



Govt's economic planning mindful of possible external and geopolitical risks, finmin tells UK MP



Naqvi tells JI Amir credit for Iran-US peace deal goes to Pakistan



Govt pursuing efforts for release of 10 Pakistani hostages in Somalia: Tarar

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## PM directs authorities to expedite work on 100MW solar power project in GB

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday directed that work on a 100 megawatt solar power project in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) be expedited and that it be completed at the earliest.

The directives came as the premier chaired a meeting in Islamabad reviewing the project, according to a statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).

The prime minister directed that the work on the project be accelerated and completed as soon as possible, adding that an independent third-party validation be conducted to ensure transparency at every stage of the project, the PMO said. According to the statement, the premier also said that the Centre

would bear all the expenses for the project.

During the meeting, the relevant authorities briefed participants on the federal government's solar energy project in GB, the statement said.

The meeting was told that an 18MW solarisation project for government buildings was being implemented across the region. The statement said that the 18MW solarisation project for government buildings in Gilgit and Diamer divisions was scheduled to be completed by December, while the solarisation project for government buildings in Baltistan division was expected to be completed by October.

The meeting was also told that work was underway on an 82MW solar energy.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a review meeting on 100 MW solar power project for Gilgit-Baltistan.

## Punjab finance minister presents 'people-friendly' budget in assembly

PEAK POINT



LAHORE: Punjab Finance Minister Mian Mujtaba Rehman presented the provincial budget on Tuesday after the cabinet approved a people-friendly Rs5.9 trillion budget for fiscal year 2026-27. Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, provincial ministers and MPAs attended the session. The proposed budget for the upcoming fiscal year is 10.7 per cent higher than the current year's, according to the budget speech.

The Punjab government has projected total revenue for the upcoming fiscal year at Rs1.2tr. Total current and capital expenditures are projected at Rs679 billion.

The government plans to spend Rs752 billion on development, Rs750bn on education and Rs500bn on health. The proposed allocation for education is 15pc higher than the amount allocated in FY2025-26, while the proposed allocation for health is 10pc higher than that of the current fiscal year.

The Punjab government has proposed a 7pc increase in the salaries of government employees, taking total salary expenditure to Rs639bn.

## US and Iran 'electronically' sign ceasefire agreement, details remain unclear

PEAK POINT



NEW YORK: US President Donald Trump said a preliminary agreement to end the war in the Gulf has been signed by the US and Iran, though details have yet to be made public and both countries said a permanent truce is yet to be negotiated.

The agreement would extend a tenuous ceasefire announced in April by another 60 days and reopen the Strait of Hormuz, which Iran has effectively blocked since the US and Israel attacked Iran in February.

Negotiators would address difficult issues like the future of Iran's nuclear programme during the next phase.

"The deal's all signed," Trump said after he arrived in France for a summit of the G7 group of big economies. He said Vice President JD Vance would attend a formal signing ceremony in Geneva on Friday.

Oil prices fell to their lowest level since March 10, shortly after the blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, a narrow waterway between Iran and Oman, cut off one-fifth of the world's oil trade.

The deal is the most significant step yet to resolve the conflict, which has killed at least 7,000 people, mostly in Iran and Lebanon, and upended global energy markets.

But much about the agreement remains unknown, and whether its provisions differ from the April ceasefire was unclear.

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian wrote on social media.

## Pakistan's economy has left the ICU, says Khawaja Asif

PEAK POINT



ISLAMABAD: Defence Minister Khawaja Asif said on Tuesday that Pakistan's economy had left the "intensive care unit".

He made the remarks while speaking in the National Assembly, during which he also talked about insecurity in Balochistan and Pakistan's role in brokering the agreement with the United States and Iran.

"When we [presented] the first budget, we were insolvent. There was always the danger that we would default today or tomorrow. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) bailed us out with strict conditions, which we are now bearing but we have become solvent. Our economy is breathing; it has left the ICU," he said.

"I will not say that we are reaching the stars but our trajectory bears witness that in one or two years ... we will reach a place where Pakistan achieves a growth rate of 6-7 per cent," he said.

He said that there were multiple "inbuilt taxes" in the country, adding that "we have to get rid of all these things to become solvent".

## CTD eliminates five terrorists in Attock gunbattle

PEAK POINT

ATTOCK: Five dangerous terrorists were eliminated in an encounter with Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) personnel in Attock border area during an intelligence-based operation.

In a statement issued on Tuesday, a CTD spokesperson said that the Department team had conducted an intelligence-based operation to arrest terrorists while the terrorists resorted to indiscriminate firing on the CTD personnel. During the exchange of heavy fire, five terrorists of Fitna al-Khwari.

## Jailed PTI leaders reject PM's call for 'Charter of Economy', seek 'Charter of Pakistan' instead

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Incarcerated Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Dr Yasmin Rashid, Mian Mahmood-ur-Rashid, Ejaz Chaudhry and Omar Sarfraz Cheema have called for a "Charter of Pakistan" instead of a "Charter of Economy", arguing that constitutional supremacy and political stability must precede any meaningful economic reform. In a letter communicated through their lawyer Rana Mudassar, the PTI leaders reacted to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's recent statement offering a "Charter of Economy". They said that while Pakistan undoubtedly needs a charter to emerge from its current difficulties, "Pakistan needs a 'Charter of Pakistan' before it needs

a Charter of Economy," PM Shehbaz, in an address to



the National Assembly on June 13, renewed his call for a "Charter of Economy" and a "Charter of Democracy", urging the opposition to set aside political differences in the national interest. The premier said he had repeatedly invited political rivals to work together on the two charters, stressing that "Pakistan remains the common bond for all" despite differences in politics and

ideology. He also said his government had "no fight



with PTI" and described members of the opposition as "our brothers", emphasising that national unity should take precedence over partisan divisions. However, the PTI signatories questioned whether a "Charter of Economy" alone could put the country on the right path "when constitutional supremacy exists only in books and both political and economic stability have become dis-

tant dreams".

Stressing the link between politics and the economy, they wrote: "Everyone is aware of the fact that economic stability cannot be achieved without political stability."

The letter argued that investment and growth thrive only where the rule of law exists, there is political and economic stability and the Constitution is supreme. "When the constitution carries no more weight than a piece of paper, what practical value can a Charter of Economy have?" the PTI leaders asked.

Using an analogy to illustrate their point, the PTI leaders said: "There is an old saying that if the water in a well is dirty, changing the bucket will not solve the problem; first, the source of the contamination must be removed."

## US Air Force B-52 bomber crashes in flames in California, killing all 8 crew aboard

PEAK POINT



CALIFORNIA: US Air Force B-52 Stratofortress bomber crashed on takeoff on Monday at Edwards Air Force Base in Southern California's Mojave Desert, bursting into flames and killing all eight crew members aboard, Air Force officials said.

The eight-engine, jet-powered aircraft, built to carry a wide array of nuclear and conventional bombs, was on a routine test mission when it crashed on the runway at Edwards just after leaving the ground, Air Force Colonel James Hayes said at a press conference hours later.

A towering pall of black smoke billowing from the crash site was visible for miles immediately after the accident.



# SPORTS



## Pakistan embassy in Belgium honours national hockey team



**PEAK POINT**  
ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Embassy in Belgium hosted a reception in honour of the Pakistan hockey team, attended by members of the Pakistani community, prominent figures from various walks of life, diplomatic officials and players of the national team.

Pakistan's Ambassador Rahim Hayat Qureshi warmly welcomed the players and officials at the event and encouraged the young players, calling them Pakistan's bright future, said a Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) press release issued on Tuesday.

Pakistan embassy in Belgium

honours national hockey team  
Manzoor-ul-Hassan, chief coach of the Pakistan hockey team, thanked the embassy and the ambassador, saying the love, sincerity and professionalism shown by the Pakistani diplomatic staff in hosting the team since their arrival in Belgium was commendable.

He said the embassy had provided full guidance and care for the team from the moment they landed and that the players were deeply grateful to Ambassador Rahim Hayat and the entire embassy team for the respect and encouragement extended to them.

Addressing the gathering, the

chief coach also spoke about the national team's current situation and the challenges facing young players. He said Pakistan's young hockey players were talented, but years away from major international competitions had visibly affected their confidence and brought added mental pressure.

He said Pakistan had not played at a Hockey World Cup or the Olympics for the past eight years, and it was natural for young players' confidence to be affected when they had fewer opportunities to compete against top-ranked teams. Manzoor-ul-Hassan said the current European tour was an important learning process

for the national team, where players were gaining experience by playing consistently against some of the world's best sides. "These matches are not just competitions for us but a complete learning process. Our top priority is restoring the players' confidence, strengthening them mentally, and preparing them to perform better under pressure," he said. He said the coaching staff was paying special attention to players' mental training, self-confidence and stress management to help them prove themselves at the international level, adding that the team needed to regain its self-belief even more than it needed hockey coaching.

## PHF announces 2026-27 national hockey calendar



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) Tuesday announced its domestic hockey calendar for the 2026-27 season, featuring six major national events to be held in Islamabad, with all provincial sports departments, educational institutions, universities, district sports authorities and hockey associations directed to begin preparations immediately.

According to a PHF statement, the new domestic season aims to strengthen Pakistan's hockey structure from the grassroots level by providing competitive opportunities and a clear development pathway for boys, girls, junior, women and senior players, with special emphasis on identifying young talent through school, district and provincial-level competitions. National Hockey Calendar 2026-27: National Women's Hockey Championship: July 2-11, 2026 National Under-15 Boys & Girls Hockey Championship: November 12-22, 2026 National Under-21 Hockey Championship: January 2-12, 2027 Naval Cup (Senior Men): March 16-26, 2027 Chief of Army Staff Hockey Championship: April 5-15, 2027 National Bank Gold Cup: April 25-May 5, 2027. The PHF has urged schools, colleges, universities and district and provincial hockey associations to ensure quality participation by launching player registration drives, talent hunt programmes, coaching camps and inter-school and inter-district tournaments well in advance.

## Pakistan squash team depart for Asian Doubles Championship 2026



**PEAK POINT**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's squash contingent departed from Islamabad International Airport on Monday to compete in the 3rd Asian Doubles Championships 2026, set to be held in Sarawak, Malaysia from June 18 to 21.

The delegation is being led by Air Commodore (Retd) Amir Nawaz, Pakistan Squash Federation (PSF) Head Coach Fahim Gul.

The Asian Doubles Championship 2026 team depart for the Asian Doubles Championship 2026 in Sarawak, Malaysia. Pakistan has fielded two strong pairings for the prestigious event. Team 1

features Noor Zaman, the World Junior Champion (Under-23) of 2025, paired with seasoned campaigner Nasir Iqbal, one of Pakistan's most experienced players on the circuit.

Team 2 comprises Hamza Khan, the World Junior Champion of 2023, teaming up with another seasoned performer, Muhammad Asim Khan.

The dual-team entry reflects the Pakistan Squash Federation's growing confidence in Pakistan's squash depth, as the country looks to build on last year's podium finish.

## PTF president meets DG PSB



## Iran 'most oppressed team in whole World Cup', says coach

**PEAK POINT**

LOS ANGELES: Coach Amir Ghalenoee said Iran is the "most oppressed team in the World Cup" after his players were suddenly informed they must travel back to Mexico immediately after their opening game ended in Los Angeles late Monday.

It is the latest logistical nightmare for an Iran squad that arrived at the tournament being co-hosted by the United States, Mexico and Canada under the shadow of a bitter diplomatic row between Tehran and Washington.

The US — which was in military conflict with Iran for months, until a peace deal was announced on Sunday — refused to issue visas for some team support staff, and provided travel documents to players only at the last minute. The team was originally intending to base its training camp in Tucson, Arizona but moved it at the

11th hour to Tijuana in Mexico due to the visa and logistical issues. "They delayed our arrivals, (now) they are forcing us to go back early without time for recovery," Ghalenoee told journalists following a 2-2 draw with New Zealand. "They are

recover." "But again they haven't permitted us," he said. "To be honest, I have no idea why they haven't told us." The coach said technical staff had been forced to take on managerial duties in the absence of key personnel. "That's why I think we are the most oppressed team in



making the situation more and more difficult, facing us with more hurdles, but we're not going to let that stop us from doing our best." According to Ghalenoee, his team had previously been told they would be able to remain in the United States until Tuesday lunchtime "to

the World Cup," he said. Iran played their opener against New Zealand in Los Angeles on Monday, just a day after a peace deal between the US and Iran was announced, bringing an "immediate and permanent" end to military operations on all fronts.

## England coach McCullum 'worried' about Stokes after curfew incident



**PEAK POINT**

ENGLAND: England head coach Brendon McCullum said he is "worried" about Ben Stokes after the captain was involved in a late-night incident that led to his absence from this week's second Test against New Zealand.

Stokes will miss the clash at the Oval after breaching a mid-night curfew while celebrating England's win over the Black Caps in the first Test at Lord's. The all-rounder and his England team-mate Gus Atkinson became embroiled in an incident involving Saracens rugby player Totoia Auvaa, prompting an internal investigation by the England and Wales Cricket Board. There were suggestions that Stokes would resign or even retire in the immediate aftermath.

But the 35-year-old's future remains shrouded in mystery ahead of the start of the second Test on Wednesday. Speaking on Monday, a sombre McCullum said he experienced a range of emotions from anger to concern when he learnt of Stokes' antics at a Chelsea nightclub. But McCullum insisted he has a duty of care for Stokes' well-being that overrides disciplinary matters or the viability of his reign as skipper.



# Pakistan, Thailand Agree to Strengthen Women's Role in Peace and Economy

NADEEM TANOLI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Thailand have agreed to strengthen cooperation on women's empowerment, political participation, economic inclusion and peacebuilding, with both sides stressing that women must play a stronger role in leadership, agriculture, business, governance and peace efforts. The most important part of the meeting was Thailand's interest in working with Pakistan on Women, Peace and Security. Thai Ambassador Rongvudhi Virabutr said Thailand is preparing its own national plan on Women, Peace and Security and wants to learn from Pakistan's experience. This area is important because it deals with women's role in preventing conflict, building peace and taking part in security and governance decisions. The meeting was held at the Women's Parliamentary

Caucus office and was attended by WPC Secretary Dr. Shahida Rehmani, Chairperson of the Special Committee on Gender Mainstreaming Dr. Nafisa Shah, WPC Treasurer Shahida Begum and the Thai Ambassador to Pakistan. The participants also expressed condolences to the people and Royal Family of Thailand over the passing of Princess Bajrakitiyabha Narendira Debyavati. They said Pakistan stands with the people of Thailand in this difficult time. Dr. Shahida Rehmani welcomed the Thai Ambassador and said Pakistan and Thailand have long-standing friendly relations. She said parliamentary diplomacy can help both countries come closer and work together on important public issues. She also said the Women's Parliamentary Caucus is a platform that works for women's rights, gender equality and inclusive

governance. Dr. Rehmani said Pakistan and Thailand can benefit by sharing experience in women's economic empowerment, digital inclusion, gender-responsive budgeting, leadership training and parliamentary work on gender equality. She said stronger cooperation between the two countries can help women get better opportunities in public life and the economy. Dr. Nafisa Shah appreciated Thailand's support for vocational and beauty skills training programmes for women. She said such training should not remain limited to one area and should be expanded to the provincial level across Pakistan. She also welcomed Thailand's work in agriculture and supported more cooperation for women working in the agriculture sector. Dr. Nafisa Shah said Pakistani women parliamentarians would welcome exchanges with Thai women parliamentarians. She

said mutual visits, study exchanges and direct contact between women lawmakers can help both sides learn from each other and improve policies for women. She also highlighted the role of UN Women in supporting women's empowerment projects. She said cooperation between Pakistan, Thailand and UN Women should be further strengthened so that more women can benefit from economic and leadership opportunities. Dr. Nafisa Shah also showed interest in working closely with Thailand on Women, Peace and Security initiatives. She said gender-responsive budgeting is a key priority for the Women's Parliamentary Caucus because government budgets should respond to the needs of women and men in a fair way. WPC Treasurer Shahida Begum welcomed the Thai Ambassador and praised Thailand's efforts for women's empowerment.

She proposed stronger institutional links between women parliamentarians of Pakistan and Thailand so that both countries can build long-term cooperation. Thai Ambassador Rongvudhi Virabutr said Thailand remains committed to women's empowerment. He said Thailand is working with UN Women and the Women's Parliamentary Caucus on projects that aim to increase women's economic participation. The Ambassador also shared details of an ongoing women's economic empowerment project in Sialkot being implemented with UN Women. He said Thailand is supporting programmes related to women's entrepreneurship, vocational skills, beauty skills and economic opportunities in different sectors. He also said Thailand is supporting women in agriculture. According to him, the first phase of a training programme has started with 30 women

participants, while advanced training will continue to help women take a stronger role in agriculture. The Thai Ambassador said women's economic empowerment is necessary for sustainable and inclusive development. He said progress on global development goals needs to be faster, and women must be included in economic growth if countries want real development. Both sides agreed that Pakistan and Thailand can work together in peacebuilding, conflict prevention, women's leadership, economic empowerment, agriculture, vocational training and parliamentary exchanges. The meeting ended with a shared commitment to strengthen Pakistan-Thailand cooperation for women's rights and inclusive development.

## Tech expert Waqar Shah steps into television acting debut

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Experienced technocrat, technology architect and public speaker Waqar Shah has entered the media and entertainment industry, marking a new chapter in his multi-dimensional professional career. Waqar Shah, who is currently serving as Chief Technology Officer at a leading healthcare company in the United Kingdom, is reported-



ly playing a key role in the development and implementation of artificial intelligence-based medical systems within the organisation. With a

career spanning over two decades, he has worked across enterprise computing, artificial intelligence, healthcare systems, financial services, and large-scale digital transformation projects. He has extensive experience in software development, technology architecture, and AI infrastructure design. Sources indicate that he has contributed to the development and deployment

of advanced technology solutions for various organisations in the UK, focusing on innovation-driven digital systems. He completed his higher education in information technology from a reputed university in Thailand, where exposure to an international academic environment helped shape his global perspective and professional approach. Alongside his tech-

nic career, Waqar Shah is also known for his experience in public speaking and corporate communication, having served in roles involving event hosting, client relations, and corporate engagement. He is recognised for his ability to simplify complex technical and regulatory subjects for wider audiences. Now, Waqar Shah has officially stepped into television acting. He will

appear in the upcoming TV drama serial "Aab Ki Izzat", where he will play the role of a reporter. This marks his first formal acting appearance in a television production. He has expressed a growing interest in expanding his work into media, including television presentation and hosting, alongside his continued focus on artificial intelligence and enterprise technology.

# Opinion & Editorial


  
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## Iran's remaining two vows

**A** S Iran braces to change the global landscape of war and peace, of imperial conquest and its nemesis in a people who refuse to be afraid of dying for their nation's self-respect, for their abiding pride in a mesmeric culture of poetry, inclusion and reflection, where do its friends and foes go from here? An all but signed agreement for permanent peace with the US promises to leave Israel out in the cold, and with it its sympathisers. That leaves room for future trouble, of course. But Iran has shown it has the wherewithal to figure out the cure.

For now, the peace deal would be a shot in the arm for BRICS whose summit, contrarily, a rightward-bound Israel-hugging India is to hold in September. But what is in store for Pakistan and its Saudi allies whose endeavours for the peace deal, overtly and covertly, may fall short of Iran's larger vision of a multicultural Palestinian state in lieu of Zionist Israel, in which its Jewish, Muslim and Christian communities live as equal partners as they had done for centuries, not as superiors and inferiors as proposed by colonialism? Isn't that the equation each one of the communities strives for in its abode in Europe and America? What will become of India's Hindutva project of majoritarianism in a world in

which its sheet anchors in racist Israel, and to an extent the MAGA-bound US, struggle to fend off Iran's two remaining deadly vows? Of the four clenched-fisted promises that Iranians learnt to state collectively during Ayatollah Khomeini's early consolidation of power, the West applauded two and even egged them on with fulsome support. "Marg bar Shauravi" translated as "death to the USSR". "Marg bar Saddam" was a united cry for "death to Saddam Hussain" at the Friday prayer congregations at the Tehran University. In a Macbeth-like turn of events, however, as if to fulfil the witches' prophecy in the Shakespeare tragedy, Saddam's death was instigated not by Iran but by the Western occupiers of Iraq who had recently supplied him with chemical weapons to use against revolutionary Iran. The more macabre the deaths of its enemies, the more the West exults in its malodorous worldview. The pictures they cherish of the gruesome murder at their bidding of Che Guevara, Najibullah, Muammar Qadhafi and Nicolae Ceausescu were circulated as cruel Roman emperors did with the heads of the rebels hoisted on poles. Qadhafi's barbaric murder got a laugh out of Hillary Clinton. They cut Che Guevara's hands after his execution in Bolivia in 1967, and the fingerprints taken from them were used to ver-

fy his identity. The severed hands were preserved in formaldehyde and sent to Buenos Aires, Argentina, while the fingerprints were promptly matched in Washington, D.C. Iran denied the world the perverse pleasure of putting a frame around the revered body of its slain Supreme Leader. And that's the abiding lesson of the war: self-respect. Of the four clenched-fisted promises that Iranians learnt to state collectively, the West applauded two. As for the USSR, the West courted a perpetually drunk Boris Yeltsin to avenge Moscow's glee at its defeat in Vietnam. Then Soviet troops followed their quarry in an error of judgement and waded straight into a merciless Kabul. With Saddam dead and the USSR dismantled, two of Iran's vows were met, for which Iranians never fail to claim divine help. The remaining two oaths target the US and Israel, the "Great Satan" and "Little Satan", respectively. But "death to Israel" or "death to America" were never meant as exhortations that the people inhabiting the countries should expire collectively. The dismantling of US imperialism like the one being carried out in Donald Trump's face with his MAGA base splitting vertically, and a globally isolated Israel in which Zionism has become its bane instead of an asset, could be much of what was ever desired by Khomeini's Iran.

## An original institution

Muhammad Hamid Zaman

**T**wenty-two years ago, in 2004, I met Syed Babar Ali for the first time. I was a post-doc at MIT, and through colleagues and friends, had heard about a new initiative in Pakistan to start a school of science and engineering. This was a topic dear to me, and the idea to create an institution in Pakistan that prioritised basic science at the undergraduate level was as exciting as it was unbelievable. I was not sure I belonged in those conversations, but those who had been thinking about it for a while were exceptionally generous to let me in those early meetings in Boston. Though I had not met Babar sahib personally, I had heard about him. In the mid-1990s, when a friend went to LUMS in their new undergraduate programme in CS, I was intrigued by what was being created. I saw Babar sahib's smiling picture in the brochure and somehow that image stayed with me. A few years later when I was at MIT, I got to meet two of his granddaughters who were undergraduates there, and I was so touched by their kindness and good nature. But none of this had prepared me for my first meeting with Babar sahib. I knew of his success in business and was aware of his extraordinary philanthropy. What I was not prepared for was his humility and his genuine interest in learning. I remember him asking me questions about research culture, inquiry and higher education that no one had ever asked me. I was used to be in places where there were others who knew so much more about these things than I did, and I knew that I had nothing new to offer. But Babar sahib had different ideas - he was genuinely interested in what I had to say, and his follow-up questions showed sincerity in learning that I had not experienced before. In many ways, this was very unsettling. I did not know many successful businesspersons in Pakistan who cared about education, and those who did were involved to the extent of writing cheques. Courtesy Tribune

## Deal of the century

**A** deal has finally come through. The United States and Iran have agreed to mend fences, and bring the war to a perpetual end. It is an epoch-making moment, and Islamabad deserves full credit for that. The signing ceremony in Switzerland on Friday will see Pakistan act as host, crowning its rise as an essential force for global peace. It is worth noting that persuading these bitter adversaries to sign on the dotted lines of rapprochement was an arduous task. It required immense wisdom and sagacity from all stakeholders in the conflict, ultimately proving that diplomacy has triumphed over warmongering and brinkmanship. According to the salient features of the preliminary deal consented to by both Washington and Tehran, a framework will be set into motion to end the war, lift the US blockade of Iran and reopen the Strait of Hormuz, leaving the contentious nuclear enrichment issue for a later date. Perhaps Iran's guarantee that it will not pursue nuclear weapons, made on moral grounds, is the driving force behind the American reciprocity. Likewise, the fact that the compromise includes suspension of military operations on all fronts, including Lebanon, must have come as a consolation for Tehran. Other critical elements of the deal include lifting sanctions on Iran and establishing a fresh roadmap for sustainable peace in the Middle East.

## Naqvi tells JI Amir credit for Iran-US peace deal goes to Pakistan



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi held a detailed meeting with Jamaat-e-Islami Amir Hafiz Naemur Rehman in Mansoor, Lahore, on Tuesday and discussed with him national economy, overall political situation, and law and order situation.

During the meeting, the Interior Minister apprised Hafiz Naemur Rehman about the US-Iran peace

deal. Both leaders described the peace agreement as a symbol of peace and prosperity for the region. Mohsin Naqvi took Hafiz Naemur Rehman into confidence over the government's stance on the Iran-US peace accord.

Naemur Rehman appreciated Pakistan's sincere role in the US-Iran peace deal.

On the occasion, the JI Amir demanded the immediate return of Pakistani crew members who were

abducted by Somali pirates.

Both leaders discussed the national economy and the provision of relief to the common man. Naemur Rehman said that Pakistan played a historic role in the US-Iran peace deal.

Mohsin Naqvi said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Asim Munir had played an unforgettable role in mediating the peace accord between Iran and the United States.

He said that all the credit goes to Pakistan for ending long-standing disputes.

The meeting also addressed humanitarian concerns involving Pakistani citizens stranded in Somalia. Hafiz Naemur urged the government to take immediate and effective diplomatic steps to ensure the safe and prompt return of the affected Pakistanis. He called for proactive engagement to secure their welfare and repatriation. In addition, the two leaders held extensive discussions on measures.

## Govt's economic planning mindful of possible external and geopolitical risks, finmin tells UK MP

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb said on Tuesday that the government's economic planning and fiscal assumptions had remained mindful of possible external and geopolitical risks, including potential "second-order impacts" arising from prolonged regional uncertainty.

The minister made these remarks during a meeting with UK Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Middle East, North Africa, Afghanistan and Pakistan (MENAP), Hamish Falconer MP, held at the Finance Division in Islamabad.

The meeting was also attended by British High Commissioner Jane Marriott and senior officials from both sides.

According to a statement issued by the Ministry of Finance, the two sides held a "comprehensive exchange" on regional developments, Pakistan's macroeconomic outlook, ongoing structural reforms, fiscal priorities, institutional modernisation, and opportunities to further strengthen Pakistan-United Kingdom economic coop-

eration. "The finance minister briefed the visiting delegation on the government's economic reform agenda and shared key priorities reflected in the budget 2026-27. He reaffirmed the government's focus on preserving macroeconomic stability, sustaining the economic recovery, accelerating structural reforms, and creating conditions for inclusive and durable growth," the ministry said.

The minister also referred to recent regional developments, including the easing of tensions following the recently agreed understanding between the United States and Iran.

"He underlined Pakistan's consistent support for dialogue, de-escalation, and peaceful resolution of conflicts and noted that Pakistan had actively advocated for reducing regional tensions at an early stage. He observed that prolonged instability in the region carries implications for economic confidence, energy markets, supply chains, and growth prospects across emerging economies," the statement said.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, holding a meeting with Mr Hamish Falconer, MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Middle East, Afghanistan and Pakistan (MENAP), United Kingdom, and H.E Ms. Jane Marriot, British High Commissioner to Pakistan, at the Finance Division.

## Sindh CM reviews Muharram arrangements, orders foolproof security, uninterrupted civic services

PEAK POINT

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister (CM) Syed Murad Ali Shah presided over a meeting to review arrangements for Muharram-ul-Haram and directed all concerned departments to ensure foolproof security, uninterrupted civic services and comprehensive administrative measures for mourning processions and religious gatherings (majalis) across the province. The meeting, held at CM House, was attended by provincial ministers Nasir Hussain

Shah, Zia-ul-Hassan Lanjar and Riaz Hussain Shah Shirazi, Mayor Karachi Murtaza Wahab, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, Home Secretary Iqbal Memon, Inspector General of Police Javed Alam Odho, provincial secretaries, CEO water board and other concerned. Representatives of the religious community,

including leaders of the Jafaria Alliance - Allama Baqar Hussain Zaidi, Syed Shabar Raza Zaidi, Syed Nadeem Hyder, Hassan Saghir Abdi, Syed Ali Sadaqain and other scholars

- also attended the meeting and presented their recommendations regarding Muharram arrangements. The chief minister reviewed security measures for majalis and mourning processions and emphasised that maintaining law and order and facilitating mourners would remain the government's top priority during Muharram. "Any negligence or lapse in Muharram arrangements will not be tolerated," the chief minister said, directing all departments to remain fully alert and ensure effective coordi-

nation.

Earlier, the chief minister listened to the suggestions given by the Ulemas at the meeting and incorporated all of them into the plan. Murad Ali Shah instructed S-lectric, HESCO and K-PCO to ensure an uninterrupted electricity supply during majalis and processions and avoid load-shedding during religious events. He also directed local government institutions and municipal agencies to complete cleanliness drives along procession routes, improve street lighting,

ensure the availability of drinking water, and enhance drainage and sewerage systems to prevent inconvenience to mourners. The chief minister instructed the police and district administrations to make comprehensive security arrangements at all sensitive locations and maintain close coordination with religious scholars, procession organisers, and community representatives. Directing the IGP to implement a comprehensive security and traffic management plan, Murad Ali Shah said smooth traffic flow should

be ensured while facilitating participants in religious gatherings and processions. He stressed the importance of promoting inter-sect harmony, religious tolerance and unity during Muharram and called upon all stakeholders to work together to maintain peace and uphold the sanctity of the holy month. The chief minister said the government would utilise all available resources to ensure the peaceful observance of Muharram-ul-Haram and safeguard the lives and property of citizens across Sindh.

## Ayaz Sadiq calls for stronger Pakistan Bangladesh ties, highlights Muharram's message of unity

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Tuesday called for enhanced parliamentary, academic and people-to-people exchanges to further strengthen Pakistan-Bangladesh relations. He made the remarks during a meeting with a delegation from Bangladesh's higher education sector at Parliament House, reaffirming Pakistan's commitment to closer bilateral cooperation through educational partnerships and institutional exchanges. The Speaker said the shared parliamentary and constitutional history of Pakistan and Bangladesh should serve as a foundation for future cooperation based on mutual respect, dialogue and common development goals. He noted that greater academic collaboration and parliamentary engagement would help



promote regional harmony and mutual understanding between the two countries. Members of the Bangladeshi delegation appreciated Pakistan's democratic institutions and stressed the importance of expanding educational and parliamentary linkages to strengthen bilateral relations. The delegation also witnessed proceedings of the National Assembly's Budget Session 2026-27. Minister of State for Federal Education and Professional Training Wajih Qamar was also present separately.

## Pakistan, Uzbekistan reaffirm commitment to Railway cooperation, regional Connectivity

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Uzbekistan have reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening bilateral cooperation in the railway sector and advancing regional connectivity during a meeting between Federal Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi and Uzbekistan's Ambassador to Pakistan, Alisher Tukhtaev.

During the meeting, both sides discussed a range of issues of mutual interest, with particular emphasis on enhancing collaboration in railway infrastructure development, freight transportation, logistics and the exchange of technical expertise.

They also agreed to further strengthen institutional ties between their respective railway



authorities to ensure long-term and sustainable cooperation.

Speaking on the occasion, Hanif Abbasi said the Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan (UAP) Railway Corridor as a landmark project that would play a pivotal role in promoting regional trade, economic integration and connectivity.

He said the initiative represents a historic step toward linking Central Asian countries with Pakistan's seaports, creating new opportunities.

## The annual Milad-e-Mustafa ceremony held in Lahore

WAJIHA TAMSEEL MIRZA

LAHORE: The annual Milad-e-Mustafa (PBUH) gathering has been organized in Sher Shah Colony, Lahore, in which a large number of people from the area, including religious, academic and political figures, are participating. The annual Milad-e-Mustafa (PBUH) gathering organized by the Central Milad Committee in Sher Shah Colony is continuing with devotion and respect. This blessed gathering, decorated with the special efforts of the founder of the gathering, Ifkhar-ul-Hasan alias Moon Bhai, has been attended by a large number of scholars and religious figures from the area. During the gathering, a special and faith-inspiring address by renowned religious scholar Pir Muhammad Ajmal Raza Qadri is being deliv-



ered, which is being listened to by a large number of lovers of the Prophet (PBUH). In addition, Tahir Dogar, President of Sunni Tehreek-Ottoman. Punjab, Mufti Saleem Naqshbandi (Nazim-e-Ala Jamia Hussainiya), Maulana Abdul Ghani Naqshbandi, Hazrat Pir Sufi Muhammad Yaqub Naqshbandi Badshah Sarkar, Hazrat Pir Allama Sufi Idrees and Mufti Syed Siddique Hussain Shah Bukhari, and other scholars participated. More political leaders MPA Malik Shabbaz Khokhar.