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No compromise on minorities' protection: PM Kakar assures Christian community

Premier reiterates the caretaker govt's resolve to protect minorities; Extremism has nothing to do with any religion; Distributes cheques among families of affected Christian community in Jaranwala

JARANWALA (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Monday assured all the minority communities in the country that the government was committed to protect their lives and properties, and the perpetrators of heinous attacks against them would be brought to justice.

Addressing a gathering of the Christian community members, he said, "We are the followers of the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) and the Founder of the Nation, and it is also binding upon us under the Constitution, which en-

courages us to respond to such atrocities."

The prime minister said that they would never condone the persecutions of minorities, and stressed that if anyone caused harm to the minorities, the law of the country would take its course by ensuring that such like incidents should not happen in future.

The entire society and the government would not cower down before the dark forces but would stand shoulder to shoulder with the victim communities, he said, adding that they would become voice of the voiceless with the tangible and

meaningful support. "Our actions will speak louder than our speeches," PM Kakar said.

The prime minister arrived here to express solidarity with the victim families of Christian community. Punjab Governor Baligh-ur-Rehman and Caretaker Chief Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi, caretaker federal ministers, senior officials and members of the Christian community were present on the occasion.

PM Kakar further said that the minorities in Pakistan were struggling for the

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ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi welcoming the Saudi Minister for Hajj and Umrah, Dr. Tawfiq bin Fawzan Al-Rabiah, who along with his delegation, called on President Dr. Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

President for further strengthening economic, cultural ties with KSA

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Monday called for further strengthening bilateral ties with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) in diverse fields, particularly economy, investment, and culture.

The president, talking to Saudi Minister for Hajj and Umrah Dr Tawfiq bin Fawzan Al-Rabiah, who along with a delegation called on him, said that Pakistan highly valued its relations with Saudi Arabia, which were based on common faith, shared history, and people-to-people ties.

Welcoming the delegation, the president reiterated Pakistan's commitment to further strengthening the existing economic partnership with the King-

dom for the mutual benefit of both the brotherly countries.

He underscored the need to expand bilateral trade as great opportunities existed for investment in Pakistan in different sectors such as information technology (IT), renewable energy, industrial and infrastructure development, and the hospitality sectors.

President Alvi thanked the Saudi government for making excellent arrangements for the Hajj this year.

He expressed the hope that the Saudi government would expedite the purchase of Pakistan House inside Markaziah in Madina from the compensation amount of two Pakistan Houses demolished in Madina.



ISLAMABAD: Commandant FC Moazzam Jah Ansari called on Caretaker Federal Minister for Interior Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti.

SC be not embroiled in economic problems, it is already embroiled in myriad matters: Justice Athar

ISLAMABAD (Online): Justice Athar, Minallah has remarked Supreme Court (SC) should not be embroiled in economic problems as it is already embroiled in so many matters.

He further observed federal government is proper forum to see matters regarding economy.

The case pertaining to loans obtained beyond constitutional limitation came up for hearing before 2-member bench of SC presided over by the Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial here Monday.

The counsel for petitioner took the plea in the court that he filed constitutional petition regarding acquisition of loans in 2020. The respondents Hafeez Sheikh and Raza Baqir ran away in the case.

The CJP inquired your case is Debt Limitation Act 2005 was not implemented. The counsel for petitioner took the plea the governments violated constitution by acquiring loans beyond limitations.

Justice Athar Minallah remarked one should go to high court for implementation of act. The country is facing dire economic hardships.

The CJP remarked there is weight in the point raised by you. Why so much loan was obtained for the country. See website of state bank that how much loans were obtained annually since 1947 to date.

CJP remarked country is facing worse economic situation. This is not better time that the court should hear such like petition.

Man martyred in unprovoked firing of Indian troops on LoC

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Indian Army on Monday resorted to unprovoked firing in Nikial Sector, targeting innocent civilians that resulted in the Shahadat of an old aged (60 years) individual named Ghias, a resident of Village Oli, District Kotli and traumatized three women while cutting grass in the fields.

The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) in a news release said, "This blatant Indian aggression is a clear violation of existing Ceasefire Understandings. Pakistan desires peace and tranquility at its borders, however, all necessary measures will be taken to protect the life and property of our citizens."

It added that any misadventure against the people of Pakistan would be befittingly responded to at the time and place of our choosing.

NAB inquiry report declares Parvez Elahi guilty of corruption

LAHORE (INP): The inquiry report of National Accountability Bureau (NAB) issued on Monday declared Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Central President and former Punjab Chief Minister Chaudhry Parvez Elahi of alleged corruption in award of contracts.

The NAB report released here stated that the PTI leader approved 116 development schemes for Gujarat in collaboration with his close aides.

The former chief minister was also involved in misuse of the authority and office, the report added.

The NAB accused him of using his influence to award contracts of schemes to his favourite contractors.

The report stated that Parvez Elahi awarded contracts through his frontmen and received bribe and kickbacks.

The report said the ex-chief minister issued funds in advance to receive kickbacks. He diverted funds allocated for other schemes to his approved plans.

He misused his position as the head of the province and received kickbacks, the report added.



FAISALABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar distributes cheques of 2 million rupees each to individuals from the Christian community whose residences were damaged due to mob violence in Tehsil Jaranwala.

Law, order, education, health & lack of drinking water biggest issues in Balochistan: Domki

Caretaker Chief Minister directs provincial secretaries to improve governance

Independent Report

QUETTA: The caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki has stated that the law and order, education, health and non-availability of clean drinking water are the biggest issues of the province, and added that no doubt conducting elections is the task of caretaker government, still as a Chief Minister, it is also included in his responsibility to resolve the issues being faced by the masses.

He said that as a son of soil, he knew very well about the issues of Balochistan, and it is our collective responsibility to work together for resolving these issues and serve the masses.

The caretaker Chief Minister

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Provincial caretaker cabinet to consist of 13-14 ministers, 5 advisers: CM

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan Caretaker Chief Minister Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki on Monday said that the provincial caretaker cabinet would consist of 13 to 14 ministers and five advisers in the first phase while in the second phase, more ministers and advisers will be inducted into the cabinet.

He expressed these views while talking to the media persons after the swearing-in ceremony at Governor House.

Domki said that the establishment of law and order in the province and the holding of fair and transparent elections were the priority of the caretaker provincial government.

He said that non-political persons have included in the caretaker cabinet, but our mandate was to hold fair, transparent and impartial elections.

He said that instructions have been issued to the relevant departments and officers for transparency and high-quality completion of the ongoing development projects under the Public Sector Development Program (PSDP).



QUETTA: Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki presiding over introductory meeting of provincial secretaries. Chief Secretary Balochistan Shakeel Qadir Khan is also present

Caretaker govt to fully support ECP, provinces in conducting free, fair elections: Solangi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi said on Monday that the caretaker federal government would provide full support to the Election Commission of Pakistan, commission and provinces in conducting transparent, free, and impartial general elections.

During a telephonic conversation with Sindh Governor Kamran Tessori, he said that the caretaker set up would perform their duties according to the constitution and would not tolerate any discrimination against anyone.

Sindh Governor Kamran Tessori congratulated Murtaza Solangi on assuming charge as the caretaker federal minister



ISLAMABAD: Director General of Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) of Pakistan Khaqan Murtaza and President of General Authority on Civil Aviation (GACA) of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Abdul Aziz Al Duailej signing Air Services Agreement (ASA) between Pakistan and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Outgoing CS holds farewell meeting with Governor Balochistan

Independent Report
QUETTA: The outgoing Chief Secretary Balochistan, Abdul Aziz Uqaili held farewell meeting with the Governor, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar here at the Governor's House on Monday.

During the meeting, both discussed the law and order situation as well as the matters about ongoing development projects and mutual interests.

The Governor appreciated the services rendered by Abdul Aziz Uqaili as Chief Secretary for the province and its people.

Pakistan signs air services agreement with Saudi Arabia

ISLAMABAD (APP): The government of Pakistan and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on Monday signed the Air Services Agreement (ASA) to enhance cooperation in the aviation sector.

Director General Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) of Pakistan Khaqan Murtaza and President General Authority of Civil Aviation (GACA), Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Abdul Aziz Al Duailej signed the agreement on behalf of Government of Pakistan and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia respectively to facilitate citizens of the two countries.

Five-member interim cabinet of Balochistan takes oath; three advisers also appointed

Independent Report

QUETTA: Five-member interim cabinet of Balochistan took oath here at the Governor House on Monday.

The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar administered oath to the members of cabinet including Prince Ahmed Ali, Captain (Retd) Zubair Jamali, Amjad Rasheed, Jan Muhammad Achakzai and Abdul Qadir Baloch.

The oath taking ceremony was attended by the caretaker Chief Minister, Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki, former members and members of the assembly besides Chief Secretary, Inspector General of Police, Additional Chief Secretaries, administrative secretaries of provincial government departments and

other dignitaries.

The Governor congratulated the caretaker provincial ministers after administering oath to them.

Meanwhile, three advisers to the caretaker Chief Minister were also appointed. They were included Ms. Shania Khan, Umair Muhammad Hassani and Danish Langove.

Later soon after oath taking ceremony, the caretaker Chief Minister told the media persons that five caretaker ministers have taken oath, more ministers would also be inducted in the interim cabinet.

Ali Mardar Domki announced that his cabinet would comprise at least 13/14 ministers. He said that his priority is to conduct free and fair elections in the

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QUETTA: Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar administering the oath of office to members of the caretaker provincial Cabinet. Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki is also present

President Alvi says Services of Secretary Waqar Ahmed 'no more required'

ISLAMABAD (INP): President Dr Arif Alvi a day after denial of his signing Official Secrets Act and the Pakistan Army Act, said the services of Secretary Waqar Ahmed were "no more required".

The president in a statement posted on X on Monday said, "In view of the definite statement of yesterday, President's Secretary has written a letter

to Principal Secretary to Prime Minister that the services of Mr Waqar Ahmed, Secretary to President, are no more required and are surrendered to the Establishment Division, immediately." "It has also been desired that Ms Humaira Ahmed, a BPS-22 officer of the Pakistan Administrative Service, may be posted as Secretary to the President," the statement added.

Original signatures of president must for approval or disapproval of bill

ISLAMABAD (Online): No copied signatures of the president are pasted on any bill and original signatures of the president are must in connection with approval or disapproval of

bill, say parliamentary sources.

Both the bills were sent to the president after completing all the phases of

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QUETTA: President Balochistan National Party Sardar Akhtar Jan Mengal meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar

APNS felicitates Murtaza Solangi on his appointment as Information Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): The All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS) on Monday formally congratulated Murtaza Solangi on his appointment as Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting.

"On behalf of the office bearers and members of the executive committee of the All Pakistan Newspapers Society, I would like to welcome and congratulate you on your appointment as caretaker Minister for Information," said APNS Secretary General Sarmad Ali in a letter.

The body expressed the hope that the issues

faced by the print media would be resolved during Murtaza Solangi's tenure as minister.

It also believed that the minister would play his role in strengthening the caretaker government's relation with media.

"I would also like to note with pleasure that a prominent person of media fraternity has been appointed as caretaker Minister for Information and hope that under your stewardship the issues pertaining to the Print Media which are still lying unattended would be addressed," Sarmad Ali noted.

Redressing traders grievances, a top priority of government: AJK PM

MIRPUR (AJK) (APP): Azad Jammu Kashmir Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq on Monday appreciated the significant role of business community in the socio-economic development of the state and determined that the problems being faced by the traders community would be resolved on priority.

ment, he added. Stressing the need for across the board accountability, the prime minister said that rule of law was the fundamental requirement to achieve prosperity and progress. "All citizens of the state, regardless of their status in society, are equal before the law", he said, adding that the accountability right from top to bottom level had been started so that no one expected any kind of concession.

"The law will take its own course", he said, adding that whoever challenges the writ of the state would be held accountable. He, however, maintained that peaceful protest was the constitutional right of every citizen. He made it clear that the state would never allow anyone to cross the limits under any pretext. "There is not a single political prisoner in Azad Kashmir", he pointed out. Regarding the provision of electricity to households, the prime minister said that currently 2368 megawatts of electricity were being provided while there was a potential of 12 to 13 thousand megawatts. He lamented that 75% of electricity bills were not being paid by the consumers.



KARACHI: Resident of Orangi Town along with his children are holding protest demonstration against massive unemployment, increasing price of daily use products and inflation price hiking, held at Karachi press club.

The government was cognizant of the traders' role and their selfless contribution to the society, he added. Maintaining the rule of law, he said, was among the top priorities of his government.

He said that the government's only mission was to provide the best facilities for the public through effective and transparent use of government resources. He said that the government's job was to ensure the welfare of the people. The prime minister said that he was not accustomed to making false promises, adding "No one can be allowed to cross the ideological boundaries".

Referring to the subsidy given on flour, the prime minister said that the government spent a huge chunk of money on subsidy (nearly a billion per month).

Law, order, education, health...

Continued from page 1 Minister was addressing the introductory meeting with the administrative secretaries of provincial government department at the CM's secretariat on Monday. Also present in the meeting was newly appointed Chief Secretary Balochistan, Shakir Qadir. Addressing the meeting, the caretaker Chief Minister said that the meeting is aimed at providing guideline about mandate of the interim government besides the introduction.

Administrative secretaries to improve their performance further and guide him too. He also urged them to consider them to be public servant and open their doors for them. In addition to this, Mr. Domki also asked the secretaries to ensure punctuality of time besides directing their subordinate officers and staff to follow it as well. He stressed that there's a need to dispel the impression about misuse of development funds in the province. He said that

it would be his utmost endeavour to dispel this impression. Moreover, we also have to pay attention on improving governance in the province, adding he stressed. He said that it is the duty of government to give policy while it is your responsibility to ensure implementation on that policy. "We also need to attention on developing human resources besides the production", he maintained.

He stressed that we have to work with sincerity and hard work as Allah Almighty has given us the responsibility, and we have to fulfill it to seek Allah's willingness. The caretaker Chief Minister on the occasion mentioned that it is our topmost priority to conduct free and fair elections in peaceful manner, and for this, we have to improve governance. He exhorted the ad-



QUETTA: Vice Chancellor Balochistan University of Information Technology, Engineering and Management Sciences Dr Khalid Hafeez in a meeting with Chairman Pakistan Engineering Council Muhammad Najeb Haroon, in Provincial Capital.

No compromise on minorities'...

Continued from page 1 protection of the rights of their communities across the region, adding that the people who had attacked the Christian community in the area were the enemies of humanity. He said that they were assuring them of the government's support not out of any compulsion, but due to their conviction. The incident that occurred in the area alluded to a pervasive issue in the society which had been experiencing extremism, radicalism and aggressive behaviour, and manifested that such behaviour did not belong to any religion, sect or group rather indicated an innate human behaviour which spread like a cancerous disease, he opined.

for their support to the victims and reiterated that there would be no compromise on the minorities' rights. The prime minister warned that no one could predict the future, but in case, any miscreant or group that harboured evil designs against the minorities, including Sikhs, Hindus, or others, would find the authority of the government on the side of the affected segments, shielding them against any harm. Recalling the Christian community members' contributions in the society, the prime minister also recollected his early education imparted by the Christian teachers. The caretaker prime minister said white was not only a colour of the National Flag, but it showed the perfection of the country in which the minorities filled that beauty of harmony and unity. He further assured that they would resist the majoritarianism and such like agenda at the domestic, regional and global levels. Speaking on the occasion, the Punjab governor said that such incidents should be curbed and let not recur, adding the places of worship were worth respected and the regard for all communities should be maintained. The chief minister, on the occasion, said that the main culprits were already in the custody. He assured that the damaged churches would be restored while the compensation cheques would be handed over to all the af-

ected families. Earlier, the prime minister also distributed cheques among the affected families. Caretaker Minister for Human Rights Khalid George, in his remarks, regretted the unfortunate incident and thanked the Muslim families of the area for protecting their Christian neighbours. During his visit to a church, the prime minister reiterated that they would not allow anyone to target the minorities on the basis of religious differences, adding that the government, with full might, would stop the hands of aggressors. Caretaker Prime Minister Anwarul Haq Kakar on Monday distributed cheques of financial assistance among the Christian families, affected due to the Jarawal incident. At a ceremony held at the Canal Road Jarawal, he gave away cheques to members of 25 affected families, and a Christian girl, who had complained that her dowry was burnt in riots. Those who received the included Abid Masih, Shafiq Hayat, Marthan Anayat, Elyas Masih, Irshad Masih, Zeeshan Masih, Shehzad Masih, Nadeem Masih, Parvaiz Masih, Rizwan Masih, Abid Masih, Sarfraz Masih, Rauf Masih, Faiz Masih, Shah Zaib Masih, Shafiq Masih, Javid Jan, Robin Gosh, Siraj Masih, Shehzad Anjum, Ahsan Afzal, Sehat Masih, Nisar Masih and Babar Masih.

Commandant FC, Chairman NACTA calls on Interim Interior Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Commandant FC Moazzam Jah Ansari called on Caretaker Minister for Interior Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti here on Monday. According to a news release, in a separate call on, National Coordinator, National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA), Muhammad Tahir Rai also met Caretaker Federal Minister for Interior Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti here.



QUETTA: A delegation led by former MPA Asghar Khan Achakzai meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar

Special court constituted in Islamabad to hear cases under official secret act

ISLAMABAD (Online): Special Court has been constituted in Islamabad to hear the cases under official secret act. Judge Abul Hasnat Muhammad Zulqarnain has been delegated the powers to hear the cases under official secret act. The in-camera hearing of the cases under official secret act will be conducted. No irrelevant person including media will be given access to the court. Only one court has been set up in the country under this act.

Delegations of Sibi, Lasebla, Hub and other areas meet caretaker CM, greet him

Independent Report Minister. They apprised the Chief Minister about the issues of law and order and others and sought his cooperation for resolving them. The caretaker Chief Minister gave patient hearing to the issues and assured that he would apprise the caretaker Prime Minister, Anwarul Haq Kakar about their issues related to the electricity, national highways and other federal-related matters so as to resolve them on sustainable grounds. He said that we would hold free and fair elections remaining in given mandate and authority. Mir Ali Mardan Domki also said that it is our priority to maintain the improved law and order situation in the province and take such step, which are in larger interest of the people.

Final report of Greece boat accident sent to Interior Ministry

ISLAMABAD (Online): The investigation committee said in its report that 147 human traffickers have been identified based on the information of families and relatives. After the incident, 163 cases were registered and 3 inquiries were completed. During the crackdown, 36 human traffickers were arrested and 32 are abroad. FIA prepared 262 and Interior Ministry 278 lists of affected families and 12 Pakistanis were rescued in the incident. DNA samples were obtained from 262 relatives. Data of fingerprints of 82 people were provided to NADRA and fingerprints of 15 victims were matched. Majority of the victims traveled abroad on E-visa from Pakistan and reached Libya. From Libya they left for Greece on a fishing boat.

No one can be pushed behind the bars on mere apprehensions: IHC

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) has set aside arrest orders of 4 office bearers of PTI Islamabad under MPO. The court has ordered to release these 4 office bearers of PTI forthwith. Justice Tariq Jahangiri of IHC announced the decision on completion of arguments on Monday. The court ordered to release the four office bearers immediately. Justice Tariq Jahangiri remarked no one can be pushed behind the bars merely on apprehensions. If apprehensions are made basis then anyone will be arrested. It is pertinent to mention here that 4 office bearers of PTI had resorted to IHC against their arrest under MPO. Counsel Babar Awan had given arguments on behalf of these four office bearers.

Number of Congo Virus patients rising in Balochistan

QUETTA (APP): Two more suspected Congo virus patients have been admitted to Fatima Jinnah Chest Hospital Quetta FICHO. The number of positive cases reported this year has mounted to 28, FICHO sources told APP. According to the administration, Hamza, 22, a resident of Quetta, and Naseeba, 30 resident of Loralai were shifted to the hospital last night in a critical condition due to the complaint of bleeding from the nose and mouth. The blood samples of the patients brought to the hospital suspected of Congo virus have been sent for laboratory tests, the sources said. They noted that as many as 28 cases of Congo virus have been reported so far this year, in which 10 patients have died.

Original signatures

Continued from page 1 approval. The president was either to sign these bills within 10 days or was to raise objections. National Assembly (NA), Senate secretariat sources said they have not received any written objection from the president. Chairman Senate and speaker NA had sent both the bills to the president. The route through which the summary goes to Awan-e-Sadr after approval of the bill, it comes back from this route too. The staff of Awan-e-Sadr is not at fault in this entire matter. Legal branch knows every thing. The president has to approve or return the bill within 10 days no matter it is passed in joint session or Senate or NA separately.

Five-member...

Continued from page 1 province. To a query, the caretaker Chief Minister said that steps are being taken to bring improvement in law and order situation in the province. He asserted that he would speak to those who would accept the writ of state. Meanwhile the portfolios have been allocated to the newly inducted caretaker ministers in the interim cabinet of Balochistan on Monday. According to an official notification issued here on Monday, Captain (Retd) Zubair Jamali has been allotted the portfolio of Home and Tribal Affairs and PDMA. Similarly, Amjad Rasheed has been allotted the portfolio of Finance and Revenue while Jan Achakzai has been allotted the portfolio of Information. Moreover, caretaker Provincial Minister Dr Qadir Baksh Baloch has been allocated the portfolio of Education and Tourism while Minister Prince Ahmed Ali Ahmedzai has been allotted the portfolio of Industry, Energy and Excise and Taxation.

Table with 2 columns: Name and Roll Number. Lists names of candidates for various positions and their corresponding roll numbers.

Aneeq urges expansion of 'Road to Makkah' project, enhanced pilgrim facilities in Saudi Arabia

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Aneeq Ahmed, on Monday, called for the extension of the 'Road to Makkah' project to multiple airports across Pakistan.

He made this appeal during a joint press conference held alongside Saudi Minister of Hajj and Umrah, Dr. Tawfiq bin Fawzan Al-Rabiah expressing that the 'Road to Makkah' initiative, which streamlines the pilgrimage process for Pakistani pilgrims, had proven highly advantageous for those embarking on the Hajj journey.

Minister Aneeq also advocated for exempting individuals aged 65 and above from mandatory biometric verification for the pilgrimage. He highlighted that this requirement had been causing inconvenience for senior citizens due to issues related to fingerprint recognition. Furthermore, he suggested exploring alternative locations for the Pakistan House in Madina, which had been dismantled to make way for the expansion of Haram Sharif.

Speaking of the efforts by the Saudi government to provide modern amenities for Hajj and Umrah pilgrims, Minister Aneeq praised the superior facilities available to religious visitors. He emphasized Pakistan's prominent role as a top contributor to Umrah pilgrims worldwide.

He underscored the deep-rooted ties between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, considering the visit of the Saudi Minister for Hajj and Umrah to be an honor for the nation. He attributed the visit to the strong affection held by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman for Pakistan.

Both Minister Aneeq Ahmed and his Saudi counterpart, Dr. Tawfiq bin Fawzan Al-Rabiah, stressed the importance of enhancing facilities for Pakistani pilgrims during their stay in Mina and Arafat.

Dr. Al-Rabiah highlighted the crucial discussions that took place during the visit and expressed admiration for the close bond shared between the Pakistani people and the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques.

Recognizing Saudi Arabia's commitment to offering essential services to Pakistani pilgrims, he emphasized the significance of evaluating the quality of facilities provided during the pilgrimage. He also announced Saudi Arabia's intention to reduce Hajj expenses and extend the visa duration for Umrah pilgrims to 90 days. Additionally, he revealed plans to introduce approximately 100 new historical sites in Makkah and Madinah, enhancing the overall pilgrim experience.

Dr. Al-Rabiah expressed optimism regarding the collaborative efforts between Pakistan's Ministry of Religious Affairs and their Saudi counterparts. He conveyed the joint commitment of both nations to ensuring the successful implementation of agreements, including an increase in flight options between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

A bilateral agreement was signed earlier, with officials from both nations expressing confidence that the agreement's outcomes would soon be disclosed to the public.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Madad Ali Sindhi conducted a surprise visit to Islamabad Model School F-6/3.

Pak-Russia relations termed crucial for global stability

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Russia to Pakistan, Mr. Danila Ganich Monday termed mutual relations between Russia and Pakistan as crucial for both countries' national interests and global stability.

He was addressing the opening ceremony of the Open Education Center at Allama Iqbal Open University (AIU) yesterday.

This center aims to teach the Russian language to Pakistani students at the Allama Iqbal Open University.

Speaking on the occasion,

the ambassador said that the Open Education Center of the Russian Ministry of Education will play a significant role in strengthening Pakistan-Russia relations.

The Russian Ambassador emphasized the need to strengthen the relationship between universities and achieve common goals.

Vice Chancellor AIU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood stated that Russia and Pakistan have had strong relations for 75 years which needs to be further enhanced through academic collaboration.

Deputy Minister of

Education of the Russian Federation, Denis E. Gribov, Deputy Executive Director of Russian Geographical Society, Mr. Sergey V. Korlykhanov, Pakistan's Counselor to the Russian Federation, Zafar Yab Khan, President of the Ural Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Andrey A. Besedin, addressed the ceremony online and congratulated Vice Chancellor AIU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood and Rector USPU, Prof Svetlana A. Miniurova on setting up the "Open Education Center" in Allama Iqbal Open University.

UNICEF Country head calls on Health Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): UNICEF Representative in Pakistan Abdullah Fadil called on the Caretaker Federal Minister for Health Dr. Nadeem Jan on Monday and discussed issues related to the health sector.

During the meeting, the UNICEF Country Chief congratulated the Minister for Health on assuming this important responsibility. Dr. Nadeem Jan appreciated UNICEF's services in the health sector.

UNICEF has supported Pakistan in every difficult time, said Dr. Nadeem Jan.

"We will endeavour to bring effective and exemplary improvements in a short span of time," he said.

The minister said, "We are determined to eradicate polio from the country and will work on an emergency basis for the eradication of polio for the prestige of our country in the comity of nations."

He appreciated the role of UNICEF in the health sector especially in nutrition. "We are also working under an integrated strategy to control malnutrition," he said.

Dr. Nadeem Jan said all necessary measures will be taken to keep people safe from diseases.

UNICEF will continue to provide all possible support to the Ministry of National Health Services under the leadership of the new Minister for the improvement of the health sector, UNICEF Country Chief said.

It was informed by the Health Minister that a high-level seminar on nutrition control will be held in the UK in November this year in which Pakistan will sign a Memorandum of Understanding with international organizations.

"We are taking effective measures to promote breastfeeding."



ISLAMABAD: A view of the over loaded husk truck at service road along the Express Way, which needs the attention of concern authority.

NUST honors its recipients of Pakistan Civil Awards 2023

ISLAMABAD (INP): The National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST) Monday paid glowing tributes to its distinguished faculty and staff upon conferment of the prestigious Civil Awards 2023 by President, Dr. Arif Alvi.

The Investiture ceremony will take place on Pakistan Day, March 23, 2024.

Registrar NUST, Engr Brig Muhammad Ashfaq Mailla in being conferred Sitara-e-Imtiaz (M), in recognition of his meritorious services during his illustrious career.

Dr. Faisal Shafiq from NUST School of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science (SECS) and Dr. Umar Shabbaz from NUST College of Electrical and Mechanical Engineering (CoEME) have been conferred the coveted Pride of Performance, while Dr. M Usman Akram from CoEME, Dr. Salman Raza Naqvi from NUST School of Chemical and Materials Engineering (SCME), Dr. Haider Abbas from NUST Military College of Signals (MCS) and Ms. Arooba Gillani from NUST Placement Office (NPO) have been conferred Tamgha-e-Imtiaz.

The awards have been bestowed in recognition of their exceptional contributions to higher education, research and public service.

On behalf of NUST, Engr Javed Mahmood Bukhari, Rector NUST, extended the heartfelt felicitations to the excellent faculty and staff members and expressed deep gratitude for their outstanding services to NUST and the nation at large.

Describing the award recipients as role models for present and future generations of scholars, scientists and change makers, he underscored that NUST's esteemed reputation is largely built upon the continuous efforts of its committed human resources, whom he termed the university's greatest asset.

He affirmed that NUST is abundantly endowed with intellectually proficient and inventive minds, and hoped that they would continue living by their own legacy of excellence.

Sharing their thoughts, the awardees thanked Rector and the NUST community for recognising their accomplishments and attributed their success to the varsity for providing them with a supportive and facilitating environment.

bestowed in recognition of their exceptional contributions to higher education, research and public service.

On behalf of NUST, Engr Javed Mahmood Bukhari, Rector NUST, extended the heartfelt felicitations to the excellent faculty and staff members and expressed deep gratitude for their outstanding services to NUST and the nation at large.

Describing the award recipients as role models for present and future generations of scholars, scientists and change makers, he underscored that NUST's esteemed reputation is largely built upon the continuous efforts of its committed human resources, whom he termed the university's greatest asset.

He affirmed that NUST is abundantly endowed with intellectually proficient and inventive minds, and hoped that they would continue living by their own legacy of excellence.

Sharing their thoughts, the awardees thanked Rector and the NUST community for recognising their accomplishments and attributed their success to the varsity for providing them with a supportive and facilitating environment.



ISLAMABAD: UNICEF Country head Abdullah Fadil calls on Federal caretaker Minister Dr. Nadeem Jan.

Jamal for facilitating children with local literature, storytelling

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Jamal Shah on Monday stressed the importance of facilitating children with local literature and storytelling to arise their interest in reading to enhance their intellectual caliber as juvenile literature played crucial part in education providing both knowledge and entertainment.

The Minister made these remarks during his visit to National Library of Pakistan (NLP) and Department of Museum and Archeology (DOAM) to review the working and performance of the attached departments of the division.

On the occasion, Director General NLP Asif Iqbal Khan gave a detailed overview of history, functioning, performance and future plans of the NLP.

Minister for National Heritage and Culture Jamal Shah underscored that proper ramps should be established for the facilitation of differently-abled person at National Library. He said that his division would adopt all measures to equip the library with modern facilities.

Later, the Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Jamal Shah presided over a meeting to review the progress on various projects of DOAM.

Chairman NDMA reviews damages caused by ongoing floods in Sutlej River

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik on Monday reviewed the situation of damages caused by the ongoing floods in Sutlej River, the situation of major Dams, and the regulation of river flows during the ongoing monsoon spell.

The NDMA Chairman presided special National Emergencies Operations Centre (NEOC) session with key stakeholders on the current flood and monsoon situation, a news release said.

The session was attended by representatives of Armed Forces, Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD), Federal Flood Commission (FFC), Provin-

cial, State, and Gilgit Baltistan Disaster Management Authorities (PDMAs, SDMA, GBDMA), Flood Forecasting Division (FFD), Pakistan Space and Upper Atmosphere Commission (SUPARCO), Pakistan Commissioner for Indus Waters (PCIW), Rescue 1122 Punjab, Tarbela and Mangla Dam Management.

The PMD briefed about the previous days' rainfall observed in the country. They also apprised about the expected rainfall in the North Eastern parts of the country from August 23 to 25.

The PDMA Punjab and Rescue 1122 Punjab briefed about the evacuation, rescue, and relief efforts conducted along the Sutlej River.

IHC declares arrest of Afridi's brother as illegal

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday declared the arrest of Rafi Afridi, the brother of former minister Shehryar Afridi, under Maintenance of Public Order (MPO) as illegal.

IHC's Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri heard the case against the arrest of Rafi Afridi, Syed Ghani and Akseer Ahmed.

Petitioners' lawyer Dr Baber Awan argued that his clients had been arrested on the orders of district magistrate under MPO and prayed the court to declare their arrest as illegal. During hearing, the court remarked that one could not be arrested on the basis of just risks. The court, subsequently, declared their arrest as null and void.

Registrar office returns PTI chief's plea with objections

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Registrar Office of the Supreme Court on Monday returned the petition seeking to stop the arrests of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf chairman in other cases with objections.

The registrar office objected that the petitioner had not fulfilled the requirements of Article 184/3 and that he had filed the case for his personal interest.

It further said that the petitioner had also not approached the relevant forum prior to filing the case before the SC. Moreover, the petitioner also could not explain that which of his basic rights had been affected.

Sanjrani condemns Quran desecration

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani on Monday strongly condemned the recent distressing incident involving the desecration of the Holy Quran in The Hague.

The incident, characterized as an act of deliberate Islamophobia, has deeply affected the hearts of Muslims worldwide, undermining the shared pursuit of peaceful coexistence and interfaith harmony, Sanjrani said in a message issued by his office.

He emphasized the need to distinguish between freedom of expression and the incitement of hatred,

particularly on religious grounds.

He highlighted that international law mandated the prevention of such deliberate provocations that erode mutual respect and breed discord among communities. The chairman underscored the importance of recognizing March 15 as the United Nations' International Day to Combat Islamophobia, urging global efforts to cultivate an environment of tolerance, understanding, and compassion. Chairman Senate's underscored Pakistan's commitment to fostering a world where diversity is celebrated, and religious sentiments are respected.

Indonesia envoy calls on Jamal Shah

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indonesian Ambassador in Pakistan Adam Tugio paid a courtesy call on Caretaker Federal Minister for National Heritage and Cultural Division Jamal Shah on Monday. The ambassador felicitated Jamal Shah on assuming charge as Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture.

During the meeting, they discussed several areas of cooperation, with a particular emphasis on enhancing cultural exchange and people-to-people contacts between Indonesia and Pakistan, especially in the fields of culture, Film, TV dramas and tourism.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Jamal Shah during visit to Islamabad Museum, Sir Syed Memorial, Federal Secretary Ms. Humaira Ahmed was also present.

HEC sends off 141 students to study in Hungary

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Higher Education Commission (HEC) Pakistan on Monday hosted a send-off ceremony for the 141 students awarded under the Stipendium Hungaricum Scholarship Programme, which was launched in Pakistan in 2015. Since its inception, a total of 1029 Pakistani students have been granted fully funded scholarships for Bachelor's, Master's, One-Tier Master's, and PhD studies across disciplines including Agricultural and Veterinary Sciences, Arts and Humanities.

The event was attended by Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, Chairman HEC, Dr. Peter Dely, Charge d'Affaires here at the Embassy of Hungary in Islamabad, Dr. Shaista Sohail, Executive Director

HEC and Mrs. Ayesha Ikrum, DG (Scholarships) HEC. This group of scholars forms the 8th cohort of the Stipendium Hungaricum Scholarship Programme, which was launched in Pakistan in 2015. Since its inception, a total of 1029 Pakistani students have been granted fully funded scholarships for Bachelor's, Master's, One-Tier Master's, and PhD studies across disciplines including Agricultural and Veterinary Sciences, Arts and Humanities.

PMD forecasts rains with occasional gaps from Aug 23-27

ISLAMABAD (APP): For the heat-stricken people bearing hot and humid weather conditions for the last few days, the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) Monday given a good news of more monsoon rains in various parts of the country from August 23-27 with occasional gaps.

The rains although will provide relief to the people by reducing the intensity of heat but will increase water flow in local streams and nullahs and may cause urban flooding and landslides in vulnerable areas. The moderate monsoon currents from Arabian Sea are likely to penetrate in upper parts of the country from August 22 (evening or night). A westerly wave was also likely to enter in these areas on August 23. Under the influence of these systems, rain/wind-thundershower with few moderate to heavy falls is expected in Kashmir, (Neelum valley, Muzaffarabad, Poonch, Hattian, Bagh, Haveli, Sudhanoti, Kotli, Bhimber, Mirpur), Gilgit Baltistan (Diamir, Astore, Ghizer, Skardu, Hunza, Gilgit, Ghanche, Shigar), Murree, Galliat, Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Attock, Chakwal, Jhelum, Mandi Bahauddin, Hafizabad, Gujranwala, Gujrat.



ISLAMABAD: WAPDA workers are busy in installing electric wires on poles along the Express Way during high temperature in Federal Capital.

Catholic Bishops for stern action against culprits of Jaranwala rampage

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Catholic Bishops' Conference (PCBC) on Monday called for initiating stern action against the culprits of the Jaranwala rampage and bringing them to justice.

"We, the Bishops of the Pakistan Catholic Bishops' Conference (PCBC) with great shock and sadness have learnt about the attack (August 16), burning and desecration of churches, Holy Cross, the Holy Bible and the burning and vandalizing of the houses of innocent Christian families who had nothing to do with the alleged desecration of the Holy Quran," PCBC President Archbishop Joseph Arshad, Bishop Samson Shkir Din, Archbishop Benny Trivas, Archbishop Sebastian F. Shaw, Bishop Yousef Sohan, Bishop Inderias

Rehmat and Bishop Khalid Rehmat said in a joint statement. "The PCBC denounces this shameful act, and urge the government to take stern action against the culprits to bring them to justice. We ask for strong measures to protect the minorities and bring such policies that can help us as a nation to become peaceful human beings and a better society so that such incident may not take place in future."

They noted that the strong reaction and condemnation of the horrible incident had come from people from all walks of life.

"The Prime Minister, Chief Minister of Punjab, Ulema, religious leaders, politicians, government officials and individuals have been expressing their solidarity with the Christian community."



ISLAMABAD: A view of massive traffic jam at Expressway in the Federal Capital.

Korean embassy holds '2023 K-POP 2023 Festival' at PNCA

ISLAMABAD (APP): Korean embassy organized the '2023 K-POP Festival' here at the Pakistan National Council of Arts (PNCA) last week where young K-POP fans presented exhilarating performances.

The festival was attended by Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Pakistan Park Kijun, the Head of the Department of Korean Language and Culture Ahtisham Hussain, representatives from different Korean companies, and a large number of people, students and K-POP fans.

Director of the King Sejong Institute Dr Atif Faraz, Assistant Professor at the National Council of Arts Saima Salahuddin, and Associate Professor at National Council of Arts Ayesha Durrani were the judges for the 2023 K-POP Festival in Pakistan.

The K-POP Festival had two categories Vocal and Dance. The performers from both categories performed exceptionally well and were well aware of the Korean K-POP culture.

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Inner demons

The recent mob rampage targeting Christians in Faisalabad's Jaranwala area should serve as a critical opportunity for the nation to look inwards, honestly diagnose the disease, and remove the cancer of extremism from society.

This is not the first incident where raw religious passions have been exploited by vested interests, and unless there is a thorough reckoning, it won't be the last. Far too many Muslims and people of other faiths have faced the wrath of the mob in Pakistan based on spurious allegations of blasphemy. Many have not lived to tell the tale, while numerous incidents have been traced to personal vendettas or schemes to grab property. Illiterate and mentally challenged individuals have been accused of writing or forwarding blasphemous text, while unfounded rumours of disrespect to religion have been enough to spark bloody riots.

Yet the advance of religious fanaticism is not limited to Pakistan. Next door in India, the shock troops of Hindutva have also unleashed violence against Muslims and other minorities.

The Babri Masjid's destruction was a bellwether event; from that grim turning point to the present, Hindutva has morphed from a fringe movement to the official narrative in the Sangh Parivar's India.

Muslims have been lynched on suspicions of transporting or keeping beef, their houses have been bulldozed by bigoted state agencies, while dubious citizenship laws have questioned those whose roots as 'bona fide' Indians are well established.

Christians, too, have not been spared by the Sangh, as the current communal disturbances in Manipur illustrate, where nearly 200 have been killed, and hundreds of churches reportedly torched. Clearly, zealots on both sides of the border share the same DNA where terrorising minorities is concerned.

It appears that this particular variant of religious extremism is a South Asian peculiarity. While discrimination against minorities does occur in other Muslim states, Pakistan is in a league of its own.

One does not often hear of public lynchings and frenzied mobs rampaging to avenge alleged blasphemy in Saudi Arabia, Iran, Egypt, etc — countries that are no less Muslim than Pakistan. This may be because in these countries the state does not allow vigilante groups or self-professed guardians of faith to rile up crowds and let them loose on hapless victims. In Pakistan, things are different. For decades, the state encouraged and later tolerated religious fanatics, while poverty and low literacy levels have left ordinary folk susceptible to the emotional messaging of such malign actors. There may still be time for course correction.

This can be done first by the state acknowledging the presence of the contagion of extremism and then by punishing those who have indulged in religious violence and who ideologically support such violence. Longer-term goals can focus on deradicalisation as envisaged under NAP and similar initiatives.



Maleeha Lodhi

General elections are expected to be held in the country sometime early next year. The months leading up to the polls will see political leaders and their parties engaged in fierce electoral competition to secure power. Winning public office will obviously be their goal. But the question is, what plan and policies will they offer voters about how they propose to address the country's myriad challenges? What public purpose will leaders bring to governance if elected?

Never before has Pakistan faced such a wide array of overlapping challenges, all of which need to be tackled with courage, imagination, and determination if they are to be surmounted. But politics in recent years has been focused more on power

struggles than on public issues. Political leaders have directed much of their energy to power tussles and efforts to subdue opponents rather than evolving and presenting any policy plans.

This has made political parties almost indistinguishable in terms of their position on issues of public concern. The usual platitudes and clichés have dominated the political discourse, with no new policy ideas generated about how to deal with the country's problems. At other times, vacuous rhetoric has substituted for policy proposals.

The most consequential challenge is, of course, the economy which remains precariously poised. Without sustainable economic recovery, the rest will be in vain. The stand-by agreement with the IMF has been projected as a major step towards economic stability. But it is only a temporary reprieve and, in any case, should be anchored in a comprehensive home-grown economic plan of structural reforms which can revive economic growth.

Official sights have

been set so low that averting a debt default has become the principal goal of economic policy, and is even celebrated as an achievement. Qualifying for a Fund programme is regarded as a great accomplishment even though it is a sign that the country is in dire and desperate economic straits.

Having a record 23 IMF programmes is a reflection of poor, not good economic management. Of course, financial bailouts are necessary to stay solvent but they cannot become the be-all and end-all of economic strategy. Hyper-borrowing both at home or abroad can hardly be touted as a gain for the country.

True that the outgoing coalition government announced an "economic revival plan" predicated on the creation of the Special Investment Facilitation Council to promote "fast track" investment by friendly GCC countries in ailing state-owned enterprises and "untapped sectors of the economy".

Announcements were made about the sale of public assets and state-owned businesses to Gulf states in a strategy to earn dollars by

privatising state assets. But hopes of investment in new sectors cannot be delinked from the country's ongoing macroeconomic crisis and unstable economic environment.

Moreover, foreign investment — whether from Gulf countries or beyond — requires consistency and predictability of policy as well as an atmosphere of political certainty and stability. It also needs a level playing field, transparency, and reliability of judicial enforcement to give confidence to investors.

As for economic revival, a serious plan has to rest on wide-ranging structural reforms that address Pakistan's chronic external and internal financial imbalances — a narrow tax and export base, outsized state sector, insolvent power sector, and low savings rate.

The effectiveness of economic policy and reform in turn depends on the state of governance. The political context weighs heavily on the success or failure of economic policy. The best-conceived economic initiatives will go nowhere if there is weak or poor governance.

After all, Pakistan's persistent economic crises have all been rooted in a governance crisis. The question this raises is whether the various aspirants for power in the electoral race have thought seriously about these and other issues that are pivotal for Pakistan's economic and political future. Do they have policy proposals to offer to indicate their government will have an aim other than wielding power? Will the election only be about who secures public office or also about what they plan to do with that power to solve the country's problems?

These problems include the eroding capacity of the institutions of governance. This imposes obvious limits on the exercise of power and ability to execute policies. It is also responsible for the long-term decline in public confidence in government institutions, as reflected in successive opinion surveys. The state's institutional capacity has weakened over time, and consequently, the delivery of public services has deteriorated and fallen well short of people's expectations.

This has happened

because of two main reasons: one, postponed reforms, and two, politicisation of the civil service. Governance after independence required transforming colonial-era administrative structures to those in sync with the requirements of a developing country. But lack of reforms meant the administrative system was unable to keep pace with a changing society and the complex needs of modern governance.

The protracted politicisation of the bureaucratic and police system distorted its functioning and produced several deleterious consequences — the erosion of authority, the undermining of efficiency, the de-emphasis of merit, and the draining of morale.

For these reasons, the quality of the civil service has been in secular decline. Yet, achieving economic recovery and setting Pakistan on a path of growth and investment depends critically on strengthening institutional capacity that can efficiently mobilise resources, ensure proper service delivery and create a credible business-friendly environment. -- Courtesy Dawn

Power and purpose

Leading without a plan



Dr Ayesha Razaque

Public universities are facing multiple challenges that we keep hearing about, ranging in nature from academic, administrative, managerial, financial, and political. Some of them may not be addressable by universities themselves but many certainly are. Some months ago, the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training (MoFEPT) solicited applications for vice-chancellors (VCs) for three prominent universities in the federal capital — Quaid-e-Azam University (QAU), Allama Iqbal Open University (AIU), and the International Islamic University Islamabad (IIU).

In the past, applications typically comprised little more than filling out a profile, sending in a cover letter, a CV, a list of publications (why that is needed for a VC is still a mystery to

me), and all the political influence they could wield. In an effort to improve the selection process and assess the depth of thought applicants have for the position they are applying for, this time the MoFEPT added a new element to the application package.

Applicants were required to include an institutional plan, albeit limited to 300 words (about one page of text), for their tenure as VC. A detailed institutional plan could span pages, so the word limit is tight. All the more reason not to waste any of them and if one does that should go to show that the writer may not have anything worthwhile to say.

It is an opportunity to demonstrate one's priorities, awareness of the challenges of the universities one seeks to lead and whether one has paid any mind to tackling them. A plan has to be practical and actionable; what it cannot be is a list of vague platitudes disconnected from reality.

Whatever your personal opinion may be, all three universities — QAU, AIU, and IIU — are large public universities in the capital and are highly seen as amongst the cushiest to be appointed VC to. One

would assume that the competition for these openings must be fierce, self-selecting and attracting only the strongest applicants. Would it not be interesting to see how much thought applicants jockeying for the most influential leadership role at universities have given to the responsibilities of that job?

As luck would have it, I had the opportunity to review the institutional plans submitted, around 200 of them. Before I get to their contents, let me share some broad observations: Almost all applicants are men and many of them are currently or have been in the past appointed VCs at other universities. Many submissions were poorly formatted documents that could not adhere to a consistent look for a single page which betrays the fact that original writing is a very occasional task for them. In the age of spell checkers and ChatGPT, a few were still riddled with grammatical mistakes, but I must appreciate them for their originality.

The most striking observation was that most 'institutional plans' people submitted were just rehashes of their CVs. This betrays one of two truths:

Either these applicants do not understand the meaning of the word 'plan' which goes to their lack of basic English comprehension, or they simply have not given a single thought to the responsibility they want to take on, have no motivation to fix anything, and have nothing more in mind than cash their pay cheque.

The ones that went beyond regurgitating their CVs for their plan rarely ventured beyond identifying institution-specific challenges. They just listed generic, anecdotal issues anyone can glean from a few newspaper reports, devoid of supporting facts or figures specific to the university they are applying to. The ones that mentioned the name of the university they were applying to did not go beyond irrelevant facts that could be obtained from the university website or Wikipedia page — its organization, structure, location, and ranking. In any case, none of them constitutes a plan of any kind.

Since many applicants are already working as VCs at other universities, you would expect them to have a track record of problem-solving, a concrete precedent in their past and that would

obviously strengthen their cases. After all, if you have solved a problem in one institution, there is greater reason to believe you can repeat that feat at another institution. One would think that such claims would be accompanied by some evidence, some numbers.

In my opinion, the primary problem almost all universities face is that the education their programmes impart is useless, irrelevant and prepares graduates for nothing. What do VCs applying for their next gig have to show to improve the primary function of a university? QAU has been in the newspapers a lot over the last year for the issue of a prominent land grab by the CDA to build the Bhara Kahu bypass (which, by the way, seems to be blocked a lot of the time since it opened). Yet, no applicant acknowledged this as a problem. The university has also been suffering occasional violent clashes between groups of students, which received occasional acknowledgment in some submitted plans, but no action plan. The use of drugs on university campuses is a growing problem nationwide, one that is frequently reported on in the media, yet

hardly anyone acknowledged its existence.

Also interesting is the fact that people applying for the job of VC are pointing to their publication record, such as it may be, as support for their applications when by this point it should be clear that the VCs job is no longer to publish but to fix the myriad of well-known problems on university campuses by (hopefully) offering some evidence for having solved such problems in the past. That lack of performance becomes particularly irritating when it is accompanied by obnoxious grand statements overestimating one's own caliber. Most critically, of the 'institutional plan' that did acknowledge any challenges, what none of them did was address the question of 'how?' You are promising to create university-industry partnerships — how? A commitment to raising funds to augment public funds — how? A desire to create an endowment fund, profits from which will sustainably augment the university budget — how? Raise the standard of scholarship, build the capacity of staff and faculty, and improve governance — how? -- Courtesy TheNews

Who set fire to Jaranwala?



Umair Javed

Incidents of anti-minority mob violence under the pretext of blasphemy allegations have risen steadily since the mid-2000s. As per the usual formulaic response, last week's incident in Jaranwala was followed by a range of condemnations from the civil and military leadership and from the mainstream, high-profile clerics of all denominations.

The specificity with which places of worship were targeted by a large crowd is evidence of both the scale of the rot within society and the high level of local organisation required to make it possible. TLP, other Bareilvi extremists, and their backers have much to answer for.

A preliminary analysis of the Jaranwala tragedy shows that anti-minority mob violence has two aspects. The first of these is the law-and-order aspect, which is what state officials tend to focus on. The assumption is that in any society there will be instances where violence can become likely.

However, local authorities should be able to take administrative steps required to defuse any potential situation, such as a blasphemy allegation, that may result in violence. If law-and-order administration is effective and far-sighted enough, such an intervention would help mitigate the risk of a full-blown riot. In the Jaranwala case, it was not.

Failing to resolve a situation prior to its escalation, the law-and-order aspect of the response would then involve managing a mob to

limit its ability to carry out violence. Whether this is through riot control, detention, or other use of force, is immaterial. The aim should be to prevent any loss of life and property of a community at risk.

In the Jaranwala case, this too did not happen. In fact, if video evidence is anything to go by, local law enforcement remained passive, while administrators attempted to negotiate with the extremists from a position of weakness.

The third stage, having failed at the first two, involves punitive consequences for those involved in the violence. This would mean strong punishments that are sufficient to act as a deterrent. The idea being that while one unfortunate incident has happened, the consequences would be enough to prevent another one from taking place.

Worth pointing out that there were zero convictions from the 2013 Joseph Colony incident so there is no deterrence to speak of. A hundred houses were burnt and 115 accused persons were acquitted. It seems the houses set themselves on fire.

Beyond the law-and-order aspect, the second aspect of mob violence is social and political. Mobs are not instant creations. The ideas that rile them up do not appear out of nowhere. The methods they use for violence are not spontaneously learned. The resources they draw on do not magically descend from heaven (or, as would be more appropriate, ascend from hell). All of these things have definitive roots in society.

The sociopolitical aspect of violent incidents such as the one in Jaranwala is far harder to tackle because it is so wide-ranging. A toxic mix of extremist clerics, pandering politicians, conniving generals, status-seeking businessmen, and honour-seeking young men all feeds into it.

Over the past decade

and a half, Pakistani society has witnessed the Bareilvi far-right gain recognition, prestige, and massive followership by weaponising the issue of blasphemy and respect for the Prophet (PBUH).

A politician who makes unfathomable changes to marriage documents in a bid to publicise his pious credentials has also contributed to the issue. And an assembly that attempts to pass legislation widening the ambit of blasphemy and endangering an entire sect is adding explosive fuel to an already burning fire.

There are other contributions at play here as well. There is the local bureaucrat who doesn't want to ruffle any feathers. There's a businessman who wants to earn a bit of recognition in the community, so ends up sponsoring a few religious gatherings and donates to a local TLP chapter.

Maybe he does it under pressure, maybe he believes in what's being preached, or maybe he's just in it for the name on the banner or the plaque outside the mosque. The intentions are immaterial because the outcome is the same.

And then there is the actual mob itself. Young men, with little prospects of upward social and material mobility. Religious rhetoric provides them with a sense of community and of being a part of something bigger. Indocinated with notions of honour and masculinity that can only be validated by taking revenge from some vulnerable minority over an imagined crime they probably didn't even commit. Even in a state of heightened pessimism, one could see the possibility of a low-capacity state like Pakistan fixing the law and order aspect of mob violence to some degree. Addressing the toxic social and political aspect, however, seems far more difficult. -- Courtesy Dawn

Taxing thoughts



Muhammad Mohsin Masood

The famed jurist Oliver Wendell Holmes did not say "The power to tax is the power to destroy"; his exact words were "Power to tax is not the power to destroy while this court sits". Just recently after sitting on it for months, the Islamabad High Court finally delivered the judgement on the challenge to Section 4C of the Income Tax Ordinance, 2001 — the super tax imposed in 2022. What a judgement it surely is! Laced with puns and mindful analogies to keep the reader engaged, the honourable judge delivered an eloquent and fantastic exposition of legal reasoning to conclude that the super tax is ultra vires the Constitution.

The judgement is not only well structured with an index, it also probes all the questions and complexities raised before the court during the hearings. With its crisp legal reasoning, it slices through the arguments of the revenue authorities. With its epigrammatic phrasing, it not only clarifies exactly why the super tax is ultra vires the Constitution, it also makes for a good read.

Indeed, it seems that one of the objectives achieved is to have the judgement read widely. Legally speaking, the court has read down Section 4C and explicitly shut the door on retrospective taxation, especially of past and closed transactions. This means that if you have closed

your account books before the tax applies and taken steps to cement that, you will not be asked to open them up again for tax deduction.

The court also afforded relief to segments of the economy for whom tax liability has crystallised in the past. Crucially, however, the court found Section 4C to be ultra vires the fundamental rights under Articles 18, 23 and 24, read together with Article 4.

This is where the brilliance of the judgement cuts too far deep. On the face of it, the judge found the actions of the legislature inconsistent with the written words of the Constitution. The devil, however, is in the details. Within the exuberance of this judgement is a potent shot in the arm to judicial review. The honourable court had been much taxed by the pleaders and, resultantly, overstretched itself to sit in judgement over not only the actions but also the intentions of the legislature. The court tried to judge the imposition of a super tax on property on the anvil of Article 23 and noted that since economic rights do not provide a "formulaic prescription" for such a task, one must refer to the context and the raison d'être of such legislation.

This is dangerous territory. With the greatest respect to the honourable judge, who is amongst one of the best if not the very best in our superior courts, this is also territory where previous robed crusaders stampeded across clicking their heels at Article 184(3). The ground still remains a swamp of legal exigency with a few skeletons of political necessity sticking out. No sooner does Mount Doom heave into view

than the empire of law turns Mordor-esque. This caution is needed because when the judiciary starts to probe the reasons behind lawmaking, it sits as unelected officials over the will of the elected representatives of the people.

Yes, our last parliament (National Assembly) was a truncated debating club where sexist remarks were easier to pass than meaningful legislation. Yes, our parliamentarians hardly represented the vast majority of the people, and yes, parliament also failed to prevent successive governments from wilfully disobeying constitutional and statutory mandates. However, does our social contract with the state allow an unelected body to step in? Who gets to rectify the failures of our institutions? Should that remedy be administered by the courts or by those stubbornly trying on the slippers of democracy till it fits right? These are questions that need to be answered.

The court has chosen to descend from the ivory tower in an attempt to answer them. It is certainly right in doing so; however, the answers should not be taken as the past and closed. For one, they form obiter dicta and the court did not need to overstep to a point as to include reports from the World Bank to showcase the demise of our parliament. These remarks are important, however, as part of a discourse of the nature of state institutions. If we are to stop Pakistan from becoming 'ad-hocistan' we must take note of these debates. On the other hand, the potential for misuse of these observations and the broadening of judicial review as a result remain a taxing thought at least for this writer. -- Courtesy Dawn

Sindh Govt decides to take action against dacoits, street criminals

KARACHI (APP): The caretaker Sindh Cabinet in its maiden meeting on Monday decided to take strict measures for controlling law & order, particularly action against dacoits in the Katcha area and street criminals in Karachi.

Caretaker Chief Minister Justice (ret'd) Maqbool Baqar presided over the cabinet's introductory meeting, which was attended by caretaker ministers Brig (ret'd) Haris Nawaz, Younus Dhaga, Mubeen Juamni, Dr Saad khalid, Dr Junaid Shah, Mrs Rana Hussain, Ishwar Lal, Arshad Wali Muhammad, Omar Soomro and Khuda Bux Marri.

At the outset, the caretaker chief minister said he had an agenda for good governance and service to the people of Sindh, besides supporting the Election Commission

of Pakistan for carrying out its work. Justice Baqar said in the aftermath of the floods, poverty had increased manifold in the province and concrete measures were needed to tackle it.

He said the caretaker government was apolitical. "We are not here to raise fingers of accusation against others, but we will try to improve the governance to serve the people and support the Election Commission of Pakistan in their assignment," he added.

Justice Baqar said there was a need of promoting enter-faith harmony in the province. The people of different faiths and beliefs had lived together there, but anti-state elements were trying to create law and order by igniting religious hatred and "we must stop it".

As it was pointed out that the dacoits had

developed the sway in the Katcha area, the cabinet decided to launch an operation against the criminals. The home minister was directed to chalk out a plan in consultation with the police and other law enforcement agencies so that a well-coordinated clean-up operation against the dacoits could be launched.

The cabinet members observed that due to some ongoing development works in the city traffic jam issues cropped up during the peak hours, therefore the traffic police was directed to manage traffic flow properly.

The cabinet after a thorough discussion decided to expedite work on the ongoing development schemes, and to accelerate work on the foreign-funded projects so that they could be completed well in time.



KARACHI: Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister, Justice (Ret'd) Maqbool Baqar presides over an introductory cabinet meeting held at CM House in Karachi.

Judicial remand of Dr Yasmin, former Umar Cheema extended

LAHORE (Online): The judicial remand of PTI former minister Dr Yasmin Rashid and former governor Punjab Umar Sarfraz Cheema has been extended for 11 days each in Jinnah House attack case.

PTI leader and former provincial minister was presented in Anti Terrorism Court (ATC) Lahore on expiry of judicial remand in the cases of torching PML-N office, attack on Askari tower and Shadman police station and other cases.

Ijaz Ahmad Buttar of ATC heard the case.

The investigation officer took the plea before the court Dr Yasmin Rashid is facing the charges of attacking the PML-N office in Model Town, attack on Askari

tower and torching Police station Shadman.

The investigation officer requested the court to extend the judicial remand of Yasmin Rashid in four cases. The court while extending judicial remand of Yasmin Rashid for 11 days ordered her to appear before it on September 01. On the other hand Umar Sarfraz Cheema former governor Punjab arrested in attack on Jinnah house and arson cases was presented in the court.

Police presented him in the court on wheelchair being unwell and requested the court to extend his judicial remand.

The court extended his judicial remand for 11 days and ordered him to appear before it again on September 01.

SMBR, Lahore Bar discuss e-registration, legal collaboration

LAHORE (APP): Senior Member Board of Revenue (SMBR) Nabil Javed and Lahore Bar Association (LBA) delegation led by its President Rana Intizar Hussain discussed in details the matters pertaining to e-registration and legal collaboration, here on Monday.

Prominent figures from legal fraternity, Director General of Punjab Land Record Authority (PLRA), Lahore's Deputy Commissioner and other relevant officers attended the meeting. PLRA Director General briefed the LBA delegation about the innovative e-registration initiative. The LBA President lauded this transformative project terming it a stride towards digitalization, which would modernize the legal landscape.

SMBR Nabil Javed

assured the LBA of addressing the concerns raised by legal community, and recognizing their pivotal role in society. He also constituted a committee to be headed by DG PLRA for addressing the lawyers' apprehensions.

The meeting also delved into the extension of the manual registration deadline, deliberating on the matter with thoughtful consideration. Any final decision regarding the extension of the manual registration period would be taken after thorough consultation with the legal fraternity, he assured.

The SMBR also unveiled plans to enlist lawyers for public service through local commission. This innovative approach would involve recommendations from the Bar's President.



PESHAWAR: Bishop Of Humsafri Sarfaraz Peter along with Chief Khatib Maulana Tayyib Qureshi and religious leaders addressing the press conference.

Naqvi seeks plan for quality medicines' provision

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi has sought a comprehensive plan for provision of quality medicines in hospitals.

According to official sources here on Monday, the CM had ordered for ensuring provision of quality medicines in hospitals besides evolving transparent mechanism for purchase of drugs. He said that swift and foolproof system should be made for storing and ensuring availability of medicines in hospitals.

A recommendation to set up special committee for purchase of medicine was also under consideration.

CM Mohsin Naqvi said that quality medicines were right of every citizen for ensuring proper treatment.

He said that management skills for storage and purchase of medicine was very much needed.

FATA Tribunal re-starts hearing of cases

PESHAWAR (APP): On the order of the Peshawar High Court, the FATA Tribunal has started hearing cases after restoration, said an official document of the Home Department.

It said that Peshawar High Court referred back 11 pending cases to FATA Tribunal, including the cases against Dr. Shakeel Afridi.

FATA Tribunal was abolished in 2019 on the merger of erstwhile FATA into KP followed by the abolishment of FCR.

The document said that after the dissolution of the FATA Tribunal, all the cases were transferred to other courts which increased the burden of cases on existing courts.



FAISALABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar addresses a congregation arranged in support of the Christian community members who were affected by mob violence in Tehsil Jaranwala.

CM chairs 7th meeting of standing committee on finance, development

LAHORE (APP): The 7th meeting of the cabinet standing committee on finance & development was convened under the chair of the caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi at his office on Monday.

The meeting decided in principle to give a special package to the heirs of employees, who had passed away during service. In addition, the CM ordered that financial aid to employees' families should be provided within 10 days positively.

The committee granted approval for rehabilitation and expansion of Gatwala Road, originating from the Nishat Abad overhead

bridge in Faisalabad. A decision was reached to collaborate with the French Development Agency (AFD) to enhance the efficiency of the Water and Sewerage Authorities (WASAs) in Lahore and Faisalabad.

A decision was made to incorporate the acquisition of snow blowers for the Murree roads into the annual development programme. Concurrently, the green light was given for comprehensive restoration of historically significant gates in Lahore, ensuring their return to their original condition. Moreover, funding was allocated for modernisation of the Lahore Zoo.

Funds were allocated to adorn the shrine of Baba Fariduddin Ganj Shakar, and the project was included in the Annual Development Programme. Under the aegis of the Prime Minister's National Programme, in-principle approval was granted for conversion of agricultural tube-wells to solar power in Punjab. The committee's consent was extended to include the Flood Protection Sector Project-III in the Annual Development Programme for fiscal year 2023-24. Re-issuance of funds was approved for small dams in Chakwal and other locations under the Public Sector Development Programme.

LHC dismisses Punjab govt appeal against bail to Elahi

LAHORE (APP): A Lahore High Court (LHC) division bench on Monday dismissed an appeal, filed by the Punjab government, against a single bench order that stopped the authorities concerned from arresting former chief minister Punjab Chaudhry Parvez Elahi in any undisclosed cases, besides granting him protective bail in two cases.

The division bench, headed by Justice Muhammad Waheed Khan announced the reserved verdict on the intra-court appeal of the Punjab

government and upheld the order of the single bench. Earlier, the bench had reserved the verdict, after hearing arguments of all parties.

It is pertinent to mention here that an LHC single bench had stopped the authorities concerned from arresting Chaudhry Parvez Elahi in any undisclosed cases and also granted him protective bail in two cases registered at Anti-Corruption Establishment Gujrat and Ghalib Market Police Station, Lahore.

Rangers arrest three robbers

KARACHI (APP): The Pakistan Rangers Sindh and Police in a joint intelligence based operation arrested three alleged robbers from Orangi Town and recovered snatched mobile phones and a motorcycle from their possession.

According to a spokesman for Rangers on Monday arrested were identified as Ayaz, Abdul Saboor alias Saboor and Ehtisham alias Ahsan alias Shehroze.

The arrested were involved in robberies, snatching and tempering of mobile phones. A motorcycle and snatched mobile phones from the possession of the arrested.



PESHAWAR: A delegation of district Banno led by former caretaker provincial minister Hamid Shah meeting with Governor Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali.

ANF seizes 620 kg drugs, 1193 kg prohibited chemical in 23 operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting 23 operations across the country managed to recover 620 kg drugs and 1193 kg prohibited chemical besides netting 30 accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Monday.

He informed that 620 kg drugs including 575 kg hashish, 38 kg opium, 5.5 kg Ice drug and 2 kg heroin were recovered during the operations.

The spokesman further informed that in an operation conducted near Mandi Mor Pirwadhai,

Rawalpindi, two accused residents of Peshawar were arrested with 36 kg opium, 32.4 kg hashish and 2 kg heroin. In another raid, 36 kg hashish was recovered from bus intercepted near Motorway Toll Plaza Islamabad. During the operation, two accused residents of Quetta and Shangla were arrested.

In third operation, over 2.5 kg Ice drug was recovered from the possession of a Saudi Arabia-bound passenger resident of Toba Tek Singh, going on flight number FZ-332, netted at Jinnah International Airport.

Three killed in traffic accident

PESHAWAR (APP): At least three persons were killed while 17 others sustained injuries in a road accident that occurred in Shangla district due to passenger van brake failure here on Monday.

According to details, the incident unfolded when the driver lost control due to brake failure.

Rescue and emergency teams were immediately reached the incident place and shifted the bodies and injured to nearby hospital. Further probe was underway.

Alhamra executive director removed

LAHORE (APP): On the orders of Caretaker Minister for Information and Culture Amir Mir, Saleem Sagar, the executive director of Alhamra Arts Council Lahore, has been removed from his position, and instructed to report to the Service and General Administration Department. Saleem Sagar, who had assumed the position few months ago, was facing allegations of ineffectiveness and corruption, according to the Punjab government handout. The responsibilities of the executive director Alhamra Arts Council.

PML-N senior leader meets governor, discusses educational matter

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) senior leader Khawaja Ahmad Hassan called on Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rehman at Governor's House here on Monday and discussed matters pertaining to education sector. The governor said that institutions were built through supremacy of merit, adding that he was committed to ensuring merit in the education sector. He said character building of the young generation was very important in educational institutions. He added that the purpose of educational institutions was to impart students various skills and also to train them morally.

Balighur Rehman said as the chancellor, he had also created a consortium on character building. He said the country could be

put on the path to development only by inculcating positive thinking and high moral values among the youth.

Khawaja Hassan said Aitchison College was a historical educational institution, adding that he would play his role for its development and improvement. He said the steps taken by the Punjab governor for supremacy of merit and improvement in administrative affairs in the institutions, run by the board of governors, were commendable. He hailed various steps taken by the governor as the chancellor to improve quality of education in the universities of Punjab, including appointment of pro-vice chancellors, adding that that had greatly improved the administrative affairs of the universities.



KARACHI: Governor Sindh, Kamran Khan Tessori exchanges views with Newly-appointed Inspector General (IG) Sindh, Riffat Mukhtar during meeting held at Governor House in Karachi.

Mayor Mardan condemns Jaranwala Incident, stresses minority rights protection

PESHAWAR (APP): Mayor Mardan Hamayattullah Mayor on Monday condemned the recent incident in Jaranwala and demanded action against those involved, aiming to mitigate the losses suffered by affected minorities.

He expressed these views during his address to the City Local Council, where elected members, government officials, and media representatives were present.

He emphasized the country's laws and constitution guaranteed the rights of all citizens, and neither the law nor Islamic teachings permit the

discrimination and violation of rights of minorities.

He highlighted Islam's message of peace and brotherhood, emphasizing the protection of minority rights.

He said that Inflation was affecting the common people and called for the establishment of a consultative team and a modern traffic management system in the city.

During the council meeting, Ashok Kumar thanked the mayor for addressing the concerns of minorities and expressed that many of their issues had been resolved through the system of jirgas.

PFA unearths fake beverages unit, disposes of 18,800 litre spurious drinks

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab Food Authority (PFA) on Monday unearthed a fake beverages unit producing carbonated drinks of different popular brands in Jameel Town.

PFA Director General Raja Jahangir Anwar said that the raiding team found disposed of 18,800 litre spurious drinks; 1,250kg sugar and 130kg prohibited ingredients besides confiscating 17 cylinders, filling machines, compressors, stove, empty bottles, lids and fake labelling.

Meanwhile, PFA also lodged a first information

report (FIR) against the adulteration mafia on account of adulteration and forgery in the nearest police station while handing an accused over to police during the raid.

He said that fabricated fizzy drinks were being prepared with hazardous chemicals, loose non-food grade colours, artificial sweeteners, unclean tap water, and other harmful ingredients while it was preserved in prohibited drums. Non-food-grade plastic bottles and fake labelling were also being used for packing purpose, he added.



LAHORE: Senior leader of PML (N) and former Coordinator of Prime Minister Khawaja Ahmed Hasaan meeting with Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman.

88 vehicles fined over no parking

RAWALPINDI (APP): The City Traffic Police (CTP) on Monday issued 88 challan tickets to vehicles and motorcycles for violating no parking in the garrison city.

The tickets were issued following the directions of the Chief Traffic Officer to ensure a smooth flow of traffic in the city. According to the CTP spokesperson, the grand operation against encroachments was launched on various thoroughfares in the city including Raja Bazaar

under the supervision of the CTO.

Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Rawalpindi Taimur Khan has issued orders to take strict action against the encroachment mafia, violators of no parking, and those obstructing the flow of traffic in Rawalpindi district. He said the encroachments and no parking violations cause traffic jams and affect the beauty of the city.

During the operation, different thoroughfares were cleared from the encroachment mafia.

Active info system directed to evacuate people from flooded areas

MULTAN (APP): Secretary Irrigation South Punjab, Ejaz Khaliq Razaqi visited Sulemanki Headworks to review the flood situation in the Sutlej as a result of India's water aggression on Monday.

He reviewed the water situation at the headworks and inspected the flood fighting arrangements and breaching section.

Chief Engineers of the Bahawalpur and Sahiwal Irrigation Departments also accompanied him. Speaking on the occasion, Razaqi said that Sutlej was facing a high level of flood. He directed authorities to establish an active information system with district administration for an early evacuation of people from the flood-affected area. The secretary instructed the officers and staff of the Irrigation department.

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Chinese company official terms Gwadar seaport CPEC's vital axis

LAHORE (APP): In a meeting with the business community here at Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) on Monday, Mr. YO BO, chairman of China Overseas Port Holding Company (COPHC), highlighted the transformative progress of Gwadar under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, saying that the seaport had emerged as CPEC's vital axis.



FAISALABAD: Chief Manager Corporate Banking Dilbar Hussain Chaudhary visiting the Group Chief CIBG Shahid Iqbal Chaudhary at NBP Corporate Center in City.

ICCI, NICAT ink MoU to promote innovators, entrepreneurs

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) and the National Incubation Center for Aerospace Technologies (NICAT) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to establish collaboration to promote youth innovation and entrepreneurship programmes.

The MoU was signed during a visit of Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, ICCI along with a delegation to NICAT. Abdul Rehman Siddiqui, Convener, ICCI MoU Committee and Imran Jattala, Project Director NICAT signed it in a ceremony held at NICAT, said a press release issued here on Monday.

As per MoU, NICAT will support ICCI for incubation and entrepreneurship programs and will collaborate with ICCI to

engage Pakistan's youth in innovation and entrepreneurship programs to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

NICAT will display the ICCI logo on its promotional materials and websites as appropriate and subject to joint approval. Similarly, ICCI will work with NICAT in the incubation & entrepreneurship programs and startup challenges.

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Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, said that Pakistan needs innovators and entrepreneurs to drive the economy and hoped that the MoU would be helpful in realizing such goals.

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SMEDA to develop separate Credit Risk Assessment System

LAHORE (APP): Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) has launched an initiative to develop a separate Credit Risk Assessment System (CRAS) for easy disbursement of loans to the manufacturing SMEs in the country.

SMEDA Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Farhan Aziz Khawaja told the media here Monday that the initiative had been taken through a PSDP-funded project: "The Research, Regulatory Insight & Advocacy Assistance for SMEs" (RRI&A) under the federal Ministry of Industries & Production (MoIP).

The CEO said that SMEs in Pakistan face significant hurdles in obtaining finance. Challenges encompass limited data transparency, complex paperwork,

cumbersome bank protocols, SMEs' creditability and readiness, high interest rates, and insufficient collateral, he added and informed that the core aim of SMEDA initiative is to establish a reliable Credit Risk Assessment Model that can enable financial institutions in accurately appraising the creditworthiness of Manufacturing SMEs by pinpointing predictive cues and information channels to enhance current credit risk evaluation processes and tools.

He hoped that emerging model will help establish a comprehensive framework guiding well-judged lending choices made by financial institutions. The initiative will provide a complete system for scrutinizing established credit risk assessment models.

modern city, replete with cutting-edge technology.

Chairman YO BO highlighted China's substantial investments in Gwadar's growth, spanning construction, airport infrastructure, and healthcare facilities. The Gwadar Free Zone, which came under the auspices of the Free Zone Company in 2018, has already established a vibrant phase one, spanning 25 hectares adjacent to the port. Notably, this area has attracted six companies.

The North Free Zone, sprawling over 900 hectares, is positioned for industrial and warehousing purposes, and Chairman YO BO emphasized its role in processing raw materials for subsequent export.



ISLAMABAD: Auditor General of Pakistan, Mr. Muhammad Ajmal Gondal, presenting the Audit report for the year 2022-23 to President Dr. Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

CPEC pivotal for uplift of marginalised areas: PCJCCI

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan-China Joint Chambers of Commerce and Industry (PCJCCI) President Moazzam Ghurki said here on Monday that China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) initiative was significant for Pakistan as it would lead to rapid economic growth of the country and also enhance regional security.

Chairing a meeting at the PCJCCI Secretariat here, he labeled CPEC as a "model of collaboration, partnership, connectivity and shared prosperity" promising high levels of industrial and agriculture cooperation. He talked about the significance of SEZs in enhancing B2B collaboration, while the government was working to ensure smooth transition

towards second phase of CPEC which will lead to socioeconomic uplift of marginalised areas.

He added that according to the World Bank's Global Economic Prospects report, the global economy probably shrank by 4.3 per cent in 2020 due to the pandemic of Covid-19 and financial crisis. The challenges for Pakistan are multiple as they struggle to eliminate poverty, bring economic growth due to hike in inflation rate. CPEC is now the principal vehicle for the pursuit of bilateral ties at renewed and heightened ebb of engagement. PCJCCI Senior Vice President Fang Yulong said that China's next transformation is well under way and a "New Economy" is emerging, all

set to make global impact through innovations and economic initiatives leveraging its demographic and economic diversity. In order to accrue the benefits of this transformation, Team CPEC has to now mobilize all resources for accomplishing the daunting task of timely implementation of CPEC projects in Pakistan, which would further lead towards a true inclusive growth. This time the focus of CPEC would be on populating the priority SEZs through industrial cooperation which is entering vital stage with immediate steps required to encourage private sector participation and creating enabling environment reducing risks and promoting complementary policies.

Pakistan earns \$2,605m from IT services' export during FY 2023

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan earned US \$2,605.340 million by providing different Information Technology (IT) services in various countries during the twelve months of the fiscal year 2022-23.

This shows a nominal decline of 0.53 per cent as compared to US \$2,619.100 million earned through the provision of services during the corresponding period of the fiscal year 2021-22, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported.

During July-June (2022-23), the export of computer services grew by 0.08 per cent as it surged from US \$2,109.370 million last fiscal year to US \$2,110.990 million year under review.

Among the computer services, the exports of software consultancy services witnessed a decrease of 4.36 per cent, from US \$795.464 million to US \$760.780 million while the exports of hardware consultancy

services however increased by 87.97 per cent from, US \$2.918 million to US \$5.485 million.

The export and import of computer software-related services also rose by 5.58 per cent, from US \$566.393 million to US \$598.020 million whereas the exports of repair and maintenance services surge to \$2.855 million from \$1.446 million.

In addition, the exports of other computer services increased by 0.09 per cent going up from US\$ 743.149 million to US\$ 743.850 million.

Meanwhile, the export of information technology services during the period under review increased by 5.54 per cent by going up from US\$ 55.230 million to US\$ 55.200 million. Among the information services, the exports of news agency services increased by 3.94 per cent, from US\$ 3.448 million to US\$ 3.584 million whereas the exports

BoK hosts seminar to promote Islamic Banking, eliminate interest

ABBOTTABAD (APP): The Bank of Khyber (BoK) Abbottabad Monday organized a seminar fostering Islamic banking practices and eradicating interest-based transactions.

Mufti Fazl Hakim highlighted that the Bank of Khyber is diligently following Shari'a principles under the guidance of the Shari'a Board, striving to offer interest-free capital investment and uphold an Islamic economic framework as ordained by Allah. He emphasized that the Creator has clearly demarcated the permissible from the prohibited.

Fazl Hakim underscored that the Holy Quran comprehensively addresses various aspects, encompassing beliefs, societal matters, and transactions. He

characterized banking as an industry.

Hafiz Muhammad Zahid, the area manager of Islamic Banking Islamabad, highlighted that banks are the backbone of country's economy. He further stated that out of the 31 banks operating in the country, five are dedicated to Islamic banking, with the Bank of Khyber being a prominent player.

However, he expressed concern that despite being founded on Islamic principles, a substantial 75 per cent of Pakistan's economy is still reliant on interest-based transactions. Hafiz Muhammad Zahid revealed that the Bank of Khyber, with its 240 branches, is a pioneer in the field, with 50 per cent adhering to Islamic principles while in contrast.

President emphasises use of IT to establish effective audit system

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Monday emphasised the need for utilizing the information technology to enhance the effectiveness of the auditing system.

The president, talking to Auditor General of Pakistan Muhammad Ajmal Gondal here, said it was the need of hour to adopt better internal controls, technology, automation and auditing as per international standards.

The Auditor General of Pakistan presented to the president the annual report of the institution for fiscal year 2022-23.

The president instructed the auditor

general to take measures for further improvement in the audit system.

He said that the improvement of the audit process would help promote good governance, transparency, and accountability.

He asked the auditor general to set targets for enhancing the institution's effectiveness.

He said the institution should also assist the government in the promotion of good governance.

President Alvi also lauded the role of the Auditor General of Pakistan in maintaining financial discipline in the country.



HYDERABAD: Labourers busy in unloading potatoes bags on the delivery track at vegetables market.

Indian water aggression dented South Punjab rural economy: Wattoo

LAHORE (INP): Vice President of Pakistan Business Forum (PBF) Jahan Ara Wattoo strongly condemning the Indian water aggression towards Pakistan has said that it resulted in unprecedented floods in Sutlej River with a range of 278,000 cusecs of water in our 35 years.

The Sutlej River has overflowed, Wattoo said adding Bahawalnagar, Okara, Lodhran, Kasur Bahawalpur, Vehari and Pakpatan will be the main victim districts from the Indian water aggression.

She condemned the India role and demanded that Pakistan foreign office should protest on it.

In Kasur only, 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. 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 Usmanwala near Ganda Singh were swept away while being transported away from flooding. Many people and animals were stranded in the floodwater as the administration failed to move them out of their houses during the last week despite warnings of heavy floods.

Over in Okara and Tehsil of Depalpur a flood current of 120,000 cusecs is passing in Sutlej River where an emergency has also been declared. The number of Tehsils of Bahawalnagar district i.e. Chishtian, Minchinabad and Tehsil Bahawalnagar are also facing severe flood including Tehsil Melsi of district Vehari.

According to the Wattoo, the floodwaters have wreaked havoc on crops like paddy, turmeric, maize, and taro (arvi).

PBF further stated that according to reports India is set to release additional water into the Sutlej today, compounding the crisis.

Rupee sheds Rs 1.36 against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani rupee on Monday witnessed Rs 1.36 devaluation against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 297.13 against the previous day's closing of Rs 295.77.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 305 and Rs 308 respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by Rs 1.85 to close at Rs 323.45 against the last day's closing of Rs 321.60, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese Yen went up by 01 paisa and closed at Rs 2.04, whereas an increase of Rs 2.11 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs 378.16 as compared to the last closing of Rs 376.05.

Separately, over 100



ISLAMABAD: Co-founder and CEO of Connect Hear Azima Dhanjee and Corporate Director HRAND OD and Dr Moin Uddin signing the MOU during ceremony at local hotel in Federal Capital.

Shipping Activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Two ships namely, MSC Cape-town and Kaisa-I, carrying Container and LPG, berthed at Container Terminal and Engro Terminal respectively on Sunday.

Meanwhile two more ships, edible oil carrier "Ocean Pioneer" and Gas carrier "Fuwaierit" also arrived at the outer anchorage of Port Qasim during the last 24 hours.

A total of 07 ships were engaged at POA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them three ships, Meratus Jayawijaya, MSC Cape-town, and SC-Taipai sailed out to sea on Monday, while two more ships, Fairchem Thresher and Hafnia Caterina are expected to sail on same day afternoon.

A cargo volume of 70,961 tonnes, comprising 55,149 tonnes of imports Cargo and 15,812 tonnes of export cargo, including containerized cargo.

Country's exports increase by 17.68 pc to Rs.581.102b in July 2023

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) has reported that the country's exports in rupee term witnessed an increase of 17.68 per cent during the month of July 2023 as compared to the same month of last year.

Exports during July 2023 were recorded at Rs.581,102 million against Rs.493,786 million during the corresponding period of last year, showing an increase of 17.68 per cent, according to provisional data released by PBS.

On month-on-month basis, the exports however decreased by 13.95 per cent when compared to the exports of Rs.675,280 million in June 2023.

The main commodities of exports during July, 2023 were knitwear (Rs. 102,439 million), readymade

garments (Rs. 77,202 million), bed wear (Rs. 60,953 million), cotton cloth (Rs. 39,604 million), cotton yarn (Rs.27,266 million), rice other than Basmati (Rs.21,848 million), towels (Rs.20,448 million), makeup articles, excluding towels & bedwear (Rs.14,342 million), rice basmati (Rs.11,059 million) and fruits (Rs.10,045 Million).

Meanwhile, imports into Pakistan during July, 2023 amounted to Rs. 1,041,138 million against Rs. 1,209,177 million in June, 2023 and Rs. 1,093,124 million during July, 2022 showing a decrease of 13.90 per cent over June, 2023 and of 4.76 per cent over July, 2022.

The main commodities of imports during July, 2023 were petroleum products (Rs. 100,204 million).



QUETTA: Convener/Chairman Senate Special Committee for Employees Senator Naseebullah Bazai in a meeting with members of National Bank Employees Union at NBP head office

South Korea will cooperate more with US, Japan if North's threats continue

Monitoring Desk
SEOUL: South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol said on Monday trilateral cooperation with the United States and Japan will grow stronger if North Korea's threats increase. He made the remark at a Cabinet meeting days after he took part in talks with the leaders of the United States and Japan where they agreed to deepen military and economic cooperation. "The structure of the trilateral cooperation among South Korea, the United States and Japan will become more solid as North Korea's provocation and threats increase," Yoon said during the meeting which was televised live, heralding what he called the "opening of a new era" in the three countries' relations. The three-way partnership would develop

into a strong framework to promote regional peace along with the AUKUS pact between the U.S., Britain and Australia, and the Quad grouping of the U.S., Japan, India and Australia, Yoon said.

North Koreans targeted US-South drills: Seoul police

Monitoring Desk
SEOUL: Suspected North Korean hackers have attempted an attack targeting a major joint military exercise between Seoul and Washington that starts on Monday, South Korean police said. South Korea and the United States will kick off the annual Uchi Freedom Shield drills on Monday through August 31 to counter growing threats from the nuclear-armed North. Pyongyang views such exercises as rehearsals for an invasion and has repeatedly warned it would take "overwhelming" action in response. The hackers — believed to be linked to a North Korean group dubbed Kimsuky — carried out "continuous malicious email attacks" on South Korean contractors working at the allies' combined exercise war simulation centre, the Gyeonggi Nambu Pro-vincial Police Agency said in a statement.



Britain's King Charles III inspects Balaklava Company, 5th Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland, at the gates of Balmoral, Scotland.

Thailand's Pheu Thai joins military rivals in bid to form government

Monitoring Desk
BANGKOK: Thailand's Pheu Thai Party vowed on Monday to deliver on a raft of election promises and change the constitution, as it unveiled an 11-party alliance that includes some military-linked rivals that will try to form a coalition government this week. Thailand's bicameral parliament has been deadlocked for weeks on forming a government, after the anti-establishment election winner Move Forward succumbed to conservative resistance in parliament, leaving second-placed Pheu Thai to take up the effort. While the proposed alliance is a step towards ending the stalemate, the pact between the populist Pheu Thai and some of old military-linked enemies could prolong concern about a new bout of insta-

bility after nearly two decades of on-off turmoil. Parliament will vote on Tuesday on the prime ministerial bid of Pheu Thai's Srettha Thavisin, a 60-year-old real estate mogul who was thrust into politics only a few months ago. "We are confident that Srettha will pass the vote," Pheu Thai leader Cholan Srikaew told a press conference. "We must quickly work to restore the economy and come up with policies that will develop mechanisms for the stability of politics, the economy and society," he said, after announcing how many cabinet portfolios each party would get. Pheu Thai's pact includes parties created by generals who were behind 2006 and 2014 coups against its governments, and engineered re-writes of a constitution to make it extremely difficult for election winners.

AI unlikely to destroy most jobs, but clerical workers at risk, ILO says

Monitoring Desk
GENEVA: Generative AI probably will not take over most people's jobs entirely but will instead automate a portion of their duties, freeing them up to do other tasks, a U.N. study said on Monday. The allegations, described as "unfounded" by a Saudi government source, point to a significant escalation of abuses along the perilous route from the Horn of Africa to Saudi Arabia, where hundreds of thousands of Ethiopians live and work. It warned, however, that clerical work would likely be the hardest hit, potentially hitting female employment harder, given women's over-representation in this sector, especially in wealthier countries. An explosion of interest in generative AI and its chatbot applications has sparked fears over job destruction, similar to those that emerged when the moving assembly line was introduced in the early 1900s and after mainframe computers in the 1950s.

Moon landing anticipation builds for India after Russia's crash

Monitoring Desk
BENGALURU: India's space agency on Monday released images of its spacecraft took of the far side of the moon as it headed for an attempted landing on the lunar south pole, just days after the failure of a Russian lander. The Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO) Chandrayaan-3 spacecraft had been in a race with Russia to be the first to land on the lunar south pole, a region whose shadowed craters are thought to contain water ice that could support a future moon settlement. As news of the failure of Russia's Luna-25 mission broke on Sunday, ISRO said that Chandrayaan-3 was on course to land on Aug. 23. All systems on the spacecraft are working

"perfectly" and no contingencies are anticipated on the landing day, the space agency said on Monday. The mission - Chandrayaan means "moon vehicle" in Hindi and Sanskrit - is India's second attempt to land on the south pole of the moon. In 2019, ISRO's Chandrayaan-2 mission successfully deployed an orbiter but its lander crashed. Rough terrain makes a south pole landing difficult, but making a first landing would be historic. The region's water ice could supply fuel, oxygen and drinking water for future missions. Images released on Monday showed craters on the moon's surface captured by the ISRO craft's Lander Hazard Detection and Avoidance Camera, which is designed to help find a safe landing location for the spacecraft.

UK child-killer nurse facing life sentence

Monitoring Desk
LONDON: A British nurse will be sentenced on Monday for murdering seven newborn babies and attempting to kill six others while they were in her care. Lucy Letby, 33, was convicted of killing five baby boys and two baby girls, making her the UK's most prolific child serial killer in modern history. She was arrested following a string of baby deaths at the neonatal unit of the Countess of Chester Hospital in northwest England between June 2015 and June 2016. The prosecution said Letby attacked her young and often prematurely born victims by either injecting them with air, overdosing them with milk or poisoning them with insulin.



U.S. President Joe Biden and first lady Jill Biden board a plane as they depart for Maui from Reno, Nevada, U.S.

Russia, China look to advance agendas at BRICS summit of developing countries in South Africa

Monitoring Desk
JOHANNESBURG: Russia and China will look to gain more political and economic ground in the developing world at a summit in South Africa this week, when an expected joint dose of anti-West grumbling from them may take on a sharper edge with a formal move to bring Saudi Arabia closer. Leaders from the BRICS economic bloc of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa will hold three days of meetings in Johannesburg's financial district of Sandton, with

Chinese premier Xi Jinping's attendance underlining the diplomatic capital his country has invested in the bloc over the last decade-and-a-bit as an avenue for its ambitions. Russian President Vladimir Putin will appear on a video link after his travel to South Africa was complicated by an International Criminal Court arrest warrant against him over the war in Ukraine. Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and South African President Cyril Ramaphosa will be at

the summit alongside Xi. The main summit on Wednesday — and sideline meetings Tuesday and Thursday — are expected to produce general calls for more cooperation among countries in the Global South amid their rising discontent over perceived Western dominance of global institutions. That's a sentiment that Russia and China are more than happy to lean into. Leaders or representatives of dozens more developing countries are set to attend the sideline meetings in Africa's wealthiest city to give Xi and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

Saudi border guards killed hundreds of Ethiopian migrants: HRW report

Monitoring Desk
RIYAD: Saudi border guards fired "like rain" on Ethiopian migrants trying to cross into the Gulf kingdom from Yemen, killing hundreds since last year, Human Rights Watch (HRW) said in a report on Monday. The allegations, described as "unfounded" by a Saudi government source, point to a significant escalation of abuses along the perilous route from the Horn of Africa to Saudi Arabia, where hundreds of thousands of Ethiopians live and work. "They fired on us like rain. When I remember, I cry," she said. "I saw a guy calling for help, he lost both his legs. He was screaming; he was saying, 'Are you leaving me here? Please don't leave me'. We couldn't help him because we were running for our lives."

Two injured in Ukrainian drone attack in Moscow region, nearly 50 flights disrupted

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: At least two people were injured on Monday when parts of a Ukrainian drone destroyed by Russian air defences fell on a house in the Moscow region, the regional governor said. Nearly 50 plane flights in and out of the capital were disrupted after Russia said it jammed a Ukrainian drone in the Ruzsky district west of the capital and destroyed another one in the Istrinsky district nearby.



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un oversees a strategic cruise missile test aboard a navy warship this photo released by North Korea's Korean Central News Agency.

Beijing lets North Korea state airline resume flights to China

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: Beijing has allowed North Korea's state carrier Air Koryo to resume flights to China more than three years after they stopped amid COVID-19 restrictions, the Chinese foreign ministry said on Monday. The approval comes amid signs of increased contact between North Korea and its neighbour and biggest trading partner. Train services between the countries have been increasing, South Korea's Yonhap news agency reported on Thursday.

Last month, a Chinese delegation visited Pyongyang to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the end of the Korean War, the first such group to travel to the reclusive state since the pandemic. China's foreign ministry did not say when flights would resume and referred further questions to China's aviation regulator which was not immediately available to comment. An Air Koryo employee who answered a call to the number for the airline's Shanghai office said he had no knowledge of the situation.

Niger coup ruler offers transition in 3 years

Monitoring Desk
NIAMEY: Niger's new military ruler has said a transition of power will not go beyond three years, and warned that any attack on the country "will not be the walk in the park" for those involved. "Our ambition is not to confiscate power," Gen-eral Abdourahmane Tiani said in a televised address. Any transition of power "will not go beyond three years," he said before warning that if an attack were to be undertaken, "it will not be the walk in the park some people seem to think". The warning came after a delegation from Econ-omic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), led by former Nigerian leader Abdulsakami Abubakar.

France issues 'red alert' over heatwave in south

Monitoring Desk
PARIS: France on Monday afternoon issued a "red alert", its most serious warning, for four southern regions amid a spell of excessively hot weather, with temperatures expected to peak at 41 degrees Celsius (106 degrees Fahrenheit) in the Rhone valley. The departments targeted by the alert, which allows local authorities to call off events and close public facilities if needed, are the Rhone, Drome, Ardeche and Haute-Loire, Meteo France said. The alert became effective at 1600 local time. It was the sixth time the French meteorological service triggered

the red alert — part of the government's programme to protect the population during periods of extreme weather — and the first such incidence this year. Earlier on Monday, Meteo France had issued an orange alert for half of the country's territory, saying temperatures will reach between 35 and 38 C (95 to 100 F) in most of the affected departments. Peaks of 41 Celsius were expected in the southwest and the Rhone Valley. Temperatures are expected to rise to between 40 and 42 Celsius (104 and 108 F) on Tuesday afternoon in the southern departments of Ardeche.

Seven football fans die, dozens injured in Brazil bus crash

Monitoring Desk
RIO DE JANEIRO: At least seven people died and 27 others were hospitalized Sunday in southeastern Brazil when a driver lost control of a bus carrying football fans on a mountainous road, fire officials said. The accident occurred on a highway near Belo Horizonte in Minas Gerais state, they said. Passengers interviewed by the G1 news website said the driver cried out that he had no brakes shortly before losing control.

Trump says he won't take part in Republican debates

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: Former US President Donald Trump said he would skip the upcoming Republican primary debates, citing his large lead in opinion polls as evidence that he was already well-known and liked by voters ahead of the 2024 election. Trump has for months suggested he would likely pass on Wednesday night's debate in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, arguing that it did not make sense to give his Republican rivals a chance to attack him given his sizeable lead in national polls. On Sunday, a CBS poll showed he was the preferred candidate for 62% of Republican voters, with his closest rival Florida Governor Ron DeSantis at 16%. All other candidates in the primary race had less than 10% support. "The public knows

who I am & what a successful Presidency I had," Trump said on his social media app, Truth Social. "I will therefore not be doing the debates." The Trump campaign did not immediately respond to a question asking if the former president meant he won't be taking part in any of the Republican debates. The New York Times reported that Trump sat for a taped interview with former Fox News host Tucker Carlson that was expected to be posted online on Wednesday. It was not yet clear where the interview with Carlson will be posted. Trump's absence from this week's debate could mean DeSantis will become the focus of attacks from other candidates looking to position themselves as the primary alternative to the former president.

Storm Hilary to bring 'life-threatening flooding' to US

Monitoring Desk
CABO LUCAS: States across the typically arid US southwest braced on Sunday for torrential rain and potentially life-threatening flooding, as Hurricane Hilary barreled up Mexico's coast, where authorities reported at least one fatality. At its peak, Hilary reached Category 4 on the five-step Saffir-Simpson scale, but it was expected to weaken to a tropical storm before reaching southern California on Sunday afternoon, the US National Hurricane Center (NHC) said. On Sunday morning it was a Category 1 hurricane packing sustained winds of around 80 miles (130 kilometres) per hour as it moved north just off Mexico's Baja California Peninsula, the NHC said. "Catastrophic and life-threatening flooding likely over Baja California and portions of the southwestern US through Monday," the US government

agency warned. One person died in Mexico after a vehicle was swept away by a rising stream, Mexico's Civil Protection agency said in a statement on Saturday, while warning of landslides and road closures in Baja California. Hilary was expected to track inland and north over the next day or two, depositing up to 10 inches of rain on parts of Mexico, California and Nevada, according to the NHC. Tomatoes were possible in parts of the Colorado River Valley, Mojave Desert and Imperial Valley, it said. The US Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has deployed teams to areas in Hilary's path, while California Governor Gavin Newsom declared a state of emergency for much of the state's southern area. Nancy Ward, director of the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services, said Hilary could be one of the worst storms to hit the state in more than a decade.

Vote count in Ecuador points to likely runoff between ally of ex-president and banana tycoon's son

Monitoring Desk
GUAYAQUIL: Ecuadorians put aside fears of leaving their homes amid unprecedented violence and voted for a new president Sunday in a special election that was heavily guarded by police and soldiers in part due to the assassination of a presidential candidate this month. No candidate received enough support to be declared winner, with early results pointing to a leftist backed by a fugitive ex-president likely facing a runoff with the son of a banana tycoon. Trailing them was the substitute of Fernando Villavicencio, who was killed Aug. 9 while leaving a campaign rally. Authorities deployed more than 100,000 police and soldiers to protect the vote against more violence. Gen. Fausto Salinas, commander general of the National Police, said one person was arrested for false voting, two for harassment and resisting arrest and more than 20 for unlawfully carrying guns.

With about 88% of the votes counted late Sunday, results from the National Electoral Council had leftist Luisa Gonzalez in the lead with about 33% of support. Former lawmaker Daniel Noboa was second with about 24%. To win outright, a candidate needed 50% of the vote, or to have at least 40% with a 10-point lead over the closest opponent. Christian Zurita was in third place with 16%. His name was not on the ballot, but he substituted for Fernando Villavicencio, whose killing this month laid bare people's fears over unprecedented violence in a country they considered peaceful up until three years ago. "For me, it is an honor to be in third place in these elections," Zurita said. "We have a lot to be proud of. This candidacy has been a light for the country because it is based on the moral stature of those of us who have fought for this country and even died (for it)."

Canada wildfires force tens of thousands to flee

Monitoring Desk
KELOWNA: Officials in western Canada's British Columbia implored tens of thousands of residents to heed warnings and evacuate on Saturday as "rapidly evolving" wildfires threatened large parts of the scenic Okanagan Valley, including the city of Kelowna. The situation in the popular boating and hiking destination was "highly dynamic," said Bowinn Ma, the province's minister of emergency management. Around 30,000 people were under evacuation orders while another 36,000 were under alert to be ready to flee, she said. "We cannot stress strongly enough how critical it is to follow evacuation orders when they are issued," Ma said at an afternoon news conference. "They are a matter of life and death not only for the people in those properties, but also for the first responders who will often go back to try to implore

people to leave." Kelowna, a city of 150,000, was choked with thick smoke as it became the latest population centre hit in a summer of dramatic wildfires across Canada that has left millions of acres scorched. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said he had spoken with British Columbia Premier David Eby about the "rapidly evolving and incredibly devastating wildfire situation" and pledged federal resources in responding to the disaster. Blazes far away in the neighbouring Northwest Territories have meanwhile prompted the evacuation of regional capital Yellowknife, leaving the remote city of some 20,000 largely a ghost town. Winds have been fanning the wildfires towards Yellowknife, but Saturday saw some relief after overnight rain brought a sharp dip in temperatures. However, "a little rain does not mean it's safe to come back home," warned Northwest Territories environment minister Shane Thompson at a Saturday evening press conference.



Pasadena Fire Department vehicles attend to a fire call following a magnitude 5.1 earthquake in Southern California, in the midst of the approach of Tropical Storm Hilary, in Pasadena, California, U.S.

ECP urges caretaker govts to refrain from indulging in political activities

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Monday again cautioned the federal and provincial governments against getting involved in any political activities that might undermine the smooth conduct of elections.

The ECP, in a notification, affirmed that caretaker governments must refrain from any actions aimed at exerting influence on the elections or engaging in any activities that could, in any way, impact or compromise the integrity of free and fair elections. It said, "The caretaker governments, as apolitical bodies, are authorized to make decisions or take steps pertaining to ongoing bilateral or multilateral agreements, as well as projects that have been previously initiated under the Public Private Partnership Authority Act 2017." The ECP cautioned the caretaker administrations to confine themselves to the authority granted to them by the Elections Act, 2017. The Commission cited an instance, in which it intervened to curtail the

caretaker government in Punjab from exceeding its prescribed powers. "A letter was penned by the Election Commission addressed to the caretaker Chief Minister (CM) and Chief Secretary of Punjab. The letter conveyed that the caretaker administration is restricted from making significant decisions, and its authority is limited to overseeing routine operations," it added.

The ECP expressed concern over the issuance of no-objection certificates (NOCs) to housing societies in green belt areas by deputy commissioners, and cautioned the caretaker governments against making decisions that fall outside their purview and should instead be made by elected governments.

The ECP additionally enacted a prohibition on any kind of hiring in federal, provincial, and local government ministries, divisions, departments, or institutions. The sole exemption to this rule is when cases receive prior approval from the Commission.

The Commission further directed the interim

administrations to refrain from announcing or commencing any fresh development initiatives on both the federal and provincial fronts. This directive applies except for projects already underway or approved before the notification was issued.

Commencing with the announcement of the election schedule, the allocation of development funds for new projects within local government institutions across provinces and cantonment boards nationwide will be suspended. This suspension will persist until the declaration of the general election results, stated the notification.

The election oversight body affirmed its constitutional duty to ensure the fair and honest organization and conduct of elections, in accordance with the provisions of Article 218(3) of the Constitution.

The ECP additionally directed the interim administrations at both the national and provincial levels to cooperate in facilitating elections within legal parameters.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation led by Saudi Minister for Hajj and Umrah H.E. Dr. Tawfiq Bin Fawzan Al-Rabiah called on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar.

Pakistan pays tribute to victims of terrorism

ISLAMABAD (APP): On the occasion of the International Day of Remembrance and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism, Pakistan Monday joined the international community in honouring the lives lost and the survivors of terrorist attacks.

The Foreign Office spokesperson in a statement said, "On this day, our thoughts are with the survivors and the families of the victims. We honour the memory of our heroes who sacrificed their lives in the fight against terrorism."

She said, "As a nation that has braved the brunt of terrorism, Pakistan deeply understands the pain and suffering of the victims of terrorism around the world. For the last two decades, Pakistan has been a victim of terrorism planned, supported and sponsored from across our borders. During this period, it suffered more than 80,000 casualties and incurred over

US\$ 150 billion in losses to the economy."

She said, "These challenges did not deter us. Pakistan remained resolute in its resolve to combat terrorism. With national commitment, matchless resilience and unparalleled sacrifices of the people, Pakistan has managed to turn the situation and score victories against terrorism."

The Spokesperson said, "As we remember and pay tribute to victims worldwide, we must also remember the victims of state terrorism including in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). Since the 1990s Indian troops have martyred over 100,000 Kashmiris, widowed over 22,000 women, orphaned 108,000 children and raped over 11,000 women in IIOJK. The international community must stand with victims of state terrorism in IIOJK as well."

She said, "It is imperative for the international community to adopt a comprehensive approach to counter-terrorism and address its root causes."

Police gets three day custody of Imaan, Wazir

ISLAMABAD (APP): An Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) on Monday granted the police three-day physical remand of Imaan Mazari Advocate and former MNA Ali Wazir in a case pertaining to a controversial speech.

The two accused were produced before ATC Judge Abul Hassnat Zulkerain by the police.

At the outset of the hearing, Imaan Mazari's lawyer Zainab Janjua argued that the police had registered two cases against one incident. She said that the mobile phone and laptop of her client had already been taken into police custody.

The lawyer said that Imaan Mazari was a lawyer and she would continue appearing before the investigators. She said that the police couldn't find anything against her client during the last two days, adding that there was no need for physical remand of the accused.

PM lauds Saudi interest in investment opportunities in Pakistan

Thanks KSA leadership for facilitating Pakistani pilgrims

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwarul Haq Kakar on Monday thanked the Saudi leadership for making excellent arrangements for Hujjaj from all over the world during the Hajj season, particularly for the Pakistani pilgrims.

He expressed the hope that the Pakistani Hajj and Umrah pilgrims would continue to receive special treatment from the Saudi side.

The prime minister expressed these views during a meeting with Minister of Hajj & Umrah of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Dr. Tawfiq Bin Fawzan Al-Rabiah who called on him.

The PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

PM Kakar expressed satisfaction on the positive trajectory of bilateral relations with the Kingdom and lauded the vision of Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman, adding that Pakistan would always remain a trusted partner of Saudi Arabia.

The Saudi Minister is leading a high-level delegation with members from the Saudi ministries of foreign affairs, interior, civil aviation authority, communication, tourism, etc.

The visit is the first by a Saudi Minister of Hajj and Umrah to Pakistan.



ISLAMABAD: National Coordinator, NACTA, Muhammad Tahir Rai called on Caretaker Federal Minister for Interior Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti.

Masood urges solidarity among diaspora for better Pak-US relations

WASHINGTON (INP): Pakistan's Ambassador to United States Masood Khan has stated that Pakistani-American community is a catalyst for moving Pakistan and US closer through people to people exchanges. He stated this while addressing a huge gathering of Pakistani diaspora at annual Pakistan Day Parade in New Jersey.

The NJ Pakistan Day Parade is an annual event since 2015. The annual parade features colorful floats, music, dance, cultural exhibitions, and Pakistani arts and cuisine.

The Ambassador said that Pakistan has passed through much turbulence and faced many challenges and it has survived, and people will see it as one of the most successful nations in the comity of nations.

He urged Pakistani

Americans to demonstrate unity so they could emerge stronger in the United States and their role in Pakistan would also grow.

Masood Khan, on the occasion, also strongly condemned attacks on churches in Pakistan. He said that the entire nation has condemned the heinous act and expressed solidarity with the victims. He said this was a conspiracy against the society and nation of Pakistan and we will not countenance it under any circumstances.

Masood Khan also paid a glowing tribute to the founder of the Parade, late Ahrar (Sam) Khan. He also acknowledged and appreciated the achievements of Assemblywoman Shama Haider for being the first Pakistani American woman to have been elected for New Jersey state assembly.



QUETTA: A delegation led by Provincial Amir JUI and former Federal Minister Maulana Abdul Wasey meeting with Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki

JUI delegation meets caretaker CM; greets on assuming new responsibly

Independent Report QUETTA: A delegation of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI) led by the Provincial Ameer and former Federal Minister, Maulana Abdul Wasey called on the caretaker Chief Minister, Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki here on Monday.

The delegation of JUI was comprised former Opposition leader, Malik Sikandar Khan Advocate, former members of the assembly and other office bearers of Jamiat.

The members of delegation congratulated Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki

on assuming the slot of caretaker Chief Minister.

They also expressed best wishes for the caretaker Chief Minister.

Speaking to the delegation, caretaker Chief Minister said that Allah Almighty has given a big responsibility. He said that he wants to fulfill the responsibility of conducting free and fair elections with good intention.

In this regard, he needs cooperation and prayers of the masses and his companions, Mir Ali Mardan Domki maintained.

Brahvi Academy's head calls on BTTN's official

QUETTA (APP): Head of Brahvi Academy and a senior lawyer Advocate Salahuddin Mengal called on Balochistan Think Tank Network (BTTN)'s Head Agha Ahmad Gul on Monday.

They exchanged views about Balochistan's social economic development and various aspects of China-Pak Economic Corridor (CPEC) and its development in the meeting.

BTTN's head presented Salahuddin Mengal with some of the research work which is directly related to Balochistan and has serious interest of Pakistan.

The head of BTTN thanked Mengal for inviting him to visit the Brahvi Cultural Center.

Cipher case: Court approves 4 days physical remand of Qureshi

ISLAMABAD (Online): The special court has approved 4 days physical remand of Shah Mehmood Qureshi, vice chairman of PTI in cipher case under official secret act.

Shah Mehmood Qureshi was presented by FIA in the court set up under official secret act in Islamabad on Monday. He is arrested in alleged misplaced cipher case.

The FIA requested for 13 days physical remand. The subordinate court of Islamabad had approved physical remand of Shah Mehmood Qureshi a day before and handed him over to FIA. The FIA presented him in the court again on completion of his remand.

Judge Abul Hasnat Zulqarnain held in camera hearing of the case.

Toshakhana Case SC to hear PTI chief's appeal on Aug 23

ISLAMABAD (APP): A three-member bench of the Supreme Court would hear the appeal of the Pakistan Tahreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman on August 23, in Toshakhana criminal case.

The bench would be headed by Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial and comprising of Justice Mazhar Ali Akbar Naqvi and Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail. It may be mentioned here that the former prime minister had challenged the verdict of the Islamabad High Court (IHC) dated August 3, before the top court. The IHC bench had remanded back the matter pertaining to maintainability of the criminal case to the additional session court.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker minister for Maritime Affairs, Communication & Railway Shahid Ashraf Tarar chaired a comprehensive briefing session at Ministry Maritime Affairs.

Minister hails govt for swift action against Jaranwala incident perpetrators

ISLAMABAD (APP): Interim Minister for Human Rights Khalil George on Monday lauded the government for taking swift action against perpetrators of the Jaranwala incident.

There is a dire need to dismantle the mindset of May 9-type mayhem, he said while talking to PTV. Some anti-state elements are trying to promote extremism in the country, he said.

He stressed collective efforts to flush out such disgruntled persons from this country.

George hoped that people belonging to all segments of society will continue to work for the promotion of inter-faith harmony. Regretting the Jaranwala incident, he said

that we are living together for decades and played a vital role in the prosperity of Pakistan.

Appreciating the Punjab government's prompt action against the criminals of Jaranwala mayhem, he said that we are united to crush any form of extremism and terrorism from this healthy society.

Meanwhile, Chairman Ruet-e-Hilal Committee Maulana Abdul Khabir Azad said it is the responsibility of every person to pay respect to all kinds of religious places.

He said that the interim government should award punishment to those who are responsible for Jaranwala tragic incident.



QUETTA: Senator Saeed Ahmed Hashmi meeting with Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki

Bazai instructs members to ensure better services in Emergency Department

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan Health Special Secretary Dawood Bazai on Monday instructed the members to work on the performance-based incentive system to ensure the delivery of better services in the Emergency Department.

Bazai chaired the first meeting of the working group to make the Accident and Emergency Department active.

The meeting was attended by working group committee members Managing Director Trauma Centre Quetta Dr. Arbab Kamran, Principal Bolan Medical College Dr. Raz Muhammad Kakar, Dean PGMI Dr. Noor Ahmad Khosa, Medical Superintendent SPH Quetta Dr. Ishaq Panizai, Medical Superintendent, BMCH Dr. Farid Ahmed Samalani,

Head of Bone and Joint Department SPH Dr. Muhammad Baksh Shahwani, Head of Gynaecology Department Dr. Bilqis, Deputy Medical Superintendent SPH Dr. Ghulam Sarwar, Assistant Medical Superintendent SPH Dr. Muhammad Umeer, Surgeon Dr. Iqbal Jafar, Dr. Hafeezur Rehman Panizai and Executive Director SKBZ Quetta Dr. Abdul Ghaffar. A detailed action plan was discussed to develop a working mechanism for the integration of services in the Trauma Center and Accident and Emergency Department, Special Secretary Health. The meeting reviewed procedures to ensure the availability of at least one senior registrar from each respective speciality 24/7 in the Emergency Department.

Mishal says: Violations of human rights in Occupied Kashmir be fully highlighted

ISLAMABAD (Online): In a statement Special Assistant to Caretaker PM on Human Rights Mishal Hussin Malik said that violations of human rights in Occupied Kashmir will be fully highlighted under Caretaker PM Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar.

We will play our positive roles against injustice happening around the world.

The doors of my house and office will always remain open for oppressed.

She said that voices will be raised for illegally detained youths and women at global level.

I will keep the positive face of Pakistan in front of the world through my positive role.

LHC moved for halting implementation of official secret amendment act

LAHORE (Online): Lahore High Court (LHC) has been moved for halting implementation of Official Secret Amendment Act (OSAA).

A petition has been filed in LHC by Muhammad Maqsaat Saleem advocate making federal government, interior ministry and ministry of law respondents.

The petitioner has taken plea in the petition the statement of the president Arif Alvi came to fore that he has not signed OSAA.

Indian troops martyr two Kashmiri youth in Pulwama

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indian troops in their fresh act of state terrorism, martyred two Kashmiri youth in Pulwama district in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). According to Kashmir Media Service, the Indian army and paramilitary forces martyred the two youths during a cordon and search.



QUETTA: Senior Vice President of National Party, former Senator Mir Kabir Ahmed Muhammadshahi meeting with President Balochistan National Party Sardar Akhtar Jan Mengal

Polls should not be delayed beyond March: Jehangir

LAHORE (APP): Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) Patron-in-Chief Jehangir Tareen said on Monday that general election should not be delayed beyond March next year and no political party including Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) should be banned.

Addressing the media person after attending a ceremony, where former PTI leader Sumsam Bukhari and others announced joining the IPP here, he said the rate of joining the IPP by leaders of the PTI and other parties was so high that this time they would need a jumbo jet, instead of a small aeroplane. He also gave away party flags to the new party members.

Tareen said after new delimitation of constituen-

cies in the light of the census results, general election should be conducted before March.

About President Dr Arif Alvi's tweet denying signing of Official Secrets Act and Army Act, Tareen said: "Listening to the president was sorrowful".

Replying to a question, he said no political party, including the PTI, should be banned.

While addressing the media, Syed Sumsam Bukhari said that audios related to May 9 incident were being associated with him, which were fake.

PTI Spokesperson Dr. Firdous Ashiq Awan said that Dr Arif Alvi should reconsider his behaviour as he was the president of Pakistan and not of Tehreek-e-Insaf.

Election arrangements ECP constitutes High Powered Oversight Panel

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has constituted a high-powered supervisory committee, led by the Special Secretary of the Commission, for election arrangements.

The committee's responsibility includes ensuring the proper and timely execution of election arrangements, as well as maintaining close coordination with relevant departments to ensure smooth elections.

Expressing contentment with the progress in the preparations, Secretary of the Election Commission, Omar Hamid Khan, directed the heads of all

Election Commission divisions and Provincial Election Commissioners to promptly finalize election-related arrangements. They are to establish contact with pertinent institutions and ensure the availability of required election materials. It was emphasized that in this regard will not be accepted.

Additionally, the Secretary of the Election Commission directed the Provincial Election Commissioner and the Additional Director General (Election) Islamabad to confirm the timely receipt of constituency maps and essential data from provincial governments.



FAISALABAD: Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami Sirajul Haq meet affectees of Jaranwala incident during visits.