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## Cabinet decides not to impose new duty on solar panels

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ISLAMABAD:

The federal cabinet decided on Tuesday that no new duty will be imposed on solar panels to ensure the common man's access to renewable solar energy. They decided that low-cost renewable solar energy would soon reach every citizen. In addition, the federal cabinet meeting, chaired by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, approved the export of sugar in a limited quantity after the Sugar Advisory Board advised that ample reserves of sugar were currently present in the country. The official statement said that the Prime Minister, while approving the export of sugar, issued a clear instruction that no increase in the price of sugar will be allowed. Apart from this, the Prime Minister directed the formation of a cabinet committee to monitor the price of sugar, stating that if there is any fear of an increase in the price of sugar, further exports will be stopped. During the

federal cabinet meeting, the Prime Minister also addressed the misunderstandings and speculations circulating about Operation Azm-e-Istehkam, clarifying that instead of launching a new and organized armed operation, ongoing operations will be intensified based on intelligence. The premier said that Azm-e-Istehkam is a multi-domain, multi-agency, whole-of-the-system national vision for enduring stability in Pakistan, adding that equating it with a large-scale armed operation that requires displacement is a misunderstanding. PM Shehbaz said that the aim of Azm-e-Istehkam is to decisively root out the remnants of terrorists, crimes, terrorist nexus, and violent extremism in the country. During the meeting, the cabinet was informed about the progress on the privatization of state institutions, especially the privatization of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA). The cabinet was apprised that the process of privatization of PIA is progressing rapidly, and different companies showing interest in the pre-bidding process are visiting various PIA sites. The cabinet was told that the PIA bidding will be held in the first week of August. The Prime Minister directed the acceleration of the privatization process of PIA, emphasizing the importance of transparency. Additionally, the premier said that planning is underway to move the economy in a positive direction, telling his cabinet members that the country is slowly and gradually moving towards economic stability. PM Shehbaz also said that the government will increase domestic exports by developing small and medium-scale industries,

promising that the privileges of elites and exploiters of the country's resources will be abolished. He vowed that providing economic security to the common man and equal development opportunities is the government's first priority. On the recommendation of the Ministry of Commerce and the request of the United Nations World Food Program, Afghanistan, the cabinet allowed a container containing truck parts to transit from Karachi to Kabul. This special permission has been given by the Government of Pakistan once on humanitarian grounds. On the recommendation of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Division, the cabinet approved the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the Government of Pakistan, and the Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Dawah, and Guidance. The federal government also approved the extension of the tenure of the implementation committee for the immovable property of the Emir of Bahawalpur until March 2025, on the recommendation of the division handling state and border affairs and in light of the orders of the Supreme Court. Moreover, the cabinet approved the appointment of the Executive Director of the Frequency Allocation Board (FAB) on the recommendation of the Cabinet Division. The cabinet, on the recommendation of the Cabinet Division, approved the National Economic Council (NEC) annual report for the financial year 2022-23 prepared by the Ministry of Planning Division to be tabled in Parliament. The cabinet approved the decisions taken in the meeting of the Economic

Coordination Committee held on 13 June 2024. It also approved the decisions made in the meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Legislative Cases on 11 June 2024. The cabinet approved the decisions taken in the meetings of the Cabinet Committee on State-Owned Enterprises (CCoSOEs) held on 20 June 2024. Meanwhile, the Prime Minister directed the ministers to ensure their presence in Parliament during the Budget 2024-25 debate.