



Aurangzeb leaves for US to attend World Bank-IMF spring meetings



Work on KP motorways, expressways projects to be expedited: CM Afridi



Bilawal hopes ceasefire will become solution to regional disputes

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'Imperative' for US, Iran to uphold ceasefire, says DPM Dar as Islamabad talks conclude

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Sunday said it was "imperative" for the United States and Iran to uphold their ceasefire commitments, following the conclusion of the Islamabad talks after intensive negotiations. The trilateral 'Islamabad talk', culminated almost 21 hours after they began on Saturday afternoon, with US Vice President JD Vance — who headed the American delegation — saying that intensive negotiations with Iran had failed to produce an agreement. Vance said talks with Iran lasted around 21 hours and covered a range of critical issues. "The bad

news is that we have not reached an agreement, and I think that's bad news for Iran much more than it's bad news for the United States of America," he added. Following the presser, Vance departed Islamabad with what he described as his country's "final and best offer," adding that it remained to be seen whether Iran would accept it. He boarded Air Force Two at 7:08am and waved to Pakistani officials from the top of the stairs. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) Field Marshal Asim Munir, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi among others were present on the occasion.



ISLAMABAD: A couple stands in front of billboard regarding the United States and Iran negotiations. The US and Iran failed to reach an agreement to end their war despite marathon talks that concluded.

Trump says US forces are 'clearing' Strait of Hormuz

PEAK POINT



WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump on Saturday posted on social media that the United States military has started to clear the Strait of Hormuz, and that all of

Iran's minelaying ships have been sunk. "We're now starting the process of clearing out the Strait of Hormuz," Trump wrote in a social media post, adding that "all 28" of Iran's "mine dropper boats are also lying at the bottom of the sea".

Trump has repeatedly said that American forces have destroyed Iran's navy and air force while crippling its ballistic missile and nuclear programs.

But fear of Iranian attacks on shipping over the past several weeks has effectively closed the Strait of Hormuz, a critical conduit for global oil supplies. Throttling the strait has disrupted global energy markets.

US gasoline prices have spiked even though most of the oil that flows through the waterway does not go to the United States.

Representatives from the US and Iran began talks hosted by Pakistan in Islamabad on Saturday.

Iran says time for US to decide 'whether it can earn our trust' after talks

PEAK POINT



IRAN: After their face-to-face talks yielded no agreement, Iran's Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf on Sunday said it was now time for the United States to decide whether it can "earn" Tehran's trust.

In a post on X, written in Persian, Ghalibaf said: "America has understood our logic and principles, and now it's time for it to decide whether it can earn our trust or not?" Ghalibaf, who led the Iranian delegation, recalled that before the negotiations, he "emphasised that we have the necessary good faith and will, but due to the experiences of the two previous wars, we have no trust in the opposing side".

"My colleagues on the Iranian delegation Minaab168 raised forward-looking initiatives, but the opposing side ultimately failed to gain the trust of the Iranian delegation in this round of negotiations," he added.

The Iranian parliament speaker went on to state: "We certainly consider diplomacy of authority to be another method, alongside military struggle, for achieving the rights of the Iranian people, and we will not stop for a moment from trying to consolidate the achievements of the 40 days of Iranian national defence."

Ghalibaf also thanked the efforts of "our friendly and brotherly country" Pakistan, for facilitating the process of the negotiations, sending his regards to Pakistanis. Remarking that Iran.

China offers incentives to Taiwan following opposition leader's visit

PEAK POINT



CHINA: China on Sunday unveiled 10 new incentive measures for Taiwan, including easing tourist curbs, allowing in "healthy" television dramas and facilitating food sales, following a visit by the island's opposition leader.

The move comes at the end of a trip to China by Cheng Li-wun, chairman of the Kuomintang (KMT), Taiwan's largest opposition party. She met Chinese President Xi Jinping and talked about the need for peace and reconciliation.

The 10 measures, unveiled by the official Xinhua news agency, "explore" the establishment of a regular communication mechanism between the KMT and China's Communist Party, the full resumption of flights between the two sides and permission for individuals from Shanghai and Fujian province to visit Taiwan.

A mechanism will be established to ease inspection standards for food and fishery products, but that has to be on the political foundation of "opposing Taiwan independence," Xinhua said.

Legendary Indian singer Asha Bhosle passes away

PEAK POINT

NEW DEHLI: Aisha Bhosle, the legendary Indian playback singer, passed away on Sunday afternoon, Indian media has reported. The 92-year-old had been hospitalised in Mumbai on Saturday night for what her granddaughter described on social media as "extreme exhaustion" and "a chest infection". Her son confirmed her death, saying her last rites would be held on Monday.

"My mother passed away today. People can pay their last respects to her at 11am tomorrow at Casa Grande, Lower Parel.

Pakistan sends military force, fighter jets to Saudi Arabia

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has sent a military force and fighter jets to Saudi Arabia to boost security under a joint defence cooperation agreement between the two countries, the Saudi defence ministry said. The Saudi ministry, in a statement, wrote that a military force and fighter jets from Pakistan had arrived at the King Abdulaziz Air Base in its eastern province. It added that the Pakistani deployment was aimed at "strengthening the joint defence cooperation agreement signed between the two brotherly countries". "The Pakistani force consists of fighter and support aircraft belonging to the Pakistani Air Force, with the aim of enhancing joint military

coordination, raising the level of operational readiness between the armed forces of the two countries," it continued.



The planes were sent after Iranian strikes hit key energy infrastructure and killed a Saudi national, three sources, including a senior Pakistani government official, told Reuters.

They were "not there to attack anyone", said the Pakistani official, who spoke on condition of

anonymity. An Iranian strike on Saudi Arabia's



sprawling Jubail petrochemicals complex on Monday had raised concerns in Pakistan that the kingdom might retaliate, potentially jeopardising the Iran peace talks, the three sources said.

The Pakistani deployment was aimed at reassuring Riyadh that Islamabad would help defend the kingdom from any further attacks, the sources said.

The Saudi government media office and Pakistan's military did not respond to requests for comment. Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have long shared a multifaceted relationship rooted in strategic military cooperation, mutual economic interests, and shared Islamic heritage. These ties have encompassed economic assistance and energy supplies, with Riyadh being a significant source of financial aid and oil for Islamabad. In September of last year, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman signed a "Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement" in Riyadh, pledging that any attack on either nation would be treated as an act of aggression against both.

PIA eyes 60-aircraft fleet amid ongoing revival push



PEAK POINT

KARACHI: Pakistan International Airlines is working to expand and restore its fleet, with plans to scale up to 60 aircraft as part of its ongoing revival strategy. Chairman of the Arif Habib Consortium for Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), Arif Habib, said.

Addressing industrialists at the Korangi Association of Trade and Industry (Kati) on Thursday, Habib said that PIA currently owns 30 aircraft, of which 18 are in operation, while five to six are undergoing repairs and maintenance.

"Efforts are being made to restore these planes and return them to service, which would raise the active fleet to 26, with a long-term goal of expanding it to 60 aircraft.



SPORTS



PSL 11: Labuschagne shines as Hyderabad Kingsmen beat Islamabad United



PEAK POINT
KARACHI: Hyderabad Kingsmen captain Marnus Labuschagne scored an unbeaten half-century as the side beat Islamabad United by six wickets in the 21st match of Pakistan Super League (PSL) 11 at the National Bank Stadium, Karachi, on Sunday.
 The victory marked Kingsmen's second consecutive as they had beaten 2020 champions Karachi Kings in their previous assignment after losing four consecutive matches.
 Set to chase a modest 154-run target, the tournament debutants comfortably knocked the winning

runs for the loss of four wickets and 11 balls to spare.
 Leading the way for them was captain Labuschagne, who oversaw their successful run chase with an unbeaten 61 off 53 deliveries, studded with six fours.
 The skipper received ample support from fellow top-order batters Maaz Sadaqat and Saim Ayub, who made brisk 30 and 35, respectively, before sharing a match-winning partnership with compatriot Glenn Maxwell, who scored an unbeaten 21 off just nine deliveries.
 For the United, stand-in captain Chris Green and Faheem

Ashraf bagged two wickets each. Kingsmen captain Marnus Labuschagne's decision to field first paid dividends as the three-time champions could accumulate 153/9 in their 20 overs.
 The United got off to a decent start to their innings as their opening pair of Sameer Minhas and Devon Conway put together 56 runs until the former was cleaned up by Mohammad Ali on the penultimate delivery of the batting powerplay.
 Minhas made a blazing 22 off just 13 deliveries, hitting three fours and a six.
 Conway was then involved in a

brief 31-run partnership for the second wicket with Mohammad Faig before both got run out in the 10th over, resulting in the three-time champions slipping to 89/3.
 The left-handed opener remained the top-scorer for the United, making 45 off 31 deliveries with the help of seven fours, while Faig made a 14-ball 18, comprising one six.
 The United lost two more wickets in quick succession, as Haider Ali and all-rounder Faheem Ashraf walked back after scoring six and five, respectively, and thus slipped further to 113/5 in 15.3 overs.

PSL 11: Lahore Qalandars replace injured Parvez Hossain with Asalanka



PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: Defending champions Lahore Qalandars have replaced Bangladeshi wicket-keeper-batter Parvez Hossain Emon with Sri Lankan batting all-rounder Charith Asalanka after signing him for the remaining matches of Pakistan Super League (PSL) season 11.
 Bangladesh's Emon had been ruled out of the tournament due to injury.
 The left-handed batter and capable off-spin bowler brings considerable international experience, having represented Sri Lanka across all formats.
 His arrival is expected to bolster the Qalandars' middle order as the team enters the crucial final phase of the competition.
 Emon sustained a shoulder injury during Lahore Qalandars' recent fixture against Multan Sultans in Lahore. The injury occurred following an on-field collision with Asif Ali, resulting in a ligament tear. He had featured in three matches for the Qalandars this season.
 Asalanka is set to join the squad ahead of Lahore Qalandars' upcoming match against Quetta Gladiators on 17th April. The franchise currently sits sixth in the table with two wins and three defeats from five matches. They are coming off a heavy defeat against Peshawar Zalmi, having been bowled out for just 97 runs in 17 overs while chasing 174.

Babar Azam becomes first PSL batter to surpass 4,000-run mark



PEAK POINT
KARACHI: Peshawar Zalmi captain Babar Azam on Saturday made history as he became the first batter in the Pakistan Super League (PSL) history to cross the 4,000-run mark.

The right-handed from 40 deliveries, batter achieved the striking three fours major milestone during their side's fixture against Lahore Qalandars at the National Bank Stadium in Karachi on Saturday.
 Babar played a key innings of 43 runs

highlighting his consistency in the tournament.
 The second-highest run-scorer in PSL history, Lahore Qalandars' aggressive batter Fakhar Zaman, remains well behind with 3,018 runs from 99 matches at a strike rate of 141.82, including 24 fifties and two centuries.
 PSL's leading run-scorers list now stands as follows: Babar Azam (Peshawar Zalmi) — 4,004*
 Fakhar Zaman (Lahore Qalandars) — 3,018
 Mohammad Rizwan (Multan Sultans) — 2,853
 Rilee Rossouw (Quetta Gladiators) — 2,366
 Shoaib Malik (Quetta Gladiators) — 2,350.



ISLAMABAD: A group photo of the winners and runner-ups of the ITF Pakistan Zainab Ali Naqvi Memorial World Juniors Tennis Championship 2026 (Leg-I), at the PTF Tennis Complex.

Farhan-coached Mustafa shines at Sher-e-Punjab Junior Squash

PEAK POINT
LAHORE: Promising young squash player Mustafa Khan, trained under the guidance of coach Muhammad Farhan, delivered an impressive performance at the Sher-e-Punjab National Junior Squash Championship 2026, held at the Punjab Squash Complex. Representing Punjab, Mustafa showcased exceptional skill, determination, and consistency throughout the tournament. His remarkable run saw him reach the final of the U-13 category, where he faced Sindh's Raheel Victor. Despite a spirited effort, Mustafa finished as runner-up after a competitive final, further underlining his growing stature in junior squash.
 Mustafa's performance reflects the quality training and mentorship provided by his coach, Muhammad Farhan, a USA-qualified

Level-III coach. Farhan has played a key role in developing several young players who are steadily



making their mark in national and international competitions. His commitment to the sport is driven by a long-term vision of producing world-class squash players capable of excelling on the international stage.



PESHAWAR: Advisor to Chief Minister for Sports Taj Muhammad Tarand distributing trophy among winning players of National Table Tennis Championship here on Sunday.



Twin Cities dominate labour export sector with 981 recruiters amid oversight concerns

NADEEM TANOLI
ISLAMABAD: Rawalpindi and Islamabad have emerged as the undisputed center of Pakistan's overseas manpower export industry, with official data presented during a National Assembly question answer session revealing that the twin cities host a combined 981 Overseas Employment Promoters (OEPs), accounting for nearly 38 percent of the country's total 2,598 registered recruitment proprietors. The figures highlight the region's dominance in labour export operations, but also expose growing regulatory concerns as a significant number of agencies continue to operate despite expired documentation. According to the official record attached with the parliamentary response,

Rawalpindi alone leads the country with 639 active recruitment proprietors, followed by Islamabad with 342. This concentration places the twin cities far ahead of Karachi, which hosts 558 agencies, and Lahore with 342. Other regions trail significantly, including Malakand with 284, Sialkot region with 211, Peshawar region with 126, Multan region with 66, and smaller numbers in Dera Ghazi Khan, Abbottabad, Quetta and Sukkur. The data confirms that the Rawalpindi regional office oversees the largest manpower recruitment network in Pakistan, driven by its proximity to embassies, foreign missions, and the Protector of Emigrants office. Industry experts say this geographical

advantage has turned the twin cities into the primary gateway for overseas employment, particularly for Gulf and Middle Eastern markets. However, this rapid expansion appears to have outpaced regulatory oversight. Within the Rawalpindi Islamabad corridor alone, more than 190 agencies are operating with expired licences while still being listed as "Valid" in official records. Nationwide, the number rises to 406 proprietors whose licences have already expired but whose status has not been updated. Of these, 138 are based in Rawalpindi and 52 in Islamabad, making the capital region the most affected by outdated licensing records. The backlog is particularly visible in recent

years. A total of 276 agencies have expiry dates in 2024 but continue to appear as valid, while 31 remained unchanged despite expiring in 2023. Older cases further deepen concerns, with agencies still marked valid despite expiry dates ranging from 2020 back to 2006, indicating that some entries have not been updated for more than 14 years. This raises questions about whether the licensing database is being actively monitored or merely maintained as a static record. At the same time, the recruitment industry is experiencing a sharp expansion driven by increasing economic migration. A new wave of licences issued in late 2024 and early 2025 reflects growing demand for overseas jobs as Pakistan

faces economic pressures at home. Despite this growth, the coexistence of new entrants with long standing agencies highlights a widening gap between expansion and compliance. Legacy firms, some dating back decades, continue to operate alongside newly registered companies, but the uniform "Valid" status across all 2,598 entries makes it difficult to distinguish between fully compliant agencies and those operating with outdated or incomplete documentation. The Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, in its official response, maintained that the overseas labour supply system is governed under the Emigration Ordinance, 1979 and monitored by the Bureau

of Emigration and Overseas Employment to ensure transparency, accountability and protection of emigrants. The policy framework includes mandatory Protector of Emigrants clearance, contract verification, insurance coverage and digital facilitation tools such as the e Protector system. However, the data presented in the same response suggests that the effectiveness of these safeguards may be undermined by gaps in licence monitoring and renewal tracking. With nearly 1,000 agencies concentrated in the capital region alone and hundreds operating with expired records nationwide, concerns are growing over whether regulatory mechanisms are keeping pace with the scale and speed of the industry's expansion.

Why Pakistan Brokered the US-Iran Ceasefire

BY: ZHANG CHAOZHE, XIANG SHONG

April 8, 2026. With less than an hour and a half remaining before the "deadline" for military action set by US President Donald Trump, the United States and Iran separately announced their acceptance of a ceasefire proposal put forward by Pakistan. The two sides are scheduled to begin two weeks of negotiations on April 10 in Islamabad, the Pakistani capital. Iran's Ambassador to Pakistan, Reza Moghadam, described Pakistan's mediation as "positive and productive," noting that the mediation efforts are entering a "critical and sensitive" stage.



Islamic world, and a country heavily dependent on energy imports from the region, Pakistan has a strong desire to see an early end to the war. Against this backdrop, Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff, General Asim Munir, has become a key liaison between the US and Iran — using his direct personal relationship with Trump (a telephone communication channel established during the India-Pakistan fire-fights in May 2025) to relay messages between the two sides.

What is the regional backdrop to Pakistan's mediation? What motivates Pakistan to actively mediate? What are the likely trends in post-ceasefire negotiations? The International Communication Center invited Zhang Chaozhe, Director of the Pakistan Study Center at Sichuan University and Associate Research Fellow at the China-South Asia Research Center, to provide analysis.

I. The Regional Background of Pakistan's Mediation

The US-Israeli war against Iran began with Operation Midnight Hammer launched by the US and Israel against Iran in June 2025. By the end of February 2026, the conflict had escalated once again. The war has now lasted more than 40 days and reached a stalemate. Although Iran has suffered heavy casualties and property damage, Mojtaba Khamenei, son of the late Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has smoothly assumed the supreme leadership of Iran, consolidating domestic unity and capacity for resistance. At the same time, Iran has blockaded the Strait of Hormuz, causing global energy prices to soar. The US-Israeli goal of overthrowing Iran's regime has not been achieved, and their actions have drawn widespread international criticism.

As a neighbor to the Middle East, the sole nuclear-armed state in the

On March 31, Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Mohammad Ishaq Dar, made an urgent visit to China, and together with the Chinese side issued a "five-point Initiative." Its core elements can be summarized as "cease, talks, and ensure": an immediate cessation of hostilities, a start of peace talks as soon as possible, security of nonmilitary targets, security of shipping lanes; and primacy of the United Nations Charter. China's just position and its support for Pakistan played an important role in the US and Iran's acceptance of Pakistan's ceasefire proposal.

II. Pakistan's Multiple Motivations for Active Mediation

Pakistan's proactive mediation is by no means impulsive; rather, it is the inevitable result of multiple strategic considerations.

First, deep historical tradition and unique advantages. Pakistan is arguably the most qualified mediator in the Islamic world. In 1971, Pakistan helped then-US Presidential Envoy Henry Kissinger secretly travel via Beijing, paving the way for Richard Nixon's visit to China and the establishment of Sino-US diplomatic relations. In 2020, Pakistan facilitated the US-Taliban peace talks and the withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan.

This cross-ideological and cross-geopolitical mediation capability is unique in the Islamic world. More importantly, Pakistan maintains close relations with both the US and Iran: Pakistan has long-standing military cooperation with the US, and General Munir enjoys a good personal friendship with Trump; Pakistan shares nearly 1,000 kilometers of border with Iran, and nearly one-fifth of Pakistan's 240 million population are Shia Muslims.

Second, China's strategic support and coordination. Pakistan's mediation is not a solo effort. The "Five-Point Initiative" issued during Dar's March 31 visit to China is both a vivid manifestation of the China-Pakistan All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership and a source of strong political support for Pakistan's mediation. China has stressed that the Five-Point Initiative "is open and welcomes the response and participation of all countries and international organizations." The joint issuance of the Five-Point Initiative provides systemic strength to a smaller country's mediation efforts, preventing them from being overwhelmed by major-power rivalry. In the US-Israeli-Iranian war, Pakistan seeks Chinese mediation for the Pakistan-Afghanistan border crisis, allowing it to focus on Middle East affairs — highlighting the highly efficient strategic coordination between China and Pakistan. This model of collaboration between a "regional power and a global power" greatly enhances the legitimacy and influence of Pakistan's mediation.

Third, the best option under the Saudi nuclear protection agreement. In September 2025, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia signed a Joint Strategic Defense Agreement, stipulating that "any attack on either party shall be considered an attack on both parties," with its core principle similar to NATO's Article 5 collective defense clause. Pakistan's Defense Minister Khawaja Asif further stated that Pakistan's nuclear program "can be

made available" to Saudi Arabia — in effect providing a nuclear umbrella for Saudi Arabia. In reality, Pakistan's "nuclear protection" is more a signal to India and Israel. However, after the war broke out, Iran designated Saudi oil facilities as "legitimate targets." Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister issued a strong warning that "patience is not limitless." Saudi-Iranian relations became tense. This means that if Saudi Arabia were to formally enter the war, Pakistan would be forced to make a painful choice between honoring its nuclear security commitment to Saudi Arabia and avoiding being drawn into a war against Iran. Proactively mediating to promote a ceasefire is the only way out of this dilemma.

Fourth, urgent domestic energy security and economic survival needs. Pakistan relies on imports for over 80% of its oil needs, with an annual energy import bill of \$16-18 billion. As of March 2026, its foreign exchange reserves stood at only about \$21.7 billion. After the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, international oil prices surged above \$100 per barrel, and Pakistan's monthly oil import bill jumped to \$600 million. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was forced to introduce a series of austerity measures: a 50% cut in fuel subsidies for official vehicles (excluding ambulances and buses); 50% of public sector employees to work from home (excluding those providing essential services); and a 20% reduction in government department spending. Under such grim circumstances, pushing for a US-Iran ceasefire and the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz is not only a diplomatic achievement for Pakistan but also a necessity for its economic survival.

Fifth, projection of middle-power ambition and domestic authority. Due to his performance in the India-Pakistan conflict and the adoption of the 27th Constitutional Amendment, General Syed Asim Munir has been awarded the rank of Field Marshal and the position of Commander-in-

Chief of the Armed Forces, as well as command over nuclear forces. This mediation effort has become his international debut, "stepping from behind the curtain into the spotlight." Successfully brokering a deal would not only consolidate his domestic authority but also greatly enhance Pakistan's voice in the Islamic world and globally. As the sole nuclear-armed state in the Islamic world, Pakistan has long aspired to become a true "middle power" — playing an irreplaceable balancing role between the US and China, between Saudi Arabia and Iran, and between East and West. If this mediation leads to a historic peace agreement, it will undoubtedly establish Pakistan as a global mediation power.

III. Ceasefire Is Easy, Peace Is Hard

Although a ceasefire agreement has been reached, the prospects for future US-Iran negotiations are not optimistic.

First, Trump's unpredictability is a major variable. Trump has repeatedly claimed that the US military "completely destroyed" Iran's nuclear capabilities, but a classified assessment by the Defense Intelligence Agency reportedly showed that the airstrikes only "delayed Iran's nuclear program by a few months." On April 7, just one day before accepting the ceasefire proposal, Trump issued a new threat to Iran, saying "Tonight, the whole civilization will die, never to be brought back again." Given Trump's style, if negotiations hit a snag, he could easily resort to military pressure again to divert domestic political attention.

Second, Iran's sense of precaution against "being deceived" is unprecedentedly heightened. In recent years, Iran has been deceived multiple times by the US, with the US launching attacks against Iran while the two sides were negotiating. After Iran's former Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was killed in US-Israeli airstrikes, Iran has become highly vigilant toward any US proposal. An Iranian official said ear-

lier that the prevailing view in Iran is that "the US request for negotiations is another deception, aimed at launching another attack when we are off guard." Iran has now proposed a 10-point plan, with core demands including the lifting of all US sanctions, the release of frozen assets, and the withdrawal of US combat forces, while stressing that "negotiations are a continuation of the battlefield" — indicating that Iran is prepared to continue fighting if talks fail.

Third, Israel's disruptive intentions cannot be ignored. Even after the ceasefire took effect, Israel continued its strikes on Iran. Israel has expressed concern over the US acceptance of Pakistan's proposed temporary ceasefire, claiming it still has more targets on its list and seeking to achieve its objectives through military action in Iran. For Israel, the ultimate goal is to completely destroy Iran's nuclear capabilities. Any diplomatic arrangement that would allow Iran to make a "dignified exit" runs counter to its strategic interests. During the two weeks of negotiations, Israel is highly likely to disrupt the peace process by intensifying military pressure.

In summary, Pakistan has demonstrated impressive diplomatic skill and strategic resolve in its mediation efforts. However, whether it can truly pull the US and Iran out of the quagmire of war remains to be seen. The two-week ceasefire window is both a valuable opportunity and potentially just the calm before the storm.

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Aurangzeb leaves for US to attend World Bank-IMF spring meetings



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb on Saturday departed for the United States to participate in the World Bank Group-IMF Spring Meetings 2026, scheduled to be held in Washington, DC, from April 13 to 18, 2026.

Prior to the formal Spring Meetings, the finance minister will visit Boston to attend the Pakistan Conference at Harvard University, where he will engage with leading academics, policymakers, and members of the Pakistani diaspora, and share Pakistan's economic outlook, reform trajectory, and growth

prospects. During his visit, the Finance Minister will represent Pakistan at important events organised by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank Group, and will participate in a wide range of multilateral and bilateral engagements with global financial leaders, development partners, and policymakers.

On the sidelines of the Spring Meetings, the Finance Minister is scheduled to hold bilateral meetings with senior leadership of international financial institutions, including Anna Bjerde, Managing Director (Operations), World Bank Group; Makhtar Diop, Managing Director, International Finance Corporation (IFC) and Tsutomu Yamamoto, Managing Director, Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA).

He will also meet senior IMF leadership, including Dan Katz, First Deputy Managing Director, Nigel Clarke, Deputy Managing Director of the IMF and Jihad Azour, Director

of the Middle East and Central Asia Department at the IMF to discuss Pakistan's macroeconomic outlook, reform progress, and future cooperation.

As part of his engagements with the United States Administration, the Finance Minister will meet senior officials of the US State Department and the US Department of the Treasury, as well as, Jamieson Greer, the United States Trade Representative (USTR) to further strengthen bilateral economic cooperation and discuss support for Pakistan's reform agenda.

He will also engage with senior representatives of global financial institutions and corporations, including leadership from major international investment institutions and banks such as Franklin Templeton, Rothschild & Co., Citibank, and JP Morgan Chase, as well as representatives of leading technology and policy platforms. In addition, Senator Aurangzeb will meet key counterparts and financial leaders.

Aseefa Bhutto urges public cooperation in polio campaign

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: First Lady Bibi Aseefa Bhutto Zardari Sunday called on families and communities across Pakistan to fully cooperate with the upcoming nationwide polio vaccination campaign, set to begin on 13 April, and ensure that every child is protected from the disease.

The campaign aims to vaccinate over 45 million children under the age of five across all provinces and regions as part of the ongoing national effort to eradicate polio. Pakistan, she noted, stands at a critical juncture in its fight against the virus. Years of sustained effort have brought the country closer to eradication, with the coming phase representing the final stretch where reaching every child is essential.

From 13 to 19 April, frontline health workers will conduct door-



to-door visits, covering urban centres as well as remote communities. In addition to administering polio drops, children will also receive Vitamin A supplementation to support immunity and healthy growth.

The First Lady highlighted measurable progress. In 2025, 31 cases of polio were reported nationwide, while in 2026 only one case has been recorded so far. She cautioned, however, that the threat persists. As long as the virus exists anywhere, it remains a risk everywhere. She stressed the need for consistency.

"Gagarin's feat ushered in a new era of space exploration": Albert P. Khorev



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Russian Ambassador Albert P. Khorev on Sunday said Yuri Gagarin's historic spaceflight marked the beginning of a new era in human history, symbolizing mankind's quest for scientific progress and technological excellence. He expressed these views while addressing a wreath-laying ceremony held at the monument of Yuri Gagarin in Fatima Jinnah Park to commemorate the 65th anniversary of the first human spaceflight. Speaking on the occasion, Ambassador Albert P. Khorev termed April 12, 1961 a defining moment in human history, when Yuri Gagarin completed the first orbit of Earth aboard Vostok-1, ushering in a new era of space

exploration. He said the historic achievement symbolized humanity's determination to achieve technological excellence and pursue ambitious goals. The ambassador paid tribute to the collective efforts of millions across the former Soviet Union whose contributions made the mission possible, adding that the milestone continued to inspire generations worldwide. He also recalled that, as a tribute to the Soviet Union's achievements in space exploration, a special session of the United Nations General Assembly in 2011 adopted a Russian-initiated resolution proclaiming April 12 as the International Day of Human Space Flight. The resolution was co-sponsored by more than 60 countries worldwide.

He further said that six months ago, in November 2025, during the 10th session of the Russia-Pakistan Intergovernmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific and Technical Cooperation, its co-chairs, Russian Minister of Energy Sergey Tsivilev and Federal Minister for Energy (Power Division) Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari, inaugurated a bust of Yuri Gagarin at the same site. He noted that it was the first monument to a Russian personality in Pakistan.

President Zardari congratulates Nizar Amidi on election as President of Iraq

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari, Sunday, congratulated Nizar Amidi on his election as President of the Republic of Iraq, conveying his best wishes for his success in the new role.

"In his message, the President expressed confidence that under President Amidi's leadership, Iraq would continue its efforts towards stability, progress.

Bilawal hopes ceasefire will become solution to regional disputes

PEAK POINT

KARACHI: Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari said the world's attention remains fixed on talks held in Islamabad, terming Pakistan's role as host as a major achievement. In an interview, he said he hoped the ceasefire would lay the foundation for a lasting settlement of disputes in the region. He expressed gratitude.

Governor Kundi assures support to tobacco growers

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Tobacco Action Committee called on Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi here on Sunday and discussed the challenges faced by tobacco growers in the province.

The delegation, comprising Bilal Khan Tarakai, Irshad Khan and other office-bearers, informed the Governor that farmers in Charsadda, Mardan, Swabi, Nowshera, Buner and Mansehra were facing severe difficulties due to excessive taxation and low prices of tobacco.

They said that instead of resolving their issues, government policies were aggravating their problems, adding that taxes



were being increased every year. The delegation maintained that despite contributing over Rs 3.25 billion to the provincial economy, the current policies were forcing farmers to abandon tobacco cultivation. Governor Faisal Karim Kundi expressed full solidarity with the growers and acknowledged tobacco as an important crop of the province.

He assured the delegation of his complete support and said that efforts would be made to encourage farmers.

Work on KP motorways, expressways projects to be expedited: CM Afridi

PEAK POINT

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Sohail Afridi chaired an important meeting of the Communication and Works Department at the Chief Minister's House, Peshawar, during which a detailed review was undertaken of ongoing and proposed development projects relating to roads and other infrastructure across the province. During the meeting, the Chief Minister directed the relevant authorities to propose, for inclusion in the forthcoming Annual Development Programme, a dedicated road infrastructure scheme aimed at improving interconec-



tivity among the merged tribal districts. He stated that enhanced connectivity would facilitate ease of movement, accelerate socio economic development, and promote greater regional integration in these areas. The Chief Minister further instructed that the pace of work on provincial motorway and expressway projects be expedited, reiterating that practical measures.



Pakistan Embassy in Beijing co-hosted with the renowned China International Cultural Communication Center (CICCC) a Star Gala to mark 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations between China and Pakistan in Beijing.

Ji leader urges U.S and Iran to continue peace talks

ABDUS SALAM BAITAB

BANNU: Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami South Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Professor Muhammad Ibrahim Khan, said that negotiations between Iran and the United States should continue, as halting the dialogue would push the region further toward destruction. If the United States has no issue with Israel's nuclear weapons, it

should not object to the nuclear capabilities of Iran and Pakistan either. He stated that the biggest enemies of world peace are the United States and Israel themselves, while the United Nations is merely a silent spectator. Muslim rulers, he said, have become subservient to the United States. The true strength of Muslims lies in Islam, but the rulers are unaware of it and

are the biggest obstacle in its path. He added that youth are not raw material but the real asset of an Islamic revolution. He expressed these views while addressing a gathering of friends and workers of Islami Jamiat-e-Talaba Bannu at Darul Uloom Islamia Bannu. Others who addressed the gathering included Secretary General of Jamaat-e-Islami

South Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, local Nazim of Islami Jamiat-e-Talaba Bannu, Secretary General Muhammad Sohail, District Nazim Aqib Hussain, Secretary General Muhammad Saad, and others. Professor Ibrahim Khan further said that Israel has been embedded like a dagger in the back of the Muslim Ummah, and the United.

Residents irk over excessive increase in medicines prices

ABDUS SALAM BAITAB

BANNU: The excessive increase in the prices of medicines has made medical treatment difficult for the common and poor people. The government should waive the taxes imposed on medicines in order to provide relief to the public so that ordinary people can easily afford their treatment. The purpose of free medical camps is

to ensure that people can receive free treatment. These views were expressed by District Chairman of All Pakistan Chemists Association Muhammad Alam Khan, Chairman of Himmat Welfare Organization Dr. Abdul Rauf Qureshi, renowned physician Dr. Umar Orakzai, Jamal Qamar, and Lady Doctor Naima Abuzar while talking to the media at the

inauguration of a free medical camp held at a private clinic on Women's Hospital Road. They said that under the Constitution of Pakistan, it is the responsibility of the government to ensure the provision of basic health facilities. However, it is unfortunate that in the country, common people are deprived of basic healthcare due to expensive medicines. The main

reason behind this is the excessive taxes imposed on medicines. There is a huge difference between the prices of medicines in neighboring countries and in Pakistan. They demanded that medicines should be declared tax-free in the country for the welfare of the public, which would directly benefit ordinary citizens. They added that today's free medical camp is part.