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'God is my witness': President denies signing Official Secrets, Army Act amendment bills

Says he did not sign the bills; alleges his staff "undermined his will and command"; Ministry of Law & Justice notes with grave concern President's tweet; PPP, PML-N call for President Alvi's resignation; PTI to take matter to Supreme Court

ISLAMABAD (Online): President Dr. Arif Alvi denied signing the Official Secrets Amendment Bill and the Army Act Amendment Bill.

In a statement on social networking website X (Twitter), Arif Alvi said that God is witness, I have not signed the Official Secrets Amendment Bill 2023 and the Pakistan Army Amendment Bill 2023 because I do not agree with these laws. He wrote that I had

asked my staff to return the bills without signature within the stipulated time to render them ineffective.

Dr. Arif Alvi wrote, "I have confirmed with the staff several times whether they have been sent back (without signature) and I have been assured that they have been sent back."

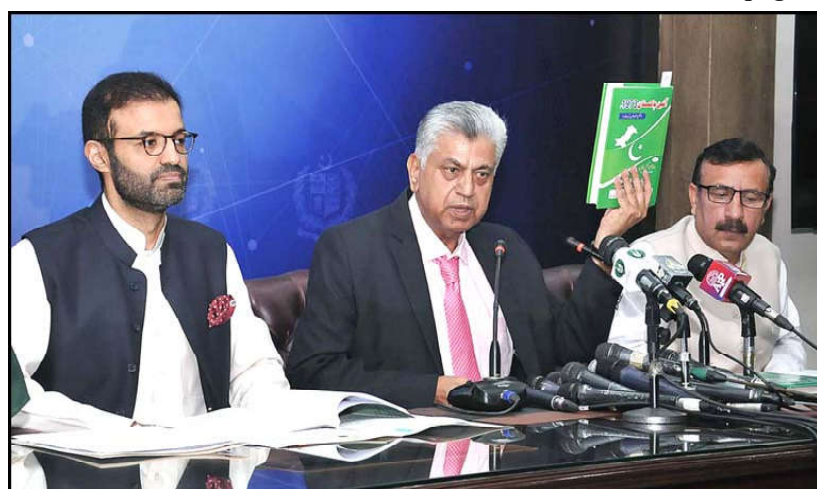
However I found out today that my staff did not agree to my wishes and He went against the order. He further wrote that

Allah knows all. He will forgive in sha Allah but I ask forgiveness from those who will be affected by it.

The Ministry of Law and Justice has noted with grave concern President Dr Arif Alvi's recent tweet.

The Ministry in a press release stated that as per Article 75 of the Constitution, when a Bill is sent for assent, the President has two options: either give assent

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ISLAMABAD: Information Minister Murtaza Solangi and Federal Law Minister Ahmed Irfan Aslam addressing an important press conference at PID Media Center.

20 burnt to death, several injured in horrific bus-pick up collision

ISLAMABAD (APP): At least 20 people including women and children, were burnt to death while several others sustained injuries in a collision between a passenger bus and a pickup carrying diesel barrels on Faisalabad Motorway near Pindi Bhattian early Sunday morning.

According to details, Rescue 1122 informed that the drivers of both vehicles were also killed in the crash.

The bus, carrying about 40 passengers, was going to Islamabad from Karachi when the horrific accident occurred.

The injured have been admitted to Pindi Bhattian Hospital.

The District Police Officer Dr Fahad talking to a private news channel said that the fire engulfed the bus

shortly after the collision. He said most of the injured persons are in critical condition. The eyewitnesses said people from nearby areas tried to pull the passengers out of the burning bus by smashing windows.

Meanwhile Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi on Sunday expressed deep grief and sorrow over the accident of a passenger coach coming from Karachi to Islamabad.

In a statement, the minister expressed sympathy and condolences to the families of those who died in the tragic accident.

"The reasons should be determined so that such accidents can be avoided in the future," Solangi said.



SARGODHA: A view of burned bus after incident in which twenty people were killed and fifteen others injured when a passenger bus caught fire after being smashed into a pick-up carrying diesel drums at Motorway near Pindi Bhattian.

Minister visits NHA headquarters after assuming charge

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister of Communications, Postal Services, and Railways Shahid Ashraf Tarar on Sunday paid a visit to the National Highway Authority (NHA) headquarters following his assumption of the portfolio.

Head of the Public Relations Department Sibtain Raza Lodhi, conveyed that a warm welcome was extended to Shahid Ashraf Tarar by various officials, including Federal Secretary of Communications and Postal Services, Captain @ Muhammad Khuram Agha, Zahir Shah, Member Admin, Sajjad Ahmed Khan, Member of the Board, Shakeel Anwar, General Manager of Establishment, Abdul Ghaffar Farooqi, Director of Estab-

lishment, Umair Saduzai, PRO to Chairman NHA, and others. They congratulated him on his new role, said a news release.

Subsequently, an informative briefing session was organized by the NHA to apprise Federal Minister Shahid Ashraf Tarar of the ongoing challenges in under-construction projects and various sectors.

The briefing was presented by key officials, including Member Planning Asim Amin, Member Engineering/EC Naseem Khattak, Member Finance Muhammad Tayyab and Member Admin Zahir Shah.

The discussions revolved around the obstacles encountered by the NHA and its endeavors in different domains.

Doors of CM House opened for people: Domki Independent Report

QUETTA: The Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki has stated that the doors of Chief Minister House has been opened for people of the province. He announced this while speaking to a select group of gathering at the Circuit House Sibi where he reached on Sunday afternoon.

Also accompanied with him was his brother and former Minister of State, Mir Dostain Khan Domki.

The caretaker Chief Minister also announced to hold open katchehris in the CM secretariat and districts.

He also directed to Assistant Commissioners of all the Tehsils to hold open katchehris in their respective tehsils fortnightly.

In this regard, all the Deputy Commissioners would inform the office of Chief Minister about progress of the open katchehris in their respective districts. Mir Ali Mardan Domki also said that the minorities are very dear to him and as such their rights and freedom of religion would be ensured.

Asad Umar 'arrested' in cipher case

ISLAMABAD (INP): PTI leader and former federal minister Asad Umar has been arrested in Islamabad, his party has claimed on Sunday.

As per claims of the PTI legal team, the former finance minister has been arrested in the FIR registered over the misplacement of a US cipher. On Saturday, his fellow party leader and former foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi was also arrested in the same case.



QUETTA: Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani, Senator Abdul Qadir and Senator Naseebullah Bazai meeting with Chief of Sarawan Nawab Muhammad Aslam Khan Raisani



QUETTA: Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki answering questions of participants during a reception

Bills become law after no objection from president within ten-day: Law Minister

There is no third option under Article 75 of the Constitution: Ahmad Irfan Aslam; Law Ministry's clarification removes ambiguity created by President's 'tweet': Solangi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Law and Justice Ahmed Irfan Aslam on Sunday said that under Article 75 of the Constitution, a bill automatically becomes law if the President didn't approve or reject it within stipulated time period of ten days.

He was addressing a press conference along with Caretaker Minister for Information Murtaza Solangi here.

The law minister said that the caretaker government has no political agenda and its mandate was also limited. He said that being the head of the federation, the president is revered in all of our hearts.

He said that "The Pakistan Army (Amendment) Bill 2023 was received by

the presidency on August 2, while Official Secrets (Amendment) Bill reached there on August 8, after being passed by the two houses of the Parliament.

The caretaker law minister said that when a bill is sent to the President, he has two options: either to approve the bill or send it back to the Parliament with his observations in writing. There is no third option under Article 75 of the Constitution, he said, adding that ten days of time period is fixed in the Constitution to exercise one of these options.

Ahmed Irfan Aslam said that the President has exercised these powers many times in the recent and distant past. The President gave observations in many

laws and also sent back bills to the Parliament, he said.

Before today, he said, no such situation has come before us that anything has returned from the presidency without the signatures of the President.

The law minister said that these two bills have not been received back from the President Office despite Article 75 of the Constitution clearly provides a period of ten days in order to avoid any political ambiguity. If the President does not exercise the authority within this time period, the bill is considered to be approved and automatically becomes law as per the constitution, he said.

Meanwhile Caretaker

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Warmly welcomed upon arrival in Sibi: Domki pledges to do best to resolve numerous problems being faced by Balochistan

Says topmost priority is to establish peace, conduct free, fair and impartial elections

Independent Report

QUETTA: The caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Ali Mardan Domki has stated that the province is facing numerous problems and it would be his utmost endeavour to resolve them. Mir Ali Mardan Domki said that as a caretaker Chief Minister, his authorities are limited. However, he would perform according to the guideline given by Election Commission of Pakistan.

The caretaker Chief Minister maintained that neither he would only exceed from his powers, nor he would let anyone do it.

This and similar other views were expressed by the caretaker Chief Minister while speaking to the

elders and other people gathered at the Circuit House Sibi to greet him on becoming the caretaker Chief Minister, on Sunday.

His brother and former Minister of State, Mir Dostain Khan Domki was also accompanied with him. It may be mentioned here that it was the first official visit of caretaker Chief Minister to any area after assuming his office on Friday last.

Mir Ali Mardan Domki was warmly welcomed by the people upon his arrival at the Circuit House Sibi.

The petals of rose were showered on him by those present on the occasion.

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ISLAMABAD: Former Member of Balochistan Assembly Mir Saleem Khoso called on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar.

Govt to ensure security, create jobs: Caretaker PM

KAN MEHTARZAI (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar ul Haq Kakar said on Sunday that efforts would be made to provide employment opportunities and maintain peace and security while expediting the development process in Kan Mehtarzai, Killa Saifullah and other areas of Balochistan.

PM Kakar while addressing a reception through a video link, organized by the All Parties Conference in his native village Kan Mehtarzai, said that he would visit Kan Mehtarzai soon and review the issues faced by local people.

Anwarul Haq Kakar said that he was grateful to all the organizers of today's reception for felicitating him on behalf of all political parties, tribal elders, scholars, civil society and lawyers from his native town after his nomination as caretaker prime minister.

A large number of people including leaders of various political parties, tribal elders, scholars, journalists, farmers, lawyers and students participated in the reception ceremony.

The government and opposition parties unanimously nominated Anwar Haq Kakar as caretaker Prime Minister.

The local notables expressed confidence that Anwar ul Haq Kakar as caretaker Prime Minister would play his key role in the elimination of terrorism in the country, conduct of transparent elections and restoration of law and order.

Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar here on Sunday held a meeting with Senator Arbab Umar Kasi and discussed issues related to Balochistan.

Senator Kasi felicitated him on assuming the office of prime minister and expressed his best wishes.

He informed the prime minister about the situation of flooding in Hanna Orak after the recent rains.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Communication Shahid Ashraf Tarar on a visit to Islamabad-Peshawar Motorway M-I and Hazara Expressway in order to inspect construction and maintenance works

11 labourers killed, two injured in terrorist attack in North Waziristan

SHAWAL (Online): 11 labourers were killed in an explosion in a vehicle carrying labourers in Shawal Tehsil of North Waziristan district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. According to the police, an explosion occurred in a vehicle near Gul Mirkot area of North Waziristan tehsil, as a result of which 11 labourers were killed while three people were missing and two were seriously injured.

DSP Thana Shawal Sherullah said total of 16 labourers were in the vehicle, the injured and dead bodies were shifted to a nearby hospital.

According to the hospital administration, the de-

ceased were identified as Mubittullah, Sahab Noor, Jannatullah, Asadullah Khan, Mir Wali Khan, Maqbool Khan, Sher Zahid, Syed Manwar, Mohd Ayaz, Muhammad Wali, Gul Hussain while the injured were I include Umar Zahid, Umar Ayaz.

Sources said that deceased belong to South Waziristan, whose bodies have been shifted to their native areas. On the other hand, Caretaker Prime Minister Anwar Haq and Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi strongly condemned the bomb blast for the loss of precious lives and expressed regrets.

Spain defeat England in final of record-breaking FIFA Women's World Cup

Sports Desk
SYDNEY: Spain defeated England 1-0 in the Women's World Cup final on Sunday, capping off a tournament that has broken attendance and TV records and raised hopes of a surge in interest for the women's game.

Co-hosted by Australia and New Zealand, the ninth edition of the global showpiece event was the first to be held in the southern hemisphere.

While local interest ebbed when Australia exited in the semi-finals, just shy of two million fans will have passed through the gates in nine host cities after Sunday's final crowd of 75,784 is added to the tally.

An Olga Carmona goal was the difference between the two sides in a pulsating

game that saw Spain create the majority of the clear-cut chances.

"We suffered, it was a difficult match [but] we always thought we were going to make it," Carmona, who was also named player of the match, told Spanish state broadcaster TVE.

LaRoja were rocked by a locker room dispute between the squad and coach Jorge Vilda and the Spanish football federation, with some of their best players absent from the tournament as a result.

But despite a shock 4-0 loss to Japan in the group stage, the team has shone throughout the tournament with their brand of attractive, attacking football.

"I can't imagine how much excitement there will

be in Spain," Vilda told TVE.

"We are going to celebrate here and we don't know when it will end."

Festival atmosphere
Thousands of fans milled around Stadium Australia in Sydney hours before kick-off on Sunday, with troupes of drummers and stilt walkers creating a festive atmosphere.

England and Spain were both making their first appearance at a Women's World Cup final, while England's wait for a first trophy since the men's tournament in 1966 goes on.

Women were banned from official facilities in England, the home of the game, until 1970 and have long lagged the men's team

in interest and funding, although that began to change after the Lionesses won the European Championship last year.

England captain Millie Bright told reporters after the final whistle she was proud of the progress the women's game had made.

"Credit to the tournament, it's been phenomenal, the crowds that we've generated and the support that all teams have and it's been surreal, it's been so visible," she said.



Spain World Football team in a group photo after winning Women's World Cup

PPP demands president Alvi's medical examination

ISLAMABAD (Online): Pakistan People Party (PPP) has demanded medical examination of President Arif Alvi after his tweet denying signatures on army act and official secret act amendment bill.

Arif Alvi's tweet is question mark on his mentality, PPP said.

In reaction to president's tweet, Pakistan People Party (PPP) secretary general Syed Nayyar Bukhari said former president Asif Zardari and Bilawal Bhutto's declassification of PTT Pakistanism division

anarchy proved correct.

He said Alvi committed nefarious crime by playing role of PTI worker and role of personal employ.

Syed Nayyar Bukhari said president neither approved nor objected the bills and hence bills became effective after specified time limit. He said president's allegations on his own staff are not worthy of president. President explanation is the biggest joke of this century. Arif Alvi's statement is lair gang ringleader Imran Khan's instrumentality, he add.

Shehbaz Sharif departs for London to meet Nawaz Sharif

LAHORE (INP): Former Prime Minister Mian Shehbaz Sharif left for London on Sunday to meet the ex-premier Nawaz Sharif to discuss the political scenario, upcoming elections and likely return of the party supreme to Pakistan.

Former information minister and the Pakistan Muslim League (N) leader, Maryam Aurangzeb also took to the X (formerly known as Twitter) and said that Shehbaz Sharif would leave Lahore for London

today. She mentioned that Shehbaz Sharif would also meet party leader Mian Nawaz Sharif in London.

During the meeting, sources said consultations would be held on party leader's return home and various party matters. The legal team of the PMLN participation in the meeting is also expected, they said adding the legal aspects related to the possible return of Nawaz Sharif would be discussed.

Pakistan finish Asian Junior Individual Squash C'ship with 3 medals

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan clinched three medals in Asian Junior Individual Squash Championship on Sunday in Dalian, China.

Nauman Khan bagged the gold medal in the under-13 category of the championship by defeating fellow Pakistani Ahmad Rayyan Khalil with a game score of 9/11, 11/8, 6/11, 11/3, 11/9.

Pakistan have won the title in the U13 category of the Asian Junior Squash Championship for the first time since 2016 when Asadullah won the trophy.

Pakistan, overall, demonstrated an impressive performance in the Asian Junior Individual Squash Championship, securing three medals.

In the final of the under-13 category, both Pakistani players showed remarkable grit against each other before Nauman Khan came out victorious after a hard-fought battle against his counterpart.

Asian Junior Squash Individual Championship was held from August 16 to August 20 in Dalian, China.

Ahmad Rayyan Khalil

started the game on high with a 9/11 victory over Nauman Khan in the first set, however, Nauman made a comeback in the second set with 11/8 to level.

Although Ahmad Rayyan Khalil pulled him back in the third set with a 6/11 win, Nauman Khan ultimately stood tall with back-to-back victories in the last two sets 11/3 and 11/9 to secure the gold medal.

Ahmad Khalil earned a

silver medal after faltering against Nauman Khan in the final, adding another medal to Pakistan's tally.

Earlier in the tournament, Nauman Khan defeated Yen Tsz Long from Hong Kong with scores of 11/2, 11/5, and 11/6 to secure his place in the final, while Ahmad Khalil toppled Lokkesh Wigneswaran from Malaysia with scores of 11/2, 11/4, 11/9, to earn his ticket to the final.



DALIAN: Squash players and coach in a group photograph with Pakistani Flag after winning Asian Junior Individual Squash Championship, 2023.

Sepma International USA celebrates Pakistan Day in New York

NEW YORK (INP): Celebrating Pakistan Day as well as the seventh anniversary of Shaan-e-Pakistan, the festival was a captivating fusion of art, music, and culture.

As Zille Huma opened Jashn-e-Sepma Music Awards happening for the first time in the USA, she introduced not only the diverse music talent of Pakistan to the US, but also laid the groundwork for business opportunities and business awards.

Beginning with stalls selling various local products to entice visitors – of which the one that drew the maximum footfall and sales

was the one that drew the maximum footfall and sales

Domki pledges to do best...

Continued from page 1
Guard of Honour was also presented to him by the smartly turned out contingent of police.

Speaking on the occasion, the caretaker Chief Minister said that although his topmost priority is to establish peace and conduct free, fair and impartial elections in the province, but still he would do his best to resolve the issues being faced by the people.

He said that all available resources would be mobilized for welfare of the people.

He on the occasion assured that he would speak to the caretaker Prime Minister to resolve the issue of electricity in the province.

He said that he would speak to Prime Minister for dualization of the Bolan-Dera Allahyar road. In addition to this, it is also included in his priority to restore Pinjra bridge on permanent basis, he announced.

Referring his visit to Sibi, the caretaker Chief Minister said that his visit is not political nor he would do politics. He said that all are equal to me and as such there is no political friendship or enmity with anyone.

Mir Ali Mardan Domki said that the purpose of his visit to Sibi is to hold direct contact with the people and he has come there just to save the people from hardships of journey.

He also announced to visit every district of the province to get himself acquainted about the issues of masses.

Earlier, he had interaction with the people from different segments of the society who reached to meet and greet him.

They also appreciated the gesture of caretaker Chief Minister saying that it is good to see him (Mr. Domki) in Sibi on his first official visit after assuming his office.



LEHRI: Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki offering Fatcha at grave of his father Mir Hazoor Bakhsh Khan Domki

Pindi Bhatian bus accident: Video of driver, passengers emerges

KARACHI (INP): As video of the driver and the travelers of the ill-fated passenger bus which met a horrific accident in Pindi Bhatian on Sunday surfaced.

The video was recorded by the Motorway Police in Sukkur – a routine security practice of filming and checking the records of the passengers.

Before the passenger bus met an accident, a new driver replaced the previous driver at the Iqbalabad stop and a few passengers also went off the bus.

The administration of the private bus company said that overall two passengers have taken the Pindi Bhatian-bound bus from Karachi. It said that the previous driver was Ameer Afzal and Majid Hussain replaced him in Rahim Yar Khan.

Several passengers rode the bus from different stations in Sindh and the entry records of the travellers were collected by Motorway Police in Sukkur.

The administration said that all other records

were burnt with the bus which met the accident. The admin said that their officials are trying to collect more details about the tragic bus accident.

At least 20 people, including women and children, were burnt to death while 14 others sustained injuries in a collision between a passenger bus and a pick up carrying diesel barrels on Faisalabad Motorway near Pindi Bhatian.

The ill-fated bus was carrying 40 passengers, and was going to Islamabad from Karachi, said rescue officials.

District Police Officer (DPO) Dr Fahad said the injured have been admitted to Pindi Bhatian Hospital. The fire engulfed the bus shortly after the collision that took place at 4:30 AM, he added. He said most of the injured were in critical condition. Eyewitnesses said people from nearby area tried to pull the passengers out of the burning bus by smashing windows.

Dr Fahad said short-circuiting was the cause of fire in the bus.

Zaka Ashraf to discuss central contract, Asia Cup with Pakistan players

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Management Committee Head Zaka Ashraf reached Sri Lanka on Sunday, as he will discuss some important matters with Pakistani players on Monday.

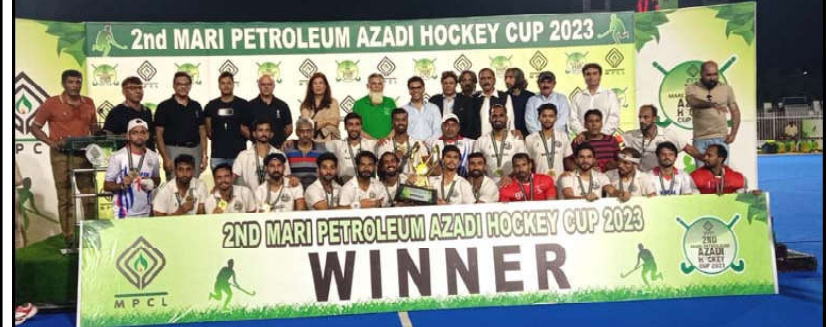
Zaka Ashraf was invited by Sri Lanka Cricket Board officials to watch the Lanka Premier League (LPL) final.

The PCB MC head will meet the players on Monday, one day before the series between Pakistan and Afghanistan's series start in Hambantota.

He is expected to have lunch with the team and would also discuss the central contracts with the players.

According to the reports, the players will sign the central contract before the Asia Cup. It was also reported that they will be told regarding the policies regarding league cricket.

Many Pakistani players were in action in the LPL, including the skipper Babar Azam, former captain Sarfaraz Ahmed and many others.



A group photo of winning team of 2nd Mai Petroleum Azad Hockey Cup 2023

President denies signing...

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sent, or refer the matter to the parliament with specific observations. Article 75 does not provide for any third option.

In the instant matter, neither of the requirements was fulfilled. Instead, the President purposely delayed the assent.

Returning the bills without any observations or assent is not provided for in the Constitution. Such a course of action is against the letter and spirit of the constitution.

If the President had any observations, he could have returned the bills with his observations like he did in the recent and distant past. He could have also issued a press release to that effect.

It is a matter of concern that the President has chosen to discredit his own officials. The President should take responsibility for his own actions.

Meanwhile PPP, PML-N call for President Alvi's resignation after he denies signing bills

and was assured that they were. However, I have found out today that my staff undermined my will and command. As Allah knows all. He will forgive Insha'Allah. But I ask forgiveness from those who will be effected," the president said.

On Saturday, it was reported that President Alvi has signed the Official Secrets Act and the Army Act Amendment Bill approved by the National Assembly and the Senate, after which both bills became law.

Soon after the law passed, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan was booked in the cipher case. The party's senior leader Shah Mahmood Qureshi was arrested from his residence in the evening, and today sources reported that Asad Umar had been apprehended in connection to the case. In response, PPP spokesperson Faisal Karim Kundi termed the incident "unfortunate" and lamented that the president issued an apology "24 hours after it was reported on the media that he did".

"I believe that such a person is not fit to remain in the presidency. This person does not know what's happening. He does not even know who has bypassed him," the PPP leader said.

In a statement, PPP Vice President Sherry Rehman said the development raises questions about Alvi's ability to continue as the president.

"Is he trying to say that someone else signed the bills under from under his nose," Rehman wondered, saying that if that's the case, then the president should resign.

In a post on X, PML-N leader and former finance minister Ishaq Dar termed Alvi's statement "unbelievable", calling for his resignation.

"Minimum morality warrants Alvi sb to resign, having failed to run his office effectively, efficiently and as per Rules of Business," the finance minister, whose government's term came to an end earlier this month said.

Meanwhile Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has decided to approach the Supreme Court immediately in the light of the eye-catching tweet of the President of the country in which he denied his signatures on Army Act and Official secret act amendment bills.

In the statement issued by the spokesperson of Tehreek-e-Insaf said on the matter of the drafts of amendments in the Official Secrets Act and the Army Act, the Constitution and the law, the basic rights of the citizens and the survival and security of the democracy and parliament have risen above the fears and concerns.

It has been announced to express gratitude to the President for taking a stand and fully support the President's stand at the national and judicial levels.



QUETTA: Former Deputy Mayor Younis Baloch, Nawabzada Aminullah Raisani, President Press Club Abdul Khaliq Rind, President BUJ Irfan, Aslam Rind, Chaudhry Shabbir Ahmed and others offering Fatcha on sad demise of mother of senior journalist Chaudhry Imtiaz

Bills become law after no...

Continued from page 1
Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi on Sunday said a clarification issued by the Ministry of Law and Justice had removed the ambiguity created by a statement posted by President Dr. Arif Alvi on its personal account on X (formerly known Twitter) regarding signing of two legislations.

"The President is a head of the state, and his position demands respect. No one should expect that we would speak against the respect of the President," said the information minister while addressing a news conference here.

Flanked by Caretaker Minister for Law and Justice Ahmed Irfan Aslam and Principal Information Officer Asim Khichi, the minister said there was no need to politicize the caretaker government's efforts, that

were aimed at removing ambiguity on important matters.

He said the President had posted a statement on the X about the two bills, sent by the Parliament, from his personal account on the platform, which might have created some sort of confusion, but did not cause any upheaval.

However, it was imperative to remove confusion on the matter and the Law Ministry had issued a statement in this regard, he added. To a query, Solangi said he did not have any knowledge about the President's intentions and desires, particularly concerning his continuation in office.

Institutions existed in the country for enforcement of laws, and a complete system was in place to ensure provision of rights to citizens and uphold the supremacy of the Constitution

and laws, the minister said in response to another question.

He stressed that the caretaker government was fully committed to upholding the constitution and would not engage in any actions that violated the laws.

With a clear understanding that their mandate is not political in nature, Murtaza said the caretaker government would refrain from engaging in any political discussions.

Solangi said there were no loopholes in the government system, and the present caretaker set up has been functioning within the framework of the constitution. In case any attempt was made to create confusion on national issues, he said the response would be given which would strictly be adhered to the boundaries defined by the constitution and law.



LAHORE: Activists of Sunni Tehreek (PST) are holding protest demonstration against inflation, unemployment and price hike of petrol and other products, at Lahore press club.

FAFEN urges electoral fairness through delimitation exercise

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN) on Sunday called upon the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to prioritize the principle of population equality in electoral constituencies during the upcoming delimitation exercise.

It said the 7th Population and Housing Census-2023, necessitates adjustments to constituency boundaries to ensure fair representation for all citizens, said a press release.

FAFEN said in light of recent amendments to the Elections Act, 2017, including the addition of a new proviso to Section 20 (3), the ECP was no longer bound to strictly adhere to existing district boundaries. This change was implemented to prevent population disparities in constituencies from exceeding 10 per cent, it added.

It emphasized that such measures were essential to uphold the fairness of the electoral process, as stipulated under Article 218 (3) of the Constitution.

FAFEN highlighted that the unequal size of constituencies not only violated citizens' constitutional right to equality (Ar-

icle 25) but also undermined the spirit of fair representation. The insertion of the new proviso in Section 20 (3) effectively neutralized the requirement that previously compelled the ECP to consider existing administrative unit boundaries during delimitation, it added.

It said the previous delimitation of National and Provincial Assembly constituencies in 2022 resulted in 82 National Assembly (NA) and 88 Provincial Assemblies (PA) constituencies having population variations exceeding 10 per cent from the respective seat quotas such as; NA-39 Bannu, the largest constituency, was nearly three times larger in population compared to the smallest, NA-42 Tank. FAFEN estimated that if district boundaries were followed, constituencies from two-thirds of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa districts, half of Sindh districts, one-third of Punjab districts, and all Balochistan districts may experience population variance exceeding 10 per cent.

It recommended the ECP consider amending its rules for delimitation to align with the new proviso in Section 20 (3). Specific-

ally, FAFEN suggested changing Rules 10 (4) and 10 (5) to limit population variance within a province to a maximum of 10 per cent, instead of five per cent within a district. Additionally, it called for the inclusion of an updated population column in Form-7 (Final List of Constituencies) after addressing representations filed on the draft list.

FAFEN also advocated for greater transparency by urging the ECP to make it mandatory for Delimitation Committees to provide detailed explanations for cases where variance exceeds 10 per cent. The organization emphasized the need for clear definitions of factors to be considered during delimitation and recommends amendments to Rules 12 and 13 to streamline the representation process.

In conclusion, FAFEN underscored that enhancing the delimitation process was pivotal to ensuring electoral fairness and preventing imbalances in population representation. The organization stressed that delimitation was a crucial mechanism for allocating political power and must be carried out justly, fairly, and transparently.



ISLAMABAD: Senator Arbab Umar Kasi calls on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar.

SAPM EU Ambassador join efforts to strengthen Pak-EU ties

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Overseas Pakistanis, Jawad Sohrab Malik, met with EU Ambassador Dr. Riina Kioska to discuss improving Pak-EU economic ties, regional security, GSP+ benefits for sustainable development and aiding Overseas Pakistanis in the European Union.

In a tweet, Malik expressed joy in welcoming EU Ambassador Dr. Riina Kioska at his house.

Malik mentioned, having an amicable conversation about various matters, encompassing eco-

nomics relations between Pakistan and the EU, we shared aspirations for the regional security and stability cooperation.

He stated that Pakistan receives a distinct incentive through the EU's GSP+ program to encourage sustainable development and good governance. A committed effort is underway to formulate a sturdy and lasting solution to tackle the challenges faced by Overseas Pakistanis in the EU.

Jawad Sohrab, has been designated as the Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) for Overseas Pakistanis in the interim cabinet led by Prime Minister Anwaar ul Haq Kakar.

Using his charitable arm, the Sohrab Foundation, Jawad Malik assists the most vulnerable parts of society. He was honored by the Pakistan Army for his relief contributions, earning national recognition.

Since the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) coalition took control after Imran Khan's vote of no-confidence, Jawad Sohrab has worked alongside PM Sharif's cabinet on various assignments.

FGRF first Pakistani NGO to respond to quake-hit Turkiye

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Faizan Global Relief Foundation (FGRF), a welfare initiative of the Dawati-Islami Foundation during the shocking earthquake of Turkiye was the first Pakistani non-governmental organization that approached the quake-hit region and provided rescue and relief services. The Foundation also ensured the provision of rations, cooked food, medicines, and funeral services in disaster-hit areas where ever it got the opportunity to serve. The FGRF showcased its achievements in welfare, rehabilitation and relief efforts during the monster Monsoon Floods 2022 at the Pakistan Expo on Disaster Risk Reduction-2023 (PEDRR-23).

The PEDRR-23, a three-day first-ever expo on Disaster Risk Reduction

convened experts, and partners from international and national organisations working in the field of disaster management and relief for a brainstorming session to learn from shared experiences and lessons learnt in different natural calamities. Nouman Attari from FGRF told APP that the Fund had organised the largest relief effort of the country with the participation of over 500,000 participants who took part in the FGRF activities in all the provinces of Sindh, Balochistan, Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) affected due to unprecedented floods in 2022.

The Foundation, he said had also provided more than 5,000 meals per day distribution for food distribution at the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) tent city for flood-displaced people.

ICP continues its campaign to check traffic rules violations

ISLAMABAD (APP): The campaign of Islamabad Capital Police to check violation of traffic rules is in full swing and special efforts are being made to maintain traffic

(ICCPO) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital Police has constituted special teams to control lane violations on various roads and ensure smooth flow of traffic in the city.



discipline in the city. The main objective of this road safety campaign is to ensure safety to the people while road users are being educated for lane discipline during driving.

Following the directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer



ISLAMABAD: Members of Rah-e-Nijat Ministry Pakistan and members of civil society participated in a protest to condemn the attack on churches and houses in Jaranwala Town of Faisalabad front of press club.

Sherry says: Attack on Jaranwala christian community is attack on Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (Online): A delegation from the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), led by Vice President Senator Sherry Rehman, visited Jaranwala to extend heartfelt sympathies and support to the Christian community following the tragic events that unfolded on August 16th.

The delegation included Secretary General PPP Syed Nayyer Hussain Bokhari, Information Secretary Faisal Kareem Kundi, Nadeem Afzal Chan, and Malaika Raza.

Senator Sherry Rehman, while addressing the unfortunate turn of events, expressed profound concern and disappointment. "What transpired in Jaranwala on August 16th

has not only saddened Pakistanis but has also left Muslims across the globe in a state of deep regret. The scenes we witnessed are heart-wrenching. Today, on behalf of the People's Party leadership and its workers, I stand here to extend our unwavering support and solidarity to the citizens of Jaranwala," she stated.

Senator Sherry Rehman remarked, "We marked National Minorities Day on 11th August as a reminder of the rights and contributions of minorities to our nation's progress. Regrettably, the events of August 16th have cast a shadow over this celebration. We demand strict penalties for those involved and justice for the victims."

ACs launch operation against professional beggars

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a decisive move, Assistant Commissioners (ACs) and Magistrates have launched a robust crackdown against professional beggars within their respective jurisdictions.

This proactive operation, aimed at curbing the prevalent issue, saw ACs apprehending a total of 48 individuals engaged in professional begging.

The crackdown yielded noteworthy results across various areas. AC Shalimar successfully detained three beggars, while AC Secretariat took six beggars into custody from different parts of the Secretariat sub-division.

CDA pursues upgradation of urban amenities, infrastructure

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Capital Development Authority (CDA) is taking concrete steps for ensuring the provision of urban facilities to the city dwellers and maintenance of infrastructure including the installation of street lights, road carpeting, and resolving water-related issues, neglected in the past.

"Special attention is being given to the completion of the remaining development works in the sectors I, G, H and D series, provision of civic facilities, and facilitating the homebuilders in these sectors in pursuance of the directives of Chairman CDA Noorul Amin Mengal," an official told APP.

'Tahafuz Programme' Around 4,781 requests for health financing approved

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Ministry of Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety has approved 4,781 requests of deserving patients for health financing from May 2022-March 2023 under the 'Tahafuz programme'. "A total of 15,729 requests of the deserving patients have been approved for health financing since the inception of the programme" an official source revealed. The initiative is aimed at catering to the catastrophic health expenditures of deserving patients through fourteen impa-

neled hospitals based in Islamabad, Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Balochistan, Sindh, Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), irrespective of geographical limitations and domicile. Tahafuz is a Public Sector Development Program (FY-2021-2024) demand-driven initiative designed to protect the extremely poor from catastrophic health expenditures. The program is also providing healthcare assistance to the poor who fall under the pre-defined eligibility criteria primarily based on BISP or National Socio-Economic Registry Poverty.

Jamal expresses grief over loss of lives in Pindi Bhattian accident

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Jamal Shah expressed deep grief and sorrow over the death of 18 people in a collision between a passenger bus and a pickup on Faisalabad Motorway near Pindi Bhattian early Sunday morning.

Commiserating with the bereaved families, the minister prayed for the departed souls. While praying for the recovery of those who injured in the accident, Jamal Shah said that our sympathies are with the lamenting families who lost their loved ones.



ISLAMABAD: People are reading a newspaper displayed for sale by a shopkeeper at Abpara Market.

PAF pays tribute to Minhas on his 52nd martyrdom anniversary

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Air Force (PAF) Directorate General Public Relations has released a short documentary to pay homage to the country's valiant son and the youngest recipient of Nishan-e-Haider, Pilot Officer Rashid Minhas Shaheed on his 52nd martyrdom anniversary. Pilot Officer Rashid Minhas Shaheed was born on February 17, 1951. Hav-

ing a dream of defending the aerial frontiers of the motherland, he got a commission on March 14, 1971, in the 51st GD (P) course. He was later posted to No 2 Squadron stationed at Masroor for an Operational Conversion Course, where he was destined for sublime heights by Almighty Allah, a PAF news release said. On August 20, 1971, an unforgettable saga of

bravery was crafted with his ultimate sacrifice. On this fateful day, Rashid vanquished the iniquitous intentions of his instructor pilot Flight Lieutenant Mati-ur-Rahman, who tried to hijack his training jet T-33 towards India. Rashid battled to take back the aircraft's controls and finally preferred to crash the plane before it could cross the border.

"Workplace Daycare Facilities: A crucial need echoes across orgs"

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a world where the pursuit of balance is a universal aspiration, the evolving trends see more women assuming pivotal roles in contributing to household finances. Yet, a stark dilemma persists: a choice between career aspirations and unmet fundamental needs, such as access to onsite daycare facilities.

This demand, proclaimed as "vital" by the Institute of Women's Policy Research (based in Washington), brings into focus an often overlooked facet of the modern working woman's journey who navigate the complex maze of responsibilities.

Khawaja Saeed Abbas, a retired BPS-20 officer, reflects on the past, drawing from his extensive career at the Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation spanning over 45 years. "Back in our times, women would take maternity leaves and never return," he muses, attributing

this trend to the dearth of resources to facilitate their return. Today, women stand at crossroads, torn between nurturing their hard-earned careers and tending to their infants. The societal pressure to prioritize one over the other compounds this dilemma, painting women as irresponsible mothers when their focus extends beyond their children, given the scarcity of daycare facilities throughout Pakistan.

In the words of Sammar Amin, a voice from an Islamabad-based think tank, the shortage of workspaces and the absence of dedicated daycare facilities force many female colleagues to relinquish their stable jobs after starting families. The need for change is undeniable, as antiquated assumptions that tether women solely to household and childcare responsibilities hold them back.

Anum Hassan, a mother of two and senior

Human Resource officer at a logistics services, vocalizes the challenges. "It's not a luxury, but a need," she asserted, emphasizing the emotional and professional toll when childcare safety is compromised.

The vulnerability of children under thirteen underscores the urgency for daycare provisions. The early years are marked by exploration, demanding a safe environment that is often absent, she remarked.

Assad Anjum, a student of the Islamic International University raised by a single father, sharing his journey's trials said, the absence of daycare in his father's workplace left him grappling with an unmet need. Similarly, Amna Ilyas, a mother juggling a private firm job, also narrated her experience, unveiling how the absence of daycare facility transformed her joy as a new mother into a torment of conflicting responsibilities. "Within the limits of

34,211 tenants, 342 house servants data registered through online system

ISLAMABAD: The capital Police had introduced an online registration system for tenants and house servants following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPO) Dr Akbar Nasir Khan in order to control criminal activities in the federal capital.

ICCPO Dr Akbar Nasir Khan said that, the system has been very effective for identifying the

employees involved in crimes and bringing them to justice. He further said that registration of tenants and domestic workers not only keeps a close eye on the miscreants but also prevents the elements involved in any kind of dubious activity. He urged the house owners to verify the backgrounds of people before giving them employment and get them registered with the nearest police station, Police Khidmat Markazs.



ISLAMABAD: A worker fixing safety road metal beam for traffic at 7th avenue bridge in Federal Capital.



ISLAMABAD: Children are enjoying Sunday Holiday at Japanese Children Park in Federal Capital.

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Catch-22

The country's superior judiciary remains in a bind. Ever since an eight-member bench led by the chief justice acted prematurely to ensure that the Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Act would be a stillborn law, several senior justices have, on different occasions, been less than enthusiastic about hearing major cases till questions regarding the constitutionality of the aforementioned law are firmly decided.

The issue arose again during the Friday hearing of a petition challenging the changes made last year by the PDM government to the country's anti-corruption laws. Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, who is part of the three-member bench that has been hearing the long-running case, proposed the formation of a full-court bench to hear the matter, noting that since the SC had not yet issued a final judgement on the Practice and Procedure law, it may be best to refer the matter to a larger bench keeping in mind the implications of the case.

It may be recalled that, through the Practice and Procedure Act, the PDM government had sought to take suo motu powers and the prerogative to form benches away from the chief justice and hand them to a committee comprising the three senior-most judges of the apex court. Parts of the Practice and Procedure Act also made their way into the later Supreme Court (Review of Judgments and Orders) Act, which the SC struck down last week.

At one point in the ruling striking down the latter law, the chief justice observed that "it would veer towards irrationality to hold" that the legislature could supersede the CJP and enact a law taking away his prerogative to exercise and invoke jurisdiction under Article 184(3).

This would seem to suggest that the Practice and Procedure Act may meet a similar fate. However, the bench hearing the case seems caught in a Catch-22 situation, with a decision either for or against the law complicated by the apex court's internal divisions.

The Practice and Procedure Act may never have become an albatross around the SC's neck had the chief justice addressed the differences within his court early and in an amicable manner. He was asked repeatedly by his fellow judges to devise rules regulating suo motu and bench-fixing powers but refused to relinquish control over them.

When the PDM government moved to capitalise on these divisions for its own ends, he failed to rally support from within the institution behind him, to the judiciary's general detriment. However, it is never too late to learn from past mistakes. The chief justice still has a month till his retirement. He must spend it tying up loose ends. Much time has been lost and grass trampled on in this fight between elephants. He must put it to rest.



Muhammad Amir Rana

It was not just an isolated incident of religious prejudice, a backlash to Islamophobia in the West, or a display of socioeconomic pressures on the average person, when a mob set fire to several churches and looted Christian homes in Jaranwala, Faisalabad district. It is indicative of the society the power elite has shaped. The state institutions' responses to this tragedy are as insincere as their pledges to root out extremism, given their lack of meaningful action.

Following each tragic incident, state institutions condemn the act and vow to take strict action against those responsible. However, after brief confrontations, the administration often capitulates to religious extremists. While the

superior courts tend to rule in favour of the victims in such cases, their interventions seldom bring about lasting change. Many are aware of the outcome of the one-man commission set up to enforce a landmark Supreme Court ruling on minority rights, and how its recommendations were dismissed by both the executive branch and religious factions. Following the recent tragedy, Islamabad police set up a religious minorities protection force. However, this move seemingly underscores the state's inability to safeguard its citizens of diverse faiths. Many are aware of the police's often indifferent attitude towards marginalised citizens. Deploying such a force might only exacerbate the hardships faced by Pakistanis belonging to minority faiths.

Power elites strengthen radical religious groups by arming them with legal tools against religious minorities and those that the majority refuses to accept. When questioned about the state's policy, institutions might produce numerous documents that have never been put into

practice, with no display of genuine intent to do so. While they have drafted internal security policies, a National Action Plan (NAP), counter-violent extremism strategies, established CVE centres, and issued decrees like the state-endorsed fatwa Paigham-i-Pakistan, these efforts have consistently failed to manifest as effective state policy. They serve merely as a facade, masking the state's and society's more troubling aspects.

The PDM government tried to introduce another CVE measure through a bill. However, it was thwarted by a few brave parliamentarians who believed its motivations were politically driven. The government reviewed numerous documents in its last weeks, including the CVE policy. Ironically, the interior ministry and the so-called National Counter-Terrorism Authority refined a CVE policy that was never put into action. Similarly, Paigham-i-Pakistan has been unsuccessful in influencing the religious clergy.

The challenge of extremism is not as simple as imagined. A moderate image

cannot be manufactured; it needs societal transformation, which in turn requires a humanisation process. The dehumanisation of others cultivates the tendencies of extremism, and state- or society-run strategic communications or counter-narratives slowly impact these tendencies. Equal citizenship rights can cultivate humanisation tendencies in society.

State institutions are faced with the immediate challenge of bridging the discrepancies between declared policies and their actual implementation. However, beyond bridging these gaps, there is a pressing need for these institutions to adapt their strategies to address new and emerging threats. Rather than relying on general approaches like the NAP and CVE policies, Pakistan should formulate specific policies targeting extremist groups like the TTP and TLP.

However, the state still believes religion can unite the nation and create a cohesive society. Religiously inspired actors often exploit this notion to promote their own goals

and motives, largely embedded in their sectarian and religious ideologies. This is why such groups, including their political wings, have failed the state's ideological project and undermined the common good of society. The common good is the well-being of the entire community, including its weakest and most vulnerable members. It is essential for the sustainability of society. Religious groups undermine the common good by exploiting the state's ideological design. This is because they prioritise their interests over those of the wider community.

Instead of looking at the diversity of religious, cultural, and societal opinion in Pakistan as a sign of inclusiveness and plurality, power elites see it as a drawback. The state institutions do not have the orientation of how to manage diversity. This has significantly damaged the country's social fabric, mainly its humanistic values such as empathy and compassion, safeguarding individuals and societies from hate and aggression.

The state's insistence on using religious groups to

achieve its purposes has also contributed to this dilemma. By outsourcing its national project to sectarian groups, the state has given them a platform to promote their agendas, which often conflict with the common good. In order to address this dilemma, the state needs to stop exploiting religious groups for its purposes. It also needs to create a more inclusive and secular society where all people, regardless of their religious beliefs, can have a voice.

Pakistan's state institutions and power elites often compare the country's situation to the rest of the world, particularly India. They attempt to suggest that religious persecution in Pakistan is not as severe as elsewhere. While such arguments might satisfy the elite, they do not alter the reality: Pakistan's situation is as dire as that of India. Comparing the two does not absolve the power elites of their duty to protect citizens of all faiths. It is understood that transformation processes take time, but they need to begin in the first place. -- Courtesy Dawn

Why Bob Dylan matters

Ghazi Salahuddin

One of my pleasures in visiting our elder daughter in southern California is to feel the warmth and glory of the cultural environment of Los Angeles. It is surely not possible for me to delve into its depth but the opportunity to just loiter on its periphery becomes so invigorating and joyous. One of my pleasures in visiting our elder daughter in southern California is to feel the warmth and glory of the cultural environment of Los Angeles. It is surely not possible for me to delve into its depth but the opportunity to just loiter on its periphery becomes so invigorating and joyous.

It does feel like a dream because of where I come from. After all, I live in a society where, say, the horror of Jaranwala is possible — again and again — and where a film like Zindigi

Tamasha cannot be released for public viewing.

But since I am attempting to leave Pakistan behind for some time, let me share with you my sense of wonder about the influence of popular music and songs in this and other advanced countries.

I sometimes talk about the books that have 'shaped America', a list compiled by the Library of Congress, and had reported about that unforgettable experience of attending a performance of the musical, 'Hamilton' on a previous visit. There is so much else to engage one's interest. However, this is about the songs that people sing.

When I arrived here about two weeks ago, I looked around for meaningful engagements of the artistic kind. There was a lot to choose from by way of 'immersive' experiences and events around museums and cultural complexes. But across the horizon was lit the name of Taylor Swift, the celebrated singer and songwriter.

There were six shows of Taylor Swift in Los Angeles, marking the end of the first leg of her North American tour. I got a low down on the importance of

these grand music shows from my teenage granddaughter Mahnoor, a high school senior. "We grew up with her, as she grew up in her personal life and her music," she said. She elaborated on how Taylor Swift became a support system for her fans. "I'm in Los Angeles and I love concerts," she added.

But the real mystery of this is that if my granddaughter can be branded as a 'Swiftie' so would be the prime minister of the United Kingdom. Rishi Sunak and his family concluded this week their 10-day vacation in Los Angeles and The New York Times had a story on how his activities were largely kept from the British media. The headline said: 'Rishi Sunak's vacation: Taylor Swift and Disneyland. (The rest is a secret.)' Yes, he was at a Taylor Swift show.

What I have gathered from reading major publications is that Taylor Swift is recognized as a "prominent culture figure of [the] 21st century". She is the most successful pop star of our time, like the Beatles were in the sixties. The point I am making is that this kind of power has a

bearing on ideas and values that are generated in a society.

Last week, The New York Times had a serious analysis of the Taylor Swift phenomenon, telling its readers "How Taylor Swift's Eras Tour conquered the world". It argues that "the pop star's record-breaking, career spanning show has dominated the summer, commanding attention and whipping up demand at a level thought unachievable in a fragmented age".

Look at some figures. Taylor Swift sells about \$14 million in tickets each night, with an audience of about 70,000 people. There are 146 stadium dates in her present tour, going well into 2024. Its sales could reach \$1.4 billion or more. Scalped tickets go up to \$3000 or more.

Taylor Swift may be at the centre of the music world; we have veteran singer-songwriters like Bob Dylan and Bruce Springstein and what I know about Springstein's European tour last month is also like a fairy tale for me with evidence provided by my younger daughter, Aliya. She lives in the Italian city of Monza, where

the last concert of the tour was held.

In the first place, she had bought the tickets for herself and friends Kiran and George in May 2022 for the July 2023 concert and I remember that it was a rather hectic exercise. She tells me that on the morning of the concert, she met some people at a cafe who had attended the first concert of the tour in Barcelona and wanted to do the last one in Monza. She learnt that attending Springstein concerts multiple times is the done thing. At the concert, she met a lady who was attending her 24th. By the way, Barack Obama and Steven Spielberg had also flown to Barcelona for the concert.

Recalling her experience, Aliya tells me: "We were overcome by the power of one man and his music that got 70,000 people to gather almost like a community, from many different parts of the world, to sing along every line from the lyrics of his songs and just come together because they all love him. And they will do it again and again."

I feel sorry that I have no space left to talk about Madonna, who turned 65

this week. In a tribute, The New York Times said: "She has accomplished what few artists have done: she has changed the world...The battle against bigotry she has fought is far from over".

Finally, let me conclude with a reference to Bob Dylan who, way back in the sixties, had given a voice to America's civil rights movement, inciting social change with songs like 'The times, they are a-changing'. He was crowned by the hippies as the guru of rock'n'roll.

It came like a bombshell in the literary world when Bob Dylan was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2016 because he was a lyricist whose words penetrated the human soul. He did not attend the presentation ceremony due to "having other engagements".

In late 2017, Harvard professor Richard F Thomas, a world expert on classical poetry, published his book titled: 'Why Bob Dylan matters'. It is meant to be an answer to that obvious question: how could the world's most prestigious book prize be awarded to a singer-songwriter? -- Courtesy TheNews

Are kids alright?

Muna Khan

I'm always impressed by the level of curiosity students bring to the classroom and this new academic year is no different. I enjoy discussing questions for which there are no right or wrong answers — what is objectivity, what is truth, who decides who is a journalist, etc. However, in the six years I have been teaching various iterations of this course, something is different: these students do not feel hopeful. About anything.

This was in response to me asking if the media reports too much bad news, and if so, how would they correct it. Over the years, students have always felt there's a lot of bad news, then disagreed on how it should be rectified and if it was a journalist's job to make audiences feel good, offer hope. This year though, this bright, inquisitive, thoughtful group of students didn't think there was anything to make them feel hopeful.

I'm rarely at a loss for words but hearing this broke my heart that morning. They deserve better. In an attempt to create some optimism, I said I felt hopeful after reading about PPP giving land rights to 5,000 families in Larkana affected by the floods. Last month, Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari distributed the title deeds — in women's names, which in itself is huge. It can have a ripple effect, I said.

Not many of my students knew about this. It hadn't created waves like the contenders for interim prime minister or anything

to do with the former can't-be-named prime minister. They all knew about the Intercept story but no one had read the whole piece. It's not surprising to hear that none of them read a physical copy of the newspaper. They are, after all, digital natives.

But because they don't see themselves or the issues that impact them in mainstream media, they are less eager to engage with news as it's presented today. This has the beginnings of a media outlet's nightmare: a future audience that does not want to consume the news it's selling.

This isn't unique to Pakistan.

According to a study by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, 38 per cent of people it polled in the US said they "sometimes or often avoid news". The number of those who had replied "very" or "extremely interested in the news" has shrunk over the years.

This "news avoidance" could be a response to "hyper information", a constant access to information on all devices, say researchers. "Digital media has made news ubiquitous and instantly available from thousands of sources representing every ideology, geography and language," the report says.

This can drive feelings of depression, hopelessness, anxiety and anger, it adds.

These emotions are evident in classrooms and living rooms across Pakistan. However, a change in leadership isn't going to fix this. Young people care more about economic security and climate change, two issues that directly impact their well-being and future. And they see all political parties as a graveyard of dead ideas. Can you blame them? In his column for Washington Post earlier this month, Paul Farhi noted how news avoidance may

be playing a role in the "ominous declines pummeling media organisations of all kinds".

I am not lucky enough to have access to audience metrics of news organisations here but given the rise of YouTube 'journalists' who do not have to deal with the same restrictions (or consequences) as those in the press, I feel confident saying things don't look good. It requires a major rethink.

How can media outlets present news in a way that engages people, not alienate them? Can profit-driven models produce journalism done in the public interest? More importantly, can the media treat young people as stakeholders whose opinions are taken seriously. Various sources list the median age in Pakistan as 21. Who is reporting on their dreams, aspirations, fears etc with as much seriousness given to tried and dusted leaders?

A lot of young people in Pakistan connect with leaders like Saad Rizvi, Manzoor Pashteen, Mohsin Dawar as well as a host of folks on social media offering alternative viewpoints to history. There is a dearth of young people in newsrooms assisting in making decisions about how, what to cover for younger audiences concerned about things like the high fees of education, the city's infrastructure, discrimination and policymaking. They should not be treated as indifferent to the problems but as participants who may offer solutions to issues that impact them the most.

The press is considered the fourth pillar of a democracy because it shines a light on issues that allow the public to make smart choices, especially at election time. The media can break its current trend of covering only the (outdated) political class by focusing on the young whose future is at stake. -- Courtesy Dawn

Brain drain

Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry

Post-dinner conversations in most urban middle-class households start these days with commentaries on the unstable politics and abysmal economic situation of Pakistan and end with the concern about the youth exodus from Pakistan to the seemingly greener pastures of North America, Europe, Australia and the Gulf. However, before drawing any conclusions, it would be important to take a broader look at the issue.

Firstly, Pakistanis going abroad is not a new phenomenon. Since 1971, the Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment estimates that over 10 million Pakistanis have gone abroad for employment. Secondly, figures vary from year to year, with no particular trend of a steep rise. In 2022, 800,000 left Pakistan for employment overseas, which is less than the pre-pandemic figure of 946,571 in 2015. Thirdly, accurate numbers of those going abroad are hard to estimate because many avail student visas or permanent residency visas or go abroad through illegal means.

Hence, what is more relevant to the debate are not the numbers but reports that most of those moving abroad these days comprise Pakistan's youth. PIDE economist Faheem Jahangir Khan says that "67 per cent of Pakistani youngsters want to leave the country". The trend of brain drain is also being reported by other surveys and analyses.

The youth are

Pakistan's future leaders. At a time when the European and Chinese populations are aging, the youth bulge here is an advantage if they can participate in the development of their own country rather than serving societies abroad. The reality, however, is that students are desperately looking for scholarships to study in the US, Australia, Europe, China and East Asia. Those already in foreign universities are reluctant to return because of joblessness in the country. Talented IT professionals are being lured by West-based companies who offer lucrative terms. Our leadership and intelligentsia, therefore, have a responsibility to identify the reasons for the youth leaving Pakistan, and then make policies that incentivise the youth to work for the country.

A major reason that frustrates our youth is the pervasive unemployment in the country. There are nearly 200 universities in Pakistan many of which award degrees in disciplines for which there are no jobs in the market. Having spent considerable sums on education, not finding a well-paying job is a deeply frustrating experience for a young person. The lucky ones who find jobs are also frustrated because of abysmally low salaries. Sarah Gilani, a start-up professional who worked for many years in Pakistan and now lives and works in Austria, says that the work culture in Pakistan is rigid and leaves little room for a healthy work-life balance, particularly for working women.

Young physicians also want to move abroad for better salaries and access to modern medical technologies. Sameera Rabbani, who graduated from a medical school in Lahore and now lives in Australia, observed that doctors are underpaid, overworked and underappreciated in Paki-

stan as opposed to the West where they are paid adequately, with a contribution to the retirement fund.

Some professionals like Maheen Ahmad, who teaches at a premier institution in Islamabad, wish to go abroad only to improve educational qualifications. She recognises, though, the growing financial difficulties of limited job growth prospects in Pakistan.

The second source of frustration for the youth is the deep political polarisation that exists and that is exacerbating the economic crisis. Nearly every family has been affected by this bitter political divide, particularly the youth. The third reason for the youth's growing disaffection is their aspiration for a life of respect, dignity and prosperity. They want equal opportunities and a level playing field. They are disappointed to find that the system does not work for them, but just for a select few, ie, the elite.

So, what can be done to stem the brain drain? First, the country needs stable politics, a charter of economy that binds political governments to ensure continuity of economic policies, and ease of doing business for investors, traders, and industrialists. Secondly, job creation should be a high priority. Since governments can create only so many jobs, it is industry which can absorb educated and semi-skilled youth. The education system should pivot towards technical education and vocational training to feed industry and the IT sector.

Thirdly, we need an efficient judicial system at all levels. Above all, the country needs a climate of justice, equal opportunity and dignity for every citizen. The National Security Policy announced last year provides a good way forward. -- Courtesy Dawn

CM Punjab says: Rs2m approved for each affected family of Jaranwala

Independent Report
FAISALABAD: Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi said that Rs.2 million was approved as compensation for each Christian family affected by riots in Jaranwala three days ago.

Addressing a meeting at ACE Church Isa Nagri Jaranwala here on Sunday, he said that Pakistan was a motherland for every Pakistani including Muslims, Christians, Sikhs and Hindus and the government would support and help every oppressed person.

He said that he along with his cabinet members had come here to express solidarity with the Christian community as the Jaranwala incident was a major tragedy for all.

"My team had been working for the last three days for early rehabilitation of affected families. In this connection, it had a number of meetings with the Christian community and the government promised

to provide justice to the affected at every cost", he added. He said that the Secretary Communication and Works along with his team had started work for the rehabilitation of the churches yesterday and two churches had so far been fully restored while restoration work of the rest of the churches was in full swing.

He announced that he would not take rest until all the churches were completely restored although he had to visit Jaranwala repeatedly for the purpose. He said that the government had promised to restore all churches affected in the Jaranwala incident to their original condition and this work would definitely be completed on a war-footing according to the will and aspiration of Christian people.

"Complete rehabilitation of Christian affectees and provision of justice to them was not just a statement but it would be seen obviously as a real action," he assured.

He said that Islam had taught us to protect the rights of non-Muslims. "The letter of the Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (Peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) which he wrote to the Christian community was a beacon for us.

"In this letter, the Muslims were instructed to take care of the rights of the Christian community and this order remained in force till the Day of Judgment. Therefore, it was our religious obligation to follow the commandment given to us by our beloved Holy Prophet (Peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) because it was the greatest commandment for us," he added.

On this occasion, the caretaker Chief Minister urgently called a meeting of his cabinet inside the church and the cabinet secretary presented its one-point agenda for financial assistance to compensate the affectees of the Jaranwala tragedy.



FAISALABAD: Punjab Chief Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi is distributing supplies during his visit Danish School Camp regarding the incident Christian Colony Jaranwala.

CM flays tragic blast in Shawal, extends condolences to victims' families

PESHAWAR (APP): Strongly condemning the heart-wrenching incident in North Waziristan, Chief Minister (CM) of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Muhammad Azam Khan on Sunday expressed his deep sorrow and unequivocal condemnation for the explosion that claimed the lives of 11 laborers in the Shawal area.

The CM denounced the heinous act of violence that resulted in the loss of innocent lives and disrupted the peace of the region.

In this time of grief and shock, Azam Khan

extended his heartfelt condolences and sympathy to the families of the victims.

He assured them that the government stood by them and would provide all necessary support during this difficult period.

He said, "Our prayers are with the families who have lost their loved ones." "We share in their pain and are committed to assisting them in any way," he added. CM prayed for the departed souls and the early recovery of the injured and urged patience and strength for the bereaved families.

26 dengue case reported in various Lahore areas

LAHORE (APP): Twenty-six new cases of dengue were reported in Lahore on Sunday while the anti-dengue squad destroyed larvae at 968 places in the province during ongoing surveillance.

According to Health Department sources, besides the dengue virus cases, 968 larvae cases were reported in the last 24 hours, with many patients under treatment in different hospitals of the city. Various squads conducted surveillance at indoor and outdoor places to detect dengue larvae.

The Punjab Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department sources told APP that 26 new cases of dengue were reported in Lahore on Sunday including eight cases from Aziz Bhatti Town, six from

Allama Iqbal Town, two each from Shalimar, Wahga, Ravi, Data Ganj Bakhs Towns and four from other areas of the city.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Lahore Rafia Haider is continuously paying surprise visits to check the performance of dengue teams after a fear of rise in dengue cases after rains. She reviewed the performance of dengue teams working in various areas and ordered strict action against ghost workers. Checking of more than 5,000 places will be ensured on a daily basis, she directed.

In a statement, she announced that the number of dengue surveillance could be increased, keeping in mind the rain alerts of the meteorological department.

CM unhappy with Kahna hospital facilities

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Punjab Chief Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi expressed strong dissatisfaction after observing poor conditions at Government Indus Hospital Kahna during a surprise visit on Sunday.

He criticized the staff for providing false information and noted issues like non-functioning air-conditioners, cleanliness problems, and blood stains on bed-sheets. The patients expressed concerns about staff behaviour and delays in medical check-ups. Naqvi inspected various departments, contacted the health secretary and expressed disappointment at the hospital's state. The Commissioner Lahore division and Deputy Commissioner Lahore were also present.

72,330 citizens provided licensing services: CTO

RAWALPINDI (APP): Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Taimoor Khan Sunday said that traffic police provided licensing services to some 72,330 citizens during the last month while breaking all records in providing licensing services to the masses.

The number of driving testing centers in the district have also been increased from 3 to 7 to facilitate the citizens, the CTO said.

He said that the mobile service vans were providing door-to-door licensing services to citizens.



BAHAWALPUR: Governor of Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman, is receiving a briefing from the Deputy Commissioner Bahawalpur Zaheer Anwar Jappa about the security measures implemented on the occasion of his visit at the Mari Qasim and Mochiwala Dams.

Governor GB meets Governor KP, discusses joint work on tourism sector

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Gilgit-Baltistan Syed Mehdi Shah reached Governor House Peshawar on his visit to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and met with Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali.

Matters of mutual interest and other important issues were discussed in the meeting. In the meeting, the two governors discussed the promotion of tourism activities between Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit-Baltistan and for the development of the

tourism sector. It was also agreed to take joint measures to provide the best facilities. On this occasion, Governor Haji Ghulam Ali said that Gilgit-Baltistan is an area rich in tourism and natural resources. The promotion of tourism in Gilgit-Baltistan and the northern regions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will benefit the country's economy.

He said Babu Sar top to Gilgit-Baltistan and all these areas are very attractive for tourists, there is a need to develop the tourism sector in Khyber-

Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit-Baltistan, Haji Ghulam Ali said. On this occasion Governor GB Syed Mehdi Shah thanked for the hospitality and said that the people of Gilgit-Baltistan are peaceful people and the crime rate here is also negligible.

Gilgit and Skardu are very attractive places for domestic and foreign tourists. Providing facilities to tourists from Naran, Kaghan, Babuser Top to Gilgit-Baltistan will not only develop the tourism sector.

Punjab Ombudsman intervenes to provide relief to widow

LAHORE (APP): In compliance with the orders of Punjab Ombudsman Maj @ Azam Suleman Khan, the Parks and Horticulture Authority Gujranwala has disbursed outstanding dues of Rs.2,401,974 to the widow of an employee who had passed away during service.

The widow had lodged a complaint to the Office of the Punjab Ombudsman for the provision of outstanding dues of her late husband who died in 2020 while

doing a job as a spray man with the PHA Gujranwala. Despite her appeals, the PHA Gujranwala had not taken action to address the financial obligations owed to her following her husband's death.

The applicant also added that she and all other dependents were unemployed. Seeking equitable resolution, she turned to the ombudsman's office, seeking outstanding dues that belonged to her late spouse.

Dera police arrested 13 outlaws

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): Dera police arrested 13 outlaws and recovered weapons and stolen goats from them in the limits of Shaheed Nawab police station on Sunday.

According to the details, on the direction of District Police Officer Dera Abdul Rauf Babar Qaisrani, SHO Shaheed Nawab Police Station Khanzada Khan carried out operations against the criminal elements and arrested two accused Alam Sher son of Behram Khan resident of Wanda Budh and Gul Niaz son of Dil Muhammad.



KARACHI: Members of civil society holds placards during protest in favor of their demands outside press club in Provincial Council.

Lahore Police ensures foolproof security at churches

LAHORE (APP): Capital City Police Officer (CCPO) Bilal Siddique Kamyana said that Lahore Police said that snipers along with additional police personnel were deployed at sensitive churches. Security of Christian places of worship was being ensured with the help of modern equipment. Checking at the entering and exiting points of the city was ongoing.

Bilal Siddique Kamyana directed the teams of Dolphin Squad, PRIO and Elite Force for effective patrolling around the churches.

police were on high alert for the security of the churches. CCPO Lahore said that snipers along with additional police personnel were deployed at sensitive churches. Security of Christian places of worship was being ensured with the help of modern equipment. Checking at the entering and exiting points of the city was ongoing.

Man caught with 2.73kg ice-drug at BKIA

PESHAWAR (APP): Airport Security Force (ASF) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa here on Sunday recovered 2.73kg ice-drug concealed in secret compartment of a bag of a Doha-bound passenger at Bacha Khan International Airport (BKIA), an official said. He said a passenger named Mohammad Noman has been arrested when his traveler bag was thoroughly examined. He kept 2.73 kg ice-drug at layers in the bag. Case has been registered against the smuggler under Control of Narcotics.

Governor visits riverside areas to monitor flood situation

BAHAWALPUR (APP): Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur-Rehman visited the riverside area of Mari Qasim Shah and Mochiwala to monitor the flood situation, here Sunday.

Commissioner of Bahawalpur Division Dr Ehtesham Anwar, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Zaheer Anwar Jappa, and officers of relevant departments were also present.

Governor Punjab said that all departments should take precautionary measures to protect the people from floods.

He said, "The district administration has been working to avoid floods since the first water flow of Sutlej."

He said that all possible measures should

be taken to maintain the strength of 30 levee dams in the region.

All government institutions should perform their duties to protect the life and property of the people from floods, he added.

"Divisional and district administrations have made plans to deal with possible floods."

Dr Ehtesham Anwar said, "Rescue and relief camps have been established in the riverside areas." "People living in the river area are being shifted to safe areas," he told.

He said, "The survey of the livestock and the people living in riverside areas has been completed."

"Around 76,000 people have been shifted from the flood area to safe localities," Dr Ehtesham Anwar added.



KARACHI: Peoples Party (PPP) Senior Leader, Sharjeel Inam Memon addresses to media persons during press conference held at Karachi press club

LG KP releases half of grant for annual development projects

PESHAWAR (APP): After a long struggle, the Local Government Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) has released half the grant for annual development projects.

According to the details issued by the finance department, "The Finance Department has issued a grant of 19,55.88 to 27 TMEs of the Local Government Department as 11 million out of 26 million rupees, 60 million rupees have been released for the purchase of sanitation vehicles in various districts, according to the Local Government Department. The grants

were also given for Tehsil offices in Abbottabad, Swat, Bannu, Dera and Kohat, and many other districts." "The notification says, "At least 5% of the fixed grant has been released for parks in Haripur, Kohat, Dir Lower, Mardan, Chitral, and Dir Upper, Municipalities Department. Out of 166 million rupees, 60 million rupees have been released for the purchase of sanitation vehicles in various districts, according to the Local Government Department."

Trainee DSPs from Sindh police called on IGP Punjab

LAHORE (APP): Deputy Superintendents of Police (DSPs) under training from Sindh Police met IG Punjab, Dr. Usman Anwar here at the Central Police Office on Sunday.

Senior police officers and DSPs under training briefed IG Punjab about their training and field attachments.

IG Punjab visited the modern police Station Mozang Lahore. Under training officers observed practical workings of various sections, including Front Desk, Police Station Record Management,

Operations, and Investigation Divisions.

The trainees presented traditional caps and cultural turbans to IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar, Additional IG Establishment Raja Rafat Mukhtar, and DIG Headquarters Humayun Bashir Tarar.

IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar provided guidance to DSPs under training for a successful professional career. He mentioned that the presentations given by young officers reflect deep insights and challenges of field duties.



HYDERABAD: Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM-P) Convener, Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui talking to media persons after offering feteha for the departed soul of brother of Kanwar Naveed Jamil Deputy Convener MQM during condolence meeting held in Hyderabad

Bringing 4.7mn out of school children in KP under education net a gigantic task

PESHAWAR (APP): Where literacy rate is detrimental in bringing socio-economic uplift in a country and putting it on the path to development and prosperity, it also indicates the priorities of a particular government if set for the well-being of the masses.

In a country like Pakistan where the population has crossed the psychological barrier of 240 million in May this year, and where there are an estimated 22.8 million out-of-school children, the education sector was in dire need of having more attention and resources by

the authorities concerned.

The Benazir Income Support Program (BISP)'s national socioeconomic registration census report 2021 revealed that 4.7 million children aged 5 to 16 years were out of school in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The breakup of the data informed that 1.38 million male and 2.38 million female students were out of school in KP, while 0.36 million male and 0.65 million were out of school in seven merged tribal districts owing to a lack of educational institutions, poverty and other socioeconomic barriers mostly caused by

population explosion.

The highest percentage of 77 percent was reported in Palas Kohai district followed by 70 percent in Upper Kohistan, 69 percent in Lower Kohistan, 61 in Torgar, 55 in Shangla, 53 in Lakki Marwat and 51 percent each in Tank and Batagram districts.

In erstwhile Fata, around 66 percent of children were out-of-school in North Waziristan, 63 percent in Bajaur, 61 in South Waziristan, 51 each in Mohmand and Khyber, and 47 percent each in Kurram and Orakzai.

"I left education in childhood after the untimely death of my father due to blood cancer. After enormous financial problems, I started labour work to support my six sisters and an ailing mother," said Faizur Rehman (18), a resident of Pabbi Nowshera while tears rolling down over his cheeks.

"My father wanted to see me as an engineer but the fortune overturned and I was left with no option but to enter the painstaking construction labour work to support my family," he added.

Besides poverty and

socioeconomic imbalances especially in rural areas, he said most of poor students left education due to the expensive cost of books and other education expenses.

Muhammad Shahab Khan, Chief Planning Officer, Education Department KP told APP that bringing out of school children under education net was a big challenge.

For bringing 300,000 children to schools in KP in the next three years billions of rupees were required including Rs2.10 billion for the provision of free uniforms, stationary and bags.



PESHAWAR: Members of the Christian minority hold placards as they shout slogans during a protest against mob attacks that erupted in Jaranwala, near Faisalabad, in Peshawar, Pakistan, 20 August 2023. Armed mobs in Jaranwala targeted two churches and private homes, setting them on fire and causing widespread destruction. The attack was sparked by the discovery of torn pages of the Muslims holy book Koran with alleged blasphemous content near a Christian colony.

Envoys show keen interest in RCCI "Health Expo"

RAWALPINDI (APP): Ambassadors of different countries have shown keen interest in the two-day RCCI Health Expo and Summit 2023.

According to a statement issued here on Sunday, Atadjan N. Movlamov, Dean of Diplomatic Corps, Ambassador of Turkmenistan, Yezan Kistafin, Ambassador of Kazakhstan, Ambassador of the Kyrgyz Republic to Pakistan Ulanbek Totuiaev, Syrian Ambassador Rameez Alraee, Ethiopian Ambassador Jamal Becker, among others who visited different stalls and appreciated the products.

Ethiopian Ambassador Jamal Becker in his tweet lauded RCCI's efforts for a successful event, Med-Health Expo

2023, showcasing the health sector's potential. He also desired close cooperation in the health sector between the two countries.

The official Twitter and Facebook accounts of the Kazakhstan embassy in Pakistan also highlighted the visit of the ambassador of Kazakhstan, Yezan Kistafin, at the RCCI Med-Health Expo and Summit 2023.

The major aim of the expo was to provide a platform to explore the export potential and address the key challenges faced by the health and pharmaceutical sectors in Pakistan. A panel discussion was also organized on the sidelines of the expo where speakers highlighted the export potential of pharmaceuticals in Pakistan

given its capabilities in drug manufacturing, a skilled workforce and a growing global demand for affordable medicines. Pakistan's pharmaceutical industry was known for producing high-quality generic medicines at competitive prices and this cost-effectiveness makes Pakistani pharmaceutical products attractive to countries seeking affordable healthcare solutions, they added.

The topics for the panel discussion include Medical Care and Challenges in the Modern Era, the Development of Health Care Equipment in Pakistan, Biological and Vaccine Development in Pakistan, Industry-Academia Linkage and Research in the Health Care Sector and health tourism in Pakistan.



LAHORE: Women are actively engaged in work during a Property Sale Event hosted at a local hotel.

Energy projects proved to be game changer in economic stability: CEO PEDO

PESHAWAR (APP): The Chief Executive Officer, Pakhtunkhwa Energy Development Organization (PEDO) Engineer Naeem Khan Sunday said that the ongoing energy projects for the production of cheap hydropower in the province will be proved as game changer for the stability of the economy of province and to control the ongoing energy crisis in the country.

He went to Daral Khwar power plant Swat of 36 MW where he reviewed the emergency safety arrangements and speed of work on flood protection for power plant and colony. He also issued necessary instructions to the authorities on slowness of work, after which he reviewed the construction of the colony at the site of Gabral Kalam 88 MW hydropower project and expressed satisfaction with the ongoing work of the project authorities to complete the ongoing work before the scheduled time.

Moreover, he went to the site of the ongoing 84 MW Gorkin Matiltan hydropower project in Swat district, where he urged the project authorities to speed up the work, saying that there is no doubt that due to the dilapidated condition of the road between Bahrain and Kalam, the project was delayed.

Furthermore, difficulties are being faced in the supply of machinery and material, however, the contractor insisted on transporting the goods through alternative small transport to complete the work more quickly.

CEO PEDO, Engr. Naeem Khan also visited the 40.8MW Koto power plant in Lower Dir district where he met with a team of Chinese engineers, expressed concern over the problems faced in importing electromechanical equipment and the slow pace of work.

The CEO PEDO said, "This visit will encompass a comprehensive agenda that includes business meetings, site visits to prominent furniture manufacturers, networking events, and interactive sessions with key stakeholders in the Russian furniture industry." "The visit will provide an ideal platform for knowledge exchange, technological innovation sharing and partnership building," he added. Mian Kashif said, "PFC looks forward to the prospect of a successful collaboration that will mutually benefit the furniture industries of Pakistan and Russia."

"Russia's increasing demand for quality furniture creates an exciting landscape.



QUETTA: People purchase used goods due to price hiking, at makeshift weekly market located on Benazir Flyover road in Quetta.

Railways spends Rs1862 mln for rehabilitation of track between Kotri-Khanpur

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Railways is spending Rs1862.84 million for the rehabilitation of 518 kilometres of track between Kotri-Khanpur under the project of Immediate Track Safety Works (ITSW-I).

Despite financial constraints, the management of Pakistan Railways is putting maximum efforts into improvement in infrastructure including tracks, bridges, stations etc., an official in the Ministry of Railways told APP.

Under the project of rehabilitation of Karachi Port tracks, 24-kilometer tracks, 17 level crossings and seven bridges have been rehabilitated along with the replacement of turnouts.

The official said that Railway Dry Ports at Lahore (Mughalpur), Badami Bagh and Azakhel

have been upgraded. He said under the Immediate Track Safety Works (ITS W-II & IMTS W-III), the railway track between Tando Adam-Khanpur covering 456 kilometres would be rehabilitated at a cost of Rs 4830.437 million and Rs 4875.461 million respectively by replacing the US components of the track by ensuring the safety of train operation.

A PC-I amounting to Rs 4930.22 million for the rehabilitation of track machinery has been approved which would ensure quality of track maintenance work.

Meanwhile, 11 stations have been upgraded including Peshawar, Hassan Abdal, Rawalpindi, Gujranwala, Lahore, Narowal, Nankana Sahib, Raiwind, Okara, Sahiwal, and Bahawalpur, under PSDP projects.

8th Colour & Chem Expo concludes

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan's 8th largest and exclusive two-day exhibition of dyes, chemicals & allied industry concluded here on Sunday.

A two-day workshop was held here on August 19-20 at the Lahore International Expo Centre. The title of this year's theme was "Transforming Challenges into Opportunities." Pakistan Industrial and Traders Associations Front (PIAF) Chairman Fahimur Rehman Saigaland Pattern-Chief of PIAF and Businessmen Panel (BMP) Chairman Mian Anjum Nisar inaugurated the event on Saturday.

The exhibition was organised under the aegis of Event and Conference International Pvt. Ltd and Rainbow Group in collaboration with the Asia Dyestuff Industry Federation. The event was supported by the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI).

ICCI, CDA launch Tree Plantation Drive from F-6 Markaz

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman CDA Noorul Amin Mengal along with President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari and Director General (DG) of Environment Protection Agency Farzana Altaf Shah visited Islamabad's posh commercial center F-6 Markaz and launched a tree plantation drive from markets by planting a saplings in the Supermarket.

F-6 Markaz Traders Welfare Association President Shahzad Shabbir Abbasi, Secretary General Aqib Abbasi, Khalid Chaudhry, Saifur Rahman Khan, Akhtar Abbasi, Malik Shabbir Awan, Imtiaz Abbasi, and others were also present on the occasion, said a press

release issued here on Sunday.

Chairman CDA took a round of the market along with Chamber President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, DG of EPA Farzana Altaf Shah, and representatives of the Traders Association and reviewed the ongoing development works.

He issued instructions to the CDA officials to speed up the ongoing works and to advance other works as well.

Talking on the occasion, he said, "The development work will be reviewed by visiting other markets soon."

He also announced on the occasion that the Zero Point Bridge would be handed over to ICCI for its decoration and beautification.

Online selling products flourishing trend among youngsters: report

ISLAMABAD (APP): As mobile commerce is emerging as a new trend, mostly youngsters including females were seen preferring to sell products online which is a highly effective strategy to attract new customers to provide a simple way to shop online and flourish their businesses in the country.

"Online shopping is one of the most popular activities that Pakistani consumers engage in when they use the internet because they are always on the lookout for unique products in Pakistan," said a report aired by a Private news channel. "There is a rising trend of 'Cash on Delivery' (COD) in Pakistan's e-commerce market, as customers



RAWALPINDI: Labourers make bricks at a bricks factory outskirts area of the city.

Experts term ecotourism vital for sustainable local development

ISLAMABAD (INP): The experts have called for promoting ecotourism for sustainable development of local resources and communities.

Speaking to the participants of the National Centre for Rural Development (NCRD) three-day training workshop on 'Ecotourism and Sustainable Development' on Sunday, they urged the participants to play their role in practicing the ecotourism framework right from individual and family picnics to larger group tourism.

The experts also urged the authorities to ensure implementation of sustainable development models in letter and spirit engaging community-based interventions.

The provincial government shall devolve powers to union council level and develop a system for local development and

community empowerment.

As many as 34 mainly mid-career professionals from different cities including northern parts of Pakistan participated in the three-day training workshop. It was organized by the Akhtar Hameed Khan National Centre for Rural Development (NCRD), and concluded on Sunday.

The expert trainers included founder and director Pakistan Mountain Festival and Executive Director Devcom-Pakistan Munir Ahmed, EvK2CNR Scientific Advisor Ashiq Ahmed Khan, PTDC managing Director Aftabur-Rehman, former IG Forests Syed Nasir Mahmood and former bureaucrat Zafarullah Siddiqi. Director Devcom-Pakistan Executive Munir Ahmed conducted a brainstorming session based on the SWOT analysis.



ISLAMABAD: A vendor selling vegetables on his stall at Sunday bazaar Abpara Market.

Baligh praises Malik for 50 years of dedicated service to the business community

ISLAMABAD (APP): Governor Punjab Eng Muhammad Balighur Rehman on Sunday eulogized the 50-year-long matchless meritorious services of octogenarian trade leader of South Asia former President SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ifthikar Ali Malik for serving the business community selflessly with utmost dedication.

Balighur Rehman extended his heartfelt congratulations on his retirement from a distinguished 50-year career in trade politics, said a news release issued here.

He said, "His unparalleled dedication and unwavering commitment to service have left an indelible mark on our national trade landscape." He said, "His remarkable record of not availing a single benefit, perk, TA/DA or free

lodging and traveling during his extensive international and domestic tours is a testament to his integrity and selflessness."

He said, "His unique example has set the bar high for ethical leadership and has inspired countless others to follow in his footsteps."

Governor further stated, "His tenure as the former President of the SAARC Chamber, Federation of Pakistan Chamber, and Lahore Chamber has been marked by his relentless pursuit of excellence and tireless efforts to uplift the business community."

He said, "As you step into this new chapter of your life, I want to express my deepest gratitude for your service and dedication and your legacy will continue to inspire us all."

Boosting investment, collaboration in furniture industry, PFC to visit Russia

ISLAMABAD (INP): A delegation of Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC) led by its Chief Executive Officer Mian Kashif Ashfaq will visit Russia instant month with the aim of exploring potential investment avenues, fostering joint ventures, and nurturing collaboration in the furniture industry.

Talking to a delegation of furniture exporters led by Chaudhary Arab which called him on Sunday, Mian Kashif said, "This presents an opportune time for both countries to strengthen ties in various sectors, including the burgeoning furniture industry."

He said, "As we delve into an era of globalization and increased cross-border cooperation, the furniture sector offers significant untapped potential for

growth and mutual benefit."

The CEO PFC said, "This visit will encompass a comprehensive agenda that includes business meetings, site visits to prominent furniture manufacturers, networking events, and interactive sessions with key stakeholders in the Russian furniture industry." "The visit will provide an ideal platform for knowledge exchange, technological innovation sharing and partnership building," he added. Mian Kashif said, "PFC looks forward to the prospect of a successful collaboration that will mutually benefit the furniture industries of Pakistan and Russia."

"Russia's increasing demand for quality furniture creates an exciting landscape.

WCCIS condemns Jaranwala Incident

SIALKOT (APP): Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry Sialkot (WCCIS) President Dr. Marian Nouman and the executive committee jointly condemned the Jaranwala incident where local churches were set ablaze by a mob.

In a statement, WCCIS President Dr. Marian Nouman said that the act of violence had drawn deep concern from the business community of Sialkot, highlighting the fragility of communal harmony and the need for immediate action to maintain law and order.

The WCCIS President said that the incidents were against the teaching of Islam. She said the WCCIS expressed their heartfelt condolences to the affected community and stressed.



MULTAN: Labourers are busy unloading tomatoes on the delivery trucks at the vegetable Market

Pakistan's journey towards digital transformation, & connectivity-MOITT at forefront

ISLAMABAD (APP): In an era when technology is transforming to the next level with each passing day, and nations are striving to surpass each other in this field, the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication (MOITT) is playing a pivotal role in empowering Pakistan's digital future.

Through visionary policies and proactive measures, the MOITT is driving technological advancements and fostering enhanced connectivity across the country.

These efforts are not only shaping the nation's digital landscape but also positioning Pakistan as a dynamic player in the global tech arena.

In recent years, Pakistan's IT sector has undergone remarkable

growth and development, making strides towards becoming a digital powerhouse in the region.

Recognizing the importance of digital transformation for economic progress, MOITT has been at the forefront for fostering a conducive ecosystem for businesses, investors, and innovators.

With a skilled workforce, growing digital infrastructure and proactive measures to strengthen cyber security, Pakistan is fast becoming an attractive destination for investment in IT-related ventures.

The MOITT has laid the groundwork for a flourishing startup ecosystem by establishing Incubation Centers across the country. These centers provide startups with essential resources,

mentoring and support to foster innovation and growth.

To propel software development and IT-enabled services, the MOITT is setting up Software Technology Parks equipped with state-of-the-art facilities.

These specialized zones create an enabling environment for technology companies to thrive, contributing to the IT export industry's substantial growth.

Meanwhile, Pakistan is also aiming to reduce its dependency on imports and create local employment opportunities by promoting mobile manufacturing and the government, through the MOITT, offers incentives and facilities to attract investment in this sector.

Recognizing the

telecom sector's pivotal role in Pakistan's digital transformation, the MOITT prioritizes support for telecom companies in order to create an enabling environment for their operations and encourage further investments in expanding and enhancing the nation's telecom infrastructure.

In an era marked by increasing cyber threats, the MOITT took significant strides to bolster Pakistan's cyber security posture. The federal cabinet of the last PML-N led coalition government approved the Computer Emergency Response Teams (CERTs) Rule 2023, a comprehensive framework to address emerging cyber security risks at national and organizational levels.

The CERTs serve as

frontline defenders against cyber incidents, enhancing the country's ability to manage and respond to cyber security threats.

The Ministry of IT has also introduced a Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) solution project with the primary goal of bolstering the security of NTC's data and servers.

The system will be responsible for monitoring data and promptly notifying the relevant departments in case of any cyber attack.

A ministry official highlighted the continuous efforts to modernize NTC in accordance with present-day requirements.

He said in a significant move, the Ministry has launched "Beep Pakistan" the country's inaugural communication application.

China stages war games in 'stern warning' to Taiwan

Monitoring Desk

BEIJING: China held air and sea drills around Taiwan, in what it said was a "stern warning" after the island's vice president visited the United States. William Lai — the frontrunner in Taiwan's presidential election next year and a vocal opponent of Beijing's claims to the island — returned on Friday from a trip to Paraguay, during which he stopped in New York and San Francisco. China has reacted angrily to the US stops, and on Saturday reiterated that Lai was a "troublemaker" while vowing to take "resolute measures... to safeguard national sovereignty and territorial integrity".

The People's Liberation Army "launched joint air and sea patrols and military exercises of the navy and air force around the island of Taiwan" on Saturday, military spokesperson Shi Yi said, according to state media outlet Xinhua.

Taiwan said 42 warplanes had entered its air defence zone since 9am, and eight Chinese vessels took part in the exercises. Twenty-six of the warplanes involved crossed the Taiwan Strait median line, the island's ministry of defence said in a statement.

Xinhua said the drills were carried out "in the waters and airspace to the north and southwest of Taiwan Island" to test the PLA's ability "to seize control of air and sea spaces" and fight "in real combat conditions".

They were also intended to serve as "a stern warning to the collusion of 'Taiwan independence' separatists with foreign elements and their provocations", it added.

A social media video published by the PLA on Saturday showed soldiers in fatigues sprinting through a military facility and fighter jets soaring above clouds, set to action-movie-style

music. Taiwan said it strongly condemned "such irrational and provocative behaviour" and that it would dispatch "appropriate forces" to respond "with practical actions".

"Conducting a military exercise this time under a pretext not only does not help the peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait, but also highlights (China's) militaristic mentality," Taiwan's Ministry of National Defence said. China claims self-ruled Taiwan as part of its territory and has pledged to take it one day, by force if necessary. It launched major military exercises after Nancy Pelosi, then House speaker, visited Taiwan last year and later when President Tsai Ing-wen transited through the United States. However, Sifu Ou at Taiwan's Institute for National Defence and Security Research said he thought "the scale of PLA exercise (this time) will be moderate".



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy and Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte attend a press conference, in Eindhoven, Netherlands.

US, Japan and Australia plan joint navy drills in disputed South China Sea, Philippine officials say

Monitoring Desk

MANILA: The United States, Japan and Australia are planning a joint navy drill in the South China Sea off the western Philippines this week to underscore their commitment to the rule of law in the region after a recent show of Chinese aggression in the disputed waters, Philippine security officials said Sunday.

On Aug. 5, Chinese coast guard ships used water cannons against Philippine vessels in the contested waterway where disputes have long been regarded as a

potential flashpoint and have become a fault line in the rivalry between the U.S. and China in the region. The drill will include three aircraft and helicopter carriers sailing together in a show of force and undertaking joint drills. Their commanders are set to meet with Filipino counterparts in Manila after the offshore drills, two Philippine security officials told The Associated Press.

Both spoke on condition of anonymity because they are not allowed to publicly discuss details of the planned drills.

The U.S. plans to deploy an aircraft carrier, the USS America, while Japan would send one of its biggest warships, the helicopter carrier JS Izumo. The Royal Australian Navy would send its HMAS Canberra, which also carries helicopters, one of the two officials said, adding that the joint drill was planned a few months ago.

The Philippines would not be part of this week's drills due to military logistical limitations but is open to becoming a participant in the future.

North Korean hackers target U.S.-South Korea military drills, police say

Monitoring Desk

SEOUL: Suspected North Korean hackers have targeted a joint U.S.-South Korea military exercise being held this week though classified information has not been compromised, South Korean police said on Sunday.

South Korean and U.S. forces will on Monday begin 11-day Ulchi Freedom Guardian summer exercises to improve their ability to respond to North Korea's evolving nuclear and missile threats.

North Korea objects to such exercises saying they are preparations by

the U.S. and its South Korean ally for an invasion of it.

The hackers were believed to be linked to a North Korean group that researchers call Kimsuky, and they carried out their hack via emails to South Korean contractors working at the South Korea-U.S. combined exercise war simulation centre, the Gyeonggi Nambu Provincial Police Agency said in a statement.

"It was confirmed that military-related information was not stolen," police said in a statement on Sunday.

Japan, Iran leaders to meet in Sept in New York - Kyodo

Monitoring Desk

TOKYO: Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi will meet in New York in September to discuss Iran's nuclear programme among other issues, Kyodo news agency said on Sunday, quoting unnamed Iranian diplomatic sources. Iran aims to promote relations with Japan, traditionally a friendly nation, to avoid international isolation as Iran's talks with the United States and Europe over their nuclear deal have stalled, Kyodo said.

No comment was immediately available from Japan's foreign ministry.



Delegates shout slogans during a 'People's Summit on G20' in New Delhi, India.

Russia's first lunar mission in 47 years smashes into the moon in failure

Monitoring Desk

MOSCOW: Russia's first moon mission in 47 years failed when its Luna-25 spacecraft spun out of control and crashed into the moon after a problem preparing for pre-landing orbit, underscoring the post-Soviet decline of a once mighty space programme.

Russia's state space corporation, Roskosmos, said it had lost contact with the craft at 11:57 GMT on Saturday after a problem as the craft was shunted into pre-landing orbit. A soft landing had been planned for Monday.

"The apparatus moved into an unpredictable orbit and ceased to exist as a result of a collision with the surface of the Moon," Roskosmos said in a statement.

It said a special inter-departmental commission

had been formed to investigate the reasons behind the loss of the Luna-25 craft, whose mission had raised hopes in Moscow that Russia was returning to the big power moon race.

The failure underscored the decline of Russia's space power since the glory days of Cold War competition when Moscow was the first to launch a satellite to orbit the Earth — Sputnik 1, in 1957 — and Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin became the first man to travel into space in 1961.

It also comes as Russia's \$2 trillion economy faces its biggest external challenge for decades: the pressure of both Western sanctions and fighting the biggest land war in Europe since World War Two.

Turk Cypriots say road project disputed by UN is 'essential'

Monitoring Desk

NICOSIA: Turkish Cypriot leader Ersin Tatar on Saturday described as "essential" the construction of a road which has triggered rare tension with United Nations peacekeepers on the divided island.

Scuffles broke out on Friday between U.N. peacekeepers and Turkish Cypriot security personnel when peacekeepers tried to prevent roadworks starting in an area the U.N. says is part of a buffer zone under its jurisdiction.

Turkish Cypriot authorities say the peacekeeping force, known as UNFICYP, overstepped its boundaries.

"It is unfortunate that an attempt was made by UNFICYP to obstruct the development of the road being carried out by a civilian contractor, within the sovereign territory of the TRNC."

Tens of thousands flee western Canada wildfires

Monitoring Desk

KELOWNA: Residents of western Canada scrambled to evacuate on Saturday as raging wildfires encroached on two metropolitan areas — separate blazes that have sent tens of thousands fleeing over the course of just days.

The devastating fires in British Columbia and the Northwest Territories are just the latest in a summer of dramatic wildfires across the country that have left millions of acres scorched.

According to estimates, 19,000 people were evacuated from Yellowknife, the North-west Territories' capital, over 48 hours, its environment minister Shane Thompson said. The city, home to some 20,000, was largely a ghost town following the largest ever evacuation from the region.

More than 2,000 kilometres south in British Columbia, fire also bore down on Kelowna, a city of 150,000 people in the Okanagan Valley. Blazes have already de-

stroyed several properties in West Kelowna, separated by Okanagan Lake from its larger, eponymous neighbour.

Among them is the Lake Okanagan Resort, according to local media, which is known for having hosted high-profile politicians such as British prime minister Margaret Thatcher.

Overall, the number of people under evacuation order in British Columbia was 15,000, Emergency Management Minister Bowen Masad, according to Canadian media.

Thousands in the area were ordered evacuated or told to be ready to leave at a moment's notice, while those on the University of British Columbia's Okanagan campus were ordered to leave "immediately".

Officials described firefighters in the Kelowna area as being forced to pull back, with some becoming trapped behind lines while making "heroic efforts" to rescue area residents.

Japan's Kishida to meet fishermen on Fukushima water release plan

Monitoring Desk

TOKYO: Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said he will meet fishermen as soon as Monday to seek their understanding of the government's plan to release radioactive water from the wrecked Fukushima nuclear plant into the Pacific.

Getting the tacit approval of organisations representing the fisherman is considered the final hurdle for the plan to release the treated waste water, a move the government says it wants to begin this summer. The plan to release 1.3 million tons of water from the tsunami-destroyed plant as Tokyo Electric Power (TEPCO) runs out of storage space, has been opposed by local fishing unions, caused concern among shoppers in South Korea and sparked import bans of Fukushima food products China.

Trump steals the show before Republican debate

Monitoring Desk

WASHINGTON: All eyes are on Donald Trump as the Republican White House hopefuls prepare to do battle in the first debate of the 2024 race on Wednesday — with the main attraction threatening not to show up. Five months ahead of the start of primary elections to choose the party's flagbearer, the runaway frontrunner's grassroots support is as strong as ever, but numerous criminal cases have cast a pall over his comeback bid.

The 77-year-old former president, who is rarely out of the headlines, has been vocal about possibly skipping the event in

the city of Milwaukee, wary of sharing the limelight with lower-polling rivals. "I am leading the runner up, whoever that may now be, by more than 50 Points. Reagan didn't do it, and neither did others. People know my Record, one of the BEST EVER, so why would I Debate?" Trump recently posted on social media.

The New York Times reported on Friday that Trump had told aides he was planning to upstage his rivals by skipping the event, organised by Fox News, and instead sitting for an online interview with one of its former hosts, Tucker Carlson.

Talks between regional bloc and Niger's junta yield little

Monitoring Desk

NIAMEY: Mutinous soldiers in Niger are under pressure from regional sanctions as they refuse to reinstate the country's president whom they toppled nearly a month ago while being fearful of attacks from France, an official said.

The official spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity after Saturday's meeting between Niger's new military regime and a delegation from the West African regional bloc, ECOWAS.

He said the roughly two-hour discussion aimed

at finding a peaceful solution to the country's deepening crisis, yielded little with no clarity on the next steps. It was the first time head of the junta, Gen. Abdourahmane Tchiani, met with the delegation after rebuffing previous attempts. Saturday's meeting was a last-ditch diplomacy scramble by the bloc to resolve the crisis peacefully and followed last week's announcement that 11 of its 15 member states had agreed to intervene militarily if democratically-elected President Bazoum was not released from house arrest and reinstated.

Thai ex-PM Thaksin to return after 15 years in exile

Monitoring Desk

BANGKOK: Thailand's former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra is set to return to the kingdom, the same day a key parliamentary vote could end a political deadlock, his daughter said.

The 74-year-old billionaire was ousted in a 2006 military coup and has spent 15 years in self-exile. Thaksin has long said he wanted to return home but faces multiple criminal charges that he says are politically motivated.

"On Tuesday, August 22, 9am I will pick up my father Thaksin at Don Muang Airport," his daughter Paetongtarn Shinawatra, who is one of the Pheu Thai Party's candidates for prime minister, said on Instagram.

Thaksin later said he was definitely coming home this time.

"I don't want to offend people. I want everyone to love each other. I want the country to be peaceful," he told BBC Thai on Saturday.

"I'm old, I miss my grandchildren, I want to be with my family." His return will coincide with an afternoon vote on whether to approve Srettha Thavisin — from the Thaksin-linked Pheu Thai Party — as prime minister and end months of political uncertainty since a May general election.

To become premier, Srettha needs to muster a majority across the lower house of 500 elected MPs, and the 250-member senate that was handpicked by the kingdom's last junta.

Guatemalans vote for new leader as many hope for renewal of democracy

Monitoring Desk

GUATEMALA CITY: Guatemalans began casting their votes on Sunday in a presidential run-off election that many hope will reverse democratic backsliding under recent administrations.

Recent polls have predicted that Bernardo Arevalo, a progressive candidate running on an anti-graft message, will trounce establishment figure and former first lady Sandra Torres. That outcome could usher in a new era after widespread allegations of corruption and creeping authoritarianism in recent years.

Guatemala's new president will assume power as violence and food insecurity roil the country, triggering fresh waves of migration. Guatemalans now represent the largest number of Central Americans seeking to enter the United States.

"I would like Arevalo to win because he is not the same," Veronica Cam-

pos, a 58-year-old office worker, said after casting her vote on Sunday. "We are in a repetitive cycle. We have been wrong so many times believing in the same politicians."

The election is being closely watched by the international community, including the United States, after campaigning was marred by attempts by some officials to remove Arevalo and his Semilla party from the race.

His surprise second-place finish in June's first-round vote provoked calls from opponents for recounts that delayed official results.

His party was briefly suspended at the request of a prosecutor before the country's top court reversed the ban.

The political back and forth has put some voters on edge about potential problems during the run-off, which Arevalo has publicly said he is expecting.

Syrian suspect in shrine bombing dead in Beirut: Hezbollah

Monitoring Desk

BEIRUT: A man suspected of involvement in an attack last month on a shrine in Syria died following a Hezbollah pursuit late on Friday south of the Lebanese capital, the Iran-backed group said.

Wissam Dalla, a Syrian in his early twenties, "threw himself from the seventh floor" of a building where he had been staying with relatives "after learning his location had been discovered", Hezbollah said in a statement.

Dalla was "responsible for the explosion in the Sayyida Zeinab area" south of the Syrian capital last month, the Shiite Muslim group added. This news agency was unable to independently confirm the allegations against Dalla. Lebanese security forces played no role in the incident, a security source said on condition of anonymity as they were not authorised to speak to the media.

Lebanon's authorities did not immediately issue any statements.

On July 27, six people were killed and at least 20 others wounded when a bomb exploded south of Damascus near the Sayyida Zeinab mausoleum, Syria's most visited pilgrimage site, authorities said.

The militant Islamic State group later claimed the blast, which came ahead of the annual commemoration of Ashura, a key event on the Shia calendar.

Friday's incident took place in Hay al-Sellom, an impoverished neighbourhood in Beirut's southern suburbs — a Hezbollah stronghold. The group had pursued Dalla amid fears he could carry out another attack, the statement added, saying he was taken to hospital but died. "Relevant bodies" in Hezbollah were informed that he had entered Lebanon secretly, the statement said.

Hezbollah is the only Lebanese faction that kept its weapons after the end of the 1975-1990 civil war.

Indian police stop a conference of activists and academics discussing G20 issues ahead of summit

Monitoring Desk

NEW DELHI: Indian police intervened to stop a meeting of prominent activists, academics and politicians discussing global issues ahead of a summit of the Group of 20 industrialized and developing nations that will be hosted in New Delhi next month, the meeting's organizers said Sunday.

Nearly 400 participants had spent two days debating the G-20 agenda and key issues that affect much of the world's population, including food security, climate change, labor rights, natural resources and rising inequality.

The meeting also featured speakers who were critical of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his government's role in hosting the G-20 summit, saying it was using the event to bolster Modi's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party ahead of a general election next year.

Meeting organizers for the "We20" conference said they received a letter from New Delhi police on Sunday morning telling them to end the meeting since it did not have the proper permission in a high-security zone, according to Kavita Kabear, a spokesperson for the group.

"We are shocked that we need to have permission to practice democracy," a statement by the organizers said.

Critics of Modi say India's democratic principles are under threat, and that assaults on the press and free speech have grown brazen under his government. Modi's ministers deny this and say India's democracy is robust and thriving.

Suman Nalwa, a Delhi Police spokesperson, declined to comment.



People float down the Shuswap River on rafts and kayaks as a haze from wildfire smoke fills the valley in Enderby, British Columbia, Canada

Jaranwala incident investigation PUC, Church of Pakistan announce 24-member committee

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Ulema Council (PUC) and Church of Pakistan on Sunday jointly established a 24-member committee in a concerted effort to address the tragic incident in Jaranwala, foster interfaith and inter-denominational unity, and quell extremist narratives. Co-chaired by PUC Chairman Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi and Church of Pakistan President Bishop Azad Marhal, the committee comprises diverse leaders including Bishop Aleem Anwar, Bishop Arshad Joseph, Muswar Abbasi, Pastor Immanuel Khokhar, Zaeer Abbas, Pastor Shahzad Gul, Pastor Immanuel Lorraine, Bishop Leoradic Paul, Bishop Alvin Samorel, Mishaal Samorel, Sahil Advocate, Pir Naqibur Rehman, Sahibzada Hassan Haseebur Rehman, Maulana Ziaullah Shah Bukhari, Allama Arif Wahidi, Allama Tahirul Hasan, Maulana Asadullah Farooq, Maulana Muhammad Aslam Siddiqui, Farz Islam, Sardar Ajmal Advocate, Sajid Iqbal Advocate and other dignitaries. Ashrafi emphasized during a media interaction that building a peaceful and resilient Pakistan required active participation from all segments of society. He stressed the inclusion of leaders from various religions in the 24-member committee, bridging the gap between Muslim and Christian leaders. "We must strive to cultivate tolerance, respect, and patience in our society and reject any attempts to exploit religion for personal or political gains," he added. He further noted that concerted efforts would be made across all levels to discourage illegal actions under the guise of blasphemy or religious insult. Ashrafi said the PUC had pledged to provide assistance to the young victims of the Jaranwala incident, announcing their commitment to organize arrangements for the affected girls' dowries as part of their ongoing support efforts.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman PKMAP Mahmood Khan Achakzai meeting with leader of JUL, former Chief Minister KPK Akram Khan Durrani

Court grants one day physical remand of Iman in terrorism case

ISLAMABAD (Online): Regional court of Islamabad granted one day physical remand of Iman Mazari in terrorism case and one day judicial remand on interference in government work and holding unauthorised public meeting. According to details former human rights minister Shireen Mazari's daughter and human rights activist Iman Mazari and former Member National Assembly (MNA) Ali Wazir were arrested in case of intervention in government work after participation in (Pashtun Tahafuz Movement) PTM public rally. Just next day after arrest Iman Mazari was presented in additional and session court duty judge Ehtsham Alam. On the start of hearing media persons' entrance was prevented from court room and deployed huge contingents of police outside the court. Police demanded physical remand of Iman Mazari and presented other FIRS (First Information Report) of rebellion and terrorism before judge. During hearing Shireen Mazari came on rostrum and said she is not nominated in the case then why her cell phone was snatched. CCTV cameras of her house were broken. She said I imagine myself insecure after ward. Judge said to Shireen Mazari to approach the relevant platform and said Inquiry officer 'if you don't need please return her cell phone'.



QUETTA: Members of Majlis-e-Wahdat Muslim and Methodist Church attending a seminar in connection with the Jaranwala incident.

Sutlej witnesses 'worst flooding in three decades'

KASUR (INP): The Sutlej River surged to extremely high levels at Ganda Singh Wala Barrage resulting in the evacuation of hundreds of families from 72 villages in Kasur and Chunan, while three people drowned in floodwater in Kasur while trying to find higher ground. The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) reported that a high-level flooding situation was underway in the Sutlej River and the situation would depend on water flow at Harike Headworks and Ferozepur Headworks. The water level had risen to 23 feet, with a flow of 269,000 cusecs at the Ganda Singh Wala Barrage. In Sulemanki, there was a moderate level of flooding with a flow of 83,072 cusecs. There is a looming threat of extremely high-level flooding at Head Sulemanki in the next 24 hours. The water flow had reached 30,142 cusecs at Head Islam. The risk of extreme flooding in Head Islam is expected to commence from August 22. However, the water flow in Sindh, Jhelum, Chenab, and Ravi remained normal. The administrative authorities of the districts adjacent to the Sutlej River were put on high alert and measures had been implemented to restrict the movement of people in areas near Sutlej. Relevant deputy commissioners have been directed to reinforce the dykes along the Sutlej River. In Kasur, two of the three villagers who drowned in the floodwater had been fished out while the rescue efforts were underway to find the third person. According to Rescue officials, Jamshed of village Athat Singh and Aslam and Mola of village Verram Jhugian wanted to shift to a safer place on their own. They were holding hands due to floodwater but the gushing water swallowed them after separating them. Separately, over 100 buffaloes of a farmer at village Usmawala near Ganda Singh were swept away while being transported from flooding.

Caretaker PM pays tribute to Rashid Minhas Shaheed

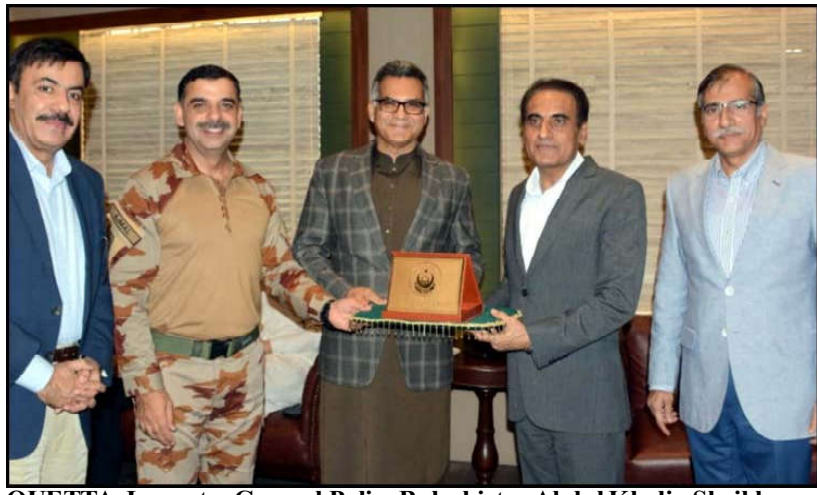
ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar on Sunday paid tribute to Pilot Officer Rashid Minhas Shaheed (Nishan e Haider) on 52nd anniversary of his martyrdom. The prime minister on social media platform-X, posted "Observing the 52nd anniversary of martyrdom of Pilot Officer Rashid Minhas Shaheed (Nishan e Haider) today, we as a nation salute his undying courage." Rashid Minhas Shaheed's act on 20 August 1971 preserved the national dignity and his legacy of valor remained undimmed, he added in his post.

President's tweet give arises to many question then constitutional

ISLAMABAD (Online): Pakistan People Party senator Raza Rabbani said president Alvi's tweet caused a rise of more real questions as compared to some constitutional questions. Under article-50 of 1973 constitution President is the part of Parliament, he said. Further he said President's statement should be investigated under whole committee of senate in which whole senate sits. Relative shift should appear in front of Bar of Senate. He maintained that President leveled very serious allegations and it will have far reaching consequences on whole system.

4 Pakistanis held in Saudi Arabia for drug trafficking Monitoring Desk

RIYADH: Five people, including four Pakistanis, have been arrested in Saudi Arabia on the charges of drug trafficking. According to the Saudi news agency, the anti-narcotics department in Riyadh took action against the drug dealers based on information from intelligence agencies. In a statement issued by the General Directorate of Narcotics Control, 1.9 kilos of methamphetamine was recovered from the possession of the four Pakistani nationals. Election Commission only for their own interests. Sirajul Haq alleged that PDM and PPP conspired to postpone the election adding the Election Commission should reconsider its decision and announce immediate elections, the caretaker government should conduct transparent elections instead of jumping around. Talking about inflation, Sirajul Haque said that according to a research, electricity prices have increased by 72 percent in a few months, now the solution to all these problems lies only with the people.



QUETTA: Inspector General Police Balochistan Abdul Khaliq Sheikh presenting a memorial shield to outgoing Chief Secretary Balochistan Abdul Aziz Uqaili at a farewell luncheon hosted in his honour

Ahsan meets CPC leader Ma Xingrui

URUMQI (China) (APP): Former federal minister Professor Ahsan Iqbal here on Sunday called on Ma Xingrui, Member of the Polit Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and Secretary of the CPC [Communist Party of China] Xinjiang Uyghurs Autonomous Regional Committee. He was accompanied by Senator Mahmood-ul-Hassan and other officials of the Embassy of Pakistan in Beijing, a news release said. The Chinese side also included Erkin Tuniyas, Governor of Xinjiang, Chen Weijun, Executive Vice-Chairman of the People's Government of Xinjiang, Kaysar Abdurkerim, Vice Chairman of the People's Government of Xinjiang and other high-ranking officials from Xinjiang. Warmly welcoming the Pakistani side, Party Secretary Ma Xingrui remarked that both countries have withstood the vicissitudes of times, despite the global political landscape. He conveyed President Xi Jinping's strong commitment to further solidify Pakistan-China strategic cooperative partnerships in diverse fields. Party Secretary Ma lauded the statesmanship, professionalism and educational background of Prof Ahsan Iqbal which enabled valuable contribution towards the development and success of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). He called him a seasoned and accomplished politician to make more contributions toward the success of CPEC in the future. He remarked that President Xi Jinping desired to make CPEC an "exemplary" Project of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), with Xinjiang playing a central role in regional and economic development. The Party Secretary reaffirmed his Government's strong commitment to fully realize the potential of the Khunjrab-Sost-Kashgar border market.



QUETTA: President Balochistan National Party Sardar Akhtar Jan Mengal condoling with Nawab Muhammad Aslam Khan Raisani over sad demise of Haroon Raisani

Khaliq Maqbool looks forward to free fair general elections

HYDERABAD (APP): Convener of Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui has said the constitution of Pakistan has laid down the procedure of holding free and fair elections and that law should be followed in letter and spirit. Talking to the media at the Soyam of MQM-P's Deputy Convener Kunwar Navid Jameel in Latifabad here on Sunday, Siddiqui observed that the recently conducted population census had shown an increase of 50 million people in the country's population since the last census. According to him, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) was expected to carry out the delimitation of constituencies in light of the increased population. Siddiqui expressed hope that the ECP with the support of the caretaker governments in the centre and the provinces would be able to conduct free and fair elections.



QUETTA: President Pakistan Islamic Medical Association Balochistan Abdul Jabbar administers oath to the newly elected members of Shura.

Siraj indicates to go to SC against ECP for getting election date

LAHORE (INP): Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Chief Sirajul Haq indicated to go to Supreme Court of Pakistan against the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) for not announcing the election's date. Addressing a press conference, Sirajul Haq said that even to date the Election Commission has not announced the date of the elections and this act of the Commission is a violation of the constitution. Siraj also demanded the Election Commission to conduct transparent elections alleging that the previous governments used the

CM visits native area Lehri; offers fateha for grave of father

QUETTA: The caretaker Chief Minister, Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki reached his native area, Lehri on Sunday morning. Soon after his arrival in Lehri, the caretaker Chief Minister visited his ancestral graveyard and offered fateha for his departed soul Hazoor Bakhsh Domki and other elders. He also showered rose petals at the graves of his father and other elders. Meanwhile, the people of his native area and elders also met the caretaker Chief Minister and greeted him on assuming his office. Speaking to them, Mir Ali Mardan Domki said that he got this status with the prayers of his elders and people of the area. Later, he moved to Sibi from Lehri the same afternoon.

PCG recovers huge quantity of drugs dumped underground

KARACHI (APP): The Pakistan Coast Guards (PCG) seized a large quantity of drugs worth millions from Balochistan. According to spokesman for PCG on Sunday, the PCG on a tip off recovered 1488kg fine quality hashish dumped underground. The seized drugs were reportedly to be smuggled abroad via sea route. Approximated value of the recovered drugs in the international market was 24.83 million dollars. The PCG had initiated the legal proceedings.

Iman arrested for insulting institutions

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad Police arrested Iman Mazari for her speech against the country's institutions in an organization meeting on Friday. Former federal minister Shireen Mazari (mother of Iman Mazari) said in a statement on the social networking website X that female police and people in plain clothes took her daughter away. She said that they asked the officers for the warrant which they did not show, they went round the whole house.

Solangi grieved over loss of lives in road mishap

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi on Sunday expressed deep grief and sorrow over the accident of a passenger coach coming from Karachi to Islamabad. In a statement, the minister expressed sympathy and condolences to the families of those who died in the tragic accident. "The reasons should be determined so that such accidents can be avoided in the future," Solangi said. He prayed to Allah Almighty to rest the departed soul in eternal peace and grant courage to the bereaved families to bear this loss with fortitude. Caretaker Information Minister Murtaza Solangi also prayed for early recovery of the injured.

Caretaker Chief Minister says: LEAs would have to adopt effective strategy to restore law & order, tackle security challenges

Independent Report QUETTA: The caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Ali Mardan Domki has emphasized that the law enforcement agencies (LEAs) would have to adopt effective strategy to restore law and order and cope with the security challenges. He also stressed that the police would also have to go for smart policing along with modernity doing away with the conventional policing. Mir Ali Mardan Domki was addressing the law and order situation in Sibi on Sunday. He was briefed about the law and order situation in Sibi. Deputy Inspector General of Police Sibi Range, Ali Sher Jhokrani briefed the caretaker Chief Minister in this regard. Speaking on the occasion, the caretaker Chief Minister said that use of modern technical is very necessary in policing. He also underlined the need to create sense of protection among masses adopting the concept of safe city in all big cities of the province. He directed the police force to bring more improvement in its performance and also get confidence of the masses. Mir Ali Mardan Domki on the occasion mentioned that holding free and fair elections in peaceful environment is the mandate and top priority of the interim government.



QUETTA: New appointed Chief Secretary Balochistan Shakeel Qadir Khan meeting with Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki

Visits Jaranwala PPP delegation expresses sympathy with Christian affectees

FAISALABAD (APP): A delegation of senior politicians of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) has visited Jaranwala here on Sunday and expressed sympathy with the people of the Christian community affected in August 16 tragedy. The delegation comprising of former Chairman Senate Nayyar Hussain Bukhari, Deputy Speaker National Assembly Faisal Karim Kundi, former federal ministers Sherry Rehman, Rana Farooq Saeed and Nadeem Afzal Chan went to Christian Colony and condemned the riotous incident in Jaranwala. They appreciated the government's efforts for rehabilitation of the affectees and demanded indiscriminate action against those responsible for this tragedy. Speaking on the occasion, Sherry Rehman said that Pakistan People's Party strongly condemned Jaranwala incident and said that the minorities had equal rights in Pakistan and the whole nation was saddened due to Jaranwala tragedy. She said that some elements had tried to disrupt peace in the country. Therefore, the accused involved in this incident should be severely punished.



LEHRI: FC Wing Commander Col. Shams meeting with Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki. Former State Minister Mir Dostan Khan Domki is also present

Rana believes PPP objecting to fresh delimitations over fear of losing seats

ISLAMABAD (INP): Former interior minister Rana Sanaullah said that the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) was objecting to the fresh delimitations on the basis of the 2023 census out of fear of losing a few seats as an increase in the number of Karachi seats was expected. Remarks of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's (PML-N) senior leader came during a Geo News programme "Jirga", wherein he maintained that a delay in conducting general elections beyond 90 days would not make any difference. He said that the Council of Common Interests (CCI), in which PPP leaders were also present, had approved the new census by consensus. On August 17, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) announced the elections couldn't be held in three months due to the requirement of fresh delimitations after the notification of census 2023, as decided by the CCI. "There is a consensus of the entire nation on this census. New delimitation is a constitutional requirement," Sanaullah said. He explained that everyone objected to the 2017 census, but since elections were around the corner, a one-time "amendment" was made to hold polls on that particular headcount. He stressed that holding elections on a "tainted census of 2017" would be unconstitutional. Therefore, delaying polls for another 80 or 90 days would not be an issue, he added. In contrast to the PML-N's position, PPP Vice President Senator Sherry Rehman urged the ECP to duly announce the date of general elections in line with the provisions of Article 224 of the Constitution. "Our Constitution binds the Election Commission of Pakistan to conduct general elections within 90 days of the dissolution of the National Assembly, however, there is no constitutional requirement for conducting delimitation," Rehman said, calling upon the ECP to announce the election date to fulfill the constitutional obligation.



KAN MEHTARZAI: Former opposition leader Malik Sikandar Khan Advocate, Malik Ramzan Mehtarzai and others addressing a ceremony held to greet Anwaarul Haq Kakar on becoming Caretaker Prime Minister. Large numbers of tribal elders and citizens are present