

Independent

dailyindisb@gmail.com Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah www.dailyindependent.com.pk Islamabad

Vol. XIII No. 238 Reg. mails-B / ID-445 Friday August 11, 2023, Muharramul Haram 23, 1445 A.H. Ph: 2158688, 2158997 Pages 4: Rs. 12

Pakistan isolated in world during Imran Niazi's tenure: PM Shahbaz

Says Nawaz Sharif to return next month to lead election campaign

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said that Imran Khan Niazi had ruined relations with the friendly countries and isolated Pakistan in the world. The prime minister, in an interview with 'WeNews', said that an effort was made to create a bloc and isolate Saudi Arabia through that bloc. "What a sad incident and what a fallen thought that a friend who helps you like a brother and family without any condition or greed and we become ungrateful and forgetful of its kindness," he added. The prime minister said that the two brotherly countries could never have imagined such a bad situation that happened during Imran Niazi's tenure. Terming the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf chief's narrative that his (Shehbaz's)

government was brought in power under an American conspiracy, a pack of lies, the prime minister said if the contents of the cipher, which was printed (in the international newspaper), were true, then it was a very big crime. With regard to the news about the cipher published in the international journal 'The Intercept', he said that two meetings of the National Security Council regarding the cipher were held under his chairmanship. In a meeting, the then Pakistani ambassador and current Foreign Secretary Asad Majeed clearly stated that there was no talk of conspiracy in his meeting with the United States official Donald Lu. The then Chief of Army Staff General Bajwa and other services chiefs also confirmed that there was no conspiracy hatched

against Pakistan, he added. "Imran Niazi's narrative was that America tried to topple his government because he was more attracted to China and Russia, so tell me that if our government was formed through the American conspiracy, would we get oil from Russia? Would our relations with China be restored which were destroyed by Imran Niazi? So this one proof is enough," he added. Regarding the delay in finalizing the name of caretaker prime minister, Shehbaz Sharif said there was a mistake in understanding that the caretaker prime minister's decision was to be taken tomorrow. "It is not the case because there cannot be a consultation between the prime minister and the opposition leader before the National Assembly is dissolved." The prime minister

said that the phase of dissolving the Assembly was completed last night, and after that he had the first meeting scheduled with the opposition leader today in which the caretaker prime minister's name would be discussed. He said that right now he could not reveal the name of the caretaker prime minister, but assured that the matter would be revealed soon. Regarding Pakistan's relations with India, the prime minister said that ties with the neighbouring country could not be restored without finding a just solution of the Kashmir issue because the Kashmiris had made great sacrifices to get their rights and thousands of them have died in 75 years. The hearts of Kashmiri mothers and daughters were torn, children and the elderly were martyred and the val-

ley of Kashmir turned red with their blood, he added. The prime minister made it clear that without resolving the issue of Kashmiris' right to self-determination, relations with India could not be normalized in any way. Meanwhile Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Thursday said Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz Quaid Nawaz Sharif would come back to Pakistan next month and face his cases in courts. The prime minister, in an interview with a private news channel, said after the formation of the caretaker government he would visit London to consult Nawaz Sharif on his plan for return. Nawaz Sharif would lead the election campaign of his party and would be the next prime minister for the fourth time if the PML-N won the next election, he added.



ISLAMABAD: Leader of the Opposition, Raja Riaz Ahmad calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif as part of the consultation process for selection of the Caretaker Prime Minister.

Pakistan, Iraq sign convention for elimination of double taxation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has initiated negotiations on the convention for the elimination of double taxation with respect to taxes on Income, Capital and the Prevention of Tax Evasion with the Republic of Iraq. In this connection, tax delegations of both the countries met here for the first round of negotiations from August 7 to 9, 2023, said a news release issued here on Thursday.

After detailed deliberations, a consensus was achieved and draft of the convention was initiated by the respective heads of delegation on August 9th.

The convention would not only provide safeguards against double taxation on the income of the residents of both the countries but will also promote economic cooperation and enhance investments.

It will further strengthen the existing bilateral economic relations between the two contracting states. It will provide adequate certainty in respect of taxation rules applicable to cross-border business transactions, dividends, interests, royalties and fee for technical services.

PIA gets new CEO

KARACHI (INP): Air Vice Marshal (retired) Muhammad Amir Hayat has been appointed Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) Chief Executive Officer (CEO) on Thursday. According to PIA spokesperson, the appointment of Muhammad Amir Hayat has been made for a year. Earlier, the retired Air Vice Marshal was working as acting CEO of PIA.

The position of the CEO has been lying vacant after Air Marshal Arshad Malik completed his three-year tenure on April 25. Arshad Malik was appointed in October 2018. The appointment was made after, the federal government approved the appointment of the chief executive officer (CEO) of the national flag carrier Pakistan International Airlines, last week. The federal cabinet approved the summary through circulation. Sources told ARY News that Hashim Raza and Mazhar Uddin were also being considered for the PIA's top slot. The prime minister rejected the recommendation to appoint the PIA CEO for three years.

President stresses AI importance for healthcare sector

LAHORE (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday emphasised the importance of artificial intelligence (AI) in the health sector to provide better facilities to people. Addressing the Instacare Future Health Forum 2023 at a local hotel, he said the AI was a great hope in the health and medicine sectors, and in future, a medical graduate could utilise it for treatment of patients. The president said now a doctor did not need to save information in his own memory as more data could be saved and accessed through his mobile phone and computer. He cited an example of the COVID-19 pandemic period in which Pakistan successfully used available data and saved several lives.

He said that the number of deaths taking place due to COVID-19 was less in the country than in other countries of the region. He said Pakistan had a good collection of data; however, learning right question through the AI for right answer was important. He added that knowledge was free for everyone now and control over it by anyone had become almost impossible. He said that Islam stresses the state to work for welfare and betterment of the community. The president said science had brought about an ease in lives of the community, so the AI should also be used for facilitating human beings.

To reach consensus on caretaker PM's selection PM, opposition leader to meet again today

ISLAMABAD (APP): Leader of the Opposition in National Assembly Raja Riaz met with Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday as part of the consultation process for the selection of the caretaker prime minister. After detailed deliberation, the two leaders decided to meet again today (Friday) to reach a consensus on selecting a name for the caretaker prime minister. As per the constitution, the prime minister had invited the opposition leader to a meeting regarding the appointment of the caretaker prime minister.

After detailed deliberation, the two leaders decided to meet again today (Friday) to reach a consensus on selecting a name for the caretaker prime minister. As per the constitution, the prime minister had invited the opposition leader to a meeting regarding the appointment of the caretaker prime minister.

Owais Ghani is likely to become new Governor of KPK

Home work for removal of Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali have been completed

By M. Ilyas

PESHAWAR: Owais Ahmad Ghani will be the new expecting governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, home work for the removal of Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali have been completed.

There is a possibility of being appointed Owais Ahmad Ghani as the new governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Owais Ahmad Ghani has previously been the governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan and also the federal and provincial minister. Most of the caretaker provincial cabinet members have resigned from their positions and a few cabinet members have sought time from caretaker chief minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Azam Khan to be resign.

The Election Commission of Pakistan has asked list of retired bureaucrats for the new provincial cabinet. It has been decided to replace the cabinet members as well as all administrative secretaries including commissioners and deputy commissioners. The tug-of-war is also going on in the bureaucracy to get the post of Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. According to the sources of KP secretariat, Election Commission of Pakistan asked list of Retired Federal Secretary Jameel Ahmed from Mansehra, Additional IG Qudrat Ullah Marwat and former Labour Secretary Akbar Khan are being scrutinized for inclusion in the provincial caretaker government.



LAHORE: President Dr. Arif Alvi in a group photo with healthcare professionals attending the Instacare Future Health Forum 2023 on Advancing Healthcare with Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning.

KSA shows interest in investment potential of Pak mining, energy, IT sectors

ISLAMABAD (APP): Saudi Arabia has shown keen interest in the investment potential of Pakistan's mining, energy, agriculture, and information technology sectors. This interest was expressed by a high-level sixteen-member Saudi delegation led by Kingdom's Deputy Foreign Minister Waleed Al-Khuraji, during its two-day special visit to Pakistan. The visit, concluded today, was the first one from any friendly country to promote foreign investment through the Special Investment Facilitation Council. The visit reflects a firm resolve of Saudi Arabia to invest in Pakistan. The delegation was given a detailed briefing

about the true potential of Pakistan, highlighting SIFC as a single window to facilitate foreign investment in various sectors. During the visit, views were exchanged with the Saudi delegation on specific development projects. The delegation members apprised the Pakistani side of benefits and their proposals about Saudi investment in various sectors of Pakistan. On the occasion, both the sides reiterated their resolve to work together to enhance bilateral cooperation in various sectors and projects.

On the conclusion of the visit, the Saudi delegation also met with Army Chief General Syed Asim Munir and discussed various matters and brotherly relations between the two countries.



LAHORE: Canadian High Commissioner to Pakistan Leslie Scanlon meeting with Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman at Governor House.

Marriyum urges journalists, media workers to remain united for implementation of PEMRA

ISLAMABAD (APP): Information Secretary of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz and former Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Thursday urged the journalists and media workers to remain united and ensure implementation of PEMRA Amendment Bill 2023, which would replace the 2002 PEMRA Ordinance, a black law introduced by Pervez Musharraf.

Marriyum Aurangzeb thanked all the media organizations including All Pakistan Newspaper Society (APNS), Pakistan Broadcasters Association (PBA), Parliamentary Reporters Association (PRA), Council of Pakistan Newspaper Editors (CPNE) for their guidance and support in the preparation of the PEMRA Amendment Bill 2023.

During her visit to National Press Club here, she said that for the past over 12 months, consultations were held with all stakeholders for the preparation of the Bill. She said that the rights of working journalists and media workers have been protected in the Bill as the issuance of government advertisements has been linked to payment of salaries and dues of the journalists and media workers. Moreover, the rule of minimum wages would now be applicable for media organizations, she added. The former minister said that the outgoing government had introduced Health Insurance Card scheme for journalists and media workers and had created a fund for payment of Rs 4 million to the families of those who die in the line of duty.

She ruled out the impression given by a certain lobby that the Bill was prepared in haste or it was being passed on the instructions of someone.

Pakistan's total foreign reserves reach at \$ 13.33bln

KARACHI (APP): The total liquid foreign reserves of Pakistan stood at US\$ 13,339.1 million while reserves held by the central bank reached \$ 8,043.4 million. The State Bank of Pakistan, in a statement issued here on Thursday, informed that SBP's reserves decreased by \$ 110 million to \$ 8,043.4 million on account of debt repayments during the week ended on August 04, 2023. Meanwhile, net foreign reserves held by commercial banks stood at US\$ 5,295.7 million, it added. In the previous week ending on July 27, 2023, total liquid foreign reserves held by the country was US\$ 13,463.7 million.

Bushra Bibi meets Imran in Attock jail

ATTOCK (INP): Former first lady Bushra Bibi Thursday met her husband and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan in Attock jail for the first time after he got arrested on August 5 in connection with the Toshakhana case. Bushra Bibi, along with the former prime minister's lawyers, reached the Attock jail where she was allowed to meet Khan. The one-to-one meeting between the two went on for about an hour without the ex-first lady's legal team. However, lawyers Naem Panjotha, Sher Afzal Marwat and Ali Ijaz Buttar did not get permission.

23 KP cabinet members resigned

PESHAWAR (APP): 23 out of 25 members of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's caretaker cabinet on Thursday tendered resignations. The caretaker chief minister had invited the cabinet members for tea here and informed them that the Election Commission had written a letter to seek resignations from members having political affiliations.

The caretaker chief minister had invited the cabinet members for tea here and informed them that the Election Commission had written a letter to seek resignations from members having political affiliations.

Action be taken against Imran by verifying the cipher: Rana Sanaullah

ISLAMABAD (Online): Former Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah said that American cipher that has come to light in the world media should be verified and if Imran Khan is found guilty in the cipher issue, action should be taken against him. In his statement, PML-N leader and former Interior Minister said on issue of American cipher that an investigation should be conducted to verify

American cipher revealed in international media. He said that it should be not forgotten that copy of cipher was with Chairman PTI which he did not return and statement of Imran Khan is on record that he had lost the copy of cipher. Rana Sanaullah further said that if Chairman PTI is found guilty in this regard then he should be prosecuted under Official Secrets Act.



ISLAMABAD: Country Representative of UN Women Sharmela Rasool cuts the ribbon along with Chairperson NCSW Nilofar Bakhtiyar, Founder of Nomad Gallery Nageen Hyat and others to inaugurate photo exhibition entitled "Emerging Violence against Women Issues" in Federal Capital.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Democracy lost

With the PDM-led government's controversial tenure drawing to an end, it is worth reflecting on what was gained from the change of leadership...

In March 2022, with the PTI at the nadir of its popularity amidst rising inflation and general disillusionment with its capability to govern...

It had seemed like a golden opportunity at the time — a chance to bury the 'hybrid regime' and reposition the parties that had been sidelined after the 2018 general elections...

The task before them was clear: reverse the economic slide triggered by the PTI's bad policies and offer the people the promise of a better future...

Unfortunately, those who took over never did their homework. They worsened the economic crisis by wasting months dilly-dallying over the 'best' response...

This quickly led to disenchantment with the PDM-led government's version of 'purana Pakistan'. The new rulers never really figured out how to address the vigorous challenge to their legitimacy...

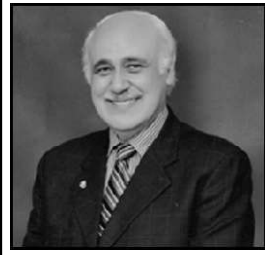
Misstep after misstep lost them immeasurable political capital amidst social turbulence and a perfect economic storm.

Eventually, it seems, the politicians simply gave up trying to solve political problems with the lawful means at their disposal. In their desperation to keep Mr Khan away from power...

How could a political movement that prided itself on utilising constitutional process to remove a 'bad' prime minister end up condemning Pakistan to a worse iteration of hybrid rule?

One is now inclined to believe that bringing down the PTI government was never about principle. Those who, with some justification, criticised Mr Khan for being a puppet prime minister proved more than eager to take his place.

A blind eye



F.S. Aijazuddin

The film A Time to Kill (1996), derived from John Grisham's best-selling novel, was set in the fictional town of Clanton in the southern state of Mississippi in the US.

The lawyer's summing up begins: "I want to tell you a story [about] a little girl walking home from the grocery store one sunny afternoon. Suddenly, a truck races up. Two men jump out and grab her. They drag her into a nearby field and they tie her up and they rip the clothes from her body."

"I want you to picture that little black girl," he asks the Mississippi jury. "Now imagine she is white."

Replace Mississippi with Sargodha, and fiction dovetails with reality. Imagine an illiterate 13-year-old girl, Rizwana, employed by a civil judge and his educated wife in Sargodha.

A fortnight ago, Rizwana's father, Manga Khan, called at the judge's residence to meet his daughter, probably to collect her meagre wages of Rs10,000.

According to the report he filed with the police, "As I stepped in the house of the judge, I heard

screams of my daughter coming out from a room. We rushed to the room where we saw she was lying on the floor in an injured condition," with wounds on Rizwana's head, face, legs and torso.

Rizwana was admitted for medical care first in Sargodha, but because her condition was deemed too critical, she was shifted to Lahore General Hospital, where she has been fighting for a life that offers only pain and undeserved suffering.

According to the hospital team now caring with commendable zeal for Rizwana, her wounds were horrific. Her skeletal injuries were arms with multiple fractures, consistent with frequent blows from a blunt instrument.

Damage to her soft tissue consisted of unhealed wounds on her scalp, where her hair had been pulled away from its roots. These had festered and become a meal for maggots.

On discovery, her weight was no more than 30 kilograms. Had she been fed properly and regularly (as Judge Hafeez's three children aged seven to 12 years were), her weight should have been closer to 46kg.

Because of her precarious condition, an injection called pentaglobin, costing Rs500,000 is being administered to her, free of cost, to help eliminate the infection in her body.

No one will ever be able to assess the psychological trauma Rizwana has suffered, or how long it will take her to recover from it. Probably never in her damaged lifetime.

Meanwhile, while Rizwana was being rushed to the hospital in Sargodha, her employer — the judge's wife, Ms Somia — rushed to an Islamabad district and sessions court, where a judge, Dr Abida Sajjad,

granted her pre-arrest bail against a surety of Rs100,000.

In the film, McConaughey asked his all-white jury to picture that young black victim: "Now imagine she is white."

Now imagine that Rizwana had been the daughter of Judge Hafeez and his wife Somia, and that she had been systematically tortured by a lowly menial. Would that perpetrator have obtained pre-arrest bail from a judge as quickly?

Politicians from the PML-N have been quick to capitalise on Rizwana's predicament.

Khawaja Asif (minister of defence, and not health or social welfare) went to ask after her, followed by Maryam Nawaz, the senior vice president of the PML-N.

She asked Rizwana blithely why she had not reported the abuse when it had been going on for six months. Did she expect the injured teenager to escape from a domestic prison and then, with broken arms, sign an FIR?

Had Maryam Nawaz stayed long enough at the hospital beyond her brief social call, she would have learned that Rizwana's mother had endured 12 pregnancies in 15 years of marriage,

and that she had no one to look after her nine other children while she was in the Lahore General Hospital caring for Rizwana. It took the police 10 days to constitute a joint investigation team to probe the case, and finally, on Aug 7, Somia Hafeez was arrested.

Rizwana's doctors found fingernail marks around her eyes, indicating that someone with sharp nails had tried to gouge an eyeball out of its socket.

Had that heartless person succeeded, Rizwana would have been as blind as justice is in Pakistan. -- Courtesy Dawn

A new dark age?



Rafa Zakaria

Over the past half century, when the hold of liberal democracy over at least the world's rich and Western nations was strong, a level of predictability reigned. It could be assumed that elections would be held on time, that political opponents would not be imprisoned or tried for sham crimes, that minorities would not be persecuted.

For those lucky enough to live in these countries, a semblance of a social contract existed between them and the state.

That status quo is no more. Even the US, not simply an old democracy but also the greatest democracy propagator, was recently moved to the category of 'backsliding democracies' — a category where the necessary precepts of democracy are not quite guaranteed.

The recent list of indictments of former president Donald Trump have done away with the tradition of not slapping charges, technical or substantive, on political opponents.

The fact that a good percentage of voting Americans do not believe that the 2020 election was fair and have even less faith in the possibility of free and fair elections in 2024 has been another blow.

Finally, the neutrality of the court and its ability to adjudicate on poll-related (the 2024 elections) lawsuits have been questioned following the political lobbying of the spouse of supreme court justice Clarence Thomas and the political leanings of various other judges in America, thus eroding further safeguards.

Things are worse in Europe. In countries like

Hungary, the cult of personality has led to the ascendance of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and his party.

His dominance is so complete that only members of the inner elite can get government posts and contracts, even though Hungary is part of the EU and subject to all the checks and balances that come with the membership. In fact, Hungary is able to capitalise through the EU forum to get plum economic deals while paying no heed to democratic safeguards — with other EU nations such as Germany, Europe's economic powerhouse that outsources its car manufacturing to Hungary, looking the other way.

This web of interrelations and autocratic rule is expanding. Consensus-building, which is at the heart of democratic rule, takes time and energy (and chaos) to achieve. Autocratic rule, as the example of India — another backsliding democracy — shows, is far more centralised and capable of fast action and producing intoxicating nationalism to satiate millions. Media censorship and bans on foreign funding for CSOs further enables a singular narrative that defeats any possibility of democracy's resurgence.

Pakistan's situation must be evaluated against such international realities. Until now, the health of democracy in developing countries had been more a matter of Western concern. Democratic indices during the height of the West's democracy-propagation decades were used to celebrate or lament a nascent democracy's ascent or descent. While meddling in Pakistan's affairs may still be strategically valuable to Western nations, America chief among them, there could be a level of indifference to Pakistan's continuing foibles that didn't exist before.

When you walk into a courtroom, or even watch a legal drama, you can see there are certain procedures to be followed. Evidence must be presented in a certain way, witnesses are questioned according to a certain procedure, and lawyers make arguments based on certain conventions. These procedures are followed because they ensure that all defendants are treated the same. The close following of these procedures means that the result or verdict is considered just and legitimate.

The more strictly the conventions are followed, the more legitimate the result will be. Democracy is no different. When courts are seen to issue verdicts not based on law or evidence, or cave in to political pressure the verdicts they produce lack legitimacy. The more times this happens, the less legitimate court justice becomes.

Similarly, when political figures are routinely imprisoned and indicted when they are not in power, elections become suspect, as do the charges against various politicians. The lack of accurate information concerning different varieties of corrupt rulers and their children means that the public is kept in a constant state of confusion and disbelief. It is also the public that has the most to lose as democracy, or at least the institutions and conventions that make it possible, are eroded. Every time power is transferred in a violent manner, or when political rivals try to get the other disqualified or imprisoned, each time the civil rights of political workers and activists are trampled on, it is the ordinary citizens who lose. In all the uncertainty that accompanies democratic backsliding, this one thing is guaranteed. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

Iran's CG for cooperation with Pakistan, China in energy, infrastructure projects

LAHORE (APP): Iran can cooperate with Pakistan and China in many sectors including energy, infrastructure projects, and many other fields by providing its manpower and skilled labor.

Far, on this occasion, expressed that Iran and Pakistan enjoy good relations that should be transformed into growing business relations to achieve mutual economic and social benefits.

work to further strengthen trade and economic bonds between the three countries. The meeting was attended by the executive committee members of PCJCCI and many top-notch business leaders from both Pakistan and China.



PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali distributing awards under the auspices of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI) at Governor's House.

USC starts targeted subsidy on special orders of PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Utility Stores Corporation (USC) has started targeted subsidies on the special orders of the Prime Minister (PM) of Pakistan Mian Shahbaz Sharif.

Five basic commodities (flour, ghee, sugar, pulses, and rice) are being provided at the cheapest rates, said a press release issued here.

SCCI gets 'Development Leadership Award'

SIALKOT (APP): The government has bestowed upon the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) the prestigious 'Development Leadership Award'.

SBP to issue Rs100 coin to commemorate 10 years of CPEC

KARACHI: To mark the 10th anniversary of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) to issue Rs 100 commemorative coin on Friday.

Infrastructure and economic development since its decade of inception in 2013. The coin is in round shape milled with serrations on the edge, diameter of 30.00mm, weight 13.5 grams and has Cupro-Nickel metal contents, the statement read.

Business community asked to cooperate in controlling use of polythene bags

ISLAMABAD (APP): Director General, Pakistan Environment Protection Agency (PAK-EPA) Ms. Farzana Altaf Shah Thursday said that the polythene shopping bags were posing serious threats to human health and the environment besides causing blockage of streams, nullahs and sewerage lines.

said while addressing the members of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) during her visit to the Chamber. Farzana Altaf Shah said that PAK-EPA needed the cooperation of ICCI and the Market Associations for proper implementation of plastic shopping bags laws and regulations to make Islamabad a plastic free city.

regulations to prohibit the use of plastic shopping bags and hoped that as responsible citizens, they would extend full cooperation in complying with these regulations. Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President ICCI assured that the business community would cooperate in controlling the plastic shopping bags in Islamabad in order to make Islamabad a clean and green and environmentally friendly city.

PIA offers 14% discount on I-Day

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) has announced a 14 per cent discount on all its domestic flights on Independence Day.

Pakistani hand carved furniture on high demand in global market: Kashif

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief Executive Officer Pakistan Furniture Council Mian Kashif Ashfaq on Thursday highlighted the global significance and high demand of Pakistani hand-carved furniture, particularly in America and the Middle East.

locally sourced materials and minimizes the environmental impact associated with mass production. He said creation becomes a work of art, preserving the essence of Pakistani culture. He said hand-carved furniture of Pakistan reflects the rich cultural heritage and craftsmanship of the region that attracts foreign buyers. He said these pieces often incorporate intricate designs and motifs that are deeply rooted in the country's history and traditions. He said the creation of hand-carved furniture involves skilled artisans who have honed their craft over generations and their expertise and dedication contribute to the uniqueness.

Price review committee reduces price of 8 food items in Haripur

HARIPUR (APP): Keeping in view the reduction and increase in the price of various essential commodities, the Price Review Committee (PRC) district Haripur on Thursday approved a decrease in the price of 8 food items. Chaired by Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Haripur Imran Khan Jadoon, the PRC's meeting reviewed the current prices of 22 food items and approved the reduction in the prices of 8 food items including different pulses, rice and Baisan.

decrease of 8 food items, increase in 10 items while the price of 4 food items remained the same. The ADC issued an instruction to the concerned to strictly comply with the new rate lists and monitor prices of the food items in district Haripur, take stern legal action against the violators, profiteers and hoarders. In the meeting was attended by Additional Assistant Commissioner Haripur Sarfraz Ali Qureshi, District Food Controller Sheeraz Khan, Food Controller Pristan Qureshi, Director Livestock Dr. Sarab Khan, representative of the consumers of district Haripur.



MULTAN: Labourers offloading sacks of vegetables from delivery truck at vegetable market.

Alvi opens cardiac centre, stresses Islamic principles of welfare, service

LAHORE (APP): President Dr. Arif Alvi underscored the intrinsic purpose of Islam as advancement and progress of society. Speaking at the inaugural ceremony of the Sarwar Shahida Memorial Cardiac Centre and Research Institute here on Thursday, he emphasised that engaging in charitable endeavours was a distinctive trait of Muslims. He lauded those who contribute to their nation's betterment, labeling them as true heroes.

He reiterated that while governments may change, the underlying national structure endures. Highlighting the growth of philanthropy among Muslims after the formation of Pakistan, he stressed the pivotal role of individuals in assisting the marginalised. Drawing from the examples set by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and the Khulafa-e-Rashidin, President Alvi conveyed the importance of service to humanity. He pointed out that Islam assigns societal responsibilities, a notion evident from the Quran's

opening chapter. Pakistan's core objective, he maintained, is rooted in Quranic teachings of serving society and nurturing a strong sense of responsibility. The president encouraged virtues such as charity, truthfulness, respect for elders, empathy, and cooperation, particularly in the younger generation. While acknowledging the government's role in addressing major issues, he emphasised that every individual in the Islamic framework has a role to play in serving others.



LAHORE: President Dr. Arif Alvi unveiling plaque during ground breaking ceremony the Sarwar Shahida Memorial Cardiac & Research Institute.

Pakistan is committed to complete eradication of polio virus: Governor

LAHORE (Online): Canadian High Commissioner to Pakistan Leslie Scanlon met Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman at Governor House Lahore, here today. In the meeting, issues of mutual interest and bilateral cooperation in health, trade, environment and mining sectors were discussed.

Speaking on the occasion, Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that Pakistan is committed to complete eradication of polio virus, we are grateful for the support of the Canadian government in this regard, he added. The Canadian High Commissioner appreciated the efforts of the Pakistani government to combat polio. Governor Punjab further said that Pakistanis living in Canada are playing a positive role in the development of Canada. He said that Pakistan is keen to further expand bilateral cooperation with Canada in trade, environment, and people-to-people contact.

PTI former MNA Gulzar shifted to Adiala jail

RAWALPINDI (Online): PTI former MNA Shandana Gulzar has been shifted to Adiala jail.

According to sources Shandana Gulzar has been detained in Adiala jail for 15 days. She has been detained on DC Islamabad orders under 3 MPO.

Sher Afzal Khan counsel for PTI had said Police and the personnel in plain clothes have abducted Shandana Gulzar. On the other hand Islamabad police had confirmed the arrest of Shandana Gulzar.

Two ghost employees suspended

MUZAFFARGARH (APP): Two ghost employees among dozens reported to have been deputed in Municipal Corporation, were suspended on Thursday after an enquiry.

Administrator Municipal Corporation Asghar Laghari sought attendance of the employees during surprise visit. He found that 27 employees were collecting salaries worth lacs at their homes while absent from the office since induction. The administrator suspended two employees on the spot while served show cause notices on rest of the fifteen employees.

KP Governor says: Govt, military shares best vision towards facilitation of business, investment

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Gulam Ali has said that the government and military leadership have best vision and approach towards the facilitation of business community and promotion of investment in the country. Addressing an awards distribution ceremony under the auspices of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI) here at Governor's House on Thursday, he said that there are minerals worth trillions of rupees in the mountains of the country including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and urged the apex trade body to conduct research on the treasures

hidden in the mountains of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan and play a role in ensuring the development and prosperity of the country by utilizing these minerals and natural resources in a better manner.

Besides, the Caretaker Provincial Minister Fazal Elahi, Special Assistant to Caretaker Chief Minister Malik Maher Elahi, FPCCI President Irfan Iqbal Sheikh, Vice President Masoodur Rehman, SAARC Chamber Anjum Nisar, Chairman of Businessmen Panel Shah Zeb, FPC CI Coordinator Sartaj Ahmad Khan, former caretaker provincial minister Adnan Jail along with former presidents of FPCCI, Peshawar.



KARACHI: Victims of ASF Tower/Arabian Vista are holding protest demonstration for demanding ownership rights, at Shahrah-e-Faisal near Natha Khan Bridge in Karachi.

Brands offering Independence Day discounts to customers

ISLAMABAD (APP): With only a few days left in the Independence Day celebrations, falling on August 14, different fashion brands and outlets in the federal capital have started offering good discounts on dresses, shoes, and other accessories to attract buyers, especially women. Every year, famous brands offer good sales and discount offers on the occasion of Independence Day giving an opportunity to the people to buy good

stocks for the next whole season. "Buying summer dresses and other seasonal accessories at full price has become difficult for the working class during the prevailing inflation so we wait for such occasions to come", Aisha Naz, a mother of three children said.

Talking to APP, she said that "We always buy clothes for ourselves and kids at the sales offered on Independence Day and other such occasions for the next season".



KARACHI: Police officials from Crime Scene Unit and Police Investigation Department are being given hands-on training at the mock crime scenes in Sindh Forensic DNA and Serology Laboratory (SFDL) held at ICCBS University of Karachi.

PRCS chairman lauds AJK chapter's services for humanity

MUZAFFARABAD (APP): Chairman Pakistan Red Crescent Society AJK Ejaz Raza was called on National Chairman Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari here on Wednesday. The meeting was aimed to discuss the on-going relief operations in a recent land sliding incident that struck the village Damishi/Abhyal in district Muzaffarabad.

During the meeting, a significant step towards strengthening humanitarian efforts and disaster response was discussed besides focusing on collaborative strategies to enhance relief operations, healthcare services and community engagement. The Chairman PRCS briefed about the recent land sliding incident in district Muzaffarabad and on-going relief operations. Besides, both the chairmen engaged in a comprehensive discussion about the current state of humanitarian activities within AJK and the broader goals of the PRCS.

CM attends funeral prayer of martyred policeman

PESHAWAR (APP): The funeral prayer for a policeman who was martyred by unknown assailants in Peshawar took place at Police Lines.

Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan, along with CCPO and other police officials, attended the funeral prayer.

The attack occurred when unknown assailants on a bike opened fire on policemen who were on their way to duty in the morning. Police constable Sarwar Shah embraced martyrdom in the incident.

The chief minister and police officials laid floral wreaths on the martyr's coffin. Prayers were offered for the elevation of the martyr's rank, and a police force rendered a salute. Chief Minister Azam Khan condemned the incident of firing on the policeman.

CS orders I-Day celebration with grandeur

LAHORE (APP): Chief Secretary Punjab Zahid Akhtar Zaman on Thursday issued directions to all the deputy commissioners regarding celebrations of the Independence Day in a befitting manner.

He directed this while presiding over a high-level meeting here at the Civil Secretariat. The meeting reviewed preparations to mark the Independence Day and decided that fireworks display would be held in all district

headquarters at 12 night on August 13, while concerts of national songs would be organized in all districts at 8pm on August 14.

The Chief Secretary Punjab said that freedom was a great blessing, it should be valued. He said the purpose of celebrating Independence Day with grandeur was to make the young generation aware of the importance of freedom. He said that living nations celebrate Independence Day with great enthusiasm.

International News

Ukraine-Russia war: Putin 'considers coming face to face with world leaders' at G20 summit

Monitoring Desk MOSCOW: Russian president Vladimir Putin is considering attending the G20 summit in person, a Kremlin source has claimed. The summit is set to take place in September in New Delhi, India, focusing on the theme "One Earth, One Family, One Future."

Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu said NATO-member Poland had already announced plans to strengthen its military, and he expected significant NATO forces and weaponry to be deployed in Finland. Russia claimed it shot down two Ukrainian drones headed for Moscow, one near a major airport to the south of the city and one to

the west of the capital. Russian president Vladimir Putin is considering attending the G20 summit in person, a Kremlin source has claimed. The summit is set to take place in September in New Delhi, India, focusing on the theme "One Earth, One Family, One Future."



India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi (R) is seen on a television screen as he addresses the lower house Lok Sabha in New Delhi.

India PM Modi's government defeats no-confidence motion

Monitoring Desk NEW DELHI: The government of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi defeated a no-confidence motion in parliament on Thursday after a fiery speech by the premier at the climax of a three-day debate. Opposition lawmakers — who had brought the motion over months of ethnic violence in Manipur state — walked out of the chamber, prompting a furious rebuke from the premier, with the government then winning the vote.

The walkouts, according to broadcasters, included Congress party leader Rahul Gandhi, who on Wednesday said Modi's government was "set on burning the whole country". Modi denounced them, saying: "Those who don't trust democracy are always ready to make a comment but don't have the patience to hear [the rebuttal]."

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas fires nearly all governors in West Bank in major upheaval

Monitoring Desk RAMALLAH: Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas fired most of the governors in the occupied West Bank on Thursday, responding to long-standing demands for a political shake-up as frustration grows with the semi-autonomous Palestinian Authority.

Abbas issued a decree dismissing the governors of eight provinces under Palestinian administration in the occupied territory. The upheaval included the rest

five northern cities of Nablus, Jenin and Tulkarem, the focus of a recent surge in Palestinian militancy that has undermined the authority's leadership. Only three areas — including Ramallah, the seat of the Palestinian Authority — retained their governors. The president's office said that he would form a committee to suggest replacements. Although the decision is unlikely to have an immediate impact on the

UN Security Council to meet on rights abuses in North Korea

Monitoring Desk UNITED NATIONS: The United Nations Security Council will meet publicly to discuss human rights abuses in North Korea next week, a move requested by the United States, Albania and Japan that is likely to anger Pyongyang and face opposition from China and Russia. It will be the first formal public meeting of the 15-member council on the issue since 2017.

North Korea has repeatedly rejected accusations of abuses and blames sanctions for a dire humanitarian situation. Since 2006 it has been under U.N. sanctions over its ballistic missiles and nuclear programs, but there are aid exemptions. "It is long overdue," said U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Linda Thomas-Greenfield, reading a joint statement by the United States, Albania, Japan and South Korea. "We know the government's human rights abuses and violations facilitate the advancement of its unlawful weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programs," she said.

Ecuador presidential candidate Fernando Villavicencio assassinated, one suspect dead

Monitoring Desk QUITO: Ecuador presidential candidate Fernando Villavicencio, a vocal critic of corruption and organised crime, was killed at a campaign event on Wednesday, authorities said, amid an upsurge in violence in the Andean nation blamed on drug traffickers.

Local media reported some 30 shots had been fired at an event in the north of the capital, Quito. Video footage posted on social media showed Villavicencio getting

Hong Kong arrests 10 for 'foreign collusion' over pro democracy fund

Monitoring Desk HONG KONG: Hong Kong police arrested 10 people on Thursday under the city's national security law, accusing them of providing financial support to overseas dissident groups pushing for sanctions against the Chinese finance hub. Beijing imposed a sweeping national security law on Hong Kong in 2020 after huge and sometimes violent pro-democracy protests the year before.

Five Turkish soldiers killed in operations in Iraq - ministry

Monitoring Desk ANKARA: Five Turkish soldiers were killed in a clash with militants of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) in northern Iraq, Turkey's defence ministry said on Thursday. The conflict took place in Zap region, where Turkey has been carrying out a cross-border operation called "Claw-Lock". Ankara says the offensive is a measure to prevent the PKK from using Iraq as a base to carry out attacks in Turkey. A Turkish defence ministry official said all five soldiers were killed in the

first round of fire by the PKK militants while they were conducting search and scan activity on the field. The PKK has large fortifications around the region, where "the terrain is very tough," but the region will be "cleared up from terrorists" despite attacks, the official added. The PKK, which has bases around northern Iraq, is designated a terrorist group by Turkey, the United States and European Union. The group launched an insurgency in southeast Turkey in 1984 in which more than 40,000 people have been killed.

Panama-flagged tanker catches fire near Iranian coast - TV

Monitoring Desk DUBAI: A Panama-flagged tanker called White Pearl has caught fire near Assaluyeh on Iran's Gulf coast, Iranian state media reported on Thursday, adding that all crew members were safe. "Twenty-two of the ship's crew have been rescued by Iranian rescue teams after the ship's captain requested assistance from the port authorities," state TV quoted a local ports official as saying. The official said that the tanker, carrying 40,000 tons of liquefied petroleum gas, had experienced "a problem in the engine room due to a fire."



Hong Kong arrests 10 for 'foreign collusion' over violent pro-democracy protests.

Prime Minister calls for unity to overcome challenges

ISLAMABAD (INP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has emphasized for greater unity, cohesion and solidarity to steer the country out of challenges and put it on the path of prosperity. He was addressing the staff of PM House and PM Office on the occasion of luncheon hosted in their honour in Islamabad.

Prime Minister recalled that our ancestors rendered immense sacrifices for a Pakistan where all the people had equal opportunities to excel in their fields. He regretted that we deviated from our path.

The Prime Minister said it is time to renew the pledge to follow the teachings of Holy Quran, Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (Peace Be

Upon Him) as well as those of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Allama Iqbal to foster unity in our ranks.

He said we should serve the country in such a manner that rids it of loans and take us on the path of self-reliance. He said this is not an impossible task but only requires sacrifice and sheer dedication and devotion to work.

Alluding to the austerity measures taken during the past 16 months of his stint, Shehbaz Sharif said given the difficult economic situation, several cabinet members decided to forgo their perks and privileges.

The Prime Minister noted that by saving our resources, we could spend them in eradicating pov-

erty, unemployment and illiteracy. He pointed out that God Almighty had blessed Pakistan with immense minerals, fertile land and a capable human resource. He said we can exploit this potential by putting our efforts together saying this will also enhance the country's image in the comity of nations.

The Prime Minister was appreciative of the support, advice and guidance provided to him by the staff of PM House and PM Office over the last 16 months. On the occasion, the staff of the PM House presented a portrait to the Prime Minister.

Earlier, the Prime Minister distributed commendation certificates amongst the staff of the PM Office and PM House



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif distributing appreciation certificates among the staff of the PM House and PM Office.

President reaffirms commitment to safeguard minorities' rights

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday reaffirmed the nation's commitment to safeguarding the religious, social, political, and economic rights of minorities in Pakistan. "We assure all minority groups that Pakistan will continue to protect their rights as well as work for their well-being," the president said in his message on Minorities' Day observed in Pakistan on August 11.

He called upon religious scholars and the media to educate society about the rights of minorities and promote a culture of love, tolerance, brotherhood, and unity in the country.

He expressed the hope that through society's collective efforts, a stronger and more prosperous Pakistan could be forged, where every individual could thrive and contribute their unique talents to the nation's development.

The president highlighted the distinguished role played by minorities in the nation-building process and appreciated their role in the country's development.

He expressed his pleasure that minorities in Pakistan enjoyed all political, economic, and social rights guaranteed by the Constitution of Pakistan.

"The Constitution guarantees the political, economic, and social rights of all citizens, regardless of their religious beliefs or ethnicity. As Muslims, we find inspiration in the teachings of Islam, which emphatically advocate for the protection of minority rights and equality among all people, fostering a spirit of harmony and unity within our diverse society," he remarked.

The president said that Pakistan had consistently made efforts for the welfare and upkeep of minorities, including the reservation of a 5% quota in government jobs, and separate seats for minorities in both houses of the Parliament to encourage their active participation in the political and economic development of the country.

Moreover, steps are being taken to provide

Caretaker PM to hold transparent elections: Kundi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Central Information Secretary of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Faisal Karim Kundi Thursday hoped that the caretaker prime minister will hold transparent elections which would lead towards a new chapter of prosperity in the country.

"PML-N and the PPP had shortlisted three final names for the slot of caretaker prime minister and all of them were politicians", he said while talking to a private news channel.

He said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had taken all opposition leaders in confidence, adding, names of Ishaq Dar, Hafeez Sheikh and Jilil Abbas Jilani among others have emerged for the interim premier's slot but Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will disclose and confirm the name.

He also favoured the suggested name of Jilil Abbas Jilani for the caretaker PM, adding that the prime minister and the opposition leader must reach a consensus on the interim set-up within a period.

Replying to a question, he said that PPP is a public-serving party and will fight for true democracy in the country until the goal is achieved.

NCSW launches commemorative stamp on gender-based violence

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) in support of the Ministry of Human Rights & UN Women launched a commemorative postage stamp to spread awareness about gender-based violence in the country and to honour the victims.

The first session of the event was a round table consultation on the increasing incidents of violence against women issues with Chairperson NCSW, Nilofar Bakhtiar and top leading gender experts in Pakistan. A resolution/charter of demands was then created and signed which pinpointed the mechanisms to reduce the prevalence of gender-based violence in the country which was shared with the audience at the end of the event. The second session of the event was an art exhibition consisting of pieces of art from the NCSW poster competition held in 2021 and 2022, as well as artwork brought in by Nagin Hayat from the Nomad Gallery and the Czech Embassy. This commemorative stamp was selected after a poster competition on ending violence against women which was held on December 2022.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjarani called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Preparations for upcoming I-day celebrations at peak

ISLAMABAD (APP): Preparations for the upcoming 76th independence day (14 August) are at its peak as the country has worn its national flag color with a display of a number of seasonal footpath stalls carrying attractive colourful accessories and clothes.

Like every year, this year too Jashan-i-Azadi stalls carrying national flags, bunting, pin badges, green and white dresses, toys, and other accessories set up at the main avenues, markets and roads of the cities, said a report aired by PTV news channel.

A trader selling national flags shared his views to APP scribe that there is much enthusiasm among youngsters, adding, the public is excited and buying tri-colored clothes and accessories.

"Our sales have already gone up by over 100pc and well surpassed our targets," the owner of VIP Flags claimed.

The bazaars, buildings, markets, and houses are also decorated with national flags whereas, stalls of colorful bunting, national flag bunting, and portraits of Quaid-e-Azam and other national heroes have been set up too, said a citizen. Badges, caps, balloons and dresses inscribed with "Jashn-e-Azadi Mubarak" are stacked in large numbers at every market, said a young girl.

People belonging to every walk of life especially youngsters are busy decorating their houses and vehicles with national flags as the nation starts preparations to celebrate Independence Day, said a motorist.

Stalls of different Azadi accessories are surrounded by youngsters who are eagerly waiting for the Independence Day celebrations said a vendor.



ISLAMABAD: Vehicle passing through rain water accumulated on road after heavy rain in the twin cities.

Legislative business in 15th NA witnesses 45% increase

ISLAMABAD (APP): Legislative activity in the 15th National Assembly, which was dissolved on Thursday, witnessed an increase of 45% as it passed a total of 279 bills against 192 laws by the 14th National Assembly, according to an analysis by the Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (PILDAT).

The biggest show of confidence in the 15th National Assembly came from its own membership in terms of their attendance. The Prime Minister, as Leader of the House, set that trend.

According to the PILDAT analysis, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif reflected a much better figure of 17% attendance of the Assembly sittings as against former prime minister Imran Khan who showed a dismal 11% attendance.

Average attendance of members of the National Assembly (MNAs) in five years stands at 61% though it stood at 67% when the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) decision to quit the NA.

The 15th National Assembly witnessed two governments: the first from August 18, 2018 to April 10, 2022 with PTI Chairman Imran Khan as PM, while the second was formed by a coalition of the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) and the Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPPP) with Shehbaz Sharif as PM which lasted from April 11, 2022 to August 09, 2023.

The PTI government relied heavily on ordinances for the purpose of legislation. Out of 75 ordinances laid in the National Assembly in five years.

Pakistan most philanthropic, giving nation in world: Masood

ISLAMABAD (Online): Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States Masood Khan says Pakistan is the most philanthropic and giving nation on the face of the earth.

He was talking to globally renowned cricketer Shahid Khan Afridi and legendary Squash champion Jahangir Khan in Washington during luncheon meeting.



The two iconic superheroes are currently visiting the United States in connection with activities of Shahid Afridi Foundation.

Highlighting philanthropic and humanitarian services of Shahid Afridi, Masood Khan said that his selfless services saved hundreds from starvation in Azad Kashmir during COVID pandemic.

He also appreciated role of Shahid Afridi for successful organization of Kashmir Premier League. He also lauded the services of the Foundation in education, water security, health and poverty alleviation.

Paying tribute to legendary Jahangir Khan, Masood Khan said that he was a source of inspiration for the nation. Speaking on the occasion, Shahid Afridi said that he formally started his humanitarian activities in 2011 with the establishment of a hospital in his area and also established five mobile health hospitals to provide healthcare services to the people of far-flung areas. He also lauded the role of Pak army which has always facilitated him in reaching out to the people of difficult terrain.

Legendary Squash Champion of the World Jahangir Khan in his remarks said that selfless service is an advanced stage of humanity and it is a unique honor to serve the community and motherland. He appreciated generous contributions of Pak diaspora enabling the foundation to expand the scope of its activities.

Partner and Co-Owner of Virginia Cancer Institute, Richmond and Chair of SAF US chapter Dr. Attique Samdani said the services of the foundation are being provided to the deserving people in a completely transparent manner. He said over 20,000 families are currently benefiting from the water filtration plants installed by the foundation.

He called upon religious scholars and the media to educate society about the rights of minorities and promote a culture of love, tolerance, brotherhood, and unity in the country.

He expressed the hope that through society's collective efforts, a stronger and more prosperous Pakistan could be forged, where every individual could thrive and contribute their unique talents to the nation's development.

The president highlighted the distinguished role played by minorities in the nation-building process and appreciated their role in the country's development.

He expressed his pleasure that minorities in Pakistan enjoyed all political, economic, and social rights guaranteed by the Constitution of Pakistan.

"The Constitution guarantees the political, economic, and social rights of all citizens, regardless of their religious beliefs or ethnicity. As Muslims, we find inspiration in the teachings of Islam, which emphatically advocate for the protection of minority rights and equality among all people, fostering a spirit of harmony and unity within our diverse society," he remarked.

The president said that Pakistan had consistently made efforts for the welfare and upkeep of minorities, including the reservation of a 5% quota in government jobs, and separate seats for minorities in both houses of the Parliament to encourage their active participation in the political and economic development of the country.

Moreover, steps are being taken to provide

Farewell celebrations held to honour Shazia Marri for transformative leadership

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Benazir Income Support Programme family acknowledged the unwavering dedication and efforts of the Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Protection, Shazia Marri in championing the noble cause of welfare for marginalized segments of society. The officials came together at the BISP Headquarters on Tuesday to bid a heartfelt farewell to the outgoing minister, Shazia Marri who is also Chairperson BISP. The event marked an emotional yet celebratory moment as Shazia Marri shared her reflections on her time with the BISP team and the remarkable achievements accomplished under her leadership.

In her address, Shazia Marri said that BISP has witnessed a substantial increase in funding, with the allocation growing from Rs. 235 billion in FY 2021-22 to an impressive Rs. 404.2 billion in FY 2022-23.

This surge in resources allowed BISP to expand its reach, as the number of eligible households surged from 7.6 million to 9 million. Notably, the stipend for the Benazir Kafaalat programme was raised by 25%, and the quarterly stipend for BISP beneficiaries was elevated from Rs. 7000 to Rs. 8750, she said.

Shazia Marri also highlighted the successful implementation of transformative initiatives, including the Benazir Nashonuma programme, which provided crucial support to 770,000 lactating mothers and infants through 488 Facilitation Centers across Pakistan. Additionally, the Benazir Taleemi Wazaif initiative witnessed a remarkable surge in children's enrollment from 2.6 million.

Pakistani and Chinese institutes sign MoU for joint research facility

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Institute of Plant Protection, Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (IPPCAS), and the Department of Entomology at the University of Agriculture have signed an agreement in Beijing to establish the Pakistan-China Joint Research Facility for 'Trim Brother Administration'. The ceremony took place at IPPCAAS. The letter of intent was duly signed by IPPCAAS Executive Director Lu Yanhui and UAF Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Iqbal Ahmad Khan, as stated in an official statement issued here, according to Gwadar Pro. As per the agreement, both sides will establish the joint research facility to address the prevention and control of crop pests in Pakistan and China.

This collaboration involves conducting tests, demonstrations, and joint research on integrated disease control strategies.

Police firing on protesters in Lakki Marwat, one person killed, 4 injured

LAKKI MARWAT (Online): One person was killed and 4 were injured during police firing on protesters in Lakki Marwat.

The police firing incident took place in Dara Pizo area of Lakki Marwat city of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK).

There are reports that the people of Wanda Jogi were protesting on the Indus Highway since late night against the arrest of their associates while the police opened fire on the protesters following exchange of bitter words.

Police sources said that the police had arrested 4 people over the dispute with the Lakki Cement Factory.



SUKKUR: View of stagnant water after low-level flood at Indus River while flood water entered riverside settlements, showing negligence of concerned authorities, in Sukkur.



ISLAMABAD: Workers of Anti Encroachment Cell of CDA clears the encroachments of restaurants on footpath at G-8 Markaz during Anti Encroachment Operation in Federal Capital.

DC directs operation against beggars, encroachments and profiteers in the capital

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Irfan Nawaz Memon directed all Assistant Commissioners in the capital to take stern action against beggars, encroachments and profiteers in the federal capital. According to the spokesperson, the Assistant Commissioners inspected 125 sites and imposed fine of Rs. 11000, sealed three shops, sent three profiteers behind the bar whereas registered FIR against one person.

During the operation, the Assistant Commissioners arrested 54 professional baggers and took action against illegal clinic and sheesha cafes.

They also ordered arrests of three persons for encroachments and ordered to register FIR against one person and also confiscated 6 kg polythene bags.

The Assistant Commissioners also took action against illegal petrol filling agencies and illegal LPG filling stations while ordering to seal 2 illegal filling stations and arrested one person.

Rain likely in few parts of country: PMD

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has forecast hot and humid weather for most parts of the country during the next 24 hours.

However, rain/wind/thundershower is expected in northeast Punjab, Potohar region, Islamabad, upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Kashmir. The rainfall recorded was Punjab: Lahore (Gulshan-e-Ravi 71 mm, Pani wala Talab 49, Lakshmi Chowk 46, Upper Mail 38, Tajpura 15, Gulberg 09, Farrukhabad 06, Iqbal Town 05, Qurtaba Chowk 04, Samanabad and City 02), Islamabad (City 45, Saidpur 36, Golra 20),

Asad says: PDM gov't comes to end after deviating from constitution

ISLAMABAD (Online): PTI leader Asad Umar has said PDM government has eventually come to end and now the people have to take revenge on them in election.

He tweeted the government annihilated the economy in 16 months and people had to face the worst inflation of the history of the country. PDM government debased parliament and weakened democracy.

He held PDM government reached its end after deviating from the constitution and getting the corruption written off.

5-day teachers training workshop ends at AIOU

ISLAMABAD (APP): A five-day training workshop for the professional development of teachers of basic education community schools successfully concluded at Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU). Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood was the chief guest of the closing ceremony while former Parliamentary Secretary of Federal Education, Zeb Jafar was the guest of honour.