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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting regarding promotion of Pakistan-Azerbaijan economic ties.

No country allowed to interfere in Pakistan domestic affairs: DPM

Pakistan weighs tit-for-tat resolution after US election probe demand; "We must show our unity, we must show that we mean business," says Ishaq Dar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar informed the National Assembly on Thursday that the government would bring a resolution in the House to counter the resolution passed by the US House of Representatives on June 25. Winding up the discussion on a cut motions, he said, "The government has taken note of the resolution passed by the US House of Representatives on Pakistan. We will also pass a resolution in response to the US's resolution, and the draft resolution will be shared with the opposition and treasury benches." He said, "We must show our sovereignty and unity. We must show we mean business... I will request all to come together and present a clear resolution in response to the US resolution." The deputy prime minister also read out a statement

earlier issued by the Foreign Office saying, "Pakistan has taken note of the passage of House Resolution 901 by the US House of Representatives on June 25. We believe that the timing and context of this particular resolution do not align well with the positive dynamics of our bilateral ties and stem from an incomplete understanding of the political situation and electoral process in Pakistan. Pakistan, as the world's second-largest parliamentary democracy and fifth-largest democracy overall, is committed to the values of constitutionalism, human rights, and the rule of law in pursuance of our own national interest." He said that Pakistan believed in constructive dialogue and engagement based on mutual respect and understanding. Such resolutions, he noted, were neither constructive nor objective.

Court rejects PTI founder & his wife's appeals for suspension of sentence in marriage case

PTI announces to challenge decision regarding rejection of appeals

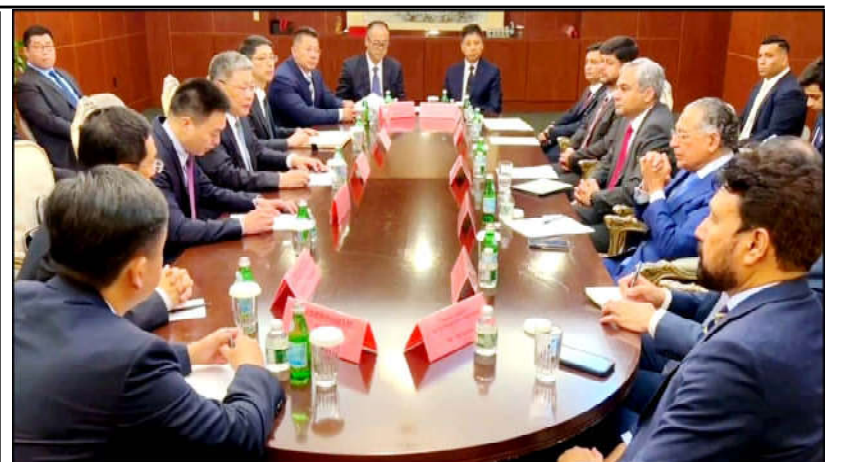
ISLAMABAD (APP): The District and Sessions Court on Thursday rejected the petitions of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder and his wife Bushra Bibi for suspension of their sentences in the marriage case. Additional District and Sessions Judge Muhammad Afzal Majoka announced the verdict which he had reserved on June 25. The court, in its 10-page written order, observed that the accused had not provided any valid reason to justify their plea for the suspension of sentence. Bushra Bibi's status as a woman also did not justify suspension of the sentence or her release on bail. It may be added that on February 3, 2024, Senior Civil Judge

Qudratullah had convicted the PTI founder and his wife in the marriage case with seven years jail term. Bushra Bibi's ex-husband Khawar Manika filed the case against their marriage. The PTI founder and his wife's appeals against their conviction were filed on February 23, 2024, in the court of Sessions Judge Shah Rukh Arjumand. On May 23, Judge Arjumand reserved the verdict on the appeals. On May 29, Khawar Manika expressed no confidence in the court, leading Judge Arjumand to request the Islamabad High Court to transfer the appeals to another court. On June 3, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) transferred the appeals to Additional Ses-

sions Judge Afzal Majoka. Online adds: PTI has announced to challenge in high court the decision of rejecting appeal pleas seeking suspension of conviction of PTI founder Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi in Nikah during iddat. PTI central leader Umar Ayyub while talking to media men said the court did not accept the plea seeking suspension of sentence in nikah during iddat case. We will challenge this decision in high court. He went on to say this matter related to husband and wife. There was no complication in this case. We had legal right in this regard but were deprived of it. Our movement will gear up after this decision.

PM directs strategy formulation for stronger economic ties with Azerbaijan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday instructed the formulation of a comprehensive strategy to strengthen cooperation and trade partnership with Azerbaijan in the fields of economy and investment. Chairing a high-level meeting on enhancing relations with Central Asian States, particularly Azerbaijan, in the areas of economy and investment, the prime minister stated, "Pakistan geographically offers a natural economic corridor to the sea for Central Asian states." He highlighted the enduring fraternal relations between Pakistan and Azerbaijan, which had spanned decades. He believed that there were significant opportunities for trade and investment



NEW YORK: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi attending meeting with his counterpart from the People's Republic of China Qi Yanjun.

China lauds establishment of SPU in Islamabad for foreigners

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi held an important meeting with his counterpart from the People's Republic of China (PRC), Qi Yanjun, in New York on Thursday. The meeting took place at the Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations. The two leaders engaged in a detailed discussion on Pakistan-China relations and security matters. They also discussed cooperation between law enforcement agencies and China's support in training and modern technology. Qi Yanjun said that China would provide full cooperation in training and capacity building of Pakistani law enforcement agencies. He also appreciated the establishment of the Special Protection Unit

(SPU) in Islamabad for the security of foreign nationals, particularly Chinese citizens. He also assured the Federal Minister for Interior full cooperation in the training and other related matters of the SPU. It is worth mentioning that an advisory group from the Chinese Ministry of Public Security will visit Pakistan soon. Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi said that Pakistan is proud of its friendship with China and Pakistan-China friendship is an example for the rest of world. He highlighted that foolproof security arrangements have been made for the Chinese citizens. It is worth mentioning that Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi and his PRC counterpart Qi Yanjun are in New York to attend the 4th United Nations Chiefs of Police Summit (UNCOPS).



ISLAMABAD: Representative of National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) and K-Electric (KE) exchange documents after agreement signed.

ECP to conduct LB elections in Punjab, Islamabad peacefully

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) here on Thursday held a high-level meeting regarding the holding of local body elections in Punjab and Islamabad. Chaired by Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja, the meeting was attended by Federal Secretary for Interior, Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Chief Secretary Punjab, Secretary Local Government of Punjab and Secretary Election Commission of Pakistan and other senior officials, said a press release. Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja said that it was the constitutional and legal responsibility of the ECP to conduct local bodies' elections in Punjab province and the federal capital. He said that the ECP was fully prepared to conduct local body elections in

Islamabad and Punjab province in peaceful manner. The Commission issued strict instructions and directed that all constitutional and legal requirements regarding the holding of local government elections in Punjab and Islamabad should be fulfilled as soon as possible so that the ECP could take immediate action to ensure the holding of local government elections. Earlier, Federal Secretary for Interior Khurram Ali Agha and Chief Commissioner Islamabad Mohammad Ali Randhawa told the Commission that the summary regarding the conducting local bodies elections in the federal capital and the notification of specific seats of the Metropolitan Corporation had been sent to the Prime Minister's office. The amendment required in Section 17 of the

ICT Local Government Act, 2017 has already been approved by the Cabinet Committee for Disposal of Legislative Cases (CCLC). Chief Secretary Punjab Zahid Akhtar Zaman and Local Government of Punjab Mian Shakeel Ahmed told the Commission that the new government of Punjab had made the necessary amendments in the Punjab Local Government Act 2022 and the preparation of the new draft law regarding the holding of local government elections in the province. The local government formed a high-level committee headed by Zeeshan Rafiq which held its five meetings and the recommendations of the Committee will be submitted to the provincial cabinet in the next few days. Along with this, the results of the new census will be revealed.

Attaulah Tarar says: Opposition's cut motions unrelated to Law Ministry

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaulah Tarar on Thursday said that the cut motions of the opposition members had nothing to do with the Ministry of Law and Justice. Instead of demands for grants of the Law Ministry, their discussions focused solely on the judiciary's internal matters, he said while speaking in the National Assembly. The minister said the opposition legislators highlighted issues unre-

Planning Minister says: CPEC 2.0 to bolster Pakistan's 5E initiative

KARACHI (INP): CPEC 2.0 will bolster Pakistan's 5E initiative, said Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal while addressing a seminar held here by KASB Ktrade Securities. The 5Es initiative is centred around five key pillars, which include exports, E-Pakistan, environment and climate change, energy and infrastructure and equity and empowerment. The seminar themed "CPEC 2.0: Business Collaboration Between Pakistan and China". Ahsan Iqbal highlighted the opportunities of the new phase of CPEC featured by B2B cooperation with a view to the outcomes of Pakistani PM Shehbaz Sharif's visit to China earlier this month. According to Gwadar Pro, the Planning Minister summarised that over 1000 business meetings were held during PM's visit to

Petrol price set to increase from July

ISLAMABAD (INP): Petrol prices are expected to increase in Pakistan from July 1 after four consecutive price cuts, sources said on Thursday. Petrol is projected to increase by Rs7 per litre and HSD by Rs8 per litre due to higher international market rates. The international prices for petrol and HSD have risen by \$4.4 and \$5.5 per barrel, respectively, in the last fortnight. The hike in petrol prices could lead to domestic price hikes, potentially more significant if the government raises the Petroleum Development Levy (PDL) from the current Rs60 per litre. Previously, Pakistan slashed petrol and HSD prices due to a slump in the international market. Since May 1, petrol prices have fallen by roughly Rs35 per litre, dropping from around Rs294 on April 30 to about Rs259. Similarly, HSD prices have fallen by roughly Rs22 per litre, decreasing from over Rs290 in mid-April to Rs268. However, the Finance Bill 2024 has raised the PDL limit to Rs80 per litre. Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, however, announced on June 13 that PDL would be gradually increased depending on the pricing trend.



ISLAMABAD: Opposition Leader in the National Assembly Omar Ayub Khan talking with media persons outside district court in the Federal Capital, as the court rejects Imran Khan, wife appeal in unlawful marriage case.

Power tariff likely to hike by Rs3.41/unit

ISLAMABAD (INP): The power tariff is likely to hike by Rs 3.41 per unit on account of monthly fuel adjustment is approved, the tariff hike would put an additional burden on consumers already struggling with high electricity prices. Following the announcement of Budget 2024-25, the federal government earlier further burdened the inflation hit citizens with Rs 5.72 per unit hike in power tariff. The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) announced that the average electricity tariff will rise to Rs. 35.50 per unit from the current Rs. 29.78. Previously, the basic electricity tariff was increased to Rs 7.50 per unit in the current financial year, up from Rs 7.91 per unit in the last fiscal year. However the surge in the electricity tariff will be implemented from July 1. The CPPA has filed an application to NEPRA seeking an increase in the electricity tariff, citing an increase in the monthly fuel adjustment for May. According to the CPPA, 12.26 billion units of electricity were generated last month, with a production cost of Rs9.12 per unit. If the application



ISLAMABAD: Chief Election Commissioner, Sikandar Sultan Raja chaired a meeting on local body elections in Islamabad and Punjab at ECP Secretariat.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Positive feelers

Hopes were not very high that relations between Pakistan and India would improve greatly under Modi 3.0, and up till now there is little to suggest that Narendra Modi's third stint in power would change the bilateral equation positively. Pakistan was not invited to the Indian prime minister's oath-taking earlier this month, whereas other regional leaders attended. Moreover, there was a lukewarm exchange of X posts between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Mr Modi to mark the latter's election victory, and while replying to Nawaz Sharif's congratulatory tweet, the Indian leader highlighted the need for 'security'.

Yet the Pakistani administration has lately sent out positive public feelers, perhaps to gauge the mood in New Delhi. Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar, who also oversees the foreign affairs portfolio, while speaking at an event on Tuesday, called for "good-neighbourly relations" with India, at the same time emphasising a "just and peaceful solution" to the Kashmir dispute. Mr Dar added that it is time for "sober reflection" on the status of bilateral ties. Considering Mr Dar's position on the totem pole, the public outreach to India appears to be a serious attempt to mend ties. From here, the onus is on India to reciprocate. One small but crucial step towards normalisation can be the restoration of full diplomatic ties. Both capitals have been without the other state's high commissioner for nearly five years, after ties were downgraded in 2019 in the aftermath of India's scrapping of Article 370 of its constitution.

Moreover, the stalled dialogue process should be restarted, both at the official level and via the backchannel. The Indian establishment can pretend that Pakistan no longer matters in its foreign policy calculus, but the truth is that a peaceful region will bring economic and other dividends for the entire subcontinent, including India.

As and when this process of talking to each other commences, Pakistan should stick to its principled stand on Kashmir, yet it should be willing to discuss all other outstanding issues. While it is expected that India would keep repeating its mantra on 'terrorism' and 'security', New Delhi's negotiators should adopt a less rigid stance if they are at all serious about regional peace.

Either the status quo can continue, and with it the mistrust and toxicity that have dominated bilateral relations for over seven decades, or both sides can take bold steps for peace, and create a better future for the more than two billion people of the subcontinent.

A basic framework for peace exists from the Musharraf era; this can be dusted up and updated if both sides are committed to leaving the past behind and working for a better future. Much will depend on whether and how New Delhi reacts to Mr Dar's overture.

Istanbul, not...

F.S. Aijazuddin

Turkish cuisine is to die for, not from. What seafood is to the Japanese, meat is for the Turks. It promises longevity.

The average lifespan of a Japanese is 84 years, a Turk 71 years. Indulgent Pakistanis last only 66 years.

Türkiye today is where Pakistan should have been, had it been properly husbanded. Pakistan, although a brother in Islam, took instead the path of unbridled procreation. Türkiye's population (99 per cent Muslim) increased from 21 million in 1950, to 86m in 2023. Over the same period, Pakistan's population burgeoned from 34m to over 220m. Birth control is spelt differently in Turkish.

Today, while Pakistan is still struggling to emerge out of its ideological sac, Türkiye knows what it is. It is the Türkiye envisaged by its Jinnah; ie, Kemal Atatürk. On Nov 10 each year — Atatürk's death anniversary — all Türkiye comes to a halt and observes one minute's silence. Jinnah shares his birthday with Jesus Christ and Nawaz Sharif.

The late president Pervez Musharraf studied in Türkiye until 1956. He spoke Turkish fluently. Unfortunately, that is all he learned. He forgot Türkiye's seismic shift from a khaki kleptocracy to a democratically elected dictatorship.

Its present ruler, Recep Erdogan, has been in power as prime minister, then president, since 2003. On his way up, he served as Istanbul's mayor. (In China, being mayor of Shanghai helps in reaching Beijing.)

In 1999, he served four months in jail for making a speech in which he recited Ziya Gökalp's 1912 poem, Soldier's Prayer. Erdogan quoted: 'Minarets are bayonets, domes are helmets, mosques are our barracks, believers are

soldiers'.

Is Erdogan a second Atatürk? No. Türkiye's pantheon has only one place at the top. Is he a Turkish version of the Saudi MBS? Erdogan, even if he had the money, is too canny to waste resources on the folly of a \$1.5 trillion Neom city project.

Türkiye — dismissed in the 19th century as the "sick man of Europe", and, in the 20th century, denied entry into the EU — has decided to steer its own course. It is a vibrant example of a benign Islam — shorn of ritualism and an intrusive clergy.

Its priorities are education, infrastructure and expanding tourism. In 2023, Türkiye's income from 57m visitors exceeded \$54 billion. The largest number — Russians — live within spitting distance across the Black Sea. Pakistan sent 140,388, less than 155,155 Mexicans. The Mongolian hordes have yet to invade Türkiye. A Turkish Chinatown is still decades away.

A 1990 guide book warned travellers that Turks were just "beginning to learn about living on plastic". Modern Turks are now as addicted to plastic cards as the Americans are to plastic surgery.

Turkey is becoming a preferred destination for medical tourism. Almost half a million foreign visitors come to have their looks improved (or damaged) by Botox procedures. Some hospitals have dedicated hotels where patients check in, go next door to have their operation, and return for five-star recuperation.

In Istanbul, stray dogs and cats are tagged at official expense and pampered with free meals and comfortable kennels. The Indian cynophile, Maneka Gandhi, who fought for Delhi's canines, would have been gratified. After the recent Eidul

Azha holidays (known as Kurban Bayrami), bones became hard to come by. A rabies epidemic could force the Turkish administration to rethink its hospitality.

Despite the keenness to encourage tourists, Turks are curiously xenophobic. They insist on speaking only Turkish. This often leads to a dialogue of the deaf between Turks and strangers, until both tap into their mobile phones for translation.

Istanbul's shopping malls are a treat, even for a tourist tired of London. In them, desi-gner outlets rub che-eks with shops offering every kind of Turkish sweets and flavours of honey. Haunches of cured meat compete with Har-ro-ds' Food Hall. The generational divide appears in the Food Court, where hamburgers and fried chicken overwhelm traditional adana kebabs and shorba.

Türkiye is now more than a country; it is an experience. To savour its fullness, one needs to immerse oneself in it. Young locals do it by dipping into the Bosphorus, which is remarkably clean considering the armada of tankers, cruise ships, ferries and boats that ply through it.

To spend a few days in a Turkish hotel is to escape from home. To live in a villa in the cool, silent suburb of Zekeriyaköy, high in the green, undulating hills that overlook Istanbul, is to holiday in heaven. Over Kurban Bayrami, its affluent residents fled to their second seaside homes, leaving streets empty for dogs, their walkers, and for those who prefer their Eid away from an urban abattoir.

Holiday in Türkiye. You will emerge from its hammam physically cleansed, emotionally relaxed, and pumelled free of domestic anxieties. -- Courtesy Dawn

Taxing health

Navaira Ali Bangash

'Babu' a colloquial term and a remnant of our colonial past, was used to refer to the British bureaucracy, who would wield the stick to tax the people. Even after independence, our inherited bureaucratic system and 'babu' mindset haven't evolved. Every year before the budget, we hear of tax babus arbitrarily formulating policies, including on health, to decide the fate of the people.

Interesting research published by the British Medical Journal in 2011 chronicles how, in 2003, the Tony Blair government in the UK invited all food companies, secretly, and informed them of the burden of hypertension cases on the National Health Service. The government's ask was to reduce sodium content by 10 per cent every year for three years. It was an inclusive, well-informed policy directive that didn't appear out of thin air, but was backed by data and research. After many years, once its impact had taken effect, the study quoted above was published to document this.

Clearly, almost eight decades after leaving the subcontinent, the British have evolved, backing policy measures with authentic data to make informed decisions without disadvantaging any specific stakeholder. But we have not. Take the matter of health tax; there are numerous global examples of health taxes on a myriad of items consumed by the public to save on healthcare costs. Some countries impose duties on beverages (liquor and carbonated drinks) and junk food, and particularly on tobacco. The decisions taken are well-

formed and intended for the long term; they are not simply an arbitrary exercise to meet revenue shortfalls.

Last year, the government imposed massive duties on the cigarette sector to discourage consumers. While the decision was correct, it should have also noted that the number of cases of oral cancer exceed those of lung cancer. Gutka consumption is the main reason behind oral cancer, an undocumented area that is not just completely off the tax authorities' radar but that also doesn't face any action except for the occasional 'ban'.

Meanwhile, it is undeniable that sugar consumption has harmful effects. Yet solely holding fruit juices and drinks responsible for our increasing diabetes burden is to overlook other factors. This is backed by studies. For example, official research published by the US in 2022 on the role of dietary sugars and obesity in type 2 diabetes, conducted a meta-analysis of multiple interventional studies. It showed that one can no longer conclude that sugar consumption alone causes type 2 diabetes, and that, instead, a hypercaloric diet — defined as "one in which a person's energy consumption exceeds their energy expenditure" — achieved by the overconsumption of any type of macronutrients, is a major risk factor.

Diabetes avoidance needs a total lifestyle change; attributing diabetes solely to sugar consumption oversimplifies the complex factors involved in the development of the disease.

In Pakistan's context, the lion's share of sugar consumption stems from our cultural sweet tooth thanks to halwais (who more of-

ten than not evade tax regulations), while the risks of packaged confectionary items are completely overlooked. The easiest sector to drop the anvil on is beverages that have some goodness of fruit in them, and to bracket them with energy drinks and sodas that are caffeinated and full of added sugar.

How can a country that is already facing a malnutrition crisis and needs fortified products tax juice with natural fruit content, which contains essential micronutrients such as Vitamin C, often prescribed by doctors for patients recovering from illness to boost immunity? Multiple research has suggested the importance of juice as a healthy source of energy, whereas in countries such as the US, the dietary guidelines for 2020-2025 allow for up to half of the recommended daily fruit intake to be replaced with fruit juice.

All this brings me back to the point that any policy decision should be well-thought-out, especially when it comes to one that will have an impact on the health of the common man. It is an unfortunate fact that when those in policymaking circles are not connected with the ground realities and tend to overlook hard facts as well as research, it becomes near impossible to take the correct steps. Invariably, the fallout of uninformed policymaking is suffered by the masses, and not by the decision-makers who will get transfers and postings and will eventually retire with hefty pensions and perks without having to answer any uncomfortable questions about how they exercised their powers. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

Agriculture top priority for government: Tanveer Hussain

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research, Rana Tanveer Hussain on Thursday said the agriculture sector is a top priority for the government.

Discussing the Opposition's cut motions on the Ministry's demands for grants, he said that efforts were underway to incorporate research and modern technology into the sector to boost per-acre yield.

Rana Tanveer said a National Development Regulatory Authority has

been established to enhance productivity and targeted subsidies for the Kharif crop are in progress. He said prompt payment to sugarcane farmers is also being ensured.

The minister expressed gratitude to the Opposition for raising critical points. He highlighted that food security was a major global challenge today and the current government had focused on agriculture, which formed the backbone of the national economy. He said several initiatives have been

undertaken for farmers, including subsidies for the Kharif crop, overseen by a cabinet committee headed by the finance minister, ensuring transparency. He said the prime minister has directed the swift completion of these measures.

Rana Tanveer assured that fixed prices for crop production would be guaranteed and outstanding payments to sugarcane farmers would be made.

The minister noted improvements in agricultural output and ongoing technology

collaborations with China and Belarus. "Plans are in place to send students to China and double the per-acre yield," he added.

He emphasized the importance of agricultural research, stating that the federal government has allocated Rs.5 billion, with 26 universities and research centers working on this front.

Rana Tanveer said subsidies for solar-powered tube wells are being introduced by the federal and Punjab governments.



ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for IT and Telecom Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja addressing Roundtable on IT and Digitalisation with Swedish companies.



Brain storming session headed by Chief statistician Dr.Naeem-uz-zafar (SI) regarding 7th Agricultural Census at Pakistan bureau of statistics, Islamabad.

B2B cooperation with China upgrading Pakistan's technology

KARACHI (INP): Business to Business (B2B) cooperation with China is upgrading Pakistan's technology. "Ten years ago, if a Pakistani wanted to use a smart phone, he probably needed to get one from smuggling."

Now, the majority of demand can be met with local production, with 8 of the top 10 mobile manufacturers, mostly Chinese companies, have established presence in Pakistan", said Adnan Aftab, CEO of s m a r t p h o n e

manufacturer Airlink Mobile at a seminar held by KASB Ktrade Securities themed "CPEC 2.0: Business Collaboration Between Pakistan and China".

Earlier this month, the company inked a MoU with Chinese technology company IMIKI to manufacture smart wearable devices in Pakistan.

This collaboration is an epitome of the transformative B2B cooperation between the two countries going on recently.

PSX stays bullish, gains 252 more points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bullish trend on Thursday, gaining 252.61 points, a positive change of 0.32 percent, closing at 78,528.25 points against 78,275.65 points on the last working day.

A total of 283,542,503 shares were traded during the day as compared to 469,756,007 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 11.067 billion against Rs 19.777 billion on the last trading day.

Pakistan aims to boost trade with Central Asia: Aleem Khan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Board of Investment and Communications Abdul Aleem Khan on Thursday said that Pakistan wants to promote bilateral trade and business activities with all the countries of Central Asia for which practical efforts have already been initiated.

Talking to the Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan Khazar Farhadov, who called on him, the minister said that States of Central Asia can be beneficiaries of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Project which will significantly increase

economic activities in the region, said a press release.

Abdul Aleem Khan apprised the Ambassador about his recent visit to Central Asia and the trade agreements held at the Ten Shen Conference in Tajikistan. Speaking on the occasion Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan expressed his gratitude to the minister for offering promotion of bilateral cooperation and said that there is a large capacity for manpower from Pakistan in various fields of professional expertise for which steps would be welcomed.

Influx of grey imports continues to undermine auto industry: PBF

KARACHI (INP): Highlighting the critical issues facing Pakistan's automotive CKD sector in its letter to the ministry of industries and production, Pakistan Business Forum (PBF) has stated that the automobile sector employs over 3.5 million people and is vital for our industrial development.

With an installed capacity of 1.1 million

units per annum, the sector struggles to produce and retail merely 100,000 units annually, representing less than 10% of its potential.

PBF President Khawaja Mehboob ur Rehman said, "Unfortunately we don't have any vision for putting the country's economy on a self-sustained path of growth."

Shaza Fatima urges Swedish companies to invest in IT, Telecom sector of Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja on Thursday urged Swedish companies to invest in Pakistan's Information Technology and Telecom sector.

"The present government is taking steps to promote Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in the country, as the growth of ICT is a vital factor for progress," she expressed these views while addressing the Roundtable

on IT and Digitalization with Swedish tech companies held at the Ministry of IT & Telecom.

Ambassador of Sweden to Pakistan Henrik Persson and representatives of Swedish companies including Ericsson, Need Insights, LCC/Talkpool, Quixel, Saab, and Mahana Wealth Ltd were present on the occasion.

Shaza Fatima said, "Ministry of IT & Telecom is working on fulfilling Digital Pakistan vision through

multiple cross sectoral initiatives including laws, policies and rules and regulations for enablement of true digital landscape."

The Minister of State for IT said, "Digital Pakistan Policy is paving way for taking Digital transformation to the next level." She said, "The government is committed for provision of affordable and quality ICT services to masses. Shaza Fatima said that atmosphere for investment in Pakistan is conducive."

Rupee gains 03 paise against Dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Rupee on Thursday gained 03 paise against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 278.37 against the previous day's closing at Rs 278.40.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market, however, were Rs 277.6 and Rs 280.5 respectively.

LCCI, SBP jointly organise event on Micro, Small & Medium-sized Enterprises Day

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) Thursday organised an event, in collaboration with the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), in connection with the Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Day observance. The day, declared by the United Nations, is marked every year on June 27.

LCCI President Kashif Anwar was the chief guest while Senior Vice President Zafar Mahmood Chaudhry, SBP Chief Manager Tariq Riaz, Senior Deputy Chief Manager Muhammad Tahir, Hamza Talib of State Bank and a large number of industrialists and traders participated in the event. More than 15 banks set up stalls at the event.

Pakistan has long-standing deep brotherly relationship with Turkiye: Sardar Saleem

Independent Report
LAHORE: The Governor of Punjab met with the Consul General of Turkiye, Durmus Bastug, at the Governor's House, Lahore. In the meeting, issues of mutual interest, strengthening bilateral relations in trade, education and other sectors were discussed.

Speaking on the occasion, Governor Punjab, Sardar Saleem Haider said that Pakistan has a long-standing deep brotherly relationship with Turkiye. He said that both the countries have stood by each other in every difficult time. Governor Punjab said

that he was grateful to Turkiye's for the its unwavering support for Pakistan's stance on international forums, especially on the Kashmir issue. He said that there is a need to increase the volume of trade between Pakistan and Turkiye. Governor Punjab said that there should be exchanges of delegations of businessmen between Turkiye and Pakistan. He said that the student exchange program between Turkiye and Pakistan should be expanded. The Governor of Punjab said that there is a need to make a comprehensive strategy

regarding scholarships for Pakistani students to study in Turkish universities.

Consul General of Turkiye Mr. Durmus Bastug said that there are strong religious and cultural ties between Pakistan and Turkiye. Consul General of Turkiye, Darmus Bastug, congratulated Pakistan for being elected as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council. Darmus Bastug said that he would do his best to take the relationship between Pakistan and Turkiye to new heights.



LAHORE: Consul General of Turkiye, Durmus Bastug meeting with Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider at Governor's House.

Punjab govt conducting first school census to introduce skill based program: Rana

ISLAMABAD (APP): Punjab's Education Minister, Rana Sikandar Hayat Thursday said that all-out measures would be taken to standardise the education system in public schools of Punjab where for better policies, the first school mapping programme to collect data about all school kids will be conducted soon transparently.

Talking to a Private news channel, he stressed on conducting school census at the national level, adding that the Punjab government is

taking the lead among all other provinces and recently with the direction of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif school mapping was being conducted to count kids.

Through NADRA data will be checked about the enrollment data of students at every district level, he said, adding that long-term policy-making for government schools and enhancing the quality of education will be the top priority of the Punjab government.

KP lifts ban on recruitment in govt depts

PESHAWAR (INP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government has lifted the ban on recruitment in government departments.

As per details, Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur has directed the concerned authorities to lift the ban on all types of recruitment in the province. A letter has been issued to the Chief Secretary from the Chief Minister's secretariat. On March 3, Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur imposed a ban on all types of recruitment, with the exception of cases already in process at the Public Services Commission.

15 dead, 1,237 injured in Punjab road accidents

LAHORE (APP): At least 15 people were killed and 1,237 others injured in 1,173 road traffic crashes in Punjab during the last 24 hours. As many as 547 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 690 with minor injuries were treated at the incident site by the rescue medical teams. Furthermore, the analysis showed those 692 drivers.



LAHORE: A group photo of Speaker Punjab Assembly Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan, with Vice Chancellor, Shaughta Naz, Dr. Arifa on the occasion of the closing ceremony of the three-day International Conference on Challenges in Global Sustainability (Economics, Environment, and Science) at Lahore College for Women University in the provincial capital.

CS chairs meeting to review Muharram arrangements

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: A high-level meeting was held under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry to review the arrangements for Muharram ul-Haram in the province. The meeting was attended by IG Police Akhtar Hayat Khan, Additional Chief Secretary Home Department, Member Board of Revenue, relevant secretaries, commissioners, deputy commissioners,

security officials, and other officers. During the meeting, a detailed review of the security arrangements for Muharram ul-Haram was conducted. Additional Chief Secretary Muhammad Abid Majid provided a comprehensive briefing, stating that control rooms would be established in both the Police Department and the Home Department to maintain strict vigilance on all activities during Muharram ul-Haram.

Khawaja Salman says: Punjab aims for enhanced universal health insurance

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Health Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique announced the government's intent to enhance the universal health insurance program during a meeting at the Punjab Health Initiative Management Company on Thursday.

The session, attended by representatives from various insurance companies, focused on improving the existing framework of the health insurance system.

The minister emphasized that all stakeholders are being engaged to refine the program. He highlighted the effective administration of the health card program under PML-N President Muhammad Nawaz Sharif's leadership but acknowledged challenges in universalizing the health card facility.

Four killed, 3 injured in armed clash over property dispute

PESHAWAR (INP): At least four people were killed and three others injured in armed clash between two groups over property dispute here on Thursday. According to details, armed men of two groups which were in dispute over ownership of a property exchanged fire in Nahaqi area in jurisdiction of Daudzai police station of Peshawar. In cross firing, four people were killed while three others sustained injuries.

Two children drowned in fish pond

MUZAFFARGARH (APP): Two children, a minor boy and his sister, drowned while bathing in a pond at a fish farm in the suburbs of the city on Thursday, rescuers said.

Rescue 1122 spokesman said that they received information that five years old Khadeeja and seven years old Hadi s/o Shakir had drowned. They reached the site at Khanga Shumali, Jhang Road, within thirteen minutes but by that time, the relatives had retrieved their bodies.

Nigerian delegation visits PDMA, lauds its working

LAHORE (APP): A delegation of the Nigerian government comprising government officials and governors of three states visited the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), here on Thursday.

The delegation learnt about the natural disaster management system of the Punjab government. In view of the ongoing work on disaster risk reduction in Nigeria with the support of the World Bank, information was exchanged with the Punjab government authorities.

According to a PDMA spokesperson, Director General Irfan Ali Kathia informed the

delegation about the PDMA working. He said 24-hour communication with all districts was ensured in the provincial control room.

The PDMA was alert to all challenges including flood, covid, dengue, drought, smog and heat wave, he added and said advance warnings and alerts are issued to management about heat waves, rain floods and other disasters.

The DG briefed the delegation about the flood simulation model. The Nigerian delegation was impressed with the PDMA control room and emergency response system.



LAHORE: U.S. Consul General in Lahore Kristin K. Hawkins being welcomed by Punjab Social Welfare Minister Sohail Shaukat Butt during her arrival at Office of Welfare and Baitul Maal.

KP govt decides to form judicial commission to probe into May 9 incidents

PESHAWAR (Online): KP government has decided to constitute judicial commission to probe into May 9 incidents.

The resolution passed by provincial assembly will now be presented before provincial cabinet for approval.

Through the resolution the withdrawal of cases against Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi has been demanded too.

Text has been worked out for judicial inquiry wherein it has been demanded that CCTV be made public.

Meeting of KP cabinet has been summoned. The resolution on judicial inquiry is part of agenda of cabinet meeting. It is pertinent to mention here resolution regarding judicial inquiry was passed in KP assembly on May 10.

The resolution was tabled by Mushtaq Ghani and Akbar Ayub.

International News

Israel says it can send Lebanon 'back to Stone Age' as UN warns against war

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: Israel said it does not want war in Lebanon but could send its neighbour "back to the Stone Age", as the UN's humanitarian chief warned such a conflict would be "potentially apocalyptic".

The border between the two countries has seen daily exchanges of fire between Israeli forces and Iran-backed Hezbollah militants ever since the October 7 attack on Israel by Hezbollah's ally Hamas, which triggered the war in Gaza.

Fears those exchanges could escalate into full-blown war have only grown in recent weeks as cross-border attacks intensified, and after Israel revealed it had approved plans for a Lebanon offensive, prompting new threats from Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah.

Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant said dur-

ing a visit to Washington on Wednesday that his country could "take Lebanon back to the Stone Age, but we don't want to do it".

"We do not want war, but we are preparing for every scenario," he told reporters. "Hezbollah understands very well that we can inflict massive damage in Lebanon if a war is launched." Israel's allies, including key defence backer the United States, have been keen to avoid such an eventuality. A US official said Washington was engaged in "fairly intensive conversations" with Israel, Lebanon and other actors, and believed that no side sought a "major escalation".

US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin told Gallant on Tuesday that another war with Hezbollah could have "terrible consequences for the Middle East", and urged a diplomatic solution. Germany on Wednesday, echo-

ing a Canadian warning from the day before, "urgently requested" its citizens in Lebanon leave the country. "The current heightened tensions in the border area with Israel could escalate further at any time," updated foreign ministry advice in Berlin said.

UN humanitarian coordinator Martin Griffiths told reporters in Geneva on Wednesday that Lebanon was "the flashpoint beyond all flashpoints".

"It's beyond planning. It's potentially apocalyptic," warned Griffiths, whose term ends this week.

A war involving Lebanon "will draw in Syria... it will draw in others", he added. "It's very alarming."

Lebanon's national news agency reported about 10 Israeli strikes on areas near the border on Wednesday, including one around 10:00 pm that destroyed a building in Nabatiyeh, wounding five people.



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and European leaders attend a family photo session, during the European Union leaders' summit in Brussels, Belgium.

Ukraine signs security pacts with EU, Lithuania and Estonia

Monitoring Desk
BRUSSELS: The European Union and two of its member countries, Lithuania and Estonia, signed security agreements with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy at a summit in Brussels on Thursday.

The agreement with the EU lays out the bloc's commitment to help Ukraine in nine areas of security and defence policy - including arms deliveries, military training, defence industry co-operation and demining, according to a draft seen by Reuters.

The pact - along with

Irish prime minister condemns bomb hoax at his home

Monitoring Desk
DUBLIN: Irish Prime Minister Simon Harris said a hoax bomb threat made to his home on Wednesday night is "utterly unacceptable" and that the intimidation of politicians and their families cannot be allowed to continue.

There have been increased instances of people gathering outside the homes of Irish ministers, sometimes wearing masks and erecting anti-migrant banners.

Three men were arrested last week over the alleged harassment of an elected official after they gathered outside Harris' home.

2 Bolivian army leaders arrested after coup attempt

Monitoring Desk
LA PAZ: Two Bolivian army leaders have been arrested after soldiers and tanks took up position in front of government buildings on Wednesday in what President Luis Arce called an attempted coup.

The troops and tanks entered Plaza Murillo, a historic square where the presidency and Congress are situated, in the afternoon, prompting global condemnation of an attack on democracy. One of the tanks tried to break down a metal door of the presidential palace.

Surrounded by soldiers and eight tanks, the now-dismissed army chief General Juan Jose Zúñiga said the "armed forces intend to restructure democracy, to make it a true democracy and not one run by the same few people for 30, 40 years". Shortly thereafter, AFP reporters saw soldiers and tanks pulling back from the square. The uprising lasted about five hours. Later Wednesday, Zúñiga was captured and forced into a police car as he addressed reporters outside a military barracks, footage on state television showed.

"General, you are under arrest," Deputy Interior Minister Jhonny Aguilera told Zúñiga. "No one can take away the democracy we have won," Arce said from a balcony of the government palace in front of hundreds of supporters.

A second senior military officer Juan Arnez Salvador, who was head of the Bolivian navy, was also arrested on Wednesday night.

Salvador's arrest was announced by Interior Minister Eduardo del Castillo, who said that Zúñiga and Arnez are "two military coup leaders who tried to destroy democracy and the institutionality of our country and failed."

UN-led Doha meeting with Taliban not about recognition, says UN

Monitoring Desk
UNITED NATIONS: A United Nations-led meeting with Afghanistan's Taliban in Qatar this weekend will not be a discussion about international recognition of the group, UN political affairs chief Rosemary DiCarlo said on Wednesday. The meeting, which will be attended by envoys from some 25 countries, will be the third such meeting in Doha, but the first attended by the Taliban, which has not been internationally recognized since seizing power in August 2021 as US-led forces withdrew after 20 years of war.

"This is not a meeting about recognition. This is not a meeting to lead to recognition... Having engagement doesn't mean recognition," DiCarlo told reporters. "This isn't about the Taliban. This is about Afghanistan and the people."

Germany brings in new rules to make it easier to get nationality

Monitoring Desk
BERLIN: The change is expected to prompt thousands of requests to become German - especially from Turkish people who moved to Germany for work. "People have now fully taken in that there will be dual citizenship. And many are now applying as quickly as possible."

The law, formally passed in March, comes nearly three years into the reign of the centre-left coalition of Social Democrats, Greens and the Free Democrats. The reform will bring Germany into line with other European countries such as Italy, Sweden, Ireland and France allowing dual citizenship. Before the changes, dual citizenship was possible only for European Union and Swiss nationals as well as children in a couple where one of the parents was from abroad.

21 children are set to exit Gaza in first medical evacuation since early May

Monitoring Desk
KHAN YOUNIS: Twenty-one critically ill children were set to exit Gaza on Thursday in the first medical evacuation since the territory's sole travel crossing was shut down in early May, Palestinian officials said.

The nearly nine-month Israel-Hamas war has devastated Gaza's health sector and forced most of its hospitals to shut down. Health officials say

Former Chinese defense minister expelled from ruling Communist Party over graft allegations

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: Former Chinese defense minister Li Shangfu was expelled from the ruling Communist Party and is being investigated for corruption and bribery, the official Xinhua news agency reported Thursday. Li was removed from office in October 2023 after disappearing from public view for almost two months.

Taiwan raises China travel alert over death penalty threat

Monitoring Desk
TAIPEI: Taiwan's government on Thursday urged the public to avoid "unnecessary travel" to China after Beijing announced "die-hard" supporters of the island's independence could face the death penalty.

China claims democratic Taiwan as part of its territory and has refused to rule out using force to bring the self-ruled island under its control.

Last week, Beijing published judicial guidelines on criminal punishments for supporters of Taiwanese independence, including the death penalty for "particularly serious" cases involving "die-hard" independence advocates, state media reported.

Taiwan's top China policy body, the Mainland Affairs Council (MAC), on Thursday raised its travel warning to the second-highest "orange" level as a result.

"After an overall assessment, the government deems it necessary to raise the travel alert on mainland China, Hong Kong and Macau... and advises people to avoid unnecessary travel," said MAC spokesman Liang Wen-chieh.

If Taiwanese people must go to China, Liang advised them to refrain from discussing sensitive issues, photographing military sites, airports and ports, and "carrying books related to politics, history and religion".

Beijing has not conducted top-level communications with Taipei since 2016 and has branded the island's President Lai Ching-te a "dangerous separatist".



ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to Prime Minister on Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam addressing a seminar on "Global Assessment of State of Nature and Biodiversity Safeguarding Actions in Northern Pakistan".

Senate body briefed on Flood Protection Plan, preparedness for monsoon season

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: Senator Shahadat Awan chaired the inaugural session of the Senate Standing Committee on Water Resources convened at Parliament House on Thursday to receive a comprehensive briefing from the Chairman of the Federal Flood Commission on the Flood Protection Plan and Preparedness of the commission for the forthcoming monsoon season and its potential impacts.

The meeting was attended by Senators Faisal Saleem Rahman, Muhammad Humayun Mohmand, Muhammad Faisal Wawda, Poonjo Bheel, Hidayatullah Khan, and Senator Khalil Tahir. Later, Federal Minister for Water Resources Senator Musadik Malik joined the proceedings as well. The Committee Chair expressed disappointment at the absence of ministry officials, emphasizing the importance of their presence during such crucial times of the monsoon.

The Committee while highlighting the onset of the monsoon season, stressed upon the proactive nature of their meeting, aimed at preemptive measures. Senator Humayun Mohmand underscored the significance of managing water flows from Tarbela, stressing the annual deadline of August 20 for reservoir levels.

In response, officials outlined protocols for managing floodwaters through Tarbela, including controlled releases during heavy rainfall. The Committee sought a ten-year performance report from the Chairman of the Federal Flood Commission. Concerns were raised about the ongoing damage to Right Bank Outfall Drain (RBOD) One and Two, with suspicions of irregularities by WAPDA prompting a demand for a detailed report.

Regarding the cause of floods in Kalam, it observed that the encroachment in the affected areas were the prime reason for the same.

The Committee reiterated that eradication of encroachments was under federal jurisdiction.

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for States & Frontier Regions (SAFRON), Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Engineer Amir Muqam shaking hand with UNHCR's Goodwill Ambassador, Ms. Mahira Khan during a seminar on "World Refugee Day-2024" organized by UNHCR.

Resolving public issues purely on merit is our foremost priority: IGP

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: According to the details, the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, held a Khuli Katchery at the Central Police Office Islamabad, a public relations officer said.

During the katchery, he listened to the issues of citizens and police officers and issued directives on the spot for their resolution.

He said that, resolving citizens' issues on merit is our top priority. Negligence and carelessness in duties will not be tolerated. Any

grievances on merit within the stipulated time frame and report back to the Central Police Office.

He directed all SDPOs and SHO's to adhere to the designated office hours and prioritize resolving citizens' issues. He strictly directed the officers to continue the crackdown against land grabbers and bring them to justice.

On this occasion, the IG Islamabad said that the Islamabad Police are taking various measures for the facilitation of citizens. The daily holding of Khuli Katchery helps in resolving

Let us pledge today, every day to stand in solidarity with refugees, their host communities: Muqam

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for States and Frontier Regions and Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Engr Amir Muqam Thursday said let us pledge today and every day, to stand in solidarity not only with refugees but also with the communities that host them, for our collective future depends on this unity. He stated this while addressing an event as the chief guest organized by UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) to celebrate World Refugee Day here in Islamabad, said a press release.

The event was aimed to bring together key government counterparts,

members of the diplomatic community, UN Agencies, partner organizations, and most importantly representatives of the refugee community. Mohammad Yahya, Resident Coordinator UN, Philippa Candler, Representative of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Ambassadors, Representatives of UN Agencies were also present on the occasion.

Addressing the ceremony, Federal Minister Engr Amir Muqam said that today, we are gathered here to commemorate World Refugee Day, a day dedicated to honoring the courage, resilience, and strength

of millions of refugees around the world.

This year's theme, "Solidarity with Refugees and Solutions for Refugees," highlights the urgent need for collective action and sustainable solutions to address the refugee crisis, he added. Engr Amir Muqam said that for over four decades, Pakistan has demonstrated unparalleled generosity and compassion by hosting one of the largest refugee populations in the world. Currently, we provide sanctuary to approximately 1.4 million P.O.R and about 0.8 million Afghan Citizen Card holders, he added.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for States & Frontier Regions (SAFRON), Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Engineer Amir Muqam shaking hand with UNHCR's Goodwill Ambassador, Ms. Mahira Khan during a seminar on "World Refugee Day-2024" organized by UNHCR.



citizen facing any issue related to the police can come to the Khuli Katchery. My office is always open for my citizens, the IGP said.

IG Islamabad further directed the concerned officers to resolve the citizen

ing issues on a priority basis, he added.

Moreover, all zonal officers and SHO's are directed to meet citizens during the designated office hours and resolve their issues promptly and on merit.

Yasin takes charge as AIG Motorway Police

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD (APP): A senior official of the Police Service Group Yasin Farooq on Thursday took charge as Additional Inspector General (AIG) of the National Highways and Motorway Police (NHMP) North Zone.

According to Motorway Police spokesman Muhammad Saqib, the AIG while presiding over the meeting of Zonal Commanders, Sector Commanders and Beat Commanders directed to provide the best kind of possible facilities to the users of the motorway.

He directed the officials to deal with the people politely and ensure help timely which is the hallmark of the success of NHMP.

Tajikistan's Somon Air starts direct flights b/w Islamabad & Dushanbe

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD (APP): Tajikistan's Somon Air on Thursday started its flight operations in Pakistan as its inaugural flight from capital Dushanbe landed in Islamabad.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi and Ambassador of Tajikistan in Pakistan Yusuf Sharifzoda received 14 passengers of the flight SMR-129 on their arrival at the Islamabad International Airport.

IFA disposes off 4000 bottles of hazardous soda drinks

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD (INP): Islamabad Food Authority (IFA) disposed off 4000 bottles of hazardous soda drinks during a crackdown in the federal capital.

According to details, with rise in temperate the sale of harmful beverages has surged and people to seek relief rushes to soda and drink shops, many of which are selling their products without meeting health standards.

After Iddat verdict, PTI thinking of setting Pakistan on fire: Danyal Ch.

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Muslim League-N leader Barrister Danyal Chaudhary has said that we were sent to the IMF with our hands and feet tied, we did not let the burden of inflation fall on the people.

Talking to the media persons on Thursday, PML-N leader Barrister Danyal Chaudhary said that after the Iddat decision, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf is thinking to destabilise the country.

In the by-election, he said, the people had rejected the arsonists in the country. "Whatever they do, the country will move towards improvement".

Danyal Chaudhary said that they (PTI) are running the government on social media.

He said the founder of PTI says that only he is Pakistan, adding, today the country is in crisis and PTI is responsible for it.

He said that Tehreek-e-Insaf has weakened Pakistan.

He went on saying that the government succeeded in reducing the rate of inflation by working hard day and night.

PTI leaders' thinking is to break Pakistan, set it on fire and shut it down. In the by-election, he said, the people had rejected the arsonists in the country. "Whatever they do, the country will move towards improvement".

Over Rs 50 bln disbursed among beneficiaries under Benazir Kafaalat scheme

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD (APP): The Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) has disbursed over Rs.50 billion among over 47,00,000 beneficiaries from across the country so far under the Benazir Kafaalat quarterly payments (April-June).

"Till June 26, over Rs. 50 billion has been disbursed among over 47,00,000 beneficiaries which make 70 per cent of the total beneficiaries", said an official source.

The disbursement of the quarterly tranche (April-June) of Benazir Kafaalat cash assistance to the beneficiaries is continued across the country in two phases to disburse Rs. 10,500 per household among over nine million registered beneficiary families.

In the first phase, the payments were being issued among the beneficiaries in all districts of Islamabad, Balochistan, Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan.

The payments are also being disbursed in Peshawar, Mardan and all districts of Malakand and Hazara Division in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, all districts of Karachi Division and District Hyderabad in Sindh province and Gujranwala, Sahiwal, Rawalpindi and all districts of Sargodha Division and District Vehari in Punjab.

While the payments to the beneficiaries in the remaining districts are being issued in the second phase.

3-day Theatre Extravaganza ends at PNCA

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD (APP): The three-day Theatre Extravaganza concluded after presenting Shahid Nadeem's International masterpiece "Dara" on Thursday evening among the audience applauding wholeheartedly the outstanding performances of the artists at Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA).

Based on the amazingly dramatic story of the conflict between Princes Dara Shikoh and Aurangzeb, the play was adapted in English by the prestigious National Theatre London and was declared as "play of the decade" by the English press. The play has also been performed in India and USA.

Chairman PRCS meets US Ambassador

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS), Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari held a productive meeting with His Excellency Ambassador of the United States, Donald Blome, at the US Embassy in Islamabad. According to a PRCS spokesman, the meeting, which took place on Wednesday, aimed to explore avenues of collaboration between PRCS and the United States in humanitarian assistance.

The USAID Pakistan Senior Advisor, James Fleming and Secretary General PRCS Muhammad Abaidullah Khan were also present on the occasion.

Distt admin targets illegal encroachments in ICT

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD (APP): On the directive of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Irfan Nawaz Memon, a large-scale anti-encroachment operation is underway in the federal capital.

Assistant Commissioners (ACs) are actively involved in removing illegal structures across various areas. The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration's spokesman said that AC Nilore, along with district teams, carried out a raid in Khanna Pul. They cleared temporary encroachments from the green belt in the area.

IHC seeks report from ministry Contempt of court case for not removing name of Shireen Mazari from EC

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) has sought report from interior ministry in contempt of court case for not removing the name of former leader PTI Shireen Mazari from ECL despite court orders.

The court has directed interior ministry to present report within next 24 hours. Justice Saman Rafat Imtiaz heard the case Thursday.

Shireen Mazari appeared in the court along with her counsel Ahsan Pirzada.

The court has summoned report from interior ministry till 9.30 a.m today (Friday).

It is pertinent to mention here Shireen Mazari has filed contempt of court plea due to non implementation of court's orders.

The court had ordered on April 4 to remove name of Shireen Mazari from ECL. Earlier IHC had ordered on December 01, 2023 to remove name of Shireen Mazari from Passport Control List (PCL).

Pak deplores UN report for omitting Kashmiri children's suffering; urges probe of missing youth

Independent Report
UNITED NATIONS (APP): Highlighting the plight of Children living under foreign occupation, Pakistan on Wednesday criticized the United Nations for ignoring the suffering of Kashmiri children in its report on "Children and Armed Conflict", calling the omission "unjust."

Speaking in the UN Security Council, which met under South Korea's presidency, Ambassador Munir Akram said the situation of children in Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir had been unjustly omitted this time, despite their ongoing suffering under foreign occupation.

"Generations of Kashmiri children have grown up amidst fear of violence and repression under foreign occupation," the Pakistani envoy told the 15-member Council.

"The report's most glaring and persistent failure and double standard has been its selective omission of certain situations, most importantly, the children of Palestine. It has taken the killing of 14,000 children in the (ongoing) Gaza war for Israel to be included in the report (this year)."

Meanwhile, Ambassador Akram added, "the plight of children in Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir, previously included in the reports, has been unjustly omitted, despite their ongoing suffering under foreign occupation."

Detailing the plight of children in the occupied territories, where human rights violations are "tragically routine", the Pakistani envoy said, adding "We vividly recall the heart-wrenching image of a three-year old Kashmiri boy sitting in shock on his grandfather's lifeless body just murdered by Indian soldier; we remember 18-month-old Hiba, her eyes ruptured by pellet guns fired by security forces inside her home in Kapran village of Kashmir."

He said that none of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and several Special Rapporteurs of the Human Rights Council have, who asked for access to Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir to investigate the reports of massive violations of human rights, was allowed to go there.

"I will like to ask the SRSG (Special Representative of the Secretary-General) whether she was able to visit Indian Occupied Kashmir during her visit to India," Ambassador Akram asked.

"The Special Rapporteur should investigate and report on the whereabouts and condition of the 13,000 Kashmiri youth who were widely reported to have been 'picked up' and detained by the occupation forces after 5 August 2019 (when India illegally annexed occupied Kashmir). It was also reported that many of them were tortured to extract 'confessions' and deter them and their families from joining the Kashmiri liberation struggle". In 2022, he said, Pakistan provided the United Nations a Dossier of 3432 cases of war crimes, including crimes against women and children, committed by senior officers of the Indian occupying forces, with audio and video evidence. "Among these are numerous cases of crimes against Kashmiri children," he added.

The report last year rightly urged India to implement measures, including the prohibition of the use of lethal and non-lethal force on children, ending the "use of pellet guns" and preventing all forms of ill-treatment of children in detention, and protection of children from sexual offences, he said.

Pakistan, Ambassador Akram added, supported the mandate of the SRSG to deal with situations of children in armed conflict.

However, the Pakistani envoy objected to the references to Pakistan in the Secretary-General's report, which he said, are "outside of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur".

In this regard, he detailed Pakistan's extensive legal, policy and operational measures to protect children.

Naeem petition against lawyers strike: IHC gives indication to initiate contempt of court proceedings against DR

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) has given indication to initiate contempt of court proceedings against Deputy Registrar (DR) IHC in connection with the application of advocate Naeem Bokhari against lawyers strike.

IHC has also directed Islamabad High Court Bar Association (IHCBA) to file detailed reply till July 5.

The case came up for hearing Thursday.

Registrar appeared in the court. Registrar and DR presented the report in IHC.

Justice Babar Sattar inquired had any complaint come to you.

Registrar high court replied no such report had come to them.

Justice Babar Sattar said this is contempt of court case. Audio has what relevance with it, what is this report.

Justice Babar Sattar inquired from deputy registrar that registrar has relied on his report.

DR said it is not his report but it is police report.

Justice Babar Sattar inquired is Islamabad police answerable in connection with security of IHC.

DR said yes responsibility of security of IHC rests with Islamabad Police.

Justice Babar Sattar remarked if the doors of high court are closed then will we say to IG.

Justice Babar Sattar inquired Bar Councils and Associations go on strike under what law.

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Meanwhile, Ambassador Akram added, "the plight of children in Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir, previously included in the reports, has been unjustly omitted, despite their ongoing suffering under foreign occupation."

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"The Special Rapporteur should investigate and report on the whereabouts and condition of the 13,000 Kashmiri youth who were widely reported to have been 'picked up' and detained by the occupation forces after 5 August 2019 (when India illegally annexed occupied Kashmir). It was also reported that many of them were tortured to extract 'confessions' and deter them and their families from joining the Kashmiri liberation struggle". In 2022, he said, Pakistan provided the United Nations a Dossier of 3432 cases of war crimes, including crimes against women and children, committed by senior officers of the Indian occupying forces, with audio and video evidence. "Among these are numerous cases of crimes against Kashmiri children," he added.

The report last year rightly urged India to implement measures, including the prohibition of the use of lethal and non-lethal force on children, ending the "use of pellet guns" and preventing all forms of ill-treatment of children in detention, and protection of children from sexual offences, he said.

Pakistan, Ambassador Akram added, supported the mandate of the SRSG to deal with situations of children in armed conflict.

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Chairman PRCS meets US Ambassador

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS), Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari held a productive meeting with His Excellency Ambassador of the United States, Donald Blome, at the US Embassy in Islamabad. According to a PRCS spokesman, the meeting, which took place on Wednesday, aimed to explore avenues of collaboration between PRCS and the United States in humanitarian assistance.

The USAID Pakistan Senior Advisor, James Fleming and Secretary General PRCS Muhammad Abaidullah Khan were also present on the occasion.

Distt admin targets illegal encroachments in ICT

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD (APP): On the directive of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Irfan Nawaz Memon, a large-scale anti-encroachment operation is underway in the federal capital.

Assistant Commissioners (ACs) are actively involved in removing illegal structures across various areas. The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration's spokesman said that AC Nilore, along with district teams, carried out a raid in Khanna Pul. They cleared temporary encroachments from the green belt in the area.

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