

# Independent

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## Pakistan, Iran agree to strengthen cultural, people-to-people linkages

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Iran on Friday agreed to strengthen cultural linkages and people-to-people contacts to further bring the two brotherly countries closer.

Both sides also emphasized the need for taking measures to enhance cooperation in the area of tourism to its fullest potential.

The bilateral relations were discussed in a meeting between President Dr Arif Alvi and the visiting Iranian Minister for Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, Seyed Ezzatollah Zarghami, who along with the members of his delegation, called on him at the Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Ambassador of Iran to Pakistan Reza Amiri Moghadam was also

present on the occasion. Welcoming the delegation, the president said that Pakistan greatly valued its relations with Iran, which were based on historic, cultural and religious bonds.

He appreciated the steps taken by the Iranian government for the facilitation of Pakistani pilgrims visiting the holy shrines in Iran.

The meeting exchanged views on the rising cases of Islamophobia in the world and called for collective efforts to prevent such incidents.

The president remarked that both countries enjoyed good relations and had similar views on the issues of Islamophobia, Jammu and Kashmir, and Palestine.

He informed the visiting dignitary about the anti-Muslim policies of India, particularly in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) where the Indian security forces had unleashed a reign of terror, and were persecuting Muslims.

He also thanked the Iranian leadership for supporting Pakistan's stance on the Jammu and Kashmir dispute.

Congratulating the Iranian leadership and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman, over the normalization of relations between the two countries, the president expressed the hope that the breakthrough in their relations would not only benefit the two countries but also the entire region.



RAWALPINDI: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif along with Services Chiefs and Federal Ministers inaugurating National Aerospace Science and Technology Park

## IHC sets aside trial court verdict declaring PTI chief's Toshakhana reference 'maintainable'

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Friday dismissed the decision of the trial court regarding the admissibility of toshakhana criminal case and remanded the case back to the additional session court for rehearing.

The court also rejected the appeals seeking to stay the proceeding in toshakhana case and the shifting of case to another court. The bench also served notices to the respondents on another appeal regarding production of witnesses and seeking to restore the right of defence of the accused.

Chief Justice Aamer Farooq issued the written order regarding the termination of lower court's verdict pertaining maintainability of the criminal case against the former prime minister. The court also instructed the trial court to also give answers

to the question raised in the appeal while announcing its fresh verdict about the admissibility of the case.

The court rejected the appeal for transfer of the criminal case to another court and said that as per the verdicts of the high courts in similar matters a case could only be shifted to the alternative court on the basis of solid reasons.

The written order said that the petitioner had raised the objection against the trial court judge due to his alleged Facebook posts about the case. The trial court judge had also rejected the plea seeking to shift the case to another court.

It further said that the ECP's lawyer was of the view that the Facebook posts associated with the judge were fake. It had been done to damage the repute of the court, he said.

## Pakistan's scenic beauty can be turned into a great opportunity: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday said that being rich with immense scenic beauty, particularly the Northern Areas, Pakistan could turn the resources into a great opportunity.

The prime minister was addressing the launching ceremony of the "Salam Pakistan" brand and e-portal that would help promote tourist attractions across the world and guide tourists.

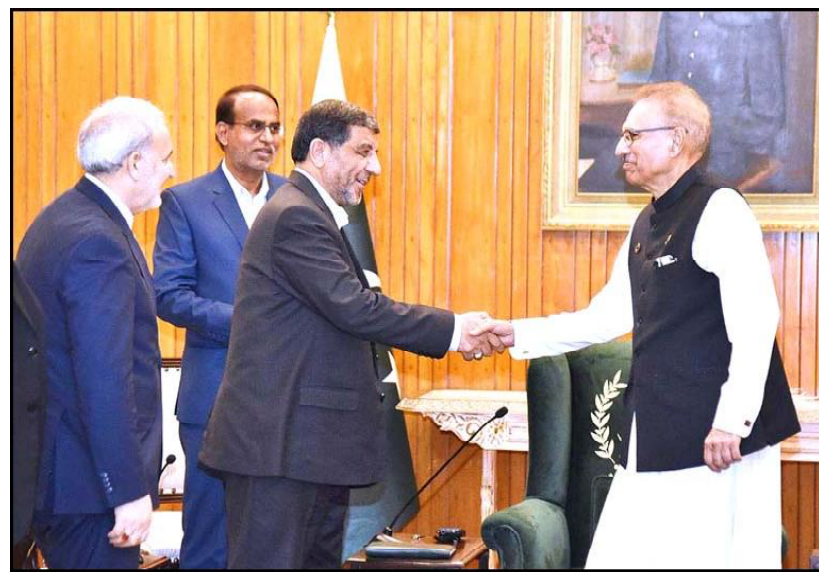
He said Pakistan was a great place for promoting tourism and cultural heritage.

He instructed his Advisor on Tourism Awn Chaudhry to do maximum efforts to promote tourism, though the government was about to complete its term very soon.

Prime Minister Shehbaz instructed the advisors as well as the government officers not to interact merely with their counterparts but also those from other countries which had excelled in tourism, cultural heritage and other fields. "Allah Almighty blessed our country with great natural resources of scenic beauty all over Northern Areas, which can be converted into a great opportunity," he remarked.

In his address, Advisor to Prime Minister of Pakistan on Tourism and Sports Awn Chaudhry said to promote the soft image of the country worldwide, the PTDC had developed a well-coordinated strategic approach for best utilization of the available resources with focus on building the image of Pakistan as one of most tourist friendly countries in Asia.

He said the launching of Tourism Brand for Pakistan was an important step in achieving the goal. The name "SALAM PAKISTAN" is selected as Tourism Brand for Pakistan. The objectives of Tourism Brand of Pakistan include building the image and perception of Pakistan as a safe, secure, friendly and hospitable nation, promoting the country as an attractive tourist destination, especially for international tourists, projecting recreational, mountaineering, adventure, cultural, religious, historical, cuisine, geographical and other tourism related aspects of Pakistan and highlighting diversities of the provinces, regions, cities etc., variety of food, accommodation, travel, communication and infrastructure facilities etc.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi welcomes the Iranian Minister for Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, Seyed Ezzatollah Zarghami, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

## Talents like you make us all proud; COAS tells World Junior Squash Champ

Army will continue to support young talent



RAWALPINDI (APP): Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir on Friday met World Junior Squash Champion Mohammad Hamza Khan here at General Headquarters (GHQ).

According to the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release, the COAS congratulated the young champion for his outstanding achievement that brought honour for the country.

"Talents like you make us all proud and your great achievement also underscores the great potential that this nation has", the COAS remarked.

The COAS also said, "Army will continue to support the young talent in the country and promised to provide him full support in academic pursuit and sports."

The COAS emphasized, "Our youth is the future of this country and with focus, dedication and hard work there is nothing that Pakistan cannot accomplish."

## India cannot suppress legitimate struggle of Kashmiris: Kaira

ISLAMABAD (APP): Advisor to the Prime Minister on Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Qamar Zaman Kaira Friday said India cannot suppress the legitimate struggle of the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

Addressing a press conference, he said Pakistan will not allow India to succeed in its nefarious designs to turn the Muslim majority into the minority in the IIOJK. Rahmani said according to the United Nations Charter, Kashmir has a separate identity and India's claims on Kashmir

were false. Flanked by Kashmiri leaders, he said Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari presented the Kashmir cause in a befitting manner at all international forums even during his visit to India.

The Advisor to Prime Minister said the Kashmir dispute was not an issue between Hindus and Muslims, rather it was a just freedom cause of the people residing over there.

Kaira regretted that India is giving the impression that Kashmir is an issue between Hindus and Muslims through propaganda.



ISLAMABAD: Incumbent Advisor to Prime Minister on Kashmir Affairs, Qamar Zaman Kaira addresses press conference.

## Kashmiris to observe Youm-e-Istehsal today

ISLAMABAD (INP): Kashmiris on both sides of the Line of Control and world over will observe Youm-e-Istehsal tomorrow to send a clear message to New Delhi government that Kashmiris outrightly reject actions taken by Modi-led Indian government on August 5, 2019 and illegal occupation of their homeland.

Scores of events including seminars, protest rallies, screening video documentaries, photo exhibitions exposing Indian brutalities on Kashmiri people, have been organized across the country.

## China calls for proper, peaceful resolution of Kashmir issue

BEIJING (APP): China on Friday reiterated its clear and consistent position on the Kashmir issue ahead of "Yaum-e-Istehsal-e-Kashmir", and called for proper and peaceful resolution of the long-standing issue under the United Nations (UN) Charter, UN Security Council's resolutions and bilateral agreements.

"China's position on the Kashmir issue is consistent and clear. This issue is a dispute left over from history between India and Pakistan, and should be resolved in accordance with the UN Charter, relevant UN Security Council's resolutions and bilateral agreements in a properly and peaceful manner," a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson said.

## Shehbaz summons CCI meeting today

ISLAMABAD (INP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has summoned Council of Common Interests (CCI) meeting today (Saturday).

The meeting will be headed by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif at 12 (noon). Chief ministers of the four provinces and federal ministers will participate in the meeting. A report regarding the new digital census recently conducted in the country will be presented during the meeting. The provinces will present their stance on the digital census.

## PM inaugurates Aerospace Science & Technology Park

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Friday inaugurated the National Aerospace Science and Technology Park (NASTP) established with the collaboration among the government, international companies and private sector.

Speaking at the inaugural ceremony, he appreciated the leadership of Pakistan Air Force for initiating the project, which augured well for activities related to the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC).

Chief Executive Officer of NASTP Air Commodore Dr Liaquatullah, in his briefing, told the participants that the PAF had achieved numerous successes in the field of aerospace technology.

He said the institution had established research and development centers for the capacity building of new generation.

"This is a project of national and strategic importance and will provide ecosystems, besides providing multifaceted benefits."

He said the project, which had been completed in record time, would prove to be a milestone for the country's self-reliance in aerospace technology.

He said the Pakistan Air Force was pursuing the vision of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah to achieve self-reliance.

## Allied parties fully empower PM for decision about caretaker PM

ISLAMABAD (Online): Allied parties have fully empowered Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif in connection with decision for caretaker PM. The meeting of heads of allied parties of ruling coalition for deciding about caretaker PM concluded under the PM Shehbaz Sharif Friday. The one point agenda about caretaker PM came under consideration in the meeting that took place through video link.

Sheikh came under consideration. After a prolonged consultation, the heads of allied parties expressed full confidence on PM Shehbaz Sharif and gave full powers to him to decide about caretaker PM. They said that PM will nominate as caretaker PM to whom he considers suitable. We will extend full support to his decision.

PM Shehbaz Sharif thanked the heads of all political parties for expressing confidence on him saying all the parties will have to go ahead together for the sake of national development and prosperity.

## President signs three bills into law

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Friday gave his assent to three bills following their passage by the parliament.

The president approved Elections (second amendment) Bill 2023 aimed at amending the Election Act 2017.

He assented to Pakistan Sovereign Wealth Fund Bill 2023 that provides for establishing the Pakistan Sovereign Fund.

President Alvi also approved Pakistan Airports Authority Bill 2023 aimed at establishing the Authority for improving the management, operations and transport services.

The president approved the said three bills in exercise of the powers conferred on him under Article 75 of the Constitution.

## Bill for privatization of PIA presented in Senate

ISLAMABAD (Online): Bill regarding privatization of PIA was presented in Senate Friday.

Chairman Senate sent the bill to respective committee on the proposal of opposition senators.

Federal minister Khawaja Saad Rafiq while presenting the bill regarding privatization of PIA in Senate on Friday said PIA loss is expected to be Rs 112 billion this year. There is loan of Rs 742 billion and we have to obtain loan to repay loans.

We will have to bring change in the system of PIA and no one will become jobless in this regard. Foreign investment will have to be brought in PIA. The planes on lease are being demanded back and planes are not becoming available on further lease.

He went on to say a committee will have to be set up to save the national institutions from complete destruction.

He indicated a holding company will be set up for this purpose. PIA control will have to be given to private sector.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif inaugurating Pakistan's tourism brand 'Salam Pakistan'.

## Persons now harping on freedom of expression, did strangulate media while in power: Marriyum

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb stated on Friday that some persons were now delivering speeches on freedom of expression though they themselves had kept the "media corner" in the Parliament House closed, banned programmes by journalists, and strangulated freedom of media during their four-year stint in power.

Talking to the media outside the Parliament House, on a question about the economic crisis, inflation and violation of the IMF agreement, she said the PTI chief just manoeuvred to shift the blame from his economic team and his cabinet for the theft of 190 million pounds.



ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister, Atta Ullah Tarar paying homage to the martyrs of Police during his visit to Police Lines in Islamabad.



## Naqvi inspects work on Ring Road Southern Loop-3 project

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi visited the Ring Road Southern Loop 3 project near Multan Road Maraka today to inspect the ongoing work. During his visit, Chief Minister Naqvi provided instructions to the concerned authorities, emphasizing the importance of completing the project promptly.

CM Punjab said that the Ring Road Southern Loop 3 project, which began after a hiatus of 12 years, aims to provide the people with improved transportation facilities. Chief Minister Naqvi expressed confidence that the project would be completed by December 31.

He informed the

media that the Lahore Ring Road Southern Loop 3 project is expected to be finished in just 5 months. Previously, there were court cases surrounding the project, but they have now been resolved, clearing the way for its progress.

The project's path through Bahria Town received tremendous support from the housing society. Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi assured that all obstacles have been removed, and the entire area for the project is now clear. He emphasized that the project would be executed with the highest quality standards.

The completion of the Ring Road Southern Loop 3 will significantly ease traffic congestion for those

travelling from South Punjab to Lahore, relieving pressure on Thokar and Canal Road. The residents of all Housing Schemes around Multan Road will also benefit from the project.

Addressing concerns about his intentions, Chief Minister Naqvi clarified that he is solely committed to serving the people and not seeking votes. He highlighted the efforts being made by the entire team to provide maximum relief to the public.

In response to inquiries about the Islamia University Bahawalpur incident, Chief Minister Naqvi said that a judicial commission will be formed and the Punjab government will submit a detailed report to the commission.



**SUKKUR: Water level increases while high grade flood water reaches at Sukkur Barrage into River Indus due to heavy downpour of monsoon season, in Sukkur.**

## 12 dead, 1,263 injured in Punjab road accidents

LAHORE (APP): At least 12 people were killed and 1,263 others injured in 1,161 road traffic crashes in Punjab during the last 24 hours.

As many as 639 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 624 with minor injuries were treated at the incident site by rescue medical teams.

The analysis showed that 649 drivers, 34 underage drivers, 147 pedestrians, and 479 passengers were among the victims of road traffic crashes. The statistics show that 256 accidents were reported in Lahore, which affected 289 persons, placing the provincial capital at top of the list, followed by 81 in Faisalabad with 78 victims and at third Multan with 76 accidents and 81 victims.

## National Police Martyrs' Day observed in provincial metropolis

LAHORE (APP): National Police Martyrs' Day was observed in provincial metropolis on Friday to pay tribute to great martyrs, brave fighters of the nation while expressing solidarity with their families. "In night, we sleep good due to the vigilant police, who at the time of need, had combated and defeated the cowardly

terrorists and robbers including the scourge of terrorism in a befitting manner," Muhammad Rauf, a retired elderly police officer told APP.

"Our brave police have a wide range of experience to deal with any aggression or the menace of terrorism and the entire world could learn from Pakistan.



**LAHORE: Inspector General Police Punjab Dr Usman Anwar presenting gifts to the orphans of the Martyrs Police Soldiers during ceremony at Al-Hamara Hall in Provincial Capital.**

## Federal Ombudsman stresses need for speedy implementation of decisions

PESHAWAR (APP): Federal Ombudsman, Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi here Friday said that swift resolution of people's complaints was the topmost priority of his department and asked employees of all the federal government organizations to double their efforts for speedy resolution of masses complaints and implementation of the decisions made by his office.

Chairing a high-level meeting here at Federal

Ombudsman Office Peshawar, Ejaz Qureshi said that access of people to the Federal Ombudsman office has been made easy and comfortable and complaints could be registered through a simple application or submitted online.

He said it has been mandatory that all complaints were disposed of in 60 days. Urging the Govt departments to swiftly implement the decisions of the Federal Ombudsman Office's decisions at people's doorsteps.

Ahmad Qureshi said that advisers and consultants were hired on merit while facilitation centres were established for the assistance of the complainants.

He said that 18 offices of his organization were working in all provinces of the country including in Peshawar, Abbottabad, Swat and DI Khan for speedy disposal of cases and implementation of the Federal Ombudsman Office's decisions at people's doorsteps.

## Indian persecution can't stifle voice of Kashmiris: Baligh

LAHORE (APP): Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman has said that state persecution by the Indian rulers can not stifle voice for freedom of the Kashmiri people. In a message on the occasion of Kashmir Exploitation Day here on Friday, he said August 5, 2019 is the darkest day in the history of Kashmir when India abolished special status of Kashmir by usurping human rights through illegal action.

"Persecution and violation of rights of Kashmiris in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK) is condemnable," he said, adding that India could not suppress the spirit of freedom of Kashmiris despite so much persecution.

He said Kashmiri people are constantly making sacrifices for the legitimate right of self-determination and India is continuously violating human rights in illegally Occupied Kashmir, adding that United Nations (UN) and international community should take cognizance of human rights violation in IOJK. He said Kashmiris should be given their right of self-determination according to the UN resolutions and international community should take notice of the inhumane atrocities on the oppressed Kashmiris. Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman emphasized that peaceful resolution of the Kashmir issue in the light of UN resolutions is very important for durable peace in the region.



**PESHAWAR: Deputy Commissioner of Peshawar, Shah Fahad administrating polio-vaccine drops to a child during inauguration ceremony of anti-polio immunization campaign, in Peshawar.**

## Internship programme concludes at ICCBS-UoK

KARACHI (APP): The 16<sup>th</sup> Summer Internship Programme-2023, the country's largest internship programme has successfully completed at the International Center for Chemical and Biological Sciences (ICCBS), University of Karachi (UoK) on Friday.

This year, the internship program provided 180 students, belonging to various academic and research institutions of all four provinces, quality training in various fields of Biological and Chemical Sciences, Plant Biotechnology, Engi-

neering, Information Technology, Food Sciences, Library Sciences, ISO and Marketing, Diagnostic Labs, IAC, CBSCR, etc.

Addressing the certificate distribution ceremony of the summer internship program 2023, held at the Golden Jubilee Hall of the ICCBS, Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary, Director of the International Center for Chemical and Biological Sciences, and Coordinator General COMSTECH, highlighted the significance of scientific research in today's fast-paced and competitive world, and

how it is important for a developing country like ours.

He said, "The prime objective of this internship is to motivate students towards scientific research that attempts to explore and understand the working of the physical world."

He said that internships provide students with hands-on experience, enabling them to enter the real-work scenario with practical skills. ICCBS has contributed to the global human resource development in the frontier fields of sciences, he said, adding

that the 16<sup>th</sup> summer internship program, organized by ICCBS, University of Karachi, was a great opportunity for talented students who sought to get exposure to working in the world-class research and academic institution.

He underlined the importance of kindness for students, and said, "Benevolence improves people's way of living and it brings people and society together and decreases hatred, negativity, and jealousy in the society."

Prof. Choudhary congratulated Prof. Dr. Asmat

Salim and her team for the successful completion of the 16<sup>th</sup> summer internship program.

Prof. Dr. Asmat Salim, a senior scientist at Dr. Panjwani Center for Molecular Medicine and Drug Research (PCMD) and the organizer of the internship program, said this internship program was initiated in the year 2008, and since then we have organized it regularly every year. This year, around 2000 students, who are in their final year of graduation from institutions all over the country, applied for the training program.

## International News

## Russia says thwarted Ukraine attacks on Black Sea naval base, Crimea

**Monitoring Desk**  
MOSCOW: Russia said on Friday it had thwarted Ukrainian sea and air drone attacks on a naval base in the Black Sea and the Crimean peninsula.

The number of attacks in the sea has increased from both sides since Moscow exited a deal last month that had allowed Ukrainian grain exports via the shipping hub during the conflict between the two countries.

"Tonight, the Armed Forces of Ukraine, with the use of two unmanned sea boats, attempted an attack on the Novorossiysk naval base of the Russian Armed Forces," the defence ministry said on Telegram.

Russian ships destroyed the naval drones, it said. It was the first such attack targeting the port city.

The Black Sea port of Novorossiysk hosts the terminus of a pipeline that carries most Kazakh oil exports through Russia.

The fuel artery's operator Caspian Pipeline Consortium said it was continuing to ship oil to moored tankers at the terminal, Russian state media reported on Friday. But "a temporary ban has been established on the movement of ships in the port", said the company, as quoted by Interfax news agency. Russia's Black Sea Fleet has been

targeted since the beginning of Moscow's military campaign in Ukraine more than a year ago, but attacks have increased in recent weeks. On Tuesday, Russia's defence ministry said it foiled a Ukrainian drone attack targeting patrol boats in the Black Sea. Three drones were trained on ships navigating in waters 340 kilometres southwest of Sevastopol, the base of Russia's Black Sea fleet in Crimea. A similar attack was repelled a week earlier. The ministry also said on Friday it had downed 13 drones over the Crimean peninsula. There were no casualties or damage in either attack, the ministry said.



**U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken stands at a podium as he holds a press conference, during a meeting of the United Nations Security Council where he presides as president.**

## US to keep Russia's food exports flowing if grain deal revived, Blinken says

**Monitoring Desk**  
UNITED NATIONS: The United States would continue to do "whatever is necessary" to ensure Russia can freely export food if there was a revival of a deal allowing the safe Black Sea export of Ukrainian grain, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Thursday.

Russia last month quit the July 2022 deal brokered by the United Nations and Turkey aimed at easing a global food crisis after Russia's invasion of Ukraine five months earlier.

Ukraine and Russia are both leading grain exporters.

"In the event of return to the agreement, of course, we'll continue to do whatever is necessary to make sure that everyone can export their food and food products freely and safely to include Russia," Blinken told reporters at the United Nations.

"We want to see that food on world markets. We want everyone to benefit from the lower prices," he said after chairing a U.N. Security Council meeting on food insecurity caused by conflict. Many countries at

the gathering expressed disappointment that Russia had quit the deal and urged them to reconsider. To convince Russia to agree to the Black Sea deal, another pact was also struck in July 2022 under which U.N. officials agreed to help Russia get its food and fertilizer exports to foreign markets.

While Russian exports of food and fertilizer are not subject to Western sanctions imposed after Russia's February 2022 invasion of Ukraine, Moscow has said restrictions on payments.

## US Congress urged to recognise Islam as great religion

**Monitoring Desk**  
WASHINGTON: Congress has taken a significant step towards recognising Islam as a major religion, emphasising its role in promoting peace and harmony.

The resolution — introduced by Representative Al Green of Texas and backed by Representatives Ilhan Omar, Rashida Tlaib, and Andre Carson — comes at a time of renewed effort to brand Islam as a radical faith and would discourage anti-Islamic deeds like the desecration of Holy

Quran. Mr. Green, a Texas Democrat, is also a member of the Congressional Pakistan Caucus. He opposed President Trump's order to ban immigration from Muslim countries and a 2015 move to brand Islam as a radical faith.

The House received the resolution, which aims to foster better understanding and respect for the Islamic faith within American society, on July 28 and referred it to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs.



**Students stage a walk out from Hillsborough High School to protest after Florida education officials voted to ban classroom instruction on gender identity and sexual orientation in all public school grades, expanding on a law signed by Republican Governor Ron DeSantis that barred such lessons for younger students and was derided by critics as the "Don't Say Gay" bill in Tampa, Florida, U.S.**

## India's top court suspends Rahul Gandhi's defamation conviction

**Monitoring Desk**  
NEW DELHI: India's top court on Friday suspended the defamation conviction of Rahul Gandhi, a decision that could pave the way for the senior opposition politician to return to parliament after his disqualification. Gandhi, 53, was sentenced to two years' imprisonment in March in a case that critics have said showed threats to the rule

of law in the world's largest democracy.

He was turfed out of the legislature as a result but has stayed out of jail while appealing the case up to the supreme court in New Delhi. A justice there said that the initial trial judge had failed to justify imposing the maximum sentence on Gandhi for his comments, made during a campaign rally four years ago.

## 52 hurt in clashes at Stockholm festival

**Monitoring Desk**  
STOCKHOLM: More than 50 people were injured and dozens detained in Stockholm on Thursday as clashes broke out at an Eritrean pro-government festival, police and health officials said, with anti-government protesters trashing property at the site. "Another public gathering took place close to the festival site, during which a violent riot broke out," police said, adding in a statement they had detained "around a hundred people".



**Rescue workers sift through wreckage at the accident site of a three-train collision near Balasore, about 200 km (125 miles) from the state capital Bhubaneswar.**

## Saudi Arabia, Kuwait reject Iran's claims to gas field

**Monitoring Desk**  
RIYADH: Saudi Arabia and Kuwait said on Thursday they had sole ownership of a disputed gas field also claimed by Iran, in an escalating feud after Tehran threatened to pursue exploration.

The offshore field — known as Arash in Iran and Dorra in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia — has long been focal point of contention between the three countries.

The Kuwaiti and Saudi authorities said in a joint statement published

on Thursday that "we alone have full sovereign rights to exploit the wealth in that area".

The two Gulf states renewed "their previous and repeated calls to the Islamic Republic of Iran to negotiate" the demarcation of their maritime borders to settle the issue, according to the statement carried by the Saudi Press Agency.

Iran and Kuwait have held unsuccessful talks for many years over their disputed maritime border area, which is rich in natural gas.

## Former Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny sentenced to 19 years in prison

**Monitoring Desk**  
MOSCOW: A Russian court Friday sentenced former opposition leader Alexei Navalny to 19 years in prison after he was found guilty on a series of new charges including extremism, according to his spokesperson. In his court case, Navalny stood before the judge, grinning and interacting with another prisoner. Navalny is already serving jail time on embezzlement charges which are regarded as politically motivated according to his friends.

## Global food prices rise after Russia ends grain deal and India restricts rice exports

**Monitoring Desk**  
LONDON: Global prices for food commodities like rice and vegetable oil have risen for the first time in months after Russia pulled out of a wartime agreement allowing Ukraine to ship grain to the world, and India restricted some of its rice exports, the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization said Friday.

The FAO Food Price Index, which tracks monthly changes in the international prices of commonly traded food commodities, increased 1.3% in July over June, driven by

higher costs for rice and vegetable oil. It was the first uptick since April, when higher sugar prices bumped up the index slightly for the first time in a year.

Commodity prices have been falling since hitting record highs last year in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Disrupted supplies from the two countries exacerbated a global food crisis because they're leading suppliers of wheat, barley, sunflower oil and other affordable food products, especially to nations in parts of Africa.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal launches Rs. 25 Billion Performance-based Challenge Fund for Out-of-School Children and Early Childhood Education.

## Ahsan launches Rs 25b fund to address out-of-school children issue

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Friday formally inaugurated the Rs25 billion "Performance-based Challenge Fund" for out-of-school children, and to promote early childhood education across the country.

The launching ceremony, held here in collaboration with the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, was attended among others by dignitaries, officials and education experts.

Addressing the ceremony, the minister highlighted the critical importance of ensuring stability and continuity of policies in the country's development agenda.

He emphasized the need to differentiate between political changes and the national agenda, urging all stakeholders to work together for the betterment of the nation.

He said the country needed a charter of economy to ensure consistency and continuity in policies. "Stability and continuity are prerequisites for development, and without them, progress remains elusive. India, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Korea, China, and Turkey, among others, have achieved remarkable success due to their sustained policies over the years. We must follow suit and provide a consistent direction for our country's growth."

Ahsan Iqbal stressed the importance of knowledge exchange and innovation for Pakistan's progress in the modern world.

He highlighted the significance of early childhood education and its role in fostering creative thinking, critical analysis, and collaborative skills in the young minds of the nation.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Secretary for National Heritage and Culture Division Fareena Mazhar addressing a seminar on National Cultural Narrative of Pakistan-2023 at National Library.

## President directs UBL to refund Rs 79,500 to profit to fraud victim

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi has directed the United Bank Ltd (UBL) to refund defrauded amount along with profit to a fraud victim and to remove the inherent flaws in their system to prevent online fraud and fraudulent transactions.

He also instructed the Bank to educate their customers about the pros and cons of online funds transfer facility before activating digital banking.

The president gave these remarks while deciding upon a representation filed by UBL against the decision of Banking Mohtasib directing it to refund Rs 79,500 to Abdul Rauf (the complainant), whose account was fraudulently

debited through the Inter-Bank Funds Transfer (IBFT) facility, a President House press release said Friday.

He urged banks to comply with the relevant rules and regulations of the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) regarding online funds transfer facility, customer consent and authentication of transactions.

The president also asked the Banking Mohtasib Pakistan to approach the SBP and other banks that on the rejection of complaints about disputed transactions, the customers concerned should be informed in a simple letter that they could approach the institution of Banking Mohtasib for relief.



ISLAMABAD: A large numbers of people parked their vehicles outside Friday Weekly Bazaar at Peshawar Morr area at sector H-9 in Federal Capital.

## Over 20 Red Crescent volunteers successfully conclude internship with Islamabad Capital Police

ISLAMABAD: A group of enthusiastic volunteers from the Red Crescent has recently completed an enriching internship program as part of a three-day special road safety campaign organized by the Islamabad Capital Police.

Praising their dedication and commitment, Chief Traffic Officer Islamabad highlighted the invaluable contribution of these individuals towards fostering a culture of friendly policing. "We take immense pride in the collaboration between our police force and the community. The engagement of young people like you is pivotal for effective

law enforcement and ensuring road safety," stated CTO Islamabad.

He emphasized that with the continued support of the younger generation, the Islamabad Capital Police can achieve even greater performance milestones. He expressed confidence that these volunteers will serve as future ambassadors, playing a significant role in safeguarding the lives of citizens and road users in the capital.

The primary aim of this internship initiative is to advance the principles of community policing and cultivate the skills of the youth who are integral to the progress of our nation.

## Isb Police again summoned Chairman PTI for further investigation

ISLAMABAD (Online): Chairman PTI Imran Khan was summoned again today by Islamabad Police to join the investigation.

Imran Khan was summoned by the Islamabad police at 2 o'clock in a case registered at Karachi company police station.

Chairman PTI was also summoned in two other cases of PS Tarnol and one of Kohsar police station at 3 o'clock. Chairman PTI was directed to appear in SSP office G11.

In the summon notice, it is said that in case of non-appearance, action will be taken as per law.

## Rain with wind, thundershower expected in most parts of country

ISLAMABAD (Online): Rain with wind and thundershower is expected in Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan, Islamabad, Pothohar region, northeast Punjab and upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa during the next twelve hours. Heavyfalls may also occur at few places in upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pothohar region, northeast Punjab and Kashmir during the forecast period. Hot and humid weather is expected elsewhere in the country.

Temperature of some major cities recorded this morning: Islamabad twenty-seven degree centigrade, Lahore thirty-one, Karachi and Peshawar twenty-nine, Quetta twenty-two.



ISLAMABAD: A police man on his way in front of a banner showing solidarity with the people of Kashmiri, August 5 is being observed as a black day as it marks the completion of 3 years since the people of IO Kashmir were deprived of their fundamental human rights.

## Lawmakers for effective measures to root out menace of terrorism

ISLAMABAD (APP): Lawmakers in the National Assembly while strongly condemning Bajaur's blast incident on Friday called for taking effective measures to eradicate the menace of terrorism.

Speaking on a point of order, Muhammad Jamal Ud Din said that innocent people were targeted in the JUI-F gathering on July 30.

He said tribal people always supported Pakistan and never damage government properties. 'Jirga' of tribal people was being held which would decide the future course of action, he said.

He urged the government and law enforcement agencies to

## Shazia Marri says BISP committed to fulfill BB's vision of empowering underprivileged sections

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety and Chairperson of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Shazia Marri Friday said that extending a helping hand to labour and underprivileged sections of society had always been a dream close to Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto's heart.

She was speaking at a special ceremony organized by the All Pakistan BISP Employees Coordination Committee. The event, held at the Benazir Income Support Programme headquarters, was a heartwarming gesture to acknowledge and thank the dedicated efforts of the BISP chairperson to address the long-standing issues of BISP within the organization. During her address as the chief guest, Shazia Marri spoke passionately about the programme's commitment to fulfilling the vision of the late Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto of

empowering the weakest segments. Commending the employees of BISP for their remarkable service, the minister acknowledged their steadfast dedication over the course of 15 years, even in the absence of basic benefits. She emphasized that the employees, through their relentless efforts, have been instrumental in catering to the needs of 9 million families across the nation.

Expressing her concern over the neglect of the just demands of BISP employees, Shazia Marri noted that their hard work often went unnoticed. She asserted that the programme has not only provided financial assistance but has also played a pivotal role in women's empowerment, leading to a transformation in the social fabric of society.

She informed the audience that Contingent Employees have been regularized along with Time Scale Promotions of grade 1 and 2 employees.

## Dar announces Rs 2 million compensation for Bajaur Attack Martyrs' families

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Friday announced that the government would pay Rs 2 million as compensation to the families of each martyr from the Bajaur Suicide Attack. During a Senate session, while speaking on a Point of Order, the Minister of Finance and Revenue mentioned that the seriously wounded individuals of the suicide blast would receive Rs 700,000 each, and Rs 500,000 would be given to each wounded victim as compensation.

He thanked the Prime Minister for announcing Rs 2 million compensation each to the martyred of the incidents and inquiring about the health of injured people during his visit to Peshawar. He also thanked the governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Chief Secretary and caretaker Chief Minister for providing a helicopter to transport the injured people to Peshawar's hospitals and other necessary assistance.

Nuzhat Pathan said the entire parliament strongly condemned the tragic incident in Bajaur. She also consoled all the bereaved families and said our armed forces rendered supreme sacrifices in the war against terrorism.

Maulana Salahuddin Ayubi said innocent people including children were brutally killed in the terrorist attack. It was the responsibility of State and its institutions to provide security to the people, he said.

Speaking on a point of order Mosa Gillani called for a constitutional amendment on the pattern of the 18th amendment to strengthen local bodies' system in the country. The development funds should be spent through local bodies system, he added.

## Medical colleges asked to avoid offering unrecognized postgraduate program

ISLAMABAD (APP): unrecognized postgraduate medical and dental program.

"In case of non-compliance to the intimation, the PM&DC will initiate disciplinary proceedings under section 35(i) of PM&DC Act 2022 which states Section 35 which says whoever runs or establishes or endorses any institution or advertises admissions in an institution for imparting education in medicine or dentistry, which is not recognized under sections 21, 22, 25, 26 or 29 in respect of which recognition has been withdrawn under section 33, shall be guilty of an offence punishable with rigorous imprisonment for a term which may extend to five years, but shall not be less than a year, or with fine which may extend to twenty million rupees, but shall not be less than ten million rupees, or with both and shall also be liable to the closure of such institution," read the letter.

# Pakistan will continue to be voice of Kashmiri people: President

Pakistan to continue moral, political, diplomatic support to Kashmiris: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi has resolved that Pakistan would continue to be the voice of its Kashmiri brothers and sisters, who had been making invaluable sacrifices, and would extend all possible support for the fullest realization of their legitimate rights.

"We have no doubt that durable peace and stability in South Asia can only be achieved through a peaceful resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions and the wishes of the Kashmiri people," the president said in his message on Youm-e-Istehsal annually observed on August 5.

He said that India unleashed its illegal and unilateral actions on August 5, 2019 in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) with the aim of disempowering, disenfranchising, and dispossessing the Kashmiri people in their own land.

These measures were designed to permanently occupy the disputed territory and erase its distinct Kashmiri character, he re-

marked. He said that India deviously attempted to convince the world that Jammu and Kashmir was an undisputed part of its territory.

However, it was India that took the Jammu and Kashmir issue to the Security Council, where the disputed status of Jammu and Kashmir was internationally recognized. It was decided that the final disposition of the State should be determined through a free and impartial plebiscite under the auspices of the United Nations (UN).

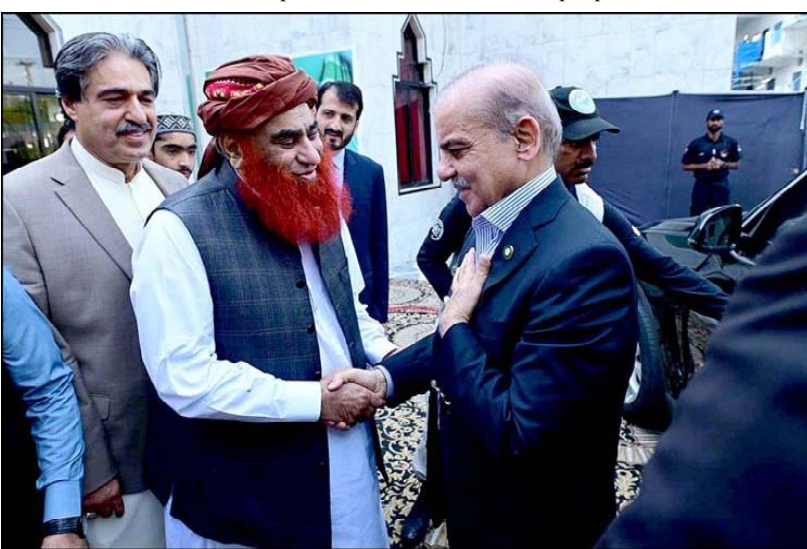
President Alvi said that the indomitable will and courage of the Kashmiri people had enabled them to withstand every Indian attempt to terrorize and subjugate them.

"Despite all of India's massive coercive methods, they have not been able to extinguish their yearning for freedom. India has been trampling upon the rights and aspirations of the Kashmiri people through machinations and intrigue for the last 75 years. However, since 5 August 2019, IIOJK has been transformed into an open prison," he added.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said Pakistan will continue to lend its unstinted moral, political and diplomatic support to the rightful and just cause of the freedom struggle of the Kashmiri people.

In a message on the Youm-e-Istehsal to be observed on August 5, 2023, he said, "It is Pakistan's abiding commitment and promise to our Kashmiri brothers and sisters that we will echo their voices, at every forum until the world takes action and urges India to end its egregious human rights violations and forcible occupation of IIOJK, undo all unilateral and illegal measures it has taken since 5 August 2019, and take necessary steps to carry out a fair and impartial plebiscite in accordance with the United Nations Security Council resolutions."

"It has been four years since India unilaterally and illegally revoked the special status of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJK) on 5 August 2019. Since then, India has resorted to use of brutal force and violence to suppress the Kashmiri people.



RAWALPINDI: Pir Syed Riaz Hussain Shah receiving Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif upon his arrival at Idara Talemat-e-Islamia.

## Senate chairman refers PEMRA Bill to standing committee for fine tuning

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senate Chairman Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani on Friday referred the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2023, to the Standing Committee on Information and Standing Committee for further refinement and improvement in response to the concerns raised by the senators.

The amended PEMRA bill, drafted after in-depth debate and consultations with all the stakeholders and presented by Minister for Information and Broadcasting Mariyoun Aurangzeb, has already been passed by the National Assembly.

Under the bill, the powers of the PEMRA chairman have been given to the Council of Complaints.

## Streamlining visa issuances: Hina enhances efficiency, accountability for Afghan nationals' applications

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Hina Rabbani Khar on Friday shed light on the intricacies surrounding visa issuances for Afghan nationals in the Senate. Recognizing the complexity of the matter during the question hour, she emphasized that national foreign missions receive a staggering number of routine visa applications, making the process multifaceted.

In her statement, Hina outlined the commitment of the national diplomatic mission to extend leniency in granting visas on grounds of health or humanitarian reasons. However, she underscored that this benevolent intention sometimes led to misuse by Afghan nationals, causing challenges within the system.

An important revelation was made by

Hina as she highlighted the comprehensive overhaul of the visa issuance process. Presently, the authority to grant visas, especially in cases requiring relaxation, rested solely with the head of the mission, she said adding that this shift in power had been enacted in the last two months, with the delegation of such authority withdrawn from other embassy staff.

Modernizing the approach to visa facilitation, Hina detailed the introduction of an online visa application system. Additionally, specific staff members had been entrusted with the responsibility of evaluating all necessary formalities before granting visas, she added. Addressing concerns raised by senators, the minister of state for foreign affairs responded to questions regarding a specific incident.

## Youm-e-Shuhada program held at Police Lines HQs Islamabad Capital Police pays glowing tribute to martyred policemen

ISLAMABAD: CPO Headquarters Awais Ahmad Malik paid rich tribute to the policemen who sacrificed their lives in the line of duty.

He said that, we, the heirs of 59 martyrs, narrated the stories of the martyrs adding that our martyrs fulfilled their duty with utmost dedication, and as a nation, we are indebted to their supreme sacrifices. Salute to these noble families whose brave sons and daughters sacrificed their lives for the protection of the country.

According to details, 4th August, the Police Martyrs' Day is being observed across the country with full enthusiasm. CPO Headquarters and senior police officers paid tribute to the fallen heroes.



Floral wreaths were laid, and a special prayer was offered for the high ranks of the martyrs. Police contingents presented salutations at the occasion, and the families of the martyrs were also present, who planted trees in their memory.

A dignified ceremony was also arranged at Police Lines Headquarters Islamabad, attended by CPO Headquarters, families of police martyrs, renowned actor and musician Saifi Hassan and Sheraz Hassan and a large number of senior police officers and officials. CPO Headquarters addressed the gathering, expressing that 59 officers and officials of Islamabad Capital Police sacrificed their lives for the country and its people. They fulfilled their duty with utmost dedication, and we, as a nation, are indebted to the eternal sacrifices of our martyrs.