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Pakistan, Iran agree to strengthen cultural, people-to-people linkages

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Iran on Friday agreed to strengthen cultural linkages and people-to-people contacts to further bring the two brotherly countries closer.

Both sides also emphasized the need for taking measures to enhance cooperation in the area of tourism to its fullest potential.

The bilateral relations were discussed in a meeting between President Dr Arif Alvi and the visiting Iranian Minister for Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, Seyed Ezzatollah Zarghami, who along with the members of his delegation, called on him at the Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Ambassador of Iran to Pakistan Reza Amiri Moghadam was also present on the occasion.

Welcoming the delegation, the president said that Pakistan greatly valued its relations with Iran, which were based on historic, cultural and religious bonds.

He appreciated the steps taken by the Iranian government for the facilitation of Pakistani pilgrims visiting the holy shrines in Iran.

The meeting exchanged views on the rising cases of Islamophobia in the world and called for collective efforts to prevent such incidents.

The president remarked that both countries enjoyed good relations and had similar views on the issues of Islamophobia, Jammu and Kashmir, and Palestine.

He informed the visiting dignitary about the anti-Muslim policies of India, particularly in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) where the Indian security forces had unleashed a reign of terror, and were persecuting Muslims.

He also thanked the Iranian leadership for supporting Pakistan's stance on the Jammu and Kashmir dispute.

Congratulating the Iranian leadership and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman, over the normalization of relations between the two countries, the president expressed the hope that the breakthrough in their relations would not only benefit the two countries but also the entire region.



RAWALPINDI: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif along with Services Chiefs and Federal Ministers inaugurating National Aerospace Science and Technology Park

IHC sets aside trial court verdict declaring PTI chief's Toshakhana reference 'maintainable'

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Friday dismissed the decision of the trial court regarding the admissibility of toshakhana criminal case and remanded the case back to the additional session court for rehearing.

The court also rejected the appeals seeking to stay the proceeding in toshakhana case and the shifting of case to another court. The bench also served notices to the respondents on another appeal regarding production of witnesses and seeking to restore the right of defence of the accused.

Chief Justice Aamer Farooq issued the written order regarding the termination of lower court's verdict pertaining maintainability of the criminal case against the former prime minister. The court also instructed the trial court to also give answers to the question raised in the appeal while announcing its fresh verdict about the admissibility of the case.

The court rejected the appeal for transfer of the criminal case to another court and said that as per the verdicts of the high courts in similar matters a case could only be shifted to the alternative court on the basis of solid reasons.

The written order said that the petitioner had raised the objection against the trial court judge due to his alleged Facebook posts about the case. The trial court judge had also rejected the plea seeking to shift the case to another court.

It further said that the ECP's lawyer was of the view that the Facebook posts associated with the judge were fake. It had been done to damage the repute of the court, he said.

Pakistan's scenic beauty can be turned into a great opportunity: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday said that being rich with immense scenic beauty, particularly the Northern Areas, Pakistan could turn the resources into a great opportunity.

The prime minister was addressing the launching ceremony of the "Salam Pakistan" brand and e-portal that would help promote tourist attractions across the world and guide tourists.

He said Pakistan was a great place for promoting tourism and cultural heritage.

He instructed his Advisor on Tourism Awn Chaudhry to do maximum efforts to promote tourism, though the government was about to complete its term very soon.

Prime Minister Shehbaz instructed the advisors as well as the government officers not to interact merely with their counterparts but also those from other countries which had excelled in tourism, cultural heritage and other fields. "Allah Almighty blessed our country with great natural resources of scenic beauty all over Northern Areas, which can be converted into a great opportunity," he remarked.

In his address, Advisor to Prime Minister of Pakistan on Tourism and Sports Awn Chaudhry said to promote the soft image of the country worldwide, the PTDC had developed a well-coordinated strategic approach for best utilization of the available resources with focus on building the image of Pakistan as one of most tourist friendly countries in Asia.

He said the launching of Tourism Brand for Pakistan was an important step in achieving the goal. The name "SALAM PAKISTAN" is selected as Tourism Brand for Pakistan.

The objectives of Tourism Brand of Pakistan include building the image and perception of Pakistan as a safe, secure, friendly and hospitable nation, promoting the country as an attractive tourist destination, especially for international tourists, projecting recreational, mountaineering, adventure, cultural, religious, historical, cuisine, geographical and other tourism related aspects of Pakistan and highlighting diversities of the provinces, regions, cities etc., variety of food, accommodation, travel, communication and infrastructure facilities etc.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi welcomes the Iranian Minister for Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, Seyed Ezzatollah Zarghami, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Talents like you make us all proud; COAS tells World Junior Squash Champ

ISLAMABAD (APP): Kashmiris on both sides of the Line of Control and world over will observe Youm-e-Istehsal tomorrow to send a clear message to New Delhi government that Kashmiris outrightly reject actions taken by Modi-led Indian government on August 5, 2019 and illegal occupation of their homeland.

Scores of events including seminars, protest rallies, screening video documentaries, photo exhibitions exposing Indian brutalities on Kashmiri people, have been organized across the country.

Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir on Friday met World Junior Squash Champion Mohammad Hamza Khan here at General Headquarters (GHQ).

According to the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release, the COAS congratulated the young champion for his outstanding achievement that brought honour for the country.

"Talents like you make us all proud and your great achievement also underscores the great potential that this nation has", the COAS remarked.

The COAS also said, "Army will continue to support the young talent in the country and promised to provide him full support in academic pursuit and sports."

The COAS emphasized, "Our youth is the future of this country and with focus, dedication and hard work there is nothing that Pakistan cannot accomplish".

Kashmiris to observe Youm-e-Istehsal today

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China calls for proper, peaceful resolution of Kashmir issue

BEIJING (APP): China on Friday reiterated its clear and consistent position on the Kashmir issue ahead of "Yaum-e-Istehsal-e-Kashmir", and called for proper and peaceful resolution of the longstanding issue under the United Nations (UN) Charter, UN Security Council's resolutions and bilateral agreements.

"China's position on the Kashmir issue is consistent and clear. This issue is a dispute left over from history between India and Pakistan, and should be resolved in accordance with the UN Charter, relevant UN Security Council's resolutions and bilateral agreements in a properly and peaceful manner," a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson said.

CM pays homage to Balochistan police martyrs: Durable peace to be established in country, province, as a result of sacrifices of martyrs, says CM

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Chief Minister, Mir Abdul Qudus Bizenjo has paid homage to the Balochistan police force jawans and officers who embraced martyrdom in the line of duty and for establishment of peace and protection of life and property of the masses.

In a message issued on the eve of police martyrs day here on Friday, the Chief Minister said that the jawans of Balochistan police force didn't hesitate from rendering any kind of sacrifice in the line of duty.

He presented salute to the heirs of police martyrs whose loved ones got the great status of martyrdom while performing their duties in the province.

The Chief Minister also presented salute to the martyrs who rendered sacrifice of lives for establishing peace and protecting life and property of the masses.

Mir Abdul Qudus Bizenjo said that the officers and jawans of Balochistan police are proud face of the province and heroes of the nation.

Police Martyrs Day observed at CPO: Sacrifices of police martyrs not to be wasted, asserts Governor Balochistan

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has stated that the sacrifices of Balochistan police, security forces and general public are the beacon of light for us as the sun of peace was dawn in the province due to their sacred blood. He said that the role played by the Balochistan Police, Pak army, Frontier Corps, Levies and other security forces is commendable. The Governor was addressing the main ceremony held marking the Police Martyrs Day observed at Central Police Office on Friday.

The Deputy Speaker Balochistan Assembly, Sardar Babar Khan Musakhail, Provincial Minister for Home and Tribal Affairs, Mir Ziaullah Langave, former Federal Minister and Senator (Retd) Mrs. Roshan KHurshid Bharucha, other parliamentarians, Additional Chief Secretary Home, Saleh Muhammad Nasar, Inspector General of Prisons, Malik Shuja Kasi, Additional IGP and Commandant Balochistan Constabulary, Chaudhary Salman, Commissioner Quetta, Sohail Rehman Baloch, Additional IGP, Jawad Dogar, and other senior police officers and personnel were present at the occasion.

The Governor maintained that we would not let the great sacrifices of the martyrs be wasted at all. He said that the government is standing by the heirs of martyrs. He stressed that we have to extend wholehearted cooperation to the security institutions for complete elimination of terrorism together as it is included in our national obligation.



Dar announces Rs 2 million compensation for Bajaur Attack Martyrs' families

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Friday announced that the government would pay Rs 2 million as compensation to the families of each martyr from the Bajaur Suicide Attack. During a Senate session, while speaking on a Point of Order, the Minister of Finance and Revenue mentioned that the seriously wounded individuals of the suicide blast would receive Rs 700,000 each, and Rs 500,000 would be given to each wounded victim as compensation.



QUETTA: Senior Member Board of Revenue Balochistan Roshan Ali Sheikh presenting a souvenir to Secretary Information Hamza Shafiqat during inauguration ceremony of Facilitation Center and E-Stamping Project

Shehbaz summons CCI meeting today

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has summoned Council of Common Interests (CCI) meeting today (Saturday).

The meeting will be headed by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif at 12 (noon). Chief ministers of the four provinces and federal ministers will participate in the meeting. A report regarding the new digital census recently conducted in the country will be presented during the meeting. The provinces will present their stance on the digital census.

PM inaugurates Aerospace Science & Technology Park

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Friday inaugurated the National Aerospace Science and Technology Park (NASTP) established with the collaboration among the government, international companies and private sector.

Speaking at the inaugural ceremony, he appreciated the leadership of Pakistan Air Force for initiating the project, which augured well for activities related to the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC).

Chief Executive Officer of NASTP Air Commodore Dr Liaquatullah, in his briefing, told the participants that the PAF had achieved numerous successes in the field of aerospace technology.

He said the institution had established research and development centers for the capacity building of new generation.

"This is a project of national and strategic importance and will provide ecosystems, besides providing multifaceted benefits."

He said the project, which had been completed in record time, would prove to be a milestone for the country's self-reliance in aerospace technology.

He said the Pakistan Air Force was pursuing the vision of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah to achieve self-reliance.

Persons now harping on freedom of expression, did strangulate media while in power: Marriyum

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb stated on Friday that some persons were now delivering speeches on freedom of expression though they themselves had kept the 'media corner' in the Parliament House closed, banned programmes by journalists, and strangulated freedom of media during their four-year stint in power. Talking to the media outside the Parliament House, on a question about the economic crisis, inflation and violation of the IMF agreement, she said the PTI chief just manoeuvred to shift the blame from his economic team and his cabinet for the theft of 190 million pounds.

Castigating the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman, she said the person arrived in courts covering his face with a bucket, box or canister as he could not face the masses and had no answer for theft allegations.

"We suffered censorship for four years but we did not put buckets, boxes or canisters on our faces and faced the odds bravely with our heads high," she added. The minister said the PEMRA (Amendment) Bill 2023 was a serious piece of legislation and on her request, the bill was referred to the Senate's Standing Committee, which should give a constructive opinion about it. The bill had already been passed by the National Assembly.



QUETTA: Provincial Finance Minister Zamrak Khan Achakzai presiding over a meeting regarding University Finance Commission

Road to peace

It is a time of transition in the subcontinent, as general elections will throw up the next dispensation. Only a few days remain for the Pakistani government's tenure to end, with caretakers shortly taking over and paving the way for general elections and a new administration. Meanwhile, India goes to the polls next year.

The changing situation presents an opportunity for new administrations in both states to restart the peace process. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif set the tone for better ties when, speaking at an event in Islamabad on Tuesday, he said that war was no longer an option with our "neighbour", a thinly veiled reference to India.

Mr Sharif added that "abnormalities" cannot be removed in the bilateral relationship unless "serious issues are ... addressed through peaceful and meaningful discussions".

With the curtain falling on the PDM government, the next dispensation, whether it consists of old faces or new, should carry forward these "meaningful discussions", with the hope that it will find a responsive partner in New Delhi.

Bilateral relations have been in deep freeze since India controversially revoked held Kashmir's special constitutional status four years ago. To be fair, attempts have been made by the outgoing administration to mend ties with India. But the response from our eastern neighbour has been the repetition of the 'do more' mantra where militancy is concerned.

This is despite the fact that Indian officials themselves have admitted that cross-border infiltration is down, while the LoC remains largely quiet, especially after the ceasefire was revived in 2021. Therefore, the impression is that the Modi administration is not serious about peace with Pakistan, and wants to burnish its credentials amongst its rabid support base by appearing tough on Islamabad.

But while the Sangh Parivar may dream about 'Akhand Bharat' and re-establishing ancient India's supposed glory through the sword, saner minds across the border have counselled restraint. For example, former Indian army chief retired Gen M.M. Naravane warned against a "two-front war" pitting India against Pakistan and China, while calling for a diplomatic solution to disputes.

The months ahead will show how strong the desire for peace is on both sides. While common friends — the US, European states, the Gulf countries — can help facilitate talks, Pakistan and India will have to do the heavy lifting themselves if they are to achieve a breakthrough.

In Pakistan, the new civilian government, as well as the gentlemen in Rawalpindi, will both need to endorse a fresh peace proposal. Meanwhile in India, whether the BJP returns or the INDIA alliance manages to trounce the Hindu nationalist juggernaut, the new dispensation should respond in earnest to Pakistan's peace overtures. Once the election dust settles in both countries, back-channel talks can get the ball rolling.



By Qamar Bashir

On August 5, 2019, the Indian government repealed Article 370, which prohibited the Indian Parliament from applying certain laws to Jammu and Kashmir without the state's consent, as well as Article 35A, which empowered the Jammu and Kashmir state legislature to define and grant special rights and privileges to "permanent residents" of the state. This illegal, unethical, and unconstitutional decision precipitated a massive political and security crisis in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJ&K), resulting in a five-year-long brutal military siege in which communications were cut off, restrictions on freedom of movement were imposed, and people were denied easy access to food, medicine, and other critical supplies.

The use of extreme tactics such as arbitrary detentions, torture, and extrajudicial killings has degraded Kashmiris' fundamental rights. Businesses have been shut down, schools have been closed, and healthcare facilities have been disrupted. People are unable to communicate with their families and friends, and the occupying forces have recently begun using disturbing and inhuman tactics that have never been used in many other conflict zones, such as refusing to return the bodies of martyred civilians to their families, denying them funerals, and denying their families the ability to fulfill their religious obligations.

The deployment of over one million heavily armed troops over a civilian population of only 12 million which is even far less than the population of Karachi has turned that Indian-occupied Zone of the world having no parallel in the current world history.

Kashmir: A bleeding Paradise

This equates to one soldier for every ten civilian Kashmiris. There is only one comparable case of Palestine, which has been under Israeli blockade since 1967, but it is likewise dwarfed when compared to IIOJ&K. On a combined population of 5 million, Israel has stationed roughly 60,000 troops in the West Bank and 15,000 in the Gaza Strip, resulting in one soldier for every 83 civilians, compared to one soldier for every ten civilians in IIOJ&K. This high level of militarization wreaked havoc on the lives of the people who reside there. The forces are frequently viewed as an occupying force, and their presence has resulted in extensive human rights violations including as arbitrary detentions, torture, and extrajudicial killings, in addition to wreaking havoc on the economy and infrastructure.

According to numerous credible reports, India's draconian illegal rule over a UN-mandated disputed region has killed 96,225 innocent civilian Kashmiris, tortured 7,297 Kashmiris, imprisoned 168,202 civilians without recourse to justice, and destroyed 110,500 homes and businesses. An estimated 100,000 widows confront severe difficulties in providing for themselves and their families. In Indian-controlled Kashmir, an estimated 50,000 half-widows married to men who have disappeared or been arrested and are subjected to sexual violence and harassment. The violence has impacted an estimated 2 million children in Indian-controlled Kashmir. Many of these children have lost one or both of their parents, and they may have also been subjected to violence, displacement, and trauma. 20,000 women had been raped, gang raped, or molested, according to the International People's Tribunal on Kashmir (IPTK).

These casualties greatly outnumber those in Palestine, where as of December 2022, 21,104 Palestinians had been dead, including 12,191 civilians, including 3,125 children. These casualties are also significantly bigger than the casualties of the Afghan war, in which at least 47,368 Afghan civilians, including 16,440 children, were killed as of January 2022, according to the Watson Institute of International and Public Affairs at Brown University.

Many reports and research have documented human rights breaches in IIOJ&K: "Kashmir: A Year of Darkness" (2020) was released by Human Rights Watch. Amnesty International released a report titled "India: Kashmir: Clampdown on Dissent and Media Freedom" in 2021. The International Commission of Jurists produced a study paper titled "Kashmir: The Impact of the Armed Forces (Jammu and Kashmir) Special Powers Act, 1990" (2018), and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights published a report on the human rights situation in Kashmir" (2018). The Asian Centre for Human Rights published "Kashmir: The Human Cost of Conflict" in 2017. These papers and studies detail a wide range of human rights breaches in IIOJ&K, including arbitrary detentions under the Armed Forces (Jammu and Kashmir) Special Powers Act (AFSPA), in which thousands of people have been jailed without charge or trial. There have been numerous reports of torture and ill-treatment by Indian security forces, as well as hundreds of extrajudicial deaths. Indian security forces have used sexual violence against women and girls. The Indian government has restricted freedom of expression in Kashmir, including a prohibition on public gatherings and the use of social media.

The International Crisis Group's (ICG) Conflict Tracker ranks the Kashmir conflict as "High" based on a number of indicators such as the number of people murdered, the number of people displaced, the level of violence, and the level of instability. The Kashmir dispute is ranked 143rd out of 163 countries in the Global Peace Index (GPI), an annual index that analyses the level of peace in countries throughout the world. The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), a research project that collects data on political violence around the world, ranks the Kashmir conflict as High Intensity.

The Indian government has put a number of limitations on freedom of movement in Kashmir, including a curfew and a ban on travel between regions. For reporting on sensitive themes, journalists have been arrested, detained, and harassed. The government has banned the coverage of public gatherings and their reporting on social media. Journalists have been arrested and incarcerated for reporting on sensitive themes under the Armed Forces (Jammu and Kashmir) Special Powers Act (AFSPA). Police and security forces have harassed journalists for reporting on sensitive topics and visiting particular areas of Kashmir or meeting with certain persons. In 2019, the government restricted access to Facebook, Twitter, and other social media platforms. Journalists have found it difficult to report on the situation in Kashmir as a result of these restrictions and have made it difficult for Kashmiris to obtain reliable information about what is going on in their own land.

The rise of violence against the civilian Kashmiri people, particularly after August 5, 2019, has been widely condemned. The US Department of State found the Indian government to have arrested hundreds of Kashmiris without charge or trial, and to have subjected them to torture, including beatings, electric shocks, and sexual assault, in its annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices released on March 8, 2023. According to the report, Indian security forces have killed dozens of Kashmiris without due process, have limited freedom of expression in Kashmir, notably by prohibiting public meetings and restricting the media, and have restricted freedom of movement by imposing curfews and checkpoints. The UN has consistently urged a halt to human rights violations in Kashmir. Michelle Bachelet, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, stated in 2019 that the situation in Kashmir is "deeply concerning" and that there is a "serious risk of further violations." The European Union has also demanded that human rights atrocities in Kashmir be stopped.

The EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs, Josep Borrell, stated in 2020 that the situation in Kashmir was "of great concern" and that the EU was "monitoring the situation closely." The US has also raised alarm about human rights abuses in Kashmir. The US State Department stated in 2021 that it was "deeply concerned" about "ongoing restrictions on freedom of movement, communications, and assembly" in Kashmir. China has also criticised India's violations of human rights in Kashmir. In 2021, the Chinese Foreign Ministry stated that India's "activities in Kashmir are a severe violation of human rights" and that they "endanger regional peace and stability."

Undaunted by international condemnation and rebukes, the BJP government views the Kashmir crisis primarily through a security lens, ignoring the situation's political and humanitarian aspects in order to deploy more troops across the region while wearing the blinkers of its Hindu nationalist ideology.

After nearly five years of siege, it is apparent that the BJP government's iron-fist policy is failing. While New Delhi appears unwilling to stray from its current course, the government would benefit greatly from acknowledging the political roots of the Kashmir crisis and approaching it as a multi-dimensional problem, rather than framing it as a security crisis fueled by Pakistan that must be solved with greater and greater use of force.

All nations committed to peace, particularly the United States and the European Union, have a critical role to play. They should encourage the Indian government to re-engage with Kashmir's political leaders, emphasizing that the government's unrelenting onslaught on Kashmiri civil society is only fueling dissatisfaction and increasing the risk of militancy. They should make it clear that success on distinct matters, such as returning the corpses of deceased

fighters to their families, may boost India's foreign image and soothe public resentment. They should also address the problem of harassment and abuse of journalists and human rights activists in bilateral talks on a regular basis.

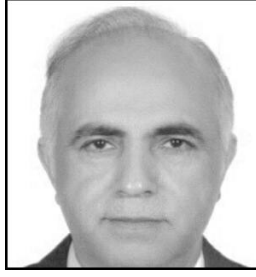
The entire Muslim world should unite and boycott Indian products and services, downgrade their diplomatic ties and put in abeyance all trade and investment agreements until India reverses its illegal action of 5th August, 2019.

India, instead of changing the demographics of the region, should address the issue through a series of public consultations, and to lend credibility to this process, it should roll back its constitutional coup of August 5th and restore articles 35A and 370 to their original positions, repeal all draconian laws specific to Kashmir, stop crackdown on political activity, allow free expression and peaceful dissent, and release Kashmiri politicians.

Then it should into a meaningful dialogue with Pakistan to decide the modus of operandi to hold free fair and transparent plebiscite under the auspices of United Nation to give inalienable right to the Kashmir to decide their fate in accordance and aspiration of Kashmir people. If the Modi's hindutva inspired Kashmir strangulation continues unabated it would only fuel resentment of the IIOJ&K, motivating even more youth to join the militants' ranks.

The only way to find a long-term solution in Kashmir is to implement several UN Security Council (UNSC) resolutions calling for a peaceful end to the conflict and a plebiscite to determine the region's future, or else Kashmiris will have to wait for another Mohammad Bin Qasim to rescue them from Raja Dahar's iron fist. --- *The writer is Former Press Secretary to the President; Former Press Minister to the Embassy of Pakistan to France; Former MD, SRBC*

Mystical doors



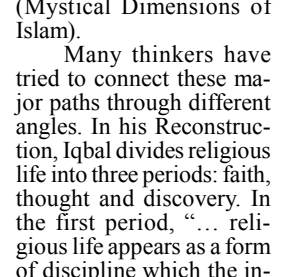
Jan-e-Alam Khaki

People approach religion with multiple perspectives, based on their inclinations, interests, backgrounds, and perspectives. John Renard tells us that there are "Seven doors to Islam". Looking at history, one would be inclined to believe that there may be 70 or even 170 ways Islam could be interpreted. Maulana Rumi stretches it to as many as there are human beings.

In the 'House of Islam', one can categorise three major doors of entry. One is esoteric, which adheres to literal truths, with a strong focus on external performances, and consistency in ritual performances, refusing to admit any inner dimensions or interpretations of faith. The second is the rational door, interpreting Islam through rational processes. It claims that Islam can be better understood through applying a rational approach. Defenders of Reason in Islam demonstrates the perspectives of this approach.

There is the third door, that is often described as mystical, spiritual (ruhani), esoteric (batini), or gnostic (irfani). This approach sees faith as essentially spiritual, and has to be approached as something more esoteric that requires an additional effort beyond the literal. Traditionally, this door has been called the 'path' or 'tariqa'. It leads to unity (wahda), wherein the 'lover' (ashiq) and 'beloved' (ma'shuq) are fused at the stage of 'fana' (annihilation) leading to 'baqa' (affirmation) or 'Fana Fillah Wa Baqa Billah'

Where are we going?



Asim Sajjad Akhtar

Democracy is dead! Long live democracy! In the space of 16 short months, the PDM government has put paid to the notion that the PTI's 'hybrid' regime was the worst thing that could happen to Pakistani politics. With no clarity on when elections may be held, the outgoing coalition comprising our most hallowed 'democrats' has bulldozed a series of bills through parliament to cement the power and plunder of Pakistan's two main arbiters — foreign states/capital and the military establishment.

There are still some who labour under the delusion that all is well because Imran Khan and the former top brass of the military are no longer ruling the roost. Khan is facing disqualification, his party in tatters. The generals who patronised him are gone. But for all that changes, much remains the same.

Take Baloch youth who have been screaming at the top of their lungs about the pillage of Reko Diq, Saindak and Gwadar. About enforced displacement and demographic change. About majoritarian tyranny and democratic change. The passing of a bill to establish the 'Pak-China Gwadar University' in Lahore and the naming of Gwadar airport after Feroz Khan Noon is like rubbing salt in a deep wound. Also in Balochistan, the Hazara community has lost young men to target killers over successive days in Quetta this past week. Is another wave of genocidal violence against Hazaras on the cards? Then there is the

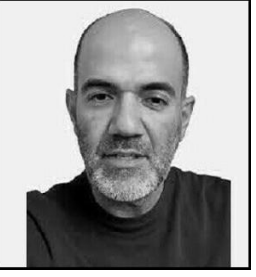
Mystical dimensions of Islam

though not necessarily the same, stages of development. Iqbal pushes spirituality to a deeper level still. He argues that, "as in the words of a Muslim Sufi — 'no [true] understanding of the Holy Book is possible until it is actually revealed to the believer just as it was revealed to the Prophet [PBUH]'. Iqbal explains this further in some of his verses, of which only one is quoted here. "Tere zameer pe jab tak na ho nazool-i-Kitab/ Girah kusha hai na razi na sahib-i-kashshaaf" meaning unless it is revealed to your consciousness as was revealed to the Prophet, no razi, no sahib-i kashshaaf is able to untie the knots (of the secrets), referring to Fakhruddin Razi and Zamakhshari, the writer of Tafsi-r-i Kashshaaf, both renowned commentators of the Quran. To Iqbal, the Quranic revelation is not just a revelation, but an experience.

For Sufis, this is music to their ears, because they also emphasise experience of the heart, not just literal or philosophical debates. It is the inner experience, the irfan, the ma'rif, the ilm-i laduni (Quran, 18:65) that enables one to grasp the true meaning of faith.

Echoing this perspective, in the preface of Light Within me, Allama Mohammad Hussain Tabatabai says: "Gnosis (ma'rif or irfan) is a perfect way of worship, based on love (ishq), not on fear or hope. It is a way of understanding the inner facts of religion instead of being contented with its outward and perceptible form." The author continues to argue that, "Among the followers of all revealed religions, ... there are individuals who follow the path of gnosis." In sum, spirituality is akin to religion, not an add-on. -- Courtesy Dawn

generation of Pakhtun youth



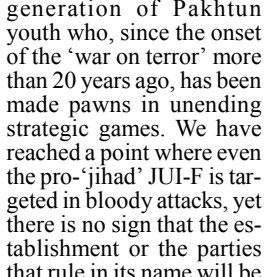
Imran Khan

who, since the onset of the 'war on terror' more than 20 years ago, has been made pawns in unending strategic games. We have reached a point where even the pro-'jihad' JUI-F is targeted in bloody attacks, yet there is no sign that the establishment or the parties that rule in its name will be held to account.

In the ethnic peripheries and metropolitan Pakistan alike, IMF-mandated subsidy cuts — petroleum, electricity, gas and whatever else our rulers can think up to keep donors happy — wreak havoc on working people. Remarkably, many who were celebrating the receipt of \$3 billion from the IMF a few weeks ago are lamenting price hikes now.

Meanwhile, the sale of land, minerals, mountains, coastlines and more to the highest foreign bidders continues with reckless abandon. They tell us that foreign investment is necessary at all costs, whether the sacrificial lamb is Karoonjhar in Sindh or the Hindu Kush/Karakoram in Gilgit-Baltistan. The choreographers talk of 'dust to development' and label anyone who disputes this narrative anti-state.

much to resist the onslaught



Imran Khan

in the ethnic peripheries, within feminist circles, and amongst at least some segments of the working class. So why do all of these efforts not aggregate into a critical mass that can actually present the people of Pakistan with a political alternative? Are we forever doomed to being caught between the dynastic 'old guard' and populists like Imran Khan?

It is true that the establishment — and most of its foreign patrons — are quite ha-ppy for Pakistani politics to continue to be a game of musical chairs between various factions of the bou-geoisie. They divide and rule. Choreo-gr-a-ph and rig the game. Stunt the political imagination.

But this does not completely explain our impasse. To move beyond an establishment-centric politics — motivated by foreign capital, property developers, cartels and patriarchs of all descriptions — requires more than outrage and selective solidarity. All those who want to transcend the status quo must coalesce around a shared political and economic programme. Limiting one's politics only to the members of an insular identity — whether ethnic, gender, religious or other — may be rewarding within the particular social media bubbles that each of us inhabit, but takes us no closer to dismantling the hydra-headed monster that subjugates all. Back in the day, progressives called such a programme socialism. It matters less what we call it and more that we commit to building something together. Ethnic-nationalists, feminists, Marxists, and whoever else who can see through the liberal hobnobbing and hollow sloganeering, ought to be thinking along these lines. Or we can remain stuck in our own echo chambers as fires engulf us all. -- Courtesy Dawn

Naqvi inspects work on Ring Road Southern Loop-3 project

Independent Report
LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi visited the Ring Road Southern Loop 3 project near Multan Road Maraka today to inspect the ongoing work. During his visit, Chief Minister Naqvi provided instructions to the concerned authorities, emphasizing the importance of completing the project promptly.

CM Punjab said that the Ring Road Southern Loop 3 project, which began after a hiatus of 12 years, aims to provide the people with improved transportation facilities. Chief Minister Naqvi expressed confidence that the project would be completed by December 31.

He informed the

media that the Lahore Ring Road Southern Loop 3 project is expected to be finished in just 5 months. Previously, there were court cases surrounding the project, but they have now been resolved, clearing the way for its progress.

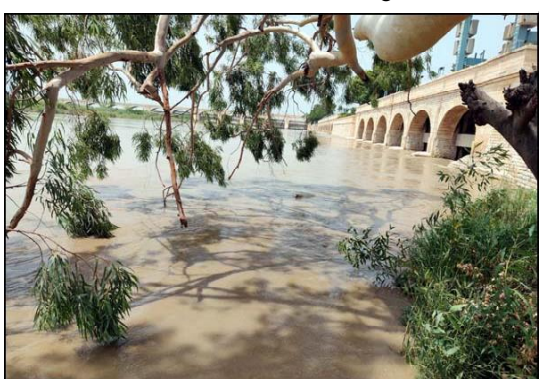
The project's path through Bahria Town received tremendous support from the housing society. Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi assured that all obstacles have been removed, and the entire area for the project is now clear. He emphasized that the project would be executed with the highest quality standards.

The completion of the Ring Road Southern Loop 3 will significantly ease traffic congestion for those

travelling from South Punjab to Lahore, relieving pressure on Thokar and Canal Road. The residents of all Housing Schemes around Multan Road will also benefit from the project.

Addressing concerns about his intentions, Chief Minister Naqvi clarified that he is solely committed to serving the people and not seeking votes. He highlighted the efforts being made by the entire team to provide maximum relief to the public.

In response to inquiries about the Islamia University Bahawalpur incident, Chief Minister Naqvi said that a judicial commission will be formed and the Punjab government will submit a detailed report to the commission.



SUKKUR: Water level increases while high grade flood water reaches at Sukkur Barrage into River Indus due to heavy downpour of monsoon season, in Sukkur.

12 dead, 1,263 injured in Punjab road accidents

LAHORE (APP): At least 12 people were killed and 1,263 others injured in 1,161 road traffic crashes in Punjab during the last 24 hours.

As many as 639 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 624 with minor injuries were treated at the incident site by rescue medical teams.

The analysis showed that 649 drivers, 34 underage drivers, 147 pedestrians, and 479 passengers were among the victims of road traffic crashes. The statistics show that 256 accidents were reported in Lahore, which affected 289 persons, placing the provincial capital at top of the list, followed by 81 in Faisalabad with 78 victims and at third Multan with 76 accidents and 81 victims.

National Police Martyrs' Day observed in provincial metropolis

LAHORE (APP): National Police Martyrs' Day was observed in provincial metropolis on Friday to pay tribute to great martyrs, brave fighters of the nation while expressing solidarity with their families. "In night, we sleep good due to the vigilant police, who at the time of need, had combated and defeated the cowardly

terrorists and robbers including the scourge of terrorism in a befitting manner," Muhammad Rauf, a retired elderly police officer told APP.

"Our brave police have a wide range of experience to deal with any aggression or the menace of terrorism and the entire world could learn from Pakistan.



LAHORE: Inspector General Police Punjab Dr Usman Anwar presenting gifts to the orphans of the Martyrs Police Soldiers during ceremony at Al-Hamara Hall in Provincial Capital.

Federal Ombudsman stresses need for speedy implementation of decisions

PESHAWAR (APP): Federal Ombudsman, Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi here Friday said that swift resolution of people's complaints was the topmost priority of his department and asked employees of all the federal government organizations to double their efforts for speedy resolution of masses complaints and implementation of the decisions made by his office.

Chairing a high-level meeting here at Federal

Ombudsman Office Peshawar, Ejaz Qureshi said that access of people to the Federal Ombudsman office has been made easy and comfortable and complaints could be registered through a simple application or submitted online.

He said it has been mandatory that all complaints were disposed of in 60 days. Urging the Govt departments to swiftly implement the decisions of the Federal Ombudsman Office's decisions at people's doorsteps.

Ahmad Qureshi said that advisers and consultants were hired on merit while facilitation centres were established for the assistance of the complainants.

He said that 18 offices of his organization were working in all provinces of the country including in Peshawar, Abbottabad, Swat and DI Khan for speedy disposal of cases and implementation of the Federal Ombudsman Office's decisions at people's doorsteps.

Indian persecution can't stifle voice of Kashmiris: Baligh

LAHORE (APP): Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman has said that state persecution by the Indian rulers can not stifle voice for freedom of the Kashmiri people. In a message on the occasion of Kashmir Exploitation Day here on Friday, he said August 5, 2019 is the darkest day in the history of Kashmir when India abolished special status of Kashmir by usurping human rights through illegal action.

"Persecution and violation of rights of Kashmiris in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK) is condemnable," he said, adding that India could not suppress the spirit of freedom of Kashmiris despite so much persecution.

He said Kashmiri people are constantly making sacrifices for the legitimate right of self-determination and India is continuously violating human rights in illegally Occupied Kashmir, adding that United Nations (UN) and international community should take cognizance of human rights violation in IOJK. He said Kashmiris should be given their right of self-determination according to the UN resolutions and international community should take notice of the inhumane atrocities on the oppressed Kashmiris. Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman emphasized that peaceful resolution of the Kashmir issue in the light of UN resolutions is very important for durable peace in the region.



PESHAWAR: Deputy Commissioner of Peshawar, Shah Fahad administrating polio-vaccine drops to a child during inauguration ceremony of anti-polio immunization campaign, in Peshawar.

Internship programme concludes at ICCBS-UoK

KARACHI (APP): The 16th Summer Internship Programme-2023, the country's largest internship programme has successfully completed at the International Center for Chemical and Biological Sciences (ICCBS), University of Karachi (UoK) on Friday.

This year, the internship program provided 180 students, belonging to various academic and research institutions of all four provinces, quality training in various fields of Biological and Chemical Sciences, Plant Biotechnology, Engi-

neering, Information Technology, Food Sciences, Library Sciences, ISO and Marketing, Diagnostic Labs, IAC, CBSCR, etc.

Addressing the certificate distribution ceremony of the summer internship program 2023, held at the Golden Jubilee Hall of the ICCBS, Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary, Director of the International Center for Chemical and Biological Sciences, and Coordinator General COMSTECH, highlighted the significance of scientific research in today's fast-paced and competitive world, and

how it is important for a developing country like ours.

He said, "The prime objective of this internship is to motivate students towards scientific research that attempts to explore and understand the working of the physical world."

He said that internships provide students with hands-on experience, enabling them to enter the real-work scenario with practical skills. ICCBS has contributed to the global human resource development in the frontier fields of sciences, he said, adding

that the 16th summer internship program, organized by ICCBS, University of Karachi, was a great opportunity for talented students who sought to get exposure to working in the world-class research and academic institution.

He underlined the importance of kindness for students, and said, "Benevolence improves people's way of living and it brings people and society together and decreases hatred, negativity, and jealousy in the society."

Prof. Choudhary congratulated Prof. Dr. Asmat

Salim and her team for the successful completion of the 16th summer internship program.

Prof. Dr. Asmat Salim, a senior scientist at Dr. Panjwani Center for Molecular Medicine and Drug Research (PCMD) and the organizer of the internship program, said this internship program was initiated in the year 2008, and since then we have organized it regularly every year. This year, around 2000 students, who are in their final year of graduation from institutions all over the country, applied for the training program.

International News

Russia says thwarted Ukraine attacks on Black Sea naval base, Crimea

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: Russia said on Friday it had thwarted Ukrainian sea and air drone attacks on a naval base in the Black Sea and the Crimean peninsula.

The number of attacks in the sea has increased from both sides since Moscow exited a deal last month that had allowed Ukrainian grain exports via the shipping hub during the conflict between the two countries.

"Tonight, the Armed Forces of Ukraine, with the use of two unmanned sea boats, attempted an attack on the Novorossiysk naval base of the Russian Armed Forces," the defence ministry said on Telegram.

Russian ships destroyed the naval drones, it said. It was the first such attack targeting the port city.

The Black Sea port of Novorossiysk hosts the terminus of a pipeline that carries most Kazakh oil exports through Russia.

The fuel artery's operator Caspian Pipeline Consortium said it was continuing to ship oil to moored tankers at the terminal, Russian state media reported on Friday. But "a temporary ban has been established on the movement of ships in the port", said the company, as quoted by Interfax news agency. Russia's Black Sea Fleet has been

targeted since the beginning of Moscow's military campaign in Ukraine more than a year ago, but attacks have increased in recent weeks. On Tuesday, Russia's defence ministry said it foiled a Ukrainian drone attack targeting patrol boats in the Black Sea. Three drones were trained on ships navigating in waters 340 kilometres southwest of Sevastopol, the base of Russia's Black Sea fleet in Crimea. A similar attack was repelled a week earlier. The ministry also said on Friday it had downed 13 drones over the Crimean peninsula. There were no casualties or damage in either attack, the ministry said.



U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken stands at a podium as he holds a press conference, during a meeting of the United Nations Security Council where he presides as president.

US to keep Russia's food exports flowing if grain deal revived, Blinken says

Monitoring Desk
UNITED NATIONS: The United States would continue to do "whatever is necessary" to ensure Russia can freely export food if there was a revival of a deal allowing the safe Black Sea export of Ukrainian grain, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Thursday.

Russia last month quit the July 2022 deal brokered by the United Nations and Turkey aimed at easing a global food crisis after Russia's invasion of Ukraine five months earlier.

Ukraine and Russia are both leading grain exporters.

"In the event of return to the agreement, of course, we'll continue to do whatever is necessary to make sure that everyone can export their food and food products freely and safely to include Russia," Blinken told reporters at the United Nations.

"We want to see that food on world markets. We want everyone to benefit from the lower prices," he said after chairing a U.N. Security Council meeting on food insecurity caused by conflict. Many countries at

the gathering expressed disappointment that Russia had quit the deal and urged them to reconsider. To convince Russia to agree to the Black Sea deal, another pact was also struck in July 2022 under which U.N. officials agreed to help Russia get its food and fertilizer exports to foreign markets.

While Russian exports of food and fertilizer are not subject to Western sanctions imposed after Russia's February 2022 invasion of Ukraine, Moscow has said restrictions on payments.

US Congress urged to recognise Islam as great religion

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: Congress has taken a significant step towards recognising Islam as a major religion, emphasising its role in promoting peace and harmony.

The resolution — introduced by Representative Al Green of Texas and backed by Representatives Ilhan Omar, Rashida Tlaib, and Andre Carson — comes at a time of renewed effort to brand Islam as a radical faith and would discourage anti-Islamic deeds like the desecration of Holy

Quran. Mr. Green, a Texas Democrat, is also a member of the Congressional Pakistan Caucus. He opposed President Trump's order to ban immigration from Muslim countries and a 2015 move to brand Islam as a radical faith.

The House received the resolution, which aims to foster better understanding and respect for the Islamic faith within American society, on July 28 and referred it to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs.



Students stage a walk out from Hillsborough High School to protest after Florida education officials voted to ban classroom instruction on gender identity and sexual orientation in all public school grades, expanding on a law signed by Republican Governor Ron DeSantis that barred such lessons for younger students and was derided by critics as the "Don't Say Gay" bill in Tampa, Florida, U.S.

India's top court suspends Rahul Gandhi's defamation conviction

Monitoring Desk
NEW DELHI: India's top court on Friday suspended the defamation conviction of Rahul Gandhi, a decision that could pave the way for the senior opposition politician to return to parliament after his disqualification. Gandhi, 53, was sentenced to two years' imprisonment in March in a case that critics have said showed threats to the rule

of law in the world's largest democracy.

He was turfed out of the legislature as a result but has stayed out of jail while appealing the case up to the supreme court in New Delhi. A justice there said that the initial trial judge had failed to justify imposing the maximum sentence on Gandhi for his comments, made during a campaign rally four years ago.

52 hurt in clashes at Stockholm festival

Monitoring Desk
STOCKHOLM: More than 50 people were injured and dozens detained in Stockholm on Thursday as clashes broke out at an Eritrean pro-government festival, police and health officials said, with anti-government protesters trashing property at the site. "Another public gathering took place close to the festival site, during which a violent riot broke out," police said, adding in a statement they had detained "around a hundred people".



Rescue workers sift through wreckage at the accident site of a three-train collision near Balasore, about 200 km (125 miles) from the state capital Bhubaneswar.

Saudi Arabia, Kuwait reject Iran's claims to gas field

Monitoring Desk
RIYADH: Saudi Arabia and Kuwait said on Thursday they had sole ownership of a disputed gas field also claimed by Iran, in an escalating feud after Tehran threatened to pursue exploration.

The offshore field — known as Arash in Iran and Dorra in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia — has long been focal point of contention between the three countries.

The Kuwaiti and Saudi authorities said in a joint statement published

on Thursday that "we alone have full sovereign rights to exploit the wealth in that area".

The two Gulf states renewed "their previous and repeated calls to the Islamic Republic of Iran to negotiate" the demarcation of their maritime borders to settle the issue, according to the statement carried by the Saudi Press Agency.

Iran and Kuwait have held unsuccessful talks for many years over their disputed maritime border area, which is rich in natural gas.

Former Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny sentenced to 19 years in prison

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: A Russian court Friday sentenced former opposition leader Alexei Navalny to 19 years in prison after he was found guilty on a series of new charges including extremism, according to his spokesperson. In his court case, Navalny stood before the judge, grinning and interacting with another prisoner. Navalny is already serving jail time on embezzlement charges which are regarded as politically motivated according to his friends.

Global food prices rise after Russia ends grain deal and India restricts rice exports

Monitoring Desk
LONDON: Global prices for food commodities like rice and vegetable oil have risen for the first time in months after Russia pulled out of a wartime agreement allowing Ukraine to ship grain to the world, and India restricted some of its rice exports, the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization said Friday.

The FAO Food Price Index, which tracks monthly changes in the international prices of commonly traded food commodities, increased 1.3% in July over June, driven by

higher costs for rice and vegetable oil. It was the first uptick since April, when higher sugar prices bumped up the index slightly for the first time in a year.

Commodity prices have been falling since hitting record highs last year in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Disrupted supplies from the two countries exacerbated a global food crisis because they're leading suppliers of wheat, barley, sunflower oil and other affordable food products, especially to nations in parts of Africa.

Ahsan launches Rs 25b fund to address out-of-school children issue

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Friday formally inaugurated the Rs25 billion "Performance-based Challenge Fund" for out-of-school children, and to promote early childhood education across the country.

The launching ceremony, held here in collaboration with the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, was attended among others by dignitaries, officials and education experts.

Addressing the ceremony, the minister highlighted the critical importance of ensuring stability and continuity of policies in the country's development agenda.

He emphasized the need to differentiate between political changes and the national agenda, urging all stakeholders to work together for the betterment of the nation.

He said the country needed a charter of economy to ensure consistency and continuity in policies. "Stability and continuity are prerequisites for development, and without them, progress remains elusive. India, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Korea, China, and Turkey, among others, have achieved remarkable success due to their sustained policies over the years. We must follow suit and provide a consistent direction for our country's growth."

Ahsan Iqbal stressed the importance of knowledge exchange and innovation for Pakistan's progress in the modern world.

He highlighted the significance of early childhood education and its role in fostering creative thinking, critical analysis, and collaborative skills in the young minds of the nation.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal launches Rs. 25 Billion Performance-based Challenge Fund for Out-of-School Children and Early Childhood Education.

CM pleads international community to take prompt notice of cruelty of Indian state institutions in IIOJK

5th August blackest day of Indian history; exposed undemocratic face of India, says Governor

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Abdul Qudus Bizenjo has pleaded the world community to take immediate notice of the cruelty as well as the illegal and unilateral actions unleashed by Indian state institutions and occupation forces four years ago on August 5, 2019 in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

additional troops and imposing unprecedented media restrictions, since 5 August 2019, the Indian occupation forces have turned IIOJK into the largest prison on the planet. The human rights situation in IIOJK has seriously deteriorated over the last four years. The Kashmiri people remain under military siege, their senior leadership remains incarcerated and their youth continue to be prime targets of Indian occupation forces' indiscriminate extra-judicial killings through staged 'cordon-and-search' operations. In fact, the Kashmiris continue to be deprived of their fundamental rights and freedoms.

maintained that millions of innocent Kashmiris have been martyred and now the extremist Hindus are being settled by snatching the land of Kashmiris and annulling the special status of Kashmir, he maintained.

He also said that with this an attempt is being made to convert the majority of Muslims into minority and the life of Kashmiris are being made miserable.

It is deplorable that in IIOJK, India continues to flagrantly violate the universal ideals of human dignity, fairness and justice with complete impunity. The just struggle of the people of IIOJK to realize their right of self-determination, guaranteed under several resolutions of the UN Security

Council, is being suppressed through brutal use of force by the Indian occupation forces.

He urged the international community to give right of plebiscite to the Kashmiris as per the resolutions of United Nations. He said that the people of Balochistan fully support the right of self-determination, and would continue to raise their voice against the Indian atrocities at every forum.

Meanwhile the Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Kakar has stated that the day of 5th August is the blackest day of Indian history when it (India) had exposed its undemocratic face by annulling its constitution's Article 370 and 35-A on the same date in 2019.



KARACHI: Karachi Mayor Barrister Murtaza Wahab, along with Iranian Foreign Minister Dr. Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, unveils a plaque designating the Old Clifton Road as "Shahra-e-Imam Khumani".

Minister Home pays homage to police martyrs

Over 1,000 brave officers, jawans of police embraced martyrdom in line of duty, maintains Langove

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Provincial Minister for Home and Tribal Affairs, Mir Ziaullah Langove has paid homage to the martyrs of Balochistan police force saying that over 1,000 officers and jawans of the police embraced martyrdom in line of duty.

In an official statement issued here on Friday marking the Police Martyrs Day observed in the province, the Minister Home presented salute to the parents of martyrs whose sons sacrificed their lives for the cause of

country in Balochistan.

He also presented salutes to the families and children of the martyrs who got the great status of martyrdom while performing their professional duties. He said that this day is the day to make pledge for the cause of protection of the homeland and protection of life and property of the general public.

He said that he has always strived for the best welfare of the families of martyrs in Balochistan. He said that the living nations don't forget their heroes.



ISLAMABAD: Incumbent Advisor to Prime Minister on Kashmir Affairs, Qamar Zaman Kaira addresses press conference.

AJK President urges UN to take notice of violation of resolutions

MIRPUR (AJK) (APP): Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) President Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry on Friday urges United Nation (UN) to take notice of brazen violation of UN resolution in Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) by Indian government.

While president terming August 5 as the darkest day in the history of Kashmir, has said that it was on this day when India, in brazen violation of the UN resolutions, stripped occupied Jammu Kashmir of its special status by revoking Article 370 and 35A.

Talking to media in the State metropolis, the President, while referring to the dangerous dimensions of the move, said that after the abrogation, India on the one hand intensified its brutal

repression in Kashmir while, on the other hand, launched a massive multi-front, legal, political and cultural offensive against Kashmir's to change the region's demographics and erase the Kashmir's social, political and cultural identity.

Barrister Chaudhry said that despite using all these tactics, India has miserably failed to break the Kashmir's political resolve and their unwavering commitment to the noble cause of freedom from India's illegal and forcible occupation.

He said that Kashmir's settled on both sides of the Loc and the rest of the world would observe August 5 as Yom-e-Estehsal to convey their message to the world that they don't accept India's control over the territory.



QUETTA: Workers of Pakistan Muslim League (N) holds protest rally against India, in Provincial Capital.

Senate chairman refers PEMRA Bill to standing committee for fine tuning

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senate Chairman Muhammad Sadiq Sanjani on Friday referred the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2023, to the Standing Committee on Information and Standing Committee for further refinement and improvement in response to the concerns raised by the senators.

The amended PEMRA bill, drafted after in-depth debate and consultations with all the stakeholders and presented by Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb, has already been passed by the National Assembly.

Under the bill, the powers of the PEMRA chairman have been given to the Council of Complaints.

Senator Tahir Bizinjo suggested that the bill should be sent to the standing committee to address the concerns of media persons.

VP CNNC calls on Finance Minister

ISLAMABAD (Online): Cao Shudong, Vice President, China National Nuclear Corporation (CNNC) called on Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, at Finance Division, today.

SAPM on Finance Mr. Tariq Bajwa, PAEC team, CNNC team and senior officials from Finance Division attended the meeting.

The meeting discussed China-Pakistan Cooperation in the field of nuclear energy projects including and construction of Chasma Nuclear Power Plant (C-5) of 1200 MW capacity in Mianwali district with Chinese credit.

The Finance Minister appreciated the Chinese leadership for extending support to Pakistan.

Facilitation center inaugurated at Quetta: E-stamping project launched under Board of Revenue

Independent Report
QUETTA: The E-stamping project has been launched under the Board of Revenue Balochistan here on Friday.

In this regard, an agreement was signed between the Government of Balochistan and the Bank of Punjab about digitalisation of E-stamping system.

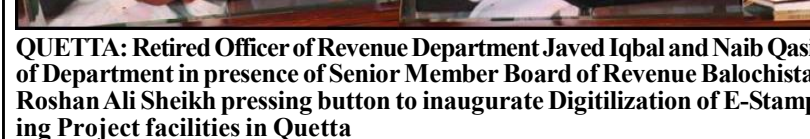
With this the facilitation center has also been inaugurated.

The senior Member Board of Revenue Roshan Ali Sheikh and Group chief of the Bank, corporate and investment, Fareed Ahmed Khan signed the agreement.

On the occasion, senior MBR Roshan Ali Sheikh and Group Chief Business Solution Officer,

PTCL and Uphone, Zarrar Hashim Khan also signed another agreement.

The signing ceremony was also attended by the Secretary Excise and Taxation, Zafar Ali Bokhari, Secretary Information, Hamza Shafiqat, Vice Chancellor BUTEMS, Professor Dr. Khalid Hafiz also attended the ceremony.



QUETTA: Retired Officer of Revenue Department Javed Iqbal and Naib Qasid of Department in presence of Senior Member Board of Revenue Balochistan Roshan Ali Sheikh pressing button to inaugurate Digitization of E-Stamping Project facilities in Quetta

Streamlining visa issuances: Hina enhances efficiency, accountability for Afghan nationals' applications

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Hina Rabbani Khar on Friday shed light on the intricacies surrounding visa issuances for Afghan nationals in the Senate. Recognizing the complexity of the matter during the question hour, she emphasized that national foreign missions receive a staggering number of routine visa applications, making the process multifaceted.

In her statement, Hina outlined the commitment of the national diplomatic mission to extend leniency in granting visas on grounds of health or humanitarian reasons. However, she underscored that this benevolent intention sometimes led to misuse by Afghan nationals, causing challenges within the system.

An important revelation was made by

Hina as she highlighted the comprehensive overhaul of the visa issuance process. Presently, the authority to grant visas, especially in cases requiring relaxation, rested solely with the head of the mission, she said adding that this shift in power had been enacted in the last two months, with the delegation of such authority withdrawn from other embassy staff.

Modernizing the approach to visa facilitation, Hina detailed the introduction of an online visa application system. Additionally, specific staff members had been entrusted with the responsibility of evaluating all necessary formalities before granting visas, she added. Addressing concerns raised by senators, the minister of state for foreign affairs responded to questions regarding a specific incident.

SC issues detailed decision on holding poll on May 14 in Punjab

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) has issued detailed decision on holding election on May 14 in Punjab.

This has been said in the order that Election Commission (EC) could not discharge its obligations in this regard.

Justice Munib Akhtar wrote decision.

In the written decision it has been said court's short order remains there. The important job of EC is to hold elections.

It was further said in the order now this matter has become in-fructuous. The petitions from speakers are disposed of after care taker set up in Punjab and KP.

A 3-member bench of SC presided over by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial had heard the case pertaining to elections in Punjab and KP.

EC adjourns hearing of PTI intra party poll case till 8 Aug

ISLAMABAD (Online): Election Commission (EC) has adjourned till August hearing of PTI intra party election case till August 08.

During the hearing of case contradiction between the stance of PTI chairman and counsel for PTI was observed. PTI intra party election case came up for hearing before a 5-member commission presided over by the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Sultan Raja Friday.

India cannot suppress legitimate struggle of Kashmiris: Kaira

ISLAMABAD (APP): Advisor to the Prime Minister on Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Qamar Zaman Kaira Friday said India cannot suppress the legitimate struggle of the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

Addressing a press conference, he said Pakistan will not allow India to succeed in its nefarious designs to turn the Muslim majority into the minority in the IIOJK. Rahmani said according to the United Nations Charter, Kashmir has a separate identity and India's claims on Kashmir were false.

Flanked by Kashmiri leaders, he said Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari presented the Kashmir case in a befitting manner at all international forums even during his visit to India.

The Advisor to Prime Minister said the Kashmir dispute was not an issue

between Hindus and Muslims, rather it was a just freedom cause of the people residing over there.

Kaira regretted that India is giving the impression that Kashmir is an issue between Hindus and Muslims through propaganda.

He said that in that regard, the resolution will be presented in the National Assembly session on Monday.

"We are proud of our friendship with China", he said, adding that China has also expressed concerns over the Indian move of August 5.

Farooq Rahmani, leader Kashmir Council said that the Modi government was currently in trouble and feared that it may take steps beyond August 5 for winning the elections.

Rahmani said according to the United Nations Charter, Kashmir has a separate identity and India's claims on Kashmir were false.



RAWALPINDI: Pir Syed Riaz Hussain Shah receiving Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif upon his arrival at Idara Talemat-e-Islamia.

Shazia Marri says BISP committed to fulfill BB's vision of empowering underprivileged sections

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety and Chairperson of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Shazia Marri Friday said that extending a helping hand to labour and underprivileged sections of society had always been a dream close to Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto's heart.

She was speaking at a special ceremony organized by the All Pakistan BISP Employees Coordination Committee.

The event, held at the Benazir Income Support Programme headquarters, was a heartwarming gesture to acknowledge and thank the dedicated efforts of the BISP chairperson to address the long-standing issues of BISP within the organization.

During her address as the chief guest, Shazia Marri spoke passionately about the programme's commitment to fulfilling the vision of the late Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto of

empowering the weakest segments.

Commending the employees of BISP for their remarkable service, the minister acknowledged their steadfast dedication over the course of 15 years, even in the absence of basic benefits.

She emphasized that the employees, through their relentless efforts, have been instrumental in catering to the needs of 9 million families across the nation.

Expressing her concern over the neglect of the just demands of BISP employees, Shazia Marri noted that their hard work often went unnoticed.

She asserted that the programme has not only provided financial assistance but has also played a pivotal role in women's empowerment, leading to a transformation in the social fabric of society.

She informed the audience that Contingent Employees have been regularized along with Time Scale Promotions of grade 1 and 2 employees.

Panezai elected President, Mehwish SVP of PTI Women Wing Balochistan

Independent Report
QUETTA: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf has elected Kulsom Kakar Panezai the Provincial President of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Balochistan Women/Women Wing, Mehwish Janjua as Provincial Senior Vice President, Niazmin Durrani as Provincial Vice President and Farzana Khilji as Provincial General on Friday in Quetta. According to PTI media wing, the services rendered by these senior leaders for the vision of Imran Khan and for the party manifesto despite the most difficult conditions, lack of resources, and tribal traditions are proud and admirable. The party statement detailed that considering their ideology, political struggle, they have been appointed to



important positions.

It is hoped that as provincial president, provincial senior vice president and provincial general secretary, they will use their skills, political, academic experience and leadership abilities to play an exemplary role for the development and functioning of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Balochistan, especially the women of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf. Under their guidance ideological workers will emerge.



QUETTA: People are offering Fateha for the departed soul of Nawabzada Mir Haroon Raisani during condolence meeting with Nawab Aslam Raisani and Nawabzada Haji Lashkari Raisani.