

Saudi Arabia Deposits \$2B to Boost Pakistan's Reserves

● Inflow follows recent \$1.4 billion Eurobond repayment

● \$3.5 billion in UAE outflows continue

● Rebuild reserves under the IMF program.

Pakistan's central bank announced on Thursday that it has received \$2 billion from Saudi Arabia, providing immediate support to the country's foreign exchange reserves as it works to stabilize its external position.

The funds are part of a broader \$3 billion financial assistance package pledged by Saudi Arabia to help Pakistan manage ongoing external financing pressures.

In a statement, the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) said the amount was received from Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Finance on April 15, 2026.

Pakistan continues to depend on external financing to meet import requirements and debt repayments. Support from allies like Saudi Arabia remains crucial, alongside the coun-



try's ongoing program with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which aims to restore macroeconomic stability.

The latest inflow comes shortly after Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb confirmed that Saudi Arabia committed an additional \$3 billion in support and agreed to extend an existing \$5 billion deposit to strengthen Pakistan's reserves.

The country is working to rebuild its foreign exchange reserves following a prolonged balance-of-payments crisis. Under its \$7 billion IMF program, Pakistan aims to increase

reserves to approximately \$18 billion by the end of the current fiscal year in June.

Saudi Arabia has long been a key financial partner for Pakistan, providing deposits, oil financing, and budgetary support during periods of economic stress.

The recent inflow follows Pakistan's repayment of about \$1.4 billion in Eurobonds and comes as the country faces outflows of around \$3.5 billion to the United Arab Emirates due to maturing deposits, highlighting continued pressure on its external account.

Guard of Honor Presented to PM in Qatar



After visiting Saudi Arabia, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif visited Qatar. He was received by the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Sultan bin Saad Al-Muraikhi.

A ceremonial guard of honor was presented by a contingent of the Qatari Armed Forces, highlighting the importance of the visit. Pakistani flags were displayed across Doha International Airport and various parts of the city to mark the Prime Minister's arrival.

During the visit, Prime Minister Sharif held a bilateral meeting with the Amir of Qatar, Shaikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani. The leaders discussed ways to strengthen bilateral relations and ex-



PM Shehbaz Sharif receives fighter jet escort on arrival in Qatar

changed views on Pakistan's efforts to promote regional and global peace.

The Prime Minister was accompanied by a high-level delegation, including Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar, Special Assistant Tariq Fatemi, and the Prime Minister's Spokesperson for International Media Mushahid Zaidi.



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EU Chief Warns Iran Over Nuclear Ambitions



European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said that security in the Gulf region and Europe are closely connected, stressing the need for stronger cooperation amid rising global tensions.

In a statement on social media platform X, von der Leyen expressed solidarity with the Gulf Cooperation Council and its member states, including the Gulf Cooperation Council, following what she described as unprovoked attacks from Iran. She also said recent developments highlight why Iran should not be allowed to ac-

quire nuclear weapons.

She thanked Gulf countries for their support and mediation efforts in response to Russia's war in Ukraine, noting that these diplomatic roles have strengthened international dialogue during the conflict.

Von der Leyen added that the European Union and Gulf states should move toward a closer partnership, saying the upcoming EU-GCC Summit later this year presents an opportunity to deepen ties.

She also highlighted discussions with NATO's Supreme Allied Commander Europe, focusing on the need for Europe

to increase defence investment and production capacity as the war in Ukraine continues. She stressed the importance of building a stronger and more innovative defence industry capable of producing both advanced systems and cost-effective technologies, including lessons learned from Ukraine's battlefield experience.

Reaffirming the strategic importance of cooperation between Europe and NATO, she said such partnerships are essential in an increasingly complex global security environment, particularly as Russia expands its military production.

Oman Air resumes Bahrain flights starting April 18

Oman Air announced the resumption of its direct flights between Muscat and Bahrain starting April 18, 2026, restoring air connectivity between the two Gulf capitals after several weeks of suspension.

The airline normally operates daily services between Muscat International Airport and Bahrain International Airport, with up to seven flights per week under regular schedules. However, the initial restart is expected to begin with reduced frequency as operations gradually return to normal.

As of mid-April 2026, Bahrain International Airport continues to operate at reduced capacity, with airlines restoring services in stages. European carriers re-



main affected by a conflict-zone advisory restricting operations in Bahrain's airspace until at least April 24, 2026.

Although the restriction does not apply to Oman Air, it has impacted several European airlines, including British Airways and Lufthansa, which have not yet resumed services to Bahrain.

Oman Air has also introduced

flexible rebooking and refund options for passengers affected by earlier cancellations, including full refunds, free date changes, and destination adjustments under specific conditions. All rebookings must be completed by May 31, 2026.

Passengers are advised to contact the airline directly or their travel agents for assistance with existing bookings.

UAE and World Bank launch strategic governance partnership

The UAE Government announced a strategic partnership with the World Bank Group aimed at strengthening global governance management and development practices.

The initiative focuses on adopting innovative methodologies, improving operational efficiency, and empowering governments to better adapt to rapid global transformations. It also aims to help public sector institutions prepare for future challenges using modern and flexible gov-

ernance tools.

According to the announcement, the collaboration will support knowledge exchange and capacity building, enabling governments worldwide to enhance performance and deliver more effective services.

The partnership reflects ongoing efforts to promote for-



ward-looking governance models that prioritize innovation, agility, and sustainable development in the public sector.

President Aliyev in Türkiye for Global Forum



President of Ilham Aliyev arrived in Türkiye for a working visit to attend the 5th Antalya Diplomacy Forum, following an invitation from Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Aliyev was accompanied by First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva. Upon arrival at Antalya International

Airport, the Azerbaijani president and his delegation were received by Antalya Governor Hulusi Sahin and other officials.

The forum is expected to bring together global leaders and policymakers to discuss key international issues.