

# DAILY MIRROR

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## CM Bugti vows to ensure principles of transparency, merit & good governance at all levels in Balochistan

APP

Quetta: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti on Thursday chaired a meeting of provincial cabinet at the Chief Minister Secretariat in which several important decisions related to the development of the province, good governance and public welfare were approved.

Addressing the provincial cabinet meeting, Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti said that the government is committed to ensuring the principles of transparency, merit and good governance at all levels in the province.

He said that climate change, food security, employment opportunities and institutional reforms are among the top priorities of the government.

The Chief Minister reiterated the commitment that through the use of modern technology, effective policy making and integrated strategy, Balochistan would be put on the path of development and better facilities would be provided to the people.

He also appreciated the performance of Chief Secretary Balochistan Shakeel Qadir Khan in implementing reform measures and good governance goals and expressed the expectation that he would continue to play his role for the betterment of the province with the same passion and professional skills in the future.

Informing the details of the cabinet meeting, Assistant to the Chief Minister of Balochistan for Political and Media Affairs Shahid Rind said that the meeting approved a comprehensive policy related to the effective use of the Balochistan Climate Change Fund.

He said that Balochistan is the first province in the country to establish a Climate Change Fund, although the province's share in environmental pollution is negligible, Balochistan is at the top of the areas most affected by climate change, floods and natural disasters. Under this policy, a coordinated and effective strategy will be adopted to deal

with climate risks.

He said that the provincial cabinet also approved the province's first Advertisement Policy 2026, under this policy, the elimination of dummy newspapers, encouragement of authentic and active media institutions and Social media would be included under regular procedures. It was clarified that this policy will not affect the interests of any genuine media house or journalist, but will promote transparency and merit, he said.

He highlighted that the meeting also approved the Balochistan Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture Bill, under which sustainable development, resource conservation and promotion of modern methods in the fishing sector would be ensured, while it was decided to merge the Balochistan Crystal Development Authority and Pasni Fish Harbor into the Fisheries Department to improve institutional coordination and efficiency.

He said that the cabinet, in an important decision, approved the recruitment process for posts from Grade 4 to Grade 16 through artificial intelligence, this measure would be implemented after June of the next financial year. Along with this, all departments have been directed to dispose of pending recruitment cases as soon as possible so that employment opportunities can be provided in a timely manner. These steps are being taken to ensure transparency, merit and use of modern technology in recruitment, he noted. He said that in an important decision regarding wheat, the cabinet agreed to the federal government's policy under which wheat would be purchased from the private sector for strategic reserves. "If private investors do not come forward at the local level, the federal government will be requested to purchase one hundred thousand metric tons of wheat to ensure food security in the province", he said and added the meeting also approved providing Rs 3 billion as seed money and Rs 1 billion as arrears for the Balochistan Public Endowment Fund.



JEDDAH: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif meets with Saudi Crown Prince of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Mohammed bin Salman in Jeddah.

## Qatar lauds Pakistan's role in de-escalating regional tensions

APP

QATAR: Qatar has appreciated Pakistan's pivotal role in supporting efforts to de-escalate tensions in the region and promote diplomatic dialogue for regional security and stability.

This appreciation was expressed by Qatari Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, while welcoming Prime Minister of Pakistan and his delegation in Doha today.

During their meeting held at the Amiri Diwan that lasted over an hour, both leaders discussed the latest regional and international developments, particularly in the Middle East.

For his part, the Prime Minister of Pakistan renewed his condemnation of the attacks against Qatar and other Gulf countries, while reaffirming Pakistan's full solidarity and support to the leadership and the people of Qatar.

Both leaders underscored the importance of supporting de-escalation efforts and enhancing interna-

tional coordination to ensure the security and stability of the region, particularly ensuring the maintenance of smooth flow of energy supply chains.

The two leaders also reviewed bilateral relations between the two countries and ways to further develop them, especially in the fields of security, defence, and energy, in a manner that strengthens the partnership and opens new avenues for bilateral cooperation.

The Amir of Qatar and the Prime Minister of Pakistan also held a one on one meeting, during which they exchanged views on current developments of mutual interest.

They emphasized the importance of continued coordination and consultation between the two countries, particularly in light of ongoing events and their implications for regional security and stability.

Following the meeting, the Amir hosted a luncheon in honour of the Prime Minister and the accompanying delegation.

## Field Marshal Asim Munir holds talks with Iran Speaker Ghalibaf in Tehran

NEWS DESK

TEHRAN: Pakistan's Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) and Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) Syed Asim Munir on Thursday held detailed talks with Iran's Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf in Tehran, reported Press TV and Tehran Times. According to the newspaper's X handle, Speaker Ghalibaf held a meeting with Pakistan's Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir but gave no further details.

Araqchi welcomes Pakistan's Army Chief

Earlier, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi welcomed Pakistan's Army Chief Field Marshal Asim Munir in Tehran, underscoring strong bilateral ties and a shared commitment to regional peace.

In a message posted on his X account on Wednesday night, Araqchi expressed appreciation for Pakistan's role in hosting dialogue and highlighted the depth of relations between the two countries, while reaffirming Tehran's commitment to promoting stability in the region.

"Delighted to welcome Field Marshal Munir to Iran," he said. "Expressed gratitude for Pakistan's gracious hosting of dialogue, emphasizing that it reflects our deep and great bilateral relationship.

## IMF MD appreciates Pakistan's reform progress and macro stability

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: International Monetary Fund (IMF) Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva on Thursday appreciated Pakistan's ongoing economic reform progress during her interaction with Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb at the IMF-World Bank Spring Meetings 2026.

In a statement on X, she said, "Pakistan's strong implementation of its reform programme has helped maintain macroeconomic stability and build investor confidence". She added, "Sound economic policies, along with deeper structural reforms, will be critical for sustaining growth and improving the welfare of the people of Pakistan". The finance minister held a series of high-level meetings and multilateral engagements on the third day of the

IMF-World Bank Spring Meetings 2026 in Washington, DC, highlighting the country's economic stabilisation, reform trajectory and global economic engagement, the finance ministry said on X.

On the sidelines of the launch of the Borrowers' Platform, the finance minister met United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres. The ministry said Aurangzeb appreciated his participation and support for the platform's creation.

According to the statement, both sides exchanged views on global economic implications of the evolving Middle East situation, particularly its impact on food and energy security in developing countries. "The Secretary-General commended Pakistan's constructive role in promoting peace and stability in the region and beyond," the statement said.



CDF Munir meets Iran's speaker Ghalibaf in Tehran.

## QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti addressing on Balochistan Assembly Session.



## PM, Saudi Crown Prince discuss evolving regional situation

INP

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has called on Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia, Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, in Jeddah.

During their warm and cordial meeting that lasted almost two hours, the two leaders held detailed discussions on the evolving regional situation.

The Prime Minister conveyed deep condolences over the loss of precious lives and said the people of Pakistan stand shoulder to shoulder with their Saudi brethren.

He appreciated the exemplary patience and restraint shown by Saudi Arabia.

The Prime Minister shared with the Crown Prince the recent developments related to Pakistan's peace efforts, which led to the U.S.-Iran ceasefire and the

recently held round of historic talks between the U.S. and Iran in Islamabad.

The Crown Prince appreciated the constructive role of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir in the peace process.

While exchanging views on bilateral issues, the Prime Minister expressed his sincere appreciation for His Royal Highness

the Crown Prince for the Kingdom's consistent support for Pakistan's economic stability.

The Prime Minister also highlighted that Pakistan and the Kingdom enjoyed a unique relationship as they are both strategic defense partners under the Pakistan-Saudi Arabia Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement.

Both leaders expressed their shared commitment to continuing close cooperation on matters of mutual interest.

## Pakistan playing key mediating role between US, Iran: FO

INP

ISLAMABAD: The Foreign Office (FO) on Thursday stated that Pakistan is playing a significant mediating role between the United States and Iran, adding that the recent round of negotiations remained largely constructive.

During a weekly briefing, Foreign Office spokesperson Tahir Hussain Andrabi said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif played an active role in facilitating US-Iran talks held in Islamabad. He said that a 21-hour negotiation process between the two sides was productive, reflecting Pakistan's strong commitment to promoting peace in the region.

Pakistan's diplomatic efforts between the US and Iran have been widely appreciated in international circles, he added.

The spokesperson further noted that the prime minister is currently on Tri-nation visit to Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Türkiye to discuss the Middle East crisis.

He added that Pakistan's role helped make a ceasefire between Iran and the US possible. The prime minister also received phone calls from leaders of various countries acknowledging Pakistan's efforts.

FO spokesperson also condemned Israeli aggression and attacks in Lebanon, reiterating Pakistan's commitment to a principled, dialogue-driven, and diplomatic approach to resolving complex geopolitical conflicts.

Tahir Andrabi said that Pakistan continues to maintain active engagement with all relevant parties as part of its efforts to reduce tensions and promote peaceful resolutions in the region. He emphasized that Pakistan, acting as a facilitator and

mediator, has kept open channels of communication with concerned stakeholders to help de-escalate tensions and create space for dialogue.

According to the spokesperson, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, along with the country's senior military leadership, has been actively involved in diplomatic outreach aimed at ensuring regional peace and stability. Pakistan has consistently maintained that conflicts can only be resolved through dialogue and cooperation.

The Foreign Office further noted that ongoing diplomatic engagements, including visits by Pakistan's senior military leadership to Iran, are part of this broader policy to strengthen consultation and coordination for regional peace.

Pakistan reaffirmed its role as a responsible and constructive state on the global stage, stressing that diplomacy and dialogue remain the only effective means to resolve conflicts.

FO spokesperson stated that Pakistan's foreign policy remains centered on sustained engagement, negotiations, and collaboration with global partners—an approach considered essential for regional stability and economic progress.

"Negotiations process was intensive and extensive" At the outset of the briefing, the FO spokesperson noted, "Pakistan has been recognised for its constructive diplomatic engagement in supporting de-escalation, ceasefire efforts, and the broader pursuit of stability between the United States and Iran."

"Through sustained interaction with both Washington and Tehran, Islamabad has sought to encourage dialogue, facilitate the exchange of messages, and help create conditions and space

for conducive to meaningful negotiations," he highlighted.

Andrabi noted that the approach underscored Pakistan's "consistent commitment to regional stability and international peace, reflecting our preference for principled, dialogue-oriented diplomacy in addressing complex geopolitical challenges and managing complex disputes".

Asked whether China and Saudi Arabia were part of the upcoming talks, Andrabi responded: "Both Saudi Arabia and China are very close, trusted partners in the peace talks".

He further stated that the two countries were "supportive" of Pakistan's efforts. "They are our close partners, and our numerous interactions with them at the highest level are a demonstration of this fact," he said.

Speaking about the Islamabad Talks held from April 11-12, he stated: "The talks continued for 21 hours – that is the duration of actual negotiations. Overall, the process continued for about 30 hours if we count movement of delegations and momentary breaks for meals and coffee."

"As such, the entire negotiation process was intensive and extensive, both in terms of scope and timelines."

He further stated that under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and "with the active involvement" of Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, as well as CDF Munir, "Pakistan has maintained open channels of communication with the concerned parties as part of its facilitative role".

Referring to PM Shehbaz and Dar's three-nation trip and the army chief's Iran visit, Andrabi said the "initiatives reflect Pakistan's longstanding position that sustainable peace is best advanced through dialogue and cooperation".

## Pakistan Navy successfully tests anti-ship missile

INP

RAWALPINDI: The Pakistan Navy has successfully conducted a test of an anti-ship missile, according to a statement issued by the military's media wing, ISPR.

The statement confirmed that the missile accurately struck its intended target, demonstrating precision and effectiveness during the test. It added that the missile traveled at high speed and successfully destroyed the designated target.

Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf witnessed the missile test and expressed satisfaction over the operational readiness and performance of the system.

Following the successful launch, the President and the Prime Minister of Pakistan extended their congratulations to the naval forces, praising their professionalism and commitment to strengthening the country's defense capabilities.

## PM Shehbaz pays respects at Roza-e-Rasool (PBUH); prays for world peace

APP

MADINAH AL-MUNAWWARAH: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday paid his respects at Roza-e-Rasool (Peace Be Upon Him) here, and prayed for the progress of the country and the nation.

The prime minister, who arrived here from Jeddah along with his delegation, was received by Governor of Medina Prince Salman bin Sultan bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.

The prime minister visited Masjid-e-Nabawi and prayed for country's progress as well as peace and harmony across the world.

The Saudi government opened the doors of Roza-e-Rasool (PBUH) for Prime Minister Shehbaz and his delegation, where he paid his respects.

After completing his visit to Saudi Arabia, the prime minister will proceed to Doha, on the second leg of this three-nation visit, where he will hold a bilateral meeting with the Amir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani.

## US says its forces ready to restart combat if Iran doesn't agree a deal

MONITORING DESK

WASHINGTON: US forces in the Middle East are postured to restart combat operations immediately if Iran doesn't agree to a peace deal, top American military officials said on Thursday.

As part of a campaign to pressure Tehran to sign an agreement, US military forces are mounting a blockade on all ships seeking to enter or leave Iran.

"You Iran, can choose a prosperous future, a golden bridge, and we hope that you do for the people of Iran," Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth told a Pentagon briefing.

"But if Iran chooses poorly, then they will have a blockade and bombs dropping on infrastructure, power and energy."

The Trump administration expressed optimism on Wednesday about reaching a deal to end the war with Iran, while also warning of increasing economic pressure against Tehran if it remains defiant.

Hegseth, addressing the Iranian leadership, said "this is not a fair fight, and we know what military assets you are moving and where you are moving them to."

General Dan Caine, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said US forces were "ready to resume major combat operations at literally a moment's notice."

US Navy ships would pursue any Iranian flagged vessel or any vessel attempting to provide material support to Iran, he told the briefing.

Ships trying to break the blockade would be

intercepted and warned that "If you do not comply with this blockade, we will use force". Enforcement would occur inside Iran's territorial seas and in international waters, he said.

A total of 13 ships have chosen to turn around rather than break the blockade, Caine said, adding that no ships had been boarded so far.

### Superintendent Hassan for preventing cheating system in examination center of Gandakha

APP

Quetta: Superintendent Professor Mir Hassan and Deputy Superintendent Nazir Ahmed on Thursday said that effective and strict steps have been taken to prevent cheating system so that the examination system could be made transparent and the real capabilities of the students to be brought to the fore during his visit of Higher Secondary School Examination Center in Gandakha area of Usta Muhammad district. Talking to APP, he said a detailed review of the examination process, security arrangements and discipline in the examination hall was also taken. Superintendent Professor Mir Hassan said that the current government is taking serious steps to promote education and improve the education system.

because this process not only affects the capabilities of the students but also degrades the overall educational standard.

Deputy Superintendent Nazir Ahmed said that strict supervision, effective checking system and full implementation of the code of conduct are being ensured in the examination centers so that there is no scope for any irregularity.

He said that the teachers and staff are discharging their responsibilities honestly clarifying that the government is taking practical steps to end cheating and promote merit at all levels so that a talented and educated society could be created.

He reiterated the commitment that transparent examination system,

quality education and highlighting the true potential of students are among the top priorities of the government and all available resources are being utilized to achieve this goal.



MADINAH AL-MUNAWWARAH: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday paid his respects at Roza-e-Rasool (Peace Be Upon Him).

### Punjab Health Minister Chairs Key Meeting on Children's Hospital Faisalabad

By Maqsood Khalid

LAHORE: Punjab Health Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique chaired an important meeting at the Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education Department regarding the affairs of Children's Hospital Faisalabad.

The meeting was attended by Secretary Health Punjab Azmat Mahmood and Special Secretary Operations

Nabeela Irfan, while the Medical Superintendent and faculty members of Children's Hospital Faisalabad participated via video link.

During the meeting, a detailed

review of matters related to enhancing the hospital's capacity and overall performance was conducted.

The Health Minister directed officials to bring further

improvements in human resource management and administrative affairs.

Speaking on the occasion, Khawaja Salman Rafique stated that the Punjab

government is expanding its healthcare infrastructure by establishing new hospitals across the



He added that the supply of medicines and other facilities in hospitals is also being gradually improved.

### Punjab Launches First Fast Train, Ushering in New Rail Era

By Maqsood Khalid

LAHORE: A new era of railway transport has begun in Punjab under a historic Memorandum of Understanding MoU between the Government of Punjab and Pakistan Railways. Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif and Federal Minister for Railways Hanif Abbasi signed the MoU. Under the agreement, Pakistan's first fast train will run between Lahore and Rawalpindi, completing the journey in two and a half hours. Officials briefed that modern trains will operate on 8 local routes across 20 regions covering 1,415 kilometers. Punjab will provide modern DMU trains for regional routes under the agreement.



Train services will operate on Shahdara-Narowal (79 km) and Narowal-Sialkot (62 km) routes. A new train will also run on the 370-kilometer Raiwind-Kasur-Pakpattan-Lodhran route. Services will also be introduced on Sheikhpura-Jaranwala-Shorkot (220 km), Lala Musa-Malakwal-Sargodha (147 km), Faisalabad-Chak Jhumra-Shaheenabad (68 km), and Kot Addu-Dera Ghazi Khan-Kashmore (303 km) routes.

The Government of Punjab will introduce new railway engines and modern coaches on these routes.

Federal Minister Hanif Abbasi appreciated the Chief Minister, saying that Pakistan Railways aims to transform its history by following her example.

### AJK Police expose RAW espionage network, suspect arrested

INP

MUZAFFARABAD: The Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) police have arrested a suspected operative allegedly working for India's intelligence agency Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), officials confirmed.

Addressing a press conference, Inspector General of Police Liaquat Ali Malik stated that police in Rawalakot carried out a timely operation leading to the arrest of the suspect, identified as Irfan.

According to police, the suspect was involved in reconnaissance of sensitive locations and recording videos, which were then shared with foreign handlers.

Authorities further claimed that he was also involved in planning to target military installations and educational institutions.

### Aleem Khan approves key highway projects to enhance GB connectivity

APP

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Communications, Abdul Aleem Khan on Thursday approved a series of key road infrastructure projects in Gilgit-Baltistan aimed at boosting tourism and better connectivity.

Chairing a high-level meeting here at the National Highway Authority headquarters, the minister reviewed ongoing and proposed highway schemes and issued directives to expedite development work across the region.

During the meeting, detailed discus-

sions were held and key decisions were approved regarding the construction and development of highways in the region. To promote tourism and provide better travel facilities to remote areas in Gilgit Baltistan, it was decided to construct several new roads.

These projects include the construction of a 54-kilometer road from Astore to Chilam Chowki and a 31-kilometer road from Deosai to Skardu.

Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan also directed that a formal survey be conducted for the Skardu-Deosai Road.



QUETTA: Chairman Public Accounts Committee MPA Asghar Treen addressing a press conference.



### US lawmaker demands FIFA to pay World Cup transport bill amid ticket hikes

SPORTS DESK

NEW YORK: A top US lawmaker called on FIFA to pay for World Cup public transportation costs on Tuesday following a report that local authorities in New Jersey are planning massive price hikes during the tournament.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, a Democrat, said on X that football's world governing body — which stands to earn \$11 billion from the tournament — should foot the bill for transport costs to World Cup venues.

Schumer was responding to a report in The Athletic on Tuesday which said New Jersey Transit is planning to charge fans more than \$100 for tickets from Penn Station in Manhattan to MetLife Stadium in New Jersey during the World Cup. A return ticket for the journey normally costs \$12.90. "FIFA is set to reap nearly \$11 billion from this summer's World Cup, yet New York area commuters and residents are being handed the bill," Schumer commented.

"The least FIFA can do is ensure New York residents can go to the stadium without being gouged at the turnstile. I am demanding FIFA step up and cover transportation costs for host cities and states.



MADRID: Atletico Madrid's Ademola Lookman (C) scores past Barcelona goalkeeper Joan Garcia during their Champions League quarter-final second leg at the Metropolitan Stadium.

### Atletico resist Barca comeback as Dembele fires PSG into CL semis

SPORTS DESK

MADRID: Atletico Madrid sent 10-man Barcelona crashing out of the Champions League and reached the final four with a 3-2 aggregate victory despite Tuesday's 2-1 quarter-final second leg defeat.

Meanwhile on Tuesday, Ousmane Dembele struck twice to confirm Paris St-Germain's place in the semi-finals with a 2-0 victory over Liverpool, sealing a 4-0 aggregate win in their quarter-final tie at a rain-soaked Anfield. Lamine Yamal and Ferran Torres fired visitors Barca ahead inside 24 minutes but Ademola Lookman's strike gave Atletico the edge in the gripping all-Spanish tie once again after their 2-0 win in the first leg.

Diego Simeone's side returned to the semi-finals for the first time since 2017 by holding on against the La Liga champions in a compelling and bloody battle.

Barcelona defender Eric Garcia was sent off for bringing down Alexander Sorloth as he ran in on goal in the final stages, hampering their chances of finding a third goal to force extra-time.

Atletico have never won the competition and lost the 2014 and 2016 finals against rivals Real Madrid with Simeone at the helm.

Atletico's talisman Antoine Griezmann, who will leave at the end of the season to join MLS side Orlando City, is daring to dream of a fairytale finale.

"I'm very happy," Griezmann told reporters. "It doesn't matter who we face, as long as we're still in it and as long as we're on top form right until the end."

"It's been a brilliant but tough tie against a top-class side who play really well in Barcelona. It's been a struggle, but we're still in it."

In Spain glory could come as soon as Saturday with the Copa del Rey final against Real Sociedad in Seville,

Griezmann's boyhood club, with Atletico chasing their first domestic cup since 2013 and an end to a four-season wait for any title.

"It's going to be a great match, a tough one, so we'll need to get some rest. Now it's time to start thinking about Saturday. What a great feeling," Griezmann said. "I hope I can help my team mates to do something beautiful this season, something historical. Our fans deserve it." Barcelona coach Hansi Flick said he believes his eliminated team deserved to progress.

"We played a fantastic first half, (but) we have to score more goals. It was really possible, (but) we conceded the goal we didn't expect at this moment," Flick told reporters.

"When you see both matches we deserved to get to the semi-final. The mentality, the attitude they showed on the pitch — I'm really proud about that."

Barcelona forward Raphinha, who was sidelined through injury for both matches, accused referees Clement Turpin, who officiated the second game, and Istvan Kovacs, from the first, of "robbing" his team.

"As far as I'm concerned, it was a robbery, not just this match but the other one (the first leg) as well," Raphinha told reporters.

"I think the refereeing is going really badly; the decisions he (Turpin) makes are unbelievable... I really want to understand why they're so afraid that Barcelona will come and win." Flick benched forwards Marcus Rashford and Robert Lewandowski for workhorses Torres and Gavi, looking to press Atletico relentlessly in the sixth match between these sides this season.

The tactic seemed to pay off as Barca came roaring out of the blocks in a fiery atmosphere at the Metropolitan and raced to a two-goal lead to level the score on aggregate.

### Composed Babar guides Zalmi to sixth PSL win against subdued Gladiators

By Maqsood Khalid

KARACHI: The National Bank Stadium remained devoid of spectators on Wednesday night, in keeping with the government's austerity measures that have seen all matches of this HBL Pakistan Super League (PSL) season played behind closed doors.

The silence, now a familiar feature of the ongoing tournament, once again framed the contest — and in that stillness, one sound stood out above all: the crisp, assured echo of Babar Azam's bat striking the ball.

That rhythm accompanied Peshawar Zalmi's march to a comprehensive eight-wicket victory over Quetta Gladiators, as their captain crafted an unbeaten 71 to steer his side to the 156-run target with nine balls to spare.

Zalmi's sixth successive win kept them unbeaten and virtually assured of a place in the playoffs, while Gladiators' campaign continued to falter leaving them fifth on the table with just two wins from six outings.

Earlier, Gladiators were bowled out for 154 on the final ball of their innings, never quite managing to impose themselves despite a handful of promising starts, thanks to another incisive spell by Sufiyan Mugeem.

Asan Ali departed early for four, caught by Mohammad Harris off Ifkhar Ahmed, before captain Saud Shakeel's 16 off 13 balls ended in a run-out, leaving Gladiators at 39-2.

Rilee Rossouw briefly countered with a fluent 26 off 18 deliveries, striking four boundaries and briefly shifting momentum. Having taken on Mohammad Basit for three consecutive fours, the South African looked set for more but was undone by left-arm wrist spinner Sufiyan, dragging a delivery onto his stumps in the eighth over.

At 62-3, Gladiators required consolidation but instead found themselves slipping further.

Shamyl Hussain managed 12 before holing out to Aaron Hardie, while Khawaja Nafay's brisk 20 off 13 balls — including a six — ended when he was trapped lbw by Sufiyan.

Hasan Nawaz top-scored with 37 off 35 deliveries, though his innings lacked the acceleration needed to lift the total. Attempting to take on Basit, he was undone by a sharp bouncer and edged behind to Kusal Mendis.



PESHAWAR Zalmi captain Babar Azam plays a shot as Quetta Gladiators wicket-keeper Khawaja Nafay looks on during the Pakistan Super League match at the National Bank Stadium.

**TENDER NOTICE**

The DIRECTOR GENERAL SOUTH invites bids from Eligible Bidders for execution of following works for the Year 2025 based on Composite schedule rates 2023 on Percentage Rates.

**Tender Fee --- and bid Security 2%**

S.No	Name of Scheme	E/Cost
1	INSTALLATION OF HOME SOLAR FOR UC RASKOHAND SOLAR STREET DISTRICT KHARAN UNDER PSDP NO. 137 Z2025.1538. TSE-2526041022963	19,934,000

Procurements shall be made under the Balochistan Public Procurement Rules — 2014. Eligibility of Bidders: Presence in Active Taxpayer List. The bidding firm must not be blacklisted by any procuring agency of Pakistan. Balochistan Revenue Authority Registration is required. The bidder must have completed 1 assignment of similar nature of work. Turnover of at least 13,953,800/- in 3 subsequent previous years showing financial capacity of the firm. Registration with Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) C-6 and above (up to 25 million) in relevant category and specialized code is EE11(i) (Solar), EE11(ii) (Solar Energy), EE11(iii) (Solar Energy System). Firm must have completed 01 similar nature of work i.e. DC Solar Home System and Solar Street Lights in last 3 years in any Government Sector. Procedure of Procurement: Single Stage Two Envelope Bidding Procedure. Bid Security: The bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of Bank Guarantee, Deposit at Call of 2% specified above in the name of the under-signed from a scheduled bank. Tender Documents: The bidding documents can be obtained from the office of the undersigned and can also be downloaded from BPPRA website. Issuance of Tender Documents: From the date of publication of NIT to opening of bid as mentioned above during office hours on working days. Last date of bid submission: The tenders must be submitted latest by 4<sup>th</sup> May: 2026 upto 10:00AM Tender opening: The tender will be opened on 4<sup>th</sup> May: 2026 upto 11:00AM Address: C-30, Railway Housing Society, Joint Road, Quetta. Phone no: 081-2472046 Email: hassanqta@gmail.com

Director General (South) Energy Department

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## Lebanon talks

**T**HE US-brokered talks between Lebanon and Israel, held in Washington on Tuesday, were closely followed across the world, not only because of the dire humanitarian situation the savage Israeli assault has created in Lebanon, but also due to their bearing on the US-Israeli conflict with Iran.

It is reportedly the first time since the early 1990s that major delegations from both states met directly. However, it appears that their agendas were worlds apart: the Lebanese side was interested in securing an immediate ceasefire, while Israel wanted to only discuss the disarming of Hezbollah, the pro-Iranian Lebanese armed group and political party that is the Zionist state's arch-foe in Lebanon.

The brutal assault on Lebanon launched recently by Israel has led to the death of around 2,000 people and the displacement of over a million. The assault was apparently sparked by Hezbollah's attacks on Israel, following the assassination of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in Iran. It should be recalled that the Lebanese armed group's guns had been silent since the November 2024 ceasefire, while Israel had violated the truce on a near-daily basis. It seems that Tel Aviv wanted to draw Hezbollah back to the battlefield, and is now pretending to be the victim.

But some memories should not be short-lived. Israel has been violating Lebanese sovereignty since 1948, and had staged several incursions and full-scale invasions before Hezbollah was created in the early 1980s. There is a reason why Tel Aviv wants Hezbollah disarmed — the Lebanese group is the only Arab entity that has ended Israel's occupation of its land by force of arms when the Zionist state retreated from south Lebanon in 2000.

In the current scenario, Israel wants to create another so-called buffer zone, deep inside Lebanese territory, essentially repeating the failed experiment it started in 1982 until it was ejected from the Arab state. Some extremist Israeli ministers have even spoken of permanently occupying Lebanon. The international community, particularly the OIC and Arab League, must firmly reject such dubious designs, and ensure Israel leaves all Lebanese territory.

The status of Hezbollah's arms is Lebanon's internal issue, and Israel has no business dictating terms to Beirut. Meanwhile, Tel Aviv is trying to stir up sectarian trouble inside Lebanon, by painting Hezbollah as the source of Lebanon's troubles, thereby attempting to pit the country's other communities against the Shia population.

The Lebanese must resist this malicious plan, maintain unity and work to free their country from Israel's clutches.

If the US wants peace in the region, particularly in the Gulf, it must put pressure on Israel to cease hostilities in Lebanon without delay, while an immediate Israeli withdrawal from all occupied Lebanese territory is essential.

Without this, there will be no peace in the Levant or the Gulf.

By Khurram Husain

## Paper oil

**A**N interesting thing is happening in the oil markets that has not received enough media attention. Given the prolonged closure of the Strait of Hormuz and the severe supply-side crisis that has hit global oil markets, there should by now have been a spiralling rise in the price of oil. But instead, we see it rise slightly above \$100 and then drop below. Sometimes this follows the headlines. But overall, a mystery is developing around why oil prices are not seeing massive rises these days, even as more and more countries announce releases from their strategic petroleum reserves (SPR), which is a sure sign that physical shortages of oil are landing around the world.

One answer doing the rounds among oil analysts is the idea of 'paper oil'. The argument is that the US Treasury is actively manipulating the price of oil by selling massive quantities in the futures market. This helps keep the price of oil down in the present. A Reuters story published on March 5, the first week of the war, kicked off rumours that this might be happening. "The US Treasury Department is expected to announce measures as soon as Thursday aimed at combating rising energy prices, including potential action involving the oil futures market", read the opening sentence of the story, quoting a senior White House official. Brent had jumped to \$85 at the time, and the IRGC had announced the closure of the Strait of Hormuz just three days earlier. To comprehend how this works, it is necessary to understand a couple of things about how oil markets function. First, there is not a single price in oil markets. There are various benchmark prices of crude, like Brent, Dubai Light or West Texas Intermediate. These refer to the price of crude oil in a specific market. WTI is mostly for the Americas, Brent for Europe and Dubai Light for Asia. Next up are oil products like petrol, diesel and jet fuel that have their own prices. And then, there are petroleum products like naphtha

or LPG that have separate prices too. Finally, there are what are called 'futures markets', where you can buy oil today for delivery at a future date.

Under normal conditions, all these prices will move closely with each other since they are tied. When the price of crude rises, the price of petrol and diesel will rise more or less correspondingly. The cap on these is the futures price. If crude oil for delivery in June 2026 is available for a particular price, the present-day price will not go too far above that. Oil watchers are now wondering aloud whether active oil market manipulation has begun.

What the Reuters story was trying to say was that someone in the administration figured out that one way to manipulate oil prices, and keep them down in the short term while the war lasted, was for the US government to become a massive seller of oil in the futures market at a lower price than what the market is generating. By that time the settlement date of the contract arrives, the outcome of the war would be known and they would be betting that the US would have prevailed, and the price of oil would have either stabilised or dropped. Either way, it would be one way to stabilise the market at a higher price point, while buying some time in which to see the war through.

But things did not work out as planned, obviously.

The war dragged on. The strait remained closed.

And as Donald Trump grew desperate to avoid a catastrophe in the oil market, by late March his administration had issued sanctions waivers for Russian oil as well as some Iranian oil. A little earlier, they had announced releases from their SPR, usually something done when the country has been attacked.

Those steps, though, were not enough. As the war dragged on, and the last oil tankers that left Hormuz at the start of the war reached their destinations, the desperation grew.

This is where the paper oil theory comes

in. Oil watchers are now wondering aloud whether active oil market manipulation has begun.

If manipulation is taking place, it means the US government is now selling massive quantities of oil on the futures market, oil that they don't actually have, at least not at the price at which they are selling it. For the racket to work, it would need to be kept under wraps, because price manipulation in any market fails if players know that the price is being manipulated. But you know price manipulation from its effects. In the oil markets, for instance, manipulation will create what sector analysts call 'decoupling', a situation where all the various prices that make up an oil market start moving apart from each other. To some extent, this has already happened, for example, jet fuel and diesel prices have skyrocketed beyond any of the others.

But the most important decoupling would be between the futures market and what they call the 'physical market'. The first is oil on paper.

The second is oil in hand. Normally, the price difference between them is only a few dollars.

But these days, it has shot up to almost \$40 per barrel. And the increase in this difference began shortly after March 20, when the previous round of steps to stabilise oil prices were taken.

Asked about this, Terry Duffy, chairman of the Chicago Mercantile Exchange, recently said that attempts to manipulate oil markets like this can create a "biblical disaster".

Another executive mentioned to the media that his firm received queries from its clients on whether a recent large spurt of transactions was initiated by the US government.

If done right, price manipulation leaves no smoking gun evidence behind, because it would not work if it did. But it reveals itself by the effects it produces. And recent moves in oil markets strongly suggest that the 'paper oil' racket is in full swing.

By F.S. Aijazuddin

## Dire straits

**R**ECENT events have given a new twist to history. A Chicago-born pontiff from Rome has publicly rebuked an American Christian crusader.

Normally, popes issue insipid encyclicals or harmless homilies. In 1968, for example, Pope Paul VI issued *Of Human Life* — a justification of the Catholic church's opposition to methods of birth control. (One sceptic wondered how a celibate bachelor felt qualified to guide married couples on such an intimate matter.)

Previous popes chose not to interfere even when human rights were being violated. In the 1940s, Pope Pius XII refrained from any condemnation of the Nazis or Stalin's pogroms. Hitler let Mussolini handle the Vatican. Stalin silenced the pope with the cutting question: "How many divisions has the Pope?"

This Easter, Pope Leo XIV felt impelled to speak out against a fellow countryman — the US Secretary of War Pete Hegseth — who had appealed to

"Almighty God who trains our hands for war and our fingers for battle" (Psalm 144). On Palm Sunday, Pope Leo XIV, in the name of the same God and quoting from the same Holy Bible, reproached Hegseth: "When you spread out your hands in prayer, I hide my eyes from you; even when you offer many prayers, I am not listening. Your hands are full of blood!" (Isaiah 1:15).

Did Trump deliberately send Vance to Islamabad to fail?

It is perhaps telling that the recent negotiations between the US and Iran held in Islamabad on April 11 did not begin with a prayer from any faith. It might have given the talks a chance. Instead, the divine and Israel were

both noticeably absent.

The composition of the US team revealed non-seriousness. Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner are Jewish real estate developers from New York. They had disappointed the Iranians twice earlier. They have a record of being midwives who specialise in lucrative abortions. Nevertheless, Iran accepted them, hoping that Vice-President J.D. Vance might bring some gravitas and maturity to the table.

They were wrong. President Trump sabotaged the Islamabad talks even before they had begun by announcing:

"If it doesn't happen, I'm blaming J.D. Vance. If it does happen, I'm taking full credit." With that, Trump ensured the failure of his VP, just as president Joe Biden, by delaying his withdrawal from the presidential race in 2024, scotched his VP Kamala Harris' chances.

It has been reported that, during a White House meeting on Feb 12, Vance sided with CIA director Ratcliffe who described Benjamin Netanyahu's proposal to attack Iran as "farcical". Vance told Trump: "This is a bad idea, but if you want to do it, I'll support you." He warned that such a war would cause "regional chaos".

Did Trump deliberately send Vance to Islamabad to fail? Or, subtler still, did Vance (a recent convert to Catholicism) sacrifice himself this Easter so that he could resurrect himself to succeed a damaged, declining Trump? Vance knows he is only a heartbeat away from the presidency, as were H. Truman to F.D. Roosevelt (1945), L.B. Johnson to J.F. Kennedy (1963), and G. Ford to R. Nixon (1974).

Vance disclosed in his final statement

in Islamabad that the US had wanted Iran to abjure nuclear ambitions, forever. Was it lost on him that he made this demand in the capital of a country that is said to possess an estimated 170 nuclear weapons and which hasn't signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty? (Iran signed the NPT in 1968.)

Is the ongoing war really about Iran's nuclear capability? Or the hydrocarbons choking the veins of the Gulf Arab-s? Or the dangerous gauntlet run by traffic in the Strait of Hormuz? Or is it Israel's ra-pacity for lebensraum?

The US/Israel vs Iran war has entered yet another menacing phase. Trump and Netanyahu will continue the Duke of Wellington's strategy at Waterloo in 1812:

"Let's see who will pound the longest." The Arab states are learning that the US-supplied security umbrella has a design fault. It opens during sunshine and closes when it rains missiles.

And in a poignant gesture of remembrance, the Iranians filled the empty seats in one of the three aircraft that flew to Islamabad (two were decoys) with images and satchels of the 168 Minab schoolgirls killed in the first US/Israeli attack on Feb 28. Embattled Iranians are reconciling themselves to the fatalism inherent in their belief: "A man can die but once; we owe God a death." Meanwhile, Pakistan has come out tops.

For acting as a gracious host to the US and Iranian delegations in Islamabad, it has been provided \$6 billion by Saudi Arabia and Qatar, to repay a \$3.5bn loan recalled by the UAE and to retire \$1.43bn in Eurobonds. An insolvent Pakistan no longer finds itself in dire straits.

# DAILY MIRROR

## Nearly 98pc of medical seats filled, following deliberations: Senate body informed

By Zahid Ahmed Khan

ISLAMABAD: The Senate Standing Committee on National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination (NHSR&C) was informed here on Thursday that nearly 98 percent of medical seats had been filled, following detailed deliberations and coordinated efforts by the Ministry, Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC), and the Committee.

The Standing Committee on National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination (NHSR&C) met under the Chairmanship of Dr. Mahesh Kumar Malani, MNA, to deliberate upon key issues concerning medical education, public health challenges and regulatory reforms.

The committee was briefed that the step benefited around 1,000 students out of approximately 1100 vacant seats which remained vacant despite extended deadlines.

The committee took up the agenda regarding the PMDC and the Ministry's revised policy for conducting future MDCAT examinations. It

was apprised that MDCAT examinations would be conducted soon after the conclusion of all FSC Boards and Cambridge examinations across the country, in order to avoid delays.

The Chairman directed the Ministry and PMDC to finalize and announce the schedule well in advance so that students nationwide could prepare accordingly. The Committee also sought a comprehensive update on vacant seats, seat allocation, and student admissions.

As, it was informed that nearly 98 percent of seats had been filled, the committee appreciated the efforts of ministry of NHSR&C and the PMDC for effectively addressing the issue and ensuring optimal utilization of available seats. The committee expressed serious concern over reported deaths, including suicide cases, in medical colleges, particularly in Punjab and Mirpur Khas. The ministry was directed to submit a detailed report on such incidents over the past years and to ensure that thorough inquiries would be conducted and corrective measures implemented to avert any such incident in future.

The issue of rising HIV cases in Pakistan and Taunsa Tehsil were also highlighted and the committee members were informed that 331 cases had been reported. The committee termed the situation alarming and directed that a detailed briefing be presented in the next meeting, including information on global funding allocations and their utilization.

The committee also directed the ministry to strengthen its inspection mechanisms and to take provincial departments on board before finalizing key policies.

The committee also discussed the Pakistan Nursing and Midwifery Council Ordinance, 2025 and recommended that the bill would be passed after necessary amendments by the committee.

The meeting was attended by Members National Assembly Ms. Zahra Wadood Fatemi, Ms. Farah Naz Akbar, Dr. Shazia Sobia Aslam Soomro, Dr. Shaista Khan, Dr. Nikhat Shakeel Khan, Ms. Aliya Kamran, Dr. Darshan, Ms. Sabheen Ghoury, Raja Khurram Shahzad Nawaz and Ch. Muhammad Shahbaz Babar (virtually).



WASHINGTON, D.C.: International Monetary Fund (IMF) Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva meet Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on th sideline of the IMF-World Bank Spring Meetings 2026.

### Pakistan, UK launch joint initiative to develop mineral sector

APP

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and the United Kingdom have launched a major joint initiative aimed at promoting the development of the mineral sector, with the inauguration of a Geo-Science training programme.

Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik and British High Commissioner Jane Marriott jointly inaugurated the project.

The practical training programme has been launched under the UK-funded REMIT initiative to enhance the technical capacity of the Geological Survey of Pakistan.

Speaking on the occasion, Jane Marriott appreciated Pakistan's diplomatic efforts for peace. She said British Prime Minister Keir Starmer had also acknowledged Pakistan's peace efforts in the British Parliament.

The Petroleum Minister lauded the support of the British High Commission and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) in this initiative.

He said international-standard geoscience training and modern methodologies will be introduced under the programme. He added that strengthening institutions like the Geological Survey of Pakistan will help make the country more attractive for investment.

Ali Pervaiz Malik said Pakistan possesses immense geological and mineral potential, while global demand for mineral resources is increasing.

### Innovation in technology key to sustainable development: Ahsan

APP

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal has urged the youth to align themselves with the demands of the modern world.

Addressing a ceremony at the University of Engineering and Technology, Narowal Campus today, he stressed that sustainable development depends on innovation in science and technology.

He further stated that Pakistan is currently at the center of the global arena due to its significant diplomatic achievements.

### Govt formed to conduct comprehensive audit of use & allocation of official vehicles in Balochistan

APP

Quetta: The Balochistan government on Thursday constituted a high-level committee to conduct a comprehensive audit of the use and allocation of government vehicles across the province.

This step has been taken in light of the instructions of the Chief Minister Balochistan to ensure effective and transparent use of government resources.

According to the official notification, the Secretary Services and General Administration Department (S&GAD) has been appointed as the chairman of the committee, while the Secretary Finance and the Secretary Services, Transport and Administration Department will be its members.

The committee was directed to conduct a complete audit of government vehicles in use in all administrative departments, affiliated institutions, autonomous bodies and subordinate offices and to review whether the vehicles are being used in accordance with the prescribed rules and regulations.

According to the official notification,

the committee will also identify cases where vehicles are being used in excess of the prescribed entitlement or without proper approval. In addition, issues such as misuse of vehicles, illegal allotment and unnecessary maintenance will also be reviewed.

The notification further stated that the committee would also propose corrective measures and recommendations for transparent use, effective management and better monitoring of government vehicles, while also making suggestions regarding the return or disposal of surplus vehicles.

The committee will also review the Balochistan Civil Car Rules 1988 and, if necessary, suggest amendments to them to make the system more effective.

All government departments have been directed to nominate a focal person of Grade 19 within 48 hours to liaise with the committee and provide the required records, data and information.

The committee will submit its comprehensive report with recommendations to the competent authority within 15 days.

### Ayaz lauds Youth Parliament for elevating youth voices nationally, globally

APP

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Thursday appreciated Youth Parliament of Pakistan for its commendable efforts in amplifying the voices of youth at both national and international levels.

He also acknowledged the leadership of Chairman Abrar ul Haq and President Ubaid ur Rehman Qureshi for organizing an important engagement alongside the ECOSOC Youth Forum 2026, said a news release.

The Speaker said that Members of the National Assembly, along with members of the Young Parliamentarians Forum (YPF), would participate in this significant initiative.

He said that their participation reflected a collective commitment to youth inclusion and national development.

Highlighting the importance of the forum, the speaker said that the session underscores critical priorities, including resilience and collaborative action toward

the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

He said discussions at the forum would focus on inclusive governance approaches to the climate, water, peace nexus, strengthening youth and women's participation in policy processes, promoting community resilience and sustainable water management, and advancing multi-stakeholder partnerships for climate adaptation and peace building.

Ayaz Sadiq encouraged the youth of Pakistan to actively engage, contribute their ideas, and play a leading role in shaping a peaceful, inclusive, and sustainable future.

He extended his best wishes to the organizers and participants for a successful forum.

The speaker also appreciated the efforts of allied partners for their support and expressed confidence that such initiatives would strengthen democratic practices by highlighting the vital role of young people in addressing key global challenges.

### Pakistan gaining global recognition for constructive role: Dr. Tariq Fazal

APP

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhary said on Thursday that Pakistan's journey on the global stage reflects resilience, transformation, and renewed trust.

In a post on his X account, he said that for decades the country was often portrayed through a narrow lens, but that narrative is now shifting, with Pakistan being increasingly recognized and appreciated worldwide for its constructive role in promoting peace and dialogue.

He added that from facilitating diplomacy to encouraging de-escalation, Pakistan is demonstrating that responsible engagement and balanced leadership can make a meaningful difference in a tense global environment.

### Power minister apologises again for outages, cites 'beyond control' factors

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Federal Power Minister Awais Leghari has once again apologised to the public for prolonged power outages, saying the current situation is largely beyond the government's control.

Speaking at a press conference, the minister acknowledged the inconvenience caused by increased load management, particularly during nighttime and peak hours.

He said he remains directly accountable to the public for the electricity shortfall.

Leghari explained that the country is facing an estimated deficit of 2,500 megawatts, mainly due to disruptions in fuel imports linked to the ongoing conflict in the Middle East, along with reduced hydropower generation caused by lower water availability.

He emphasised that while the government regrets the hardship faced by citizens, external challenges such as the fuel crisis have made the situation difficult to manage.

The minister also highlighted that the PML-N government had significantly reduced loadshedding in previous years, claiming that Pakistan had largely overcome widespread power outages.

He added that the country's transition towards renewable energy has gained international recognition, noting that much of the progress has been driven by private investment rather than reliance on independent power producers or costly loans.

### At UN, Pakistan pushes for peace in eastern DR Congo amid rising security fears

APP

UNITED NATIONS: Despite diplomatic progress aimed at ending the brutal conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Pakistan told the UN Security Council that continued violence, humanitarian pressures and internal displacement in the country's east underscored the urgency of restoring peace and stability on the ground.

"The situation in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo remains fragile and deeply concerning," Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, said during a debate in the 15-member Council on the situation in DRC and wider Great Lakes region.

"We reiterate the need for full implementation of resolution 2773 and stress that progress toward a durable ceasefire remains essential for stabilizing the region and creating space for a political solution," he added.

Tensions have been high between ethnically aligned armed groups in parts of the region for decades, punctuated by the horrific killing of nearly a million people during the 1994 Rwandan genocide. More recently, in 2022, the Democratic Republic of the Congo accused Rwanda of supporting the M23 armed group's intervention on Congolese soil. A peace agreement — known as the Washington Accords — was brokered in June 2025 and endorsed by the Council in resolution 2803 (2025), though fighting continues.

In his remarks, the Pakistani envoy welcomed the sustained diplomatic engagement in support of de-escalation, including efforts under the African Union-led mediation, the Washington

process and the Doha Framework. "These initiatives, together with the good offices of the United Nations and regional organizations, represent important and mutually reinforcing pathways toward restoring trust between the parties and advancing a comprehensive settlement."

Ambassador Asim Ahmad also takes note of progress toward the operationalizing ceasefire oversight and verification arrangements and supports MONUSCO, the UN peace-keeping force, playing a constructive role in ceasefire implementation, once conditions permit.

The Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, a 2013 agreement signed in Addis Ababa to end the persistent violence in eastern DRC, continues to provide a comprehensive platform for addressing the root causes of instability in the Great Lakes region, with its commitments relating to dialogue, cooperation and confidence-building remaining essential for advancing regional stability. "The illicit exploitation and trafficking of critical natural resources also remains a structural driver of instability in eastern DRC," the Pakistani envoy said, adding it requires strengthened regional cooperation, transparency in supply chains and effective implementation of existing regional mechanisms to ensure that natural resources become a source of shared prosperity, and not conflict and chaos for the people.

In conclusion, Ambassador Asim Ahmad reaffirmed Pakistan's strong support for the sovereignty,

unity and territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Islamabad's commitment to advancing lasting peace and stability in the Great Lakes region.



QUETTA: Adviser to the Chief Minister of Balochistan on Political and Media Affairs Shahid Rind brief to media.

### Leghari, Sam Waldoock discuss bilateral cooperation, regional stability

APP

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Energy (Power Division), Sardar Awais Ahmed Khan Leghari on Thursday met Development Director, at the British High Commission Sam Waldoock and discussed bilateral cooperation and the evolving geo-strategic situation in the region.

The minister appreciated the United Kingdom's recognition of Pakistan's constructive and pivotal role in facilitating a ceasefire between the United States and Iran, as well as hosting peace negotiations. He stated that acknowledgment of Pakistan's diplomatic efforts reflected positively on its continued engagement for regional peace and stability, said a

press release. Sam Waldoock commended the Government of Pakistan's overall approach and its effective response in managing the complex situation arising from Iran-US tensions. He noted that Pakistan has demonstrated resilience and sound judgment in maintaining stability across key sectors despite challenging circumstances.

He further stated that the United Kingdom attached high importance to macroeconomic stability in Pakistan and remained committed to continued engagement and support in this regard. The Federal Minister thanked the UK's FCDO for its continued cooperation, describing it as an important component of the bilateral partnership.

### BISP moves to modernise payments, expand livelihood opportunities through banking partnership

INP

ISLAMABAD: Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Senator Rubina Khalid, held a key meeting with President Bank Alfalah, Atif Bajwa, to advance efforts aimed at modernising payment systems for beneficiaries and unlocking new livelihood opportunities through strategic collaboration.

The meeting, held in Karachi, focused on enhancing the efficiency and transparency of the payment mechanism for BISP beneficiaries, while also exploring avenues to generate sustainable income opportunities through the Benazir Hunarmand Programme and Bank Alfalah's Alfa Mall platform.

During the discussion, both sides deliberated on introducing interoperability in the payment system, enabling beneficiary women to choose a bank of their preference.

The initiative is expected to improve convenience, ensure greater financial

inclusion, and strengthen service delivery standards.

The participants also reviewed measures to enhance transparency, security, and accessibility of the payment system, reaffirming their commitment to improving the overall beneficiary experience.

A detailed discussion was held on scaling up the Benazir Hunarmand Programme. It was agreed to leverage the Alfa Mall platform to expand outreach and create skill-based earning opportunities for BISP beneficiaries, helping them achieve greater financial independence, said a news release.

The other key matters related to facilitating beneficiaries were also reviewed, with consensus on making the system more robust and user-friendly.

Director General Cash Transfers BISP Muhammad Idrees Mian, DG Sindh Sanaulah Rind, and Consultant Naveed Khan were also present during the meeting.



QUETTA: Leader of the Opposition in Balochistan Assembly Mir Younis Zehri addressing on Balochistan Assembly Session.