



Govt ensures uninterrupted gas supply during sehri, iftar: Minister



Minister reviews Ramazan Relief Package 2026 implementation, orders immediate disbursement



Maryam Nawaz aims to make Punjab drug-free: Azma Bokhari

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PM Shehbaz arrives in US for inaugural Board of Peace meeting

PEAK POINT

WASHINGTON: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has arrived in Washington today (Wednesday) to attend the inaugural session of the Gaza Board of Peace.

The prime minister is scheduled to participate in a session of the board on February 19, an initiative under the leadership of President Trump. The BoP session is said to focus on the rehabilitation of the war-devastated Gaza and other related matters.

The BoP, formed by President Trump, has garnered support from several key Muslim countries, including Pakistan, as well as a number of non-Muslim states.

The sources indicated that Muslim countries are expected to contribute up to \$5 billion in funding for the rehabilitation and the reconstruction of Gaza. The summit will focus on three key objectives: strengthening and consolidating the ceasefire in Gaza, mobilising financial commitments for the BoP and shaping the structure of a proposed global forum envisioned by President Trump as a more effective mechanism for conflict resolution than existing international platforms. The group is scheduled to meet in Washington on Thursday for the first time since it was established in January, to discuss reconstruction plans for Gaza.

Participants are also expected to deliberate on the formation of an International Stabilisation Force (ISF) for Gaza to ensure security.



LAHORE: President Asif Ali Zardari visited the residence of the late Mian Manzoor Ahmed Wattoo to offer Fatiha and express his condolences to Begum Perveen Wattoo and other members of the bereaved family.

Punjab govt withdraws appeals against Imran Khan, Bushra Bibi bail in SC

PEAK POINT



ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan was informed that the Punjab government has withdrawn its appeals seeking cancellation of bail granted to PTI founder Imran Khan and his spouse Bushra Bibi. The state counsel told the court that he had received instructions to withdraw the appeals challenging the bail orders. Consequently, the apex court disposed of the appeals against Imran Khan's bail in the May 9 cases on the basis of their withdrawal. Meanwhile, the cipher appeal case was also adjourned without proceedings. The Prosecutor General informed the bench that the detailed judgment in the matter had not yet been submitted and requested time to file it. During the hearing, Barrister Salman Safdar appeared at the rostrum, prompting Justice Hashim Kakar to question his appearance. The counsel responded that he had not been served notice in the case despite being present in court. Justice Kakar remarked that notice could be issued if required, but it had not yet been determined whether the appeal was maintainable. Subsequently, the court granted time for submission of the detailed judgment.

TTAP ends Parliament House sit-in, upholds demand for Imran's personal doctors

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The opposition alliance Tehreek-i-Tahafuz-i-Ayin-i-Pakistan (TTAP) announced on Wednesday that it would call off its days-long sit-in at Parliament House over former Prime Minister Imran Khan's health concerns. Despite ending the protest, TTAP reiterated the demand, voiced by Imran Khan's family, for the PTI founder to have uninterrupted access to his personal physicians and to be allowed private meetings with his relatives in jail. Earlier in the day, TTAP leaders visited the Supreme Court to show solidarity with Imran during hearings of his ongoing cases. "Mahmood Khan

Achakzai, Allama Raja Nasir Abbas, Barrister ing, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief



Gohar Ali Khan and others have reached the Supreme Court," TTAP spokesperson Akhunda Hussain Yousafzai told media. He added that the leadership would hold a press briefing after returning from the court and outline further strategy, including responses to the crackdown on PTI supporters. Ahead of the hearing, Minister Sohail Afridi met with Imran's three sisters — Aleema Khan, Noreen Niazi and Uzma Khanum — to discuss his health, judicial matters, and other challenges, according to the PTI. TTAP had earlier issued a list of five "immediate and unconditional demands," primarily seeking full, confidential access for

Imran's personal doctors Dr. Aasim Yusuf and Dr. Faisal Sultan to conduct independent medical examinations. The alliance also requested certified copies of all medical tests, scans, X-rays, and lab reports be shared with his personal physicians and called for regular follow-ups.

TTAP emphasized that Imran's personal doctors should be able to provide independent medical opinions without interference from the government's medical board. The alliance also demanded a written explanation for any delays or obstructions in his treatment, insisting that such negligence must not occur again.

Family members and senior PTI leaders have repeatedly attempted.

President Zardari expresses condolences to late Mian Wattoo's family

PEAK POINT

LAHORE: President Asif Ali Zardari, Wednesday, visited the residence of former Punjab chief minister late Mian Manzoor Ahmed Wattoo to convey condolences and express sympathies with the bereaved family. The president met Begum Perveen Wattoo, the children of the late Wattoo and other members of the family and conveyed his condolences, President Secretariat Media Wing said in a press release. He paid tribute to Mian Wattoo's political services to the country and the province.

Ramazan moon sighted in Pakistan; first fast to be observed on February 19

PEAK POINT

PESHAWAR: The Ramazan moon for 1447 Hijri has been sighted in various cities across Pakistan, and the first fast will be observed nationwide on Thursday. Chairman of the Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee, Maulana Abdul Khabir Azad, announced the sighting of the moon, confirming that the first fast will be observed tomorrow, while the first Taraweeh prayers will be offered tonight. The Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee meeting to sight the Ramazan moon was held in Peshawar.

Israeli police arrest Al-Aqsa Mosque imam ahead of Ramazan

PEAK POINT

JERUSALEM: Israeli police has arrested the imam of Al-Aqsa Mosque, Sheikh Mohammed al-Abbasi, from inside the mosque's courtyards in occupied Jerusalem.

The Palestinian news agency Wafa, citing local sources, reported that "Israeli forces detained Sheikh al-Abbasi inside the courtyards of Al-Aqsa Mosque" on Monday evening without giving any reason. It added that the arrest "comes amid escalating Israeli measures against the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque, including restrictions on imams, preachers and worshippers stationed there, limitations on the entry of worshippers, and intensifying incursions carried out by settlers under heavy protection from

Israeli police". Hamas condemned the arrest of al-Mosque, the imposition of restrictions on worship-



Abbasi in a statement on Tuesday, saying he had been "served with an order banning him from the mosque".

The movement said the measure "constitutes blatant interference in the affairs of Al-Aqsa and an unacceptable assault on its imams". Hamas added: "The escalating violations by the fascist occupation government against the sanctity of Al-Aqsa

pers' access, the prevention of logistical preparations for the month of Ramazan, and the intensification of raids by settler groups are dangerous interventions that fall within its persistent attempts to control and Judaize the mosque, restrict freedom of worship there, and impose temporal and spatial division."

The movement called on the "Palestinian people in Jerusalem, across the

West Bank and inside the 1948 territories to remain stationed at Al-Aqsa, travel to it and maintain its presence, and stand as a bulwark against plans to tamper with its identity".

Hamas also urged the Arab League, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, and the Arab and Islamic nations "to take urgent action through all possible channels to protect Al-Aqsa Mosque from the danger of Judaization, and to take practical steps to pressure the occupation and force it to halt its violations".

Occupied Jerusalem, particularly the Old City and the vicinity of Al-Aqsa Mosque, has been witnessing rising tensions amid tightened Israeli security measures, including arrests and ban orders against religious figures.

14 suspected militants killed during CTD operations in Quetta, Barkhan



PEAK POINT

QUETTA: The Balochistan Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) on Wednesday said a total of 14 suspected militants were killed in separate security operations in Quetta and Barkhan districts. In a statement, the CTD said eight armed men were killed during a security operation in Quetta's Darakhshan area. "Eight armed persons were killed in a fire exchange during the operation," read the statement, adding that three CTD personnel were injured during the action. According to the CTD, weapons and ammunition were recovered from the killed militants. It noted that the dead individuals were said to be a banned outfit. In a separate statement, the CTD said "six terrorists were killed in a fire exchange" during an intelligence-based operation in Barkhan.



SPORTS



Ton-up Farhan helps Pakistan seal Super Eight spot with Namibia rout



PEAK POINT ISLAMABAD: Sahibzada Farhan hit a magnificent unbeaten century to help Pakistan seal the final Super Eight berth at the T20 World Cup with a thumping 102-run win over Namibia in Colombo on Wednesday. Farhan scored 100 not out off 58 balls with four sixes and 10 fours as Pakistan posted 199-3 before they routed Namibia for 97 in 17.3 overs.

Pakistan's victory took them to six points from four games in Group A and eliminated the United States, who finished with four points. India also have six points and play the Netherlands in the

group's final game later Wednesday. The defending champions India, South Africa, Zimbabwe and the West Indies will play each other in the Super Eight Group 1, hosted in India. Pakistan join New Zealand, England and co-hosts Sri Lanka in Group 2, hosted in Sri Lanka.

After a morale-shattering 61-run defeat against India, Pakistan needed a victory to avoid an early exit, which was achieved with ease as spinners Usman Tariq (4-16) and Shadab Khan (3-19) tore through the Namibia batting.

Lauren Steenkamp scored 23 while Alexander Busing-

Volschenk was the only other batsman to reach double figures with 20. Farhan earlier blasted a six and a four off pace bowler Jack Brassell to enter the 90s before taking a single off Gerhard Erasmus to complete his hundred in the final over.

Farhan is the only second Pakistani to score a T20 World Cup century after Ahmed Shehbaz in 2014 against Bangladesh.

Shadab Khan, promoted to a number five with Babar Azam left out, hit three sixes and a four in his 36 not out off 22 balls as Pakistan smashed 42 from the last three overs.

Farhan put on 40 for the opening wicket with Saim Ayub (14) before consolidating the innings during a 67-run second wicket stand with captain Salman Agha (38). Pakistan also left out pace bowler Shaheen Shah Afridi after a poor show in the first three matches, including conceding 31 in two overs in the defeat against India on Sunday.

He followed Sri Lanka's Pathum Nissanka, who scored a hundred against Australia on Monday, and Canada's Yuvraj Sama who reached three figures against New Zealand on Tuesday.

PCB announces squad adjustment for Shaheens ahead of England Lions tour



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Cricket Board on Wednesday confirmed a single alteration to the Pakistan Shaheens squad for their upcoming white-ball series against the England Lions, set to be played in Abu Dhabi from February 20 to March 9.

After undergoing a comprehensive medical evaluation at the National Cricket Academy, right-arm pacer Ali Raza has been advised to begin rehabilitation for a left knee issue. He is currently following a structured recovery programme under the supervision of the PCB's medical team at the NCA.

In light of his unavailability, the selection committee has brought in Swat-born Muhammad Amir Khan as his replacement for the series. The 24-year-old cricketer, who bowls right-arm pace and bats right-handed, will join the squad for the three T20 fixtures and the five-match 50-over contest.

Updated Pakistan Shaheens Squad: Shamy! Hussain (captain), Abdul Samad, Arafat Minhas, Ahmed Daniyal, Akif Javed, Hasan Nawaz, Maaz Sadaqat, Mohammad Salman, Muhammad Amir Khan, Rohail Nazir (wk), Saad Baig (wk), Saad Khan, Saad Masood, Sameer Minhas, Shahid Aziz, and Sufyan Moqim.

Zimbabwe advance to Super Eights after Ireland clash washed out



PEAK POINT PALLEKELE: Zimbabwe booked their place in the Super Eight stage of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup after their crucial Group D fixture against Ireland was abandoned due to persistent rain at Pallekele International Cricket Stadium on Tuesday.

Continuous showers left the outfield waterlogged, forcing officials to call off the match without a toss. The shared points lifted Zimbabwe to five

in the standings, comfortably defeating Oman to the next round. The washout simultaneously ended the Super Eight hopes of both Australia and Ireland. Australia, currently third with one win and two defeats, can only reach four points even if they defeat Oman in their final group match, insufficient to overtake Zimbabwe. Ireland finish their campaign with three points from four matches. Zimbabwe's competitive 174, on dominant earlier performances. They comfortably defeated Oman by chasing 104 in just 13.3 overs, and stunned Australia with a 23-run victory after posting 169-2. Led by Sikandar Raza, Zimbabwe will next face Sri Lanka at the R. Premadasa Stadium to conclude their group-stage campaign. New Zealand stormed into the Super Eight stage of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup after an emphatic eight-wicket win over Canada. Chasing a qualification was built on earlier Blackcaps sealed vic-

tory in just 15.1 overs, powered by a match-winning 100-run stand between Glenn Phillips and Rachin Ravindra. Phillips blazed an unbeaten 76 off 36 balls, striking six sixes, while Ravindra anchored the chase with a fluent 59 off 39 deliveries. Earlier, Canada posted 173 courtesy of a magnificent maiden T201 century by Yuvraj Samra, who smashed 110 off 65 balls with 11 fours. Captain Dilpreet Bajwa added 36, but New Zealand's bowlers struck late to restrict further damage. Michael Jones struck a fluent half-century to guide Scotland to a competitive 170/7 against Nepal in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup. After being put into bat.

Cricketer Hassan Ali and his wife Samiya have welcomed a baby boy!



PHF, PSB trade blame after Pro League mismanagement

PEAK POINT LAHORE: The Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) and the Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) have traded blame over alleged mismanagement during the national hockey team's participation in the second leg of the FIH Pro League in Hobart, Australia, prompting Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to take notice and order an immediate inquiry. The Green Shirts returned to Lahore late Tuesday night after suffering defeats in all their matches against Germany and hosts Australia, concluding a winless campaign across both legs of the competition.

Media reports highlighted serious lapses in arrangements, particularly inadequate and delayed accommodation in Hobart, which left players discontented and affected their preparation. PHF president Tariq Hussain Bugti, speaking to Dawn, said the responsibility for all logistical and financial

arrangements — including hotel bookings, air travel, TA/DA and visas — rested with the PSB.

He cited directives from the senate standing committee on sports, which had designated the PSB as the body to handle financial matters

against top-ranked teams." A PSB official, Rana Nasrullah, countered that the team management had sufficient funds at its disposal, with players also carrying USD 1,650 each.

"If funds were available, why was the hotel arrange-



ment mismanaged? There was also no proper cooking system, forcing players to prepare their own meals," he said. When queried about food-related issues, Bugti noted that the squad was en route home and a detailed report would be available upon their arrival in Lahore.

Saim Ayub returns to top of ICC T20 all-rounder rankings

PEAK POINT DUBAI: Pakistan's emerging all-rounder Saim Ayub has once again secured the top spot in the latest T20 all-rounder rankings released by the International Cricket Council.

According to the updated rankings issued in Dubai, Ayub climbed to number one after delivering outstanding performances for Pakistan in recent international



fixtures. He surpassed Sikandar Raza of Zimbabwe, who has moved to second position. Ayub's recent performances, particularly against India, significantly boosted his ranking after he claimed three key wickets in a crucial match. Among other lead-

ing all-rounders, Hardik Pandya remains among top performers, while Marcus Stoinis of Australia is placed fourth and Shakib Al Hasan of Bangladesh holds fifth position.

Cricket analysts believe Ayub's rise reflects his growing importance as a match-winning all-rounder, strengthening Pakistan's squad with reliable batting and effective bowling contributions.



Climate change committee takes strong stand with privilege motion against ministry, CDA over non submission of PSDP proposals

NADEEM TANOLI
ISLAMABAD: The Standing Committee on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination has filed a Privilege Motion against the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, the Federal Minister, the Minister of State, and the Chairman of the Capital Development Authority (CDA) for failing to submit critical documents related to the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP). This motion was filed after the Committee's 18th meeting on February 18, 2026, chaired by Ms. Munaza Hassan, where the Ministry's and CDA's blatant disregard for parliamentary procedures led to serious questions over their commit-

ment to climate change initiatives. The Committee expressed outrage as the Ministry failed to provide the necessary briefing documents despite having ample time to do so. Ms. Munaza Hassan, Chairperson of the Committee, opened the session by stating that the Ministry's failure to submit essential documents was a clear violation of parliamentary protocol. "This is not the first time we've faced such delays. The Ministry's negligence undermines the integrity of our parliamentary oversight," she said. The agenda included reviewing the PSDP, yet no comprehensive report was submitted for scrutiny, delaying critical climate-related decisions. Members of the Committee noted that such actions

directly impacted their ability to ensure transparency and accountability in the allocation of public funds for climate projects. The situation worsened as the Committee also confronted the Capital Development Authority (CDA) for not providing the required documentation. Members pointed out that this failure to comply with Committee requests was unacceptable and indicated systemic issues within the CDA. "The repeated non-compliance by the CDA Chairman cannot be overlooked. This is a serious matter, and it cannot be normalized," one Committee member emphasized. Adding to the controversy, Ms. Shazia Sobia Aslam Soomro, a prominent member of the Committee, criticized the

Ministry's focus on international appearances rather than domestic action. "While the Ministry is quick to spend large sums on international conferences and pavilions, they fail to follow up on the outcomes of these events. We are not receiving the updates we need on signed MOUs or secured projects. This is a clear indication of their lack of seriousness in addressing climate issues in Pakistan," Soomro remarked. She also questioned the absence of a clear tree plantation policy, pointing out that the Ministry's inaction could have long-term detrimental effects on the environment. "It's not just about projects, it's about making a real impact that affects the ground realities of climate change in our communities," she

added. In light of the Ministry's failure to fulfill its duties, the Committee unanimously moved to initiate a Privilege Motion against the Ministry, the Federal Minister, the Minister of State, and the Chairman of the CDA. This motion reflects the Committee's frustration over the ongoing neglect of climate responsibilities. "We cannot continue to let these actions slide. It's our right and duty to ensure accountability," said Ms. Hassan. Due to the Ministry's continued neglect, the Committee was forced to adjourn the meeting, unable to proceed with discussions due to the absence of the critical documentation. "Without the necessary material, we cannot do our jobs effectively," Ms. Hassan concluded,

indicating that the matter would not be taken lightly. The meeting was attended by several influential Members of the National Assembly (MNAs), including Syeda Shehla Raza, Dr. Shazia Sobia Aslam Soomro, Ms. Tamkeen Akhter Niazi, Ms. Shahida Rahmani, Mir Khan Muhammad Jamali, Ms. Tahira Aurangzeb, and Ms. Musarrat Rafique Mahesar, along with senior officials from the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination and the Capital Development Authority. The ongoing lack of cooperation and transparency from these key institutions continues to raise questions about Pakistan's readiness to address the pressing issue of climate change.

American Author John Kiser visits Institute of Regional Studies

PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: Mr. John Kiser, distinguished American author, historian, and interfaith advocate, visited the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS), Islamabad, during his recent trip to Pakistan. During his visit, Mr. Kiser interacted with the Institute's researchers and scholars, where he shared insights from his extensive intellectual work focusing on moral courage, ethical leadership, and interfaith harmony. He particularly highlight-



ed themes from his acclaimed book *Commander of the Faithful*, which chronicles the life and legacy of Emir Abdelkader as a model of humanitarian values, spiritual depth, and principled



leadership in times of conflict. Ambassador Jauhar Saleem, President of the Institute, welcomed Mr. Kiser to the Institute. He commended his scholarly contributions and efforts to



promote interfaith understanding and mutual respect across cultures. Ambassador Saleem appreciated Mr. Kiser's work in highlighting shared moral values and underscored the importance

of intellectual engagement in fostering global harmony and peaceful coexistence. The interactive session provided an opportunity for a meaningful exchange of ideas on religious coexistence, ethical

traditions in Muslim societies, and the importance of building bridges between civilizations. Mr. Kiser also reflected on the need to challenge prevailing stereotypes and promote a more balanced understanding of Islam and the West through scholarship and dialogue. The visit concluded with a reaffirmation of the importance of continued dialogue and research collaboration on themes of ethical leadership, regional stability, and inter-civilizational understanding.

Opinion & Editorial

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Ramazan relief

WITH the month of Ramazan almost here, traders are hiking prices of food items in high demand during the fasting month. This is not a new development; it is an annual feature caused by a combination of factors, including the dynamics of supply and demand — some food items are in high demand, while supply remains limited — as well as plain old greed on the part of traders. The challenge before the state is to ensure that goods of a reasonable quality are sold at per notified rates, and that traders do not get away with price gouging. While high prices affect all segments of society, low-income groups are hit the hardest by Ramazan-related inflation, as they are deprived of a decent iftar spread. In this regard, the prime minister last week announced a Rs38bn Ramazan package which will be available to over 12m deserving families. Funds will be directly transferred by the state through digital wallets or bank transfer. The prime minister acknowledged that there had been problems with such programmes in past years, such as the substandard quality of items and long queues at utility stores, and hoped these issues would be resolved through digital cash transfers. As the state wound up utility stores last year, the direct transfer of funds should help people partially tide over inflation during Ramazan.

Outlawing solidarity

Mahir Ali
IN Australia last week, a mass rally in Sydney's Town Hall Square against Israeli President Isaac Herzog's presence in the country descended into chaos when riot police launched an unprovoked assault against peaceful protesters. The unwarranted aggression involving fists, kicks and pepper spray appeared to have been pre-planned.

A few days later, Britain's high court pointed out the absurdity of designating Palestine Action as a terrorist organisation, albeit without immediately unbaning it. The judges stopped well short of condoning PA's activities — directed at contributors to the Israeli genocide — but argued that they could be prosecuted under existing criminal laws, and that the terrorist designation contravened rights to free speech. The fate of the nearly 2,800 people arrested since last July, mostly for holding placards saying 'I support Palestine Action, I oppose genocide', is yet to be determined, although police have declared they will stop detaining PA supporters (until further notice).

Canberra's indefensible invitation to Herzog, pushed by the Zionist lobby and extended despite opposition from several Jewish groups (among others), was ostensibly intended as a comforting gesture to affected families following last December's Bondi Beach massacre of mainly Australian Jews. Why

the Israeli head of state, hardly a spiritual leader, might be seen as a source of succour remains unanswered. In his homeland, he is supposed to be above politics, yet had no qualms about encouraging genocide (as a UN commission noted last year) or signing an artillery shell intended for Gaza.

He could hardly be considered a neutral figure, and the welcome he received in Australia at the state and federal level militated against Prime Minister Anthony Albanese's stated aim of reinforcing social cohesion. The societal response to the Bondi atrocities was virtually unanimous in its rage, sorrow and empathy. The tragedy, perpetrated by a pair of fanatics, was politicised by the Zionist lobby and its Israeli masters, who claimed that the Australian government's token recognition of a Palestinian state and permission for protests against genocide promoted the anti-Semitism that provoked the killings. Its collaborators are complicit in Israel's genocide. That's palpable nonsense. Yet the Albanese government and its state counterparts appear determined (like much of the West) in defying the norms of international legality and morality as long as Donald Trump can be kept happy. Amusingly, Herzog failed that test when he was berated by the US president for hesitating to indemnify Benjamin Netanyahu against his multiple legal woes — a series of charges that Trump views as

relatively insignificant instances of grift and graft, given his personal proclivities. The Trump regime and its predecessors have been instrumental, though, in establishing the template for criminalising resistance to genocide. The British government may not have extended an invitation to Herzog, but in various other respects its leaders trump Australia in their devotion to a genocidal state. Whatever might follow the high court's initial findings, there is little doubt that beleaguered PM Keir Starmer, Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood and Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper will continue to do their best to extend cover — and moral and military support — to Israel. The pattern is repeated across much of the West, barring a few exceptions such as Spain, Slovenia and Ireland. Germany, ridden by a guilt complex that no longer makes much sense, has been particularly vociferous in curbing protests against Israel, many of whose stalwarts take their cue from Nazi antecedents. France is not all that different. Much of Europe has hesitated, though, to leap onto Trump's ridiculous Board of Peace, essentially a one-man show supplemented by hangers-on. Both Israel and Pakistan will be represented at the highest level when the board meets this week, but anyone who expects any good to come from it dwells in a fool's paradise.

Courtesy Dawn

Asian lessons for Pakistan

Shahid Javed Burki

The title of this essay needs to be explained. Pakistan is an Asian nation, and it should not be looking too far out to draw some important lessons for the design of public policy. For lessons, it has to search far into Asia to draw some important lessons for managing its economy. Pakistan has four neighbours — Afghanistan, China, India and Iran — three of which have adopted religion as the way of economic governance. Until the arrival of Prime Minister Narendra Modi as prime minister in 2014, India had followed an inclusive approach to economic management. It is now abandoning that approach and has decided to adopt what the main governing party — the Hindu nationalist, Bharatiya Janata Party, the BJP — calls "Hindutva". This way of governance was initially developed in the western state of Gujarat when Modi governed as the Chief Minister. Rather than follow an inclusive system of governing the country, Modi has opted for an exclusionary system, which keeps out all non-Hindu groups from involvement in making public policy. This approach has limited the participation of the country's 200 million Muslims in governance. I have written about this feature of Modi's India in an article I titled "India's Mussalman problem". Today my focus will be on the lessons that can be drawn from the way governments in the eastern part of the continent rule their domains. I had a long stint in the World Bank — I worked at the institution over a period of 26 years, eight of which included directorship of the China Program. The directorate I managed was part of the East Asian Vice Presidency which included several countries that came to be called "miracle economies". They were miracles because of the rates of growth in the national income and personal incomes had reached unprecedented levels. This was done by the governments getting actively involved in directing the development of private enterprises. They were directed to produce cheap manufacturers that had large markets in the United States and Western Europe.

Courtesy Tribune

Govt ensures uninterrupted gas supply during sehri, iftar: Minister



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik on Wednesday said the government has taken all possible measures to ensure an uninterrupted gas supply during Sehri and Iftar in Ramadan.

Speaking at a press conference with Minister for Power Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari, he said the government coordinated closely with Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) and Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) to improve gas

pressure and arrange additional supply during the holy month.

He said gas will be provided at maximum pressure from 3:00 am to 10:30 pm, with special attention to peak Sehri and Iftar hours to facilitate households across the country.

The minister said the government had successfully managed gas supply during the winter season and further strengthened the system for Ramadan.

He added that situation rooms have been set up at the head offices

under the supervision of the managing directors of SNGPL and SSGC, following a monitoring system similar to the one used by the Power Division. Regional offices have also been directed to closely monitor the network, especially in tail-end areas, to ensure timely supply during critical hours.

To facilitate consumers, he said, a complaint system has been activated. Citizens can register complaints on helpline 1199. The managing directors will personally monitor the complaints and ensure they are resolved within the timeframe set by the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA).

He said automated robocalls will also be made to check customer satisfaction and confirm whether complaints have been addressed. If complaints are not resolved on time, consumers can report dissatisfaction, leading to further management review. The minister said the steps reflect the government's commitment under the prime minister.

Rubina Khalid announces major relief for women beneficiaries ahead of Ramadan

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Chairperson of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) Senator Rubina Khalid Wednesday announced major financial relief for women beneficiaries in view of the upcoming holy month of Ramadan, including an increase in quarterly stipends and additional support for education and nutrition programmes. The chairperson was speaking during a live e-Katcheri held at the BISP Headquarters. The primary objectives of the session were to directly hear public concerns, understand issues faced by beneficiaries, and ensure timely and effective resolution of complaints. While addressing participants, the chairperson said Ramadan is a month of blessings, patience and compassion, and in line with this spirit, BISP is extending maximum possible



relief to deserving families across the country. She announced that the quarterly installment of the Benazir Kafalat Programme has been increased by Rs. 1,000, raising the amount from Rs. 13,500 to Rs. 14,500 for eligible women beneficiaries. In addition, stipends under the Benazir Nashonuma Programme and Benazir Educational Scholarships have also been enhanced by Rs. 500 each to further strengthen maternal nutrition and support children's education. Senator Rubina Khalid urged deserving women to ensure they receive.

Minister reviews Ramadan Relief Package 2026 implementation, orders immediate disbursement

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Protection Syed Imran Ahmed Shah Wednesday chaired a high-level review meeting on the Ramadan Relief Package 2026 to ensure smooth and timely assistance to beneficiaries, in line with the directives of the Prime Minister.

The meeting was attended by representatives of National Database and Registration Authority, State Bank of Pakistan, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, the Benazir Income Support Programme, National Telecommunication Corporation, Press Information Department, and officials from various banks.

Minister reviews Ramadan Relief Package 2026 implementation, orders immediate disbursement

Addressing the participants, the federal minister directed the State Bank of Pakistan to immediately begin crediting Ramadan relief funds to beneficiaries' accounts from today.

He further instructed that all banks must ensure full operational readiness on the first day of Ramadan to avoid any disruption in payments.

Emphasizing uninterrupted disbursement, the minister ordered that pending beneficiary bank accounts be opened on a priority basis.

He also called for the formation of a dedicated WhatsApp group comprising focal persons from all relevant institutions to strengthen coordination and ensure twice-daily progress updates.

Later, Syed Imran Ahmed Shah visited the control room established to monitor the disbursement of the Prime Minister's Ramadan Relief Package.

According to the real-time dashboard, nearly 200,000 calls have been received so far, with over 95,000 resolved through the IVR system and around 23,000 handled by call agents. The minister directed BISP to keep the control room operational 24/7 at least during the first ten days of Ramadan.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister Syed Imran Ahmed Shah chaired a review meeting at Ministry of Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety with all the stakeholders of PM Ramadan Relief Package 2026 to review its progress and to address issues, if any.

Islamabad High Court upholds PIC decision declaring PMIC a public body under RTI Act

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court has upheld an order of the Pakistan Information Commission (PIC) declaring the Pakistan Microfinance Investment Company Limited (PMIC) a public body and subject to the Right of Access to Information Act, 2017. The Commission, in pursuance of an appeal filed by a citizen, had held through its order dated January 16, 2025 that PMIC falls within the definition of a public body and is answerable under the Act. PMIC,

instead of complying with the Commission's earlier order dated September 10, 2024 directing it to furnish certain information, challenged the decision before the High Court under Article 199 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Justice Muhammad Asif heard the writ petition, in which PMIC sought to have the impugned order set aside on the grounds of misapplication of law and lack of jurisdiction. The company argued that it is a private sector entity incorporated under the Companies

Act, 2017, licensed and regulated by the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), and neither owned nor controlled by the Federal Government. It contended that it does not fall within the definition of a "public body" under Section 2(ix) of the Act. PMIC submitted that Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) holds only 49 percent shareholding in the company, which does not amount to majority ownership or control. It maintained that majority shareholding rests with Karandaaz Pakistan and

New auto policy to empower industries, strengthen domestic production: SAPM Haroon

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan on Wednesday said that the core objective of the new Auto and Tractor Policy was to empower industries, strengthen domestic production, and promote export-led growth.

He said during a high level meeting with the CEO of Millat Tractors Sikandar Mustafa and discussed the future roadmap of Pakistan's auto and tractor sector, said a news release.

Federal Secretary for Industries and Production, Capt (r) Saif Anjum, also attended the meeting.

During the meeting, detailed discussions were held on the upcoming Auto Policy, Tractor Policy, and the promotion of local manufacturing and indigenization in the engineering sector. Haroon said that, under the directions of Prime Minister, a comprehensive and forward-looking Auto and Tractor Policy will soon.

Maryam Nawaz aims to make Punjab drug-free: Azma Bokhari

PEAK POINT

LAHORE: Punjab Information Minister Azma Bokhari said on Wednesday that making Punjab drug-free is the mission of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, stressing that protecting students from narcotics is a collective responsibility.

During her visit to the headquarters of the Punjab Anti-Narcotics Force, Director General Brigadier Mazhar Iqbal briefed the minister on the department's performance and ongoing operations against drug trafficking.

The meeting was also attended by Punjab Information Secretary Tahir Raza Hamdani and Secretary Excise and Narcotics Masood Mukhtar.



The minister appreciated the force's efforts in curbing drug-related activities and termed its performance commendable.

Azma Bokhari directed authorities to organise awareness programmes in universities and colleges to safeguard the youth from the menace of drugs. She also underscored the need for an effective social media campaign to spread awareness about the harmful effects of narcotics.

PTI UK leaders concerned over the health and safety of Imran Khan

BY: MIAN AAMIR ALI

MANCHESTER: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Northwest UK, led by Asif Butt, held an urgent international media briefing in Manchester to highlight growing concerns over the health and safety of Pakistan's former Prime Minister Imran Khan, with a focus on his reported deteriorating eye condition and gaps in medical documentation. The conference saw participation from key PTI leaders and medical experts, who called for immediate independent medical access and Supreme Court intervention to ensure proper care for the incarcerated leader. Dr Kamran Aftab Ahmed, President of PTI Doctors



Forum UK and an ophthalmologist, addressed journalists to detail critical issues in Mr Khan's medical reports. He stated that the documentation provided is incomplete, lacking key information including when vision problems first emerged, accurate diagnosis, and details of ongoing treatment. Dr Aftab warned of severe risks associated with a blood clot in Mr Khan's eye.

records held by public bodies, and give effect to the fundamental right of access to information under Article 19A of the Constitution. The Court observed that Section 2(ix) defines "public body" in expansive terms and that ownership, controlling interest, or substantial funding independently suffices to bring an entity within its ambit. The Court noted that PMIC's shareholding vests entirely in PPAF, Karandaaz Pakistan, and KfW, and that more than 70 percent of its funding originates from public bodies and public funds.

2(ix) is broad and includes entities owned, controlled, or substantially funded by public bodies, as well as organizations undertaking public functions or receiving public funds. The respondent maintained that PMIC is wholly owned by PPAF (49%), Karandaaz Pakistan (37.8%), and KfW (13.2%), all government-backed entities, and that substantial public funding is sufficient to attract the Act. In its judgment, the Court examined the legislative intent of the Act, noting that it seeks to promote transparency, ensure access to

records held by public bodies, and give effect to the fundamental right of access to information under Article 19A of the Constitution. The Court observed that Section 2(ix) defines "public body" in expansive terms and that ownership, controlling interest, or substantial funding independently suffices to bring an entity within its ambit. The Court noted that PMIC's shareholding vests entirely in PPAF, Karandaaz Pakistan, and KfW, and that more than 70 percent of its funding originates from public bodies and public funds.

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