



Finance Minister highlights Pakistan's improving debt outlook at AIUa Conference



Punjab, WB agree to expand partnership in health, education and climate projects



Rana Ishaan Afzal receives Cambodia's Cham Nimul in Islamabad ahead of Key trade talks

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PM Shehbaz launches Indus AI week 2026, vows to prepare Pakistan's youth for digital future

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad hosted the inaugural ceremony of Indus AI Week 2026, marking a major step toward promoting artificial intelligence across Pakistan.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif attended the opening event, officially launching the nationwide initiative aimed at accelerating digital and technological development.

Addressing the ceremony, the Prime Minister said the government is taking comprehensive measures to align young people with modern technological demands.

He highlighted initiatives such as the distribution of laptops to talented students, establishment of e-libraries, and wide-ranging digital reforms in the education sector.

Shehbaz Sharif noted that Pakistan is moving forward with unity and determination, citing key achievements including the launch of the country's first Safe City project in Lahore and the establishment of Pakistan's first IT university.

He emphasized that reforms such as the introduction of e-stamp papers and digitization of land records have improved transparency, increased government revenue, and significantly reduced corruption within revenue departments.

The Prime Minister added that full digitization of the Federal Board of Revenue has enhanced transparency in tax collection, while advanced scanners and equipment have been installed at ports to curb smuggling.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif addresses the inaugural ceremony of AI Indus week being organized by Ministry of Information Technology.

Islamic, Arab countries slam illegal Israeli decisions, acts

PEAK POINT



ISLAMABAD: The Foreign Ministers of Islamic and Arab countries, Monday, condemned in the strongest terms the illegal Israeli decisions and measures aimed at imposing unlawful Israeli sovereignty, entrenching settlement activity and enforcing a new legal and administrative reality in the occupied West Bank. They also reaffirmed that Israel has no sovereignty over the occupied Palestinian territory. The joint statement of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, the Republic of Indonesia, the Republic of Türkiye, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the State of Qatar, termed these illegal acts as "accelerating attempts at its illegal annexation and the displacement of the Palestinian people." "The Ministers warned against the continued expansionist Israeli policies and illegal measures pursued by the Israeli government in the occupied West Bank, which fuel violence and conflict in the region," the joint statement shared by the Foreign Office Spokesperson with media said.

Khawaja Asif stresses need for national identity as NA passes resolution condemning Islamabad suicide attack

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Defence Minister Khawaja Asif on Monday stressed the need for a national identity as the National Assembly passed a resolution condemning the attack at an imambarah in Islamabad.

Speaking on the floor of the house, Asif said, "It is very important that we have a national identity on which no one disagrees."

Talking about terrorism, he said, "The spike in terrorism in the country; I am sad to say that we are not even united in the condemnation of terrorism."

He said that in order to protect political interests, some refrained from attending the



funerals of martyrs.

"At least on national issues — all of us sitting here, regardless of which party they belong to ... this is one thing on which there needs to be consensus on and that is Pakistan and its integrity as well as respect for those sacrificing their lives," he said.

In his remarks, the minister said that two dictators in the past had joined the war in Afghanistan to please a

superpower. He said terrorism was a blowback of mistakes committed by dictators in the past.

The minister said religious hatred was being fanned in Pakistan under an international conspiracy. He said the last four presidents of the United States were responsible for the killings of millions of Muslims.

"But we always try to get support from the world powers," he

added. He said India was sponsoring terrorism in Pakistan, adding that it was the need of the hour that all Pakistanis be united to foil India's plan.

He said that the Afghan government in the past had agreed with Pakistan's stance but now were reluctant to give any guarantee for controlling terrorism.

"Now, India is using Afghan terrorists against us. India is fighting a proxy war in Pakistan," he added.

He said there were differences among our religious sects which could be sorted out in Parliament instead of in mosques and imambarahs. "Let us make this parliament functional in a real manner," he added.

SC forms bench to hear Imran Khan's defamation case against Shehbaz Sharif

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan has ordered the formation of a three-member bench to hear a defamation case filed by former Prime Minister Imran Khan against Shehbaz Sharif.

During the proceedings, Justice Shahid Bilal Hasan inquired about the current status of the case. The lawyer informed the court that the matter is presently being heard in the Lahore High Court.

After hearing the positions of both parties,

DMP Dar says Pakistan committed to meet GSP Plus obligations

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar on Monday said that Pakistan had successfully completed four biennial GSP Plus reviews and was committed to fully meeting its obligations under the scheme to expand mutually beneficial trade opportunities. The deputy prime minister was chairing a high-level inter-ministerial meeting to review measures aimed at strengthening Pakistan's economic and trade cooperation with the European Union.

PSL franchise Multan Sultans sold for record Rs2.45bn; new owner says name will be changed to Rawalpindi

PEAK POINT

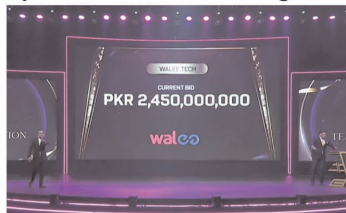
ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Super League franchise (PSL) Multan Sultans on Monday was sold to Walee Technologies for a record Rs2.45 billion ahead of the tournament's 11th edition.

At the auction in Lahore, show host Fakhr-i-Alam informed bidders that the winning bid would also cover the annual fee to maintain ownership of the team for the next 10 years.

Speaking at the auction ceremony, the new owner of the team announced that they would be changing the name to Rawalpindi.

"Are you ready for a surprise? We will be going for Rawalpindi!" announced the company's chief executive officer, Ahsan Tahir.

Speaking at the ceremony, Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman Mohsin



Naqvi congratulated Walee Technologies on their successful bid and expressed gratitude to former board chairman Najam Sethi for his vision for the Multan Sultans franchise.

"This Multan Sultans was created by Najam Sethi sahib and the person who started this journey; we are so pleased he is with us today," Naqvi said, inviting Sethi onto the stage. In his remarks, Sethi said, "I'm obviously delighted to be here; this is

the culmination of a dream come true. "I'm obviously over the moon that it's come through under Mohsin Naqvi, who is a dear, dear friend of mine," he said. Sethi hailed the winning bid as a "great moment for Pakistan cricket", adding that Naqvi would give good news "beyond PSL" over the coming days.

Later, at a press conference with representatives from Walee Technologies, Naqvi said that the future

of the Multan Sultans brand would have to be considered.

"I cannot ask the person paying Rs2.45bn to keep the name Multan Sultans," he said.

"When we discussed auctioning Multan Sultans, we planned to keep it for one or two years. But there was a good environment in the market and we were already auctioning five or six teams," he said.

The PCB chief noted that there were concerns, given the brand's age and the possibility of damage to its reputation. "For me, Multan Sultans is very close to my heart, so we will come up with a solution," Naqvi said. When asked about the criteria for setting the opening bid at Rs1.82bn, he replied that it was the second-highest bid for the Sialkot team.

Moody's revises Pakistani banking sector outlook from positive to stable



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: International credit rating agency Moody's has revised the outlook for Pakistan's banking sector from positive to stable.

The agency has noted a gradual improvement in Pakistan's macroeconomic conditions, particularly in the banking sector, while maintaining that key structural and fiscal challenges persist.

In its recent assessment, Moody's observed that Pakistan's banking sector has remained resilient despite a difficult operating environment. The agency attributed this stability to strong profitability, driven largely by elevated interest rates and banks' significant exposure to government securities.



SPORTS



Pakistan to face India in T20 World Cup after ICC accepts its terms

England hold off spirited Nepal by 4 runs in T20 World Cup opener



PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: A major development has emerged in the ongoing controversy surrounding the T20 World Cup, as Pakistan has succeeded in having its conditions accepted by the ICC and has now decided to play the scheduled match against India on Feb 15. Sources said that Pakistan agreed to play the match against India following repeated requests at the international level. The Pakistan-India match is scheduled to be held on February 15 in Colombo. Earlier, the President of Sri Lanka had made a telephone request to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, urging that the Pakistan cricket team should play the match being hosted in Sri Lanka.

During the conversation, the Sri Lankan president recalled that despite facing terrorism, Pakistan had always fully supported Sri Lankan cricket, and the Pakistan team continued to tour and play cricket in Sri Lanka even during difficult times. It is worth noting that a meeting was held yesterday between PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi and the ICC Deputy Chairman, who is also the President of the Bangladesh Cricket Board, during which this important issue was discussed.

PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi said that matters were being discussed with the ICC and that any progress would be shared once finalized, adding that Pakistan was not afraid of anyone. The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has appealed to Pakistan to withdraw its boycott of the scheduled match against India, marking a significant development in the ongoing controversy surrounding the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026.

According to foreign media reports, BCB President Aminul Islam raised the issue during a meeting with Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman Mohsin Naqvi in Lahore. Aminul Islam reportedly said that while he understood Pakistan's stance and appreciated the support shown by the BCB, it was important to reconsider the boycott in the broader interest of global cricket. ICC Vice Chairman Imran Khawaja was also present during the discussions.

PEAK POINT
MUMBAI: England survived a spirited challenge from Nepal to secure a narrow four-run victory in their opening match of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 at the Wankhede Stadium on Sunday.

Chasing a competitive target of 185, Nepal produced a strong batting display and remained in contention until the final over. Openers Kushal Bhurtel and Aasif Sheikh provided a brisk start before England struck early breakthroughs. Bhurtel scored an aggressive 29 off 17 balls, while skipper Rohit Paudel (39) and Dipendra Singh Airee (44) revived the innings with an impressive 82-run partnership that kept Nepal firmly in the hunt.

Despite losing wickets at crucial moments, Nepal fought back through Lokesh Bam, who played a rapid knock of 39 off 20 balls, smashing four boundaries and two sixes. Nepal required 10 runs in the final over, but Sam Curran held his nerve, conceding just five runs to seal England's hard-fought victory. Earlier, England posted a competitive total of 184 after being put into bat. The innings got off to a shaky start with opener Phil Salt falling cheaply, but Jacob Bethell and captain Harry Brook steadied the innings with a crucial 71-run partnership.

Farima Sana promises fearless brand of cricket against South Africa



PEAK POINT
LAHORE: Pakistan Women's cricket team captain Farima Sana has said the team has been working on playing fearless brand of cricket and she is confident that it will pay off. "The tracks here are a pacy and the batters are enjoying the ball coming nicely onto the bat and our fast bowlers are liking it too, because there's something in it for them as well," she said prior to the T20I series against the South Africa Women. Pakistan will face South Africa in a three-match women's T20I series, com-

mencing from February 10 and all cricket." matches will be staged on 10, 13 and 16 February. This is Pakistan's 15-member squad will be captained by Fatima Sana, while Laura Wolvaardt will lead South Africa for a bilateral tour and play cricket in Sri Lanka even during difficult times. It is worth noting that a meeting was held yesterday between PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi and the ICC Deputy Chairman, who is also the President of the Bangladesh Cricket Board, during which this important issue was discussed.

Qalandars strengthen fan engagement strategy with Fasset partnership



Peshawar's rising Boxer Ubaidullah Khan clinches Gold at KP under-21 Games as coach hadullah's hard work pays off

PEAK POINT
PESHAWAR: Ubaidullah Khan, a talented young boxer from Peshawar, delivered an outstanding performance at the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Under-21 Games Boxing Event, securing a gold medal for himself and bringing pride to the province. His remarkable achievement is not only the result of his own dedication and discipline but also a clear reflection of the tireless efforts, professional training, and guidance of his coach, Shadullah. Throughout the competition, Ubaidullah Khan impressed spectators and officials alike with his superior technique, speed, confidence, and ring awareness. Boxing circles believe that his dominant performance was a direct outcome of Coach Shadullah's continuous hard work, modern coaching methods, and unwavering belief in his athlete's potential. Coach Shadullah not only refined Ubaidullah's technical

skills but also motivated him mentally at every stage, preparing him to face tougher challenges ahead. After winning the gold medal, Ubaidullah Khan expressed his determination to achieve further success, stating that Pakhtunkhwa Boxing Association Secretary Khizraulah, crediting him for revitalizing boxing in the province and instilling a renewed sense of passion and motivation among young boxers. Looking ahead, Ubaidullah Khan dreams of representing Pakistan at international boxing events and achieving glory on the global stage. To realize this ambition, he has intensified his training regime under the strict supervision of his coach, focusing on improving his fitness, strength, and overall fighting skills to develop into a complete and versatile boxer.



Murad and Mahoor retain singles titles at National Badminton C'ships





IRS hosts launch of urdu translation of tragedy in Kashmir

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Regional Studies (IRS), Islamabad, hosted the launch of the Urdu translation of 'Tragedy in Kashmir', the seminal historical work by Abdul Haq Suhrawardy, highlighting the continued relevance of the Kashmir dispute and the importance of preserving its authentic historical narrative.

In his welcome remarks, Ambassador Jauhar Saleem, President, IRS, described the book as a rigorously researched account of the events surrounding the 1947 Partition and the annexation of Jammu and Kashmir. He noted that the work's credibility is reinforced by corroboration from Indian and



British sources, making it a trusted reference for scholars, researchers, and diplomats.

Mr. Rana Muhammad Qasim Noon, Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Kashmir, said the book serves as a powerful reminder of the historical injustices faced by the people of Jammu and Kashmir. He added that its translation into Urdu would strengthen public awareness and national resolve on the Kashmir issue,

particularly among younger generations.

Ms. Mushaal Hussein Mullick, Chairperson of the Peace and Culture Organization and former Advisor to the Prime Minister on Human Rights and Women Empowerment, emphasized that the Urdu translation is vital for highlighting the human dimension of the Kashmir dispute and for sustaining informed human rights advocacy.

Presenting an overview of the book, Senator Dr. Zarqa Suhrawardy Taimur highlighted its academic depth and documentary evidence, noting that the Urdu translation makes this authoritative work accessible to a wider audience in Pakistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

Senator Barrister Syed Ali Zafar reflected on the legal and constitutional aspects of the Kashmir issue, stressing the need to ground

contemporary discourse in verified historical facts.

Ambassador Ashraf Jehangir Qazi underscored the importance of historical accuracy in shaping sound policy and diplomacy, describing the book as a serious scholarly contribution that helps separate fact from myth.

In his address, Ambassador Sardar Masood Khan, former President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir,

termed the Urdu translation an intellectual and national endeavour aimed at reconnecting people with the true historical context of Kashmir.

Ms. Nasim Zehra, author and senior journalist, highlighted the role of credible historical documentation in countering misinformation and historical distortion, particularly in the context of Kashmir.

Mr. Farhan Bokhari, seasoned multimedia journalist and columnist, discussed the relevance of the book for media narratives and public discourse, noting that such works help reconnect society with forgotten or overlooked historical realities.

OIC Vaccine Manufacturers Group's 4th meeting inaugurated at COMSTECH to boost health security

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The fourth meeting of the OIC Vaccine Manufacturers Group (VMG) was inaugurated on Monday at the OIC-COMSTECH Secretariat, aiming to advance vaccine self-reliance and strengthen health security across the Islamic world.

Federal Minister for Health, Syed Mustafa Kamal inaugurated the ses-

sion as chief guest, alongside OIC Assistant Secretary-General for Science and Technology Aftab Ahmad Khokher and Coordinator General OIC-COMSTECH Prof. Dr. Muhammad Iqbal Choudhary. Senior representatives from the OIC General Secretariat, World Health Organization, Islamic Development Bank, SESRIC, SMIIC, vaccine manufacturers, regulators



and development partners from OIC member states also attended. Welcoming the participants, Prof. Dr.

Choudhary said the meeting comes at a critical global juncture where vaccine self-reliance has become a

strategic necessity rather than a choice. He noted that the COVID-19 pandemic exposed vulnerabilities in global supply chains, particularly affecting countries with high disease burdens and growing populations. He highlighted the progress of the VMG since its establishment in 2014, including cooperation agreements, joint training programmes and the creation of the OIC Centre of Excellence on

Vaccines and Biotechnology Products in Indonesia. Addressing the gathering, Health Minister, Syed Mustafa Kamal praised COMSTECH's role in promoting scientific cooperation and public health initiatives. He shared that Pakistan currently relies on 13 imported vaccines but aims to develop indigenous vaccine production capacity by 2030 in collaboration with OIC countries.

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Critics' views

THE arrest and charging of seven men in the UK for allegedly conspiring to assault Pakistani dissidents Adil Raja, convicted of 'digital terrorism' in absentia, and Shahzad Akbar, the controversial financial czar under the Imran Khan government, merits attention. According to British police, the charges do not concern robbery or random violence but coordinated attacks intended to cause harm. The case is at an early stage and the accused are yet to enter their pleas, so no conclusions can be drawn at this point. Still, the apparently coordinated targeting of critics of the ruling elite in Pakistan has led to speculation. Dissidents flee abroad to countries where they feel safe enough to speak their mind. To be targeted in these places leads to doubts about the security of these safe havens. The case revives memories of the January 2022 trial in the UK, which led to the conviction of Muhammad Gohir Khan for conspiring to murder Waqas Goraya, a Pakistani activist living in Europe. While Khan was convicted, it was never made public whether the trial was pursued beyond him. While it is true that in the present case, there is no evidence to link the attacks against these dissidents to elements outside the UK, the picture is still bizarre.

Horns of a dilemma

Zarrar Khuhro
IN geopolitics as in physics, actions do cause reactions which, even though they may be opposite, aren't necessarily equal or immediate. And these reactions, when they do become apparent, can be stunning. Take, for example, the sight of F-16 jets patrolling the skies above Mogadishu — not on a bombing run as may have been the case in the past, but as part of a 'gift' to Somalia from their Turkish allies. This means that Somalia, which has not had an air force since 1991, is now one of only three African countries to field F-16s.

Speaking of opposites, the last week also saw Saudi Arabia and Turkiye sign a far-reaching accord encompassing everything from economic ties to strategic cooperation, which is quite something considering the low ebb that relations sank to after the blockade of Qatar in 2017 and the 2018 murder of Jamal Khashoggi. Now these erstwhile rivals are on the proverbial same page when it comes to Yemen, Sudan and — crucially — Somalia.

Why is Somalia important? Situated on the Horn of Africa on the Red Sea coast, Somalia stands at the crossroads of critical maritime trade routes that connect Europe, Asia, the Middle East and Africa. This means that whoever has a foothold in Somalia can effectively choke trade and interdict vessels, much as the Houthis

managed to do in the recent past.

What added urgency to Turkish and Saudi efforts to shore up Somalia militarily and diplomatically was in large part the Israeli recognition of Somaliland last year. Somaliland, a breakaway province of Somalia, has effectively been independent since 1991, and has since cooperated deeply with the UAE to develop its port of Berbera, which was intended as yet another node in the UAE's network of ports and bases, all located at strategic choke points. The possibility of an Israeli deployment in Somaliland raises alarm in Saudi Arabia, which rightly fears an encirclement of sorts. Riyadh is now willing to act against any such possibility, as evidenced by the rout of the Southern Transitional Council in Yemen last year, a group that Riyadh claims is a UAE proxy. Had the STC succeeded in grabbing a large part of Yemen, Riyadh would be faced with the untenable scenario of a potentially hostile proxy in power on its terrestrial southern border and also across the Red Sea in Somaliland. Since then, Saudi-UAE ties have taken a serious downturn, with the latest signal of this being the withdrawal of several UAE defence firms from the Riyadh-based World Defence Show to be held this week.

This realignment brings Riyadh closer to Ankara, overcoming decades of mistrust and confrontation.

Turkiye's involvement makes sense not only due to its old antipathy towards the UAE's strategic designs — a feud that dates at least as far back as the Arab Spring — but also its increased wariness of and confrontation with Israel, which views Turkiye as one of the only regional powers capable of checking its ambitions. Whoever has a foothold in Somalia can effectively choke trade. With the backing of two powerful regional nations, Somalia then acted against the UAE by annulling all agreements with that country, bringing Somali-UAE ties to their lowest ebb ever. Nevertheless, Somaliland stands defiant, and while the UAE has not officially recognised them as an independent state, the president of Somaliland was prominently in attendance at the recent World Governments Summit in Dubai, an appearance that naturally drew condemnation from Mogadishu. Now, with both Riyadh and Ankara loudly condemning Somaliland and reaffirming Somalia's territorial integrity, the outlines of a new regional order, and of rival camps, can clearly be seen. It is also worth noting that the Somali air chief and interior ministers were both in Pakistan recently, and while Somali commentators and analysts are hinting at the prospect of military cooperation and defence deals with Pakistan, nothing is official at the moment.

Courtesy Dawn

Deepening wealth gap

Dr Muhammad Babar Chohan

Recent data from the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, compiled by a stock brokerage and financial company, reveals a widening inequality in incomes and assets between the rich and the poor of the country. The data shows economic prosperity is flowing upwards while financial strain is dissipating deep downwards, making the rich richer and the poor poorer. Based on the latest Household Integrated Economic Survey (HIES), it is observed that the real purchasing power for the common man has been declining between FY19 to FY25.

As the HIES provides a review of socio-economic conditions of the country, it was deemed a key tool for evidence-based planning and policymaking by the Ministry of Planning. That means the ministry will follow the results of the survey as evidence for future economic planning, ensuring data-driven governance. The morbid situation not only raises questions about the much-debated economic stabilisation but also demands an informed analysis of what is fundamentally wrong with the country's economy. The literature shows that inequality is not always bad if the economy is on the right track. For this purpose, however, long-term economic growth policies need to be based on principles of inclusivity, balancing the power relations between the powerful and the powerless. Most economic growth theories and quantitatively sophisticated econometric models do not treat balanced political power as a determinant of economic growth in a country, but it is a major mistake.

Although the concept of long-run determinants of economic growth does accommodate such factors as culture, geography and religion of a country, an analysis of power relations is still inadequately examined. Few researchers, such as Nobel laureate Daron Acemoglu, however, discuss the trade-off between democracy and nondemocracy for elites and the influence of economic institutions thereon.

Courtesy Tribune

Indus AI Week 2026 opens new chapter in Pakistan's digital transformation: Shaza Fatima



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja on Monday said the launch of Indus AI Week 2026 marks a new chapter in Pakistan's journey to shape artificial intelligence in line with national priorities, values and aspirations.

Addressing the opening ceremony of Indus AI Week, she said Pakistan stands at a historic turning point as emerging technologies rapidly reshape the world, adding that the country is ready to embrace this transformation and actively build its

digital future rather than merely observe it.

The minister said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif, Pakistan had been investing in digitisation long before the global hype around artificial intelligence and digital governance.

She recalled that during his tenure as Chief Minister of Punjab, initiatives such as e-facilitation centres, co-working spaces, e-libraries and single-window services were introduced across the province, including remote areas.

Shaza Fatima said the past two

years had witnessed a foundational shift at the national level, with 2025 focused on strategy-building and the launch of Pakistan's first National AI Policy in September, while 2026 would be dedicated to implementation and impact. "The launch of Indus AI Week is the starting point of turning policy into action," she said.

She said that the week-long event features collaboration among universities, global technology firms and governments, along with demonstrations of AI capabilities from the public and private sectors, startups and defence institutions, as well as policy dialogues aimed at practical outcomes. The minister said Pakistan's digital transformation is being driven by the Digital Nation Pakistan Act, which provides a comprehensive governance framework for data, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, blockchain and emerging technologies.

She added that the Act led to the establishment of the National Digital Commission, chaired by the Prime Minister.

Finance Minister highlights Pakistan's improving debt outlook at AIUla Conference

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Monday highlighted Pakistan's initial but meaningful progress in restoring stability through disciplined macroeconomic policies, institutional reforms, and proactive debt management, while acknowledging that the reform journey remains ongoing.

The minister participated in a high-level roundtable on "Addressing Sovereign Debt Vulnerabilities" at the AIUla Conference for Emerging Market Economies 2026, jointly organized by the Government of Saudi Arabia and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), according to press release issued by finance ministry.

He noted that global public debt remained at historic highs,



placing sustained pressure on emerging and developing economies through elevated debt servicing costs, tighter financing conditions, and constrained fiscal space.

He emphasized that the central policy challenge was not only managing debt stocks, but preventing liquidity pressures from escalating into solvency crises, while safeguarding growth-enhancing and social expenditures. Senator Aurangzeb drew attention to remarks by Minister of Finance of Saudi Arabia, Mohammed AlJadaan.

Rana Ihsaan Afzal receives Cambodia's Cham Nimul in Islamabad ahead of Key trade talks

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Rana Ihsaan Afzal Khan, Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Commerce, Government of Pakistan, today received Ms. Cham Nimul, Minister of Commerce of the Kingdom of Cambodia, at the State Lounge of Islamabad International Airport.

Accompanied by a senior official delegation, Cham Nimul is in Pakistan from February 10-11, 2026, to co-chair the 2nd meeting of the Pakistan-Cambodia Joint Trade Committee (JTC), said a release issued here on Monday. The inaugural JTC session was held in Phnom Penh on January 21, 2025, led by Pakistan's Minister for Commerce, Mr. Jam Kamal Khan. The JTC serves as the primary platform to advance bilateral trade, investment, and economic cooperation.

Diplomatic ties between Pakistan and Cambodia were formalized on May 28, 1952, with Pakistan among the first nations to recognize Cambodia's independence from French colonial rule. While bilateral

trade volumes remain modest, Pakistan consistently enjoys a surplus. In FY 2024-25, Pakistan exported goods worth \$29.2 million to Cambodia, against imports of \$4.70 million, yielding a trade balance of \$24.5 million (source: TDAS).

Key Pakistani exports include medications (USD 11.74 million), woven cotton fabrics (\$5.23 million), cotton yarn (\$2.72 million), and prepared leather products. Imports from Cambodia feature structures (\$2.29 million), cocoa powder (\$ 1.85 million), and select apparel items.

The 1st JTC explored collaboration in trade facilitation, investment, agriculture, textiles, customs, and related sectors, with discussions on a Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA). This visit will feature the official announcement of the launch of PTA negotiations, designed to lower tariffs, improve market access, expand trade volumes, and promote joint ventures. This engagement supports Pakistan's strategy to build bilateral ties with ASEAN members amid efforts toward broader ASEAN integration. Cambodia.

Mustafa Kamal proposes OIC Vaccine Alliance to strengthen vaccine production collaboration

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, Syed Mustafa Kamal, on Monday proposed the establishment of an OIC Vaccine Alliance to enhance collaboration among member states of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in vaccine production.

He expressed these views while addressing the fourth meeting of the OIC Vaccine Manufacturers Group, stressing the urgent need for a joint vaccine alliance among Islamic countries to collectively strengthen manufacturing capacity. The Minister announced that work on the OIC Vaccine Alliance would commence immediately, focusing on short-, medium- and long-term strategies, enabling member countries to benefit from each other's expertise and experience. Highlighting the importance of vaccine manufacturing for Pakistan's health sector, Mustafa Kamal said local vaccine production remains a major challenge.

Punjab, WB agree to expand partnership in health, education and climate projects

PEAK POINT

LAHORE: The Punjab government and the World Bank have agreed to further strengthen their partnership across key development sectors.

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif met World Bank President Ajay Banga, along with his delegation, and warmly welcomed the visiting team.

Both sides discussed expanding cooperation in health, education, housing initiatives, the "Suthra Punjab" program, tourism, and climate-related projects. Ajay Banga praised the Punjab government's welfare-focused initiatives and ongoing reforms.

The World Bank president



lauded Punjab's progress in tourism, education, health, and skills development projects and reviewed World Bank-supported initiatives in various sectors. He assured continued support and investment in climate resilience, digital governance, and inclusive development. Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz said the Punjab government highly values World Bank cooperation, adding that health and education remain top priorities with substantial.

NDMA dispatches 28th humanitarian aid consignment to Palestine

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has dispatched an additional humanitarian aid consignment for the people of Palestine following the special directives of Prime Minister.

The 28th relief consignment, comprising 100 tons of tents, has been sent with the support of Alkhidmat Foundation. The relief goods were dispatched through a special flight from Allama Iqbal International Airport, Lahore to Al-arish Egypt for onward delivery to Gaza. With the dispatch of this latest consignment, the total volume of humanitarian assistance sent to Palestine through 28



consignments has reached 2,727 tons. The sending-off ceremony was attended by Punjab Housing Minister, MPA Mian Bilal Yasin as chief guests. Senior officials from NDMA, MoFA, along with representatives of government departments and Alkhidmat Foundation, were also present on the occasion. Government of Pakistan and the people of Pakistan stand firmly.



ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Commerce, Rana Ihsaan Afzal Khan, presents a bouquet to H.E. Cham Nimul, Minister of Commerce of Cambodia, on her arrival at Islamabad International Airport, ahead of the 2nd Pakistan-Cambodia Joint Trade Committee (JTC) meeting.

KP Governor, SNK Petroleum delegation for exploring modern fuel station development

PEAK POINT

LAHORE: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi and a delegation of SNK Petroleum, a US-based company engaged in wholesale fuel supply and distribution held meeting here to discuss investment opportunities in the province's fuel retail sector. The delegation included SNK Director Ali Kurmani, promi-

nent businessman Chaudhry Akram, petroleum exploration expert Shehbaz Zaheer, and others. During the meeting, both sides held detailed discussions on the development of modern fuel stations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, private sector investment, and expanding local business opportunities. The delegation



informed the Governor that SNK Petroleum supplies petrol and diesel to independent fuel stations across several US states, providing brand support along with environmental and operational assistance. Through partnerships with leading global fuel brands, the company supports local retailers by offering modern facilities

and business growth opportunities. The delegation emphasized that the company's objective is not merely to earn foreign exchange, but to contribute to Pakistan's development.

The meeting also reviewed prospects for establishing modern and secure fuel stations in the province, upgrading existing petrol pumps, and introducing improved business management systems.

Governor Faisal Karim Kundi said that private sector investment would strengthen the fuel retail sector, create new employment opportunities, and boost local economic activity. Both sides stressed that modern designs, enhanced

safety measures, and efficient management systems could make fuel stations more profitable and customer-friendly, thereby contributing positively to the province's overall economic growth. The delegation appreciated Governor Kundi's vision and commitment towards the development of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.