



Quarterly fund release mechanism agreed between Information Ministry, Finance Division: Tarar



Govt explores tokenisation of sovereign bonds, NPCs



Medical arrangements for Pakistani Hajj pilgrims exemplary: Sardar Yousef

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## PM stresses result-oriented use of public funds in development projects

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Monday, emphasized that public money should be invested in such development projects which ensured tangible results.

The prime minister chaired a meeting to review the ongoing year's development budget and proposed projects under the upcoming Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) for the next fiscal year, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

During the meeting, the prime minister said that ministries demonstrating better performance would be given priority in the allocation of funds for development projects.

He said that water reservoirs and

hydropower projects were among the government's top priorities in development spending and stressed that water reservoirs enhancement projects would be accorded high priority. The meeting was attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar, along with federal ministers Ahsan Iqbal, Ahad Khan Cheema, Muhammad Aurangzeb, Rana Tanveer Hussain, Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Hanif Abbasi, Sardar Awais Leghari, Mian Mohammad Moeen Watto, Abdul Aleem Khan, Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, Minister of State Bilal Azhar Kayani, Special Assistant Haroon Akhtar Khan, and other senior officials. The prime minister also appreciated Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a review meeting regarding PSDP.

## Iran responds to latest US proposal via Pakistan

PEAK POINT



IRAN: Iran said Monday it had responded to a new US proposal aimed at ending the war, adding that exchanges were continuing via Pakistan despite

Iranian media reports describing Washington's demands as excessive.

Washington and Tehran have been swapping proposals in an effort to end the conflict which broke out on February 28. The two sides have held a single round of talks so far amid a fragile ceasefire in place since April 8. "As we announced yesterday, our concerns were conveyed to the American side," foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said during a press briefing Monday, adding that exchanges were "continuing through the Pakistani mediator", without providing details.

Baqaei defended Iran's demands including the release of Iranian assets frozen abroad and the lifting of long-standing sanctions. "The points raised are Iranian demands that have been firmly defended.

## Pakistan condemns drone attack on UAE nuclear power plant

PEAK POINT



ISLAMABAD: The Foreign Office (FO) on Monday strongly condemned the drone attack on the United Arab Emirates' nuclear power plant, saying that "such reckless actions carry potentially catastrophic and irreversible consequences for human life, the environment and regional as well

as global peace and security".

A day ago, a drone strike had triggered a fire near Barakah Nuclear Power Plant in the emirate of Abu Dhabi, reporting no injuries or impact on radiation levels, according to the UAE's defence ministry.

The UAE defence ministry said two other drones had been "successfully" dealt with, and that the drones had been launched from the "western border". It did not elaborate.

Emirati officials said they were investigating the source of the strike and that the UAE had the full right to respond to such "terrorist attacks".

The UAE has previously accused Iran of attacking its energy targets in what it has called an escalation of the conflict in the region.

In the statement released on Monday, the FO said that "any deliberate targeting of nuclear facilities" constituted a grave violation of international law, including international humanitarian law, the UN Charter, and the fundamental principles of nuclear safety and security enshrined in the Statute and resolutions.

## Counsel for Imran, Bushra challenges IHC order setting deadline for arguments in £190m case

PEAK POINT



ISLAMABAD: In a significant development in the £190 million case pending before the Islamabad High Court (IHC), counsel for incarcerated PTI founder

Imran Khan and his spouse Bushra Bibi challenged the court's order setting a deadline for concluding arguments in the appeals against their conviction.

Imran — imprisoned since Aug 5, 2023, for concealing details of Toshakhana gifts — is serving a 14-year sentence at Rawalpindi's Adiala jail in the £190m case, also known as the Al-Qadir Trust case.

An accountability court in Islamabad had sentenced Imran and Bushra to 14 and seven years in prison, respectively, on Jan 17, 2025, in the case. Subsequently, both had challenged their convictions before the IHC.

Earlier in May, the IHC rejected their petitions seeking the suspension of their sentences in the case, observing that their main appeals were already fixed for hearing. Barrister Salman Safdar filed two separate miscellaneous petitions on behalf of the PTI founder and Bushra Bibi, contending that the April 30 order imposing.

## Tribal chief among 3 killed in IED blast in KP's Wana

PEAK POINT

LOWER SOUTH WAZIRISTAN: At least three people, including prominent tribal elder and chief of the Ahmadzai Wazir tribe Malik Tariq Wazir, were killed while four others sustained injuries in an improvised explosive device (IED) blast that struck the busy Rustam Bazaar area of Wana on Monday morning, officials said. According to District Police Officer (DPO) Mohammad Tahir Shah Wazir, the explosion occurred near Gulshan Plaza when a vehicle with Tariq on board was passing through the market. The powerful blast resulted in the deaths of three individuals.

## India will be 'relegated to history' if it attempts misadventure against Pakistan

PEAK POINT

India a "devastating" geography or history or response.



ISLAMABAD: Defence Minister Khawaja Asif on Monday said that India would be "relegated to history" and its geography "changed" if it attempted any future misadventure against Pakistan.

In an interview on the Geo News programme 'Capital Talk', Asif said, "As a nation, India thinks that its esteem has been damaged."

The defence minister was referring to last year's confrontation with India, beginning with the April 22 Pahalgam attack and the subsequent military conflict — which resulted in a resounding victory for Pakistan — until the ceasefire on May 10.

Reflecting on last year's standoff with India, Asif said that Pakistan's armed forces had given

"If India attempts any misadventure against Pakistan, it would be relegated to history and its geography would be changed," the defence minister asserted.

The defence minister also criticised the recent remarks made by Indian Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi, in which he said that Pakistan had "to decide whether they want to be part of

"By making those kinds of remarks, the Indian army chief is trying to regain his lost respect," Asif maintained, adding that during Marka-i-Haq, India was significantly battered. Asif also commented on the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) secretary general's remarks, calling for keeping the window for dialogue between Islamabad and New Delhi open.

"There are also various critical voices against the government in India," he said, adding that the stance of the Indian army and civil society differs.

He said that Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka, which India had considered its "extension," did not enjoy the same relationship with it as before. "India is now facing embarrassment on the foreign front," he added.

Meanwhile, he said that Pakistan had achieved "a highly reputable status" in the region. While responding to a question about a possible nexus between India and Israel against Pakistan, the defence minister said that there could be a resemblance in the objectives of India and Israel. "Israel doesn't want anyone more powerful in this region other than its partner, India."

## Karachi court extends drug queenpin Pinky's physical remand by four days

PEAK POINT



KARACHI: A judicial magistrate in Karachi on Monday extended the physical remand of Anmol alias Pinky, the alleged head of a drug trafficking network, by four days in a murder case registered against her.

Judicial Magistrate South heard the case and directed investigators to complete the interrogation and submit a progress report at the next hearing. The accused is facing proceedings in connection with the murder case, while police have also linked her to multiple ongoing narcotics-related investigations.

During a hearing at the Judicial Complex in a drugs and murder case, the accused created a commotion upon seeing media personnel, prompting police to remove journalists.



# SPORTS



## Bangladesh extend lead to 249 against Pakistan in second Test



**PEAK POINT**  
SYLHET: Bangladesh reached 203-4 at lunch on day three of the second Test against Pakistan, extending their overall lead to 249 runs to remain firmly in control at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium on Monday.

Resuming their innings at 110-3 in 26.4 overs, Bangladesh lost just one wicket during the opening session and reached 203-4 in 53 overs, taking a commanding lead of 249 runs.

The Tigers lost skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto after pacer Khurram Shahzad trapped him lbw to claim his third wicket.

Shanto scored 15 off 46 deliveries, including one boundary.

Mushfiqur Rahim and Litton Das then combined sensibly to stabilise the innings with a 50-run partnership, helping the team's total surpass the 150-run mark.

The duo continued to build steadily, aiming to add crucial runs and push the total beyond 200 to further pressure the opposition. By the end of the opening session, Das remained unbeaten on 48 off 66 deliveries, while Rahim was not out on 39.

On day two of the final Test, Bangladesh got off to a poor start by losing the wicket of Tanzid

Hasan on the third delivery of the fourth over and scored four off seven deliveries after hitting a boundary. After the early setback, 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.

Mahmudul Hasan was in dominant form with the bat as he brought up his sixth Test fifty, reaching the milestone off 58 deliveries, as he led his side's charge towards a strong total against Pakistan.

However, the 76-run stand was broken after Mohammad Abbas

struck and dismissed Mahmudul after contributing 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.

But it was Khurram Shahzad with the ball who claimed his second wicket, dismissing Mominul 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.

## National hockey team trials for Pro League begin today



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Trials for the selection of Pakistan's national hockey team for the FIH Pro League will begin tomorrow, with 35 players set to participate in the two-day evaluation camp.

All national players currently featuring in overseas leagues have reported to the camp and will take part in the trials. The selection committee, headed by former Olympian Samiullah Khan, will closely assess the players' performance before finalizing the squad.

Officials said the final team is expected to be announced on Wednesday following the conclusion of the trials.

In the upcoming Pro League fixtures, Pakistan national field hockey team is scheduled to play two matches each against Belgium men's national field hockey team, Spain men's national field hockey team, England men's national field hockey team, and arch-rivals India men's national field hockey team.

## Pakistan to host Billie Jean King Cup in October



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is set to script history as it prepares to host the Billie Jean King Cup for the first time, with 10 Asian women's tennis teams confirmed to compete in the country in October, the Pakistan Federation vlog. According to

Asiam, the event will be a game changer as it will provide Pakistani girls a unique platform to showcase their talent and enhance their global rankings.

The tournament is scheduled to run from October 19 to 25, drawing teams from across Asia for what promises to be a landmark week of competitive tennis in Pakistan. The PTF president revealed that the International Tennis Federation (ITF) had formally entrusted Pakistan with the hosting rights of the prestigious global event, a gesture he said reflected the international community's growing confidence in Pakistan's ability to organise top-tier competitions. Regarding operational readiness, Asiam assured that the PTF would make every effort to conduct the event in the best possible way. "We are committed to ensuring that this tournament is conducted to the highest standards," he said. He said that the federation viewed this event as a platform to project a positive and soft image of Pakistan globally, while simultaneously demonstrating the country's commitment to women's empowerment.

## People of Pakistan are my greatest strength, says Waqar after defending Seychelles Nature Trail title

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani ultra-runner Waqar Ahmad Nasir has said that the prayers, love, and great support of the people of Pakistan remain his greatest source of strength and motivation after he successfully defended his title at the prestigious Seychelles Nature Trail Challenge 2026.

"I feel truly honored and grateful for the constant prayers, love, and support from the people of Pakistan, which continue to be my greatest strength and motivation," Waqar Ahmad Nasir said following his remarkable international triumph.

Expressing gratitude to those who supported him throughout the journey, Waqar paid special tribute to Sal Nephrun, Fasih Saleh,

Ms. Wild Paths, and Vaga Tales for their encouragement, guidance, and belief in his abilities. He also thanked ACTIVIT and its CEO Rd. Rizwan Aftab

for their encouragement, guidance, and belief in his abilities. He also thanked ACTIVIT and its CEO Rd. Rizwan Aftab



Ahmed for sponsoring and supporting his campaign. "A heartfelt thank you to ACTIVIT for sponsoring me and for their continuous support, trust, and encouragement throughout my journey," he added.

## Islamabad Jeep club elects new leadership for two year term



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Elections of the Islamabad Jeep Club (IJC) have been concluded, resulting in the formation of a new leadership team for a two-year term. According to details, a

Media Secretary; and Syed Tufail Ahmad — Joint Secretary. On the occasion, the newly elected office bearers reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening the club's 26-year legacy by promoting off-roading, adventure sports, and responsible tourism across Pakistan. Meanwhile, Amir Malik, founder of the Islamabad Jeep Club, in his congratulatory message, extended heartfelt congratulations to all newly elected office bearers and wished them success in the club's future progress under the new leadership.

## Umar Gul breaks silence on Shaheen Afridi feud rumours

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's red-ball bowling coach Umar Gul has put an end to discussions surrounding a viral video showing him and fast bowler Shaheen Afridi during the second Test against Bangladesh at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium on Monday, which sparked speculation of an on-field argument related to the match situation.

The video went viral on social media



with claims that Shaheen Afridi disrespected Gul, although there was no verified evidence of their conversation leading to misunderstanding and widespread speculation among viewers online. Addressing confusion in the presser, the former right-arm pacer clarified that there was no internal dispute within the team. He explained that Hasan had suffered a head injury and was temporarily off the field while Shaheen Gul stated,

Afridi was simply informed about the situation as part of routine team communication.

"There was also a misunderstanding on social media regarding Shaheen Afridi and Hasan Ali. Hasan Ali had suffered a head injury and was off the field, and Shaheen was simply informed about the situation. There is no issue, but it was misinterpreted online," field while Shaheen Gul stated.



# Education bills face objection over shift of powers from cabinet to Prime Minister, Minister and Division

**NADEEM TANOLI**  
ISLAMABAD: The Senate Standing Committee on Federal Education and Professional Training approved several education related amendment bills despite objections that replacing the term "federal government" with "Prime Minister," "minister" or "concerned division" could weaken the cabinet based decision making principle settled in the Mustafa Impex judgment. The bills also triggered debate over 33 percent women's representation on boards, with some members questioning whether appointments should be gender based or strictly merit based. The committee considered five government bills moved by Federal Education Minister Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui. These included amendments to the National Rahmatul Lil Aalameen Wa

Khatamun Nabiyyin Authority Act, the Centre for Clinical Psychology Centers Act, the National Textile University Ordinance, the Area Study Centers Act and the NFC Institute of Engineering and Technology Multan Act. Officials told the committee that the amendments were mainly based on two government directions: ensuring 33 percent female participation on boards and replacing the term "federal government" in certain places with the Prime Minister, minister or concerned division to delegate routine administrative powers. The ministry argued that minor matters, such as lower level appointments or board nominations, should not keep going to the federal cabinet because this causes delays. The most controversial objection came when a senator said the amendments appeared to "frustrate" the

Supreme Court's Mustafa Impex judgment, which had defined federal government as the federal cabinet rather than the Prime Minister alone. The member argued that powers were being shifted from the cabinet to a single authority and recorded his reservation on the proposed changes. The education ministry defended the move, saying it was not a blanket transfer of power. Officials said the term "federal government" had been retained in places where cabinet level approval was necessary, while only minor or routine matters were being delegated to avoid unnecessary administrative delay. The committee chairperson Senator Bushra Anjum Butt also questioned why the ministry was only making limited amendments when many of these laws were old and needed broader updating. Officials admitted that wider

reforms were needed but said comprehensive review would require consultation with several stakeholders, including educationists, universities and subject experts. They said the present amendments were being moved quickly because of government pressure to implement changes related to women's representation and delegation. The 33 percent women's representation proposal also sparked debate. A member objected that appointments should be merit based rather than gender based. The chairperson responded that women's representation is necessary because Pakistan remains a patriarchal society where women often receive fewer opportunities, while officials maintained that the same eligibility criteria would apply to both men and women. During discussion on the Centre for Clinical Psychology Centers Act, offi-

cialists said amendments would include 33 percent women's participation and replacement of outdated references to the University Grants Commission with the Higher Education Commission. The committee was informed that the two clinical psychology centers in Lahore and Karachi operate under the same legal framework. The National Textile University amendment also raised administrative concerns because the university's board still included the Secretary Industries despite the institution now falling under the education ministry. Officials said representatives from the industries side do not attend board meetings because the university is no longer under that ministry. The ministry proposed replacing Secretary Industries with Secretary Education and removing references to the abolished Textile

Commissioner post. In the Area Study Centers Act, officials admitted that one proposed change had been wrongly drafted. They said the power to transfer centers should remain with the federal government and not be shifted to the concerned division. The committee accepted the withdrawal of that part of the proposed amendment. For the NFC Institute of Engineering and Technology Multan Act, the proposed amendments included women's representation in the board, syndicate and academic council. Officials said female professors and teachers would be included where required, while vacancies would be filled as seats become available rather than immediately removing existing members.

## ICT admin extends market exemption till May 31, marriage halls to close by 10 pm

**PEAK POINT**  
ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad district administration on Monday issued a notification exempting shops, markets and food businesses from recently announced early closure tim-

ings till May 31, 2026, while directing marriage halls and marquees to shut operations by 10 pm. According to the notification issued by the Office of the District Magistrate Islamabad Capital Territory, the decision was taken in

continuation of an earlier order dated May 5 and with reference to the Cabinet Division's notification issued on May 18, 2026. Under the revised instructions, a wide range of commercial activities have been exempted from the closure

timings with immediate effect. These include shops, markets, shopping malls, restaurants, food outlets, tandoors, grocery stores, kiriyana stores, meat shops, fruit shops, including dry fruit outlets, vegetable vendors and bakeries.

The administration stated that the exemption will remain in place till May 31, 2026. The move is expected to provide relief to traders, retailers and businesses operating across the federal capital during the ongoing period of restricted business tim-

ings. However, the notification also clarified that marriage halls, marquees and other commercial venues where festive events are held will continue to follow fixed operating hours and must close by 10 pm.

# Opinion & Editorial

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## Digital hygiene

**A**midst a whirlwind of digital advances embedded in Pakistan's economy, as well as the gradual takeover of fintech over most businesses, digital hygiene is not being awarded the attention that it deserves. The phrase 'digital hygiene' was popularised around 2006 and highlights the importance of practices that secure our data and devices - arguably the most important one being password management. As users are swarmed with prompts to 'create an account' at every corner of the internet, we're naturally inclined not to give passwords much thought in an expeditious bid to save time and effort. But recent reports by a major cybersecurity firm suggest that 68 per cent of modern passwords can easily be cracked in a day. Once upon a time, this just meant having to go through the hassle of a recovery email. But now, it means that your identity, financials, medical records and family information are all accessible to anyone willing to put in a day's work. The rise of digital banking in Pakistan has made most users vulnerable to cyber attacks that target their money. The possibility of your life's savings simply disappearing due to unprotected passwords is, unfortunately, dangerously high. Not only that, but a rise in phishing calls and 'pretend kidnappers' attempting to coax money out of you with empty threats necessitates stringent data privacy.

## In pursuit of stability

**Maleha Lodhi**  
**T**HE summit meeting between President Donald Trump and President Xi Jinping produced no surprises. The pomp and ceremony during the visit were as expected. The summit was more about optics than outcomes, but at its core, it was about managing superpower competition and stabilising the world's most consequential relationship.

The meeting took place after weeks of delay with an agenda that matched the range of disputes between the two global powers: trade, technology, rare earths and critical minerals, Taiwan and the Iran conflict. The race for AI dominance between the two powers remains intense.

This was the first trip to Beijing by an American president in nearly a decade. The last was Trump's own visit in 2017. This time he arrived with diminished leverage. His inability to secure any of his stated objectives in the Iran war damaged his standing and eroded US credibility. Trump's push to reach even a limited framework agreement with Tehran ahead of his China visit did nothing to change that reality. With his approval ratings at a historic low, Trump's unpopularity at home also weakened his hand. Most significantly, his tariff offensive against China all but backfired. When Trump raised trade levies on China last year, escalating at one point to 145 per cent, Beijing used its leverage on critical rare earth minerals,

over which it has a near-monopoly, to push back by curbing its exports.

This threatened US industry and forced Washington to retreat. It undermined China's ability to hit back at the US and gave it the upper hand in the trade war. A trade agreement was then reached when the two leaders met in October 2025 in South Korea. But its one-year sunset clause meant it remained a temporary truce.

Trump's National Security Strategy announced in December 2025, described China as a "near peer" power and cast it as a competitor, not an adversary. But this did not mean dilution of the US policy of containing China. The document designated Indo-Pacific as a region of high priority precisely for that reason and as the battleground where the US must "win the economic future" and "complete successfully". The goal set out by the NSS was to rebalance America's relationship with China while forging a "mutually advantageous economic relationship with Beijing".

While the summit's optics outweighed the outcomes it aimed at managing relations along a stable track.

In practice, Trump has dealt erratically with China, at the same time alienating allies, taking military actions against at least eight countries and switching attention randomly from one region to another. Beijing on the other hand, has acted with a clear and consistent plan bolstered

by efforts to increase its global influence and expand its trading relationships. It is now the largest trading partner of around 70 countries with its exports hitting a record level. This has enabled China to project itself as a stable and reliable partner in contrast to Trump's whimsical and coercive conduct.

All these factors gave President Xi a stronger hand in dealing with Trump in the Beijing encounter. Indeed, most Western analysts agreed the Chinese leader held more cards than Trump. An op-ed writer in the Financial Times described China's "great wall of confidence" that Trump was up against.

In The Guardian, Simon Tisdall wrote Xi held all the cards, adding that Washington's "loss of influence and leverage is Beijing's gain". A confidential US intelligence assessment ahead of Trump's trip said China had gained the geopolitical edge over the US due to the Iran war.

China, however, did nothing during the visit to signal this advantage. Instead, it went out of the way to show Trump respect. The high-stakes talks began with the two presidents exchanging warm and positive words. Xi said the two countries "should be partners, not rivals" and to "avoid the so-called Thucydides Trap" - a reference to the theory that underlines the danger of conflict between a rising and a dominant power.

Courtesy Dawn

## Trump-Xi summit in Beijing

Shahid Javed Burki

**I** write this after President Trump had spent a day in Beijing and held a meeting with the Chinese President Xi Jinping. He may have returned to Washington by the time the article is published, and even then, we will not know exactly what transpired at the summit or whether there were any breakthroughs in the understanding between the two countries.

The meeting with the Chinese president was initially scheduled for April but was delayed because of escalating tensions with Iran. Instead, the summit took place on May 14 in Beijing. There is a fairly long history of high-level contacts between the top leaders of the two countries. "Unless they have amnesia, China should remember quite vividly how, during Trump's first term, the US imposed multiple rounds of tariffs under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974 on China during negotiations," said Sarah Schumman, a former US trade official who is now the managing director at Boston Global Strategies. The administration still has multiple options "to increase tariffs on China in pretty short order," she added. US officials spoke at length about the meeting before President Trump flew to Beijing on May 13. On May 8, Jamieson Greer, a trade adviser to the president, sketched out a long list of concerns that the administration planned to raise - from its adherence to past purchase agreements to its approach to artificial intelligence. "There is not a situation where we get China to change the way they govern, the way they manage their economy; that's all baked into their system. But I think there is a world where we find out where we can optimise trade between China and the US to achieve more balance," he said. At the time of the Trump-Xi summit, the trade balance was in China's favour. Trump was meeting his Chinese counterpart after constitutional changes in 2018 removed presidential term limits, effectively allowing Xi Jinping to remain in power indefinitely.

Courtesy Tribune

## Quarterly fund release mechanism agreed between Information Ministry, Finance Division: Tarar



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Monday informed the National Assembly that a quarterly release mechanism between the Ministry of Information and the Finance Division has already been agreed upon, under which funds are released every quarter in line with utilisation. Responding to questions during Question Hour, he explained that many projects of the ministry are related to procurement, where payments

are often made on a one-time basis; therefore, funds are released according to the agreed mechanism with the Finance Ministry. He said several Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) projects, including the revamping of the Digital Communication Department, were currently underway, and the Finance Division had extended full cooperation in this regard.

The minister added that the Finance Division is also ensuring the timely release of pension-related expenditures.

However, he acknowledged that in some cases, fund disbursement did not fully correspond with actual requirements, as the Finance Division operates within its available fiscal space.

Tarar said the government will continue efforts to ensure full utilisation of quarterly allocations and timely completion of ongoing projects. Replying to a supplementary question, he said the ministry had enhanced engagement with media and communication departments of universities to strengthen networking and policy coordination.

He added that the government is also introducing artificial intelligence (AI) programmes in collaboration with university media departments to align academic disciplines with emerging technological trends and communication needs.

The minister said suggestions from parliamentarians would also be incorporated to further improve coordination and modernisation in the media and communication sector.

## In rare unity, KP governor and CM criticise Centre over province's rights

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi and Chief Minister Sohail Afridi on Monday criticised the federal government over the suspension of gas supply in the province, urging the Centre to ensure KP gets its due rights.

During a joint press conference in Peshawar alongside Governor Kundi, the KP chief executive claimed that CNG stations were being shut down across the province due to the lack of gas supply.

"Article 158 of the Constitution clearly states that a gas-producing province has the first right over its resources," he added.

CM Afridi said the people of KP should not be forced into further difficulties, claiming decisions taken behind closed doors



were being imposed on the province.

He alleged that the federal government was adopting "unlawful and unconstitutional" behaviour in several development projects and claimed Rs12 billion allocated for the merged tribal districts had been deducted unfairly.

"The suspension of gas in the province is an illegal act," he said, urging all stakeholders not to support unconstitutional measures against KP. On the security situation, the KP CM said that if "interference ended".

## Govt explores tokenisation of sovereign bonds, NPCs

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The government on Monday initiated high-level discussions on the tokenisation of sovereign debt instruments and Naya Pakistan Certificates (NPCs), as part of efforts to modernise Pakistan's financial infrastructure and expand investor access through blockchain technology.

The discussions took place during a meeting between Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, Minister of State and Chairman of the Pakistan Virtual Assets Regulatory Authority Bilal Bin Saqib, and Advisor on Debt Management Omer Khan, according to a statement issued by the Finance Division. The meeting marked one of the first senior-level government engagements focused specifically on sovereign asset tokenisation and the role of blockchain infrastructure in capital markets. Officials discussed possible structures, implementation pathways, regulatory requirements and next steps for introducing tokenised sovereign instruments within Pakistan's evolving financial ecosystem.

According to the statement, the model under consideration involves the issuance of digitally native sovereign notes through a regulated blockchain-based financial market infrastructure, enabling same-day settlement while remaining interoperable with conventional international clearing and settlement systems linked to Pakistan's existing Eurobond programme. The proposal would allow coupon payments, secondary market trading and final repayments to continue through established global financial infrastructure, ensuring compatibility with institutional investors participating in Pakistan's sovereign debt market. The meeting also reviewed the potential tokenisation of Naya Pakistan Certificates to improve accessibility for overseas Pakistanis and broaden retail investor participation through digital investment channels connected to global markets. Officials noted that the Roshan Digital Account initiative has attracted nearly \$13 billion in cumulative inflows since its launch in 2020, with most of the funds deployed within Pakistan's economy.

## MoFEPT strengthens foundational learning through innovative Teacher Aid Kits

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: As part of the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training's (MoFEPT) ongoing efforts to strengthen foundational learning for out-of-school children

Secretary MoFEPT, Mr Nadeem Mahbub, visited a National Commission for Human Development (NCHD) Non-Formal Education (NFE) Centre in Bhara Kahu. During the visit on Monday, the Secretary observed classroom teaching activities and interacted with teacher Ms Maryam Imran and 57 enrolled students to evaluate the effective use of the recently distributed Non-Formal Education Teacher Aid Kits in daily learning practices.

The interaction focused on how these kits are being integrated into classroom instruction to promote interactive, activity-based learning in a multigrade environment.

MoFEPT strengthens foundational learning through innovative Teacher Aid Kits.

## Medical arrangements for Pakistani Hajj pilgrims exemplary: Sardar Yousaf

PEAK POINT

MAKKAH: Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Sardar Muhammad Yousaf, conducted a detailed inspection of the Pakistan Hajj Medical Mission's central clinic established in the Azizia district of Makkah. During his visit, the Minister reviewed operations across various departments, including the male and female OPDs, pharmacy, laboratory, dental unit, ultrasound, X-ray, and physiotherapy sections. He interacted with elderly, male, and female pilgrims undergoing treatment to inquire about the quality of care, with the pilgrims expressing their complete satisfaction with the available services. On this occasion, medical authorities



comprising Colonel Dr. Tauqeer, Lieutenant Colonel Dr. Hamza Mansur, and Lieutenant Colonel Dr. Jawad Aslam briefed the Federal Minister. They highlighted that all Pakistani dispensaries and the central clinic operational in Saudi Arabia are functioning strictly in compliance with the Saudi Ministry of Health regulations and international medical standards. According to the briefing, a total of 36 dispensaries and clinics have been established across Makkah, Medinah.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, holding a meeting with Minister of State and Chairman PVARA Bilal Saqib to discuss tokenization of sovereign debt instruments and Naya Pakistan Certificates at the Finance Division.

## Bangladesh's Acting President hosts lunch for Pakistan's former Info Secy

PEAK POINT

DHAKA: Acting President and Speaker of the Bangladesh Parliament Hafizuddin Ahmed on Monday hosted a lunch in the honour of the visiting former Pakistani Federal Secretary for Information and Broadcasting, Syed Anwer Mahmood, here in Dhaka.

The lunch was hosted at the Speaker's House on the conclusion of former federal secretary's visit to Bangladesh.

The goodwill visit was undertaken on the invitation of Bangladesh's Acting President.

During his stay in Bangladesh, former secretary Information Anwer Mahmood



met several government officials, and discussed the need for enhanced people-to-people contacts to strengthen the Pak-Bangladesh relations.

Earlier this month, the former secretary Information also witnessed a cricket match along with Bangladesh's Acting President at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Dhaka.

## NDMA hosts 2nd Pak-China disaster warning symposium

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) on Monday opened the 2nd Pak-China Symposium on Early Warning for Hydrological and Geological Disasters in Islamabad, bringing together policymakers, scientists, diplomats, UN agencies and international experts to strengthen regional cooperation on climate resilience, disaster preparedness and multi-hazard risk management. The two day symposium, being held at NDMA headquarters from May 18 to 19, also featured the launch of a report titled "Global Best Practices for Disaster Mitigation and

Management", aimed at improving Pakistan's disaster response framework through international models and lessons. Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal attended the inaugural session as chief guest and warned that climate change had become one of the defining challenges of the century.

, requiring stronger preparedness, scientific innovation and institutional coordination.

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He stressed the need to strengthen provincial capacities and coordination with NDMA for timely early warn-



ing dissemination, emergency response and post-disaster recovery operations.

Mr Iqbal said Pakistan faced growing threats from glacier lake outburst floods (GLOFs), flash floods, landslides, earthquakes, heatwaves and other extreme weather

events, adding that disaster resilience must be integrated into national development planning through science-based policymaking and technological modernisation.

In his keynote address, NDMA Chairman Inam Haider Malik said the authori-

ty was shifting from reactive disaster response to a preparedness-driven and anticipatory disaster management system.

He highlighted the shared geography of the Hindu Kush, Karakoram and Himalayan region, saying Pakistan and China faced common risks due to tectonic fault lines, glacier-fed rivers and strategic infrastructure along the Karakoram belt, making operational cooperation essential.

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Representatives from the Chinese Embassy reaffirmed support for deeper bilateral cooperation in disaster man-

agement, scientific research and technological innovation.

Experts from Pakistani and Chinese institutions presented research on glacier monitoring, flood forecasting, landslide and seismic hazards, artificial intelligence, geospatial technologies and digital disaster resilience during technical sessions held as part of the symposium.

NDMA hosts 2nd Pak-China disaster warning symposium The event was attended by diplomats, researchers, development partners, students, UN representatives and disaster management practitioners, reflecting growing international collaboration on climate adaptation.