



Naqvi meets Chinese consul general, discusses bilateral cooperation



Pakistan, US explore ways to deepen economic partnership



Govt fast tracks youth employment drive via Digital Youth Hub

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CDF Munir arrives in Iran alongside delegation for 'ongoing mediation efforts': ISPR

PEAK POINT

TEHRAN: The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said on Wednesday that Chief of Defence Forces and Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir had arrived in Tehran as part of the "ongoing mediation efforts". In a statement, ISPR said that CDF Munir had arrived in the Iranian capital alongside a formal delegation and Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi. The statement came hours after Iran said that exchanges with the United States via Pakistan had continued following negotiations in Islamabad over the weekend that yielded no result.

"Since Sunday, when the Iranian delegation returned to Tehran, several messages have been exchanged through Pakistan,"

said foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei in a weekly press briefing.

"Today, we are very likely to receive a Pakistani delegation as a continuation of the discussions in Islamabad," he added.

Baqaei asserted that Tehran's right to enrich uranium was "indisputable" although the level of enrichment is "negotiable".

The Iranian official said the right to peaceful use of nuclear energy could not be "taken away under pressure or through war". "Regarding the level and type of enrichment, we have always stated that this issue is negotiable. We have emphasised that Iran should be able to continue enrichment in accordance with its needs," he added.



Field Marshal Asim Munir, NI(M), HJ, COAS & CDF and Mr Mohsin Naqvi, Interior Minister along with the delegation arrives at Tehran as part of the ongoing mediation efforts.

Xi meets Russian FM as leaders flock to China over Middle East war

PEAK POINT



CHINA: China's President Xi Jinping met with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on Wednesday, Chinese state media said, as a string of leaders of countries impacted

by the Middle East war flock to Beijing.

Lavrov joins Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, Abu Dhabi's Crown Prince Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and Vietnam's President To Lam in meeting with Xi this week.

The Russian diplomat told a news conference after meeting Xi that Moscow could "compensate" for China's energy shortages as shipping through the Strait of Hormuz remains choked by the Iran war. Xi, meanwhile, has sought to position China as a mediator and stable partner in the face of the US- and Israeli-led conflict. Xi told Abu Dhabi's crown prince on Tuesday that China would play a "constructive role" in promoting peace talks in the Middle East. In talks with Spain's Sanchez, Xi warned that the world was facing "chaos and turmoil" and "a contest between justice and force", urging closer cooperation.

Three-nation tour: PM Shehbaz arrives in Jeddah amid regional tensions

PEAK POINT



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, accompanied by a high-level delegation, arrived in Jeddah on Wednesday for a bilateral visit to Saudi Arabia, his office said.

At the airport, he was warmly received by Prince Saud bin Mishal bin Abdulaziz, Deputy Governor of Makkah Region, Pakistan's Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Ahmed Farooq, and Saudi Ambassador Nawaf Al-Malki.

The PM is accompanied by the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attullah Tarar, and Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Syed Tariq Fatemi, as well as other senior officials.

The premier will also travel to Qatar and Türkiye during his five-day official visit. In a press release issued on Wednesday, the Foreign Office (FO) said that the visits to Saudi Arabia and Qatar will be in the bilateral context, where the premier will meet the leadership of both the countries to discuss ongoing bilateral cooperation as well as regional peace and security. His visit to the Kingdom comes after Saudi Arabia pledged an additional \$3 billion in deposits for Pakistan and has extended its existing \$5 billion facility for a further three years.

Iran does not seek war or instability: Iranian President

PEAK POINT



IRAN: Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Wednesday that Iran did not seek war but dialogue, and that any attempt by the US to impose its will

or force Iran to surrender will fail, according to the IRNA. "Iran does not seek war or instability" and has emphasised dialogue and constructive engagement with other countries, Pezeshkian said. He went on to add that "any attempt to impose will or force the country into submission is doomed to fail, and the Iranian nation will never accept such an approach".

According to the IRNA, he criticised the double standards in international conduct. "What justification is there in targeting civilians, elites, children and destroying vital centres, including schools and hospitals, within the framework of international law and humanitarian principles?"

US President Donald Trump, in an interview to be aired on Wednesday, said the US-Israeli war on Iran is "close to over." "I think it's close to over, yeah. I mean, I view it as very close to over."

Student kills 4 in Türkiye's second school shooting in 2 days

PEAK POINT

TURKIYE: A teenage student shot at least four people dead, including three fellow pupils and wounded at least 20 others at a middle school in southeastern Türkiye on Wednesday, the local governor said, marking the country's second school attack in two days. Three students and one teacher died in the attack in the province of Kahramanmaraş, Governor Mukerrem Unluer told reporters, adding the shooter had shot and killed himself in the commotion.

"An eighth-grade student came with five weapons.

'Privilege for none': Pakistan calls for abolition of UNSC veto power, rejects new permanent seats

PEAK POINT

NEW YORK: Reaffirming its consistent policy, Pakistan has called for the abolition or severe restriction of the veto power and strongly opposed any expansion of permanent membership in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). The stance was expressed by Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, at a resumed session of the long-running Intergovernmental Negotiations (IGN) aimed at reforming the 15-member UNSC. "Pakistan's policy position remains clear and consistent — veto should either be abolished or, at a minimum, its use by the current permanent members severely restricted," Ambassador Ahmad stated.

He expressed Pakistan's firm opposition to "any five permanent members — China, France, Russia, the



United Kingdom, and the United States — and 10 non-permanent members elected for two-year terms by the General Assembly.

The UNSC often sees resolutions failing to pass due to the veto power being used by one or more of its permanent members.

This was particularly witnessed during Israel's war on Gaza, when the US repeatedly vetoed resolutions calling for an immedi-

ate ceasefire.

In his remarks, Ambassador Ahmad said: "Together with a very large majority of member states, we firmly believe that the paralysis that we see often at the Security Council, leading to inaction on crucial matters related to international peace and security, stems from the misuse or abuse of the veto power by the permanent members."

The envoy highlighted that this point of view was widely shared outside the UN in think tanks, academia, media and civil society. "There is an overwhelming sentiment against the veto, and how actually this privilege is anachronistic today, along with the permanent membership. Yet, proposals to expand veto-wielding members persist," he said. "How can this dichotomy be defended?"

North Korea boosting ability to make nuclear arms: UN watchdog



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: North Korea is showing a "very serious increase" in its ability to produce atomic weapons, the head of the UN nuclear watchdog said on Wednesday on a visit to Seoul.

The diplomatically isolated north is believed to operate multiple facilities for enriching uranium, a key step in making nuclear warheads, South Korea's spy agency has said.

They include one at the Yongbyon nuclear site, which Pyongyang purportedly decommissioned after talks but later reactivated in 2021. "In our periodic assessments, we have been able to confirm that there's a rapid increase in the operations".



SPORTS



Peshawar Zalmi outclass Quetta Gladiators to extend unbeaten run in PSL



PEAK POINT

KARACHI: A disciplined bowling display combined with captain Babar Azam's unbeaten half-century powered Peshawar Zalmi to a convincing eight-wicket victory over Quetta Gladiators in the 23rd Pakistan Super League (PSL) 11 match at Karachi's National Bank Stadium on Wednesday.

The victory marked Zalmi's sixth in seven matches and fifth

consecutive after their washout against three-time champions Islamabad United in Lahore.

Set to chase a modest 155-run target, the leaders comfortably knocked the winning runs for the loss of just two wickets and nine balls to spare.

The leaders got off to a flamboyant start to the pursuit as their opening pair of Mohammad Haris and Babar put together 75 runs

inside nine overs until the former

was dismissed by Gladiators captain Saud Shakeel.

Haris remained a notable run-getter for Zalmi in the pursuit with a brisk 35 off 28 deliveries, featuring five fours and a six.

Following his dismissal, Babar joined forces with in-form Kusal Mendis (21), and the duo ensured retaining Zalmi's momentum by knitting a 49-run partnership for the second wicket, which culminated with the latter's dismissal

off Alzarri Joseph in the 16th over.

Meanwhile, Babar held his ground firmly and eventually steered Zalmi over the line in the penultimate over, courtesy of an unbeaten 32-run partnership for the third wicket with Aaron Hardie, who made 18 not out from 14 deliveries.

The captain top-scored for Zalmi with an unbeaten 71 off 51 deliveries, studded with 10 fours.

Last eight line-up finalised in Youth U-18 Hockey Championship



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The quarter-final line-up of the Youth Under-18 National Hockey Championship 2026 has been finalised as the tournament, organised by the Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF), continues at the Naseer Bunda Hockey Stadium, Islamabad. The teams qualifying for the quarter-finals include Pakistan Customs and Punjab-4 from Pool A; Khyber Pakhtunkhwa-1 and Punjab-1 from Pool B; Punjab-2 and Azad Jammu and Kashmir from Pool C; and Pakistan Army along with Punjab-3 from Pool D. On the sixth day of the championship, two matches were played. In the first match, Punjab-2 delivered a dominant performance, thrashing Islamabad 11-0. Rana Sami led the scoring spree with a hat-trick, while Hammad netted twice. Haneen, Abu Sufyan, Hamza, Farhan, Zain and Zunair contributed one goal each. In the second match, Pakistan Army outclassed Punjab-3 with a convincing 5-0 victory. Muzammil starred with a hat-trick, while Haseeb and Shoaib added one goal apiece. A large number of officials and hockey enthusiasts witnessed the matches, including PHF Selection Committee member Olympian Naem Akhtar, Chief Coordinator Abdul Nasir Akhunnada, Tournament Director Khawaja Muhammad Junaid, Assistant Tournament Director Shafiq Bhatti, Mahmood Ahmed, Umpire Manager Sohail Akram Janjua.

Pakistan outplay Nepal 3-0 in ITF Asia U-12 team competition



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan continued their impressive run in the ITF Asia 12 & Under Team Competition - South Asia 2026, defeating host nation Nepal 3-0 in a one-sided contest, the Pakistan Tennis Federation (PTF) said on Wednesday.

According to a press release issued by the federation, the Pakistani duo of Muhammad Aayan and Muhammad Faizan maintained

a commanding performance to secure their second consecutive victory in the tournament.

In the singles matches, Muhammad Aayan led the charge with a solid 6-2, 6-0 win over Karki Savya Jung. Muhammad Ibraheem Hussain Gill further strengthened Pakistan's position by defeating Malla Aariti 6-2, 6-1.

The Pakistani duo of Muhammad Ibraheem Hussain Gill and Muhammad Faizan maintained

the momentum in the doubles match, overcoming Karki Savya Jung and Basnyet Sahansh 6-2, 6-1 to complete a clean sweep.

Pakistan outplay Nepal 3-0 in ITF Asia U-12 team competition. Meanwhile, Pakistan's girls' team is competing in Group A, which also includes Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka and India.

The PTF said the teams' participation in the regional event

is being supported by Honda Atlas Cars (Pakistan) Limited, whose continued backing is playing a vital role in the promotion and development of young tennis talent in the country.

Through its initiatives, including support for both boys' and girls' teams, the company is contributing to youth empowerment and encouraging greater participation in sports, particularly among young female athletes.

PTF President, Secretary General and other officials congratulated the team on their outstanding performance and expressed confidence in their continued success in the tournament.



MUZAFFARABAD: In the final match of the Kashmir Super League organized by MSK Group of companies, special guest and senior lawyer Rao Sajjad Ahmed Khan presents a shield to an advocate player for his outstanding performance.

Sufiyan Mueqem scripts redemption arc amid Zalmi dominance

PEAK POINT

KARACHI: When Sufiyan Mueqem marks his run-up at the bowling crease, the fall of opposition wickets appears almost inevitable. Such has been the pattern the left-arm wrist spinner has established this HBL Pakistan Super League season for Peshawar Zalmi.

Largely introduced into the attack by captain Babar Azam during the crucial middle overs, Sufiyan has made it a habit of striking regularly. In doing so, the 23-year-old has collected 13 wickets in five PSL outings so far — averaging just under 10 and conceding a miserly 6.45 per over — to sit atop the bowling charts.

Sufiyan's latest masterclass came on Monday night at the National Bank Stadium, where his spell of 3-30 proved decisive in Peshawar Zalmi's 24-run victory over Multan Sultans. Chasing 197, the Sultans looked comfortable at stages, but Sufiyan's variations and

control turned the tide. He removed key players including Josh Philippe and Ashton Turner, applying the brakes as the asking rate soared.

The southpaw's resurgence in the PSL has been nothing short of a redemption arc after he was dropped from the Pakistan side despite a promising start to his international career two years ago — four ODIs yielding eight wickets at 22.75 and 19



That setback might have dented confidence. Instead, it triggered a professional response. Back with Zalmi, Sufiyan has displayed the composure and hunger that first caught the selectors' attention.



LAHORE: Office bearers and participants pose for a group photo after attending a General Council meeting of Sports Journalists Association here on Wednesday.



Asia Pacific Geopolitical Group meeting held at IPU assembly, Istanbul

PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: Parliamentary delegates from across the region gathered on the sidelines of the Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly in Istanbul to engage in constructive dialogue under the banner of the Asia Pacific Group. Discussions centered on peace, regional cooperation and international security, with participants emphasizing the role of parliamentary diplomacy in responding to emerging geopolitical challenges. The Pakistan delegation

included Azam Nazeer Tarar, Minister for Law and Justice, Farhan Chishti, Asad Alam Niazi, Senator Amir Waliuddin Chishti, Senator Muhammad Talha Mahmood, Syed Shamooun Hashmi and Naqash Zafar. Delegates highlighted Pakistan's commitment to democratic values, multilateral cooperation and efforts to foster mutual understanding among Asia Pacific nations. Speakers underscored the need for enhanced coordination among member parliaments to promote



regional stability and practical cooperation on security and development issues. The Asia Pacific Group discussions stressed parliamentary engagement as a complement to diplomatic channels and a means to build consensus on

shared challenges. Senator Amir Waliuddin Chishti received endorsement from the Asia Pacific Group for membership of the Inter-Parliamentary Union Committee on Health. The endorsement recognizes his commitment to public health and is expected to strengthen parliamentary contributions to international cooperation on health policy within the IPU framework. In line with Pakistan's ongoing austerity measures, members of parliament, including those on the national delegation, attended

the IPU Assembly at their own expense. Delegates said this decision reflects a conscious effort to ensure prudent use of public resources while maintaining active international parliamentary representation. The meeting concluded with a reaffirmed resolve by the Asia Pacific Group to intensify collaboration among member parliaments and to play a proactive role within the IPU, with Pakistan reaffirming its readiness to contribute to regional peace and cooperative initiatives.

Rs. 48.85 million surrendered in NCC project as PAC questions delays

NADEEM TANOLI
ISLAMABAD: Financial irregularities and administrative lapses have surfaced in the Establishment of the National Curriculum Council (NCC), as the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) was informed that over Rs. 48.85 million was surrendered and an additional Rs. 3.06 million lapsed, raising serious questions about governance and execution in a key education reform initiative. During a meeting chaired by Acting Chairman Syed Naveed Qamar, officials disclosed that the bulk of the surrendered funds remained unused due to vacant posts, highlighting persistent delays in hiring and operationalization of the NCC Secretariat. The committee was told that these funds fell under

the ERE head and could not be re-appropriated due to Finance Division rules, effectively rendering a significant portion of the budget idle. The PAC was further informed that Rs. 3.06 million lapsed due to what was described as a "system error" and delays in financial processing, including reviewers failing to deposit their cheques before the fiscal deadline. Members viewed these explanations with concern, noting that such procedural failures reflect deeper systemic weaknesses in financial management. The issue gained further significance as the National Curriculum Council plays a central role in shaping academic standards across the country. Officials also informed that the curriculum for technical education streams has been developed under

the NCC framework, making the inefficiencies in its establishment more critical for the overall education system. Committee members observed that lapses in a project of such national importance point toward weak planning, poor coordination, and lack of accountability within the concerned department. Analysts note that unspent and surrendered funds in education projects not only delay institutional development but also undermine broader reform efforts in curriculum standardization. The PAC is expected to seek detailed explanations from the relevant authorities regarding delays in appointments, financial mismanagement, and corrective measures to ensure that such lapses do not recur in future projects tied to national education policy.

Governor Sindh, Abbasi discuss development projects, regional situation

PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: Governor Sindh Nihal Hashmi Wednesday called on Federal Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi and discussed matters of mutual interest, the national and regional situation and ongoing development projects. During the meeting, the two leaders also exchanged views on Pakistan's recent diplomatic role, particularly its efforts regarding Iran-US



negotiations, said Pakistan's diplomatic initiatives were appreciated. They highly significant for the promotion of peace and stability in the region. The meeting also focused on various Pakistan Railways development schemes, including the ML-1 project in Sindh.

Opinion & Editorial

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Limits of ceasefire

Hassan Aslam Shad
WHILE the world breathed a collective sigh of relief as the US-Iran ceasefire hold on April 8, that sense of calm may prove fleeting. The ceasefire is not conflict resolution. It carries a warning that in the absence of a sound legal architecture underpinning the talks, it risks becoming nothing more than an intermission between escalations. The talks between the US and Iran must be anchored in international law as the central organising principle for a durable and lasting settlement.

Looking back at the debris of past truces, one thing is certain: ceasefires that lack a legal framework collapse under the weight of mistrust and competing narratives. Conversely, those grounded in established legal principles possess the capacity to stabilise even the most entrenched rivalries.

The starting point must be the United Nations Charter. Both Iran and the US have, at various points, justified their actions within the UN framework. The immediate task, therefore, is not to re-litigate those claims in the abstract, but to subject them to a mutually agreed legal process anchored in international law.

Looking back, the jurisprudence of the International Court of Justice offers guidance. In the famous 1986 case, Nicaragua vs United States, the court drew an important distinction between the gravest forms of

the use of force and lesser violations. In other words, this case laid down the outlawed forms of the use of force by one country against another. In another case, 'Oil Platforms' (Iran vs United States', 2003), the court had to determine whether US claims of self-defence against Iranian targets were legally justified. The court determined the grounds legally insufficient. These cases are not mere academic relics. They provide a legal vocabulary through which both states can frame their legal positions.

The immediate priority is to convert the ceasefire into a legally binding framework.

Importantly, there is a prohibition under international law on states of knowingly allowing their territory to be used for acts contrary to the rights of other states. This principle was affirmed in cases such as 'Corfu Channel' ('United Kingdom vs Albania'). Applied to the present context, it offers a pathway to address the attribution of actions by non-state actors. Rather than relying on unilateral assertions, the parties could agree to a verification mechanism grounded in this doctrine, whereby each state undertakes enforceable obligations to prevent hostile acts traceable to its territory or proxies. This is very important in the context of US-Iran relations.

However, legal principles are toothless without the right institutional machinery. For this, historical precedents

provide ample practical models.

An example is the Camp David Accords between Egypt and Israel. What made Camp David endure more than political will was an institutionalised legal framework that included phased withdrawals and third-party monitoring. Similarly, the Algiers Accords of 1981 established the Iran-US Claims Tribunal, a binding arbitral mechanism that has handled thousands of claims and continues to resolve disputes between the two states decades later. The takeaway is clear: even adversaries can sustain legal cooperation when it is properly institutionalised.

More recently, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, also known as the Iran nuclear deal, illustrates both the power and fragility of legally structured diplomacy. Its detailed verification regime delivered a degree of transparency. However, its subsequent breakdown exposed a critical gap: while the JCPOA contained a dispute resolution mechanism, it lacked a binding and adjudicatory framework strong enough to withstand political differences.

In my view, any future negotiations should also consider the Cold War era Helsinki Final Act. This model introduced early confidence-building measures such as prior notification and observance of military exercises.

Courtesy Dawn

Looking for geniuses

Daud Khan

There are some very clever people in the world. People who can absorb huge amounts of information, process it quickly and derive conclusions faster and better than most other people.

And then, scattered here and there are the geniuses. Geniuses possess brains that are wired differently from those of others. And this different wiring allows them to do things that nobody else can, and to do so in completely unexpected ways. They are like wizards.

I strongly believe that geniuses are randomly scattered across the world and across all socioeconomic groups. If so, Pakistan, with a population of over 220 million people, must have a few somewhere. The question is how we can find them, nurture them and help them realise their potential.

To illustrate the importance of nurturing, I would like to talk about two people who were considered geniuses by their peers: John von Neumann and Srinivasa Ramanujan.

Already as a child, John von Neumann could divide two eight-digit numbers in his head, was well versed in calculus and could converse in Ancient Greek and seven other languages. As a teenager, he memorised a twenty-volume encyclopedia and years later could recite what was written on any page and volume.

Later in life, someone once brought him an unsolved problem on which there had been no published literature. John von Neumann looked at it briefly and said offhandedly: "Oh, that!" He then went on to explain how to solve the problem using completely novel methods. He made a pioneering contribution to mathematics, physics, economics and computing. He worked in a Valhalla of top scientists that included a whole suite of Nobel Prize winners, and all who worked with him regarded him as the smartest person they had ever met.

Courtesy Tribune

Credibility boost

Pakistan's economic narrative, long weighed down by uncertainty and stopgap actions, received a measure of reassurance this week as Fitch Ratings affirmed the country's long-term foreign currency issuer default rating at "B-" with a stable outlook. Such an assessment is a signal - both to markets and to policymakers - that stability, however tentative, may be beginning to take root. The affirmation reflects progress that cannot be dismissed lightly. Fiscal consolidation efforts and alignment with the IMF programme have collectively stabilised Pakistan's funding outlook. Equally significant is the rebuilding of foreign exchange buffers over the past year. These reserves, though still modest by global standards, offer a cushion against external shocks - particularly the ongoing conflict in the Middle East. Pakistan's heavy reliance on imported energy leaves it acutely exposed. Yet, the presence of even a limited buffer helps calm market anxieties. There is also a subtle but important geopolitical dimension at play. Pakistan's emerging role as a ceasefire broker in regional tensions, if sustained, may yield diplomatic and economic dividends that partially offset external pressures. While such gains are neither immediate nor guaranteed, they contribute to an improved perception of the country's strategic relevance.

Naqvi meets Chinese consul general, discusses bilateral cooperation



PEAK POINT

KARACHI: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi met with Chinese Consul General Yang Yundong at the Chinese Consulate on Wednesday, discussing bilateral cooperation, facilities for Chinese investors, and security-related matters.

The interior minister assured Yundong that issues faced by Chinese businessmen would be resolved on a priority basis, adding that a conference would soon be held in Islamabad for this purpose.

He also extended an invitation to Yundong, along with Chinese businessmen in Karachi, to participate in the conference.

Naqvi was also briefed on the measures taken for the protection of Chinese citizens in Pakistan.

Naqvi said that Chinese investors were playing an important role in the construction and development of Pakistan. Chinese investors would be provided facilities at all levels, he said, adding that attracting maximum Chinese investment in Pakistan was a key goal.

The interior minister also assured the consul general that providing a business-friendly environment to Chinese businessmen remains a priority.

Yundong thanked Naqvi for his active role in enhancing bilateral cooperation between the countries.

Read: Naqvi urges return of offshore wealth

Separately, Naqvi also met Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah, holding discussions regarding law and order in the country and the ongoing tensions in the region. Matters of mutual interest and security issues were also discussed.

The chief minister noted that

national unity remains indispensable in the current regional situation, adding that the political and military leadership was making full efforts to reduce regional tensions.

Naqvi said during the meeting that necessary measures were being taken to maintain law and order in the country.

Read More: China backs Pakistan's regional diplomacy A day earlier, Naqvi urged the business community to repatriate a portion of overseas-held wealth, estimating that nearly \$100 billion has been moved out of the country over the past three to four years.

Addressing business leaders in Karachi, the minister said that if traders act decisively, up to \$10b could return to Pakistan before the upcoming budget.

He encouraged investors to utilise existing financial channels, including Roshan Digital Accounts, to bring back between 20-30% of their offshore funds. Naqvi assured the business community that the government would provide a more conducive.

Aleem Khan greets Sikh community on Baisakhi, announces 'Guru Nanak Motorway' project

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan on Tuesday extended warm greetings to the Sikh and Hindu communities on the occasion of Baisakhi and announced the development of the "Guru Nanak Motorway" project aimed at facilitating Sikh pilgrims.

In his message, the minister said Baisakhi symbolized harvest, new beginnings and interfaith harmony, adding that the government was committed to promoting religious inclusivity and unity, said a press release.

Sharing details of the project, he said the proposed Guru Nanak Motorway would connect Nankana Sahib with Kartarpur, describing it as a "highway of peace and unity" dedicated to Sikh pilgrims from around the world.



He said the initiative reflected the Government of Pakistan's vision to facilitate religious tourism and strengthen harmony among different faiths.

Abdul Aleem Khan said the Ministry of Communications would ensure provision of world-class travel facilities along the motorway, adding that hotels, shopping malls, service areas and other amenities would be developed under the public-private partnership (PPP) mode.

He also invited the global Sikh community to participate in the landmark project.

Pakistan, US explore ways to deepen economic partnership

PEAK POINT

WASHINGTON: Pakistan and the US discussed on Wednesday avenues for deepening bilateral economic partnership, with a focus on enhancing trade, promoting investment flows, and facilitating private-sector engagement.

"Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Muhammad Aurangzeb, held a meeting with Howard Lutnick, Secretary of the United States Department of Commerce, during his visit to the World Bank-IMF Spring Meetings 2026 in Washington, D.C.," as per the Ministry of Finance.

The two sides held discussions that also covered cooperation in key sectors, including mining, energy, and information technology, with an emphasis on unlocking new opportunities for mutually beneficial economic collaboration. Meanwhile, Muhammad Aurangzeb also participated in a panel discussion titled "MENAP Economics Navigating War: Managing Shocks and Shaping the Future," organised by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The minister described the ongoing Middle East conflict as

one of the largest supply shocks in recent history, comparable in scale to the demand shock experienced during COVID-19.

He said that the crisis had triggered a broader global conversation on energy security and supply chain resilience.

During the discussion, the minister detailed the immediate effects of the crisis on fuel availability and prices, and described Pakistan's ongoing planning for potential secondary and tertiary impacts, including effects on inflation, remittances, exports, and capital flows.

"Highlighting an emerging silver lining, the Finance Minister noted that transhipment volumes at Karachi Port over the past 25-30 days had exceeded those recorded during the entire previous year, reflecting evolving opportunities in the global trade landscape," as per a statement.

Aurangzeb underscored that building strategic reserves remains a key takeaway from the current crisis.

"He further identified two important lessons being applied to the present situation: the importance of maintaining fiscal

CM Shah reviews wheat procurement for rabi 2025-26

PEAK POINT

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah chaired a meeting to review wheat procurement for the rabi season 2025-26, directing authorities to accelerate the process and ensure timely achievement of targets.

Officials briefed the meeting that against a procurement target of 973,900 tons, only 1,061,600 tons of wheat have been purchased so far across the province.

The chief minister expressed serious concern over the slow pace of procurement and instructed the food department to immediately speed up operations. He emphasised that priority should be given to small farmers, particularly those receiving subsidies on essential agricultural inputs such as DAP fertiliser and urea under the Sindh Wheat Growers Support Programme.

The meeting, held at the Chief Minister's House, was attended by provincial ministers including Sharjeel Inam Memon, Jam Khan Shoro, Mukesh Kumar Chawla, M a k h d o o m Mehboob-uz-Zaman.

Govt fast tracks youth employment drive via Digital Youth Hub

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has accelerated its youth employment strategy by designating the Digital Youth Hub (DYH) as the central national platform, Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme Rana Mashood Ahmad Khan said on Wednesday, that coordinated directives have been issued to align skills development with global market demands and expand employment opportunities for Pakistani youth through a unified, technology-driven framework.

According to official details, the government has declared the Digital Youth Hub the cornerstone of its youth employment campaign, integrating a wide range of opportunities, including



scholarships, vocational training, internships, apprenticeships, and job placements into a single accessible platform.

All federal and provincial institutions have been directed to connect their schemes with DYH on a priority basis to ensure wider outreach and institutional cohesion. Mr Khan said that, on the Prime Minister's instructions, key ministries including Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, Foreign Affairs, and Federal Education,

Governor for filling vacancies in power utilities to improve service delivery

PEAK POINT

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Wednesday stressed the need for immediate filling of vacant posts in power distribution companies to improve service delivery and operational efficiency. He was talking to Chief Executive Officer Tribal Electric Supply Company (TESCO), Tahir Jamal, who called on him at Governor House and briefed him in detail about departmental performance and challenges. During the meeting, matters relating to electricity supply in merged districts, recovery mechanisms, consumer facilitation and other issues were discussed at length.



The TESCO chief informed the Governor that effective measures had been taken in line with federal government policies to curb electricity theft, adding that recovery rates had also improved.

The Governor appreciated the company's performance and termed the steps taken to make TESCO financially stable as commendable. He said elimination of power.



Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, held a meeting with Honorable Howard Lutnick, Secretary of the United States Department of Commerce, during his visit to the World Bank-IMF Spring meetings 2026 in Washington, D.C.

Safe City projects to be extended to Mardan, Kohat merged districts: CM Afridi

PEAK POINT

PESHAWAR: A high level meeting of the Planning and Development Department was held under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Muhammad Sohail Afridi, to undertake a comprehensive review of the proposed Annual Development Programme for the fiscal year 2026-27 and deliberate on new development initiatives across multiple sectors. The meeting reviewed proposed schemes relating to the Excise, Local Government,

Climate Change, Food, Housing, Home, Agriculture, Livestock, and Energy Departments, with priorities identified in line with public welfare and sustainable socio economic development objectives. Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister stated that the forthcoming provincial budget would be designed with a particular focus on empowering youth and improving the socio economic conditions of low and middle income segments of society. He emphasized that budgetary priorities would be aligned to expand employ-



ment opportunities and promote inclusive economic growth, directing that development interventions with direct and tangible public benefit be accorded highest priority. The meeting consid-

ered proposals to establish Safe City in Kohat, Mardan, Peshawar, and the merged districts as part of the Government's broader strategy to strengthen urban security and public safety infras-

structure. The Chief Minister also directed the relocation of the existing grain warehouse from Peshawar and instructed the relevant authorities to establish a modern alternative facility. In addition, proposals were reviewed for the establishment of technologically advanced grain storage facilities at divisional headquarters to improve food security management and storage efficiency. To strengthen the capacity of law enforcement and public security institutions, the meeting reviewed proposals for the acquisition of land for

the establishment of eight new Excise police stations in various districts, enhancement of prison security infrastructure, strengthening of police stations, provision of advanced equipment to the Special Branch, and establishment of district level Counter Terrorism Department structures. In the energy sector, proposals were discussed for the establishment of mini solar grids in the merged districts, rehabilitation of micro hydropower stations in Tirah, and installation of new electricity feeders.