



IMF MD meets Aurangzeb, hails Pakistan's reform progress, macroeconomic stability



Leghari, Sam Waldoock discuss bilateral cooperation, regional stability



Pakistan, UK launch initiative to strengthen geoscientific capacity

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PM Shehbaz meets Qatar emir, stresses importance of de-escalation, dialogue amid regional situation

PEAK POINT

QATAR: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday met with Qatar's Emir Tamim bin Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani and stressed the importance of de-escalation and dialogue amid the ongoing regional situation.

According to the Foreign Office (FO), the prime minister, accompanied by a high-level delegation, is undertaking official visits to Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Türkiye from April 15 to 18.

The meeting with the Qatari emir took place shortly after his arrival in Doha, where he landed after concluding his trip to Saudi Arabia.

"I had a most warm and cordial meeting with my dear brother, Amir of Qatar His

Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, in Doha today," PM Shehbaz said on X. He stated: "We discussed the evolving regional situation, particularly in the Gulf region, and underscored the importance of de-escalation, dialogue, and close international coordination to ensure peace and stability."

"I reiterated Pakistan's strong condemnation of attacks targeting Qatar and other regional countries, and conveyed our full solidarity with the brotherly people of Qatar," the premier added.

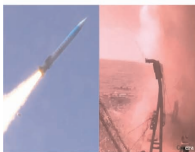
The prime minister said he thanked Sheikh Tamim on behalf of the people of Pakistan for the "exceptionally warm and generous gesture of sending Qatar's fighter jets to escort our aircraft."



Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets Amir of Qatar, H.H Sheikh Bin Hamad Al Thani in Doha.

Pakistan Navy successfully test fires locally developed anti-ship ballistic missile: ISPR

PEAK POINT



ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Navy has successfully fired a locally developed anti-ship ballistic missile to engage targets at an extended range, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR)

said in a statement on Thursday. "In a resolute display of preparedness and precision-strike capability, Pakistan Navy successfully conducted a live weapon firing of an indigenously developed ship-launched anti-ship missile, accurately engaging its target with high speed at extended range," the ISPR said. It added that Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf, along with leading scientists and engineers, witnessed the missile firing. The missile integrates a cutting-edge guidance system and advanced maneuverability, enabling it to "evade threats, adapt to dynamic conditions, and deliver with precision and lethality". The successful launch of the locally developed missile underscores the "fusion of technological excellence and operational expertise", it added. "This missile firing is a manifestation of the Pakistan Navy's commitment to maintaining credible sea-based deterrence in a conventional domain and ensuring maritime security and stability."

Field Marshal Munir meets Iran's top civil and military leaders in Tehran

PEAK POINT



TEHRAN: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) and Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir visited Iran armed forces' Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters in Tehran, according to Iranian media reports on Thursday.

Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters Commander Major General Ali Abdollahi welcomed the army chief upon his arrival.

Field Marshal Munir's visit to Iran is part of Pakistan's ongoing efforts to turn Tehran's two-week ceasefire with the US into a lasting peace.

Field Marshal Munir and Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, along with a Pakistani delegation, arrived in Tehran on Wednesday, where they were received by Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi.

During the visit, the army chief held separate meetings with Araghchi and Iran's Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf. Both Iranian leaders were part of the delegation that held direct talks with a US delegation in Islamabad last weekend. Pakistan mediated the talks in its federal capital on April 11 after Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif facilitated a two-week ceasefire between the two sides on April 8. Before the high-level Pakistani delegation's visit, a spokesperson for the Iranian foreign ministry said that it would convey messages from the US side.

No date set for second round of US-Iran talks, FO says

PEAK POINT



ISLAMABAD: No dates have been decided for the second round of talks between the United States and Iran, FO spokesperson Tahir Andrabi said on Thursday.

"Nuclear issues are among the subjects being discussed by the countries," he said while responding to a question during his weekly briefing.

"We will not comment on the positions of Tehran and the parties involved in the negotiations. This is part of the parties' trust in us," Andrabi said, urging the media to refrain from speculations.

The FO spokesperson further noted that the talks were ongoing with a high level of trust and "secrecy". "It is essential for us to keep the negotiations confidential," he added. When asked about the arrival and composition of the delegations for a second round of dialogue, he said, "Who will come, how large the delegation will be, who will stay, and who will leave — this is for the parties to decide." "The details and information of the negotiations that we had were entrusted to us by the negotiating parties," he added.

AJK police arrest suspected RAW agent in Rawalakot

PEAK POINT

AZAD KASHMIR: Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) police claimed on Thursday that they had arrested a suspected agent of India's Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) in Rawalakot, who had been blackmailed into working for the foreign intelligence agency.

According to AJK Inspector General of Police (IGP) Liaqat Ali Malik, one suspect had been arrested who had allegedly been blackmailed into working for RAW.

His handler, whom Malik said used a Facebook account.

Security arrangements in Islamabad in overdrive amid possible 2nd round of US-Iran talks

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Security arrangements in Islamabad were in overdrive on Thursday as speculation continued about the federal capital possibly hosting a second round of talks between the US and Iran.

Senior police officials said a meeting — chaired by the deputy inspector general of logistics — was held last night, during which a shortage of manpower in connection with the security arrangements came to light.

Officials have also begun carpeting the Islamabad Expressway to remove bumps and potholes in a bid to ensure a smooth drive from Nur Khan Airbase to the Red Zone, they said.

Meanwhile, police in

nel from Punjab police, and Faisalabad, the officials told the media per-



Islamabad on Thursday, the senior officials said.

Accommodation for the additional force has been arranged at different locations, including Liaqat Gymnasium and a school in F-7, they added. The remaining force from Punjab was likely to be sent from different districts, including Rawalpindi, Sargodha, Gujranwala, Dera Ghazi Khan, Multan, Sahiwal,

sons. Additionally, troops of Rangers and Federal Constabulary have also been sought, as per the police officials.

Security will be deployed at entry and exit points, pickets, sensitive areas and installations. The capital has also been placed on high alert, the police officials added, with the Special Branch and Counter-terrorism Department's intelligence

wing being asked to mount surveillance and intelligence around slums, wooded areas and nullahs, as well as the city's outskirts, bus terminals, and entry and exit points.

Hotels and guest houses within the capital have also been put under strict surveillance, with the police being directed to check the records of guests and visitors. Police have also told to set up pickets to monitor suspicious activity, the officials said.

Pakistan hosted direct Iran-US talks in Islamabad on Saturday and Sunday, marking the highest engagement between the two sides since 1979. The talks ended without an agreement despite nearly 21 hours of talks. While no breakthrough was achieved, both sides indicated that the diplomatic channel remained open.

3 abducted polio workers recovered in Bannu after joint efforts of police, jirga

PEAK POINT

BANNU: Three polio workers abducted by militants on Wednesday have been safely recovered through coordinated efforts by the police and local jirga elders, police said. Under the leadership of the Bannu district police officer (DPO), the police initiated immediate action following the incident. A comprehensive strategy was adopted by taking local jirga elders into confidence. Due to the successful mediation by the jirga and the professional competence of the police, the abducted workers were safely recovered. Bannu DPO Yasir Afridi, while confirming the development, told Dawn that "with a lot of efforts, they have been recovered".

The three polio workers were abducted by unidentified militants in the Jhandu Khel area on Wednesday during the ongoing anti-polio campaign, sparking serious concern in the area.

Earlier this week, a police constable was martyred and four others were injured in an attack on a law enforcement party en route to provide security for polio teams in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Hangu district. The incident took place on the first day of a nationwide vaccination campaign taking place from April 13 to 19.



SPORTS



PSL 11: Sameer, Conway power Islamabad United to dominant win over Karachi Kings



PEAK POINT Conway yielded 93 runs in 10 overs. Minhas dominated the opening stand with a blistering 58 off 36 deliveries, studded with 10 fours, until getting stumped off Kings' stand-in captain Moeen Ali on the final delivery of the 10th over. The United then suffered another jolt 14 deliveries as their in-form top-order batter Mohammad Faiz could muster five before falling victim to Hasan Ali in the 13th over. Conway was then joined by skipper Shadab Khan in the middle, and the duo ensured retaining United's momentum with an unbeaten 43-run partnership, which eventually steered the visitors to glory in 16 overs. The left-handed opener contributed with an unbeaten 53 off 36 deliveries, laced with six fours and a six, while Shadab struck two sixes and a four on his way to a 16-ball 31 not out. For the Kings, only Moeen and Hasan could pick up a wicket apiece. Minhas claimed the Player of the Match award after guiding United with 58 off 36. United captain Shadab Khan's decision to field first proved beneficial as the home side could accumulate 150/6 in their 20 overs despite Hendricks's gutsy knock. The Kings got off to a dismal start to their innings as emerging batter Saad Baig, who was promoted to the opening position, could score a five-ball six before falling victim to Richard Gleeson in the second over with just seven runs on the board. Following the early stutter, returning Jason Roy was joined by Reeza Hendricks in the middle, and the duo stabilised the Kings' innings by putting together 62 runs for the second off 39 deliveries until United captain Shadab got rid of the latter in the ninth over.

Layla Banaras: Bridging two worlds, building Pakistan's women's football future



PEAK POINT KARACHI: In the evolving landscape of Pakistan women's football, diaspora talent is playing an increasingly important role, and few embody that shift more clearly than Layla Banaras. Born in Birmingham in 2006 to a Pakistani father and English mother, Banaras has already carved out a professional pathway in English football while simultaneously becoming an important part of Pakistan's national team setup. A midfielder for FA Women's National League South club Lewes, she represents a growing generation of British South Asian women breaking into elite football environments. Her journey is not just about football development; it is also about identity, belonging, and opportunity across two cultures. "It's like two different worlds coming together, so it has really taught me a lot about myself and about the world, really, and I think I'm so grateful that I was brought up in that sort of household." That dual identity has helped shape her outlook, both as a player and as a person navigating the demands of professional sport. Like many footballers, Banaras' earliest steps came far away from stadium lights.

Mikael storms into singles, doubles finals at Subh-e-Nau ITF Junior Championship



PEAK POINT ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's rising tennis star Mikael Ali Baig delivered an outstanding performance to book his place in both singles and doubles finals of the Subh-e-Nau ITF Pakistan Junior International Tennis Championship (Leg-II), underway at the PTF Tennis Complex. Organized by the Pakistan Tennis Federation, the international junior event has attracted 41 players—22 boys and 19 girls—from 15 countries, highlighting Pakistan's growing footprint in global junior tennis. In a gripping boys' singles semifinal, Mikael Ali Baig edged past fellow Pakistani Abubakar Talha in a three-set thriller, winning 7-6(2), 6-7(5), 6-4 to secure his place in the final. He will now face Sri Lanka's Ganuka Fernando, who defeated Pakistan's Amir Mazari in straight sets, 6-1, 6-4. Mikael storms into singles, doubles finals at Subh-e-Nau Junior Championship

PFF-BSS alliance aims to revolutionise grassroots football



Pakistan Customs, Punjab-2, Pakhtunkhwa, Army reach U-18 Hockey semifinals

PEAK POINT ISLAMABAD: The Youth Under-18 National Hockey Championship 2026, being organized by the Pakistan Hockey Federation, witnessed thrilling quarterfinal encounters at the Naseer Bunda Hockey Stadium, with Pakistan Customs, Punjab-2, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), and Pakistan Army advancing to the semifinals. In the first quarterfinal, Pakistan Customs outclassed Punjab-1 with a convincing 6-2 victory. Assam Haider led the charge with a brace, while Abdullah, Usman, Yahya, and Umar contributed one goal each. For Punjab-1, Waqas and Ali managed to score one goal apiece. Pakistan Customs, Punjab-2, Pakhtunkhwa, Army reach U-18 Hockey semifinals. The second quarterfinal saw Punjab-2 dominate Punjab-3, registering a comprehensive 6-0 win. Abu Sufyan and Farhan scored two goals each, while Hanain and Abdul Sami added one goal each to seal an emphatic victory. The third quarterfinal between Khyber exceptional form, thrashing Azad Jammu and Kashmir 10-0. Muzammil Saeed scored a hat-trick, while Shoaib and Hassan netted two goals each. Bilal Umair and Ammar added one goal each to complete the rout. A large number of hockey enthusiasts and officials witnessed the matches. The championship, featuring 16 teams from across the country, will continue until April 19, with the top teams competing for the coveted title.

Pakistan athletes dominate South Asian Ju-Jitsu with unprecedented duo sweep



PEAK POINT LAHORE: Pakistan national team delivered a historic performance at the South Asian Ju-Jitsu Championship 2026 in Digana, Sri Lanka, sweeping both gold and silver medals across all duo categories to establish complete regional dominance. In a remarkable show of skill, coordination and discipline, Pakistani duos outclassed their rivals throughout the competition, often facing each other in the finals while other nations competed for bronze. The unprecedented clean sweep not only underlined Pakistan's growing stature in ju-jitsu but also highlighted the depth of talent within its national programme. Across two days of competition, Pakistan amassed an impressive haul of 12 gold, five silver and five bronze medals in duo events alone. In the adult categories, standout performances came from pairs such as Muhammad Ali Rashid and Yousuf Ali, who clinched gold in the men's classic duo, while Rashid partnered Isra Waseem to secure top honours in the mixed category. In the women's and mixed events, athletes including Kainat Arif and Rishaal Khan also contributed podium finishes, further strengthening Pakistan's dominance.



Privilege motion moved over fake degrees, delayed aid expose governance crisis in Bait ul Mal

NADEEM TANOLI
ISLAMABAD: A Senate Sub committee has moved to initiate a privilege motion against senior officials after revelations of fake degree investigations and delays in aid distribution exposed serious governance lapses in Pakistan Bait ul Mal (PBM), raising concerns over the handling of programs meant for the country's most vulnerable. The Senate Sub Committee on Poverty

Alleviation and Social Safety, chaired by Rubina Qaimkhani, expressed strong displeasure over the absence of the concerned Minister and Secretary, terming their non appearance a major obstacle to effective parliamentary oversight. Members observed that failure to attend such meetings undermines accountability in critical social welfare institutions. Officials informed the committee that a formal inquiry has been launched

into fake degree cases involving three officers, with investigations currently underway. Lawmakers stressed that such incidents raise serious questions about internal verification mechanisms and institutional integrity, calling for strict action to restore public trust. The committee also took serious notice of delays in procurement and distribution of essential aid items, including wheelchairs and sewing machines intended for under-

privileged beneficiaries. Members noted that inquiries into these matters have been completed but remain pending approval at the Managing Director's office, further delaying relief to deserving individuals. Terming the situation unacceptable, the committee emphasized that administrative inefficiencies directly affect vulnerable segments of society who rely on timely assistance. It warned that delays in welfare distribution defeat the pur-

pose of social safety programs and erode confidence in public institutions. In response to these issues, and following a request from the Additional Secretary, members decided to move a privilege motion against the concerned Minister and the Managing Director, signaling a rare escalation aimed at ensuring accountability at the highest level. The chair directed officials to submit a comprehensive and final report on all pending

inquiries, while postponing remaining agenda items to the next meeting to allow for a more detailed review focused on transparency and corrective action. The meeting was attended by Senators Jan Muhammad and Dost Ali Jeesar, as the committee underscored the need for stronger governance, timely service delivery, and strict enforcement of accountability within Pakistan Bait ul Mal.

Essential Medicine Stocks Dwindling: PIMS and Polyclinic warn of service collapse amid funding cuts

BY: ALINA JANAT
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ISLAMABAD: Federal government hospitals are facing a deepening healthcare crisis after austerity measures led by the Ministry of Finance resulted in significant funding constraints, raising serious concerns about patient care and service delivery. According to informed sources, the Ministry of Finance has reduced substantial allocations from the budgets of key federal hospitals. Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) has reportedly experienced a cut exceeding Rs 390 million. Similar reductions have been applied to Polyclinic Hospital, National Institute of Rehabilitation Medicine, and Federal Government Hospital, prompting concern across the public healthcare system. Available official correspondence indicates that the austerity measures include a 20 percent cut in fourth-quarter fund releases and restrictions on the purchase of certain equipment and supplies (durables). Hospital

officials caution that these measures could have serious implications for service delivery if not addressed. In a formal communication, the administration of PIMS approached the Ministry of National Health Services, requesting that the matter be taken up with the Ministry of Finance and seeking exemption for hospitals from certain austerity restrictions. The communication emphasizes that healthcare institutions require consistent funding to maintain uninterrupted patient care. Sources indicate that the funding limitations have begun to affect operations. Stocks of essential medicines at PIMS are reportedly sufficient for approximately one month, while procurement of surgical supplies has slowed due to financial constraints. The situation is further compounded by pressures on fuel resources required for generators and ambulances, which are critical for emergency operations. Officials note that the continuation of free medicine provision—initiated under directives of the Prime Minister—may face

challenges if current financial conditions persist. A senior official, speaking on condition of anonymity, stated that sustaining basic treatment services could become increasingly difficult without timely financial support. Financial records suggest that PIMS was already managing a deficit of approximately Rs 1.8 billion prior to the recent measures. The additional financial adjustments, along with expenditure restrictions, may further strain operational capacity. Healthcare experts and administrators are calling for an urgent policy review, emphasizing that sustained funding is essential to ensure continuity of public healthcare services, particularly for low-income patients who rely heavily on government hospitals. The situation has intensified calls for authorities to reassess the policy framework, with growing concerns that prolonged financial constraints could significantly impact healthcare delivery if timely interventions are not made.

CDA approves land for Jinnah Medical Complex, extends RWMC agreements

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) on Thursday approved the allotment of additional land in sector H-11/1 for the proposed Jinnah Medical Complex and Research Centre, while also extending agreements with the Rawalpindi Waste Management Company (RWMC) for waste disposal operations. The decisions were taken during the fourth CDA Board meeting of 2026, chaired by CDA Chairman and Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Sohail Ashraf, at the authority's headquarters. The meeting was attended by senior officials, including Member Administration Efstandyar Baloch, Member Estate Zaman Wattoo, Member Finance and Planning and Design Muhammad Umair, Member Engineering Syed Nafasat Raza, and Punjab University Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Muhammad Ali.

Opinion & Editorial

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IMF's forecast

Fresh projections from IMF have offered a sobering, yet not entirely discouraging, snapshot of Pakistan's economic trajectory. According to the global lender, economic growth is now expected to settle at 3.5% in the next fiscal year, down from earlier estimates, while inflation is projected to rise to 8.4%. In isolation, these figures may appear underwhelming. Placed within the context of a volatile global environment and heightened regional tensions, however, they signal that stability is holding, even if momentum remains constrained. The downward revision in growth is primarily the result of external pressures rather than a collapse of domestic fundamentals. The ongoing conflict in the Middle East, coupled with oil price assumptions ranging between \$100 and \$120 per barrel in adverse scenarios, has forced the IMF to recalibrate expectations globally. For Pakistan, the implications are particularly acute. With nearly 90% of its energy imports sourced from the region, any disruption translates directly into higher import bills and constrained fiscal space. Yet, there is a degree of resilience embedded in the projections. The IMF has retained the current year's growth forecast at 3.6%, aligning with other international assessments and suggesting that the economy has, at the very least, avoided slippage.

RECENT events have given a new twist to history. A Chicago-born pontiff from Rome has publicly rebuked an American Christian crusader. Normally, popes issue insipid encyclicals or harmless homilies. In 1968, for example, Pope Paul VI issued *Of Human Life*—a justification of the Catholic church's opposition to methods of birth control. (One sceptic wondered how a celibate bachelor felt qualified to guide married couples on such an intimate matter.) Previous popes chose not to interfere even when human rights were being violated. In the 1940s, Pope Pius XII refrained from any condemnation of the Nazis or Stalin's pogroms. Hitler let Mussolini handle the Vatican. Stalin silenced the pope with the cutting question: "How many divisions has the Pope?" This Easter, Pope Leo XIV felt impelled to speak out against a fellow countryman—the US Secretary of War Pete Hegseth—who had appealed to "Almighty God who trains our hands for war and our fingers for battle" (Psalm 144). On Palm Sunday, Pope Leo XIV, in the name of the same God and quoting from the same Holy Bible, reproached Hegseth: "When you spread out your hands in prayer, I hide my eyes from you; even when you offer many prayers, I am not listening. Your hands are full of blood!" (Isaiah 1:15). Did Trump deliberately

send Vance to Islamabad to fail? It is perhaps telling that the recent negotiations between the US and Iran held in Islamabad on April 11 did not begin with a prayer from any faith. It might have given the talks a chance. Instead, the divine and Israel were both noticeably absent. The composition of the US team revealed non-seriousness. Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner are Jewish real estate developers from New York. They had disappointed the Iranians twice earlier. They have a record of being midwives who specialise in lucrative abortions. Nevertheless, Iran accepted them, hoping that Vice-President J.D. Vance might bring some gravitas and maturity to the table. They were wrong. President Trump sabotaged the Islamabad talks even before they had begun by announcing: "If it doesn't happen, I'm blaming J.D. Vance. If it does happen, I'm taking full credit." With that, Trump ensured the failure of his VP, just as president Joe Biden, by delaying his withdrawal from the presidential race in 2024, scotched his VP Kamala Harris' chances. It has been reported that, during a White House meeting on Feb 12, Vance sided with CIA director Rattcliffe who described Benjamin Netanyahu's proposal to attack Iran as "farcical". Vance told Trump: "This is a bad idea, but if you want to do it, I'll support you." He

Why students cheat

Muhammad Ali Falak
On social media, a wave of videos recently exposed students using advanced gadgets to cheat in examinations. While the focus has been on policing misconduct, a deeper issue remains unexamined: students are not disengaging from education because of a lack of discipline, but because they increasingly question its value. For most students in Pakistan, particularly those enrolled in public institutions, education is not pursued for the love of knowledge—it is pursued as a means of survival. They enter universities not to explore ideas or develop intellectual depth, but to break free from the cycle of poverty that defines their circumstances. Within this reality, classrooms are not spaces of curiosity but arenas of economic urgency. Students study not to understand, but to pass; not to learn, but to qualify. The goal is not enlightenment—it is employment. Similarly, contrary to popular perception, the poor do not stay out of school because they are ignorant, regressive, or unaware of education's value. They stay out or drop out because, for them, education often does not make economic sense. The crisis is not one of awareness. It is one of the incentives. "Sir, if I study, who will earn?" The question did not come from a textbook. It came from a 15-year-old boy standing outside a government school in rural Punjab. His father was ill. His younger siblings depend on him. For him, education is not a dream deferred; it is income denied. Policy discourse, however, prefers a simpler story. The underlying assumption is that if supply exists, demand will follow. But this assumption collapses when confronted with lived reality. For low-income households, education is an investment, not a slogan. And like any investment, it comes with costs. The most immediate cost is income foregone. Courtesy Tribune

IMF MD meets Aurangzeb, hails Pakistan's reform progress, macroeconomic stability



PEAK POINT
WASHINGTON: International Monetary Fund (IMF) Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva has commended Pakistan's "continued progress on economic reforms" under the Fund's programme and the resulting macroeconomic stability. She met with Finance Minister

Muhammad Aurangzeb on the sidelines of the IMF-World Bank Spring Meetings 2026 in Washington, where the finance czar had arrived on Monday. During his visit, Aurangzeb was expected to participate in over 50 high-level engagements from April 13 to 18. "Great to see Aurangzeb at the IMF Meetings!" Georgieva said on X early on Thursday.

"Strong programme implementation has helped Pakistan maintain macroeconomic stability and build confidence," the IMF official said. She emphasised that "sound policies and deeper structural reforms remain key to sustaining growth and raising welfare for all Pakistanis". In its statement on the interaction, the finance ministry recalled Georgieva's remarks, noting that she "appreciated Pakistan's continued progress on economic reforms". "The remarks reflect growing international recognition of Pakistan's reform efforts and its commitment to maintaining economic stability through prudent policymaking," the ministry noted. A day ago, Aurangzeb also met the IMF's First Deputy Managing Director, Dan Katz, and briefed him on the immediate impact of the ongoing Middle East conflict on Pakistan's economy and outlined the government's policy response. The finance minister also held a "constructive meeting" with Fitch Ratings on the sidelines.

Leghari, Sam Waldock discuss bilateral cooperation, regional stability

PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Energy (Power Division), Sardar Awais Ahmed Khan Leghari on Thursday met Development Director, at the British High Commission Sam Waldock and discussed bilateral cooperation and the evolving geo-strategic situation in the region. The minister appreciated the United Kingdom's recognition of Pakistan's constructive and pivotal role in facilitating a ceasefire between the United States and Iran, as well as hosting peace negotiations. He stated that acknowledged efforts reflected positively on its continued engagement for regional peace and stability, said a press release. Sam Waldock commended the



Government of Pakistan's overall approach and its effective response in managing the complex situation arising from Iran-US tensions. He noted that Pakistan has demonstrated resilience and sound judgment in maintaining stability across key sectors despite challenging circumstances. He further stated that the United Kingdom attached high importance to macroeconomic stability in Pakistan and remained committed to continued engagement and support in this regard. The Federal Minister.

Pakistan, UK launch initiative to strengthen geoscientific capacity

PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik, along with British High Commissioner to Pakistan Jane Marriott, on Thursday launched a capacity-building initiative aimed at strengthening Pakistan's geoscientific capabilities and supporting the development of the country's mineral sector. The programme was formally inaugurated at the Geological Survey of Pakistan (GSP), marking a significant step in Pakistan-UK collaboration, said a news release. The initiative is being delivered through the UK-funded REMIT programme in partnership with International Geoscience Services (IGS), a UK-based geoscience consultancy with extensive experience in supporting geological survey organisations worldwide. The programme will run from April to July 2026 and aims to enhance GSP's technical capacity through hands-on training aligned with international standards. Speaking at the event, the Minister expressed gratitude to the British High Commissioner for her support and said the

timing of the initiative was particularly appropriate. He said that recent geopolitical developments and conflicts have once again exposed the vulnerabilities associated with excessive dependence on hydrocarbons. He emphasised that strengthening institutions such as the GSP is essential to position Pakistan as an attractive destination for mineral exploration and investment, especially in view of the growing global demand for minerals. He reiterated the government's commitment to developing the mineral sector in a sustainable, transparent, and investor-friendly manner. The Minister appreciated the support of the British High Commission and the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), and acknowledged the High Commissioner's personal engagement in advancing the collaboration. He welcomed greater participation of international partners, particularly from the United Kingdom, across various segments of Pakistan's mineral value chain. He added that the programme launched at GSP would help equip Pakistani scientists with modern tools, improve workflows.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik jointly launched, along with British High Commissioner to Pakistan H.E. Jane Marriott at GSP.

Misbah Khar visits Rhodium Residencia project

PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: The Advisor to the Chairman Senate and Ambassador for the Inter-Parliamentary Speakers' Conference, Ms. Misbah Khar, visited the Rhodium Residencia project located in the Diplomatic Enclave, Islamabad. During the visit, Ms. Khar was briefed on the architectural design, construction standards, and amenities of the development. The project comprises two basements, a dedicated club floor, and 19 total floors, including 16 residential levels, offering 156 apartments in accordance with contemporary residential standards. She inspected multiple floors, model apartments, and the club floor. She commended the project's design excellence, construction quality, and the pace of development, describing Rhodium Residencia as a distinguished addition to the federal capital's residential landscape. She observed that developments of this caliber contribute meaningfully to urban progress and elevate living standards. The emphasis on quality, meticulous planning,

Ayaz lauds Youth Parliament for elevating youth voices nationally, globally

PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Thursday appreciated Youth Parliament of Pakistan for its commendable efforts in amplifying the voices of youth at both national and international levels. He also acknowledged the leadership of Chairman Abrar ul Haq and President Ubaid ur Rehman Qureshi for organizing an important engagement alongside the ECOSOC Youth Forum 2026, said a news release. The Speaker said that Members of the National Assembly, along with members of the Young Parliamentarians Forum (YPF), would participate in this significant initiative. He said that their participation



reflected a collective commitment to youth inclusion and national development. Highlighting the importance of the forum, the speaker said that the session underscores critical priorities, including resilience and collaborative action toward the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. He said discussions at the forum would focus on inclusive governance approaches to the climate, water, peace nexus, strengthening youth.

Naqvi lauds Police & Security Forces for eliminating seven militants in Hangu

PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has lauded the police and security forces for successfully carrying out an operation in Hangu region that resulted in the killing of seven militants of the Khawarij faction. The minister praised the professional competence and swift action of the police and security personnel involved in the operation. He also paid tribute to the police officer who embraced martyrdom during the encounter, acknowledging the ultimate sacrifice, rendered in the line of duty. "I salute the brave sons of



the nation for eliminating seven terrorists belonging to the mischief of the Khawarij," said Naqvi. He also offered prayers for the early recovery of the injured security official. The operation took place in the district of Hangu, where security forces continue efforts to combat militancy and ensure regional stability.

Speaker NA addresses 152nd IPU Assembly in Istanbul

PEAK POINT
ISTANBUL, TÜRKİYE: The Speaker of the National Assembly of Pakistan addressed the 152nd Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in Istanbul. He expressed his sincere gratitude to the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye for its warm hospitality. Speaking on the theme "Nurturing hope, securing peace and ensuring justice for future generations," the Speaker described it as a critical test of the collective role of parliamentarians in the contemporary global order. He noted that the international system, established through the collective will of

humanity over eight decades ago, is currently facing a critical point of inflection amid unresolved conflicts, prolonged disputes, and emerging global crises. He said that ongoing wars across various regions continue to cause immense human suffering, displacement, and erosion of trust in the global peace architecture. Reaffirming Pakistan's commitment, the Speaker stated that Pakistan firmly believes in parliamentary diplomacy as an essential instrument for building trust, fostering cooperation, and promoting conflict prevention and resolution. He stressed that adherence to the core principles of the United



Nations Charter—including the non-use of force, self-determination, sovereign equality, territorial integrity, non-interference, and peaceful settlement of disputes—remains indispensable for global peace and security. He further emphasized that durable peace cannot be achieved through power pro-

jection but only through dialogue, mutual respect, and inclusive diplomacy. He highlighted that while the UN Charter provides comprehensive mechanisms for peaceful dispute resolution, these tools remain underutilized or selectively applied. Referring to regional issues, he stated that the continued suppression and denial of the right to self-determination of the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) remains a key source of instability in South Asia. He reiterated that Jammu and Kashmir is an internationally recognized disputed territory, whose final status is to be deter-

mined in accordance with relevant UN Security Council resolutions and the aspirations of the Kashmiri people. He called for the reversal of unilateral measures taken since 5 August 2019 and expressed concern over what he termed India's aggressive rhetoric and posturing. NA Speaker further termed India's decision to hold the Indus Waters Treaty in abeyance as irresponsible and a violation of international law and established interstate norms, warning that the weaponization of water poses a serious threat to regional stability. He added that Pakistan reserves all rights to safeguard its due share of

water under the Treaty. On the situation in Palestine, Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said that the Palestinian people continue to face occupation, dispossession, systemic violence, and denial of their right to self-determination. He stated that over the past two years, more than 71,000 Palestinians—mostly women and children—have been martyred, particularly in Gaza, while violence has also escalated in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. The Speaker noted that despite these grave realities, international diplomatic efforts have created pathways toward peace, including outcomes of the UN High-Level.