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Govt taking practical steps to eradicate polio disease from Pakistan: PM

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday emphasized that the government was taking practical steps through a comprehensive strategy and an effective team to completely eliminate Polio disease from Pakistan at the earliest.

He was talking to President Global Development Gates Foundation Dr. Chris Elias who along with his delegation called on him at the PM House.

The prime minister expressed the government's resolve that Pakistan will continue its efforts, with the support of trusted partners like the Gates Foundation, until the complete eradication of polio from the country.

"The invaluable services of Bill Gates for

the eradication of polio from Pakistan will always be remembered," he said adding Pakistan was deeply grateful for the cooperation of Bill Gates and brotherly Muslim countries, particularly Saudi Arabia, in efforts to eradicate polio.

Despite significant success in the ongoing fight against the disease, the prime minister noted that further urgent measures were indispensable.

He said the federal government was working in full coordination with the provinces to ensure access for polio teams across the country adding that relevant projects under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) for the anti-polio campaign will be continued.

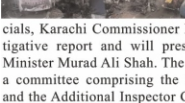


ISLAMABAD: President Global Development Gates Foundation Dr. Chris Elias along with delegation calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Final investigation report on Gul Plaza tragedy completed, key findings revealed

PEAK POINT

KARACHI: The final investigation report on the Gul Plaza tragedy has been completed, with key details of the tragedy now coming to light.



According to officials, Karachi Commissioner has finalised the investigative report and will present it to Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah. The report was prepared by a committee comprising the Karachi Commissioner and the Additional Inspector General of Police.

Sources said the report includes detailed findings on the causes of the fire, firefighting efforts, and rescue operations. It also contains information gathered from victims, eyewitnesses, and rescue officials involved in the response. The report states that the fire initially broke out at a flower shop on the ground floor, reportedly due to the actions of a child. The flames spread rapidly and intensified through air-conditioning ducts, causing the fire to engulf multiple sections of the building. According to the investigation, the tragic incident resulted in 79 fatalities.

Trump threatens Iran over nuclear talks, says 'time is running out'

PEAK POINT

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump on Wednesday renewed threats to attack Iran, saying "time is running out" to make a deal on nuclear weapons, after Tehran rejected talks.

"Hopefully Iran will quickly 'Come to the Table' and negotiate a fair and equitable deal — NO NUCLEAR WEAPONS — one that is good for all parties. Time is running out," the US leader said in a social media post, noting that "a massive armada is heading to Iran."

"As I told Iran once before, MAKE A DEAL! They didn't, and there was 'Operation Midnight

Hammer,' a major destruction of Iran. The



next attack will be far worse!"

The dialling up of threats came after Iran's top diplomat said the country would not come to the table under the shadow of military action.

"Conducting diplomacy through military threat cannot be effective or useful," Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said in tele-

vised comments on missile programs.

Earlier this month, he threatened to strike Iran over its crackdown on anti-government protests. But the prospect of immediate American action seemed to recede in recent days, with both sides insisting on giving diplomacy a chance.

With a US naval strike group led by an aircraft carrier lurking in the region, top Iranian officials also reached out to key Arab states in behind-the-scenes diplomacy to rally support.

A strike group led by the USS Abraham Lincoln has now arrived in Middle Eastern waters, US Central Command said, without revealing its precise location.

DPM Dar for enhanced engagement with UN bodies on IT sector

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar on Wednesday stressed the need to enhance Pakistan's engagement with UN bodies dealing with information technology and telecommunications through a coordinated approach among all stakeholders. He was chairing a meeting to review Pakistan's presence and role in multilateral forums related to the information technology and telecommunications sectors. The meeting was attended by Minister.

Islamabad court issues non-bailable arrest warrant for KP CM Sohail Afridi in Peca case

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: An Islamabad court issued a non-bailable arrest warrant for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi on Wednesday in a case wherein he has been accused of making misleading allegations against state institutions and tarnishing their reputation.

The case has been registered with the National Cyber Crime Investigation Authority (NCCIA) under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (Peca). Senior Civil Judge Abbas Shah presided over the case's.

Mineral sector transformation cannot happen without strategic partners: Ahsan Iqbal

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal on Wednesday stressed that the development of the country's mineral sector "cannot happen without strategic partners", particularly China.

Pakistan's mineral wealth is estimated at \$8 trillion, spread across 600,000 square kilometres and comprising 92 identified minerals, 52 of which are commercially extracted, according to an estimate by the Institute of Cost and Management Accountants of Pakistan (ICMA).

He made the remarks while addressing the Pakistan Mineral Cooperation Forum in Islamabad. Noting the scale of Pakistan's mineral wealth, the minister



highlighted the gap between the sector's potential and performance, stating that the "gap is a result of structural constraints".

He maintained that the mineral sector's "transformation" was dependent on "strategic partners", terming China's role "central" in the matter. "Chinese enterprises bring advanced expertise to the entire mining value chain, including geological surveying, modern

extraction techniques, mineral processing, smelting, refining and manufacturing," the minister said. He held that existing projects with China, such as "Sandak copper gold, Dardar lead-zinc, and Thar coal demonstrate what the partnership can achieve".

"Our objective now is to move decisively, and beyond extraction," the minister said. He elaborated that Pakistan is seeking to

"develop mineral processing plants, smelters, refining facilities and mineral-based industrial [...] linked with special economic zones and transport corridors".

On that note, he also suggested the establishment of a "Nokundi, Mashkel, Turbat, Gwadar corridor, through which we will be able to link the mineral sector in Balochistan to the Gwadar port". Iqbal noted that "the country hosts around 5,000 operational mines, producing nearly 68.5 million metric tonnes". However, Pakistan's mineral exports stood at a "modest" estimate of \$2 billion, the minister said, and added that the exports contribute "only 2-3 per cent to the GDP".

SA won't allow airspace to be used for military action against Iran, crown prince says

PEAK POINT

SAUDI ARABIA: Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman told Iranian President Masoud Peshkian that Riyadh will not allow its airspace or territory to be used for military actions against Tehran, state news agency SPA reported on Tuesday. In a phone call with Peshkian, the crown prince affirmed his country's support for any "efforts that would resolve differences through dialogue" to bolster security and stability in the region. Earlier, Iranian media reported that Peshkian told bin Salman that Tehran welcomes any process, within the framework of international law, that prevents war. The statement by the Saudi de facto ruler follows a similar statement by the United Arab Emirates that it would not allow any military action against Iran using its airspace or territorial waters. Uncertainty over the possibility of military action in Iran has lingered after US President Donald Trump said last week that an "armada" was heading toward the country but that he hoped he would not have to use it.



SPORTS



Australian squad arrives in Lahore for T20I series ahead of ICC World Cup

National hockey team announced for Pro Hockey League, WC qualifiers



PEAK POINT

LAHORE: The Australian cricket team arrived in Lahore on Wednesday for its T20I tour of Pakistan ahead of the ICC Men's T20I World Cup in February.

This is the third time Australia are touring Pakistan; they played a three-match Test and an ODI series in March-April 2022, followed by a solitary T20I where they bagged a close three-wicket win at Gaddafi Stadium.

Australia also played three of their 2025 Champions Trophy matches in Pakistan.

All three matches are sched-

uled to take place at Lahore's Gaddafi Stadium on January 29, 31 and February 1, PCB said in a statement.

Addressing a press conference in Lahore on Wednesday, Australian captain Mitchell Marsh praised Pakistan's team and said Australia was excited about the challenge of playing them on home soil in preparation for the World Cup.

"Pakistan's got a great history of fast bowlers, so no doubt that we're looking forward to that challenge," Marsh said in response to a question. "Especially Shaheen: he's an amazing bowler and it's

going to be a great challenge for Ellis. our group."

Marsh added that some of the Australian team members would meet them in Sri Lanka, as the tour was "really important for our World Cup preparations".

"We've got some guys that weren't quite ready to be here," he said. "But they're back home on training and preparing to meet us in Sri Lanka, so absolutely no stress there from our end."

The five senior Australian players being rested during the series are Pat Cummins, Josh Hazlewood and Glenn Maxwell, as well as Tim David and Nathan

Answering a question about Pakistan's Babar Azam, Marsh said, "Babar's been a world-class player for a long period of time for Pakistan. So we have great respect for him. And we know that in these conditions he's one of the best players in the world still, so we look forward to that challenge."

About the Pakistani team as a whole, Marsh added.

"We have great respect for them and we look forward to the challenge of playing them here. ... we're just really excited about the opportunity."



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) on Wednesday announced the national hockey team for the Pro Hockey League and the World Cup qualifying round, with two changes made to the Pro League squad.

The 20-member squad, accompanied by six officials, will depart for Australia on February 2, PHF Secretary Rana Mujahid said while announcing the team at the Naseer Bunda Hockey Stadium alongside head coach Tahir Zaman. Rana Mujahid said the squad touring Australia would also represent Pakistan in the World Cup qualifiers, adding that Muhammad Imad Butt would lead the Green Shirts. He informed that the issue of players' outstanding dues had been taken up with the government and all pending payments would be cleared by Friday. According to PHF, goalkeeper Ali Raza has replaced Abdullah Ishaq, while Umair Sattar has been included in place of Manan Raza in the Pro League squad. The selected players include Muneeb-ur-Rehman, Ali Raza, Arshad Liaqat, Muhammad Abdullah, Sufyan Khan, Arbaz Ahmed, Hamad Anjum, Moeed Shakeel, Ghazanfar Ali, Zakariya Liaqat, Umair Sattar, Hanan Shahid, Rana Waheed, Nadeem Ahmed, Abdul Rehman, Rana Waleed, Afraz and Abubakar.

Subhan, Sameer steer Pakistan U19 to 8-wicket win over Kiwis



PEAK POINT

HARARE: A four-wicket haul by Abdul Subhan, followed by a fluent unbeaten 76 from Sameer Minhas guided Pakistan U19 to a comprehensive eight-wicket win over New Zealand U19 in their Super Six Group 2 fixture of the ICC U19 Men's Cricket World Cup at the Harare Sports Club in Zimbabwe on Tuesday.

After winning the

toss and opting to field, Pakistan bowled New Zealand out for 110 in 28.3 overs, an effort that included five maiden overs, three by Subhan and two by Ali Raza. Right-arm fast bowler Subhan returned impressive figures of four for 11 to earn the player of the match award, while Ali Raza (3-36) provided solid support as Pakistan's bowlers applied sustained pressure

throughout the innings. The partnerships.

first steadying the early loss of wicketkeeper- Azadi March cases batter Hamza Zahoor against PTI founder (8) and then adding 67 runs with Usman resistance came main-

New Zealand's Khan (15, 24b, one run through Hugo Bogue, who scored 39 off 27 balls. However, regular wickets meant today's win, Pakistan U19 will travel to Bulawayo on Wednesday to take on India in their second Super Six fixture at the Queens Sports Club on Sunday, 1 February. The first ball of the match will be bowled at 9.30am 17.1 overs, losing only two wickets and with 197 balls to spare. Opening batter Sameer anchored the innings with yet another half-century. His unbeaten 76 came off 59 balls which included 10 fours and two sixes. Ali Raza 3-36) by 8

He shared key wickets. Pakistan U19 112-2, 17.1 overs (Sameer Minhas 76 not out) beat NEW ZEALAND U19 110 all out, 28.3 overs (Hugo Bogue 39; Abdul Subhan 4-11, Ali Raza 3-36) by 8 wickets.

Pakistan's T20 team captain Salman Ali Agha, and his Australian counterpart Mitchell Marsh pose for photograph with T20 Series Trophy at Gaddafi Stadium



Golf and Diplomacy unite at Diplomatic Ryder Cup Islamabad

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Club at Eighteen, in collaboration with Mövenpick Hotel Centaurus Islamabad, successfully hosted the Diplomatic Ryder Cup Islamabad 2026 at the Eighteen Golf Course. The event brought together diplomatic missions from the United States and Europe for a spirited 18-hole golf competition, celebrating sportsmanship, friendship, and international engagement.

The tournament witnessed enthusiastic participation from several distinguished Heads of Mission, including Ms. Natalie Baker, Chargé d'Affaires of the United States; H.E. Mr. Maciej Pisarski, Ambassador of Poland; and H.E. Mr. Idesbald van der Gracht, Ambassador of Belgium, along with diplomats and members of the international community. Competition remained intense throughout the day, with both teams

demonstrating exceptional skill and determination. In a closely contested finish, team Europe emerged victorious, clinching the coveted Diplomatic Ryder Cup with a narrow three-point

the closest to the pin (men) award.

The event concluded with a brunch providing an opportunity for diplomats, golfers, and guests to connect.



lead. Adding to the day's excitement were on-course challenges.

with Brendan Kallander claimed the longest drive (men) title, Michaela Chrtova won longest drive (women) and Gilles Hachez secured success.

Rashid Naseem becomes first Pakistani to set 150 guinness world records





Senate flags loss of artworks, hidden artifacts, and weak oversight in National Heritage Institutions

NADEEM TANOLI

ISLAMABAD: Serious concerns over missing artworks, thousands of national artifacts lying unseen in storage, and weak institutional oversight dominated a Senate committee review of the Ministry of National Heritage and Culture, with lawmakers questioning whether Pakistan's cultural legacy is being adequately protected or effectively managed. During the meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on National Heritage and Culture, members expressed alarm over revelations that more than 90,000 historical artifacts remain locked in storage due to the lack of gallery space, while past executive decisions led to the removal of

valuable paintings donated by renowned artist Anwar Shemza. The committee also revisited the long standing issue of smuggled Gandhara and Mohenjo daro artifacts, warning that failures in heritage governance have previously allowed priceless national treasures to leave the country illegally. The committee was informed that Pakistan currently lacks a purpose built National Museum in the federal capital, a gap members described as unacceptable for a country with one of the world's richest civilizational histories. Lawmakers stressed that the absence of adequate display and preservation facilities has reduced public access to heritage and weakened cultural education, despite repeated calls for a modern

national museum in Islamabad. The issue of the Quaid e Azam Mazaar Management Board also drew attention, with committee members seeking clarity on governance, funding, and coordination. Senators demanded greater transparency in cultural programming and asked the ministry to submit a full annual calendar of events, along with details of international cultural engagements. Only after these concerns were raised did the committee turn to routine briefings. The Secretary of the Ministry of National Heritage and Culture presented an overview of the ministry's mandate, sanctioned posts, staffing levels, attached departments, autonomous bodies, and budget allocations.

Separate briefings were also given by the heads of major institutions, including National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage (Lok Virsa) and the Department of Archaeology and Museums, outlining their functions, activities, and use of funds. Lawmakers were told that while around 10,000 artifacts are currently on display at the National Museum in Karachi, the vast majority remain in storage due to space limitations. Members described this imbalance as a national failure and reiterated the demand for expanded museum infrastructure to showcase Pakistan's full cultural heritage. The committee also questioned the circumstances under which the Shemza paintings were taken back in 2020, with ministry

officials confirming that the action was carried out under executive orders issued during a previous government. Senators noted that such decisions damage trust between artists, donors, and the state. On the issue of stolen artifacts, the ministry stated that no new cases have been reported since dissolution under the 18th Constitutional Amendment. However, members emphasized that past losses require continued diplomatic effort. The committee was briefed that Pakistan has signed multiple international agreements with European and Asian countries, leading to the recovery of several smuggled artifacts. The chairman stressed the need to further strengthen cultural diplomacy and coordination with foreign

missions. The committee also reviewed the status of Pakistan's six UNESCO World Heritage Sites and urged the ministry to pursue registration of additional sites. Ongoing archaeological excavations by foreign research teams in Sindh and proposed explorations at Shah Allah Ditta caves were also discussed, along with calls for broader academic collaboration. Additional issues raised included limited financial support for retired and financially struggling artists, the need for annual cultural exhibitions across all provinces including Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, and concerns over staffing shortages and funding constraints across heritage institutions.

Rubina Khalid calls for linking skilled women with global markets

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) and Senator Rubina Khalid on Wednesday underscored the need to equip women with modern skills and connect them with national and international markets to ensure sustainable livelihoods and economic empowerment.

She was speaking during her visit to the Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) Haripur, where she was warmly received by President CCI Malik Umair Khalid, Executive Member Syed Ahmed Jan Sikandar, and other members of the chamber. The Chairperson also reviewed a handicrafts exhibition organized by the chamber, in which women displayed a range of hand-crafted products, including garments and traditional handicrafts, said a news release.



She visited various stalls and appreciated the quality, creativity, and dedication of the women artisans. Later, Senator Rubina Khalid attended the Sanfe-Ahan Conference at CCI Haripur as chief guest. The conference focused on initiatives aimed at providing women with modern technical skills and empowering

them in line with international standards so they can effectively meet economic challenges at national and global levels. Addressing the gathering, the BISP Chairperson lauded the efforts of local skilled women and emphasized the importance of value addition. She said that proper sizing, attractive color combinations, improved packaging, and fair pricing could significantly enhance the competitiveness of local products in national and international markets. She encouraged women to use smartphones, adopt modern techniques, and align their work with global trends. She also urged the chamber to organize regular training workshops to further strengthen women's professional capacities. She stressed that skilled women must receive fair compensation for their work and that profit monopolization by middlemen should be discouraged.

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India's BoP dilemma

WHILE the Donald Trump-led Board of Peace is not without controversy, mainly because of the US president's ambitions to create a body that could rival the UN, India faces a different dilemma where joining the board is concerned. Although Mr Trump has extended an invitation to New Delhi, reports indicate that India is "examining" the proposal. The main reason for New Delhi's dithering, as per the Indian commentator, may be that it fears that joining the board could lead to "unwanted" attention towards the Kashmir dispute. The US leader has in the past offered his services to mediate the Kashmir question, while he also claimed to have played an integral part in bringing last year's Pakistan-India hostilities to an end. India, however, remains allergic to third-party interest in occupied Kashmir.

India-US relations have cooled considerably since the US president's first term. Therefore, if India stays out of the BoP, it would further invite Mr Trump's wrath, as the American leader does not like to take no for an answer. If it joins, it may face questions about Kashmir, as Donald Trump has indicated the BoP is not just about ending the Gaza slaughter. But beyond the board's ambitions, this episode reveals more about India's anxieties regarding held Kashmir.

Ethical Use of Artificial Intelligence in Educational Institutions: Protecting Students and Teachers



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Artificial intelligence is rapidly shaping the current modern education. It is transforming education for both teachers and students through the use of virtual assistants, quick grading systems, online learning soft wares, and plagiarism detection. Students are the foundation of the education system and Students' rights must be protected. Modern AI technologies have numerous advantages, but their use without ethical policies can seriously threaten academic transparency, justice, and privacy. The issue is not whether or not to use AI, but rather how to do it safely and successfully. AI systems collect a lot of information about students, such as their writing style, attendance, results, study

habits, and even their facial expressions. A student's future may suffer if this information is abused, revealed, or unfairly assessed. No student should be considering as weak or incapable and surreptitiously profiled, such decisions must be made by human teacher or academic committee not by machine. In the era of AI, educators should also be protected. Instead of monitoring or controlling instruction, technology should enhance it. AI cannot be used to record lectures without permission, spy on classrooms, or evaluate teachers using unreported performance indicators. Teaching is a human and creative vocation that relies on professional judgment, empathy, and trust. Education becomes unfair and mechanistic when algorithms begin to take the place of fundamental values. "AI should make teachers stronger, not replace them". Transparency is also necessary for ethical AI. Teachers and students have a right to know how choices are made, what data is gathered, and when AI is employed. If AI system or plagiarism software flags a student's assignment, the student must be offered the sup-

porting documentation and given an opportunity to clarify. No one should be punished by an unquestionable, "black box" system. However, when applied correctly, AI can be a very useful tool. By managing repetitive chores, it can help kids write better, support students with disabilities, customize instruction, and save teachers time. It can help students who require additional support before they disengage and fall behind. These are beneficial applications, but only as long as control by reliable and expert people. Educational professionals and experts must develop clear standards and policies on AI for academic integrity. Students should have access to AI for research, and linguistic support. However, using AI to cheat on assignments and tests must be strictly prohibited and penalized. Such negative activities must be included in academic policies for student awareness, as they should be aware of the consequences of using AI negatively. Honesty and transparency should be the keystones of these policies. The AI in education should be used to maintain balance for both teachers and students. Technology must help people, not replace

them. The future of society can be shaped by education and this can be achieved by using AI effectively and ethically. AI can improve education and support in building nations when applied properly. The government and authorities must launch training programs for teachers and parents so they can use ethical AI in the classroom with a clear understanding of these systems, their limitations and how they work. The training sessions should also be arranged for parents as they too must be aware that AI is applied ethically in their children's education. This will give more trust to parents that their child's education is in safe hand and hence education will promote. Students should also use AI tools for solving problems and things that are difficult to understand. Some concepts are complex and require more explanations, using AI tools and assistance they can easily and quickly learn things. Instead of using shortcuts or ways to cheat, these technologies should only be used to enhance learning, such as grasping concepts, creative skills, and strengthening critical thinking.

President Zardari, UAE Vice President discuss bilateral, economic, trade ties



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari and Vice President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Dubai Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Wednesday, discussed ways to further strengthen bilateral relations, with a focus on expanding economic, trade and investment cooperation between Pakistan and the UAE. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthen the brotherly relations between Pakistan and the UAE and

expressed satisfaction over the positive trajectory of bilateral ties.

During a meeting at Zabeel Palace, Dubai, President Zardari congratulated Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, on two decades of leadership as Ruler of Dubai and commended Dubai's remarkable transformation into a global centre for tourism, finance and emerging technologies.

Both sides exchanged views on benefiting from Dubai's development experience, particularly in ports, logistics, infrastructure,

information technology and digital financial services. President Secretariat Media Wing said in a press release.

The meeting was attended by First Lady, Bibi Aseefa Bhutto Zardari, Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Pakistan's Ambassador to the UAE.

The president highlighted Pakistan's ongoing economic reforms, including investment facilitation and privatisation, and explored opportunities for enhanced cooperation with the UAE in infrastructure development, logistics, food security and technology-driven sectors. President Zardari extended an invitation to Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum to visit Pakistan. The leaders underscored the importance of high-level exchanges, recalled the recent visit of Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan to Pakistan, and acknowledged the UAE's continued support for Pakistan's economic development.

Ali Pervaiz Malik invites Chinese firms to Pakistan Minerals Investment Forum 2026

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik on Wednesday invited Chinese companies to participate in the Pakistan Minerals Investment Forum (PMIF) 2026, scheduled to be held on April 8 and 9 this year.

Addressing the Pakistan-China Minerals Cooperation Forum, the minister said, "I extend a formal invitation to all the Chinese companies and delegates present here to participate in the Pakistan Mineral Investment Forum 2026 scheduled to be held in April."

"We would particularly welcome participation through a country pavilion showcasing mining capabilities, technologies and equipment. The forum will serve as a focused platform for structured engagement with poli-



cymakers, regulators and project sponsors," he said.

The minister thanked the Chinese Chamber, Metallurgical Corporation of China Ltd (MCC), and all delegates for contributing to the success of the forum.

Highlighting decades-long Pakistan-China cooperation, the minister said the partnership had translated into tangible outcomes across multiple sectors of Pakistan's economy. Under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, he said, Chinese investment had played a pivotal role in rapidly expanding.

Transparency, digitization drive improved ministry's performance in 2025: Sardar Yousaf

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Religious Affairs Sardar Muhammad Yousaf on Wednesday attributed the improved performance of the ministry over the past year to transparency, promotion of interfaith harmony and effective governance, reaffirming the commitment to ensuring better facilities for pilgrims and promoting the true message of Islam.

While sharing the performance of the ministry from January 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025, with the media, the minister said that for the first time in Pakistan's history an International Qirat Competition was held from November 24 to 29, 2025 at the Jinnah Convention Centre, Islamabad, with participants from 37 countries.

He said such initiatives enhanced youth interest in religious activities and projected Pakistan's positive religious image at the international level, adding that more countries would be included in future competitions.

Sardar Yousaf said national-level competitions of Hifz-ul-Quran and Husn-e-Qirat

were also held in September 2025 after provincial rounds, featuring 10 categories for men, women, Huffaz, Qaris and youth.

According to the minister, prominent participants from previous national competitions were nominated to represent Pakistan in international contests in Dubai, Russia, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Morocco.

Highlighting steps taken to promote the Seerat of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), Sardar Yousaf said the 50th Seerat Conference was held at the Convention Centre, Islamabad, under the OIC-declared theme "Nabi-ur-Rahma," marking 1,500 years since the blessed birth of the Holy Prophet (PBUH).

He said international delegations from Palestine, Egypt, Bangladesh and Bahrain, along with scholars and religious leaders from all schools of thought in Pakistan, participated in the conference. A National Quran and Seerat Exhibition was also organized, while federal and provincial governments observed Ashra-e-Rehmat-ul-Il-Alameen and arranged Seerat and Naat gatherings across the country to promote peace, tolerance and harmony.

Mushaal vows to protect legal rights of Yasin Malik

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Mushaal Hussain Mullick, wife of Hurriyat leader Yasin Malik, has expressed determination to protect her husband's legal rights, questioning the transparency of his case amidst repeated adjournments. She in a statement issued here, sent a strong message following the latest hearing of her husband's case in the Delhi High Court, reaffirming his resolve and expressing hope for justice from the international community. The Delhi High Court heard the case of Yasin Malik on Wednesday, during which he appeared via video link. She said that Malik raised concerns before the court over the repeated adjournments of case, questioning the transparency of the legal proceedings.

Mushaal Mullick said that Yasin Malik told the court he remains firmly determined to protect his legal rights. The hearing was limited to arguments only, and no final decision was announced. The court has now postponed the matter to April 22, granting additional time to the National Investigation Agency (NIA). Commenting on the proceedings, Mushaal.

Compassionate behaviour key to patient recovery: Mustafa Kamal

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Health, Syed Mustafa Kamal, on Wednesday underscored the compassionate behaviour by health care providers is key for patients recovery, noting that allied health staff and nurses, who spend the most time with patients, play important role in the healing process.

While speaking at an event held here at the Sultana Foundation, the Minister stressed that treating patients well, speaking gently, and showing respect costs nothing but leaves a lasting and powerful impact on recovery outcomes. "The health field is not just a job. It is a service and a mission," he emphasized. Real healthcare is not limited to treat patients in hospitals, he said,



adding it involves preventing disease, providing awareness, and encouraging precautionary measures. He underscored that provision of health is not solely a government duty, declaring, it's a shared responsibility for every person and every sector. "Achieving public health goals requires a collective societal effort," he added. He also drew attention to the fact that nearly 68 percent of diseases in Pakistan arise from contaminated water.

Young innovators Gear Up for TEKNOFEST 2026 as Global Success stories inspire a New Generation

PEAK POINT

TEKNOFEST: the world's largest aerospace and technology festival, promising to bring together millions of young innovators at the crossroads of history, science, and the future. With TRY 75 million in prizes and over TRY 100 million in financial support, TEKNOFEST 2026 is set to take place in Sanliurfa from September 30 to October 4, at GAP Airport a city often described as the "zero point of history." Organized under the leadership of the T3 Foundation and the Republic of Turkey Ministry of Industry and Technology, TEKNOFEST has become a global platform where ideas evolve into real-world technologies. Applications for the 2026 Technology Competitions, spanning

52 competitions and 127 sub-categories, will remain open until February 20. This year's festival will host competitions in cutting-edge fields such as rocketry, unmanned aerial vehicles, agricultural technologies, artificial intelligence in health, satellite communications, and air defense systems. Several competitions will debut for the first time, including Electronic Warfare, Advanced Autonomous Systems, Mining Technologies, FPV Drone Tracking, and Technologies for Humanity, offering participants hands-on experience in emerging and strategic technology areas. Since its launch in 2018, TEKNOFEST has received over 4 million applications, becoming a launchpad for students ranging from primary school to postgraduate level.



ISLAMABAD: Fedral Minister for Religious Affairs and Inter-Faith Harmony Sardar Muhammad Yousaf addressing press Conference in Islamabad on 28th January 2026. Secretary Minister of Religious Affairs Dr. Sajid Mehmood Chauhan also accompanied the Minister.

CPOPC Mission to Karachi highlights Asia's Central Role in the Palm Oil Industry

PEAK POINT

KARACHI: The Council of Palm Oil Producing Countries (CPOPC) concluded a mission to Karachi, reaffirming its partnership with Pakistan as a strategic Asian palm oil market and underscoring Asia's growing influence on global demand, market stability, and food security. The delegation met government, industry, and diplomatic stakeholders to discuss market dynamics, supply-chain resilience, and global edible oil trends, highlighting Pakistan's role as a

leading importer shaping regional trade flows. A key highlight was CPOPC Secretary General Madam Izzana Salleh's address at the 8th Pakistan Edible Oils Conference (PEOC 2026). She emphasized that Pakistan—consuming about 4.3% of global palm oil and importing ~3.3 million tonnes annually—is a strategic partner influencing price stability, food security, and long-term market direction, alongside India and China. Asia's dominance was under-



scored by import shares of India (18%), China (11%), and Pakistan (9%), together

accounting for nearly 40% of global imports, surpassing traditional markets such as the EU. The Secretary General highlighted palm oil's critical role in Pakistan's food system, supplying over 50% of edible oil needs and accounting for 70-75% of total consumption, particularly in ghee and cooking oil. As the most affordable option, palm oil supports households and SMEs—key in a price-sensitive economy where SMEs contribute ~40% of GDP and 25% of exports—and is vital to food security amid global volatility. On sustainability, she stressed a

shift from compliance to contribution, advocating inclusive approaches that support food security and supply reliability, recognize national standards, and assist smallholders. While certified sustainable palm oil exceeds 20% of global supply, avoiding new trade frictions is essential. Pakistan's five-decade partnership with producing countries exemplifies balancing sustainability, affordability, and stability through trust and transparency.