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**DAILY PEAK POINT ISLAMABAD**

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# Government providing all possible facilities to investors in digital, telecom industry: PM

**PEAK POINT**

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday said that the government was providing all possible facilities to investors in the digital and telecom sectors to promote the country's digital economy.

"The recent successful auction of 5G spectrum in Pakistan reflects that the government is moving in the right direction," the prime minister said while speaking to VEON Group CEO Kaan Terzioglu, who along with a delegation called on him at the PM House.

He stated that Pakistan was pursuing a comprehensive and effective strategy to increase foreign investment and promote innovation in the information technology sector. "Effective use of information technology to achieve a cashless economy is among the government's top priorities," he said, adding that digitalization of the economic sector would help ensure transparency.

Following the 5G spectrum auction, the prime minister noted that all relevant institutions were working in close coordination to provide high-quality internet services to the public through telecom operators.

He further emphasized that Pakistan's youth could play a vital role in strengthening the economy and improving service delivery through active participation in information technology and digital platforms.

He added that the growing interest of young people in telecom and IT is attracting international investors to Pakistan.



ISLAMABAD: Group CEO of Multinational telecommunication and digital services company VEON Mr Kaan Terzioglu called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

# Security forces kill 13 terrorists in two separate intelligence-based operations in KP

**PEAK POINT**

ISLAMABAD: Security forces killed 13 terrorists in two separate engagements in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, said a statement by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) on Wednesday. The military's media wing said the engagement took place on March 30 and the terrorists belonged to "Indian Proxy Fina Al Khawarij". Fina al Khawarij is a term the state uses for terrorists belonging to the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan. During the first intelligence-based operation (IBO) conducted in the Bara area of Khyber district, security forces killed 10 terrorists. "During the conduct of operation, own troops effectively engaged khawarij location and after an intense fire exchange, 10 khawarij were sent to hell," said the ISPR. In another IBO conducted in the Bannu district of the province, three terrorists were killed by security forces. "Sanitisation operations are being conducted to eliminate any other Indian-sponsored khawarij found in the area, as the relentless Counter Terrorism campaign under vision 'Azme-e-Istehkam' (as approved by the Federal Apex Committee on National Action Plan).

# Trump says US to leave Iran 'pretty quickly' and return if needed, says Khamenei asked for ceasefire

**PEAK POINT**

WASHINGTON: Iran's new leader has just asked the United States for a ceasefire, United States President Donald Trump said in a Truth Social post on Wednesday.

"We will consider when Hormuz Strait is open, free and clear. Until then, we are blasting Iran into oblivion," he said.

He separately told Reuters today, hours before he was scheduled to make a primetime address to the nation, that the US would be "out of Iran pretty quickly" and could return for "spot hits" if needed. Trump also said he would express his disgust with the war he considered the alliance's lack of support for US objectives in Iran. He said he was "absolutely" considering an attempt to withdraw the US from NATO. Meanwhile, the United Arab Emirates is preparing to support US-led efforts to reopen the Strait of Hormuz by force, according to a Wall Street Journal report.

Citing Arab officials, the outlet reported that the UAE is lobbying for a UN Security Council resolution that would authorise military action and is urging the US and military powers in Europe and Asia to form a coalition to secure the strategic waterway.

The Gulf state is also reviewing potential military roles, including mine-clearing operations, as it weighs becoming a direct participant in the conflict for the first time, the report said. In a statement cited by the Wall Street Journal, the UAE Foreign Ministry said there is "broad global consensus that freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz must be preserved," pointing to international condemnation of disruptions in the waterway. According to Al Jazeera, US-Israeli strikes have hit steel complexes in central and southwest Iran, damaging production units, Iranian media is reporting. "Initial assessments indicate massive attacks, with significant damage and destruction to production units" at the complex of the Mobarakeh Steel Company, one of Iran's biggest, in the central province of Isfahan, Fars news agency reported, quoting a statement by the company.

QATAR: An oil tanker leased to state-owned QatarEnergy was hit by an Iranian cruise missile on Wednesday in Qatari waters, the defence ministry said. Qatar was targeted by three cruise missiles coming from Iran; two were intercepted while the third hit the Aquia 1 fuel oil tanker, but caused no casualties. The vessel, located 17 nautical miles (31 km) north of Qatar's Ras Laffan industrial hub, the site of the world's largest gas plant, sustained damage above the waterline, but no environmental impact was reported, the United Kingdom.

# Russian military plane crashes over Crimea, killing 29 people

**PEAK POINT**

ISLAMABAD: The Russian Defense Ministry said on Wednesday that one of its military planes crashed over the Crimean Peninsula, killing 29 people.

The ministry said in a statement that there were 23 passengers and six crew members on board.

"During a scheduled flight over the Crimean peninsula on March 31 at around 6:00 PM Moscow time (1500GMT), communication with the An-26 military transport aircraft was lost," it said. A search and rescue team located the crash site of the An-26 aircraft.

# Pakistan, Afghanistan officials meet in China's Urumqi under trilateral mechanism

**PEAK POINT**

ISLAMABAD: Officials from Pakistan, Afghanistan and China are meeting on Wednesday in the Chinese city of Urumqi under the trilateral mechanism, said a senior official from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA). Since Pakistan launched Operation Ghazab-e-Ila-Haq against terrorist hideouts in Afghanistan on February 26, diplomatic contact between the two sides had largely ceased.

The MoFA official, who asked not to be named due to the sensitive nature of negotiations, said the meeting is not a "mediation effort per se". The meeting is focused on sharing perspectives on the latest escalation. No major outcomes are expected, though China is pushing for confidence-building measures, such as reopening trade routes.

Officials are engaged in detailed discussions on the inside Pakistan do not fall under their direct responsibility.

Despite these continuing differences, talks are also focusing on confidence-building measures and lowering of tensions. Pakistan is understood to be showing openness towards reopening trade routes and economic cooperation with Afghanistan.

It is an effort to manage tensions while leveraging opportunities for economic cooperation, even as core security disagreements persist, a Pakistani official said.

Another Pakistani official, familiar with the development, said Beijing requested Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar, who was in the Chinese capital on Tuesday, for Islamabad's participation as Kabul had asked for assistance from the Chinese in bringing Islamabad to the table.

He added that China also has concerns about the East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) — a transnational terrorist outfit known to operate in Afghanistan.

"The Afghan side is showing willingness to walk the talk this time and has agreed to discuss a verifiable mechanism on some of the key demands by Pakistan and China on TTP and ETIM." He elaborated that these are "exploratory discussions".

# FCC seeks response from KP CM Afridi over plans to form 'Imran Khan release force'

**PEAK POINT**

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Constitutional Court (FCC) on Wednesday directed Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi to respond within 10 days to a petition seeking to prevent the mobilisation or activation of a "release force" for jailed PTI founder Imran Khan. Headed by FCC Chief Justice Aminuddin Khan, a three-judge bench also issued notices to respondents in the petition, namely the KP government, the PTI, the federal government and the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP). The proposed force was announced by CM Afridi in February after a days-long protest to secure a meeting with Imran failed to budge the government.

# SPORTS

## Pakistan's Asian Cup qualifying campaign ends with defeat

## Rain washes out Zalmi-United clash



**PEAK POINT**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's 2027 Asian Cup qualifying campaign ended on a disappointing note as Myanmar defeated the hosts 2-1 in their final Group 'E' match at the Jinnah Stadium.

The victory gave Myanmar their fourth win of the round, helping them finish second in the group with 12 points behind Syria, while Pakistan concluded their campaign with two points from six matches.

Coached by Nolberto Solano, Pakistan produced an energetic first-half display and created several promising opportunities but

were undone by defensive lapses early in the second half before a late fightback proved insufficient.

The match began cautiously, with both sides probing for openings during the opening exchanges. Myanmar threatened first when Zaw Win Thein's effort was blocked by a timely sliding challenge from Waqar Ehtisham, while Than Paing later headed wide from Hein Phyow Win's free-kick.

Pakistan gradually grew into the contest. Captain Alamgir Ghazali led from the front, testing goalkeeper Zin Nyi Nyi Aung with a powerful strike from dis-

tance midway through the half. Moments later, Pakistan came close again when a cross from the left was headed down by Ali Uzair at the far post, but Shayekh Dost failed to make clean contact.

Zin then produced an outstanding reflex save to deny Dost from point-blank range after Ali Uzair had knocked the ball into his path.

Despite Myanmar's occasional attacks, Pakistan finished the first half on top but were unable to break the deadlock as the teams went into the interval level. The complexion of the match changed just a minute into the second half.

A back pass from Waqar was misjudged by goalkeeper Saqib Hanif, with the ball striking his standing leg and rolling into the net to hand Myanmar an unexpected lead.

Myanmar capitalised on the advantage and doubled their momentum just before the hour mark. Lwin Moe Aung broke free down the right flank and delivered a precise low cross that than Paing tapped home from close range. The visitors controlled possession thereafter, combining well with quick passing moves to frustrate Pakistan's attempts to recover.

**PEAK POINT**

LAHORE: Seventh rain forced the abandonment of the seventh match of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) Season 11 at Peshawar Zalmi and Islamabad United at the Gaddafi Stadium on Tuesday, with not a single ball bowled.

The downpour began moments before the scheduled toss at 6:30pm and intensified steadily, leaving the outfield waterlogged and unfit for play. Despite swift action from the ground staff, who immediately covered the pitch and worked tirelessly to prepare the field once the rain subsided, conditions failed to improve in time. Match officials eventually called off the contest approximately 30 minutes before the official cut-off time for a five-over game, awarding one point each to both sides. The result proved beneficial for Peshawar Zalmi, who moved up to second place on the points table with three points from two matches, just behind early leaders Karachi Kings. Islamabad United, meanwhile, opened their account in the tournament and climbed to sixth position. The washout resurfaced the standings, pushing Lahore Qalandars and Multan Sultans down the table, while United edged ahead of Rawalpindi, who are still in search of their first win.

## Zampa snubs IPL for PSL, hails Afridi as all-time favourite



**PEAK POINT**

AUSTRALIA: Australia's leg-spinner Adam Zampa has shed more light on his decision to opt for the Pakistan Super League (PSL) over the Indian Premier League (IPL), while also naming Shahid Afridi as his all-time favourite Pakistani cricketer.

Speaking on an ARY podcast, Zampa said the time commitment required for the

IPL does not match the financial returns for players with his skill set.

"To be brutally honest, for someone like me, the money isn't quite there compared to other roles. Considering the time the IPL demands, it didn't feel worthwhile," he said.

The 34-year-old went unsold in an IPL 2026 mini-auction after being released by Sunrisers Hyderabad, before

joining Karachi Kings, where he has made an immediate impact.

Zampa said he had initially planned to take a break from franchise cricket, but accepted the PSL offer when it came. "It all happened quickly, and I'm really enjoying the experience," he added.

Praising the standard of the HBL PSL, he said the tournament features high-quality bowling attacks, making even seemingly straightforward matches highly competitive.

He also highlighted the positive dressing room environment at Karachi Kings, noting strong camaraderie between the local and overseas players.

Zampa named Afridi as his all-time

favourite from Pakistan, while picking Hasan Ali as a current player he enjoys watching.

He also lauded Shaheen Shah Afridi, saying the left-arm pacer always creates wicket-taking ability.

"When Shaheen is bowling, it feels like something is about to happen. He's always a challenge to face," Zampa said.

The leg-spinner also mentioned his friendship with Pakistan pacer Haris Rauf, adding that he has shared the field with him on several occasions. Among his Australian teammates, he named Nathan Ellis as a close friend and expressed hope of seeing him feature for Karachi Kings in future PSL editions.



LAHORE: Hockey trial for U-18 Youth Championship here in Mini Hockey Stadium on Wednesday.

PESHAWAR: Muhammad Hammad of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa poses alongside trophy after clinching 2nd position in PSA Squash Championship.

## Iraq seal FIFA World Cup return after 40 years; Turkiye end 24-year drought

**PEAK POINT**

MEXICO: Coach Graham Alexander challenged his players to "shock the world" after Iraq became the 48th and final team to qualify for the World Cup with a nerve-shredding 2-1 win over Bolivia in an intercontinental playoff in Mexico.

Iraq, whose preparations were disrupted by the war in the Middle East, sealed their first appearance at the finals in 40 years and will play in Group I against France, Senegal and Norway.

Goals from Ali Al-Hamadi and Aymen Hussein secured a famous win for Iraq, whose last appearance at the World Cup came at Mexico in 1986.

"With everything going on in the Middle East at the moment it made it harder for the players," said the Australian Arnold, who had initially sought to have the fixture postponed due to the

disruption caused by the conflict.

"Delighted for the players, very good boys, very happy for the 46 million Iraqis," he added.

"Hopefully, it will help change the perception of

Baghdad that began with an overland crossing into Jordan.

But there was little sign of weariness during a confident start by Iraq, who took the lead after nine minutes through Luton Town striker



Iraq and the football in Iraq. Doing something in the World Cup nobody expects us to do.

"Let's shock the world." Because of the US-Israeli conflict caused by the travel ban on Iran, most of the Iraqi squad only reached Mexico after a gruelling three-day journey from

Ali-Hamadi — the 24-year-old who moved to Liverpool as a toddler following the outbreak of the 2003 Iraq war. Iraq midfielder Amir Al-Ammari won a corner after a superb free-kick that was saved at full stretch from Bolivia goalkeeper Guillermo Viscarra.

## Minister stresses transparent, timely aid for patients during Mayo Hospital visit

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Syed Imran Ahmed Shah Wednesday underscored that ensuring transparent and timely financial assistance to deserving patients is a top government priority. The minister stated this during his visit to the Mayo Hospital in Lahore to review support being provided through Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM). During the visit, the minister conducted a detailed assessment of PBM's individual financial assistance mechanism, with particular focus on transparency and prompt disbursement to

patients in need, said a news release. He was briefed that from 2021 to 2026, PBM has disbursed Rs. 685.8 million for the treatment of 3,035 patients at Mayo Hospital. In the financial year 2024-25 alone, Rs. 321.4 million were provided to 1,180 patients, while in the current financial year, Rs. 106.6 million have so far been released for 535 patients. Additionally, Rs. 190 million were allocated last year specifically for cancer patients at the hospital. The minister noted that similar visits had been conducted to major healthcare institutions across the country, including Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS).



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Syed Imran Ahmad Shah chairs a briefing at Mayo Hospital Lahore on PBM financial assistance and service delivery.

## PANAH urges Govt to Tax tobacco, sweet drinks and other ultra-processed products instead of cutting health and education budgets

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan National Heart Association (PANAH), in collaboration with civil society organizations and public health experts, has strongly urged the Government of Pakistan to increase taxes on tobacco products, sugary drinks and other ultra-processed products instead of placing additional burden on the public through drastic cuts in development spending, particularly in the health and education sectors. In light of the ongoing global

economic pressures and rising fuel costs linked to geopolitical tensions in the Middle East, the government has announced significant reductions in development budgets and increased fuel prices. These measures, while aimed at managing fiscal constraints, risk severely undermining Pakistan's long-term economic growth and human development. Pakistan is already facing a public health emergency driven by non-communicable diseases (NCDs), including cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, cancer, and



chronic respiratory illnesses. NCDs account for nearly 58% of all deaths in Pakistan, making them the leading cause of mortality in the country. Diabetes, in particular, has reached alarming levels, with over 33 million adults living

with the disease. Each year, hundreds of thousands of deaths are linked to diabetes and its complications, placing immense pressure on families and the healthcare system. The economic burden of NCDs is equally devastating. These diseases cost Pakistan billions of rupees annually in healthcare expenditures and productivity losses. Pakistan is spending approximately USD 2.6 billion annually on the treatment and management of diabetes only — an amount that is double the IMF installation we receive. A significant

portion of the workforce suffers from reduced productivity, absenteeism, and premature mortality due to preventable illnesses, directly impacting national economic output. A major contributor to this crisis is the widespread consumption of tobacco products and sugar-sweetened beverages. These harmful, non-essential products are directly linked to heart disease, obesity, diabetes, and cancer, yet remain under-taxed in Pakistan. General Secretary of PANAH, Sana Ullah Ghumman, stated that

at this time when the Government is cutting essential development budgets, it is both unjust and economically short-sighted to ignore the massive revenue potential of taxes on non-essential items. Tobacco, sweet drinks and other ultra-processed products are not necessities — they are drivers of disease and death. By increasing taxes on these harmful products, the government can generate significant revenue, reduce disease burden, and protect vulnerable populations from further economic hardship.

# Opinion & Editorial



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## Two-tier judicial quandary

The two-tier judicial system in vogue is now snowballing into a confrontation. The bizarre observation from jurists from the newly-constituted Federal Constitutional Court is not entitled to uphold or implement decisions of the erstwhile Supreme Court has opened a Pandora's box. This is an outcome of the fractured 27th Amendment, passed by the parliament in negation of the principle of separation of powers, which is now posing grave questions of legitimacy. It is a doctrine that all decisions of the judiciary are sacrosanct until and unless overturned or reversed by appellate forums, and that too as ordained by law and the Constitution. Thus, the assumption that the supra-court, i.e. the FCC, has no binding obligation or jurisdiction to protect decisions of the apex court is non-maintainable under any injunctions of lawfare. The FCC observation is bound to stir unrest in the judicial circles. Legal dicta are treasure troves and are debatable in good faith. However, they cannot be shunted out on the premise that a forum that invented them has ceased to exist, or a supra body has taken over it. This is where the 1973 Constitution appears jaundiced, as the recent amendments have taken out the inalienable aspect of adherence to the rule of law, and brought a dual superior judiciary into being.

## Why the poor reject education

**Nadeem ul Haque**  
CONTRARY to popular perception Pakistan's education crisis is not a core problem of access. It is a problem of incentives. Until that reality is grasped, the system will continue to expand without delivering either learning or opportunity. The dominant narrative, shaped by well-meaning experts and echoed by commentators, is simplistic, intellectually lazy and politically convenient. Its prescriptions are predictable: build more schools, expand universities, pour in more public money. The oft-repeated figure of 26 million out-of-school children is invoked to fabricate moral urgency, resting on a flawed assumption that parents who keep their children out of school are behaving irrationally. They are not. They are responding, with considerable clarity, to the incentives in front of them.

Education, in this framing, is treated as an unquestionable moral good. And needs to be expanded irrespective of context, incentives, outcomes or returns. Interrogating this assumption is treated as near-heretical. The result is the substitution of sentiment for analysis, and advocacy for understanding. Political responses reflect this shallowness. For many policymakers, education is not about learning outcomes but patronage — an instrument for distributing jobs to teachers and low-skilled staff

within their constituencies. Access is invoked; quality is ignored. The system expands in form while hollowing out in substance.

Before demanding that families sacrifice more and governments spend more, a fundamental question must be confronted: why should anyone invest in education at all? This is the central economic question that the discourse avoids. Gary Becker's theory of human capital is unambiguous: education consumes real resources today — time, money, foregone income — in exchange for higher earnings tomorrow. It's an investment. And like any investment, its value depends entirely on expected returns relative to costs.

When schooling is poor, learning outcomes weak, and labour markets fail to reward skills, the economic case for education crumbles. Families send children to school only if they expect those sacrifices to pay off. When returns are this weak, incentives collapse. Every year in school has an opportunity cost. A child studying is not earning, not gaining work experience and not contributing to household income. For low-income families, these costs are immediate, while the benefits are distant and uncertain. More importantly, in a low-growth rate economy experiencing high graduate unemployment and an uncertain job market the signal is clear for young people: education

does not pay reliably. When expected returns fall below these costs, rational households pull back. They do not persist out of moral obligation or some grand national goal. Refusal to invest in education is not ignorance; arithmetic drives the decision. For many policymakers, education is not about learning outcomes but patronage. Framed in these terms, the behaviour of millions of Pakistani households is not puzzling, it is entirely rational. Global evidence shows that each additional year of schooling raises earnings by roughly nine to 10 per cent on average. Pakistan's labour market returns consistently 5pc to 7pc, barely half the global norm, and even weaker at the primary level. Until this basic calculus is acknowledged, calls for higher enrolment and greater spending will remain ineffective and fundamentally misguided. Low returns, however, are only part of the problem. Pakistan's education problems run deeper. Education has also lost its power to signal competence; capability rarely determines outcomes here. Appointments depend on connections, not credentials. Loyalty, and not competence, is rewarded by promotions. Contracts flow through networks, not capability. Influence is inherited, not earned. Social mobility comes from the family in which you are born not the talent with which you are born.

Courtesy Dawn

## The republic that waits

Syed Jalal Hussain

Iran is often described in the language of crisis. Nuclear thresholds, proxy wars, sanctions, escalation. Yet beneath these visible pressures lies a deeper logic that shapes how the state thinks, acts and endures. Iran behaves like a power that has made a deliberate choice about time.

To understand that choice, one must begin with an idea that sits at the centre of its worldview: the concept of the Hidden Imam.

In Shia Islam, thought, the Hidden Imam is a divinely guided leader, a descendant of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), believed to be alive yet concealed from public view. His absence is temporary, his return certain. When he reappears, he will restore justice in a world that has been overtaken by imbalance and disorder. This belief frames history itself as incomplete. Authority becomes provisional. The present becomes a bridge rather than a destination.

This has direct political consequences.

If ultimate authority belongs to a figure whose return lies in the future, then no existing state can claim final sovereignty. Power is exercised in trust. In Iran, this idea is embedded in the structure of governance. The Supreme Leader rules as a representative, a deputy of the Hidden Imam, rather than as a final sovereign. The state exists as a custodian of a larger, unfinished order.

Such a system develops a distinctive relationship with time.

It values endurance over immediacy. It treats pressure as a condition to be managed rather than a problem to be resolved quickly. Sanctions, isolation and confrontation become part of a broader narrative in which the present remains open, awaiting a future realignment of justice.

Vali Nasr's book, *Iran's Grand Strategy: A Political History*, brings this worldview into the realm of hard politics. Iran's leadership is shaped by memory.

Courtesy Tribune

## Ali Pervaiz inaugurates production of Spinwam-1 in Waziristan block



**PEAK POINT**  
ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik has inaugurated the commencement of production from the Spinwam-1 exploratory well in the Waziristan Block, adding 40 million cubic feet of gas per day (MMCFD) and 220 barrels of condensate per day. The Waziristan Joint Venture (WJV), operated by Mari Energies Limited (Mari Energies), has formally begun production from Spinwam-1. According to a news release issued by

the Ministry, the WJV comprises Mari Energies Limited (Operator, 55%), Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) (35%), and the Orientation Ceramics, Inc. (10%). The inauguration ceremony, held at the Mari Energies Head Office, was attended by the federal minister, who praised the joint venture's technical expertise and operational excellence.

He said that discoveries like Spinwam-1 strengthen Pakistan's energy security, reduce reliance on imports, and support sustainable economic growth.

On the occasion, the minister paid tribute to the sacrifices of martyrs from law enforcement agencies (LEAs), exploration and production (E&P) companies, and SNGPL teams. "These sacrifices have enabled us to stand here and celebrate this achievement," he said. He also lauded the efforts of local firms that have stepped up to fill the vacuum created by the closure of the Strait of Hormuz. He added that, under the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and with the support of Field Marshal Shayed Asim Munir, Pakistan has managed supply disruptions more effectively than many countries in the region. He further said that fertilizer supply has been maintained with prices remaining comparatively lower due to the support of domestic E&P companies. Faheem Haider, Managing Director and CEO of Mari Energies, highlighted that Spinwam-1 reflects the joint venture's commitment.

## Sharjeel Memon inaugurates EV Taxi scheme in Karachi

**PEAK POINT**

KARACHI: Sindh's Senior Minister for Transport, Sharjeel Memon, on Wednesday inaugurated an Electric Vehicle (EV) Taxi project in the province, signing an agreement with Sindh Bank, the Sindh Development Fund (SDF), and the Sindh Mass Transit Authority.

Speaking at the ceremony, Memon said the initiative aims to promote environmentally friendly transport, enhance urban mobility, and create employment opportunities for the youth of Sindh. The project will also introduce online EV technology to make services more efficient and technologically advanced.

"The Sindh government is fulfilling its promises to the youth by providing employment opportunities. Our transport projects, including the Pink Bus service for



women and the introduction of EV buses, have gained international recognition," he said.

Highlighting the Pink Bus initiative, Memon noted that it is driven entirely by female drivers and conductors, providing women with safe and secure transport. "For the first time in Pakistan, EV buses and Pink EV scooters have been introduced to empower women and create a safer environment," he added.

He further said the EV taxi and Pink EV projects aim to give women greater freedom, security, and opportunities.

## Int'l Finance Corporation briefs Aurangzeb on 'growing portfolio' in Pakistan

**PEAK POINT**

ISLAMABAD: A delegation from the International Finance Corporation (IFC) called on Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb and discussed its 'growing portfolio in Pakistan, which now exceeds \$2 billion annually', according to the finance ministry.

IFC is the private sector arm of the World Bank Group. According to the ministry, the IFC delegation comprised IFC Divisional Director for Pakistan, Afghanistan and Central Asia Simon Andrews, World Bank Country Director for Pakistan Bolormaa Amgaabazar and IFC Country Manager Naz Khan. Key areas of engagement included financial sector support through risk-sharing and guarantee facilities to promote trade and small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) financing; expansion of local currency financing to mitigate foreign exchange risks; and upcoming initiatives such as a diversified payment rights facility and a green bond issuance with a leading local bank, the ministry said. "Discussions focused on further scaling private sector investment, particularly

in infrastructure and public-private partnerships," it said. The ministry added: "While progress had been made in areas such as urban water management and distribution efficiency projects, both sides acknowledged the need to develop a stronger pipeline of projects and enhance coordination to unlock larger-scale private investment in sectors including energy, transport, and logistics."

The minister emphasised the importance of adopting a client-centric approach to financing solutions, particularly in facilitating local currency lending to support private sector growth and reduce exchange rate vulnerability, it said, adding that Aurangzeb underscored that "such initiatives complement, rather than substitute, foreign currency inflows and are essential for sustainable economic expansion". "The meeting also covered collaboration on job creation, entrepreneurship, and innovation, including proposals for developing a venture capital ecosystem and strengthening private sector engagement in policy formulation," the ministry stated. During the meeting, both sides discussed mechanisms to further institutionalise

## Ayaz felicitates newly elected APNS office-bearers

**PEAK POINT**

ISLAMABAD: Speaker of National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has extended his heartfelt congratulations to the newly elected office-bearers of the All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS). In his felicitation message, the Speaker congratulated Senator Sarmad Ali on being elected President, Ms. Lakh Areen Sehgal Nazkhan as Senior Vice President, Shahab Zuberi as Vice President, Muhammad Athar Qazi as Secretary General, Mohsin Bilal as Joint Secretary, and Naveed Kashif as Finance Secretary, along with other members of the newly elected governing body. The Speaker said that the success of the newly elected leadership reflects the confidence reposed in them by members of the organization in recognition of their abilities and leadership qualities.

He expressed hope that the new leadership would play a pivotal role in effectively addressing the challenges faced by the newspaper industry. Ayaz Sadiq emphasized that a free,

## Minister takes notice of NHA maintenance expenditures

**PEAK POINT**

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan on Wednesday approved large-scale new policies to ensure transparency and accountability in the National Highway Authority (NHA).

Minister takes notice of NHA maintenance expenditures. Taking strict notice of heavy expenditures under the guise of maintenance, the minister made it clear that any form of corruption under the cover of repair work will not be tolerated, said a press release.

Aleem Khan directed the Chairman NHA to immediately formulate a comprehensive and integrated plan for institutional reforms. He stated that while



efforts are being made to save every penny, it is unacceptable that funds are being misused at lower levels.

Therefore, any financial irregularity or corruption at any level will not be accepted. He further instructed NHA to hire competent, capable and honest executives from the private sector to improve the Institution's performance. 0 Abdul Aleem Khan emphasized the need to complete pending inquiries promptly, ensure full accountability.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, holding a meeting with IFC Divisional Director Mr Simon Andrews, World Bank Country Director for Pakistan Ms. Bolormaa Amgaabazar, and IFC Country Manager Ms. Naz Khan to discuss investment expansion, infrastructure development, and job creation at the Finance Division.

## Renowned Peshawar doctor seriously injured in gun attack

**PEAK POINT**

PESHAWAR: Renowned urologist Dr Asif Malik was seriously injured after unidentified assailants opened fire at him in the city's University Town area last night, hospital and police officials said on Wednesday.

Asif, a pioneer of kidney transplants in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, was shifted to Peshawar General Hospital (PGH) and was under treatment in the intensive care unit (ICU).

A statement issued by city police stated that an investigation team recovered three empty bullet shells of a pistol from the spot near Asif's home, adding that a case had been registered on the



urologist's behalf.

"CCTV footage is being obtained, and teams have been assigned the task to arrest those behind the attack," City Police spokesperson Alam Khan told Dawn. "Dr Asif Malik is stable," the PGH, where he offers his services, confirmed in a statement on Facebook. "The matter is being handled by the relevant authorities.

## Pakistan, Norway sign first carbon market deal under Paris agreement

**PEAK POINT**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Norway on Wednesday signed the country's first bilateral agreement under Article 6.2 of the Paris Agreement, marking a key step towards entering international carbon markets and attracting climate finance.

The memorandum of understanding, signed here under the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, will enable Pakistan to develop carbon credit pro-



jects and transfer emission reductions to Norway. Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Musadik Malik described the agreement as a "historic mile-

stone", saying it marked Pakistan's shift from carbon market preparedness to implementation. Pakistan, Norway sign first Paris Agreement deal under Carbon Market deal

"This is Pakistan's first

bilateral agreement under Article 6.2 and an important step towards implementation," he said, adding that it would create a pathway for international cooperation and investment in climate-related sectors.

Under the arrangement, Pakistan can generate carbon credits through projects in renewable energy, agriculture, transport and waste management. These credits may be traded as international transfered mitigation outcomes (ITMOs).

## IHC Adjoins hearing on NA Petition against Information Commission ruling

**PEAK POINT**

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court heard a writ petition filed by the National Assembly challenging a decision of the Pakistan Information Commission. The hearing was conducted by Justice Muhammad Azam Khan, where petitioner Saadia Mazhar appeared along with her counsel, Advocate Gulsham Qasim Bhatti. Upon the request of the petitioner's counsel, the court adjourned the hearing to a later date. Advocate Gulsham Qasim Bhatti informed the court that the petitioner became aware of the case

hearing through a newspaper advertisement, and therefore sought time for arguments. Saadia Mazhar had, in 2022, requested information from the National Assembly under the right to access information law. Her request included details regarding privilege motions submitted by members of the National Assembly. She had also sought details of the responses provided by relevant departments to those privilege motions, as well as information about questions forwarded to standing committees along with their findings and recommendations.