families arrived from different districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and spent few hours in its relax environment amid food cuisines enjoyed by them in its sprawling lawns.

Children accompanied by parents arrived from Khyber, Kohat, Nowshera, Charsadda, Mardan, Mohmand, Swabi, Peshawar and others districts of KP were briefed by the wildlife experts.

Established on 29 acres land near University of Peshawar, it was the biggest zoo of Pakistan setup by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa wildlife department wherein almost all species of wild animals and birds existing in the country were caged in natural habitats.

At entrance, big status of elephant and zarafa have been installed in front of main gate that attract attention of visitors, and children while passing through Rahatabad Road. Falcons' cage remained a centre of attraction of tourists, wildlife lovers, students and children where three large sizes brown and black eagles are kept.

On its left and middle sides, zarafas, zebras, camels, dears, ducks, pheasants



and others birds draw visitors' attention. A safari bus is also available for visitors to help them in watching all these wild animals in short time besides a restaurant for food services. Free swings, camel and train ride inside facility doubled the joy of children.

Sundus Khayam (35), who came to the

zoo alongwith her children told APP that it was a great gift for people, which has not only enhanced beauty of Peshawar but also become a symbol of healthy entertainment.

"In the past, I had visited Islamabad and Lahore zoos to entertain my children. This year I did not go to these cities because of Peshawar Zoo," she said.

"Falcons have always attracted my children and that is why I came here to see them closely on my kids demands," she said.

"It is not only a place of entertainment but a great source of education and research for students of wildlife and zoology who otherwise travelled to Islamabad and Lahore for this purpose in the past," she said.

She underscored the need for proper shelter shades, trees plantations and proper cold watering for animals, adding services of DVM doctors may be hired 24/7 for looking after medical needs of the animals in harsh weather conditions.

Professor Dr Naveed Farooq of Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan said that Peshawar zoo was a good addition in provision of healthy entertainment and recreation

facilities for residents of Peshawar and adjoining districts.

People from Attock Punjab have also visited Peshawar zoo, which are bringing people of all provinces further closers by enhancing bonds of friendship and love besides knowing about each others' culture, language and traditions.

He said its play-lands, train ride, swings, motion and camel ride, cafeteria and safari train added colours of the zoo.

Suggested an establishment of a testing laboratory at the zoo premises for treatment of common diseases, he said the facility would help avoid deaths of precious animals in future. He said fare of zoo was relatively high and small children should be exempted from it.

Special focus should be made on training of doctors and staff employed at the zoo so that they could properly take care of the animals as per international standards.

The wildlife experts urged visitors not to throw stones at animals or tease them, and extend full cooperation with zoo staff. They said the zoo was identity of Peshawar and visitors should make it neat and clean for people. — APP

News BRIEFS

LWMC ensures cleanliness arrangements in city on Eid

OUR CORRESPONDENT

LAHORE: The Lahore Waste Management Company (LWMC) has ensured the provision of exceptional sanitation facilities across the city during Eid-ul-Fitr.

The Eid cleanliness operation remained active from Chand Raat until the second day of Eid, with over 15,000 sanitation workers and more than 1,400 vehicles deployed across the city in three shifts, said a press release issued here on Sunday.

The cleaning operation was continuously monitored digitally from the central control room to ensure effective implementation.

On the first day of Eid, LWMC Chairman Malik Bilal Zulfiqar Khokhar and Suthra Punjab Authority DG Babar Sahib Din visited various areas of the city to review cleanliness arrangements.

They also met sanitation workers in the field, appreciated their efforts, and distributed Eid gifts and sweets among them to boost morale.

Chairman Malik Bilal Zulfiqar Khokhar stated that, following the directions of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, the company was implementing a zero-tolerance policy to ensure the provision of top-quality sanitation services to citizens.

Chairman PEC felicitates nation on Eid



STAFF REPORTER

The Chairman Pakistan Engineering Council, Engr. Waseem Nazir, has extended heartfelt greetings to the engineering community and the entire Muslim Ummah on the blessed occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr. He said that Eid marks the successful completion of the holy month of Ramadan, which teaches patience, sacrifice, discipline, and compassion. He prayed that this auspicious occasion brings peace, prosperity, and happiness to Pakistan and to Muslims around the world.

Engr. Waseem Nazir stated that engineers play a vital role in the development and progress of the country, and their professional contributions are essential for building strong infrastructure, promoting innovation, and ensuring sustainable growth. He urged engineers across Pakistan to continue serving the nation with dedication, integrity, and a strong sense of responsibility, while upholding the highest standards of professionalism.

The Chairman further said that Eid-ul-Fitr is a time to promote unity, harmony, and social responsibility. He expressed hope that this joyous occasion will strengthen the spirit of brotherhood and encourage everyone to work collectively for the prosperity and stability of Pakistan. He prayed that Allah Almighty accepts the prayers and good deeds of all and blesses the nation with peace, success, and lasting progress.



ISLAMABAD: A view of deserted 7th Avenue due to Eid al-Fitr festival Holidays, in the Federal Capital. — PHOTO: ONLINE

School holidays extended in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa to save fuel

KP wide closure from March 24-29 follows Eid break; online classes urged

STAFF REPORT

PESHAWAR: In a significant move to conserve fuel and electricity amid persistent energy challenges, the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa government has announced an additional six-day holiday for all public and private educational institutions across the province.

The Elementary and Secondary Education Department issued an official notification stating that schools, colleges and other teaching facilities will remain closed from March 24 to March 29. The measure comes shortly after the Eidul Fitr

holidays and is part of a broader provincial strategy focused on fuel conservation and responsible governance.

Officials explained that the decision aims to reduce energy consumption linked to school operations, student transportation, heating, lighting and administrative activities during a period of heightened demand and supply constraints. By keeping campuses shut for an extended period, authorities hope to achieve meaningful savings in petroleum products and electricity without permanently disrupting the academic calendar.

To limit academic losses, the depart-

ment has strongly encouraged schools and colleges to shift teaching online or adopt home-schooling arrangements wherever internet access and digital resources are available. Teachers have been advised to prepare recorded lessons, share assignments through WhatsApp groups or learning management platforms, and conduct virtual assessments if possible.

However, school administrations, clerical staff and admission teams must continue attending offices during the closure period to handle routine paperwork, process new admissions, maintain re-

ords and address urgent administrative matters.

Education stakeholders have offered mixed reactions. Supporters argue the step will deliver tangible energy relief and demonstrate fiscal responsibility at a time when fuel prices remain volatile. Critics, particularly from remote districts such as Shangla, Upper Dir, Chitral and parts of Kohistan, warn that unreliable or non-existent internet connectivity in mountainous areas will make online learning largely ineffective, potentially widening the educational gap for thousands of students. The department has directed

district education officers and school principals to ensure strict compliance and to communicate the changes clearly to parents and communities. Parents are urged to keep children engaged in self-study and follow any alternative learning schedules provided by their institutions.

This latest closure follows earlier weekly off-days (Fridays and Saturdays) introduced earlier in the academic year for similar conservation reasons, underscoring the province's ongoing struggle to balance education continuity with resource management in an energy-stressed environment.

Young man killed in Shangla road accident

OUR CORRESPONDENT

SHANGLA: At least one young man lost his life and more than seven people were injured in multiple traffic accidents across Shangla district on the first and second days of Eid.

The incidents occurred in various areas of the district, where deteriorating road conditions, speeding, and challenging mountainous terrain contributed to the mishaps. The deceased youth belonged to the Shahpur area of Shangla.

Rescue teams responded swiftly, providing first aid to the injured and transferring them to District Headquarters Hospital in Alपुरi. Two of the injured are reported to be in critical condition and are receiving treatment there.

According to Rescue 1122 sources, personnel remained on high alert throughout the Eid holidays, stationed at key locations to handle emergencies.

They not only evacuated victims to safety promptly but also urged the public to adopt precautionary measures while traveling.

In preparation for potential incidents, Rescue 1122 Shangla conducted drills



along the Indus River banks to enhance quick response capabilities and professional skills in emergencies.

Local residents praised the timely actions of rescue workers, noting that delays could have led to greater loss of life.

Citizens have called on the government and district administration to urgently repair dilapidated roads, enforce traffic laws strictly, and implement effective preventive measures to avoid such tragic events in the future.

Speaker urges unity, dialogue and stability to tackle challenges

OUR CORRESPONDENT

LAHORE: Punjab Assembly (PA) Speaker Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan urged the nation to uphold unity, democratic values and national cohesion to overcome challenges and ensure progress.

In his message on the occasion of the Pakistan Day, he said March 23, 1940 marked a defining moment in the history of the Muslims of the Sub-continent, when the Lahore Resolution laid the foundation for a free, sovereign and welfare state. He added that the resolution strengthened the vision of a separate homeland and set the course for a historic struggle that led to the creation of Pakistan.

The speaker said the Pakistan Day reminds the nation of the sacrifices, foresight and determination of the founding leaders, emphasizing that it was a collective responsibility to honor their legacy by contributing to stability, development and democratic continuity.

Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan said the challenges facing the country, including economic and security issues, could be effectively addressed through unity, coordination and collective efforts. He



added that state institutions remain committed to sustainable development, economic resilience and strengthening democracy.

He paid tribute to the armed forces for their sacrifices in defending the country, combating terrorism and ensuring national security, terming their role vital for the country's sovereignty and stability.

Referring to the regional and global situation, he stressed the need for peace,

tolerance and dialogue, expressing hope for unity in the Muslim world and lasting peace in conflict-hit regions, including the Middle East. He also highlighted the importance of educating the younger generation about the ideology of Pakistan, constitutional supremacy and democratic values, adding that adherence to the principles of unity, faith and discipline would enable the nation to move towards a brighter and more prosperous future.

March 23: The resolve of Muslims that created Pakistan

PESHAWAR: The historic day of March 23, 1940, holds a special place in history of world, marking a turning point in the political and democratic struggle of Muslims in the subcontinent for Pakistan.

This historic day saw the adoption of the Lahore Resolution, later known as the Pakistan Resolution passed by millions of Muslims at Minar e Pakistan 86 years ago, which laid the foundation for creation of Pakistan.

The Pakistan Resolution, passed during the All India Muslim League's annual session in Lahore on March 23, 1940, had symbolized the unwavering determination and heroic political struggle of Muslims seeking a separate homeland

where they could freely practice their religion, culture, and traditions.

Professor Dr. Muhammad Younas Khan, Chairman of the Pakistan Studies Department at Islamia College Peshawar, described the Pakistan Resolution as a powerful declaration of the Muslims' collective will.

"The adoption of resolution was not just a political statement rather it was the culmination of decades of aspirations, sacrifices, and tireless efforts of Muslims who were pushed to the wall in that era of discrimination following 1857 uprising against colonial rulers," he said.

Led by Father of the Nation Quaid e Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the reso-

lution called for the creation of separate states for Muslims in the north-western and eastern zones of the Subcontinent, giving rise to the idea of Pakistan.

It marked the Muslims' determination to carve out a space in the Subcontinent where they could flourish as a distinct nation, preserving their identity, rights and autonomy. Dr. Younas highlighted the rejection of Congress policies by Muslims through the resolution, emphasizing the role of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the independence movement.

"The province's support for the great Quaid was evident when he visited Peshawar to mobilize the people of KP for Pakistan after the resolution's adoption.

The people of KP, then NWFP, greeted him with great enthusiasm, decorating their homes, bazaars, and vehicles with Muslim League flags. They showered him with rose petals, showcasing their unshakable commitment to the cause of Pakistan."

The great Quaid received a warm welcome in Peshawar in 1945, where his presence inspired the people from all districts of KP.

Former Vice Chancellor of ICP, Professor Dr. Muhammad Naushad Khan, shared a memorable incident when students of the Muslim Students Federation at ICP presented Quaid e Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah with Rs 8,000 as a fund for the Pakistan Movement, pledging to contrib-

ute 8,000 educated workers for the noble cause.

The love for the legendry Quaid in KP was so profound that the Muslim League secured more than 50 seats in the province, cementing the region's critical role in the movement for Pakistan's independence.

The great Quaid visited Islamia College Peshawar three times in his lifetime i.e in 1936, 1945, and 1948, each visit acknowledging the contributions of the college's faculty, staff, and students toward Pakistan's creation.

Dr. Younas said the great leader considered the students of ICP and the people of KP as a frontline force in his constitutional

and peaceful struggle for independence.

In his final visit to ICP as Governor-General of Pakistan on April 12, 1948, the Father of the Nation had delivered an inspiring message to students, urging them to contribute to Pakistan's prosperity by developing discipline, character, initiative, and academic excellence.

He also shared his vision for a quality university in Peshawar. His long-held dream came true in 1949 with the establishment of the University of Peshawar, located near Islamia College.

This institution was to become a center of culture and knowledge, spreading its influence across the country, Afghanistan and Central Asia.

“Collateral Damage” Means Dead Children

DR SYED KALEEM IMAM

In war, we are told that truth dies first. Today, something even more disturbing is happening: the deaths of children are being explained and justified. That is not just a tragedy; it is a dangerous shift in how we see human life. Children do not start wars. They do not carry weapons. They do not choose sides. Yet, when violence begins, their lives are often the first to be lost.

War is usually described in terms of power, strategy and victory. But in reality, it becomes something else: a storm where those who create it remain protected, while the smallest and weakest are left exposed.

The deeper problem today is not only that children are dying. It is that their deaths are slowly being accepted. The killing of innocent civilians, including children, is often called “collateral damage”, as if their deaths are an acceptable cost in pursuit of a larger goal. This language does more than describe; it excuses. It allows powerful actors to avoid responsibility and weakens the very laws meant to protect children in war.

A recent strike on a school in Minab, Iran, during the first day of a US–Israel attack reportedly killed more than 160 schoolgirls. In minutes, a place of learning turned into a place of grief. Later, these deaths were described as collateral damage. But this term cannot carry the weight of what happened. These were young girls with books, dreams and futures, now reduced to numbers in reports. Sadly, this is not new. We have seen some of the worst attacks in the years following the “War on Terror”. Pakistan still carries the pain of the Army Public School attack in 2014, where more than 140 children were killed in their classrooms. In the United States, the Sandy Hook shooting took young lives. In Nigeria, Boko Haram attacked schools and kidnapped children, including the Chibok girls. And it did not stop there. In Yemen, a school bus was hit in 2018, killing dozens of children. In Lebanon, airstrikes in Qana in 2006 killed many civilians, including children. In Gaza, Israeli actions over the years have taken the lives of thousands of children.

These events happened in different places and under different conditions. Some were acts of terrorism; others were part of military operations. But one pattern stands out: many perpetrators were never truly held to account. When there is no accountability, violence does not stop; it becomes bolder and more frequent.

Children suffer the most because of the way wars are now fought. Conflicts take place in crowded cities, close to homes, schools and hospitals. Children, because of their age and vulnerability, are the least able to protect themselves.

We are also told that modern weapons are “precise”. But are they? Even the most advanced systems cannot eliminate human error, fear or poor judgement. When decisions are rushed or careless, innocent lives are lost.

As law enforcers, we were taught a simple rule: if an operation risks harming innocent people, especially children, it must be stopped or changed. No goal is so important that it can justify the death of innocent children. Still, this basic principle is often ignored.

Another serious concern is what happens after such tragedies. There are statements of regret. Investigations are promised. But real action rarely follows. In many cases, responsibility is widely understood, yet meaningful steps are not taken. States avoid strong responses because of political interests and power. This weakens trust in international law and global justice.

There are rules meant to protect civilians. The Geneva Conventions and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child clearly state that children must be protected, even during war. But these rules only work when countries choose to follow them. When powerful actors ignore them without consequences, these protections begin to lose meaning.

Language also plays a dangerous role. Terms like “collateral damage”, “precision strike” or “kinetic action” make violence sound distant and controlled. They remove the human face of tragedy. It becomes easier to read about deaths without feeling their impact. Numbers do the same. Reports may say that dozens were killed, but each number represents a child with a name, a family and a future. When we see only numbers, we begin to lose our sense of humanity. I have seen this up close. Visiting a crime scene involving children is one of the most painful experiences. One case still stays with me: a father killed his nine children and his wife because he felt he could not provide for them. It broke my heart, and I carry it even today. Since then, I often ask myself: how do those who plan or order such violence live with it? How do they go home and face their own children?

To me, this is the real test. If we are serious about protecting children, we must do more than express sorrow. The law must apply equally to all. Investigations must be honest and transparent. Those responsible must be held accountable, no matter how powerful they are. We must also stop using language that hides the truth. The killing of children should never be accepted as a normal part of conflict. It is not a side effect; it is a failure of responsibility. Because the moment a child’s death becomes just a number or a technical term, we do not just lose clarity; we lose our conscience. Tailpiece: It is strange. Many soldiers carry pictures of their own children close to their hearts, but on the battlefield, other children become just numbers. War does not just change actions; it changes conscience itself.

The Invincible Disruption

When a disaster strikes somewhere in the world, it is the poor in developing and underdeveloped countries who are most affected.

ATTIYA MUNAWER



While the world is currently facing many problems, one of the most serious is climate change, which is affecting the globe tremendously. Global warming and climate change refer to shifts in the earth’s environmental conditions caused by internal and external factors. In recent years, climate change has been worsening at a dangerous pace on a global scale, and it will pose a major threat to the world in the coming era. Its greatest impact is on the earth and the creatures living on it, and if proper measures are not taken in time to address it, climate disruptions will make it difficult for the earth and its inhabitants to exist safely. It must now be admitted that climate change is a very serious and research-intensive issue worldwide, and it is leaving a harmful impact across the globe. In this era, mankind is struggling with the most important issue facing its survival at the local, regional and global levels, namely climate change. Climate change is, in fact, a disturbance in the natural climate system, the main reason for which is the deterioration in human practices, habits, uses and desires. It includes problems such as the unnecessary exploitation and waste of natural resources. Water, food, wood and land are further exacerbating this problem. The issue of climate change is mainly related to changes in global temperature. Some of its key aspects are the large-scale emission of gases that contribute to rising temperatures, such as carbon dioxide, and a significant decrease in forest area.

Apparently, the term global warming is used for climatic changes. For this reason, in the public mind, it refers to an increase in the intensity of heat. However, it is more than that, and now global tensions and war crimes are making the world more painful for the people living in it, as the geopolitical situation is being altered and countries are being destabilised intentionally by causing extreme temperature increases, acid rain and even severe climate change. Due to climate change, there can be severe and prolonged cold, or severe cold during warm and moderate months. Its effects on the lives of ordinary people may not be immediately noticeable, but such weather conditions have devastating effects on crops and agriculture. Developed countries are combating the adverse effects of climate change to some extent because of their abundant resources. However, due to financial difficulties, a lack of research and scientific facilities, and a shortage of trained personnel, developing nations generally seem unable to face the devastating effects of climate change and are looking to each other for help. While concerns are increasing with the passage of time, scientists have predicted that ongoing global climate change will trigger adverse events affecting approximately 143 million people in the Global South by 2050, which will also lead to various forms of displacement and mobility.

When a disaster strikes somewhere in the world, it is the poor in developing and underdeveloped countries who are most affected, with sub-Saharan Africa likely to see the highest number of internally displaced people, at around 86 million by 2050. Countries will see the emergence of climate migration hotspots as early as the 2030s, and if left unchecked, these hotspots could expand and intensify, but no government currently offers a legal migration pathway based solely on an individual’s exposure to climate change. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has also clarified that fleeing the impacts of climate change is not sufficient grounds for obtaining refugee status, which is limited to people flee-



ing persecution. The African Climate Mobility Initiative projects that the number of internal climate migrants in Africa alone could reach 113 million by 2050.

Climate change is affecting everyone, not just one group, yet everyone is paying the price. While politics is being played over this issue, vested interests are being protected, and business is also being conducted around it. Big countries are busy polluting the air, while weak countries are bearing the burden of that pollution. Conferences are held in major countries and grand speeches are delivered, but those affected by climate change are not being supported or helped. This is a global problem, everyone agrees with that, but there is no real global response, nor is anyone truly recognising the seriousness of this issue. Only weak countries are being suppressed, only the weak are being blamed, while those responsible for air pollution and climate change are neither admitting their shortcomings nor addressing them.

Pakistan is also among the ten countries most affected. The floods of the last few years, which have claimed hundreds of lives and damaged infrastructure worth billions of rupees, have been caused by climate change. In addition, there have been unusual changes in the weather, severe heatwaves, effects on the monsoon season and drought-affected areas. The force behind all these destructive factors is also global warming. Although Pakistan’s share in global greenhouse gas emissions is negligible, the United States and other developed countries played a major role in polluting the environment to this extent over the last century, and in recent decades countries like India and China have also significantly increased pollution.

Pakistan also has a separate Ministry of Climate Change, but in the recent Paris Conference, Pakistan’s role was not encouraging. At the forum where other nations presented detailed plans to deal with climate change, the Pakistani delegation failed to draw the world’s attention to the fact that Pakistan is suffering the serious consequences of climate change. There is a dire need for support from the international community to repair this damage and deal with such horrific factors in the future. If no action is taken now and rich countries do not support poor affected countries, then each passing year will create new stories of destruction and devastation.

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One of the most glaring weaknesses was the failure to mobilise Punjab. Despite being the largest and politically most influential province, Punjab’s response remained muted

Security for One, Suspicion for Others

MUHAMMAD MOHSIN IQBAL



There are moments in the life of nations when questions, long suppressed beneath the weight of power and narrative, rise with an urgency that cannot be ignored. Today, one such question confronts the conscience of the international order; is it the exclusive right of the United States of America to live in security, sovereignty, and independence, while the same aspirations in other nations are treated with suspicion, hostility, or even force?

The United States has, over decades, constructed for itself one of the most formidable arsenals known to mankind. It justifies this accumulation as a necessary shield for its security and sovereignty. Yet, paradoxically, it continues to view with deep apprehension the efforts of other states to develop similar means of defence. This contradiction lies at the heart of much of the instability that defines contemporary global politics. If America claims the right to protect itself through strength, can it, in good faith, deny that same right to others? And if it harbours fears of potential threats from nations that possess or seek to possess such capabilities, is it not reasonable that those nations, in turn, might perceive an even greater threat from America itself?

History offers sobering lessons. The tragic episode of Iraq stands as a stark reminder of how fear, when shaped by flawed intelligence and amplified by political will, can lead to catastrophic consequences. The assertion that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction became the moral and strategic justification for a war that dismantled a state, cost countless lives, and destabilized an entire region. Yet, in the aftermath, it was acknowledged that no such weapons existed. The question that lingers, unanswered and perhaps unanswerable, is whether the immense human and material losses inflicted upon Iraq were ever justly accounted for: Can such a breach of trust be easily forgotten, or does it not cast a long shadow over every subsequent claim made in the name of global security?

It is equally perplexing that the United States does not exhibit the same degree of apprehension towards several of its allies—countries such as the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Israel, Italy, Australia, and India—many of which possess significant military capabilities, including advanced and, in some cases, nuclear weapons. Why are these arsenals perceived as stabilizing, while similar capabilities in other nations are deemed destabilizing? Is the distinction rooted in objective criteria, or does it arise from the fluid and often subjective boundaries of geopolitical alignment?

Recent developments further underscore these contradictions. The inability of the United States to persuade its allies to join a military confrontation against Iran has evidently created a moment of strategic discomfort. Instead of introspection, however, there appears to be a tendency to redirect attention towards new theatres and new narratives, with countries like Pakistan being drawn into the discourse of suspicion. Such shifts not only strain diplomatic relations but also risk undermining the very alliances that have been carefully cultivated



Within the American policy establishment itself, there are voices of dissent and uncertainty. Some officials have expressed reservations about the justification for military action, even to the extent of resigning from their positions

over decades.

Within the American policy establishment itself, there are voices of dissent and uncertainty. Some officials have expressed reservations about the justification for military action, even to the extent of resigning from their positions. Others continue to articulate concerns about emerging threats from the capabilities of various nations. This divergence raises an important question; which voice represents the true measure of American policy—the cautionary voice that urges restraint, or the alarmist one that amplifies fear? A nation as influential as the United States cannot afford ambiguity in matters that carry global consequences.

If the logic of pre-emptive fear were to be universally applied, it would lead to an absurd and dangerous conclusion—that every nation must dismantle the capabilities of every other nation to ensure its own safety. Such a path would not lead to peace but to perpetual conflict. The only viable alternative is the recognition of mutual security, grounded in respect for sovereignty and a commitment to dialogue over domination.

Pakistan’s case is particularly instructive in this regard. Since its inception, Pakistan has maintained a relationship with the United States that has often been characterized by cooperation and alliance, even in the most challenging of circumstances. From the Cold War to the war on terror, Pakistan has stood alongside America, sometimes at great cost to itself. To now cast Pakistan as a source of threat is not only inconsistent with historical reality but also detrimental to the prospects of a constructive partnership.

It is worth reflecting on whether the analyses guiding such perceptions are themselves free from bias or external influence. In the complex theatre of international politics, narratives are often shaped by interests that are not immediately visible. Misjudgments, when left uncorrected, can harden



into policy, with consequences that extend far beyond the intentions of those who formulate them.

The world today stands at a delicate juncture, where the choices of powerful nations will determine whether the future is defined by cooperation or confrontation. For the United States, this is a moment to reaffirm its commitment to the principles it has long championed—justice, fairness, and respect for the sovereignty of all nations. Security, in its truest sense, cannot be achieved through the accumulation of weapons alone, nor through the perpetuation of fear. It must be built upon trust, understanding, and a willingness to see the world not as a collection of adversaries, but as a community of shared destiny.

For God’s sake, let this world remain a cradle of peace, not a battleground of suspicion. And let reason prevail over fear, before fear once again leads humanity down a path from which return is both painful and uncertain.

Hormuz open to all but 'enemy-linked' ships amid US threat

Irani statement comes after Trump threatened to target Iranian power plants if the waterway was not open within 48 hours

TEHRAN: The Strait of Hormuz remains open to all shipping except vessels linked to "Iran's enemies", Iran's representative to the UN maritime agency said on Sunday, after US President Donald Trump threatened to target Iranian power plants if the waterway was not "fully open" within 48 hours.

The threat of Iranian attacks during the US-Israeli war on Iran has kept most ships from getting through the narrow strait, the conduit for around a fifth of global oil and liquefied natural gas supplies, threatening a global energy shock.

Ali Mousavi said Tehran was ready to cooperate with the International Maritime Organisation to improve maritime safety and protect seafarers in the Gulf, adding that ships not linked to "Iran's enemies" could pass the strait by coordinating security and safety arrangements with Tehran.

"Diplomacy remains Iran's priority. However, a complete cessation of aggression as well as mutual trust and confidence are more important," Mousavi said, adding that Israeli and US attacks against Iran were at the "root of the current situation in the Strait of Hormuz".

Japan could consider deploying its



military for minesweeping in the Strait of Hormuz, a vital artery for global oil supplies, if a ceasefire is reached in the US-Israeli war on Iran, Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi said on Sunday.

"If there were to be a complete ceasefire, hypothetically speaking, then things like

minesweeping could come up," Motegi said during a Fuji TV programme. "This is purely hypothetical, but if a ceasefire were established and naval mines were creating an obstacle, then I think that would be something to consider."

Japan's military actions are limited

under its postwar pacifist constitution, but the 2015 security legislation allows Japan to use its Self-Defence Forces overseas if an attack, including on a close security partner, threatens Japan's survival and no other means are available to address it.

Iran to completely close Hormuz if Trump executes threats on Iranian energy, Revolutionary Guards say

TEHRAN: Iran will completely shut the strategic Strait of Hormuz if US President Trump executes threats to target Iranian energy facilities, the country's Revolutionary Guards said in a statement on Sunday.

Trump on Saturday threatened to "obliterate" Iran's power plants if Tehran did not fully reopen the Strait of Hormuz within 48-hours, suggesting a significant escalation barely a day after he talked about "winding down" the war, now in its fourth week.

In their Sunday statement Iran's Revolutionary Guards also said companies with US shares will be "completely destroyed", if Iranian energy facilities were targeted by Washington and energy facilities in countries that host US bases will be "lawful" targets.

Earlier, US President Donald Trump threatened Iran to attack its power plants if strait of Hormuz was not fully restored within 48 hours. The statement added dramatic situation in war escalation entering into fourth week.

The Strait of Hormuz remains open to all shipping except vessels linked to "Iran's enemies", Iranian media reports published on Sunday quoted Iran's representative to the UN maritime agency as saying, Ali Mousavi's comments came from an interview published on Friday by Chinese news agency Xinhua, before US President Donald Trump's threat.

Iran missile strikes wound over 100 in two south Israel towns

DIMONA: Iranian missile strikes on two southern Israeli towns wounded more than 100 people on Saturday, medics reported, after Israeli air defense systems failed to stop the incoming projectiles.

The two direct impacts ripped open the fronts of residential buildings and carved deep craters into the ground.

Magen David Adom responders said 84 people were injured in the town of Arad, 10 of them seriously, hours after 33 were wounded in nearby Dimona.

Iranian state television said the missile strike on Dimona, which contains a nuclear facility, was a "response" to an earlier attack on its own nuclear site at Natanz.

AFP footage from Arad showed rescue crews searching through rubble for injured people in a heavily damaged building.

Fire trucks with flashing lights were at the scene alongside dozens of emergency personnel.

The Israeli military said it would review the failed interception. "The air defense systems operated but did not intercept the missile. We will investigate the incident and learn from it," military spokesman Brig. Gen. Effie Defrin wrote on X.

The local fire service said there was "extensive damage" in Arad, with three buildings affected and a fire ignited in one of them.

Medic Riyadh Abu Ajaj described "extensive destruction" at the strike site in a statement from the organisation. "There was a lot of chaos at the scene," he said.

Taliban carry out over 1,100 floggings, six public executions in past year

Human rights advocates term expansion of corporal punishment as reflective of wider restrictions under Taliban rule



KABUL: The Afghan Taliban flogged at least 1,186 people and carried out six public executions in Afghanistan during the last year – March 2025 to March 2026.

The official statements and data compiled by an Afghan television channel, and drawn from statements issued by the Taliban's Supreme Court, indicate the continued application of corporal punishment in most parts of the country. The total excluded the final 12 days of July 11 to 22, implying that the actual number of floggings could be higher.

These punishments took place across

dozens of provinces, including Kabul, Herat, Balkh, Kandahar, Nangarhar, Khost, Badakhshan, Ghor, Paktia, Paktika, Faryab, Laghman, Kapisa, Parwan, Uruzgan, Zabul, Kunar, Maidan Wardak, Ghazni, Kunduz, Baghlan, Takhar, Badghis, Farah, Nimroz, Logar, Jawzjan, Helmand, Sar-e-Pul, Daikundi and Bamian.

Taliban court statements showed an increase in the use of corporal punishment during the latter months of the year, with women also subjected to such measures. Official data revealed that nearly 100 women were flogged over an eight-month period, with many of these

punishments conducted in public. Human rights advocates described the expansion of corporal punishment as reflective of wider restrictions under Taliban rule, raising serious concerns regarding due process and fundamental freedoms.

Abdul Ahad Farzam, a human rights researcher, stated that the persistence of these practices could lead to long-term consequences.

"These punishments violate basic human rights standards and create a climate of fear in society," he said.

Public executions were also implemented during the year under the principle of qisas, or retributive justice, with residents in at least four provinces witnessing such events.

In the most recent instance, a man was executed in a sports stadium in Khost in the presence of thousands of spectators, including children. Other executions were reported in Badghis (where three individuals were put to death), as well as one each in Farah and Nimroz.

Additionally, the Taliban introduced a new penal code during the year, which drew widespread international criticism for its severity and inadequate due process protections. Isolates Afghanistan and heightens concerns over the protection of basic freedoms under Taliban rule.

Doha confirms four Qataris, three Turks killed in helicopter crash

Turkiye says helicopter crashed into sea during training exercise as part of joint forces command



DOHA: Qatar on Sunday confirmed four of its military personnel and three Turkish nationals, including one serviceman, were killed on board a helicopter that crashed in Qatar's territorial waters.

The Gulf state's interior ministry said in a statement rescue operations had been completed and a final seventh individual was confirmed dead.

All those who were on board have been found, numbering seven, and their mar-

tyrdom has been confirmed," it said.

Earlier, Qatar's defence ministry named the victims of the crash as Captain Mubarak Salem Daway al-Marri, Sergeant Fahad Hadi Ghanem al-Khayarin, Corporal Mohammed Maher Mohammed and Captain Saad Nasser Sameekh from the Qatari armed forces.

The defence ministry also identified Major Sinan Tastekin from the Qatar-Turkiye Joint Forces and two Turkish civilians, Suleiman Cemra Kahraman and

Ismail Anas, as having been killed in the crash.

They are the first recorded fatalities from both countries since the US and Israel unleashed strikes on Iran on February 28 and the Islamic republic launched a retaliatory air campaign against its Gulf neighbours.

The Turkish defence ministry said: "A Qatari armed forces helicopter, which was carrying out a training exercise as part of the Qatar-Turkiye Joint Forces Command, crashed into the sea."

"A member of the Turkish armed forces and two Aselsan technicians" were killed in the crash, the ministry said, referring to the Turkish defence giant.

The Qatari defence ministry had earlier said that the helicopter crashed due to a "technical malfunction" during a routine flight.

Meanwhile, the Pakistani government expressed deep sorrow over the tragic helicopter crash in Qatar that resulted in the loss of precious lives.

In a statement, the Foreign Office spokesperson said: "We extend our heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims and to the governments of Qatar and Turkiye."

He added that Pakistan stood in firm solidarity with both brotherly nations during this difficult time.

Drone strike on Sudan hospital kills 64, wounds dozens, WHO says

Attack on El-Daein Teaching Hospital in the state capital occurred on Friday

DARFUR: A strike on a hospital in Sudan's East Darfur state killed 64 people and wounded 89 others, including 13 children, the World Health Organization said Saturday.

The attack on El-Daein Teaching Hospital in the state capital occurred on Friday, damaging the pediatric, maternity, and emergency departments and leaving the facility non-functional. WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus called for an end to the nearly three-year conflict.

"Enough blood has been spilled," he said. "Health care should never be a target. Peace is the best medicine."

Human toll and emergency response

Among the dead were two female nurses, one male doctor, and multiple patients. Eight health staff were reported among the wounded. The WHO is supporting local health partners to treat the injured and fill urgent gaps in medical services with essential supplies.

Sudanese rights group Emergency Lawyers reported that the hospital was struck by a drone. The paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) control the Darfur region, while Sudan's army holds the east, center, and north.

Ongoing attacks on health care

RSF-controlled El-Daein has been targeted repeatedly by the Sudanese army, including a market strike earlier this month. The Sudan Armed Forces said in a statement carried by SUNA



that it adheres to international norms, accusing the RSF of regularly attacking service and health facilities.

The WHO's Surveillance System for Attacks on Health Care (SSA) tracks such incidents but does not assign blame. According to SSA data, Friday's strike brings the total deaths in health-care attacks in Sudan to 2,036 across 213 incidents.

"Beyond the devastating human toll,

attacks on health care have immediate and long-term consequences for communities already in desperate need of medical services," Tedros said.

Escalating drone warfare

Drone strikes have become a hallmark of the Sudan conflict, killing dozens at a time, mainly in southern Kordofan. UN rights chief Volker Turk said more than 200 civilians were killed by drone

attacks over eight days this month.

The war, which began in April 2023, has killed tens of thousands and displaced over 11 million people. More than 33 million need humanitarian aid, according to the UN.

"Enough suffering has been inflicted," Tedros said. "The time has come to de-escalate the conflict in Sudan and ensure the protection of civilians, health workers, and humanitarians".

زمن آخیا ہا فکتاً نماً آخیا اللّٰہن جیماً اور جس نے کسی ایک انسان کی زندگی بچائی، تو گویا اس نے پوری انسانیت کو بچایا

The Ray of HOPE

For the needy ones

Hamza Foundation

Welfare Thalassemia Center & Blood Transfusion Services Peshawar
(Reg. Charitable Organization)

hamzafoundation.org.ijaz@gmail.com www.hamzafoundationhosp.org

Since 2006

Saudi Arabia construction costs rise 1.4% in February: GASTAT

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's construction sector maintained stable cost growth in February, with the index rising 1.4 percent year on year amid steady increases in residential and non-residential building expenses, official data showed.

According to data from the General Authority for Statistics, the Kingdom's Construction Cost Index rose to 102.5 in February, up from 102.4 in January and 101.1 a year earlier.

The steady momentum in Saudi Arabia's construction sector aligns with broader trends across the Gulf Cooperation Council, where countries are accelerating efforts to diversify their economies away from hydrocarbons.

Last year, property consultant Knight Frank projected that the Kingdom's construction output value will reach \$191 billion in 2029, marking a 29 percent increase compared to 2024.

In its latest report, GASTAT said: "The CCI recorded a 1.4 percent increase in February 2026 compared to the corresponding month of the previous year."

It added: "This increase is mainly attributed to a 1.4 percent rise in construction costs for the residential sector and a 1.5 percent rise in construction costs for the non-residential sector."

Saudi Arabia's US Treasury holdings rise over 6% to \$134.8bn in January

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's holdings of US Treasuries rose 6.22 percent from a year earlier to \$134.8 billion in January, even as they declined from the previous month, US Treasury data showed.

The Kingdom's holdings fell by \$14.7 billion from December, when they stood at \$149.5 billion, marking a pullback after a steady build-up in recent months. Holdings were \$148.8 billion in November and \$134.3 billion in October.

Countries including Saudi Arabia invest in US Treasuries for their perceived safety, liquidity, diversification benefits, and alignment with economic ties to the US.

Saudi Arabia ranked 18th among the largest foreign holders of US government debt, slipping one position from the previous month after being overtaken by South Korea, whose holdings rose to more than \$141 billion.

The bulk of the Kingdom's portfolio remained concentrated in long-term securities, which stood at \$106.2 billion and accounted for 78.8 percent of the total. Short-term holdings amounted to \$28.6 billion, or 21.2 percent. The allocation toward longer-dated Treasuries underscores the Kingdom's strategy to preserve capital, maintain liquidity and diversify foreign reserves, as global markets navigate interest rate uncertainty and shifting monetary conditions.



RAWALPINDI: People are busy in shopping at a market ahead of the Eid al-Fitr celebrations, which marks the end of the Islamic holy month of Ramadan, in the city. PHOTO: ONLINE

Govt bears Rs69b shock to maintain POL prices: FinMin

Govt preparing targeted relief package for vulnerable segments: Aurangzeb

STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE: Federal Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb said on Sunday that the government had borne the burden of Rs 69 billion to maintain stability in the prices of petroleum products and provided possible relief to the people.

Talking to the media here, he added that ongoing tension and possible war situation in the region may pose risks to the energy infrastructure, which is also likely to have an impact on the supply chain.

He hoped that the energy supply situation would improve by April and the country would not face any major crisis. He clarified that government's top priority is to put minimal financial pressure on the people and effective steps are being taken at various levels for this purpose. Government is following a serious and comprehensive strategy to keep the economy stable despite limited resources, he vowed.



Finance Minister said that resources are not unlimited, therefore it is necessary to find sustainable and long-lasting solutions. In this regard, consideration is being given to promoting demand

management, efficient use of energy and saving measures to reduce unnecessary consumption.

Muhammad Aurangzeb asserted that a targeted relief package is being pre-

pared for the deserving and low-income groups, which aims to reduce the effects of inflation and provide facilities to the real needy.

He invited the public, economists and relevant stakeholders to send their suggestions to the government so that better and effective policymaking could be made possible. He also referred to the fact that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, in his recent address, has shared in detail the economic and energy challenges facing the nation and the government is taking all possible measures to solve these problems.

The Federal Finance Minister extended his heartfelt greetings to the entire nation on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr and prayed for sustainable stability, development and security in the country. He expressed the optimism that through joint efforts and responsible behavior, Pakistan will successfully deal with the current challenges.

Saudi Ports Authority expands support for Gulf shipping with new services

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's ports authority has rolled out additional support for vessels operating in the Arabian Gulf, aiming to streamline services and sustain maritime activity as regional shipping conditions tighten. The Saudi Ports Authority, also known as Mawani, said it is leveraging capabilities across its Eastern Region ports to deliver integrated services that meet vessel requirements efficiently, helping ensure the continuity of operations. This comes amid escalating tensions in the region, which have disrupted navigation through the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most critical oil and gas chokepoints, through which roughly a fifth of global oil supplies pass. Recent developments have led to restrictions and delays in maritime traffic through the waterway, pushing freight rates higher and prompting shipping companies to seek alternative routes. The disruptions have raised concerns over supply chain stability and the flow of global trade. Mawani said its initiative includes the provision of food and medical supplies, crew change services, as well as bunkering and water supply, alongside other operational support for ships during voyages. In a release, Mawani stated: "To facilitate access to these services, Mawani will provide an updated list of approved ship suppliers and bunkering service providers, enabling ship owners and operators to communicate directly with them and coordinate their needs promptly."

Call for expanding food export to Gulf states

STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE: Convener of FPCCI Regional Committee on Food, Shahid Imran Friday urged all the country's trade bodies and exporters to act swiftly to capitalize on expanding food market access in Gulf states in view of the prevailing situation.

He told media here that Pakistan, with its strong agricultural base and diverse food production, is well-positioned to meet the growing food needs of Gulf States.

Shahid Imran said, Pakistani exporters

are witnessing increased demand for rice, meat, fruit, vegetables, and processed food products. If managed strategically, this situation can help Pakistan not only boost its exports but also establish itself as a dependable and long-term food supplier to Gulf nations, contributing positively to the country's economic growth, he suggested.

The convener said Pakistan Halal-certified meat industry, in particular, holds a competitive advantage in Gulf markets where quality and religious compliance are critical. The ongoing conflict in the Gulf region has un-

expectedly created new opportunities for Pakistan's food export sector. As supply chains from traditional exporters face disruptions due to instability, Gulf countries are actively seeking reliable alternative sources to meet their growing food demands.

Ensuring compliance with international standards, he said, Pakistan can significantly enhance export volumes to Gulf. He said, strengthening cold chain systems and ensuring consistent quality will be essential to sustain long-term relationships with Gulf buyers.

Recycling textile waste can help boost economy: Mian Kashif

STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE: Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC) Chief Executive Officer Mian Kashif Ashfaq said here Friday Pakistan has significant potential to achieve sustainable social and economic development in the 21st century by recycling textile waste that saves whopping quantum of water.

Talking to a delegation of exporters led by Ahmad Nisar Gujjar, he said, though challenges ahead for Pakistan are complex such as climate change, rapid population growth, resource shortages, inadequate job creation and rising pov-

erty, Pakistan, in a decade, can be among the top five countries exporting circular, sustainable textiles made from recycled waste textiles. That would be a much-needed step to combat poverty, reduce textile waste, and preserve the country's land, water and electricity resources. Mian Kashif said, Pakistan has the potential to eliminate textile waste and transform it into creative products. European Union (EU) had exported 100,000 pairs of used jeans valued at USD 46 million to Pakistan in 2021 which were recycled and exported from Karachi. He said Pakistan generates approximately

270,125.34 metric tons of textile waste annually, he cited.

There is a dire need to impose a strict ban on textile dumping in the country. Simultaneously, it is crucial for the government to mature the textile recycling industry and employ women and girls in this sector to transform waste textiles into meaningful and creative products.

He said, even brand handbags are made from waste fabrics and leather which is an excellent example of women empowerment, entrepreneurship and transformation of textile waste into practical meaningful products.

US permits 30-day sale of Iran oil at sea in effort to tame prices

Energy analysts say admin efforts to control prices will not have a meaningful impact until the Strait is open

WASHINGTON: The Trump administration waived sanctions on the purchase of Iranian oil at sea for 30 days on Friday in its latest attempt to ease oil prices that have been driven up by the US-Israeli war on Iran.

The waiver will bring some 140 million barrels of oil to global markets and help relieve pressure on energy supply, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent posted on X.

The move reflects White House worries that the surge in oil prices after nearly three weeks of US and Israeli strikes on Iran will hurt US businesses and consumers ahead of the November midterm elections, when President Donald Trump's fellow Republicans hope to retain control of Congress.

The licence, posted to the Treasury Department's website after market hours, says Iranian oil can be imported into the US under the waiver when necessary to complete its sale or delivery.

The US has not meaningfully imported Iranian oil since Washington imposed measures after the 1979 revolution. It was unclear whether any Iranian oil would end up in the country as a result of the waiver.

Cuba, North Korea and Crimea are among the regions excluded from the licence, which will remain in effect until

April 19.

The move is expected to benefit China, the top buyer of Iranian oil. Energy Secretary Chris Wright said supplies could get to Asia within three or four days and hit the market after being refined over the coming month and a half.

It was the third time the Treasury Department has temporarily waived sanctions on oil from US adversaries in a little more than two weeks. The moves are part of the administration's attempts to tame energy prices that have soared above \$100 a barrel to the highest levels since 2022.

The US previously eased sanctions on Russian oil and on Friday issued a general licence allowing the sale of Iranian crude oil and petroleum products loaded on vessels by Friday.

"In essence, we will be using the Iranian barrels against Tehran to keep the price down as we continue Operation Epic Fury," Bessent said.

Bessent had telegraphed the move in an interview with Fox Business on Thursday, saying the release of the sanctioned Iranian oil into global supplies would help keep oil prices down for 10 to 14 days.

He said on Friday that Iran would have difficulty accessing any revenue generated by the move, and Washington would maintain maximum pressure on Iran and



its ability to access the international financial system.

Running out of options

Oil prices have jumped about 50% since the US and Israel launched their attacks on February 28. Tehran has responded with attacks on Israel and the Gulf states that host US bases.

Vital energy infrastructure in Iran and neighbouring Gulf states has been attacked, and Iran has effectively closed the Strait of Hormuz, a conduit for some 20% of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas.

Read more: How many countries have pushed back on Trump's Hormuz ship demand?

In its effort to tame oil prices, the Trump administration on Wednesday announced a 60-day waiver of the Jones Act shipping law, temporarily allowing foreign-flagged vessels to move fuel, fertiliser and other goods between US ports.

Energy analysts, including Brett

Erickson, a managing principal at Obsidian Risk Advisers, have said the administration's efforts to control prices will not have a meaningful impact until the strait is opened to vessels.

"The easing of sanctions raises concerns about the rapid depletion of Washington's economic toolkit," to dampen oil prices, Erickson said. "If we've reached the point of loosening sanctions on the country we are at war with, we're really running out of options."

The US issued a 30-day waiver for countries to buy sanctioned Russian oil stranded at sea after a 30-day license on March 5, specifically for India to buy Russian oil.

Mark Dubowitz, CEO of the Foundation for the Defence of Democracies, a non-profit research institute considered hawkish on Iran, praised the decision.

"We've worked on sanctioning Iran's oil industry for years. This is a smart move ... to help win the fight against the regime," Dubowitz said on X.

Vietnam, Russia to sign energy deal: Hanoi

HANOI: Vietnam's prime minister left Sunday for an official visit to Russia during which the two nations will sign several agreements, including on oil and gas cooperation, Hanoi said.

Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh's trip to the major oil-producing nation from March 22 to March 25 comes as Vietnam seeks to shore up its fuel reserves amid global supply disruptions due to the war in the Middle East.

His visit will focus on deepening ties with Russia and expanding cooperation in trade, investment and energy, Vietnam's government said in a statement on Sunday.

"During this visit, a series of important agreements related to nuclear power plant projects, as well as cooperation in energy and oil and gas will be signed," another statement from Hanoi said on Saturday.

"Cooperation in oil and gas energy will be reinforced in all fields of trade, exploration, extraction, and human resource training," it added.

Since the US-Israel war against Iran began in late February, sparking fuel price hikes and fears of shortages around the world, the cost of 95-octane petrol and diesel in Vietnam, a manufacturing hub, has soared by 50 percent and 70 percent, respectively.

Chinh held phone talks recently asking for fuel support from several countries, including Qatar, Kuwait, Algeria and Japan, according to Hanoi.

He is scheduled to meet with his Russian counterpart, Mikhail Mishustin, on March 23, Moscow said.



They will discuss "issues of Russian-Vietnamese trade," with a focus on implementing joint projects in the energy and other sectors, according to a Russian government statement released on March 19.

During a visit by Mishustin to Hanoi in January 2025, Russia said it was "ready to participate in building a national nuclear power industry in Vietnam," and the two nations would work together on joint oil and gas projects, according to a joint statement.

The two sides also signed a deal on nuclear energy at the time, with Chinh saying his country would aim to build a nuclear power plant within five years.

Matches limited to Karachi, Lahore

PSL to commence without spectators

PCB to compensate franchises for financial losses caused by the absence of crowds, says Mohsin Naqvi

STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE: The Pakistan Super League (PSL) will commence on March 26 but will be held without spectators due to the ongoing security situation, Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman Mohsin Naqvi announced on Sunday.

Addressing a press conference at Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore, Naqvi said the decision was taken after days of consultations, including with the government and security agencies. "All matters regarding the PSL have been discussed in coordination with the government," he said.

He noted uncertainty surrounding the current situation, adding that it was not clear how long the crisis would continue. "When the crowd will not be allowed in stadiums, there is no need to take matches to multiple cities," he said.

Under the revised plan, the tournament will be staged in only two cities — Karachi and Lahore. Naqvi added that more matches would be scheduled in Peshawar in the next edition.

The PCB chief also confirmed that the PSL opening ceremony has been



cancelled, while spectators will not be permitted in stadiums until conditions improve.

He said the board would compensate franchises for financial losses caused by the absence of crowds. "The PCB will cover the losses incurred by franchises due to no spectators," he stated.

Fans who have already purchased tick-

ets will be issued refunds, he added.

The minister said that if conditions return to normal, spectators will be allowed to enter stadiums.

Two weeks ago, the government sharply increased diesel and petrol prices by Rs55 per litre or 20% — due to the ongoing US-Israel and Iran war, which has disrupted supply chains and pushed crude oil prices

to their two-year high.

Both federal and provincial governments have since introduced a range of austerity steps, including an additional weekly holiday, cutting free petrol allocations for ministers, limiting protocol vehicles, and proposing subsidised fuel for students. "We do not have a security issue; these are regional matters. Pakistan is safe," said Naqvi. International players will start arriving within a day or two, said Mohsin Naqvi. "We have a large pool of players available."

PCB's part-time employees can work with other franchises, said Mohsin Naqvi.

"All franchises are very pro-Pakistan and were taken into confidence on all decisions," said Mohsin Naqvi. The PCB chief said that if the PSL had been suspended this time, there would have been no time available for the rest of the year.

"Regarding what Gary Kirsten said, I would ask those who were with him to respond to it," said Naqvi.

The PCB chairman also announced that action will be taken against players who terminated their PSL contracts and signed with another league.

Rwanda's Utagushimaninde becomes youngest to score T20 int'l century



LAGOS: Rwanda's Fanny Utagushimaninde became the youngest cricketer to score a T20 international century during her team's 122-run win over Ghana at the Nigeria Invitational Women's T20I Tournament in Lagos on Saturday.

Utagushimaninde, aged 15 years and 223 days, smashed an unbeaten 111 off 65 balls, surpassing the previous record held by Uganda's Prosscovia Alako, who was 16 years and 233 days old when she struck 116 against Mali in Kigali in 2019.

The Rwandan opener also became the first woman to score a hundred on her international debut in the format.

On the men's side, France's Gustav Mckeon holds the record as the youngest player to hit a T20 international century, achieving the feat at 18 years and 280 days.

Ronaldo extends Eid ul Fitr wishes to fans across world



LISBON: Football icon Cristiano Ronaldo has extended heartwarming Eid ul Fitr wishes to fans across the world, spreading a message of peace and happiness.

Taking to social media, Ronaldo shared warm Eid greetings, posting a heartfelt message, saying: "Eid Mubarak to all! I hope you have a very special day with your family and loved ones. Wishing you all peace and happiness."

The Portuguese football star, currently playing for Al Nassr in Saudi Arabia, posted the message on his Instagram, accompanied by a photo of himself in traditional Saudi attire.

Muslims in the Gulf region are celebrating Eid ul Fitr on Friday, marking the end of the holy month of Ramadan.

Ramadan ends with the sighting of the new moon, which ushers in the month of Shawwal.

Across the Muslim world, Ramadan festivities this year were overshadowed by the ongoing war in the Middle East, triggered by the US and Israel's attack on Iran.

Snooker great O'Sullivan makes history with highest-ever break

50-year-old Englishman pulls off feat against Ryan Day of Wales on his way to World Open semi-finals

BEIJING: Seven-time world champion Ronnie O'Sullivan made professional snooker history on Friday by crafting the highest break ever of 153 at the World Open in China.

The 50-year-old Englishman pulled off the feat against Ryan Day of Wales on his way to sealing his place in the semi-finals in Yushan with a dominant 5-0 victory.

O'Sullivan, regarded as the best player snooker has ever produced, was aided by a free ball and started his break with the green, followed by an opening black.

He then reeled off the 15 reds, complemented by 13 further blacks and

two pinks, before nonchalantly clearing the colours to nail the eye-popping record.

O'Sullivan celebrated with a broad smile and a thumbs-up to the arena, which clapped and cheered in return.

The previous highest break was 148 by Jamie Burnett in 2004.

"Just want to say a big shout-out to all the people that have been messaging me, congratulating me on the 153," O'Sullivan said in a video posted on X.

"It was a pretty cool moment, really happy to do it. Thank you to everyone out there who has supported me."

The "Rocket" has achieved a perfect 147 break a record 17 times previously.



James breaks NBA appearance record as Lakers win thriller

The Lakers superstar took the court for his 1,612th time

MIAMI: LeBron James broke the NBA record for most regular-season games played on Saturday, taking the court for his 1,612th in the Los Angeles Lakers last-gasp 105-104 victory against the Orlando Magic.

The 41-year-old basketball icon's appearance took him one clear of the mark of 1,611 held by Robert Parish since his retirement in 1997.

The four-time NBA champion had equaled Parish's tally on Thursday in stunning fashion, posting a triple-double in the Lakers' win over the Heat in Miami.

It had looked as if James' milestone appearance on Saturday would be tinged with disappointment with Orlando poised to end the Lakers' eight-game winning streak, leading 104-102 with three seconds on the clock.

But a sensational buzzer-beating three-pointer with 0.6sec remaining from Luke Kennard rescued the Lakers to make it nine consecutive victories. The Lakers improved to 46-25 to tighten their grip on third place in the Western Conference.



James finished with 12 points, six rebounds and four assists.

Luka Doncic led the Lakers with 33 points but picked up a costly 16th season technical foul which triggers a suspension that will rule him out of Monday's show-

down with the Detroit Pistons.

"We'll try and get that rescinded," Lakers coach JJ Redick said of Doncic's foul.

Austin Reaves finished with 26 points on 10-of-20 shooting.

James, playing his unprecedented 23rd season, already holds a host of NBA records, including points scored, field goals made and field goals attempted and the longest streak of regular-season games with at least 10 points scored — 1,297 — in history.

James said his preparations for Saturday's record-breaking performance had been no different to the previous 1,611 games.

"It was a regular prep day," James said. "I know once I stepped on the floor that I was breaking the record, and that's a pretty cool thing."

"I said the other night, the best thing you can do for your teammates is to be available and I've tried to be available throughout my career, two decades plus, for my guys."

Including playoff games, James has amassed a total of 1,904 fixtures during his career. Kareem Abdul-Jabbar is a distant second with 1,797 appearances while Parish is third on 1,795.

South Africa clinch 19-run win over New Zealand in fourth T20I

"It was a perfect response to two disappointing losses in a row," says Captain Maharaj



WELLINGTON: South Africa's spinners played a decisive role as the tourists won the fourth Twenty20 international against New Zealand by 19 runs on Sunday to square the five-match series 2-2.

New Zealand were well placed to clinch the series midway through their chase in Wellington after the Proteas scored 164-5.

However, from 88-3 after 10 overs, they lost wickets in rapid succession to be all out for 145 off 18.5 overs.

It sends the series, played between weakened sides from both countries, to a decider in Christchurch on Wednesday.

The match swung in favour of South Africa when spinners Keshav Maharaj and Prenalan Subrayen turned the screws through the middle stages of the chase.

Captain Maharaj is comfortably the most experienced member of an experimental tour squad and proved hard to score from as he took 2-22 off four overs.

Subrayen, playing his first T20 international, bowled Dane Cleaver for 26 to spark New Zealand's middle order crumble and finished with 2-13 off three overs. Maharaj said his side played with more energy than in defeats in Hamilton and Auckland.

"It was a perfect response to two disappointing losses in a row," he said. "Coming into this game, you could see there was a little bit more energy and hunger. We are a young team, finding our way in international cricket so it takes a little bit of time."

Opener Tim Robinson top-scored with 32 for New Zealand while Proteas pacerman Gerald Coetzee took 3-31.

South Africa's innings were dominated by 57 off 36 balls from wicketkeeper Connor Esterhuizen.

He was dismissed by a spectacular outfield catch from Katene Clarke, on his international debut, off Ben Sears' bowling.

Paceman Sears impressed, taking 1-22 off four overs, which included conceding just two runs off the last over of the innings.

PSG sweep past Nice to reclaim top spot

Luis Enrique hailed his side's "perfect evening" after reclaiming Ligue 1 top spot

PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain coach Luis Enrique hailed his side's "perfect evening" after reclaiming top spot in Ligue 1 with a dominant 4-0 victory over 10-man Nice on Saturday.

Nuno Mendes opened from the penalty spot for the Parisians three minutes before the break with Desire Doue, Dro Fernandez and Warren Zaire-Emery adding three more in the second half.

Nice played the last half an hour a man down after Burundi midfielder Youssouf Ndayishimiye was sent off on his first start after a 10-month knee injury layoff.

PSG move one-point ahead of Lens, who thrashed Angers 5-1 on Friday and have

played one more game. PSG and Lens will meet on April 11.

"It will be difficult until the end," warned Luis Enrique of the title battle.

Days after keeping their Champions League title defence on track by reaching the quarter-finals with an 8-2 aggregate win over Chelsea, the Parisians were slightly less flamboyant but highly efficient in attack, despite the absence of several key players.

"Yes, it was a perfect evening. Every match presents difficulties, especially since it's tough to play after the Champions League.

"We controlled the match; it wasn't easy. These are three important points because



Lens continue to improve, and it will be difficult until the end."

On the Riviera, the reigning French champions notched up their third consecutive victory since their 3-1 defeat against Monaco three weeks ago.

"We showed that we are capable of improving and overcoming difficulties," added the Spanish coach.

First goal for Dro

The visitors opened the scoring with a

penalty awarded after Morgan Samson handled the ball in the box.

Portuguese winger Nuno Mendes, deployed on the left to replace the injured Bradley Barcola, ended PSG's poor run of missed penalties after 42 minutes.

Mendes then set up Doue for his fifth league goal after the break.

Ousmane Dembele came on after an hour and was involved in the last two Parisian goals with subtle passes.

Eighteen-year-old Dro Fernandez scored his first goal for the club since arriving from Barcelona during the winter transfer window after 81 minutes.

Warren Zaire-Emery picked up a Lucas Beraldo cross to cap off the victory with five minutes to go.

But already missing several key players, Luis Enrique lost two more, with Senny Mayulu substituted just before halftime,

visibly suffering a calf injury.

Then, Lee Kang-in, nursing a left ankle injury, was forced to leave the pitch after 64 minutes following a reckless Ndayishimiye tackle which resulted in the Nice player's sending off.

Nice remain 15th, ahead of Auxerre who beat Brest 3-0, in a crucial win for their survival hopes. Auxerre are five-points ahead of Nantes.

The Burgundy side played with ten men after the dismissal of their goalkeeper Donovan Leon after six minutes but held on against Brest who drop to 11th.

Toulouse secured their second consecutive Ligue 1 victory 1-0 against Lorient with substitute Emerson scoring after a solo run nine minutes from time.

Toulouse moved into the top half of the table, climbing to ninth place and overtaking Lorient, who sit in 10th.



Fiza Ali Announces Second Marriage

ISLAMABAD: In a delightful surprise for her followers this Eid, renowned Pakistani actor and television host Fiza Ali has officially announced her marriage to Ejaz Khan. Taking to Instagram to share the milestone, the Mehndi star described this new phase of her life as a "peaceful chapter" that she has long awaited. Fiza Ali, who has been a household name since her breakout role in the hit drama Mehndi, chose the festive occasion of Eid to share glimpses of her wedding celebrations. The announcement quickly went viral, with fans and industry peers flooding her social media with prayers and well-wishes for the couple. At 41, the veteran star opened up about how love has transformed her perspective. In her heartfelt post, Fiza expressed a deep sense of contentment, noting that this union has brought her the tranquility and stability she had been seeking for years. After a career spent in the public eye—spanning acting, modeling, hosting, and even music—this moment marks a significant personal turning point for the star. One of the most touching aspects of Fiza Ali's marriage is the role of her daughter, whom she shares with her former husband, Fawad Farooq. Fiza revealed that her daughter played a pivotal part in the decision to wed Ejaz Khan. Not only did her daughter warmly accept the union, but her constant encouragement gave Fiza the strength to move forward into this new relationship. For a celebrity who has often shared her life's highs and lows with her audience, this "peaceful chapter" feels like a well-deserved era of calm. As the news continues to trend across social media, Fiza Ali remains focused on embracing her future with Ejaz Khan, supported by the love of her family and the blessings of her fans.



PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi in a group photo with SOS orphan kids who visited Governor House on first day of Eid-ul-Fitr on Saturday. — PHOTO: TP

Governor House belongs to people, doors will remain open

Governor KP hosts orphan children, opens G.House to public on Eid

APP

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on the first day of Eid-ul-Fitr hosted orphan children from an SOS welfare organization at the Governor House on Saturday, where he distributed Eidi among them and shared festive moments.

The children spent time with the Governor, took photographs and celebrated Eid with enthusiasm.

Speaking on the occasion, the Governor expressed heartfelt joy in celebrating Eid with orphan children, saying that they deserve the utmost care, attention and affection of society.

He said the true spirit of Eid lies in sharing happiness with the underprivileged segments of society, adding that the up-

bringing and education of orphan children is a collective responsibility.

He stressed that both the state and society must play their role in ensuring the welfare and better future of such children.

Faisal Karim Kundi expressed confidence that these children, through education and hard work, would bring pride to Pakistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, terming them the architects of the nation's future. He emphasized the need for special focus on their education and character-building.

The Governor also opened the Governor House to the general public on the first day of Eid. A large number of people from Peshawar and other districts, including political and social figures as well as members of the Christian community,

Governor KP condoles death of Senator Sherry Rehman's daughter

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Sunday expressed deep sorrow and grief over the demise of Marvi, daughter of Pakistan Peoples Party leader Senator Sherry Rehman. In his condolence message, the Governor termed the death of Marvi an irreparable loss and a deeply distressing moment for the bereaved family.

visited the Governor House to exchange Eid greetings with him.

The Governor welcomed the visitors and extended Eid felicitations. Citizens appreciated the initiative of opening the Governor House to the public, saying that it added to the joy of Eid celebrations.

Speaking on the occasion, the Governor said that Eid conveys a message of happiness, love and brotherhood, and sharing these moments with the public remains his top priority. He reiterated that the Governor House belongs to the people and its doors will always remain open to them.

He further said that collective efforts are essential for peace, development and prosperity in the province, adding that such interactions play a vital role in strengthening public engagement.

Iran's threat to fully close Hormuz

Turkiye steps in for de-escalation

Iran's Revolutionary Guards say any attack on its energy infrastructure would trigger sweeping retaliation

ANKARA: Turkiye's Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan on Sunday discussed 'steps to end' the war with his counterparts from Egypt and Iran, as well as with US and EU officials, after Iran's Revolutionary Guards said they would completely close the Strait of Hormuz if Trump carried out threats against Iranian energy infrastructure.

Fidan held separate calls with Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Aragchi, Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty, EU's foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas and officials on the calls was provided.

Iran warns to shutdown Hormuz completely Iran has warned it will completely shut the Strait of Hormuz if US

President Donald Trump follows through on threats to target Iranian energy facilities, the country's Revolutionary Guards said on Sunday.

The warning came a day after Trump said he would "obliterate" Iran's power plants if Tehran failed to reopen the strategic waterway within 48 hours, signalling a sharp escalation despite earlier remarks about "winding down" the conflict. In a statement, Iran's Revolutionary Guards said any attack on its energy infrastructure would trigger sweeping retaliation. Companies with US ties would be "completely destroyed," it said, adding that energy facilities in countries hosting US bases would be considered "lawful" targets.

CDF warns terrorists from Afghan sanctuaries will not be allowed to undermine security

Field Marshal Asim Munir lauds troops' achievements during Operation Ghazab lil-Haq

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KURRAM: Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) Field Marshal Asim Munir has stressed that terrorists operating from sanctuaries across the border in Afghanistan will not be allowed to undermine Pakistan's security. Pakistani troops were — before a ceasefire was announced due to Eid ul Fitr — responding to the Afghan Taliban's unprovoked attacks, resulting in the killing of more than 450 Taliban operatives and Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) militants and the destruction of several important Afghan infrastructure.

The Pakistani government's longstanding

demand has remained that the Taliban honour the Doha commitments and ensure that the Afghan soil is not used for terrorism against Islamabad; however, that promise remains unfulfilled, due to which hostilities between the neighbours have increased.

In a statement, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said that Field Marshal Munir, who is also the chief of army staff (COAS), visited Kurram to spend Eid ul Fitr with the troops and officers.

"The field marshal offered Eid prayers, and prayed for the enduring stability and prosperity of Pakistan," the military's media wing said. During his interaction

with troops and officers, Field Marshal Munir extended warm Eid greetings and commended their unwavering dedication, high morale, and exemplary professionalism in safeguarding the nation.

Appreciating the valour and spirit of the troops, the field marshal lauded their achievements during Operation Ghazab lil-Haq, aimed at dismantling terrorist networks and ensuring lasting peace in the border regions. Reaffirming Pakistan's commitment to regional peace and stability, CDF Munir reiterated that Afghan soil must not be used by hostile elements for activities against Pakistan.

Acknowledging the formations' tireless efforts, he attributed operational successes to the supreme sacrifices of the nation's martyrs and the unwavering resolve of officers and soldiers dedicated



to the greater cause of national security. CDF Munir expressed pride in the

troops' steadfastness and reaffirmed the Armed Forces' unflinching commitment

to defending Pakistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Spot ON

3-year old child's body found floating in river



HYDERABAD: A dead body of a 3 years old child was found floating in the Indus River near Khanpur bridge in Kotri, Jamshoro district, on Friday.

An official of Rescue 1122 informed that the dead body of the female child was pulled out from the water and shifted to the Liaquat University Hospital for postmortem.

Meanwhile, the Jamshoro police said they were trying to identify the child and that an investigation had also been started over her drowning.

Punjab Governor holds public meetings in his native village

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ATTOCK: Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan on the second day of Eid ul Fitr held public meetings in his native village Dharnal, where a large number of local elders, notables, party workers and residents called on him. The governor shared Eid greetings with the people, distributed Eidi among children and listened to public complaints. Speaking on the occasion, he said Eid ul Fitr conveys a message of brotherhood, love and sacrifice, urging people to adopt these values in their daily lives.

One killed, three injured on road

FAISALABAD: One passenger was killed while three others sustained injuries in a road traffic in the area of Balochni police station.

A Rescue 1122 spokesman said on Sunday that a speeding van hit a harvester on Sheikhpura Road near Adda Johal.

As a result, Hashmat Ullah, 40, received serious injuries and died on the spot while Rescue 1122 provided first aid to Muhammad Javaid in addition to shifting Habib Aurangzaib and Waheed Munir to the Allied Hospital-I in a critical condition.

The police took the body into custody while further investigation was under progress, he added.

DPM Dar speaks with Egyptian FM, discusses regional issues

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Sunday spoke with Foreign Minister of Egypt, Dr. Badr Abdelatty and discussed the evolving regional situation.

The deputy PM emphasized the importance of dialogue and collective efforts to promote peace and stability in the region.

The two leaders also exchanged warm Eid greetings.

Gilani felicitates nation on Pakistan Day

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Senate, Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani, has extended heartfelt congratulations to the nation on the occasion of Pakistan Day, stating that March 23 marks a significant milestone in the country's history and serves as a reminder of the objective of independence and the unparalleled sacrifices made to achieve it.

In his special message, the Chairman of the Senate said that the historic resolution of 1940 provided the Muslims of the subcontinent with a clear destination, ultimately leading to the creation of an independent and sovereign state of Pakistan.

He added that the day calls for a renewed commitment to follow in the footsteps of the forefathers and to play an active role in ensuring the country's progress, stability, and prosperity.

He said that the creation of Pakistan was the result of the collective struggle and sacrifices of millions of Muslims. Under the ideology of the Two-Nation Theory, the Muslims of the subcontinent united for their religious, political, and economic freedom, culminating in the creation of a separate homeland.

Paying tribute to Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Allama Muhammad Iqbal, and other leaders, he said their visionary leadership provided clear direction to the nation.