

Independent

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Vol. XIII No. 244 Reg. mails-B / ID-445 Friday August 18, 2023, Muharramul Haram 30, 1445 A.H. Ph: 2158688, 2158997 Pages 4: Rs. 12

Govt will strive to meet expectations of public representatives; says PM

Says caretaker govt to facilitate free, fair election process

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Thursday said that his government would make its utmost efforts to come up to the expectations of public representatives within the given short stint.

The prime minister said in a meeting with Senate Chairman Sadiq Sanjrani here. The Senate chairman congratulated the prime minister on assuming the office.

Prime Minister Kakar thanked Sadiq Sanjrani, who expressed the hope that the caretaker government would not only assist in holding fair elections as per public expectations but also accelerate the course of economic development.

Senator Danesh Kumar also attended the meeting.

Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar has said that the govern-

ment would be assiduously working to facilitate a free and fair election process in Pakistan according to the Constitution. On his Twitter handle on Wednesday, the prime minister thanked US Secretary of State Antony Blinken for his good wishes. "We place importance on our partnership with the US and deeply value the shared commitment to economic prosperity, democracy and stability in the region," he further posted.

Earlier, the US secretary of state, in a tweet, congratulated the new Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar. "As Pakistan prepares for free and fair elections, in accordance with its constitution and the rights to freedom of speech and assembly, we will continue to advance our shared commitment to economic prosperity," Blinken added in his tweet.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi administering the oath of office to members of the caretaker Federal Cabinet, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

16-member caretaker federal cabinet takes oath

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr. Arif Alvi on Thursday administered the oath of office to the 16-member caretaker federal cabinet.

The swearing-in ceremony was held at the Aiwan-e-Sadr that was attended by Interim Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar, Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi, politicians and prominent figures from different sectors.

The ceremony commenced with the national

State responsible for protection of minorities' rights, says CJ

ISLAMABAD (APP): An eight-member delegation of the Sikh community on Thursday paid a courtesy call on Chief Justice of Pakistan Umar Ata Bandial.

The delegation was headed by Implementation Minority Rights Forum Chairman Samuel Payara and comprising Baba Makhan Singh, Baba Gurpal Singh, Dr. Sahib Singh, Sardar Bishan Singh, Amrik Singh, Kaka Singh, Satnam Singh and Dharam Singh, said a press release.

The CJP welcomed the delegates and felicitated them on the Minorities Day. He briefed them about the rights of minorities as enshrined in the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, 1973. He further said that in Pakistan, every citizen had the right to profess and practice their respective faiths.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Minorities representatives presenting a souvenir to the Hon'ble Chief Justice of Pakistan Mr. Justice Umar Ata Bandial at the Supreme Court of Pakistan.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi administering the oath of office to members of the caretaker Federal Cabinet, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

COAS vows to bring culprits of Jaranwala incident to justice

Gen Munir says all citizens of Pakistan are equal amongst each other irrespective of religion, gender, cast or creed

RAWALPINDI (INP): Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir on Thursday condemned the "extremely tragic and totally intolerable" Jaranwala incident, saying that "there is no space for such incidents of intolerance and extreme behaviour".

As per the military's media wing, General Munir made the remarks when he was asked a question about the mob that set fire to a number of churches and vandalised Christians' homes during a rampage over alleged blasphemy on Wednesday.

The mob made its way through predominantly Christian area on the outskirts of the industrial city of Faisalabad after allegations spread that the Holy Quran had been desecrated.

The question was asked by a "participant" during the COAS's address to the 370 students that were interns at the yearly Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Internship Programme.

"Jaranwala incident is extremely tragic and totally intolerable. There is no space for such incidents of intolerance and extreme

behaviour by any segment of the society against anyone, particularly against minorities," the army chief was quoted by the ISPR as saying.

The COAS said that all citizens of the country "are equal amongst each other irrespective of religion, gender, cast or creed". He assured that no one would be allowed to take the law into their hands and those "culpable of committing such crimes will be brought before the court of justice".

Earlier in his address, Gen Munir highlighted the "role of youth towards national development".

"Youth is the future of Pakistan, which can contribute immensely towards peace, progress and prosperity of the country," the army chief said. He also "highlighted the efforts of inimical forces towards creating and fomenting fissures, intolerance, mistrust and violent behaviour among the people to spread anarchy and unrest in the country."

He added: "It's imperative for the youth to discern the difference between truth, half-truth, lies, misinformation and disinformation."

Elections to be delayed as ECP announces delimitation schedule

Entire process of delimitation will take nearly four months; ECP is bound to draw new boundaries after CCI approves new census; Delimitation of constituencies across the country will be notified in December this year

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has opted to initiate the delimitation of constituencies following the approval of the Council of Common Interests (CCI) for the Digital Population Census 2023 and complete the process within four months.

The decision to the effect was taken during a meeting chaired by Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja and attended by the ECP members, secretary and other officials, a press release said.

The ECP issued a notice seeking help from provincial governments and the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) in the delimitation process.

According to the schedule, delimitation committees will be established on August 21. Administra-

tive tasks concerning delimitation will be concluded by August 31. Delimitation committees are scheduled for September 1 to 4. Allocation of district quotas for national and provincial assembly seats to delimitation committees will take place from September 5 to 7. Delimitation committees will conduct the initial delineation of constituencies between September 8 and October 7.

Preliminary proposals will be made public on October 9. Representations on preliminary proposals can be filed between October 10 and November 8, and the Commission will address/hear these representations from November 10 to December 9.

The final delimitations will be published on December 14.



RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir addresses to the 370 students that were interns at the yearly Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Internship Programme.

Murtaza Solangi assumes charge as Interim Information Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Murtaza Solangi on Thursday assumed charge as Interim Minister for Information and Broadcasting.

"Murtaza Solangi arrived in his office at the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting after taking oath



of his position (at the President's House)," said a news release.

After assuming the responsibilities as the interim information minister, Murtaza Solangi held a meeting with the ministry's officers and his staff.

PPP demands timely polls, opposes ECP move to hold fresh delimitation

ISLAMABAD (INP): Shortly after the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) announced holding fresh delimitations, the Pakistani Peoples Party (PPP) on Thursday opposed the decision, saying drawing new boundaries of constituencies is not a "constitutional requirement".

The PPP's statement said that the electoral authority has announced that new delimitations will be carried out across the country on

the basis of a new census approved by the Council of Common Interest (CCI) meeting last month, meaning the general elections in the country will be delayed beyond its 90 days constitutional requirement.

The ECP schedule showed that fresh delimitation will take nearly four months, to be held from September 8 to October 7, as per the electoral body's schedule.

Media community applauds President Alvi's approval of PEMRA Amendment Bill

ISLAMABAD (Online): Media Joint Action Committee representing PFUJ, CPNE, AEMEND, APNS and PBA today issued a statement thanking the President of Pakistan, Dr. Arif Alvi for formally approving and signing the PEMRA amendment Bill 2023.

The Joint Action Committee in the statement said that we appreciate President Alvi's understanding of the need for these amendments, which are a first step towards making

PEMRA independent, defining the often misused term "Fake News", ensuring that electronic media workers get paid on time, appointment of Chairman PEMRA instead of the Government and partially addressing the long pending demands of electronic media to rationalize the terms of license. Although there is still a long way to go to ensure freedom of speech and free media, the current bill is a step in the right direction.

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Safar moon not sighted

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony on Thursday announced that the moon of Safar, 1445 AH has not been sighted.

In accordance with the decision made during the Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee meeting, it was declared that the commencement of the 1st Safar, 1445 AH will take place on Saturday, the 19th of August, 2023.

The decision was reached after careful consideration by the Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee and in line with the ministry's efforts to ensure accuracy in marking the start of each Islamic month.

Blinken calls PM Kakar, greets him on assuming office

ISLAMABAD (Online): US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has congratulated Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar on becoming the Caretaker Prime Minister (CPM).

Antony Blinken said that preparations for the election are underway in Pakistan according to the constitution and we will continue to cooperate for the economic prosperity of Pakistan.

Antony Blinken also congratulated Caretaker PM Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar on his assumption of office.

Caretaker PM Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar said that he is committed to the stability of Pakistan's economy and democracy and attaches importance to relations with the United States.

Syrus Sajjad Qazi appointed foreign secretary

ISLAMABAD (Online): Syrus Sajjad Qazi has been appointed as the 32nd Foreign Secretary of Pakistan.

He replaces Ambassador Asad Majeed Khan who retires from government service upon attaining superannuation.

PM allocates portfolios to federal ministers, advisers, special assistants

ISLAMABAD (APP): Khalil George Human Rights; Aneeq Ahmed Religious Affairs and Inter-faith Harmony; Jamal Shah National Heritage and Culture; and Madad Ali Sindhi Federal Education and Professional Training, according to the Prime Minister's Office.

The prime minister also appointed Air Marshal ® Farhat Hussain as Adviser for Aviation, Ahad Khan Cheema Adviser for Establishment and Dr Wasiq Masood Khan as Adviser for Finance. The advisers will have status of the federal minister.

PM Kakar also appointed his five Special Assistants with the status of Minister of State: Syeda Afifa Zehra was appointed as Special Assistant for Federal Education and Professional Training, Vice Admiral ® Iftikhar Ahmad Rao as Special Assistant for Maritime Affairs, Wasif Shah as Special Assistant for Tourism, Mishal Hussain Malik as Special Assistant for Human Rights and Women Empowerment, and Muhammad Jawad Sohrab Malik as Special Assistant for Overseas Pakistanis.

Justice (Rtd) Maqbool Baqir takes oath as Caretaker Chief Minister Sindh



KARACHI (APP): Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori on Thursday administered to the oath to Caretaker chief minister of Sindh Justice (Rtd) Maqbool Baqir.

The oath-taking ceremony held at the Governor House here, said a spokesperson of the Governor House. Judges of the Supreme Court, Consul Generals of different countries, former federal and provincial ministers, businessmen, political and social figures, senior officers and dignitaries of the city participated in the ceremony. On the occasion, the Governor of Sindh also congratulated Justice (Rtd) Maqbool Baqir on assuming the office of the caretaker Chief Minister of Sindh.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

Friday August 18, 2023

Faisalabad rampage

Unless both state and society decide on a practical way of tackling extremism, and go beyond clichés and condemnations, the monster of obscurantism will continue to devour Pakistan's vitals.

Another shameful incident was witnessed on Wednesday in Faisalabad's Jaranwala area when a mob torched several churches, ransacked Christian homes and vandalised a graveyard. The apparent provocation for this assault was blasphemy, as the house of a Christian man allegedly involved in the offence was razed.

Clearly, in Pakistan, evidence is not required where the issue of blasphemy is concerned, and mobs take it upon themselves to dispense 'justice'. This is the second such event in recent days; just a few days ago, a teacher in Balochistan was murdered because of blasphemy allegations against him.

There has been the usual round of denunciation by the political elite, including the interim prime minister. Yet the question is: do the rulers — politicians and establishment — as well as clerics and prominent society figures have the courage to confront this madness? Past precedents do not inspire confidence as murders, riots and lynchings in 'defence' of religion testify.

This is not a situation that developed overnight; it has been decades in the making. For over 40 years, the state has itself been either promoting obscurantism, or using sectarian and religious fanatics as proxies. The result of these failed policies is before us, as these same forces have now begun to influence the general populace by framing the narrative.

Our power elite has been silent as blasphemy laws have been misused to settle personal scores, occupy property, or terrorise minorities. In fact, the last parliament had tried to bulldoze, without any proper debate, an amendment that would have 'strengthened' the blasphemy law.

Can we then complain if episodes such as Jaranwala unfold with disturbing regularity? Violence in the name of religion is indefensible in any context, but in Pakistan, the blasphemy laws have been misused with impunity by vested interests.

However, it is also true that in the 'civilised' West, the appalling trend to attack the sacred symbols of Islam feeds into a vicious circle of bigotry and Islamophobia. In fact, extremists, such as the ones involved in the Jaranwala outrage, use these despicable acts to point out the hatred the 'Christian' West allegedly harbours towards Islam, and channel their vitriol at local minority communities.

The fact is that both in the West and in Muslim states, efforts need to be intensified to counter the forces of religious bigotry. The attacks on Islam's sacred symbols — indeed, the revered symbols of all faiths — in the West must stop, while Pakistani society must bring to justice all involved in such grotesque violence, and begin an internal reckoning that exorcises the demons of obscurantism tearing this country apart.



Ashraf Jahangir Qazi

Afghanistan's internal developments are of importance to its neighbours, especially Pakistan. But far more important is Pakistan's Afghanistan policy mess which is a direct consequence of Pakistan's political situation.

Let us take a brief look at Pakistan's external relations. Its relations with India are hostile largely due to India. Its relations with Afghanistan are strained because of strategic short-sightedness. Its relations with Iran are dubious because of US diplomatic and economic leverage over Pakistan. Its relations with China are stable but static because of its structural inability to avail of transformation opportunities. Its relations with Russia remain undeveloped due to

Pakistan's Afghanistan policy

Pakistan's elite deference to the US and India's continuing influence in Moscow. Its relations with the US, despite its elite deference, have declined because of its diminished strategic relevance as well as India's rising strategic profile in Washington.

In this bleak situation, Pak-Afghan relations are crucial. The Taliban government, long considered a protégé of Pakistan, is no longer friendly. It sees Pakistan's policy towards it as wavering between furtive support and kowtowing to American demands. Its enemy at home is the Khurasan branch of the Islamic State. It cannot and will not treat the TTP as an enemy even though Mullah Hibatullah Akhundzada has openly declared that attacks in Pakistan are not jihad.

Mullah Akhundzada also asks pertinent questions. Why out of Afghanistan's six neighbours only Pakistan, which has fenced almost its entire border, complains of terrorism from Afghanistan? Is it because Pakistan cannot contain the TTP which actually operates from inside Pakistan with

on and off support from certain quarters? Or is it because the other neighbours of Afghanistan are more committed to stopping TTP terrorism? The Taliban government of Afghanistan denies it allows TTP terrorism against Pakistan from its territory. However, it concedes it has not been able to stop it altogether.

The rest of Afghanistan blames Pakistan for having imposed the Taliban on them and for the vicious regime that oppresses them — especially women — in the name of Islam. They prefer India to Pakistan — and not just because of India's economic assistance. Pakistan's assistance to Afghanistan on a per capita basis has actually been more than India's but it has not brought any political goodwill. This is the measure of the failure of Pakistan's Afghanistan policy. It has allowed India to potentially develop a strategic pincer or two-front situation against Pakistan.

There is, however, a larger regional context that has to be considered. India seeks regional hegemony in South Asia. As long as Pa-

kistan was perceived as a viable state its relations with China presented an impossible obstacle to India's regional ambitions. This posed a strategic dilemma for it. The closer it got to the US against China, including a quantum jump in critically important military technology cooperation, the more the US would demand as quid pro quo that India move away from military cooperation with Russia, neutrality on Ukraine, and economic cooperation with China.

Why would India object given the importance of being a de facto non-Nato military ally of the US which would significantly advance its regional hegemonic aspirations? One, because India prizes its own status as an emerging great power which chooses its own strategic options; and two, because ironically a closer strategic alliance with the US actually reduces India's options for regional hegemony in South Asia despite the dwindling strategic significance of Pakistan. This is because China would be compelled by the US-India military alliance to dramatically raise its own strategic profile in the In-

dian Ocean and among all the neighbours of India, including Afghanistan which does not actually border India.

Accordingly, whenever Pakistan recovers from its current domestic predicament it should prioritise investing diplomatically and economically in Afghanistan's stability and prosperity. This would progressively build goodwill among the Afghan people, eliminate the danger of a two-front pincer situation, and restore China's confidence in its preferred option of Pakistan being able to counter India's hegemonic aspirations in South Asia.

This could incentivise China to financially and diplomatically support Pakistan's much more welcome influence in Afghanistan and transform the bilateral CPEC into a multilateral CAICAP (China, Afghanistan, Iran, Central Asia and Pakistan) that would be book-ended by China and Pakistan. This would eventually enable Pakistan to negotiate with India on more equitable terms, and enable the CASA region (Central and South/Southwest Asia) to become a major force for peace, security and development in Asia. -- Courtesy Dawn

Living in the worst of times

Kamila Hyat

Pakistan's eighth caretaker Prime Minister Anwarul Haq Kakar has taken the reins of the country at a time when it faces economic, social and political disarray of the worst kind. Kakar's name has also caused a degree of controversy, with the BNP Mengal particularly strong in the opposition to his nomination to the current post while others too are said to be displeased over the choice made by the opposition leader and the former prime minister. The issue at hand is the future of the country. Kakar has promised fair and free elections but doubts linger as to whether these will actually take place, or whether Kakar, like others before him, will end up being a glorified rubber-stamp for powerful stakeholders in the country.

The reality is that Pa-

kistan has barely known true democracy through its years of existence since 1947. In recent years after three clean and democratic transfers of power from one government to another, we now see the possibility of a disruption in the democratic process although there is of course hope that this will not happen. Much depends on what is decided behind the scenes and also on whether Kakar, chosen as a presentable man acceptable to the world, will act on what he has claimed and ensure transfer of power to a democratically elected government.

It is true that Pakistan's governments, elected by the people, have not served the people well. Today we see the result of that: the hyperinflation that has hit virtually every household in the country and the taxation through indirect means the people are subjected to means those from lower income brackets end up paying more while the wealthier in the country get away with paying very little tax.

This is a disaster. Whether that can be corrected is the true challenge for the incoming setup and any setup that takes over after the caretaker government of Kakar leaves the

scene. The conjecture that this caretaker government will stay longer than is expected is of course yet to be determined and will eventually decide the future of our democracy.

The reality is that our democracy has been disrupted far too often by interventions. The possibility that Pakistan could have risen further in the ranks as a country able to offer true justice to its people may have been higher had a democratic setup been allowed to function smoothly as for example has been the case for the most part in India.

Of course, this is not to say that anything is perfect in India. The country has many problems. They begin with poverty and now have translated into other issues such as increasing intolerance and hatred. But on the whole India has a literacy rate of nearly 90 per cent and more in some states. This follows the pattern of Bangladesh and other nations which all have a higher rate of schooling than Pakistan's sad looking 70 per cent or so. For women, this figure falls to 50 per cent and of course when 'real' is measured the problems are far greater. With literacy

measured by the ability to scribble a name on a piece of paper and nothing more than this, many of those capable of writing out their names cannot read the headline of a newspaper.

Pakistan then has a long way to go. It needs good governance if it is to develop and give its people the opportunities they need. In the first place, there must be a setup which allows all children in the country to gain quality education at schools which meet their needs and where they are taught true facts of our history and what can be learnt from it rather than a series of lies and misrepresentations than what has really happened in the seven decades of Pakistan's existence.

While real schooling is urgent need, there are also many others. The question is if we can bring in power a government that can achieve this. Because of the chaos we have seen notably during the often unsavoury events, there are many who are once again calling for a non-democratic or technocratic government as such governments are labelled. The fact is that such governments have not been able to deliver in the past. We achieved little under

Shaukat Aziz who then left the country and the various 'technocrats' caretakers prime ministers who have held office before this. Indeed, in many cases those who do not have their own interests vested in the country, leave for other shores soon as their tenure is over.

So what then is the solution for Pakistan? In fact, is there any solution? The fact is the country must have a continued process of democracy, smooth transitions and democratic spirit visible in both houses. This could perhaps bring up leaders who can offer solutions and ways to bring about change. We know that people exist in the country who are capable of writing up new ideas for Pakistan's future. Many politicians and others have already done so.

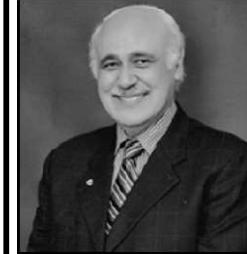
We need to see many years of clear, healthy transitions so that a new and possibly more competent leadership can emerge. Yes, this is the high road.

It is also the harder route to take than the lower route which offers powers to many nondemocratic players along the way. But it is the only route to take

and the only way to ensure that power is transferred without disruption and without constant efforts to bring in so-called 'caretakers' who have little to offer. Only those with interests in the country would have this kind of affection for Pakistan and its future.

We need to support real democracy and nothing other than this. No matter how long it takes, democracy and smooth transfers of power is the only way Pakistan will get the kind of leaders it needs. Yes, this will take time — it will take plenty of time. But the time will come when we have leadership that is capable of putting in place some of the most basic steps that we need, such as rule of law and a contract with the people that gives them security and certainty that they will benefit them as citizens of Pakistan.

We are as yet a long way from this goal, but we must move towards it so that our future as a country is secured and people are given the reins they need to hold the country steadily as it moves forward — hopefully towards a better place than the one it occupies right now. -- Courtesy TheNews

Flying solo

F.S. Ajazuddin

The US astronaut John Glenn — the first human to orbit the earth — was once asked how he felt hurtling through space in a capsule. His trenchant reply was: "How would you feel travelling in a machine assembled from 150,000 pieces of equipment, each procured by NASA from the lowest bidder?" Over 200 million Pakistanis today are reliving his apprehensions. They are orbiting in a political void, led by a caretaker prime minister chosen from among the lowest political denominators.

Following the National Assembly dissolution on Aug 9, it took three days for Shehzad Sharif (representing the outgoing government) and Raja Riaz Ahmad Khan (the still thrashing tail of a PTI opposition) to propose a name for the post of caretaker PM to an impotent president.

Names proffered by Sharif and Raja Riaz were unacceptable to the other. The person finally proposed to the president (and approved by him with alacrity) was Senator Anwarul Haq Kakar, a comparatively unknown politician from Balochistan.

Raja Riaz justified the choice, saying: "We had earlier decided that the caretaker PM should be someone from a smaller province and a non-controversial personality. Our aim was to remove the sense of deprivation in small provinces."

Raja Riaz, a Punjabi, should have been more circumspect. Balochistan is the largest of Pakistan's provinces. Geographically, it is one and half times the size

of Punjab, two and half times the size of Sindh, and five times the size of KP. It is not small. It may have less of a population than the others but it deserves fraternal respect, not gratuitous condescension.

No one would doubt that the new caretaker PM is non-controversial. He owes his nomination to an establishment that breeds a stable of dark horses. The last such unexpected entrant was Usman Buzdar, former Punjab chief minister, appointed by then PM Imran Khan. In 2018, he appeared out of nowhere, survived in office for over 43 months until 2022, and then disappeared unlamented into oblivion.

No sooner had Kakar's nomination been announced than his fellow politician from Balochistan Akhtar Mengal complained: "You have designated an individual as the caretaker prime minister whose appointment has shut the doors of politics for us." He added more pointedly: "A solution is being sought by consulting the establishment instead of politicians."

He reminded the elder Sharif — less in anger than frustration — of the 'oppression' suffered by the Baloch at the hands of military-led administrations from Gen Ayub to Gen Musharraf, which had not been forgotten nor, it would appear, forgiven.

History has a longer memory than politicians from Punjab. Mengal served as Balochistan's ninth CM from February 1997 to June 1998, 10 years before Kakar entered politics. Seen as a militant Baloch, Mengal's provincial loyalties attracted suspicion. He complained in an interview in 2013: "The Baloch militants consider me a traitor while the secu-

rity establishment also treats me as an enemy."

Mengal will receive a reply from Na-waz Sharif. Like the astronaut John Glenn, Sharif's prime concern is a safe re-entry.

Will Na-waz Sharif be welcomed by the very establishment that aborted his three earlier prime ministerships? Will he want to forgo the comforts of Avenfield House in London for the sweat, dust and drudgery of an insolvent Pakistan? Will his younger brother Shehzad Sharif be content to play second fiddle after he has enjoyed being the master of his own one-man band in Islamabad? In the closing days of the last government, Shehzad admitted to having a close working relationship with the establishment. This came as no revelation. Five years ago in 2018, he had told the Financial Times: "Where the military leadership needs to be consulted, we will consult them." And he did not mean only on military or security-related matters.

A younger generation of voters might have noticed the last speech Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari made in parliament. Stressing the need for "political unity and reconciliation", he appealed to key political figures, including his father Asif Ali Zardari and Nawaz Sharif, to "make decisions that would help create a conducive political environment, notably for Maryam Nawaz and himself". His conciliatory speech was intended to calm contending kings". His entrenched elders though might construe it as premature patricide. Today, Pakistan's political future is again up in the air. No one knows for sure when elections will be held. Probably next year. However, those who have watched Shehzad Sharif's self-laudatory leave-taking can fore-see the result. He intends to return as PM and then fly solo for at least five years. -- Courtesy Dawn

Young workers

Shazia Nizamani

The case of 13-year-old Rizwana, who was brutally tortured by her employer, the wife of a civil judge, in Islamabad, is a reminder of the despicable acts of violence and abuse perpetrated on our young domestic workers who are still minors. The girl is still receiving medical care. A case against her employer was registered only after a hue and cry was raised on social and mainstream media. Even judges were seen to come to the rescue of their fellow judge's wife by granting bail to the suspect.

Earlier this year, an 11-year-old domestic worker was killed by his employer in Karachi. The victim had been working with his two brothers in Karachi to support his family back in Tharparkar. After the horrible death of their youngest son, the family found out that all three had been subjected to inhuman torture and violence. Some years ago, 10-year-old Tayyaba was physically and mentally tortured for months by her employers — an additional sessions judge and his wife. Due to media coverage and public pressure, the authorities took action. Although the Islamabad High Court had increased the initial sentence of the culprits to a maximum of three years, the apex court restored the lesser sentence.

It is uncertain if Rizwana's tormentors will be brought to justice because our rotten criminal justice system hardly works for the underprivileged and disadvantaged as it does for the privileged

or during the night or work where the child is unreasonably confined to the premises of the employer" to be hazardous. Based on these criteria, child labour in domestic work could be considered and addressed as hazardous work.

Some 30-odd countries have adopted the Domestic Workers' Convention but Pakistan is not among them, though it is a signatory to eight international treaties directly related to labour rights, including the rights of children.

The Constitution guarantees the rights of children. Article 11 prohibits the involvement of children younger than 14 years old in work. Meanwhile, it was also estimated that in 2004, 80 per cent of children engaged in domestic labour worked to support their families, while 14pc worked to pay off family debts.

According to the ILO, child labour is "work that is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children and/or interferes with their schooling by depriving them of the opportunity to attend school, obliging them to leave school prematurely, or requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work". ILO and other reports indicate that 93pc of children "engaged in child labour in domestic work in 2021", most of them girls. In 2011, the ILO adopted the Domestic Workers' Convention which, among other things, requires countries to set a "minimum age for domestic workers consistent with the provisions of the Minimum Age Convention ... and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention". The latter convention considers "work under particularly difficult conditions such as work for long hours

and the minimum age for domestic workers". The Convention also requires countries to prohibit child labour in domestic work.

The Ministry of Human Rights, the National Commission of Rights of Child (NCRC), the Ministry of Poverty Alleviation and the provincial child protection bureaus have an obligation to enforce policy frameworks and laws on child labour. The NCRC has a dedicated complaint cell. But there is hardly any awareness about such services and laws at the public level. Unfortunately, the monitoring, implementation and accountability mechanisms of these institutions are very weak, and there is a lack of coordination and collaboration among them where child labour in domestic work is concerned.

Awareness must be created in communities that child labour in domestic work is illegal and unconstitutional. The power of social media can be utilised for raising awareness about child rights, the available social protection measures and existing laws. Pressure should be put on the state by civil society and child rights organisations to ensure protection for children. -- Courtesy Dawn

PM AJK committed to provide relief to masses

MIRPUR (AJK) (APP): Azad Jammu and Kashmir Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar Haq on Thursday reiterated his government's commitment to providing relief to the common people.

While addressing the coalition partners' parliamentary meeting at Jamia Kashmir House in the federal metropolis, the AJK PM expressed gratitude to the heads of the coalition partners and cabinet ministers for reposing their confidence upon his leadership.

The coalition government would spare no efforts to provide relief to the people and would take all possible measures

to ensure development in the backward areas of the state, he added.

"We all have to work for the welfare of the people and all resources would be utilized for this purpose", he added.

The expenditures of the Prime Minister's House had been reduced to a great extent, adding that he expressed optimism that the ministers would also follow suit and reduce expenditures in their respective ministries.

In order to make Azad Kashmir more attractive for tourists, the AJK PM said that special focus was being laid on improving infrastructure,

especially roads to provide easy access to visitors.

Besides improving the road infrastructure, he said that the hotel industry would be promoted in collaboration with the private sector.

The meeting was attended by People's Party President Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin, PML-N President Shah Ghulam Qadir, former President and Prime Minister Sardar Muhammad Yaqub Khan, former Prime Minister Raja Muhammad Farooq Haider Khan, Senior Minister, Finance Minister Colonel ® Waqar Ahmad Noor, along with other government ministers.

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Murad Ali Shah talks with media persons during press conference after the Gujjar Nala implementation case, outside Supreme Court Karachi Registry building.

Kashmir's rich culture and heritage needed to be kept alive: Samina Alvi

MUZAFFARABAD (APP): First Lady Mrs. Samina Alvi has said that handicraft was a part of Kashmir's culture and heritage which needed to be kept alive and should be marketed on modern lines so that women associated with this skill can earn as much as they work hard to prepare.

She made these remarks during a visit to small industries display center here on Thursday.

Mrs. Alvi visited Meena Bazaar in the center organized by the small industries corporations and appreciated the different handicraft prepared by local women including embroidery, wooden carving displayed in the Bazaar.

Managing Director Small Industries Corporation Wajahat Rasheed Baig told the first lady that their organization was supporting the women associated with this trade by displaying their items.

on different occasions.

The first lady on the occasion took a keen interest in different handmade things and appreciated the skill of women. Before leaving for another visit, she planted a tree at the center.

Later, she also visited a training institute established by technical education and vocational training Authority (TEVTA) where she was told about the skill development training of the women by chairman TEVTA Raja Razzaq Nadeem.

She visited the different departments of the institute and encouraged the women to take training in different skills like handicrafts, embroidery, wood carving and beautician. The first lady also visited a rehabilitation center for physically challenged person before leaving for Islamabad and visited different departments.

Due to the road closure and extreme heat, the passengers in the vehicles faced severe difficulties. Later, the crowd was dispersed after receiving assurances from the authorities about the arrest of the murderers.

Mother, two sons killed over property dispute

MALAKAND (APP): A mother, along with her two sons, was tragically killed due to a property dispute here in Ghawar Kale near Skhakot while the culprits managed to escape from the crime scene, police said on Thursday.

The victims and the perpetrators had been embroiled in a long-standing conflict over land ownership.

The people kept the bodies of the deceased mother and sons on the main GT Road and closed the main road for all kinds of traffic. They demanded for early arrest of the killers involved in the bloody incident.

The meeting was chaired by CS Wani and

Small cell of jail cannot defeat IK, Aleema Khan

LAHORE (Online): PTI leader Imran Khan's sister Aleema Khan said that we are not being allowed to meet Imran Khan despite court orders.

While responding questions of journalist on appearance in Anti-terrorism court Lahore she said that court remarked that jail authorities will tell you in this regard about Imran Khan.

She further said that we are very worried because even doctors and lawyers are not being allowed to meet Imran Khan.

At this time, the Pakistan Red Crescent Society Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, in collaboration with the German Red Cross, is working to reduce the effects of climate change and to maintain the safety of local populations during disasters in various areas of Chitral. In this context, it's crucial for other organizations to also support the PRCS.

On the other hand, during the relief distribution, Syed Ali Hassan, Secretary, Pakistan Red Crescent.

During the distribution of relief items, our efforts have been supported by the German Red Cross.

In this regard, Habib Malik Orakzai, Chairman, Pakistan Red Crescent Society Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, stated that Chitral District is currently facing the effects of natural disasters in both the summer and winter seasons.

These adversities have not only affected the region's infrastructure but have also deeply impacted the homes and fields of its residents. Our mission is to

assist people in such situations as an Auxiliary body to the Government. However, it's imperative that we also play a role in mitigating the impacts of climate changes emerging in Chitral.

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During the meeting, the DG PFA said that the authority was working on reducing medical screening fees for small-scale businesses and providing free facilities for roadside street vendors. He also highlighted the plan to reorganise the testing system for food-borne diseases.

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According to a RWMC spokesman, during the rains, the company had made special arrangements for cleaning in the city and deployed additional workers to clean and dredge major drains to avoid urban flooding.

He informed RWMC workers removed hundreds of tons of waste in the Rawalpindi city areas while drains blocked during the rain on Thursday morning.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali exchanging views with Ambassador of Belgium, Mr. Charles Delogne at Governor House.

Former PM Imran took u-turn on providing houses to displaced persons: CM

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Thursday said former prime minister Imran Khan's led federal government had promised to provide shelter to the displaced persons of Gujar, Mehmoodabad and Orangi Nullah but he reneged his promise as usual.

He stated this while talking to media persons here outside the Supreme Court registry after appearing in a case of rehabilitation of displaced persons.

The chief minister said Imran Khan, continued to make an announcement that his government would

provide houses to all the displaced persons under 'Naya Pakistan housing scheme', but later on, he took a U-turn.

He said Imran Khan was well known for his u-turns.

Murad Ali Shah said the provincial government had been working on this sincerely since the day first.

It prepared a rehabilitation scheme of Rs 9.8 billion, he said, adding the floods of 2022 caused the lack of resources which halted the process of rehabilitation.

"Today, we presented two options before the court for rehabilitation of displaced persons. First to

provide 80 square yards plots with construction money and the second to provide amount for both a plot and construction.", the CM said.

He said the Sindh government was giving cheques of Rs 15,000 to the affected people for rental purposes. Murad Ali Shah said the government had been working on this

however it could not submit progress reports in the court for which he had sought an apology and his apology had been accepted. The chief minister on the occasion was flanked by Mayor Karachi Murtaza Wahab and former provincial minister Nasir Shah.

In a statement issued

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ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi addressing a seminar on "Insurance Ombudsman and Concept of Speedy Justice at the Doorstep", at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Muslim-Christian leaders demand swift justice for perpetrators of Jaranwala incident

LAHORE (APP): Prominent Muslim-Christian leaders Thursday united in demanding swift justice for the perpetrators behind the tragic incident in Jaranwala, which involved the desecration of places of worship.

A delegation of Muslim scholars, led by Pakistan Ulema Council Chairman Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi, visited Saint Anthony Catholic Church here and extended an olive branch to the Christian leaders and people, seeking forgiveness for the disrespectful act that has deeply disturbed the entire nation.

Addressing a presser, the Muslim-Christian leaders, including Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi, Archbishop Sebastian Shah, Pastor Emmanuel Khokhar, Pastor Saleem, Maulana Nauman Hashir, Maulana Muhammad Shafi Qasmi,

Maulana Asadullah Farooq, Maulana Zubair Abid, Maulana Muhammad Ashfaq Pitafi, Maulana Tahir Aqeel Awan, Maulana Muhammad Aslam Siddiqui, Qari Abdul Hakeem Athar, Maulana Muhammad Aslam Qadri, Mufti Naseem Islam, Maulana Qari Mubashir Rahimi and others said the incident had not only strained interfaith relations but also cast a dark shadow over the country's reputation.

They said a nationwide day of mourning would be observed on August 18 to express collective condemnation and solidarity, urging the government to provide compensation for the losses, besides reconstruction of the damaged worship places.

The Muslim religious leaders said the heinous act in Jaranwala was unequivocally condemned in Friday sermons in mosques across the country.

They said a diverse group of religious leaders and scholars, representing all schools of thought, would visit Jaranwala to offer support and express solidarity with the affected people.

The religious leaders unequivocally stated that the perpetrators behind the attack on Christian places of worship had not only harmed the local community members but also brought disrepute to the religion of Islam and Pakistan.

They urged the Punjab government to expedite its investigations into the incident. After a thorough probe, those found responsible for burning churches and desecrating the holy books must be brought to justice under a fair and expeditious trial, they added.



LAHORE: Religious Scholar Allama Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi along with the Archbishop is addressing a press conference on the Jaranwala Issue at Regal Church.

Pakistan delegation pays day long visit to Afghanistan to attend border meeting

PESHAWAR (APP): A delegation from Pakistan Thursday paid a day-long visit to Afghanistan for attending border committee meetings held regularly on a fortnight basis for improving effective liaison and coordination for smooth operation of bilateral and transit trade on both sides of the border.

The fifteen-member delegation was headed by Director Transit Customs Department, Arbab Qaiser Hameed.

Additional Director Transit Trade, Shams Wazir, Additional Collector Appraisal, Muhammad Rizwan, Deputy Collector Appraisal, Mohib Khan and Director Pak-Afghan

Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Ziaul-Haq Sarhadi were also part of the delegation.

Raes Gmrak (Customs) Nangarhar Province, Hajji Fazle Hadi received the delegation on arrival in Afghanistan.

The participants of the meeting discussed different issues including the pendency in the clearance of goods and presented different suggestions for the resolution of problems.

Ahsan Iqbal said that torching the places of worship of other religion is no service to deen.

There are laws and courts in the country.

Former Federal Minister said that one cannot take law in hands as there is law for every crime.

He said that if a minority in Pakistan considers itself insecure, this idea will be negation of ideology of Pakistan.

Ahsan Iqbal said that young people of 12 to 14 years are being seen in the footage holding sticks and chanting the slogans of a religious party.

He further added that this trend is reminiscent of the tragic incident of Sialkot.

MQM leader Kunwar Naveed Jameel passes away

KARACHI (INP): Kunwar Naveed Jameel, Deputy Convenor of Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), has passed away after prolonged illness.

The demise of MQM's Deputy Convenor was confirmed by party Convenor Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, who emphasized his status as a valuable asset and senior leader within the movement.

Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui went on to underscore Kunwar Naveed's indelible contributions to both MQM and the nation, asserting that every MQM member mourns the loss.

The funeral prayer of the MQM leader will be offered today after the Friday prayer at Defense Phase I Masjid Mustafa.



Speaking at the plantation drive, Nauman Fakhru, Chief Retail Sales Officer, Ufone 4G said, "Environmental protection and resilience against climate change are critically important for Pakistan, which is amongst the top ten countries adversely impacted by climate change. As responsible corporate citizens, it is our duty to help create a world that is safely habitable for our coming generations. We are making progress on our zero emissions commitment and hope to emerge as a green organization in the near future."

The afforestation drive will ensure the sustainability of the local environment and natural resources that usually come

under pressure due to greater human and vehicular influx.

Apart from carbon reduction, the new forest cover will also add to the region's natural splendor.

CJP says Accused acquitted due to presentation of unacceptable evidences by prosecution

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) has adjourned the hearing of the petitions about cancellation of Police Order -2002 for indefinite period.

The Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJ) Umar Ata Bandial has remarked due to lack of protection of crime scenes, the evidences are destroyed and the accused are acquitted due to presentation of unacceptable evidences by prosecution in the courts. There are weaknesses in police investigation and accused persons take advantage of it.

He remarked Sindh has set up a separate investigation wing. Sindh police step is appreciable. Punjab and Islamabad police have not taken such steps for improvement in investigation. In KP Police system has been improved to some extent.

The CJP admired the steps taken by Sindh and KP police. The petitions regarding cancellation of police order 2002 came up for hearing before a 3-member bench of SC presided over by the CJP Thursday.

The CJP remarked due

Pakistan urges India to end illegal detention of Kashmiri activists

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Thursday urged India to bring an end to the unjustified and illegal detention of Khurram Pervaiz and Irfan Mehraj and numerous other Kashmiri activists who were languishing in jails for raising their voice against Indian oppression.

Speaking at a weekly press briefing here, the Foreign Office Spokesperson said, "In a communication addressed to the government of India, UN special procedures for human rights have expressed serious concerns at the arrest, detention and charges against Kashmiri human rights defenders Khurram Pervaiz and Irfan Mehraj."

Khurram Pervaiz, who was the Programme Coordinator of the Jammu and Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society (JKCSS) and Irfan Mehraj, a researcher with JKCSS, were detained in Rohini prison in New Delhi.

Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Al Zaabi giving food packets to deserving people under the banner of Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation.

Saudi embassy commemorates Pakistan's Independence Day with spirited celebrations

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a show of unity and cameraderie, the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia marked Pakistan's Independence Day with fervor and national pride. The local employees and officials gathered at the embassy to partake in the jubilant festivities that highlighted the enduring bond between the two countries the other day.

Ambassador Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki led the commemorative event, embodying the deep-rooted ties between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. Amidst an atmosphere charged with patriotic fervency, Ambas-

sador Al-Malki ceremoniously cut a cake adorned with the flags of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

The poignant strains of the national anthems of both nations reverberated through the embassy, echoing the shared aspirations and values that bind them.

As a gesture of friendship and goodwill, the ambassador generously distributed gifts to Pakistani nationals present at the event.

This heartfelt exchange symbolized the unwavering brotherhood that defines the relationship between the two countries.

Masood Khan says:

Pakistan is moving towards political & economic stability

NEW YORK (Online): Masood Khan, Pakistan's ambassador to America, has said that Pakistan is moving towards political and economic stability.

On Independence Day, Pakistan's Ambassador Masood Khan unfurled the Pakistani flag and New York City Mayor Eric Adams hoisted the American flag.

Speaking at the Independence Day ceremony in New York, Masood Khan said that it is a matter of pride for many Pakistanis are serving in the civil government of the United States today.

He urged people to ignore rumors that Pakistani-Americans no longer have faith in Pakistan's economy.

He emphasized that do not lose faith in Pakistan, America is your homeland and Pakistan is your motherland and this strong bond will not break.

On this occasion, the mayor of New York said that people from different regions, cultures and religions live in New York and they themselves have come and settled here, but the people who live here should help each other to solve global problems.

Federal Insurance Ombudsman building confidence among public to get speedy justice: President

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday said the Federal Insurance Ombudsman was doing major work in building confidence among the general public to get speedy justice by following easy steps.

The president said only few percent people knew about the role of the ombudsman had significantly increased. But still, he stressed the need to make more people aware of it. He also highlighted the role of media in creating awareness about the ombudsman's role and responsibilities adding that the good decisions by the ombudsmen must be publicized in the national print, electronic and social media.

He said ignorance was not an excuse, therefore the people should know about various ways to get justice through alternative means.

The president highlighted that in many cases the decisions remained pending for decades in the mainstream judiciary due to overburden of work and other flaws. Therefore, he called upon the people to utilize this channel which was relatively easy, more

quick, and affordable for all. He said Alternative Dispute Resolution was the solution to reduce the burden on the mainstream judiciary.

He also asked the insurance company owners to offer better products for the public to increase trust and remove doubts among the people about the insurance companies.

Generally, he said the perception of insurance among the general public was not up to the mark which needed to be improved by building trust among them.

Federal Insurance Ombudsman Dr Khawar Jamil said the office of FIO was acting upon the concept of providing speedy justice.

"We are trying to enhance our outreach to grassroots level and we are also endeavoring to provide maximum relief to the complainants by settling their issues in an amicable manner and through mutual settlement", he added.

He informed that during previous year the office had settled issues and provided relief worth of Rs 2.57 billion.



Commanding Officer PNS SAIF receiving Base Commander UAE Naval Forces on board during Pakistan Navy Ship's visit to UAE

U.S. Ambassador calls on Air Chief

ISLAMABAD (APP): U.S. Ambassador Donald Blome called on Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Zahoor Ahmed Baber Sidhu here on Thursday.

The discussion underscored matters pertaining to geo-political environment leading to emerging regional security challenges, augmenting the already fortified bilateral ties and fostering collaborative endeavours within the realms of defence and aviation.

The Air Chief accentuated the cordial relations that exist between the two nations while emphasizing his steadfast determination to elevate the existing synergistic partnership between the two key allies.

The Chief of the Air Staff further said, "Pakistan deeply values its robust diplomatic, economic and defence ties with the United States of America which are firmly rooted in mutual consensus concerning all important matters pertaining to regional peace, security and stability."

Police to enhance traffic management, safety measures

Independent Report

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad police have decided to enhance traffic management and safety measures for a safer road environment in the city. In line with the directives from Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP), the Chief Police Officer (CPO) of Safe City/Traffic Shaheed Janbaz convened a significant gathering at Safe City Islamabad to discuss and strategize traffic-related matters. Present at the meeting were key personnel, including the Chief Traffic Officer of Islamabad, the AIG General and Development, and the SSP Logistics, according to a police public relations statement.

This heartfelt exchange symbolized the unwavering brotherhood that defines the relationship between the two countries.

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Book "Landmarks of Pakistan" by German artist launched

ISLAMABAD (APP): A book titled, "Landmarks of Pakistan" containing pen and ink drawings of historical places of Pakistan by a German Painter, Ms. Ute Elpers launched on Thursday here at Pakistan National Council of Arts (PNCA).

The event was organized by the German-Pakistan Chamber of Commerce & Industry with the support of the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany and PNCA.

Addressing the participants, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany Alfred Grannas said, "As Ambassador to this fascinating country, I have the opportunity to experience many of the monuments immortalized by Ute Elpers on site, and I am always impressed by how they capture not only the shape, but also the soul of these buildings with the economical methods of a technical draftswoman".

President of the German-Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Pervaiz Akhtar and Director General PNCA Muhammad Ayub Jamali were present on the occasion. The event was attended by many diplomats, VIPs, dignitaries and artists.

The chief guest at the event was Alfred Grannas, Ambassador of the Federal

Republic of Germany and the Guest of Honour was Ambassador Shahid Kamla, Former Ambassador of Pakistan to Germany, who initiated and pioneered the compilation of the book.

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