



**Water-related challenges, threats to be addressed on priority: Ahsan**



**Mustafa Kamal hails WHO's support to strengthen Pakistan's health system**



**Teachers key to nation's future: Wajiha Qamar**

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## PM reaffirms government's support for foreign investors, strategic technology partners

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday reaffirmed the government's commitment to supporting foreign investors and strategic technology partners. In a meeting with a delegation from Ericsson here at the PM's House, the prime minister welcomed the delegation and appreciated Ericsson's longstanding investment in Pakistan and its contribution to the development of the country's telecommunications sector. He acknowledged Ericsson's presence in Pakistan that spans more than six decades.

The delegation was led by Patrick Johansson, President and Head of Market Area Europe, Middle East and Africa at Ericsson. The meeting focused on the impor-

portance of next-generation digital connectivity for economic growth, productivity and public service delivery. The prime minister highlighted Pakistan's interest in learning from Ericsson's global experience in advanced networks, including 5G, while ensuring secure and resilient infrastructure aligned with national needs. Discussions also covered cooperation on digital skills development, financial inclusion and the expansion of cashless payment systems, as well as the use of technology to strengthen disaster preparedness and institutional resilience. The Ericsson delegation praised the Government of Pakistan's efforts to develop and upgrade the country's IT infrastructure including the 5G spectrum auction.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets a delegation from Ericsson led by President Patrick Johansson.

## Trump tells Iranians to keep protesting, says 'help' on its way

PEAK POINT



WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump on Tuesday said Iranians should continue nationwide protests and take over the country's institutions.

"Save the names of the killers and abusers. They will pay a big price. I have cancelled all meetings with Iranian Officials until the senseless killing of protesters STOPS. HELP IS ON ITS WAY."

Trump did not specify what form the promised "help" would take, in a message that backed regime change in the Islamic Republic — marking a change in the US stance from one day ago.

On Monday, his Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt told reporters that a channel for diplomacy with Tehran remained open, saying that Iran was taking a "far different tone" in private discussions with Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff.

Trump on Monday also announced a 25 per cent tariff on any country doing business with Iran.

## Consensus on matters of national security need of the hour, DG ISPR says

PEAK POINT

RAWALPINDI: Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Director General Lieutenant General Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry has stated that unity and consensus on matters of national security and narrative is the need of the hour, Radio Pakistan reported on Tuesday. According to the report, he made the remarks as a delegation of the National Paigham-i-Aman Committee (NPAC), led by its Chairman Hafiz Tahir Mahmood Asrafi, met with the DG ISPR in Rawalpindi. "Speaking on the occasion, the DG ISPR emphasised that unity and consensus on matters of national security and narrative were



the need of the hour," it said. He said a comprehensive discussion was held on internal security challenges in the context of Fina al Khawarij, Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan and Tehreek-i-Taliban Afghanistan, which further strengthened the shared stance of all stakeholders, it said.

"Reiterating Islamabad's principled position on Kashmir and Gaza, DG ISPR said sup-

porting oppressed people is Pakistan's moral responsibility," it added. He stressed that public awareness and a truth-based narrative were decisive tools in countering the enemy's psychological warfare, the report said. Terming the meeting as highly productive, the DG ISPR expressed hope for further progress in building trust and enhancing practical cooperation in the days ahead, it said. Meanwhile, the

NPAC delegation expressed unwavering solidarity with Pakistan's armed forces and reaffirmed their collective resolve to counter anti-state narratives and hostile propaganda, it said. Assuring full cooperation in promoting the national narrative, the committee strongly condemned Fina al Khawarij as well as the Afghan Taliban, stressing that terrorism had no justification under any circumstances.

## Four members of Peace Committee killed by Khawarij in Bannu

PEAK POINT

PESHAWAR: At least four members of a local peace committee were killed when Khawarij opened fire on them in the Huwed area of Bannu district on Tuesday, police said. According to police, the victims were returning from a jirga in Gulbadin Landik area when armed assailants, lying in ambush, carried out indiscriminate firing on their vehicle. All four occupants of the vehicle died on the spot. Police confirmed that the deceased included a father and son.

## Security forces kill 4 Indian sponsored terrorists in IBO in Kalat

PEAK POINT

RAWALPINDI: Security forces killed four terrorists belonging to Indian proxy, Fina al Hindustan in intelligence based operation (IBO) in Kalat District of Balochistan. "During the conduct of operation, own forces effectively engaged the terrorists' location, and after an intense fire exchange, four Indian sponsored terrorists were sent to hell," said a news release issued by Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR). Weapons and ammunition were also recovered from the terrorists.

## China rejects India's claim over Shaksgam valley in Kashmir, asserts territory belongs to Beijing

PEAK POINT

CHINA: Beijing has rejected New Delhi's claim over the Shaksgam valley in Kashmir and said that the territory "belongs to China". At a press conference on Monday, when asked by the Press Trust of India (PTI) for comment on the Indian criticism of China's infrastructure development projects in the Shaksgam valley, China's Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Mao Ning said that it was "fully justified" for China to conduct infrastructure construction "on its own territory". "The territory you mentioned belongs to China," she said. India's foreign ministry spokesperson had on Friday said that it reserved the right to take necessary measures to safeguard its interests as the Shaksgam valley was "an



Indian territory". "We have never recognised the so-called China-Pakistan boundary agreement that happened in 1963. We have consistently maintained that the agreement is illegal and invalid," he said at a press conference in response to a question from India's state-owned public television broadcaster Doordashan. The Indian spokesperson added that New Delhi also does not "recognise the so-called China-Pakistan Economic

Corridor". "The entire union territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh are an integral and inalienable part of India," he maintained, adding, "This has been clearly conveyed to Pakistan and the Chinese authorities several times". He added that India had "consistently protested with the Chinese side against attempts to alter the ground reality in Shaksgam Valley". Mao Ning, in response to the Indian foreign ministry

## Govt, opposition agree on Mehmood Khan Achakzai as new NA opposition leader

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The government and opposition have reached a consensus on appointing a new opposition leader following the disqualification of PTI's Omar Ayub as Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly. According to sources, Achakzai will be the sole candidate of the united opposition. NA Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq assured that Achakzai will be appointed as the Leader of the Opposition after completing the required legal formalities. Sources said the NA speaker will fulfill all procedural requirements before issuing the notification for the appointment. Earlier, a Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) delegation met speaker of the National Assembly and formally submitted the nomination of Achakzai for the position of opposition leader. The PTI delegation included Barrister Gohar Ali, Asad Qaiser, Amir Dogar and Iqbal Afridi, while Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Tariq Fazal Chaudhry was also present at the meeting.





# SPORTS



## National women's football team set for March return at Fifa Series after six-month hiatus



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan women's football team is all set to feature in the upcoming Fifa Series, a women's football event to be hosted in Brazil, the Ivory Coast and Thailand in March. The announcement was made in November last year by the world football body, which is expanding the Fifa Series by involving more member nations and introducing a women's edition.

What turned the fate for the national women's team was a meeting between Fifa supreme Gianni Infantino and the Pakistan

Football Federation (PFF) president Mohsen Gilani. It paved the way for the national women's team to participate in the series of friendly matches and face new nations across other federations. The Pakistan women's football team, despite an 8-0 loss against Chinese Taipei in the AFC Women's Asia Cup qualifiers in June last year, showed some promise when they beat Indonesia and Kyrgyzstan in subsequent matches. However, the team's lack of exposure in matches against other nations will require more focus from them on the pitch.

"We don't have too many

details about the series yet," says Maria Khan, the midfielder and captain of the national team. "Fifa will be releasing more information sometime this month [January], so we don't really have an idea who all we will be playing against. However, our target as a team, every time we step on the pitch together, is to always represent Pakistan in the best way possible," she adds. The national women's football team is expected to be seen in action in March at the Fifa Series. After not playing for the past six months, facing off against teams from other confederations will be both an opportunity and a

challenge for the Green Shirts. Shahrux Sohai, a sports management professional and analyst, is of the view that the team's squad, based on their performance showcased during the AFC Women's Asia Cup qualifiers, seems strong. "There could be a few new additions on the cards [in terms of change in squad], but the team is not expected to have any friendly games before the series," he says. "They will really have to hit the ground running." Under its Strategic Objectives for the Global Game: 2023-2027, Fifa came up with its brainchild, the Fifa Series, in 2024.

## PSL franchises split as three teams push for auction system in season 11



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Three leading franchises of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) have formally demanded the introduction of an auction system for the tournament's upcoming 11th edition, arguing that it would create a more level playing field. Sources say Karachi Kings, Islamabad United, and Quetta Gladiators have approached PSL management, urging them to replace the existing draft format with a full auction. The franchises believe an auction would provide equal opportunity to acquire top-tier players, unlike the draft system, where teams with earlier selections gain a significant advantage. According to insiders, the franchises have also sought immediate clarification regarding direct signings, including how many players can be recruited through this route and who holds authority over determining player categories. They have stressed the need for greater transparency in these processes. The three franchises are of the view that players they aim to sign are frequently picked by other teams due to draft order limitations, prompting their call for an auction-based mechanism.

In contrast, Lahore Qalandars are reportedly in favor of retaining the draft system, while Peshawar Zalmi have yet to submit their stance on the issue.

## In meeting with ICC, Bangladesh reiterates its refusal to travel to India for T20 World Cup



PEAK POINT

BANGLADESH: Bangladesh's cricket board said on Tuesday it had repeated its refusal to travel to India for next month's T20 World Cup during talks with the International Cricket Council (ICC), announced on Jan 4 that it would not play its T20 World Cup matches in India after during a video conference with the ICC, the

board (BCB) said it had "reiterated its request for the ICC to consider relocating Bangladesh's matches outside India." "The BCB reaffirmed its position regarding the decision not to travel to India, citing security concerns," the board said in a statement. "While the ICC has already been announced and

requested the BCB to reconsider its stance, the Board's position remains unchanged." The ICC has not commented. The BCB said discussions with the ICC continue to "explore possible solutions", it added, but that it "remains committed to safeguarding the well-being of its players, officials and staff."

Bangladesh, led by Litton Das, are placed ninth in the ICC T20 rankings. They have played all nine editions of the tournament, but have never qualified for the semi-finals. Political ties between India and Bangladesh soured after a mass uprising in Dhaka in 2024 toppled then-prime minister Sheikh Hasina, a close ally of New Delhi.

## Pakistan skipper Salman Ali Agha has set a strike rate recording during the third T20I match against Sri Lanka in Dambulla



## Australia captain Alyssa Healy to retire after upcoming India series

PEAK POINT

AUSTRALIA: Alyssa Healy, a mainstay of Australia's dominant women's cricket team for 15 years and latterly its captain, has announced that she will retire from the game after the upcoming multi-format series against India. The 35-year-old wicketkeeper-batter was part of two one-day international World Cup triumphs and six successful T20 World Cup campaigns before taking over as skipper after the retirement of Meg Lanning in late 2023.

"It's with mixed emotions that the upcoming India series will be my last for Australia," she said in a statement on Tuesday.

"I'm still passionate about playing for Australia, but I've somewhat lost that competitive edge that's kept me driven since the start, so the time feels right to call it a day. "I'll genuinely miss my teammates, singing the team

song and walking out to open the batting for Australia." Healy made her Australia debut in 2010 and scored 3,563 runs with seven centuries in one-day internationals and 3,054 with a single hundred in Twenty20s for her

Wicketkeeper-batter was part of two one-day international World Cup triumphs and six successful T20 World Cup campaigns before taking over as skipper after the retirement of Meg Lanning in late 2023.



country, as well as making 275 dismissals behind the stumps. "Alyssa is one of the all-time greats of the game and has made an immeasurable contribution both on and off the field over her 15-year career," said Cricket Australia Chief Executive Todd Greenberg. As a mark of her status in Australia,

will play her last matches for Australia in three ODIs and a single test against India in February and March. Women's cricket has come on in leaps and bounds during Healy's career but, despite having missed only two for Australia since her debut in January 2011, her final match will be only her 11th test.

## Abdul Javed bags Islamabad Snooker Cup title





# Role of governance and internal systems critical in ensuring human security: Expert

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Major-General (R) Ehsan Mehmood Khan, a Human Security expert and former Director- General of Institute for Strategic Studies, Research & Analysis (ISSRA), emphasized that Pakistan is maintaining effective comprehensive deterrence against threats while existential challenges still require traditional security responses whereas governance reforms, and the role of internal systems is critical in ensuring human security, service delivery and sustainable development. He was delivering a distinguished lecture on "Comprehensive Security and Sustainable Development: Concepts and Practices", organized by Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), here. Traced the history of the concept of security from ancient times to the modern state system, Maj-Gen (R) Ehsan Mehmood Khan



argued that the core purpose of the state should be peace, security and inclusive prosperity. Stressing the need for viewing security and development through a combined lens, he noted that prosperity cannot be achieved without comprehensiveness in national objectives. Referring to his book Human Security in Pakistan, published in 2013 and taught at international institutions including the National Defense University in Washington,

he said national security has no fixed definition and has evolved over centuries, often shaped by conflict and war. He cited the 1947 US National Security Act as a milestone that institutionalized national security frameworks later replicated in dozens of countries. Security is not merely the absence of threats but also the capability to deal with them, with the state remaining the primary securitizing actor, he adding that national power is both a means and an end, dynamic in nature and difficult to measure absolutely. Maj-Gen (R) Ehsan recalled Dr Mahbub ul Haq's seminal contribution and the UN Human Security paradigm, which broadened security to include economic, food, health, environmental and social dimensions. He stressed that human development and human security are deeply interdependent, which form the foundation for sustainable stability. Presenting his conceptual model for

Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security, he identified three key rings: global security, state security and human security, with the latter two forming the core of comprehensive national security. He argued that true security can only be achieved when territorial, political, diplomatic, economic, cultural and human dimensions advance together, creating a "corridor of prosperity".<sup>2 / 2</sup> During the question-and-answer session, the expert underscored that human security cannot be imagined without state security, and that strong state security does not inherently undermine human security. He noted that weak governance and poor resource utilization, however, can negatively impact service delivery and human wellbeing. He said Pakistan is maintaining effective comprehensive deterrence against threats, while existential challenges still require traditional security responses.

## Journalist Iqrar Ul Hassan to launch Youth movement

BY: WAJIHA TAMSEEL

LAHORE: Pakistani journalist Iqrar ul Hassan has launched a major announcement for the youth movement at the Lahore Press Club on January 15 2026. What will be the name of the movement, what will be the manifesto and who will be the leader? All these announcements will be made at the Lahore Press Club. Further Iqrar ul Hassan said, January 15 is the date when the common man will become the decision-maker. Today is not the turn of history, history is turning itself in a new direction. On January



15, 2026, a revolutionary movement will be formally announced from Lahore, where the people will emerge not as mere spectators but as the decision makers of their destiny. On this day, the flag of the movement will be hoisted, public registration will begin, and

the doors will open for every citizen to add their voice. This movement is not just a gathering, but a narrative of a new political culture. It aims to empower the people, nurture true democratic traditions and create such a system. Where everyone's opinion is valued. The day will mark a change in Pakistan's political culture and the rising of the sun of people's power. 15th January can be the most important date in the history of Pakistan after the establishment of Pakistan. On this day, people will decide that they will not just wait for history, but will be the creators of

history. After the announcement of the name, procedure and flag of the movement in Lahore on January 15, every citizen will be able to be a part of this movement through registration. This is the opportunity to Make your own decisions for the future. It's not a promise, it's a commitment. Every citizen is now ready to be a character, not just a spectator. Every letter of this movement is a story of people's resolve. On January 15, history will be written in Lahore and this time the pen will be in the hands of the common man.

## 13 beggars held as ICT admin acts against street begging

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration on Tuesday detained 13 people during an operation against street begging in the federal capital, officials said.

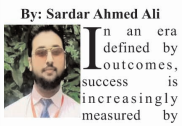
The action was carried out in Sector F-6 and at Express Chowk, where those taken into custody were shifted to a

police lock-up. The Islamabad district administration has stepped up efforts to curb street begging as part of its ongoing campaign to maintain order in public spaces. Assistant Commissioner City, Maheen Hassan, led the operation, targeting areas where complaints about professional beggars had been reported by residents and shopkeepers.

# Opinion & Editorial

By: **Sardar Ahmed Ali**  
In an era defined by outcomes, success is increasingly measured by visibility, wealth, and influence, while the means used to achieve it are conveniently overlooked. This widening gap between success and ethics reflects a deeper moral drift. Achievement is celebrated even when it is built on compromise, manipulation, or the quiet acceptance of wrongdoing. Across societies, those who bend rules are often admired as clever or pragmatic, while individuals who uphold principles are dismissed as idealistic. This distorted narrative reshapes ambition, particularly among the young, who begin to view integrity as negotiable. History, however, offers a consistent lesson. Success detached from ethics may rise swiftly, but it rarely sustains itself. When trust is eroded, institutions weaken, and the eventual cost is paid not by decision-makers alone, but by society as a whole. Ethics are frequently portrayed as obstacles to progress, yet they are its most reliable safeguards. They provide direction to ambition and credibility to authority. When dishonesty becomes routine and accountability selective, confidence in systems collapses. Influence replaces integrity, appearance overtakes substance, and stability gives way to uncertainty. True success is not defined solely by reaching the top, but by the path taken to get there. Ethical boundaries do not restrict achievement; they protect its meaning. Societies that defend ethics cultivate trust, resilience, and continuity. Those that abandon them may enjoy short-term victories, but they also sow the seeds of long-term decline. Success without ethics is not advancement. It is a delay in reckoning, and history shows that such delays always end with a heavier price.

## Success without ethics: A dangerous trend



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## Narrow alleys of higher-ed

MUHAMMAD HAMID ZAMAN

At a restaurant in southern Poland, I met a Pakistani server. He had been in Poland for a year. This young man defied many of the stereotypes we often associate with Pakistanis working in the food industry in Europe. He had gotten his undergraduate degree in Pakistan in applied geology, received an HEC fellowship to do a Master's in Hungary (in petroleum engineering) and then had gone back to Pakistan to work in the public sector. He tried his luck for three years, finding one door closed to him after another. In one particular case for a public sector job, he told me, he passed the requisite exam but was denied the position because his degree was in "applied" geology while the job was for someone who just had a geology degree, without the applied part! When he expressed his frustration to HEC staff, he found nothing but bureaucratic dismissals of his pleas. In another instance, the hiring managers were confused about how someone with a geology degree could get a Master's in engineering. After three frustrating years, this young man was back in Europe, finishing another degree financed by a modest scholarship from the local university, and working on the side to make ends meet, hoping that this time things might turn out better. There is an ongoing debate in many circles about why people choose to leave. As the number of people leaving has increased substantially, there are, as one can imagine, many different examples and sides to the story of young people leaving the country. There are also uncomfortable truths that many in the corridors of power are unwilling to listen to. But we also need to acknowledge that sometimes people actually want to come back, and even do come back, only to find opportunities closed to them due to myopia, ignorance and our commitment to the inertia of the system.

## Solo flight

THE KP chief minister's eventful visit to Sindh has thrown up the same questions that his recent, equally eventful trip to Punjab did: why this? Why now? Why has a relatively inexperienced PTI leader decided to go around the country to muster up a street movement, that too, at a time when both the appetite and space for agitational politics are considerably more restricted than before? If the purpose is to gain some more public sympathy for the beleaguered party, the effort is overkill. There has been no shortage of news reports and social media commentary on the travels the party and its supporters continue to face. If the purpose is to rally the public for some meaningful movement against the government, the PTI has clearly not read the room. There is no doubt that many still support the party, but that support continues to be passive. Is it that the KP chief minister felt compelled to take up this campaign in order to cement his own standing within the party? If so, that is an unfortunate reflection on the party and the unproductive expectations it has of its leaders. It is worth noting that several prominent leaders from both the opposition and the government benches have recently signalled their intention to initiate a national-level dialogue. Those leading the effort from the opposition's side, under the TTAP banner, have been delegated the responsibility by none other than the PTI itself.

## Cities in our memories

ARIFA NOOR

I GREW up in a Lahore very different from the grey expanse it has now become. Back then, it was a sleeper city but a very green one. The main boulevard in Gulberg was a long road with a wide and very green belt in the centre that ran from the Jail Road-Sherpao intersection all the way to Liberty market. The road on both sides of this green expanse was smallish and not that busy. But as the city grew, a decision was made to broaden the road and reduce the green belt, in order to accommodate the traffic. Since then, concrete has swallowed up most of the green. And the traffic continues to be a

nightmare. The roads are wide and there are limited spots for U-turns or crossings but the traffic is far from manageable. Those who are forced to walk have to dash across between fast-moving cars and motorcycles. It is hard to think of any place in Lahore where the traffic is less chaotic, despite the flyovers and underpasses that have mushroomed all over the city, replacing the greenery in many cases. The canal, which once was the preferred spot for those who wanted to go for a 'long drive', is now a noisy, chaotic place, despite a series of underpasses. There was a time a drive next to the canal could be a relaxing affair as the city ended close

to where Johar Town is. When an aunt of mine moved near Thokar Niaz Beg, it seemed so far away that a trip to her place was planned with as much fanfare as a day trip out of town. By now, of course, the city has spread far beyond what then seemed to be nowhere land. The city has become much bigger, swallowing areas around it and the people travelling in and out and through the city have also increased; but decades later, no one seems to realise that widening roads and installing flyovers doesn't lead to a smooth traffic flow. In fact, more and bigger roads mean more cars and motorcycles.

Courtesy Dawn

## Ayaz, Chairman Senate pledge stronger parliamentary coordination



**PEAK POINT**  
ISLAMABAD: Speaker of National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Tuesday reaffirmed his commitment to further strengthening coordination among the country's constitutional and legislative institutions and to promoting parliamentary harmony.

He expressed these views during a meeting with Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani

here. Deputy Speaker of National Assembly Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah was also present, said a news release.

Chairman Senate warmly welcomed the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker. The meeting featured a detailed exchange of views on legislative affairs, the effective role of Parliament, and other matters of mutual interest.

Both the Speaker of the National Assembly and the Chairman Senate reiterated their resolve to uphold parliamentary traditions, strengthen democratic values, and enhance cooperation between the National Assembly and the Senate to make the legislative process more effective and responsive to national interests.

Chairman Senate praised Sardar Ayaz Sadiq for his positive and constructive role in promoting dialogue between the government and the opposition.

He also appreciated the Speaker for treating members of all political parties with complete impartiality and for conducting the proceedings of the House in a transparent and unbiased manner.

Ayaz Sadiq thanked the Chairman Senate for the warm reception and his kind remarks.

The Speaker and the Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly also commended Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani for his transparent, impartial, and dignified conduct as Chairman Senate.

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## Passengers to bypass UAE airport queues as Islamabad, Abu Dhabi seal pre-clearance plan

**PEAK POINT**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates have agreed to introduce a "pre-immigration clearance" system that will allow passengers traveling from Pakistan to skip lengthy immigration queues upon arrival in the UAE. The agreement was reached during a meeting between Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi and a UAE delegation led by Director General of Customs and Port Security Ahmed bin Lahij Al Falasi. Discussions focused on strengthening bilateral cooperation, particularly in simplifying travel and immigration procedures.

Under the proposed system, immigration checks for UAE-bound passengers will be completed in Pakistan before departure. Karachi has been selected as the pilot location for the initial



rollout. Minister Naqvi said the initiative would significantly reduce processing time for travelers, enabling them to exit UAE airports as domestic passengers. "This system will make travel easier, save time, and greatly improve the passenger experience," he said. The UAE delegation welcomed the proposal, calling it beneficial for citizens of both countries and affirming full cooperation in its implementation. Both sides agreed to continue coordination to finalize the administrative and technical framework for the pilot phase.

## Aurangzeb meets Icoin Technology delegation, discusses Pakistan's emerging digital asset framework

**PEAK POINT**

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Tuesday held a meeting with a delegation from Icoin Technology Inc. led by its Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Chet Silvestri. During the meeting, the minister briefed the delegation on the Government of Pakistan's ongoing efforts to develop a structured and responsible framework for digital assets, said a news release.

He also apprised the delegation of the progress made toward the establishment of a Pakistan Crypto Council and the Pakistan Virtual Assets Regulatory Authority (PVARA), outlining the rationale, sequencing of poli-



cy actions, and the broader implications of these initiatives for market development, financial inclusion, transparency, and consumer protection.

The minister highlighted Pakistan's growing participation in global digital asset activity, as reflected in international analytics, and emphasized the government's resolve to channel this activity into a well-regulated environment that safeguards users while encouraging innovation and investment.

## Pakistan, Saudi Arabia deepen mining cooperation, explore joint investment opportunities

**PEAK POINT**

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik met Saudi Minister of Industry and Mineral Resources Bandar Ibrahim Al-Khorayef in Riyadh to discuss avenues for strengthening bilateral cooperation in the mining and minerals sector.

Malik is leading Pakistan's delegation to the Future Minerals Forum (FMF) 2026, hosted by the Saudi Ministry of Industry and Mineral Resources.

On the sidelines of the Forum, the talks centered on exploring joint investment opportunities and enhancing collaboration across the mineral value chain, underscoring the two countries' commitment to deepening economic ties in the sector. The Saudi Minister appreciated Pakistan's participation in the Forum, noting that global focus has increasingly shifted toward mining and critical minerals. He highlighted the vast potential for Pakistan-Saudi cooperation in the minerals sector and assured that Saudi Arabia's knowl-

edge resources and technical expertise would be available to support Pakistan's mineral sector. He also underscored Pakistan's young and dynamic workforce as a key asset.

Federal Minister Ali Pervaiz Malik reiterated the strong brotherly relations between the two countries and emphasized Pakistan's commitment to deepening cooperation.

He shared that the Geological Survey of Pakistan is working to collaborate with the Saudi Geological Survey, and highlighted the immense mineral potential of the Tethyan Belt, of which Reko Diq is only a small part. He further noted that fertilizer production and medical equipment manufacturing also offer promising avenues for joint ventures.

The Pakistani delegation comprises senior policymakers, heads of state-owned enterprises, private sector representatives, and leading mining sector stakeholders, including PPL, OGDC, Mari Energies, GHPL, FWO, PMDC, Saindak Metals, and Balochistan-based mineral companies, along with specialized service providers.

## Teachers key to nation's future: Wajhi Qamar

**PEAK POINT**

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Federal Education and Professional Training, Wajhi Qamar, underscored the pivotal role of teachers in shaping the nation's future and reaffirmed the government's commitment to strengthening non-formal education across the country. She was addressing the inaugural session of a five-day training workshop for 201 teachers of Basic Education Community Schools (BECS) from Azad Jammu and Kashmir, organized by the Directorate General of Non-Formal Education at the Federal College of Education, Islamabad. Director General BECS, Hameed Khan Niazi, welcomed the chief guest and participants and briefed the gathering that the Basic Education initiative has been serving underprivileged segments of society for the past three decades, enabling millions of children to complete their foundational education and move forward in their academic journey. At present, around 10,000 children—mostly girls—are enrolled in 201 community schools operating in Azad Kashmir.

## Mustafa Kamal hails WHO's support to strengthen Pakistan's health system

**PEAK POINT**

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Health Services Syed Mustafa Kamal acknowledged the World Health Organization (WHO) for providing vehicles to help strengthen Pakistan's health system, particularly in underserved and remote areas. Addressing a ceremony held in this regard, the minister said the government's vision goes beyond building hospitals and offering treatment, emphasizing that the real mission is to protect people from falling ill through effective prevention strategies. He said the vehicles provided by the WHO will be utilized for immunization drives



and basic health activities in far-flung regions, improving outreach and access to essential services. Highlighting the challenges facing the healthcare system, Syed Mustafa Kamal noted that any large-scale outbreak places immense pressure on the entire health infrastructure, citing the Covid-19 pandemic as an example that overwhelmed even developed nations.



RIYADH: Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik held a meeting with H.E. Bandar Ibrahim Al-Khorayef, Saudi Minister of Industry and Mineral Resources on the sidelines of Future Minerals Forum.

## Water-related challenges, threats to be addressed on priority: Ahsan

**PEAK POINT**

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal on Tuesday said that the government will address water-related challenges and threats on a priority basis, with a focus on practical, timely and sustainable solutions.

He was chairing the first meeting of the Task Force on National Water Security, directing the formation of a special working group under the Ministry of Water Resources to submit actionable recommendations to the Planning Commission within 15 days, said a news release.



During the meeting, the participants were informed that in the Hindu Kush Himalayan region the rate of snowmelt increased by a record 65 percent during the decade 2011-2020 compared to previous decades, while the Siachen Glacier is melting at a rate of 50 to 60 meters per year. The rate of snowmelt in the Himalayas mountains has reached 30

meters annually.

Addressing the meeting, Ahsan Iqbal expressed serious concern over the alarming impact of climate change on Pakistan's water resources. The minister said that climate change had accelerated glacier melting to a dangerous level, noting that since 1960 around 23 percent of glaciers had melted and been destroyed. He warned that Pakistan was likely to face a serious and long-term water crisis due to climate change if urgent measures were not taken. Ahsan Iqbal directed the authorities to convene an immediate technical workshop to convert existing water policies into

practical and implementable projects. He stressed that the task force should not only diagnose problems but also propose immediate and workable solutions, supported by a clear timetable to deal with the looming water crisis.

Highlighting regional concerns, the minister termed India's suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty a serious threat to regional peace and Pakistan's water rights. He said India's water aggression was aimed at pushing Pakistan into a water crisis, adding that increasing uncertainty in river flows posed a grave threat to the country.

The minister underscored that water conservation was

the guarantee of food security and economic stability, adding that water security was being wasted through pollution of rivers and unchecked flows into the sea. Referring to the government's "5 Es" framework, he said water conservation was a key pillar of the national development agenda and called for closer collaboration between universities and water experts to plan effective conservation strategies. The minister said the task force would play a pivotal role in recommending effective solutions to Pakistan's water challenges, stressing that the construction of new dams was the need of the hour.

updated to ensure sustainability. He also lamented that precious freshwater was being wasted through pollution of rivers and unchecked flows into the sea. Referring to the government's "5 Es" framework, he said water conservation was a key pillar of the national development agenda and called for closer collaboration between universities and water experts to plan effective conservation strategies. The minister said the task force would play a pivotal role in recommending effective solutions to Pakistan's water challenges, stressing that the construction of new dams was the need of the hour.