



Gradual price stability observed despite global pressures: Ahsan Iqbal



Ayaz lauds security forces for eliminating 22 terrorists in Khyber



Rana Mashhood, Mustafa Dar discuss AI-driven youth empowerment

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US envoys to reach Pakistan Saturday for Iran talks: White House



NEW YORK: White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt said on Friday that US Special Envoy on the Middle East Steve Witkoff and President Donald Trump's son-in-law would be leaving for Pakistan on Saturday for a second round of talks with Iran. Earlier, Pakistani sources said that Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi was expected to

arrive in Islamabad tonight along with a small negotiating team. The sources said that a second round of peace talks with the United States was also expected. They added that a logistics and security team from the US was already in the federal capital. On the other hand, while confirming the visit, Iran's state media said that Araghchi would hold "bilateral consultations". "Iran's foreign minister will begin a regional tour on Friday evening, April 24, travelling to Islamabad, Muscat and Moscow," the official IRNA news agency said. "The purpose of this trip is to hold bilateral consultations, discuss ongoing developments in the region, and review the latest situation regarding the war imposed by the United States and the Israeli regime against Iran," it said.



Hoardings are mounted on lamp posts, as Pakistan prepares to host the US and Iran for a possible second phase of talks in Islamabad.

Ishaq Dar, Iran FM discuss regional developments



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Friday received a telephone call from Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, during which the two leaders discussed evolving regional dynamics and ongoing diplomatic efforts. According to official sources, both sides exchanged views on the regional situation, including the ceasefire and Islamabad's diplomatic engagement in the context of US-Iran dialogue.

Dar emphasized the importance of sustained dialogue and constructive engagement to resolve outstanding issues and promote lasting peace and stability in the region at the earliest.

The Iranian foreign minister appreciated Pakistan's consistent and constructive role in facilitating diplomatic efforts, acknowledging Islamabad's contribution to easing tensions.

Both leaders agreed to remain in close contact and continue consultations on matters of mutual interest.

Pakistan urges UNSC to push India to restore Indus Waters Treaty a year after its suspension



PEAK POINT

UNITED NATIONS: Pakistan has urged the UN Security Council (UNSC) to address India's suspension of the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty (IWT), warning of "grave" security, environmental, and humanitarian risks for 240 million people. A letter from Pakistani Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister, Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar, addressed to Ambassador Jamal Fares Alrowaiei of Bahrain, which hold the 15-member Council's presidency for the month of April, draws attention to India's "illegal" decision to hold the IWT in abeyance one year after its suspension amid heightened political tensions with Pakistan. The letter was handed over to the Security Council President by the Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations, Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, at UN Headquarters in New York on Thursday, according to a press release issued by the Pakistani Mission. DPM/FM Dar urged the Security Council to take cognizance of the alarming situation and call on India to restore the full implementation of IWT, resume all Treaty-mandated cooperation and data-sharing without delay, desist from any form of water coercion, and comply fully with its international obligations in good faith. In this regard, Ambassador Asim Ahmad also briefed the Security Council president on the "regurgitation of baseless allegations and propaganda by India at a time when Pakistan is engaged in serious mediation efforts to promote regional and international peace and security."

Israel, Lebanon extend ceasefire as Iran peace talks stall



PEAK POINT

DUBAI: Israel and Lebanon extended a shaky ceasefire by three weeks, President Donald Trump said on Thursday, as the United States remained at a standstill in negotiations with Iran to end the Middle East war. Trump announced the truce extension as he met with ambassadors of the two countries and despite recent Israeli strikes in Lebanon and fresh rocket fire from Hezbollah, which was not part of the talks in Washington.

"I think there's a very good chance of having peace. I think it should be an easy one," Trump told reporters on Thursday. The initial truce had been set to expire on Sunday.

Still, the US president said earlier he was in no rush to end the war with Iran, adding that "the clock is ticking" for the Islamic republic as a third American aircraft carrier arrived in the Middle East.

Iranian media reported blasts over the capital Tehran, a first since the ceasefire in the Middle East war came into effect two weeks ago.

Two young men abducted, killed in Bannu's Domel area

PEAK POINT

BANNU: An incident in the Domel area of Bannu has left the community in mourning after two young men were abducted and later killed by unidentified militants on Thursday night, police said. According to local sources, the two men were travelling in a car late at night when they reached the Painda Khel area. Armed militants reportedly signalled them to stop, but when they did not comply, the attackers opened indiscriminate fire on the vehicle. As a result of the firing, one of the young men was killed on the spot, while the other sustained injuries. The militants then took

22 India-backed terrorists killed in Khyber intelligence-based operation, says ISPR

PEAK POINT

RAWALPINDI: Security forces and law enforcement agencies neutralised at least 22 India-sponsored terrorists during an intelligence-based operation in the Khyber district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on April 21, a statement issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said on Friday. According to the military's media wing, the joint operation was conducted in response to the reported presence of India-backed militants, also known as Fitna al-Khawarji. It added that during the operation, the terrorists resorted to indiscriminate firing out of panic and in an attempt to avoid capture. As a result, a 10-year-old innocent child was martyred. The ISPR added that weapons and ammunition

were also recovered from killed India-sponsored terrorists, who remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities in the area. "Sanitisation operation is being conducted to eliminate any other Indian-sponsored kharij found in the area," the ISPR said, adding that the relentless counter-terrorism campaign under vision "Azm-e-Istehkam" will continue at full pace to wipe out the menace of foreign-sponsored and sup-



ported terrorism from the country. "Such sacrifices of our innocent civilians further strengthen our resolve." Pakistan has witnessed a spike in cross-border militant activity, particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, both of which share a border with Afghanistan, since the Afghan Taliban took control in 2021. In response to the escalating attacks, Pakistan

launched "Operation Ghazab lil-Haq," during which approximately 796 Afghan Taliban fighters and allied militants were killed, according to Information Minister Attaullah Tarar.

More than 1,000 Afghan Taliban fighters and terrorists were also injured during the Operation Ghazab lil-Haq. The minister had said that 286 posts of the Afghan Taliban regime had been destroyed and 44 captured.

In October 2025, the two countries were also involved in border clashes after Afghan Taliban fighters and allied militants carried out unprovoked assaults on Pakistan's border positions.

The ensuing fighting resulted in the deaths of over 200 Taliban and affiliated militants, while 23 Pakistani soldiers were martyred in the line of duty.

Pakistan secures 3 bids for spot LNG cargoes



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: After a gap of 28 months, state-run Pakistan LNG Limited (PLL) on Friday secured three bids at \$17,997 to \$18,88 per million British thermal units (mmBtu) for delivery between April 27 and May 8. A total of four bids were received and three were declared the lowest. For the first delivery window of April 27-30, TotalEnergies submitted the lowest bid of \$18.88 per mmBtu. Vitol Bahrain's bid of \$18.54 was declared the lowest for the May 1-7 window, while OQ Trading was declared the lowest bidder at \$17,997 per mmBtu for delivery between May 8 and 14. A day earlier, PLL had floated urgent tenders for the import of three LNG cargoes for delivery between April 27 and May 8 amid rising temperatures and power shortfall.



SPORTS



United inflict humiliating eight-wicket defeat on Kingsmen in PSL encounter



PEAK POINT
KARACHI: Islamabad United on Friday handed Hyderabad Kingsmen a humiliating eight-wicket defeat in the 36th match of the ongoing Pakistan Super League (PSL) 11 at the National Bank Stadium.

The victory, which marked United's fifth in the ongoing eight-team tournament, propelled the three-time champions into the playoffs, joining leaders Peshawar Zalmi and 2021 champions Multan Sultans.

Set to chase a modest 81-run target, the United comfortably remained unbeaten with 27 off 20

balls to spare. The 2024 champions, however, had a contrasting start to the pursuit as they lost left-handed opener Devon Conway (zero) on the second delivery of the innings.

But Sameer Minhas and Mohsin Riaz batted sensibly to put United within touching distance as they put together 79 runs for the second wicket until Ali struck again, dismissing Riaz, who top-scored with 42 off just 18 deliveries, studded with six fours and two sixes. Minhas, on the other hand, remained unbeaten with 27 off 20 deliveries, featuring three fours and a six, while skipper Shadab hit the winning runs in the same over with a boundary on the first delivery he faced.

For the Kingsmen, Mohammad Ali remained the solitary wicket-taker in the gruelling defeat with two scalps.

United captain Shadab Khan's decision to field first paid dividends as his team's bowling unit booked the new entrants for 80 in 15.5 overs. Kingsmen got off to the worst possible start to their innings as Gleeson dismissed Maaz Sadaqat (zero) on the first delivery of the innings. The right-arm pacer swept through

Abubakar reaches singles, doubles finals at ITF J60 leg-3 C'ship



PEAK POINT

LAHORE: Pakistan's promising junior tennis player, Abubakar Talha, delivered an impressive all-round performance to secure places in both the boys' singles and doubles finals at the Treet ITF Pakistan Syed Dilawar Abbas Memorial Junior Tennis Championship (J60, Leg-3), currently underway at the PTF Tennis Complex in Islamabad. Abubakar showcased resilience and determination in the boys' singles semifinal, staging a remarkable comeback against fellow Pakistani Mikael Ali Baig. After dropping the opening set 4-6, Talha bounced back emphatically, dominating the next two sets 6-0, 6-3 to book his place in the final. He will now face Singapore's Luke Jie Xi Ho in what promises to be an exciting title clash. Ho advanced to the final after defeating Sri Lanka's Ganuka Fernando in straight sets, 6-1, 7-5, in the second semifinal. Continuing his strong run, Abubakar Talha also progressed to the boys' doubles final. Partnering with Hamza Roman, the Pakistani duo delivered a commanding performance to defeat Russia's Artem Bukin and Fedor Dorokhov 6-1, 6-2 in the semifinal. They will meet the pair of Mikael Ali Baig and Luke Jie Xi Ho in the final, who secured their place after overcoming China's Jinxuan and Pakistan's Amir Mazari 6-0, 6-4. In the girls' singles semifinals, China's Zhiyu Zhou outclassed compatriot Yitong Lu with a dominant 6-0, 6-1 victory.

Int'l stars dominate opening day of K2 Squash Women's 6K event



PEAK POINT
LAHORE: The K2 Squash PSA Women's 6K Challenger Championship 2026, presented by One World Squash, got underway in impressive fashion at K2 Squash Club, signalling another milestone for the venue as it hosts its second international tournament and its first-ever women's international

championship. The tournament has attracted players from 13 countries, underlining its growing global stature and the increasing prominence of women's squash on the international stage. A total of eight matches were contested on the opening day, showcasing a high standard of play, intensity, and competitive spirit. Players delivered commanding performances, reflecting both technical excellence and physical endurance.

The standout encounter of the day saw Korea's Jihyun Lee edge past Ecuador's Maria Moya in a gripping five-game battle, the longest match of the round, lasting 51 minutes. Jihyun won the epic encounter by 3-2 (18-20, 11-9, 12-10, 6-11, 11-3) in 51 minutes. While Allie Stoddard (USA) [9/16] beat Busayo Olatunji (NGR) 3-0 (11-8, 11-4, 11-1) - 23 mins, Elisabeth Ross (USA) beat Jiya Naik (USA) 3-0 (11-4, 11-2, 11-4) - 18 mins, Rose Lucas Marcuzzo (FRA) [9/16] beat Alysa Ali (USA) 3-2 (11-6, 11-5, 8-11, 6-11, 11-9) - 41 mins. In other first round matches, Wen Li Lai (MAS) [9/16] beat Eva Maheshwari (USA) 3-0 (11-3, 11-6, 11-5) - 18 mins, Bo Ram Ryoo (KOR) [9/16] beat Sameera Shahid (PAK) 3-0 (11-7, 11-6, 11-5) - 23 mins, Gabriella Csokási (HUN) [9/16] beat Nicole Friedman (USA) 3-0 (11-5, 11-4, 11-5) - 21 mins, Franka Vidović (CRO) beat Laila Tantawy (EGY) [9/16].

WAPDA honours medal-winning athletes with cash awards



US says Iran can play in Fifa World Cup but IRGC-linked individuals won't be allowed

MAHPARA ZAMAN
NEW YORK: Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Washington had no objections to Iranian players participating in the 2026 Fifa World Cup but he added the players will not be allowed to bring with them people with ties to Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).

"The problem with Iran would be not their athletes. It would be some of the other people they would want to bring with them, some of whom have ties to the IRGC. We may not be able to let them in but not the athletes themselves," Rubio said.

After the start of the Iran war, Iran requested that Fifa move the team's three group matches from the US to Mexico, which was rejected. The US and Israel

"Nothing from the US has told them they can't come," Rubio told reporters. President Donald Trump also said his administration "would not want to affect the athletes" in comments he made at the White House.



attacked Iran on February 28. Iran responded with its own strikes on Israel and Gulf states with US bases. US-Israeli strikes on Iran and Israeli attacks in Lebanon have killed thousands and displaced millions. A fragile ceasefire in the Iran war began over two weeks ago.

The 2026 soccer World Cup is set to begin on June 11 across the United States, Mexico and Canada. Paolo Zampolli, a Trump envoy who has no official connection with the World Cup, had earlier suggested that Italy should replace Iran at the tournament.

BISE Lahore wins All Pakistan Inter-Boards Hockey Championship 2025-26



PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: The Inter-Boards Coordination Commission (IBCC), through its subcommittee, the Inter-Board Sports

Committee (IBSC), successfully organized the All Pakistan Inter-Boards Hockey Championship 2025-26. The Championship hosted by the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, Lahore secured first position, Gujranwala claimed second place, while Peshawar finished third. The closing ceremony was graced by Chief Guest Dr. Ghulam Ali Sahiwal, Rawalpindi, Bahawalpur, Multan, Director IBCC, along with distinguished personalities, including Shahbaz Senior, Pervaz Sandela, Khawaja Junaid, Faisal Farid, Rizwan Nazir, and Masood Rehman.



COMSTECH, Green Academy sign MoU to advance green economy cooperation

PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: The OIC-COMSTECH and Scientific Research and Education Center "Green Academy" signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Friday during the Regional Ecological Summit 2026, marking a meaningful step towards strengthening environmental cooperation across OIC member states.

The agreement was formalized in Astana on April 24 by Coordinator General OIC COMSTECH Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary and Prof. Dr. Yesssekina Bakht

Kamalbekovna, Director of Scientific Research and Education Center "Green Academy".

COMSTECH, Green Academy sign MoU to advance green economy cooperation

The partnership establishes a collaborative framework aimed at accelerating the transition towards a green economy in OIC countries. Under the agreement, both institutions will work jointly to promote capacity-building initiatives in key areas including climate change, environmental protection, sustainable agricul-



ture, and renewable energy. The collaboration will feature specialised training programmes, workshops, policy dialogues, and the development of scientific

reports.

The officials noted that the initiative is designed to bridge the gap between scientific research and environmental policymaking, ensuring sustainable development across the region.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Choudhary termed the agreement a timely and strategic opportunity to enhance scientific cooperation among OIC member states.

He emphasised that strengthening human capital and fostering innovation-driven solutions would play a crucial role in addressing

pressing environmental challenges.

While Yesssekina Bakht Kamalbekovna also underscored the importance of international collaboration in tackling ecological issues and expressed optimism that the partnership would contribute to long-term sustainability and knowledge exchange within the OIC region.

The MoU reflects a shared commitment to advancing environmental resilience and supporting global efforts toward a greener, more sustainable future.

Alabuga Start: Participants share views on work and career path

PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: An international career remains a goal for many young people, offering access to professional skills, modern technologies, and income support for families, moving abroad for work involves multiple challenges that affect both employment and daily life.

Young specialists often face difficulty finding reliable jobs with fair pay. Many vacancies lack clear terms, and some include hidden costs or unclear arrangements. Language barriers and adjustment to a new culture also create problems, espe-

cially during the first months. In addition, most employers ask for prior experience, which many new entrants do not have. Daily living adds further pressure. Housing costs can take a large share of income, and finding a secure place to live in a new city is not easy. Moving without family support also creates emotional strain. These issues are more significant for women, where safety and clear conditions are key concerns. At the same time, companies continue to look for workers. New employment programmes have been introduced to support relocation, provide housing, and offer



job options. One such programme is Alabuga Start in the Alabuga special economic zone in Russia. It is designed for young foreign workers and focuses on common issues linked to working abroad.

Participants receive official job contracts from the start. The terms of work, rights, and responsibilities are clearly defined. Social protection and state support are included. The process is direct, without intermedi-

aries. Ellise from Sri Lanka said company staff respond to issues and provide support when needed.

The programme also includes housing arrangements. Participants stay in company hostels located within a closed area. These hostels have security systems, cameras, and controlled access.

Kateana from Ecuador said the living system meets daily needs and provides secure access to buildings.

Alabuga Start: Participants share views on work and career path

The programme removes the need to search for hous-

ing and reduces safety concerns. Participants live together, share experiences, and support each other.

Work experience is not required to join. Participants receive training at the workplace under supervision in areas such as production and logistics. Work schedules include time for rest.

Kateana said she was welcomed by colleagues and found the work process smooth.

Participants also highlighted career growth. Madelaine from Ecuador said the programme helped her build a work path and apply her skills in a new setting.

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Digital hearings

The Supreme Court has taken a major step towards making justice more accessible by formally adopting digital hearings across multiple cities. For a judiciary long weighed down by paper files and an adjournment culture, this policy change is welcome. The past system was a logistical nightmare, with lawyers shuttling between various registries of the apex court. Now, geography is no longer a major hurdle. Litigants and judges can participate via videolink from any approved location. Some movement remains, as hearings will still occur in Islamabad or the four provincial registries. However, if the plan succeeds, the court could take the next logical step - allowing participation from locations closer to people's homes, such as district court complexes. These changes would show that, instead of running from pillar to post, the law will meet citizens where they are. Naturally, there are pitfalls to avoid. A digital hearing is only as reliable as the bandwidth it travels on. Anyone who has sat through a glitch-ridden Zoom call knows that a stuttering connection can erode the decorum and precision that legal argument demands. Remote hearings also require a different kind of focus from judges and lawyers, due in part to the impersonal nature of interactions via computer screens.

A case for smaller provinces

Afzal Ali Shigri
THE debate on creating new provinces is often seen through the lens of ethnicity, history and political identity, and projected as being in the public interest. Not only is this misleading, it is also designed to preserve the existing power structure. It diverts attention from the real issue of governance failure and replaces it with emotional narratives. Pakistan does not suffer from a shortage of identities; it suffers from a deficit of equitable governance and basic administrative needs.

Across South Asia, the trajectory is unmistakable. To improve governance, India has expanded from about 14 states at independence to 28 and eight union territories (it has included occupied Jammu & Kashmir in the latter category). Bangladesh has moved from four to eight administrative divisions, while Nepal has transitioned from a unitary system to seven provinces. Even Afghanistan has increased its administrative units from fewer than 20 to 34 provinces. In contrast, Pakistan, despite significant population growth and increasing governance complexity, continues to operate with only four provinces, reflecting a deeper resistance to redistributing power.

Pakistan's ethnic, linguistic and cultural diversity is a strength to be preserved and encouraged. However, when administrative systems fail to ensure the fair distribution of

development and opportunity, identity turns into grievance, which is then used politically to resist reform, protect entrenched interests, and maintain control over resources. The debate is thus confined to identity while deprivation remains undressed.

Across the country, particularly in the larger provinces, islands of prosperity are surrounded by vast regions of neglect. South Punjab, interior Sindh, peripheral KP districts and much of Balochistan reflect this structural imbalance, despite the increased fiscal space following the 18th Constitutional Amendment. Resources exist, but their distribution is skewed and guided by elite priorities.

Smaller units create a closer alignment between decision-making and ground realities.

All four provinces have become unwieldy administrative units. As scale expands, administrative reach weakens, and instead of improving local institutional arrangements, decision-making becomes more centralised and distant. Political attention remains disproportionately focused on a few urban centres, where visibility is high and political and economic returns are immediate. This creates a cycle where select areas benefit from development while vast areas remain trapped in neglect.

The government, instead of addressing this weakness at a structural level, has

resorted to interventions such as setting up complaint cells, facilitation centres and digital portals, which merely create an illusion of responsiveness while actually further weakening the administrative machinery.

Pakistan has well-defined institutional systems of inspection, supervision and accountability within its departments. These systems have eroded due to political interference, a lack of autonomy and the pressures of governing oversized administrative units. Rather than rehabilitating these systems, successive governments have created additional structures, resulting in duplication, confusion and conflict, and a governance model driven by optics rather than outcomes.

At the heart of this dysfunction is an entrenched elite culture and dynastic politics. Pakistan's political system, though formally democratic, has come to assume the characteristics of a closed, hereditary order where power in the provinces is concentrated within a narrow circle of families that exercise influence over politics, administration and economic resources. Even electoral competition is largely confined within this elite ecosystem. The result is a controlled political marketplace where new aspirants to leadership face barriers almost impossible to surmount. Authority is inherited and influence preserved across generations.

Courtesy Dawn

Rote to reason

Naeem Sadiq & Rabia Azfar Nizami
Year after year, the print and electronic media are saturated with reports of disturbing irregularities in board examinations. Despite the yearly promises of digitisation and reforming the grading system, everything falls apart when it comes to conducting examinations. The papers are invariably leaked in advance, the examination centres are sold to the highest bidder, mass cheating is organised, mobile phones are permitted, the invigilators pretend blindness, the marks sheets are interchanged, and the results are altered. Regrettably, Sindh, having already squandered an unjustified \$75 million ADB loan, stands at the forefront of these unethical practices. The dismal performance of Intermediate and Secondary Examination Boards has created a deep divide within Pakistan's education system. Every year, about 110,000 students, from private schools and affluent families appear in 'O' and 'A' level examinations conducted by Cambridge Assessment International Education, which is part of the University of Cambridge. The total annual expense for conducting Cambridge examinations (O Level and A Level), twice a year, is estimated to be between Rs25 billion and Rs35 billion (approximately \$90 million to \$125 million) - an amount that well compares with the annual budget of the Higher Education Commission (HEC). This criminal willingness of the state to cough out scarce foreign exchange to serve a privileged few, rather than reform its own dilapidated examination boards, is simply inexplicable. The mainstream of five to six million students who sit for Matric and Intermediate examinations across Pakistan have no choice but to suffer the indignity and mismanagement of the 'memory testing' that Intermediate and Secondary Boards established in each province. Echoing the colonial era - when education was designed to create compliant clerks - our examination boards have done little to rise above that legacy.

Courtesy Tribune

Gradual price stability observed despite global pressures: Ahsan Iqbal



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal has said that a gradual trend of price stability was being observed across the country despite evolving regional and global challenges.

Chairing the weekly meeting of the National Price Monitoring Committee (NPC), he noted that stability in fertilizer prices, despite international pressures was an encourage-

ing sign reflecting effective policy measures, a news release said on Friday. He added that coordinated efforts by federal and provincial authorities were helping improve price trends of essential commodities.

The committee was briefed that transport fares had remained unchanged, while poultry prices had reverted to pre-Gulf conflict levels, offering relief to consumers. Highlighting the need for sustainable stability in the poultry sector, the minister stressed the importance of establishing a robust cold chain infrastructure to reduce price volatility and ensure uninterrupted supply. He directed the authorities concerned to submit comprehensive proposals on cold chain development within five days.

Expressing concern over the presence and sale of substandard ghee and other food items in rural areas, he

called for strict enforcement measures to ensure quality standards.

The minister urged all provincial and federal institutions to remain vigilant to sustain price stability and prevent artificial shortages, emphasizing the need to ensure adequate availability of essential commodities.

He also appreciated the performance of the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics and provincial governments for effective weekly price monitoring and data management, terming it vital for informed decision-making.

The meeting reviewed the overall supply and price situation of essential commodities and reaffirmed the government's commitment to maintaining relief measures and strengthening market oversight to protect public interest.

Pakistan, Russia pledge cultural collaboration during Envoy's visit to Niftysphere Institute

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Russia have reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening cultural and educational cooperation through art, education, and creative exchange during a visit by the ambassador of the Russian Federation to Pakistan to the Niftysphere Institute of Arts and Design on Friday.

The visit concluded on a positive note, with both sides expressing keen interest in future collaborations, including cultural exchange programmes, student opportunities, and joint artistic initiatives. During the visit, the ambassador was received by Syed Usman Tahir, Honorary Advisor to the Federal Minister for Culture Aurangzeb Khan Khichi, who briefed him on the institute's academic programmes, creative work, and skill-based training initiatives.



PEAK POINT

Speaking on the occasion, both sides highlighted the importance of cultural diplomacy, noting that Pakistan and Russia share rich cultural traditions that can be further strengthened through institutional linkages and collaboration. The ambassador appreciated the institute's role in promoting creative education and expressed interest in participating in upcoming cultural events and fostering partnerships with Russian institutions.

IAEA-PNRA workshop on Radioactive Waste Management concludes in Islamabad



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Authority (PNRA), in collaboration with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), has successfully concluded a five days national workshop on radioactive waste management at its Headquarters here Friday.

Speaking at the closing session, Shahid Rashid, Member (Executive), PNRA, said that protecting people and the environment from harmful radiation depends on the safe handling of radioactive waste. He noted that

proper identification and classification of waste are key steps in ensuring safety.

Nuclear safety expert Ms. Latife Ozge Unver, from IAEA emphasized the need for close inter-agency coordination amongst stakeholders as safe handling of radioactive waste is a shared national responsibility at the level of government, regulatory body and operating organizations.

During the five-day workshop, participants discussed important topics such as waste characterization, classification, and setting criteria for safe waste acceptance.

The sessions included expert talks, international practices, and interactive discussions.

The workshop was attended by 25 participants from regulatory body and operating organizations across Pakistan, along with three experts from the IAEA.

As a State Party to the Convention on Nuclear Safety (CNS), Pakistan continues to uphold a nuclear safety regime aligned with international standards, including in radioactive waste management.

Ayaz lauds security forces for eliminating 22 terrorists in Khyber

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Speaker of National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Friday paid glowing tribute to the security forces for eliminating 22 terrorists belonging to Fitna al-Khawarij during a successful intelligence-based operation in District Khyber. In a statement issued by the National Assembly Secretariat, the Speaker praised the professionalism, bravery and timely action of the security forces in carrying out the effective operation against terrorist elements. He said the sacrifices rendered by the security forces and law enforcement agencies in the fight against terrorism were a source of pride for the nation. Ayaz Sadiq said cowardly acts of terrorists could never weaken the resolve of the people of Pakistan, adding that the nation stood shoulder to shoulder with its brave armed forces. The Speaker also appreciated the ongoing anti-terror campaign under "Azm-e-Istehkam," saying operations would continue until terrorism was completely eradicated from the country. Expressing full confidence in the courage, determination and professionalism.

CJP Afridi rejects IHC CJ's request to convene meeting on judges' transfers

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Yahya Afridi has rejected a request by the Islamabad High Court's chief justice to convene a Judicial Commission meeting on the transfer of judges, citing constitutional and institutional concerns.

In a written response to IHC Chief Justice Sarfraz Dogar, CJP Afridi said that calling a commission meeting for a specific purpose was not possible.

The top judge observed that transferring judges without clear justification would be "tantamount to punishment" and warned that such moves could undermine judicial independence and autonomy. He emphasised that no institutional need or valid



PEAK POINT

reason had been presented for the proposed transfers of IHC judges.

CJP Afridi also raised concerns about the impact on the federal balance, noting that recalling judges belonging to Sindh would disrupt provincial representation in the IHC. He added that the requirements of the Islamabad High Court Act, 2010, could also be adversely affected by the judges' transfer from the court.

Further, the chief justice maintained that transferring five out of nine judges.

Rana Mashhood, Mustafa Dar discuss AI-driven youth empowerment

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Prime Minister's Youth Programme Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan met Adviser to the Punjab Chief Minister on Artificial Intelligence and Special Initiatives Ali Mustafa Dar on Friday to discuss strategies for leveraging artificial intelligence, digital innovation and emerging technologies to create new opportunities for young people.

During the meeting, both sides held a detailed exchange on integrating modern technologies into policy frameworks aimed at equipping youth with skills aligned with global trends.

Rana Mashhood, Mustafa Dar



PEAK POINT

discuss AI-driven youth empowerment

They emphasised that forward looking policies and targeted initiatives were essential to empower young people, enabling them to contribute effectively to national development and represent Pakistan on the international stage. The discussion also focused on enhancing collaboration between federal.

CM Afridi orders decisive action against illegal constructions 14th Authority Meeting of PDA discusses urban uplift, governance, administrative affairs

PEAK POINT

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Muhammad Sohail Afridi, chaired the 14th Authority meeting of the Peshawar Development Authority (PDA). The meeting deliberated on a wide range of urban development, governance, administrative, and infrastructure-related matters, and approved several key policy and operational decisions. The meeting approved the PDA budget



PEAK POINT

for the fiscal year 2025-26, along with multiple agenda items aimed at strengthening urban management and service delivery. The Chief Minister directed that decisive action be taken against illegal constructions and emphasized the need to improve urban order to ensure planned, sustainable, and regulated development across the city. In this context, the forum agreed in principle to bring Nasir Bagh Road under the jurisdiction of PDA, with directions to place the matter before the Cabinet for final approval. It was fur-

ther directed that a minimum setback of 20 feet be maintained for buildings along the said road, with instructions from the Chief Minister to remove encroachments while also minimizing inconvenience to the public. The meeting also decided to enforce a building control and regulatory regime on Nasir Bagh Road. The Authority meeting approved the allocation of additional land and re-planning for the Institute of Management Sciences.

Sherry terms Pakistan's UN demand on IWT key step for regional peace

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Vice President of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Senator Sherry Rehman Friday said Pakistan's demand for the immediate implementation of the Indus Water Treaty (IWT) through the United Nations was an important development for regional peace.

In a statement, she said Pakistan's firm diplomatic stance over India's alleged suspension of the water accord was drawing international attention, adding that respect for international



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agreements was essential for regional stability and lasting peace. She said Pakistan had made it clear that unilateral actions regarding shared water resources could not be accepted, stressing that adherence to treaties.