



**President Zardari
felicitates leadership of
Mauritius on National Day**



**Finance Minister signals
further increase
in petroleum prices**



**5G Spectrum Auction Nets
\$ 507m: Rana Mashhood
Thanks Shehbaz Sharif**

Founded By:
(Late) Rehmat Khan

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Friday 13 March 2026 Ramazan 23, 1447 A.H VOI No: 06 Issue No. 42 Pages 4 Rs. 20

PM Shehbaz arrives in Saudi Arabia as war in Middle East escalates

PEAK POINT

SAUDI ARABIA: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday arrived in Saudi Arabia on a brief official visit as the ongoing conflict in the Middle East saw no significant signs of de-escalation.

The prime minister's visit comes amid intense hostilities in the Middle East, where Gulf countries — including Saudi Arabia — are facing Iranian attacks, which Tehran says are aimed at US and Israeli sites in response to the latter's deadly large-scale strikes.

According to state-run PTV News, the premier was received at the Royal Terminal of Jeddah's King Abdulaziz International Airport by Deputy Governor of Makkah

Region Prince Saud bin Mishal bin Abdulaziz, Pakistan's Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Ahmad Farooq, Pakistan's Consul General in Jeddah Syed Mustafa Rabani and other diplomatic staff.

PTV News reported that the visit would only last for a few hours, where he would meet Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

Earlier in the day, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said the premier was undertaking the visit at the invitation of the Saudi crown prince.

It added that the prime minister and the Saudi crown prince would "exchange views on the ongoing tensions in the region, the regional security situation.



JEDDAH: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif is being received by His Royal Highness Prince Saud bin Mashaal bin Abdulaziz, Deputy Governor of Makkah region, at the royal terminal of Jeddah International airport.

In first remarks, Iran's new supreme leader vows to avenge martyrs, keep Strait of Hormuz closed

PEAK POINT



IRAN: Iran will avenge the blood of its martyrs, keep the Strait of Hormuz closed and attack US bases, new Supreme Leader Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei said on Thursday in a statement read out on state television, his first remarks since succeeding his father following his assassination. In the defiant address, Khamenei said the United States must close all its bases in the region. The strait, which runs past Iran's coast and supplies a fifth of the world's oil, should remain shut to put pressure on the enemy, he said.

"The lever of blocking the Strait of Hormuz must definitely be used," Khamenei said of the waterway. Ayatollah Mojtaba vowed to avenge the deaths since the start of the war, saying it would remain among his top priorities. "A limited amount of this revenge has so far taken concrete form, but until it is fully achieved, this case will remain among our priorities," Khamenei said in a statement read on state television. "We will seek compensation from the enemy.

Pakistan playing role of 'bridge builder' in ongoing Middle East conflict: FO

PEAK POINT



ISLAMABAD: Foreign Office (FO) spokesperson Tahir Andrabi said on Thursday that Pakistan was playing the role of a "bridge builder" during the ongoing US-Israeli war on Iran. The war began as the US and Israel launched strikes on Tehran on February 28, which also resulted in the assassination of Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. In retaliatory strikes, Iran has targeted US assets and bases in Gulf countries, against which a resolution was adopted in the United Nations Security Council on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, Pakistan has been calling for de-

escalation, with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar holding phone calls with dignitaries from relevant countries over the past few days. On Thursday, Andrabi gave a round-up of the phone calls during his weekly press briefing. During the question-answer bit, a reporter mentioned that Dar had

Gulf countries — yes, we have had an open channel of communication." He then recounted the phone calls that PM Shehbaz and Dar had held with dignitaries in other countries, saying "there is a level of exchange of communication". "We are playing the role of a bridge builder. Our principal position on issues regarding sovereignty, international law and the UN Charter, and on dialogue and diplomacy, is respected in all regional capitals. So, this allows us to exercise a channel of communication between the relevant capitals," he added. Responding to other questions.

In response, Andrabi said: "As regards the communication that we may have between Iran, Saudi Arabia, and other

PM Shehbaz recommends PML-N's Nehal Hashmi as Sindh governor

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: In a surprise move on Thursday, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has decided to appoint PML-N's Nehal Hashmi as Sindh governor, according to a statement released from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO). According to the PMO, PM Shehbaz met Hashmi at PM House on Tuesday and decided to nominate him as the governor of Sindh. The premier has forwarded a summary in this regard to President Asif Ali Zardari for the final nod. A video of the meeting with Hashmi showed Deputy.

Pak Army successfully targets Afghan Taliban Posts in Thal Sector

PEAK POINT

PESHAWAR: Pakistan Army continued its effective retaliatory actions against the Afghan Taliban and Fitna al-Khwarizj, targeting Afghan Taliban posts in the Zhob sector along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. Security sources said that as a result of the timely and effective response, Pak-Army completely destroyed several Afghan Taliban posts. Pak Army is giving effective and prompt responses to the unprovoked aggression of the Afghan Taliban along Pak-Afghan border. Security sources further stated that Operation Ghazab Lil Haq.

Trump says he is not worried about Iran-backed attacks on US soil

PEAK POINT

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump said on Wednesday he was not worried about Iran-backed attacks on US soil, as the Federal Bureau of Investigation warned of Iranian drones potentially striking the US West Coast, ABC News reported.

The US and Israel carried out strikes on Iran nearly two weeks ago, launching the Gulf region into a war.

Tehran has carried out retaliatory strikes in response to the US-Israeli strikes that killed top Iranian officials, including the country's supreme leader.

When asked on Wednesday if he was wor-

ried that Iran may increase allegedly aspired to conduct a surprise attack using



strikes on US soil, Trump told reporters, "No, I'm not."

ABC News later reported that the FBI had warned police departments in California that Iran could retaliate for US attacks by launching drones at the West Coast.

"We recently acquired information that as of early February 2026, Iran

unmanned aerial vehicles from an unidentified vessel off the coast of the United States Homeland, specifically against unspecified targets in California, in the event that the US conducted strikes against Iran," the FBI wrote in an alert distributed at the end of February, according to ABC News. "We have no additional

information on the timing, method, target, or perpetrators of this alleged attack." Spokespeople for the FBI, Los Angeles Police Department, California governor and Los Angeles mayor did not immediately respond to requests for comments.

Reuters reported earlier this month that Iran and its proxies could target the US with attacks in response to US strikes.

A threat assessment produced by the Office of Intelligence and Analysis at the Department of Homeland Security said Iran and its proxies "probably" pose a threat of targeted attacks on the United States, although a large-scale physical attack was unlikely.

IHC orders formation of medical board on plea seeking Imran's transfer to Shifa Int'l Hospital



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Thursday directed the formation of a medical board in its verdict on a plea seeking the transfer of PTI founder Imran Khan to Shifa International Hospital for medical treatment.

A division bench, comprising Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir and Justice Khadim Hussain Soomro, presided over the hearing. IHC directed Islamabad Chief Commissioner Muhammad Ali Randhawa to constitute a medical board and ordered that Dr Muhammad Arif and Dr Nadeem Qureshi be included.

Dr Qureshi, who is a retina specialist from Shifa Eye Hospital.



SPORTS



PCB unveils 'Infinity' trophy for historic PSL 11



PEAK POINT

LAHORE: The dazzling 'Infinity' trophy for the landmark 11th edition of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) was officially unveiled on Wednesday at the National Bank Stadium, Karachi. The league revealed the trophy through a 47-second video shared across its social media platforms, offering fans a behind-the-scenes glimpse of the intricate craftsmanship involved in creating the silverware. Designed with a modern and elegant aesthetic, the trophy features a tall, sleek golden structure rising from a circular base. The central body is adorned with sparkling stones arranged in vertical patterns, giving the piece a radiant appearance under lights. Two gracefully curved golden arms extend upward from either side, converging near the top to form the striking centerpiece. Crowning the trophy is a distinctive crescent and star, a design element inspired by the national flag of Pakistan. The crescent is embedded with small crystals, while a polished metallic star sits just above it, creating a symbolic and visually captivating finish. The base of the trophy is gold-plated and mounted on a black cylindrical pedestal featuring PSL branding, completing the premium design. According to the league, the trophy was crafted by a team of 18 artisans and required nearly 2,600 hours to complete, highlighting the meticulous work behind the iconic prize that will be lifted by the champions of PSL 11. The upcoming season promises to be historic as the tournament expands to eight teams with the addition of two new franchises, Pindiz and Hyderabad Kingsmen. The PSL 11 will run from March 26 to May 3, featuring a total of 44 matches. The tournament will begin with defending champions Hyderabad Houston Kingsmen at their home venue on March 26. Under the tournament format, each team will play 10 league matches, with the top four sides progressing to the playoffs. The knockout stage will consist of Qualifier 1, Eliminator, and Qualifier 2 before culminating in the final. The PSL 11 final is scheduled to be played at the iconic Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore on May 3, with May 4 reserved as a contingency day. The tournament will feature six double-headers, three of which will be held in Lahore. Matches will be played across six venues in Pakistan.

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Iran cannot participate in upcoming FIFA World Cup in US, minister says



PEAK POINT

IRAN: Iran cannot participate in the 2026 FIFA World Cup after the co-host US launched airstrikes alongside Israel, Sports Minister Ahmad Donyamali said on Thursday. The attacks assassinated Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and triggered a region-wide conflict.

"Considering that this corrupt regime has assassinated our leader, under no circumstances can we participate in the World Cup," the minister told state television.

The 48-team World Cup will be held in the US, Mexico and Canada from June 11 to July 19. "Our children are not safe and, fundamentally, such conditions for participation do not exist," Donyamali said.

"Given the malicious actions they have carried out against Iran, they have forced two wars on us over eight or nine months and have killed and martyred thousands of our people. Therefore, we certainly cannot have such a presence."

More than 1,300 Iranian civilians have been killed since the US and Israeli airstrikes began on February 28, according to Iran's UN ambassador Amir Saeid Iravani. Iran drawn to play in LA and Seattle Iran are grouped with Belgium, Egypt and New Zealand.

Bangladesh thrash Pakistan by eight wickets in low-scoring first ODI



PEAK POINT

MIRPUR: Bangladesh delivered a dominant performance to defeat Pakistan by eight wickets in the first match of the three-match ODI series at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium. Bangladesh's chase was

anchored by an impressive unbeaten knock from Tanzid Hasan, who struck a fluent 67 off 42 balls, smashing seven fours and five sixes to guide the hosts to victory. The home side made a steady start as openers Saif Hassan and Tanzid Hasan comfortably crossed the finish line. Litton Das remained unbeaten on three at the end. Earlier, Pakistan's batting lineup collapsed after a promising start. Openers Maaz Sadaqat and Saifuddin Ahmed added 41 runs for the first wicket, giving the visitors a solid platform. However, Bangladesh pacer Nahid Rana turned the match decisively in the hosts' favour with a devastating spell.

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Mekayial and Laplacette shine in FG Polo's win in 5th President of Pakistan Polo Cup opener



New Zealand's Williamson launches line of boxes after low blow from Steyn

PEAK POINT

MELBOURNE: New Zealand batter Kane Williamson has started a business inspired by one of cricket's most painful rites of passage, launching his own line of "premium alloy" boxes to protect players' most sensitive area.

Worn inside a player's briefs as a shield for the groin, boxes are an essential piece of protective kit for batters facing deliveries that can exceed 140 km/hr (87 mph). Williamson said a ball from South Africa's feared fast man Dale Steyn in 2012 cracked his box and inspired the "Cover" brand he had co-founded.

"It was extremely painful and it just absolutely dropped me," the former New Zealand captain said in a statement.

"I was hit, my box split, and that made it pretty clear that the protection players were relying on wasn't up

to the demands of the modern game."

Co-founder Jason Low said the box's alloy shell could handle ball speeds well over 200 km/hr and offer protection from high-speed pro-

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PTF Rising Tennis Stars initiative launched



jectiles across other hard ball sports like hockey, lacrosse and baseball. While boxes have long

month after suffering "internal testicular bleeding" from being hit in the groin by a ball at training.



Rs250 Million cigarette theft from FBR Warehouses exposes Major Security Lapses, Senate Panel orders Probe

NADEEM TANOLI

ISLAMABAD: A massive Rs250 million theft of 2,828 cartons of cigarettes from Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) warehouses in Swabi and Mardan has triggered serious concern in the Senate after investigators revealed shocking administrative failures including the absence of CCTV cameras, stock registers, duty rosters and security protocols at the government storage facilities. The revelations surfaced during a meeting of the Sub Committee of the Senate Standing Committee on Interior and Narcotics Control, convened by Senator Saifullah Abro, where officials admitted that the theft occurred amid severe lapses in warehouse

management and monitoring systems. According to officials from the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), the case referred through the Ministry of Interior relates to embezzlement valued at approximately Rs250 million involving seized cigarette consignments stored by the FBR. During the briefing, investigators disclosed that no officer had been formally designated to supervise the warehouse, and critical documentation including stock registers, official logbooks and duty rosters of staff was missing. Officials further informed the committee that no CCTV cameras had been installed at the facility, while standard operating procedures for transferring seized

goods between warehouses were also absent. In addition, investigators reported that no gate pass records of drivers were maintained, and movements of mobile squads were not recorded in the official movement registers, creating serious gaps in accountability. The FIA confirmed that statements of several officials posted at the warehouse have been recorded and the inquiry is currently underway. Senator Muhammad Talha Mahmood expressed concern that responsibility might be shifted solely onto lower level staff and warned that senior officers must also be held accountable if their involvement or negligence is established. He recommended that warehouse video footage

be presented in the next meeting and called for scrutiny of the assets of staff deployed at the warehouse to determine whether they benefited from the alleged embezzlement. The senator also stressed the need to identify possible beneficiaries outside the department, including industrialists who may have profited from the stolen cigarette consignments. During the meeting, the Regional Tax Office (RTO) Peshawar also briefed the committee on the machinery used in cigarette manufacturing, revealing that such equipment costs over Rs1 billion. Officials explained that when illegal cigarette production is detected, the machinery is

seized and production is halted until the courts decide the case. The committee also took up another issue regarding the confiscation of more than half a ton of gold by Pakistan Customs between June 2011 and 2025. Customs officials informed lawmakers that confiscated gold is handed over to the State Bank of Pakistan, which melts the metal and deposits its value into the national treasury. Officials further explained that confiscated items are categorized as auctionable or destroyable, and goods such as cigarettes, betel nut and other addictive commodities fall under the destroyable category, making them more vulnerable to theft and mismanagement. The

Senate panel directed Pakistan Customs to submit complete details of confiscated items including gold, silver, electronics, cigarettes and narcotics seized since 2012 within ten days. Senator Saifullah Abro instructed the FBR, FIA and regional police authorities to coordinate closely and expedite the investigation, while also ordering geocoding of the incident location to help identify the individuals involved in the theft. The committee indicated that further action will depend on the findings of the investigation and warned that accountability must extend beyond lower-level employees if systemic failures or senior-level negligence are uncovered.

PNCA's Modern Calligraphy Workshop concludes

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) successfully concluded its four-day Modern Calligraphy Workshop at the National Art Gallery on March 12.

The workshop, led by Master Calligrapher Nasir Khan Seemab, brought together calligraphy enthusiasts ranging from beginners to seasoned professionals under one roof, offering them a rare opportunity to learn from one of Pakistan's most

distinguished calligraphic artists.

The workshop commenced on March 9, and ran through March 12, with daily sessions held from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM. Coordinated by Saba Zia, the event was organized with the aim of promoting the rich tradition of Islamic calligraphy while encouraging contemporary artistic expression.

Participants were not only trained in professional techniques but were also given the exciting opportunity to showcase their masterpieces



at PNCA, making the experience both educational and celebratory.

Nasir Khan Seemab, who hails from Mardan (Takht

Bhai), served as the soul and driving force of the workshop.

As the Head and In-charge of the Department of

Calligraphy at the National Language Promotion

Institute, Seemab has dedicated his life to the preservation and promotion of this ancient art.

He played a pivotal role in establishing the calligraphy department at the government level, a testament to his commitment to institutionalizing this art form across Pakistan.

A devoted Sufi calligrapher, Seemab follows the distinguished style of Hazrat Nafees Shah Sahib and commands mastery over major

scripts including Thuluth, Naskh, and Sufi.

His teachings throughout the workshop reflected not just technical precision but also the spiritual depth that defines great calligraphy.

Beyond calligraphy, Seemab is an accomplished painter and has served as a curator in exhibitions held across the country.

His work has earned recognition at both national and international levels, and his passion for promoting Islamic calligraphy remains as strong as ever.

Opinion & Editorial

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The Iran-Israel-U.S. War: Do Not Overlook Qatar and Saudi Arabia's Role in Peace Diplomacy

By Haseeb Ahmed
Column: Voice Of The Time

The Middle East is once again facing a level of tension that is no longer limited to a few states but could shape the future of the entire region and the wider Muslim world. The growing confrontation between Iran and the United States and Israel has pushed the Gulf region toward a dangerous turning point. If Gulf countries—particularly Qatar and Saudi Arabia are drawn directly into this conflict, the consequences could be deep and far reaching. History shows that Qatar has established itself over the past two decades as a country that promotes mediation and diplomacy in times of conflict. One of the most prominent examples was the Afghanistan peace process, where Doha became the primary platform for negotiations between the United States and the Taliban. After years of diplomatic engagement, the talks eventually resulted in an agreement that shaped the political future of Afghanistan. Similarly, Qatar has played an important role in efforts to reduce tensions in Gaza. During periods of intense fighting between Israel and Hamas, Qatar was involved in facilitating negotiations and supporting ceasefire initiatives while also providing humanitarian assistance to the peo-

ple of Gaza. These efforts strengthened Qatar's image as a state that prioritizes diplomacy and peace rather than escalation. Saudi Arabia's role in the region is even more significant. As one of the largest economies in the Muslim world and a central political actor in the Middle East, Saudi Arabia has historically influenced the stability of the region. In recent years, Riyadh also took steps aimed at reducing tensions, most notably the restoration of diplomatic relations with Iran through mediation supported by China. That agreement was widely viewed as a major step toward regional stability. In such circumstances, if Iran continues targeting Gulf countries especially Qatar and Saudi Arabia it risks undermining not only regional stability but also years of diplomatic progress. The closure of the Strait of Hormuz has already increased global pressure and disrupted international trade. With hundreds of oil tankers reportedly stranded, the economic impact is not limited to global markets it also threatens the trade and economic stability of Gulf nations themselves. Another important question arises here: if Iran continues launching attacks in the Gulf, how long will these countries remain patient? At some point, they may feel compelled to respond militarily. If that happens,

the conflict could transform into a broader confrontation within the Muslim world itself. Such a scenario would only benefit external powers that have long been accused of exploiting divisions in the region. Some analysts believe that the broader strategy of the United States and Israel may involve pushing regional states toward confrontation with one another. If Muslim countries become entangled in direct conflict, major global powers could gradually step back from the battlefield while the region remains trapped in prolonged instability. In this context, Pakistan's role also becomes highly significant. Pakistan and Saudi Arabia share decades-long strategic and defense cooperation. Historically, Pakistan has often described Saudi Arabia's security as closely linked to its own. If tensions escalate to the point where Saudi Arabia becomes directly involved in the war, the repercussions could extend to Pakistan as well. Given the deep military cooperation and historical ties between the two countries, maintaining complete neutrality would not be an easy choice for Islamabad. History repeatedly teaches the same lesson: whenever the Muslim world becomes divided internally, external powers gain the mos-

Fighting oil price hikes

Khurram Husain

Last Friday was a bombshell by any definition and a Rs55 per litre price hike is a killer for the common citizenry. Sharp adjustments like this always trigger equally sharp politics. But this is the first time I have seen a government move with such speed, and pre-emptive intention, to adjust oil prices at the pump even before the instability has entered our oil supply chain.

Maybe it was possible to do this better, but the fact that a sharp upward adjustment was coming was unavoidable. In the wake of the price hike, a number of observations circulated. Let me address one of them in particular.

People shared a graphic showing fuel price hikes in various countries around the world which showed Pakistan at the top. Why did Pakistan pass such a massive price increase compared to all other countries, including India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka? Let's start with the regional countries. India has elections coming up in four important states in the month of May and a history of governments being reticent about adjusting fuel prices in the run-up to elections. Second, India has a strategic reserve of oil, which when combined with the commercial stocks held by oil marketing companies, gives them 74 days of import cover. By contrast, Pakistan has stocks barely enough for 28 days of cover, and no strategic reserve to cushion the impact of supply disruptions. According to reports from India, the oil sector is currently bearing a loss of INR20 per litre (Rs60) on every sale. Pakistan stands out in the region as a country that moved rapidly to preserve the integrity of its fuel supply chain. Bangladesh has a newly minted government that just entered power in February after campaigning on providing relief to the people following a few years of inflation. Passing a 20 per cent hike in essential fuels so soon after entering power, and in the month of Ramadan with Eid looming, would be a wrecking ball to their political prospects at the very outset.

Courtesy Tribune

Pakistan generates \$510 mln through 5G spectrum auction: PTA



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan generated \$510 million (Rs142.6 billion) from the landmark auction of Next Generation Mobile Services (NGMS) spectrum, while the telecom regulator on Thursday completed the position assignment auction to determine the exact placement of spectrum blocks acquired by operators. The announcement was made by Hafeez Ur Rehman, Chairman of the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), during a press briefing alongside

Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja, following the completion of the multi-band spectrum auction process. He said that 480 MHz of spectrum was sold during the bidding held on March 10, generating \$507 million in revenue, equivalent to about Rs 142 billion for the national exchequer. The position assignment held on Thursday generated an additional \$3 million following multiple rounds of bidding, bringing the total proceeds to \$510 million

(Rs142.6 billion).

Describing it as one of the largest spectrum sales globally in terms of volume, the PTA chief said the government had fulfilled its responsibility by conducting the auction, and it was now the telecom operators' turn to transform the spectrum into improved services for consumers.

The position assignment stage allowed operators to determine the precise placement of the spectrum blocks they had secured. The process covered the 2600 MHz and 3500 MHz bands, with operators bidding for lower, middle, and upper block positions to optimise network performance and minimise interference between networks. No assignment process was required for the 700 MHz band, which was secured solely by Jazz during the auction. Speaking on the occasion, Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication, said the successful completion of the auction was made possible by the difficult decisions taken by the government led by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

Finance Minister signals further increase in petroleum prices

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb has indicated a possible further increase in petroleum product prices in the coming days.

Speaking at a meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Finance, Aurangzeb said the government is implementing austerity and cost-saving measures on the instructions of the prime minister, but petroleum prices are still expected to rise in the near future.

During the meeting, officials from the Petroleum Division informed the committee that Pakistan currently has five refinery plants, most of which are outdated.

They added that Saudi Arabia is providing crude oil to Pakistan at discounted rates, offering some relief to the country.

Officials also revealed that



two oil tankers carrying crude oil for Pakistan are currently stuck in the Strait of Hormuz.

They further stated that global price fluctuations have significantly increased costs, noting that diesel was priced at \$88 per barrel on March 1 but surged to \$149 per barrel by March 6.

According to the Petroleum Division, shipping costs have also risen sharply, with cargo that previously cost \$700,000 now costing around \$7 million.

The committee was also informed that LPG imports from Iran are continuing.

NA members visit NDMA for strategic briefing on proactive disaster management

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Members of the National Assembly visited National Emergencies Operation Center (NEOC) at NDMA Headquarters on Thursday, where they were received by Chairman NDMA, Lt. Gen Inam Haider Malik.

NA members visit NDMA for strategic briefing on proactive disaster management

The visit provided parliamentarians with a comprehensive overview of Pakistan's transition to proactive disaster management and the country's current standing as a globally recognized leader in anticipatory disaster preparedness. NA members visit NDMA for strategic briefing on proactive disaster management

During the briefing, Members of the National Assembly were introduced to NDMA's Disaster Early Warning and Technology Ecosystem, which includes operational dashboards, digital portals, and real-time monitoring tools fully operational at the NEOC. Chairman NDMA highlighted that these capabilities are indigenously developed

and operationalized, emphasizing anticipatory action, whole-of-government coordination, and readiness measures designed to mitigate evolving disaster risks nationwide.

NA members visit NDMA for strategic briefing on proactive disaster management

The delegation received an in-depth demonstration of Lens Pakistan 2026, offering high-resolution disaster forecasts across all provinces and territories to enable precision in resource pre-positioning and response planning.

This was followed by insights into the Global Disaster Lens 2026, a cutting-edge tool that monitors international climate and disaster trends in real time, positioning Pakistan as a key data provider for global disaster risk analysis and strengthening the country's role in international climate diplomacy.

NA members visit NDMA for strategic briefing on proactive disaster management

A key highlight of the session was the formal launch of the Global Disaster Early Warning App, a digital platform designed for mass public access, providing citizens with real-time alerts.

President Zardari felicitates leadership of Mauritius on National Day

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Thursday extended his warm felicitations to the President of the Republic of Mauritius, Dharambeer Gokhool, G.C.S.K., the Government and the friendly people of Mauritius on the auspicious occasion of their National Day.

The president highlighted that Pakistan attaches great importance to its cordial relations with Mauritius, which are marked by mutual trust and constructive cooperation at both bilateral and multilateral fora.

It is encouraging to see the growing engagement between the leadership of both nations and the steady expansion of cooperation in areas of shared interest. There is a considerable potential to further strengthen collaboration through enhanced people-to-people contacts, as well as in the fields of trade, education, culture and tourism, said the president in a press statement.

President Zardari expressed his confidence that the friendly relations between the two countries.

Leghari orders strict action on poor performers, strengthens 118 call center for consumer relief

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Power Sardar Awais Ahmed Khan Leghari on Thursday directed all power distribution companies (DISCOs) to make the redressal of electricity consumers' complaints more effective and transparent and ordered strict action against officers showing negligence in service delivery.

The minister issued directives aimed at making complaint resolution more effective, transparent and consumer-friendly, said a press release issued by the Ministry of Energy (Power Division).

He instructed DISCOs to take immediate action against officials demonstrating negligence in handling consumer complaints and



ordered that sub-divisions with the best and poorest performance be nominated on monthly basis based on 118 platform data, so that performance can be evaluated and better performance can be encouraged.

Leghari has also directed that Customer Services Directors of all power distribution companies be held accountable regarding the redressal of consumer complaints. Particularly, he took notice of the low registration of complaints by electricity.

5G Spectrum Auction Nets \$ 507m: Rana Mashhood Thanks Shehbaz Sharif

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of Prime Minister Youth Programme (PMYP) Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan on Wednesday celebrated the completion of Pakistan's 5G spectrum auction across 600 MHz bands, which generated \$ 507 million and fast-tracks a digital revolution, praising Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's vision for ultra-fast 10 Gbps speeds, 1ms latency, and IoT-powered smart ecosystems, highlighting PML-N's April 2014 4G launch versus PTI's stagnation, as the world advances toward 6G.

Rana Mashhood extended heartfelt thanks to PM Shehbaz, noting how this under his Digital



Pakistan initiative would boost e-commerce, online education, IT exports, and youth prospects, transforming healthcare with remote surgeries, industries with automation, and agriculture with smart sensors.

Chairman PMYP said the PML-N government first ignited Pakistan's digital journey in April 2014 by launching 4G networks, turbocharging internet access.



ISLAMABAD: MNA delegation visited National Emergencies Operation Center for Strategic Briefing on Proactive Disaster Management at NDMA HQs.

Inclusive value chain for pulses key to food security, reduction in imports: Rana Tanveer

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain said that developing a competitive and inclusive value chain for pulses is critical for ensuring food security, improving nutrition and reducing Pakistan's reliance on imports, thus only a 30 per cent improvement in the sector could significantly cut the country's pulses imports.

He was speaking as the chief guest at a briefing session titled "Developing

Competitive and Inclusive Value Chains of Pulses in Pakistan," organized by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) on Thursday. The project is funded by the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) and led by The University of Queensland.

Pulses fall among the cheapest sources of protein and an important crop for sustainable agriculture, the minister said, adding that strengthening the sector would directly benefit farm-



ers and ensure national food security. He said: "Pakistan currently produces around 0.7 to 0.8 million tons of pulses annually against a national requirement of about

1.6 million tons, which shows a major production gap that forces the country to import."

Rana Tanveer stressed that promoting public-private

partnerships, local seed production and value addition would help in strengthening the pulses sector and support small farmers. Improved market intelligence, crop preservation facilities and national quality standards are essential to attract investment and build a robust value chain.

The government is focusing on strengthening agricultural research, extension services and climate-resilient seed varieties to improve productivity, the minister said and added that Pakistan

currently invests only 0.16 per cent of its GDP in agricultural research, compared to around 4.0 per cent by countries such as Korea.

The minister said climate change had emerged as a major challenge for Pakistan's agriculture sector, leading to declining yields in key crops such as rice and wheat. To address post-harvest losses, he said the government was working on introducing modern Chinese harvesting machinery, which could significantly reduce crop wastage.