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quality controls to protect
public health, boost exports**

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UN Resident, Humanitarian Coordinator pays a farewell call on PM

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: United Nations Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator in Pakistan Mohamed Yahya, Wednesday, paid a farewell call on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

The prime minister thanked Yahya for his valuable contribution to strengthening Pakistan-UN cooperation during his tenure, and for the UN Country Team's continued support to Pakistan's development and humanitarian priorities, including climate resilience, sustainable development, and disaster response. He recalled with appreciation the UN's role in mobilizing international support for Pakistan, particularly during the 2022 floods. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator

Mohammad Ishaq Dar, SAPM Syed Tariq Fatemi and other senior government officials were also present during the meeting, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. The prime minister congratulated Yahya on his appointment as Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator at the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), describing it as a fitting recognition of his experience and commitment. He wished him continued success in his new assignment and expressed confidence that Pakistan's close partnership with the UN would continue to grow. While thanking the Prime Minister for the appreciation, Yahya expressed his gratitude for the cooperation extended to him and the UN Country Team.



ISLAMABAD: UN's resident coordinator Mr. Muhammad Yahya called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Pakistan condemns 'unprovoked' Israeli attack on Syria air base

PEAK POINT



ISLAMABAD: The Foreign Office (FO) on Wednesday strongly condemned the "unprovoked" attack carried out by Israel on an air base in Syria, saying such acts had

the potential to "further undermine regional peace and stability".

Syria's state-run Ekhbariya television, citing a military source, said on Tuesday that Israel carried out eight airstrikes on the runway and storage facilities at the Abu al-Duhur base near Aleppo in northwest Syria. A separate military source and a civilian who lived near the base said there were no casualties.

"Such provocative actions constitute a flagrant violation of international law and have the potential to further undermine regional peace and stability," the FO said on Wednesday.

"Pakistan expresses its unwavering solidarity with the brotherly people of Syria, and reiterates its full support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity as well as peace and prosperity of the Syrian Arab Republic," the FO said.

'A good start': PPP, opposition agree to maintain contact, cooperate on legislative matters in parliament

PEAK POINT



ISLAMABAD: In a significant move, PPP, a major ruling coalition partner, and the opposition PTI on Wednesday agreed to maintain contact and cooperate on legislative matters in the parliament. The agreement was reached when PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari met Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly Mahmood Khan Achakzai and Leader of the Opposition in the Senate Allama Raja Nasir Abbas at the Parliament House in the NA opposition leader's chamber, PPP said in a post on X. PTI Secretary General Salman Akram Raja, Tehreek-i-Tahaffuz Ayeen-i-Pakistan (TTAP) Secretary General Asad Qaiser, Vice Chairman Mustafa Nawaz Khokhar and PTI's Amir Dogar were also present at the meeting.

PPP leaders Raja Pervez Ashraf, Sherry Rehman, Naveed Qamar and Nadeem Afzal Chan accompanied Bilawal. The meeting discussed parliamentary affairs and the country's political situation. Bilawal asked the opposition leaders to join parliamentary committees and play an active role, according to the statement. The opposition leaders said they would decide after consulting the PTI chairman, it added. The PPP and opposition leaders agreed to increase contact regarding legislation in parliament. Bilawal urged the opposition leaders to play their role in parliament in connection with electoral reforms to ensure transparency in elections. Referring to the transfer of incarcerated PTI founder Imran Khan to the hospital and his treatment following the Supreme Court's decision.

Govt files review plea against SC ruling to move Imran to Shifa Int'l Hospital, terms it 'discriminatory'

PEAK POINT



ISLAMABAD: The federal government on Wednesday filed a petition in the Supreme Court, seeking a review and recall of the SC order to shift incarcerated

former prime minister Imran Khan to Islamabad's Shifa International Hospital for medical examination and treatment. The government's review petition, filed by Islamabad Advocate General Naveed Hayat Malik on behalf of the federal capital's chief commissioner a day after the SC's ruling, termed the interim order "discriminatory". The petition, a copy of which is available with Dawn, stated that the order was "in excess of jurisdiction" and, therefore, "liable to be reviewed". The plea further stated that the order "suffers from errors of law floating on the surface of the record". It argued that Rule 197 of the Pakistan Prison Rules, 1978, which governs the manner and mode of the transfer of a prisoner to the hospital, had escaped SC's attention in its ruling on Imran's hospitalisation. "Had the court taken note of the above-noted provision of law, the order under review could not have been passed," the plea said.

Pakistan extends airspace ban on Indian aircraft until Sept 24

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has extended its airspace ban on Indian aircraft for until Sep 24, according to a Notice to Airmen (Notam) issued by the Pakistan Airports Authority (PAA). The extension comes as the previous restriction was due to expire on Aug 23. "Pakistan airspace not available for Indian-registered aircraft and aircraft operated or leased by Indian airlines/operators, including military flights," the Notam, issued early on Wednesday, said. According to the Notam, the extension took effect.

Iran's armed forces warn Gulf countries against assisting US military

PEAK POINT

TEHRAN: Iran's armed forces warned Gulf countries on Wednesday against assisting the US military, saying it would be tantamount to joining American military operations. "We wish to warn that any assistance or facilitation provided to the aggressor US military amounts to participation in the US military operation," armed forces chief of staff Ali Abdullahi said, according to Iran's Mehr news agency. South Korean minister says Trump appears to be pressuring Seoul over Iran, investment

Iran war, alongside other unresolved issues such as States under a trade deal signed last year, Cho said.



investment.

"I think President Trump's message includes pressure over several pending issues concerning the South Korean government, as well as a message to North Korea and an intention by the United States to break a stalemate in the Iran war," Cho said.

One potential source of friction could be South Korea's pledge to invest \$350 billion in the United

rating.

South Korea and the United States announced on Wednesday that they will shorten annual military drills to five days from 11 and scale back some field training, following Trump's order on a substantial reduction in US participation. South Korea's Unification Minister Chung Dong-young, who attended the same hearing, said he believes Trump was moving closer to potentially arranging a new meeting with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un by curtailing exercises that have long angered Pyongyang.

UAE says two missiles detected earlier launched from Iran The United Arab Emirates' defence ministry said on Tuesday that it had detected two ballistic missiles launched from Iran, the first such incident reported since a May.

PML-N announces tickets for 7 reserved AJK seats



PEAK POINT

MUZAFFARABAD: The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) on Wednesday announced its candidates for seven of the eight reserved seats in the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly. The special seats, for which elections have been scheduled for August 24, comprise five for women and one each for Ulema-i-Din or Mashaikh, Jammu and Kashmir state subjects residing abroad, and technocrats and other professionals. Polls are being held in three phases amid unrest in the region. So far, in the direct elections to 38 territorial constituencies, the PML-N has secured 25 seats while the PPP won 12. The lone MLA-elect of the Awami Dast-o-Bazu party also joined hands with the PML-N, taking the alliance's strength to 26.



SPORTS



Robinson double rocks Pakistan in first Test before rain stops play



PEAK POINT

ENGLAND: England bowler Ollie Robinson took a wicket with the first ball of the match as his double strike left Pakistan reeling before rain stopped play in the first Test at Headingley on Wednesday.

Robinson celebrated his recall in style in England's first Test since the exits of Ben Stokes, their former captain, and Brendon McCullum, sacked as red-ball coach.

By the time rain halted play after 50 minutes, Pakistan—with out injured captain Babar Azam for the start of the three-Test series—were stumbling at 23-2.

Imam-ul-Haq was five not out and Abdullah Shafique unbeaten on 12. Robinson had figures of 2-12 in five overs, with the umpires later announcing lunch would be taken 30 minutes early at 12:30pm (4:30pm PKT).

Joe Root, in his second stint as full-time England captain, explained his decision to field first after winning the toss by saying: "We feel there's some overheads to work with, and a bit of top moisture that our lads can exploit." But not even Root, all-rounder Stokes's predecessor as skipper, could have forecast what happened next.

Robinson, recalled in place of off-spinner Shoaib Bashir, was on target with the first ball of the match, trapping left-hander Azam Awais lbw.

Awais reviewed but umpire Chris Gaffaney's decision was upheld, with replays indicating the ball would have hit the top of middle stump. It was a fine way for the 32-year-old Robinson to take his 500th first-class wicket at an impressively low average of 21.

Shan Masood had managed just five when he too fell lbw to Robinson, bowling over the wicket at the left-hander and moving the ball back into the batsman's pads.

Shafique drove Gus Atkinson for four before he survived a confident caught behind appeal, with umpire Allahuddin Paleker correctly ruling the rising ball had flicked the batsman's leg instead. Pakistan, bidding for their first series win in England in 30 years, suffered a setback before the three-match contest when captain Babar Azam was ruled out with a hand injury.

Pakistan's Salman Ali Agha reacts after the toss on the opening day of the first test match between England and Pakistan at Headingley cricket ground in Leeds, northern England.

Boxer Fatima receives cash award

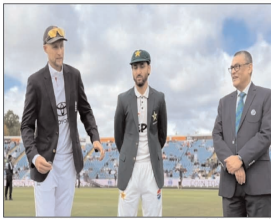


MOHSIN ALI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's federal government has awarded boxer Fatima Zahra Rs2 million for winning a bronze medal at the 2026 Glasgow Commonwealth Games. Prime Minister's adviser on Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC) Rana Sanaullah presented Zahra with the cash prize and a certificate of appreciation at a ceremony in Islamabad. Zahra won bronze in the women's 60 kilogramme weight category at the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, becoming the first Pakistani woman to win a boxing medal at the Games. "Fatima Zahra is a source of pride for the entire nation and a role model for young athletes," Sanaullah said at the ceremony. He said her performance had given fresh impetus to efforts to develop boxing and expand opportunities for women in sport.

"Her success is proof that Pakistan's daughters have the ability to make the country proud on the international sporting stage," Sanaullah said. The award comes as Pakistan seeks to strengthen its sporting infrastructure and improve support for athletes competing internationally. The government has said it wants to provide national athletes with access to modern facilities and international-standard training.

First Test: Rain cuts short opening session after Pakistan's shaky start



PEAK POINT

LEEDS: Rain disrupted the opening day of the first Test between Pakistan and England at Headingley on Wednesday, forcing an early lunch after only 9.4 overs of play.

After being put in to bat, Pakistan endured a disastrous start as opener Azam Awais was trapped LBW by Ollie Robinson off the first ball of the match.

The visitors suffered another early setback in the fifth over when former captain Shan Masood was dismissed by Robinson for five runs from 20 balls, leaving Pakistan reeling at 6-2. Imam-ul-Haq and Abdullah Shafique then showed some resilience, putting together a brief partnership to take Pakistan's total to 23-2 before heavy rain brought play to a halt.

Hosts England won the toss and opted to field first against Pakistan in the series opener of the three-match Test series at Headingley on Wednesday. Pakistan have made several changes to their line-up for the first Test, with Salman Ali Agha standing in as captain in place of the injured Babar Azam. Shan Masood and returning captain Azam. Shan Masood and Saud Shakeel have also returned to the playing XI.

Pakistan captain Awais, Imam-ul-Haq, Babar Azam has been ruled out of the series opener, with Salman Ali Agha stepping in as stand-in captain. Pakistan have won just one of their last five Tests, with their run including a 2-0 series defeat and a victory over the West Indies that helped level that series 1-1. England have endured a mixed run in their recent red-ball matches, losing three of their last five Tests, including a 2-1 series defeat against New Zealand. They will be looking to regain momentum under their new head coach Ben Stokes as the series gets under way.

Playing XIs

Pakistan: Azam

Awais, Imam-ul-Haq,

Shan Masood,

Abdullah Shafique,

Saud Shakeel,

Mohammad Rizwan

(wk), Salman Ali

Agha (c), Ali Usman,

Khurram Shahzad,

Mohammad Ali and

Mohammad Abbas.

Shaheen's 7-for, twin tons power Gold to Champions Cup glory



Pakistan crash out of FIH Hockey World Cup after defeat against India

PEAK POINT

DUBAI: Pakistan failed to qualify for the next stage of the ongoing tournament, being held in the Netherlands and Belgium, after suffering their second defeat in three matches. Following a 1-4 loss to England and a 3-3 draw against Wales, Pakistan needed a victory against traditional rivals India in their Group D match to advance to the knockout stage. However, in Amstelveen, the Pakistan hockey team, led by Abu Bakar, appeared under pressure from the very beginning against India. The Indian team, captained by Harmanpreet Singh, had lost 2-4 to England in their second match but displayed highly aggressive hockey against Pakistan. India secured their second win of the World Cup with a 5-3 victory over Pakistan and qualified for the knockout stage. In the important FIH

Hockey World Cup 2026 match at Wagener Hockey Stadium in Amstelveen, India opened the scoring in the first quarter through captain Harmanpreet Singh from a penalty corner. Abhishek then scored India's second goal to make it 1-3. However, just minutes later, Abhishek scored his second goal of the match to restore India's three-goal advantage. Pakistan then converted their first penalty corner of the match through Sufyan.



goal to double their lead. India maintained their advantage until the end of the first quarter. In the second quarter, Indian captain Harmanpreet Singh scored his second goal from a rebound off a penalty corner, putting India 3-0 ahead. A few minutes later, Pakistan's Hannan Shahid pulled one

reducing the deficit. At the end of the second quarter, India led Pakistan 4-2. In the third quarter, India further strengthened their lead to 5-2 through a penalty stroke. In the fourth and final quarter, Hannan Shahid scored his second goal of the match and Pakistan's third, but India held on to win 5-3.

All aboard as Asian Games preparations enter 'final stages'





CPSC launches special platinum jubilee edition of PIVOT magazine

PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: China-Pakistan Study Centre (CPSC) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) on Wednesday organized the launch of a special Platinum Jubilee edition of PIVOT Magazine, titled "Pakistan-China All-Weather Partnership in Peace and Progress at Platinum Jubilee," commemorating the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and China.

Ambassador Naghmana Hashmi, Former Ambassador of Pakistan to China, was the Keynote Speaker, while Mr. Xu Hangtian, Minister-Counsellor, Embassy of the People's Republic of China, was the Guest of Honor, said a press release.

Dr. Tahir Mumtaz Awan, Director, Pakistan Institute of China Studies, University of Sargodha; Dr. Sadaf Jabbar, Faculty Member, Department of Chinese Language and Literature, NUML Islamabad and Professor Huang Yunsong, Associate Dean,



School of International Studies and Deputy Director, Institute of South Asian Studies, Sichuan University were other guest speakers.

Dr. Talat Shabbir, Director, CPSC also spoke at the occasion. Ambassador Moin ul Haque in his welcome remarks highlighted the exceptional trust, mutual respect and unconditional support that characterize Pakistan-China relations. He underscored the strong people-to-people dimension of the partnership and its wide spectrum across defence, trade and investment, industry, agriculture, green technology, climate change, clean energy, civil nuclear energy, space, health, education, cul-

ture and media. He also highlighted China's development experience, particularly its emphasis on long-term planning, innovation, research and development and socio-economic progress.

Ambassador Naghmana Hashmi described the special edition of PIVOT as a comprehensive publication documenting the evolution and future direction of Pakistan-China relations. She emphasized the need to continuously nurture the relationship and protect it from complacency and disinformation.

BRT Yellow line Project faces fresh questions over Transparency, Senate demands clear answers

NADEEM TANOLI
ISLAMABAD: The Karachi Mobility Project, commonly known as the BRT Yellow Line, came under strict parliamentary review as the Senate Standing Committee on Economic Affairs demanded complete transparency in the project's contracts, subsidies and future financial arrangements. Chairman Committee Senator Saifullah Abro directed authorities to provide full details of the project and ensure that every decision related to public money remains transparent. The

Committee specifically asked for complete proposals, including details of subsidies planned under the project. The meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Economic Affairs was held at Parliament House under the chairmanship of Senator Saifullah Abro to review foreign funded development projects, including the Karachi Mobility Project BRT Yellow Line and the Akram Wah Canal Project. The meeting was attended by Senator Haji Hidayatullah Khan, Senator Rana Mahmood Ul Hassan, Senator Syed Waqar Mehd,

Senator Rubina Khalid, Senator Kamran Murtaza, Senator Dilawar Khan as a special invitee. During the briefing, officials informed the Committee that the Karachi Mobility Project is expected to be completed in December 2028. The Sindh Government plans to introduce 250 electric buses through a Public Private Partnership model to operate the BRT Yellow Line service. However, Senator Saifullah Abro stressed that the project must move forward with complete openness because it involves public

resources. He directed the concerned authorities to submit all proposals and financial details before the Committee so that the project's arrangements could be properly reviewed. The Committee emphasized that large public transport projects must provide benefits to citizens while ensuring responsible use of government funds. Members observed that transparency in contracts, subsidies and operations is necessary to maintain public confidence. The BRT Yellow Line project was discussed along with other foreign funded

projects during the meeting. The Committee also reviewed concerns related to road projects in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where members questioned procurement procedures and demanded inquiries into alleged irregularities. The Committee also discussed the Akram Wah Canal Project and expressed concern over the non availability of certain project documents. Officials explained that some contract related information could not be shared before completion of the procurement process due to World Bank rules. Senator Saifullah Abro directed offi-

cials to provide a clear timeline for completion of the contract process and ensure strict internal checks during bid evaluation to prevent any irregularities. The Committee reiterated that foreign funded projects must be completed with transparency, proper monitoring and accountability so that public money delivers maximum benefit to citizens. The Committee directed all concerned departments to submit updates on progress and ensure that commitments made during the meeting are followed.

Opinion & Editorial

PEAK POINT
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Social media limits and privacy

Despite concern over France's Constitutional Council decision to block the country's social media ban for children under 15, the ruling should be seen as a technical setback addressing a structural flaw in the legislation, not a repudiation of the need to protect young people online. Though the court objected to the legislation's "disproportionate" infringement on expression and its vague privacy safeguards, it did not explicitly rule that age-based restrictions are inherently unconstitutional. Other countries planning similar bans - including the EU and several member states, and also Pakistan - should take note of this and craft their laws in ways that achieve the balance needed to meet these conditions. The French court's primary grievance was the lack of clear limits on age-verification data collection - a flaw with a solution that could be implemented in no time - requiring robust privacy-preserving technologies, strict data retention caps and transparent oversight through independent audits. The EU should also feel minimal pain, even if it has to tweak its Digital Services Act, considering the bloc's long-running reputation for respecting personal rights. The most dangerous thing any country could do is give up on introducing or enforcing restrictions just because it would take legislators a few more hours to make their laws compliant with the relevant privacy and free speech rules.

World Humanitarian Day: Pakistan's Tradition of Service and Our Collective Responsibility

By: Choudhary Muhammad Rasheed Sal



World Humanitarian Day is observed every year on 19 August to honour humanitarian workers, volunteers and aid personnel who dedicate their lives, time and resources to helping people affected by wars, natural disasters, poverty, hunger, displacement and other humanitarian crises. The day reminds us that humanity transcends religion, nationality, language and borders. Helping a person in distress is a shared responsibility of us all. The Significance of World Humanitarian Day in Pakistan For decades, Pakistan has faced earthquakes, devastating floods, epidemics, poverty, unemployment and numerous social and humanitarian challenges. In every difficult hour, the Pakistani people have demonstrated a remarkable spirit of sacrifice, compassion and solidarity. During natural disasters and other crises, ordinary citizens, welfare organisations, students, teachers, doctors, young volunteers and social groups have come forward to support affected communities. The tradition of serving humanity is also deeply rooted in Pakistan's religious and cultural values. Islam places great emphasis on human dignity, helping the needy, caring for orphans and vulnerable people, giving charity and standing with those facing hardship. Consequently, Pakistan has a strong tradition of Zakat, charity, community kitchens, medical camps, blood donations and relief operations during natural disasters. The Pakistani Nation in Times of Crisis The devastating 2005 earthquake remains one of the most powerful examples of Pakistan's collective humanitarian spirit. People from across the country travelled to affected areas, donated relief supplies and participated in rescue and rehabilitation efforts.

Similarly, during severe floods in different periods, Pakistani citizens and welfare organisations have played an important role in providing food, clean water, medicines, shelter and other essential supplies. These experiences demonstrate that the spirit of supporting one another during difficult times remains alive in Pakistani society. However, the growing humanitarian and economic challenges of the modern era require us to transform this spirit into a more organised, sustainable and effective system of social support. Moving Beyond Relief Towards Self-Reliance Humanitarian service is not limited to emergency relief. Providing food to a deserving family for a few days is certainly valuable, but genuine humanitarian assistance becomes far more meaningful when that family is helped to rebuild its life and become self-reliant. Therefore, welfare activities in Pakistan should focus not only on relief but also on rehabilitation, education, healthcare, employment and economic empowerment. Supporting a poor child's education, teaching a young person a marketable skill, creating a livelihood opportunity for a family or ensuring timely medical treatment can have a far greater and longer-lasting impact than temporary assistance. The Role of Young People and Educational Institutions Pakistan's young population represents a tremendous force for humanitarian service. Educational institutions should cultivate a culture of volunteerism, social responsibility and community service among students. Universities and colleges can promote blood donation drives, tree plantation campaigns, environmental protection initiatives, health and hygiene awareness programmes, support for deserving students and volunteer networks for disaster response. If the energy, education and technological skills of young people are systematically connected with

humanitarian work, Pakistan can develop a strong and organised culture of volunteerism. Social Media and Responsible Humanitarianism In the digital age, social media has become a powerful tool for humanitarian assistance. During a crisis, information can reach millions of people within minutes, relief activities can be coordinated and the needs of affected communities can be highlighted. However, this power comes with responsibility. Fake images, misinformation and fraudulent appeals can mislead the public and divert assistance away from those who genuinely need it. Media organisations and social media users must therefore prioritise accurate information, responsible communication and respect for the dignity and privacy of victims during humanitarian crises. The Role of the Media The role of the media during humanitarian crises should go beyond simply reporting events. Journalism must have affected people a voice, highlight their problems, monitor relief efforts and hold government and non-governmental organisations accountable for their performance. Responsible journalism should not turn human suffering into a spectacle. Instead, it should promote public awareness, collective responsibility and solutions. While reporting on victims, journalists must also protect their dignity, privacy and emotional well-being. This is not merely a matter of professional ethics; it is a fundamental responsibility of humane journalism. A Shared Responsibility of Government and Society Pakistan cannot effectively respond to humanitarian crises without cooperation among the government, welfare organisations, private sector, media, educational institutions, religious and social organisations and ordinary citizens. Effective disaster preparedness, timely relief, transparent systems and long-term rehabilitation are essential. At the same time, social

protection mechanisms for vulnerable groups—including children, women, older people, persons with disabilities and extremely poor families—must be strengthened. Humanitarian assistance should not be treated as an occasional response to a crisis. It should become part of a broader national strategy for social protection, resilience and human development. Humanity Is Not a One-Day Commitment The most important message of World Humanitarian Day is that humanity cannot be confined to a single day. Feeding a hungry person, visiting a sick individual, helping a deserving student continue education, donating blood, supporting a vulnerable family or simply listening to someone in distress are all acts of humanity. We should also recognise that humanitarian service does not always require significant financial resources. Sometimes a small act of kindness, a timely decision or a few words of hope can change someone's life. Conclusion World Humanitarian Day reminds us that humanity is both our common identity and our collective responsibility. Pakistan has repeatedly demonstrated its spirit of sacrifice, compassion and solidarity in times of crisis. The challenge now is to transform this spirit from temporary relief into a permanent, organised and effective part of our social system. Let us resolve not merely to speak about humanity but to make it a part of our everyday conduct—to create care for those in need, support the vulnerable and help ensure that every member of society has the opportunity to live with dignity and basic rights. A strong Pakistan is built not only through a strong economy and strong institutions, but also through a compassionate, responsible and humane society. When humanity remains alive, society becomes stronger; and when society becomes stronger, Pakistan becomes stronger.

Govt launches mobile app for small traders' tax scheme



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The government on Wednesday launched a mobile application for its Fixed Tax Asaan Scheme, allowing small traders and shopkeepers to file their tax returns through the app.

The government had unveiled the scheme ahead of presenting the federal budget for traders with an annual turnover of up to Rs200 million. Addressing a press conference alongside Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb and representatives of the trader community, Minister of State for Finance Bilal Azhar Kayani said

the launch marked the "practical start" of a project the government had been working on for the past few months.

Kayani congratulated the trader community on the successful launch of the app, saying it had been developed with their "guidance and consultation".

He recalled that the tax scheme for small traders was announced ahead of the budget on June 5. Following the announcement, the government team worked on developing the app and the plates to be provided to shopkeepers. The minister said the government team kept trader

representatives Ajmal Baloch and Kashif Chaudhry, along with their associates, in the loop throughout the app's development. "We initiated the process with a few questions: why had tax schemes in the past failed, and what was required to make a scheme successful today — one that would make it easier for traders to become tax filers while helping achieve the twin objectives of expanding the tax net and increasing the number of tax filers?" Kayani said.

He said the scheme had been designed as a "win-win for all", with the government benefiting from increased tax collection while traders would have a simpler, more facilitative system and easier dealings with the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR).

"This is a trader-led scheme and it will be successful with trader-led implementation," he noted. The minister outlined the key features of the scheme and app, saying it was open to all traders, whether they were already tax filers or not, provided their annual sales.

President asks Banking Mohtasib to expand public awareness of services

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Wednesday asked Banking Mohtasib Pakistan to expand public awareness about its services to help banking customers protect themselves against fraudulent activities.

He said this while talking to Banking Mohtasib Pakistan, Sirajuddin Aziz who called on him here at Aiwan-e-Sadr and presented the Banking Mohtasib's Annual Report 2025, a Presidency's news release said.

The President noted that information technology was playing an important role in modern banking services, and lack of knowledge was making customers vulnerable to fraudulent activities. He asked the Banking Mohtasib to especially facilitate women, persons with disabilities, senior citizens, low-income com-



munities and other vulnerable groups in accessing justice. The President was informed that the Banking Mohtasib received 35,130 complaints in 2025, while 13,793 complaints had been brought forward from the previous year. Of the total 48,923 complaints in hand, 36,280 were addressed and disposed of, with relief amounting to Rs. 1,879.766 million provided to banking customers. The President was further informed that 21,392 new complaints were received from January 1 to June 30 this year.

Ahsan urges nationwide food quality controls to protect public health, boost exports

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Wednesday directed relevant regulatory authorities to strengthen enforcement and establish a coordinated nationwide mechanism for food quality and safety.

He stressed that effective quality controls were essential to protect public health and enhance Pakistan's export potential.

Chairing a meeting of the National Price Monitoring Committee (NPMC), the minister reviewed a Pakistan Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (PCSI) report on the quality of Banaspati ghee, edible oils and milk products, besides examining an Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) report on the disparity between notified LPG prices and prevailing market rates, a news release said.

The committee was informed that 491 samples of Banaspati ghee, edible oils and milk products collected from locations prescribed by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS)

across the country were analyzed by PCSIR. The report found excessive trans-fat levels in 26 Banaspati ghee samples, with the highest reaching 15.87 grams per 100 grams against the PSQA limit of 2 grams. Excessive peroxide values were detected in 22 samples, elevated free fatty acids in 15 samples, while Vitamin A was absent in 46 samples. Rancidity and excessive moisture were also detected in some samples. In blended cooking oil, Vitamin A was not detected in 26 samples, while excessive peroxide values were found in four samples, with the highest value recorded at 76.71 against the prescribed limit of 10. Several samples also showed elevated free fatty acids, rancidity, excessive moisture and volatiles. Three of the four refined palm olein samples tested were found non-conforming. The milk quality assessment showed that all 26 non-conforming packaged liquid milk samples had milk-fat levels below the prescribed standard, while all eight non-conforming milk powder samples had protein levels below the required range.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal, chairs a meeting of the National Price Monitoring Committee (NPMC).

217 Probationary Officers of 54th CTP visit BISP Headquarters

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of 217 Probationary Officers of the 54th Common Training Programme (CTP) of the Civil Services Academy, Lahore, visited the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) Headquarters to gain an in-depth understanding of the programme's vision, mandate, institutional framework and flagship social protection initiatives.

Chairperson BISP Senator Rubina Khalid and Additional Secretary Dr. Asmat Nawaz welcomed the probationary officers to BISP Headquarters.

Addressing the delegation, Senator Rubina Khalid highlighted the evolution of BISP as Pakistan's flagship social protection programme and its significant contribution to poverty reduction, women's empowerment and financial inclusion.

The Chairperson said that BISP was conceived in accordance with the vision of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, while its foundation was laid by President Asif Ali Zardari. She highlighted that one of the distinctive features of BISP.

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Wednesday said successful negotiations with oil refineries had paved the way for a reduction of around Rs32 per litre in diesel prices, providing major relief to the public.

Speaking alongside Petroleum Minister Ali Pervaz Malik, he said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had chaired a meeting earlier in the day with the petroleum minister, petroleum secretary and relevant officials and directed negotiations with oil refineries to ensure that possible relief was passed on to consumers.

Tarar said the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA)



would announce the reduction shortly, adding that the petroleum minister had made considerable efforts to make the negotiations successful.

He said a significant portion of diesel was refined and produced locally, adding that the reduction would particularly benefit farmers, goods transport and public transport, which rely on diesel. The minister said the government was aware of the difficulties faced by the people amid rising global oil prices.

Joint ventures with US business community can boost trade in KP: Governor Kundi

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi has said that the province had immense potential for investment and joint ventures with the American business community could help create new opportunities for trade and economic development.

Addressing a farewell dinner hosted in honour of US Consul General Tom Eckert, the governor said Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was rich in natural resources and offered vast opportunities in various sectors including hydropower, oil and gas, minerals and tourism. He said the province's abundant water resources could



play a vital role in energy generation, while religious tourism also offered attractive prospects for international investors.

Governor Kundi said Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had the largest youth population in the country and efforts were being made to promote international cooperation for their development by providing educational scholarships and skill development.

Water security is linked to Pakistan's food, Economic and National Security, says Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, while delivering the keynote address at a Parliamentary Seminar on Water Governance, titled "Evidence from Local, Low-Cost Solutions for Water Security and Flood Resilience," hosted by the SDGs Secretariat at Parliament House, Islamabad, and organized by the Parliamentary Task Force on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), emphasized that water is life and its conservation is intrinsically

linked to Pakistan's food security, economic stability, and national security. Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has also said that water is no longer merely a sectoral issue but has emerged as a critical matter of national security. "Water does not belong to any one political party; it is a national issue that concerns the entire country," he said, stressing that ensuring access to clean water is a shared national responsibility. Speaker National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said that India's suspension of the Indus Water Treaty was a



clear violation of international law. He emphasized the need for national consensus and a long-term strategy to address Pakistan's water challenges, saying that the country must move beyond

temporary measures and adopt sustainable, permanent solutions. Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq called for making water harvesting a priority for both the federal and provincial governments. He

further stressed the need to introduce sustainable water-recycling systems at the federal and provincial levels to improve groundwater levels and conserve precious water resources. NA Speaker said that the federal and provincial governments should accord special attention to the construction of water reservoirs and small dams. He emphasized that close cooperation between the Federal and provinces was essential for effective management of water resources. Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said that Pakistan is blessed

with abundant water resources; however, these resources need to be used prudently and efficiently. He stressed that effective implementation of the National Water Policy and institutional coordination are essential for sustainable water management. Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq called for ensuring transparent utilization of funds allocated for water-related projects and said that Parliament's responsibility extends beyond legislation to effective oversight of public policies. Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq.