



Law minister rules out constitutional amendment without allies' consensus



Pakistan tells World Urban Forum climate crisis has become 'a crisis of justice' for the poor



PMYP, UNESCO to align youth initiatives with global development goals

Founded By:
(Late) Rehmat Khan

ABC CERTIFIED

Email: editor.peakpoint@gmail.com
Website: www.peakpoint.pk

Executive Group Editor
Arif Mehmood Khan



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Business & Human Rights: Implementation of first National Action Plan under way: PM

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has said that the implementation of Pakistan's first National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights is under way to promote "responsible business conduct, protection of labour rights, elimination of discrimination, and effective remedies for human rights violations linked to business activities."

The PM said this in an official statement, issued Saturday, in connection with the International Day of Living Together in Peace.

"Today, Pakistan joins the international community in observing the International Day of Living Together in Peace.

Alongside Constitutional guarantees for human rights, effective policy and practical interventions remain indispensable," the statement quoted the PM as saying.

In this regard, he said, the government has formulated the National Action Plan on Human Rights, aimed at women's empowerment, child protection, and the promotion of the rights of vulnerable and marginalised groups. Through the Human Rights Awareness Programme, the government is further promoting the values of tolerance, unity, and social cohesion, said the PM.

At the provincial level, he said, the District Human Rights Committees have also been established to promote social harmony at the grassroots level.



TEHRAN: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has met Iranian President Masoud Peshkeshian at the Presidential Palace in Tehran on Sunday.

Iran's Baghaei says US, Israel 'manufacture crises' to justify escalation and war claims

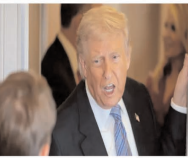
PEAK POINT



ISLAMABAD: Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmacel Baghaei stated in an X post on Sunday that the United States and Israel manufacture crises to justify escalation "under the noble banner of 'restoring stability' and 'defending peace.'" "The next grand lie being rolled out to justify their illegal 'war of choice' is the claim that they are 'preserving peace and stability in global energy markets,'" the post on X read. He accused the "reckless wamongering of the 'US and Israeli regimes' of destroying 'promising diplomatic processes'" and said the unprovoked aggression against Iran "deliberately injected insecurity into vital energy routes," which they then used to accuse Iran of destabilisation. He said that the US and Israel were putting into practice "Goebbels'" infamous dictum: "Accuse others of what you yourself are doing." Iran military warns US against repeating "miscalculation. Senior spokesperson of Iran's Armed Forces, Brigadier General Abdolrahim Mousavi Sharif, has warned the United States against any further "miscalculation," saying such actions would face a stronger response from Iran.

Trump warns 'won't be anything left' of Iran unless it agrees to deal

MAHPARA ZAMAN



NEW YORK: US President Donald Trump on Sunday warned Iran "there won't be anything left of them," if Tehran does not quickly agree to a peace deal with the United States.

"For Iran, the Clock is Ticking, and they better get moving, FAST, or there won't be anything left of them," Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform. "TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE!"

Iranian media on Sunday said the United States failed to make any concrete concessions in its response to Iran's proposal for negotiations to end the war. Fars news agency said Washington gave a five-point list which included a demand for Iran to keep only one nuclear site in operation and transfer its stockpile of highly enriched uranium to the United States. Mehr news agency meanwhile said: "The United States, offering no tangible concessions, wants to obtain concessions that it failed to obtain during the war, which will lead to an impasse in the negotiations." Meanwhile, US President Donald Trump has once again warned Iran of serious consequences if a peace agreement is not reached soon, saying it would be in Tehran's own interest to finalise a deal without further delay. Speaking during a telephone interview with a French broadcaster, Trump said that if a peace agreement was not achieved quickly, it would become "a very bad time" for Iran. Trump added that he was no longer in the mood to tolerate additional delays in the process.

Interior Minister Naqvi meets President Peshkeshian, discusses Iran-US conflict

PEAK POINT

TEHRAN: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has met Iranian President Masoud Peshkeshian at the Presidential Palace in Tehran on Sunday. Pakistan's Embassy in Tehran said in a press release that the "private" meeting between the two leaders lasted 90 minutes, and Peshkeshian was accompanied by Iranian Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni. Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi was also present at the Presidential Palace during the meeting, it added. Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has met with Iran's Parliamentary Speaker Bagher Ghalibaf, according to a press statement by Pakistan's Embassy in Tehran. It said the two met in the afternoon. Earlier, Mohsin Naqvi also met with Iranian Foreign Minister Dr. Seyed Abbas Araghchi. Earlier, Interior Minister Naqvi met his Iranian counterpart Eskandar Momeni in Tehran on Saturday. Pakistan has positioned itself as a mediator since the war erupted following joint US-Israeli strikes on Tehran on Feb. 28, which triggered Iranian retaliation and a blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, a critical global energy corridor through which roughly one-fifth of the world's oil and gas passes. While a fragile ceasefire announced on Apr. 8 remains in place, negotiations between Washington and Tehran have largely stalled following a first round of direct talks in Islamabad, with disputes over Iran's uranium enrichment program and regional security continuing to hamper progress.

Zilhaj moon sighted, Eidul Azha to fall on May 27

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Ruet-i-Hilal Committee announced on Sunday that the Zilhaj moon had been sighted and Eidul Azha will be celebrated on May 27. The announcement came after the committee met earlier today in Karachi for the moon sighting, while meetings of zonal committees were also convened in Islamabad, Lahore, Quetta and Peshawar. Addressing a press conference after the meetings, Ruet-i-Hilal Committee Chairperson Maulana Abdul Khaiber Azad, said skies were mostly clear in the country today except in some areas.

US official Paul Kapur concludes Pakistan visit after high-level meetings

PEAK POINT

NEW YORK: US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs S. Paul Kapur, on Sunday, concluded a visit to Pakistan, during which he met high-level leaders on the full spectrum of bilateral issues, participated in a landmark cultural artefact repatriation event, and also visited the Margalla Hills.

In a statement posted on X, the US embassy in Islamabad wrote, "That's a wrap! During a productive visit to Pakistan, Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs S. Paul Kapur met with high-level lead-



ers on the full spectrum of bilateral issues, participated in a landmark cultural artefact repatriation event, and still found time to enjoy a hike in the beautiful Margalla Hills with some of our US Marines."

Earlier on Friday, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi met Kapur, alongside US Chargé d'Affaires Natalie Baker, Minister of State for

remarks come after Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) resumed its direct services to London earlier this year, ending a six-year suspension. The airline confirmed on March 29 that its inaugural flight had departed from Islamabad.

PIA also announced that direct flights from Lahore to London would be introduced.

Naqvi observed that Pakistan-US relations had strengthened during President Donald Trump's tenure, describing the ties between the two nations as based on mutual trust and bilateral cooperation.

ISPR takes exception after Indian army chief says Pakistan should decide between being 'part of geography' or not

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) on Sunday took exception to the Indian army chief's recent provocative remarks and cautioned New Delhi against pushing South Asia towards another conflict with "devastating" consequences for the region.

"Indian COAS gave a provocative statement during a recent interview that 'Pakistan should decide if it desired to be part of geography and history.'" ISPR noted in a statement issued in response to Indian Army Chief Gen Upendra Dwivedi's comments made a day earlier.

"Contrary to the delusional and hallucinational belief system and despite the omnipresent ill wishes that prevail in Hindutva-led India, Pakistan is already a country of consequence at global level, a declared nuclear power and an indelible part of South Asia's geography and history," the ISPR said. It observed that the statement reflected that the "Indian leadership has neither been able to reconcile with the very idea of Pakistan nor it has learnt the right lessons, even after [the] passage of eight decades".

"This hubristic, jingoistic and myopic mindset has repeatedly pushed South Asia towards wars and crises," the military's media affairs wing highlighted.





SPORTS



Bangladesh tighten grip with commanding lead over Pakistan in second Test



PEAK POINT

DHAKA: Hosts Bangladesh moved into a commanding position in the second and final Test of the series, after extending their lead over Pakistan on Sunday at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium. Batting in their second innings, the hosts ended day two at 110-3 in 26.4 overs, holding a 156-run advantage. Skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto remained unbeaten on 13, while Mominul Haque was dismissed on the final delivery of the day's play.

Bangladesh got off to a poor start by losing Tanzid Hasan on the third delivery of the fourth

over. After the early setback, Mahmudul Hasan Joy and Haque stabilised the innings by scoring crucial runs from the start, notching up 50-run stand and helping the team's total past the 50-run mark as well.

Joy was in dominant form with the bat as he brought up his sixth Test fifty, reaching the milestone off 58 deliveries.

However, the 76-run stand was broken after Mohammad Abbas struck and dismissed Joy, who contributed 52 off 64 deliveries after hitting 10 fours.

Shanto and Haque kept the score board ticking which helped

them take the team's total past the 100-run mark and extend the lead to over 150 runs.

Khurram Shahzad dismissed Haque for 30 off 60 deliveries, an innings that included three boundaries. In the first innings, Pakistan were bowled out for 232 in 57.4 overs, handing the hosts a 46-run lead courtesy of a dominant bowling performance by Bangladesh.

Babar Azam top-scored with a fighting 68 off 84 deliveries, hitting 10 fours before being dismissed by Nahid Rana, while Sajid Khan contributed valuable runs down the order, scoring 38 off 28 balls with two fours and

four sixes. Skipper Shan Masood and Salman Ali Agha chipped in with 21 runs each, while opener Azan Awaiz and Mohammad Rizwan added 13 runs apiece.

Pacer Nahid Rana and spinner Tajjul Islam led the Bangladesh attack with three wickets each, while Taskin Ahmed and Mehidy Hasan Miraz claimed two wickets apiece. Earlier, put into bat first, Bangladesh were bowled out for 278 shortly after lunch, largely due to a composed and commanding innings from Litton Das, who held the innings together and guided the lower order.

Young Pakistan squash stars set for Asian Junior Championships



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's young squash players are all set to showcase their talent at the 33rd Asian Junior Individual Squash Championships 2026, scheduled to be held from May 20 to 24 in Panzhihua, China. According to Pakistan Squash Federation, the national contingent, led by Director Academies Group Captain (R) Irfan Asghar and Head Coach Fahim Gul, will compete against top emerging players from across Asia in the prestigious junior event. Pakistan's squad comprises five boys and two girls competing in different age categories. In the boys' events, Abdullah Nawaz will participate in the Under-19 category, Nouman Khan in Under-17, Ahmed Rayyan Khalil and Sohail Adnan in Under-15, while Mustafa Khan will feature in the Under-13 category. In the girls' competitions, Sehrish Ali and Mahnoor Ali will represent Pakistan in the Under-15 category. The championship is regarded as one of Asia's premier junior squash events and provides a major platform for young players to gain international exposure and improve continental rankings. Pakistan squash officials expressed confidence that the young players would deliver strong performances and continue the country's rich legacy in the sport.

Ireland thrash Scotland 54-5 in Women's Six Nations to finish third



PEAK POINT

DUBAI: Ireland marked their first stand-alone match at Dublin's Lansdowne Road with a 54-5 eight-try, rout of Scotland on Sunday as they finished the Women's Six Nations Championship in third place. The Irish overwhelmed the Scots in a remarkable first half where they scored seven tries, with No 8 Aoife Wafer crossing twice, to lead 47-0 at the break.

It took Clodhna Moloney-McDonald just five minutes to

score Ireland's first try. And it was not long before Robyn O'Connor added a second, with Brittany Hogan, captain Erin King, Wafer (two) and Stacey Flood also scoring tries in an opening 40 minutes where fly-half Dannah O'Brien landed six conversions. Ireland, who won all three of their home games this tournament, had to wait until the hour mark for their eighth try, when blindside flanker Hogan scored her second of the match in front of a crowd of

over 31,000. Scotland avoided being 'hilled' through Aicha Sutcliffe's try with the last play of the game but that was scant consolation as they suffered a fourth defeat in five games this Championship. "The first half was the best version of us and we were excellent," Ireland coach Scott Bemand told the BBC.

He added: "Today was a special day to play in front of such a big crowd and next year we want to get closer to England and France." Scotland captain Helen Nelson said her side were "bitterly disappointed" with their first-half performance. "It has been a tough campaign for us, there is no shying away from that," Nelson said.

World champions England, on a record 37-game unbeaten run, are away to France in a Grand Slam-decider in Sunday's finale as they bid to win an eighth successive Six Nations title. Earlier, Wales suffered a record ninth successive defeat as Italy scored seven tries in a decisive 43-24 win in Cardiff. Wales actually led 19-17 at half-time, with tries from Courtney Keight, Carys Cox and Kelsey Jones cancelling out Italian efforts from Vittoria Ostuni Minuzzi, Francesca Granzotto and Alyssa D'Inca, as the boot of Keira Bevan gave the hosts a slender advantage. But Italy deservedly pulled clear after the break, with Ostuni Minuzzi crossing for a second try, and Francesca Sgorbini and Veronica Madia also going over Wales' line before D'Inca completed a try double.

Historic Step for Pakistan Badminton; International Coach Raziuddin Ahmad launches first-ever shuttle feeding machine

PEAK POINT

RAWALPINDI: International badminton coach Raziuddin Ahmad has launched Pakistan's first-ever advanced Shuttle Feeding Machine with the vision to promote modern

and sports education experience. He has attended international sports conferences and coaching programs in Austria, USA, UK, Glasgow, Switzerland, Greece, Denmark, Peru, UAE, France, Czech Republic and Jordan.

and help them compete successfully at the global podium. To introduce this advanced technology to the badminton community, Coach Razi organized a two-day Badminton Coaching Seminar on 9-10 May 2026 at



badminton training among youth boys and girls across the country. Coach Raziuddin Ahmad is a UKCC Level 2 certified coach and former National Coach for the 11th South Asian Games held in Bangladesh in 2010. He also served as National Coach for the International School Sports Federation (ISF) World Schools Badminton Championship held in Malta in 2016. Coach Razi also possesses worldwide coaching

He also participated in the IOC Medical Commission Congress held in Athens, which focused on preparing 21st century athletes through scientific training methods without the use of medicine. Speaking on the occasion, Coach Razi said that the introduction of this modern training machine would prove to be a milestone for badminton development in Pakistan. He emphasized that the primary aim is to raise the standard of Pakistani shuttlers

Shalimar Club for male and female coaches as well as Physical Education teachers. The seminar focused on the practical use of the Shuttle Feeding Machine for both school-level beginners and professional players. The Badminton Coaching Seminar proved to be a highly successful event in which around 40 male and female physical educationists from all provinces of Pakistan participated, including Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan, AJK.



KARACHI: Governor, Sindh Syed Muhammad Nehal Hashmi poses for a group photo with cricket players of exhibitory match here on Sunday.

Championing inclusion at Special Olympics Pakistan 2026 concluded

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: From 14 May to 16 May 2026, the athletics nationals championship of Special Olympics Pakistan will take place at the Islamabad Sports Complex, bringing three days of competitive track and field events to the capital.

The event will showcase national-level athletics with athletic achievement competitors taking part across multiple disciplines, offering an important platform for athletes and their support teams to demonstrate skill and resilience. Organisers expect the Islamabad Sports Complex to serve as a central venue for families, coaches and local sports followers to gather and celebrate athletics with athletic achievement



while reinforcing inclusive sporting opportunities across Pakistan. For timely updates, the event unfolds from 14 May to 16 May 2026. peakpoint.pk/en as



NHA earns Rs62.33 Billion from Motorways as Maintenance spending faces scrutiny

NADEEN TANOLI
ISLAMABAD: The National Highway Authority generated Rs62.33 billion from Pakistan's motorway network during the last three fiscal years. Revenue more than doubled in the latest year, and billions of rupees were also spent on motorway maintenance across key routes. The disclosure has raised questions over toll income, road upkeep, service area standards, price control, washroom conditions and the use of public money on one of the country's most expensive transport networks. According to data provided in the Senate question answer session, NHA earned

Rs13.45 billion from motorways in FY2022-23, Rs14.30 billion in FY2023-24 and Rs34.56 billion in FY2024-25, bringing total motorway revenue to Rs62.33 billion in three years. The increase in motorway revenue has placed renewed attention on how this income is being spent, especially when commuters continue to complain about high toll rates, service area prices, cleanliness, washrooms and overall travel facilities. The maintenance spending record shows major expenditure across several motorway sections. On M-1 Peshawar Islamabad and Hazara Motorway E-35, maintenance expenditure stood at Rs1.616 billion over

three years. On M-3 Lahore Abdul Hakeem Motorway, maintenance spending reached Rs427.16 million. The highest listed maintenance spending appeared on the Faisalabad-Pindi Bhattian M-4 section, where expenditure reached Rs6.26 billion over three years for routine maintenance, patrolling, weigh stations and periodic maintenance works. The figure included Rs3.83 billion in FY2023-24, Rs2.17 billion in FY2024-25 and Rs252.74 million in FY2025-26. On M-5 Multan-Sukkur Motorway, no maintenance cost was recorded for FY2023-24, but expenditure rose to Rs910.47 million in FY2024-25 and Rs1.679 bil-

lion in FY2025-26. Maintenance costs on the M-14 Hakla-Dera Ismail Khan Motorway reached Rs1.26 billion over three years. The government informed that operation, maintenance and repair of M-2 Islamabad-Lahore Motorway is with M/s MORE, a subsidiary owned by FWO, under a BOT-based concession agreement signed for 20 years. Similarly, operation and maintenance of M-9 Karachi-Hyderabad Motorway and M-11 Lahore-Sialkot Motorway also rest with FWO under concession arrangements. Service area conditions also came under focus in the official response. NHA said it has improved

service and rest areas during the last three years and established new service areas on M-1, Hakla-D.I. Khan Motorway, Hazara Expressway, CPEC-HT and M-4. However, the reply also shows that price and quality control at motorway service areas remains dependent on district administrations because NHA officers do not have magisterial powers. This raises questions over how effectively overcharging, poor food quality and weak service standards can be controlled at motorway stops. NHA said it has prepared comprehensive SOPs for price and quality control and is in the process of engaging reputed firms pre-

qualified by the Planning Commission to evaluate prices and quality of items being sold at motorway service areas. The authority also said washroom facilities are being upgraded at rest areas on M-4 Pindi Bhattian-Faisalabad-Multan Motorway, M-3 Lahore-Abdul Hakeem Motorway and M-5 Sukkur-Multan Motorway. The figures were provided in response to a question by Senator Abid Sher Ali, who sought details of motorway revenue, maintenance expenditure and steps taken to upgrade service areas.

PRA Pakistan writes to Information Minister over media workers' dismissals and unpaid salaries

PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: PRA Pakistan has expressed serious concerns over forced dismissals of media workers, non payment of salaries, and recent government actions in a detailed letter addressed to Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar. The letter, written by PRA Pakistan President M.B. Soomro, stated that due to a recent accident and stitches on his lips, he was unable to speak directly and was therefore presenting the organiza-

tion's position through a written communication. The letter recalled that on May 11, 2026, PRA Pakistan staged a walkout from the Press Galleries of the National Assembly and Senate. During the protest, a parliamentary delegation led by Attaullah Tarar, including Shazia Marri, Sehar Kamran, Palwasha Khan, Senator Abid Sher Ali, and Senator Nasir Butt, visited the Press Gallery where PRA presented its written Charter of Demands. PRA Pakistan stated that after the walkout against forced dis-

missals at Suno TV and Dunya TV, as well as unpaid salaries at Aaj TV and other media organizations, the Information Minister had made what the organization described as a "bold announcement" to suspend government advertisements for Suno TV until the issue of terminated employees was resolved. According to the letter, the announcement had given media workers hope that the government would take strong measures to protect their legitimate rights and ensure that media owners

complied with laws and regulations. However, PRA expressed disappointment that the very next day, after a meeting with Suno TV management, the government restored advertisements merely on assurances from the channel administration without resolving the issue of terminated employees. The organization questioned whether the decision was taken under pressure or solely on the basis of management assurances. The letter urged the Information Minister to inform PRA Pakistan about

any concrete steps taken by Suno TV regarding reinstatement of employees, as the organization claimed that the channel management had failed to fulfill its commitments. PRA also asked what action the government intended to take if the promises remained unfulfilled. PRA Pakistan also raised concerns regarding Aaj TV, stating that it had been informed that a meeting with Aaj TV management would take place following the meeting with Suno TV officials. However, according to the organization,

Aaj TV management was allegedly unwilling to attend despite being called by the minister. The letter questioned whether such a situation created the impression of a "state within a state." The organization further referred to the issue of dismissals at Dunya TV, which was also included in the written Charter of Demands, and asked whether the government had contacted or summoned the management of the channel, adding that PRA had not been informed of any progress in the matter.

Opinion & Editorial

ISLAMABAD
DAILY PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD
Arif Mahmood Khan
Group Editor: 0333-5366814
Samra Athar Kakakhel
Resident Editor
Nadim Tanoli
Joint Editor: Mob-0301-777874
Email: editor.peakpoint@gmail.com
www.peakpoint.pk

When education becomes a burden instead of empowerment, what happens to the dreams of Pakistan's Middle Class students?

By: Fajar Fatima Tariq



Walk into any Pakistani university classroom and watch closely. You'll see students physically present but mentally drowning... in unpaid dues, part-time job fatigue, or the guilt of being a financial burden. No one records them. No statistic counts them. But every year, hundreds of dreams die not from lack of talent... but from lack of bus fare, hostel money, or the next fee deadline.

Then ask: How many dreams are silently buried under university fees, transport costs, and societal pressure?

Have you ever considered WHY?

Why are middle class families forced to sacrifice everything just to afford education?

Why do talented students fall behind simply because of financial limitations?

And most importantly Can a nation progress when its students are exhausted before even entering professional life?

For Pakistan's middle class, education was once the great promise... the surest path to security, respect, and a better life for the next generation. But today, that promise is breaking. Across the country, middle-class families are discovering a painful truth: the system designed to uplift them is now

pushing them to the edge.

Raised questions usually have answers... Right?

But in this case we have to find them ourselves...

The numbers tell a brutal story. Pakistan spends only 0.8 percent of its GDP on education—far below the 4 percent recommended by UN agencies. To put this in perspective, India spends 4.6 percent, Bhutan spends 7 percent, and even Afghanistan, despite its challenges, allocates 2.9 percent.

Dawn (June 10, 2025) — "Economic Survey 2024-25: Education spending plummets to 0.8pc of GDP" quoted "The cumulative expenditure on education by the federation and the provinces remained merely 0.8 percent of the Grand Domestic Product (GDP)"

There is no statistic that captures the 2 a.m. anxiety of a student calculating whether their parents can afford next semester's fees. There is no survey that measures the guilt of asking for more money. But the impact is real. The Pakistan Panel Household Survey (PPHS), conducted by the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics, reveals that 30 percent of households cannot afford three meals a day. Pakistan now has 269 universities—160 public and 109 private. On paper, this sounds like progress. But quantity has come at the cost of quality.

Many public universities are facing severe financial difficulties. "Some cannot even

make payrolls and have to cut pension payments," reports Dawn. "Some of the new universities in the public sector have not been given any support at all by the HEC"

Where as many families from the lower-middle and middle classes cannot even afford to enroll their children in O/A levels programs due to the high cost of tuition, examination fees, and associated expense: (The News International (January 9, 2025) — "Beyond reach" — Letter by Dr. Intikhab Ulfat, Karachi)

While The middle-class student occupies a cruel no-man's-land: too wealthy for scholarships, too poor to pay without pain. No one gives them aid. No one calls them underprivileged. But they know the truth, their education is funded by their parents' sleepless nights, and that is a debt no degree can repay. A middle-class student doesn't just study for themselves. They study to justify every rupee their family spent. Failure is not an option, it is a betrayal. The wealthy student has a safety net. The poor student has a scholarship. The middle-class student has anxiety, and a mother who stopped buying medicine so they could stay enrolled.

And a nation that sacrifices its middle class for education has already failed, because the middle class was never supposed to be the price. It was supposed to be the profit.

So here's what we get in the name of answers.

A degree was never meant to be a burden. It was meant to be a door.

But today, millions of middle-class students in Pakistan are learning a different lesson: that ambition has a price, and it is one their families cannot afford. They study with calculators burning through the night. They graduate with degrees but no direction. They enter a world that asks for experience they were never taught to gain.

And then—they burn out. Not because they lacked talent. Not because they didn't try. But because a system that spends less than 1% of its GDP on education asked them to carry the remaining 99% on their own backs. Pakistan has 140 million people under 25. That is not a statistic. That is a generation exhausted before it even begins.

We can keep calling education a "priority" while funding it like an afterthought. We can keep handing out degrees while refusing to fix the curriculum. We can keep watching middle class families sell gold, skip meals, and bury dreams under fee vouchers.

Or we can finally ask ourselves the question that matters:

How many more students must break before we decide to change the system instead of blaming them?

The answer will determine not just the future of Pakistan's middle class, but the future of Pakistan itself.

No more bail

According to the Anti-Rape (Investigation and Trial) Act, 2021, sexual abuse against children was still a bailable offence in Pakistan, and a medico-legal examination was not subject to a strict timeline. But the National Assembly has finally rectified this negligence through the Anti-Rape (Amendment) Bill, 2026, which focuses on three aspects of the previous bill: bail, victim protection and medical examination. The word 'bail' does not appear anywhere in the 2021 act at all. This means that crimes falling under this act were subject to the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC). While rape offences were already non-bailable under the CrPC, it was not uncommon for courts to grant pre-arrest bail under a separate section of the CrPC. The 2026 bill now ensures the obstruction of such liberties, other than in "exceptional" circumstances. Making rape offences non-bailable is an important step towards progress in granting thousands of rape victims the justice that they're casually and routinely denied - although it is not a blanket solution. While this bill makes it harder for accused persons to receive bail, in the end, what matters is the interpretation of "exceptional circumstances". A legal system entirely rid of corrupt proclivities is the only longitudinal solution to guarantee that the law sides with the victims and not the offenders.

Law minister rules out constitutional amendment without allies' consensus



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar on Saturday said that any constitutional amendment process will only proceed with consensus, adding there were currently no signs of a 28th Amendment.

"We are a coalition government; how can we proceed with constitutional amendments without consultation?" he said during a media interaction in Lahore.

According to the law minister, the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) will first consult with its allies in parliament and proceed on the matter only after receiving a "signal" from its allies.

He added that all stakeholders

will come together for dialogue on key issues requiring agreement, stressing past consensus models, including those from 2009, could guide future discussions.

"Nothing is clear yet; the contours of any amendment become visible once a draft is prepared," Tarar said.

His clarification aligns with Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari's denial of any constitutional talks on a proposed 28th Constitutional Amendment.

"No talks have taken place yet on the 28th Amendment; [but] I do not know about tomorrow," he said while addressing the PPP's parliamentary party meeting on Thursday.

Bilawal's remarks followed State Minister for Law Barrister Aqeel Malik's statement, rejecting impressions that the 28th Amendment would roll back the 18th.

"This impression being created that if the 28th Amendment is introduced, it is a rollback of the 18th

Amendment — I believe an extremely false impression is being created," Malik said during a Geo News' programme "Capital Talk".

Meanwhile, the law minister reiterated that the constitutional amendment process will only move forward with consensus among coalition partners and stakeholders.

He noted that the federal government was facing governance challenges, stressing discussions on a number of national issues, including the National Finance Commission (NFC), the proposed Saraiki province and the strengthening of local governments.

Tarar noted MQM-P's advocacy for strengthening local governments, saying Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif gave him the responsibility to create consensus on the party's suggestions.

The law minister said that coordination between PM Shehbaz and President Asif Ali Zardari would help advance consultations on key national matters.

Islamabad, Baku developing ties within Pakistan-Turkiye-Azerbaijan trilateral framework: President Aliyev

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad and Baku are developing their ties under a trilateral framework involving Pakistan, Türkiye and Azerbaijan, President Ilham Aliyev said on Sunday.

The Azeri president met with Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz in Baku, where CM Maryam arrived on a three-day visit on Saturday to represent Pakistan at the 13th UN World Urban Forum (WUF13).

"President Ilham Aliyev also emphasised that Azerbaijan-Pakistan relations are currently developing within a trilateral framework involving Azerbaijan, Türkiye, and Pakistan," read a statement issued by the Azeri president's office on the meeting.

During the meeting, the two sides "commended the development of fraternal relations and



strategic partnership between Azerbaijan and Pakistan".

"They discussed cooperation in political, economic, diplomatic, defence, and other fields, while also highlighting the importance of interregional cooperation and the strong potential for further expanding trade ties," the statement said.

It was also highlighted during the meeting that "centres based on Azerbaijan's 'ASAN Khidmet' experience have been established in Pakistan". Expressing satisfaction with participating in WUF13, the Punjab CM thanked.

Pakistan tells World Urban Forum climate crisis has become 'a crisis of justice' for the poor

PEAK POINT

BAKU: Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Musadik Malik on Sunday told the World Urban Forum that climate change was no longer merely an environmental challenge but a "crisis of justice" disproportionately affecting poor and vulnerable communities living in cities across Pakistan. Delivering Pakistan's national ministerial statement at the World Urban Forum in Baku, Azerbaijan, the minister painted a grim picture of urban inequality, climate vulnerability and inadequate housing, warning that millions of Pakistanis were being pushed deeper into poverty by floods, heatwaves and collapsing urban infrastructure. Malik recalled an image from the devastating floods in which a child stood holding a torn notebook beside his father after their home had been washed away in one of affected province across the country. "Two generations of efforts, probably, washed away because the housing stock was not resilient," he said,

adding that such disasters trap vulnerable families in cycles of poverty that may take generations to escape. Calling for urgent global action, the minister said the housing crisis facing developing countries should be viewed through the lens of justice rather than charity. "This is not a housing crisis; this is a crisis of justice," he told delegates at the forum. The minister said Pakistan's rapidly growing urban population was becoming increasingly exposed to climate shocks, with nearly half of the country's 240 million people now living in cities. Of those, he said, around 55 million people were living in slums under inadequate housing and crumbling civic infrastructure. "Slums are not a policy category; slums are a life category. Real people live in these slums," he said. Describing the living conditions faced by low-income families, Malik spoke of households of six to eight people sharing two-room homes without reliable electricity, sanitation or safe access to schools and healthcare facilities.



Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Dr Musadik Malik delivered Pakistan's National Ministerial Statement at the Thirteenth Session of the World Urban Forum (WUF13) being held in Baku, Azerbaijan.

KP governor, CM discuss wheat crisis, CNG closure

PEAK POINT

PESHAWAR: Sohail Afridi met Faisal Karim Kundi at the Governor House to discuss key provincial issues, including law and order, suspension of CNG services and wheat supply challenges in the province.

During the meeting, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi said the closure of CNG stations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was a violation of constitutional rights and warned that both the wheat shortage and suspension of gas supply were severely affecting low-income communities.

He said the province could secure wheat from Sindh if transit facilities were provided through Punjab, adding that otherwise KP was being forced to buy wheat at higher prices.

Jet fuel price cut by Rs111.44 per litre may ease airfares. The governor also discussed increasing salaries and benefits for KP police personnel and directed the chief secretary to review pay structures and incentives being offered to police forces in other provinces.

PMYP, UNESCO to align youth initiatives with global development goals

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP) Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan and UNESCO's Country Director Fuad Pashayev on Sunday held a high level meeting at the Prime Minister's Office to explore collaboration between the PMYP and UNESCO Pakistan under UNESCO's Country Cooperation Strategy 2026-2030, with discussions focusing on education, youth empowerment, digital inclusion, climate resilience and technical skills development.

PMYP, UNESCO to align youth initiatives with global development goals

The meeting, attended by senior officials from both sides, aimed at positioning PMYP as



UNESCO Pakistan's strategic implementation partner by utilizing its nationwide youth development network to advance opportunities in education, entrepreneurship, innovation and employment for young people across the country.

During the briefing, Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan highlighted PMYP's flagship initiatives, including the Digital Youth Hub, PM Youth Skills Development Programme, Matric Tech Programme.

Internal party rift, not ideology, behind PTI resignations from standing committees: Tariq Fazal

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry on Sunday said that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)'s resignation from parliamentary standing committees resulted from internal party differences over the chairmanship of committees — particularly the Public Accounts Committee — rather than any ideology.

The minister, talking to the media, said that while PTI leadership attempted to project the move as a matter of principle or ideology in the media, the core issue was an internal dispute within the party regarding the appointment of committee chair-



men, especially concerning Public Accounts Committee Chairman Junaid Akbar Khan.

The parliamentary affairs minister said that after resigning from the standing committees, the opposition members were now left with no position.

"By boycotting the proceedings of the standing committees, the opposition has disassociated itself from the budget.

Government aims to complete Provincial Consultations on NDMP before budget

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Cheema and Advisor to the Prime Minister's Office Dr. Tauqeer Shah co-chaired a meeting on the National Digital Masterplan (NDMP) to review progress on Pakistan's digital transformation agenda and strengthen coordination among federal and provincial stakeholders.

Federal Minister for IT and Telecom Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Secretary IT Zarrar Hashim Khan, Chairman Pakistan Digital Authority Dr. Sohail Munir, and senior

officials briefed the co-chairs on the implementation roadmap, institutional coordination mechanisms, and ongoing initiatives under the National Digital Masterplan aimed at accelerating digital governance, digital economy, digital infrastructure, and digital society reforms across the country, said a release issued here on Saturday.

During the meeting, Federal Minister Ahad Cheema appreciated the Ministry of IT and Telecommunication for its active engagement with provincial governments and emphasized that strong provincial participation



would be essential for the successful implementation of the National Digital Masterplan.

He stated that the NDMP represents a national framework designed to ensure inclusive and coordinated

digital transformation across all sectors of the economy, including education, health, agriculture, taxation, social protection, energy, logistics, and public service delivery.

Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Cheema

expressed hope that consultations with all provinces on the National Digital Masterplan would be finalized before the upcoming federal budget to ensure alignment of priorities, implementation readiness, and effective resource planning for the next fiscal year.

He said he expected provincial governments to finalize their feedback and consultations with the Ministry of IT on the NDMP before the budget.

He further underscored that improved inter-provincial collaboration would help create harmonized digital systems, strengthen service

delivery, and enhance transparency and efficiency in governance.

The participants of meeting reviewed a proposal to introduce a dedicated digital transformation column in the PC-1 of new development projects, similar to the existing environment-related component in project planning.

The proposal aims to ensure that digital integration and technology adoption are incorporated into project design and implementation from the outset, enabling improved governance, efficiency, transparency, and service delivery across sectors.