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No power in the world could harm Pakistan COAS resolves to block attempts of creating chaos in Pakistan

No one has the courage to desecrate the glory of the Holy Prophet (SAW). If someone tries to create anarchy in Pakistan, by God, we will stand against him.; Ulema, Mashaikh may play pivotal role for promotion of tolerance & unity in society: Army Chief

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Syed Asim Munir on Thursday urged the Ulema and Mashaikh (religious scholars) to work for promotion of tolerance and unity in the society in order to banish the tendency of extremism. Addressing the National Ulema Convention the COAS said the Pakistan Army was working hard to end strife from the motherland as per the commandments of the Allah Almighty as it was the greatest crime to Allah on the land. He said, "We do not consider those as Pakistanis, who do not follow Shariat and Constitution." The religious scholars should bring back modera-

tion in the society and reject dissension, he added. The western civilization and way of life was not the nation's ideal, it should be proud of its own civilization, he said and mentioned the verses of Allama Dr Muhammad Iqbal's poetry that stated Muslim ummah has no comparison to the western nations as the followers of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) are a special nation. The COAS noted that the Pakhtun brothers and the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had rendered great sacrifices in the war against terrorism and the Armed Forces along with the nation stand with them appreciating their efforts.

For more than 40 years, he said Pakistan has hosted millions of Afghan refugees, adding, "We are explaining to them not to oppose their neighbour, brotherly Islamic country and long time friend for the sake of subversive Kharijite (referring to TTP)." He said the Kharijite were a great strife or fitnah in the society as Allama Iqbal said: "Education may be a fitna if it deviates you from Allah Almighty. Property, children, estates may also be temptation or strife if it diversify you from justice; and the sword for justice will be a strife including the slogan of Takbeer."



Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir NI(M) attending the National Ulema & Mashaikh Conference in Islamabad.

Stresses unity to overcome national challenges

Unprecedented cooperation between govt, institutions to rid country of challenges: PM

Says collaboration between military establishment and government for Pakistan's benefit is a "role model" for future; Efforts are being made to bring relief to masses; hopes upcoming IMF programme to be country's last; Asks Ulema to play role in countering fake news

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said that the coalition government and the national institutions were in an unprecedented harmony and cooperation to serve the better national interests and steer the country out of prevailing challenges. The prime minister, addressing the Ulema-Mashaikh Conference here, said that the country never needed unity and national harmony more, and he had never seen such a level of cooperation between a political government and the institutions throughout his political career.

Appreciating the support extended by Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir, also attending the moot, he said that such exemplary collaboration was a role model for the future. He said that the challenges pervading the country necessitated learning lessons from past weaknesses and mistakes and making sincere efforts to develop Pakistan as a country as was dreamt by the forefathers and sacrificed hundreds of thousands of lives during the Pakistan Movement.

Prime Minister Shehbaz said the nation, which was about to celebrate its 77th Independence Day on August 14, was yet to find its destination, but the goal was

achievable provided the dedicated efforts were made and the teachings of Quran and Sunnah were followed. He called for the efforts to wipe out Fitna al Khawarij - a term referring to Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan - which he said was involved in anti-Pakistan activities despite claiming to be a Pakistani. He also criticized the use of social media to spread lies and propaganda - particularly after 2018 - instead of appreciating the government's efforts for public services. He said even the army soldiers, who sacrificed their lives to protect millions of other children from being orphaned, were being

humiliated on social media. Calling the May 9 attacks "the most heart-wrenching" incident in the country's history, the prime minister highlighted that the characters behind the tragedy of 1971 met their fate in Bangladesh amidst the recent developments in the country. He urged the Ulema to play their role to do away with the division in the society and highlight the Islamic economic system, and said that no force could obstruct the country's development if the nation was determined to achieve its goal. Prime Minister Shehbaz told the gathering that the government was

making all-out efforts to address the economic challenges and expected the upcoming IMF program to be the last one. At the same time, it had scraped Rs50 billion to support the power consumers of the protected category consuming up to 200 units. But the consumers using 200-500 units of electricity were still under the burden, he added. However, he assured the gathering that the coalition government and the COAS were in consultation to work out a comprehensive plan to ease the inflation-stricken people and the provinces would soon announce their respective plans in this regard.



ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari welcoming the Imam of Masjid Al-Nabvi, Dr Salah Bin Mohammad M AlBdeer, upon his arrival, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

President Zardari for unity among Muslim countries to address challenges

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari has underlined the need for greater unity and cooperation among Muslim countries to overcome the challenges being faced by the Muslim Ummah. He expressed these views while talking to the Imam of Masjid Al-Nabvi, Dr Salah bin Mohammad M AlBdeer, who called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, on Thursday Welcoming Dr Salah bin Mohammad M AlBdeer, the president said that Pakistan and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) enjoyed excellent relations, based on common faith, history, and brotherhood. He expressed satisfaction that relations between two brotherly countries

were growing stronger, and reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to further boosting bilateral ties. He urged the need for promoting cultural and people-to-people relations to bring the two brotherly countries further closer. Reiterating Pakistan's support to KSA, the President said that KSA was a close friend and Pakistan would always stand with Saudi Arabia. The Imam of Masjid Al-Nabvi said that the leadership and people of KSA highly valued their relations with Pakistan. He stated that Pakistan and KSA enjoyed strong partnership and both countries should work together to address the challenges faced by the Islamic World.

He lauded the contributions of the Pakistani community towards the development of Saudi Arabia. He also highlighted that the reforms initiated by the Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman Al-Saud would bring further development and prosperity to KSA. The president appreciated the courage and vision of Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who was spearheading the process of reforms for the betterment and welfare of the people of KSA. He expressed the hope that the visit of the Imam of Masjid Al-Nabvi would further boost bilateral relations. The Imam of Masjid Al-Nabvi also prayed for the peace and prosperity of Pakistan.



ISLAMABAD: U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Mr. Donald Blome calls on the Federal Minister for States and Frontier Regions Engr Amir Muqam.

US Ambassador calls on Amir Muqam to discuss Afghan refugees' issues

ISLAMABAD (APP): United States Ambassador to Pakistan Donald Armin Blome on Thursday called on Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Balistan and SAFRON Engr. Amir Muqam and discussed the matters related to the welfare of Afghan refugees, rehabilitation, and bilateral cooperation. During the meeting here, the minister expressed his gratitude for the long-standing cooperation of US with Pakistan. He said that Pakistan was combating successful war against terrorism and also rendered countless sacrifices in terms of human lives and economic losses. He said that more than 70,000 lives had been lost due to terrorism in Pakistan since 2001 and more than \$150 billion in economic losses. Amir Muqam urged

him to seek due rights of the people and not have come here for begging. If government gives this right on its own then situation will not reach the point of snatching these rights. If no sincere and positive reaction comes from government then we will very soon change the nature and configuration of Dharna. IPPs are plundering the hard earned money of people. How long will we continue to fill their belly, he said this while addressing press conference on 14th day of Dharna in Liaquat Bagh Rawalpindi. "Today two weeks of dharna have been completed but the participants of dharna are determined. Because our demands are demands of every citizen of Pakistan. Our demands are just and implementable. It is our desire relief is provided to people of Pakistan because paying electricity bill has become next to impossible for the people.

If no positive reaction comes from govt we will change soon nature, contours of dharna: Naem

RAWALPINDI (Online): JI Amir Hafiz Naem ur Rehman has said government wants to avert them through verbal talks but "We will not return by believing on any future promise." "We have come here to seek due rights of the people and not have come here for begging. If government gives this right on its own then situation will not reach the point of snatching these rights. If no sincere and positive reaction comes from government then we will very soon change the nature and configuration of Dharna. IPPs are plundering the hard earned money of people. How long will we continue to fill their belly, he said this while addressing press conference on 14th day of Dharna in Liaquat Bagh Rawalpindi. "Today two weeks of dharna have been completed but the participants of dharna are determined. Because our demands are demands of every citizen of Pakistan. Our demands are just and implementable. It is our desire relief is provided to people of Pakistan because paying electricity bill has become next to impossible for the people.

PTI founder claims govt has only two months, denies apologizing

RAWALPINDI (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan has asserted that the government has just two months left, dismissing claims that he has apologized. In an informal conversation with journalists at Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail during the hearing of the £190 million case, Khan predicted that the government's time is running out. He reiterated that the suggestion he has apologized is false, stating his focus is solely on Pakistan. The PTI founder challenged the government to present evidence of PTI members' involvement in the May 9 incident if it exists. He vowed to seek an apology and impose penalties if proven true. He also mentioned plans to present witnesses in the Al-Qadir Trust case but declined to disclose their identities for fear of repercussions. Khan emphasized that he would not engage in any deals, despite the government's attempts to dismantle PTI and allegedly pressuring the military to act against his party.

Govt to scrap 1990s IPP contracts in major relief move

ISLAMABAD (INP): The government has decided to terminate the power purchase agreements (PPAs) with Independent Power Producers (IPPs) made in the 1990s, aiming to provide significant relief to consumers suffering from high electricity costs. According to media reports, the federal government, under the leadership of Energy Minister Owais Leghari, has finalized a framework for this major policy shift. An official announcement is expected soon. In addition to terminating old IPP contracts, the government is reviewing agreements with other IPP companies. A new framework is being developed for consumers using more than 201 units, with changes to the policy that currently maintains them in the same slab for six months. Special slabs are being considered for these high-usage consumers, with a potential rate of Rs. 26 per unit for those exceeding 201 units. Minister Owais Leghari emphasized the importance of the energy sector for the economy and assured that reforms are underway, with coordination crucial for their implementation. The National Task Force is working on 20-point reforms to address the sector's issues swiftly and stabilize the economy.

CII urges SC to review ruling in Mubarak Sani case

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) has expressed concerns over several clauses in the Supreme Court's recent ruling on the Mubarak Sani case, calling on the apex court's judges to review their decision. In a statement issued by the CII on Thursday, the council, under the chairmanship of Dr Muhammad Raghob Hussain Naeemi, highlighted its reservations regarding the Supreme Court's July 24 ruling on the criminal review of the Mubarak Sani case. The council urged the judges to reconsider the verdict. The CII also urged the government, particularly the Prime Minister, to play an effective role in addressing the matter.

with Islamic teachings. The council announced that a detailed report outlining these concerns will soon be submitted to the Supreme Court, noting that the ruling has caused widespread unease among the public. "This is a matter of faith and love for the Prophet (PBUH), rather than legal technicalities," the statement read. The council emphasized the need for all segments of society to work together to resolve the issue and expressed hope that the honourable Supreme Court will promptly review its decision. The CII also urged the government, particularly the Prime Minister, to play an effective role in addressing the matter.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb exchanging views with Prof. Dr. Omer Bolat, Trade Minister of Turkiye during meeting held in Islamabad.

NEPRA notifies Rs 2.56 per unit increase in FCA for June

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) on Thursday notified Rs 2.56 per unit increase in power tariff under monthly fuel cost adjustment mechanism for the month of June. In the petition, the Central Power Purchasing Agency (CPPA-G) on behalf of XWDISCOs had sought Rs 2.63 per unit increase in power tariff for June. The CPPA-G maintained in its petition that the actual cost of electricity remained Rs 9.70 per unit against reference fuel charges of Rs 7.14 per unit for the said period. The increase would be applicable to all the consumer categories except Electric Vehicle Charging Stations (EVCS) and lifeline consumers. It would be shown separately in the consumers' bills on the basis of units billed to the consumers in the month of June 2024.

Election Act Amendment Bill 2024 gets presidential assent amid legal wrangling

ISLAMABAD (INP): President Asif Ali Zardari signed the 'controversial' Election Act Amendment Bill 2024 which becomes a law. The gazette notification will be issued today (Thursday) as the bill has been sent to the Senate Secretariat. The Senate passed the Election Act Amendment Bill by a majority vote despite protest by the opposition Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) on Aug 6. As the session started with Yousuf Raza Gilani in the chair, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Senator Talal Chaudhry presented the Election Act Amendment Bill. The opposition members stood on their seats and started protest.

LHC questions govt's disparate treatment with PTI and JI

LAHORE (INP): The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Thursday criticized the government for its disparate treatment with political parties, specifically pointing out differences in its approach towards Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and Jamaat-e-Islami (JI). During a hearing on PTI's request for permission to hold a rally in Lahore, Justice Ali Baqar Najafi questioned the government's policy on political activities, highlighting the differing attitudes towards PTI and JI, which was currently holding a protest. The Punjab government's lawyer explained that applications for rallies from PTI and two other parties were rejected, while JI is conducting activities without permission. The lawyer admitted to lacking information on any actions taken against JI and noted that political party behaviour must be considered.



RAWALPINDI: Ameer JI Hafiz Naem-ur-Rehman giving a press conference at Liaquat Bagh in the city.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Temporary relief

The government must have heaved a sigh of relief on securing commitments from allies China, Saudi Arabia and the UAE to roll over Pakistan's bilateral debt of \$12bn for yet another year.

This rekindles hopes of approval of the new \$7bn IMF bailout, crucial to shore up Pakistan's official international reserves and meet its foreign financing needs, by the lender's executive board later this month. These loans come up for a rollover at different times every year because we are unable to repay them due to a liquidity crunch. That these countries have apparently declined, or deferred, Pakistan's request to extend the maturity period of the loans to three to five years to provide greater predictability over the tenure of the IMF programme shows that even friendly nations are hesitant to bet on us over the long term.

Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, who broke the news on Tuesday, noted that our projected financial needs stood at around \$3-5bn for the next three years, and that these funds could be managed comfortably. According to him, the government had received offers from foreign commercial banks for concessional loans and had hired a Chinese adviser to launch the Panda bond to initially raise \$300m amid efforts to reprofile the Chinese energy debt of \$15bn for a longer period to ease pressure on the fragile external account.

Indeed, Pakistan's economy, which is characterised by a shrinking GDP, a balance-of-payments crisis and high inflation, has 'stabilised' in recent months thanks to the emergency loan of \$3bn from the Fund. However, its short- to medium-term outlook remains uncertain. The country needs nearly \$25bn annually to finance its large trade deficit and repay its foreign debt, while it has around \$9bn in its reserves.

The new IMF programme is expected to help consolidate this newfound stability but the quest for faster and sustainable economic growth will remain elusive for years even if we move in the right direction. Most of us, including the policymakers, believe that compliance with the IMF's tough conditions and its successful reviews constitute the much-needed structural reforms.

This, however, is misleading. Our deep-seated problems need tough and politically unpopular reforms beyond just securing a new bailout from the lender of last resort; the IMF loan will provide only temporary relief. The IMF is here to simply ensure that the country carries out its external financial commitments, because boosting economic growth or reforms in a client economy does not constitute the Fund's mandate as such. Some 20 years ago, Pakistan's economy was 18pc the size of India's; now that figure is only 9pc. This is in spite of five bailouts from the IMF during that period. This means we must look beyond the temporary support of bailouts to overcome our crisis.

Heart drops

F.S. Aijazuddin

Readers and Leonardo da Vinci are owed an apology. The tableau at the opening ceremony of the Paris Olympics that caused such offence was not a pastiche of Leonardo's iconic mural Last Supper.

The organisers have clarified that the tableau depicted a bacchanalian scene showing an assembly of Greek gods, led by Dionysus, the god of wine. The inspiration came from a painting — The Feast of the Gods — by the 17th-century Dutch artist Jan Harmensz van Bijlert.

Was there no symbol closer to France's reputation as the capital of wine than Greek gods and a Dutch painter?

Whatever other lessons the French have learned from the 2024 Olympics, one is that too many cooks can spoil a bouillon, even in France. The other, never to take decisions by committee, for didn't a wit warn that 'a camel is a horse designed by a committee'.

The Olympic events, spread over the last week in different venues, have confirmed France's administrative talents. The stunning gardens of Versailles palace could not have been a nobler backdrop for the riding competitions, a fusion of equestrian elegance and ineffable taste.

The 2024 Olympics will be remembered, though, for unexpected issues that emerged.

Gender, for one. For millennia, men and women were classed as opposites, compatible but uniquely separate. Being a hermaphrodite (the word comes from the fusion of the Greek deities Hermes and Aphrodite) put one in a no-man's or no-woman's land.

Parisians have for long tolerated the nightly infestation of its Bois de Boulogne gardens by provocative professionals from Brazil. The Olymp-

pic organisers had no problem with gay divers like Greg Louganis (gold medalist, Los Angeles, 1984, Seoul, 1988) or Tom Daley (gold, Tokyo 2020), even when Daley spent his off-platform time knitting for his partner.

Two boxers — Imane Khelif of Algeria and Lin Yu-ting of Taiwan — were slammed by critics for competing as women, even though they had failed gender eligibility tests sometime in the past.

Will the IOC be forced to create a new category for trans people? They have already provided for national ambiguity by allowing refugees to compete as displaced nationals, and athletes from Russian and Belarussian to be admitted as Individual Neutral Athletes.

For some competitors, the use of technology has proved a bane. Photo-finishes are a tool of the past. Now, even turns in a swimming relay are scrutinised with shark-eyed precision. In the women's 200-metre individual swimming medley, Alex Walsh finished the backstroke and was going into the breaststroke. That millisecond turn was deemed illegal and Walsh (who would otherwise have won a bronze medal) forfeited her prize.

Similarly, the British medalist Luke Greenbank thought he had qualified in the 200m back-stroke heat for the semifinals. To his grief, he was disqualified because he was "completely underwater past the red 15-metre mark following a turn". They were no grounds for review. Replays could not be refused. Understandably, he felt "absolutely gutted".

For every Olympic medal winner — whether gold, silver or bronze — there are hundreds of disappointed athletes who have spent years preparing for the event. As one athlete put it: "We have ups and

downs. Unfortunately, you can't pick the days they come on."

If one has to admit partiality in favour of any single contestant, it would have to be for the Serbian tennis ace Novak Djokovic.

Djokovic has won an all-time record of 24 Grand Slam titles. He achieved a triple Grand Slam by winning each of the four majors at least three times. "Djokovic is also the only man in tennis history to be the reigning champion of all four majors at once across three different surfaces."

In the recent Wimbledon men's final last month, a 37-year-old Djokovic lost to the 21-year-old Carlos Alcaraz. Djokovic had reached the age when men look forward to playing with un-born grandchildren. Critics wrote him off. But Djokovic craved an Olympic gold as the glittering capstone to a pyramid of hard, unrelenting endeavour.

On Sunday, the sun and the Serbian saints shone on Djokovic. In a tense duel, he secured his victory. Djokovic wept in defeat. Alcaraz wept in defeat. Neither need feel shame: 'Les larmes sont les gouttes du coeur' — tears are the drops of the heart.

By the time of future Olympics (Los Angeles, 2028, and Brisbane, 2032) the world will welcome a fresh crop of competitors. An increasing number will be black, representing traditionally white nations. The IOC should dispense with nationality and gender, and instead honour individuals.

We should applaud those who, despite a lifetime of commitment, never gained a medal, for many of them will no longer be athletes. They will have only memories of having been one. -- Courtesy Dawn

The voiceless

Syed Saadat

Whenever one reads news items, attributed to a 'source', about the IMF's recommendations to further tax salaried individuals, one always wonders why the Fund never singles out the tax exemptions given to military organisations like the FWO and NLC, or property tax exemptions given to residents of DHAs. One asks why the IMF is hell-bent on taxing salaried individuals, to the extent of pushing them into a state of chronic depression.

I got the answer to this question in a recent casual meeting with an official from the Fund itself. As per this source, the IMF never asks for the salaried class to be taxed; it only asks that tax revenues be increased. Connecting the dots leads one to the realisation that such news items are intentionally fed by the Government of Pakistan to shift the blame on the IMF for the weaknesses inherent in our system. The government lacks the power to tax the powerful sectors, and it all comes down to les misérables — the voiceless salaried class.

When, at a recent press conference, the finance minister was asked the reason for this, he replied that there was no magic wand and that nothing would change overnight. He said we would keep going back to square one unless the untaxed and undertaxed sectors of the economy were brought in the tax net.

This really sums up the fate of the nameless, faceless, voiceless salaried class for many years to come. It would take only one notification to tax the FWO; it would take only one notification to remove the

exemption of tax on 500 square-yard houses in DHA, it would take only one day to make the pension expenses of military personnel a part of the defence budget. But the problem is that a lot would be done overnight if the finance minister adopted this course.

Though I agree with the finance minister that salaried individuals are the easiest route to raising taxes, can he elaborate on any incentive, including amnesty schemes enjoyed by others, given to salaried individuals over the last couple of decades? Is there a scheme by the Government of Pakistan that gives individuals who cross a certain threshold in the amount of income tax deducted from their salary, privileges like getting preferential treatment at CMHes (they are the only reasonable hospitals in the public sector) or admission fee discounts for their children in public sector universities? The finance minister wants salaried individuals to make this sacrifice for the sake of the IMF deal but is not ready to introduce even a single small incentive for these individuals.

The middle and upper middle class, which is comprised mostly of salaried individuals in Pakistan, is the most unfortunate social class in the country. The poor have already given up on any ambition; this class, however, has ambitions and awareness as well. They know a lot and have too little. They are being decimated by government policies and don't have any mechanism through which to fight back.

You may add value to your individual skills to earn a better living but the government has

the final say in your earnings. It is better to be robbed by highway robbers, because at least you can complain about it and it is considered a crime by any court of law. Without getting into too many numbers, let's try to answer a very simple question: has the standard of living of a person earning Rs5 million per annum improved in the last five years, or has it deteriorated drastically? The answer is a no-brainer; the said individual is finding it tougher and tougher to make ends meet because he has to afford a certain lifestyle.

Also, it is pertinent to point out that the riches of an individual working in the private corporate sector or finance sector — like our finance minister, who was president and CEO at a bank until a few months ago — is not the result of government incentives or favours by powerful quarters but his own hard work and many sacrifices by his family in terms of time. The government unabashedly robs a sizable chunk of his earnings and does not provide any incentive whatsoever — not even access to a social media platform like X. Maybe, even unblocking X.com cannot be done overnight?

Lastly, a few weeks ago, the Salaried Class Alliance of Pakistan requested the Supreme Court's intervention in this unfair taxation through a suo motu notice. Truth be told, if your last resort is the Supreme Court in this country, then it is already a lost cause. Salaried individuals in Pakistan are indeed an apt representation of the following line of Victor Hugo's

Les Misérables: "It is nothing to die. It is frightful not to live." -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

Pakistan-Turkey agree to boost business activities

ISLAMABAD (APP): Turkey and Pakistan have agreed to boost up business activities and investment in various fields by enhancing mutual trade and promote economic activities.

It was decided in a Round Table Business Conference co chaired by Trade Minister of Turkey Professor Dr. Omer Bolat and Federal Minister for Board of Investment, Privatization and Communications Abdul Aleem Khan.

Deputy Trade Minister of Turkey Mustafa Tuzcu,

Ambassador in Pakistan Mehmet Pacaci, Presidents of Chambers of Turkey were also accompanied while prominent business community figures from Pakistan joined this session.

Abdul Aleem Khan while addressing the Pakistan-Turkey Business Round Table Conference said that the brotherhood, mutual cooperation and friendly relations of Turkey and Pakistan span decades and these two countries have already entered into economic and joint business agreements.

He added that

Pakistan wants to promote bilateral investment and business ties in various fields with Turkey because it is prime time to increase the economic activities between Turkey and Pakistan.

Aleem Khan welcomed the interest of the business community from Turkey and said that it would benefit both countries and all possible support will be provided.

Turkish Minister of Commerce said that the economic and business relations and bilateral partnership between

Pakistan and Turkey are going to be in a new beginning as Turkey will also ensure all possible cooperation for Pakistan in all circumstances.

Turkish business leaders purposed that in various sectors including infrastructure bilateral investment can be increased.

Representatives of Pakistan's main commercial institutions welcomed Turkey's proposals and said that Turkey can develop better with its modern machinery and Pakistan with its raw materials.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb in a meeting with a delegation of Meezan Bank, led by the Chairman of the Board of Directors, Mr. Riyadh S.A.A. Edees.



QUETTA: A delegation led by PIA General Manager Passenger Sales Islamabad Muhammad Shafiq meeting with Balochistan Governor Jaffar Khan Mandokhail.

Govt committed to transform Pak into cashless economy: Shaza Fatima

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja Thursday said that the present government was committed to transform Pakistan into cashless economy.

She said that the government aimed to reduce reliance on physical currency and promote digital transactions through initiative like the SBP's RAASST instant payment system.

Speaking at a meeting

of a high-level Committee on Promotion of Cashless Economy, Shaza Fatima said that digital payments have critical role in driving economic growth and efficiency, said a news release.

She said that steps were needed to accelerating digital financial inclusion and boosting economic growth.

The state minister also emphasized the importance of data integration and effective change management.

KP Govt, PESCO sign power acquisition contract

PESHAWAR (APP): The government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has entered into an agreement on Thursday to sell the electricity generated from 2.8 megawatts built from its own resources with Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO). In this regard, a ceremony was held in the Pakhtunkhwa Energy Development Organization (PEDO) House Peshawar regarding the sale of electricity generated by 10.2 MW.

Tourism, Cuisines play vital role in connectivity among countries: Commerce Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan on Thursday said that tourism and cuisine played a vital role in the relations and connectivity between the countries.

The minister said this while addressing a Cuisines exhibition organized by Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) in Karachi.

He said that foods were the main factor to closely connect the

peoples in different regions of the world and Asian, South African and Arabian cuisines were known all over the world.

Jam Kamal said that Malaysian foods were very famous in the world as their admirers were all over the world. He said that food and tourism brought different nations closer together. The Minister said that to invigorate the economy, tourism should be promoted in the country.

Chinese investors group meets Ch Shafay Hussain

LAHORE (APP): A big group of Chinese investors called on Provincial Minister for Industries and Commerce Chaudhry Shafay Hussain in the committee room of the Punjab Investment Board.

In the meeting, it was agreed to cooperate in technical education, IT sector and electric business. The Chinese investor group expressed interest in setting up a plant of electric bikes in Punjab.

Provincial Minister Chaudhry Shafay Hussain while speaking on this occasion said that the government is serious in promoting electric vehicles to control environmental pollution. The government is giving 10,000 electric bikes to students of universities and colleges.

Chinese investor will set up a plant of electric bikes and government will provide all possible facilities.

Macroeconomic indicators on upward trajectory: FM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Thursday emphasized that Pakistan's macroeconomic indicators were on an upward trajectory, leading to a growing public trust in the country's economic management. In a meeting with a delegation of Meezan Bank, led by the Chairman of the Board of Directors, Riyadh S.A.A

Edees, the finance minister outlined the government's ongoing efforts in reforming the State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs), Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), energy sector and privatization initiatives. According to press release issued by finance ministry, the delegation also included President and Chief Executive Officer, Irfan Siddiqui, Deputy CEO Syed Amir Ali. Governor

State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) and senior officials from the Finance Ministry were also present in the meeting. The Minister reiterated the government's commitment to fostering investment and enhancing the ease of doing business in Pakistan. On the occasion, Riyadh Edees highlighted the bank's status as the largest bank in the Middle East, with over 17,000 employees in 1,000 branches all over Pakistan.

SBP, banks to remain closed on Wednesday

KARACHI (APP): The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) and all the banks and financial institutions will remain closed on Wednesday, August 14, 2024 on the occasion of Independence Day of Pakistan. The central bank, in a statement issued here on Thursday, announced, "The State Bank of Pakistan will remain closed on Wednesday, August 14, 2024 being public holiday on the occasion of 'Independence Day' as declared by the Government of Pakistan." Subsequently, all the banks, Development Finance Institutions (FDI),

Back feeding process of Suki Kinari hydropower station completed

ISLAMABAD (APP): Back feeding process of Suki Kinari Hydropower Station on Thursday successfully completed. Located on the Kunhar River in Mansehra, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province in northwest Pakistan, SK Hydropower Station is a flagship project within the "China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)" under China's Belt and Road Initiative, said a press release. It stands as the largest greenfield hydropower investment project by Chinese

enterprises abroad and the most significant hydropower station investment by Energy China. Suki Kinari Hydropower Station, an investment and construction project of China Energy Overseas Investment Co., Ltd. (Energy China, marked the official countdown to grid-connected power generation for the station.

HE Xiongfei, the Chairman and General Manager of SK Hydro (Private) Limited, commented on the Back Feeding process.

Craftmanship of KP women important for province identity: Kundi

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi on Thursday emphasized the importance of introducing the craftsmanship of women of this province on an international level to ensure their economic empowerment.

Speaking at a meeting with a delegation from the Handicraft Association, including Chairperson Maryam Iqbal and Mahira Imad, the Governor highlighted the necessity of

global exposure for these crafts.

Governor Kundi announced that a handicraft exhibition was scheduled to take place in Tajikistan in November.

He directed the Chambers of Commerce to ensure representation for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's women at the event.

He also stressed the need for providing digital skills and market exposure to women involved in handicrafts to ensure their efforts are rewarded.

The Governor noted that promoting the soft image of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa globally was crucial for the province's development and prosperity.

He praised the delegation's efforts and accepted an invitation to attend an awards ceremony hosted by the Association.

The delegation, in turn, commended the Governor for his initiatives and commitment to women's empowerment.



RAWALPINDI: On the call of Ameer Jamaat-Islami Hafiz Naeemur Rahman, the rally against rising electricity bills and inflation is passing through Murree Road.

KP assembly approves salary increase for police personnel

PESHAWAR (APP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly has unanimously passed a resolution to increase the salaries of police personnel in the province. Moved by JUI member Makdoom Zada, the resolution highlighted the risks faced by police officers in combating terrorism and pointed out the disparity in salaries compared to those in Punjab and Islamabad.

The resolution recommends aligning police salaries in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with those in the neighboring regions. In addition to the police salary increase, MPA Ijaz Khan presented another resolution addressing public transportation concerns.

He emphasized the success of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system but noted the lack of adequate public transportation on other routes. The resolution calls for the provincial government to introduce new BRT routes on Kabir Road, Warsak Road, and Shah Alam Bridge to Naguman Road. During the session, some resolutions were presented without prior notice, leading to objections from government members who argued that such practices hinder informed decision-making. Speaker Babar Saleem Swati said that resolutions lacking advance notice might not be included in the proceedings unless deemed urgent after consulting the relevant minister.

18 killed, 1,323 injured in 1,189 RTCs in Punjab

LAHORE (APP): At least 18 persons were killed and 1,323 injured in 1,189 Road Traffic Crashes (RTCs) in all 37 districts of Punjab during the last 24 hours.

Out of these, 579 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 744 victims with minor injuries were treated at the incident site by Rescue Medical Teams thus reducing the burden of hospitals. Furthermore, the analysis showed that 707 drivers, 43 underage drivers, 160 pedestrians, and 474 passengers were among the victims of road traffic crashes.

Minor girl drowns in canal

FAISALABAD (APP): A minor girl drowned in canal water in the area of Jaranwala Sadar police station. Rescue 1122 spokesman said here on Thursday that 3-year-old Eshal Fatima resident of Chak 635/8 was playing outside her house when she accidentally slipped and fell in a nearby canal in Chak 8 Bair Mor on Nankana Road. Receiving information, divers of Rescue 1122 rushed to the spot and fished out the girl.



LAHORE: A delegation of International Lawyers Association UK Lahore Chapter led by President International Lawyers Association Ashiq Ali Rana in a group photo with Punjab Governor, Sardar Saleem Haider Khan at Governor House.

Overseas Pakistanis rendering great services to the country: Governor

Independent Report
LAHORE: The delegation of International Lawyers Association UK Lahore Chapter led by President International Lawyers Association Ashiq Ali Rana called on Punjab Governor, Sardar Saleem Haider Khan at Governor House Lahore.

The delegation presented suggestions to Governor Punjab about overseas desk to solve the problems of Pakistanis living abroad, free legal aid for prisoners involved in minor crimes, training of law students in Punjab universities.

Speaking on the occasion, Governor Punjab, Sardar Saleem Haider Khan said that the overseas Pakistanis are rendering great services to the country in terms of sending valuable foreign exchange.

He added that their services are truly recognized. He said that the proposal to set up Overseas Desk in the Governor House is being seriously considered to solve the problems of Overseas Pakistanis. Governor Punjab appreciated the efforts and recommendations of

International Lawyers Association Lahore Chapter for Overseas Pakistanis. Governor Punjab further said that it is commendable that Overseas Pakistanis have always helped their fellow countrymen in difficult times.

President International Lawyers Association, Ashiq Ali Rana, while briefing the Governor of Punjab, said that resolving the property disputes and taxation issues of Overseas Pakistanis are the priorities of their association.

Mujtaba Shjua visits Municipal Corporation General Hospital

LAHORE (APP): On the directives of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, Punjab Finance Minister Mujtaba Shjuar-Rehman visited the Municipal Corporation General Hospital, Kot Khwaja Saeed, on Thursday.

During the visit, he assessed the available medical facilities and reviewed the recent upgrade facilities at the hospital.

The Minister inspected various departments, engaging with patients to inquire about the quality of care, the

presence of doctors, availability of medicines, and the behavior of the hospital staff.

Addressing the hospital staff and the media, the Provincial Minister emphasized that the health sector remains a top priority for the Punjab government, with significant budget allocations directed toward health and education.

He highlighted that the upgrade of hospitals across Punjab is currently underway and that within a year, the enhancement work at all hospitals.

ANF recovers 188 kg drugs in six operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting six operations across the country managed to recover 188 kg drugs and arrested six accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Thursday. He informed that 800 grams ice was recovered from a Jeddah-bound passenger at Multan Airport. 52.8 kg opium and 61.2 kg hashish were recovered from a vehicle intercepted near North Bypass Peshawar and two accused were arrested during the operation. In third operation, 48 kg hashish was recovered from a parcel sent to Karachi from a courier office in Ring Road.

Minister for effective campaign to create zero-waste environment

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Local Government Minister Zeeshan Rafiq on Thursday directed the waste management companies to conduct special campaigns to increase public awareness regarding zero-waste environment.

During a video link meeting of the CEOs of waste management companies across the province held at the Civil Secretariat, the minister reviewed the plan for an efficient and sustainable sanitation system in the province. Secretary Local Government Shakeel Ahmad Mian, Additional Secretary Maria Tariq also

attended the meeting. The CEOs of the companies informed about progress made so far in their respective areas.

Minister Zeeshan Rafiq said that it was the vision of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif to implement a uniform sanitation system throughout Punjab. "A large proportion of the population resides in rural areas, so it is not possible to achieve sanitation targets by neglecting villages", he added.

Zeeshan Rafiq said that sanitation challenges could be tackled through outsourcing system.



LAHORE: Members of All Pakistan Clerk Association are protesting for their demands in front of the press club of the provincial capital.

Compensation for landmine victims referred to standing committee

PESHAWAR (APP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly discussed the issue of compensation and aid to victims of landmine blasts during its session presided over by Speaker Babar Saleem Swati here on Thursday.

MPA Asif Khan presented a call attention notice, highlighting that despite the passage of 15 years, victims in Upper South Waziristan have not received compensation. He further stated that people whose houses were destroyed during military operations have also not been provided any

assistance, leaving many in severe distress.

In response, Law Minister Aftab Alam mentioned that the Relief Department handles this matter and that financial aid is provided to the victims through a committee under the supervision of the Deputy Commissioner. He emphasized the importance of this issue and the need for immediate resolution.

Housing Minister Dr. Amjad termed the matter a humanitarian issue, noting that such incidents are occurring continuously across the country and need urgent attention.

International News

Haniyeh's killing risks 'wider' Middle East conflict, OIC warns

Monitoring Desk

JEDDAH: The heinous killing of Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh risks tipping the Middle East into "wider conflict", the chair of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) told a meeting on Wednesday. The comments from Gambian Foreign Minister Mamadou Tangara came as a senior Iranian official said during the meeting that the Islamic republic would need to defend itself from Israel, which it blames for Haniyeh's death last week in Tehran. Iranian and Palestinian officials called for Wednesday's gathering of the 57-member OIC in the Saudi coastal city of Jeddah, saying the body needed to respond to the killing of the Hamas leader.

"This heinous act serves only to escalate the existing tensions potentially leading to a wider conflict that could involve the entire region," said Tangara,

whose country currently chairs the OIC. Haniyeh's killing "will not quell the Palestinian cause but rather it amplifies it, underscoring the urgency for justice and human rights for the Palestinian people", he said. "The sovereignty and territorial integrity of nation states are fundamental principles underpinning the international order.

"Respecting these principles has profound implications and their violation equally carries significant consequences."

Israel has not commented on Haniyeh's death, which Iran has vowed to avenge. "Currently, in the absence of any appropriate action by the (UN) Security Council against the aggressions and violations of the Israeli regime, the Islamic Republic of Iran has no choice but to use its inherent right to legitimate

defence against the aggressions of this regime," Ali Bagheri, Iran's acting foreign minister, told the OIC.

Hamas's Lebanese ally Hezbollah has also pledged to retaliate for Haniyeh's killing and that of its military commander Fuad Shukur in an Israeli strike in Beirut hours earlier. Wednesday's meeting was far from the first time the bloc has weighed in on the conflict, which began with Hamas's October 7 raids in southern Israel.

That operation led to bombardment of Gaza by Israel and the deaths of almost 40,000 people, mostly civilians. In addition to issuing regular statements condemning civilian deaths in Gaza, OIC leaders gathered with their counterparts from the Arab League in November for a summit that condemned Israeli forces' barbaric actions in Gaza.



Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus is pictured during a press briefing, as he arrives at the Hazarat Shahjalal International Airport, in Dhaka.

Bangladesh Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus takes charge of caretaker govt

Monitoring Desk

DHAKA: Bangladesh's Nobel Peace Prize-winning economist Muhammad Yunus was sworn in as the head of the country's caretaker government on Thursday, three days after former prime minister Sheikh Hasina was forced to quit and flee the country following violent protests.

"I will uphold, support and protect the constitution," Yunus said during the swearing-in ceremony, adding that he would perform his duties "sincerely". Yunus, 84, was recommended for the role by student protesters and returned to Dhaka earlier today from Paris, where he was undergoing medical treatment. "The country has the possibility of becoming a very beautiful nation," an emotional Yunus told reporters at the Dhaka airport, where he was greeted by top military officers and student leaders.

Saudi king allows cabinet to meet without him or crown prince

Monitoring Desk

DUBAI: Saudi Arabia's King Salman issued a royal decree that allows the cabinet to convene in the absence of both himself and the prime minister, his son Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, state media reported on Thursday.

The 88-year-old king of the world's biggest oil exporter, and a major US ally in the Middle East, received medical care for lung inflammation in May that prompted Prince Mohammed to later postpone an official visit to Japan due to the king's health.

Pilot, four Chinese nationals killed in Nepal chopper crash

Monitoring Desk

KATHMANDU: A helicopter crashed in central Nepal on Wednesday, killing all five people aboard including the pilot and four Chinese tourists.

Nepal has a woeful track record on aviation safety and the Himalayan republic has seen a spate of deadly light plane and helicopter crashes over the decades.

US leaders call for calm in the Middle East, even as more American forces head to the region

Monitoring Desk

WASHINGTON: Calling for calm in the Middle East, top U.S. national security leaders said Tuesday that they and allies are directly pressing Israel, Iran and others to avoid escalating the conflict, even as the U.S. moved more troops to the region and threatened retaliation if American forces are attacked.

"It's urgent that everyone in the region take stock of the situation, understand the risk of miscalculation, and make decisions that will calm tensions, not exacerbate them," Secretary of State Antony Blinken

said at the close of a meeting with Australian leaders.

At the same time, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin noted the attack Monday on U.S. forces in Iraq by an Iranian-backed militia group, which injured seven personnel, and made it clear that the U.S. won't hesitate to respond. "Make no mistake, the United States will not tolerate attacks on our personnel in the region," Austin told reporters at a press conference after the meeting. "And we remain ready to deploy on short notice to meet the evolving threats to our security, our partners or our interests."

Israel kills 40 Palestinians in Gaza airstrikes amid fears of wider war

Monitoring Desk

CAIRO: Israeli forces stepped up airstrikes across the Gaza Strip on Thursday, killing at least 40 people, Palestinian medics said, in further battle with Hamas-led militants as Israel braced for potential wider war in the region.

Israeli airstrikes hit a cluster of houses in central Gaza's Al-Bureij camp, killing at least 15 people, and the nearby Al-Nuseirat camp, killed four, medics said. Nuseirat and Bureij are among the densely populated enclaves' eight historic camps and seen by Israel as strongholds of armed militants. Israeli aircraft also bombed a house in the heart of Gaza City in the north, killing five Palestinians, while another airstrike in the southern city of Khan Younis killed one person and wounded others, according to medics.

Later on Thursday, 15

Palestinians were killed and 30 injured in Israeli bombings of two schools east of Gaza City, the territory's Civil Emergency Service said in a statement.

The Israeli military said it struck Hamas command and control centres embedded in the Abdel-Fattah Hamouda and Al-Zahra schools in the Tuffah neighbourhood of Gaza City, where Hamas militants were operating. It accused Hamas of exploiting civilians and civilian properties for military purposes, an allegation Hamas denies.

Footage circulated on social media, which Reuters could not immediately verify, showed casualties being brought to a hospital on donkey carts. The armed wings of Hamas and Islamic Jihad said they were firing anti-tank rockets and mortar bombs at Israeli forces operating across Gaza.

Russia says fighting continues in Ukrainian incursion into Kursk region

Monitoring Desk

KYIV: Russian troops are fighting Ukrainian forces in the Kursk region in the third day of one of the largest cross-border incursions of the war, the Russian Defense Ministry said Thursday. A ministry statement said the Russian military and border guards have blocked Ukrainian forces from advancing deeper into Kursk region in southwest Russia and that the army is attacking Ukrainian combatants who are trying to advance on the area from Ukraine's Sumy region.

"Attempts by individual units to break through deep into the territory in the Kursk direction are being suppressed," the ministry said. The Institute for the Study of War, a Washington-based think tank, said that as of Wednesday, Ukrainian troops had advanced as much as 10 kilometers (6 miles) into Rus-

sian territory, but that information wasn't confirmed. Ukrainian officials haven't commented on the scope of the operation around the town of Sudzha.

"The enemy has not advanced a single meter, on the contrary, it is retreating. The enemy's equipment and combat forces are being actively destroyed. We hope that in the near future... the enemy will be stopped," the Kursk region's acting deputy governor Andrei Belostotsky said Thursday, according to state news agency RIA-Novosti. Russian President Vladimir Putin on Wednesday described the incursion as a "large-scale provocation." Putin met with his top defense and security officials to discuss what he called the "indiscriminate shelling of civilian buildings, residential houses, ambulances with different types of weapons."

Turkey formally asks to join the genocide case against Israel at the UN court

Monitoring Desk

ANKARA: Turkey on Wednesday filed a request with a U.N. court to join South Africa's lawsuit accusing Israel of genocide in Gaza, the foreign minister said. Turkey's ambassador to the Netherlands, accompanied by a group of Turkish legislators, submitted a declaration of intervention to the International Court of Justice in The Hague.

With the development, Turkey, one of the fiercest critics of Israel's actions in Gaza, becomes the latest nation seeking to participate in the case. Spain, Mexico, Colombia, Nicaragua and Libya have also asked to join the case, as have Palestinian officials. The court's decision on their requests is still pending.

"We have just submitted our application to the

International Court of Justice to intervene in the genocide case filed against Israel," Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan wrote on the social media platform X. "Emboldened by the impunity for its crimes, Israel is killing more and more innocent Palestinians every day." "The international community must do its part to stop the genocide; it must stop the necessary pressure on Israel and its supporters," he said. "Turkey will make every effort to do so."

Turkey approves law to remove stray dogs from streets. Opposition vows to fight the 'massacre law'. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has accused Israel of genocide, called for it to be punished in international courts and criticized Western nations for backing Israel.

Large 7.1 earthquake recorded off Japan: USGS

Monitoring Desk

TOKYO: A 7.1 magnitude tremor struck off southern Japan on Thursday, the United States Geological Survey (USGS) said, with the local meteorological agency warning of tsunamis striking coastal areas.

Initially, the USGS erroneously recorded two separate earthquakes, registering two tremors at 6.9 and 7.1 magnitude, respectively.

The USGS acknowledged the error on its website, stating, "This event originally showed as two events in our event list. This error has been fixed. There was one event." Tsunamis of up to one metre were expected to arrive or have arrived in some coastal areas in Kyushu and Shikoku islands, broadcaster NHK reported.

Imam Masjid Al-Nabawi meets Chairman Senate; emphasizes joint efforts for regional peace

ISLAMABAD (APP): A Saudi delegation led by Imam Masjid Al-Nabawi Dr. Salah bin Mohammad Al-Budair on Thursday met with Senate Chairman Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani at the Parliament House during their visit to Pakistan.

Chairman Gilani highlighted the long-standing history of cooperation between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia across various sectors. He emphasized that the relations between the two countries are rooted in religious, cultural, and moral values. He further noted the significance of the Holy Mosques, particularly Makkah and Madina, as sacred sites for the Muslim Ummah.

Welcoming Imam Al-Budair to Pakistan, Chairman Gilani remarked that his presence in the country is a testament to the strong and brotherly relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. He added that un-

der the leadership of King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Saudi Arabia has always been a sincere friend of Pakistan.

Chairman Gilani briefed the esteemed guest on the overall regional situation, also highlighting the issues of Kashmir and Palestine. He stressed that the challenges faced by the Muslim Ummah are shared, and unity is the need of the hour to address them. He also underscored the importance of joint efforts to ensure peace and stability in the region and the world.

Chairman Gilani emphasized the importance of enhancing cooperation in the fields of religious education and research with Saudi Arabia. He expressed Pakistan's desire to engage in academic exchanges and initiate joint research projects with the Kingdom. He also called for accelerat-

ing the exchange of parliamentary delegations, noting that such exchanges would help bring the people of both nations closer.

Furthermore, Chairman Gilani stressed the need to further strengthen trade and economic relations between the two countries. He remarked that Dr. Salah bin Mohammad Al-Budair's visit would contribute to deepening the friendship and brotherhood between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

Chairman Gilani reiterated Pakistan's commitment to working alongside Saudi Arabia to achieve shared goals and address common challenges. He also noted that the people of Pakistan hold a special place in their hearts for Masjid-e-Nabawi, which he described as a symbol of unity, peace, and devotion.

Chairman Gilani conveyed his best wishes for the leadership of Saudi Arabia.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi meets with Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi in Federal Capital.

Govt committed to make Pakistan polio-free: Additional DG EPI

ISLAMABAD (APP): Additional Director General Health Services EPI, Dr. Samra Khurram said on Thursday that the authorities are leaving no stone unturned in their quest to make Pakistan a polio-free country saying that a comprehensive review of the existing polio drive strategy is underway with experts.

In an exclusive interview with PTV news channel, she assured that the government's determination to end polio is evident in its proactive approach where every possible measure is being taken to enhance the efficacy of the

polio vaccination campaigns.

By leveraging the expertise of researchers and stakeholders, the government aims to plug the gaps in the system and ensure that no child is left unprotected against this debilitating disease, she added.

With renewed commitment and a robust strategy, Pakistan is poised to make a decisive push towards a polio-free future, she mentioned.

Dr. Samra Khurram also expressed her deep concern over the persistence of polio cases in Pakistan, despite the

government's efforts to eradicate the disease.

"It is a tragedy that children in Pakistan continue to fall prey to a disease that can be easily prevented with a vaccine that the government brings to people's doorsteps," she lamented.

She emphasized that the polio vaccine is a safe and effective way to protect children from the debilitating effects of polio. She urged parents to take responsibility for ensuring that their children receive the full course of vaccination, as prescribed by the government's vaccination schedule.

Talal dismisses PTI founder's apology offer as 'face-saving attempt'

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Senator Talal Chaudhry on Thursday fired back at Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan's offer to tender a conditional apology for the May 9 incidents, terming it a "face-saving tactic" that comes too little, too late.

Talking to a private news channel, Chaudhry slammed Khan's attempt to justify the violent clashes that erupted on May 9, which resulted in widespread property damage and injuries to several individuals.

The PML-N leader demanded an unconditional apology from Khan, holding him squarely responsible for the chaos and destruction unleashed by his party's supporters.

He said that the person who 'confessed' to the crime is now demanding evidence. Talal Chaudhry has revealed that Imran Khan's own family and

party workers were at the forefront of the May 9 violence.

He said that the PTI "desecrated" military installations, sensitive buildings, and even attacked our national TV station and Parliament House.

It is time for Imran Khan to take responsibility and apologize sincerely, without conditions. Anything less would be an insult to the nation, he stressed.

Replying a question, he vehemently demanded swift justice for the martyred and innocent civilians who lost their lives in the May 9 incidents.

He emphasized that the nation will not tolerate any further delays in bringing the perpetrators to book.

Chaudhry asserted that the government must take concrete steps to ensure that those responsible for the senseless violence are held accountable and punished accordingly.



ISLAMABAD: Islamic Scholars from Afghanistan and various universities from all over Pakistan posing group photo with Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah, Judge Supreme Court of Pakistan, at the Federal Judicial Academy.

'Khan advised to rethink his strategy, engage in meaningful dialogues', Senator Siddiqui

ISLAMABAD (APP): The parliamentary leader of Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) in the Senate Senator Irfan Siddiqui Thursday urged Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leader Imran Khan to adopt a mature approach and appealed to Khan to seek constructive dialogue to address his grievances rather than resorting to immature political tactics.

Talking to a private news channel, Siddiqui emphasized that by engaging in dialogue, Khan can harness the collective wisdom of stakeholders and find solutions that benefit the

country as a whole.

Senator Irfan Siddiqui has urged Imran Khan to take a step towards reconciliation by accepting responsibility for the 9th May incident and apologizing to the nation for any harm caused.

Siddiqui emphasized that this gesture of goodwill is essential for creating a conducive environment for meaningful dialogues with the government.

Furthermore, Siddiqui advised Khan to refrain from criticizing the Army and other institutions, as such rhetoric only serves to further divide the nation.

Gilani pays tribute to Major Tufail on his 66th martyrdom anniversary

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Senate Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani paid tribute to Major Tufail Muhammad Shaheed (Nishan-e-Haider) on his 66th martyrdom anniversary.

"Major Tufail Muhammad has sacrificed his life fighting bravely against the enemy in 1958," he said.

He said that Major Tufail Muhammad was awarded the highest military honor, Nishan-e-Haider, in recognition of his bravery and valor.

"The entire nation salutes Major Tufail Muhammad on his 66th martyrdom anniversary," he said, emphasizing that the sacrifices of the martyrs have allowed us to breathe freely.

"The nation takes pride in its brave sons," said Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani. "The sacrifices of the Pakistan armed forces for the motherland will never go in vain."

He said that the sacrifices of the martyrs teach us lessons of unity, brotherhood, and patriotism.

Yusuf Raza said that May Allah Almighty elevate the ranks of Shaheed Major Tufail Muhammad.

Chinese delegation keen to invest in Islamabad's development projects

ISLAMABAD (APP): A Chinese delegation in a meeting with Chairman CDA, Muhammad Ali Randhawa on Thursday expressed their keen interest to invest in development projects of Islamabad.

The meeting focused on exploring avenues for collaboration and investment in key sectors.

During the briefing, the delegation expressed desire to invest in the project of transferring CDA offices and streetlights to solar energy.

This initiative aligns with country's goal of promoting renewable energy sources and reducing carbon emissions.

Muhammad Ali Randhawa welcomed global investors, particularly from China, to invest in Islamabad's development projects.

He assured the delegation that the Capital Development Authority (CDA) would extend full support to facilitate investments.

The meeting also discussed other upcoming projects of CDA, including the Silicon Valley and Four Tier Data projects for IT.

The delegation was briefed on the details of these projects, highlighting their potential for growth and investment.

CDA chairman for connecting cycle tracks to metro stations

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) Muhammad Ali Randhawa on Thursday emphasized the importance of connecting cycle tracks with metro and other bus stations in Islamabad. The consultants from Asian Development Bank (ADB) gave a detailed briefing to Chairman CDA on proposed cycle tracks in Islamabad. The meeting was held via Zoom aimed at introducing an affordable and alternative mode of transportation and recreation in the Capital City. Chairman Randhawa stressed that the project should be developed according to international standards while being cost-effective.



ISLAMABAD: The Executive Director General of Information Service Academy (ISA) Muhammad Arshad Munir, giving away award to the students of educational institutions during an event to mark 78th Independence Day celebrations.

Dastgir lauds PML-N for respecting state institutions, its belief in democratic norms

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) senior leader Khurram Dastgir on Thursday praised that Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N)'s respect for institutions is rooted in its belief in the importance of democratic norms and the rule of law.

Talking to a private news channel, Dastgir argued that this approach has allowed the party to maintain a positive relationship with the army and other institutions, even when they have been in opposition.

On the other hand he criticised that the founder of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf

(PTI) had set up precedent of taking U-turns and maligned the state institutions' image solely for his personal gains.

Dastgir's scathing remarks exposed the PTI leader's alleged hypocrisy and self-serving agenda and argued that such flip-flopping has become a hallmark of the PTI's politics, undermining the trust of the people and the integrity of the political process.

Dastgir urged the people to recognize this reality and reject the PTI's divisive and negative politics, which have hindered Pakistan's progress and stability.

Info ministry organises quiz show among students to celebrate I-Day

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Islamabad organized a Quiz Show in commemoration of 78th Independence Day Celebrations of Pakistan here on Thursday at Information Service Academy.

A large number of students, teachers from different government schools of ICT and officials from the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, and Information Service Academy

had also participated in the quiz show.

Cash prizes were distributed among the winners and runner up students teams of the quiz show competition.

Executive Director General Information Service Academy Mr Arshad Munir distributed the cash prizes and appreciation certificates among runner up team of IMCB G/9-4 and the winner team of IMCG F/10-2.



ISLAMABAD: A vendor displaying flags on roadside at Jinnah Super to mark the 78th Independence Day celebrations.

Parliament Lodges Phase-I expansion to be completed during current fiscal year

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker of the National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq's special efforts have borne fruit as the expansion project of the Parliament Lodges is now nearing completion.

Upon assuming office, Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq immediately ordered the swift completion of the project. Both the Speaker and Deputy Speaker held multiple meetings with the relevant institutions to ensure progress.

Taking strict notice of the increased costs of the project, the Speaker ordered that the project

may be completed as soon as possible with minimal expenses. He warned that further delays in construction and costs will not be tolerated.

Due to the Speaker's efforts, the required funds for the project's construction have been provided. He has also directed legal action against all relevant institutions in the event of further delays.

The delays have caused significant difficulties for the Members of Parliament, with many expressing their concerns on multiple occasions.

AIOU to host 37th AAOU int'l conference

ISLAMABAD (APP): Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) is set to host the 37th annual international conference of the Asian Association of Open Universities (AAOU) from October 15th to 17th, 2024.

According to the AIOU, this significant event will bring together over 100 vice-chancellors, rectors, and professors from leading open universities across Asia, alongside approximately 250 national education experts and researchers.

Members of AAOU's Executive Body and General Body will also participate in the conference, highlighting its importance in the field of open and distance learning (ODL).

The Vice-Chancellor of AIOU has appointed Dr. Zahid Majeed, Director of the Directorate of Academic Planning and Course Production, as the Conference Coordinator. Reflecting on the university's legacy, Dr. Majeed noted that AIOU successfully hosted the first AAOU conference in 1988 and the second in 2013.



ISLAMABAD: Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari offering Fateha during the condolence meeting over the sad demise of Nazir Dhoki, PPP Media Coordinator, at Sector I/10 in Islamabad.

Dr Shafqat says: Bangladeshis erode Modi's influence in Dhaka after defeat of Hindutva in India

ISLAMABAD (APP): Research fellow at Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) and a specialist on South Asian Affairs, Dr Shafqat Munir on Thursday expressed the optimism that with the fall of Hasina Wajid led government in Bangladesh, a new power balance in South Asia would help strengthen Bangladesh-China-Pakistan regional initiative for peace, development and prosperity.

Talking about the recent uprising in Bangladesh in a SDTV programme, Dr Shafqat said that the Awami League's politics was based on hatred and divide policy without realizing the sentiments of three generations of Bangladesh as she could not maintain the heroism of her late father for long and with her largely pro-Indian stance, she keep distancing herself from a large number of people who disagreed with her politics of

authoritarianism. The three generations included the population who lived in united Pakistan, a generation that was grown up in Bangladesh with some bitterness of the past and a new young generation who did not have the baggage of strained history, he said.

Sharing his experience of interactions with these three generations, Dr Shafqat said by and large a majority of the people hailing from these generations with predominantly did not like the country's tilt towards India by distancing from Pakistan. "One extremist sizable population that was supporting Awami League was certainly siding with Hasina on her pro-Indian politics. Amid this reality, Ms Hasina remained insecure that is why she relied on Indian security and Modi's then stature which has now been eroded after the general election 2024 in India.

ICT Admin prepares for Annual Urs of Imam Bari

ISLAMABAD (APP): As the annual Urs of Shah Abdul Latif Kazmi, known as Bari Imam, approaches, the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration gears up to ensure a smooth event for the followers.

For this purpose, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon, visited the shrine of Imam Bari Sarkar to oversee the preparations for the upcoming Urs, said the spokesman of ICT administration.

Accompanied by the Assistant Commissioner and senior officials from the Capital Development Authority (CDA), including the Director General of Building Control, Director of Sanitation, and officials from the Directorate of Municipal Administration (DMA).

New Centralized Complaint Management System to facilitate BISP beneficiaries

ISLAMABAD (APP): The new Centralized Complaint Management System developed by Asian Development Bank (ADB) will facilitate beneficiaries of Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) to redress their complaints efficiently. This was shared during a meeting between Secretary BISP Amer Ali Ahmad with the technical team of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) here Thursday.

The ADB team presented a detailed briefing to Secretary BISP on the development of a new iGMS Centralized Complaint Management System.

During the briefing, the ADB team informed the Secretary that the newly developed system aimed to enhance the redressal process for BISP beneficiaries by generating a unique ID/Tracking number, allowing users to monitor and track the entire life cycle of their complaints.

The Secretary BISP emphasized the importance of an efficient complaint reporting mechanism and suggested the introduction of a simple complaint form specifically for BISP beneficiaries. He stressed that this would make the system more accessible and user-friendly.



ISLAMABAD: Pakistani students are protesting against the blocking of visa applicants of the Indian company BLS European countries Italy.

NDMA says: Flash Flooding in Chenab & Ravi adjoining Nullahs; heavy rains may trigger Urban Flooding

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)'s National Emergencies Operation Center anticipated that extremely heavy rainfall over upper catchments of Rivers Chenab, Ravi and Sutlej may cause an increase in water flows in these rivers.

Consequently, medium to High Level Flood flows is expected in River Chenab along with Nullahs of Rivers Chenab and Ravi

from August 10-13. Moreover, flows in River Sutlej are subject to releases from Indian Side likely to trigger flash flooding and land sliding in hilly and mountainous regions of Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Gilgit Baltistan (GB) and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) in next 24 to 48 hours, an NDMA news release said. "Heavy rains may cause urban flooding in Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Peshawar, Lahore,

Gujranwala, Sialkot, Sargodha, Faisalabad, and other urban areas. Rain-wind / thundershowers with isolated very heavy falls expected in Kalat, Zhob, Sibbi, Naseerabad, Khuzdar, Awaran and Barkhan. In KP, rain-wind / thundershowers with isolated very heavy falls expected in Dir, Swat, Kohistan, Shangla, Battagram, Mansehra, Abbottabad, Galiyat, Haripur, Buner, Swabi, Nowshera, Mardan, Malakand, Mohmand.



ISLAMABAD: Motorists facing difficulties due to damage service road along Karnal Sher Khan Shaheed Road after the heavy monsoon rain in the Federal Capital.