



**Gilani calls for stronger
Pak-Australia
parliamentary, bilateral ties**



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be resolved through
dialogue: Tariq Fazal**



**Pakistan keen to
deepen ties with
Russia: Awais Leghari**

Founded By:
(Late) Rehmat Khan

ABC CERTIFIED

Email: editor.peakpoint@gmail.com
Website: www.peakpoint.pk

Executive Group Editor
Arif Mehmood Khan



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Army's top brass warns of 'decisive force' against any 'May 9-like situation'

PEAK POINT

RAWALPINDI: The army's top brass on Friday warned that any attempt at creating agitation or a "May 9-like situation" would be dealt with "decisive force", according to the military's media wing.

The warning came during the 277th Corps Commanders' Conference in Rawalpindi, which was presided over by Chief of Defence Forces and Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir. "[The] forum underscored the importance of internal stability and resolved that any attempt to cause agitation or create [a] May 9-like situation, on any pretext whatsoever, will be dealt with decisive force and rule of law, without hesitation and discrimination," a statement from Inter-Services

Public Relations said. The warning comes as the PTI is gearing up for a long march to Islamabad, to demand the release of former prime minister and party founder Imran Khan. The protest was originally scheduled for Sept 27 but was postponed to Oct 4. The party is currently in talks with the government over its long march, with the first round of dialogue taking place earlier in the day. It is worth mentioning that Imran's arrest on May 9, 2023, had triggered widespread riots across Pakistan, during which government buildings and military installations — including the GHQ in Rawalpindi — were stormed and vandalised. Following the unrest, a crackdown was launched against the PTI, with dozens of terrorism cases lodged.



Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) and Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Field Marshal Asim Munir presided over the 277th Corps Commanders' Conference at General Headquarters (GHQ), Rawalpindi. Photo: ISPR

Four candidates elected unopposed to vacant AJK Council seats

PEAK POINT



MUZAFFARABAD: All four candidates for the vacant seats of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Council have been elected unopposed after no additional candidates entered the contest.

The Azad Kashmir Election Commission has issued an official notification confirming the election of Chaudhry Latif Akbar, Mushtaq Ahmed Minhas, Chaudhry Muhammad Saeed and Chaudhry Manzoor Ahmed as members of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Council. Under the election schedule, nomination papers for the four vacant seats were submitted on October 1.

Only four candidates filed nomination papers for the four available seats, bringing the electoral process to an end without a contest. Three candidates from the Pakistan Muslim League-N — Chaudhry Manzoor Ahmed, Chaudhry Muhammad Saeed and Mushtaq Ahmed Minhas — submitted their nomination papers. Former Azad Kashmir Assembly speaker Chaudhry Latif Akbar submitted his nomination papers on behalf of the Pakistan Peoples Party.

PM orders nationwide regulatory registry, unified business rules

PEAK POINT



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has directed the establishment of a comprehensive regulatory registry to consolidate all existing regulatory requirements, rules and regulations across the country. Chairing a meeting on regulatory reforms, the prime minister said

reforms were essential to facilitate businesses, promote investment and create a transparent and business-friendly regulatory environment.

He directed the implementation of the Ease of Doing Business Act nationwide to ensure uniformity in regulatory systems and facilities for the business community across provinces. The prime minister also ordered third-party validation of regulatory reforms to independently assess their impact and effectiveness. He directed the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) to highlight reforms undertaken for the awareness and benefit of the business community. The prime minister directed an SIFC delegation, led by Advisor on Industry Haroon Akhtar Khan, to visit all provinces and engage provincial governments on regulatory reforms. He further directed all ministries and divisions to ensure timely implementation of Cabinet-approved reforms and ordered the SIFC and Punjab Chief Secretary to complete the integration of eBiz Punjab and Business Facilitation Center (BFC) Islamabad by March 2027. The meeting was informed that the Cabinet's Regulatory Reforms Committee has approved 557.

'Grave provocation': Pakistan condemns Houthi attack on power facility in Madina

PEAK POINT



SAUDI ARABIA: Pakistan on Friday strongly condemned an attack by the Houthi militia on the Taibah power distribution station in Madina on Sept 29, describing it as a "grave provocation" and a threat to regional peace and security. In a statement, the Foreign Office (FO) said the attack targeted civilian infrastructure supplying electricity to the Holy Prophet's (PBUH) Mosque. "The sanctity of the Two Holy Mosques and the safety of worshippers and pilgrims must be respected under all circumstances," the FO said. It called for an "immediate and unconditional" end to what it described as "reckless actions", saying such attacks also constituted a grave threat to regional peace and security. The FO reaffirmed Pakistan's "unwavering solidarity" with Saudi Arabia and expressed full support for the kingdom's sovereignty, territorial integrity and security. "Pakistan stands firmly with Saudi Arabia in its efforts to safeguard the Two Holy Mosques protect its people and ensure the safety of pilgrims," the statement said.

4 Pakistani crew members from hijacked oil tanker to arrive in Karachi today

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said on Friday that four of the 10 Pakistani crew members of MT Honour25, an oil tanker hijacked by Somali pirates, had been "safely retrieved" and were scheduled to arrive in Karachi on Oct 3. The four crew members — Yasir Khan, Aqeel Khan, Amin bin Shams and Usman Ghani — were retrieved following "sustained efforts" by the Foreign Office (FO) and Pakistan's embassy in Djibouti, Dar said. Meanwhile, the "mortal remains" of three Pakistani crew members.

First round of talks between govt, opposition end as PTI's Oct 4 protest looms over federal capital

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The first round of talks between the PTI-led opposition and the ruling coalition over the party's proposed Oct 4 long march concluded on Friday, with both sides agreeing to resume the dialogue on Saturday (Oct 3).

The meeting between government and opposition representatives, chaired by National Assembly Speaker Ayaz Sadiq, was aimed at defusing the country's ongoing political crisis, with the PTI's planned Oct 4 protest march demanding the release of party founder Imran Khan emerging as the latest point of contention between the party and the federal government. According to a statement issued by the National Assembly Secretariat, the participants held detailed discussions "on the prevail-

ing political situation and exchanged views on various Saturday at 2pm in the NA speaker's chamber. "NA



ing matters of national importance". "The government, PPP and opposition representatives apprised each other of their respective positions and held a detailed exchange of views in a constructive and cordial manner. The participants emphasised the need to resolve national issues through dialogue and negotiations," it said. The statement added that the second round of talks would be held on

logue. He maintained that negotiations were the only way to resolve differences and issues, adding that positions and offices were temporary. "Parliament is the only forum where solutions to issues can be found," he said. In an earlier post on X, the Tehreek-i-Tahafuz-Ayini-Pakistan (TTAP) said the opposition side was being led by the leader of the opposition in the Senate, Allama Raja Nasir Abbas. Minister Amir Muqam, Adviser to the PM on Political Affairs Rana Sanaullah, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, Minister of State for Interior Tahir Chaudhry and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Tariq Fazal Chaudhry attended the meeting, along with PPP Senator Sherry Rehman and National Assembly members Syed Naveed Qamar and Ejaz Hussain Jakhani.

Two Pakistanis martyred in Indian BSF firing near Kasur border



PEAK POINT

KASUR: Two Pakistani citizens were martyred and another was injured after Indian Border Security Force (BSF) personnel opened unprovoked fire near the Pakistan-India international border in Kasur, security sources said on Friday.

The three Pakistani citizens from Punjab's Ladhra village were targeted by the BSF without warning after they moved only a few steps ahead of a border pillar, the sources said. "All three citizens were unarmed," the sources added.

According to the sources, the martyred were identified as Azmat Rasool Shah and Mohsin Jutt, both residents of Jattan Wali Haveli in Ladhra.



SPORTS



Asian Games: Pakistan settle for squash silver as Iran end volleyball run



MOHSIN ALI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's wait for a men's squash team gold at the Asian Games goes on.

Sixteen years after beating Malaysia 2-0 in Guangzhou for their last title in the event, Pakistan found the result reversed at the Nagoya Kinjo Futo Arena on Friday, losing the final 2-0 to the same opponents and settling for silver — their second successive runners-up finish after also losing the final to India at the last edition in Hangzhou.

Nasir Iqbal got the final under way against Ameeshraj Chandaran and started brightly,

reeling into a 6-1 lead before Chandaran, ranked 95th in the world, clawed his way back into contention.

The Malaysian cut the gap to 8-5 and then 9-7, but Nasir, ranked 94th, held his nerve to close out the opener 11-8 in nine minutes.

Chandaran responded instantly in the second, surging from 4-2 to 10-2 with a six-point run before Nasir saved one game point but the 22-year-old converted his second opportunity to level the match at 11-3.

The Malaysian carried that momentum into the third, trading points with Nasir up to 6-6 before

reeling off four straight to reach game point and close it out 11-6, moving ahead in the match for the first time.

Chandaran completed the job in the fourth, breaking clear from 5-3 with a five-point burst to reach match point and sealing an 11-4 win in nine minutes — a 3-1 victory in games that put Malaysia 1-0 up in the tie.

That left Pakistan's top-ranked Noor Zaman needing a win over Malaysia's Eain Yow Ng to keep the final alive — the same opponent who had beaten him in the individual singles semi-final earlier in the Games, and the reigning

singles gold medallist. The rematch went the full five games.

Ng, ranked 18th in the world, built an early cushion to lead 9-4 before Noor rallied with three straight points, but the Malaysian held on to edge the opener 11-8 in nine minutes.

Noor responded immediately in the second, tearing off four consecutive points from 3-3 to lead 7-3 and closing it out 11-6 to level the match.

The third was the standout of the tie — a 15-minute war of long rallies in which neither player led by more than two points for long, before Noor edged clear.

Bangladesh down Pakistan in U19 Women's tri-series opener



PEAK POINT

LAHORE: Bangladesh opened their account in the Rivaj Presents the University of Lahore U19 Women's T20 Tri-nation series with a 30-run win over hosts Pakistan, defending their total of 117-8 as Iqbal Stadium Faisalabad became host to an international women's fixture for the first time on Friday.

Pakistan will take the field against on Saturday against Sri Lanka with the first ball set to be bowled at 11am at the same venue.

Player of the match Nishita Akter Nishi starred for Bangladesh with both bat and ball as she followed her 23-run effort at no.3 with a clinical four-over spell taking two for 16. Pakistan were restricted to 87-6 in 20 overs in their pursuit of the target as Komal Khan top-scored with 29 off 39 striking three fours.

Komal had stitched a 21-run opening stand with Ravail Farhan, who got off the blocks quickly hitting four boundaries before falling for 17 off 12 — pinned leg-before by left-arm spinner Afrin Mim. Pakistan lost their way losing five for 37 as Bangladesh bowlers applied pressure from both ends with both mainstays of hosts' batting Zoofishan Ayyaz (12, 15b, 2x4s) and Aqsa Habib.

Fighting Pakistan go down to Vietnam in final ASEAN Cup match



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan ended their FIFA ASEAN Cup campaign with a fighting 4-2 defeat against Vietnam at the Gelora Bung Karno Stadium in Jakarta on Friday.

Nolberto Solano's side, ranked 99 places below Vietnam in the FIFA rankings, took the lead through a superb first-half goal from Mohibullah but could not withstand a second-half onslaught

from their opponents.

Long Hai Nguyen, Duc Hoang Nguyen and Bac Dinh Nguyen scored to put Vietnam 3-1 ahead before veteran Kaleemullah Khan pulled one back for Pakistan in the 88th minute. Hoang Minh Williams restored Vietnam's two-goal advantage in stoppage time.

The result left Vietnam second in Division I Group 'B' behind Thailand, with the Philippines third

and Pakistan finishing with one point from their three matches in their maiden FIFA competition.

Pakistan had come from two goals down to draw 2-2 with the Philippines in their previous match and needed a victory against Vietnam to have any chance of reaching the bronze-medal match.

They dominated the opening half and deservedly went into the break ahead.

Ali Akbar Khan combined with Abdul Samad Shahzad in the opening minutes before his effort inside the box was blocked. Shayek Dost then headed wide in the fifth minute after another promising move through midfield.

Vietnam gradually settled into the game and Yousuf Butt was forced to make a save from a deflected effort, but Pakistan continued to threaten through Ali Akbar and Abdul Samad, who operated down the flanks.

Abdul Samad saw his effort saved before Pakistan took the lead in the 31st minute.

Mohibullah pressed a Vietnam centre-back into a mistake.

Pakistan, India placed in same group as ICC announces 2027 World Cup schedule



Peshawar Inter-School Hockey tournament: Chamkani defeat cantt two 3-0 to clinch title

PEAK POINT

PESHAWAR (Sports Reporter): The Peshawar Inter-School Hockey Tournament was organized by the Directorate of Sports Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as part of the U-15 National School Hockey Tournament, with teams from various schools participating enthusiastically and showcasing their hockey skills. The final of the tournament was played between Chamkani and Cantt Two. The match witnessed an exciting and competitive contest, but Chamkani produced an impressive performance to defeat Cantt Two by 3-0 and secure the championship title.

Chamkani adopted an attacking approach from the very beginning and maintained pressure on their opponents through excellent teamwork, quick passing and solid defensive play. The team scored three goals during the match, while Cantt Two

made every effort to fight back but failed to find the net. At the conclusion of the tournament, prizes were distributed among the successful teams and players. The champion team, Chamkani, received a cash prize of Rs.

15,000 along with the winners' trophy, while the runner-up Cantt Two received a cash prize of Rs. 10,000 and the runners-up trophy. District Sports Officer Peshawar Ahmad Zaman was the chief guest at the prize distribution ceremony. Office-bearers of the Hockey Association, including Zahir Shah Lala

and Zia Buner, along with other officials and distinguished guests, were also present. The chief guest and other guests distributed prizes among the winning and runner-up teams and appreciated the players for their performances. Speaking on the occasion, District Sports Officer Peshawar Ahmad Zaman said that organizing hockey competitions at the school level was extremely important for identifying and developing young talent and providing promising players with opportunities to compete.



Sri Lanka drop Asalanka from T20 against Pakistan





KOMAL butt Gains Attention as model and Journalist Amid Miss Pakistan and Miss perfect 2026 pageant Buzz

Komal Butt: Model and Journalist Emerges as a Promising New Face in Pakistan's Fashion Scene



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Young Pakistani model and journalist Komal Butt is emerging as a notable new face in the country's fashion, beauty and entertainment landscape, attracting growing attention through her confident personality, stylish presence and increasing digital visibility. Known for her elegant appearance and contemporary style, Butt represents a new generation of Pakistani women using fashion, social media and digital platforms to establish their public profiles. Her social-media activity during 2026 has included fashion- and lifestyle-oriented content, helping her connect with an expanding audience. A New Journey



Towards Pageantry Komal Butt's growing public presence has generated interest in the possibility of her appearing on a major Pakistani beauty-pageant platform in 2026. If she participates in Miss Pakistan 2026, the competition could provide her with an opportunity to demonstrate not only beauty and style but also confidence, communication skills, personality and a sense of social responsibility. Modern international beauty pageants increasingly place emphasis on contestants' personalities, public speaking abilities, advocacy and commu-



nity involvement alongside physical appearance. Pakistan's pageant scene has also attracted increased international attention, particularly following the listing of Anniqa Jamal Iqbal as Pakistan 2026 by the Miss World organisation. Beauty, Confidence and Personality Butt's public appeal extends beyond fashion photography and social-media appearances. Her image reflects confidence, youthfulness and an interest in contemporary Pakistani lifestyle and culture. Her appearances at fashion, hospitality and social venues, combined with her digital content, have contributed to her growing recognition among followers. For a young Pakistani woman



entering the fashion and pageant arena, such a journey can involve more than competing for a crown. It can offer a platform to represent Pakistani culture, encourage young women to pursue their ambitions and potentially participate in charitable and community-focused initiatives. Representing a New Generation If Komal Butt takes part in Miss Pakistan

2026, the experience could represent an important step in her developing career as she moves from digital visibility towards the broader fashion and beauty industry. Pakistan has a growing pool of young models, actors, presenters, journalists and digital creators building careers across traditional and online media. Butt's emergence comes at a time when social media

has become an important platform for young Pakistani talent to reach audiences both nationally and internationally. With continued professional development, confidence and a growing digital presence, Komal Butt is positioning herself as an emerging personality to watch in Pakistan's fashion, beauty and pageant landscape.

Opinion & Editorial

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ISLAMABAD

Arif Mehmood Khan
Group Editor: 0333-5366814

Samra Athar Kakakhel
Resident Editor
Nadim Tanoli
Joint Editor: 0333-777874
Email: editor.peakpoint@gmail.com
www.peakpoint.pk

Elusive hockey gold

Pakistan has not won a hockey gold medal at the Asian Games since 2010, and their 4/3 semifinal loss to arch-rivals India yesterday ensures that the drought will persist through the ongoing Nagoya Games. The Green Shirts put up a spirited fight after conceding three goals in the first 23 minutes. They leveled the score by the 49th minute, raising hopes of a comeback or at least pushing the game into a penalty shootout. While the match remained finely balanced for the next 10 minutes, it ultimately tilted in India's favour with just seconds left before the final hooter. To add to the embarrassment, the result extended India's unbeaten run against Pakistan to 21 matches. With a spot in the final gone, the Green Shirts are now left fighting South Korea (who were defeated by Malaysia in the other semifinal) for the bronze medal - a podium position they have miserably failed to secure at the Asian Games since the 2006 Doha Games. This current slump stands in stark contrast to the country's glorious past. A total of 14 Asian medals - 8 gold, 3 silver, and 3 bronze - still makes Pakistan the most successful men's field hockey nation in the tournament's history. Pakistan's decades-long slump remains a frustrating enigma.

Politics of agitation

Khurram Abbas
SEPTEMBER emerged as a politically charged month. The PTI and Jamaat-i-Islami announced their plans for long marches on Islamabad. The simultaneous mobilisation by the two parties had raised concerns about potentially prolonged street protests and disruptions in the capital.

However, both parties postponed their marches (although the PTI has indicated it would begin its protest over the weekend), which temporarily eased the immediate concern of large-scale agitation. But, despite the postponements, the episode has once again highlighted the recurring pattern of opposition parties resorting to street agitation. It has raised several questions regarding the rationale of this politics of agitation.

Why do some political parties in Pakistan consistently resort to street agitation, road blockades, and prolonged sit-ins, while others continue to place their faith in parliamentary procedures and institutional mechanisms? What does this divergence reveal about the country's political culture? These questions lie at the heart of understanding the recurring cycle of protests that has come to define much of Pakistan's contemporary politics.

In Pakistan's political culture, agitation has recently served as a potent instrument for opposition parties to convert street power into tangi-

ble political gains through the ballot box. By orchestrating prolonged protests and sit-ins, parties have succeeded in mobilising their grassroots workers, reinvigorating cadre loyalty, and projecting an image of resistance against the status quo. Excessive media coverage provides publicity that often elevates relatively smaller actors to the level of national relevance, while the narrative of standing up for the 'common man' against an unresponsive system helps cultivate a saviour-like persona.

This dynamic was most visibly demonstrated by the PTI, whose 2014 Islamabad dharna and 2016 'lockdown' agitation not only kept the party in the headlines for months but also laid the organisational and perceptual groundwork for its dramatic electoral expansion in 2018. Through this strategy, the PTI secured phenomenal electoral gains, from a modest 34 National Assembly seats in 2013 to 120 seats in 2018.

Since 2012, the state's response to political agitation has undergone a noticeable evolution.

Similar patterns are evident at the regional levels. The TLP registered itself as a political party in 2016 and after its long march on Islamabad in November 2017, it remarkably secured 2.2 million votes in the 2018 elections. Maulana Hidayatullah's sustained agitation in Gwadar transformed him from a marginal local political figure into a formidable

voice of Gwadar, while Hafiz Naeemur Rehman's high-visibility protests in Karachi have allowed the Jamaat-i-Islami to reclaim political space in urban Sindh. It is precisely this proven formula of converting agitation into both visibility and voter sympathy that appears to have encouraged the current Jamaat chief to attempt replicating the strategy on a national scale. At its core, however, the recurring resort to agitation also reflects a deep lack of trust in the government, legitimacy of the electoral system, and the taxation system, compounded by the widespread perception of corruption. When citizens believe that taxes are routinely misappropriated rather than spent on public welfare, protests become the default language of political expression, as institutional channels are viewed as ineffective or compromised. However, this strategy of political agitation also carries significant socioeconomic costs. Prolonged protests and road blockades not only disrupt daily economic activities, they also impose heavy financial burdens on businesses, trade, and ordinary citizens. The PTI's 2014 Islamabad sit-ins, which stretched for 126 days, and the subsequent waves of agitation in later years, created extended periods of uncertainty, including around 152 days of political and economic instability within a span of two years.

Courtesy Dawn

The privatisation of resilience

Syed Siddiq Hussain

What happens when powerful people stop believing that the future can be salvaged, and they instead start preparing to survive its destruction?

That is the unsettling question at the heart of End Times Fascism: And the Fight for the Living World, the new book by Naomi Klein and Astra Taylor. The book argues that a new political formation is emerging from the convergence of religious fundamentalists, ethnonationalists, Silicon Valley billionaires and other reactionaries. What connects them is not necessarily a common political programme, but an increasingly apocalyptic imagination: the conviction that some catastrophic rupture is coming and that they will somehow be the ones to survive it.

Klein calls this "end-times fascism". Unlike twentieth-century fascism, which sought national rebirth through authoritarianism and exclusion, today's far right increasingly wants to prepare for a world shaped by climate change, resource scarcity, mass migration and other crises.

Klein's ongoing work for more than the last two decades has explored the growing power of corporations, how elites exploit crises for their own benefit, and how the wealthy seek to insulate themselves from catastrophe.

In a recent interview about the book, she offers a jolting observation about wealth itself: "Wealth has its own deranging effects." Humans, she observes, need stories to make sense of the world around them. The ultra-rich are no different: they, too, need stories to explain why they possess so much while others have so little. The answer can become a story of superiority: that there is something about the wealthy person that justifies their extraordinary share of resources, with the implicit conclusion that inequality is deserved. This is where Klein's argument becomes particularly relevant to the Global South.

Courtesy Tribune

Gilani calls for stronger Pak-Australia parliamentary, bilateral ties



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani Friday called for further strengthening Pakistan-Australia relations through enhanced parliamentary exchanges, trade and investment, education, defence cooperation and people-to-people contacts.

He expressed these views during a meeting with Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan, Timothy Kane, at Parliament House, Islamabad. Chairman Gilani said Pakistan highly values its longstanding and cordial relations with Australia, underscoring the

shared democratic values, Commonwealth traditions, bicameral parliamentary systems and strong people-to-people linkages between the two countries. Gilani appreciated Australia's contribution to Pakistan's development, particularly in education and human resource development, and acknowledged the valuable contribution of the Pakistani diaspora to Australia's social and economic development. The Chairman briefed the Australian High Commissioner on the Inter-Parliamentary Speakers' Conference (ISC), of which he is the

Founding Chairman. He said the first ISC was held in Pakistan, the second in Cambodia, while the third conference is scheduled to be held in Indonesia in February 2027.

The two sides also exchanged views on the upcoming election for the Presidency of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and matters of mutual interest in the sphere of inter-parliamentary cooperation. Emphasizing the potential for greater economic cooperation, Chairman Gilani called for enhanced collaboration in agri-tech, renewable energy, fintech, minerals, textiles, IT services and food products, along with stronger linkages between the business communities and chambers of commerce of the two countries. He also emphasized greater cooperation in higher education, scholarships, joint research, climate change, disaster management, cybersecurity, maritime security and peacekeeping. He underscored the importance of constructive diplomacy, respect for international law and the peaceful resolution of disputes.

Australian High Commissioner Timothy Kane expressed,

Imran Shah stresses coordinated approach to strengthen mental health services

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Protection Syed Imran Ahmed Shah, Friday, emphasized the need for a coordinated, inclusive and people-centred approach to strengthen mental health services in the country, ensuring accessible and affordable care for all segments of society.

He expressed these views while attending the closing ceremony of the Pakistan Global Mental Health Summit 2026 as chief guest here.

The two-day summit, held from October 1-2, brought together national and international mental health experts, policy-makers, development partners, United Nations agencies, academia, civil society representatives and other stakeholders to discuss strategies for strengthening



ing the country's mental health system. The summit focused on improving access to quality mental health services, ensuring sustainable financing, promoting community-based care and enhancing coordination among relevant institutions. The key outcomes included the launch of the National Mental Health Policy, national school-based programmes for children's and young people's mental health, and the adoption of the Islamabad Declaration for Global Mental Health. Participants stressed the need to integrate.

World Bank calls on govt to implement policy actions under \$20bn reform partnership

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The World Bank on Friday called upon the government to expedite implementation of policy actions under its \$20 billion economic reform partnership for harmonisation of sales tax, provincial agriculture and property taxes and removing regulatory constraints to achieve higher growth, revenue mobilisation and trade and investment facilitation.

The World Bank group launched the 10-year country partnership framework 2025-35 in January last year, with a total blended financing of about \$20bn, involving concessional and commercial lending facilities. It is now pursuing the implementation phase of the agreed reform agenda.

A bank delegation, led by its country director Bolormaa Amgaabazar, had a meeting with Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb on Friday to review progress under the ongoing economic reform partnership, said a statement issued by the Ministry

of Finance.

The delegation discussed implementation priorities across growth, jobs, fiscal management, revenue mobilisation, capital-market development, trade and investment, and institutional reforms.

According to the ministry, the meeting reviewed the World Bank's support for Pakistan's broader economic reform agenda, with particular emphasis on translating reform priorities into targeted, implementable actions and strengthening coordination among relevant ministries, provincial governments and implementing agencies.

The two sides agreed on moving from reform design to effective implementation, with a focus on practical measures capable of delivering measurable improvements in economic activity, investment, jobs and the overall business environment, the statement said. The meeting discussed the proposed World Bank growth and jobs operation, including interventions aimed

Sherry calls on PTI to call off long march unconditionally

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: PPP central leader, Sherry Rehman, has called on PTI to completely and unconditionally call off its proposed long march, saying such actions could escalate violence instead of reducing it.

Speaking to the media, Sherry Rehman said the law and order situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was alarming, with soldiers and police personnel being martyred in attacks by Fitna-ul-Khawarij and others.

She said terrorism was a red line for the PPP and stressed that the party did not stage long marches for the sake of a single individual.

Moreover, Sherry Rehman said she could not comment on PTI's demands at this stage, adding that mutual trust should not be undermined.

She said the ongoing dialogue needed time to produce results and expressed hope that negotiations would be concluded and a decision reached tomorrow.

Pakistan keen to deepen ties with Russia: Awais Leghari

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Energy and co-chair of the Pakistan-Russia Intergovernmental Commission Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari has said Pakistan has significant potential and a strong appetite to expand cooperation with Russia in key sectors, including energy, agriculture, food security, tourism and information technology, while stressing that closer bilateral engagement is important for regional peace, security and economic growth.

Sardar Leghari said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had consistently availed opportunities to meet Russian President Vladimir Putin on international platforms, reflecting the leaderships' interest



in strengthening bilateral relations.

He said the Pakistan-Russia Intergovernmental Commission, which he co-chairs with Russian Energy Minister Sergei Tsivilev, provided an important institutional mechanism for advancing cooperation across a broad range of areas.

Leghari highlighted the considerable untapped potential between the two countries, particularly in agriculture, food security, energy, tourism and IT.

Political differences should be resolved through dialogue: Tariq Fazal

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhary on Friday stressed resolving political differences through dialogue, mutual consultation and parliamentary forums.

In a post on X, he said representatives of the government, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and the opposition held important talks under the chairmanship of National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq.

The participants discussed the overall political situation and national issues in detail. Dr



Tariq said differences of opinion were natural in a democracy and lasting solutions to national issues could only be achieved through dialogue and political reconciliation.

He expressed hope that the talks would help promote political stability, mutual trust and parliamentary traditions in the country.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, meeting with a World Bank delegation led by Country Director, Ms. Bolormaa Amgaabazar, at the Finance Division.

Dar says committee under Makkah defence pact to meet in Riyadh 'soon'

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said on Friday that a meeting of Makkah Defence Alliance's Strategic Political Defence Committee (SPDC) would take place in Riyadh "soon".

The deputy premier was addressing a press briefing regarding the Pakistan delegation's engagements at the 81st session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York in September, as well as high-level meetings that took place on its sidelines.

"We made a plan because all three of us countries were present (in New York)," Dar said, referring to himself, Turkiye's Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan and Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud. The SPDC, established under the trilateral Makkah Accord, comprised of three members from each country, he noted: the foreign ministers, defence ministers and chiefs of army staff. On Sept 25, a special meeting took place of the three army chiefs in Riyadh, he said, adding that the foreign ministers had

met before this in New York, on Sept 24, in the wake of increased Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia. The joint defence pact, signed on August 7, empowers the member states to treat an attack against one of them as an attack against all of them. "Very soon, a meeting of the whole SPDC ... has been agreed to in principle, to take place in Riyadh," the deputy premier said, noting that the current situation and "ground reality" would be examined during the meeting, particularly vis-a-vis Saudi Arabia. He added that details of the

meeting would be shared after it took place.

The first meeting of the SPDC was held in Istanbul on Aug 31, during which it was decided that the alliance's secretariat will be initially headed by Pakistan for three years.

Responding to a question, DPM Dar said that this upcoming meeting was an emergency one, and the committee would meet again as planned after "the end of October or beginning of November", when its work was expected to be completed. He said that the meeting

would focus on the Houthi attacks in Saudi Arabia, as the previous meeting of foreign ministers in New York had done. Regarding yesterday's airstrike on a power plant in Madina, which was attributed to the Houthis, he highlighted that Pakistan had already condemned it and said it was "not acceptable".

The deputy prime minister also noted that he had spoken to Iran in detail regarding the Houthi attacks, reminding them that Pakistan had its trilateral agreement to honour. Iran, he said, denied association "both with the Houthis

and with the Iraqi militia".

Iran also advised that the Houthis be "engaged politically", rather than using "kinetic action", he said, although he clarified that this was simply a "brainstorming between two foreign ministers, and in all good faith, a suggestion".

He added that the decision would be taken between the three countries of the SPDC after the upcoming meeting. DPM Dar also stated, responding to a question about the potential expansion of the Makkah Pact, that while he would not name.