

Maritime Affairs Minister announces major incentives for Karachi transhipment ships

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Friday 20 March 2026 Ramazan 30, 1447 A.H VOI No: 06 Issue No. 48 Pages 4 Rs. 20

# Telecos awarded licences for 5G spectrum, announce launch of services in some cities

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Telecommunication companies announced on Thursday the launch of 5G services in some parts of the country after they were awarded licences for 5G spectrum at a ceremony in Islamabad, where Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also spoke.

The government completed its spectrum auction in Islamabad last week, in which 480 megahertz (MHz) were sold for \$507 million. The three bidders — Zong, Jazz and Ufone — competed heavily for the 2,600MHz band, a key frequency range for 5G services. Zong acquired 110MHz, Ufone 180MHz and Jazz 190MHz during the auction.

The licence agreements for the services

were signed by Pakistan Telecommunication Authority Licensing Director General Brig (ret'd) Aamir Shahzad and senior management of Jazz, Ufone and Zong.

In a press release, Jazz announced that in the first phase of 5G rollout, the services were being provided across 180 sites in Islamabad, all four provincial capitals — Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar and Quetta — as well as in Rawalpindi, Multan and Faisalabad. "Jazz is delivering ultra-fast speeds, low latency, and enhanced reliability at scale. At the same time, Jazz continues to expand and upgrade its nationwide 4G network, ensuring that the benefits of connectivity reach every Pakistani, everywhere," the press release stated.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif witnesses Spectrum Auction License Ceremony.

CELEBRATING 5G DIGITAL NATION PAKISTAN Spectrum Auction License Ceremony 19th March 2026

# FO rejects US intelligence chief's claims about Pakistan's missile capabilities

PEAK POINT



ISLAMABAD: The Foreign Office (FO) on Thursday categorically rejected the statement by US Director of National Intelligence Tulsī Gabbard over Pakistan's missile capabilities posing a threat to the country. In a statement, FO spokesperson Tahir Hussain Andrabi said, "Pakistan categorically rejects the recent assertion by a United States official alleging a potential threat from Pakistan's missile capabilities." He highlighted that Pakistan's strategic capabilities were exclusively defensive in nature, aimed at safeguarding national sovereignty and maintaining peace and stability in South Asia. "Its missile programme, which remains well below intercontinental range, is firmly rooted in the doctrine of credible minimum deterrence vis-à-vis India," he said. "In contrast, India's development of missile capabilities exceeding 12,000 kilometres reflects a trajectory that extends beyond regional security considerations and is certainly a cause of concern for the neighbourhood and beyond," he said. "Pakistan remains committed to constructive engagement with the United States, anchored in mutual respect."

# CDF Munir reiterates Pakistan's resolve to eliminate terrorists 'wherever they may be'

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) and Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) Field Marshal Asim Munir reiterated Pakistan's resolve to eliminate terrorists and their infrastructure "wherever they may be" through "precise, intelligence-based operations", said a statement by the Inter-Services Public Relations on Thursday. The CDF, during an interaction with ulema in Rawalpindi, emphasised that the Afghan Taliban must prevent the use of Afghan soil for terrorism against Pakistan. Pakistan has decided on a "temporary pause" in the ongoing



Operation Ghazab lil-Haq against the Afghan Taliban in view of Eidul Fitr and "at the request of brotherly Islamic countries". The field marshal, during the interaction, also highlighted Pakistan's efforts and pro-active diplomacy in seeking regional de-escalation, in reference to the ongoing US-Israeli war against Iran, said the

military's media wing. "He emphasised the critical role of Ulema to strengthen unity and counter extremism, reiterating that religious sentiments must not be exploited to incite violence in the country." "Violence in Pakistan, on the basis of incidents occurring in another country, will not be tolerated," said the ISPR statement while quoting

Shawwal moon not sighted in Pakistan, first day of Eid-ul-Fitr on Saturday, March 21

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Shawwal crescent was not sighted in Pakistan on Thursday, and the first day of Eid-ul-Fitr 2026 will be on Saturday, March 21. This was announced by Chairman of the Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee, Maulana Abdul Khair Azad, who presided over a meeting in Islamabad. The zonal and district committees also met at their respective headquarters for sighting of the moon. Addressing a press conference, Maulana Khabeer said that the skies remained cloudy over most parts of Pakistan.

# PIA dismisses claim of flight escaping missile attack in UAE's Fujairah

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) on Thursday dismissed claims regarding a missile attack near Fujairah in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) involving its flight, terming it "entirely baseless and false". Several media reports had claimed that a PIA flight on Tuesday had narrowly escaped a missile attack during landing at the Fujairah airport. "PIA clarifies that the news circulating regarding a missile attack near Fujairah involving a PIA flight is entirely baseless and false," it said on the social media platform X. "No such statement."

# Jemima responds to Tarar, says govt wants Imran's sons to travel on Nicops so they will 'not have British protection'

PEAK POINT

LONDON: Jemima Goldsmith, the former spouse of PTI founder Imran Khan, on Thursday alleged that the government was recommending that the former premier's son travel to Pakistan on National Identity Cards for Overseas Pakistanis (Nicop) as they would have "no British protection". She issued the statement on the social media platform X in response to Information Minister Attaullah Tarar. On Wednesday, the minister said Imran's children were welcome to visit Pakistan on Nicops, for which no visa was required, provided they "fully comply with the laws of Pakistan during their stay". "We all know that the reason you are refusing their visas and recommending they travel on

Nicop cards (which they don't have presently) is sons Sulaiman and Kasim Khan applied for visas in



because that way they will have no British protection if you choose to arrest them on arrival," Jemima said on X. Kasim and his older brother Suleiman live in London with their mother and will have to travel to Pakistan to meet Imran, who is imprisoned at Rawalpindi's Adiala jail. Tarar's suggestion on Wednesday came after Jemima, in an appeal to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, had stated, "My

January (again...) to allow them to visit their father, Imran Khan, in Pakistan. The Pakistan consulate states that online visa processing normally takes 7-10 working days. It has now been 60 days."

She said the delay in the issuance of visas was despite Defence Minister Khawaja Asif publicly "promising that they (Kasim and Suleiman) could safely travel there to see their father after four

# No 'definitive time frame' for ending Iran war: Pentagon

PEAK POINT

NEW YORK: United States Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth said on Thursday there was no "time frame" for ending the US-Israeli war against Iran, which was launched three weeks ago.

"We wouldn't want to set a definitive time frame," Hegseth told a news conference, adding that "we're very much on track" and that President Donald Trump will be the one to decide when to stop. "It will be at the president's choosing, ultimately, where we say, 'Hey, we've achieved what we need to.'"

Hegseth also addressed a report that the Pentagon has requested more than \$200 billion in additional funding from Congress to pay for the conflict. "As far as \$200b, I think that number could move. Obviously it takes money to kill bad guys," Hegseth said. "We're going back to Congress and folks there to ensure that we're properly funded for what's been done for what we may have to do in the future," he said.



# SPORTS



## Pakistan to face India on Aug 19 as FIH unveils Hockey WCup 2026 schedule

### Bangladesh players cleared for PSL 11 with split availability amid NZ tour



**PEAK POINT**

**BANGLADESH:** The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has approved No Objection Certificates (NOCs) for several national cricketers to take part in Pakistan Super League Season 11, though some permissions are limited due to the team's upcoming tour of New Zealand. According to reports, left-arm pacer Mustafizur Rahman has been released from Bangladesh's T20 commitments against New Zealand in order to feature in the PSL. Bangladesh is scheduled to play three ODIs on April 17, 20, and 23, followed by T20 internationals on April 27, 29, and May 2, with the preparatory camp beginning March 27. Several other PSL-bound players, Parvez Hossain, Sharaf Islam, Nahid Rana, Tanzid Hasan, and Rishad Hossain, will miss the national training camp while fulfilling their PSL contracts. However, the board has ensured that most players will return in time for the ODI series, which holds significance for World Cup qualification. Mustafizur's clearance has been divided into two windows, from March 26 to April 12 and again from April 24 to May 3, allowing him to skip the T20 series entirely. Meanwhile, Tanzid, Sharaf, Nahid, and Rishad have been permitted to play in the PSL until April 12, while Parvez Hossain's NOC extends until April 21.

**PEAK POINT**

**LAHORE:** The International Hockey Federation (FIH) has officially unveiled the complete match schedule for the 2026 Men's Hockey World Cup, setting the stage for one of the most eagerly awaited tournaments in recent years. The global showpiece event will be jointly hosted by Belgium and Netherlands from August 15 to August 30, bringing together the world's top 16 teams in a highly competitive format. For Pakistan, a four-time world champion, the tournament carries added significance as it marks the national team's return to the World

Cup after an eight-year absence, a moment that has reignited excitement among hockey fans across the country. According to details released by the Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF), Pakistan will begin their campaign on the opening day of the tournament. Their first match is scheduled against England on August 15 at the iconic Wagener Hockey Stadium in Amstelveen, with the game set to start at 10:00 PM PST. Pakistan will then take on Wales in their second group fixture on August 17 at the same venue, with the match beginning at 3:30 PM PST. However, the highlight of

Pakistan's group stage campaign, and arguably the most anticipated fixture of the tournament, will be the clash against arch-rivals India on August 19. The high-voltage encounter will also be played at Wagener Stadium, scheduled for 6:00 PM PST. Matches between Pakistan and India have historically been among the most intense and widely followed contests in international hockey, often transcending sport to capture the imagination of millions of fans across the globe. The 16 participating teams have been divided into four pools of four teams each following an

official draw ceremony held in Amstelveen earlier this week. Pakistan has been placed in Pool D alongside India, England and Wales, forming one of the most competitive groups in the tournament. The remaining pools feature some of the world's strongest hockey nations: Pool A: Netherlands, Argentina, New Zealand, Japan; Pool B: Belgium, Germany, France, Malaysia and Pool C: Australia, Spain, Ireland, South Africa. As per the tournament format, the top two teams from each pool will advance to the second round, where they will be regrouped into two new pools.

## Salman Agha enters top 10 as Pak players rise in ICC ODI rankings



**PEAK POINT**

**LAHORE:** Pakistan's middle-order batter Salman Ali Agha has emerged as the stand-out performer for the national side in the latest International Cricket Council (ICC) Men's ODI rankings, following his impressive showing in the recently concluded

series against Bangladesh. Salman climbed nine places to secure a career-best ninth position with 664 rating points, marking his entry into the top 10 for the first time. His consistent performances, including a fluent century and a crucial half-century

during the series, reinforced his growing importance in Pakistan's middle order and provided much-needed stability to the batting lineup. In contrast, Pakistan's top-order batters experienced a dip in the rankings. Former captain Babar Azam retained his sixth position, continuing to lead the national contingent in the batting charts. However, wicket-keeper-batter Muhammad Rizwan slipped two places to 19th, while aggressive opener Fakhar Zaman dropped four spots to 31st. Young batters Saim Ayub and Abdullah Shafique also lost ground, falling to 41st and 31st respectively. Meanwhile, experienced opener Imam-ul-Haq moved down five places to 56th, highlighting Pakistan's ongoing struggle for consistency at the top of the order. On the bowling front, Pakistan's pace attack showed modest progress. Left-arm fast bowler Shaheen Shah Afridi climbed one spot to 17th after delivering key breakthroughs in the series. Similarly, right-arm Mohammad Rizwan moved up to 19th, reflecting his effectiveness with the ball. Young fast bowler Mohammad Wasim Jr also improved slightly, rising to 64th as he continues to establish himself in the ODI setup.

## Captain of captains: Azhar Hussain Zaidi's enduring legacy in Pakistan cricket



## Iran continuing World Cup preparations but will not play in US, says soccer chief

**TEHRAN:** The Iranian national team are continuing to prepare for the World Cup finals and have no intention of pulling out of the tournament even if they will not travel to the United States, soccer chief Mehdi Taj said.

Iran were one of the first nations to qualify for the finals but their participation has been in doubt since the conflict between the Islamic Republic and the United States began in late February. The tournament runs from June 11 to July 19 and is being staged in the US, Mexico and Canada.

Team Melli are scheduled to play all three of their opening-round group matches in the US but Taj said on Monday the Iranian FA (FFIRI) was negotiating with Fifa to have them moved to Mexico. Iran will play Nigeria on March 27 and Costa Rica four days later in

Antalya as part of a four-nation invitational tournament that had to be moved from Jordan because of the conflict in the Middle East. "The national team is holding a training camp in Turkey, and we will also play



two friendly matches there," FFIRI President Taj was quoted as saying by the Fars News Agency on Wednesday. "We will boycott America, but we will not boycott the World Cup." Taj was speaking as he welcomed the players from the women's national team back to Iran at the border their safety in Iran. While seven accepted, only two ended up staying. US President Donald Trump had urged Australia to offer the players asylum and later said that while the Iranian men were welcome to play in the US, it might not be appropriate for their "life and safety".

## Sikandar Raza reunites with Lahore Qalandars for PSL 11



Sikandar Raza has reunited with Lahore Qalandars for PSL 11. The image shows two men, one in a black shirt and one in a white shirt, standing together outdoors. The man in the white shirt is likely Sikandar Raza, and the man in the black shirt is likely a member of the Lahore Qalandars team.

## IITP deploys 520 officers, rolls out special traffic plan for Chand Raat, Eid

**PEAK POINT**

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) has devised a special traffic plan for Chand Raat and Eid-ul-Fitr, deploying over 520 traffic officers at major roads, commercial centers and recreational spots to ensure smooth flow of traffic. An ITP official told APP on Thursday that special traffic squads would be present at various locations to guide cit-

izens and manage traffic effectively during the festive days. He said that special help desks have also been established in markets to assist citizens, while student volunteers would be deployed at different locations to facilitate the public and ensure implementation of traffic rules. The official added that indiscriminate crackdown would be launched against one-wheeling and hooliganism on public roads during Chand Raat and Eid days. Chief Traffic Officer Captain (R) Hamza Humayun would personally supervise all arrangements to ensure effective implementation of the traffic plan. He urged citizens to park their vehicles only in designated parking areas and cooperate with the traffic police to avoid inconvenience.



ISLAMABAD: Women busy in selecting purchasing bangles from stall for Eid ul Fitr.

# Vibrant reflection of Pak-China everlasting friendship: Joint art exhibition held

**PEAK POINT**

ISLAMABAD: A "China-Pakistan Art Exhibition" was organized through the collaboration of China Media Group and the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA), in the context of the enduring friendship between Pakistan and China and the 75 years of diplomatic relations between the two countries. The event was graced by the Minister of State for Federal Education and Professional Training, Ms. Wajaha Qamar, as the

Chief Guest. In her address, she stated that the relationship between Pakistan and China was not limited to strategic or diplomatic dimensions but it was also deeply rooted at the people-to-people level, where strong cultural and civilizational harmony existed. She noted that this exhibition beautifully reflected the connection through colors and artistic expressions.

She further emphasized that such cultural initiatives not only strengthened bilateral ties but also helped educate



the younger generation about the significance of this historic relationship. On this occasion, the Cultural Counsellor of the Chinese

Embassy in Pakistan, Mr. Chen Peng, attended as the Guest of Honour. In his remarks, he said the "China-Pakistan Art

Exhibition" reflected the 75 years of diplomatic relations and the timeless friendship between the two countries, founded on mutual trust, cultural harmony, and sustained cooperation. He added that through fine arts, the exhibition highlighted the shared cultural heritage and creative expression of both nations, while promoting mutual understanding and closeness, thereby further strengthening Pak-China friendship.

Parliamentary Secretary for the National Heritage and

Culture Division, Ms. Farah Naz Akbar, also expressed her views, stating that culture and fine arts played a vital role in bringing people closer, and such exhibitions might serve as an effective platform for promoting mutual respect, cultural exchange, and harmony. The exhibition featured artworks by prominent artists from Pakistan and China, which were highly appreciated by attendees from diverse walks of life, including both Pakistani and Chinese participants.

# Opinion & Editorial

## Fomo (Fear of missing out)

Writer: Laraib Hashmi



“Fear of Missing Out” (FOMO) is an all-consuming feeling that is associated with mental and emotional stress. Such strains are caused by a compulsive concern that one is missing an opportunity for a socially rewarding experience often spotted on social media networks. FOMO is entirely based on comparing one's self with others. These kinds of comparisons are entirely unhealthy and insatiable. No matter how much knowledge or experience you gain, there will always be someone who has more and you will be left feeling inadequate. The reason for this is we often make the mistake of thinking there are only two people in the world: You, and everyone else. While this entirely false, it's an easy pit to fall into and leads to FOMO and feelings that we can never measure up to where everyone who is not us is at. As the world has become more connected, an unusual sense of anxiety has become part of our everyday life. An example would be when scrolling through social media and seeing pictures of friends on vacation or seeing pictures of people in our social network achieving accomplishments that we were not part of. This feeling is defined as FOMO (fear of missing out). Research

verifies what many of us believe – that it is not just an inconvenience; but rather a true psychological issue that has a measurable effect on our well-being. FOMO is a term that refers to the anxiety that we feel when we see that other people are enjoying themselves and we are not. The term was first coined in 2004, but with the rise of social media, has become part of our everyday vocabulary. What makes FOMO different today compared to traditional envy or jealousy, is that it is experienced in real-time rather than weeks or months later with regard to news reports about others' experiences (i.e., when we see it happen in real-time) and that they present themselves in a well-prepared or artificially-enhanced manner that increases their desirability. ## What does the research tell us? Research conducted within the field of psychology has identified a number of factors that lead to the development of this modern-day syndrome. One of those factors is the impact of FOMO on various aspects of our lives, as reported in several articles published in the journal *Computers in Human Behavior*, as well as *Cyberpsychology, the Journal of Media Psychology*, and such. Studies consistently indicate that people who suffer from FOMO are more likely to experience. But the relationship is two-sided. Researchers have found that FOMO itself increases social media engagement. This creates a cycle where the platform causing our anxiety also seems to provide a

solution. We log on to see what we're missing, only to find more chances for comparison. A particularly concerning discovery from 2023 research is the link between FOMO and mental health. Studies show that higher FOMO levels are connected to more symptoms of anxiety and depression, along with lower life satisfaction. The reason seems to be social comparison. Constantly measuring our lives against others' highlight reels leaves us feeling inadequate. Perhaps most alarmingly, FOMO affects people of all ages. While it was primarily studied in teens and young adults—who are often deep into social media—researchers now see significant FOMO effects in older adults too. The fear of missing out on family gatherings, job opportunities, or retirement experiences can weigh them down just as much. ## The Psychology Behind the Pain Why does FOMO hit so hard? A few psychological factors come together to disrupt our peace. First, there's the "scarcity heuristic"—our brains focus more on what we lack than what we have. Social media algorithms take advantage of this by showing us the content most likely to trigger that feeling. Second, "uncertainty" plays a part. Unlike clear threats, the "something" we're scared of missing remains unclear and undefined, making it hard to deal with directly. Our minds fill this gap with worst-case scenarios. Third, "loss aversion" ensures that the pain of missing out

## Democracy and freedom deficit

Shahid Najam

The politicians, the power brokers and the people of Pakistan, though peripherally, have been engaged since independence in a procrustean and vain struggle to define, fashion and custom-operate the attributes and features of a system of democratic governance and freedom in the country. The oft-repeated rationale or apologia in terms of the historical legacy of colonial sufferings and servitude, which we inherited, a widely pervasive socio-structural exclusionary mind-set and the elite's self-arrogated belief of institutional superiority and custodianship of "national interest" no longer offer a sufficiently convincing logic for democratic deficit and recurrent praetorian episodes in the country. Paradoxically, however, despotic constitutional amendments to bestow a veneer of legality, asymmetrical power distribution, deliberate erosion of state institutions and manipulative fragmentation of the already fragile pluralist entities continue to reinforce and strengthen the clutches of the ruling clique. The right of the people to freely exercise their rights remains an elusive dream. They constantly oscillate between hope and despair amidst interminable entrapment in poverty, disenfranchisement and deprivation. The unending sagas of failure of democratic systems, perennial economic instability, perpetual rule of mutually symbiotic politico-military nexus and rampant corruption characterise the meandering journey and erratic endowment of today's Pakistan. It is indeed lamentable that the country ranks 124 out of 160 countries surveyed in the Democracy Index 2024 and is classified as an "authoritarian regime". The Global Peace Index 2025 places Pakistan at number 144 out of 163 countries due to the frequency of political upheavals and governance dysfunction. The country has slid back 2 spots from 133 in 2023 to 135 in 2024 out of 180 countries, according to the latest Transparency International Corruption Index. Courtesy Tribune

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## Worsening war

Another high-profile assassination from a US-Israeli air strike has pushed the war on Iran towards further escalation. The killing of Ali Larjani, Secretary of the Iranian Supreme National Security Council, is a blow to an administration that was trying to put up a brave show after the extermination of Supreme Leader Sayed Ali Khamenei. Basij paramilitary force commander Gholamreza Soleimani was also killed in the air strike. The back-to-back political murders by the US-Israel alliance will surely fuel vengeance. The Islamic Republic has already declared avenging the unlawful exterminations in a "decisive and regrettable" way. What that means is anybody's guess as the Jewish state is already being treated with missile strikes and cluster bombings, and the Gulf countries are running helter-skelter, fearing a complete socio-economic collapse. Larjani's exit will have its toll on Iran as he was one of the best military brains, and was close to the heart of the revolutionary establishment. He was an articulate negotiator, and had won laurels for his country. His recent visit to Islamabad wherein he offered a 'blank cheque' to Pakistan's defence and economy exhibits his diplomatic acumen. The fact that he was in the midst of things and was seen in a rally a week ago in Tehran testifies to his unflinching leadership. That ultimately proved lethal for him. The war in its third week now has already pushed the global economy to the brink.

## Pakistan among 13 Islamic nations denounce Iran attacks, urging de-escalation



PEAK POINT

RIYADH: A coalition of Arab and Islamic nations has issued a strongly worded joint statement condemning a wave of Iranian missile and drone attacks targeting multiple countries across the region.

The statement was released following a consultative ministerial meeting held in Riyadh, bringing together foreign ministers from 13 countries.

Representatives from Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Türkiye, and the United Arab Emirates participated in the meeting, which focused on what they described as escalating Iranian

aggression. The gathering took place on 29 Ramadan 1447, underscoring the urgency of the situation amid heightened regional tensions.

The ministers collectively denounced the attacks as deliberate strikes involving ballistic missiles and drones that targeted civilian infrastructure and populated areas. According to the statement, affected sites included oil facilities, desalination plants, airports, residential buildings, and diplomatic premises across Gulf Cooperation Council countries, as well as Jordan, Azerbaijan, and Türkiye. The joint declaration stressed that such actions "cannot be justified under any pretext," reaffirming a unified stance

against violations of sovereignty and attacks on civilian targets. The ministers emphasised that the targeting of critical infrastructure posed a direct threat to regional stability and humanitarian conditions.

Citing Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, the ministers reaffirmed the right of affected states to defend themselves against armed attacks. They called on Iran to immediately cease all hostile actions and urged adherence to international law and international humanitarian law as essential steps towards de-escalation. The statement further highlighted the importance of good neighbourly relations, warning that the future of ties with Iran would depend on its respect for the sovereignty of other nations and non-interference in their internal affairs.

The ministers also cautioned against the development or use of military capabilities in a manner that threatens regional security.

A key demand outlined in the statement was Iran's compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 2817 (2026), which calls for an immediate

## Govt body reviews energy situation: Diesel stocks provide about 24-day cover

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Amid global market volatility, the Cabinet Committee to Monitor Petrol Prices affirmed stable fuel supplies while directing urgent coordination with the State Bank of Pakistan and other banks, including temporary enhancements and consortium-based financing where required, to ease operational challenges arising from the increased size of Letters of Credit (LCs) and safeguard uninterrupted imports.

The committee was informed that diesel stocks currently provide approximately 24 days of cover, while petrol stocks remain at comfortable levels, supported by ongoing imports and refinery operations.

Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb chaired the meeting,



as part of the government's ongoing daily review of developments in the energy sector amid continued regional tensions.

The committee undertook a detailed review of petroleum product stock positions and was briefed that, despite heightened volatility in international energy markets and evolving regional dynamics, domestic supply remains stable with adequate stocks available across the country. The Petroleum Division informed the Committee that one cargo of crude oil has arrived.

## Punjab govt distributes Ramadan package with dignity for beneficiaries

PEAK POINT

LAHORE: Punjab Information Minister Azma Bukhari stated that the Ramadan package has been successfully distributed to beneficiaries without compromising their dignity.

In her statement, the minister said the Punjab government effectively implemented the "Maryam's Dastarkhwan Package," achieving its three main objectives: distribution of aid cards, "Dastarkhwan" meals, and facility bazaars.

Millions of eligible individuals received aid cards at their doorsteps, ensuring that no underprivileged or deserving citizen's dignity was violated. The multi-billion rupee Ramadan package was executed transparently. She



added that thousands of citizens broke their fasts daily through "Maryam's Dastarkhwan," describing it as part of the transforming Punjab under Marium Nawaz. New examples of public welfare are being set across the province. Azma Bukhari further stated that Marium Nawaz has trained Punjab ministers and officials to serve the public efficiently. Whereas in past governments, people had to search for assistance, now government resources reach citizens.

## Maritime Affairs Minister announces major incentives for Karachi transshipment ships

PEAK POINT

KARACHI: Maritime Affairs Minister Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry has announced a comprehensive incentive package for foreign transshipment vessels operating at Karachi Port.

The announcement was made during a meeting chaired by the minister at the Karachi Port Trust, with the new scheme taking effect from March 18, 2026.

The minister revealed that duties and charges on dry bulk export cargo have been reduced by up to 60 percent, while the minimum transshipment cargo requirement has been lowered from 10 percent to 7.5 percent.

Additionally, the base discount has been increased from 5 percent to 20

percent, with an extra 5 percent discount on additional cargo.

Special incentives have also been enhanced for shipping lines that bring in a higher number of vessels.

Minister Junaid Anwar Chaudhry stated that a 60 percent flat discount has been set on 50 percent GRT transshipment cargo, and weight charges for large container ships have been reduced by up to 50 percent. An additional 5 percent discount is offered for ships using environmentally friendly fuel.

He emphasized that these measures aim to make Karachi Ports a cost-effective and efficient gateway for global shipping, facilitating both domestic and foreign maritime operations while promoting exports and transshipment activities.

KP, Punjab Governors discuss political stability, inter-provincial harmony

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi and Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider held an important meeting at Punjab House in Islamabad, discussing the overall political situation of the country, inter-provincial harmony and matters of mutual interest.

During the meeting, both leaders termed the role of President Asif Ali Zardari and Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari as exemplary and crucial for ensuring stability, development and prosperity in the country. They emphasized the importance of political stability, continuity of the democratic process and improved coordination among institutions in the prevailing circumstances. Governor Kundi said that national unity and political harmony were indispensable to tackle the challenges faced by the country. He stressed,

## Education Ministry partner with NGOs to strengthen efforts to identify, enroll out of school children in capital

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training (MoFE&PT) held a signing ceremony on Thursday for a Letter of Understanding (LoU) with eight civil society organisations at the Ministry.

The ceremony formalized collaboration under the "No Child Left Behind" campaign, aimed at ensuring universal access to education across Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) through a coordinated Union Council-wise approach.

The Federal Secretary, Mr. Nadeem Mehbub, speaking at the occasion, emphasized that the



partnerships will significantly strengthen efforts to identify, enroll, and retain Out-of-School Children (OOSC).

He stressed the importance of achieving the target of completing comprehensive household surveys and enrollment of out-of-school children within the next three months. He further highlighted that the initiative includes community outreach.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs, Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry chairing a meeting to announce incentives for transshipment vessels.

## 20 killed, 8 injured in rain-related incidents across Karachi: police

PEAK POINT

KARACHI: Twenty people died and eight were injured as a result of a thunderstorm that swept through Karachi on Wednesday night, the city police said on Thursday.

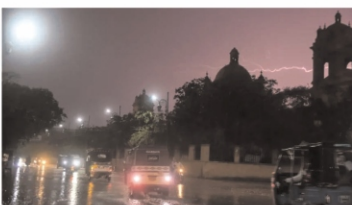
Heavy rain and strong winds lashed the city and caused casualties related to falling debris and wall collapses, as the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) said a westerly wave was affecting most parts of the country.

Additional Inspector General of Police Azad Khan told Dawn that, according to police records, 13 of the deaths occurred during a wall

collapse in Saeedabad and two more due to a wall collapse in Quidabad. Two were also injured in a wall collapse in Keamari.

Separately, roof collapses killed one and injured three people in Gulistan-i-Jauhar, as well as causing one death and two injuries in the Mominabad area of Orangi Town. One person also died in a roof collapse in Malir's Sukhan area, while one person died and one was injured in Clifton after being hit by debris from the storm.

Additionally, Khan said that one death was caused by a lightning strike in Shah Latif Town.



Karachi Mayor Murtaza Wahab, meanwhile, said that 55mm of rainfall had been recorded on Wednesday night, adding that "Karachi remains largely functional." "Most roads are clear, only under-development areas face minor issues. Where

rainwater is present, clear instructions have been issued and water will be removed shortly," he said. Meanwhile, the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has forecast more rain in Karachi and other areas of Sindh on Thursday as a westerly wave

continues to affect most parts of the country. In its three-day forecast for the Karachi division, the PMD predicted continued cloudy weather and "chances of wind-thunderstorms or rain with a few moderate to isolated heavy falls" on Thursday.

Temperatures will reach highs of 24-26 degrees Celsius and a low of 18.5°C, with humidity reaching 82 percent in the daytime and falling to between 40 and 50pc in the evening. A north-westerly wind is predicted to turn southwesterly, it added.

As of 11am, the highest level of rainfall was recorded

in Keamari at 8mm, followed by Surjani Town (4.5mm).

Friday is predicted to see a respite from the rainfall with "mostly sunny" weather, raising temperatures to a maximum of 27-29°C as lows remain around 18-20°C.

Humidity is forecast to be similar to the previous day, at around 75-85pc in the daytime and 45-55pc in the evening, while the wind will turn from northeasterly to southwesterly.

Saturday, which is expected to be the first day of Eid, will once again bring cloudy weather with a chance of isolated thunderstorms or rain on the outskirts.