



Aurangzeb discusses economic cooperation, reform agenda with British envoy



SAPM Fahd Haroon meets Somalia's DPM in Makkah



PMYP appoints Ibtisam Babar to lead fintech drive under digital Pakistan vision

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China's Xi hails 'unbreakable' ties, praises Pakistan's role in Iran peace efforts as he meets PM Shehbaz

PEAK POINT

CHINA: China's President Xi Jinping hailed Beijing's "unbreakable" friendship with Pakistan on Monday as he met Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in Beijing, seeking to deepen the "all-weather" partnership between the two countries.

PM Shehbaz landed in China on Saturday on a four-day official visit, reaching Beijing yesterday after making a stop in Hangzhou.

Addressing bilateral talks at the Great Hall of the People, Xi said: "China is ready to work with Pakistan to move faster to build an even closer China-Pakistan community with a shared future in the new era, work for more results in our all-weather cooperation, [...] contribute to regional peace and stability and

set an example for building a community with a shared future among neighbouring countries." Xi called PM Shehbaz an "old friend" and said the two countries had "understood, trusted and supported each other" over decades, forging an "unbreakable tradition of friendship".

"Despite international changes, China has always prioritised Pakistan relations in our neighbourhood diplomacy," Xi said.

Chief of Defence Forces and Chief of the Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir, who concluded his visit to Iran on Saturday, was also present on the occasion.

"I know that you have just returned from Iran and made positive efforts to mediate for peace.



Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping in Beijing.

At least 16 killed, 7 injured as passenger coach collides with parked bus on Swat Motorway

PEAK POINT



MARDAN: At least 16 people were killed and seven others were injured after a Swat-bound passenger coach collided with a bus parked by the roadside of the Swat Motorway in

Khoro Kotay Saeedabad area on Monday, Rescue 1122 said. Rescue 1122 Public Relations Officer Syed Abbas Shah confirmed the number of casualties. According to the motorway police, the passenger coach crashed into a bus that was parked by the roadside after developing a mechanical fault. The motorway police, Rescue 1122 officials and locals of nearby areas rushed to the spot after the incident was reported and shifted the dead and injured to Mardan Medical Complex Hospital. Hospital and Rescue 1122 officials said that the identities of the dead and injured persons had yet to be ascertained.

However, they said that the majority of the victims hailed from Dir and Bajaur, and were headed home for the Eid holidays. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Information and Public Relations Shaifan expressed grief at the incident. He said that the injured were being provided with the best medical facilities.

Makkah municipality prepares 'Mashair Villages' to serve 300,000 pilgrims in Arafat

PEAK POINT



ISLAMABAD: Makkah Municipality is preparing to provide services to more than 300,000 pilgrims in Arafat through its "Mashair Villages" initiative during Hajj 1447 AH. According to Saudi Press Agency (SPA), the initiative is part of the municipality's volunteer and nonprofit sector programs aimed at improving services and comfort for pilgrims in the holy sites. The report said the hospitality project is spread over an area exceeding 40,000 square meters near Namirah Mosque and along the pedestrian route leading toward Muzdalifah. Authorities said the services will begin from Maghrib on the Day of Tarwiyah, the 8th of Dhul-Hijjah, and continue until the morning of Eid Al-Adha. SPA told APP that the initiative aims to provide pilgrims with rest and hospitality facilities at one of the busiest movement points during Hajj rituals. The report said the site includes food and beverage services, rest areas, cooling mist systems, gifts, awareness activities and health guidance services for pilgrims.

Officials added that the project has been designed to improve pilgrims' experience and support smoother movement between Arafat and Muzdalifah during one of the most important stages of the Hajj journey.

Iran says progress on many issues with US but agreement not imminent

PEAK POINT



IRAN: Iran said on Monday that Tehran and Washington had reached understandings on many issues in exchanges over a deal for ending the war, but warned an agreement was not imminent.

"It is correct to say that we have reached a conclusion on a large portion of the issues under discussion," foreign ministry spokesman Esmacil Baqaei said, during a weekly news briefing.

"But to say that this means the signing of an agreement is imminent — no one can make such a claim," he said, accusing Washington of "contradictions" and shifting its positions.

The remarks come after Iran said it was finalising a 14-point framework for a deal on ending the war. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said a deal to end the war with Iran could materialise on Monday as US President Donald Trump told his negotiators not to "rush".

During the press conference, Baqaei insisted that the framework being drafted "is focused on ending the war" across the region, including in Lebanon.

Federal Budget 2026-27 to be presented on June 5

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: A meeting of the National Assembly Standing Committee on Finance was held under the chairmanship of Member of National Assembly (MNA) Syed Naveed Qamar in Islamabad on Monday. During the meeting, senior PPP leader Syed Naveed Qamar said that the federal budget of 2026-27 will be presented in the National Assembly on June 5, 2026. Naveed Qamar said that economic experts will brief the participants of the meeting about the next budget 2026-27.

Talking on the occasion, economic expert Ali Salman.

Trump demands widespread sign-up to Abraham Accords as part of Iran peace deal

MAHPARA ZAMAN

NEW YORK: US President Donald Trump on Monday seemingly predicated an emerging Iran peace deal on Muslim-majority nations across the Middle East and beyond normalising relations with Israel. This brand new demand came on the heels of a potential memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the US and Iran to end the war on all fronts and potentially lift oil waivers.

It is worth noting that the nations named by Trump, including Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Qatar, have traditionally advocated for a two-state solution between Palestine and Israel as a precursor to any discussions on the normalisation of relations with Israel. In a lengthy social media post, Trump listed

countries whose leaders he spoke with on Saturday Jordan, and Bahrain (already a Member!)"



about efforts to end the war with Iran.

"After all the work done by the United States to try and pull this very complex puzzle together, it should be mandatory that all of these countries, at a minimum, simultaneously sign onto the Abraham Accords," he wrote. "Those countries discussed are Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (already a Member!), Qatar, Pakistan, Turkiye, Egypt,

and Bahrain (already a Member!)"

The Abraham Accords are a set of agreements brokered under Trump in 2020 and govern the normalisation of diplomatic relations between Israel and countries that have historically been hostile to it. They, however, remain unpopular among the public in many parts of the region, not least because they do not tackle the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. "It may be possible that one or two have a rea-

Ishaq Dar to Visit New York for UN Security Council debate

PEAK POINT



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar will visit New York City from May 26 to 28 to participate in a high-level debate at the United Nations Security Council, according to the Foreign Office spokesperson. The spokesperson said the Security Council debate would focus on global peace and security and the role of the United Nations in addressing international challenges. The session will be held under the presidency of China for May 2026, with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi set to chair the debate.

The Foreign Office spokesperson said Pakistan had welcomed China's timely initiative and reiterated its support for the multilateral system and the central role of the United Nations.



SPORTS



Pakistan women cricket team leave for Ireland to play tri-series



PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: Pakistan women's cricket team on Monday left Lahore for Ireland to take part in the upcoming T20 tri-nation series featuring Ireland and the West Indies.

will travel to Dublin via Dubai to play the tri-series. During the series, Pakistan will play a total of four matches against the host Ireland and the West Indies. The team is scheduled to begin its campaign against Ireland on May 29. The tri-series is considered a

crucial part of Pakistan's preparations for the upcoming ICC Women's Cricket World Cup. Fatima Sana is leading Pakistan team in the tri-series in Ireland and the upcoming ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2026 in England and Wales. Squad

Fatima Sana (captain), Aliya Riaz, Ayesha Zafar, Diana Baig, Eyman Fatima, Gull Feroza, Iram Javed, Muneeba Ali Siddiqui (wk), Nashra Sundhu, Natalia Pervaiz, Rameen Shamim, Sadia Iqbal, Saira Jabeen, Tasmia Rubab and Tuba Hassan.

PCB begins search for men's white-ball team batting coach



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has formally started the process of appointing a batting coach for Pakistan's men's white-ball team, issuing an official advertisement seeking an "experienced and skilled" candidate for the position. According to the eligibility criteria released by the board on another day, applicants must hold at least a Level II cricket coaching accreditation and possess a minimum of five years' experience in a similar role with elite cricketers, national sides, franchise teams, or international setups. The PCB said candidates should demonstrate strong knowledge of batting techniques, game analysis, and player development, along with experience in monitoring and evaluating systems used internationally to improve batting performance. The board is also seeking applicants with experience coaching athletes to international standards, as well as strong planning, organisational, and management abilities. Officials said candidates must be capable of working effectively with people from diverse backgrounds and possess analytical, communication, and problem-solving skills. Computer literacy, including proficiency in Microsoft Office and coaching software, has also been listed among the essential requirements, while expertise in advanced coaching software would be considered an added advantage.

Pakistan wins 5 medals in Asian Jr Squash C'ships



PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has brought home five medals in the recently concluded 33rd Asian Junior Individual Squash Championships 2026.

According to details, a total of 8 players represented Pakistan in different age categories, and 5 of them earned medals.

Pakistan wins 5 medals in Asian Jr Squash C'ships
Gold Medals: Nauman Khan (U-17), Ahmad Rayyan Khalil (U-15); Silver Medal:

Muhammad Sohail (CHN) 0-3 (10-12, 9-11, 10-12) 23m.
Final Match Good job Abdullah Khan beat SHIVEN AGARWAL (IND) Boys U-17 3-1 (10-12, 11-7, 11-2, 11-5) 46m; Ahmad Rayyan Khalil beat PNG Vidhurran Ruthiran (MAL) Boys U-15 3-0 (11-7, 11-3, 11-4) 29m; Mahnoor Umair (U-17), Ali lost to Ziyuan Yin (U-15).
Medals: Muhammad Umair (U-17), Ali lost to Ziyuan Yin (U-15).
Medal Tally: Pakistan: 2 Gold, 1 Silver, 2 Bronze (5 Medals).



Pakistan-Australia ODI Series: national squad holds practice session in Rawalpindi



PAF wins 55th National Men's Volleyball C'ship

PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Air Force (PAF) clinched the title of the 55th National Men's Volleyball Championship 2026, defeating Pakistan Navy 3-1 in a thrilling final held at the Pakistan Ordnance Factories Sports Complex, Wah Cantt. PAF wins 55th National Men's Volleyball C'ship

Marking a comeback after 12 years, PAF reclaimed the national crown. Despite losing the first set 16-25, PAF staged a strong comeback to win the next three sets 25-21, 25-21, and 25-18, said a press release.

PAF remained unbeaten throughout the tournament. In the semi-final, the team defeated defending champions Wapda in straight sets.

The championship took place from May 18 to May 23, featuring 16 of the country's top teams.

PAF Captain Chief Technician Fahad Raza was



named Player of the Final as well as Player of the Tournament. Chief Technician Afaq Khan received the award for Best Outside Hitter.

The victory underscores the Pakistan Air Force's commitment to high performance, teamwork, and the spirit of competitive sports.

Pakistan Football Federation dismisses director over harassment allegations



PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) has dismissed a senior

official from his position following allegations of harassment, officials confirmed on Monday.

According to a spokesperson for the federation, the official, who was serving as a director within the organisation, was removed from his post after a complaint was lodged by a female referee.

Chief Operating Officer of the federation, Shahid Niaz Khokhar, stated that the organization maintains a zero-tolerance policy towards harassment.

was investigated in accordance with the guidelines of FIFA and the Asian Football Confederation before the decision to dismiss the official was taken. The federation emphasized its commitment to ensuring a safe and professional environment for all players, referees and officials associated with football in Pakistan.

Opinion & Editorial

Language: Double-Edged Sword

Azhar Ahmad

The phrase "language double-edged sword" is a metaphorical application of the ancient idiom "double-edged sword," which refers to a situation, tool, or action that can have both highly favorable and deeply unfavorable consequences. The literal and metaphorical origins of the phrase "double-edged sword" span across thousands of years. The phrase began appearing figuratively in English texts during the 15th century. The question is why language is a "double-edged sword" although language is humanity's most powerful tool, but it acts as a double-edged sword. Despite the fact it bridges divides to foster empathy, unity, and innovation, it can just as easily be weaponized to spread misinformation, deepen social fractures, and stifle free expression. The written and spoken word is the cornerstone of civilization, and it allows us to pass down knowledge, express complex emotions, and coordinate global efforts. When language is used constructively, it builds communities, champions human rights, and drives progress. It serves as an instrument of liberation, giving a voice to the marginalized and fostering a shared sense of global solidarity. However, we only have to look at modern discourse to see the reverse side of the linguistic blade. The exact same words used to inspire can also be twisted into tools of manipulation. In the era of digital connectivity and artificial intelligence, the rapid spread of misinformation and polarized rhetoric has shown how words can be weaponized to sow distrust and divide societies. Inflammatory language, whether used in politics, on social media, and in mass media, frequently creates ideological narratives that hinder constructive dialogue. In addition, language shapes perception in ways that can be subtly exclusionary; words can carry inherent biases and stereotypes, creating invisible barriers that prevent true equity. The labels



we use matter, and when used carelessly, they can stigmatize entire groups or diminish the severity of real-world issues. However, the nature of a double-edged sword implies that the user determines its impact. We cannot abandon language, but we can wield it more responsibly. This requires a collective commitment to mindful communication prioritizing clarity over sensationalism, active listening over reaction, and factual precision over persuasive manipulation. In our increasingly interconnected world, where a single statement can cross borders in seconds, the responsibility resting on our choice of words is immense. By cultivating linguistic awareness, we have the power to transform the sword into an instrument solely for understanding, empathy, and collective growth.

Constructive Edge: Language acts as a powerful constructive tool that builds human civilization, fosters deep emotional connections, and drives intellectual progress. At its core, language is the primary vehicle for collaboration, allowing individuals to share complex abstract ideas, coordinate monumental societal projects, and pass down generational knowledge so that humanity can progress without restarting from scratch. By providing a structured framework for thought, it enables precise communication, scientific inquiry, and the formulation of legal and ethical systems that maintain social order. Furthermore, language possesses an extraordinary capacity for empathy and healing. Through carefully chosen words, humans can comfort the grieving, resolve deep-seated conflicts through diplomacy rather than violence, and give voice to marginalized communities fighting for justice. Literature, poetry, and storytelling utilize this constructive edge to bridge cultural divides, allowing people to experience worlds entirely

different from their own and recognize their shared humanity. In due course, when used with positive intent, language serves as the eventual architect of unity, enlightenment, and cultural preservation, transforming solitary human thoughts into collective monumental achievements.

Destructive Edge: Language operates as a destructive, double-edged sword when it is weaponized to divide, deceive, and inflict psychological harm. At an individual level, malicious words can shatter self-esteem, destroy relationships, and leave deep, lasting emotional scars that physical wounds rarely match. On a societal scale, the destructive edge of language manifests as propaganda, hate speech, and misinformation. Demagogues and manipulative leaders historically use carefully crafted rhetoric to exploit human fears, dehumanize specific groups, and incite violence and systemic oppression. Additionally, language can distort objective truth through sophisticated manipulation, gas-lighting, and political spin, creating echo chambers that polarize communities and erode social trust. By masking harmful intentions behind euphemisms and stoking the flames of anger with inflammatory labels, spoken and written words hold the unique, catastrophic power to dismantle peace, institutionalize bias, and spark global conflicts.

Exploring language as a double-edged sword can be structured into six core areas:

Creation and Destruction: Language holds the capacity for both sublime creation and significant destruction. On one hand, it serves as an essential creative tool, allowing humanity to build civilizations, formalize laws, share scientific breakthroughs, and craft literature that evokes deep empathy across generations. Through words it connects isolated minds, heals emotional wounds, and finds inspiration for movements toward justice and peace. On the contrary, that same linguistic power can be weaponized, as

specific rhetoric can ignite devastating conflicts, spread propaganda, ruin reputations, and inflict lasting psychological trauma. Deceptive language can manipulate masses and dismantle social harmony just as quickly as honest dialogue builds it. Eventually, the impact of language depends on the intent and application of the speaker, acting either as a bridge for advancement and a barrier that tears society apart.

Connection and Isolation: Language simultaneously drives human connection and deepens social isolation; on one side, it serves as the ultimate bridge for empathy, allowing individuals to share complex thoughts, express love, and build global communities through shared understanding. Conversely, the exact same tool can alienate and divide when words are weaponized, misinterpreted, and restricted by linguistic barriers. Cultural nuances and emotional subtleties often get lost in translation, turning a well-intentioned conversation into a wall of misunderstanding. In due course, while language has the unique power to unite diverse groups, its inherent limitations and capacity for misuse can leave individuals feeling profoundly isolated, even when surrounded by words.

Liberation and Oppression: Language currently acts as an instrument of liberation and a tool of oppression; on one hand, it serves as a powerful catalyst for liberation by giving voice to marginalized groups, fostering collective identity, and allowing individuals to articulate complex ideas of freedom and human rights. Through literature, poetry, and revolutionary rhetoric, language dismantles systemic barriers and unites people against injustice. On the other hand, language can be weaponized as a mechanism of oppression when dominant groups utilize it to enforce censorship, propagate harmful stereotypes, and institutionalize discrimination. Colonial powers, for instance, historically suppressed indigenous languages to erase cultural identities

and assert control. At last, the impact of language depends entirely on who holds the power to shape it, making it capable of either freeing the human spirit or keeping it bound.

Expression and Censorship: Language serves as the ultimate tool for human expression and a primary target for systemic censorship; on one edge, it empowers individuals to articulate complex emotions, share revolutionary ideas, and foster deep cultural connections. It acts as a vehicle for liberation, allowing marginalized voices to challenge authority and demand social justice. On the opposing edge, this immense power makes language inherently vulnerable to suppression. Authorities, institutions, and dominant social groups frequently weaponized censorship to silence dissent, restrict free speech, and control the public narrative. By regulating vocabulary, banning specific texts, and punishing open dialogue, forces of censorship attempt to blunt the sharp edge of expression. At last, the survival of free society depends on maintaining the balance between these two forces, ensuring that language remains an open channel for creativity rather than a tool confined by political control.

Empowerment and Manipulation: Language drives human empowerment and enables psychological manipulation; as an instrument of empowerment, language articulates complex thoughts, preserves historical knowledge, and unites marginalized communities to demand social justice. It provides individuals with the agency to construct identity, share diverse perspectives, and foster global cooperation. Conversely, this same structural power makes language a potent tool for manipulation, where deceptive rhetoric, propaganda, and coded framing can distort objective truth. Dictators and advertisers alike exploit semantic ambiguities and emotional triggers to manufacture public consent, cultivate implicit biases, and control societal behavior.

Finally, the impact of language is contingent completely on the intent of the speaker, serving as either a liberating force for truth or a restrictive mechanism of control.

Healing and Hurting: Language possesses the equal capacity to heal and to hurt; with a single word, it can act as a soothing balm, offering comfort to the grieving, validating the misunderstood, and bridging deep divides between estranged communities through empathy and open dialogue. Conversely, that same linguistic tool can be weaponized to inflict profound psychological wounds, destroy self-esteem, and incite violence and discrimination. The true impact of language does not lie within the vocabulary itself, but rather within the intent, empathy, and awareness of the speaker. In due course, words serve as a reflection of human consciousness, capable of either constructing a sanctuary of peace or demolishing emotional well-being.

In a nutshell, language remains the definitive double-edged sword of human civilization, as on one side, it serves as an unparalleled tool for empathy, allowing us to build cultural bridges, share complex knowledge, and unite diverse communities under a shared identity. On the sharper, darker side, it possesses the volatile power to marginalize, deceive through misinformation, and spark deep-seated conflict when weaponized carelessly. Ultimately, words do not merely reflect our reality; they actively shape it because the impact of our speech depends entirely on the intent of the speaker. We must wield this profound instrument with conscious responsibility, ensuring that our voices are used to build up humanity rather than tear it apart.

SDPI gets Word

Azhar Ahmad, Research Scholar in English Linguistics and Literature, Lahore Leads University. (Publication articles 58, books, and 2).

Governance beyond Slogans: What Punjab Reveals About Power and Performance in Pakistan

Ghazala Shaheen

However, in most parts of Pakistani history, politics has been about promises and not about performance. Over the years of different administrations and all the large political parties, great slogans—accountability, reform, welfare, and development—have been pronounced in public speech, and actual implementation was delayed. The outcome has been the popular cynicism and a feeling that governance is more about narration control than delivery. It is against this context that the recent events in Punjab under Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz provide an eye-opener in the manner in which governance practices evolve towards symbolism instead of execution. The political culture in Pakistan has, over time, been rewarding a leadership that is announcement-based. Policies were frequently introduced with much talk and hype only to grind to a halt within the mires of bureaucratic inertia,



institutional opposition, or a distraction of politics. This trend spanned along ideological lines. The politics of unfulfilled promises cannot be credibly exempted by any party, be it civilian or otherwise. Even leaderships that were reform-oriented faltered.

An excellent vision of accountability, institutional reform, and results-driven governance was expressed by former Prime Minister Imran Khan. His speeches appealed to the masses who were fed up with elite corruption and malpractice within the government. Nevertheless, his administration was under constant structural pressure despite its intentions. Most of the suggested reforms did not go through due to institutional resistance, lack of administrative cohesion, and strained relations with any power centers that were already established. Disparity between

vision and performance continued.

The current governance approach in Punjab does not focus on new ideas but on delivery. The leadership of Maryam Nawaz has taken the form not as one led by ideology but as one that is management-oriented. In each sector of society, such as healthcare, welfare distribution, urban markets, public transport, and digital public services, a focus on timelines, monitoring, and quantifiable results has been shifted.

One of the characteristics of this method has been the direct administrative control. The top officials in charge of the project implementation are closely exposed to regular progress reports, in-person communication, and open responsibility towards any delay or poor performance. This is contrary to the Pakistani orthodox bureaucratic paradigm in which responsibility is diffused and the cost is low. Rather, power is becoming more and more

associated with performance. This form of governance has a political implication also, other than administration. The Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) had found itself in this stage with a serious credibility crisis. The years of corruption claims, proven, politicized, or both, had created a different understanding of the party in the eyes of the people. The existing approach has instead focused on performance-driven legitimacy (using accomplished projects and observable service delivery to rebrand political credibility) as opposed to using counter-narratives or legal reasoning. In this regard, the rule of Maryam Nawaz can be considered as an effort to make a reformist ideal that has been long debated in the politics of Pakistan but has not been realized. It is an expression of the pragmatic implementation of ideas expressed by leaders of different parties such as Imran Khan and limited by political reality in their addresses. The dis-

course that comes out of Punjab is that reform is not intended as such, but rather governments must exert consistent administrative control and follow-through. This does not imply that challenges have disappeared. Fiscal pressures, political That does not mean that there are no challenges anymore. Fiscal strains, political polarization, and institutional inertia are still formidable restraints. Delivery in a single province cannot solve the crises of democracy and economy that Pakistan is facing. But the change of approach is important. It refutes the notion that implementation cannot be done in the current systems. More so, it reinvigorates social expectations. When completion is used to assess governance instead of claims, citizens start seeking results and not justifications. Accountability is no longer represented through the narratives of the courtrooms and the broad-casting accusations but rather through the realities of

service access, infrastructure, and responsiveness to the populace.

The experience of Punjab is no universal template, but it raises an important question to the political class of Pakistan: Is it possible to deliver anywhere in the country? Governance based on execution is a silent yet significant break in a nation that has long been characterized by politics that promise a lot but deliver on very little. After all, it is not speeches or even slogans that help to restore democratic credibility, but visible service that is consistent. The future debate on governance in Pakistan can turn out to be more based on who can speak loudly of reforms and less on who can demonstrate it.

Ghazala Shaheen, Ph.D. Scholar, Department of Education, Khawaja Fareed University of Engineering and Information Technology (KFUEIT), Rahim Yar Khan, Pakistan.

Aurangzeb discusses economic cooperation, reform agenda with British envoy



PEAK POINT
 ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb discussed on Monday bilateral cooperation, economic reforms, regional developments, and continued engagement on matters of mutual interest with Jane Marriott CMG OBE, British High Commissioner to Pakistan. As per a statement, the minister shared the government's perspective on the evolving global economic environment and its

implications for Pakistan's economy, "particularly in the context of regional geopolitical developments and energy market volatility". Aurangzeb also outlined the government's ongoing efforts to maintain macroeconomic stability, manage external sector pressures, and sustain the momentum of economic reforms aimed at ensuring long-term growth and resilience. The minister also highlighted improvements in key economic indicators, including stability in the external account, continued strength in remittance inflows, and

growing investor confidence. "He also briefed the British High Commissioner on measures being undertaken to broaden the tax base, strengthen revenue mobilization, improve compliance, and enhance transparency through technology-driven reforms and digitalization initiatives," the statement said. Aurangzeb further emphasized the commitment to policy continuity, fiscal discipline, and structural reforms, including efforts to improve public sector efficiency, strengthen institutional coordination, and create an enabling environment for private sector-led growth and investment.

The two sides also covered the importance of effective communication and public engagement in sustaining support for the reform agenda. Regional and global developments, including their economic and humanitarian implications, also came under discussion. "Both sides acknowledged the importance of dialogue international cooperation, and coordinated efforts to address emerging challenges affecting economic stability and global supply chains."

KP chief minister meets Prince Rahim Aga Khan V in Chitral

PEAK POINT

CHITRAL: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Muhammad Sohail Afridi met Prince Rahim Aga Khan V during a brief visit to Lower Chitral on Monday, where both sides discussed investment, tourism and development opportunities in the province. Speaking to the media after the meeting at Lower Chitral Airport, the chief minister said the purpose of his visit was to welcome Prince Rahim Aga Khan V on his arrival in Chitral. During the meeting, the two sides held detailed discussions on investment prospects, tourism promotion and development initiatives in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, including the provincial government's ongoing projects and future goals. The chief minister praised



the contributions of the Aga Khan Foundation in the fields of education, health and social services, describing its role as commendable. He said matters related to the establishment of Aga Khan University and a modern hospital in Peshawar also came under discussion during the meeting.

According to the chief minister, Prince Rahim Aga Khan V expressed interest in investing in various sectors of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and assured continued cooperation for the province.

Int'l recognition grows as Field Marshal Asim Munir plays pivotal role in Iran-US mediation



PEAK POINT
 ISLAMABAD: Chief of the Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir continues to earn global acclaim for his instrumental role in mediating between the United States and Iran amid prevailing tensions in the Middle East.

According to reports by US-based CBS News and other international outlets, Field Marshal Munir's recent visit to Tehran proved crucial in advancing negotiations and bridging gaps between the two sides.

His engagements with Iranian leadership,

including President Masoud Pezeshkian and senior officials, helped refine a draft proposal that was subsequently shared with both Iranian and American authorities for review.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio has acknowledged significant progress, stating that a deal is nearing completion thanks in large part to Pakistan's persistent mediation efforts.

Rubio described Pakistan as playing a key role in the negotiations, highlighting the progress achieved through ongoing diplomatic channels facilitated by Islamabad.

President Donald Trump has repeatedly expressed his deep appreciation for Field Marshal Munir, famously referring to him as "my favorite Field Marshal."

Trump's consistent praise underscores the strong trust the US leadership places in Pakistan's leadership. This mutual confidence has been a cornerstone of the mediation process, allowing Pakistan to act as an effective and neutral bridge.

SAPM Fahd Haroon meets Somalia's DPM in Makkah

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State and Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Digital Media, Fahd Haroon, held a meeting with Somalia's Deputy Prime Minister, Salah Ahmed Jama, in Makkah during a warm and informal interaction marked by mutual goodwill and respect.

According to a post shared on social media platform X, during the interaction, both sides exchanged views in a cordial atmosphere and emphasized the importance of strengthening friendly relations and people-to-people ties between the two countries.

The meeting was also attended by Governor of Sindh, Syed Nehal Hashmi, Sardar Qadir, Naseer Hashmi, and the Deputy Prime Minister's wife.

The meeting reflected the spirit of brotherhood and cooperation shared by Pakistan and Somalia.

SDPI gets World No Tobacco Day Award 2026

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) has been awarded the World Health Organization's (WHO) World No Tobacco Day (WNTD) Award 2026. The award, one of the highest global honours in tobacco control, was conferred in recognition to the organization's exceptional services in advancing evidence-based policies that protect current and future generations from the harms of tobacco and nicotine products. The award, announced on May 19, places SDPI among a select group of global honourees from each of WHO's six regions. Notably, this year also saw the Ministry of National Health Services,

Regulations and Coordination and Pakistan's Tobacco Control Cell recognized by WHO, underscoring the country's growing prominence in the global fight against the tobacco epidemic. SDPI Consultant Dr Waseem Iftikhar Janjua is been part of the team SDPI producing landmark research on the economic costs of tobacco use, the impact of taxation on consumption, and the illicit tobacco trade. The recognition reflects SDPI's unwavering commitment to supporting the government, particularly the ministry in three critical areas, i.e. strengthening tobacco taxation, protecting public health policies from industry interference, and countering the rapid spread of emerging nicotine products.

Islamabad residents still struggling as capital waits for electric tram amid rapid urbanization

NADEEM TANOLI

ISLAMABAD: Lawmakers in the National Assembly raised serious concerns over the lack of modern, efficient public transport in Islamabad, highlighting that despite rapid urban expansion, a futuristic Electric Vehicle (EV) tram service remains only on paper. The revelation sparked criticism that planning and execution lag behind the city's growing population needs. During a parliamentary question-and-answer session, MS. Zahra Wadood Fatemi asked the Minister for Interior and Narcotics Control, Senator Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi, about the status of EV based tram service in Islamabad and details of existing transportation networks. The Minister revealed that the Capital Development Authority (CDA) has initiated a traffic study in collaboration with the National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST) along two major corridors the Islamabad Expressway and Srinagar Highway to assess demand for wheel based electric trams. The study is expected to be com-

pleted within two months, after which implementation decisions will be made. While the futuristic tram remains in the planning stage, the session exposed the current strain on public transport. At present, Islamabad operates 21 routes. The Orange Line, a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridor running from Faiz Ahmed Faiz Station to the New Islamabad International Airport, operates with a fleet of 30 diesel buses. The Blue Line runs from PIMS to Rawat using 20 diesel hybrid buses. These main corridors are supported by 19 feeder routes served by 160 electric buses (EVs). Despite these arrangements, the system struggles to handle the city's transport demand, accommodating an average daily ridership of approximately 150,000 passengers. Lawmakers stressed that with Islamabad's rapid urban growth, the existing diesel and hybrid buses are insufficient, contributing to traffic congestion, pollution, and commuter frustration. Many expressed urgency that the EV tram project, which promises modern, eco-friendly transit, be fast-tracked to prevent a transportation crisis in the capital.

PMYP appoints Ibtisam Babar to lead fintech drive under digital Pakistan vision

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: In a major move to accelerate Pakistan's transition towards a digital and cashless economy, Chairman of the Prime Minister's Youth Programme Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan appointed young fintech advocate Ibtisam Babar as Focal Person for the PMYP Fintech Division under the Prime Minister's Digital and Cashless Pakistan Initiative, with the mandate to spearhead youth financial inclusion, digital payment adoption, and fintech driven reforms across the country.

The official appointment letter was handed over during a special meeting in Islamabad focused on empowering youth



through technology, innovation, entrepreneurship and financial accessibility. The initiative forms part of the government's broader agenda to build a technology-enabled economy driven by young innovators and digitally empowered communities. Under his new role, Ibtisam Babar will lead efforts aimed at promoting digital payment systems, supporting fintech policy reforms.

Event held to mark 75th anniversary of Pak-China diplomatic ties



PEAK POINT
 ISLAMABAD: The Chinese cultural center China Window organized a grand and dignified ceremony at Khyber Pakhtunkhwa House, Islamabad, to commemorate the 75th anniversary of Pakistan-China diplomatic relations. The event was attended by Speaker of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly Babar Saleem

Swati as the chief guest, while Chinese Cultural Consul Chen Peng participated as a special guest. Among those present were Provincial Minister for Energy Nazir Abbasi, former Provincial Minister Akbar Ayub, Members of the Provincial Assembly Anwar Khan, Asif Mehsud, Ikrumulah Ghazi, Faiza Malik, Sonia Shah, Secretary of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly Syed

Waqar Shah, former Inspectors General of Police Malik Naveed Khan and Akhtar Hayat Gandapur, diplomats, journalists, officers from the Assembly's Public Relations and Protocol Departments, and a large number of people from various walks of life. Speaking on the occasion, Amjad Aziz Malik, Administrator of China Window, said that the event was a humble effort to

express the enduring sentiments of Pakistan-China friendship through the universal language of music and culture. He said that China Window was proud to launch a song dedicated to Pakistan-China friendship that holds a unique and historic significance in many respects. He explained that the song is primarily a Pashto composition and conveys the message that friendship transcends bor-

ders, geography, and languages. Although the song is presented in the style of romantic poetry, its deeper meaning reflects the long-standing and cherished relationship between Pakistan and China. Addressing the ceremony, Chen Peng highlighted the deep friendship and strategic cooperation between Pakistan and China, describing it as a shining example of mutual trust and

shared prosperity. He stated that the Pakistan-China friendship is everlasting and serves as a model for the world. He emphasized that the relationship between the two countries has been built on mutual trust, respect, and sincerity over the past 75 years. He noted that both nations have stood by each other during every challenge and trial, further strengthening their friendship.