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PM, Saudi FM discuss ways to achieve peace, stability in region

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia Prince Faisal bin Farhan Sunday called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and discussed ways to achieve peace and stability in the region.

The Prime Minister was assisted by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, National Security Advisor Lt. Gen. Muhammad Asim Malik, and SAPM Tariq Fatemi.

During the warm and cordial meeting, the Prime Minister warmly welcomed the Saudi Foreign Minister and conveyed his respectful regards for The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and warm greetings for Prince Mohammed

bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Crown Prince & Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia.

While reaffirming Pakistan's full and unwavering solidarity and support with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Prime Minister appreciated the remarkable restraint exercised by Saudi Arabia amid the current crisis and assured the Saudi Foreign Minister that Pakistan would always stand shoulder to shoulder with Saudi Arabia.

The Prime Minister recalled his recent conversations with the Crown Prince, including their meeting in Jeddah on 12 March. He shared with the Saudi Foreign Minister Pakistan's extensive diplomatic outreach during the current crisis, including the mediation efforts for de-escalation.



Foreign Minister of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud calls on and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in a meeting in Islamabad.

Iran claims US 'secretly planning ground attack' amid talk of diplomacy

PEAK POINT



IRAN: Iran has accused the United States of pursuing a dual strategy of diplomacy and military escalation, with senior officials warning that any ground incursion would be met with

forceful resistance, reported Al Jazeera on Sunday.

In remarks carried by the state-run Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA), Iran's parliament speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf sharply criticised the approach of US President Donald Trump, accusing Washington of signaling openness to negotiations while covertly preparing for a potential ground offensive.

"The enemy is openly sending a message of negotiation and secretly planning a ground attack," Ghalibaf said, adding that Iranian forces were fully prepared to confront any such move. He warned that Iranian troops were "waiting for the arrival of American soldiers on the ground," suggesting a readiness for direct confrontation. The remarks come amid heightened regional tensions and reports in US media that the Pentagon is preparing for extended ground operations in Iran. These reports followed a US military announcement confirming,

Pakistan, Turkiye, Saudi Arabia, Egypt begin talks on US-Iran war in Islamabad

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Consultations among the foreign ministers of Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Turkiye, and Egypt commenced in Islamabad on Sunday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced in a post on X. "Convened at the invitation of Deputy



Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, the Foreign Ministers during the consultations will review the evolving regional situation and discuss issues of mutual interest," the ministry wrote. The four-nation meeting will take place today and tomorrow (March 29 and 30), with the Egyptian, Turkish, and Saudi foreign ministers in attendance. Earlier, in a tweet on X, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced the arrival of Egyptian Foreign Minister Dr Badr Abdelatty at the ministry, where he was received by Dar. "The two sides will hold bilateral consultations

est, including regional developments," the tweet concluded.

Abdelatty arrived in Islamabad last night to participate in the meeting, where Additional Foreign Secretary Syed Ahmed Maroof accorded him a warm welcome. Fidan was received by Additional Foreign Secretary Syed Ali Asad Gillani at Nur Khan Airbase. Read: Iran's president tells PM Shehbaz trust needed for talks to end Middle East conflict. Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan al Saud arrived in Islamabad midday Sunday, the Foreign Office announced on X.

Bushra Bibi suffers blurred vision, undergoes eye check-up at Adiala Jail

PEAK POINT

RAWALPINDI: Bushra Bibi, the spouse of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan, underwent a medical check-up at Adiala Jail after complaining of pain and vision issues in her right eye, jail sources said. According to officials, she was examined on Saturday around 2pm by Dr Muhammad Arif Khan, head of the ophthalmology department at Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS), at Central Jail Rawalpindi. Medical sources revealed that Bushra Bibi had been experiencing blurred.

KP sees 65pc cut in terror incidents since launch of Ghazab-lil-Haq

PEAK POINT

PESHAWAR: Terrorism incidents have reduced in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) by 65 percent since the launch of Operation Ghazab-lil-Haq, according to sources. Operation Ghazab-lil-Haq was carried out against terrorists hiding in Afghanistan. It was launched on February 26 and 27 night. According to sources, 240 incidents of terrorism were reported in KP before the operation. After the operation, 80 incidents of terrorism have been reported in the province so far. In the twelfth week after the operation, incidents decreased.

Anger over Iran war adds fuel to anti-Trump rallies in US

PEAK POINT

WASHINGTON: Demonstrators decrying President Donald Trump's policies took to city streets across the United States on Saturday in the third edition of the "No Kings" rallies that organisers hoped will be the largest single-day non-violent protest in US history. The two previous No Kings events attracted millions of participants. Singers Bruce Springsteen and Joan Baez headlined a rally at the state capitol in Minnesota, where upward of 100,000 people gathered in an area that became a flashpoint over Trump's crackdown on illegal immigration and the incursion of federal immigration agents into Democratic-led urban centres. Other major rallies took place in New York, Los Angeles and Washington, but two-thirds of the events were happen-

ing outside. say they have seen a surge in the number of people



40 per cent jump for smaller communities from the movement's first mobilisation last June. "The defining story of this mobilisation is not just how many people are protesting, but where they are protesting," said Leah Greenberg, co-founder of Indivisible, the group that started the No Kings movement last year and led planning of Saturday's events. With mid-term elections later this year in the US, organisers

organising anti-Trump events and registering to participate in deeply Republican states like Idaho, Wyoming, Montana and Utah. Competitive suburban areas that have helped decide national elections are seeing "huge" surge in interest, Greenberg said, citing as examples Pennsylvania's Bucks and Delaware counties, East Cobb and Forsyth in Georgia, and Scottsdale and Chandler in Arizona.

"Voters who decide elections, the people who do the door-knocking and the voter registration and all of the work of turning protests into power, they are taking to the streets right now, and they are furious," she said.

White House spokeswoman Abigail Jackson in a statement dismissed the rallies as "Trump derangement therapy sessions" of interest only to journalists. In northern Virginia, just outside Washington, several hundred people began gathering close to Arlington National Cemetery before a planned march across the Potomac River to the capital's National Mall. Some passing drivers honked their horns in support, but others slowed down to berate the protesters.

Pak-Afghan peace jirga to meet in Peshawar on tomorrow



PEAK POINT

PESHAWAR: A Pak-Afghan peace jirga will be held in Peshawar on March 31 to urge the leadership of both countries to immediately de-escalate tensions and work towards peace, former chief secretary Arbab Shehbaz Khan said. Speaking at a news conference at Peshawar Press Club, Mr Khan, who is head of Aspire Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, which, along with Quami Islahi Tehreek, is organising the jirga, said the forum would be attended by national and political leaders, tribal elders, religious scholars, members of civil society, traders and media representatives from KP as well as Afghans residing in Pakistan. Quami Islahi Tehreek chief Haji Sohrab Ali Khan was also present at the presser.



SPORTS



Karachi Kings defeat Lahore Qalandars by four wickets in PSL 11 thriller



PEAK POINT
LAHORE: Karachi Kings secured a four-wicket victory over Lahore Qalandars in the sixth match of Pakistan Super League 11, successfully chasing a modest target of 129 runs at Gaddafi Stadium. Karachi Kings reached the target in the 19th over, sealing the win on the third ball. Muhammad Wasim Jr. led the chase with a crucial 38-run knock, while Saad Baig scored 19, Moeen Ali added 18, and Khushdil Shah

contributed 13 runs. Captain David Warner managed just 8 runs. Salman Ali Agha was dismissed for a duck, while Azam Khan made 14. Abbas Afridi remained unbeaten on 10 to help guide his side home. For Lahore Qalandars, captain Shaheen Shah Afridi delivered an outstanding bowling performance, claiming four wickets for 18 runs, though it was not enough to secure victory.

Haris Rauf proved expensive, conceding 45 runs for just one wicket, while Mustafizur Rahman picked up one wicket. Earlier, Lahore Qalandars posted 128 for 9 in their allotted 20 overs after opting to bat first. Abdullah Shafique top-scored with 33 runs, followed by Haseebullah Khan with 28 and Sikandar Raza with 19. Muhammad Naeem added 13 while Perviz Hossain Emon Agha chipped in with one wicket.

tributed 7 runs before being dismissed. Lower down the order, Haris Rauf made 4 runs, while Fakhar Zaman and Usama Mir managed just one run each. Mustafizur Rahman remained not out on 1. Karachi Kings' bowling attack was led by Moeen Ali, Mir Hamza, and Adam Zampa, who took two wickets each. Abbas Afridi, Hasan Ali, and Salman Ali Agha chipped in with one wicket apiece.

K2 Squash Club to host historic PSA Challenger events next month



ISLAMABAD: K2 Squash Club is set to host its first-ever PSA Challenger Tournaments in USA this April, signaling a major step forward in its journey toward international recognition. The initiative, led by Tournament Director Muhammad Naveed Alam, highlights the club's growing stature and ambition to establish itself as a key venue on the global squash circuit, said a press release. Sanctioned by the Professional Squash Association and presented by One World Squash, the two-phase tournament will feature elite players from around the world, combining experience with emerging talent. The men's Challenger 15K event, scheduled from April 8 to 12, is expected to deliver high-quality action with a strong international field that includes Salman Khalil, Tom Walsh, Mohammad Sharaf and Yassin Elssin Elshafci. With a total prize purse of \$15,000, the event promises intense competition and valuable ranking opportunities for participants. Wildcard entries, including Ahsan Ayaz, add an extra layer of excitement, offering rising players a platform to compete at a higher level. The final is scheduled for April 12 and is expected to draw significant attention from squash enthusiasts.

Pakistani players confident ahead of AFC Asian Cup Qualifier



PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: Pakistani footballers Jeevan Khan, Shayek Dost and Ali Raza have expressed confidence and determination ahead of their AFC Asian Cup qualifier against Myanmar, vowing to deliver a strong performance. Speaking to the media here at the Pakistan Sports Complex on Sunday, Jeevan Khan said the ongoing training camp had been a valuable

learning experience. He noted that the squad includes several talented players and highlighted the guidance he has received from senior teammates, particularly Shayek Dost. He added that the recent National Challenge Cup has helped maintain players' match fitness, ensuring the team is well-prepared for the upcoming fixture. Khan also observed a shift in Pakistan's playing style under

confidence in the team's ability to perform well. He also pointed out that local players have been given a significant opportunity in this match, with overseas-based players rested by the coach. Dost called it a crucial moment for domestic players to showcase their abilities and contribute positively to the team's outcome. Reflecting on previous encounters with Myanmar, Dost acknowledged them as a competitive side but stressed that Pakistan could achieve a different result with greater passion and energy. He added that while overseas players benefit from regular league exposure, the local squad has worked hard during the camp and is highly motivated.



LAHORE: Players in training camp pose for group photo with coach here in Qaddafi Stadium on Sunday.

Rashid Malik clinches 60+ title at RLK Group ITF Masters Tennis Championship 2026

PEAK POINT
LAHORE: Pakistan's leading ITF senior tennis player Rashid Ahmed Malik (Tamgha-e-Imtiaz) clinched the men's 60+ singles title at the RLK Group ITF Masters Tennis Championship 2026, concluded at the Punjab Tennis Academy, Bagh-e-Jinnah Lahore.

In the men's singles 60+ final, Malik outclassed Israr Gull in straight sets, winning 6-1, 6-3. Malik dominated proceedings from the outset, using precise shot placement and consistency to keep his opponent under pressure. Gull struggled to find rhythm against Malik's aggressive yet controlled play, as the seasoned campaigner wrapped up the title in convincing fashion.

The men's doubles 45+ final witnessed a competitive battle as Syed Hadi and Shehryar Salamat overcame Hasan Said and Qadir Nawaz

in a three-set contest with a score of 6-2, 3-6, 10-3. The men's doubles 50+ final delivered another gripping encounter, as Ashar Ali Khan and Hasan Said staged a comeback to defeat M. Arif and Tanveer Haral by 4-6,

Pakistan Tennis Federation (PTF), as both dignitaries distributed prizes and shields among the winners across various age-group categories. The ceremony was further distinguished by the presence of Rashid Malik, Senior



7-5, 10-6. Rashid Latif Khan, Chairman of RLK Group, graced the prize distribution ceremony as the chief guest. He was joined by the guest of honour, Aisam-ul-Haq Qureshi, President of

Executive Vice President of PLTA, along with Hasan Said and other notable guests. A large gathering of players, their families, and tennis enthusiasts also attended the event, adding to the vibrant and celebratory atmosphere.

23rd Punjab Girls Judo Championship to be held on April 5





Pakistan's rice exports plunge nearly 50% as Govt introduces emergency support

NADEEM TANOLI
ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's economic landscape reflects a mixed trajectory of relief and crisis, as key ministries informed the National Assembly that rice exports have dropped sharply by 46.7 percent in value, while inflation has declined significantly to 5.5 percent, alongside enforcement actions generating Rs. 3,827 million in customs penalties. The Ministry of Commerce reported a severe contraction in rice exports during recent months, primarily driven by India's return to the global market, which led to a significant drop in international Basmati prices. In response, the government introduced a Duty Drawback of Local Taxes and Levies (DLTL) scheme, offering 9 percent

support for Basmati and 3 percent for non Basmati rice to stabilize exporters and maintain competitiveness. Officials further informed the Assembly that Free Trade Agreements with Gulf Cooperation Council countries have been finalized, while Preferential Trade Agreements with Central Asian states are currently under negotiation to open new markets. On the macro-economic front, the Ministry of Finance and the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) attributed past inflationary pressures to the post COVID commodity super cycle, devastating floods in 2022, and sustained depreciation of the Pakistani Rupee. Inflation, which had surged to 29.2 percent in FY23, has now eased to 5.5 percent during the current

fiscal period, reflecting improved economic stabilization. The Assembly was also briefed on the current income tax structure, where salaried individuals earning up to Rs. 600,000 remain exempt, while higher income brackets face increasing taxation, culminating in a base tax of Rs. 616,000 plus 35 percent on income exceeding Rs. 4,100,000. Customs operations came under focus as well, with the newly implemented Facelless Customs Assessment system processing 3,193,527 Goods Declarations. While no banned goods were detected, authorities identified 4,612 violations, resulting in penalties amounting to Rs. 3,827 million. Officials termed the system a step toward transparency and

efficiency in trade regulation. The Ministry of Planning highlighted persistent structural weaknesses affecting development projects under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP). Officials admitted that delays continue due to limited financial resources, weak feasibility studies, land acquisition hurdles, and inadequate project management capacity, slowing down implementation despite regular monitoring. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Economic Affairs disclosed that Pakistan secured external disbursements worth US\$ 12,144 million during FY 2024-25. The ministry is utilizing the UNCTAD-supported Debt Management and Financial Analysis System (DMFAS)

for effective tracking of loans and financial obligations. It was further revealed that 190 officers from Sindh were sent abroad for professional training over a five-year period. In the education sector, the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training informed lawmakers that 34 Daanish Schools are currently operational in Punjab, catering to 38,820 students, while 21 additional schools and two universities are under development. A major initiative, the National Institute of Excellence in Teacher Education (NIETE), has been approved at a cost of Rs. 960.761 million to enhance teacher training through blended learning methods. Separately, the National Heritage and

Culture Division clarified a longstanding issue regarding artwork by renowned artist Anwar Jalal Shemza, stating that the paintings returned to his widow were never formally owned by the Pakistan National Council of the Arts and had only been on loan since 1985. A senior parliamentary observer, speaking anonymously, remarked that while inflation figures show improvement, "the collapse in exports and persistent structural inefficiencies reveal deeper economic vulnerabilities that remain unaddressed." Another analyst criticized policy execution, stating that "short-term relief measures cannot compensate for long-term governance gaps in trade and development sectors."

HRCP, civil society organisations demand immediate halt to eviction operations in Islamabad's katchi abadis

PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, along with several civil society organisations, on Sunday called on authorities to immediately halt all planned and ongoing eviction operations in Islamabad's low-income areas and katchi abadis (informal settlements). The call was made in a statement issued by the

HRCP following a press conference at the National Press Club in Islamabad. "The All Party Alliance for Katchi Abadis, Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, National Commission for Justice and Peace, Awami Workers Party, Aurat March Islamabad and allied civil society organisations strongly condemn the imminent threat of demolition and forced eviction fac-



ing residents of Allama Iqbal Colony, a 25-year-old, predominantly Christian working-class settlement reported-

ly slated for clearance in the coming week," the statement read. It added: "We unequivocally reject the ongoing pat-

tern of evictions carried out by the Capital Development Authority (CDA), Islamabad, without due process, adequate notice or lawful rehabilitation. "These actions are not isolated incidents but part of a broader and deeply unjust approach that disproportionately targets low-income communities across Islamabad's katchi abadis — affecting families who have lived and worked in these

areas for decades," the statement said. The CDA is carrying out anti-encroachment operations with special focus on illegal slums in Islamabad. According to CDA's rules, 34 societies/schemes were supposed to transfer amenity land in the name of the civic agency for further utilisation. However, despite the passage of years, CDA has failed to get the land.

Opinion & Editorial

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Unwarranted exasperation

The indecent and undiplomatic remarks from India's External Affairs Minister Dr Subrahmanyam Jaishankar were uncalled for and unwarranted under any canons of adversity. A diplomat and scholar of his stature could have chosen better words to express New Delhi's frustration and isolation in realpolitik, as Islamabad has been able to make strides during the ongoing crisis in the Middle East. The fact that Jaishankar — who is revered among his contemporaries for his fence-mending skills despite being a cabinet member of an ultra-radical Hindutva dispensation — chose to exhibit his anger in unequivocal terms of enmity towards Pakistan reflects the mindset of India. It is a fact that Delhi has not been able to play a leadership role and has rather kept meddling in the internal affairs of almost all of the South Asian states. This annoyance is understandable as his government rode the wrong horse by standing beside Israel, ending up burning its fingers in terms of its relations with the Muslim world, especially Iran and the Gulf states. Likewise, the cheap concessions that New Delhi sought from Washington in terms of oil and tariff relaxations had limited its role as a regional power. Thus, the condemnation is on the mark, as the vulgar vocabulary resorted to by Dr Jaishankar is unbecoming of diplomatic decorum.

Pakistan's diplomatic moment

Muhammad Amir Rana
APPARENTLY, the stage is being prepared for US-Iran talks in Islamabad, despite deceptive statements and official denials. Western and Gulf diplomatic channels are confirming these reports; however, much depends on the backdoor communications currently underway through Pakistan. This is a rare moment for Pakistan's diplomacy, as the country has become an interlocutor in a major global conflict after decades. There is little reason to doubt Pakistan's diplomatic capacity to facilitate such talks, given its role in the breakthrough between China and the US in 1971. However, Pakistan's real test is domestic: repairing the trust deficit with its own people. Certainly, such secret diplomacy usually enters the public sphere only when matters reach their conclusion, and the executive has the lawful authority to undertake such initiatives. However, if parliament were an effective forum for creating a conducive environment for such occasions, it would boost public confidence and foster a sense of pride. A joint parliamentary session should be convened to discuss the Iran conflict and Pakistan's geopolitical and strategic priorities in the Gulf, as Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had promised earlier this month

during an in-camera session of parliamentary parties. Although Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar delivered statements in separate sessions of the National Assembly and the Senate during Ramadan, a joint session dedicated to this issue has no substitute. Nonetheless, these are challenging times for democracies, including in several Western nations. US President Donald Trump has been criticised for launching military action against Iran without seeking Congressional authorisation, while the absence of the UN Security Council's approval has also raised legal and political concerns. Public support often becomes secondary once power elites have chosen their course; however, in fragile democracies, such moments are rare opportunities to foster national pride, especially when divergent political views create a messy scene on public forums and social media. Setting aside the internal scenario for a moment, Pakistan has effectively handled the situation in the Iran-US-Israel conflict by engaging all actors involved while maintaining strategic clarity and balancing relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia. Pakistan's weak economic profile has remained a hindrance, limiting its edge in West Asia's geopolitical and security affairs. However, its profile as a specialised security provider

remains a key strength, alongside its strategic geographical location, which provides a distinct advantage. Leveraging this profile, Pakistan has managed to carve out a role in an otherwise geopolitically complex environment. Pakistan's profile as a specialised security provider remains a key strength. Many Gulf nations: Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, Oman, the UAE, and especially Qatar have used mediation diplomacy to position themselves as facilitators of peace processes. This has helped them cultivate a softer international image, attract global investment, and, to some extent, obscure their authoritarian credentials. If Pakistan wants to join the club, it has yet to craft a coherent strategy to use mediation diplomacy to strengthen its economic and geopolitical gains. However, if Islamabad successfully facilitates talks between the US and Iran, it could open a new avenue for the country. Again, it would depend on the priorities of state institutions, whether they choose to keep the country positioned as a hard power or to fundamentally alter its posture. Although Pakistan has a record of diplomatic interventions and facilitating backdoor channels in the past, the news that Islamabad was chosen as one of the venues for possible talks came as a surprise to many. Courtesy Dawn

Free speech jokes

Imran Jan
The sickest joke since the year 2026 has started, that so far, all the wars waged around the world by various nations are at the behest of a foreign country, asking the leadership of the war-waging country to launch the war. As ironic as it may sound, a natural and homemade organic war would bring a fresh hope of change. President Trump has turned his image and that of his country into a joke by launching an illegal war against a country that did not threaten or attack America in any way whatsoever. He announced making peace talks with Iran in the middle of the war, only to be refuted by the Iranians. And the world trusts Iran's word far more than Trump's social media posts, which many argue seem to have been designed to manipulate the stock market in order for his family and his cronies to make a fortune overnight. Speaking of jokes, I am reminded of a joke that President Reagan once told in a way only a Hollywood actor could tell, which he was in his previous life. He was trying to compare the free speech rights of the Americans with those of the Russians. The joke goes that an American and a Russian are talking to each other and bragging about their countries. The American tells the Russian that his country is so democratic that he could walk into the president's office, thump on his desk and tell him that he, as an American citizen, disagrees with how he is running America. The Russian muses and says he could do the same. He says he could also go into his president's office, thump on his desk and tell him how he, as a Russian citizen, disagrees with how the American president is running America. The allusion is that in Russia, the only critique allowed was to criticise America and that Russians couldn't criticise the Russian government without facing dire consequences. I wonder how the joke would play out between an American and a Russian today over the issue of Israel. Courtesy Tribune

Ayaz urges collective action for environmental protection



ISLAMABAD: Speaker of National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq Saturday termed environmental protection a shared responsibility of all segments of society, urging citizens to adopt eco-friendly habits beyond symbolic observances.

Addressing a ceremony held outside Parliament House to mark Earth Hour 2026, he reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to environmental sustainability.

The Speaker said Earth Hour should not be viewed merely as switching off lights for one hour, but as a collective pledge to safeguard the planet.

He said that energy conservation measures are already being strictly enforced within Parliament House as part of broader efforts to ensure responsible use of resources.

As part of the global Earth Hour campaign led by the World Wide Fund (WWF) for nature, the lights of Parliament House were switched off from 8:30 pm to 9:30 pm. Like previous years, all unnecessary lighting remained turned off during this period.

Ayaz Sadiq emphasized that small individual actions, when combined, can lead to significant and lasting environmental impact.

He said that Pakistan is facing multiple challenges due to climate change, highlighting the need for

comprehensive policy making and effective implementation to tackle these issues.

The Speaker stressed that timely measures are essential to ensure a safe and sustainable future for coming generations, adding that reducing air pollution and curbing harmful emissions are among the most pressing priorities. He underscored the importance of sustainable use of natural resources and promoting environmentally responsible practices in everyday life.

Ayaz Sadiq said that protecting the environment can help realize the vision of a green, clean, and prosperous Pakistan, urging the nation to treat Earth Hour not as a one-time activity but as a continuing commitment.

He also appreciated the WWF's efforts in raising environmental awareness and promoting climate consciousness among the public.

CM Bugti reaffirms education as top priority, lays foundation of welfare institution in Kuchlak

PEAK POINT

KUCHLAK: Chief Minister of Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti has reaffirmed that the provision of quality education remains the top priority of the provincial government, emphasizing that education is the key driver of development and progress.

Speaking at a ceremony in Kuchlak to lay the foundation stone of a welfare educational institution, Sarfraz Bugti said that nations prioritizing education achieve lasting success.

He highlighted government efforts to strengthen the sector, including the reopening of 3,200 previously closed schools across the province.

Sarfraz Bugti pledged that no public school in Balochistan would remain closed, reiterating his commitment to uninterrupted



ed access to education for all.

The chief minister welcomed the role of philanthropists in supporting educational initiatives, noting that their contributions complement government efforts and play a vital role in social uplift. He praised Daud Khan Khilji, head of the welfare institution, for his dedication to promoting education and assured full government support for its growth. As part of the ceremony, Sarfraz Bugti distributed uniforms among students, underscoring the government's commitment.

DRAP denies any recent increase in price of essential medicine, expresses satisfaction over supplies

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) strongly denied news reports regarding the recent increase in prices of medicines, expressing satisfaction over its supplies.

In a statement issued on Sunday, the authority formally clarifies that the prices of Essential Medicines, including insulin and other life-saving essential drugs, have not undergone any upward revision.

It is further noted that the price mentioned in recent news reports refer to the Maximum Retail Prices (MRPs) already printed on medicine packs and certain insulin administering device manufactured in 2024 or 2025 and wrongly portrayed as recent price hike.

The authority reiterated that no new price increase has been approved for essential medicines in recent months and pharmaceutical manufacturers are strictly prohibited from implementing unilateral price hikes for any product listed on the National Essential Medicines List (NEML).

DRAP is also proactively monitoring the

availability of drugs and has conducted a comprehensive review of supply chain of medicines and medical devices and found it satisfactory for coming months.

About 85% of medicines consumed in Pakistan are manufactured locally and unaffected by current geographical disputes including Middle Eastern airspace and sea route disruptions, it stated.

DRAP also issued 2 advisories to all manufacturers to have contingency planning, directing firms to adopt multiple sourcing strategies and geographically diverse channels to further strengthen supply chain resilience, ensuring that temporary cargo disruptions (if any) do not evolve into future shortages.

DRAP also focused on verified information before publication to avoid any unnecessary panic or anxiety among the general public regarding the availability and affordability of life-saving essential medicines.

DRAP remains steadfast in its regulatory oversight, ensuring that the people of Pakistan have uninterrupted access to safe, effective and quality-assured Therapeutic Goods.

AJK PP calls on journalist delegation to discuss their issues

PEAK POINT

MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir, Faisal Mumtaz Rathore has said that the government has been providing facilities to state newspapers and will continue to do so in the future.

He expressed these views during a meeting with a delegation that called on him under the leadership of Secretary Finance of All Kashmir Newspapers Society Ajaz Khan here Saturday.

Reiterating his government's commitment to resolve the problems faced by the journalist community, the PM said that steps would be taken to promote press freedom.

During the meeting, financial difficulties faced by newspapers and issues confronting journalists were discussed in detail. Chief Editor of daily Jannat Nazir and Secretary Information of the Kashmir Journalists Forum Ali Hasnain Naqvi were also present in the meeting.

TK son's speech misquoted to hush up federal govt mismanagement: CM Afridi

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Muhammad Sohail Afridi, addressed a press conference at Khyber Pakhtunkhwa House, Islamabad, where he stated that a recent speech by Qasim Khan, son of former Prime Minister Imran Khan, has been deliberately misrepresented by the illegitimate federal government in an attempt to mislead the public and divert attention from its own economic and governance failures.

The Chief Minister said that the federal government is attempting to shift the burden of its economic mismanagement onto Qasim Khan in order to conceal its own incompetence. He noted that the speech has been translated into



Urdu to ensure that its actual content is clearly understood by the public. Highlighting the broader context, the Chief Minister underscored that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf seeks to strengthen Pakistan's economic trajectory under the GSP Plus framework and expand its role in global trade. He noted that European partners require adherence to key principles including democracy, human rights, environmental protection, and transparent governance.

Governor KP stresses promotion of interfaith harmony, tolerance in society

PEAK POINT

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi emphasized that promoting inter-sect and interfaith harmony, tolerance, and a culture of coexistence is the need of the hour in the province.

He expressed these views while talking to a delegation which included former Federal Shariat Court Judge Justice Syed Muhammad Anwar, President Bishop Church of Pakistan Archbishop Dr Azad Marshall, Minority Member National Assembly James Iqbal, renowned scholar and former Chairman Council of Islamic Ideology Professor Dr Qibla Ayaz, and



Professor Dr Mohiuddin Hashmi of Allama Iqbal Open University.

The Governor said that after assuming office, he visited places of worship of various minority communities in Peshawar to promote mutual harmony and build trust among different religious groups. He further said that events marking international minority day have been initiated at Governor House.



Minister of State for Railways & Finance, Bilal Azhar Kayani together with counterparts EU, Singapore & Colombia, co-host a session of Multiparty Interim Arrangement for Arbitration (MPIA) in 14th WTO Ministerial Conference in Youande, Cameroon.

IRS hosts expert webinar on OIC's momentum against illegal settlements

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Regional Studies, Islamabad (IRS) convened an expert webinar featuring Dr. Feras Qawasmeh, Assistant Professor of Public Policy at the Joaan Bin Jassim Academy for Defence Studies in Qatar, on the theme "A United Front Against Illegal Settlement Expansion: The Role of The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation." The discussion focused on the changing patterns of Israel's expanding illegal settlements in the occupied West Bank, and the

value of the collective consensus among Pakistan and its OIC partners at the extraordinary open-ended ministerial session recently. Dr. Qawasmeh underlined the need for greater regional diplomacy to leverage grass-root campaigns - including those that involve Palestinian-led movements focused against settlement expansion. The discussion underlined how Pakistan has continued to back the two-state solution, the sanctity of Palestinian liberties, and a clear stance against any illegal aggression or violence



that threatens Palestinian statehood. Recognizing the value of the OIC to meaningful progress, Dr. Qawasmeh built on the significance of Muslim-majority states presenting a consensus against settlement expansion. His talk put a premium on con-



tries to navigate complex challenges that prevent sufficient international scrutiny towards the expanding settlement challenge, considering how rising arson attacks and impediments to life carry on. His talk delivered a critical value addition on the role of

key movements, such as the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS), in lending international scrutiny and awareness to the settlement issue. These considerations were part of policy recommendations, including a set pipeline of Palestinian rights advocates and organized groupings that can derive traction with Pakistan and key Gulf partners within the OIC, to collectively advance their own consensus against any forced annexation with grass-roots advocacy. Hannan Hussain, head of the West Asia Program at the

Institute, added that the talk provided an in-depth assessment of the conditions on-ground in occupied West Bank, where rising tensions between recipient populations and those spearheading violence, deserves ample attention. Core reference points included the lasting effects of the Oslo Accords which have led to a geographical shift in terms of the security controls and political liberties enjoyed by Palestinians at present, and how these elements of control continue to shift to their detriment amid settlement.