



President congratulates Kazakhstan on successful constitutional referendum



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Wednesday 18 March 2026

Ramazan 28, 1447 A.H

VOI No: 06

Issue No. 46

Pages 4 Rs. 20

Sufficient petroleum products available to meet country's requirements: PM told

PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: A meeting with Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in the chair, Tuesday, was informed that adequate stocks of petroleum products were available in the country as per local requirements. The meeting to review implementation of fuel conservation and austerity measures in light of the regional and global situation, was briefed on the progress on these measures. It was apprised that implementation of the prime minister's directives was being ensured, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. The Intelligence Bureau would present monitoring reports on the implementation of all measures, it was added.

The prime minister directed the Minister for Petroleum to further enhance efforts to improve Pakistan's petroleum import supply chain. He stressed that all relevant institutions should remain prepared for emergency measures until the situation improved. The meeting was attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, Minister for Economic Affairs Ahmad Khan Cheema, Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb; Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik, Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar, Minister for Climate Change Dr. Musadik Malik, Minister for Information Technology.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif a review meeting regarding implementation of Austerity measures in the wake of the current regional and global situation.

Information ministry rubbishes Afghan Taliban's claims of hospital being hit in Kabul

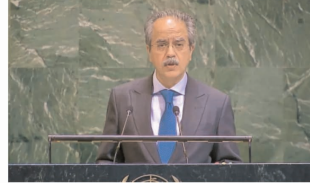
PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Tuesday dismissed claims made by the Afghan Taliban that its armed forces allegedly struck a hospital in Kabul, stating that the target was "Camp Phoenix", which is several kilometres away from the hospital. The development comes amid the ongoing Operation Ghazab lil-Haq, which was launched on the night of February 26, following unprovoked firing by the Afghan Taliban from across the border. Earlier on Monday, the government said that Pakistani forces targeted the Afghan Taliban's military installations in Kabul and Nangarhar overnight. A fact check posted by the information ministry on X said that Omid Hospital, which the Afghan Taliban claimed had been hit, was "actually multiple kilometres away from Camp Phoenix, the military terrorist ammunition and equipment storage site precisely targeted last night". Sharing satellite imagery, the ministry said that the "actual hospital is a multi-storied structure as compared to the military/terrorist infrastructure actually targeted, whose image is also attached; the difference and lie is clear to see".



UN marks Islamophobia day with alarm over rising hate, discrimination against Muslims

PEAK POINT
UNITED NATIONS: This year, the International Day to Combat Islamophobia did not pass unnoticed — largely due to mounting tensions in the Middle East and their ripple effects across the globe. Pakistan, which spearheaded the 2022 UN resolution establishing the observance, underscored that anti-Muslim hatred is intensifying worldwide, with political rhetoric, digital platforms, and mainstream discourse amplifying the problem. The observance comes amid heightened global instability, particularly the ongoing conflict involving Iran,

which analysts say has contributed to a fresh surge in Islamophobic narratives. Reports indicate a spike in online hate speech and dehumanising rhetoric targeting Muslims, feeding a broader climate of intolerance that the UN and allied nations have increasingly called attention to. Observed annually on March 15, the International Day commemorates the victims of the Christchurch mosque attacks, in which 51 worshippers were killed. It was designated by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) following a resolution introduced by Pakistan on behalf of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, adopted by consensus. At a high-level UN event on March 16, the OIC reaffirmed that Islamophobia has reached "unprecedented" levels, citing its normalisation in political discourse and amplification through new technologies, including artificial intelligence. At another event, also at the UN headquarters in New York, Secretary-General António Guterres urged countries to "work together" to confront the rising tide of anti-Muslim hatred. Calling for a rejection of "the narratives of fear and exclusion," he warned that even "subtle biases" can "shape lives, erode trust, and send a clear message about who is seen as belonging and who is not." "The consequences are painfully real," he said.



Govt calls off Pakistan Day parade, associated events amid austerity measures

PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: The government on Tuesday said it will not hold the Pakistan Day parade and other ceremonial events on March 23 in light of the ongoing Gulf oil crisis and the resulting austerity measures announced by the government. Pakistan Day — observed on March 23 every year — commemorates the passing of the Lahore Resolution on March 23, 1940, when the All-India Muslim League demanded a separate nation for the Muslims of the British Indian Empire. A statement from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).

Missile debris kills 3rd Pakistani in UAE amid Iran war

PEAK POINT
ABU DHABI: Another Pakistani national was killed due to "falling debris" following the interception of a ballistic missile in the United Arab Emirates, the country's media office said on Tuesday. The development marks the third instance of a Pakistani national losing their life in an attack in the UAE during the ongoing war between Iran, the US, and Israel. The Abu Dhabi Media Office, in a statement on X, said that the authorities "responded to an incident involving falling debris in the Baniyas area, following the interception of a ballistic missile by air defence systems".

Dar stresses dialogue, diplomacy for achieving regional peace in meeting with Iranian ambassador



PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Tuesday stressed that dialogue and diplomacy remained the only viable path to resolving issues and achieving lasting peace and stability in the region. Dar made the remarks during a meeting with Iran's

Ambassador to Pakistan Reza Amiri Moghaddam, according to the Foreign Office (FO). In a post on X, the FO said, the ambassador expressed gratitude for the "strong moral support extended by the people of Pakistan during this challenging time". "The DPM/FM conveyed his condolences over the loss of precious lives in the conflict and expressed hope for an early resolution. He underscored that dialogue and diplomacy remain the only viable path to resolving issues and achieving lasting peace and stability in the region," it said. The development comes amid an ongoing conflict in the Middle East, which began with US-Israeli strikes on Iran on February 28. In

retaliatory strikes, Iran has targeted US assets and bases in Gulf countries. Amid the hostilities, the FO has termed Pakistan's role a "bridge builder". On Monday, Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi thanked the government and people of Pakistan for extending their "strong solidarity and support" with Iran and its people who he said were facing aggression from the United States and Israel. In a post in Urdu on X, Araghchi said: "On this blessed, divine, and spiritual day and hour, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the government and people of Pakistan for their strong expression of solidarity and support with the people and government of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the face of the aggression by America and the Zionist regime."

US, Iran officials make first direct contact since war, say US media



PEAK POINT
WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump's special envoy, Steve Witkoff, and Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi have reportedly resumed direct communication in recent days, Axios reported, citing a US official and a source familiar with the matter. Both officials had previously managed negotiations between Washington and Tehran before Israel and the United States launched an attack on Iran. Axios noted that it is unclear how substantive the messages exchanged were, but the contacts mark the first known direct communication between the parties since the conflict began. According to the US official and the source.



SPORTS



Iranian women's football team begins journey home after players decline asylum



PEAK POINT
KUALA LUMPUR: The Iranian women's football team began making their way home from Malaysia on Monday, after five of its players withdrew their claims for asylum in Australia.

Australia had granted humanitarian visas to six players and one support staff member from the Iranian squad after they sought asylum, fearing possible persecution if they returned home.

Concerns over their safety emerged after the players failed to sing the national anthem at a government respected the decision of those who chose to return

this month. Five of the group, however, have since changed their minds and decided to return home to Iran, with Australian media reporting the latest withdrawal on Monday.

They joined the rest of the squad in Kuala Lumpur where the team had been staying since departing from Sydney last week, with just two remaining in Australia.

Australian Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs Matt Thistlethwaite told Sky News the

to Iran while continuing to provide support to the remaining two. "This is a very complex situation," Thistlethwaite said.

The team was seen at Kuala Lumpur International Airport on Monday evening checking in on an Oman Air flight, though their destination was unclear.

The Asian Football Confederation said earlier on Monday the squad would seek to travel to another country from Malaysia as it cannot immediately return to Tehran due to the war in the Middle East.

"They are just waiting for the flight connections. When they are

going... where to, they have to tell us," AFC General Secretary Windsor John told reporters in Kuala Lumpur.

He said he was unable to verify reports that the players' families had come under pressure from authorities in Iran, adding that the players had not expressed any concerns over their safety.

"We have spoken to the team officials. We have spoken to the coaches, the head of delegation. They are actually in high spirits," he said.

"I personally met them. They are not demotivated, or they don't look afraid."

Over 500 join CM Punjab Energy Saving Cycling Ride in Lahore



PEAK POINT

LAHORE: More than 500 participants, including men, women, boys, girls and children, took part in the CM Punjab Energy Saving Cycling Ride 2026 held in Lahore on Sunday to promote healthy lifestyles and environmental awareness. Punjab Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs Malik Faisal Ayub Khokhar attended the event as chief guest and joined the ride alongside Muhammad Ali, Suleman Malik and M Tariq Qureshi. The cycling ride began from Kalma Chowk in the Central Business District and concluded at the same location after covering a distance of 10 kilometres. Speaking to the media, Khokhar highlighted the importance of cycling as a healthy activity that also contributes to energy conservation and environmental protection. He said encouraging youth to engage in sports and positive activities remains a top priority of the provincial government. The minister added that the Punjab government has declared the current year as the "Year of Sports." After Eid, two major sporting events, the Punjab Marathon and Punjab Games, will be organised on a large scale. He also announced plans to include cycling in the upcoming Khelta Punjab Games and revealed that a major cycling race may soon be held in other cities across the province.

Hyderabad Kingsmen announce their captain for PSL 11



PEAK POINT
LAHORE: Marnus Labuschagne has been appointed captain of the Hyderabad Kingsmen for the upcoming 11th edition of the Pakistan Super League, with the franchise confirming the development through its official social media platforms.

was made via a 26-second promotional video that quickly gained attention online. The clip showed a private jet flying over the city of Hyderabad, releasing the paper slips into the air. Each slip carried the message announcing Labuschagne's appointment as captain, adding a theatrical touch to the reveal.

entrants in the league, aiming to make an immediate impact in their debut season.

The appointment of Labuschagne is seen as a significant move, given his international experience and leadership credentials in various formats of the game.

The 11th edition of the Pakistan Super League is scheduled to run from March 26 to May 3, featuring top domestic and international talent across franchises. The Kingsmen will begin their campaign against Lahore Qalandars in the opening match of the tournament. The match is set to be played at Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore on March 26, marking the official start of PSL 11.

MCC comments on Salman Agha's run-out in Bangladesh ODI



Diya Women Football Club celebrates Women's Day



PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: Diya Women Football Club organized an Intra-Branch 6-a-side Football Tournament at Maidaan KMC. Around 5 intra-branch teams from different areas of Karachi participated in the event, which marked the celebration of Women's Day and Women's Month. Team Nishtar Road secured 1st position, Metroville took the runner-up spot, and Gulzare Hijri came 3rd. Dr. Sadia Sheikh,

Founder and President distributed trophies along with Ms. Naila Vice President, and Coordinators Chinee Gul and Karimullah. Around 40 players participated in this event in this two day event from March 16th to 17th.

Pakistan drawn with India, England in Hockey World Cup 2026





Illegal 6 floors built instead of 3 at Safa Gold Mall as PAC exposes CDA's regulatory failure

NADEEM TANOLI
ISLAMABAD: A major building violation in Islamabad has triggered outrage in the Public Accounts Committee after it was revealed that Safa Gold Mall was constructed with six floors despite official approval for only three, exposing serious regulatory failure by the Capital Development Authority. The issue came under intense scrutiny during a PAC meeting chaired by MNA Shahida

Begum where the Auditor General of Pakistan strongly criticized the CDA for failing to stop illegal construction in the federal capital. The violation was formally raised by Senator Saleem Mandviwalla, who demanded a detailed record of the plaza amid multiple public complaints. Audit officials informed the committee that the CDA had granted approval for only three floors, yet the developers went ahead and constructed a six storey commercial building,

doubling the permitted structure in clear violation of building regulations. The Auditor General questioned how such a large scale deviation could occur without the knowledge or intervention of the regulator. "The CDA is the regulator in Islamabad. They approved three floors, but six were constructed. This does not happen overnight," the Auditor General remarked, pointing towards possible negligence or oversight failures within the building control system.

During the proceedings, MNA Tariq Fazal Chaudhry pointed out that the project was initiated during the tenure of Senator Saleem Mandviwalla, adding a political dimension to the controversy. The Auditor General also raised concerns about the risks posed to investors, noting that citizens have already invested in the building without being aware of the legal violations. He questioned who would bear responsibility for the losses if action is taken against the

structure, emphasizing that regulators must act at the construction stage rather than after completion. The committee was further warned about the growing trend of illegal high rise constructions in Islamabad, with the Auditor General calling for a broader investigation. He recommended that records of all buildings constructed in violation of approved layouts should be summoned to assess the scale of the issue. Following the revelations, the Public Accounts

Committee directed the CDA to submit a detailed report explaining how the illegal construction was allowed to proceed, what action has been taken against the developers, and whether any officials were held accountable for regulatory lapses. The case has raised serious questions about enforcement of building laws, transparency in approvals, and the protection of public investment in Islamabad's rapidly expanding commercial sector.

A warm welcome ceremony held for new Elected Members in Gujranwala



WAJHA TAMSEEL MIRZA
GUJRANWALA: A warm welcome was accorded to the youth joining the movement by Tehreek-e-Awaam Raaj Gujranwala.

They were welcomed with love and devotion and expressed good wishes and prayers by presenting bouquets. The event was hosted by Tehreek-e-Awaam Raaj coordinator Noman Ahmed, Social media activists Sajid Ali Sial, Rana Nadir, Mohammad Ashfaq, Nayab Sarwar and Mobilizer

Wajha Tamseel Mirza. The ceremony began with the recitation of the Holy Quran. During the event, the visiting members were made aware of the manifesto of the movement, and all the young people were given the opportunity to express their opinions and ask questions. The youth were made aware of the

power sector and were assured that today's youth are no less than anyone in any sense. Iftar dinner was also held during the event.

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Unlawful surveillance

Privacy of life is a sacrosanct affair and enjoys protection under the ordinances of law and societal ethics. Any attempt to violate it is contested. A three-member bench of the Supreme Court has written a treatise, declaring it illegal to indulge in unauthorised recordings either for purposes of extortion or evidence-gathering. The judgment has come at a time of social media strides, when society is quite inquisitive, making privacy a questionable issue. There is no dearth of audio and video recordings, and their dissemination in the media, of people who fell prey to espionage, ultimately making their private lives a subject of public discourse. Thus, the learned judges were on the mark as they outlawed secretly collecting information about private conversations without the consent of the person(s) involved, and termed it a breach of constitutional rights. The ruling is in accordance with Article 14 of the Constitution that guarantees the inviolability of human dignity and the privacy of the home, as well as in relevance with PECA 2016 legislation. It is worthwhile to note that the court was firm as it maintained that a "clear distinction exists between routine recordings made in the ordinary course of official duty and recordings made with the intention of laying a trap to procure evidence".

Ending futile wars

Dr Niaz Murtaza
THE quagmire of Middle East wars that has badly hurt all US presidents since Richard Nixon is now ensnaring a clueless Donald Trump. As plucky Iran alone foils American and Israeli might and war costs rise, the illegality and practical futility of their war bites them hard. The US says it's acting pre-emptively under UN self-defence laws, against Iran's nuclear threat. But UN laws allow pre-emption against attacks imminent in the short run — not distant threats. Iran's unproven nuclear heft or intent to use it failed the imminence test. Israel says such laws cover its attacks on militants in other states too. But, as the verdicts of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) say, they apply clearly to attacks by states, not militants as the two differ. State attacks come from across borders, mainly use state resources and are controlled by a state. So, culpability is clear and one-sided and there is a legal right to attack it until the UN is informed, as required, and acts. But attacks often come from one's own soil and involve citizens who use local resources and aid from foreign-based groups whom the other state may not control. Both states fail to convict the terrorists. An attack by one state on another may go on for days. So, self-defence attacks are needed to end it. Many attacks, including suicide attacks, end before

the host state can act, and there may be long gaps before the next one. So, the one-sided culpability of a state for unprovoked attacks is absent. The ICJ in Congo's 2005 case against Uganda rejected the latter's plea that it attacked the former country legally in self-defence against terrorists based there. It gave strict criteria for UN self-defence laws to apply in such cases: proven control of a state on terrorists (like Serbia's in 1992), the intensity of their attacks, and the immediacy, proportionality and necessity of one's counter-attacks on the other state. Such high bars aim to limit more ruinous state wars. State air and artillery responses to smaller attacks may be disproportionate and delayed and the role of the other state and the necessity of one's own response hard to prove if terrorists don't cross borders for every attack but largely operate locally. If illegality was clear from day one, futility is clear from day one. Unlike Gaza, "USrael" can only fight Iran for a few weeks given their ability to hit them and their allies hard and as war in this region badly affects the global economy. While their last war on Iran was mainly on its nuclear sites, the aim now is weakening it overall and changing its regime directly or via rebels/ protests. Two weeks later, this aim seems

surreal. So, there is much pressure on the US to end the war from multiple transmission routes — the Gulf and Western allies, Democrats, peace groups, media and above all the economic fallout on US voters and markets. By appointing the late Ayatollah Khamenei's son as the new Supreme Leader, Iran has clearly signalled hard-line regime continuity. In fact, it is the two aggressors that may actually suffer regime change. Israel's prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, may lose the next elections and Trump's party the mid-term ones as domestic foes mock their failed aims. One opposes Iran's autocratic misrule but opposes much more the war on it by 'global gangster states like 'USrael'. The war will affect others too. The Gulf states may review their US alliances though they lack viable alternatives. For us, the war will impact three key economic metrics — inflation, foreign reserves and growth — and three key aspects of foreign policy. Firstly, its unwise to be chummy with a martial egoistic like Trump and back him for a Nobel Peace Prize. We must not be too chummy nor needlessly hostile to a global warlord like the US. Secondly, we must openly discuss and fine-tune the Saudi pact which our officials have referred to once the Saudis were hit. Courtesy Dawn

The harm-heal line

Muhammad Hamid Zaman
In the late 1930s, a large lab in northern China, under Japanese occupation, was forging ahead with a new type of weapon. It was nicknamed Unit 731. Led by General Shiro Ishii, a microbiologist by training, the goal of the lab was not just to produce but also to test biological weapons on the Chinese population. Over the course of the lab's operation, plague-infested flea bags were dropped in Ningbo and Quzhou in Zhejiang province. Marshes, wells and waterways were poisoned with biological weapons, including anthrax. Estimates suggest that by the end of WWII, more than two hundred thousand Chinese civilians were killed through testing of biological weapons and subsequent epidemics of plague, cholera and anthrax. These numbers are similar to the deaths caused in Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the atomic bombs dropped by the US. The development of biological weapons was not an accident. It was a deliberate, well-funded and organised effort by the Japanese Imperial army. The idea to use bacteria as a weapon was first articulated by a French chemist, Auguste Trillat, in the 1920s, but the European programme never really took off. General Shiro, who visited Europe during the interwar years, was impressed by the new weapons technology of Europe and brought some of these ideas back to Japan, and was eventually able to convince the military and political leadership to invest in, develop, and test. During and after the war, the US and the UK developed major biological weapons programmes. The US programme continued for nearly three decades, during which it conducted extensive tests both in the US and in the Marshall Islands. The UK experiments done with Anthrax toxin on the Gruinard Island (near Scotland) in 1942 were so intense that the whole island was contaminated for four decades. Even an attempt to set the whole island on fire did not clean the environment. Courtesy Tribune

Sindh accelerates digital governance drive as CM Murad Shah oversees expansion of e-stamping system



PEAK POINT

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah launched an expanded push for digital governance in the province, describing technology-driven reforms as central to building a transparent, efficient and citizen-centric government, as he presided over the signing ceremony for the e-Stamping system.

The ceremony held at CM House was attended by Provincial Ministers Dr Azra Fazal Pechuho and Syed Sardar Shah, SACM Ali Rashid,

Spokespersons Nadir Gabol and Buland Junejo, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, Chairman P&D Najam Shah, and Senior Member Board of Revenue Khalid Hyder Shah, Secretary Finance Fayaz Jatoi, Secretary to CM Asif Jameel, Secretary U&B Abbas Balchoh, Secretary IT Zulfiqar Nizamani, Dr Sarosh Lodhi, President Sindh Bank Anwar Shaikh and Deputy CEO Asad Shah, along with senior officials.

The ceremony marked the signing of a Master Service Level Agreement

and Service Order between the Board of Revenue Sindh and the Sindh Information Technology Company (SITC) for the continued rollout and expansion of the e-Stamping platform — an initiative aimed at digitising government documentation, eliminating fake stamp papers and simplifying services for citizens.

Addressing the gathering, the chief minister said the reform was part of a broader strategy to modernise governance in Sindh through digital systems that enhance transparency, efficiency and ease of access for the public. "In just five months since SITC took over the system, more than 730,000 challans have been processed and Rs12.8 billion collected through the e-Stamping platform transparently and efficiently," he said.

Murad Ali Shah said the significance of the reform went beyond revenue generation, noting that the system was helping eliminate.

Chairman Senate announces austerity measures to save Rs 700–750 million

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani has announced wide-ranging austerity measures, projecting a reduction of more than 50 percent in the Senate Secretariat's remaining budgetary utilization for the current fiscal year, translating into estimated savings of Rs 700 to 750 million.

The Chairman presided over a high-level meeting at the Senate Secretariat to review and implement austerity measures in light of the prevailing economic situation, focusing on significant cuts in Senate expenditures, beginning with substantial reductions in the budget of the Chairman's Office.

Adopting a top-down approach to fiscal discipline, the Chairman directed that austerity measures must begin at the high-level.



Accordingly, significant cuts have been ordered in the operational budget of the Chairman's Office, setting a precedent for all departments to follow.

He issued comprehensive directives for the immediate enforcement of austerity measures across the Secretariat. These include a complete ban on foreign travel, a 50 percent reduction in POL (petrol, oil, and lubricants) consumption, the grounding of 60 percent of official vehicles, a strict ban on non-essential procurements, and the implementation of salary deductions.

Chairperson says BISP not responsible for cash disbursement after deaths at payment point in RYK

PEAK POINT

RAHIM YAR KHAN: Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) Chairperson Rubina Khalid on Tuesday said that the programme was not responsible for the process of disbursement of cash, saying that it had been "outsourced" to banks.

The statement comes a day after at least seven women were killed and more than 75 were injured during a roof collapse when hundreds of women gathered at a retail shop in Rahim Yar Khan's Tibba area to collect BISP handouts.

Speaking to the media during a visit to Sheikh Zayed Hospital in Rahim Yar Khan on Tuesday, Khalid maintained that BISP was not responsible for disbursing cash handouts. "We don't have any mechanism for disbursement, so when you outsource something, the responsibility falls on the banks," she said. Khalid termed it unfortunate that the programme — an initiative aimed at uplifting people — was pushed to

the "background" while "actual criminals... are not asked why their retailers and franchisees are doing this".

She said that BISP had no "direct relation" to retailers or franchisees, adding that the banks were the ones in contact with them.

"We are going to be imposing fines on them, and a first information report will be filed naming people present at the site of the incident," she added. She asserted that those responsible would be held accountable.

At the outset of her talk, Khalid said, "We share the grief of the bereaved families. People who are responsible for the incident will be given strict punishment".

The BISP chairperson said the women who suffered minor injuries had been discharged from the hospital, while 17 women had suffered major injuries. One of the injured was in a serious condition, she said. She said cheques of Rs1 million and Rs300,000 were being distributed.



Benazir Income Support Programme Chairperson Senator Rubina Khalid talks to media during her visit to Sheikh Zayed Hospital in Rahim Yar Khan.

President congratulates Kazakhstan on successful constitutional referendum

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has extended warm congratulations to the President of Kazakhstan Qasym-Jomart Tokayev, and the people of Kazakhstan on the successful holding of the constitutional referendum. The President noted that the strong participation of the people and the broad support expressed for the referendum reflect the confidence of the citizens of Kazakhstan in the continued progress and development of their country. President Zardari reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to further strengthening bilateral relations and expanding cooperation in areas of mutual interest for the benefit of both countries. He also emphasised that Pakistan greatly values its close and brotherly relations with Kazakhstan, which are rooted in mutual respect, shared aspirations for peace and development, and a tradition of constructive cooperation.

KP mulls waste conversion into fuel to replace coal: CM Afridi

PEAK POINT

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Muhammad Sohail Afridi, has approved a proposal to convert municipal waste into fuel under the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) framework and directed that the unsolicited proposal submitted by a private company be floated in the market to ensure transparency and competitive process. While chairing a meeting of the Public Private Partnership Committee, he said that the conversion of waste-to-energy initiative would lay the foundation for a modern and sustainable waste management system in Peshawar. He added that the project would help reduce reliance on imported coal for cement



industry, save foreign exchange, and create employment opportunities for the people. "This initiative will not only benefit the environment but also contribute positively to the economy," he said, adding that additional economic gains could be achieved through carbon credits and its industrial utilization. During the briefing, it was informed that Refuse-Derived Fuel (RDF) produced from waste would be used as an alternative to coal in the cement industry.

Minister inspects Pirwadhai Bus Stand, warns against overcharging in name of Eid travel

PEAK POINT

RAWALPINDI: Punjab's Minister for Transport Bilal Akbar Khan on Tuesday vowed that no one would be allowed to overcharge passengers in the name of Eid travel.

"The administration is following a zero-tolerance policy in this regard," he said, adding that strict legal action would be taken against those found involved in overcharging.

The minister was talking to passengers heading to their hometowns to celebrate Eid-ul-Fitr during his visit to the Pirwadhai General Bus Stand in Rawalpindi to have a first-hand account of the facilities and



arrangements. He interacted with the passengers and inquired about fares being charged by transporters. He also inspected the waiting area and sought feedback from the commuters regarding the facilities being provided. Bilal Akbar Khan said he was visiting different cities on the directions of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif.

Pakistan launches major crackdown on money laundering, Hawala/Hundi Networks

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: In a high-level special meeting chaired by Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi and Federal Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, the government on Tuesday approved an aggressive nationwide crackdown against money laundering and the hawala/hundi networks operating across the country.

The meeting resolved that strict action will be taken against major business figures and institutions involved in illegally transferring funds

abroad. Officials agreed that no leniency would be extended to individuals or entities engaged in money laundering or hawala/hundi operations.

It was decided that overseas remittances must be sent strictly through banking channels and other legally approved mechanisms. The process of sending money abroad through money changers will also be streamlined to eliminate loopholes and ensure complete transparency.

The ministers emphasised that the entire mechanism for foreign remittances



will be made "transparent and foolproof." All illegal channels used for transfer-

ring funds abroad will be discouraged at every level. A strong resolve was

expressed to take firm action against "big money launderers," with the ministers reit-

erating that the business of hawala/hundi would not be tolerated under any circumstances.

The meeting also approved the formation of a joint working group of the State Bank of Pakistan and the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA). The group will regularly review progress on all relevant matters linked to combating illegal financial flows.

During the session, the Governor of the State Bank briefed participants on the current system of fund transfers through banking.