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Will not allow army to take any unconstitutional steps: CJP Bandial

Says those who abide by Constitution will be successful; Armed forces should be "praised" for not opening fire on civilians on May 9; Hearing adjourned indefinitely

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Adjourning the hearing of a set of petitions challenging military trials in military courts indefinitely on Thursday, CJP Umar Ata Bandial remarked that the Supreme Court will not allow the Pakistan Army from carrying out any unconstitutional act.

"Those who build their case on the Constitution of Pakistan and law will be successful," said CJP Bandial.

The six-member bench led by CJP Bandial and comprising Justice Munib Akhtar, Justice Sayeed Mazahar Ali Akbar Naqvi, Justice Ayesha A Malik and Justice Yahya Afridi adjourned the hearing for an indefinite period.

During the hearing, the

CJP observed that the incidents of May 9 were of a serious nature. He said it pained him to hear remarks about the Pakistan Army being equipped to open fire on protesters on May 9. The CJP added that the army is meant to serve the country. The Pakistan Army did the correct thing by not resorting to shooting citizens on May 9, he said.

Earlier, Attorney General of Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Awan assured the court that the 102 civilian suspects currently under military custody will be fairly treated during ongoing trials.

AGP Awan claimed that his assurance is coming from the military's top leadership. Concessions are

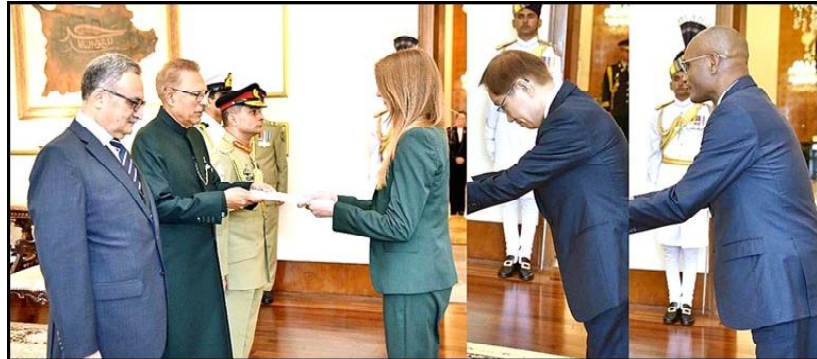
being made for May 9 suspects on the court's insistence, said the AGP.

At one point the AGP also reminded the court that the military is armed.

"No efforts are being made to overturn the Constitution of Pakistan... What happened on May 9 is before everyone," said AGP Awan. "Remember one thing - they are the armed forces. If they are attacked, they have weapons to defend themselves."

The AGP further said that the army is equipped to fire bullets. "It is not possible that if they are attacked, they first approach an SHO to lodge a formal complaint."

"They [the military] Continued on page 2



ISLAMABAD: The United Kingdom's High Commissioner-designate to Pakistan Ms Jane Marriot, the Ambassador-designate of the Republic of Korea Mr. Park Ki Jun, and the high Commissioner-designate of Malawi Mr Younos Abdul Karim, presenting their diplomatic credentials to President Dr. Arif Alvi at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

President for enhancing ties with UK, South Korea, Malawi

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday said that Pakistan wanted to enhance its relations with the United Kingdom (UK), the Republic of Korea, and Malawi in the fields of trade, economy, and culture.

The president made these remarks while talking to the High Commissioner-designates of the United Kingdom and Malawi, and the Ambassador-designate of the Republic of Korea to Pakistan.

The envoys presented their diplomatic credentials to the president and separately called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Talking to Jane Marriot, the UK's High Commissioner to Pakistan, the president said that Pakistan attached utmost signifi-

cance to its longstanding ties with the UK, which were grounded in historic connections and enduring people-to-people linkages.

He remarked that both countries needed to further expand and promote economic and trade relations for the mutual benefit of the two sides.

He also lauded the contributions of the Pakistani diaspora in the UK towards its socio-economic development.

President Alvi underscored the need for strengthening cultural ties and people-to-people contacts.

He highlighted that both governments were committed to establishing and maintaining a more robust and long-term relationship.

He also urged that the world needed to prevent and discourage the incidents of the Islamophobia in the world.

Speaking to Park Ki Jun, the ambassador of the Republic of Korea, the president said that Pakistan highly valued its multidimensional relationship with Korea, encompassing political, economic, scientific, cultural, and people-to-people linkages.

He mentioned that Pakistan and Korea had tremendous potential to increase bilateral trade to further strengthen economic relations.

He said that Pakistan was open for business and investment, and would welcome Korean investment in all sectors of its economy.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Ms. Marriyum Aurangzeb and Her Excellency Pang Chunxue, the Charge d'affaires of the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan cutting ribbon to inaugurate Chinese News Service at APP Headquarters.

Nawabzada Haroon Raisani laid to rest in Kanak and so Brahmdagh Lehri in Quetta

Independent Report
QUETTA: The nephew of Chief of Sarawan and former Chief Minister Balochistan, Nawab Aslam Raisani, Nawabzada Haroon Raisani was laid to rest in the ancestral graveyard of Kanak, Mastung on Thursday morning.

A large number of people belonging to different walks of life including the political and tribal elders attended the funeral prayer and burial of Nawabzada Haroon Raisani. Also among those participated in the funeral and burial of Nawabzada Haroon Raisani, son of Nawabzada Asadullah

Raisani were his uncle, Nawabzada Lashkari Raisani and other relatives, well wishers and friends.

The Director General Balochistan Food Authority, Muhammad Naeem Bazai was also among those attended the funeral and burial.

Meanwhile, Mir Brahmdagh Lehri was also laid to rest in the local graveyard of Killi Ghousabad, in Quetta the same noon. Earlier, his funeral prayer was offered at the Jamia e Islamia Maftahul Uloom. A large number of people from different shades of life participated in the funeral prayer and burial.

16 killed in rain-related incidents in Balochistan

QUETTA (APP): The death toll from the monsoon rains and floods during last one month in different parts of Balochistan has risen to 16 people and around 1330 houses have been swept away.

As per Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), death toll from recent monsoon rains and floods in different parts of Balochistan has risen to 16, including 8 men, 2 women and 6 children, while 24 persons have been injured.



Foreign Minister of Iran, Mr. Hossein Amir Abdollahian, calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad.

We all have to take ahead this country: PM

Country's interests sole purpose of meetings held with army chiefs throughout political career; People taunt me, calling me the establishment's man, but this doesn't bother me; Global action a must to save faultless countries like Pak from climate disaster

ISLAMABAD (Online): Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif has said we have to take ahead this country.

"We have to take forward this country. If we decide with consensus that we have to take ahead this country then we can make progress with consultation, national unity and national consensus. PM said this while addressing a ceremony following inauguration of Bhara Kahu Bypass

here Thursday. "I am taunted that I am man of establishment. Such things don't make any difference to my health. The objective was only this that government and establishment should together take ahead country, he added.

He went on to say "I, you and Marriyum Aurangzeb cannot understand the circumstances of these millions of poor people. Only those people can understand it who are

facing this situation. Chief of Army Staff Gen Asim Munir has a very vital role in completion of this project, he added. Had he not given full attention and not persuaded and supported it this project would not have been completed. I am thankful to him. He has shown great commitment.

This project was and is Nawaz Sharif vision, he said adding Nawaz Sharif Continued on page 2

Chief Minister Bizenjo approves allocation of budget for bar bodies of Balochistan

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Abdul Qudus Bizenjo has approved allocation of the budget for the bar bodies of the province.

This was announced in an official hand out issued here on Thursday.

The approval was made under the Section 57 of the Legal Practitioner Bar Council Act 1973.

As per the hand out, the budget has been allocated for the Balochistan bar bodies on permanent basis in the financial year 2023-24.

The Chief Minister gave approval to the budget on the summary sent by the Law and Parliamentary Affairs department.

With approval of the summary, the Balochistan High Court Bar Association (BHCBA) would get Rs. 5 million while the Loralai, Sibi, Khuzdar and Turbat High Court Associations would get Rs. 2 million each.

Similarly, all the district bar councils would be released Rs. 1 million each, the official hand out mentioned.



QUETTA: Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar in a group photo with under trainee officers of the 37th Mid-career Management Course (MCMC) at the National Institute of Management (NIM) Quetta

Governor Balochistan emphasizes:

Civil officers ought to take special steps for ending safarish culture, nepotism and ensuring merit

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has stated that the civil officers play key role in establishing good governance, formation of corruption-free society and utilization of development budget for the public welfare. Therefore, it is responsibility of the civil officers to take special steps for ending safarish culture and nepotism and ensuring implementation of the merit.

This and similar views were expressed by the Governor while addressing the closing ceremony of trainee officers of the 37th Mid-

career Management Course (MCMC) at the National Institute of Management (NIM) Quetta on Thursday.

Also present on the occasion was the Director General of NIM, Muhammad Aslam Ghani. Addressing the participants of MCMC, the Governor said that the civil officers are posted on the important portfolios, and they have the capability to transform the society.

He exhorted the civil officers to use their pen, knowledge and authority for the well being of masses. He said that they

can please Allah by doing welfare work.

He also urged them to pay wholehearted attention on performing their responsibilities and public service as per the law and constitution.

He also said that we have expectations with the officers coming from other provinces that they would play their role in removing the hardships of people of Balochistan while serving in their respective departments.

Earlier, the NIM Director General also addressed the officers while Khalid Mehmood Lashari presented welcome address.

Pakistan, Iran chalk out five-year trade plan; target \$5 b trade volume

PM reaffirms commitment to strengthen Pak-Iran relations

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Iran on Thursday set a target of \$5 billion for bilateral trade as the two countries chalked out a five-year trade cooperation plan to enhance cooperation.

Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, addressing a joint press stakeout with his Iranian counterpart Hossein Amir Abdollahian, said the five-year trade cooperation plan was aimed at removing impediments in bilateral trade, finalizing the Free Trade Agreement and establishing of institutional linkages between the private sectors of both countries.

"I am confident that the steps we are taking today, will chart the course for a long-term durable economic partnership between our two countries in the months and years ahead," the foreign minister told the media after the two leaders held a meeting as well as the delegation-level talks.

He said during their meeting, they had agreed to prioritize the operationalization of the five remaining border markets by the end of current year.

Foreign Minister Bilawal said Pakistan and

Continued on page 2



Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari and Iran Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian witnessing signing of memoranda of understanding between Pakistan and Iran in Islamabad.

BHC declares appointment of Ombudsperson null, void & without lawful authority

Division bench headed by CJ BHC restrains Ms. Noor Jehan Mengal from acting as Ombudsman with immediate effect; directs to appoint Ombudsman on strength of criteria strictly in accordance with law

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Balochistan High Court (BHC) has declared the appointment of Ms. Noor Jehan Mengal as Ombudsman, Balochistan against harassment of women at workplace as null, void and without lawful authority and of no legal effect.

The court also restrained Ms. Mengal from acting as the Ombudsman with immediate effect and directed the Secretary Women Development to appoint ombudsperson on the

strength of criteria mandated by section 7(3) of the Act, 2016 strictly in accordance with the law.

The division bench headed by the Chief Justice, BHC, Mr. Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan in a constitutional petition filed by Ms. Andleeb Qaisrani, Tayyaba Altaf and Bibi Shakar Baloch against the appointment of Ms. Noor Jehan Mengal as Ombudsman, here on Thursday.

The court, however, remarked that the instant ombudsperson on the Continued on page 2

Minister Home takes notice of Korangi incident

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Provincial Minister for Home and Tribal Affairs, Mir Ziaullah Langave has taken notice of the incident of firing that claimed lives of two students from Mastung in Korangi area of Karachi.

The Minister Home also directed the Additional Chief Secretary Home to seek report from the Additional Chief Secretary and Inspector General of Police Sindh about the incident.

He said that the killing of students at hands of the law enforcement agencies is a matter of concern. However, he urged the masses of the province to maintain

environment of brotherhood among their ranks.

The Minister Home asserted that the provincial government would not leave its citizens in isolation. He also said that the provincial government is with its people living in any part of the country.

He said that we are Pakistanis and we should live with one thinking and ideology.

He expressed grief and share with the bereaved family of the victims of firing. He assured that action would be taken against those responsible as soon as there is progress into the matter.



QUETTA: Home Minister Mir Ziaullah Langave separately offering Fateha on sad demise of Sardarzada Haroon Raisani and Mir Bramdagh Lehri

Inaugurates newly constructed Bhara Kahu Bypass PM stresses need of collaboration among all stakeholders for dev., prosperity of country

Project would facilitate commuters and tourists travelling from Rawalpindi Islamabad to Murree, Azad Kashmir and other hilly areas

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif inaugurated newly constructed Bhara Kahu Bypass project at a ceremony held in Islamabad on Thursday. Addressing the inaugural ceremony, he said the project would facilitate commuters and tourists travelling from Rawalpindi Islamabad to Murree, Azad Kashmir and other hilly areas. The Prime Minister said the Bhara Kahu bypass project, which has been completed in a very short span of only nine months at a cost of six billion rupees, would also provide easy access to people who travel on daily basis between Murree and Islamabad and also resolve

traffic jam issue at Bara Kahu. The Prime Minister stressed on the need of collaboration among all the stakeholders and state institutions for development and prosperity of the country. Speaking on the occasion, Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif worked day and night to provide relief to the people of Pakistan. She said stabilizing Pakistan's economy is not less than a miracle. Marriyum Aurangzeb said previous government could not complete a single project in the capital city. PML-N leader Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhary in his speech said this project



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif inaugurates Barakahu Bypass.

Growing financing gap major challenge to Pakistan's Roadmap to 2030 climate resilience: Sherry

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Senator Sherry Rehman on Thursday said the major challenge to Pakistan's Roadmap to 2030 was the growing financing gap, and the country needed state-of-the-art projectisation, resources and money to scaffold adaptation and transformational municipal, rural and Agri-water governance for the years of unpredictability ahead. The Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination successfully organized the National Stocktake on Pakistan's Climate Journey here whereas the event aimed to showcase the government's collective efforts and accomplishments in combating climate change over the past year, underscoring the critical importance of ongoing commitment and collaboration in tackling this global challenge. The event was graced by the presence of the Chief Guest, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, who attended the gathering to exemplify the nation's unwavering dedication to addressing climate issues and building a sustainable future, a news release said.

Senator Sherry Rehman in her keynote speech said, "We stand at the crossroads of history during this crucial decade leading up to 2030. Our people have been uprooted from their homes repeatedly due to the climate carnage, and in many areas, often when we start to rebuild, disaster strikes once more, pushing us into a recovery trap. Climate change has interrupted human history in ways that only World Wars and the nuclear bomb did, bringing the human race and those at the epicenter of the carnage in an arc of extreme vulnerability."



Federal Minister for Planning Development & Special Initiatives, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal chairs a meeting of Education Research Commission in Islamabad.

Operational universities without NOCs risking students' future: Rana

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training Rana Tanveer Hussain on Thursday emphasized the paramount importance of fulfilling legal prerequisites and obtaining a 'No Objection Certificate' for the establishment of universities rather than putting the future of students at risk. Speaking here at National Assembly, the minister stressed the significance of obtaining official approval, specifically the No Objection Certificate (NOC) from the Higher Education Commission (HEC), prior to granting charter approval.

He expressed concern over several universities operating without the necessary NOC, despite having charter approval. This incongruence has led to the issuance of degrees that lack the HEC's attestation, rendering them essentially void. The minister underscored that degrees from such institutions hold no credibility and leave students, their families, and guardians in a state of distress even after completion of degree despite heavy financial investment. The minister acknowledged instances of student protests stemming from these irregularities and underscored that the absence of proper procedures within these degree-awarding universities was troubling. He clarified that while the National Assembly possesses authority to legislate the establishment of universities within the confines of Islamabad Capital Territory, it does not extend to granting approvals for universities in provinces. However, the Assembly can deliberate on legislation pertaining to institutions and new campuses affiliated with Islamabad-based universities.

August 5 one of darkest chapters in Kashmir's history: Saghar

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Convener of All Parties Hurriyat Conference Azad Jammu and Kashmir (APHC-AJK) chapter, Mahmood Ahmed Saghar, terming August 5 as one of the darkest chapters of Jammu and Kashmir's recent history said the Kashmiris do not accept Modi-led Indian government's illegal actions it had taken on the day in 2019 in violation of the UN resolutions. According to Kashmir Media Service, Mahmood Ahmed Saghar in a statement issued in Islamabad, Thursday, said, it was on August 5, 2019 when the RSS-backed apartheid regime led by Modi snatched all political, social, religious, and other basic rights of the people of occupied territory by dint of force.

River Indus experiencing medium flood since July 26

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Flood Commission (FFC) has said that River Indus has been experiencing medium flood at Guddu and Sukkur since July and 30th July 2023 respectively, however, flows have now receded from 461,353 cusecs to 400,000 cusecs at Sukkur. According to daily FFC report on Thursday, the maximum peak discharges were observed at Guddu on 30th July 2023 and at Sukkur on 31st July 2023. Further to above, Rivers Indus at Taunsa Barrage (upstream Guddu), Ravi at Sidhnai and Sutlej at Suleimanki & Islam are also flowing in mild category flood (Low Flood) while rivers Jhelum & Chenab are discharging normal flows. Tarbela and Mangla Reservoirs are at 1541.29 feet and 1231.90 feet respectively (i.e. 8.71 feet and 10.10 feet are below their respective MCL of 1550.00 feet and 1242.00 feet).

Steering committee discusses legal migration opportunities to EU

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Overseas Pakistan and Human Resources Development Sajid Turi and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Hina Rabbani Khar on Thursday co-chaired inaugural meeting of PM Steering Committee on Legal Migration Opportunities to European Union countries. The meeting was attended by SAPM Tariq Fatemi and representatives of NAVTTC, Overseas Employment Corporation, Overseas Pakistanis Foundation, Pakistan Square Export Board, Higher Education Commission, Federal Investigation Agency, TEVTA (Punjab) and NUML. The meeting reviewed progress and discussed opportunities as well as challenges. The steering committee stressed the need for better coordination on skills development and certification, language proficiency and importance of regulations. The participants also underscored the importance for curbing illegal migration.



ISLAMABAD: A view of the broken shed of Blue Line Bus Stop at Express Way, which needs the attention of concern authority.

Responsive and inclusive local governments essential for achieving SDGs

ISLAMABAD (Online): Convener Parliamentary Task Force on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Ms. Romina Khurshid Alam on Thursday said that sustainable progress cannot be achieved without a proactive tier of government. She stated this during the inaugural session of the National meet on Sustainable Development Goals 2023 with the theme "From Global Goals to Local Impact: Empowering Local Government for SDGs Success". Ensuring responsive, inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making at all levels. She said that this tier of the government (local government) should not only be empowered but should also be included in all policy formulation and strategy development. She further said that the local government system plays a pivotal role in the adoption and implementation of the SDGs. Furthermore, Convener Parliamentary Task Force on SDGs stated that Local Government representatives are much closer to citizens unlike provincial and federal governments on account of constraints such as limited resources and limited personnel. Moreover, she said that United Nations has also recognized the significance of Local Governments in achieving the SDGs and urged governments to empower their local administrations and departments. It is high time that Federal and Provincial Governments collaborate with the third tier of Government to localize the SDGs and ensure socio-economic progress in the country, she added. In addition, she stated that Parliamentarians and Government Representatives should ensure the implementation of the Local Government System in Pakistan in order to manage critical aspects of our communities such as education, healthcare, water and sanitation systems.

Law minister inaugurates blocks of IBC complex

ISLAMABAD (Online): Minister for Law and Justice, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar on Thursday inaugurated the extended blocks of Islamabad Bar Council (IBC) complex. Talking to newsmen on the occasion, the minister said that a part of the happy ending came to me, adding that it was a fundamental right of the legal fraternity. He said that the Constitution was superior to everybody and judges were more bound to follow it. The minister said that a good system should be developed for the next generations, adding that attitude is the problem, to correct attitude. He said that the lawyers are the main component for the development of the country, adding that if they fight for the rights of others then their rights should also be heard.

PAC directs MoWR to complete ongoing projects

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) on Thursday directed the Ministry of Water Resources to complete its ongoing various projects within the stipulated time to yield desirous results. Chairing PAC meeting, Chairman Noor Alam Khan said that the Ministry of Water Resources had launched several projects in the last 20 years but it could not complete a single project during the period. The committee had shown serious concern over the non-attendance of the meeting by the Secretary Ministry of Water Resources and urged the authorities concerned to apprise him to appear before PAC in the next meeting. "We will write a letter of displeasure to the Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Water Resources to take actions against the officials and ask them to appear before the committee to settle the audit paras," Noor Alam Khan added. He further said that the Department Audit Committee (DAC) ordered inquiries into many irregularities and embezzlement but the same were not being completed for years.

Ahsan unveils ERC to transform education sector, ensure sustainable dev.

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Thursday unveiled a momentous Education Research Commission (ERC) to revolutionize the country's education system, ensure inclusive and sustainable national development. Chairing a maiden meeting of the commission, the minister shed light on the nation's paradoxical history, and said "Pakistan has achieved remarkable milestones, defying global opposition, and asserting itself as a nuclear power. However, we face challenges in our education sector, which is vital for our future growth and prosperity."



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazir Tarar along with SAPM on Interior and Legal Affairs Attaullah Tarar inaugurated the Extended Blocks of Islamabad Bar Council Complex at Federal Judicial Complex.

Javed Latif says: PML-N stands strong on timely elections for fresh mandate, national unity

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister Javed Latif on Thursday categorically said that the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) is against any postponement of elections because it believes that for achieving a fresh mandate on timely elections is also essential for national unity. Talking to media, he asserted that his party firmly opposes any delay in the upcoming general elections, believing that the elections will undoubtedly benefit the country. While some people claim democracy has weakened in the past 15 months, he countered that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government had a deliberate agenda to undermine the democracy. He highlighted PML-N's commitment to the country by making bold decisions to safeguard the state and preserve democracy. He emphasized that the people place their hopes in former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif as the only leader capable of leading the country towards prosperity and progress. He said Nawaz Sharif was ousted from power by international adversaries, working alongside local collaborators, due to his endeavors in fortifying Pakistan's defense and launching the game-changing China (Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects. Similarly, he contended that former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was executed through the involvement of international forces and their local agents.



ISLAMABAD: Workers filling drinking water in their water tankers outside Ghori Town area due to drinking water shortage in Ghori Town, which needs the attention of concern authority.

Islamabad police arrest two suspects in child abuse cases

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Police have apprehended two individuals connected to cases of abuse, securing their remand from the respective courts to facilitate ongoing investigations. Utilizing advanced scientific and technological methods, the SSOI Unit of Islamabad Capital Police, in collaboration with Shahzad Town Police, diligently traced and detained two suspects implicated in the heinous act of assaulting two young girls. All suspects are currently in custody, with their remand granted by the relevant court to facilitate further in-depth inquiries. On May 30, 2023, Hazar Gul, son of Satar Gul residing near 'Deputain' in close proximity to Maryam Masjid within the jurisdiction of Shahzad Town police station, filed a complaint concerning the sexual abuse of his eight-year-old daughter by an unidentified individual. Promptly registering the case under the appropriate legal provisions, Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan promptly intervened and entrusted CPO/DIG Operations Syed Shahzad Nadeem Bukhari with the responsibility of ensuring the swift apprehension of the perpetrator. A specialized team, led by SSP (Investigation) and comprising personnel from SSOIU and Shahzad Town police station, was constituted to bring the culprits to justice. Employing cutting-edge forensic techniques and modern technologies, these teams succeeded in arresting the accused individual, Danish, son of Darwish and a resident of Alipur, who had initially managed to evade capture following the crime of abuse.

Senate body wants LHC CJ intervention in IUB drugs, video scandal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senate Standing Committee on Federal Education and Professional Training Thursday decided to approach Chief Justice (CJ) Lahore High Court (LHC) requesting him to constitute a commission to probe into the Islamia University Bahawalpur (IUB) drugs and video Scandals issue. The committee that met here with Irfan-ul-Haque Siddiqui in the chair decided to address the matter by writing a letter to the LHC CJ, urging the constitution of a judicial commission to conduct a thorough inquiry. The IUB Vice-Chancellor briefed the Senate body regarding concerning issues of drug sales, scandals, exploitation, and dissemination of obscene material involving students and teachers on Campus. He informed the committee about ongoing investigations by the Punjab



Federal Minister for Human Rights, Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada chaired the 4th Meeting of National Committee for Implementation of UNCRPD, Incheon Strategy & Other International Commitments Pertaining to Disability at the Ministry of Human Rights in Islamabad

PM urges Pak-US businessmen to benefit from investment opportunities; highlights SIFC 1-window facility

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday, highlighting the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) as a one-window facility for investors, urged the Pakistani-American businessmen to benefit from the numerous investment opportunities available in Pakistan.

He lauded the contributions being made by the successful and vibrant Pakistani-American community. He said they were contributing to the socio-economic development of their motherland as well as their adopted country but

also serving as a bridge of friendship between Pakistan and the United States. Highlighting Pakistan's geo-economic potential, its strategic location, vast mineral wealth, and population dividend, Prime Minister Shehbaz briefed the delegation about Pakistan's economic recovery plan under the newly constituted SIFC through a whole-of-the-government

approach. He said under the SIFC framework, the government was working on a comprehensive plan to attract investment in the five select fields of agriculture, information technology, energy, and defence production. He said the purpose of establishing the SIFC was to provide a one-window facility to the potential investors.



ISLAMABAD: A group of prominent Pakistani-American businessmen and entrepreneurs call on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.



ISLAMABAD: Aug 03- Members of Chinese delegation travelling by the coaches given by the Chinese government in connection with 10 years celebration of CPEC at Margalla Railway Station, in Federal Capital.

Turkish delegation to visit Pakistan for joint ventures, investment: Mian Kashif

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief Executive Officer Pakistan Furniture Council Mian Kashif Ashfaq on Thursday said a high level Turkish furniture delegation will soon visit Pakistan to further explore the possibilities of collaboration for joint ventures and investment. After his return from a week-long tour of Turkey he held a series of fruitful meetings with Turkish furniture manufacturers and invited them to Pakistan, said a news release issued here. He said both the Turkish and Pakistani furniture industries were significant players in the global market. Collaboration between the Turkish and Pakistani furniture industries could lead to exciting opportunities for both countries. It could involve sharing expertise, technology, and design ideas, resulting in the

production of unique and high-quality furniture products, he remarked. This partnership may also facilitate access to each other's markets, potentially increasing trade and economic benefits for both nations. He said their visit will be an exciting opportunity for both countries businesses to strengthen their ties and explore potential investment and joint ventures in the furniture industry. It could lead to beneficial collaborations and economic growth for both countries. He said the Turkish furniture industry has been known for its craftsmanship, innovation, and the use of high-quality materials. Turkiye strategic location at the crossroads of Europe, Asia, and the Middle East can help Pakistan be a hub for furniture exports.

US, China, UK remained top three destinations of Pakistani exports in FY23

ISLAMABAD (APP): The United States (US) remained the top export destination of Pakistani products during the fiscal year (2022-23), followed by China and the United Kingdom (UK). Total exports to the US during July-June (2022-23) were recorded at US\$ 5929.176 million as opposed to the exports of US\$ 6808.278 million during July-June (2021-22), showing a decline of 12.91 percent, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). This was followed by China, wherein Pakistan exported goods worth US\$ 2029.104 million compared to the exports of US\$ 2783.059 million last year, showing a decrease of 27.09 percent. UK was the third top export destination, where Pakistan exported goods worth US\$ 1966.357 million during the year

under review against the exports of US\$ 2201.080 million during last year, showing a decline of 10.66 percent, SBP data revealed. Among other countries, Pakistani exports to Germany stood at US\$ 1600.172 million against US\$ 1751.423 million last year, showing a decrease of 8.63 percent while the exports to UAE were recorded at US\$ 1475.809 million opposed US\$ 1848.991 million last year. During July-June (2022-23), the exports to Holland were recorded at US\$ 1446.927 million against US\$ 1499.671 million whereas the exports to Afghanistan stood at US\$ 521.999 million against US\$ 522.781 million. Pakistan's exports to Italy were recorded at US\$ 1151.448 million against the exports of US\$ 1087.434 million.



PESHAWAR: A vendor displaying national flags color decoration and wearing stuff to attract customers at Qassa-Khwani Bazaar on ahead of 76th Independence Day of Pakistan on 14 August.

Saudi extends 1m bpd oil output cut: Ministry

RIYADH (APP/APP): Saudi Arabia announced Thursday it is extending a voluntary oil production cut of one million barrels per day for another month, keeping up its campaign to prop up prices. "Saudi Arabia will extend the voluntary cut of one million barrels per day... for another month to follow a June meeting of the 23-nation OPEC+ alliance, which also includes Russia, Saudi Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman noted that it was potentially "extendable". It followed a decision in April by several OPEC+ members to slash production voluntarily by more than one million bpd.

The "voluntary cut comes to reinforce the precautionary efforts made by OPEC Plus countries with the aim of supporting the stability and balance of oil markets," the energy ministry said. Announcing the cut following a June meeting of the 23-nation OPEC+ alliance, which also includes Russia, Saudi Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman noted that it was potentially "extendable". It followed a decision in April by several OPEC+ members to slash production voluntarily by more than one million bpd.



ISLAMABAD: Labourers busy in unloading bunches of bananas from a delivery truck at Fruit and Vegetable Market.

Corporate farming to attract Rs100 billion investment in agriculture sector: Khokhar

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Kissan Ittehad Khalid Mehmood Khokhar Wednesday said that corporate farming will attract about Rs100 billion investment in the agriculture sector within three years and help to achieve self-sufficiency in staple food crop production, besides attaining food safety and security in the country. Addressing a press conference, he dismissed all the misconceptions being created by some elements regarding corporate farming in the country in which they claimed that initiation of corporate farming would deprive the small farmers of their cultivable lands. He said that under

corporate farming the farmer's clusters would be established to start collaborative farming to enhance the output of all major and minor crops by adopting modern and innovative cultivation technologies and they would be enabled for purchasing of latest tools including tractors, combine harvesters and land levellers. The farmers would be given their due right through future market practice as it was protecting farmers' rights farming in the world, he said adding that they would also provide proper seeds and other agriculture inputs to enhance their farm income to alleviate poverty in the country.



ISLAMABAD: A vendor displaying and selling fruits on his handcart setup at Khana Pul.

China-Pakistan Economy, Trade B2B Forum held in Shenzhen

BEIJING (APP): The 10th Anniversary Ceremony for China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and China-Pakistan Economy and Trade B2B Forum was held in Shenzhen, China. At the invitation of the Shenzhen Municipal Government and the China-Pakistan Trade, Investment and Technology Cooperation Center, guest including Rana Ishaan Afzal Khan, Coordinator to Prime Minister of Pakistan on Commerce and Industry, Muhammad Asif Noor, Chief Executive Officer at Belt and Road Consultants Pvt Limited, Mr. Fu Chaoyang, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the China Ocean Group Industry Co., Ltd, Ms. Zhu Yanyan, President of

China-Pakistan United (Shenzhen) Economy and Trade Management Co., Ltd., Zang Mengsheng, General Manager of the Trade and Finance Department of Pakistan's Habib Bank Limited (HBL) in China, attended the forum, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Thursday. At the forum, the Pakistani representative introduced in detail the more than 50 agreements signed by two governments since the construction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor was launched in 2013, which determined the "1+4" cooperation layout centered on the CPEC, with Gwadar Port, energy, infrastructure and industrial cooperation as the four priorities.

Chambers' presidents call for cut in govt expenses, imports with strategy to increase exports

MULTAN (APP): Presidents of Lahore and Multan Chambers of Commerce and Industry on Thursday stressed reducing government expenses, cut in imports and practical steps to increase exports to bring the national economy on the right track. They expressed these views during a ceremony at the Multan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) organized in honour of a delegation from the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) led by its president Kashif Noor.

The delegates visited different stalls showcasing products developed by craftsmen at MCCI. They appreciated the craftsmen's work but added that their skill level be upgraded through training to match present-day advancements and their access to lucrative international markets be made easy. LCCI president Kashif Noor said on the occasion that the country's economy-related troubles could compound further in case of no cuts in expenses and imports, and also stressed on withdrawal of free gas, electricity and other privileges saying these initial steps were imperative for a stronger economy.

"We must take initiatives to increase exports," he said adding that the country was facing a shortage of dollars and export earnings would not only improve reserves position but would also strengthen Rupee. He expressed concerns that the country does not have enough dams and added that floods play havoc every year and then water goes waste into the sea without benefitting agriculture. He said that the country should have started making strides in harnessing alternate means of energy like solar power much earlier.

Gold rates dip by Rs2,800 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs 2,800 and was sold at Rs.220,200 on Thursday against its sale at Rs.223,000 on the previous day, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported. The price of 10 grams of 24-karat gold also decreased by Rs2,401 to Rs 188,786 from Rs191,187 whereas the price of 10 gram 22 karat gold dipped to Rs173,054 from Rs. 175,254. The price of per tola silver decreased by Rs.50 to Rs.2750 and that of ten gram by Rs.48.86 to Rs.2,357.68.

Services' trade deficit narrows by 87% in FY2023

ISLAMABAD (APP): The services' trade deficit shrank by 87.68 percent during the fiscal year 2022-23 as compared to the corresponding period of the previous year, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics reported. The services trade deficit was recorded at \$719.45 million during July-June (2022-23) against the deficit of \$5,840.11 million during July-June (2021-22). The exports of services during the period increased by 2.78 percent going up from \$7,102.35 million in 2021-

22 to \$7,300.13 million during fiscal year 2022-23, according to PBS data. On the other hand, the imports declined from \$12,942.46 million to \$8,019.58 million in FY2023, showing negative growth of 38.04 percent. Meanwhile, on a year-on-year basis, the export of services decreased by 13.99 percent by declining from 664.02 million in June 2022 to \$571.10 million in June 2023. The services imports also increased by 50.71 percent, from \$1,328.89 million to \$655.06 million.



KARACHI: Regional Chairman FPCCI Muhammad Nadeem Qureshi presenting shield to nominated Pakistan Ambassador to Iran Muhammad Mudassar Tipu during his visit to FPCCI.

Tibet sees record air passenger volume in July

LHASA (Xinhua/APP): Southwest China's Tibet Autonomous Region logged a new record in single-month passenger throughput in July since the opening of civil aviation in the region in 1965. In July, seven civil airports in Tibet handled a total of 770,000 passenger trips, an increase of 31.6 percent year on year. Meanwhile, the region's civil aviation also achieved a new record by handling 5,936 flights in July, up 2.4 percent year on year, according to the Tibet branch of the Civil Aviation Administration of China. Tibet is rich in tourism resources, with its majestic mountains and rivers, magnificent grasslands and forests, and profound ethnic and religious culture. The region has seen surging passenger arrivals after China adjusted its COVID response. From January to July, air passenger volume in the region hit 3.8 million, a year-on-year increase of 37.1 percent. Airports here handled 33,523 flights and 25,985.5 tonnes of cargo and mail in total, up 8.7 percent and 7.8 percent, respectively, compared with the same period in the previous year.

Commissioner vows to achieve cotton production target

MULTAN (APP): Cotton Commissioner, ministry of national food security and research, Dr. Zahid Mahmood said on Thursday that Pakistan is expected to meet national cotton production target of 12.65 million bales in 2023-24 pleading that weather conditions were favourable for cotton crop compared to last year. During a telephonic conversation with Sajid Mahmood, the head of technology transfer wing of Central Cotton Research Institute (CCRI) Multan, Dr. Zahid said that the cotton arrivals report

released by Pakistan Cotton Ginners Association (PCGA), putting the arrivals figure at more than 1.4 million bales, was encouraging, according to a release issued by CCRI Multan spokesman. He further stated that total 368 cotton ginning factories were operational in Pakistan, 70 more than the previous fortnight, meaning thereby there was steady arrival of seed cotton (Phutti) necessitating operations of increased number of factories. This, he added, brought a ray of hope for farmers.

Over 1.4m bales of cotton arrival recorded at ginneries till Aug 1 in Pakistan

MULTAN (APP): Seed Cotton (Phutti) equivalent to over 1.4 million (1,428,638) bales have reached ginning factories across Pakistan till Aug 1, 2023 with major contribution of over one million bales recorded from Sindh owing to early picking and its Sanghar district alone attracting more than half of the total arrivals so far. According to a fortnightly report of Pakistan Cotton Ginners Association (PCGA)

issued to media on Thursday, Punjab ginning factories recorded cotton arrival figure of 388,568 bales while arrivals to ginneries in Sindh recorded at one million plus (1,040,070) bales including 721,149 reaching ginneries in Sanghar district alone. Arrivals in Baluchistan were recorded at 41,100 bales. Out of the total arrivals, seed cotton converted into bales was recorded at 1.3 million (1,327,847).

China hints leaders started annual seaside vacation in flood-hit province

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: Chinese President Xi Jinping's chief of staff met with experts holidaying at Beidaihe on Thursday, a signal that typically means top leaders have started their vacation at the seaside resort, even as large areas of northern China remain flooded.

The summer retreat comes as questions continue to swirl around the unexplained removal as foreign minister of Qin Gang, a former rising star under Xi's patronage, the abrupt replacement of the top brass at the People's Liberation Army Rocket Force, and as the leadership struggles to find the right tools to stimulate the economy.

Beidaihe has traditionally provided a relaxed setting for retired Chinese Communist Party leaders

to interact and raise concerns with the current leadership.

But as Xi has consolidated power over the past decade, the scope for elders to speak their minds has shrunk, said a Chinese scholar who declined to be named as he is not authorised to speak to foreign media. Cai Qi, who is Xi's chief of staff, met with 57 technology experts on vacation at Beidaihe and urged them to do more to make China technologically self-reliant, state news agency Xinhua reported.

China does not announce when leaders go on holiday but typically indicates the start of their vacation with an announcement about meeting experts.

Leaders then disappear from public view for about two weeks.

It is unclear if Qin, who would be qualified to holiday at Beidaihe with the leadership since he retains the title of state councillor, will turn up. Qin has not been seen in public since June 25.

One of Xi's last tasks before going on vacation was to instruct emergency responders to work harder at rescuing those affected by floods battering northern China as a result of Typhoon Doksuri.

At least 100,000 people in the province where Beidaihe is located have been evacuated, but the resort itself has not been affected.

Since the founding of the people's republic, current and retired party and government leaders have gathered for summer vacations at Beidaihe, 3-1/2 hours east of Beijing by car.



Rescue workers from Shanxi province evacuate people through floodwaters with a boat after the rains and floods brought by remnants of Typhoon Doksuri, in Zhuozhou, Hebei province, China.

Beijing records its heaviest rainfall in 140 years

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: Rains that pummelled Beijing in recent days were the heaviest since records began 140 years ago, the city's weather service said on Wednesday.

"The maximum (amount) of rainfall recorded during this storm, which was 744.8 millimetres, occurred at the Wangjiayuan Reservoir in Changping," the Beijing Meteorological Service said, adding it was the "heaviest rainfall in 140 years".

Storm Doksuri, a former super typhoon, swept northwards over China after hitting southern Fujian province last week, following its battering of the Philippines.

Heavy rains began pummeling the capital and surrounding areas on Saturday, with nearly the average rainfall for the entire

month of July dumped on Beijing in just 40 hours.

On Tuesday, state broadcaster CCTV said the rains had killed at least 11 years ago, the city's weather service said on Wednesday.

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Tunisia's president sacks PM, the first woman to hold that job in an Arab League nation

Monitoring Desk
TUNIS: Tunisia's president has sacked the country's prime minister, who was the first woman to hold that job in an Arab League nation.

A brief statement from the presidential office late Tuesday did not give reasons for the dismissal of Najla Bouden Ramadhane.

President Kais Saied had appointed the engineering school professor as Tunisia's first female prime minister in September 2021.

Her replacement is retired central bank director Ahmed Hachani, who was sworn in Tuesday night.

Tunisia is in the midst of an economic crisis with shortages of basic necessities and, in recent days, long lines for bread.

Four Nigerians, rescued in Brazil, survived 14 days on a ship's rudder

Monitoring Desk
SAO PAULO: On their tenth day at sea, the four Nigerian stowaways crossing the Atlantic in a tiny space above the rudder of a cargo ship ran out of food and drink.

They survived another four days, according to their account, by drinking the sea water crashing just meters below them, before being rescued by Brazilian federal police in the southeastern port of Vitoria.

Their remarkable, death-defying journey across some 5,600 kilometers (3,500 miles) of ocean underlines the risks some migrants are prepared to take for a shot at a better life.

"It was a terrible experience for me," said 38-year-old Thankgod Opemipo Matthew Yeye, one of the four Nigerians, in an interview at a Sao Paulo church shelter. "On board it is not easy. I was shaking, so scared. But I'm here."

Their relief at being rescued soon gave way to surprise.

The four men said they had hoped to reach Europe and were shocked to learn they had in fact landed on the other side of the Atlantic, in Brazil.

Two of the men have since been returned to Nigeria upon their request, while Yeye and Roman Ebimene Friday, a 35-year-old from Bayelsa state, have applied for asylum in Brazil.

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Greenpeace activists hold a banner while others cover British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's £2m manor house in oil-black fabric in protest of his backing for a major expansion of North Sea oil and gas drilling amidst a summer of escalating climate impacts, in Yorkshire, Britain.



Mongolian Prime Minister Oyun-Erdene Luvsannamsrai gestures in front of Mongolia's flag and a portrait of the country's national hero Genghis Khan while speaking to Reuters correspondent Simon Lewis in an interview at the Mongolian embassy in Washington, U.S.

UN given green light to monitor peace deal between Colombia's government and its largest rebel group

Monitoring Desk
UNITED NATIONS: The Security Council on Wednesday unanimously authorized the U.N. political mission in Colombia to help verify implementation of a cease-fire agreement between the government and the country's largest remaining guerrilla group, the National Liberation Army.

The council also expressed willingness to do

the same if a cease-fire is reached with another armed group, the Estado Mayor Central.

The U.N. has been monitoring a 2016 peace accord between the government and Colombia's then largest rebel group, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC. It ended more than 50 years of war in which over 220,000 people died and nearly 6 million people

were displaced.

More than 14,000 FARC fighters gave up their weapons under that agreement, but violence between some rebel groups has grown in parts of Colombia.

Colombia's government asked the council to extend the U.N. mission's verification mandate to include the June cease-fire deal with the National Liberation Army.

Trudeau and wife announce separation after 18 years

Monitoring Desk
OTTAWA: Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his wife Sophie said on Wednesday they were separating in an unexpected announcement that appeared to mark the end of the couple's 18-year high-profile marriage.

Trudeau, 51, and Sophie Gregoire-Trudeau, 48, were married in late May 2005. They have three children.

"Sophie and I would like to share the fact that after many meaningful and difficult conversations, we have made the decision to separate," Trudeau said on Instagram. Sophie posted

an almost identical message on her own Instagram account.

Trudeau's office said the two had signed a legal agreement.

"They have worked to ensure that all legal and ethical steps with regards to their decision to separate have been taken, and will continue to do so moving forward," it said.

After Trudeau became prime minister in late 2015, he and Sophie were often seen together at social functions and on foreign trips. But in recent years, Sophie has curtailed such appearances with her husband.

Russia adds Norway to list of countries 'unfriendly' to its diplomats

Monitoring Desk
NEW YORK: Russia has added Norway to its list of foreign states that have committed so-called "unfriendly" acts against Russian diplomatic missions, news agencies reported on Thursday.

Countries on the list are limited in the number of local staff they can hire in Russia, with Norway restricted to 27, state news agency RIA Novosti said.

Norway expelled 15 Russian diplomats for alleged spying in April, and Russia responded by ordering out 10 Norwegian diplomats.



SAG-AFTRA actors and Writers Guild of America (WGA) writers walk the picket line during their ongoing strike outside Netflix, in Los Angeles, California, U.S.

Dozens of states to pledge to combat use of food as weapon of war

Monitoring Desk
UNITED NATIONS: More than 75 countries will "commit to take action to end the use of food as a weapon of war and the starvation of civilians as a tactic of warfare" by backing a U.S.-drafted communique at the United Nations on Thursday, senior U.S. officials said.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken will release the communique on Thursday when he chairs a U.N. Security Council meeting on famine and food insecurity caused by conflict. A senior U.S. official said more countries were expected to sign.

Blinken will also announce some \$362 million in new U.S. funding to "tackle the drivers of food insecurity and enhance resilience" in nearly a dozen African countries and Haiti, said a second senior U.S. official.

While the United States, the European Union and others have accused Russia of using food as a weapon of war by worsening a global food crisis when it invaded Ukraine in February 2022, the draft communique does not specifically call out any countries.

At least 15 thought to be dead after bus crash in Mexico, officials say

Monitoring Desk
MEXICO CITY: At least 15 people are thought to have died and 21 more injured in a bus crash in the Mexican state of Nayarit in the early hours of Thursday, state officials said.

Local media had earlier reported that as many as 24 could have died when the passenger bus crashed off the highway into a ravine in western Mexico.

India to participate in Saudi Arabia summit on finding ways to start Ukraine war negotiations

Monitoring Desk
NEW DELHI: India will participate in a weekend meeting that Saudi Arabia is hosting to find a way to start negotiations to end Russia's war in Ukraine.

Saudi Arabia invited India to the two-day meeting in Jeddah and its "participation in our long-standing position that dialogue and diplomacy is the way forward," Arindam Bagchi, the spokesman for India's External Affairs Ministry, told reporters in New Delhi on Thursday.

Bagchi did not say who would represent the country at the summit.

Haryana tensions spill over into neighbouring states

Monitoring Desk
NEW DELHI: Tensions ran high in Haryana and its neighbouring states on Wednesday, with riot police patrolling neighbourhoods on the outskirts of the Indian capital as authorities issued prohibitory orders across the Nuh district, banning the sale of loose petrol or diesel in the aftermath of two days of communal violence that saw several shops, shanties and a mosque set ablaze. The death toll climbed to six on the third day of clashes between Hindus and Muslims, while

internet services also remained shut in four tehsils of Rajasthan's Bharatpur district, NDTV quoted officials as saying.

Arson and vandalism attacks had earlier broken out in parts of Gurugram, a satellite city of the capital and a key business centre where Nokia, Samsung and other multinationals have their headquarters.

One neighbourhood saw a mob of around 200 people armed with sticks and stones loot several meat shops and set fire to a restaurant while chanting Hindu religious slogans.

Ukraine accuses Russia of damaging 40,000 tonnes of grain

Monitoring Desk
KYIV: Russia damaged almost 40,000 tonnes of grain in an overnight strike on southern Ukrainian ports near the Danube river, Kyiv's infrastructure minister said on Wednesday.

"The Russians attacked warehouses and grain elevators — almost 40,000 tonnes of grain were damaged," Minister Oleksandr Kubrakov said in an English-language post on social media.

Kubrakov added that the grain was destined for some African countries, China and Israel, and accused Russia of using Iranian drones to carry out the attack. "These are the very ports that have become the foundation of global food security today," he said.

The port, across the

river from Nato-member Romania, is the main alternative route out of Ukraine for grain exports, since Russia's blockade halted traffic at Ukraine's Black Sea ports in mid-July.

Video released by the Ukrainian authorities showed firefighters on ladders battling a huge blaze several stories high in a building covered with broken windows.

Several other large buildings were in ruins, and grain spilled out of at least two wrecked silos.

Putin-Erdogan talks President Tayyip Erdogan emphasised the importance of avoiding steps that could jeopardise the resumption of the Black Sea grain initiative in talks with Putin on Wednesday, Erdogan's office said.

Niger junta says it will not back down despite 'inhumane' sanctions

Monitoring Desk
NIAMEY: The self-declared new leader of Niger on Wednesday said the junta would not bow to pressure to reinstate ousted President Mohamed Bazoum, intensifying a standoff with the West African bloc which has threatened to intervene after last week's coup.

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has imposed sanctions on Niger and said it could authorise the use of force if the coup leaders do not restore Bazoum's presidency within a week from last Sunday.

The bloc also sent a delegation to Niger on Wednesday to negotiate with the military officers who seized power, hoping to find a diplomatic solution before they have to decide whether or not to intervene. In a televised address, Abdourahmane Tiani said the junta "rejects these sanc-

tions altogether and refuses to give into any threats, wherever they come from. We refuse any interference in the internal affairs of Niger".

ECOWAS has struggled to contain a democratic backslide in West Africa and had vowed that coups will no longer be tolerated after military takeovers in member states Mali, Burkina Faso and Guinea and an attempted coup in Guinea-Bissau in the last two years.

"The military option is the very last option on the table, the last resort, but we have to prepare for the eventuality," said Abdel-Fatau Musah, ECOWAS Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security.

"There is a need to demonstrate that we cannot only bark but can bite," he told reporters earlier on Wednesday, as regional defence chiefs started a two-day meeting in the Nigerian capital Abuja.

Vast majority of submissions to UN body on Israeli occupation favor them, Palestinians say

Monitoring Desk
UNITED NATIONS: The vast majority of over 55 countries that made submissions to the U.N.'s highest judicial body which will give an advisory opinion on the legal consequences of Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories supported the Palestinians' view that Israel is taking over land they seek for an independent state, their U.N. ambassador said Wednesday.

The Palestinian U.N. envoy, Riyad Mansour, told a group of reporters the number of submissions to the International Court of Justice exceeded Palestinian expectations and came from every continent and included all five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council — the United States, Russia, China, Britain and France.

The U.N. General Assembly last Dec. 30 adopted a Palestinian-backed resolution asking the court's opinion on the legality of Israeli policies in the Palestinian territories. It

also seeks an opinion on the legal consequences of Israeli measures it said are "aimed at altering the demographic composition, character and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem." And it asks for an opinion on how all Israeli policies affect the legal status of its occupation, "and what are the legal consequences that arise for all states and the United Nations from this status."

Israel vehemently opposed the resolution. Its ambassador, Gilad Erdan, called the measure "outrageous," the U.N. "morally bankrupt and politicized," and said any potential decision from the court will be "completely illegitimate."

Mansour didn't provide further details on the submissions except to say the vast majority supported the Palestinians.

He said the next step is for the countries that made submissions to the court to rebut what the other countries said if they desire, and to make additional submissions by Oct. 25.

In Taiwan, Typhoon Khanun shuts markets, grounds flights

Monitoring Desk
TAIPEI: Northern Taiwan on Thursday shut businesses and schools while airlines cancelled dozens of flights as the slow-moving Typhoon Khanun skirted past the island's northeast amid warnings of floods and high winds.

Typhoon Khanun, categorised by Taiwan's weather bureau as the second-strongest typhoon level, slowly headed towards its northeastern coast with maximum winds of 198 kph (123 mph).

As of 1:15 pm Taipei time (05:15 GMT), the eye of the typhoon was 340 km off Taipei in the East China Sea, heading in a westerly direction at around 3 kph.

The storm was expected to brush past Taiwan's northern coast late on Thursday before making a sharp turn to the northeast on Friday, bringing total rainfall of up to 0.6 meter (2 feet) in mountainous central Taiwan and 0.3 meter of rain on the mountains near Taipei.

Northern cities includ-

ing the capital Taipei shut businesses and schools. Taiwan's stock and foreign exchange markets were also closed.

More than 110 international and domestic flights have been cancelled while all domestic ferry lines were suspended.

In Taipei, rain and wind have brought down dozens of street signs and trees, while subway services were reduced and food delivery services were suspended. Hundreds of soldiers were on standby in nearby cities for disaster response. The storm had cut power to more than 16,000 households across Taiwan although the majority of them had been restored. In Japan's popular tourist destination Okinawa, Typhoon Khanun left two people dead, injured at least 62 people and knocked out power to more than 200,000 households over the past two days.

Typhoon Khanun comes just a week after Typhoon Doksuri brought heavy rains and strong winds to the Taiwan's south.

President urges efforts to deepen Pak-Iran ties in trade, culture

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday called for efforts to deepen and widen the relationship between Pakistan and Iran, particularly in the areas of trade, economy, culture, and people-to-people contacts. The president, talking to Pakistan's Ambassador-designate to Iran Mudassar Tipu, who called on him here, underlined that Iran was a brotherly neighbouring country and Pakistan greatly valued its relationship with Iran rooted in history, culture, and religion.

He underscored that in the regional context, it was important that efforts were reinforced to highlight the plight of hapless people living in the Indian Illegal Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) to the Iranian people, adding that Iran had supported the causes of justice and equity. The ambassador-designate maintained that he was determined to further solidify Pakistan-Iran ties and, in the emerging geopolitical developments, elevate those ties to new heights exploring their full potential.



QUETTA: A delegation comprising All Parties, transporters of Shirani, Zhub and Harnai and representatives of Harnai Awami Ittehad led by MPA Nasrullah Zairay meeting with Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Kakar.

Pak, Bahrain to enhance cooperation in Postal & Communication Sector

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Communication and Postal Services Maulana Asad Mehmoed on Thursday stressed the need to enhance cooperation in postal and communication sectors between Pakistan and Bahrain.

He welcomed high-level delegation of Bahrain led by Minister of Transport and Telecommunication Muhammad Bin Tahmeer-al-Kaab in his office.

The minister, on the occasion, informed the delegation that Pakistan was heavily investing to build state-of-the-art road infrastructure spreading from Kashghar to Gwadar for countries in the region to take full advantage through trade.

He also briefed the delegates about the investment opportunity for the investors from Bahrain in road infrastructure development. The postal services of Pakistan is also being upgraded to bring at par with the global postal services, said the minister added.

He said National Highways and Motorway Police is also part of his ministry and the government is introducing more stringent traffic rules to avoid accidents and to facilitate commuters on Motorways.

Federal Secretary Ministry of Communication and Chairman National Highway Authority (NHA) Capt (Rtd) Muhammad Khuram Agha also briefed the delegation upon ongoing and completed projects.

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Masood Khan, senior US official discuss boosting economic ties

WASHINGTON (APP): Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States, Masood Khan, Wednesday discussed with the US Under Secretary for Economic Growth, Energy, and Environment, Jose Fernandez, steps to strengthen the economic partnership between the two countries.

"Today I discussed with Pakistani Ambassador Masood Khan strengthening US-Pak economic partnership and climate resilience via the U.S.-Pakistan Green Alliance and investment in the technology sector," tweeted Under Secretary Fernandez.

"I look forward to working together on mutually beneficial priorities," he said.

Reciprocating, Ambassador Masood Khan thanked Fernandez for receiving him with warmth, according to a press release issued by the Pakistani embassy.



QUETTA: Balochistan National Party (BNP) Central General Secretary, Waja Jahanzaib Baloch addressing press conference at Quetta press club.

Toshakhana case: Chairman PTI challenges order of rejection of his right to defence in IHC

ISLAMABAD (Online): Chairman PTI has challenged in Islamabad High Court (IHC) rejection of his right to defence in Toshakhana case. Additional Sessions Judge Humayun Dilawar while withdrawing PTI Chairman right to defence yesterday had accepted Election Commission (EC) plea for declaring irrelevant all the witnesses of chairman PTI.

The chairman PTI while challenging the decision regarding rejection of his right to defence in IHC prayed the court to nullify the trial court's yesterday's decision. Imran Khan requested the court in his appeal plea that trial court's orders be nullified and his right to defence be restored.

Chairman PTI has prayed the court to hear his plea today because Humayun Dilawar had said during the hearing that the judgment will be reserved after hearing the final arguments on Thursday (August 03). Amjad Pervez the counsel for EC had raised the objection that these were irrelevant witnesses. District and Sessions court had maintained during its August 02 hearing that Imran Khan has failed to prove link of his witnesses with the case.



QUETTA: Provincial Secretary Communication & Works Ali Akbar Baloch presiding over a meeting to review progress on ongoing development projects in Quetta Zone Building



ISLAMABAD: Principal Information Officer Mobashir Hassan and Executive Director of State Life Insurance Corporation Shahid Iqbal Baloch exchanging documents after signing an agreement for the provision of health insurance to working journalists and media workers associated with the media houses of Pakistan. Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Information Minister Ms Marriyum Aurangzeb witnessing the ceremony.

Health insurance for journalists, artists step forward to equitable Pakistan: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said that the introduction of a health insurance facility for journalists and artists was a step forward to achieving the milestone of an equitable Pakistan as dreamt by Quaid-e-Azam. He was addressing the ceremony of agreement signing between the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and State Life Insurance Corporation for providing health insurance cards to journalists, media workers, and artists as well as technical workers associated with the film industry.

The prime minister said the agreement was of utmost importance as it addressed the media men and artists who worked hard, even sometimes during tough working conditions, but remained deprived of basic amenities in their lives.

However, the government would provide them with health insurance coverage through budgetary allocations under the PM Program. Calling her a "moving spirit" the prime minister appreciated the key role of Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb to launch the said insurance facility.

He recalled that during Nawaz Sharif's tenure, health insurance card was launched on a massive scale, and at that time, the Punjab government also implemented his vision. He said the health insurance card was a gift for the downtrodden people who could not afford costly medical treatments.

The prime minister said no one would have objected to the previous government's health insurance facility if it was meant to patronise the private hospitals. He said the across-the-board facility was misused as even some greedy healthy people misused that card to mint money, in connivance with the hospitals. The prime minister shared that in 2003 he suffered a fatal disease and had to spend around Rs8 million at a US hospital which was in no way affordable for the poor.

He said in order to provide equitable health facilities, Nawaz Sharif had established Pakistan Kid-



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Communications and Postal Services, Maulana Asad Mehmoed in a meeting with Mohammad Bin Thamer Al Kaabi, Minister of Transport and Telecommunication, The Kingdom of Bahrain, to discuss cooperation in postal service and road networks.

Governor assures every possible cooperation to resolve issues of masses & transporters

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Kakar has assured every possible cooperation for resolving the issues being faced by the masses as well as transporters and those associated with the coal mining in Shirani, Zhub and Harnai.

The Governor was speaking to a delegation comprising the All Parties, transporters of Shirani, Zhub and Harnai and representatives of Harnai Awami Ittehad, who called on him here at the Governor house on Thursday.

The member provincial assembly, Nasrullah Zairay led the delegation. The members of delegations apprised the Governor about the issues and hardships being faced by the people of three districts besides transporters and especially those associated with the business of coal.

They informed that the people of concerned districts are facing numerous issues. They sought role of Governor for resolving their issues.

The Governor gave patient hearing to the issues and assured to resolve them.

A-Web delegation visits ECP to foster collaboration

ISLAMABAD (APP): A two-member delegation from the Association of World Election Bodies (A-Web) visited the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to learn about its operations and invited the Commission to attend the General Assembly meeting of the Association, which is scheduled to be held next year in Colombia.

According to a press release, various Wings of the ECP provided detailed briefings to the delegation.

Former Chairman PCB Ijaz Butt passes away
LAHORE (Online): Former Chairman of Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) and former test cricketer Ijaz Butt passed away. In this regard, his son-in-law Arif Saeed has confirmed that Ijaz Butt was 85 years old and was ill for long time. Late Ijaz Butt represented Pakistan in 8 test matches. He was chairman of Pakistan Cricket Board from 2008 to 2011.

Iranian FM calls on Chairman Senate

ISLAMABAD (Online): Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani has said that Pakistan Iran bilateral relations are rooted in historical linkages and based on religious, linguistic, cultural similarities and spiritual affiliation. He expressed these views in a meeting with Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian here at Parliament House on Thursday.

He further said that Iran was the first country to acknowledge Pakistan's sovereignty and to support our membership in the United Nations. "I view this as a solid foundation upon which we have built close bilateral ties that we continue to nature", Chairman Senate observed. He observed that Parliamentary ties between Pakistan and Iran have also grown stronger over the years, with multiple bilateral visits and cooperation at international forums such as the IPU and the APA.

Justice Mazahir Naqvi pens letter to CJP

ISLAMABAD (Online) (SJC). The Chairman of the Council shall send a member of the Council to examine the said information or complaint and express his opinion. "In my case, according to media reports, the matter was referred to Justice Sardar Tariq Masood on May 29 to express his opinion on the complaint. It is a matter of record that the said judge wrote two letters to the members of the Supreme Judicial Council and me on April 3 and 26, the letter expressed his impatience and eagerness to initiate proceedings before the Supreme Judicial Council said Justice Mazahir Ali Naqvi.

67th Meeting of National Logistics Board held

ISLAMABAD (Online): The 67th meeting of the National Logistics Board (NLB) was held on Thursday. Chaired by Chairman NLB, the Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives (PDSI), Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, the meeting was attended by other members of the apex logistics body.

Lieutenant General Muhammad Ali, Quartermaster General Pakistan Army / Officer In-Charge (OIC) NLC, and Major General Farrukh Shahzad Rao, Director General NLC, apprised the participants on the operational, administrative and financial matters of the organization.

The Board was apprised of NLC's regional connectivity initiatives under Transport Internationaux Routiers (TIR), and the bilateral transit trade agreements with China, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkey.

The Board was informed that NLC has so far completed 14 trips to these countries in past one year while preparations are being made to undertake 2 more trips to Kazakhstan & Kyrgyzstan through China.

Earlier this year, 21 trucks of NLC delivered relief goods donated by the Government of Pakistan for the Turkish earthquake victims by road. It was the first ever road transportation of relief goods to any regional country by Pakistan.

Prof. Ahsan Iqbal lauded the performance of NLC and praised the organisation's contributions towards nation-building activities. He assured that PD&SI will play its role in resolving matters pertaining to issuance of I & E forms by commercial banks to exporters and importers for shipment through Iran.

The minister directed NLC management to explore ways and means for all whether operationalization of khunjab pass for trade with China.



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NA body on HR urges govt for removal of civil judge on alleged torture

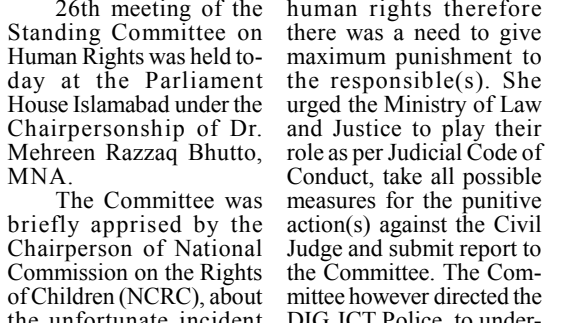
ISLAMABAD (Online): The National Assembly Standing Committee on Human Rights, expressing grave concern over alleged torture of underaged housemaid Rizwana by the wife of a Civil Judge, urged that the Ministry of Law and Justice should immediately initiate the process for removal from service of the said Civil Judge.

26th meeting of the Standing Committee on Human Rights was held today at the Parliament House Islamabad under the Chairpersonship of Dr. Mehreen Razaq Bhutto, MNA.

The Committee was briefed by the Chairperson of National Commission on the Rights of Children (NCRC), about the unfortunate incident occurred with an innocent girl named Rizwana who was a maid in the house of Civil Judge. She further informed the Committee that the incident was happened on 24th July, 2023, and reported in media after 2 days. Initially, the FIR was very weak however on the basis of Medico Legal Report, some more sections were added in the FIR to further strengthen the case.

The DIG, ICT Police, also endorsed the statement of the chairperson NCRC.

Chairperson of the Standing Committee; while referring the Articles No. 3, 11, 23, 25-A, 35 and 37 (a) of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan 1973, held that the unfortunate incident was clear-cut violation of the human rights therefore there was a need to give maximum punishment to the responsible(s). She urged the Ministry of Law and Justice to play their role as per Judicial Code of Conduct, take all possible measures for the punitive action(s) against the Civil Judge and submit report to the Committee. The Committee however directed the DIG, ICT Police, to undertake an impartial inquiry; ignoring all sorts of pressures, finalize the report and submit to the Committee at the earliest possible. The Committee further directed the Ministry of Human Rights to give their input on the draft policy; prepared by Child Rights Commission, and submit the same to the Committee in the next meeting.



QUETTA: Director General Balochistan Levies Force Naseebullah Khan Kakar in a group with under trainee ASPs of National Police Academy

Concept of "A" and "B" areas ended: Peace restored owing to excellent performance, services of Levies & Police in Balochistan: DG Levies

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Director General of Levies force Balochistan, Naseebullah Khan Kakar has stated that the peace has been restored in the province because of the excellent performance and services of the Levies and police force.

He said that we have ended the concept of "A" and "B" areas in the province.

He said that huge sacrifices have been rendered by the police, Levies and Frontier Corps (FC) jawans for the cause of peace in the province.

The DG Levies force was speaking to the under trainee police officers of the National Police Academy (NPA), currently on study tour of Balochistan, during their visit to the Levies force headquarter here on Thursday.

Also present on the occasion were the Additional Inspector General of Police, Jawad Ahmed Dogar, Director Training of NPA, Noman Siddiqui, Course Commander Rana Abdul Aziz, Director Operations Balochistan Levies, Mir Wais Khan Kakar, and others.

Mir Wais Kakar briefed the visiting trainee police officers about the overall functioning and performance of Levies force in Balochistan.

Speaking on the occasion, the Director General Levies maintained that Levies is mainly responsible for security of the large area of the province. He mentioned that the trust of people is mounting on the Levies force in the province.

He also said that the Levies is a tribal and regional law enforcing force and it better knows how to deal with the criminals and law breakers having good capacity and capability of the same.

He also said that we are proud of the performance of Army, FC, Police and Levies.

The DG also highlighted the role and services of Levies force in dealing with different situations besides maintaining law and order in the province.

It has equally played important role in extending assistance and relief to the masses during the flood situation in Balochistan, the DG maintained.