

PM Shehbaz announces Rs7.41 per unit cut in power tariffs for countrywide consumers

Islamabad(News Desk) Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday announced a Rs7.41 per unit cut in power rates across the country in a "major" relief package to reduce the burden on citizens facing exorbitant electricity bills. Speaking at an event in Islamabad, the premier congratulated the nation and said that it was not easy to convince the International Monetary Fund (IMF) of the cut, adding that his team had gone to great lengths to achieve the feat. For industries, he declared

that electricity prices would be cut by Rs7.59. The premier also emphasised that the government would have to take up structural reforms in the power sector, highlighting his determination to tackle the theft of Rs600 billion. "Even though work on it has already started, we have to completely eradicate [malpractices]", he said. "If a shopkeeper is paying the electricity bill honestly and the shopkeeper next to him does not, then it is an unhealthy competition." The government on Wednesday

wrote on its official X account that "great news for the entire nation" would be unveiled today, without providing any details about the announcement itself. The post bore the hashtag 'Small Eid, Big Gift', referring to Eidul Fitr. It was widely reported last month that the prime minister would announce a Rs8 per unit reduction in electricity rates in his speech to the nation on March 23. The prime minister, however, did not announce any such relief package in his Pakistan Day speech. Instead, he

presided over a meeting on the power sector in light of a last-minute hiccup after a substantial reduction in electricity tariffs could not get past the Fund. The premier reiterated that a cut in electricity tariffs would "be announced soon". It may be noted that the government had decided to maintain the petroleum prices at the existing level — instead of an up-to-Rs13 per litre cut worked out by the oil regulator and the petroleum division — promising to transfer its financial impact to electricity consumers.



Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif addresses an event in Islamabad on April 3, 2025

'Militant attacks in March surged to highest level since 2014'

ISLAMABAD: (News Desk) Militant violence and security operations intensified in the country in March 2025, with the number of militant attacks surpassing 100 for the first time since November 2014, according to a data released by the Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies (PICSS). The think tank reported 105 militant attacks during the month, resulting in 228 fatalities, including 73 security personnel, 67 civilians, and 88 militants. Additionally, 258 people were injured, comprising 129 security personnel and an equal number of civilians. Security forces also conducted intensified counter-militancy operations, resulting in the deaths of 107 individuals, including 83 militants, 13 security personnel, and 11 civilians, while 31 others were injured, among them nine security personnel and four militants. In total, militant attacks and security operations accounted for 335 deaths, with 86 security personnel, 78 civilians, and 171 militants among the deceased.

Development of Balochistan among our top priorities: PM



QUETTA / ISLAMABAD: (News Desk) Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti met Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday to discuss the law and order situation, ongoing protests and development projects in the province, with the premier stressing that the province's growth remains one of the government's top priorities.

The meeting took place in Lahore, where CM Bugti also extended Eidul Fitr greetings to the prime minister. Officials said that the two leaders held a detailed discussion on the political, economic and security situation of Balochistan, as well as the progress of federal development initiatives in the province. The discussions emphasised the federal government's unwavering support for Balochistan, with PM Shehbaz stressing that all necessary steps would be taken to accelerate development initiatives and improve the quality of life for its people. Following the meeting, CM Bugti shared details on the social media platform X (formerly Twitter), expressing satisfaction with the prime minister's assurance of full cooperation and calling it a promising sign for the people of Balochistan. Mr Bugti reiterated that ongoing projects, supported by the federal government, would play a crucial role in strengthening the province's economy and enhancing public welfare.

PTI embroiled in controversy over who gets to meet Imran

ISLAMABAD: (News Desk) Amid a deepening rift within the PTI's upper echelons, KP Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur held a meeting with jailed party founder Imran Khan, along with an aide, on Wednesday.

In a separate development that hints at the PTI's internal differences, the president of its Punjab chapter Hammad Azhar also resigned from his party position the same day.

During the Adiala meeting, Imran Khan reportedly asked CM Gandapur to re-engage with the es-

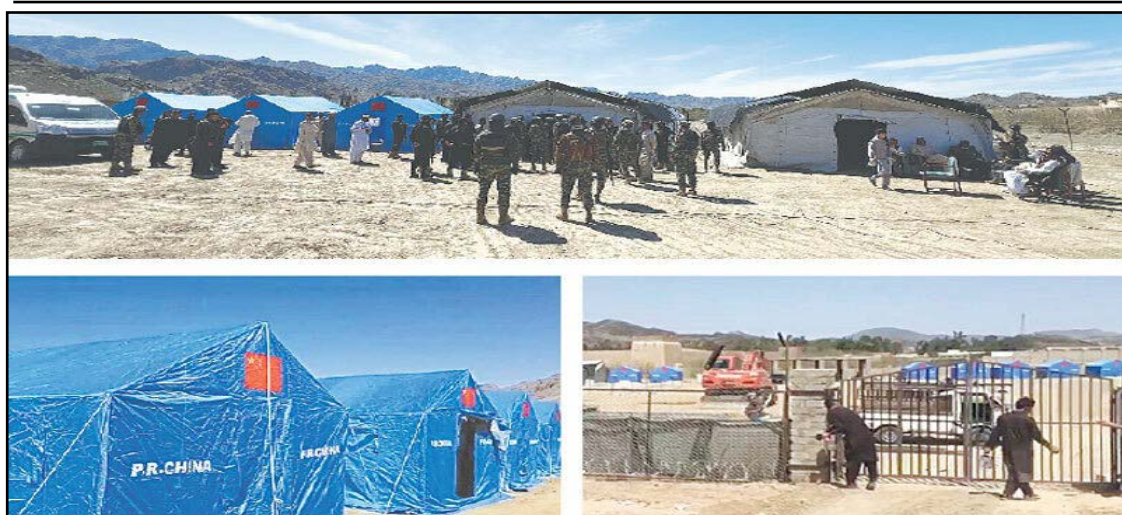
tablishment within the parameters of the Constitution and law, Adviser to CM Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif, who accompanied Mr Gandapur, claimed while talking after the huddle.

The meeting continued for two-and-a-half hours in the conference room of Adiala Jail. However, as per orders of the Islamabad High Court, they left without holding a media talk outside the jail.

Party sources said the meeting was a continuation of Tuesday's huddle between ex-minister Azam Swati and Mr Khan.

On Tuesday, PTI leaders Advocate Salman Akram Raja and others reached Adiala Jail and Mr Raja provided to the authorities a list of persons who had to meet Imran Khan. However, Mr Raja was stopped from going inside while Mr Swati was allowed to meet Imran Khan. Jail sources claimed that Imran Khan was not willing to meet Mr Raja. Later, Mr Swati also claimed that the party founder was not willing to meet Mr Raja. Mr Swati said he assured Mr Khan that Mr Raja was sincere with the party and was

standing on principles. He also informed that based on his discussion with Mr Khan, some changes will be made in the KP government. Party sources said that during the meeting between CM Gandapur and Imran Khan, various issues related to KP including political and security came under discussion. Call for re-engagement Barrister Saif claimed that Imran Khan had asked CM Gandapur to re-engage with the establishment within the parameters of the Constitution and law.



(CLOCKWISE from top) Security and administration officials examine work at a camp in Landi Kotal, meant to house Afghan citizens awaiting repatriation; a screengrab shows workers installing a gate and fence around the facility; and, Chinese-made tents are erected to house the homeward-bound Afghans

Journalist Farhan Mallick remains behind bars as bail plea in Peca case to be heard on April 7

Islamabad(News Desk) A bail application to overturn the judicial magistrate's order for journalist Farhan Mallick was fixed for hearing on April 7, his lawyer Abdul Moiz Jaferi said on Monday.

Jaferi told Dawn.com that the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) claimed it did not receive notice for today's hearing, so it

has been rescheduled for Monday at 8:30am. Mallick, the founder of media agency Raftar and a former news director at Samaa TV, was arrested on March 20 in Karachi and booked under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (Peca) as well as the Pakistan Penal Code in a case related to alleged anti-state content on his

YouTube channel.

On Saturday, a Karachi district court issued notices to the FIA related to a bail application for Mallick. The suspect, through his lawyer, applied to the district and sessions judge east after a judicial magistrate had dismissed his post-arrest bail plea. The applicant asked the court to overturn the order of

the magistrate and set him free on bail.

The caseAccording to a first information report (FIR) dated March 20, the FIA had received a report about Raftar TV's YouTube channel, which was "involved in running a campaign for the posting of anti-state videos targeting the dignitaries mentioned in violation".

Deportations begin today amid 'deadline extension' confusion

PESHAWAR: (News Desk) The second phase of sending back Afghan refugees is set to begin in earnest from today (Thursday) following the expiration of a government deadline for Afghan Citizen Card (ACC) holders to leave the country voluntarily. The government had set March 31 as the last date for ACC holders to return to their country and refused to budge despite calls from the international community to extend the deadline. "Although the deadline was March 31, the provincial government extended it till April 2 keeping in view Eidul Fitr. Now, phase 2 will begin from [Thursday] and we have established camps, one each at Landi Kotal and Nasir Bagh Road," a senior official from Afghan Commissionerate in Peshawar. The two-day relaxation for Eid led to some confusion among official circles, with some sources suggesting that the deadline for repatriation had been extended. The AFP news agency reported the deadline has been extended until the beginning of next week due to Eid holidays, while the Associated Press claimed that arrests and deportations had been paused until April 10.

Gilani designated founding chairman of Inter-Parliamentary Speakers' Conference

ISLAMABAD: (News Desk) Senate Chairman Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani has been designated as the founding chairman of the Inter-Parliamentary Speakers' Conference (ISC), a Seoul-based global forum dedicated to fostering parliamentary dialogue, promoting sustainable development and augmenting cooperation in addressing key challenges such as climate change, renewable energy and water scarcity. The decision to the effect was made during Mr Gilani's recent visit to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, where he attended an exclusive briefing session on the forthcoming ISC in Seoul, South Korea. According to a statement, the formal ceremony in this regard will take place during the forthcoming World Summit 2025, sponsored by the Universal Peace Federation (UPF) in Seoul. The summit will be participated by 500 representatives and 45 speakers of parliaments from 150 countries. In recognition of his leadership.

Under-trial prisoner found dead in Attock jail

TAXILA: (News Desk) An under-trial prisoner was found dead under mysterious circumstances in the lavatory of the Attock District Jail on Eid day. Prison officials claimed that the prisoner had committed suicide by hanging himself with a drawstring. The inmate, identified as 37-year-old Rashid Khan — a native of Bhallar Joggi village — was found by his fellow prisoners hanging from the window of the jail washroom. They immediately informed the jail authorities about his death.

According to jail officials, Rashid was arrested by Hasanabdal police after registration of a first investigation report under section 354 of the Pakistan Penal Code on January 1, this year.

His case was under hearing at a local court in Hasanabdal. However, on Eid day, his body was found by his fellow prisoners hanging from the window of the jail washroom.

Jail authorities said the body was dispatched to the district headquarters hospital Attock for an autopsy. Afterwards, a judicial inquiry was carried out by civil Judge Syed Naseer Abbas in the jail in which statements of fellow inmates and jail officials were recorded. On the other hand, a teenage boy was killed, while a man was shot and injured in two separate accidents in various parts of Attock district on Wednesday. In the first accident, a 16-year-old boy identified as Ashsar Mansoor, a native of Chabb village, drowned in a water channel located on Makhad Road in Jand while taking a bath. A police spokesman said that a Rescue 1122 team retrieved his body and handed it over for burial.

2 arrested in Karachi for impersonating police, carrying out online robberies, kidnappings

Karachi(News Desk) Two people have been arrested in Karachi for impersonating the police and committing robberies and kidnappings via an online platform, it emerged on Thursday.

The suspects used to steal data from a private digital site and contact customers to receive deliveries, according to a press release by Karachi District East Police spokesperson.

"After contacting customers, the suspects would

wear fake police uniforms and reach the doorsteps of the customers to commit house robberies and kidnappings," the statement said. Gulshan-e-Iqbal Station House Officer (SHO) Naeem Rajput arrested two of the suspects after identifying them through CCTV footage obtained from several crime scenes. Two illegal 30 bore pistols with ammunition, mobile phones, and stolen watches, among other items,

were recovered from the suspects during their arrest. The vehicle used by the suspects, which had a fake number plate BKY-361, was seized by the police, and information is being obtained based on the car's records, the statement further added. Following the interrogation, the arrested suspects identified the items looted during the house robberies. They included three police uniforms, eight

stolen mobile phones, dozens of mobile phone covers, dozens of uniform badges, various mobile SIMs and 20 bags. They confessed that the items were stolen during the following robbery incidents. On March 6, after entering a house in Gulshan-e-Iqbal Block 1, they looted four mobile phones, an LED TV, gold ornaments, watches and cash. They then kidnapped the victim and took him to ATMs at



different locations in Karachi to withdraw money, after which they escaped. The case related to the incident was registered u

nder charge number 202/2025 at the Gulshan-e-Iqbal Police Station. In another incident on February 8 in Gulshan-e-Iqbal Block 13/D,