

Macroeconomic growth through export-led strategy, key to poverty alleviation: Ahsan Iqbal

Islamabad expands electric bus network with major new infrastructure

Gov't taking concrete steps to address issues of bars: Law Minister

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PM Shehbaz meets Rubio after Board of Peace summit in Washington

PEAK POINT

WASHINGTON: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif met US Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Thursday, with the two sides discussing cooperation in critical minerals, energy, counter-terrorism and prospects for increased American investment, according to a State Department statement. Earlier Thursday, the Pakistani leader also addressed the inaugural session of a Gaza peace forum led by President Donald Trump. The State Department said the US secretary thanked Pakistan for supporting Trump's Gaza peace plan and for joining the first meeting of the "Board of Peace" as a founding member. He also offered condolences over the Jan 31 attacks in Balochistan and the

Feb 6 bombing in Islamabad and reaffirmed the importance of continued partnership in counter-terrorism. The talks covered Pakistan's participation in the recent Critical Minerals Ministerial in Washington, with the United States welcoming Islamabad's engagement and discussing cooperation in developing Pakistan's energy and mineral resources, as well as commercial opportunities for American companies. In a post on X, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar thanked Secretary Rubio and said Pakistan values its "long-standing relationship with the United States". The foreign minister added that the two diplomats had "meaningful discussions" on advancing peace.



WASHINGTON: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets US Secretary of State Marco Rubio on the sidelines of the inaugural meeting of Board of Peace.

King Charles' brother Andrew released after arrest over misconduct relating to Epstein

PEAK POINT



LONDON: King Charles' younger brother Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor was released from police custody on Thursday evening after being arrested on suspicion of misconduct in public office over allegations he sent confidential government documents to Jeffrey Epstein.

Mountbatten-Windsor, who turned 66 on Thursday, had been questioned all day by detectives from Thames Valley Police. Earlier this month, the police force said it was looking into allegations that he had passed documents to the late convicted sex offender while working as a trade envoy. The arrest of the senior royal, eighth in line to the throne, is unprecedented in modern times. "I have learned with the deepest concern the news about Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor and suspicion of misconduct in public office," King Charles said in a statement. A Reuters witness saw the former prince leaving a police station in Aylsham, eastern England, where he was met by a small group of photographers and television crews.

Pakistan stands by Kashmiris in struggle for right to self-determination: FO Spokesperson

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan reiterated on Thursday that it stood by people of Kashmir in their struggle for right to self-determination with full political, moral and diplomatic support. Speaking at the weekly press briefing, the Foreign Office Spokesperson said, "This support takes place in our bilateral exchanges with individual countries as well as with international civil society, human rights advocacy groups, think tanks dealing on matters with peace and security and conflict studies. Third area in this regard is UN and other multilateral forum." "So, our efforts would continue on all those three tracks. And of course, we constantly seek guidance

of the Parliament and Kashmir Committee in where in the world, not just in Afghanistan or



furthering our endeavors for the support to the Kashmiri people, he added. To a question about Afghanistan, he said, "We have been apprising the international community on terrorism in Balochistan - their abettors, their supporters, their facilitators." "Our information is evidence based and concrete, covering all the individuals who are present any India, but also in Europe," he added. He said Pakistan had been pursuing the issue of Indus Water Treaty in various forums. "Firstly, is the forum of the Indus Water Commissioner. Last week, the Sawalkote hydro project on Chenab River in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir has been raised by the Pakistani Indus Water

Commissioner. There is another case in the Court of Arbitration. So we are following all those channels. We are emphasizing to India, to the world and the World Bank and other relevant stakeholders, the fact that there is no provision of abeyance or walking away from the treaty," he said adding, "Any such action under international law merits serious repercussions in terms of a country's legal obligations with respect to the treaties that it has signed. India aspires to be a big power and play larger role at the United Nations. Yet, India cannot honour the agreement that it has inked with Pakistan." The Spokesperson said, "There are legal consequences of violating. SC stays Rs10b defamation case against PTI founder, issues notice to PM Shehbaz

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan has temporarily stayed proceedings in a defamation case filed by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif against the PTI founder and has issued a notice to the Prime Minister seeking his response. The case, involving a claim of Rs10 billion, will be scheduled for urgent hearing. During the hearing, Justice Ayesha Malik noted that no representative appeared for the other side and highlighted her dissenting note in the case. Previously, a two-judge bench had upheld the trial.

ATC grants Aleema Khan one-day exemption in Nov 26 protest case

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan has temporarily stayed proceedings in a defamation case filed by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif against the PTI founder and has issued a notice to the Prime Minister seeking his response. The case, involving a claim of Rs10 billion, will be scheduled for urgent hearing. During the hearing, Justice Ayesha Malik noted that no representative appeared for the other side and highlighted her dissenting note in the case. Previously, a two-judge bench.

Trump orders agencies to identify and release government files on aliens

PEAK POINT

WASHINGTON: U.S. President Donald Trump said on Thursday he will direct Pentagon chief Pete Hegseth and other relevant agencies to begin the process of identifying and releasing government files related to alien and extraterrestrial life, unidentified aerial phenomena (UAP), and unidentified flying objects (UFOs). In a social media post, Trump said he would order Pentagon chief Pete Hegseth and other agencies to release the information, calling the matter "extremely interesting and important." Earlier in the day, Trump, without providing evidence, accused former President Barack Obama of improperly disclosing classified information when

discussing aliens publicly, saying Obama "made a big ground facility unless there's this enormous con-



mistake." "He took it out of classified information ... He's not supposed to be doing that," Trump told reporters while traveling to Georgia. During an interview with podcast host Brian Tyler Cohen released on Saturday, Obama was asked if aliens were real. "They're real, but I haven't seen them, and they're not being kept in ... Area 51. There's no under-

spiry and they hid it from the president of the United States," Obama said. Area 51 is a classified Air Force facility in Nevada that fringe theorists have speculated holds alien bodies and a crashed spaceship. CIA archives released in 2013 said it was a test site for top-secret spy planes. There was no indication in Obama's remarks that the former president released classified information. Obama's office did not respond to a request for comment. "I saw no evidence during my presidency that extraterrestrials have made contact with us. Really!" Obama said in an Instagram post on Sunday. In the post, Obama explained his belief that aliens exist by saying the statistical odds of life beyond Earth were high because the universe is so vast. He added that the chances of extraterrestrial life visiting Earth were low, given the distance. Following his comments on Obama, Trump added that he had not seen evidence that aliens exist, saying, "I don't know if they're real or not." In recent years, the Pentagon has investigated reports of UFOs, and senior military leaders.

IMF acknowledges Pakistan's economic recovery ahead of review talks

PEAK POINT



WASHINGTON: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has acknowledged signs of economic improvement in Pakistan, stating that inflation has remained under control while macroeconomic stability has strengthened under ongoing reform programs. Speaking at a press briefing in Washington, IMF Director of Communications Julie Kozack announced that an IMF delegation will visit Pakistan starting February 25 to conduct important review discussions. According to Kozack, the visiting mission will engage with Pakistani authorities for the third review under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) program and the second review under the Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF).



SPORTS



Pakistan to face New Zealand as T20 World Cup Super Eight begins

Saim Ayub, Usman Tariq sign up for 'The Hundred' 2026 auction



PEAK POINT
COLOMBO: The Super Eight stage of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup is set to begin tomorrow with Pakistan taking on New Zealand in Colombo.
 The high-stakes encounter marks the start of the next phase of the tournament, with both sides aiming to build early momentum. The match is scheduled to begin at 6:30pm local time.
 The New Zealand squad held a training session at the R. Premadasa Stadium in Colombo but had to wrap up practice 30

minutes earlier than planned due to rain. Persistent showers and a damp outfield also forced the Pakistan national team to cancel their scheduled three-hour training session at the same venue.
Weather concerns
 Rain has also been forecast for match day, raising the possibility of interruptions. Conditions in Colombo have already affected team preparations, with both sides forced to adjust their plans.
 New Zealand batter Mark Chapman noted that the toss could play a significant role given the prevailing conditions.

He added that Sri Lankan pitches often favour spin bowlers, which could influence team strategies.
Spin factor
 Chapman acknowledged Pakistan's strength in the spin department, suggesting that slow bowlers could prove decisive. He also contrasted the surfaces with those in India, where pitches were more batting-friendly.
 With weather uncertainty and pitch behaviour both in focus, the opening Super Eight fixture is expected to test adaptability as much as skill.
SQUADS
 New Zealand: Tim Seifert

(wk), Finn Allen, Rachin Ravindra, Glenn Phillips, Mark Chapman, Daryl Mitchell (c), Cole McConchie, James Neesham, Kyle Jamieson, Matt Henry, Jacob Duffy, Ish Sodhi, Devon Conway, Mitchell Santner, Lockie Ferguson
 Pakistan: Shahbaz Farhan, Saim Ayub, Salman Agha (c), Babar Azam, Usman Khan (wk), Khawaja Nafay, Shadab Khan, Mohammad Nawaz, Faheem Ashraf, Salman Mirza, Usman Tariq, Fakhar Zaman, Shaheen Afridi, Abrar Ahmed, Naseem Shah.

LAHORE: More than 50 Pakistani cricketers have entered the draft for this year's edition of The Hundred, with leading names such as Saim Ayub, Usman Tariq, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Shadab Khan and Haris Rauf included in a player pool of over 950 for next month's auctions.
 The tournament, organised by the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB), will hold its women's draft on March 11 and men's draft on March 12 in London.
 While several Pakistani stars have registered, former captain Babar Azam and wicket-keeper-batter Mohammad Rizwan are not on the long list, reportedly due to Pakistan's Test commitments later in the summer.
 The inclusion of Pakistani players comes amid renewed debate over the influence of Indian Premier League-linked investors in the competition.
 Four franchises in The Hundred now have ownership ties to IPL groups, including Mumbai Indians (MI London), Lucknow Super Giants (Manchester Super Giants), Sunrisers Hyderabad (Sunrisers Leeds) and Delhi Capitals (Southern Brave).
 Historically, only nine Pakistani players have featured across the first five seasons of The Hundred.

Interim PHF president lifts ban on hockey team captain amid Pro League controversy

Pakistan to tour Bangladesh next month for a 3-match ODI series



PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: The newly appointed interim president of the Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF), reported on Friday, On Thursday, for-

mer president Tariq Bugti lifting of the ban on Hussain Butt, state-run APain Butt, citing findings of a committee regarding alleged mis-

conduct. He also announced his resignation amid controversy over the national team's tour of Australia for the FIH Pro League.
 In a statement issued today, the interim president lifted the ban, stressing that "transparency and fairness would guide all decisions under his tenure." APP quoted him as saying.
 Wani, who was the Secretary of the Provincial Coordination (IPC), also vowed to "revive

PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said on Friday that the Green Shirts would tour Bangladesh in March for a three-match One Day International (ODI) series. In a press release, the PCB said, "Pakistan men's cricket team will tour Bangladesh for a three-match ODI series, the Bangladesh Cricket Board confirmed on Friday." It said that the team would arrive in Bangladesh on March 9 and hold a training session the next day, ahead of the opening ODI against the hosts on March 11. The board added that the



second ODI would be played on March 13, while the third and final match was scheduled for March 15. It added that all three matches would be played at the Shere Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Dhaka. "This will be Pakistan's second tour of Bangladesh since July 2025.
 Pakistan last toured Bangladesh for a three-match T20I series in July, which the hosts won 2-1. Meanwhile, Bangladesh toured Pakistan for a three-match T20I series in May/June last year, which the Salman Ali Agha side won 3-0," the PCB said.

Pakistan Hockey Federation shake-up: former olympians, officials demand accountability, funds recovery following PM intervention

PEAK POINT
KARACHI: Member of National Assembly and Standing Committee on Inter-Provincial Sports, Syeda Shehla Raza, along with former Olympians Kaleemullah, Samiaullah, Hanif Khan, Nasser Ali, Ayaz Mehmood, Wasim Feroze, former Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) Secretary Haider Hussain, international hockey player Mohammad Naem, and officials from the Karachi Hockey Association, held a press conference condemning corruption and mismanagement in the Pakistan Hockey Federation. The gathering thanked Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for accepting the resignations of PHF President Tariq Bugti and illegitimate Secretary General Olympian Rana Mujahid Ali, describing their removal as a long-overdue corrective measure. Syeda Shehla Raza stated, "The story is not over yet. Those who looted PHF funds

must be held accountable, their names placed on the Exit Control List (ECL). Our aim is not positions but the revival of Pakistan's national sport. Finally, the voices of players and concerned citizens have reached the corridors of power." She criticized the role of the DG of the Pakistan Sports Board and Secretary POA for the destruction of hockey and said investigations must cover PHF's actions since 2008, including alleged misuse of funds and unconstitutional practices during Tariq Bugti's tenure. She called for thorough audits of 113 paragraphs in PHF financial

records, citing over PKR 150 crore in corruption involving former presidents Olympian Akhtar Rasool, Brig. (Retd) Khalid Sajjad Khokhar, Tariq Bugti, and former secretaries Olympian Rana Mujahid Ali, Shahbaz Senior, and Asif Bajwa. Former Olympian Samiaullah emphasized that a working team appointed on merit could support PHF's revival and promised cooperation for good management. Hanif Khan questioned, "If corrupt politicians can be jailed, why not those who embezzled hockey funds?" Olympian Nasser Ali alleged that FIH President Tayyab Ikram has contributed to the

decline of Pakistan hockey and exploited his position for personal gains, controlling hotel arrangements and food contracts for teams. Former PHF Secretary Haider Hussain claimed that the federation has been involved in human smuggling over the past two years and called on the Prime Minister to investigate all foreign trips undertaken by the national team. International player Mohammad Nazeem criticized the mistreatment in Australia, stating that news of such incidents being covered by Indian media was a national embarrassment. He also highlighted

that due to mismanagement, Pakistan currently has barely 100 functional hockey clubs nationwide. Syeda Shehla Raza urged the Prime Minister to take legal action against POA Secretary General Khalid Mahmood, accusing him of decades-long interference in sports federations, including issuing parallel federations and manipulating elections. She confirmed that the case of former PHF Secretary Haider Hussain is still in court, noting that Rana Mujahid Ali had unlawfully assumed the full Secretary General role despite being granted only limited administrative permissions. The press conference also called for a transparent and legally compliant investigation into all former PHF officials and Olympians implicated in corruption, with immediate ECL placement for those under inquiry, as part of a broader effort to restore Pakistan hockey to its rightful status internationally. Olympians emphasized that their demands were focused on the sport's revival rather than personal gain, urging the Prime Minister to constitute a working committee comprising professionals and former players capable of restructuring PHF operations effectively. This marks a critical moment in Pakistan hockey's governance, highlighting widespread allegations of corruption, mismanagement, and abuse of authority at both national and international levels, with former Olympians and officials united in seeking accountability and a clean start for the sport.





“Who Ruined Our Hockey?” NA Panel Slams PSB, PHF as Rs 35m Project Swells to Rs 123m and Narowal Cost Jumps to Rs 6bn

NADEEM TANOLI

ISLAMABAD: In a blistering session at Parliament House, the National Assembly Subcommittee on Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC) declared the state of Pakistan hockey a “tragedy,” questioned who was responsible for “ruining our sports,” and exposed staggering delays and cost escalations in sports projects including a 15 year astroturf scheme and a mega sports city whose price ballooned from Rs 732 million to Rs 6 billion. Convened by Mehreen Razaq Bhattu, the meeting took strong notice of the crisis surrounding the national hockey team

and summoned top officials for accountability. The session was attended by Pakistan Hockey Federation’s Ad hoc President and Federal Secretary IPC Mohyuddin Wani, the Director General of the Pakistan Sports Board (PSB), and committee members who expressed deep alarm over the decline of the national game. Mehreen Razaq Bhattu did not mince words. Calling the situation “unfortunate” and deeply disturbing, she declared that the committee would determine who was responsible for what she described as incompetence at the highest levels. “Our hearts beat for hockey

just as they do for cricket. We will identify who is responsible for destroying our sport,” she stated, signaling that the matter would not be brushed aside. Committee member Khawaja Izhar ul Hassan went further, directly blaming both the Pakistan Sports Board and the Pakistan Hockey Federation for failing in their responsibilities. He demanded that the inquiry report submitted to the committee be formally presented and proposed that a high-level meeting with the Prime Minister be arranged to address the crisis in hockey governance. The session then shifted from performance

failure to financial shock. PSB officials revealed that the Biomechanical Lab project, launched in 2014, remains incomplete even after more than a decade. The hockey astroturf project in Gilgit took 15 years to complete, with its cost escalating from Rs 35 million to Rs 123 million — more than triple the original estimate. Even more startling was the Narowal Sports City project. Initiated in 2012, the project was halted in 2018. Officials disclosed that its estimated cost had surged from Rs 732 million to Rs 6 billion before it was transferred to the Higher Education

Commission. The justification offered was that the facility was being upgraded to international standards. However, members questioned how such a dramatic escalation could occur without strict oversight. Mehreen Razaq Bhattu described the revelations as shocking, especially considering that Narowal is the constituency of Ahsan Iqbal. She remarked that despite substantial allocations and the passage of many years, flagship sports infrastructure projects remained incomplete. The Pakistan Sports Board, she said, had ample funds but failed to deliver tangible

results. The committee concluded that a detailed briefing would be sought on the national hockey team’s collapse, the management failures within PHF and PSB, and the status of all delayed sports projects. Lawmakers indicated that accountability for administrative lapses, financial escalation, and institutional negligence would be pursued. The session marked one of the strongest parliamentary rebukes in recent years against sports authorities, as members signaled that Pakistan’s once-proud hockey legacy would no longer be allowed to decline without

PCSIR Chairman appears before Pakistan information commission, tenders unconditional apology over delay in order implementation

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Pakistan Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (PCSIR), Dr. Syed Hussain Imam Abidi, appeared in person before the Pakistan Information Commission (PIC) along with his counsel and tendered an unconditional apology for the delay in implementing the Commission’s order. According to details, despite the issuance of a show cause notice to the Chairman, PCSIR, no one appeared before the Commission. Consequently, the

Pakistan Information Commission passed an order directing the Chairman to appear in person and to ensure submission of the public record required by a citizen in an appeal pending before the Commission. In compliance with the order of the PIC, Dr. Syed Hussain Imam Abidi, Chairman, PCSIR, and his counsel, Amreen Moeen Advocate, appeared before the Commission. Counsel for the Chairman submitted that Dr. Abidi tendered an unconditional apology for the delay in implementing the Commission’s order and for the

non-appearance of any PCSIR officers before the PIC. She further informed the Commission that the non-appearance was neither intentional nor deliberate, but occurred due to unavoidable official engagements. It was also submitted that as no stage was there any intention to disregard, delay, or disobey the lawful orders of the Commission. Taking note of the personal appearance of the Chairman and showing grace, the Commission appreciated his presence and subsequently withdrew the show cause notice.

Air University hosts workshop on IPRs to strengthen innovation ecosystem

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Air University on Friday hosted a two-day workshop on Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) in collaboration with Intellectual Property Organization of Pakistan (IPO-Pakistan) to enhance awareness, capacity building and commercialization of research, aiming to strengthen the country’s innovation landscape. The workshop, held at the university’s main campus, brought together experts, faculty members, researchers, students and entrepreneurs to discuss the importance of intellectual property protection and its role in fostering a knowledge-

based economy, said a press release. On the first day, participants were briefed on the significance of intellectual property as a legal framework for safeguarding scientific inventions, software, artistic works and brand identities. Mrs. Humaira Shakeel, Deputy Director, Technology and Innovation Support Center (TISC), provided an overview of IPO-Pakistan and explained Pakistan’s intellectual property legal system. A hands-on training session on the Patent Registration System, including database search tools and filing procedures, was conducted by Mujtaba Kamal, Deputy Director (Patent) and Assistant Controller of Patent at IPO-Pakistan.

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Custodial killings

PUNJAB has descended into a different kind of lawlessness in recent months propelled by the state’s readiness to overlook extrajudicial killings in the name of fighting ‘serious’ crime. A damning report by HRCP reveals that at least 924 suspects were killed across the province last year following the establishment of the Crime Control Department in May. The fact that the FIA did not conduct mandatory investigations and that magisterial inquiries were not carried out into these killings lends credence to allegations that Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz’s government has adopted a “deliberate policy of staged police encounters leading to extrajudicial killings”. FIRs on such incidents across districts follow an identical narrative pattern, alleging that the suspects fired first, police acted in self-defence, and those killed were hardened criminals; it suggests what HRCP calls an “institutionalised practice”. Even the affected families are warned of further harm to deter them from pursuing legal action. Punjab police are notorious for custodial killings. Successive administrations have usually looked the other way, never questioning this method of crime control. However, this is the first time that extrajudicial killings appear to have been “institutionalised”, evolving from sporadic police excesses to systemic practice.

Cost of indifference

As Naeem Sadiq STATE derives its legitimacy from its ability to safeguard its people from preventable harm — whether arising from disease, unsafe environments, violence or systemic neglect. In ‘Shehla Zia vs Wapda’ (1994), the Supreme Court of Pakistan declared that the right to life includes the right to a healthy and safe environment, and preventive measures should be taken to ensure the safety and security of citizens. If that is the standard of care and precaution mandated by law, why is the state indifferent to nearly 400,000 citizens who suffer dog-bites each year, resulting in around 1,000 preventable deaths? Trapped in a cycle of post-accident reactive responses, we push for dog-bite care units, dog-bite emergency departments, dog-bite vaccines and dog-bite training programmes. While all these measures are important, we fail to address the root cause — hundreds of uncontrolled stray dogs, many infected with rabies, that roam our streets and towns, scavenging through scattered garbage and overflowing kachra kundis. Coupled with nearly 18,000 newborns arriving each day, with many destined to inhabit the same streets rather than sit in classrooms, this becomes a grim combination of painful bites and preventable deaths. Our leaders spend billions on self-publicity, luxury Fortuners and embarrassingly expensive foreign junkets, but

do not have the money or mind to protect the lives of ordinary citizens. All that is needed is a fleet of vans in every town, each staffed by two trained workers to humanely capture and transport stray dogs to purpose-built rehabilitation facilities. A long metal or fibreglass pole with a sliding cable loop at the end is the simplest method to safely guide (trap) a dog into a transport vehicle. Once admitted to a rehabilitation facility, the remaining stages — commonly called TNVR (trap, neuter, vaccinate, and tag) — can be carried out in an organised manner. Over time, this approach would eliminate the population of street dogs, prevent further breeding and enable the remaining dogs to age out without replacement. A reactive firefighting approach has also landed Pakistan in the category of the last two countries where polio continues to persist. Most regions of the world were certified polio-free decades ago; the remaining persistent reservoirs of wild polio now exist only in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Despite receiving more than \$3 billion in donor support, Pakistan, with 31 polio cases reported in 2025, remains far from becoming a polio-free country. This persists despite successive nationwide campaigns delivering repeated doses of the oral polio vaccine to children — campaigns that have cost the lives of more than 150 dedicated polio workers. Harsh as it may sound, until

we confront the root causes, polio will continue to cripple our children and shame our collective conscience. Preventing polio and dog-bites is a distant dream. The continued recurrence of polio cases ought to be of no surprise in a country that discharges nearly 99 per cent of its raw sewage into open drains, ponds, rivers, lakes and the sea. As a result, the faecal-oral transmission cycle, where germs from human or animal faeces enter another person’s mouth (largely by drinking contaminated water), continues unabated. Thus, as long as untreated sewage flows freely and clean drinking water is out of reach for most citizens, escaping the clutches of polio will remain an unrealistic and distant aspiration. Had even half the funds spent on polio drops been directed towards sewage treatment and universal access to clean drinking water, Pakistan might have escaped the dubious distinction of remaining one of the last two polio-endemic countries. There are simple, indigenous and low-cost solutions such as sewage treatment in ‘constructed wetland’, that could be developed across the country in a matter of weeks and without foreign funding. Why must we continue to leave our poorest and most vulnerable children and adults exposed to life-threatening dangers such as dog-bites, rabies, and polio while the rest of us live in comfort and safety? Courtesy Dawn

Being and Becoming

Aneela Shahzad Modern cosmology often presents itself as the most triumphant extension of physics: a discipline that has traced the history of the universe from fractions of a second after the Big Bang to the formation of galaxies, stars and planets. Yet beneath this empirical success lies a persistent and unavoidable metaphysical tension. This is the tension between understanding the universe as a timeless structure governed by invariant laws, as opposed to a universe understood as an unfolding process shaped by time, change and history. Is the universe a ‘complete being’ or is it still ‘becoming’? If the universe is a ‘complete being’, unchanging and stable, there can be certainty regarding the laws of physics upon which everything operates. But if it is in the process of ‘becoming’, its shape, mechanism and the very firmament of its structure may be undergoing change, which would render all discovered laws of physics temporary and revisable. At first glance, equations of physics that describe spacetime curvature, models that explain cosmic expansion, and simulations that reproduce large-scale structure ensure the triumphal success of physical cosmology. However, this confidence dissolves once we ask more fundamental questions: What is time in cosmology? What does it mean for the universe to “begin”? Are laws prior to the universe, or emergent within it? These are not technical questions resolvable by better instruments or more math. They are questions that question the very conceptual framework through which physics itself becomes intelligible — they are questions of metaphysics. This tension between Being and Becoming was recorded in early Greek philosophy. Parmenides presented reality as timeless, unified and changeless — the true Being admits no coming-to-being or passing-away. Heraclitus, by contrast, insisted that reality is flux, change is fundamental, and stability is an illusion born of limited perception. Courtesy Tribune

Pakistan receives extraordinary welcome at Board of Peace meeting: Atta Tarar



PEAK POINT

Defence Forces, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, acknowledging Pakistan's vital role in fostering global peace. "This high-level commendation has significantly enhanced Pakistan's international prestige and serves as a moment of pride for Pakistanis living across the globe," he added. He said this was a clear manifestation of Pakistan's successful foreign policy and the result of dedicated teamwork.

Atta Tarar noted that Pakistan is now emerging as an influential and effective player on the world stage, moving away from a past era of diplomatic isolation.

He emphasized that such outcomes are inevitable when leadership remains honest and prioritizes national interest.

The prime minister maintained a firm stance on the occasion that the land belongs to the Palestinians and that they must be granted their right to self-determination in accordance

with UN Security Council resolutions, Tarar said while praising PM Shehbaz for his advocacy for Palestinians' rights at the Board of Peace. The minister said PM Shehbaz Sharif has effectively presented the case of the Palestinian people at every major forum, including the United Nations and the SCO. He highlighted that the establishment of an independent Palestinian state is indispensable for lasting peace in the region, adding that these points represent the sentiments of every Muslim. The meeting of the Board of Peace concluded with a cordial conversation between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and President Donald Trump, he said, noting that the body language of both leaders during their interaction reflected mutual trust and understanding. Pakistan has now secured a prominent and respected position in global affairs due to the effective policies of the incumbent government, he remarked.

WASHINGTON: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar has said that Pakistan had received an extraordinary welcome during the inaugural meeting of the Board of Peace, held in Washington earlier in the day.

Talking to the media, the minister said US President Donald Trump specifically praised the leadership of Pakistan, including Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Chief of the Army Staff and Chief of

Gov't taking concrete steps to address issues of Law: Law Minister

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Law and Justice, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar on Thursday said that in consultation with the provincial government and relevant authorities, practical and sustainable solutions would be pursued to ensure improved facilities and institutional support for the legal fraternity. The law minister held a meeting with the newly elected Members of various bar associations from across the Rawalpindi Division. Minister of State for Law and Justice, Barrister Aqeel Malik, was also present on the occasion. During the meeting, the issues and matters pertaining to each bar association were taken up separately and discussed in detail. The newly elected representatives apprised the Federal Minister of the professional, administrative,



and facility-related challenges faced by their respective bars and shared by their priorities. The Minister listened attentively to the concerns of the bar representatives and assured them that the issues of each bar would be addressed on a priority basis. He stated that, in consultation with the provincial government and relevant authorities, practical and sustainable solutions would be pursued to ensure improved facilities and institutional support for the legal fraternity. Minister of State Barrister Aqeel Malik also reaffirmed the Government.

Islamabad expands electric bus network with major new infrastructure

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Strengthening the capital's transition toward sustainable urban mobility, Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Friday inaugurated a new fleet of electric buses along with a purpose-built depot and charging station marking a significant expansion of Islamabad's eco-friendly public transport network.

With the latest induction, the number of electric buses operating across 21 routes has risen to 160. After the launch ceremony, Naqvi inspected the facilities and took a ride on an electric bus with senior officials, receiving a comprehensive briefing on fleet operations, depot management, and charging infrastructure.

Naqvi praised the project team for its timely execution, noting that the service is already being used by 125,000 passengers daily, with plans to increase ridership to 250,000. He added that special focus has been placed on ensuring accessibility for students

across major routes.

The minister also announced that the electric bus service will be extended to Rawat, further integrating with the existing Metro Bus system to help alleviate traffic congestion in the twin cities. He confirmed that the Rawalpindi-Islamabad local rail service is being restored, and that HIT Pakistan is preparing to start local manufacturing of electric buses.

Officials briefed that the new depot can accommodate 64 charging units, with 50 already installed and 14 more to be added soon. Each charger can power two buses within two hours, and the entire system has been integrated with, and Google for real-time monitoring and navigation.

The ceremony was attended by the Chief Commissioner Islamabad, IG Islamabad Police, Deputy Commissioner Islamabad, and other senior officials.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi inaugurated a new fleet of electric buses here on Friday.

Religious ministry holds 183 workshop to educate intending Hajj pilgrims

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Religious Affairs has conducted 183 training workshops in 107 cities across Pakistan to educate and sensitize intending pilgrims about Hajj 2026 rituals and related administrative procedures.

The figures were shared by the Secretary of Religious Affairs on Thursday during a review meeting on Hajj arrangements, chaired by the Minister for Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Sardar Muhammad Yousof. The secretary informed the meeting that the first phase of Hajj training for pilgrims has been completed, while the second phase will commence after Ramadan. He added that arrangements for the provision of vaccines, issuance of air tickets, and visa processing would be initiated shortly. The meeting was further briefed that preparations related to pilgrims' accommodation, Mina camps, and food services are in their final stages. Addressing the meeting, the minister,

Pakistan, Netherlands pledge cooperation on interfaith harmony, minority rights

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Khalid Das Kohistani, held a meeting with Dutch Ambassador Robert-Jan Siegart at his office in Islamabad on Wednesday.

The two leaders discussed in detail matters of mutual interest, focusing on the promotion of interfaith harmony, protection of minority rights, and regional cooperation. Both officials reaffirmed their commitment to fostering peace, dialogue, and brotherhood in the region, while jointly working against Islamophobia.

Speaking at the meeting, Minister Khalid Das Kohistani highlighted that the rights of minorities were clearly enshrined



in Muhammad Ali Jinnah's 1947, and guaranteed under the Constitution of Pakistan.

He added that the Ministry actively promoted interfaith gatherings and dialogues nationwide and ensuring that all religious festivals of minority communities are celebrated under official patronage. The minister also noted that under the Minorities Welfare Fund, educational scholarships have been provided to non-Muslim children.

Junaid Anwar Ch. reaffirms commitment to protect Arabian Sea marine mammals

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs, Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry reaffirmed the government's steadfast commitment to safeguarding rich marine biodiversity, especially vulnerable cetaceans like whales and dolphins in the Arabian Sea.

In a message on International Day for Marine Mammals, the minister warned that these ocean giants face growing threats from overfishing, bycatch, ship strikes, noise pollution, and habitat loss. "Yet they underpin our coastal ecosystems, blue economy, and national livelihoods," he said.

Following the International Whaling Commission (IWC)'s



global moratorium on commercial whaling, the day underscores the need to protect species like whales, dolphins, seals, and sea otters from pollution, fishing gear, and habitat degradation.

The IWC was founded in 1946 under the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling. It has more than 80 member countries, including many non-whaling nations.

Macroeconomic growth through export-led strategy, key to poverty alleviation: Ahsan Iqbal

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal on Friday emphasized that macroeconomic growth driven by an export-led economy and performance-based industrial units at provincial and district levels, was the need of the hour to alleviate poverty in the country.

Addressing the "Launch of Poverty and Inequality Estimates 2024-25" ceremony held at the Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives

Auditorium, the minister underscored the importance of developing competitive human resource capital across all federating units.

He stressed for the promotion of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and cottage industries at district and provincial levels to unlock local potential at the grassroots level, while advancing progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

"Export-led growth, along with quality education and competitive human

resource development, can play a major role in reducing poverty at both national and provincial levels," he said.

The minister noted that due to the global food inflation super cycle during COVID-19, along with environmental catastrophes such as floods and the commodities boom cycle, national poverty, increased from 21.9 percent to 28.9 percent, a rise of seven percent, compared to estimates from 2018-19 to 2024-25.

He attributed part of the economic challenges to the policies of the previous gov-

ernment led by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), stating that economic mismanagement and political instability forced the country to enter three programs with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

He said that strict reform measures, including subsidy reductions under IMF agreements, contributed to rising poverty levels. Ahsan Iqbal further criticized the previous government for promoting excessive imports and consumer-driven growth,

noting that imports surged to \$80 billion, result-

ing in a \$50 billion trade deficit.

Highlighting the role of the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP), the minister said it has historically played a critical role in poverty reduction and sustainable development. However, he lamented that PSDP allocations declined from 2.8 percent to 0.9 percent of the total budget in recent

He pointed out that since November now hold a larger share of PSDP resources compared to the Federation and called for comprehensive

provincial strategies to address poverty. "Provincial-level poverty reduction efforts directly impact national poverty indicators," he said.

Comparing rural and urban poverty trends, Ahsan Iqbal stated that urban poverty increased from 21.9 percent to 28.9 percent over the past seven years, while rural poverty rose from 28.2 percent to 36.2 percent during the same period.

The minister emphasized that economic stability was essential for achieving sustainable growth.