



Pakistan remains resilient amid global energy crisis: Rana Sanaula



Gilani extends Easter greetings to Christian community



Mohsin Naqvi visits Raiwind Tablighi Markaz

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PM announces Rs70,000 monthly subsidy for transporters to curb price hikes

PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday announced a series of subsidies to help control the rising prices of essential goods, particularly in the transportation sector.
In response to the recent hike in fuel prices, the government has introduced a monthly subsidy for various transport categories: trucks will receive Rs70,000, passenger buses Rs100,000, mini-buses and wagons Rs40,000, cargo vehicles Rs80,000, and delivery vans Rs35,000.
The subsidies aim to ease the transportation cost burden, and they will be distributed through digital wallets to ensure transparency.

The prime minister also stressed that transporters would not be allowed to increase fares, with penalties for those who attempt to do so.
Additionally, the Balochistan government has contributed its share to the national relief package, with the hope that other provinces will follow.
Over the past three weeks, the government has provided Rs129 billion in public relief to assist citizens facing economic difficulties.
Efforts also include a reduction in petrol levy by Rs80 per litre and a Rs6 billion subsidy by Pakistan Railways to prevent an increase in fares for passenger trains and cargo freight.



LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a high level meeting to review implementation of government's subsidy package for petroleum products in the wake of regional situation.

Pakistan rejects misleading commentary on UAE financial deposits

PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs Saturday categorically rejected the recent misleading and unfounded commentary regarding financial deposits from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) held with the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). In a statement the spokesperson of the ministry said, "The deposits were placed under bilateral commercial agreements, demonstrating the UAE's strong support for Pakistan's economic stability and prosperity. Accordingly, pursuant to mutually agreed terms, the Government of Pakistan, through the SBP, is now returning the matured deposits to the UAE. This is a routine financial transaction, and any attempt to portray it otherwise is erroneous and misleading."
"Pakistan and the UAE share a longstanding, fraternal partnership built on trust and strategic cooperation across trade, investment, defence, and people-to-people ties," he said adding, "This relationship has stood the test of time and has grown stronger with each passing year. The people of Pakistan warmly cherish the pivotal role played by the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan.

Trump gives Iran 48 hours to make deal or face 'Hell'

PEAK POINT
WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump on Saturday said Iran had 48 hours left to make a deal on opening the vital Strait of Hormuz or face "Hell."
"Remember when I gave Iran ten days to MAKE A DEAL or OPEN UP THE HORMUZ STRAIT," Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform.
"Time is running out - 48 hours before all Hell will reign (sic) down on them," the president said Saturday, adding: "Glory be to GOD!"
Trump had initially threatened on March 21 to "obliterate" Iran's power plants, beginning with the country's biggest, "if Iran doesn't FULLY OPEN, WITHOUT THREAT, the Strait of Hormuz, within 48 HOURS."
Two days later, however, he said "very good and productive conversations" were being held with Iranian authorities, and that he had postponed any strikes on power plants for five days.
He later again pushed the deadline back, to expire at 8:00 pm Monday (0000 GMT Tuesday).
Experts have said that attacks on civilian energy infrastructure could constitute a war crime.

US forces rescue 2 airmen downed in Iran; Trump says crew member injured but 'safe'

PEAK POINT
WASHINGTON: United States President Donald Trump said on Sunday that US forces had safely recovered a second airman downed in Iran, calling it "one of the most daring search and rescue operations in US history."
The announcement came as Iran launched missiles and drones at Israel and Kuwait earlier on Sunday, and a day after Trump warned the Islamic republic it had 48 hours to cut a deal or face "all Hell."
"This brave Warrior was behind enemy lines in the treacherous mountains of Iran, being hunted down by our enemies," Trump said on Truth Social.
"He sustained injuries, but he will be just fine," he added.
"This miraculous Search and Rescue Operation comes in addition to a successful rescue of another brave Pilot, yesterday, which we did not confirm, because we did not want to jeopardise our second rescue operation. "This is the first time in military memory that two US Pilots have been rescued, separately, deep in Enemy Territory.

Pakistan engages Iran, Egypt in talks to ease regional tensions

PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar held separate telephone conversations with the Foreign Ministers of Iran, Abbas Araghchi, and Egypt, Badr Abdelaty, to discuss the evolving regional situation and ongoing diplomatic efforts. During the calls, Ishaq Dar reiterated Pakistan's support for initiatives aimed at de-escalation and emphasized the importance of resolving issues through dialogue and diplomacy. Both sides agreed to maintain close contact amid ongoing developments.

Pakistan questions UN experts over TTP presence in Afghanistan, cites multiple UN, int'l reports

PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Sunday questioned the position of UN Human Rights Experts regarding the lack of "credible evidence" linking Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) attacks to Afghan soil, pointing to multiple UN and international reports that documented the presence and activities of terrorist groups, including TTP, operating from Afghanistan.
In a recent statement, the UN Experts had urged Pakistan and Afghanistan to commit to a permanent ceasefire and had also claimed that Pakistan had not published credible evidence that TTP attacks within its territory were directed or controlled by the de facto Afghan authorities. Contradicting their

position, Pakistan highlighted a contrast between the UN Experts' statement and established findings from various UN Security Council Monitoring Team reports and SIGAR assessments consistently documenting TTP presence, safe havens, and operational activity from Afghan soil.
Pakistan referred to the 35th, 36th, 16th and 37th UN Security Council Monitoring Team Reports issued in February 2025, July 2025, December 8, 2025 and February 4, 2026 respectively. It also cited the SIGAR 66th and 68th reports of January 2025. Additional references include the Russian MFA Military-Political Assessment of February 2026, the CSTO Security Assessment of 2026, the SCO Deliberations of September 2025, and the Quadrilateral Assessment by Russia, China and

Iran in September 2025. Pakistan further mentioned statements by the Danish Ambassador at the UN Security Council in November 2025, Russia's Security Council Secretary Sergei Shoigu in 2025, Russia's UN Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia in 2025, and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov in August 2025. The said reports and assessments collectively highlighted Afghanistan as a hub for over 20 international terrorist organizations (ITOs), with 13,000-23,000 foreign terrorists, including more than 6,000 TTP fighters enjoying safe havens and operational freedom. They also note continued Al-Qaeda presence and leadership regrouping, as well as active ISIL-K expansion.

FIA arrests Nadra official 'involved' in issuing fake CNICs to Afghan nationals in Karachi

PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: The Federal Investigation Agency said on Sunday it has arrested an official of the National Database and Registration Authority (Nadra) for his alleged "involvement" in issuing fake identity cards to Afghan nationals in Karachi. As per a statement by an FIA spokesperson, the agency's officials conducted a raid in the Metroville SITE area, where two Afghan nationals were arrested and found to be possessing "illegal Pakistani identity documents". The statement added that upon further investigation, it surfaced that a Nadra official, identified as Furqan Ahmed Khan Durrani, was "involved" in approving Computerised National Identity Cards (CNICs) issued to the two Afghan nationals. Durrani was arrested in a subsequent raid carried out in Karachi's Nursery area.





SPORTS



Pakistan women set for historicw FIFA Series debut in Cote d'Ivoire



PEAK POINT

LAHORE: Pakistan's women's football team stands on the brink of history as it gears up for its maiden appearance in the FIFA Series, set to take place in Côte d'Ivoire from April 9 to 16, a breakthrough moment for the sport in the country.

This will be the first time Pakistan competes in a FIFA-sanctioned event at the senior women's level, marking a significant leap forward and offering players long-awaited exposure on the international stage. Pakistan women will kick off its campaign against the Turks and Caicos

Islands on April 9, followed by a fixture against Mauritania on April 12. The team will wrap up its group stage against Côte d'Ivoire on April 16 in what is expected to be a stern and defining test.

Under the stewardship of head coach Adeel Rizki, the squad has completed an intensive training camp in Lahore, focusing on tactical discipline, team cohesion, and match preparedness. The team is scheduled to depart for Côte d'Ivoire on Monday, carrying both ambition and expectation.

The players have expressed a mix of excitement and gratitude

ahead of the historic assignment. Forward Nadia Khan edged the role of Pakistan Football Federation Syed Mohsen Gilani in making the participation possible. "There's a clear difference between promises and delivering on them," she said. "We're truly grateful for the effort that has gone into ensuring our place in this tournament. Opportunities like this allow us to test ourselves at a higher level and grow as a team."

Goalkeeper Zeeyana Jivraj emphasised the importance of extended preparation period,

highlighting how rare it is for the squad to spend meaningful time together. "Being selected for the Pakistan FIFA Series is a big moment for us," she noted. "We've finally had the chance to train together consistently, build understanding, and strengthen our chemistry. That could make a real difference in our performances."

Midfielder Sanah Mehdi also called on supporters to rally behind the team during the tournament. "We're really looking forward to the support," she said. "It means everything to us and motivates us to give our best on the field."

Shabbir draws level with Matloob ahead of J.A. Zaman Memorial final round



PEAK POINT

LAHORE: The 12th J.A. Zaman Memorial Open Golf Championship 2026 witnessed a gripping turn of events on day three at Lahore Gymkhana, as seasoned campaigner Shabbir Iqbal produced a sensational performance to draw level with overnight leader Muhammad Matloob, setting the stage for a dramatic final-round showdown. What began as a seemingly comfortable day for Matloob, who entered the round with a commanding five-shot lead, quickly evolved into a fiercely contested battle. Taking full advantage of favorable conditions, Shabbir mounted an inspired charge, displaying exceptional composure and precision. The defending champion ignited his round with four consecutive birdies on the front nine, instantly closing the gap. Although a three-putt bogey on the ninth momentarily halted his momentum, Shabbir remained undeterred, continuing to apply relentless pressure. The decisive moment came on the 16th hole when Matloob faltered with an errant tee shot. Shabbir capitalized brilliantly, securing a birdie while Matloob settled for par, bringing both players level at 12-under-par for the tournament. Matloob, however, responded with resilience befitting a champion. A crucial birdie on the 17th hole saw him reclaim the outright lead, only for the drama to intensify on the final hole.

'No pressure', say Pakistan coach and captain ahead of historic FIFA Series participation



PEAK POINT

LAHORE: The Pakistan Women's National Team is set to depart for Côte d'Ivoire on Monday to participate in the FIFA Series, marking one of the most significant milestones in the history of women's football in Pakistan. At a press conference held in Lahore on Sunday, the team's management, coaching staff, and captain spoke with clarity and conviction: this group is going to win. Mejzgan Orakzai, Director of the Pakistan Football

Series places Pakistan in competition against sides from outside their usual confederation boundaries — Turks and Caicos Islands (CONCACAF), Mauritania, and Ivory Coast (both CAF) — an opportunity that required deliberate pursuit at the highest level of federation leadership. "This is a unique opportunity to play outside of our confederation," she said. "We are exposed to different styles of playing, different tactical identities. Our global connections are fostered and developed. This is crucial for the team's growth." The PFF Women's Football Department, which operates as an all-women's unit, is also focused on building an ecosystem that extends well beyond the play-

ing field — creating pathways for women coaches, referees, administrators, and managers at every level of the game. Adeel Rizki: "One of the strongest squads we've had" Head Coach Adeel Rizki was measured but unambiguous in his assessment of this squad. "The preparations have been quite strong. I believe this is one of the strongest squads we've had so far. We expect to go there and compete at the highest level and make Pakistan proud." When asked about selection decisions, Rizki outlined a PFF philosophy built entirely on footballing merit — and one that explicitly rejects any division between diaspora and locally-based players.

Pakistani Ali Sisters Shine Globally as Mahnoor Ali Wins Gold at Asian Junior Squash Championship 2026



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's squash stars, the Ali sisters, have once again raised the green crescent flag high on the global stage. At the SRAFTKL International Junior Open Squash Championship 2026 (Asian Junior Super Series), held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, Mahnoor Ali delivered an outstanding performance to

secure the gold medal. In the final, Mahnoor Ali faced the host country's top-ranked player and Asia's fourth-ranked contender, Misra Khairulnizam. Demonstrating exceptional skill and composure in a tense match, Mahnoor defeated her opponent 3-1 to claim the title. The final match score was 12-10, 13-11, 6-11, and 11-7. This

marks the 28th international gold medal of Mahnoor Ali's career, a testament to her remarkable talent and consistency. In the same championship, Sherrish Ali brought further pride to the country by winning a bronze medal, while Mehwish Ali also impressed with strong performance, securing a place in the 5th-8th position bracket.

Matloob Ahmed clinches 12th J.A. Zaman Memorial Championship title



Pakistan beat Nepal in mixed team event

BY: ZAHID YAQOOB KHAWAJA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Beat Nepal in Mixed Team event U-23 by 3-2 in the finals of Badminton Asia-South Asia Regional Junior Badminton Championships Islamabad, 2026. Nepal got 2nd position and Bhutan stood in 3rd position. Pakistan Badminton team U-23 won the team event title after beating Nepal in the finals. In the five matches tie Pakistan won the Women singles, Women Doubles and Mixed Doubles. Results of the tie as under: Final of Mixed Team Event U-23 Pakistan Beat Nepal By 3-2 Men Singles: Prince Dahal (Nepal) Beat Raja Hassan Mujtaba (Pakistan) By 10-21 21-17 21-17 Women Single: Ammarah Ishitq (Pakistan) Beat Rasila Maharjan (Nepal) By 13-21

18-21 Men Double: Prince Dahal & Kshittiz Khanal (Nepal) Beat Umar Jehangir & Raja Hassan Mujtaba (Pakistan) By 21-14 21-17 Women Double: Ammarah Ishitq & Umama Usman (Pakistan) Beat Rasila Maharjan & Sheshna Sirlpali (Nepal) By 13-21 17-21 Mixed Double: Umar Jehangir & Umama Usman (Pakistan) Beat Prince Dahal & Rasila Maharjan (Nepal) By 10-21 13-21 Results of U-23 Mixed Team event held on 2nd April, 2026 Mixed Team Event U-23 Nepal Beat Bhutan By 5-0 Men Single: Prince DAHAL (Nepal) Beat Tshering DORJI (Bhutan) By 21-6 21-8 Women Single: Ammarah ISHTIAQ (Pakistan) Beat Namgya DEM (Bhutan) By 21-6 21-9 Men Doubles: Umar JEANGIR & Raja Hassan MUJTABA .

(Nepal) Beat Tshering DORJI & Tandin Y SONAM (Bhutan) By 21-8 21-7 Women Doubles: Rasila MAHARJAN & Sheshna SIRPALI (Nepal) Beat Kunzang CHOIDON & Namgya DEM (Bhutan) By 21-12 21-18 Mixed Doubles: Prince DAHAL & Rasila MAHARJAN (Nepal) Beat Tandin Y SONAM & Namgya DEM (Bhutan) By 21-7 21-9 Pakistan Beat Bhutan By 5-0 Mixed Double: Umar 21-13 17-21 Results of U-23 Mixed Team event held on 2nd April, 2026 Mixed Team Event U-23 Nepal Beat Bhutan By 5-0 Men Single: Prince DAHAL (Nepal) Beat Tshering DORJI (Bhutan) By 21-6 21-8 Women Single: Ammarah ISHTIAQ (Pakistan) Beat Namgya DEM (Bhutan) By 21-8 21-9 Men Doubles: Umar JEANGIR & Raja Hassan MUJTABA .



IFJ training calls out gender bias in media, urges reform in political coverage

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) here on Sunday conducted a one day training workshop titled "Rewriting the Story: Media, Gender and Politics", where more than 20 journalists from different media platforms were engaged to address gender stereotypes in political reporting and promote reforms in newsroom practices under a project focusing on labour rights, gender equality and freedom of association in Pakistan's media, according to a press release.

The training directly addressed barriers to the fair representation of women and men in political and public life, while fostering engagement, leadership and change



in editorial policies and media culture.

The participants observed that media coverage of women in politics often centred on personal attributes such as family background, marital status, wealth and

appearance, while neglecting their professional competence and policy contributions. This imbalance, they noted, reinforces stereotypes, undermines credibility and diminishes women's visibility in governance.

The discussion also highlighted how mainstream and digital platforms amplify such biases, with social media further intensifying the issue by turning sexist remarks into viral trends, thereby normalizing misogyny in political discourse.

Through interactive sessions, the workshop enhanced participants' understanding of gender concepts, identification of bias and inclusive reporting practices.

It also introduced practical tools including media framing analysis, ethical journalism standards and strategies to improve diversity and representation in political coverage.

As a key outcome, participants proposed a set of recommendations, including structured training programmes for media leadership, ensuring gender balance in recruitment and newsroom decision making, and providing equal opportunities in assignments and coverage for both male and female journalists.

They also emphasized fair representation within journalists' unions at both regional and national levels.

Highlighting the need for sustained reform, participants stressed the importance of institutional policies promoting gender equality, alongside ensuring journalists' safety, equal pay and job security, as well as the adoption of gender-sensitive editorial guidelines across media organizations.

The initiative, supported by the National Endowment for Democracy, was described as a significant step towards strengthening responsible journalism and enabling citizens to make informed decisions, particularly in electoral contexts.

Government accelerates promotion of technical education to empower youth and address out-of-school children

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training has intensified its efforts to bring out-of-school children into the education system while simultaneously promoting technical education streams to develop a skilled and employable workforce in the country. In line with this vision, the Ministry has directed the Federal

Directorate of Education (FDE) and ICT-PEIRA to actively promote Matric Tech and Inter Tech programs, aimed at equipping students with practical skills aligned with market demands. These programs are designed to create opportunities for youth employment both within Pakistan and abroad. The initiative enjoys strong backing from the Prime Minister, who has shown keen interest in

expanding youth participation in technical education to maximize the development of skilled manpower and enhance economic productivity. Currently, FDE and ICT-PEIRA are offering technology-based education programs in more than 60 public and private institutions across Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT). In a recent development, FDE has also announced fresh admissions

in these programs, encouraging students who have passed their previous grades to enroll and benefit from skill-oriented education pathways. Chairman ICT-PEIRA, Dr. Ghulam Ali Mallah, emphasized the critical role of the private sector in supporting this national initiative. He urged private educational institutions to introduce and promote Matric Tech and Inter Tech streams, ensuring

compliance with PEIRA registration requirements and affiliation with the Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education to maintain quality standards. Dr. Mallah further advised institutions to upgrade their infrastructure and teaching capacity to produce competent and industry-ready graduates. In this regard, a consultative meeting with representatives of private school

associations has been scheduled on Tuesday to discuss implementation strategies and collaboration mechanisms. Highlighting the importance of youth development, Dr. Mallah stated that "youth is the greatest strength of the country, and it is our collective responsibility to make them productive and useful citizens through skill-based education programs."

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Carbon credit deal

Despite the poor choice of date, the April 1 carbon credit agreement inked between Pakistan and Norway in Islamabad is no joke. The deal could end up benefiting Pakistan several times over, as it would put money in state coffers for investing in green solutions. The deal is Islamabad's first bilateral carbon market agreement under the COP21 Paris Agreement and establishes a framework for Pakistan to develop carbon-credit projects in renewable energy, agriculture, transport and waste management, with Norway as the buyer. On paper, it offers something for everyone: climate finance for a nation on the front lines of global warming and progress toward Norway's ambitious 2030 climate-neutrality target. However, there can be many a slip between the cup and the lip, and effective implementation will be the key. Pakistan already has national carbon-trading guidelines in place, but it is debatable whether we have the regulatory architecture to ensure that emission reductions are real, measurable and long-lasting. Meanwhile, Norway has literal billions available for its Global Emission Reduction Initiative, which includes purchasing 15 million carbon credits by 2030 and a focus on "large-scale programmes" rather than small or piecemeal efforts.

Aasiya, unyielding

Asad Rahim Khan

THE first time they arrested Aasiya Andrabi, her baby was kept away from her for a year. He was left to play with a stone, banging it on the door the whole day. "That stone was his toy," she remembered. But that was a long time ago. More recently, she has been sentenced to life by an Indian special court. Three life sentences. This is not because of anything Ms Andrabi, a 64-year-old grandmother, has done. This is because she is Kashmiri, and because she refuses to accept the terms of her oppression.

Ms Andrabi has spent more time in Indian prison than outside it. Her latest sentence, she says, proves her a true soulmate to her husband, Dr Muhammad Qasim Faktoo, occupied Kashmir's longest-serving political prisoner — himself bereft of his liberty for 33 years. His shalreeq-i-hayat, meanwhile, has won laurels of her own: she is the first Kashmiri woman to have her struggle for self-determination met with a life sentence.

Resistance has come easy to Ms Andrabi, even in the face of local tradition: she refused to wed within caste ("We demand freedom from Indian rule. But Kashmiris are slaves of their own bogus customs.") Instead, she married someone likeminded; years of peril followed. She had a similar Damascus moment with her education: Ms Andrabi insisted on get-

ting her postgrad from Himachal Pradesh's Dalhousie, back when women were rarely permitted to go outside Kashmir. Her family refused, but this failed to extinguish her: a chance encounter with Khawateen Ki Dilon Ki Baatein, by conservative author Mayal Khairabadi, helped forge her path.

Dukhtarani-Millat was the answer, a sisterhood with faith at its core and liberation its end. In time, Ms Andrabi's story became one with the story of Kashmir, in all its cruelty and violence, its unbroken hope. She mobilised women after the martyrdom of Burhan Wani; she set up rehab centres for families ravaged by occupation; she looked on as her prison in Jammu was converted into a temple, her lungs deliberately destroyed by incense smoke.

Resistance has come easy to Aasiya Andrabi.

That last bit occurred in 2009, which might jar against the Pakistani liberal's history: rolling massacres in Hyderabad and barbed-wire siege in Kashmir seem morally beyond gentle Nehruvians, then or since. And yet, occupation is a bipartisan business: it needs no Modi or Yogi to spur it along.

With the Hindutva project in full swing now, however, even the old hypocrisy has faded. Judge Chander Jit Singh, the Delhi kangaroo that sentenced Ms Andrabi last month, was clear that "no

violent incidence in particular" had "been brought on record". Yet even as the charge of waging war was found empty, the court convicted her of a string of lesser offences.

To read the court's reasoning, as this writer has, it's clear that freedom is a thought crime. How else could the court acknowledge the absence of violence yet impose its maximum penalty? Or rely on extraneous, unproven reports and not a single mitigating factor (age, health, eight years already served)? Ms Andrabi and her associates, Sofi Fehmeeda and Nahida Nasreen, showed no remorse, the court said. That they said they were "proud of what they were doing and also that they will continue to do their work" was enough.

Because the Dukhtarani-Millat believed, the court observed, that "Jammu and Kashmir has never been part of India". It hasn't. It never will be.

Ms Andrabi's case is not the first. Freedom fighter Yasin Malik was handed down a life sentence in 2022. Ever since Hindutva's sectarians moved from occupation to annexation in Kashmir in 2019, stripping the vale of Article 370, Lebensraum has carried on. Detention without trial; curricula scrubbed; 80,000 Indians receiving residency certificates; Delhi's legal project has gone hand in hand with a grimy reordering of demographics in Kashmir.

Courtesy Dawn

Rule through crisis?

Ali Hassan Bangwar

Humankind tends to be sensitive to security and has an innate tendency to protest and resist any attempts aimed at disrupting their perceived sense of identity, peace and serenity by the powerful. The resistance, however, doesn't always emanate from the collective strength of a population but from a collective sense of identity shaped - over generations - by historical, cultural, social, economic and political forces, ultimately leading toward inclusive prosperity. The identity with prosperity, nevertheless, doesn't come unless it is voluntarily, selflessly and consistently pursued by the governance machinery and institutions that derive their legitimacy from it, and are accountable to, the public.

For rulers harbouring dynastic, despotic or authoritarian ambitions, a nationalistic identity and unified sense of purpose pose risks in three distinct ways: it raises the threshold of popular resistance; threatens the ruling machinery's exclusive privileges and interests; and subjects that machinery to potential public accountability. Therefore, such rulers deliberately cultivate fluid, fragmented and amorphous identities among the populace - engineered to keep the population divided, disoriented and pliable. They manufacture chaos and crisis for masking their inefficacies and scapegoating their deliberate failures.

Pakistan, though a democracy in outlook, has essentially evolved an amorphous and fluid identity and national causes without a defined direction and is essentially entangled in and oscillates around the charged buzzword, the "nazuk morr" or the critical juncture. The term captures more than a moment of transition - it has become a permanent alibi, recycled across decades to justify inaction, defer reform and deflect accountability. The junctures that the country has been through throughout history reflect the pursuit of vested interests by successive governments, notwithstanding their manifestoes, plans and policies.

Courtesy Tribune

Hajj 2026 flights begin from April 18 with exemplary arrangements, new Lahore route introduces: Minister says



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Religious Affairs, Sardar Muhammad Yousuf announced on Sunday that Hajj 2026 arrangements are fully prepared with no extra cost for 180,000 pilgrims, including 120,000 government and 60,000 private, with flights starting April 18 with exemplary arrangements and a new Lahore route added to existing services.

While exclusively speaking with PTV news in Riyadh, the Federal

Minister stated that all arrangements for Hajj 2026 are being completed efficiently with no extra cost.

He announced that a total of 180,000 pilgrims will perform Hajj this year, including 120,000 under the government quota and 60,000 through private arrangements, ensuring fair access for all eligible pilgrims.

Highlighting improvements for this year, he revealed a new Lahore-to-Saudi Arabia route to facilitate easier travel for pilgrims, while flights from other cities will continue as scheduled.

The minister emphasized that all operations, including flights, accommodations and transport, will be organized in a smooth and exemplary manner to ensure the comfort and safety of all pilgrims. He further stated that the Ministry of Religious Affairs will closely coordinate with private companies to regulate Umrah services, accommo-

dations, catering and transport. Every effort is being made to provide pilgrims with high-quality arrangements and the ministry aims to make this year's Hajj an exemplary experience in terms of management and facilities. The minister also reaffirmed the strong relationship between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, appreciating the host country's arrangements and support for Pakistani pilgrims.

He highlighted that this year's Hajj would fully utilize the Pakistani quota while maintaining exemplary standards, reflecting the commitment of both governments to facilitating a safe and memorable pilgrimage experience. Responding to a query, he said that previously the Hajj route ran from Karachi to Islamabad, and now a new Lahore-to-Saudi Arabia route has been added to facilitate easier travel for pilgrims, while flights from other cities will continue as scheduled.

Mohsin Naqvi visits Raiwind Tablighi Markaz

PEAK POINT

LAHORE: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Sunday visited the international Tablighi Markaz at Raiwind and met senior leaders of Tablighi Jamaat and exchanged views on matters related to religious gatherings and facilitation of foreign delegations. During the visit, he met Maulana Amjad Farooq, Maulana Aamir, Anwar Ghani, Imtiaz Ghani, Maulana Mudassar Shaheen and others, and also held meetings with visiting religious scholars and elders from India and Bangladesh. The interior minister appreciated the services and efforts of the Tablighi Jamaat leadership in the propagation and promotion of Islam, saying their role in spreading the message of faith was commendable and spiritually meaningful. He also lauded their contribution



towards promoting unity, religious awareness and positive engagement among Muslim communities. He said facilitating religious preaching activities is both a responsibility and a matter of goodwill, adding that the government remains committed to ensuring smooth arrangements for international participants. Foreign delegates from India and Bangladesh expressed gratitude to the minister for full cooperation in visa issuance, stating that due to improved facilitation this year they faced no difficulties.

Murree Expressway upgradation completed, more facilities to be added: Aleem Khan

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan on Sunday expressed satisfaction over the completion of upgradation work on the Murree Expressway and announced additional facilities, including more Rest House on both sides, to further improve travel convenience.

During a visit to Murree, the minister inspected various sections of the Murree Expressway. He along with NHA authorities inspected on the spot situation of traffic on IMDC particularly at Lower Topa and directed authorities to take immediate measures to further improve traffic flow, there, said a press release. Abdul Aleem Khan instructed the National Highway Authority (NHA) officials to ensure modern design of new Roundabout at Lower Topa to ensure better facilities of traffic especially to the visitors. He stated that the Murree Expressway has been made more beautiful, safe and comfortable than before. He also approved the construction of more Rest Areas along both sides of the Murree Expressway to provide better

travel facilities to tourists coming from far-off areas. While visiting newly constructed Rest Areas and Mosques, Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan emphasized that there should be no compromise on cleanliness, provision of clean drinking water and other basic facilities. He appreciated the availability of separate prayer arrangements for women and stressed maintaining this standard. Abdul Aleem Khan stated that proper follow up of quality facilities must be ensured at all costs. Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan also directed the NHA to adopt high-quality designs and international-standard facilities in all new development projects.

During his visit, citizens traveling also met the Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan at various locations and expressed their appreciation.

They shook hands and took photographs with the minister. Abdul Aleem Khan acknowledged that the cooperation of the local population in improving the Murree Expressway is commendable and emphasized the need to further promote such positive collaboration in the future.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan inspecting completed work on Islamabad-Murree Dual Carriage way.

Chairperson BISP felicitates Christian community on Easter

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme, Senator Rubina Khalid has extended heartfelt greetings to the Christian community on the occasion of Easter, highlighting the values of love, sacrifice, and hope associated with the festival.

In her message on Sunday, Senator Rubina Khalid said that Easter conveys a powerful message of humanity, service and brotherhood.

She emphasized that all citizens in Pakistan enjoy equal rights regardless of their religion, adding that the Constitution guarantees complete religious freedom.

The Chairperson appreciated the contributions of the Christian community towards the country's development and welfare, terming their services as commendable. She underscored the need to promote mutual respect, tolerance and harmony in the society. She further stated that the Benazir Income Support Programme would continue to serve deserving individuals.

Pakistan remains resilient amid global energy crisis: Rana Sanaula

PEAK POINT

FAISALABAD: Adviser to Prime Minister (PM) on Political and Public Affairs Senator Rana Sanaula Khan has said that Pakistan has remained largely insulated from the worst impacts of the ongoing global energy crisis due to effective government strategy while emergency relief measures were being extended to protect the public from inflationary pressures.

Addressing a press conference at his residence, he said that uninterrupted supply of petroleum products across the country was ensured despite severe global disruptions caused by escalating regional conflict and closure of key international supply routes.



He said that the entire world was currently facing an unprecedented energy crisis while the petrol and gas prices have reached historic highs. The situation worsened after the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, which severely affected global supply chains and led to acute shortages in several countries.

"In some countries, fuel is not available at all, while in neighboring states the situation deteriorated to the extent that army had to be deployed.

Gilani extends Easter greetings to Christian community

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Senate, Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani, on Sunday, extended heartfelt greetings and best wishes to the Christian community in Pakistan and around the world on the joyous occasion of Easter.

In his message, the Chairman of the Senate stated that Easter is a profound symbol of hope, renewal, and spiritual reflection for the Christian community.

He added that the occasion is marked by special prayers and religious gatherings, which not only strengthen faith but also promote the universal values of love, tolerance, and brother-



hood. Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani urged the Christian community to offer special prayers for the peace, stability, and prosperity of Pakistan.

He emphasized that such occasions serve as an opportunity to foster interfaith harmony and to spread the message of unity, compassion, and coexistence in society.

Balochistan announces relief package amid rising fuel prices and regional uncertainty

PEAK POINT

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister, Mir Sarfraz Bugti, unveiled a wide-ranging relief package to ease the burden on citizens following rising petroleum prices and regional instability. The announcement came during a press conference after a high-level meeting on national austerity and public relief measures at



the Chief Minister's Secretariat. Sarfraz Bugti announced that the Green and Pink Bus Services in Quetta and other areas will be free of

charge for one month, providing immediate relief to citizens. He also declared that vehicle and motorcycle transfer/registration fees are waived for 15 days, urging residents to take advantage of the subsidy. Highlighting transport and agriculture support, the Chief Minister said that Balochistan has around 80,000 registered public and goods transport vehicles, with special subsidies being provided to goods transporters, while federal assistance is being sought for public transport.

Gaps in Budget Transparency and Accountability in Pakistan highlighted

ABDUS SALAM BAIYAB

BANNU: CPDI Highlights Gaps in Budget Transparency and Accountability in Pakistan. The Centre for Peace and Development Initiatives (CPDI), through its Citizen Network for Budget Accountability (CNBA), shared findings from its State of Budget Transparency Report (2025) during a media briefing held in District Bannu by

Community Development Organization (CDO). The report focuses on FY 2024-25, as the current FY 2025-26 is still ongoing and its complete data will only be available after the year ends. The findings show that budget transparency in Pakistan remains limited and uneven, with weak public participation and gaps in accountability. Key budget documents are not consistently made

public, and citizens have little opportunity to influence budget priorities. Speaking at the briefing, program manager of CDO Mr. Inayat Ullah Khan said: "Budgets are still not truly public in Pakistan. People are informed after decisions are made, rather than being part of the process." The report notes that although budgets are presented on time, parliamentary engagement remains weak, with

limited debate days and insufficient scrutiny. Transparency further declines during implementation, as governments often fail to publish timely spending and audit reports, limiting effective oversight. It also finds that Punjab performs relatively better, followed by the federal government, while Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Balochistan lag behind.