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Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah

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Terms incident extremely tragic, intolerable

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 a 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,

Continued on page 2



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



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.

Governor describes provision of equal rights to masses true democracy

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has categorically stated that true democracy is to provide equal rights as well as even facilities and opportunities of progress to the masses. He said that he got to the conclusion in the light of his knowledge and experience during his political life that provision of equal rights, even facilities and equivalent opportunities of growth to the masses is actually real democracy.

Therefore, the policy of taking all along should also

guarantee sustainable solution to the problems.

This and similar other views were expressed by the Governor while speaking to different delegations who called on him at the Governor House on Thursday.

The Governor on the occasion stressed that brotherhood and respect to difference of opinion is the essence of democracy.

He added that we have to promote national solidarity and unity to combat the chaos and division in the

Continued on page 2



QUETTA: Chairman Khadmit-e-Khalq Foundation Naimatullah Zaheer meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar

Manzoor Pashteen, Ali Wazir meet Akhtar Mengal invite to take part in protest gathering

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Head of Pashtoon Tahafuz Movement (PTM) Manzoor Ahmed Pashteen met the President of Balochistan National Party (BNP) Sardar Akhtar Mengal in Islamabad on Thursday.

During the course of meeting, the PTM leader and former Member National Assembly, Ali Wazir

was along accompanied with Manzoor Pashteen.

The sources said that PTM leaders invited Sardar Akhtar Mengal to participate in the protest and public meeting to be held in Islamabad.

Meanwhile, during the course of meeting, the matters pertaining to the politics and other related affairs were discussed.

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 (PM).

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 thanked the US Secretary of State on Twitter and made it clear that help will be provided for transparent elections.

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.

Consultation has been completed in connection with caretaker federal cabinet. According to sources, Jilil Abbas Jilani and Sarfaraz Bugti are likely to be given portfolios of caretaker foreign minister and caretaker interior minister respectively. Defence analyst Syed Muhammad Ali is likely to be made caretaker information minister.

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 Anwar-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 this 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 Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar has said that the government 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.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani and Senator Danesh Kumar call on caretaker Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar.

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 Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar, Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi, politicians and prominent figures from different sectors.

The ceremony commenced with the national

anthem before the recitation of verses from the Holy Quran.

Among newly appointed federal cabinet members who took oath, included Senator Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti, Jilil Abbas Jilani, Shamsah Akhtar, Lt. General (Retd) Anwar Ali Hyder, Murtaza Solangi, Sami Saad, Shahid Ashraf Tarar, Ahmad Irfan Aslam, Muhammad Ali, Gohar Ejaz, Umar Saif, Nadeem Jan, Khalil George, Aneeq Ahmed, Jamal Shah and Madad Ali Sindhi.

Newly sworn-in cabinet vows to cope with challenges, serve masses

ISLAMABAD (APP): The members of the newly-appointed interim Federal Cabinet on Thursday vowed to cope with the challenges confronting the country and serve the masses within their short stint.

The 16-member interim cabinet members took the oath of office at a swearing-in ceremony held at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, also attended by Caretaker Prime Minister Anwar-ul-

Haq Kakar, Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi and prominent figures from various sectors.

Talking to newsmen after his oath, Murtaza Solangi said that the masses would be ready to back the government if it succeeded to create closeness with them.

The minister said if he were given the portfolio of

Continued on page 2



QUETTA: Members of Balochistan Union of Journalists (BUJ) holding protest demonstration against killing of Senior Journalist Jan Muhammad Mehar in Sukkur, at Quetta press club.

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. Administrative tasks concerning delimitation will be concluded by August 31. Delimitation committees' training is scheduled for September 1 to 4.

Allocation of district quotas for national and provincial assembly seats to delimitation committees

will take place from Sep-

tember 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.

State responsible for protection of minorities' rights: CJP

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 Makhana Singh, Baba Gural 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.

The chief justice termed the courts in Pakistan the custodian of the fundamental rights of the people, which had always been cognizant of the rights of minorities and had delivered judgments to enforce, implement and address issues faced by the minorities in the country.

After dissolving assemblies Putting nameplate of Ministers, MNA, MPA or Coordinators on vehicles illegal

QUETTA: The Balochistan police has warned that putting name plate of the Ministers, Members of National Assembly, Member Provincial Assembly and coordinators on the vehicles after dissolution of assemblies is an illegal act.

This was announced in an official communique issued by the spokesman of Balochistan Police here on Thursday.

The spokesman also mentioned that it is also an illegal act to install blue light on the private vehicles. According to the spokesman, those place such number plates and blue lights on the vehicles are given time of 24 hours for removal of the same.

Speaker forms parliamentary committee for nomination of caretaker CM Balochistan

Independent Report QUETTA: The Speaker Balochistan Assembly, Mir Jan Muhammad Jamali constituted parliamentary committee for nomination of the caretaker Chief Minister on Thursday.

According to the official sources, the parliamentary committee announced by the Speaker provincial Assembly comprised three members each of the government and opposition side.

Those included in the parliamentary committee are: Chief Minister Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo, Sardar Abdul Rehman

Khetran and Engineer Zamarak Khan Achakzai as well as Muhammad Nawaz Kakar, Abdul Wahid Siddiqui and Younas Zehri.

It may be mentioned that Chief Minister Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo had sent names of three MPs to Speaker assembly including him.

Other two members he referred from his side for the committee were included: Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran and Zamarak Khan Achakzai.

Similarly, the leader of Opposition Malik Sikandar Khan Advocate had sent

Continued on page 2



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.

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

PTI rejects ECP decision on delimitation, set to challenge CCI decision in Supreme Court

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

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.

Reacting to the ECP's announcement, PPP spokesperson Faisal Karim Kundli said the party has been demanding elections to be held as per the Constitution.

"There is no constitutional requirement to do delimitations but there is [a] constitutional requirement to hold elections within 90 days," he added.

The PPP was a key ally of the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM)-led government in the Centre.

Continued on page 2

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."

"The communication has been signed by the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders; the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntarily Disappearances; the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Freedom and Peaceful Assembly and of Association; and the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protec-

tion of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms," she added.

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 Dehi. The UN Special Procedures had expressed concern that their arrests and detention were designed to delegitimize their human rights work and to obstruct monitoring of the human rights situation in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

The Spokesperson said the communication by the UN Special Procedures was yet another indictment of the Indian occupation authorities in IIOJK as it continued to silence and harass Kashmiri human rights defenders.

To a question, she said, "Pakistan has always welcomed peace and dialogue between countries especially between our friends." "Iran is a friend and so is the United States. We wel-

come constructive engagement and result-oriented dialogue between them. As far as the meeting with Dr. Aafia Siddiqui is concerned, I do not wish to speak on a case that is subjudice."

"But what I can say is that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, our Embassy in Washington and our Consulate in Houston have been closely following the case of Aafia Siddiqui and the requests for consular access."

To another question about relations with Afghanistan, she said Pakistan had said clearly time and again, that it would like to have peace and amity with Afghanistan.

"Our relationship is centuries old, it is rooted in our culture and in our history. It is important for the two sides to resolve all differences and concerns and that is why we have been raising our concerns with respect to terrorism that emanates from Afghanistan and endangers Pakistan. This has been an area of regular contact and dialogue between our two countries," she added.



QUETTA: Chief Secretary Balochistan Abdul Aziz Uqaili meeting with Speaker Balochistan Assembly Mir Jan Muhammad Khan Jamali

Hurriyat leaders urge UN to resolve Kashmir dispute

ISLAMABAD (APP): Hurriyat leaders and organizations have sought intervention of UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, to resolve the Kashmir dispute in accordance with the UN Security Council resolutions and the aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

According to Kashmir Media Service (KMS), Jammu and Kashmir Muslim League acting chairman Abdul Ahad Parra, United Peace Alliance chairman Mir Shahid Saleem, Jammu and Kashmir Youth Social Forum Chairman Maulana Musab Nadvi, Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Youth Forum Mueeb Ahmed, Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Resistance Party Chairman Imtiaz Ahmed, Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Movement Chairman Prof Zubair, Jammu and Kashmir Political Resistance Movement, Chairman Jameel Ahmad and Chairman of Jammu Kashmir Pir Panjal Freedom Movement Asrar Ahmed reiterated that the Kashmiris will continue their freedom struggle till the settlement of the Kashmir dispute is resolved as per United Nations resolutions and

Media community applauds President Abvi'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 by the Parliament 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.

MQM leader Naveed Jameel passes away

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

The demise of MQM's Deputy Convener was confirmed by party Convener 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 worker mourns the loss.

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

Larkana Press Club holds candlelight vigil to remember journalist Jan Muhammad

LARKANA (APP): A candlelight vigil was held at Larkana Press Club on Thursday to pay tribute to renowned journalist and Bureau Chief of a private Sindhi TV channel Jan Muhammad Mahar.

All the office bearers of the Press Club, members of the club, journalists, cameramen, photographers and people from different walks of life gathered there to reminisce Jan Muhammad Mahar and placed flowers and candles light vigil in front of the photo of the martyred Jan Muhammad Mahar.

On the occasion, a special prayer for Jan Muhammad Mahar was offered.

COAS vows to...

Continued from page 1
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."

In the end, Gen Munir also lauded the young internees for successfully completing the programme.

Ashrafi visits church in Lahore, expresses solidarity with Christian community

LAHORE (APP): Interfaith Harmony Council President and Pakistan Ulema Council Chairman Hafiz Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi visited Saint Anthony Catholic Church here on Thursday and expressed solidarity with the Christian community after the Jaranwala incidents.

Addressing a press conference at the church here, he expressed sorrow over the recent events, stating that harming innocent lives and property was totally against the Islamic teachings.

On behalf of all Pakistanis, he sought pardon from the Christian community over the losses, Christian had to suffer at the hands of angry mob in Jaranwala.

Ashrafi urged the government and judiciary to investigate the matter, suggesting that stern award of sentence in previous such instances could have prevented the current tragedy. He also expressed his sorrow over destruction of sacred texts and called for accountability.

Archbishop Sebastian Francis Shaw also spoke at the conference. He expressed distress faced by the Christians and condemned the burning of Holy Quran. He emphasised the need for patience and tolerance, while demanding a thorough investigation into the incident. He thanked the Muslim individuals, who provided shelter and assistance to the affected Christians.

ECP sets deadline for political parties to submit 2022-23 financial statements

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has directed political parties to submit their consolidated financial statements for the fiscal year 2022-23 by August 29th.

As stated by the ECP spokesperson, political parties were obligated under Section 210 of the Elections Act, 2017, in conjunction with Section 204 of the same Act, along with rules 159 and 160 of the Election Rules, 2017, to submit their financial statements for the fiscal year ending on June 30th no later than August 29th, 2023.

As a reminder, Section 210 of the Elections Act, 2017 stipulates that a political party must, following the outlined procedure, furnish the Commission with a consolidated audited financial statement within sixty days after the conclusion of a financial year. This statement, documented on Form-D, should encompass yearly income and expenses, fund sources, as well as asset and liability information.

The report that needs to be provided to the ECP must include an accountant's audit report of the political party's accounts, along with a certificate signed by an authorized party member, as designated by the party head. This certificate affirms that the party did not receive funds from any prohibited source according to the Elections Act, 2017, and also confirms

the accuracy of the financial details within the statement.

The financial statement is required to be submitted using Form-D, as outlined in the Elections Act, 2017. Printed copies of these forms were accessible at no charge in the Election Commission Secretariat in Islamabad, as well as at the offices of the provincial election commissioners in Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Balochistan. Additionally, Form-D and the source of funds proforma were also made available on the ECP's official website.

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) emphasized the importance of avoiding overwriting. They also instructed that the membership or certificate from ICAP for the engaged Auditor should be attached to Form-D, along with the most recent valid renewal certificate. Additionally, Form-D must include clear copies of the party's bank statements from July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2023, as well as a bank reconciliation statement. The statement should be directed to the Secretary of the Election Commission of Pakistan at Constitution Avenue, G-5/2, Islamabad. It should be handed over by a party officer who has been authorized by the party head according to rule 156 of the Election Rules, 2017. The statement won't be accepted if sent via post, fax, courier service, or any other method.



QUETTA: Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) Balochistan Chief, Mufti Wazir Ahmed Rizvi addresses to media persons during press conference, at Quetta press club.

Pakistan to feature in Asian Baseball C'ship

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan U15 baseball team Thursday left to take part in the Asian Baseball Championship in Weihai, China.

The players and officials have been provided with essential camp and accommodation facilities by the Pakistan Sports Board, showcasing their commitment to supporting the youth athletes of the country. Pakistan Federation Baseball has taken on the responsibility of arranging all other necessary expenses for the team, said a press release.

Before their departure, the Director General of the Pakistan Sports Board (PSB), Shoab Khoso, bid farewell to the players and officials at the Pakistan Sports Board in Islamabad to convey his well wishes and to offer his encouragement.

He further explained that the decision to send a minimum number of players and officials was made in order to ensure the team's participation.

The Pakistan Sports Board, citing budgetary constraints, was unable to afford to send the national team to the Asian Games. Consequently, the Pakistan baseball community has made a significant effort to send the U15 team, as the nation cannot afford to compromise its international ranking despite having formidable teams.

The decision to send the U15 team to the Asian Baseball Championship not only showcases the resilience of Pakistan's sports community but also highlights their determination to maintain their presence in the international sports arena. The team's participation would contribute to the development of young athletes and further promote the sport of baseball within the nation.



ISLAMABAD: German Ambassador Alfred Grannas and President of German-Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Pervaiz Akhtar in a group photo with the dignitaries during a book launching ceremony on Landmarks of Pakistan Drawings by Ute Elpers German porcelain painter compiled by Shahid Kamal/Folker Flasse/Farah Mahmood at PNCA.

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.

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.

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 im-

mortalized 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 draftsman could".

He said that their legacy is now being immortalized in this book is not only a long overdue honor but also a beautiful example of the diverse ties between Germany and Pakistan.

"I am particularly grateful to my fellow Ambassador Shahid Kamal for his tireless dedication to this project over the years", he added.

President of the German-Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Pervaiz Akhtar said Ms. Ute Elpers was a German porcelain painter who died in 2019. She was trained as a porcelain and ceramic painter at the Roloff porcelain factory in Muenster, Germany. She gifted 21 of her beautiful filigree ink drawings of landmarks of Pakistan to the Pakistan National Council of Arts (PNCA), Islamabad, he added.

He said that Ute very skillfully portrayed through her pen and ink drawings the rich architectural and cultural heritage of Pakistan, adding that to support humanitarian-

work in Pakistan, she donated proceeds from the sale of her artwork through the Humanity Care Foundation based in Muenster.

Pakistan's ex-Ambassador to Germany, Shahid Kamal in collaboration with the head of Humanitarian Care Foundation, Folker Flasse, and Ms. Farrah Mahmood have compiled the drawings of Ute Elpers in a coffee table book to showcase her memorable artwork and acknowledge her passion and love for Pakistan.

Pakistan's ex-Ambassador to Germany, Shahid Kamal said that today is a very special occasion for him to unveil this special book of Ute Elpers. He said that she was a versatile artist and great humanitarian as she working two jobs as an artist and as an humanitarian. He highly praised Ute Elpers humanitarian work during floods in Pakistan.

Meanwhile, Pakistan National Council of the Arts hosted a fantastic new exhibition of Ute Elpers, a German Porcelain Painter, "Landmarks of Pakistan" in collaboration with the German-Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry and with the support of Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany to celebrate the publication of the book on the drawings of Ute Elpers. Ute Elpers (1935-2019) was a highly gifted artist trained as a porcelain and ceramic painter as well as in the art of using special ink pens. In 2003 Ute met Col Folker Flasse, President of Humanity Care Foundation, a charitable organization registered in Germany and Pakistan. Col Flasse encouraged her to support the Foundation's humanitarian work in Pakistan.

PPP demands timely polls....

Continued from page 1
which "unanimously" approved the new census earlier this month, requiring the ECP to carry out fresh delimitations before holding polls.

As per the schedule, the new delimitation of the constituencies across the country will be notified in December this year.

Meanwhile Following the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) decision to carry out new delimitation, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) on Thursday rejected the idea and announced it would challenge the Council of Common Interest's (CCI) decision to notify the new census in the Supreme Court.

In a statement, the party spokesperson alleged that the schedule for the delimitation issued by the ECP was "malicious and a clear deviation from the Constitution".

The party added that if the National Assembly is dissolved before the completion of its tenure the Constitution clearly states that the ECP is bound to hold polls within 90 days.

"The Election Commission's schedule is a criminal attempt to prolong the caretaker government contrary to what is written in the Constitution," the party spokesperson said. It added that the poll organizing authority after violating the Supreme Court's order on elections in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) is once again trying to "violate the Constitution".

"In light of the decision of the Council of Common Interests, the formation of new constituencies cannot be used as a justification to escape election," the former ruling party further said.

Governor describes provision...

Continued from page 1
society. In this regard, we need to raise voice for promotion of democratic norms and behaviours among the masses at every forum, adding he stressed.

The Governor also said that all are equal and bound to law equally in the real democracy. He said that the country's prevailing circumstances require national unity and solidarity, and for the purpose, we would have to play our due role in national development and reconstruction setting aside mutual differences and personal interests, adding Governor stressed.

Meanwhile, speaking to the Chairman Khidmat-e-Khalq Foundation, Naimatullah Zaheer, the Governor said that the public service is actually true politics.

He said that his doors are open for everyone as there is very much important of the masses and province to him.

He said that Allah Almighty has given him an opportunity to serve the masses for he is indebted to Allah.

He appreciated the performance of Khidmat-e-Khalq Foundation and said that it would be an honour for him to participate in the 31st anniversary of the Foundation.

Earlier, Naimatullah Zaheer invited Governor to participate in the anniversary of his welfare organization.

He also extended an invitation to the Governor to visit Pishin, which was accepted by him.

Moreover, he briefed the Governor about overall performance and functioning of Khidmat-e-Khalq Foundation.

Newly sworn-in cabinet...

Continued from page 1
The Information and Broadcasting Ministry, he would strive to modernise the state media institutions, including the Associated Press of Pakistan (APP), Pakistan Television and Radio Pakistan to make them cope with the modern trends.

Talking to APP, former foreign secretary Jalil Abbas Gilani, who is also part of the interim cabinet, said the main objective of the foreign policy was to serve the national interests.

He said the caretaker cabinet would strive to serve the country's interest through national consensus and improve cordial ties with countries like China, the United States, the United Arab Emirates, Iran and South Asian states, among others.

He said Pakistan should further strengthen its relationship with China being a strategic partner with great economic cooperation.

Similarly, he said, the success of the Afghan gov-



NASEERABAD: Patient is being examine by doctor during the free medical camp organized by International Rescue Committee, held in Naseerabad.

CANCELLATION

The notice inviting Tender Published in Daily Newspaper 04.08.2023 Vide PRQ No.279/03.08.2023 is hereby Canceled due to letter No S-II-2(4)/2023-S&GAD Dated 16th Aug 2023

Executive Engineer
CW, PP & H Department, District
Kohlu

PRQ No.399/17-8-2023
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Policy dialogue stressed for clean energy transition

ISLAMABAD (APP): Former Ambassador of Pakistan to China Naghma Hashmi on Thursday said developing an expert-led long-term strategic energy plan and monitoring mechanism was crucial to ensure just energy access and eradicate energy poverty.

She was speaking at policy dialogue on "Transforming the Power Sector: Exploring the Prospects of China-Pakistan Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETPs)", organized by Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) and Pakistan China Institute (PCI), a news release said.

She expressed that by reforming economic and energy policy structure, energy access for industry and rural economies could be improved and export and economic growth could catalyze.

Head of Political and Press Section, Embassy of People's Republic of China in Pakistan, Wang Shengjie said that energy inflation during Russia-Ukraine conflict triggered a global shift in energy policies for "just" and "adjust" energy transition.

He suggested that currently Pakistan needed moderate and flexible energy policies to ensure just energy transition, introduce supply-side reforms, and diversify the power generation for sustainable energy supply.

He added that Biomass and Waste to Energy were overlooked areas with immense energy generation potential.

Energy efficiency was essential to address the circular debt issue which was the biggest hurdle in foreign investment, he said.

Senior Advisor and Research Fellow, SDPI, Dr Hassan Daud Butt highlighting the immense energy financing opportunity for BRI countries urged the government to leverage it to increase access to clean and affordable energy as well as for international financial institutions to introduce cheaper clean energy technologies in developing countries.

He added that Pakistan must address the headwinds to create a true, sustainable easy-of-doing business environment to attract foreign investors in Pakistan.

Director Green Finance and Development Centre, Fudan University, Dr. Christopher Nedophil said that Pakistan was among top 5 recipients of China's energy financing which had expanded coal-powered generation from 0.15 GW in 2015 to 7.2 GW in 2023 under CPEC, reducing import dependency and foreign exchange reserve outflows.

However despite economic cost of clean energy, renewable energy transition in Pakistan is impeded by policy inconsistency and local political economy.

Executive Director, PCI, Mustafa Hyder Sayed stressed that political will, bold decision-making and concrete policy actions were crucial to catalyze clean energy transition.

He further added that attracting foreign investments in energy and meeting climate and delivering on the 30% emission reduction commitments required developing technical capacity of public bodies in energy sector to formulate policies for competitive tariff structures.



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Ambassador-designate to Algeria, Khalid Hussain Khan Gudaro called on President Dr. Arif Alvi at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Qibla denounces Jaranwala incident, urges respect for religious values, legal actions

ISLAMABAD (APP): Council of Islamic Ideology Chairman, Dr. Qibla Ayaz, Thursday vehemently denounced the recent incidents that unfolded in Jaranwala, highlighting the disconnect between such actions and the core principles of religion, national laws, and societal norms.

He, in a statement, asserted that the occurrences in Jaranwala stood in stark contradiction to the teachings of Islam, which espoused reverence for places of worship and religious symbols across all faiths.

"Our religion and our

faith and our Constitution to ensure that justice prevails. Those responsible for promoting discord and hatred must be held accountable under the full extent of the law," he added.

Furthermore, Dr. Ayaz urged the government to take immediate and comprehensive measures to rehabilitate the affected homes and places of worship. He stressed that compensation should be extended to individuals who had suffered losses to their private properties as a result of these distressing incidents.

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Yield sustainable DRR Urgency of adopting collaborative approach crucial: Cheema

ISLAMABAD (APP): Country Representative, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN - Pakistan), Mahmood Akhtar Cheema has emphasized the urgency of adopting a collaborative approach, which was crucial amid for spiking up environmental degradation as development partners were currently working individually while combining their resources could yield sustainable Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR).

He was addressing in insightful group discussion

on 'Climate Change and its Impacts on DRR' held at the Pakistan Expo on Disaster Risk Reduction 2023 (PEDRR-23) titled "Navigating Towards Resilience: Group Discussion on Climate Change and its Impacts on DRR" organised by IUCN.

The experts and enthusiasts came together to delve into the critical intersection of climate change and disaster risk reduction. They agreed to collaborate and drive meaningful action to build a resilient future for Pakistan.

Court terminates bail of two accused

ISLAMABAD (APP): An Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) on Thursday dismissed the bail petitions of two activists of PTI allegedly involved in riots and vandalizing the public property.

ATC Judge Abul Hassnat Zulkarnain announced the verdict against the interim bail petitions moved by accused Syed Mehtab and Sayed Aftab in FIR registered by Shams Colony Police Station. During the course of proceeding, the defence lawyer adopted the stance that his clients were not even present at the crime scene.

Planning Ministry introduces 'Intelligent Project Automation System'

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives has introduced an Intelligent Project Automation System (iPAS), bringing together different systems to make project work smoother and get enhanced management efficiency.

The iPAS is a joint effort by the Ministry of Planning and Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB) to assist project managers in making smarter choices with the help of geospatial technology, a news release said on Thursday.

Making a proud announcement, the ministry said the Spatial Decision Support System was now a part of the iPAS.

"This means we're entering a new era of project appraisals. By mixing different kinds of information using GIS, #SDSS gives decision-makers a complete picture," it added.

Elaborating further, the ministry said the iPAS was not just a technology but like a smart brain. "It gathers information from different places like demographics, economics, and

the environment. This helps to make better choices for the future."

With iPAS, it said project managers and ministry officials could get a helping hand that gave them tools to improve project operations, financial management, monitoring and execution of the assigned tasks.

The iPAS stands as a testament to the government's unwavering dedication to progress and innovation.

"It's more than just a system. It's a beacon guiding toward a brighter future," the ministry said adding that with the iPAS, it not only streamlined the processes but also fostered collaboration, data-driven decisions, and strategic planning.

"As we navigate the complex landscape of development, iPAS empowers the officials and stakeholders to make choices that aren't just informed but strategically calculated. This initiative encapsulates the essence of Govt's commitment to building a stronger, more efficient, and prosperous Pakistan," the ministry remarked.



Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem AlZaabi 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 camaraderie, 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, Ambassador 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.

The occasion was organized by Saudi Press Attaché, Dr. Naif Al-Otaibi, who emphasized the profound interconnectedness across various spheres between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. Dr. Al-Otaibi underscored that the celebration was a testament to the profound social, political, cultural, economic, and religious affiliations that have blossomed over the years.

In a poignant reflection, Dr. Naif Al-Otaibi noted the significance of Pakistan's Independence Day for Saudi Arabia.

In one year 503 killed, 270 injured in accidents on national highways, motorways

ISLAMABAD (APP): As many as 503 persons were killed and 270 were injured in various accidents that took place on national highways and motorways in the jurisdiction of National Highways and Motorway Police (NHMP) during one year period from July 12, 2022 to July 11, 2023.

According to official figures issued by the NHMP here Thursday, a total of 259 fatal and 128 non-fatal mishaps occurred at national highways and motorways during one the period. The NHMP has taken several steps to control accidents on motorways.

To ensure smooth flow of traffic and control accidents, the NHMP has been conducting round-the-clock patrolling and provid-

ing help to the commuters in distress through its Helpline-130, an official of NHMP said. He said the NHMP has installed LED lights at all toll plazas and it displays safety messages to sensitize the general public at toll plazas and their vehicles. Motorway Police regularly takes measures for road safety education to educate the general public through seminars, workshops, walks and briefings. Massive road safety campaigns are also launched through print, electronic and social media.

"Moreover printed pamphlets and brochures regarding road safety are distributed among road users. The NHMP has taken steps to ensure availability of two drivers in public service vehicles traveling on long-routes.

IHC issues written order regarding hearing on plea of Najam

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Thursday issued a written order regarding hearing in a plea of Najam U Saqib, the son of former chief justice Saqib Nisar, challenging his summons by a parliamentary committee in audio leak case.

Justice Baber Sattar of IHC issued the written order.

It said that the court had been told that attorney general of Pakistan was not available for arguments.

It said that the comments of the federal government were not as per the order dated May 31, and instructed it to submit the detailed answer again.

It said that the court would summon the principal secretary to the prime minister, and federal secretaries of interior.



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Zia (PML-Z) chief Ijaz-ul-Haq, DR Anwar Ul Haq and others offering fataha on grave of Former President Gen (R) Zia Ul Haq on death Anniversary.

Psychological evaluation conducted for CTD's personnel

ISLAMABAD (APP): A comprehensive psychological evaluation was carried out for personnel within the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) with the purpose to enhance the performance and mental acuity of Islamabad Capital Police officials.

The psychological evaluation was undertaken to augment the capabilities of police personnel in accordance with the special directives of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, police said.

The committee over-

seeing this consisted of SSP CTD, who chaired the committee, along with SP CTD and Clinical Psychologists as its members.

Nasir Khan highlighted that the Islamabad Capital Police consistently upholds its responsibilities in maintaining law and order to safeguard the lives and property of citizens.

Given the substantial challenge of ensuring lawfulness in the federal capital of Islamabad, officials were encountering both physical and mental stressors.

CDA plans to develop several new parks in capital

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Capital Development Authority (CDA) is planning to develop several new modern parks in the federal capital to provide better recreational facilities to the residents of the city.

"The civic authority has already developed around 37 public parks in the federal capital during the last ten years and is working on a policy to increase their number in the coming years," official sources in the CDA told APP.

Police to enhance traffic management, safety measures

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad police have decided to enhance traffic management and safety measures for a safe 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 Shoaib 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.



ISLAMABAD: German Ambassador to Pakistan Alfred Grannas, President of Pakistan-German Chamber of Commerce and Industry Pervez Akhtar and others are taking interest in paintings.

Crackdown on reckless driving: 175 licenses revoked for repeat offenses

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Police is taking a resolute stance against traffic violations, demonstrating its commitment to road safety and it revoked 175 licenses over repeated violations.

Amidst a wave of strict actions against traffic rule violators this year, the licenses of 175 habitual offenders have been revoked, alongside the suspension of 217 public service vehicle permits for severe infractions, stated a spokesperson for the police.

This robust initiative follows the precise directives of Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP), the police have diligently issued numerous challan tickets for a range of infractions, including overspeeding, signal jumping, lane indiscipline, zebra crossing violations, and one-way transgressions.

Employing the e-challan system, 175 driving licenses have been suspended due to the deduction of 10 demerit points from their respective records.

PTCL Group partners with PHA to plant trees

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's largest telecommunication company, PTCL Group (PTCL & Ufone 4G) in collaboration with the Parks & Horticulture Authority (PHA),



Rawalpindi, carried out a tree plantation campaign at Khajut on Murree Expressway to help promote environmental protection and the country's resilience against climate change.

Senior management, employees, staff and interns actively participated said a news release.

Murree is one of the most popular tourist destinations in the country that receives massive footfall each year.

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. Speaking at the plantation drive, Nauman Fakhar, Chief Retail Sales Officer, Ufone 4G said, "Environmental protection and resilience against cli-

mate 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."

Also sharing his thoughts, Sheikh Tariq Mehmood, Director PHA Rawalpindi said, "It is heartening to witness PTCL Group stepping up to support efforts for a cleaner and greener Pakistan. PHA has been working tirelessly for the beautification of our cities and towns and maintenance of parks.



ISLAMABAD: A view of massive traffic jam at Islamabad Expressway during rain that experienced the Federal Capital.

Mufti Muneeb denounces Jaranwala incident, urges comprehensive investigation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Former Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee Chairman Mufti Muneeb-ur-Rehman on Thursday denounced the Jaranwala incident in the strongest terms and called for a thorough and impartial investigation to ensure accountability and justice into the matter. Speaking out against biased or one-sided positions, he, in a statement, emphasized the importance of upholding the law without favoritism.

"The responsibility of safeguarding the lives, property, and honor of every citizen, regardless of their background, rests with

the state," the Mufti said who is also the president of Tanzeem-ul-Madaris and Darul Uloom Naemia, Karachi. He reiterated that the Constitution of Pakistan guaranteed the protection of all citizens, including minorities such as Christians, and their places of worship. He further said, "Although we unequivocally denounce the harm inflicted upon the churches and residences of Christians, we also assert the necessity to elucidate that the motives behind this occurrence must be revealed, including the identities of those who defiled the Holy Quran.

PM AJK committed to provide relief to masses

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

While addressing the coalition partners' parliamentary meeting at Jammu 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.



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 Gujjar, 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 Muratza Wahab and former provincial minister Nasir Shah.



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 Wajhat 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 education Authority (TEVTA) where she was told about the skill development training of the women by chairman TEVTA Raja Razaq 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.

PRCS-KP completes distribution of aid after heavy rains in Chitral

PESHAWAR (APP): Pakistan Red Crescent Society Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (PRCS-KP) on Thursday successfully completed the distribution of essential aid to families affected by the recent floods in Chitral District, following heavy rainfall.

This assistance was provided to 118 families in various areas of Chitral, including the Kalash Valley. Relief items such as tents, blankets, and family hygiene kits were provided.

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.

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

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.



HYDERABAD: Members of Hyderabad Union of Journalists are lighting candles to express solidarity with martyred Senior Journalist Jan Muhammad Mehar, who was shot dead in Sukkur, at Hyderabad press club

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.

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.

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.

The court has left us on mercy of jail authorities that we will be able to meet only if jail authorities allow us, I do not understand why this is being done.

Aleema Khan said in response of a question that they are giving many statements and they will have many more stories.

WHO delegation meets PFA DG

LAHORE (APP): A delegation of the World Health Organisation (WHO) called on Director General Raja Jahangir Anwar to discuss the medical screening project and reorganise the testing system for food-borne diseases.

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 with the help of WHO.

GB govt striving to phase out use of plastic for many years: CS GB

GILGIT (APP): Chief Secretary Gilgit Baltistan Muhiudeen Wani Thursday said the Government of Gilgit-Baltistan has been striving to phase out the use of plastic for the last many years owing to its hazardous impacts on human health and the environment.

"In this regard, Order under Section 144 of CrPc shall be issued to ensure ban on transportation of plastic bottles from down country to GB with effect from 1st September 2023, CS GB said. He said necessary directions are to be issued to all government departments, attached departments, subordinate offices, autonomous bodies.

was attended by the Inspector General of Police and the Home Secretary. It was decided to ban the use, sale, manufacturing and transportation of plastic bottles in Gilgit-Baltistan given the detrimental impacts it causes on human health and the overall ecological system.

"In this regard, Order under Section 144 of CrPc shall be issued to ensure ban on transportation of plastic bottles from down country to GB with effect from 1st September 2023, CS GB said. He said necessary directions are to be issued to all government departments, attached departments, subordinate offices, autonomous bodies.



LAHORE: Religious Scholar Jawad Naqvi, Arch Bishop Sebastian Francis Shaw and scholars of religion rises hands to show solidarity during the Vice Chancellor Conference on Civic Education by Punjab Education Department at local hotel in Provincial Capital.

Belgium to support promotion of education in merged districts

PESHAWAR (APP): Ambassador of Belgium Charles Delogne on Thursday called on Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ghulam Ali here at the Governor's House.

In the meeting, discussions were held on bilateral issues, trade relations and enhancing people-to-people relations between the two sides, said a press release issued here.

The two sides also discussed issues related to providing better education opportunities to the youth of the merged tribal districts.

The governor said that Belgium should provide support for

promoting education in the merged districts of the province and special scholarships for the youth.

He suggested that Belgium should introduce an educational project that could bring the youth of merged districts forward in the field of education.

Ghulam Ali also underlined the need to strengthen bilateral trade and people-to-people ties with Belgium.

The Belgium envoy said the two countries had a history of 75 years of strong public and diplomatic relations.

The two countries were celebrating the anniversary of 75 years of diplomatic relations.

RWMC's sanitation activities underway during rains

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Rawalpindi Waste Management Company (RWMC) was carrying out the cleanliness of the city during the ongoing rainy season.

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.

Naqvi directs to ensure free of-cost medicines to patients

RAWALPINDI (APP): Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi on Thursday directed the management of Benazir Bhutto Hospital (BBH) to ensure the provision of free-of-cost medicines to the patients.

During a visit to inspect facilities at BBH, he reviewed the treatment of the patients in the new Emergency department.

The CM interacted with the patients and their attendants and inquired about the medical facilities provided to them.

Taking notice of the patient's complaints about delays in medical check-ups and the X-rays

process, Naqvi said that there should be no hold-up in check-ups and directed the hospital's administration to expedite the process of registration at the reception counter.

During his visit, the CM in detail inspected various sections of the hospital and found some doctors were absent from their duties.

He also inspected the sanitation situation of the BBH and directed the hospital's management to improve the cleanliness arrangement.

Caretaker Information Minister Amir Mir also accompanied the CM during his visit.



GILGIT: Ex-Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Hafiz Hafeez Ur Rehman addressing a press conference at PMLN Secretariat.

LHC orders to produce Hassan Niazi nephew of chairman PTI on Aug 18

LAHORE (Online): Lahore High Court (LHC) while taking action on the petition seeking recovery of Hassan Niazi nephew of chairman PTI has ordered to produce Hassan Niazi on Friday in the court.

A single bench of LHC led by Justice Sultan Tanvir took up on Thursday for hearing petition filed by Hafeez Ullah Niazi father of Hassan Niazi in connection with recovery of his son.

In the petition IG Police Punjab and others have been made respondents.

The petitioner has taken the plea Police have kept Hassan Niazi in habeas corpus at unknown place and family members are being told nothing about him. It is requested

to court to order for the recovery of his son.

Justice Sultan Tanvir issued written order on the petition of Hafeez Ullah Niazi.

The court ordered all other respondents including IG Police should file report on next hearing.

It has been said in the written order of the court if Ahsan Niazi is in the custody of the respondents then he should be presented in the court on August 18.

Hafeez Ullah Niazi father of Hassan Niazi had resorted to LHC in connection with recovery of his son.

On the other side the counsel took the plea during the hearing of petition against arrest of Hassan Niazi in Peshawar High Court (PHC).

GB officials review work on GLOF-II Project to enhance disaster risk management

GILGIT (APP): Additional Secretary of the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination (MoCC&EC) and National Project Director of the GLOF-II Project Syed Mujtaba Hussain accompanied by Provincial Coordinator Abdul Basit, Director General of the Gilgit-Baltistan Disaster Management Authority (GBDMA) Kamal Uddin Qamar and other officials, here on Thursday visited various parts of Gilgit-Baltistan to assess the ongoing initiatives under the GLOF-II Project and address the challenges posed by glacial lake

outburst floods (GLOFs) and enhance disaster risk management in the region.

During the visit, the delegation engaged in productive meetings with the local communities wherein they sought valuable feedback about the ongoing project activities. The insights garnered from these discussions will play a pivotal role in ensuring that the project aligns with the needs and aspirations of the local communities, further enhancing its effectiveness. Talking to the media, the Additional Secretary highlighted the alarming rise of over 3,000 lakes as a consequence of melting glaciers.



HYDERABAD: Members of Christian Community are holding protest demonstration against attack on churches in Jaranwala, at Hyderabad press club.

Commissioner visits Warsak Dam, reviews security

PESHAWAR (APP): Saleem Khan, Additional Deputy Commissioner Relief Peshawar Imran Yousafzai and other relevant officers also accompanied the commissioner.

On this occasion, the Project Director gave a detailed briefing on the ongoing work on the second Warsak Dam Rehabilitation Project, while the Director Security gave a detailed briefing on the security of the staff working on the project.

Talking on the occasion,

Saleem Khan, Additional Deputy Commissioner Relief Peshawar Imran Yousafzai and other relevant officers also accompanied the commissioner.

On this occasion, the Project Director gave a detailed briefing on the ongoing work on the second Warsak Dam Rehabilitation Project, while the Director Security gave a detailed briefing on the security of the staff working on the project.

Talking on the occasion,

Govt to ensure full use of SIFC forum for economic development: Kakar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Thursday said that the government would ensure full use of the forum of Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) to carry forward the development agenda.

Terming the SIFC a ray of hope for Pakistan's economic development, the prime minister said the government would focus on development of different sectors under the Council's umbrella.

Addressing a meeting held here in connection with the working of SIFC, Prime Minister Kakar said the caretaker government during its short tenure would fully devote all its

energies to the stability and progress of the economy. He directed to harmonize the regulatory structure with the contemporary international requirements to improve the energy sector.

He said Pakistan had vast potential for foreign investment in the fields of agriculture, mining and minerals, information technology, energy and defence production.

During the meeting, Secretary SIFC Jahanzeb Khan and Secretary Implementation Jameel Ahmed Qureshi briefed the prime minister about the steps taken to bolster foreign direct investment.

PM Kakar was also apprised about the whole of government approach under SIFC to increase the foreign investment by facilitating investors.

The meeting was further informed that under the forum, the government would provide one window facility to the investors for different projects.

The prime minister appreciated the efforts of Jahanzeb Khan and Jameel Ahmed Qureshi for bringing investment in the country, adding the SIFC would play a vital role in improving the economy.

He said there was huge potential for foreign investment in the infrastructure and tourism sectors.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar getting briefed about steps taken to bolster Foreign Direct Investment by SIFC officials.

Sino-Pak joint venture set to start production of electric rickshaws

BEIJING (APP): In a development for Pakistan's transportation sector, a joint venture between Chinese and Pakistani companies is set to commence production of electric two-wheelers and three-wheelers, commonly known as rickshaws in the country.

The collaboration is expected to bring about positive changes in the local market, reducing carbon emissions and promoting eco-friendly transportation options.

The joint venture was formed in April by Chinese electric vehicle manufacturer Benling

Group, Chinese battery manufacturer Dongjin Group and Pakistani auto company Crown Group to leverage their expertise to introduce cutting-edge electric mobility solutions to the Pakistani market.

Two-wheelers and three-wheelers are widely used in Pakistan for public transportation and are a vital part of the country's mobility ecosystem. By electrifying this segment, the vehicles to be produced here are expected to address the growing demand for efficient and environmentally friendly transportation options in densely populated urban areas,

where traffic congestion and air pollution have become major concerns. In a recent interview with China Economic Net, Hu Ge, General Manager of Dongjin Pakistan noted that "it is expected that the first batch of materials, batteries and equipment for the production of electric two-wheelers and three-wheelers will arrive in Pakistan after customs clearance next week. We are excited about the launch of the first batch of electric two-wheelers and three-wheelers manufactured by our joint venture late this month or in early September."



MUZAFFARABAD: First Lady Begum Samina Alvi viewing the handiwork of artisans during her visit to TEVTA Vocational Training Institute.

EAG Emphasizes Economic Openness, Crucial Structural Reforms

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Economic Advisory Group (EAG) on Thursday highlighted economic openness and the need for key structural reforms including pricing revisions, improved vocational education, participating in regional trade blocs, and shifting industrial policy towards innovation.

These reforms encompass improvements in urban land utilization, simplification of tax regulations, and harmonization with the EAG's vision for a more competitive and forward-moving economy.

A meeting was organized by the Economic Advisory Group (EAG) to deliberate on the recent revisions made to the Board of Investment Act.

Within the discussions, apprehensions were raised regarding the substantial authority vested in the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC). The EAG stated that unless the challenge of

servicing external debt is directly addressed, Pakistan's investment environment will remain vulnerable to the associated macro uncertainties. Notably, Pakistan's external debt servicing burden, when measured against its dollar income, stands among the highest globally.

Recognising the need for swift policy decisions to address Pakistan's current crisis, the EAG also asserts that measures diminishing competition and weakening contractual institutions will not attain the desired goals.

The EAG suggested a different plan for policymakers to follow, with the goal of promoting the nation's future prosperity.

The EAG suggests a way forward that combines restructuring external debt to tackle immediate liquidity challenges and implementing structural reforms to boost Pakistan's productivity and competitiveness.

Most markets drop as US rate, China fears dent global optimism

HONG KONG (APP): Most Asian markets joined a global sell-off Thursday on fresh worries that the Federal Reserve would hike interest rates again, while China's economic woes continued to shred traders' nerves.

While minutes from the US central bank's July meeting showed two decision-makers were against lifting borrowing costs, they also revealed that "most participants" saw a significant risk that price increases would persist and could require further monetary tightening. The remarks dealt a blow to investors who had hoped rates were now at their peak following a string of data indicating inflation was falling and the jobs market softening.

And there also remains debate inside the Fed about the next move, with officials giving sharply differing views, though the bank has said it will make decisions based on incoming data.

Futures traders assign a probability of close to 90 percent that the Fed will stand pat at its September meeting, according to data from CME Group, though there is a growing belief that more hikes are coming down the line.

All three main indexes on Wall Street sank, with tech firms—which are susceptible to higher rates—acting as a major drag, while 10-year Treasury yields hit their highest level since 2008 at the height of the global financial crisis.

PSX turns around, gains 179 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) turned around to bullish trend on Thursday, gaining 179.40 points, a positive change of 0.37 per cent, closing at 48,325.84 points against 48,146.44 points the previous trading day.

A total of 48,146.44 shares were traded during the day as compared to 194,576,873 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 10,021 billion against Rs 7,670 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 325 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 155 of them recorded gains and 147 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 23 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were Dewan Motors with 25,214,746 shares at Rs 14.23 per share; JS Bank Ltd with 14,384,000 shares at Rs 5.59 per share and Pak Refinery with 12,576,009 shares at Rs 16.71 per share.

Ismail Ind witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 42.50 per share price, closing at Rs 642.50, whereas the runner-up was Sanofi-Aventis with an Rs 38.00 rise in its per share price to Rs 800.00.

Shipping Activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Six ships namely, Wide Juliet, Maersk Pelepas, Asphalt Alliance, Laniki, IMKE Selmar and Al-Jassasiya, are scheduled to load/offload Container, Bitumen, Palm oil, Coal and LNG, berthed at Container Terminal, Multi-Purpose Terminal, Liquid Terminal, Bulk Terminal and Engro Terminal respectively on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, three more ships, New Liberty, Elka Athina and Hafnia Caterina scheduled to load/offload Corn, Gas oil and Mogas also arrived at the outer anchorage of Port Qasim during the last 24 hours.

Railways earn over 5mln from salons in last three years

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Railways has generated revenue worth Rs 5,269,315 through utilizing its 23 salons and inspection coaches for commercial purposes, during the last three years.

"At present, Pakistan Railways has only 23 salons and inspection coaches with different dignitaries of the country who are entitled to use these salons when needed," an official in the Ministry of Railways told APP on Thursday.

Giving the details, he said, "Two highly luxurious coaches have been allocated for the Prime Minister's Secretariat while four coaches have been allocated for the Minister for Railways, Secretary/

Chairman of Railways, and another senior official in the ministry."

The official said, "Only one salon has been allocated to the federal government while one each has been allocated to the Governors of Sindh, Balochistan, Punjab, and the provincial governments."

In addition, eight salons had been allocated for the Railway Headquarters Lahore, in which one each would be marked to Chief Executive Officer/General Manager (BS-22), Additional General Manager BS-21, Inspector General Railway Police, Federal Government Inspector, and four salons were allocated for Principal Officers.

Rupee gains 02 paise against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani rupee on Thursday gained 02 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs294.91 against the previous day's closing of Rs294.93. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs302 and Rs304 respectively. The price of the Euro decreased by Rs1.61 to close at Rs320.75 against the last day's closing of Rs322.36, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese Yen went down by 01 paise and closed at Rs 2.01, whereas a decrease of 58 paise was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs375.54 as compared to the last closing of Rs376.12.



LAHORE: A delegation of industrialists and businessmen meeting with Provincial Minister Provincial Minister for Industries and Commerce SM Tanveer.

SMEDA to organize webinar on Amazon Private Label for SMEs

ISLAMABAD (APP): Small Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) is going to organize a webinar on "Amazon Private Label for SMEs" for profitable business growth on August 19 (Saturday).

SMEDA under National Business Development Programme (NBDDP) for SMEs, is offering free online awareness sessions on various e-commerce verticals through pre-qualified services provider M/S Extreme Commerce across Pakistan, according to a source in the authority.

The e-commerce

awareness and training initiatives will provide opportunities to the SMEs on high trending and most demanding e-commerce tools, and platforms.

The webinar provides information about product hunting, product sourcing, product listing, creation and management, launching and ranking, how to develop your own private label, and how to sell made-in-Pakistan products on Amazon.

The training session would be attended by individuals and firms operating in e-commerce verticals, existing and potential SMEs.

PBF calls for the revival of sick industries in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): Vice Chairman, Pakistan Business Forum (PBF) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Muhammad Ashfaq Paracha on Thursday urged the authorities concerned to take effective measures to revive sick industries and also solve the problems being faced by the industrialists in the province.

He said that steps

should be taken to resolve the issues of the industrialists in the industrial estates falling under the KP Economic Zones Development and Management Company and the Small Industries Development Board as well.

The PBF Vice Chairman was given a detailed briefing by the Nowshera Industrial Zone.

Kyrgyz company sees promising investment opportunities in food sector

ISLAMABAD (APP): A visiting delegation of Kyrgyzstan business community on Thursday described Pakistan as a promising destination for investment, especially in the food sector.

Zhumadil Egemberdiev, who is heading the delegation of a company "Shoro," expressed keen interest to explore potential investment avenues and collaborations within Pakistan's vibrant food industry, particularly in the Punjab province.

Talking to Chairman Kyrgyzstan Trade House and Coordinator to Federal Tax Ombudsman Meher Kashif Younis, he stressed the need for focusing on a mutual goal of fostering economic growth and enhancing bilateral ties.

He said recognizing the abundant resources, skilled workforce, and growing consumer demand within Pakistan, Kyrgyz businessmen were enthusiastic about the prospect of joint ventures and partnerships that

could drive innovation, employment and market expansion.

Zhumadil Egemberdiev said the food industry, being an essential component of both countries' economies, offered a plethora of opportunities for collaboration.

He said Kyrgyzstan's expertise in certain food products and processing techniques could synergize effectively with Pakistan's rich agricultural resources and establish international standard food processing facilities.

"This potential partnership can result in the creation of value-added products, improved supply chains, and a broader market reach," he added.

Zhumadil Egemberdiev proposed the establishment of a collaborative platform that facilitated communication, knowledge exchange, and business matchmaking between Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan.



MULTAN: Deputy Managing Director Muhammad Shahid Punjab Small Industry distributes souvenirs among the participants during glass cut work competition organized by Punjab Small Industry at Tea House.

SCCI chief invites Belgium investors to invest in KP's important sectors

PESHAWAR (APP): Acting President of Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI), Ijaz Khan Afridi invited Belgium companies to make investments in mines, minerals and other important sectors in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Prospects of enhancing mutual trade ties between Pakistan and Belgium are brighter, said Ijaz Afridi while speaking to members during a visit of the Ambassador of Belgium in Pakistan, Charles Delogne here at the Chamber's House on Thursday.

The SCCI's acting president Commercial Attaché of the Belgium Embassy in Islamabad, Abid Hussain, Trade Officer Shoukat Niazi, Former presidents of the Chambers Zulfiqar Ali Khan, Sherbaz Bilour, former vice president Malik Niaz Muhammad, members of the executive committee of the SCCI Naem Qasmi, Kashif Amin, Hafaf Ali Khan, Javed Ahmad Khan, Laal Badshah, Monawar Khurshid, Abdul Hakim Shinwari, Qurtul Ain and

Ihsanullah, Fazl e Wahid, Sadder Gul, Faiz Rasool, Ishiaq Muhammad and others were present during the meeting.

The President SCCI called for the establishment of business to business contacts, organizing joint exhibitions and taking benefits from each other's experiences to further strengthen the mutual economic cooperation between the two countries.

Charles Delogne while speaking to members of the SCCI said that his country gave much importance to Pakistan to further enhance the diplomatic and bilateral trade relations with Pakistan, because of which cordial diplomatic and trade relations were established between the two countries for the last 75 years.

He said bilateral cooperation has been improved to some extent after granting of GSP+status to Pakistan. However, the envoy stressed the need for further enhancing bilateral trade and economic relations with Pakistan.



HYDERABAD: Labourers busy in sorting onions for delivery to other markets at Subzi Mandi.

Telenor Pakistan's climate change dialogue unites industry leaders for 'Greener Tomorrow'

KARACHI (APP): The climate change experts on Thursday came together in a cross-industry dialogue to understand challenges and learning opportunities for Pakistan due to increasing global warming impacts and natural calamities impacting the country's economy, masses, and natural resources.

The event, organised and hosted by Telenor Pakistan at their Karachi office, furthers the company's commitment to advance sustainability efforts and promote collaborative approaches towards addressing climate change, a news release said.

The panel, comprising representatives from Reon Energy, Sapphire Group's Renewable Energy & Infrastructure Business; Linked Things and S. Mehboob & Company shared their insights on the ever-accelerating pace of climate change, its far-reaching consequences, and the evolving roles of businesses. Delving deeper, they explored renewable energy initiatives and technologies, underscoring the pivotal role of stable economic indicators and policies in empowering the private sector towards sustainable futures. A key

takeaway from the discussion: by prioritising the reduction of carbon emissions and the promotion of renewable energy, businesses can contribute to the resilience and adaptation efforts crucial for combating the impact of climate change in Pakistan. Given Pakistan's vulnerability to climate change, this discourse takes on even greater urgency. The nation grapples with extreme climate events such as heatwaves and floods, which have inflicted substantial damage, exacerbated poverty rates, and stifled economic growth.



FAISALABAD: Labourers spreading corn cobs for drying purpose.

Iran FM touts unity on first Saudi visit since ties restored

Monitoring Desk
RIYADH: Iran's top diplomat preached unity and dialogue during a visit to Saudi Arabia on Thursday, his first since the two Middle East rivals announced a surprise rapprochement in March.

Hossein Amir-Abdollahian also took the opportunity to reiterate the Islamic Republic's support for the Palestinian cause at a time when Riyadh is in discussions with the United States about potentially normalising ties with Israel.

Ties between Sunni-majority Saudi Arabia and Shiite-majority Iran "are progressing in the right direction," Amir-Abdollahian told reporters at a press conference with his Saudi counterpart Prince Faisal bin Farhan, touting economic and security cooperation without announcing any new agreements.

Thursday's meeting in the Saudi foreign ministry's Islamic Solidarity Hall "will be a prelude to the meeting of the heads of the two countries", he added, without specifying when President Ebrahim Raisi would visit Saudi Arabia at King Salman's invitation.

"We are sure that these meetings and cooperation will help the unity of the Islamic world."

The foreign ministers did not take questions.

The two countries severed ties in 2016 after Saudi diplomatic missions in Iran were attacked during protests over Riyadh's execution of Shiite cleric Nimr al-Nimr.

But in March, a China-brokered deal saw the long-time rivals agree to restore diplomatic relations and reopen their respective embassies.

In June, Iran reopened its embassy in Riyadh with a flag-raising ceremony. Its new ambassador, Alireza Enayati, travelled with Amir-Abdollahian to Riyadh on Thursday.

Earlier this month, Iran said the Saudi embassy in Tehran had begun operations, but Riyadh has yet to confirm this or announce an ambassador of its own.

Amir-Abdollahian's one-day stop in Riyadh came two months after Prince Faisal became the first Saudi foreign minister to travel to Iran since 2006.



Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian (L) and his Saudi counterpart Faisal bin Farhan hold a joint press conference in Riyadh.

BRICS nations to meet in South Africa seeking to blunt Western dominance

Monitoring Desk
JOHANNESBURG: BRICS leaders meet in South Africa next week to discuss how to turn a loose club of nations accounting for a quarter of the global economy into a geopolitical force that can challenge the West's dominance in world affairs.

Russian President Vladimir Putin, who faces an international arrest warrant over alleged war crimes in Ukraine, will not join leaders from Brazil, India, China and South Africa amid rifts over whether to expand the bloc to include dozens of "Global South" nations queuing up to join.

South Africa will host

Chinese President Xi Jinping, Brazil's Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi from August 22 to 24.

Spread over the globe and with economies that operate in vastly different ways, the main thing uniting the BRICS is scepticism about a world order they see as serving the interests of the United States and its rich-country allies who promote international norms they enforce but don't always respect. Few details have emerged about what they plan to discuss, but expansion is expected to be high on the agenda, as some 40 nations have shown interest in joining, either formally or informally, according to South Africa. They include Saudi Arabia, Argentina and Egypt.

"BRICS AND AFRICA" China, seeking to expand its geopolitical influence as its tussles with the United States, wants to enlarge BRICS quickly, while Brazil is resisting expansion, fearing the already unwieldy club could see its stature diluted by it.

In a written response to Reuters questions, China's foreign ministry said it "supports progress in expanding membership, and welcomes more like-minded partners to join the 'BRICS family' at an early date."

Biden hopes to tighten South Korean, Japanese bond at Camp David

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: When Yoon Suk Yeol this week commemorated his country's 1945 independence from Japan, the South Korean president didn't dwell on the brutal 35-year occupation his people endured under their neighbor.

Instead, the 62-year-old leader, too young to remember the humiliations of Japanese rule, celebrated the country as a "partner" that now shares the same values and interests. Facing nuclear threats from North Korea — a constant worry for both Seoul and Tokyo — Yoon reserved his condemnation for "Communist aggression."

The Biden administration believes that a seismic but fragile realignment is underway in East Asia: a deeper relationship between two close US allies with a long history of mutual acrimony and distrust. The change would accelerate Washington's effort to counter China's influence in the region and help it defend Taiwan. US President Joe Biden hopes to cement those ties with a summit at Camp David, the storied presidential retreat in Maryland's Catoctin Mountains, this Friday.

While the summit is unlikely to produce a formal security arrangement that commits the nations to each other's defense, they will agree to a mutual understanding about regional responsibilities. "I find the meeting at Camp David mind blowing," Dennis Wilder, a professor at Georgetown University who once managed the Japan and South Korea relationship under former President George W. Bush, wrote on the social media platform X. "We could barely get South Korean and Japanese leaders to meet with us in the same room."



ECOWAS Committee of Chiefs of Defense staff pose for a group photo at the headquarters of the Ghana Armed Forces as they meet on the deployment of its standby force in the Republic of Niger, in Accra, Ghana.

Militia fighting leaves 55 dead, 146 wounded in Libya

Monitoring Desk
TRIPOLI: Tripoli's worst armed clashes in a year have killed 55 people and wounded 146, Libyan media reported on Wednesday, before a truce took hold in the capital and air traffic was restored.

Fighting between the influential 444 Brigade and the Al-Radaa, or Special Detachment Force, two of the myriad of militias that have vied for power since the 2011 overthrow of Muammar Qadhafi, erupted on Monday night and raged through Tuesday. The clashes with rocket launchers and machine-guns followed the detention of the 444 Brigade head, Colonel Mahmud Hamza, by the rival Al-Radaa Force on Monday, an interior ministry official said.

Al-Ahram TV updated the death toll to 55, citing Malek Mersit, spokesman for the emergency medical

17 soldiers killed in Niger border attack

Monitoring Desk
NIAMEY: At least 17 troops were killed in an ambush in Niger in a reminder of the nation's deep security crisis as its military rulers face off against neighbours determined to reverse last month's coup.

An army detachment was "the victim of a terrorist ambush near the town of Koutougou" in the Tillaberi region near Burkina Faso on Tuesday, said a defence ministry statement published later that day.

It added that another 20 soldiers had been wounded, six seriously, with all the casualties evacuated to the capital Niamey. More than 100 assailants, who were travelling on motorbikes, were "neutralised" during their retreat, the army said.

An insurgency has plagued Africa's Sahel region for more than a decade, breaking out in northern Mali in 2012 before spreading to neighbouring Niger and Burkina Faso in 2015.

Around 45,000 Muscovites fight in Ukraine: mayor

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: Tens of thousands of Muscovites are taking part in combat operations in Ukraine, the Russian capital's mayor Sergei Sobyanin said on Wednesday, giving a rare estimate of the forces deployed.

Russia and Ukraine rarely communicate on the total number of troops involved in the conflict, or on their respective losses.

"Forty-five thousand Muscovites are fighting in the area of the special military operation," Sobyanin was cited as saying by Russian news agency

Small aircraft carrying 8 people crashes in Malaysia

Monitoring Desk
KUALA LUMPUR: A small aircraft crashed in Malaysia's Selangor state with eight people on board on Thursday, the country's civil aviation authority said.

The condition of the six passengers and two crew on board the Beechcraft Model 390 (Premier 1) aircraft could not immediately be confirmed and a search and rescue mission was underway, the civil aviation chief said in a statement. It crashed near Elmina township after departing from the holiday island of Langkawi, en route to Selangor's Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah Airport.



Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida waves as he gets on an airplane at the Haneda international airport in Tokyo.

At least 36 Nigerian soldiers killed in ambush, helicopter crash

Monitoring Desk
ABUJA: At least 36 Nigerian soldiers were killed in two attacks during operations against armed gangs in the northern-central state of Niger, the military said on Thursday.

Gangs of heavily armed men have wreaked havoc across northwestern Nigeria in the past two years, kidnapping thousands, killing hundreds and making it unsafe to travel by road or to farm in some areas. Defence spokesman Major-General Edward Buba said the fatalities include three officers and 22 soldiers, with seven soldiers wounded during an ambush around Kundu village in the Shiroro local government area in Niger state on Aug. 14. An Air Force Mi-171 helicopter despatched to evacuate the casualties crashed near Chukuba village in Shiroro on Monday, killing others. While Buba didn't confirm the cause of the crash, two military sources told Reuters the helicopter was probably brought down after gang members shot at it.

"The helicopter crashed with 14 of the earlier killed in action personnel, seven of the earlier wounded in action personnel, two pilots and two crew members," Buba said in a statement. "Operations are ongoing to recover the bodies and investigate the cause of the aircraft which will be communicated," he said. Attacks by gangs, often referred to locally as bandits, have confounded Nigeria's security forces, who have been stretched as they tackle a violent secessionist group in the east.



Authorities inspect the scene of a plane crash in Shah Alam, Malaysia.

US imposes sanctions on four Russians linked to FSB over Navalny poisoning

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: The United States on Thursday imposed sanctions on four Russians it accused of being involved in the 2020 poisoning of now jailed Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny.

The U.S. Treasury Department in a statement said the four hit with sanctions are linked to Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) and included two it said are among the main reported perpetrators of Navalny's poisoning.

"Today we remind Vladimir Putin and his regime that there are consequences not only for waging a brutal and unprovoked war against Ukraine, but also for violating the human rights of

Israeli troops kill a Palestinian outside a West Bank bakery

Monitoring Desk
TEL AVIV: Israeli forces raided a home above a bakery in a militant stronghold in the occupied West Bank on Thursday, killing one man in a gunbattle in Jenin, a city that has seen some of the worst bloodshed in the current round of Israeli-Palestinian fighting.

Violence has gripped the region since last spring, when Israel launched near-daily raids in response to a spate of deadly Palestinian attacks.

It's become the fiercest fighting in the West Bank in some two decades, and along with increased violence by radical Jewish settlers and settlement expansion by Israel's far-right government, has fueled tensions in the region.

US beefs up Gulf deployment over Iran oil tanker threat

Monitoring Desk
MANAMA: As Iranian seizures threaten oil tankers plying the Gulf, the United States is raising its military presence — a move long demanded by Gulf Arab states who accused Washington of retreating from the region.

Three thousand additional US personnel on troop-landing warships have already passed through the Red Sea, and US-led maritime forces are warning ships against approaching Iranian waters.

The moves follow a spate of capture and attempted capture of ships in

Sweden raises terrorist alert level after Quran burnings

Monitoring Desk
STOCKHOLM: Sweden's national security service raised its terrorist alert to the second-highest level on Thursday and warned that the threat of attack could persist for a long time after burnings and other acts against the Quran outraged Muslims.

Denmark and Sweden have tightened border controls as authorities in both countries fear revenge attacks after anti-Islam activists burned and damaged several copies of the Muslim holy book in recent months.

Sweden's SAPO security service raised the warning level to 4 from 3 on a scale that runs from 1 to 5, reflecting a "high threat."

Russian raid off Turkey's coast tests Erdogan's resolve

Monitoring Desk
ISTANBUL: Russia's raid on a ship just off Turkey's coast brings the fallout from the Ukraine war to another NATO frontier and raises the stakes as Ankara seeks to coax Moscow back to a grain-export deal that would restore some calm to the Black Sea.

Armed marines raided the Turkish-based vessel via helicopter on Sunday some 60 km (37 miles) off Turkey's northwest coast, in international waters but near Istanbul, in what Moscow called an inspection before it sailed on to Ukraine. Turkey, NATO's second-largest military, has made no public comment on the incident that occurred far south of the war that has raged for a year-and-a-half in the north Black Sea.

Analysts said it tests President Tayyip Erdogan's resolve to maintain good relations with Russian President Vladimir Putin, whom he has invited to Turkey this month to discuss resuming the UN-brokered deal that had protected grain exports from Ukraine. "This type of aggression being exercised so close to Istanbul went unchecked and doesn't respect Turkey's overall rights," said Yoruk Isik, an Istanbul-based geopolitical analyst at the Bosphorus Observer consultancy.

India landslides block trucks taking supplies to strife-torn Manipur

Monitoring Desk
GUWAHATI: Landslides in India have stranded hundreds of trucks carrying fuel and essential items to the violence-hit state of Manipur, police said on Thursday, after heavy rains caused devastation that killed at least 84 people.

Torrential rains that officials blame on climate change, coupled with unabated construction over the past few years in the mountainous Himalayan region, have also led to frequent flash floods and landslides in neighbouring Pakistan and Nepal.

Rocks and mud engulfed part of a highway near Imphal, the capital of Manipur, following Wednesday's rains, stranding 400 trucks, police said, adding that incessant rain was hampering efforts to clear the road.

The state is trying to restore peace after it was hit by deadly ethnic violence that began in May, killing at least 180 people and driving tens of thousands from their homes.

Hundreds of structures have also crumbled down the mountains in the northwestern state of Himachal Pradesh, killing at least 68 people with about 15 missing, disaster management official Praveen Bhardwaj said.

The state's chief minister, Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, told the Indian Express newspaper he blamed indiscriminate construction and improper structural design among the reasons for the destruction.

In the neighbouring state of Uttarakhand, at least 16 people died in landslides this week with 15 missing by Wednesday, government figures showed.

Hawaii officials say 'no regrets' about lack of wildfire sirens

Monitoring Desk
LAHAINA: Embattled officials in Hawaii who have been criticised for the lack of warnings as a deadly wildfire ripped through a town insisted on Wednesday that sounding emergency sirens would not have saved lives.

At least 110 people died when the inferno levelled Lahaina last week on the island of Maui, with some residents not aware their town was at risk until they saw flames for themselves.

But the head of Maui's Emergency

Big potential for green hydrogen in North Africa: report

Monitoring Desk
PARIS: By 2050 North Africa could become a leading exporter of green hydrogen with Europe its main market, according to a recent report projecting the future of an industry still in its infancy.

So-called green hydrogen is set "to redraw the global energy and resource map as early as 2030, creating a \$1.4 trillion-a-year market by 2050," according to the report from accounting consultancy Deloitte.



Red Cross volunteers help local residents to evacuate from the city of Kupiansk-Vuzlovyyi in Kharkiv region, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, in Kharkiv, Ukraine.

