



Rana Sanaullah defends fuel price hike, links it to global crisis



Pakistan, UK agree to boost cooperation on security, counterterrorism and organized crime



Govt announces targeted subsidies after fuel price hike amid regional tensions

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PM announces major relief for railway passengers, fares unchanged despite fuel price hike

PEAK POINT

LAHORE: The government has announced a significant relief for railway passengers by deciding to absorb the financial impact of rising diesel prices instead of passing the burden on to the public. PR spokesperson said here on Friday, Pakistan Railways was facing increased operational costs due to the surge in fuel prices, making a 30 percent increase in train fares unavoidable.

However, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif intervened and directed the authorities not to increase fares for any class.

Thus, fares for all categories, including economy and air-conditioned classes,

will remain unchanged.

In addition, to support the business community, the government has also decided not to increase freight train charges. On the Prime Minister's instructions, the government has taken on an additional financial burden of Rs 6 billion until June 30 to ensure relief for passengers and traders.

Federal Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi stated that the Prime Minister's decision had won the hearts of people during challenging times.

The step was a gift to the public and would keep rail travel affordable and accessible for everyone, he added.



LAHORE: Jamate-Islami workers protest about hike of petrol price.

Iran's Pezeshkian says Trump's 'Stone Age' threat amounts to war crime

PEAK POINT



IRAN: Iranian President Dr Masoud Pezeshkian said on Friday that threats by United States President Donald Trump to send his country back to the "Stone Age" amounted to a war crime.

In a post on X, he said: "Does threatening to send an entire nation back to the Stone Age mean anything other than a massive war crime? This was the question I asked my Finnish counterpart, who is a jurist. History is full of those who paid a heavy price for their silence in the face of criminals."

Six people were injured, and several houses were damaged in northern Israel in an Iranian missile attack on Friday, Israeli media reported.

A 79-year-old individual was wounded as the missile hit Haifa and Kiryat Ata, the Israeli daily Yedioth Ahronoth reported. Al Jazeera reports that Israeli medical sources say six people were injured, and another was hit by stones from the shockwave of an explosion.

The attack came after the Lebanese group Hezbollah launched 15 rocket attacks.

Suicide bombing at Domel police station in Bannu leaves 5 civilians dead, 13 injured

PEAK POINT

BANNU: A suicide car bomb attack at the Domel Police Station in Bannu killed at least five civilians, while 13 others were injured, including one policeman. Among the deceased are a husband, wife, daughter, and son from the same family.

The explosion occurred when an explosives-laden vehicle rammed into the rear side of the police station, triggering a massive blast followed by an exchange of gunfire. The intensity of the explosion was so powerful that it was heard miles away.

According to initial reports, the blast completely destroyed the sentry post of the police station, while a large por-

tion of the building was reduced to rubble. The people were martyred and 13 injured were shifted to



hospitals, including one police officer.

He added that search and rescue operations are ongoing and will continue until the area is fully cleared.

Following the incident, Rescue 1122 teams reached the site promptly; however, continuous rainfall created difficulties in relief operations.

After the firing stopped, rescue person-

nel initiated a full-scale operation to remove debris and recover those trapped. Meanwhile, announcements were made in local mosques appealing to the public for blood donations and assistance, while residents actively participated in rescue efforts.

Security forces have cordoned off the area and launched a clearance operation, while further details regarding casualties and damage are being collected.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif condemned the attack, expressing sorrow at the loss of life, according to a statement issued via the Prime Minister's Office (PMO). "We are determined to completely eradicate all kinds of terrorism."

Petrol price hike sparks NA protests, JI announces nationwide action

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Opposition members staged a protest in the National Assembly on Friday against the government's sharp increase in petroleum prices, with lawmakers chanting slogans while surrounding the speaker's podium in a show of defiance. The government on Thursday further increased petrol prices by Rs137 per litre to a record-high of Rs458.4 after Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif decided to impose more taxes on consumers.

6.1-magnitude earthquake jolts Islamabad, KP

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: A 6.1-magnitude earthquake jolted parts of the country on Friday, according to the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD). The PMD said that the quake struck at 9:13pm at a depth of 190km, with the Hindu Kush Region in Afghanistan as its epicentre.

It said the shocks were felt in Islamabad, Chitral, Peshawar, Swat and Shangla. According to DawnNewsTV, tremors were also felt in Rawalpindi, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan and parts of Punjab.

Pakistan backs Arab League's stand against foreign occupation, urges stronger bonds with UN

PEAK POINT

UNITED NATIONS: Pakistan has called for stronger UN-Arab League cooperation in the crisis-ridden Middle East, highlighting that a priority of the 22-member League's is the resolution of long-standing disputes such as those arising from foreign occupation.

"We hope the ongoing international efforts will lead to a time-bound and irreversible political process, anchored in relevant UN resolutions, culminating in the establishment of a sovereign, independent and contiguous State of Palestine on the basis of pre-1967 borders, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital," Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, told the UN Security Council which met on Thursday afternoon and subregional organizations in maintaining inter-

national peace and security.



"A key priority for the League, for the Council and indeed for Pakistan is the resolution of long-standing disputes, particularly those arising from foreign occupation and the denial of the right to self-determination," the Pakistani envoy said.

The League, he said, has played a leading role in addressing the unresolved Palestinian question that remains at the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The Palestinian people continue to be victims of occupation and dispossession, the Pakistani envoy said, demanding that Israel vacate its illegal occupation of all Arab territories, including in Palestine, Syria and Lebanon.

"Arab and OIC [Organization of Islamic Cooperation] representation is so important at this table," he added.

As the US-Israel war against Iran escalates, Ambassador Asim Ahmad said that the immediate goal must be complete cessation of all hostilities and return to dialogue for peaceful resolution of all issues.

"Our brothers, Gulf members of the Arab League are facing direct attacks on their soil.

Pentagon shake-up as Hegseth ousts army chief amid Iran conflict

PEAK POINT

WASHINGTON: US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth has abruptly forced Army Chief of Staff General Randy George to immediate retirement amid the ongoing war with Iran, multiple US media outlets reported on Friday.

The outlets described the move as one of the most consequential Pentagon leadership upheavals in decades.

The decision also included the removal of General David Hodne, head of the Army's Transformation and Training Command, and Major General William Green, chief of the Army Chaplain Corps, in actions first reported by The Washington Post and later confirmed by CBS News and other organisations.

The ouster cuts short General George's tenure roughly one and a half years into what is typically a four-year term and comes as US forces enter the fifth week of active operations against Iran. CBS News quoted US defence officials as saying that Hegseth.





SPORTS



PSB shifts to result-based model; proposes Rs4.9b budget for athlete development



PEAK POINT
 LAHORE: The Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) has approved a wide-ranging reform agenda aimed at transforming the country's sports structure, alongside key financial and policy decisions, during its 36th Board Meeting held at the PSB Headquarters, Islamabad.

The meeting was chaired by Federal Minister for Inter-Provincial Coordination and PSB President Rana Sana Ullah Khan, who led discussions focused on governance, athlete development, and long-term sustainability of sports in Pakistan. Director General PSB Yasir Pirzada presented the bi-annual performance

report (July–December 2025), outlining progress in governance reforms, infrastructure upgrades, athlete facilitation, and international participation. The board unanimously approved the report, commending the PSB management for improving institutional performance and strategic direction. A key highlight of the meeting was the approval of a landmark Long-Term Athlete Development Programme (LTADP). The initiative aims to transition Pakistan's sports system from an activity-based model to a performance-driven framework aligned with international standards and Olympic cycles. Under the new

policy, all national sports federations have been directed to submit four-year development plans within 90 days, with future funding tied to performance benchmarks and compliance. In a significant financial move, the board also endorsed a proposal to increase PSB's annual budget from approximately Rs. 1.2 billion to Rs. 4.9 billion, reflecting the growing needs of athlete training, international exposure, coaching, and infrastructure development. The proposal will be forwarded to the Prime Minister for final approval. On governance, the board reviewed adherence to tenure regulations under the National Sports

Policy 2005 and stressed the importance of transparent and fair elections across federations. It also proposed the introduction of standardised electoral guidelines to strengthen accountability. Reaffirming its commitment to clean sport, the Board adopted a zero-tolerance stance on doping, with particular concern raised over violations within the Pakistan Weightlifting Federation. The meeting concluded with a renewed commitment to modernize Pakistan's sports ecosystem, emphasising merit, transparency, and international competitiveness as central pillars of future progress.

PHF rejects 'fake' social media reports, warns of legal action



PEAK POINT
 ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) on Thursday strongly refuted what it termed as "fabricated and misleading" reports circulating on social media regarding its internal affairs, including alleged circulars and committee appointments.

In an official statement issued by its Media Cell, the federation clarified that several posts and news items being widely shared online over the past few days had no connection with reality and were based on misinformation.

The PHF emphasized that all official communications, including circulars and announcements, are issued strictly through its authorized platforms after due approval from the PHF President.

The federation also dismissed reports concerning the appointment of the selection and management committees, terming them as baseless and fake.

"The PHF categorically denies such news and reserves the right to initiate legal proceedings against individuals involved in spreading false information," the statement added.

Matloob Ahmed shines with stunning 64 to lead J.A. Zaman Open Golf



PEAK POINT
 LAHORE: Seasoned professional Matloob Ahmed of Lahore Garrison Golf Club delivered a master-class performance to seize the lead on the opening day of the prestigious J.A. Zaman Open Golf Championship at the Lahore Gymkhana

worthy, as he sank crucial putts with confidence and consistency, leaving spectators and fellow competitors in awe. Trailing him in second place is Zahir Khan of Peshawar Golf Club, who returned an impressive 66, six-under par, just two strokes behind the leader. Khan's steady and disciplined play ensured he remains firmly in contention, heading into the next round. The opening day witnessed high-quality golf, with players demonstrating exceptional control, strategic awareness, and technical excellence. Birdies flowed regularly across the course, reflecting the competitive intensity and skill level of the field. Among the notable performers, Waqar Hassan of Margalla Golf Club, Muhammad Shabbir, and M. Saqib of Lahore Garrison Golf Club all carded solid rounds of 69 (three-under par), keeping themselves within striking distance. Other commendable performances included Jafal Hussain, who also posted a 69, while Adam Syed recorded a respectable 70 (two-under par) to stay in the mix. While Matloob's dominance set him apart on day one, the overall standard of play remained impressively high, promising an intense battle in the rounds ahead.

Amir faces Ahtesham in Servis Tyres Jr National Tennis final



LEGO lands football's dream lineup ahead of 2026 FIFA World Cup

PEAK POINT
 DUBAI: The LEGO Group has launched one of the most ambitious sports marketing campaigns in recent memory, signing four of football's most recognizable players, Cristiano Ronaldo, Lionel Messi, Kylian Mbappé, and Vinicius Júnior, for a global initiative tied to the 2026 World Cup. The campaign, created in partnership with FIFA, marks the first time the four players have appeared together in a single LEGO commercial and product collection. The effort includes new collectible sets, global fan activations, and a large-scale advertising rollout designed to coincide with the tournament in the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

LEGO said the campaign aims to connect football fandom with creativity and play, introducing the footballers as LEGO minifigures for the first time. The product line features multiple collectible sets celebrating each player's career, signature moments, and personal story through buildable scenes and hidden "easter eggs" for fans. The rollout also includes fan experiences and digital content

dece, now appear alongside Mbappé and Vinicius Jr., widely seen as leading figures of the next era. The commercial features the players assembling a brick-built World Cup trophy as part of the campaign titled "Everyone Wants a Piece." The new collection includes minifigure sets, display models, and premium builds timed for release ahead of the 2026 tournament. Marketing analysts view the move as a major statement in sports advertising, blending global celebrity power with a family-focused brand identity.

Quarterfinals conclude at National Boxing Championship



From Awareness to Action: Building an Inclusive Future for Autism in Pakistan”



PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: On World Autism Awareness Day, Maroof International Hospital hosted a high-impact awareness event, joined by Rongyudhi

Virabutr, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Thailand to Pakistan, emphasizing early autism intervention and societal inclusion. The event featured a symbolic Autism Awareness Walk within the hospital premises, uniting

staff, families, and guests to visually highlight the importance of acceptance, understanding, and timely support for children with autism. Speaking at the Maroof Early Intervention Therapy Unit (EITU), the Ambassador

stressed: “Early diagnosis can change a child’s entire future. We must move beyond pity and focus on creating opportunities for every child to live with dignity.” He highlighted societal challenges, shared Thailand’s “Steps with

Thera” vocational initiative, and reaffirmed Thailand’s commitment to support autism care in Pakistan. CEO Haroon Naseer said: “Autism awareness is a responsibility. We must create systems that nurture potential and give

every child the opportunity to thrive.” Medical Director Dr. Mir Waheed added: “Early intervention is as critical as emergency care. Awareness must lead to immediate action to ensure better outcomes for children.”

“Seats empty, standards lowered, fees inflated”: Senate exposes deep crisis in private Medical Colleges

NADEEM TANOLI
ISLAMABAD: A major crisis in Pakistan’s medical education system has come to light as the Senate Standing Committee on National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination exposed serious irregularities in private medical colleges, including empty seats despite massive demand, fee overcharging, lack of teaching hospitals, and declining education standards. The most controversial revelation was that despite over 140,000 students qualifying the MDCAT, thousands of seats in private medical colleges remain vacant, raising serious questions about the credibility and quality of these institutions. Senators directly challenged the narrative that financial constraints are the main barrier, pointing out that

top tier institutions like Aga Khan and Ziauddin have no vacant seats, indicating that the real issue lies in the quality of education rather than affordability. Senator Rubina Khalid strongly criticized the decision to lower MDCAT passing marks to 55 percent for MBBS and 50 percent for BDS, alleging that the move was designed to help underperforming private colleges fill their vacant seats. She raised concerns about a conflict of interest within the regulatory structure, claiming that private college owners influence key decisions to protect their commercial interests. Officials acknowledged the issue, confirming that several colleges still fail to attract students and admitted that these institutions may lack basic quality standards. It was announced that all colleges

with vacant seats will undergo fresh inspections, signaling a possible crackdown on substandard institutions. The debate took a sharper turn when lawmakers exposed serious deficiencies in infrastructure, functional teaching hospitals in some colleges. Senators questioned why institutions without proper hospitals are allowed to operate, warning that students are being enrolled without access to adequate clinical training. The committee was informed that a medical college is required to have a 500 bed hospital for 100 students and 650 beds for 150 students, but officials admitted that actual facilities often fall far short of these standards. In a candid admission, the Health Minister acknowledged this as a “weak area,” while another participant

highlighted the ground reality, stating that students are admitted and fees are collected without any proper hospital arrangements in place. The issue of overcharging by private medical colleges further intensified the debate. Despite a regulatory cap of Rs. 1.8 million for annual tuition fees, several institutions were found charging between Rs. 1.9 million and Rs. 2.5 million. The committee was informed that around 15 to 18 colleges had violated the fee cap. Authorities claimed that these institutions were forced to return the excess amount through fee adjustments and that their admission portals were temporarily suspended as a punitive measure. Lawmakers questioned whether such actions were sufficient, arguing that repeated violations indicate weak enforcement rather than

isolated breaches. Another critical concern raised during the session was the growing migration of experienced faculty from public to private medical colleges, driven by better salaries in the private sector. Senators warned that this trend is weakening public sector institutions and called for immediate salary reforms to retain qualified doctors and teachers. The committee also discussed the controversial 15 percent quota reserved for overseas students, which operates on separate merit lists, and the broader issue of limited local capacity. It was revealed that more than 40,000 Pakistani students go abroad annually to study medicine, resulting in an estimated loss of \$800 million in foreign exchange. Some lawmakers argued that increasing local seats could reduce this

outflow and discourage students from enrolling in low-quality foreign institutions. In response to the mounting concerns, regulators have issued final warnings to private medical colleges, directing them to comply strictly with fee caps and regulatory requirements. Any violation, concealment, or misrepresentation could lead to suspension of accreditation and a complete halt on admissions. A senior participant, speaking anonymously, described the situation as “a systemic failure where commercial interests have overtaken academic standards,” while another observer warned that “if immediate corrective action is not taken, the credibility of Pakistan’s medical education system will continue to erode.”

Opinion & Editorial



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Engineered stability

Farooq Arby
PAKISTAN’S external account signals aren’t comforting. Export momentum is uneven, imports are rebounding and the current account has been oscillating between deficit and modest surplus. But the rupee has been unusually calm. That combination typically shows up as visible pressure on exchange rates in emerging markets. The missing puzzle piece is policy. The State Bank of Pakistan has been purchasing extensively from the exchange market over the past two years. Is the SBP merely smoothing volatility through interventions or actively shaping the market?

Currency market intervention isn’t necessarily controversial, and central banks do routinely step in to dampen disorderly swings, curb speculative overshooting and maintain market functioning. If transparent and proportionate, such action can lower uncertainty, support trade planning and anchor expectations. But there’s a difference between episodic smoothing and persistent purchases. When a central bank repeatedly becomes the dominant buyer in the market (a monopsony), it influences price discovery, even if it insists it’s not targeting a specific exchange rate. Over time, participants stop focusing only on trade flows, remittances and portfolio sentiment and begin pricing in its likely presence. The bank’s presence alone can

dictate price formation. When one player consistently absorbs supply, the exchange rate may stop reflecting underlying demand-supply fundamentals and, instead, begin to reflect administrative intent. As a monopsony, the central bank can dictate the dollar’s price. The result can be an exchange rate that appears stable but is actually managed at an artificially low level. The rupee has exhibited a degree of parity stability in the last couple of years. But while reassuring on the surface, it may not fully correspond to macroeconomic realities. If this process keeps the rupee stronger than what fundamentals would imply, the costs keep accumulating quietly before arriving loudly.

First, an artificially strong currency is effectively a subsidy to imports and a tax on exports. Imports become cheaper in rupee terms, while exporters lose pricing power in competitive global markets. For Pakistan, which is still constrained by limited export diversification and a structurally fragile external account, this weakens the one lever that can generate durable foreign exchange, trade competitiveness. A credible exchange rate must balance three imperatives. Second, an overvalued rupee distorts investment signals. Exchange rates aren’t only a macro indicator but are also economy-wide price signals that guide capital allocation. If firms and investors believe

the rupee is policy — rather than fundamentals-driven, incentives shift. Tradable-sector firms hesitate to scale, import dependence becomes rational and domestic industry faces sustained pricing pressure from cheaper foreign goods. The long-run outcome is slower productivity growth and fewer jobs in sectors that can actually earn foreign exchange.

Third, credibility becomes the hidden balance sheet item. Once markets internalise the fact that the exchange rate is “guided”, expectations become path-dependent and traders ask what the central bank will tolerate rather than what fundamentals imply. Stability becomes brittle. In such a setting, a guided exchange rate ultimately proves costlier and more painful than market-based adjustment, as inevitable corrections arrive abruptly, triggering inflation, eroding real incomes and forcing emergency stabilisation.

To be clear, reserve accumulation itself is not a policy sin. Adequate buffers strengthen sovereign resilience, improve credit ratings and provide insurance against external shocks. But method and magnitude matter. If reserves rise primarily through sustained market dominance rather than through organic inflows, exports, remittances and FDI, the policy begins to resemble market engineering rather than market management.

Courtesy Dawn

A strategic neglect

Durdana Najam
The global contest for power is being redefined, not by oil, nor by traditional trade routes, but by control over critical minerals. Copper, lithium and rare earth elements now underpin everything from electric vehicles and renewable energy systems to advanced defence technologies. These are not just economic inputs; they are strategic assets. In the emerging order, access to these resources determines technological leadership, industrial resilience and military capability. This is where China has built a decisive edge. Over the past two decades, Beijing has secured dominance not only in mining but, more importantly, in processing and refining. Today, a significant portion of the world’s critical minerals passes through Chinese-controlled supply chains.

The US response has been to push for “supply chain diversification”. The logic is clear: reduce reliance on China by developing alternative sources and routes. Yet, while this strategy is frequently articulated, its execution remains uneven. The search for alternatives often overlooks regions that are not only resource-rich but also geographically central to emerging trade networks.

Pakistan is one such case. From a mineral perspective, Pakistan’s relevance begins with Reko Diq, one of the largest undeveloped copper and gold deposits in the world. At a time when global copper demand is expected to surge, driven by electrification and the green transition, such reserves are not peripheral; they are central to the future supply equation.

But Pakistan’s importance cannot be understood through minerals alone. Its geographic position elevates its strategic value. Sitting at the intersection of South Asia, Central Asia and the Middle East, Pakistan offers a rare combination: resource potential and connectivity. It provides the most direct access to the Arabian Sea for landlocked Central Asian states and serves as a natural corridor linking inland resource zones to global markets.

Courtesy Tribune

Govt announces targeted subsidies after fuel price hike amid regional tensions



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Thursday announced a targeted subsidy package aimed at cushioning the impact of a recent petroleum price surge, following decisions taken by the government in consultation with the national leadership amid prevailing regional tensions.

The announcement came after petroleum prices in the country rose sharply, with petrol reaching Rs458.40 per litre and high-speed diesel Rs520.35 per litre effective from April 3, following an unprece-

dent spike in global crude oil prices.

Addressing a news conference along with Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik, the finance minister said the government had opted for a targeted relief mechanism instead of blanket subsidies to ensure that support reaches the most deserving segments of society. "The leadership has decided that we are announcing a targeted subsidy programme so that relief is not a blanket one, but reaches those who are truly deserving," he said, adding that the move was aimed at reducing the burden of inflation on the poor and middle class.

He said the decision followed a detailed review of global petroleum supply and pricing trends over the past four weeks, particularly in light of emerging challenges in neighbouring regions, while Pakistan had so far avoided severe disruptions.

Highlighting key measures, the minister said a subsidy of Rs100 per litre would be provided for two-wheeler motorcycles, capped at 20

litres per month, for a period of three months.

To support the agriculture sector during the harvesting season, he said small landowners would receive a one-time subsidy of Rs1,500 per acre, noting that diesel consumption increases significantly during this period.

He further announced subsidies for the transport sector, including Rs100 per litre support for freight vehicles, alongside fixed monthly assistance of Rs70,000 for trucks, Rs80,000 for large transport vehicles, and Rs100,000 for public service buses, initially for one month, subject to review.

The finance minister said the government would also extend support to Pakistan Railways to help maintain affordable fares, particularly for lower-income passengers.

Aurangzeb said the evolving global energy situation required careful resource management, saying that the government would continue to review the measures.

Rana Sanaullah defends fuel price hike, links it to global crisis

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Adviser to the Prime Minister on Political Affairs Rana Sanaullah on Friday defended the recent increase in petroleum prices, saying the government had made sustained efforts to shield the public from the impact and had introduced targeted subsidies to ease the burden on vulnerable groups.

The government on Thursday further increased petrol price by Rs137 per litre, to history's highest ever level of Rs458.4 after Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif decided to impose more taxes on consumers. The government also increased the high-speed diesel price to Pakistan's highest level of Rs520.35 per litre — an increase of Rs185 per litre or 55%. In a video statement, Sanaullah said the world was facing an unprecedented surge in global petroleum prices, which had affected Pakistan in the same way as other nations. "In view of this situation, the prices of petrol and diesel were increased," he said.

He noted that the government had delayed passing on the increase to consumers for three weeks by adopting austerity measures and

utilising financial resources.

"Initially, austerity measures were implemented, after which the prime minister created a fund. Around Rs129 billion was spent from this fund, allowing the government to hold prices steady for three weeks," he added.

However, he said, such measures could not be sustained indefinitely. He revealed that extensive consultations were held with chief ministers of all provinces, as well as leaders from Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, alongside political, administrative and military leadership, to find ways to minimise the impact on the public. Following these deliberations, the government decided to introduce targeted subsidies.

Sanaullah said motorcycle users had been identified as one of the most vulnerable groups, while farmers would receive Rs1,500 per acre to support them during the upcoming harvesting season.

He added that goods transport operators would be given subsidies ranging from Rs70,000 to Rs80,000 per month, depending on capacity.

CJ stresses training, integrity for judicial officers

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Chief Justice of Pakistan on Friday underscored the importance of continuous professional training, integrity and impartiality for judicial officers to ensure effective dispensation of justice and strengthen public confidence in the judiciary. He expressed these views while interacting with a delegation of 24 senior civil judges from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa at the Supreme Court of Pakistan. The judges are currently undergoing in-service pre-promotion training at the Federal Judicial Academy under a professional exchange programme as part of their study tour. The meeting was attended by senior officials including the director general of the Federal Judicial Academy, the director general of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Judicial Academy and the secretary of the Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan. During the session, the chief justice highlighted the evolving nature of judicial responsibilities and said training programmes play a vital role in enhancing judicial competence, improving consistency in decision-making and promoting public trust in the justice system.

Pakistan's first state-of-the-art national forensic agency becomes fully operational in record time: Mohsin Naqvi

PEAK POINT



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's first modern, state-of-the-art National Forensic Agency has become fully operational in a short period, said Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi during his visit to the agency on Friday. During the visit, he toured various facilities including the Research and Innovation Lab, Digital Forensic Lab, Narcotics Lab, FinTech Lab, and Questioned Document Lab.

The interior minister also inspected the DNA, firearms, serology, and explosives rooms. He appreciated the performance of the entire team for making the agency fully operational in such a short time. Mohsin Naqvi stated that the establishment of the National Forensic Agency was a critical need of the modern era. He said the institution will significantly contribute to national

security and crime control. The agency is providing state-of-the-art services that were previously unavailable with other institutions, he said.

The Interior Minister added that the agency would now provide internationally standardized services and analysis within Pakistan. He also instructed that the agency's services be widely publicized so that all institutions can benefit from them.

Mohsin Naqvi also visited the mock crime scene unit and interacted with ASPs undergoing training.

Pakistan, UK agree to boost cooperation on security, counterterrorism and organized crime

PEAK POINT



ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry on Friday held an important meeting with Edward Llewellyn, Director General (Political) of the United Kingdom, during his visit to Islamabad. Federal Interior Secretary Mohammad Khuram Agha, British High Commissioner Jane Marriott and senior officials from both sides also participated. Both sides held detailed discussions on long-standing Pakistan-UK relations and the overall regional situation. They agreed to enhance cooperation in the Upskill Programme, anti-money laundering efforts, combating organized crime, and counterterrorism initiatives.

Talks were also held on strengthening collaboration in narcotics control and further improving security cooperation. Minister of State Talal Chaudhry said that Pakistan-UK relations were rooted in mutual trust and an effective partnership. During the meeting, Edward Llewellyn appreciated Pakistan's role in promoting peace in the region. He noted that Pakistan's efforts to reduce tensions in the Middle East have been acknowledged globally. If you'd like, I can also format.

Pakistan Travel Mart 2026 opens in Karachi, Anchored by National Tourism Vision

PEAK POINT

KARACHI: Pakistan has taken a significant step towards strengthening its global tourism footprint with the inauguration of the Pakistan Travel Mart (PTM) 2026 at the Karachi Expo Centre, a landmark event reflecting growing international confidence in the country's travel and hospitality sector. The three-day exhibition was jointly inaugurated by Sindh Governor Nehal Hashmi and Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, National Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Tourism, whose leadership has emerged as a driving force behind Pakistan's evolving tourism strategy. Widely regarded as one of the largest tourism exhibitions ever

held in Pakistan, PTM 2026 has brought together around 250 companies and organisations, occupying all six halls of the Expo Centre. The scale of participation, spanning both domestic and international stakeholders, highlights Pakistan's increasing relevance on the global tourism map. At the heart of this initiative is Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, whose role as the Prime Minister's National Coordinator on Tourism has positioned him at the forefront of policy direction, international engagement, and sectoral reform. His efforts in conceptualising and executing PTM have transformed it into a high-impact platform for investment.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for communications Abdul Aleem Khan chairing an important meeting regarding National Highway Authority, at Ministry of Communications.

Sindh announces Rs2,000 for bikers as part of fuel subsidy; Punjab, Islamabad make public transportation free

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Sindh and Punjab governments announced a host of relief measures on Friday, a day after the Centre announced an unprecedented increase of 43 per cent and 55p in the prices of petrol and high-speed diesel (HSD), respectively, to cushion the impact of global oil price shocks amid the US-Israel war on Iran.

The Sindh government also announced support for small-scale farmers and transporters. Meanwhile, the Punjab government said it

was making public transport free, introducing a targeted monthly subsidy for transporters, a diesel subsidy for wheat-growing farmers and a subsidy for motorcyclists.

At the same time, public transport in the federal capital was also made free for the next 30 days, starting from Saturday.

Sindh announces fuel subsidy for motorcyclists

In a press conference in Karachi, Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah announced the Sindh government will provide motorcyclists Rs2,000 as part of a



fuel subsidy under a scheme unveiled by the federal government a day earlier.

At the outset of the press conference, the chief minister, referring to the recent fuel hike, maintained that the

government had to take "difficult decisions".

"For three weeks, the prime minister did not increase the cost of fuel; however, the policy had both advantages and disadvan-

tages," CM Murad said, noting that the blanket subsidy was benefiting the "rich and poor alike".

He recalled that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) also highlighted the need for "targeted subsidies". He said the federal government, along with the provincial governments, held consultations and developed a "one-month regimen, which has four components".

Under one of the components, he said it was decided that motorcyclists should be "shielded from the hike," resulting in the Rs100 sub-

sidy, which was announced a day earlier.

In that regard, the chief minister said that the provincial government will be providing registered motorcycle owners Rs2,000 per month as part of the fuel subsidy. "The excise department has prepared an application," he said, adding that once registered, the owners will receive the funds "between April 15-20" as targeted support for bikers.

He urged bike owners to get their vehicle registered "under their own name" so they may be able to avail.