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Will not allow army to take any unconstitutional steps: CJP

Says those who abide by Constitution will be successful; Armed forces should be "praised" for not opening fire on civilians on May 9; Hearing adjourned indefinitely

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Adjourning the hearing of a set of petitions challenging civilian trials in military courts indefinitely on Thursday, CJP Umar Ata Bandial remarked that the Supreme Court will not allow the Pakistan Army from carrying out any unconstitutional act.

"Those who build their case on the Constitution of Pakistan and law will be successful," said CJP Bandial.

The six-member bench led by CJP Bandial and comprising Justice Munib Akhtar, Justice Sayeed Mazahar Ali Akbar Naqvi, Justice Ayesha A Malik and Justice Yahya Afridi adjourned the hearing for an indefinite period.

During the hearing, the CJP observed that the incidents of May 9 were of a serious nature. He said it pained him to hear remarks about the Pakistan Army being equipped to open fire on protestors on May 9. The CJP added that the army is meant to serve the country. The Pakistan Army did the correct thing by not resorting to shooting citizens on May 9, he said.

Earlier, Attorney General of Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Awan assured the court that the 102 civilian suspects currently under military custody will be fairly treated during ongoing trials.

AGP Awan claimed that his assurance are coming from the military's top leadership. Concessions are being made for May 9 suspects on the court's insistence, said the AGP. At one point the AGP also reminded the court that the military is armed.

"No efforts are being made to overturn the Constitution of Pakistan... What happened on May 9 is before everyone," said AGP Awan. "Remember one thing — they are the armed forces. If they are attacked, they have weapons to defend themselves."

The AGP further said that the army is equipped to fire bullets. "It is not possible that if they are attacked, they first approach an SHO to lodge a formal complaint." "They [the military] could have opened fire [on citizens] on May 9," said the AGP.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif inaugurates Barakahu Bypass.

We all have to take ahead this country: PM

Country's interests sole purpose of meetings held with army chiefs throughout political career; People taunt me, calling me the establishment's man, but this doesn't bother me; Global action a must to save faultless countries like Pak from climate disaster

ISLAMABAD (Online): Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif has said we have to take ahead this country.

"We have to take forward this country. If we decide with consensus that we have to take ahead this country then we can make progress with consultation, national unity and national consensus. PM said this while addressing a ceremony following inauguration of Bhara Kahu Bypass here Thursday.

"I am taunted that I am man of establishment. Such things don't make any difference to my health. The objective was only this that government and establishment should together take ahead country, he added.

He went on to say "I, you and Marriyum Aurangzeb cannot understand the circumstances of these millions of poor people.

Only those people can understand it who are facing this situation.

Chief of Army Staff Gen Asim Munir has a very vital role in completion of this project, he added. Had he not given full attention and not persuaded and supported it this project would not have been completed. I am thankful to him.

He has shown great commitment.

This project was and

is Nawaz Sharif vision, he said adding Nawaz Sharif was removed from government through worst conspiracy otherwise this project would have been completed during his tenure.

Metro bus project had stalled and when we came to power again we run it within few weeks, he indicated.

Ahead of IMF agreement we were facing shortage of foreign exchange reserves. Therefore, it was difficult to open LCs. Now LCs are opening. Now electric buses will start coming and there will be no smoke.

Some friends taunt me I am man of establishment, he said adding such things

make no difference to my health. Was I to reap personal benefits then it would have been meant so.

I give you an example because this thing has become public. It was said about Pervez Musharraf that Shahbaz Sharif was close to him.

But Nawaz Sharif went to jail and I too went to jail. Like him I and my family was exiled. What I got. It is and will remain there in my heart that there are our ground realities that we have to take care of this poor nation.

APP adds: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday called for timely decisions and actions, warning that climate disasters could also hit other countries like Pakistan with even no contribution to the emissions.

The prime minister, addressing a seminar on climate change, urged the international community to stand for the future and work hard as the calamities like flash floods in Pakistan could hit any other country too.

He said Pakistan was among ten countries facing the impacts of climate change despite having no fault.

"We need to stand for our future. We need to work hard. Let us accept the challenge, work out a plan, and not waste time to save generations," the prime minister remarked.



ISLAMABAD: The United Kingdom's High Commissioner-designate to Pakistan Ms Jane Marriot, the Ambassador-designate of the Republic of Korea Mr. Park Ki Jun, and the high Commissioner-designate of Malawi Mr Younos Abdul Karim, presenting their diplomatic credentials to President Dr. Arif Alvi at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

President for enhancing ties with UK, South Korea, Malawi

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday said that Pakistan wanted to enhance its relations with the United Kingdom (UK), the Republic of Korea, and Malawi in the fields of trade, economy, and culture.

The president made these remarks while talking to the High Commissioner-designates of the United Kingdom and Malawi, and the Ambassador-designate of the Republic of Korea to Pakistan.

The envoys presented their diplomatic credentials to the president and separately called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Talking to Jane Marriot, the UK's High Commissioner to Pakistan, the president said that Pakistan attached utmost significance to its longstanding ties with the UK, which were grounded in historic connections and enduring people-to-people linkages.

He remarked that both countries needed to further expand and promote economic and trade relations for the mutual benefit of the two sides.

He also lauded the contributions of the Pakistani diaspora in the UK towards its socio-economic development.

President Alvi underscored the need for strengthening cultural ties and people-to-people contacts.

He highlighted that both governments were committed to establishing and maintaining a more robust and long-term relationship. He also urged that the world needed to prevent and discourage the incidents of the Islamophobia in the world.

Speaking to Park Ki Jun, the ambassador of the Republic of Korea, the president said that Pakistan highly valued its multidimensional relationship with Korea, encompassing political, economic, scientific, cultural, and people-to-people linkages.

Iranian FM calls on Chairman Senate

ISLAMABAD (Online): Senate Chairman Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani has said that Pakistan Iran bilateral relations are rooted in historical linkages and based on religious, linguistic, cultural similarities and spiritual affiliation.

He expressed these views in a meeting with Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian here at Parliament House on Thursday.

He further said that Iran was the first country to acknowledge Pakistan's sovereignty and to support our membership in the United Nations. "I view this as a solid foundation upon which we have built close bilateral ties that we continue to nature", Chairman Senate observed. He observed that Parliamentary ties between Pakistan and Iran have also grown stronger over the years, with multiple bilateral visits and cooperation at international forums such as the IPU and the APA.



Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari and Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian witnessing signing of memoranda of understanding between Pakistan and Iran in Islamabad.

PM's Health Insurance Scheme for journalists, artists historic step of Shehbaz Sharif

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb said that the health insurance scheme for journalists and artists was a historic decision of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

While addressing the signing ceremony of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and State Life Insurance Corporation for the health insurance of journalists and artists here Thursday, she said that the prime minister took a historic decision for the health insurance of journalists and artists, which was starting from today, for the first time in the history of Pakistan.

She said that Rs 1 billion had been allocated for each category of journalists and artists from all over Pakistan in the current fiscal year. She said that the prime minister had issued directives that the money allocated in the budget for journalists and artists should not be limited to announcements only but practical steps should be taken on this project.

The minister said that the registration for health insurance was started two weeks ago for journalists and media workers and one week ago for artists. She said that the foundation of the health insurance card scheme was laid during the Nawaz Sharif tenure as prime minister. She said that keeping in mind the experience of State Life Insurance Corporation, the Ministry of Information was going to issue health insurance cards for journalists and artists community. The minister said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will issue health insurance cards on August 7 to both journalists and artists. Marriyum said that in a short period of 15 months, the government had done important legislation for the welfare of journalists, linking their minimum wages with government business. She said that health facilities would be provided to journalists in the form of health insurance cards.

President gives assent to five bills

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday gave his assent to five bills after they were passed by the parliament.

The president signed Defense Housing Authority Islamabad (Amendment) Bill 2023 to amend the Defense Housing Authority Islamabad Act, 2013.

He assented to Petroleum (Amendment) Bill, 2023 aimed at amending the Petroleum Act, 1934.

President Alvi also approved the Pakistan Nursing Council (Amendment) Bill, 2023 which provided for amending the Pakistan Nursing Council Act, 1973. The president signed the Board of Investment (Amendment) Bill 2023, providing for amending the Board of Investments Ordinance, 2001. He also assented to the Pakistan General Cosmetics Bill, 2023 aimed at regulating the sale, purchase, quality, packaging, manufacturing, storage and distribution of cosmetics.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Ms. Marriyum Aurangzeb and Her Excellency Pang Chunxue, the Charge d'Affaires of the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan cutting ribbon to inaugurate Chinese News Service at APP Headquarters.

Pak, Bahrain to enhance cooperation in Postal & Communication Sector

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Communication and Postal Services Maulana Asad Mehmoos on Thursday stressed the need to enhance cooperation in postal and communication sectors between Pakistan and Bahrain.

He welcomed high-level delegation of Bahrain led by Minister of Transport and Telecommunication Muhammad Bin Tahmeer al-Kaabi in his office. The minister, on the occasion, informed the delegation that Pakistan was heavily investing to build state-of-the-art road infrastructure spreading from Kashghar to Gwadar for countries in the region to take full advantage through trade.

He also briefed the delegates about the investment opportunity for the investors from Bahrain in road infrastructure development.

The postal services of Pakistan is also being upgraded to bring it par with the global postal services, said the minister added.

He said National Highways and Motorway Police is also part of his ministry and the government is introducing more stringent traffic rules to avoid accidents and to facilitate commuters on Motorways.

Federal Secretary Ministry of Communication and Chairman National Highway Authority (NHA) Capt (Rtd) Muhammad Khurram Agha also briefed the delegation upon ongoing and completed projects.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Communications and Postal Services, Maulana Asad Mehmoos in a meeting with Mohammad Bin Thamer Al Kaabi, Minister of Transport and Telecommunication, The Kingdom of Bahrain, to discuss cooperation in postal service and road networks.

Pakistan, Iran chalk out five-year trade plan; target \$5 b trade volume

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Iran on Thursday set a target of \$5 billion for bilateral trade as the two countries chalked out a five-year trade cooperation plan to enhance cooperation.

Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, addressing a joint press stakeout with his Iranian counterpart Hossein Amir Abdollahian, said the five-year trade cooperation plan was aimed at removing impediments in bilateral trade, finalizing the Free Trade Agreement and establishing of institutional linkages between the private sectors of both countries.

"I am confident that the steps we are taking today, will chart the course for a long-term durable economic partnership between our two countries in the months and years ahead," the foreign minister told the media after the two leaders held a meeting as well as the delegation-level talks.

He said during their meeting, they had agreed to prioritize the operationalization of the five remaining border markets by the end of current year.

Foreign Minister Bilawal said Pakistan and Iran had decided to repatriate all the sentenced prisoners as per provisions of existing agreements between two sides. It was also decided to set free fishermen in custody in Pakistan and Iran and to waive off any fine imposed by the authorities of both countries for the release of their vessels.

He said the two sides would exchange lists of prisoners to put into practice the understanding expeditiously.

Masood Khan, senior US official discuss boosting economic ties

WASHINGTON (APP): Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States, Masood Khan, Wednesday discussed with the US Under Secretary for Economic Growth, Energy, and Environment, Jose Fernandez, steps to strengthen the economic partnership between the two countries.

"Today I discussed with Pakistani Ambassador Masood Khan strengthening US-Pak economic partnership and climate resilience via the U.S.-Pakistan Green Alliance and investment in the technology sector," tweeted Under Secretary Fernandez.

"I look forward to working together on mutually beneficial priorities," he said.

Reciprocating, Ambassador Masood Khan thanked Fernandez for receiving him with warmth, according to a press release issued by the Pakistani embassy.

"Together Pakistan and the US - will work to take our cooperation in trade, technology, agriculture, energy, and climate resilience to a higher plane", he said in his tweet.

He also expressed the hope to attract more foreign direct investment (FDI) from the US for Pakistan.



BAGHDAD: Federal Minister for Interior Rana Sana Ullah Khan inaugurating Machine Readable Passport System at Pakistan Embassy.

AML/CFT Authority established to counter terror financing

ISLAMABAD (Online): An important bill for the establishment of the Authority for Anti-Money Laundering and Prevention of Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) has also been approved by the National Assembly on Thursday, under which the authority will also be able to impose targeted financial sanctions.

According to the contents of the bill for the establishment of the National Anti-Money Laundering and Counter Financing of Terrorism Authority approved by the National Assembly, the authority will monitor the transactions of relevant institutions against anti-money laundering and counter-financing of terrorism.

The authority will also impose targeted financial sanctions. The Authority will act as a focal point for FATF and other relevant international organizations.

According to the bill, the authority will oversee the national strategy to combat money laundering and terrorist financing.

The Authority will also be able to approve the National Action Plan (NAP) in the context of the National Strategy.

The Authority will be able to review the national policies, laws and regulations against money laundering and terrorist financing and also recommend amendments in the relevant laws.

And send recommendations to the federal and provincial governments for policy making. The appointment of the chairman of the authority will be the authority of the prime minister.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

A terrible law

The National Assembly — a forum elected, empowered and entrusted by the nation to safeguard the public interest — has once again capitulated to unelected powers to pass legislation that gravely undermines civil rights.

The amendments to the Official Secrets Act passed by the Lower House on Tuesday read like an autocrat's wish list: sweeping powers to search and detain; to brand anyone an 'enemy' of the state on mere suspicion; to pry into citizens' personal affairs without a court-issued warrant; to freely use force against suspects who resist such intrusions; and to treat anyone as guilty until they are proven innocent.

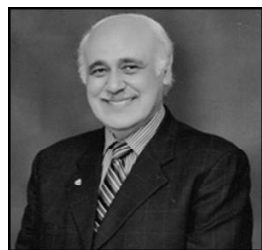
It is deeply troubling that whoever had this law drafted clearly not only felt that such extreme measures were 'appropriate' against citizens of this country, but that they should also be given sanction. Thankfully, the Senate has refused to abdicate its responsibility. Facing stiff opposition from both government and opposition benches, the Senate chairman has referred the NA-passed bill to the relevant Senate committee for further debate.

It is unfortunate that so few legislators are speaking out while Pakistani democracy is being frogmarched into the shambles by their own hands. A law which empowers the state to consider anyone an 'enemy' — even if they have unintentionally interacted with any person or entity deemed to be working against the country — not only runs counter to the established principles of justice, it is dangerous in the hands of a state that routinely brands its own citizens, including elected prime ministers, 'traitors'. Likewise, any law that gives intelligence agencies carte blanche to "enter and search any person or place, without a warrant, and if necessary, by use of force, and seize any document, sketch, or like nature, or anything which is or can be evidence" on the basis of mere suspicion is excessive and will only serve to create a climate of perpetual fear. The same bill also pushes for all materials collected by intelligence agencies during their investigations to be considered admissible as evidence, even when they may not have been collected by legal means. This would include secretly taped conversations or video recordings done without a warrant from a court of law.

Do our lawmakers really want to give intelligence agencies complete impunity to conduct surveillance operations against anyone, which would include themselves, and conveniently justify their intrusive activities later by calling them part of an ongoing investigation?

Even in the worst period of oppression in Pakistan's history, such a brazen attempt to jettison civil liberties would have prompted an outcry from the thinking segments of society. When the implications are this serious, it is critical that this law be debated further — not just in parliament, but by civil society too. The Senate, meanwhile, must do its duty.

Our cloudy future



F.S. Aijazuddin

Every thinking person should watch Christopher Nolan's film *Oppenheimer*. Tickets are expensive but they are cheaper than ignorance about the implications of our nuclear prowess. The film is a disturbing narrative of the career of J. Robert Oppenheimer, the man who headed the US Manhattan project which developed and detonated the first atomic bomb 'Trinity' in 1945. Like Alfred Nobel who invented dynamite, Oppenheimer suffered postpartum qualms about the demon he spawned: "Death — the Destroyer of Worlds".

The atomic bombs dropped by the US on first Hiroshima and then Nagasaki in 1945 killed or permanently maimed 200,000 humans. They were followed between 1945 and 1980 by atmospheric nuclear tests conducted by powerful countries across the globe. The impact has been the direct cause of cancer in about 2.4 million people.

Nolan spared his audience graphic images of the effect of the atom weapons on human beings — peeling flesh, blindness, loss of hair, leukemia, incurable tumours. He avoided mention of the irreversible impact on the world's atmosphere, contaminated water resources and genetic mutations.

The film concentrated instead on the political aftermath following the birth of Oppenheimer's brainchild. Like Frankenstein's monster, it destroyed its creator.

The US and USSR, having fought as allies against Hitler's Germany, Mussolini's Italy and Hirohito's Japan, turned on

each other after the war ended in 1945. Their arms race continues even today. Oppenheimer, as a member of the US Atomic Energy Commission, lobbied to minimise nuclear proliferation and advocated against an arms race with the Soviet Union. He opposed the development of the hydrogen bomb, alienating the US government and its military. Dr Oppenheimer's security clearance was withdrawn and he found himself ostracised on suspicion of being a closet communist. Eventually, in 2022, (55 years after his death), the US "ordered that the 1954 decision to revoke Oppenheimer's security clearance be vacated".

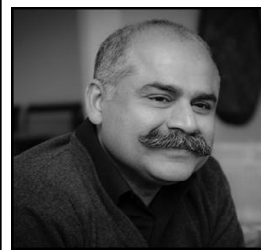
Had Oppenheimer been born in India, he would have been feted like his scientific counterparts the polymath Dr Homi Bhabha, Dr Vikram Sarabhai, and Dr Abdul Kalam who became India's president.

Had Oppenheimer been a Pakistani, he would have shared the indignity suffered by the self-styled father of our bomb, Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan (a claim contested by his nemesis Dr Munir Ahmad Khan).

Since Oppenheimer's time, many countries have amassed large nuclear arsenals, ostensibly to deter their enemies. None has been foolhardy enough to deploy them in combat. Neither the US, nor Russia, China, Israel, North Korea, India nor Pakistan. Prohibitively costly to produce, nuclear weapons are too dangerous to be used (even with a limited objective) without endangering the rest of humanity. They have become the ultimate status symbol, like some gold-plated skeleton — a macabre talking point.

Earlier this year, Pakistan celebrated the 25th anniversary of its first nuclear tests. At a seminar organised by the Institute of Strategic Studies, adviser to the National Command Authority, retired Lt-Gen

War in tea leaves



Shahzad Sharjeel

Can one nation's freedom become a millstone around another's neck? That too across oceans and over mountains as mightily as the Himalayas? The answer, unfortunately, is, yes.

The Brits and their cousins in America had to have their tea. The Chinese would only sell it for silver dollars. The American War of Independence scuttled silver mining. Jack Beeching has meticulously documented in *The Chinese Opium Wars* how by 1781 no silver remittances had reached India for two years. To make matters worse for the East India Company and its patrons in London, opium production of two years from Patna remained unsold. The quadrangle of tea-silver-opium-war came together.

Boston was not just the scene of the Tea Party but also home to clans called Boston Brahmins. These traders — some in their teens — monopolised America's opium trade with China. Amit Ghosh, author of *Smoke and Ashes*, holds that almost all merchant communities in East and West India had their initial capital accumulation through opium. The generally peaceable and philanthropic Parsis were no exception. Rustomjee Cowasjee's clippers 'Sylph' and 'Cowasjee Family' were considered the fastest vessels in the opium trade. In fact, philanthropy is the common hallmark of opium fortunes from India to Holland and from Britain to the US.

Things have a way of coming full circle. After decades of trying to stem the

tide of foreign drugs like heroin, cocaine, ice, etc, the US faces a 'made in America' opioid pandemic. Powerful family names have been tarnished, skeletons are tumbling out of cupboards, and foundation plaques have been removed as university and museum links to opium come to the fore. Poppies are, after all, not just flowers.

The name Abbot, avarice and Americans it appears are destined to be intertwined. The most wanted man on earth was discovered in Abbottabad. Abiel Abbot Low, progenitor of the leading family of entrepreneurs and philanthropists after whom Columbia University's Low Library is named, made his fortune in opium.

Assuming you are hooked by now, let's tell the tale from the beginning. The vernacular term 'posti' (lethargic) is derived from 'post', Persian for the poppy bulb. Another term used for these substance abusers is 'afyonchi', which reflects the drugs' antecedents more closely and precisely. Afyon is a region in Turkey that was famous for its poppy crop in the olden days. Opium's medicinal use is miraculous, especially for pain management amongst the chronically ill, and has been employed for millennia. Opium forms the basis for most other, non-chemical illicit drugs and has posed a major problem for governments for well over a century. Poppy and its main derivative morphine are essential for pharmaceutical purposes, and preventing them from falling into the wrong hands has proved near impossible; the profit margins are just mind-boggling. No other nation knows the debilitating effects of opium dependence like our Chinese friends. No other nation has so brazenly forced it upon a hapless people as the British did from their

colonial perch in India. Two major wars were imposed on China between 1839 to 1860 to force it to not just open its ports for the British ships carrying opium, but making it mandatory for the Chinese to buy this agent of destruction and allow its free use across the land. China lost the Nanking Treaty through which China had to cede Hong Kong.

Availability of illicit drugs and the challenges of managing Pakistan's more than 2600-kilometre-long border with Afghanistan across which all sorts of troubles move back and forth hogs so much of our attention that the lack of sufficient regulation and the res-urgent abuse of over-the-counter opioids is hardly ever mentioned. Visit any pharmacy across the country, diddle about for a while, and start counting the number of people who ask for 'relaxants' but fail to produce any prescription. What makes dozens of medicines open to abuse, unfortunately, is also found, albeit in lower volume, in something that does not require a doctor's prescription, ie, cough syrup.

Drugs, wars, civil unrest and politics go hand in hand. Those calling for a cap, and rightly so, on the range of punishments that can be meted out by military courts, must also think about how various types and quantities of drugs inexplicably show up in the possession of political opponents. Planting 20 kilograms of heroin on a member of the opposition is as bad as ensuring capital punishment, military courts or not. One hopes that our jails become rehab centres for all prisoners, present and future. No one begrudges an occasional mattress, a fan, or a home-cooked meal, but a red line must be drawn against white lines behind bars. - Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

PM urges

Pak-US businessmen to benefit from investment opportunities; highlights SIFC 1-window facility

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday, highlighting the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) as a one-window facility for investors, urged the Pakistani-American businessmen to benefit from the numerous investment opportunities available in Pakistan.

prominent Pakistani-American businessmen and entrepreneurs, who are currently visiting Pakistan, called on him.

He lauded the contributions being made by the successful and vibrant Pakistani-American community.

He said they were contributing to the socio-economic development of their motherland as well as their adopted country but

also serving as a bridge of friendship between Pakistan and the United States. Highlighting Pakistan's geo-economic potential, its strategic location, vast mineral wealth, and population dividend, Prime Minister Shehbaz briefed the delegation about Pakistan's economic recovery plan under the newly constituted SIFC through a whole-of-the-government

approach. He said under the SIFC framework, the government was working on a comprehensive plan to attract investment in the five select fields of agriculture, information technology, mine and minerals, energy, and defence production.



ISLAMABAD: A group of prominent Pakistani-American businessmen and entrepreneurs call on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Saudi extends 1m bpd oil output cut: Ministry

RIYADH (AFP/APP): Saudi Arabia announced Thursday it is extending a voluntary oil production cut of one million barrels per day for another month, keeping up its campaign to prop up prices.

"Saudi Arabia will extend the voluntary cut of one million barrels per day... for another month to include the month of September," the energy ministry said in a statement.

The cut, which first took effect in July, could be further prolonged or even deepened, the energy ministry added. The move

leaves daily production by the world's biggest crude exporter at approximately nine million bpd.

The "voluntary cut comes to reinforce the precautionary efforts made by OPEC Plus countries with the aim of supporting the stability and balance of oil markets," the energy ministry said.

Announcing the cut following a June meeting of the 23-nation OPEC+ alliance, which also includes Russia, Saudi Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman noted that it was potentially "extendable".

Chambers' presidents call for cut in govt expenses, imports with strategy to increase exports

MULTAN (APP): Presidents of Lahore and Multan Chambers of Commerce and Industry on Thursday stressed reducing government expenses, cut in imports and practical steps to increase exports to bring the national economy on the right track.

They expressed these views during a ceremony at the Multan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) organized in honour of a delegation from the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry

(LCCI) led by its president Kashif Noor.

The delegates visited different stalls showcasing products developed by craftsmen at MCCI. They appreciated the craftsmen's work but added that their skill level

could compound further in case of no cuts in expenses and imports, and also stressed on withdrawal of free gas, electricity and other privileges saying these initial steps were imperative for a stronger economy.

"We must take initiatives to increase exports," he said adding that the country was facing a shortage of dollars and export earnings would not only improve reserves position but would also strengthen Rupee.



KARACHI: Regional Chairman FPCCI Muhammad Nadeem Qureshi presenting shield to nominated Pakistan Ambassador to Iran Muhammad Mudassar Tipu during his visit to FPCCI.

Commissioner vows to achieve cotton production target

MULTAN (APP): Cotton Commissioner, ministry of national food security and research, Dr. Zahid Mahmood said on Thursday that Pakistan is expected to meet national cotton production target of 12.65 million bales in 2023-24 pleading that weather conditions were favourable for cotton crop compared to last year.

During a telephonic conversation with Sajid Mahmood, the head of technology transfer wing of Central Cotton Research Institute (CCRI) Multan, Dr. Zahid said that the cotton arrivals report

released by Pakistan Cotton Ginners Association (PCGA), putting the arrivals figure at more than 1.4 million bales, was encouraging, according to a release issued by CCRI Multan spokesman.

He further stated that total 368 cotton ginning factories were operational in Pakistan, 70 more than the previous fortnight, meaning thereby there was steady arrival of seed cotton (Phutti) operations of increased number of factories. This, he added, brought a ray of hope for farmers.

Pakistan's total foreign reserves reach at \$ 13.46b

KARACHI (APP): The total liquid foreign reserves of Pakistan stood at US\$ 13,463.7 million while reserves held by the central bank reached \$ 8,153.8 million.

The State Bank of Pakistan, in a statement issued here on Thursday, informed that SBP's reserves decreased by \$ 32 million to \$ 8,153.8 million on account of debt repayments during the week ending on July 27, 2023.

Meanwhile, net foreign reserves held by commercial banks stood at US\$ 5,309.9 million, it added.

In the previous week ending on July 21, 2023, total liquid foreign reserves held by the country was US\$ 13,534.1 million.

Services' trade deficit narrows by 87% in FY2023

ISLAMABAD (APP): The services' trade deficit shrank by 87.68 percent during the fiscal year 2022-23 as compared to the corresponding period of the previous year, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics reported.

The services trade deficit was recorded at \$719.45 million during July-June (2022-23) against the deficit of \$5,840.11 million during

July-June (2021-22). The exports of services during the period increased by 2.78 percent going up from \$7,102.35 million in 2021-22 to \$7,300.13 million during fiscal year 2022-23, according to PBS data.

On the other hand, the imports declined from \$8,192.46 million to \$8,019.58 million in FY2023, showing negative growth of 38.04 percent.

Gold rates dip by Rs2,800 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs2,800 and was sold at Rs.220,200 on Thursday against its sale at Rs.223,000 on the previous day. All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported. The price of 10 grams of 24-karat gold also decreased by Rs2,401 to Rs 188,786 from Rs191,187 whereas the price of 10 gram 22 karat gold dipped to Rs173,054 from Rs. 175,254.

Over 1.4m bales of cotton arrival recorded at ginneries till Aug 1 in Pakistan

MULTAN (APP): Seed Cotton (Phutti) equivalent to over 1.4 million (1,428,638) bales have reached ginning factories across Pakistan till Aug 1, 2023 with major contribution of over one million bales recorded from Sindh owing to early picking and its Sanghar district alone attracting more than half of the total arrivals so far.

According to a fortnightly report of Pakistan Cotton Ginners Association (PCGA) issued to media on Thursday, Punjab ginning factories recorded cotton arrival figure of 388,568 bales while arrivals to ginneries in Sindh recorded at one million plus (1,040,070) bales including 721,149 reaching ginneries in Sanghar district alone.

Caretaker CM inspects Mozang, Civil Lines police stations

Independent Report
LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi conducted thorough inspection of Mozang and Civil Lines police stations on Thursday. He was accompanied by Provincial Information Minister Amir Mir.

He was disheartened to find that both police stations were in a state of disarray, with poor cleanliness and dysfunctional front desks. The staff's inability to provide satisfactory responses to the chief minister's queries further highlighted the issues at hand. What made matters

even more distressing were the grievances expressed by people at the police stations. One particular incident involved a young motorcyclist, who shared a troubling experience with the caretaker CM. The boy narrated how he was unjustly detained by the police while on an errand to buy daily-use items. The police demanded bribe from him and he was only released after succumbing to their extortion demand.

Taking immediate action, the chief minister took the boy to the front desk to thoroughly investigate the matter. Testimonies from other

staff members confirmed that Constable Naveed was involved in extorting money from him. Incensed by this revelation, CM Mohsin Naqvi ordered immediate arrest of the corrupt constable and ensured that the bribe money was returned to the hapless boy. Furthermore, the CM issued instructions for departmental action against the accused constable. Expressing his deep displeasure at the deplorable state of the two police stations, he promptly directed the IG police to implement necessary improvements within three days.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali presenting relief cheque to Senator Abdur Rasheed and Deputy Commissioner Bajaur for blast victims of Bajaur.

North Waziristan delegation calls on Governor Punjab

LAHORE (APP): A delegation led by Member National Assembly (MNA) Nazir Khan met Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman and discussed varied affairs including current political situation in the country during a meeting at the Governor's House here on Thursday.

Speaking on the occasion, Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that speedy work on CPEC projects, establishment of Special Economic Zones and inauguration of various development projects are a practical example of the

government's determination to stabilize the country economically.

The Governor Punjab said whenever Pakistan started to get stronger economically, anti state elements became active to derail the process of development. He strongly condemned the Bajaur blast, extended condolences to the bereaved families, and prayed for the elevation of ranks of those who lost their lives in the blast.

He said that the nation and security forces made lasting sacrifices in the war against terrorism and eradicated the scourge of terrorism.

76th I-Day to be celebrated with national zeal

BAHAWALPUR (APP): A meeting was held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Bahawalpur Zaheer Anwar Jappa in the committee room of his office to review the arrangements related to Pakistan Independence Day celebrations.

On this occasion, President Bahawalpur Chamber of Commerce and Industry Chaudhry Zulfiqar Maan, Additional Deputy Commissioner Headquarters Sumera Rabbani, Additional Deputy Commissioner General Naem Sadiq Cheema, and officers of relevant departments attended the meeting.

KP CM chairs meeting to take detail review of census 2023

PESHAWAR (APP): An important meeting was held here with caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan in the chair to take a detailed review of the Census, 2023 to the extent of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Advisor to Chief Minister for Finance Himayatullah Khan, Additional Chief Secretary Zubair Asghar Qureshi, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister Amjad Ali Khan, Administrative Secretaries of the concerned departments, Provincial Census Commissioner, Director Bureau of Statistics Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and other relevant officials attended the meeting.

He was briefed in detail about the mechanism and methodology adopted for the Census, 2023 and other related matters.

It was told that for the first time in the history of Pakistan, modern technology was used in the Census. It was further informed that the entire Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was divided into more than 28000 blocks for the purpose of census adding that the final statistics of the census would be presented in the Council of Common Interest (CCI) for approval. It was decided in the meeting to form a committee headed by the Home Secretary with the purpose to examine and check the results of the census with ground realities.

Allocation of Rs 471bln for BISP shows govt sincerity: Minister

SARGODHA (APP): State Minister for Production and Industries Tasneem Ahmed Qureshi has said that the coalition government allocated huge funds for the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) in the recent budget 2023-2024 which showed its sincerity to end poverty in the country.

Talking to APP here on Thursday, he said Pakistan People's Party (PPP) had played crucial role for increasing the BISP allocations. He said the PPP had a vision for

development of the poor since its formation by former premier Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

He said the BISP Board, under the supervision of Federal Minister Shazia Marri, approved the huge amount for financial year 2023-2024. Out of total allocation, Rs 361.5 million would be spent on 9.3 million families under the Benazir Kifalat Programme, whereas 1.5 million beneficiaries would get Rs 32.27 billion under the BISP growth programme.

8 dead, 1,195 injured in Punjab road accidents

LAHORE (APP): At least eight persons were killed and 1,195 others injured in 1,107 road traffic crashes (RTCs) in Punjab during the last 24 hours.

As many as 607 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 588 with minor injuries were treated at the incident site by the rescue medical teams.

The analysis showed that 601 drivers, 46 underage drivers, 136 pedestrians, and 466 passengers were among the victims of the road traffic crashes.

Iranian CG shows interest as CPEC partner

PESHAWAR (APP): Iranian Consul General in Peshawar, Ali Banafsha Khawa, while reaffirming Iran's unwavering commitment to regional peace and stability, has emphasized Iran's keen interest in becoming an active participant in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project, underscoring the importance of cooperation among regional nations for mutual progress and prosperity.

The Iranian Consul General expressed these views during a conversation with media persons during his visit to Peshawar Press Club on Thursday. During

the visit, the Iranian diplomat participated in a Meet the Press event alongside esteemed members of the PPC. The gathering facilitated open discussions on various subjects, including the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), Iran-Pakistan trade relations, and fostering people-to-people contact between the two neighboring nations.

During the event, the Consul General while responding to different questions on the Iran-Pakistan Gas Pipeline project stated that Iran had completed its part of the pipeline and now it was incumbent on Pakistan.

Three people die in separate incidents

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): Three people were killed in two separate incidents that took place here Thursday.

In the first incident, two laborers died after receiving electric shocks at a private colony when a lift in which they were taking up construction materials to a rooftop of an under-construction house touched with electricity wires. In the second incident, the Rescue 1122 spokesman said a man who was identified as Shah Nawaz died when unknown persons opened fire at him at Drabon Chugi.

PFA DG inaugurates Model Food Carts, distributes food kits

LAHORE: Punjab Food Authority (PFA) Director General Raja Jahangir Anwar inaugurated Model Food Carts (MFC) and distributed free of cost food kits and disposable

to ensure food hygiene. He said that training sessions will also be arranged for small food points including tandoor, roadsides carts and food pedlars. He said that the purpose of the training is



vessels among 291 food peddlers on Thursday.

On the occasion, he has directed food business operators (FBOs) to ensure the hygiene principles at roadside carts, 'dhabas' and food points because a large number of people visited these sites to beat hunger on a daily basis.

He further said that a continuous checking process will be continued

to be aware food handlers regarding personal hygiene and safe food preparation.

The director general said that the purpose of the PFA is to bring reforms in food industry. All resources will be utilized to ensure the availability of safe, quality and standard food to the people. Despite the awareness, strict action will be taken against those FBO who sell substandard food, he added.



LAHORE: A delegation led by Member National Assembly from North Waziristan, Nazir Khan, meeting with Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman at Governor House.

International News

China hints leaders started annual seaside vacation in flood-hit province

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: Chinese President Xi Jinping's chief of staff met with experts holidaying at Beidaihe on Thursday, a signal that typically means top leaders have started their vacation at the seaside resort, even as large areas of northern China remain flooded.

The summer retreat comes as questions continue to swirl around the unexplained removal as foreign minister of Qin Gang, a former rising star under Xi's patronage, the abrupt replacement of the top brass at the People's Liberation Army Rocket Force, and as the leadership struggles to find the right tools to stimulate the economy.

Beidaihe has traditionally provided a relaxed setting for retired Chinese Communist Party leaders to interact and raise concerns with the current leadership. But as Xi has consolidated power over the past decade, the scope for elders to speak their minds has shrunk, said a Chinese scholar who declined to be named as he is not authorized to speak to foreign media.

Cai Qi, who is Xi's chief of staff, met with 57 technology experts on vacation at Beidaihe and urged them to do more to make China technologically self-reliant, state news agency Xinhua reported.

China does not announce when leaders go on holiday but typically indicates the start of their vacation with an announcement about meeting experts. Leaders then disappear from public view for about two weeks.

It is unclear if Qin, who would be qualified to holiday at Beidaihe with the leadership since he retains the title of state councillor, will turn up. Qin has not been seen in public since June 25.

One of Xi's last tasks before going on vacation was to instruct emergency responders to work harder at rescuing those affected by floods battering northern China as a result of Typhoon Doksuri.



Rescue workers from Shanxi province evacuate people through floodwaters with a boat after the rains and floods brought by remnants of Typhoon Doksuri, in Zhuozhou, Hebei province, China.

Dozens of states to pledge to combat use of food as weapon of war

Monitoring Desk
UNITED NATIONS: More than 75 countries will "commit to take action to end the use of food as a weapon of war and the starvation of civilians as a tactic of warfare" by backing a U.S.-drafted communique at the United Nations on Thursday, senior U.S. officials said.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken will release the communique on Thursday when he

chairs a U.N. Security Council meeting on famine and food insecurity caused by conflict. A senior U.S. official said more countries were expected to sign.

Blinken will also announce some \$362 million in new U.S. funding to "tackle the drivers of food insecurity and enhance resilience" in nearly a dozen African countries and Haiti, said a second senior U.S. official.

At least 15 thought to be dead after bus crash in Mexico, officials say

Monitoring Desk
MEXICO CITY: At least 15 people are thought to have died and 21 more injured in a bus crash in the Mexican state of Nayarit in the early hours of Thursday, state officials said. Local media had earlier reported that as many as 24 could have died when the passenger bus crashed off the highway into a ravine in western Mexico.



Mongolian Prime Minister Oyun-Erdene Luvsannamsrai gesturing in front of Mongolia's flag and a portrait of the country's national hero Genghis Khan while speaking to Reuters correspondent Simon Lewis in an interview at the Mongolian embassy in Washington, U.S.

UN given green light to monitor peace deal between Colombia's government and its largest rebel group

Monitoring Desk
UNITED NATIONS: The Security Council on Wednesday unanimously authorized the U.N. political mission in Colombia to help verify implementation of a cease-fire agreement between the government and the country's largest remaining guerrilla group, the National Liberation Army.

The council also expressed willingness to do

the same if a cease-fire is reached with another armed group, the Estado Mayor Central.

The U.N. has been monitoring a 2016 peace accord between the government and Colombia's then largest rebel group, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC. It ended more than 50 years of war in which over 220,000 people died and nearly 6 million people

were displaced. More than 14,000 FARC fighters gave up their weapons under that agreement, but violence between some rebel groups has grown in parts of Colombia.

Colombia's government asked the council to extend the U.N. mission's verification mandate to include the June cease-fire deal with the National Liberation Army.

Trudeau and wife announce separation after 18 years

Monitoring Desk
OTTAWA: Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his wife Sophie said on Wednesday they were separating in an unexpected announcement that appeared to mark the end of the couple's 18-year high-profile marriage.

Trudeau, 51, and Sophie Gregoire-Trudeau, 48, were married in late May 2005. They have three children.

after many meaningful and difficult conversations, we have made the decision to separate," Trudeau said on Instagram. Sophie posted an almost identical message on her own Instagram account.

Trudeau's office said the two had signed a legal agreement. "They have worked to ensure that all legal and ethical steps with regards to their decision to separate have been taken, and will continue to do so moving forward," it said.

Russia adds Norway to list of countries 'unfriendly' to its diplomats

Monitoring Desk
NEW YORK: Russia has added Norway to its list of foreign states that have committed so-called "unfriendly" acts against Russian diplomatic missions, news agencies reported on Thursday.

Countries on the list are limited in the number of local staff they can hire in Russia, with Norway restricted to 27, state news agency RIA Novosti said.

Ukraine accuses Russia of damaging 40,000 tonnes of grain

Monitoring Desk
KYIV: Russia damaged almost 40,000 tonnes of grain in an overnight strike on southern Ukrainian ports near the Danube river, Kyiv's infrastructure minister said on Wednesday.

"The Russians attacked warehouses and grain elevators — almost 40,000 tonnes of grain were damaged," Minister Oleksandr Kubrakov said in an English-language post on social media.

Kubrakov added that the grain was destined for some African countries, China and Israel, and accused Russia of using Iranian drones to carry out the

attack. "These are the very ports that have become the foundation of global food security today," he said.

The port, across the river from Nato-member Romania, is the main alternative route out of Ukraine for grain exports, since Russia's blockade halted traffic at Ukraine's Black Sea ports in mid-July. Video released by the Ukrainian authorities showed firefighters on ladders battling a huge blaze several stories high in a building covered with broken windows. Several other large buildings were in ruins, and grain spilled out of at least two wrecked silos.



Greenpeace activists hold a banner while others cover British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's £2m manor house in oil-black fabric in protest of his backing for a major expansion of North Sea oil and gas drilling amidst a summer of escalating climate impacts, in Yorkshire, Britain.

Four Nigerians, rescued in Brazil, survived 14 days on a ship's rudder

Monitoring Desk
SAO PAULO: On their tenth day at sea, the four Nigerian stowaways crossing the Atlantic in a tiny space above the rudder of a cargo ship ran out of food and drink.

They survived another four days, according to their account, by drinking the sea water crashing just meters below them, before being rescued by Brazilian federal police in the southeastern port of Vitoria.

Their remarkable, death-defying journey across some 5,600 kilometers (3,500 miles) of ocean underlines the risks some migrants are prepared to take for a shot at a better life.

"It was a terrible experience for me," said 38-year-old Thankgod Opemipo Matthew Yeye, one of the four Nigerians, in an interview at a Sao Paulo church shelter. "On board it is not easy. I was shaking, so scared. But I'm here."

Health insurance for journalists, artists step forward to equitable Pakistan: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said that the introduction of a health insurance facility for journalists and artists was a step forward to achieving the milestone of an equitable Pakistan as dreamt by Qaid-e-Azam. He was addressing the ceremony of agreement signing between the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and State Life Insurance Corporation for providing health insurance cards to journalists, media workers, and artists as well as technical workers associated with the film industry.

The prime minister said the agreement was of utmost importance as it addressed the media men

and artists who worked hard, even sometimes during tough working conditions, but remained deprived of basic amenities in their lives. However, the government would provide them with health insurance coverage through budgetary allocations under the PM Program. Calling her a "moving spirit" the prime minister appreciated the key role of Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyu Aurangzeb to launch the said insurance facility.

He recalled that during Nawaz Sharif's tenure, health insurance card was launched on a massive scale, and at that time, the Punjab government also implemented his vision.

He said the health insurance card was a gift for the downtrodden people who could not afford costly medical treatments.

The prime minister said no one would have objected to the previous government's health insurance facility if it was not meant to patronise the private hospitals. He said the across-the-board facility was misused as even some greedy healthy people misused that card to mint money, in connivance with the hospitals. The prime minister shared that in 2003 he suffered a fatal disease and had to spend around Rs8 million at a US hospital which was in no way affordable for the poor.

He said in order to provide equitable health fa-

ilities, Nawaz Sharif had established Pakistan Kidney and Liver Institute where 1,000 liver and kidney transplant procedures had been completed. The facility provides free treatment to the poor and charges the rich ones to help provide cross-subsidy.

He said the Nawaz Sharif-led government also introduced free medicine facilities at hospitals.

"This is the human service... This is the equality for which Pakistan was made but this is still a far cry," he remarked. He also lamented the suspension of free CT scan facilities provided at the district level, while he was Punjab chief minister, as the government had signed an agreement.



ISLAMABAD: Principal Information Officer Mobashir Hassan and Executive Director of State Life Insurance Corporation Shahid Iqbal Baloch exchanging documents after signing an agreement for the provision of health insurance to working journalists and media workers associated with the media houses of Pakistan. Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Information Minister Ms Marriyu Aurangzeb witnessing the ceremony.



ISLAMABAD: The 67th meeting of the National Logistics Board (NLB). Chaired by Chairman NLB, the honourable Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives (PDSI), Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, the meeting was attended by other members of the apex logistics body.

67th Meeting of National Logistics Board held

ISLAMABAD (Online): The 67th meeting of the National Logistics Board (NLB) was held on Thursday. Chaired by Chairman NLB, the Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives (PDSI), Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, the meeting was attended by other members of the apex logistics body.

administrative and financial matters of the organization.

The Board was apprised of NLC's regional connectivity initiatives under Transport Internationaux Routiers (TIR), and the bilateral trade agreements with China, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkey.

Lieutenant General Muhammad Ali, Quartermaster General Pakistan Army / Officer In-Charge (OIC) NLC, and Major General Farrukh Shahzad Rao, Director General NLC, apprised the participants on the operational,

The Board was informed that NLC has so far completed 14 trips to these countries in past one year while preparations are being made to undertake 2 more trips to Kazakhstan & Kyrgyzstan through China.

Rana Tanveer says

Operational universities without NOCs risking students' future

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training Rana Tanveer Hussain on Thursday emphasized the paramount importance of fulfilling legal prerequisites and obtaining a 'No Objection Certificate' for the establishment of universities rather than putting the future of students at risk.

Speaking here at National Assembly, the minister stressed the significance of obtaining official approval, specifically the No Objection Certificate (NOC) from the Higher Education Com-

mission (HEC), prior to granting charter approval. He expressed concern over several universities operating without the necessary NOC, despite having charter approval. This incongruence has led to the issuance of degrees that lack the HEC's attestation, rendering them essentially void. The minister underscored that degrees from such institutions hold no credibility and leave students, their families, and guardians in a state of distress even after completion of degree despite heavy financial investment.

Candlelight vigil held to pay tribute to martyred policemen

Independent Report

ISLAMABAD: A candlelight vigil was organised by Islamabad Capital Police at Shuhada monument to pay tribute to martyred policemen and express solidarity with their families.



The candlelight vigil/demonstration was attended by Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPPO) Dr Akbar Nasir, CPO Headquarters, senior police officials, and Shuhada families. The participants lit the candles and offered 'Fateh' for the departed souls of martyrs.

ICCPPO Dr Akbar Nasir Khan said that the nation is indebted to martyrs who laid down their lives for security of the country and today's ceremony was being held to pay tributes to them.

He expressed profound gratitude to martyred policemen for their unwavering dedication, emphasizing that their memory will forever be etched in the hearts of the entire nation.

"This program serves as a symbol of our unyielding commitment to honor and support the families of our brave martyrs," stated ICCPO Dr Akbar Nasir Khan. "Their sacrifices will never be forgotten, and we pledge to uphold their legacy by continuing our relentless pursuit of safeguarding our beloved country."

Highlighting the commitment of Islamabad capital police towards the welfare of its officials, Dr Akbar Nasir Khan affirmed, "We consider the martyrs as a cherished asset of our police department and the entire nation. They are our pride, our benefactors, and their memory shall forever remain alive within us."

We stand united with our police personnel on every occasion and will forever honor the eternal sacrifices made by those who laid down their lives for the safety of our citizens."

Dar reiterates govt's support to promote sports activities

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar here on Thursday reiterated government's support and cooperation to encourage sports activities, especially Cricket which is becoming more popular among youth.

He was talking to a delegation of Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) headed by Chairman Muhammad Zaka Ashraf that called on the minister here. Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Revenue, Tariq Mehmood Pasha and senior officers from Finance and PCB team also attended the meeting.

The minister also extended full cooperation of the government to make the Asia Cup 2023 event successful, according to press statement issued by finance ministry.

LHC grants bail to Afridi

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Lahore High Court Rawalpindi bench on Thursday granted bail to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Shehryar Khan Afridi allegedly involved in the Military General Headquarters (GHQ) attack case.

The LHC Justice Anwar-ul-Haq Pannu while hearing the case dismissed the 14 days' detention orders of Deputy Commissioner Rawalpindi and ordered Afridi's immediate release.

The court also granted protective bail to Shehryar Khan Afridi in the wheat theft case at Bahawalpur police station.

August 5 one of darkest chapters in Kashmir's history: Saghar

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Convener of All Parties Hurriyat Conference Azad Jammu and Kashmir (APHC-AJK) chapter, Mahmood Ahmed Saghar terming August 5 as one of the darkest chapters of Jammu and Kashmir's recent history said the Kashmiris do not accept Modi-led Indian government's illegal actions it had taken on the day in 1919 in violation of the UN resolutions.

According to the rules, the complaint against the judge is submitted to the Chairman of the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC). The Chairman of the Council shall send a member of the Council to examine the said information or complaint and express his opinion. "In my case, according to media reports,

President urges efforts to deepen Pak-Iran ties in trade, culture

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday called for efforts to deepen and widen the relationship between Pakistan and Iran, particularly in the areas of trade, economy, culture, and people-to-people contacts.

The president, talking to Pakistan's Ambassador-designate to Iran Mudassar Tipu, who called on him here, underlined that Iran was a brotherly neighbouring country and Pakistan greatly valued its relationship with Iran rooted in history, culture, and religion.

He underscored that in the regional context, it was important that efforts were reinforced to highlight the plight of hapless people living in the Indian Illegal Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) to the Iranian people, adding that Iran had supported the causes of justice and equity.

The ambassador-designate maintained that he was determined to further solidify Pakistan-Iran ties and, in the emerging geopolitical developments, elevate those ties to new heights exploring their full potential.

PM expresses displeasure over awarding Serena underpass construction contract to railway, quits ceremony

ISLAMABAD (Online): Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif expressed annoyance over awarding contract of construction of Serena underpass to Railway and left the foundation stone laying ceremony besides ordering to issue tenders paper again in regard to this project.

PM reached the foundation stone laying ceremony of the project of Serena Chowk underpass. He was given short briefing on the project.

Chairman CDA Noor ul Amin Mengal gave briefing that a company of railway will complete this underpass.

The PM expressed displeasure over awarding the contract of construction of Serena Chowk underpass to railway. He chided chairman CDA and secretary Railway.

PM said it is not Railway job to construct roads and underpasses. The performance of railway is before all of us.

PM cancelled the foundation stone laying ceremony besides ordering to issue tenders of the project again. PM left his chair in displeasure saying new tenders be issued. In the light of it best committee be selected. PM left the ceremony with issuing new directives.



ISLAMABAD: Members of Chinese delegation travelling by the coaches given by the Chinese government in connection with 10 years celebration of CPEC at Margalla Railway Station, in Federal Capital.

Justice Mazahir Naqvi pens letter to CJP

ISLAMABAD (Online) Supreme Court Judge, Justice Mazahir Ali Naqvi, has said in a letter addressed to the Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) that according to reports, frivolous and non-serious complaints have been filed against him. These complaints are part of a malicious campaign against the judiciary.

It is alleged that the property is valued higher than the value shown in the revenue records and income tax returns.

According to the rules, the complaint against the judge is submitted to the Chairman of the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC). The Chairman of the Council shall send a member of the Council to examine the said information or complaint and express his opinion. "In my case, according to media reports,

the matter was referred to Justice Sardar Tariq Masood on May 29 to express his opinion on the complaint. It is a matter of record that the said judge wrote two letters to the members of the Supreme Judicial Council and me on April 3 and 26, the letter expressed his impatience and eagerness to initiate proceedings before the Supreme Judicial Council said Justice Mazahir Ali Naqvi in a letter written to CJP.

He further said that this behavior of the judge was not only surprising but also unprecedented, never before has any member of the Supreme Judicial Council acted in this manner.

It is also worth noting that several complaints against the present judges are pending with the Secretary of the Supreme Judicial Council.

NA body on HR urges govt for removal of civil judge on alleged torture

ISLAMABAD (Online): The National Assembly Standing Committee on Human Rights, expressing grave concern over alleged torture of underage housemaid Rizwana by the wife of a Civil Judge, urged that the Ministry of Law and Justice should immediately initiate the process for removal from service of the said Civil Judge. 26th meeting of the Standing Committee on Human Rights was held today at the Parliament House Islamabad under the Chairpersonship of Dr. Mehreen Razaq Bhutto, MNA.

The Committee was briefly apprised by the Chairperson of National Commission on the Rights of Children (NCRC), about the unfortunate incident occurred with an innocent girl named Rizwana who was a maid in the house of

Civil Judge. She further informed the Committee that the incident was happened on 24th July, 2023, and reported in media after 2 days. Initially, the FIR was very weak however on the basis of Medico Legal Report, some more sections were added in the FIR to further strengthen the case. The DIG, ICT Police, also endorsed the statement of the chairperson NCRC.

Chairperson of the Standing Committee, while referring the Articles No. 3, 11, 23, 25-A, 35 and 37 (a) of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan 1973, held that the unfortunate incident was clear-cut violation of the human rights therefore there was a need to give maximum punishment to the responsible(s). She urged the Ministry of Law and Justice to play their

role as per Judicial Code of Conduct, take all possible measures for the punitive action(s) against the Civil Judge and submit report to the Committee. The Committee however directed the DIG, ICT Police, to undertake an impartial inquiry; ignoring all sorts of pressures, finalize the report and submit to the Committee at the earliest possible. The Committee further directed the Ministry of Human Rights to give their input on the draft policy; prepared by Child Rights Commission, and submit the same to the Committee in the next meeting to be held on 7th August, 2023.

The Committee also expressed displeasure over the non-attendance of meeting by Secretary, Ministry of Law and Justice and held that such a non-serious and unprofessional attitude.

Law minister inaugurates blocks of IBC complex

ISLAMABAD (Online): Minister for Law and Justice, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar Thursday inaugurated the extended blocks of Islamabad Bar Council (IBC) complex.

Talking to newsmen on the occasion, the minister said that a part of the happy ending came to me, adding that it was a fundamental right of the legal fraternity.

He said that the Constitution was superior to everybody and judges were more bound to follow it.

The minister said that a good system should be developed for the next generations, adding that attitude is the problem, to correct attitude, he said that the lawyers are the main component for the development of the country, adding that if they fight for the rights of others then their rights should also be heard.

PAC directs MoWR to complete ongoing projects

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) on Thursday directed the Ministry of Water Resources to complete its ongoing various projects within the stipulated time to yield desirous results. Chairing PAC meeting, Chairman Noor Alam Khan said that the Ministry of Water Resources had launched several projects in the last 20 years but it could not complete a single project during the period.

The committee had shown serious concern over the non-attendance of the meeting by the Secretary Ministry of Water Resources and urged the authorities concerned to apprise him to appear before PAC in the next meeting.

"We will write a letter of displeasure to the Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Water Resources to take actions against the officials and ask them to appear before the committee to settle the audit paras," Noor Alam Khan added.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar along with SAPM on Interior and Legal Affairs Attaullah Tarar inaugurated the Extended Blocks of Islamabad Bar Council Complex at Federal Judicial Complex.

Senate body wants LHC CJ intervention in IUB drugs, video scandal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senate Standing Committee on Federal Education and Professional Training Thursday decided to approach Chief Justice (CJ) Lahore High Court (LHC) requesting him to constitute a commission to probe into the Islamia University Bahawalpur (IUB) drugs and video Scandals issue.

The committee that met here with Irfan-ul-Haq Siddiqui in the chair decided to address the matter by writing a letter to the LHC CJ, urging the consti-

tution of a judicial commission to conduct a thorough inquiry.

The IUB Vice-Chancellor briefed the Senate body regarding concerning issues of drug sales, scandals, exploitation, and dissemination of obscene material involving students and teachers on Campus.

He informed the committee about ongoing investigations by the Punjab Higher Education Department and a special inquiry committee established by the CM Punjab.



ISLAMABAD: A view of the broken shed of Blue Line Bus Stop at Express Way, which needs the attention of concern authority.

Islamabad police arrest two suspects in child abuse cases

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Police have apprehended two individuals connected to cases of abuse, securing their remand from the respective courts to facilitate ongoing investigations.

Utilizing advanced scientific and technological methods, the SSOI Unit of Islamabad Capital Police, in collaboration with Shahzad Town Police, diligently traced and detained two suspects implicated in the heinous act of assaulting two young girls.

All suspects are currently in custody, with their remand granted by the relevant court to facilitate further in-depth inquiries.

On May 30, 2023, Hazar Gul, son of Satar Gul residing near 'Deputian' in close proximity to Maryam Masjid within the jurisdiction of Shahzad Town police station, filed a complaint concerning the sexual abuse of his eight-year-old daughter by an unidentified individual.

Promptly registering the case under the appropriate legal provisions, Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan promptly intervened and entrusted CPO/DIG Operations Syed Shahzad Nadeem Bukhari with the responsibility of ensuring the swift apprehension of the perpetrator.



Federal Minister for Human Rights, Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada chaired the 4th Meeting of National Committee for Implementation of UNCRPD, Incheon Strategy & Other International Commitments Pertaining to Disability at the Ministry of Human Rights in Islamabad