

# Independent

dailyindisb@gmail.com

Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah

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## PM seeks plan comprising concrete measures to reduce excessive electricity bills

Says such measures will be taken which will not put an additional burden on the country's exchequer.; NEPRA determines electricity tariff: Water & Power ministry

ISLAMABAD (Online): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar has directed the relevant institutions to prepare concrete measures to reduce the excess electricity bills and submit a report in the next 48 hours.

He said that such measures will be taken which will not put an additional burden on the country's exchequer.

The distribution companies should present a road map to prevent electricity theft, it is not possible that the common man will be in trouble and bureaucrats and the prime minister will use free electricity on their taxes, he added.

The first round of emergency meeting on the increase in electricity bills was held on Sunday under the chairmanship of Caretaker Prime Minister Anwar Haq Kakar.

According to the ongoing

declaration, the Prime Minister was given a detailed briefing on the increase in July electricity bills in the meeting.

The Caretaker Prime Minister said that in the next 48 hours, concrete steps should be taken to reduce the excess electricity bills. No action will be taken in haste which will harm the country.

Measures will be taken which will not burden the national exchequer and provide convenience to the consumers. The caretaker prime minister said that it is not possible that the common man is in trouble and the bureaucrats and the prime minister use free electricity on their taxes.

The concerned ministries and concerned institutions should provide complete details of officers and institutions receiving free electricity. Anwarul Haq Kakar said that I represent the com-

mon man, the cost of electricity in the Prime Minister's House and Pakistan Secretariat should be kept to a minimum.

A detailed consultation with the provincial chief ministers on the implementation of power saving measures and the issue of excess bills for July will also be held on Monday.

The Caretaker Prime Minister asked the distribution companies to present a road map to prevent electricity theft.

Interim Cabinet Federal Ministers Shamshad Akhtar, Gohar Ijaz, Murtaza Solangi, Advisor to Prime Minister Dr. Waqar Masood, Secretary Power, Chairman WAPDA, Chairman NEPRA and other relevant senior officials participated in the meeting.

The meeting was given a detailed briefing on the problems of the electricity sector, details regarding ex-

cess bills, electricity theft and measures to be taken to prevent it.

The Prime Minister adjourned the meeting till Monday and directed to prepare and submit concrete measures and plans.

Earlier, a briefing was given in the meeting by the Ministry of Water and Power. The Power Division officials said that the price of imported coal was also Rs 51,000 to Rs 61,000 per metric. Next year, Rs 2 trillion should be paid only in terms of capacity payments. 63.5% of domestic consumers have no increase in tariff.

The Power Division said electricity prices for 31.6 per cent domestic consumers increased by Rs 3 to Rs 6.5 per unit.

Only 4.9 per cent of domestic consumers saw a tariff hike of Rs 7.5 per unit. The average tariff hike

for domestic consumers was Rs 3.82. Power Division officials said. The maximum electricity tariff in 2022 was Rs 31.02 per unit. In August 2023, the price of electricity is Rs 33.89 per unit.

Meanwhile Officials of Ministry of Water and Power have said that electricity tariff is determined by NEPRA (National Electric and Power Regulatory Authority) electricity prices change under Consumer Price Index, due to KIBOR (Karachi Interbank Offered Rate) and fuel price adjustment also in electricity prices.

According to details, an emergency meeting on electricity rates and bills was held on Sunday under the chairmanship of Caretaker Prime Minister Anwarul Haq Kakar. The Ministry of Water and Power gave a briefing in the meeting.



Caretaker Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar chairing an emergency meeting regarding electricity bills at the Prime Minister's House Islamabad.

## Kakar assures resolution of all issues of Balochistan

Caretaker PM vows to bring higher education in Pakistan at par with world standards

QUETTA (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar on Sunday assured of resolution of all issues of Balochistan province and said that Pakistan's progress and development were linked with the development of the province.

The prime minister was talking to a delegation of the elders of the province who called on him to felicitate him on assuming the office.

The delegation also extended good wishes, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release issued here.

Governor Balochistan Abdul Wali Kakar and Caretaker Chief Minister Ali Mardan Domki were also present during the meeting.

The prime minister said that the government was taking steps, on a priority basis, to enhance foreign investment, industrial and agriculture development, and provision of employment opportunities in the province.

He also assured of providing equal job opportunities to the youth of

Balochistan. For the country's progress, the caretaker government would strive to increase the role of Balochistan province through the provision of infrastructure, electricity, water, and all other available resources, he added.

Meanwhile Caretaker Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar Sunday stressed upon formulation of planning to ensure that higher education at the university level should become a regular base for the latest research and innovative achievements.

He said that graduated students should be equipped with the professional skill sets to meet the requirements of industries.

The prime minister expressed these views during a meeting with a delegation of vice-chancellors of public sector universities of Balochistan that called on him, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release issued here.

The delegation appreciated the prime minister of the progress over higher education and the pertain-

ing issues. The prime minister underscored the need to promote a culture of research and creativity as the lack of innovation was linked with the deficiency in research and higher education.

The caretaker prime minister further asked for setting up incubation centers for the students by the industrial sector in universities, so that they could get opportunities for contemporary research, adding that with these measures, trained manpower would be provided to the industries, thus paying the way for an industrial revolution.

He shared that with the continuous facility of higher education, the improvement could be brought in different sectors of life.

The youth should be provided with ample opportunities to seek higher education so that the talented young lot could play their due role in the progress of the country, he said, adding the youth and manpower were the vital assets for a better future.



QUETTA: A delegation of Vice Chancellors of Public Sector Universities of Balochistan called on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar.



KARACHI: Leaders and activists of Jamat-e-Islami (JI) are holding protest demonstration against massive unemployment, increasing price of daily use products, inflation price hiking and the highly inflated electricity bills, held in Karachi.

## Delaying tactics in elections not good omen for democracy: Mengal

Independent Report QUETTA: The President Balochistan National Party (BNP), Sardar Akhtar Mengal has stated that it is constitutional obligation of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to conduct elections in the country within the stipulated timeframe. In addition to this, the caretaker government's responsibility is to supervise the elections. He said that using delay tactics in elections is not good omen for democracy in the country.

He said that the caretaker government in Balochistan is just incomplete, however, whoever are included in the provincial cabinet belongs to some political parties.

Those made part of the caretaker government and cabinet should not belong to any political party. The caretaker Prime Minister (Anwarul Haq Kakar) has resigned from the party after taking oath of his office. The people happen to be ideological while remaining part of the political parties, and their relationship don't end nor the ideologies are ended with resignations.

Any non-political person should have been made caretaker Prime Minister.

While a member of a political party was chosen as caretaker Prime Minister.

This and similar other views were expressed by Sardar Akhtar Mengal while speaking to a private TV channel the other day.

The BNP chief further said that the constitutional obligation of conducting elections should be fulfilled within the given time period. While the assemblies were dissolved before their due tenure then ECP should announce elections in the country meeting the constitutional requirements instead of constitutional excuses, he maintained.

About the population census, Sardar Akhtar Mengal said that we think that free and fair census was conducted for the first time in the province. He said that the very aim of the CCI meeting held before few days of the end of previous government was nothing but to reduce the population of Balochistan. In that meeting, population of the province was decreased up to 7.3 million, he charged.

He said that the CCI meeting was also delayed for six hours just for the then Chief Minister (Abdul Quddus Bizenjo).

## During investigation Imran deviates from May 9 incidents

ISLAMABAD (Online): Chairman of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) once again deviated from the events of May 9.

The JIT investigated Chairman PTI in 6 cases on May 9 arson incidents across the country.

According to the sources, 6 cases of terrorism related to May 9 have been registered against Chairman PTI, on which he was investigated.

JIT sources said that the entire JIT team, including DIG Investigation Imran Kishor, questioned Imran Khan regarding the events of May 9. PTI Chairman once again deviated from the events of May 9.

Sources said that the JIT said that there is evidence of incitement by you regarding May 9, on which the PTI chairman said that he was arrested and did not incite anyone by calling.

The JIT members said that there are videos and clips in which the protestors are seen chanting his name, to which Imran Khan said that he did not instigate anyone, they all went to the cantonment area on their own. No one else was involved.

## Domki optimistic about meaningful progress in resolving longstanding issues of Balochistan

Independent Report

QUETTA: The caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki has expressed the high hope that there would be meaningful progress in resolving longstanding problems of the province after the visit of caretaker Prime Minister Anwarul Haq Kakar to Quetta.

In a tweet issued here on Sunday, the caretaker Chief Minister said that the visit of caretaker Prime Minister has im-

portance and it is the source of pleasure, encouragement for the people of Balochistan.

He said that the caretaker Prime Minister is well aware of the issues of Balochistan.

He said that the caretaker Prime Minister got briefing about the law and order, ongoing development projects and other related issues in the province.

Mir Ali Mardan Domki mentioned that Mr. Kakar has assured us to resolve the issues of the province at the earliest.

Jan Achakzai says

## Caretaker Government of Balochistan will not have any impact on elections

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Caretaker Minister for Information, Jan Achakzai has assured veteran politician and Chief of BNP(M), Sardar Akhtar Mengal, that the caretaker government of Balochistan will not have any impact on the upcoming elections.

The assurance comes in response to an interview given by Mengal to a private channel, where he claimed that members of the caretaker government in Balochistan have political affiliations with certain political parties. Mengal further stated that resigning from a party after taking an oath will not diminish a cabinet member's loyalty or ideological affiliation.

In a statement issued

today, Achakzai reassured Mengal that the members of the caretaker cabinet have no political agenda and will not participate in any way that violates the rules set by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP).

"The caretaker government is committed to ensuring free, fair, and transparent elections in Balochistan," Achakzai said. "We will not allow anyone to interfere in the electoral process."

Achakzai also welcomed any legitimate proposals from Mengal to further ensure the fairness and transparency of the elections.

"We are always open to constructive suggestions," he said. "We will consider any proposal that is in the best interests of the people of Balochistan."

## Protest to be held against increase in prices of petroleum products & electricity on September 1

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Quetta Development Mahaz (QDM) has announced to stage protest demonstration against increase in the prices of petrol and petroleum products and the tariffs of electricity on September 1 in the provincial metropolis.

This was announced by the Chairman of QDM, Abdul Muteen Akhunjada in a statement issued here on Sunday.

According to Chairman QDM, the life of common men has been made miserable by the caretaker government. The petrol and petroleum prices were in-

creased on one hand, and the tariffs of the electricity were increased on the other hand making it difficult for the people to make their both ends meet, Abdul Muteen Akhunjada regretfully pointed out.

He said that the levying of numerous taxes on the daily used items as well as in the electricity bills is something against the will and interests of the people.

He also charged that a corrupt and incompetent bureaucracy is imposed on the general public especially in Quetta. He also criticized the concerned authorities for causing delay in conducting the local bodies elections in Quetta.



FAISALABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for National Heritage & Culture Syed Jamal Shah is visiting a Christian Colony Jaranwala.

## MQM-P wants elections after fresh delimitations

KARACHI (INP): Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) Convener Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui on Sunday demanded transparent elections with the fresh delimitation of constituencies in line with the census 2023.

"General elections should be held following fresh delimitation of constituencies," the MQM-Pakistan convener said while addressing the presser alongside party leaders Farooq Sattar and Mustafa Kamal.

The MQM-P leader went on to say that Karachi needs transparent elections at the earliest, but on the same hand, Siddiqui said "If the delimitation of constituencies took weeks or months, it is not a bad deal."

"In the previous elections, fake representatives were imposed on the city," Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui said, adding that this time the elections needed to be fair, transparent, impartial, and acceptable to all.

"Delimitation of new constituencies inevitable after the new census," he said.

## Caretaker provincial govt announces financial assistance of ailing media persons

Independent Report QUETTA: The caretaker provincial government has announced financial assistance for treatment of two ailing media persons of the province on Sunday.

The government also announced financial assistance for the bereaved family of a media person.

According to an official hand out issued here on Sunday, the caretaker Minister Information, Jan Achakzai arranged the funds for treatment of ailing media persons and the

family of a late journalist, on directives of the caretaker Chief Minister Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki.

It may be mentioned here that the caretaker Minister Information had visited the Quetta Press Club on Saturday.

During the visit, the office bearers of Press Club had diverted attention of Jan Achakzai towards the issue of treatment of two ailing media persons besides financial condition of bereaved family of a media person.

## Package approved for 1200 students: Chinese shown special interest in improving education system in Gwadar

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chinese government has shown special interest in improving education system in Gwadar as a package has been approved for 1200 students belonging to the port city. In this regard, meeting of District Education Officer (DEO) Gwadar was held with the General Manager, Administration, Gwadar Port, Mr. Zhao and

assistant General Manager of the Port.

During the course of meeting, the pace of ongoing projects being implemented with Chinese cooperation in the schools of Gwadar was reviewed.

The DEO presented a project of package for 1200 students of Gwadar in the meeting, which was approved by the Chinese Port authorities.



Daily Voice of Masses  
**Independent**

Monday August 28, 2023

**Flashpoint now**

Bloated electricity bills have triggered countrywide protests. Crushed by the spiking cost of living, hundreds of consumers took to the streets in most cities yesterday to give vent to their seething anger over growing incidence of indirect taxes in their electricity bills.

Some political parties joined them to cash in on the growing discontent. The interim government of Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar is also feeling the heat and has convened a meeting of power sector authorities today to find a way to provide some "relief" to frustrated power consumers.

How? It's not yet clear. The caretakers have little space to help inflation-stricken citizens without compromising on the fiscal goals of the present IMF programme, which would be disastrous for the economy, as it could make the multilateral lender suspend or terminate the programme.

The increasing price of electricity is essentially a governance and fiscal problem for which successive governments are to blame. On the one hand, the ruling classes have relied on heavy indirect taxes on fuels and power bills to pay for the state's ballooning expenditure, instead of effectively taxing powerful lobbies like retailers, real estate and agriculture because of their political clout.

On the other hand, they've utterly failed to implement energy sector reforms to control growing theft and power and gas sector losses, and chosen instead to periodically increase prices to recover lost revenues from honest customers. It goes without saying that the surging fuel and energy costs are devastating the working-class and salaried households, as well as industry.

At least a third of the electricity bill is made up of taxes and other government charges. Likewise, almost a quarter of the petrol price consists of taxes and levies. The government can't remove or even partially reduce these levies without an IMF waiver. At best, they can offer consumers the 'facility' of paying their bills in installments, as was decided by Shehbaz Sharif last year.

This is no solution though. It will only delay the calamity for the consumers. The toxic mix of inflation and economic recession over the last two years, coupled with inequitable tax policies, have brought households under renewed pressure.

Inflation, considered to be the most regressive tax on the poor-middle-income families, remains elevated at above 28pc. Fuel and food prices have hit the hardest as tens of millions of people scramble to find some way to survive. Unable to cope with the rising cost of living that is exacerbating inequalities in society, many are ready to risk their lives to leave this country.

With the authorities unlikely to change their bad fiscal and tax policies, and take tough decisions to reform the energy sector, working-class and salaried households can expect to face continued pain for a much longer time than the rulers would like us to believe.

**Parvez Hassan**

President Dr Arif Alvi, on Aug 20, 2023, went on his X (formerly Twitter) account to allege that he had not 'assented' to two bills seeking amendments to the Pakistan Army Act, 1952, and the Official Secrets Act, 1923, both of which the government had already notified as duly promulgated acts by parliament. In fact, the government hastily moved to prosecute certain PTI leaders under these amended 'acts'. The controversy around the 'assent' of the president is against the following backdrop of law and facts:

(1) Article 75 of the Constitution provides a multidimensional approach to the 'assent' of the president necessary to the passage of a 'bill' of parliament to an 'act' of parliament. There is a distinct di-

chotomy in the Article between 'assent' and 'deemed assent'.

(2) Thus, Article 75 charges the president, within 10 days, to either 'assent to the bill' as covered by sub-Article 75(1)(a) or return the bill to parliament with "a message requesting that the bill or any specified portion thereof, be reconsidered" by the joint session of parliament and, if passed on such reconsideration, with or without amendment, it shall be presented to the president who "shall give his assent within ten days, failing which such assent shall be deemed to have been given" (Article 75(2)).

(3) Against this constitutional background, simply presented, the president has alleged that he did not "assent" to the bills. There is the detail about his instructions to his staff which were allegedly not carried out. These details may impact on the good governance and the personal conduct of the president in not fully complying with his obligations under Article 75 but what needs to be examined is whether such governance and conduct impact on the constitutional requirement of "assent" required under

Article 75(1)(a). It is clarified that as the president did not return the bills with a "message" under Article 75(1)(b), the provisions of Article 75(2) are not attracted.

The pivotal issue to be addressed simply is whether in not returning the bills within 10 days, with or without a message, the president shall be deemed to have "assented" to the bills under Article 75.

'Assent' in the Constitution is always understood to mean an unequivocal intent to support or approve a measure. An assent, generally, to be valid and legal must, borrowing from the timeless principles of contract law, be consensus ad idem, that is assent in the same sense upon the same thing. Thus, if the parties are not ad idem, there is no assent. Assent, accordingly, must normally be expressed through the signatures of the president or communicated through his subordinate staff, in writing, as allowed by the applicable Government Rules of Business, 1973. It thus remains to be investigated whether the government complied with this constitutional requirement at the time it notified the 'bills' as 'acts'.

Clearly, the bills could not become acts if there was no substantial compliance with this basic obligation. If the president had not signed his assent or not communicated his assent through his office as enabled by the Government Rules of Business, there, clearly, was no assent under the Constitution for purposes of Article 75(1)(a) and the issuance of the notification of the bills as acts was flawed, irregular, illegal and unconstitutional.

A few other comments about 'assent' and 'deeming' provisions of law may be helpful in the above result.

First, an 'assent' could be unequivocally expressed in writing as through a signature. But our jurisprudence is also familiar with 'constructive assent' or 'implied assent'. None of these have been invoked by the caretaker law minister and, in any event, the extension of such assents in Article 75(1)(a) would be reading something that is not there.

Second, the deeming provisions in a Constitution or law are exceptional provisions and are always interpreted restrictively. The word 'deemed' conveys a fiction whereby a thing is legally treated in a particular

manner when in fact it does not so exist. A deeming provision creates a legal fiction, which is otherwise not factual, and the interpretation of such provisions is always most guarded in the jurisprudence of all legal systems. We canvass that the deeming provisions of Article 75 are limited, as per the express provisions of Article 75(2), to the reconsideration of parliament of the message of the president sent under Article 75(1)(b). It is a fundamental principle of constitutional construction that you cannot read into the Constitution that which is not written there. Had it been intended to read the deeming fiction in Article 75(1)(a), the Constitution would have so stated as it did in Article 75(2).

The oft-repeated observation on the interpretation of deeming clauses in the rich jurisprudence of our Supreme Court and the superior judiciary compels that "statutory fiction should be carried to its logical conclusion... but the fiction cannot be extended beyond the language of the section by which it is created or by importing another fiction", therefore, to find out a solution, it has been observed that the "principle of

harmonisation shall be attracted" and ultimately it was held that "the impact of deeming clause could be curtailed if it produces a disgraceful result" (emphasis added).

Here, let us look at the enormity of the implications of a 'deeming assent'. The president's right to assent to a bill is a part of the fundamental basic structure of our Constitution of checks and balances meant in the ultimate interest for the welfare of the common man. The right to 'assent' to bills before they become the law of the land is not a trivial right that should be 'deemed' when the president has, particularly, expressly and publicly said that he did not 'assent' for purposes of Article 75(1)(a).

The president may be guilty of poor office-keeping and ineffective indoor management (a concept known to corporate lawyers) but such conduct cannot be extended to allege his abdication or relinquishment of his right to assent under Article 75(1)(a) which, as we suggest, should be clear, unequivocal, unambiguous and in writing through his signature or through his office as may be enabled by the Government Rules of Business. — Courtesy Dawn

**A sense of the world****Ghazi Salahuddin**

It had been raining for hours, though not as heavily as our monsoon downpours, when we ventured out on a drive. It was early in the afternoon last Sunday, well before the storm was expected to peak in that location. The environment was laden with an air of foreboding. And I was excited as well as nervous about experiencing a tropical storm in southern California. It had been raining for hours, though not as heavily as our monsoon downpours, when we ventured out on a drive. It was early in the afternoon last Sunday, well before the storm was expected to peak in that location. The environment was laden with an air of foreboding. And I was excited as well as nervous about experiencing a tropical storm in southern California.

We drove around a few beaches in Long Beach. It was hard to take the scenic routes because the parks had been closed. There were many other motorists looking for a good view of the Pacific though the roads were generally deserted, with rainwater flowing on the sides.

Yes, I am referring to a tropical storm named Hilary. It was California's first tropical storm in 84 years and another manifestation of abnormal weather events that have plagued the United States and several areas across the globe. This is how climate change is becoming a global issue. We in Pakistan have suffered its blow in the rains that submerged a large part of Sindh last year. In fact, it was a disaster that shocked the world and underlined the magnitude of what can happen elsewhere.

Anyhow, being here when a tropical storm came calling, I felt as if I was situated in a wider world where momentous events are taking place. It has now been about three weeks since we landed in the US and I am trying to emotionally and mentally disengage myself from the mostly sordid developments that are taking

place in Pakistan. One resolve is to not watch the news channels and avoid conversations on politics with the Pakistani friends I meet here.

This does not mean that I am not keeping tabs on what is happening in Pakistan. As a professional journalist, I have to be aware of the headlines and it is not possible to not be concerned about the national drift. But here is this opportunity of being abroad and in the midst of unfamiliar situations in another, faraway country. A 12-hour time difference in itself enforces a kind of detachment.

I also see this as an educational experience. We exist in a world that is vast and various and not really in a good shape. It is certainly not the land of dreams or even opportunity that so many of our people are willing to risk their lives for. This does not mean that our unemployed and frustrated young men have no justification for yearning to escape from what is becoming a great country to go away from.

I am not intending here to look at Pakistan's place in the world, which is in the lower depths, or to examine the horror of what hu-

man smuggling often presents. Nor am I in any position to endorse the lure of what is said to be the American dream. It can be a dream — and also a nightmare, particularly for a large number of its own citizens.

What I am trying to say is that an encounter with the world as such, across its myriad climes, can be useful in one's attempt to understand Pakistan and its abiding sorrows. Or it can simply be a gratifying experience, at a personal level, to just watch the world go by and be grateful for whatever pleasures and surprises it has to offer. Let me also explain that I am not talking about a tourist's fleeting love affair with a particular place and its liberating prospects, though traveling essentially is a learning experience.

I feel energized by so much that I can do during this sojourn, apart from the immeasurable joy that a family reunion can provide. For instance, the time that I spent in The Last Bookstore in downtown Los Angeles is now a precious memory. A somewhat similar emotional and spiritual nourishment is provided by meaningful conversations with learned individuals

who come from other countries and cultures.

Incidentally, I was happy to be with an Indian family on Wednesday evening to share the joy and the thrill of India's Chandrayaan-3 achievement of landing a craft near the Moon's South Pole. There is this South Asian bondage that still sustains the glimmer of our 'Aman ki Asha'. This occasion was made more cheerful with the induction of Urdu poetry and Bollywood music. Beyond South Asia, there are concerns that bind the entire populace of this planet Earth. Climate change is apparently becoming a larger threat than the possibility of a nuclear war, which has become a topical issue with the release of Christopher Nolan's epic movie 'Oppenheimer'. It is interesting how movies, like books, can inspire serious debates on the state of our civilization. So, there is 'Barbie'. Actually, they are talking about 'Barbenheimer'. However, I was talking about last Sunday's tropical storm that had southern California in its path, after its landfall in Mexico. There were extensive preparations to

deal with the potential of deadly floods. Authorities had pleaded with residents not to drive. There was a state of emergency. As I have stated at the outset, I had a little taste of it all.

Thankfully, Los Angeles escaped major damage. But the citizens are urged to get ready for the next disaster. What will it be and when will it come? It is this uncertainty that the phenomenon of climate change has fostered. Meanwhile, the situation in many parts of North America and southern Europe has recently been very critical. Weather records have been broken around the world during this summer.

Wildfires around the historic city of Lahaina in Hawaii are one of America's deadliest disasters. The fires that raged across the breadth of Canada in July eclipsed annual fire records. Smoke from Canada that drifted into the US led to an increase in the number of asthma patients being taken to hospitals.

There are many other stories to be told about how climate change is affecting everything. Isn't this the time to worry about the future in a global context? — Courtesy TheNews

**Outsider, outcast****Muna Khan**

My nephew, now 9, and I have been watching one of the 11 Star Wars films for the last three years whenever we are together. He didn't think anything of the British-Pakistani actor Riz Ahmed playing Bodhi in Rogue One, whereas the rest of us celebrated this first. Bodhi's ethnicity doesn't figure in the film. There are many other firsts for Pakistanis in the creative arts which have paved the way for a new normality.

When I was nine, the closest I got to some sense of representation — without knowing what it meant — was watching Atyque Padamsee play Jinnah in Gandhi in 1982. I watched it as part of my history class and remember feeling upset at Jinnah's portrayal. Pakistan seemed like a last-minute inclusion in the film. Fast forward to my first job as a journalist at Newsline in the mid-'90s; there was so much controversy about Christopher Lee playing Jinnah but the film went ahead.

That could not happen now and it is a good thing. Today you see pushback against the constant portrayal of regressive storylines in dramas or the casting of a man to play a transgender character. Of course, this pushback will cause conflict among those who have created and enforced a social order, and do not want to give new voices a seat at the table.

I believe audiences want to see themselves in stories and visuals, and I'm including the news in this, too. Marginalised commu-

nities aren't adequately represented, which widens the gulf in people's understanding of their issues.

But sometimes seeing yourself on screen can also go wrong, as happened with Yashica Dutt, author of Coming out Dalit, who saw her story in an episode of the Indian series Made in Heaven, the second season of which was released recently. The episode in question portrays an inter-caste wedding of Pallavi Menke, a scholar at Columbia University who claims her Dalit identity after years of hiding behind an upper-caste name. Her marriage into an upper-caste family in India is riddled with power and class dynamics. These are rarely talked about on screen and many people have hailed the episode, which was directed by Neeraj Ghaywan, also Dalit, for the assertion and resistance shown by Pallavi. In a tense exchange of words with her fiancé about the kind of wedding they should have, Pallavi says, "everything is about politics".

But for Dutt, the opening scene cuts too close to home and, as she wrote on Instagram, was "taken without permission or credit". While the director Ghaywan credited Dutt as an inspiration for the episode in a social media post, and Dutt herself called the episode a "cinematic triumph when it comes to showcasing what it truly looks like for a Dalit woman to take her power back in the casteist society", she wants to be acknowledged in the end credits. The producers felt otherwise and issued a strong rebuke denying any appropriation of Dutt's life. This controversy has evoked diverse opinions and thoughtful discussion across caste lines. Dalits are sharing stories about the discriminations they've faced, and also asking whether any individual should speak for a

community.

For readers in Pakistan not familiar with the caste system: Dalits are the lowest in social hierarchy. They have historically performed jobs like manually removing human waste from sewers. Although India outlawed caste discrimination in 1950 and manual scavenging in 2013, both continue. India also created a quota system for lower castes to give them more opportunities.

One of America's greatest public intellectuals, Cornel West, was quoted by the Associated Press as saying he felt a kinship with Dalit activists, and called racism and casteism "institutionalised forms of hatred".

Lest any sense of gloating set in, I'd like to remind you about Pakistan's shameful "institutional form of hatred" that makes its citizens rob others of their right to self-identification. Further, linking that to citizenship — and even marriage certificates, as attempted in Punjab last year — legitimises hatred. We are seeing this hatred play out across Pakistan in the form of brutal violence against peaceful communities trying to make ends meet like every other person right now. Yet they are only seen when acts of violence are thrust upon them. Our response to Christian persecution in Pakistan does not elicit the same reaction as does violence against Muslims in India.

I do not know how this institutional prejudice can be arrested, given the government's head-in-the-sand approach. However, I believe filmmakers may have answers if they are allowed to tell stories that unmask stigmas. We have, after all, a rich history of thought-provoking dramas on social ills. I have no doubt of our ability to do it again. There is an audience desperate for these stories. — Courtesy Dawn

**Truth & tolerance****Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry**

Jaranwala, a small town near Lahore, has shot into prominence, but for the wrong reasons. What happened there on Aug 16, 2023 represents another low in our history of communal intolerance, with local community leaders and law-enforcement authorities appearing totally helpless in preventing the mob from targeting dozens of Christian families, their houses and churches. For a country whose teeming majority adheres to the faith of Islam — the religion of peace — the incident has put all Pakistanis to shame.

Sadly, this was not an isolated occurrence, nor was it the first time that Christians were targeted in our country. In July 2009, a mob attacked houses belonging to Christians in Kasur, and a month later in Gojra. In 2010, Aasia Bibi was sentenced to death for blasphemy and remained in prison for eight years before her acquittal, and in 2012, the trial of another Christian, Rimsha Masih, made headlines. In 2013, a suicide bombing at a church in Peshawar killed more than 100 people, while at least 75 Christians were killed in 2016 when they were celebrating Easter at a park in Lahore. Extremists have targeted other non-Muslims as well.

This gross intolerance and vigilantism in the name of religion is most reprehensible. The persecution of minority communities is against the spirit of Islam and the teachings of

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Any Muslim knows that one's faith is not complete if he or she does not believe in Allah's Prophets or His books, including Hazrat Issa (Jesus) and the scripture revealed on him, the Gospel or Bible. These actions are also a violation of the Constitution, which provides for freedom of religion to every citizen under articles 20 and 36. The founder of Pakistan also provided clear guidance that all citizens of Pakistan should be free to go to their places of worship.

Such blatant display of violent extremism causes immense damage to Pakistan's reputation. The persecution of Christians is not around the world because the majority of the world's Christians (nearly 63 per cent) live in the Americas and Europe, where parliaments, international human rights organisations and civil society are quick to call out Pakistan every time such persecution of Christians occurs.

Such incidents also weaken the moral high stand that Pakistan has taken to speak for the rights of Muslims and other non-Hindu citizens of India.

The only silver lining in this situation is that this time, the people of Pakistan from every walk of life have expressed deep anguish and concern about the growing incidents of mob violence against non-Muslims living in Pakistan. However, condemnation of such incidents is not enough. We need concerted action to prevent such incidents in future.

A first step would be to ensure that the perpetrators of the latest violence are brought to justice. If they manage to escape accountability on one ground or the other, then sadly the Jaranwala incident might not be the last one.

Secondly, we need to revive the culture of toler-

ance that used to be the hallmark of our society. Textbooks would need to be amended to include the virtues of tolerance. In a recent article published in this paper, Amir Rana reported that Saudi Arabia was updating its textbooks, removing anti-Semitic and anti-Christian references, and modernising negative depictions of non-believers. Pakistan could consider taking a leaf or two from the Saudi book. In this regard, it would help if the study of all major religions is mainstreamed in academic disciplines at all levels of education.

Thirdly, we need to complete the task of madrasah reforms that was star-ted under the National Action Plan. These reforms should also ensure that masjid imams would be allowed to lead prayers only if they have the requisite academic certification issued by the government. This has been adopted as a standard practice in many Muslim countries. Fourthly, the threshold of evidence regarding blasphemy accusations needs to be raised in order to prevent the misuse of the law. Our legislators have an onerous responsibility in this regard. Finally, and most importantly, extremist organisations should not have any political patronage, nor should they be used as a tool for political manoeuvring. British philosopher Bertrand Russell, when asked to outline his advice to future generations, identified the values of truth and tolerance as 'vital' for the continuation of human life. In Jaranwala, both these values were trampled upon with impunity. If we want to prevent such incidents from happening in future, the state must act firmly to uphold the values of truth and tolerance. Let the intolerance displayed in Jaranwala be the endpoint of the cycle of faith-based violence in our country. — Courtesy Dawn



## Governor praises Christian schools educational services in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali on Sunday lauded the significant contributions of Christian Church-administered educational institutions to the advancement of education.

He highlighted that these institutions have played a commendable role not only in producing numerous scholars across the country, including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, but have also contributed to increasing the literacy rate prior to the partition of the subcontinent.

Governor Haji Ghulam Ali expressed these sentiments during a meeting with a delegation led by Priest Rauff Masih of the Seventh Day Adventist Church.

The delegation, which included Principal of Seventh Day Adventist School, Waris Sharif, Adil Siddiqui, and others, discussed the provision of facilities in the schools under the administration of

Adventist Church. The delegation informed the Governor about the challenges faced in providing clean drinking water and other facilities at the Adventist Church-administered school.

They also shared that the construction of a tube well had been initiated by the Department of Auqaf (Religious Affairs), but due to a lack of funds, progress had been hindered, causing difficulties in ensuring clean drinking water for the students.

Governor Haji Ghulam Ali attentively listened to the delegation's concerns and assured them of his complete cooperation in resolving the issues.

He expressed his condolences over the Jaranwala incident, emphasizing that minority communities are equal citizens of the country and their protection is the responsibility of all.

He mentioned that individuals from various schools of thought,

including important figures and even the Prime Minister, had shown solidarity with the Christian community.

Praising the exemplary educational services provided by the Christian community, Governor Haji Ghulam Ali said that the Christian community is contributing significantly to the progress and well-being of the nation.

He emphasized the importance of ensuring facilities in all educational institutions, recognizing that children are the future and providing facilities in educational institutions is not just a duty but also vital for the bright future of the nation.

The delegation expressed gratitude to the Governor for his willingness to address their concerns and offer cooperation in finding solutions. They also commended the steps taken by the Governor for promoting education in the province.



LAHORE: Caretaker Federal Minister for National Heritage & Culture Syed Jamal Shah is visiting Jinnah House.

## Jaranwala a shameful act, committed by some so-called Muslims: Minister

FAISALABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for National Heritage & Culture Syed Jamal Shah has said the Jaranwala incident was a major tragedy which saddened all patriotic Pakistanis.

It was a very shameful act and regrettably it was committed by those who called themselves Muslims. "I am ashamed and apologise to the Christian community over this incident, he said during his visit to Isa Nagri in Jaranwala and an interaction with the locals and the media on Saturday.

The caretaker minister said that

teachings of Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) were very obvious and not only a philosopher but also a common man could understand it easily. He said Pakistan was a peaceful land despite having diverse ethnic communities and religions. He regretted that intentionally the peaceful combination was distorted by sowing thorns in this land and "now we are facing its ill impacts".

He said "we lived in the diversity. Many of my teachers and friends were Christians, Hindus, Parsi. But our Indus culture

narrative had taught us that we are a bouquet of diversity and our difference was a beauty of the land where flowers of all kinds grow". He said Pakistan was a most peaceful land in the region. It was the land of Sufis who prohibited strictly from injuring feelings of any person.

He quoted a proverb in Pashto that "I am a Muslim but my friend is a Hindu. Therefore, I am ready to sweep his place of worship for the sake of my friend" and said that it was a pity that thorns were intentionally sown for the last four decades to disturb peace of the land.

## Shamshad Khan says: Monitoring by-election in 21 districts of KP

PESHAWAR (APP): Provincial Election Commissioner Shamshad Khan in a video message said that they were monitoring the by-elections in 21 districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) wherein a Control room, and complaint cell had been established for three days of the election.

"A central control room has been established for monitoring the election process, and redressal of complaints," Shamshad Khan added.

He said, "Officers in the central control room along with the monitoring

team are monitoring the election process."

"Senior officers from the central control room along with the monitoring team are closely monitoring the election process for three days without interruption," Shamshad Khan disclosed.

"Apart from this, complaints regarding the election process will also be resolved immediately," he informed. He said, "CCTV cameras have also been installed in sensitive polling stations adequate security arrangements have been made and people shall leave their homes.

## Zulfiqar for collective efforts to resolve public issues

DG KHAN (APP): Former Governor of Punjab, Sardar Zulfiqar Ali Khan Khosa, emphasized the need for collective efforts to ensure the country's survival and put it into the path leading to progress and prosperity.

While talking to journalists at Khosa House, he called for focus towards national interests, highlighting the challenges of inflation and uncertain futures for the youth.

Khosa hoped for relief measures from the caretaker government, and urged individuals to work for the country's betterment.

## Interim CM directs to control Malaria in a week

KARACHI (APP): The caretaker CM directed the Health Department to launch a campaign against the elimination of malaria.

Baqar also directed to make arrangements for the availability of malaria drugs and wards in all government hospitals.

He said that the LG department should start spraying mosquito killers in their respective areas.

He further said that the Solid Waste Management Board should improve sanitation.

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HYDERABAD: Peoples Party (PPP) Senior Leader, Mola Bux Chandio addresses to media persons during press conference held in Hyderabad.

## Minister visits LGH, says govt to uphold rule of law at all costs

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Human Rights Khalil George assured the public that the government was committed to upholding the rule of law at all costs.

During a visit to the Lahore General Hospital here on Sunday, he spoke to the media about the importance of justice and accountability, stating that even the government officials would not be exempt from facing the court if they commit injustices.

The minister emphasised his personal connection to matters of human rights and commended the media for shedding light on issues that might otherwise go unnoticed. He stressed

equal rights to minorities in the country and acknowledged their significant role in Pakistan's freedom struggle.

Khalil George also praised the unity between Muslim Ulema and local communities, particularly in supporting Christians in Jaranwala.

Concerning Rizwana, a victim of domestic violence, the minister noted her ongoing health struggle, but highlighted the progress made through dedicated efforts. Her plea for justice resonated with him.

Responding to queries, the minister explained that the removal of the assistant commissioner in Jaranwala.

## ANF recovers over 266 kg drugs, 20250 liters prohibited chemical in eight operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting eight operations across the country, managed to recover over 266 kg drugs and 20250 liters prohibited chemicals besides netting five accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Sunday.

He informed that 30 kg opium and over 100 kg hashish were recovered from a vehicle intercepted in a private housing society near Islamabad Airport. Two pistols and ammunition were also recovered from the vehicle.

During the operation, a suspect, resident of Swabi was also arrested on

the spot. In another operation on Kuri Road Islamabad, 100 intoxicated tablets were recovered from the possession of an accused, resident of Karachi. In the third operation at a courier office in Karachi, over 1320 grams Ice drug was recovered from two parcels which were booked for Hong Kong and Bahrain. In the fourth operation, 270 grams Ice drug was recovered from a parcel being sent to Bahrain through a courier company located on Faisal Road, Karachi. In the fifth operation, 122 kg hashish concealed in secret cavities of a vehicle was recovered near Hub area.



LAHORE: Caretaker Federal Minister for Human Rights Khalil George is visiting the child victim of violence Rizwana in Lahore General Hospital.

## Govt won't succumb to pressure from elements promoting vulgarity: minister

LAHORE (APP): Provincial Minister for Information Amir Mir warned on Sunday that the Punjab government would neither be blackmailed by elements promoting vulgarity at theatres nor succumb to any threats or pressure.

Talking to the media persons here on Sunday, he remarked that the elements promoting obscenity should desist from becoming spokespersons of genuine artists. He said genuine artists were siding with the Punjab government in its crackdown on indecency and immorality. He rebuked that the elements minting money through obscene dances could not be deemed as true representatives of artists, adding that crackdown

would continue against such elements for making theatres haven for obscene dances.

Amir Mir asserted that the elements involved in attempting to mislead people would also be dealt with an iron hand. He stressed that strict accountability would be done of such elements challenging the writ of the government. In reply to a question, he apprised that the Punjab government was introducing amendments in the Drama Act and dance in dramas would be banned. Besides, producers committing violation of the Drama Act would be awarded punishment along with imposition of fine.

Amir Mir revealed that after the approval of the Punjab cabinet,

## Caretaker CM visit Bulleh Shah hospital

KASUR (APP): Caretaker Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Sunday paid a surprise visit to Baba Bulleh Shah District Hospital Kasur and reviewed the medical facilities provided to the patients.

According to the spokesperson here, he inspected the emergency, children ward and various wards. The Chief Minister also asked about the provision of free medicines to the patients and the doctors.

The patients expressed their satisfaction on the facilities being provided in the hospital while the careers complained about the overcharging of the parking lot, on which Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi ordered MS Dr. Farooq Ahmed to immediately redress the complaints of overcharging. Chief Secretary, Commissioner Lahore Division, RPO and related officials were present on the occasion.

## CS, IGP visit office of EC

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chaudhry Nadeem Aslam, Inspector General of Police Akhtar Hayat Gandapur on Sunday visited office of Provincial Election Commissioner KP in connection of local bodies by-elections. Polling remained peaceful throughout 21 districts without any break from 8am to 5pm. The Spokesman of ECP said that counting process is continue and will be announced officially.



PESHAWAR: A delegation led by Priest Rauff Masih of the Seventh Day Adventist Church meeting with Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali.

## Widow get pension dues of Rs3.7m on ombudsman order

FAISALABAD (APP): Pension dues of Rs.3.7 million were paid to widow of a deceased government employee on the order of Punjab Ombudsman Major (Retired) Azam Suleman Khan.

A spokesman to district administration said here on Sunday that Muhammad Boota was working as guard in the

Forest Department when he died during service on April 08, 2021.

His widow approached the Punjab Ombudsman as the Forest Department failed to make payment of pension dues and arrears of her deceased husband to her despite submission of necessary document along with pension case.

## Police complaint cell set up at Jaranwala

FAISALABAD (APP): The police have established a complaint cell at Jaranwala to facilitate people affected due to Jaranwala riots. A police spokesman, Sub Inspector (SI) Naveed Ahmad, said here on Sunday that City Police Officer (CPO) Usman Akram Gondal had directed the police officers to facilitate masses, especially Christian community affected due to Jaranwala incident.



HYDERABAD: People are enjoying pleasant evening and cooling themselves during cloudy weather of summer season, at River Indus in Hyderabad.

## EPD warns toxic smoke-emitting units, seals 131

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab Environment Protection Department (EPD) has formed various teams to check whether the industries have taken necessary steps to control water and air pollution by installing emission control systems, and to make survey reports on them.

EPD Director Naseem-ur-Rehman Shah told APP that the department has sealed 131 industrial units and imposed fine worth millions besides registering FIRs [first information report] over pollution during the ongoing pre-smog arrangements drive.

To control smog and air pollution, the EPD launched strict action and announced imposing fines over violation of the

industrial and traffic rules. The EPD teams are raiding factories, industrial units in nook and cranny of Lahore, engaged in burning expired batteries in industrial units and surrounding areas, he added.

Naseem-ur-Rehman told APP that ahead of the winter season, heavy smog and air pollution might create an alarming situation in Punjab and especially in Lahore. Therefore, keeping in view the situation, the EPD was making round-the-clock efforts, he added.

He said that teams were working under the supervision of secretary environment and they would consist of field officers, with the director general (DG) Labs, attached to them.

Environment Misbah-ul-Haq Khan Lodhi told APP that inspection of the industrial units, smoke-emitting vehicles and brick-kilns was being ensured on daily basis by the departmental teams as preventive measures to avert smog. He said that this year, prior to smog season, strict measures were being taken as smog last year, had been declared as calamity in terms of Punjab National Calamities (Prevention & Relief) Act 1958.

Likewise, brick-kilns not following SOPs [standard operating procedures] were also being sealed over violation of smoke emissions and not adopting zig-zag technology.

The EPD deputy

director further informed that smoke-emitting vehicles were also being challaned, adding that the smog situation was under control across the district due to adoption of timely measures and hoped that it would remain normal. Lodhi said that FIRs were also being registered against violators. The Agriculture Department and the district administration was taking action against stubble burning in the district as rice harvesting season had almost started, he added.

Noted environmentalist Mahmood Khalid Qamar said that climate change is the single biggest health threat, which the humanity is facing, adding health professionals worldwide are already responding to

the health hazards, caused by the unfolding crisis. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has concluded that to avert catastrophic health impacts and prevent millions of climate change-related deaths, the world must limit temperature rise to 1.5°C. The past emissions have already made a certain level of global temperature rise and other changes to the climate-inevitable, he added. Qamar said that even global heating of 1.5°C is not considered safe; however, every additional tenth of a degree of warming is likely to take a serious toll on people's lives and health.

Dr. Iftikhar, former Medical Superintendent Mayo Hospital.



LAHORE: Residents of Kharak block road and burn tyres and electricity bills as they are holding protest demonstration against massive unemployment, increasing price of daily use products, inflation price hiking and the highly inflated electricity bills, held at Multan road in Lahore.



## May-9 reflected not political anger but anti state mindset: Jamal

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Jamal Shah said on Sunday that May-9 mayhem did not reflect anger of some so-called political activists but anti-state mindset. Talking to the media after visiting the Jinnah House (Corps Commander's House in Lahore Cantt), he said that those who had burnt the house and pictures of Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah on May 9 could neither be regarded as responsible citizens nor patriots. He said that on May 9, memorials of martyrs, iconic fighter jet of MM Alam, and the statue of martyred Captain Sher Khan were put on fire and vandalised by unruly mobs. He said those who had burnt the sensitive installations were 'zombies' as they had zero per cent ability to apply their own

mind. Jamal Shah said: "Our elders teach us the lesson of patience and advocate to make our surroundings clean and prosperous". He added that those who were involved in the violent incidents of May 9 would be brought to justice at all costs, as the people of Pakistan would never forget the painful day. He said that he had visited the burnt building of Radio Pakistan where a stock of heritage information from 1935 were collected, but felt sad to see the present condition of the heritage site. The caretaker minister said the country was facing critical situation these days and collectively efforts from all stakeholders were needed to make it developed and prosperous. He said that the Capital Development Authority (CDA) was developing a park named 'Bagh-e-Shuhada' in F-9 sector.



QUETTA: Musa Jan Badini and Bilal Kakar meeting with Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki

## Folk singers meet caretaker PM in Quetta

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: Two prominent folk singers including Meer Jamali and Wahab Bugti met the caretaker Prime Minister, Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar here in Quetta the other day.

The meet-up was held at the Chief Minister's House on the occasion of dinner-reception arranged by the caretaker Chief Minister, Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki in honour of the caretaker Prime Minister.

It may be mentioned here that the folk singer from Naseerabad Division, Meer Jamali had diverted the attention of caretaker Prime Minister towards the

broken Pinjra Pull (bridge) located in Boaln area through his song sung in a special way.

He had demanded of the Prime Minister to take notice of the Pinjra bridge through his song.

The song had gone viral on the social media and then mainstream media had also aired it. The caretaker Prime Minister had taken notice of the issue and assured to do the needful in this regard at the earliest.

During the course of meeting, the caretaker PM reassured the singers that the work on damaged bridge would be started in September 2023.



Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Anjad Khan Niazi in a group photo with winners and runners up of 2nd CNSAL Pakistan Squash Championship 2023 held at RKJK Squash Complex Karachi

## Sh. fears civil disobedience movement amid protests over electricity bills

RAWALPINDI (INP): Awami Mulsim League (AML) president Sheikh Rashid Ahmed has said the people of Pakistan, recently hit hard by inflated electricity bills and generally affected by inflationary pressures, are moving towards civil disobedience movement.

Taking to X (formerly known as Twitter), he said the masses protesting power bills on roads could be more violent in the month of September if the caretaker rulers failed to rescue their economic woes.

Taking jibe at former Prime Minister Shehbaz

Sharif, the seasoned politician said those [PDM government] claiming to sell their clothes to provide relief to the masses after enjoying 16 months in power. He said the influential people are involved in power theft, but the poor bear the brunt of this theft, fearing next bills of fuel and electricity would add fuel to fire.

Rashid further was of the view that the most important challenge for the country is not holding elections in time, but how the masses would bear electricity and fuel costs for the month of September.

## Brain drain escalates: Over 450,000 Pakistanis flee in pursuit of better jobs overseas

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan is grappling with a major exodus as more than 450,000 of its citizens have left the country in search of improved job prospects overseas during the first half of 2023, according to official data from the Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment.

This alarming trend underscores the ongoing economic challenges facing the nation, pushing educated professionals like Nazeer Ahmed, a young banking professional, to make the difficult decision to leave his job and seek a brighter future abroad.

"The economic conditions and uncertainties left

me no choice. I had to find a way out," Ahmed explained. "The salaried class is working hard, but the disparity between what we earn and what it takes to have a decent life continues to widen." Ahmed's story reflects the experiences of many educated Pakistanis who are increasingly seeking opportunities abroad to escape the country's persistent economic crisis. The data from the Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment reveals that during the first seven months of 2023 (January to July), 450,110 Pakistanis departed their homeland in pursuit of work opportunities overseas.



QUETTA: A delegation from Balochistan led by Sahibzada Muhammad Khan called on caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar.

## Ministry organizes 'Interfaith Harmony Conference' to address religious issues, minority safety

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony is holding an 'Interfaith Harmony Conference' on Wednesday, August 30, to bring together religious leaders and representatives from various faith communities to discuss pressing issues related to attacks on religious sites, desecration of holy scriptures, and the safety of minorities.

Presiding over by Minister Aneeq Ahmed, the conference would promote unity and cooperation among different religious groups besides providing a platform for open dialogue and collaboration on topics crucial to fostering interfaith harmony. The attendees would include representatives from both Muslim and Christian communities,

demonstrating their shared commitment to peaceful coexistence. Meanwhile, in a meeting with the executive members of International Interfaith Harmony Council, President Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi highlighted the recent attack on the Christian community in Jaranwala and characterized it as a deliberate attempt by external forces to tarnish Pakistan's reputation on the global stage.

He asserted that initial investigations pointed towards the involvement of elements from India, alleging a strategic move to divert international attention from the plight of minorities in India.

Ashrafi who is also the Chairman of Pakistan Ulama Council further de-

tailed a larger scheme involving planned incidents in Sargodha and Sialkot, alluding to Pakistan's successful prevention of these attempts by its law enforcement agencies.

He emphasized the solidarity between Pakistan's Muslim and Christian communities, noting their shared commitment to thwarting divisive agendas.

Applauding the Danish government's recent legislation against the desecration of the Holy Quran, Ashrafi underscored the Christian community's respect for the holy scripture. He highlighted the Quran's role in providing insights into the lives of Prophet Jesus and Hazrat Maryam, further promoting mutual understanding between the

two faiths. He asserted that Pakistan belonged to both Muslims and Christians alike urging the public to refrain from seeking collective retribution for individual wrongdoings, thereby promoting a sense of tolerance and coexistence.

The conference also witnessed the presence of notable figures such as Ammanul Khokhar, representing Pakistan Churches, Tahir Naveed Chaudhry, Maulana Nawaz Khalid, Mufti Nasrullah, Maulana Ubaidullah Gurmani, Allama Tahirul Hassan, Mufti Abdul Rahim, Waqar Usmani, Maulana Aqeel Zubair, Maulana Abdul Rauf Dogar, Maulana Tanveer Ahmed Chohan and several other prominent religious leaders.

## Khurshid's proposes Rs.15 reduction in per unit of electricity

ISLAMABAD (Online): Pakistan People's Party leader Khurshid Shah suggested a reduction of 15 rupees per unit of electricity. In his statement, he said that the coalition government of PDM could have reduced Rs 4 per unit but it could not be done, the caretaker government can reduce 15PKr per unit.

Khurshid Shah said that a reduction of Rs 15 per unit of electricity is still possible, not that it cannot be reduced per unit.

He predicted about the return of Nawaz Sharif and said that there is no program for the return of Nawaz Sharif as his health is not good and he may not come.

## NAEAC delegation visits Balochistan Agricultural College

QUETTA (APP): A delegation of National Agriculture Education Accreditation Council led by the Chairman Council (NAEAC) Professor Dr. Fayyaz-ul-Hassan Sai will visit the Agricultural College from August 28 to 30, 2023 in Baluchistan Agricultural College Quetta, on behalf of Higher Education Commission Islamabad.

The purpose of the visit is to take stock of educational and research activities in different departments of Baluchistan Agricultural College Quetta. The delegation includes Professor Dr. Shakeel Ahmed, Professor Dr. Shahjan Shabir Ahmad Rana, Professor Dr. Abdul Qayyum, Professor Dr. Muhammad Ashfaq, Professor Dr. Zafra Lahi Gondal, Professor Dr. Badr Naseem Siddiqui, Professor Dr. Rai Mohammad Amir, Dr. Arif Shah Kakar, Secretary Council, Dr. Abdul Ghaffar and Mr. Muhammad Afzal as members of coordination of the Council.

## PPP's next CEC meeting on polls scheduled in Lahore

KARACHI (INP): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) has decided to call next meeting of its Central Executive Committee in Lahore next month to further deliberate on matter of general elections in the country on Saturday.

Sources privy to the development told that PPP CEC summit will be held next month in September which will be attended by the top leadership of the party including former president Asif Ali Zardari, party chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and other leadership.



QUETTA: Former Speaker Balochistan Assembly Raheela Durrani addressing during the two days National Youth Workshop organized by Health and Rural Development (HARD).

## Proper strategy yet to be prepared to cope with challenges of digital world: caretaker Minister Info

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The caretaker Provincial Minister for Information, Jan Achakzai has stated that social media is a powerful tool, which can be used for making an access to the youth in positive manner and connecting them through constructive means.

He said that there is an important role of government, security institutions and civil society in shaping narrative on the social media.

However, proper strategy is yet to be prepared to cope with the challenges of digital world.

This and similar views were expressed by the caretaker Minister Information while addressing the short documentary film competition held on the theme of anti-terrorism here on Sunday.

The short documentary contest was arranged by Voice of Balochistan. Mushahid Shan of Mastung stood first in the competition with Saiful Islam from Lasbela and Payam Kharoti from Zhob remained second and third respectively.

Jan Achakzai on the occasion also spoke at length about importance of

messages on the social media.

He stressed the need to provide accurate information to the youth about dangers of the terrorism.

He on the occasion also praised Voice of Balochistan for highlighting the issues of province and engaging the youth in good initiatives.

He exhorted the youth to use social media for promoting peace and harmony besides rejecting the message of extremism.

He also congratulated those who won the short documentary film contest.



QUETTA: Family members and relatives of Shaheed Imdad Hussain Juy'a hold a protest in front of Quetta Press Club.

## Power sector pushing country towards anarchy: PEW

ISLAMABAD (INP): President of Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW) Dr. Murtaza Mughal has said that people across the country are protesting and committing suicides as a result of excessive electricity costs, which are pushing the country into chaos.

He said, "The country is plunging into lawlessness and chaos as elites have turned an affluent country into a living nightmare for its citizens."

After the political and economic collapse, the power bills have become a nightmare for the masses; their household budgets have been destroyed, and their lives have become miserable, he added.

In a statement issued here on Sunday, Dr. Murtaza Mughal said that fights are taking place in the streets and in houses, violence has become the norm, and divorcees are taking place due to the inflated electricity bills.

People have been forced to take out loans, sell jewellery and other essen-

tial items to pay the bills, and compromise on food, health, and education.

In various parts of the country, announcements are being made from mosques asking people not to pay electricity bills; traders are not allowing WAPDA officials to enter the markets; strikes, road-blocks, and attacks on WAPDA officials have become routine in many places, which is a perfect recipe for a civil war, he observed.

He said that the security of the power officials, offices, and grid stations is facing severe threats, and if the situation is not controlled, a civil war may also break out across the country.

Dr Mughal said that while the cost of electricity is killing people, it is also destroying businesses. The country's elite and WAPDA officers have become white-collar criminals who only care about their own interests and have no interest in resolving the problems of the people.

## Hydro-power potential vital for socioeconomic uplift of Kashmiris: AJK PM

MIRPUR (AJK): Azad Jammu and Kashmir Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar Ul Haq, while referring to the region's incredible hydro-power potential, has said that taking full advantage of the existing hydro-power potential was imperative for socioeconomic uplift of the people of Azad Jammu Kashmir.

The PM said this while speaking at a high level meeting of the Energy and Water Resources Department held at Jammu Kashmir House in the federal metropolis on Sunday.

Stressing the need for an uninterrupted supply of electricity across the state, the PM said that along with repair and maintenance of the feeders there was an urgent need to improve the power distribution system.

The PM also sought feasibility reports regarding Khurshidabad Power Project, Transmission Line from Minhasa to Bagh and

Transmission Line from Rampura to Barora. He directed the concerned authorities to prepare a feasibility report on whether the Mangarea should be linked to Rawalakot or Palindri.

He said that Betaar Power Project should be upgraded for the comfort of the people of Haveli. He said that PDO must ensure better maintenance of its projects so that citizens do not face any difficulties.

Anwaar emphasized the need to adopt a better strategy regarding Jagran 1, 2, 3, 4. The Prime Minister also stressed maintenance of community development projects and local power houses in Neelum, Haveli and Jhelum Valley.

He said that the demands/needs of commercial, industrial and domestic users should be taken into account and the billing system should be made transparent so that there was no inconvenience to the public.



LAHORE: Federal Minister for Human Rights Khalil George talking with media persons along with mother of 14-year-old housemaid Rizwana, outside hospital in Provincial Capital.

## Religious affairs minister visits Jamia Islamia Clifton

KARACHI (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Aneeq Ahmed on Sunday paid a visit to Jamia Islamia Clifton and engaged in discussions with Ulema, fostering unity and collaboration for a shared religious harmony agenda.

Addressing the religious scholars, he, in light of escalating social intolerance, raised a question on the dissemination of true message and purpose of Islam to fellow Muslims.

He lamented that the tragic incident in Jaranwala highlighted the unfortunate reality of the nation.

Aneeq asserted that any misconception regarding blasphemy or desecration of the Holy Quran must be dispelled. "No doubt, we cannot tolerate blasphemy or disrespect towards the Holy Quran under any circumstances.

But it does not mean that we have to establish our own courts to deal with such sensitive issues," he added. He said that the message he had delivered in case of Jaranwala incident as it has portrayed a negative image of Pakistan and Islam in the comity of nations. "As followers of the Holy Prophet Peace Be Upon Him, we must exhibit conduct and ethics that invite others to embrace our religion," he urged.

The caretaker minister commended the Holy Prophet's tolerance in the face of injustice. "I aim to cleanse Pakistan's beautiful image from such blemishes," he affirmed.

Aneeq said the events in Manipur had unveiled the true face of secular India, and now, similar attempts were being made here adding that "we do not let Pakistan to be Modi's India at all costs."

## Law ministry condemned criticism of Chief Justice of IHC on social media

ISLAMABAD (Online): The Ministry of Law strongly condemned the criticism of the Chief Justice Islamabad High Court on social media and said that political parties should refrain from attacking the country's institutions.

In a statement issued by the Ministry of Law and Justice, it has been said that the attack on the Chief Justice of the Islamabad High Court by a political party on social media is highly condemnable.

Ministry said it is a responsible act for political parties to refrain from attacking national institutions.

Keep clear that social media is heavily criticising the Chief Justice Aamer Farooq on petition to dismiss conviction of chairman PTI Imran Khan by additional session judge Humayun Dilawar in Toshi Khana case.

Former Information minister and PMLN leader

Maryam Aurangzeb also criticised the social media criticism and wrote on that state terrorist (Imran Khan) who threatened Zeba Judge has now come down to "Oy Aamir Farooq, I will not leave you."

Information Secretary of Pakistan Muslim League (N) Maryam Aurangzeb said that the person who threatened "Oy beautiful judge, I will not leave you" and the state terrorist of May 9 now "Oy Amir Farooq, I will leave you". "Ga nan" has come down.

Maryam Aurangzeb, in one of her tweets on the social media website X (former Twitter) said that the hands, actions, mouth and conspiracy of the state terrorist have always harmed the state, the country and the people and benefited the enemy. The conspiracy of foreign agents, ciphers, Kashmir, the country to pieces, bankrupt, starving the people has been exposed.

## An attempt to smuggle 1bln 17 crore worth sugar to Afghan fails

KARACHI (Online): Customs has made fail an attempt to smuggle 1 billion 17 crore worth of sugar to Afghanistan. Additional Director Customs Moin Afzal told private TV that sugar worth 1 billion 17 crore rupees was being smuggled from Pakistan to Afghanistan. Smugglers were using off-road tracks to smuggle foreign goods, mafias were now smuggling banned goods along with local goods in small pickups.

He said that an attempt was being made to smuggle Indian Gutka under the guise of Chalia cement, smuggled goods worth 36 lacs have been recovered and seized from a Land Rover pick-up.

He said that the security of the power officials, offices, and grid stations is facing severe threats, and if the situation is not controlled, a civil war may also break out across the country.



KARACHI: Supporters of Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) are holding protest demonstration in favor PTI Chief Imran Khan and demanding of released from Jail, held at M.A Jinnah road in Karachi.