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Helicopter carrying Iran's President Raisi crashes, search underway

Lives of President Raisi and Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian "at risk; Harsh weather conditions and heavy fog have made it difficult for rescue teams to reach accident site, says state TV; Iranians urged to pray.

TEHRAN (AFP/APP): A helicopter carrying Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi was involved in "an accident" in poor weather conditions on Sunday, state media reported, with a search underway and no news yet on his condition.



Conditions and heavy fog have made it difficult for the rescue teams to reach the accident site, state TV said in an on-screen news alert.

"An accident happened to the helicopter carrying the president" in the Jofa region of the western province of East Azerbaijan, state television said.

Search and rescue team were headed to the remote mountain area, state media in the Islamic republic reported, adding that Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian was also aboard the aircraft.

"The harsh weather worshippers reciting prayers in the holy Shrine of Imam Reza in the city of Mashhad, Raisi's hometown.

Sunday's accident happened in the mountainous protected forest area of Dizmar near the town of Varzaghan, said the official IRNA news agency.

Raisi, 63, was visiting the province Sunday where he inaugurated a dam project together with his Azeri counterpart, Ilham Aliyev, on the border between the two countries. His convoy included three helicopters, and the other two had "reached their destination safely," according to Tasnim news agency.



Federal Minister & Senator Dr Mudadik Malik received Pakistani students upon their return from Kyrgyzstan in Islamabad.



LAHORE: Deputy Prime Minister & Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tassar and Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs & Gilgit-Baltistan Amir Maqam addressing a press conference.

Another 175 Pakistani students return home from Bishkek Deputy PM assures support for victims of Bishkek incident

Ishaq Dar says Kyrgyz FM has assured him that no deaths have occurred and the situation is peaceful

LAHORE (APP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar expressed his regret over the unfortunate incident in Bishkek, emphasizing that the government stands firmly with the victims during this challenging time.

At a press conference held on Sunday, alongside Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tassar and Federal Minister for Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan Affairs Ameer Muqam, Dar reassured that medical treatment for injured Pakistani students is a top priority.

He clarified that mis-leading information, such as mislabeling a Bangladeshi student's picture as Pakistani, is being propagated. He dismissed claims of assault against a female student as unfounded, citing confirmation from the Kyrgyz government.

He highlighted the immediate response by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, stating, "An emergency unit was activated right after the incident. Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and the entire gov-

ernment machinery are closely monitoring the situation." He mentioned that despite the Kyrgyz ambassador being on leave, his deputy provided detailed information on Saturday, ensuring full communication between the government and Kyrgyzstan as a precaution," he added.

PM stresses injured students should be brought back to Pakistan on priority

LAHORE (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday contacted Ambassador of Pakistan in the Kyrgyz Republic Hassan Ali Zaigham and directed him for making necessary arrangements for a special flight being sent to Bishkek this evening to bring back Pakistani students. At the instructions of the prime minister, the government of Pakistan will bear all the expenses of the special plane. The prime min-

ister directed for keeping continuous contacts with all the students and their families, emphasizing that the return of injured students should be a priority.

President, PM concerned over Raisi's helicopter incident

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has said that he heard the distressing news from Iran regarding Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi's helicopter and waiting with great anxiety for good news that all is well.

Australian defence chief visits GHQ Pakistan, Australia agree to expand military-to-military cooperation

General Angus J. Campbell expresses his admiration for high professional standards maintained by the Pakistan Armed Forces

RAWALPINDI (APP): Chief of Defence Forces Australia General Angus J. Campbell called on Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Pakistan, the military's media wing said on Sunday.

He lauded their remarkable achievements in combating terrorism and acknowledged their ongoing efforts to foster regional peace and stability.



RAWALPINDI: Chief of Defence Forces Australia General Angus J. Campbell meeting with Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir



MAKKAHAL-MUKARRAMA: Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Chaudhry Salik Hussain meeting with CEO Rehlat Manafea Company Ahmed Abdullatef Tammar during his visit.

In a post on X handle, he said our prayers and best wishes are with Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and the entire Iranian nation.

In a statement released by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the discussions between the two military leaders focused on the global and regional security environment, as well as avenues for enhanced cooperation.

Yousuf Raza Gilani receives threats

MULTAN (INP): Senate Chairman Yousuf Raza Gilani received a threatening message on his mobile phone from an unknown person.

Tassar says Bishkek situation normal; political party misrepresenting incident

LAHORE (APP): Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage, and Culture Attaullah Tassar has said that a political party is misrepresenting the Kyrgyzstan incident. He said that the situation in Bishkek has returned to normal, and those spreading fake images of casualties should fear Allah.

groups in Bishkek, Pakistani students got caught up in the conflict, although they were not the target. He mentioned that when the incident had occurred, the Prime Minister's Office and the Foreign Office immediately took action, and the government promptly activated an emergency response cell at the Foreign Ministry. The Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister have been continuously monitoring the situation moment by moment for the past two days.

No compromise on provision of best quality facilities to Pakistani pilgrims: Salik

ISLAMABAD (INP): Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Chaudhry Salik Hussain Sunday assured that no compromise will be made on provision of best possible facilities of food, accommodation, cleanliness, transport and healthcare to Pakistani pilgrims during this year's hajj.

APP adds: Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Chaudhry Salik Hussain visited the Rehlat Manafea Company, a service provider, on Sunday to review the arrangements made for Pakistani Hujjaj, particularly during the five Hajj days in Mashair from 8-12 Zilhaj.

China invested in Pakistan in difficult times: Ahsan Iqbal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Planning Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal has said that China invested in Pakistan under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project when the country was passing through difficult times, which helped to turnaround the local economy and put it on the sustainable growth and development trajectory.



Foreign Minister of Türkiye Hakan Fidan arrives in Islamabad. He was received by Additional Foreign Secretary (Afghanistan & West Asia) Ambassador Ahmed Naseem Warraich at Nur Khan Airbase.

President House directs Pakistani embassy in Bishkek to ensure security of students

ISLAMABAD (APP): On the instructions of President Asif Ali Zardari, the President House Sunday contacted the Pakistani ambassador in Kyrgyzstan expressing concern over the violent situation in the county.

He said the embassy was in close contact with the Kyrgyz authorities and was taking measures to ensure the security of the students.

Turkish FM Hakan Fidan arrives on official visit

ISLAMABAD (APP): Foreign Minister of Türkiye Hakan Fidan arrived here Sunday on a two-day official visit to Pakistan.

Addressing a joint press conference along with Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar and Federal Minister for Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan Affairs Ameer Muqam here on Sunday, he said that no Pakistani student had died in Bishkek; the incident was misrepresented, and any condemnation was insufficient.

Currently, six Pakistani students are receiving treatment in three different hospitals, he added. The Federal Minister said that propaganda was launched by a political party, where a photo of a Bangladeshi student was used to depict a Pakistani student.

"Apart from the food flavor, food cleanliness and safety are also essential to keep in mind while serving the hajjis. Hence, our monitoring will encompass food preparation until the distribution processes," he remarked. An online app has been launched to train pilgrims from Pakistan to Hajj

Director Mouavneen Asghar Yusufzai and other officials assisted the minister in the meeting.

"When China decided to invest \$25 billion in Pakistan, this is [in] 2013, when we had 18 hours of power shortages and frequent suicide bombings at that time they decided to come to Pakistan and support Pakistan," he stated in an interview with VOA. This shows they have trust and confidence in Pakistan, he said adding that recent bullish performance of the country's stock exchange showed that the local investors had full confidence in the direction the government was following.

He said the Kyrgyz government and universities would arrange online classes for the students who were returning to Pakistan.

The two sides will review the state of bilateral relations and assess preparations for upcoming high-level engagements between the two countries.



LAHORE: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi visiting NADRA Center, Garden Town.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

Border clashes

The Pakistan-Afghanistan frontier has witnessed another series of flare-ups, this time in the Kurram tribal district that borders several Afghan provinces. The hostilities indicate the need for better border management from both sides, so that minor disputes do not descend into armed exchanges. Thankfully a ceasefire was agreed to on Saturday, with the border reopening. Earlier, those living in border villages had moved to safer locales as forces from both states traded fire. Trade activities at the Kharlachi crossing had also been suspended. The trigger for the escalation remains unclear. Though the Taliban remained tight-lipped, Afghan media claimed a number of "civilians" had lost their lives in the clashes, which had been continuing for several days but intensified on Friday.

Pakistan's cross-border issues with Afghanistan are of two kinds. The first involves direct hostilities between security forces of both nations. The second element is that of cross-border terrorism perpetrated in Pakistan by militant groups that have apparently found sanctuary in Afghanistan. Both these outstanding issues need to be resolved in order to ensure mutual security. While some in official circles had felt that security would improve after the Western-backed government in Kabul fell and the Taliban took over, this has not been the case. Ever since the August 2021 fall of Kabul, cross-border security has remained tenuous. The number of incidents over the past several months is numerous. For example, the Torkham crossing has remained closed for days on end due to various disputes. Sometimes these closures have taken a violent turn, with security forces trading fire. Pakistan has also struck reported terrorist sanctuaries in Afghanistan; the last major such incident took place in March after a number of security personnel were martyred in a North Waziristan ambush. Meanwhile, a terrorist incursion in Chitral was thwarted by security forces in September last year.

While Pakistan has communicated its "deepest concerns" to Kabul regarding the latest hostilities, there is a need to work with the de facto Afghan government to ensure the western border remains peaceful. Local-level disputes at the frontier need to be resolved by area commanders and officials before they deteriorate into exchanges of fire. Moreover, the Afghan side must realise that the Durand Line is the border, and change in its status is non-negotiable from the Pakistani point of view. The issue of cross-border terrorism is more complicated. While the Taliban authorities may be in denial about the presence of militants on Afghan soil, securing the border — and ensuring no anti-Pakistan terrorists are able to threaten this country's security from the Afghan side — is the Taliban's responsibility. While it may appear that Islamabad's antiterrorism concerns are not being seriously entertained by Kabul, the state must continue to use diplomatic channels to communicate its views.

Environmental Issues in Quetta and its solution



By Romisa Shah

Air pollution due to dust and particulate matters. Natural environment and geography of Quetta contribute to dry and dusty atmosphere. Limited rainfall and wind patterns exacerbate dust particles in the air. Urban sprawl and population growth encroachment on green land, leading to soil erosion and increased dust. Construction activities and traffic emissions worsen air quality.

Solutions:
Implement dust-reducing measures: water sprinkling, tree planting, and soil stabilization.
Promote sustainable urban planning: green spaces, parks, and gardens.
Encourage eco-friendly transportation: public transport, cycling, and electric vehicles.
Enforce emissions regulations and standards for vehicles and industries.
Educate citizens about environmental conservation and individual actions to reduce pollution.
Develop and implement effective waste management and recycling systems.
Support research and development of innovative solutions for Quetta's unique environmental challenges.
By addressing these issues and implementing these solutions, Quetta can mitigate the effects of environmental pollution and preserve its natural beauty for future generations.

Air pollution: Pakistan is the world's third-most polluted country when it comes to air quality. This is because of industrial activities, vehicle emissions, and the burning of garbage and plastic.

Water pollution: Pakistan is classified as a water-stressed nation. The country's rivers are polluted by industrial effluent, untreated sewage, and the overuse of chemical fertilizers and pesticides.

Climate change: Pakistan is highly vulnerable to climate change. The country has experienced extreme weather events like droughts, floods, and heatwaves.
Deforestation: Pakistan's forests are depleting at an alarming rate due to the lack of self-sufficiency in the wood-based products sector.
Waste management: Pakistan lacks effective waste management systems, leading to pollution and health problems.
Industrial pollution: Industrial activities in Pakistan release harmful chemicals into the environment, contributing to air and water pollution.
Transportation pollution: Vehicle emissions are a significant contributor to air pollution in Pakistan's cities.
Agricultural pollution: The use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides in agriculture has contaminated soil and water resources.

Good governance

Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry

Successive governments, both elected and military, have failed to provide good governance to Pakistan. A perfect storm created by chronic political instability, inconsistent economic policies, weak institutions, pervasive corruption, and lack of accountability has hit our country. Add to that the gross mismanagement of scarce resources, the accumulation of unsustainable debt, and pathetic public service delivery, and it is no wonder that Pakistanis are losing trust in their government and state institutions. Inequitable distribution of resources has created horizontal and vertical disparities. Millions of people have fallen below the poverty line. There is no social justice or equal opportunity. Nor are people's basic needs being met or their human rights being respected.

Experts have written on what ails governance in Pakistan. Studies have advised on how to extricate our economy from poor governance. However, if one were to identify the root cause of these ills, it is not the economy but the way parliamentary democracy is practised here.

Take, for instance, the role of a ruling party MNA who has spent a certain amount of money on elections. Ostensibly, his (or her) priorities would include: recovering the amount spent on the poll campaign, securing contracts and government jobs for his constituents; getting an executive position; and ensuring that the local government system does not take root lest development funds move out of his domain and end up with LG representatives. None of these priorities relate to his actual responsibility of negotiating and legislating on public interest issues.

It is essentially no different if this MNA is in the opposition. He would have to find a way to recoup the funds spent on his election campaign, or team up with like-minded colleagues to bring the government down. Legislation is the least of his priorities.

The prime minister is a hostage to the MNAs. If he does not facilitate the allocation of sufficient development funds for them, he runs the risk of a vote of no-confidence. To remain in power, he looks around to seek help from other state institutions — the bureaucracy, judiciary, army — rather than leading them as chief executive of the country or inspiring their confidence to work within their respective mandates.

Such a fragile political system cannot deliver good governance. One may ask why the parliamentary form of governance works well in countries like Japan, Italy and the Netherlands, where politics is nearly as unpredictable as it is in Pakistan. A major reason is that these countries have not experienced military interventions in recent history, and the governance system has refined itself over electoral cycles. The other reason is that their state institutions, particularly the bureaucracy, judiciary, and the armed forces, are not politicised, and maintain their independence and meritocracy. An efficient and competent civil service coupled with an impartial judiciary is the steel frame that ensures the rule of law. If these two institutions are functioning on the basis of merit, governance remains functional regardless of which political party is in power.

For Pakistan to take the road to good governance, the parliamentary form of government, as is being practised here, needs to be revisited. The size of the provinces should be rationalised by increasing their number to facilitate better governance. The resources devolved to them under the 18th Amendment should be transferred to the local level of governance. We should also set up a national security council for integrated decision-making under the leadership of the elected prime minister. However, these measures require national consensus and constitutional amendments, which would take a long time.

The focus, therefore, should be on doable measures that do not require constitutional amendments. These would include: (i) setting up elected LGs for better public service delivery, and letting MNAs and MPAs devote their time to legislation; (ii) encouraging wealth creation by facilitating industrialisation and ease of doing business, and attracting domestic investors who have parked their capital abroad; (iii) working towards self-reliance: expect no foreign dole-outs, open up the SIFC framework for domestic investors, encourage industries that create employment, expedite economic zones, encourage import substitution, regulate food cartels, and encourage regional trade; (iv) not compromising on establishing the government's writ, otherwise investments won't come in; and (v) empowering the ECP to use electronic voting machines for transparent polls, and ensuring democratic practices within political parties.

A governance system that does not ensure the safety, security, dignity, and prosperity of ordinary citizens must be reformed. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

PSO workmen union Qazi Shaukat Panel takes oath

Independent Report
KARACHI: The 25-member cabinet of Pakistan State Oil (PSO) Workmen's Union, Qazi Shaukat Panel took their oath of office at a ceremony held at PSO House. The oath was administered by Election Commissioner Mahmood Ali to the newly elected President Qazi Shaukat Hussain, General Secretary Irfan, Senior Vice President Naseer Sultan, Finance Secretary Imran Taimoori, and other officials.

Company Secretary Rashid Umar Siddiqui, the chief guest at the ceremony, emphasized the importance of harmony and coordination between the management and the union. He underscored the need to address the legitimate concerns of the workers and ensure their rights are protected.

PSO GM (Legal Affairs & IR) Syed Sajad lauded the fairness of the union elections and expressed hope that the re-elected Qazi Shaukat panel would continue to advance workers' rights with even greater vigor.

He reaffirmed the management's commitment to resolving workers' issues, highlighting that employees are the backbone of the organization.



KARACHI: PSO Workmen Union, Qazi Shaukat Panel President Qazi Shaukat Hussain, Vice president Naseer Sultan, General Secretary Irfan, Finance Secretary Imran Timuri and other officials are taking oath of office at PSO House.

Finance Minister updated on banking sector's strategic initiatives in priority sectors

KARACHI (INP): Pakistan Banks' Association (PBA) held a meeting with the Federal Minister for Finance & Revenue, Muhammad Aurangzeb.

The meeting focused on enhancing support by the banks for the three key sectors of Agriculture, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), and Digital & Technology in Pakistan. The discussion underlined the banking sector's commitment to fostering financial inclusion in the country.

Federal Minister mentioned at the outset that the idea of this exercise shall be to encourage the entire sector to contribute towards these priority sectors as per their size and unique offerings & strengths. While there will be no "directed lending"; however, there shall be voluntary targets to be set between the banks and the regulator to share the responsibility to contribute towards these critical sectors. He expects the banks to step up and continue to work with the Government in the revival and the growth of the economy. During the session, PBA Chairman Zafar Masud, along with the Steering Committee members on these initiatives, including Vice Chairman PBA, Ahmed Bozai, CEO & SG PBA, Muneer Kamal, Executive Director (Financial Inclusion Group) State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), Syed Irfan Ali, and President & CEO Meezan Bank, Irfan Siddiqui, presented a comprehensive set of recommendations aimed at promoting growth and sustainability in these vital sectors. The proposals were developed in close consultation with SBP to ensure they effectively address.

Inter-provincial, inter district transportation of wheat permitted: Food dept

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab Food Department has not imposed any restrictions on the transportation of wheat and according to the policy of the Punjab government, inter-provincial and inter-district transportation of wheat is fully permitted.

In a policy statement on the transportation of wheat, the spokesperson for Food Department said that according to the Wheat Procurement Policy 2024, the transportation of wheat is fully permitted and the Food Department of Punjab has not issued any notification regarding the ban on wheat transportation within or outside the province. There is no need for any kind of permit for the transportation of wheat.

The spokesperson also clarified that some elements are linking a letter written by the federal government to prevent smuggling of various items with the transportation of wheat, which is based on a complete misunderstanding. He said that in the light of the instructions of the federal government and the Punjab home department, letters were written for the appointment of vigilant and honest staff at all check posts to stop smuggling of various items. However, delivery, purchase and sale of wheat and inter-provincial and inter-district transport are fully permitted.



LAHORE: Consumers buying vegetables and fruits at Shadman Sunday market in the provincial capital.



LAHORE: Consumers buying household items at Shadman Sunday market in the provincial capital.

Green startup offers kitchen gardening through hydroponic technology

PESHAWAR (APP): A green startup by a university student offered kitchen gardening idea by installing of hydroponic farming technology at homes where there is no or very less space for growing of essential vegetables.

"Through installation of hydroponic technology and with little guidance people can do kitchen gardening and can get higher yields than traditional soil based growing systems," explains Marfaa Naseem, leader of team that proposed green startup of hydroponic farming at homes for kitchen gardening.

The startup was granted to university students under the Green Urban Development Program (GUD), a two-year initiative by Institute of Urbanism (IoU) & School of Leadership Foundation (SoLF), with the support of the US Embassy.

The Green Urban Development Programme has been launched for fostering a collaborative environment aimed at reshaping the urban landscape for a greener and more sustainable future.

FTO to chair central advisory committee today

LAHORE (APP): Minister of State and Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) Dr Asif Mahmood Jah will chair a high-level meeting of the central advisory committee to review the overall performance and take stock of the problems being faced by tax payers here tomorrow (Monday).

FTO Adviser Dr Waqarullah Chaudhry told media here Sunday that the 50-member advisory committee consisting of presidents of chambers of commerce, women chambers, APTMA, seed associations, prominent trade associations.

Exploring IT potential for economic growth

LAHORE (APP): As Pakistan navigates challenges of a rapidly evolving global landscape, a robust IT industry becomes a catalyst for driving innovation, fostering research and technological development and grabbing slot on the list of developed nations. Fully employing this sector would matter much for Pakistan also in attracting foreign investment and partnerships on way to a progressive economy and steering country out of financial crunch.

A thriving IT sector can act as a buffer, reducing dependency on traditional industries with a youthful population contributing visibly as a strategic asset for nation building and making the country flourish in different arena of life.

"Information Technology (IT) sector has exhibited consistent year-on-year growth and emerged as one of top five net exporters in the country," stated Pakistan Software Houses Association Chairman Zohaib Khan. "As a primary contributor to net exports in services industry, IT sector plays a pivotal role in shaping Pakistan's economic landscape."

Zohaib said. "With the potential to become country's primary foreign exchange earner and achieve ambitious annual national target of over US\$ 15 billion, it is crucial to embrace a comprehensive approach to propel this sector forward."

According to Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), Pakistan's Telecom sector had generated Rs 850 billion in revenues in 2022-23, marking 17 percent growth from previous year and demonstrating sector's resilience amidst challenges of inflation.

Dr Iqrar says: Scientists should come up with solutions to increase agriculture productivity

FAISALABAD (APP): Agriculture Department Punjab Prof Dr Mahmood A Randhawa, Director Professional Training Dr Neelam Chaudry and others also spoke. Prof Dr Iqrar Ahmad Khan urged agriculture scientists to disseminate modern agricultural trends in the farming community that would boost productivity.

He said that the development of the country depended upon the agriculture sector but the sector was facing challenges including low productivity.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi addressing public gathering at Dargai during his visit to Malakand.

CM KP expresses satisfaction over timely measures for Pak student

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Minister (CM) of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Ali Amin Gandapur has sent a message to the Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan in Pakistan and expressed satisfaction over the timely measures taken by the Kyrgyz government to protect Pakistani students. The timely and effective measures taken by the Kyrgyz government to protect the students are commendable, Sardar Ali Amin Gandapur said. The timely actions of the Kyrgyz government proved helpful in saving the

students from further harm and comforting their parents, said CM KP. "In this difficult time, the leadership role of the Kyrgyz government has been very helpful in normalizing the situation and giving the students a sense of security," Ali Amin Gandapur said. "We are grateful to the Kyrgyz government for ensuring the safety of our students," the CM said. "However, these incidents caused mental stress and suffering for the students and their families," Ali Amin Gandapur said.

Advisor Tourism visits Galyat, directs to remove encroachments

Independent Report PESHAWAR: Advisor to Chief Minister KP on Tourism, Culture and Archeology Zahid Chanzab on Sunday expressed his displeasure over the illegal encroachments in Galyat and issued instructions to the concerned quarters to remove them immediately and submit the report of all the leased properties to him within ten days. He also paid a detailed visit to the parks, public washrooms and parking areas in Nathiagali and Dongagali. On this occasion, he expressed his indignation over the deteriorating condition of the washrooms and issued instructions to

immediately allocate 20 washrooms separately for men and women and keep them clean. While at the same time orders were also issued to remove the illicit encroachments and keep it as resting places for tourists only. He also directed to prepare a map of the land in Dongagali and make a modern parking area for tourists so that the issue of parking in the area could be solved in the true sense. He also visited the Himala House and issued instructions to complete the necessary renovation work going on there as soon as possible and to provide Wi-Fi and other facilities for the tourists as well.

Cop injured by firing of unknown motorcyclists

RAWALPINDI (APP): Unknown motorcyclists opened indiscriminate firing on police party and fled away from the scene in the jurisdiction of naseerabad police station. According to the police spokesman, the incident occurred when the police tried to stop the motorcyclists, but they responded with gunfire resultantly. Due to the fire a constable was injured and he was shifted to the nearby hospital. SDPO Naseerabad visited the hospital to inquire the injured cop. Additionally a search operation was being conducted to apprehend the unknown attackers.

Free medical camp organized by Pak Army in Gilgit-Baltistan

GHANCHE (Online): A one-day free medical camp was organized by Pakistan Army in Kharko village of Ghanche district of Gilgit-Baltistan. Twenty-six doctors and paramedical staff of Army Medical Corps participated in the medical camp. During the one-day free medical camp, more than 1500 patients including 425 men, 627 women and 363 children were treated. The medical camp provided patients with routine medical and dental check-up, ECG lab investigations, portable dental x-ray, minor OT procedures, patient care.

PDF, TiKA pledge to boost humanitarian activities in KP

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Development Foundation (PDF) and Turkiye's aid organization TiKA held talks for enhancing humanitarian activities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The PDF was represented by its Chairman Muhammad Bilal Sethi, Patron-in-Chief Dr Qibla Ayaz and Executive Member Khurshid Khan, while the TiKA team comprised Turkiye Ambassador Dr Mehmet Pekachi and its Country Director Muhsin BALCI. The meeting focused on kick-starting projects to uplift the socio-economic status of the KP people. Highlighting the economic challenges faced by the Pakistani youth, the PDF chairman underscored the need of creating job opportunities and empowering young individuals. He pleaded for the TiKA's support in organizing skill-based training programmes, ranging from culinary arts to digital marketing, with the aim to foster entrepreneurship among the youth. Muhsin BALCI provided a comprehensive overview of the TiKA's ongoing projects, emphasizing their commitment to empowering the local communities.

FIA operations against illegal currency business continue in Swabi, Peshawar

PESHAWAR (APP): The FIA crackdown operations continued against Hawala, Hundi and illegal currency exchange in Swabi and Peshawar here on Sunday. Major Operations of Commercial Banking Circle Peshawar in its operations have arrested 5 suspects in raid operations, FIA spokesman said. The alleged accused was arrested from Din Trade Center and Sader area of Peshawar and Lower Dir, FIA spokesman informed. The alleged accused were found to be involved in Hawala hundi and illegal currency exchange and the accused were doing currency exchange business without license, FIA spokesman said. Among the arrested accused are Khalid Khan, Shayaz Khan, Shoaib, Asghar and Amjad Ali, the FIA spokesman said. A huge amount of domestic and foreign currency was recovered from the possession of the accused and a total of more than 48,56,000 Pakistani rupees was recovered from the possession of the accused. The money also included 355 UAE Dirhams, 115 Saudi Riyals, 20 US Dollars and 550 Ringgits were also recovered.

Ready to play bridge role between KP and federation: Governor

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Sunday said that he is ready to play the role of bridge between the federation and the provincial government. Governor Kundi stressed the importance of addressing issues with reason rather than resorting to indecorous behavior. He said this while addressing a public gathering in Malakand. "I extend an invitation once again to the Chief Minister KP to visit the Governor House, and I am willing to visit the Chief Minister's House if there is any problem in visiting the Governor House," said Governor Kundi, highlighting his commitment to collaboration for the province's welfare. Expressing readiness to meet the Chief Minister at any time for the province's rights, Governor Kundi expressed his intent to pursue the province's case at the appropriate forum. "I invite the provincial government and all political parties to join hands with me in struggle for the province's cause," Governor Kundi urged, underlining the Governor House's role as the home for all political factions. Governor Kundi assured that political rivalries should be settled through elections, emphasizing the need for effective governance. "We will not impose Governor's Rule; Peoples Party believes in democracy," Governor Kundi asserted, outlining his party's stance. Regarding the electricity issue, Governor Kundi advised the federal government to transfer all three power companies to the province, holding the provincial government responsible for its management and outcomes. "The issue of tax exemption was a gift from Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto. I will raise the matter of tax enforcement with the federal government," Governor Kundi added, acknowledging the concerns of the Malakand division's residents and emphasizing the need for permanent solutions rather than repeated protests. "I am a people's Governor, ready to go to every street. I don't want to cause anyone distress."

15 dead, 1152 injured in 1085 road accidents in Punjab

LAHORE (APP): At least fifteen persons were killed and 1152 injured in 1085 Road Traffic Crashes (RTCs) in all 37 districts of Punjab during the last 24 hours. Out of these, 542 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 610 victims with minor injuries were treated at the incident site by Rescue Medical Teams thus reducing the burden of Hospitals. Furthermore, the analysis showed those 603 drivers, 33 underage drivers, 174 pedestrians, and 390 passengers were among the victims of road traffic crashes. The statistics show that 256 RTCs were reported in Lahore which affected 281 persons placing the Provincial Capital at top of the list followed by Gujranwala 74 in with 74 victims and at third Faisalabad with 72 RTCs and 84 victims. Chairman of the Pakistan Ulema Council, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi, has emphasized that Pakistani pilgrims should refrain from participating in any political activity during their pilgrimage. Addressing a press conference at Jamia Manzoor-ul-Islamia Cantonment on Sunday, Ashrafi condemned the spread of fake news on social media for political gains, particularly regarding the recent Kyrgyzstan incident. He highlighted that thousands of Pakistanis have left for Hajj, with over 80,000 joining private groups and around 70,000 in official groups. He praised the Makkah program, which assists pilgrims with necessary supplies, and expressed gratitude to Saudi Arabia for facilitating this program.



LAHORE: Chairman of the Pakistan Ulema Council Moulana Tahir Ashrafi is addressing a press conference at Jamia Masjid Manzoor Islamia.

Ashrafi urges pilgrims to avoid political activities during Hajj

LAHORE (APP): Chairman of the Pakistan Ulema Council, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi, has emphasized that Pakistani pilgrims should refrain from participating in any political activity during their pilgrimage. Addressing a press conference at Jamia Manzoor-ul-Islamia Cantonment on Sunday, Ashrafi condemned the spread of fake news on social media for political gains, particularly regarding the recent Kyrgyzstan incident. He highlighted that thousands of Pakistanis have left for Hajj, with over 80,000 joining private groups and around 70,000 in official groups. He praised the Makkah program, which assists pilgrims with necessary supplies, and expressed gratitude to Saudi Arabia for facilitating this program.

International News

Saudi crown prince, US national security adviser meet for talks

DHAHRAN (INP): Prince Mohammed bin Salman and US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan met in Saudi Arabia's eastern city of Dhahran to discuss a "semi-final" version of strategic agreements between the two countries, official Saudi media reported on Sunday. The agreements are considered a major part of Washington's efforts to bring Riyadh around to recognising the state of Israel for the first time — efforts complicated by Israel's military offensive in Gaza. Prince Mohammed, the kingdom's de facto ruler, and Sullivan discussed "the semi-final version of the draft strategic agreements between the kingdom and the United States of America, the work on which is close to being completed", according to Saudi state media. The two sides also discussed "what is being worked on between the two sides on the Palestinian issue to find a credible path towards a two-state solution". The talks also touched on "the situation in Gaza and the necessity of stopping the war there, and facilitating the entry of humanitarian aid". Sullivan is scheduled to visit Israel later on Sunday for talks about the conflict, according to the White House. The Biden administration has been seeking for some time to reach an agree-



Venezuelan opposition leader Maria Corina Machado and opposition presidential candidate Edmundo Gonzalez wave during a rally in La Victoria, Aragua State, Venezuela.

Slovak PM Fico out of danger but condition serious, deputy says

Monitoring Desk BANSKA BYSTRICA: Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico is no longer in immediate danger but still in a serious condition, his deputy said on Sunday, four days after an assassination attempt that sent shockwaves through Europe. "The worst that we feared had passed, at least for the time being," Deputy Prime Minister Robert Kalinak told a news conference outside the hospital where Fico is being treated in the central Slovak city of Banska Bystrica. The prime minister was shot on Wednesday in an attack that raised alarms over the polarised state of politics in the central European country of 5.4 million people. Kalinak told journal-

Turkiye pardons 7 generals jailed for role in coup

Monitoring Desk ISTANBUL: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has pardoned seven generals imprisoned for their role in the military coup that overthrew an Islamist government in 1997, according to decrees published in the official gazette. The decision cited the age and medical conditions of the generals, who were sentenced in 2018 after a trial full of twists and turns. The decrees were signed as a court in Ankara sentenced charismatic Kurdish leader Selahattin Demirtas to 42 years in prison for offences including undermining state unity. The main opposition CHP party, which made strong gains in municipal elections in late March, has long asked for the generals to be freed. Party leader Ozgur Ozel said on X, formerly Twitter, the decision was "late but just".

Russia seizes assets of three European banks

Monitoring Desk MOSCOW: A Russian court has ruled that Deutsche Bank and UniCredit's assets in the country are to be seized, documents showed. European banks have largely exited Russia after Moscow launched its offensive on Ukraine in 2022. Russia has a list of Western assets that would be seized if Group of Seven (G7) leaders decided to confiscate \$300 billion in frozen Russian central-bank assets, the Kremlin had warned on Dec 29 last year. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said any such move by the West would violate international law and undermine the global financial system and the world economy. A court in Saint Petersburg ruled in favour of seizing 239 million euros (\$260 million) from Deutsche Bank, documents dated May 16 showed. The same day, it ordered the seizure of around 463 million euros of assets belonging to Italy's UniCredit.

Saudi king has 'high temperature', will undergo tests: statement

Monitoring Desk RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's King Salman is suffering from "high temperature" and joint pain and will undergo his second round of medical tests in less than a month, state media reported Sunday. The tests will take place at a clinic at the Al-Salam Palace in Jeddah, the Royal Court said in a statement published by the official Saudi Press Agency (SPA). King Salman "suffers from a high temperature and pain in the joints," the statement said.

Venezuela opposition candidate vows political freedom

Monitoring Desk LA VICTORIA: Venezuelan opposition candidate Edmundo Gonzalez said he will ensure all political parties are free to operate if he unseats President Nicolas Maduro in a July vote, and he urged the military to uphold the country's institutions as intended by the constitution. Gonzalez, a former ambassador to Algeria and Argentina, was named by the Unitary Platform opposition coalition in April as its candidate after a ban against landslide primary winner Maria Corina Machado's holding office was upheld by the Supreme Court. The opposition has said Machado's ban is illegal and an attempt by Maduro's government, which has overseen a deep economic crisis in the country, to tamp down support for the opposition in the July 28 presidential election. Standing on a large truck bed, Gonzalez and Machado spoke to a chanting crowd of about 3,000 in La Victoria, Gonzalez's hometown in central Aragua state. Gonzalez said he will ensure political movements can exercise their rights under the constitution, urging voters to imagine a country "where the president does not insult or see his adversaries as enemies." "To the national armed forces - you play a fundamental part in the security of all of us, being guarantors of institutions under article 328 of the constitution," Gonzalez, 74, said. The previously low-profile Gonzalez told Reuters this month he believes Maduro's government would have banned him from office by now if it intended to.



MADRID: A woman holds a placard as people attend a protest in solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza.

Israeli minister threatens to quit unless 'Gaza plan' approved by June 8

Monitoring Desk JERUSALEM: An Israeli minister said on Saturday he would resign from the "war cabinet" unless Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu approved a long-term plan for the Gaza Strip. "The war cabinet must formulate and approve by June 8 an action plan that will lead to the realisation of six strategic goals of national importance, (or) we will be forced to resign from the government," Benny Gantz said, referring to his party, in a televised address directed at

As UNSC member

Pakistan to push for Mideast peace & self determination for occupied peoples: Munir

NEW YORK (APP): Pakistan will articulate developing countries' aspirations, work for peace and in the Middle East and Africa as well as promote the right of self-determination for peoples under foreign occupation if elected as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, Ambassador Munir Akram has said.

Elections for five of the 10 non-permanent seats on the Security Council for the term 2025-26 are set to take place on Jun 6. Pakistan's candidacy has the endorsement of the 55-member Asian Group.

Pakistan has been elected to the Security Council seven times, with the most recent term in 2013. Other occasions were in 1952-1953, 1968-1969, 1976-1977, 1983-1984, 1993-1994 and 2003-2004.

Ambassador Akram, who is Pakistan's ambassador to the UN, was speaking to members of the US-based Pakistan Students Association Coalition (PSA Coalition) via video-link, said the election to the 15-member Council would bring a lot of responsibility on Pakistan to play a leadership role in addressing "our issues like Kashmir, Afghanistan and counterterrorism", but also other multiple global challenges.

The Coalition comprises US-based Pakistani student associations of various colleges that are linked by their unwavering commitment to preserving the Pakistani identity, traditions and its rich culture.

The Pakistani envoy said that U.N. Security Council resolutions on Kashmir provided for the realization of the right to self-determination by Kashmiris.

No gimmicks by the Indian government could alter the international status of the dispute, which is on the UN Security Council agenda, he told the students.

Ambassador Akram briefed the students about

Pakistan's active role at the United Nations, including its presidency of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), as non-permanent member of the Security Council and as chairman of the Grouping of G-77 and China.

As the second-time President of the ECOSOC in 2021, he said Pakistan played a leading role in advocating the concepts of vaccine equality, and the creation of new money for the developing countries enabling them to fight off the impact of Covid-19, an effort that led to restructuring of debt and suspension of interest payments by G-20,



ISLAMABAD: Protesters demand release of poet "Ahmad Farhad" during a demonstration in front of National Press Club in the Federal Capital.



LAHORE: Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan Wada Mitsuhiro meeting with Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz.

Japanese ambassador calls on CM Punjab, discusses trade

LAHORE (APP): Japanese Ambassador Mr. Wada Mitsuhiro called on Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif here on Sunday.

All possible opportunities for strengthening trade, business and investment relations were discussed. Exchange of cultural and educational delegations between Punjab and Japan were also discussed in the meeting. The CM said that Punjab is emerging as a major consumer market, adding that there are good

investment opportunities for Japanese companies in Punjab. Skilled young manpower of Punjab can perform unprecedentedly in Japanese institutions, she added.

The chief minister said the people-to-people interaction between Punjab and Japan is indispensable for the development of bilateral relations. Moreover, the promotion of student-faculty programs between Punjab and Japan was also agreed in principle in the meeting.

Wada Mitsuhiro said that Japan attaches great importance to its relations with Pakistan. He added, "We are determined to collaborate with the Punjab government for the development of technology."

Mr. Wada Mitsuhiro apprised the CM that eleven Pakistani students are studying in Japan on MEXT scholarships for Masters/PhD degrees. He added a number of Japanese projects are ongoing for public welfare in Pakistan.

"Clinic on Wheels" program providing modern health facilities to people: Asif

SIALKOT (APP): Federal Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif has said that the "Clinic on Wheels" programme is providing modern healthcare facilities to people at their doorsteps. He said this while addressing the inaugural ceremony of the Chief Minister Punjab Initiative "Clinic on Wheels" project in Sialkot here today.

The ceremony was attended by Member Provincial Assemblies (MPAs) Muhammad Manshaullah Butt, Chaudhary Faisal Ikram,

believes in the politics of public service and the government is providing necessary healthcare and education facilities to people, especially women.

He said that the provision of modern healthcare facilities is government's top priority. Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has given the gift of health to the people of Punjab by starting the "Clinic on Wheels" program. Health facilities will be available at the doorstep of people through the mobile clinic, he added.



Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Zulqarnain, Chief Officer (CO) Health Dr. Rehan Azhar, Program In-charge "Clinic on Wheels" Sialkot District Dr. Muhammad Adnan besides local officials of the health department and field staff. Addressing the ceremony, Khawaja Muhammad Asif said that the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N)

He said that the condition of the District Headquarters (DHQ) hospital is a matter of concern. "On the instructions of the Chief Minister, I will visit the DHQ hospital tomorrow and steps will be taken to improve its condition. Maryam Nawaz is taking initiatives by following in the footsteps of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Nawaz Sharif.

Capital's school children participate in YourPace Kid's trail Pakistan race

ISLAMABAD (APP): The passionate school children of the federal capital early in the morning on Sunday actively participated in the inDrive and Margalla Trail Runners (MTR) hosted YourPace Kid's Trail Pakistan Race Event, a pioneering initiative aimed at promoting a running culture among children in the country.

The project's race, held at Fatima Jinnah F-9 Park, saw an impressive turnout of around 400 enthusiastic young runners aged 7-14, from diverse backgrounds along with their teachers and supporters. YourPace by inDrive is a non-profit project dedicated to supporting running initiatives to bring together people from diverse backgrounds, helping create a discrimination-free environment for everyone. YourPace, a global initiative successfully conducted in six countries including Egypt, Morocco, Peru,

Balanced diet boosts brain health; study

ISLAMABAD (APP): Researchers found that individuals who followed a balanced diet tended to exhibit better mental health and cognitive functioning.

A recent study published in Nature Mental Health, examined how various dietary patterns influence several aspects of brain health, including mental health, cognitive function, metabolic biomarkers, and brain structure, as measured using MRI.

This study underscores the importance of making wise nutritional choices to enhance brain function and mental health outcomes.

Research suggests that diets rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean protein, and healthy fats can support cognitive function and reduce the risk of cognitive decline.

Conversely, diets high in processed foods, saturated fats,

Hot and dry weather likely in most parts of country: PMD

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has forecast mainly hot and dry weather for most parts of the country during the next 24 hours.

Very hot weather with windstorm-dust raising winds is likely in central and southern parts.

However, partly cloudy weather with rain-windstorm/thunderstorm is expected at isolated places

Tourists throng Kaghan-Naran after road's reopening

ISLAMABAD (APP): Foreign and domestic tourists are thronging to Kaghan-Naran after the reopening of the road to enjoy their trips at recreational spots of the scenic valley. Talking to APP, a Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) official said the Kaghan Development Authority (KDA) has reopened the Kaghan Highway for all kinds of commuters.



Chairman, Pakistan Prime Minister's Youth Program, Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan arrives in Dhaka, Bangladesh to attend D-8 Youth Ministers and Senior Officials.

Saif deplors Centre's unfair behaviour towards KP province

By M. Ilyas
ISLAMABAD - Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Adviser to Chief Minister on Information and Public Relations Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif took the centre to task over the latter's 'unfair behaviour' towards the province.

His remark came days after when KP Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur lashed out at the federal government.

In a presser with the province's Food Minister Zahir Shah, the barrister said, "the funds of the ex-FATA region have been ended and now its responsibility also falls on KP's shoulders."

Defending his chief minister's aggressive speech, he said the purpose his choice of words was to make the centre aware of its rights about KP.

The Food Minister said that the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will not buy imported wheat this year and so far 14 lakhs metric tons of wheat has been registered in the app.

On this occasion, he said that wheat is being purchased in 22 centers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The

process of purchase has been made very transparent. So far, they have bought 27 thousands 3 hundreds metric tons of wheat.

On this occasion, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa farmers, we are buying 6 lakhs Tons of wheat, the price of 100 kg of wheat has been fixed at Rs 9,720. We are also buying wheat and are taking various steps to ensure the transparency of this purchase.

The provincial minister said that the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa do not like the imported wheat, wheat is being purchased in 22 centers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, wheat will be purchased in new phases from 20 May 2024. The Food Minister said that the Khyber P a k h t u n k h w a government's decision to purchase wheat from local farmers will benefit the province to the tune of 12 billions rupees.

During a telephonic conversation, the two leaders also discussed the robust bilateral relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, exploring various avenues for further strengthening cooperation across multiple sectors. This dialogue underscored the profound and enduring partnership between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

The ministers also discussed the grave situation in Gaza and other pressing regional and global developments of mutual concern.

Dar, Saudi FM review preparations for Crown Prince's visit to Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Prince Faisal bin Farhan bin Abdullah on Sunday reviewed preparations for the visit of the Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia Mohammed Bin Salman Al Saud to Pakistan.

Ishaq Dar underlined that the people of Pakistan were eagerly looking forward to the visit of His Royal Highness at a mutually agreed date.

Student volunteers of Iqra University visits Security Division

ISLAMABAD: According to the details, the student volunteers of Iqra University visited Security Division Islamabad and met with SSP Security, a public relations officer said.

He said that, following the special directives of the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, the SSP Security Capt @ Syed Zeeshan Haider welcomed the delegation of student volunteers of Iqra University and briefed them about security division police work.

The student delegation visited the Security division under the Friends of

Later, the delegation also visited the CCTV control room, police mess, stable, and diplomatic enclave. Moreover, delegation was fully informed about their procedure and usefulness, patrolling of police in high Security Zone and the performance and utility of the police that are playing an important role in the security of the High Security Zone, security of VVIP/VIP foreign dignitaries, national VIPs, important buildings situated in High Security Zone and protection of life and property of citizens.

The delegation acknowledged the security measurements taken by Islamabad Police to ensure



Police Program. The SSP Security fully briefed the delegation about the procedures and advantages of the Security division, the protection of the diplomatic enclave. The delegation expressed special gratitude to IGP Islamabad and his team for this successful visit.



ISLAMABAD: Families enjoying on holiday at Shahdara picnic point in the Federal Capital.