

# Independent

Member APNS & CPNE

Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah

www.dailyindependent.com.pk

Quetta

Ph: 2841470/2841473 REG: No. BC-116 B/ID-445 V& XXIV No 345, Muharramul Haram 19, 1445 AH Monday August 07, 2023 Pages 12, Price Rs.15

## President, PM express grief over loss of lives Over 30 killed, scores injured as 10 bogies of Hazara Express derail near Nawabshah

Railways minister hints at possible sabotage, says accident could be result of a mechanical fault or the fault may have been 'created'

NAWABSHAH (INP): Over 30 people were killed and dozens others injured when ten bogies of Havelian bound Hazara Express derailed near the Sarhari Railway Station close to Nawabshah on Sunday.

Local people, rescue personnel, railway officials, Pakistan Army, FC and officials of district management reached the scene and joined the rescue operation.

Talking to media at People's Medical College Hospital in Benazirabad,

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah confirmed the death toll.

He said that the injured could be shifted to Karachi if needed and directed the local administration and health officials to expedite relief and rescue efforts.

According to Railways and Aviation Minister Khawaja Saad Rafique, the accident occurred at 1:18pm and around 1,000 passengers were travelling in the Hazara Express.

During rescue opera-

tion, dozens of cars, tractors, rickshaws and motorcycles were seen parked on a road that runs alongside the track at the site of accident.

Volunteers were witnessed through a canal that separates the road from the railway line to help, and lifting the injured to get them assistance.

Some passenger compartments were upright but off the tracks, while others lay on their side, mangled steel from the undercarriage



NAWABSHAH: A large numbers of people gathered at the accident site following the derailment of a Hazara Express in Nawabshah



Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif addressing a public gathering in Kasur.

## Asadullah Baloch vows to record protest against cut in population of Balochistan

Independent Report

QUETTA: The central President of Balochistan



National Party-Awami (BNP-A) and Provincial Minister for Agriculture, Mir Asadullah Baloch has stated that injustice has been done with people of the province by reducing the population of the province.

He said that while the province's actual population was more than 20 million in the recently conducted population and housing census, but it was deducted at least up to 7 million in the meeting of council of common interests (CCI) on Saturday.

He mentioned that there was no deduction in the population of other provinces in the CCU's meeting.

He said that strong protest would be lodged against the injustice done with the province in population census.



SANGHAR: Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety & Chairperson, Benazir Income Support Programme Ms. Shazia Marri distributing ownership (Sanad) of houses built by Sindh Government to the deserving people during the ceremony Distribution of Land Title to Flood Affectees.

## Senate passes amended 'Official Secrets Bill 2023' amidst controversy

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Senate on Sunday successfully passed 'The Official Secrets (Amendment) Bill, 2023', marking a pivotal moment in the legislative landscape.

The bill, which had faced staunch opposition from various quarters, underwent crucial modifications before achieving passage.

Minister for Law and Justice, Azam Nazir Tarar, presented the bill on behalf of Minister for Interior, Rana Sanaulah Khan, in the house. Notably, the revised

version of the bill omitted certain provisions that had granted intelligence agencies the authority to carry out warrantless arrests or searches.

He emphasized that the revised legislation empowers the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) to conduct investigations into individuals suspected of violating the Official Secrets Act.

He highlighted that the bill no longer includes the amendment labelling an individual as an 'enemy' for engaging with foreign

agents, a provision that had sparked extensive debates.

Simultaneously, the Senate Standing Committee on Cabinet, chaired by Senator Rana Maqbool Ahmed, presented its comprehensive report on 'The Official Secrets (Amendment) Bill, 2023'. The committee's report underscored the urgency to amend the antiquated Official Secrets Act of 1923, considering the evolving social context and the necessity to safeguard official documents.

The event was also in connection with preparations for the upcoming 'peace seminar' to be held in memory of the martyrs

## Seven girls drowned to death in local stream of Turbat

Independent Report

QUETTA: Seven girls were drowned to death in a local stream located in Kalag area of Turbat of Kech district on Sunday evening.

According to the reports reaching here, two other girls were saved in the incident and shifted to the local hospital in unconscious condition.

The reports suggested that at least nine girls aged between 10-17 went to the local stream of Kalag for picnic where they were trapped in the deep water and thus drowned.

The local people rushed to the spot and at-

tempted to save them, however, seven of them were drowned and died before they were taken out of the stream. The bodies of deceased girls were retrieved from the stream after hectic efforts.

Two of nine girls, however, were saved by the local dwellers and shifted to the Turbat hospital. Later, the bodies of ill-fated girls were also removed to the hospital. Afterwards, the bodies were handed over to the heirs. Moving scenes were witnessed on the occasion when bodies of the girls were brought to their homes.

## Pakistan cricket team gets go-ahead to travel to India for ICC World Cup

Govt, however, has deep concerns about security of its cricket team: Foreign Office

ISLAMABAD (Online): Pakistan has consistently maintained that sports should not be mixed with politics and therefore, decided to send its Cricket Team to India to participate in the upcoming ICC Cricket World Cup 2023.

Pakistan believes that the state of bilateral relations with India should not stand in the way of fulfilling its international sports-related obligations. Pakistan's decision shows its constructive and responsible approach vis-à-vis India's intransigent attitude, as the latter had refused to send its Cricket Team to Pakistan for the Asia Cup. Pakistan, however, has deep concerns about the security of its Cricket Team. We are conveying these concerns to the International Cricket Council and the Indian authorities. We expect that full safety and security of Pakistan Cricket Team will be ensured during its visit to India, said authorities.



QUETTA: Balochistan Governor Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar presenting best performance shield to PRO Provincial Ombudsman Riaz ud Din Bangulzai.

## Asghar Achakzai, other ANP leaders assert: Deduction in population of Balochistan would not be acceptable anyway

By Sardar Khandoi

CHAMAN: The Provincial President of ANP and parliamentary leader, Asghar Khan Achakzai and other senior leaders of the party have asserted that we would not be accepting any cut on the population census of the province at any cost. In this regard, we would raise forceful voice along with the like-minded and nationalist forces. This and similar other views were expressed by the Provincial President of ANP, Asghar Khan Achakzai and other senior leaders of the party including Ubaidullah Abid, Mabat Kaka, Asghar Ali Tareen and other leaders while addressing the inaugural ceremony of the Intra-party membership held at the Chaman Model High School Hall the other day.

The event was also in connection with preparations for the upcoming 'peace seminar' to be held in memory of the martyrs

of August 8, 2016 in Quetta. On the occasion, Nazir Jan Hasnzai also announced to join ANP along with his companions and leaders of the Pashtoon Students Federation.

Welcoming the new joiners in the party's fold, Asghar Khan Achakzai and others said that it is a good omen that the like-minded political activists are joining the party. They strongly condemned the incidents of terrorism on the Pashtoon land saying that terrorism is not product of our country, rather it has been imposed on us. The terrorism has devastated everything, whether it is Majid Ali Khyber or Peshawar's police line or Jamiat workers' convention in Bajor or it is in form of the target killing of police and levies personnel.

They on the occasion also criticized the western route of CPEC saying that it is not a viable project.

## Nawaz Sharif to be next PM if voted to power: PM

KASUR (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Sunday said Nawaz Sharif would be the next prime minister of Pakistan and would change destiny of the country by initiating projects in the sectors of agriculture, industry and infrastructure.

He was speaking at a public meeting here after laying foundation stone for Taray Garh interchange on the Lahore-Bahawalnagar motorway and Rai Mansab Ali Khan interchange on the Bucheki-Nankana road.

"Nawaz Sharif will serve the people of Pakistan as prime minister for another term if voted to power. He considers the

whole of Pakistan as his family and in the past selflessly served the people," he remarked.

He said Rs 263 billion would be spent on the construction of motorway from Lahore to Bahawalnagar and on other projects.

He recalled that in the past, Pakistan suffered from load-shedding of 20 hours every day and then Nawaz Sharif came in 2013 and he removed the darkness caused by power shortages by setting up power projects, revived industry and agriculture and brought the CPEC project of \$30 billion with the collaboration of China.

He said their govern-

ment provided laptops worth billions of rupees to millions of students, adding he was unfairly criticised for delivering laptops to youth who were now using modern tools of communication and earning livelihoods.

He noted that Nawaz Sharif initiated the project of Diamer Bhasha and Dasu dams and made Pakistan a nuclear state by conducting six nuclear explosions in response to five explosions by India.

He reminded that Nawaz Sharif rejected the offer of \$ five billion by the then US President Bill Clinton and went on with

## CM grieved over incident of drowning of seven girls in Kech district

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo has expressed his deep grief and sorrow over incident of drowning of seven girls in a stream in Kalag area of Turbat, Kech district on Sunday.

In a condolence message issued here, the Chief Minister said that he was grieved over the death of seven girls in the sorrowful incident. He said that he is standing with the bereaved families in the time of trial. Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo prayed for the departed souls of deceased girls. He also prayed that may Allah Almighty give enough strength and patience to the bereaved families to bear the tragic loss of death of the girls.

## PTI leader Rahim Kakar along two sons arrested

QUETTA (Online): Former mayor and PTI leader Rahim Kakar along with two sons has been arrested on the charges peaceful protest against the arrest of Tehreek-e-Insaf chairman. Rahim Kakar along with his supporters protested and blocked road against the arrest of Imran Khan

Quetta police took action and arrested Rahim Kakar and his two sons



KARACHI: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Marriyum Aurangzeb addresses to media persons during meet the press program held at Karachi press club.

## Imran's arrest not political Cases cannot be avoided by dodging law, attacking institutions: Marriyum

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb has said that cases cannot be avoided by dodging the law, evading the courts and attacking national institutions.

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chairman Imran Khan's arrest has nothing to do with politics, nor it was an act of political vendetta, she said during an exclusive interview with BBC World.

"Peaceful protest is a democratic right of any political party or worker, but no protesters came out on the arrest of chairman PTI as people cannot be fooled every time, courts are there".

The minister said that the legal procedures were

completed in the Tosha Khana case against Chairman PTI, and on the completion of his trial, the court announced a verdict on which he was arrested.

She said that Chairman PTI failed to present evidence in his defense, he was accused of abuse of power, but he could not answer questions when asked about state gifts.

She said apart from this, four more cases of theft of 190 million British pounds, cipher, May 9 tragedy and foreign funding case are also in the trial courts against Imran.

In response to a question, the minister said that no one can be given impunity for misuse of powers.

She said that the arrest



HUB: Activists of National Party are holding protest demonstration against massive unemployment, increasing price of daily use products and inflation price hiking, in Hub.



## President upholds penalty of PTV employees for creating hostile, offensive environment for female

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi has upheld the penalty of withholding the promotion for two years upon six PTV employees who were involved in creating a hostile and offensive work environment for a female cameraman (the complainant).  
He also held that the complainant's termination from service was being rendered as void ab initio as disciplinary proceedings were initiated against her without following the due process, in a slipshod and clumsy manner, and rude and degrading actions were taken against her, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release on Sunday. The president gave this decision while rejecting the representations filed by PTV, Abdul Rashid, Zia-ur-Rehman, Maqbool Shah, Muhammad Munawar, and Kanwal Masood, in which the Federal Ombudsman for Protection against Harassment of Women at Workplace (FOSPAP) had imposed the minor penalty of withholding of promotion for two years and fine of Rs 100,000 upon Zia-ur-Rehman, Abdul Rashid, Maqbool Shah, Kanwal Masood, Saeed Ather, and Muhammad Munawar (the respondents) for issuing charge sheets, suspension orders, transfer orders and orders to ban the entry of the complainant into the premises of PTV in a slipshod manner.

He, however, set aside the penalty of fine imposed

by FOSPAP, on 16.10.2017, upon the employees involved in the matter.

The complainant had filed a complaint before FOSPAP alleging that she had been assaulted by two employees at PTV premises and the respondents had supported them.

The charges of sexual harassment, however, could not be established against the accused, however, FOSPAP had decided to impose minor penalty upon the respondents for initiating acts which amounted to workplace harassment.

Earlier, the President of Pakistan on 05.01.2018 had reversed the decision of FOSPAP as the charges of sexual harassment were not proved in the case.

Later, the Supreme Court of Pakistan accepted civil review petitions filed by the complainant (female cameraman) and Attorney General for Pakistan, set aside the earlier judgments of the Supreme Court and Islamabad High Court passed in the matter and remanded the representation to the President for decision afresh.

The Supreme Court in its judgment, dated 06.06.2023, had interpreted the word 'harassment' by elaborating that harassment had two components, first pertained to sexual favors and the second was about creating a hostile or offensive working environment.



Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif unveils a plaque to mark the ground breaking of Lahore-Sahiwal-Bahawalnagar moterway in Kasur.



FAISALABAD: Interior Minister Rana Sana Ullah Khan is addressing a public gathering during inauguration of Nadra Registration Centre at Union Council 117 Dhanola.

## AJK Assembly strongly rejects abrogation of Article 370 by Indian govt

MIRPUR AJK (APP): The Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly (AJK LA) in its meeting held here on Sunday, strongly rejected the abrogation of Article 370 by Indian government and termed it a dirty conspiracy against the state subjects and their democratic rights. They termed the sinister actions as an atrocious assault to alter the region's demographics and erode Muslim majority Kashmir's ancient political, cultural and religious identity.

According to details, the legislative body through a unanimously adopted resolution, presented by Leader of the House Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq on Saturday denounced the Indian move and termed it as a flagrant violation of the UNSC resolutions.

While presenting the resolution in the assembly, the AJK PM said that 5th August was another darkest day in the history of Kashmir.

He said that being a representative forum of the entire state of Jammu and Kashmir, the AJK legisla-



QUETTA: Quetta Administrator, Jabbar Baloch inspecting various offices and parks during his surprise visit, in Quetta.

sentiments and feelings of the Kashmiri's living on both sides of the Line of Control.

The august House, he said, rejects the India's attempted annexation of the held territory of Jammu and Kashmir and considers all its actions as illegal and against the spirit of the UN resolutions and international law.

"The House considers changing the status of IIOJK and dividing it into two Union Territories as an attempt to push forward Hindutva agenda in the region and erode identity of Kashmiri's."

The resolution condemned the India's cultural aggression and distortion of the Kashmiri's history and its civilization.

He said that this house condemns in strong terms the Indian bid to reduce Kashmiri's role in political decision making process, depriving them of the right to due representation through illegal, unjust and unconstitutional delimitation process. The house, he said, was concerned about the illegal settlement of

non-Kashmiris in IIOJK by India and issuing fake domicile certificates to non-state subjects during the last four years.

The PM said that this representative forum (AJK assembly) considers all these measures as a violation of the Kashmiri's fundamental human rights and a conspiracy to render Kashmiri's landless in their own homeland.

He said that over the past 34 years, 96225 civilians have been martyred, 22960 women widowed and 1, 07,923 children orphaned.

He pointed out that more than 8 thousand mass graves were discovered in IOK.

He said that 11259 women were humiliated whereas the number of half widows has swelled over 2,500. "Over 10,000 youths have been forcibly disappeared and thousands of Kashmiri's have been forced to migrate during the years of turmoil", he said.

"This House demands that the international community take notice of these serious violations of human rights in the region", the PM said.

He said that this House expresses its grave concern over the threat to the health and lives of political and human rights activists including Yasin Malik, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, Musrat Alam Butt, Shabir Shah, Asia Andrab, Nahida Nasreen, Fahmida Sufi, Dr. Qasim Fakto and other activists who have been languishing in Indian jails for the past several years.

Earlier, after the incident occurred the rescue teams of Pakistan Army and Rangers Sindh had started reaching the accident site.

Moreover, additional troops were called in from Hyderabad and Skarund.

Apart from this, Army Aviation Helicopters were also sent for rescue so that the precious lives of the injured could be saved as soon as possible with rescue helicopters.

President Dr Arif Alvi Sunday expressed grief over the loss of lives in the accident of Hazara Express train. He sympathised with the bereaved families and prayed for grant of patience to them.

Meanwhile Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Sunday expressed grief and sorrow over the loss of precious lives in an accident of Hazara Express in Nawabshah.

He prayed for the departed souls and ordered the administration to provide the best possible medical treatment to the injured. He sought a report from the railways authorities about the accident. He praised the efforts of personnel of Pakistan Railways, Rescue and Pakistan army for their timely help.

## Khursheed Shah hopes elections to be held on time, PPP to stand if it delays

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan People's Party leader Syed Khurshid Shah Sunday expressed hope that Pakistan Muslim League-N will take the country in the right direction and elections would take place on time in accordance with the constitution as PPP will stand if polls will be delayed.

"Election should be held under the code of conduct as economic stability hinges on political stability", he said while talking to a private news channel.

"PPP truly believes in timely and transparent elections which would be better for the country and its stability," he added.

Replying to a question about the progress in the appointment of the caretaker setup, he explained

that it was important to follow the Constitution, adding, almost all parties are included in the committee.

They have finalized five names at a committee level, not the leadership level," he added.

He said that the PM candidate should be independent, adding, a candidate should not be an active member of any party nor be a major leader of any party.

He also appreciated PM Shahbaz Sharif and the way he took all his allied parties along, adding, he also hoped that now it's all responsibility of PML-N to take wise decisions for the caretaker of set up and timely elections for the smooth system of state affairs.

## Former MPA Javed Hakeem passed away in London

LONDON (Online): Javed Hakeem Qureshi, founder member of Pakistan People Party and former MPA of PPP from Rawalpindi, passed away in London after illness. According to details, Javed Hakeem Qureshi became the President of PPP Rawalpindi in 1970 and He was elected MPA from Rawalpindi in the same capacity.

The deceased was associated with journalism and education. During the Zia-ul-Haq era, he went into exile and settled in London and established an education system there. Ghazal Faisal, daughter of Javed Hakeem Qureshi, said that the deceased's burial will be in London.



KARACHI: President Karachi Press Club Saeed Sarbazi and Secretary Sohaib Ahmed present traditional Ajrak to Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb during her visit to Karachi Press Club.

## Nawaz Sharif to be next....

Continued from page 1 the nuclear explosions while ignoring pressure. Nawaz Sharif also started Zarb e Azab led by Pakistan army to eradicate terrorism and the jawans of armed forces and people from all sections of society rendered sacrifices against terrorism.

Shehbaz Sharif said unfortunately terrorists were again allowed to re-enter Pakistan and they took many innocent lives in terrorist acts. In the era of Nawaz Sharif, the PM said Pakistan had good relations with friendly and brotherly countries including China, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Turkey, Qatar and others.

Then Imran Niazi was imposed on the country after rigged election in 2018 and his regime caused severe damage to relations with these countries including Islamic countries and he resorted to baseless allegations of corruption against companies of China, he added.

Ties with China were broken by the former government of Imran Niazi despite the fact that the neighbouring country massively invested in infrastructure, power and road projects, he pointed out.

The prime minister said former judge Saqib Nisar and other co-conspirators ousted Nawaz Sharif on the basis of residence permit even when his name was not among the 400 persons named in the Panama papers.

Nawaz Sharif and his daughter Maryam Nawaz appeared before the court 100 times in their cases and

did not evade arrests as was later done by Imran Niazi who presented a fake receipt for an expensive watch imprinted with a model of Khana-e-Kaaba and came in court with a "bucket on his head", he added.

He said those who filed false and concocted cases against opposition leaders now met divine justice.

He said in the tenure of Imran Niazi, several cases of corruption surfaced including wheat and sugar scams in which money was minted by unnecessary export and import of these commodities and then these acts of fraud were never probed and citizens bore the burden of loot and plunder.

He said his government faced unprecedented challenges of inflation and devastating floods.

"My government distributed Rs100 billion among the flood affectees and several hundreds of billions are still required for their rehabilitation."

He said due to his government's policies and distribution of seeds and fertilizer on lower rates, bumper wheat was produced while cotton production this year would also be at record levels.

"My government saved the country from default and from difficult economic conditions, unemployment and price hikes by signing the agreement with the International Monetary Fund."

He said reasons of current inflation were war in Ukraine and rising international commodity and fuel prices, adding due to the mismanagement of the past

## Governor Kakar lauds significant contributions of Hayatullah Durrani

Independent Report

QUETTA, Governor House Quetta warmly welcomed esteemed guests, Mr. Hayatullah Khan Durrani, the recipient of the prestigious Pride-of-Performance Award and the first Pakistani to be honored with the British Caving Legend Award, and Mr. Muhammad Abubakar Durrani, a stellar athlete and 13-time National Canoeing Champion from Pakistan Customs Quetta. Also present in the meeting was Mr. Hashim Khan Ghalzai PS to Governor, who holds the distinguished positions of Patron for both the Pakistan Canoe and Kayak Federation and the Hayat Durrani Water Sports Academy International (HDWSA) at Hanna Lake Quetta.

During the productive meeting, Governor Abdul Wali Kakar lauded the significant contributions made by Mr. Hayatullah Khan Durrani in fostering the development of Canoe Kayak, Rowing, Mountaineering and Caving Adventure Sports in Pakistan. The Governor also commended Mr. Muhammad Abubakar Durrani for his exemplary achievements at both the national and international levels, recognizing

his unwavering dedication and excellence in the sport of canoeing.

In light of the outstanding accomplishments and passion demonstrated by these individuals, it was decided to celebrate Pakistan's Independence Day 14th August, 2023, with great fervor and enthu-

siasm by hosting the prestigious "Governor Balochistan Canoeing Trophy Championship." The event is set to be organized at the renowned Hayat Durrani Water Sports Academy International (Pvt, Ltd) and its sprawling ranch at Hanna Lake Quetta, in collaboration with the Pakistan Canoe and Kayak Federation.

Mr. Hashim Khan Ghalzai presented a comprehensive overview of the upcoming Championship, providing valuable insights into the diverse activities organized by HDWSA International in conjunction with the Pakistan Canoe and Kayak Federation.

Governor Abdul Wali Kakar expressed his resolute commitment and he eagerly anticipates inaugurating the Independence-Day Canoe Kayak Championship, contributing to the spirited and sportive celebration of the nation's Independence Day.

The event promises to unite athletes, enthusiasts, and spectators, to showcase the immense talent and dedication of Pakistan's canoe and kayak athletes on a national stage.

Mr. Hashim Khan Ghalzai presented a com-

## Cases cannot be avoided ....

Continued from page 1

institutions, hospitals, schools and ambulances. She said that there were also attacks on Capitol Hill in the United States and all those who were involved in them have been punished irrespective of their status. She said that a person who has been proven guilty in court has to be arrested.

In response to a question, the minister said that during the investigation process in the trial court, Imran Khan was given ample opportunities through 40 hearings but he appeared only three times and could not provide any proof in his defense.

On another question, the federal minister of information said that the arrest of Imran Khan cannot be compared that of Nawaz Sharif.

When allegations against Nawaz Sharif were leveled, he as prime minister, he wrote a letter to his Supreme Court for his accountability. He appeared in day-to-day hearings of NAB court for 150 times.

No one burnt any ambulance, hospital, mosque or school during protest against Nawaz Sharif arrest, she maintained.

To a question, she said that the public cannot be hoodwinked every time, Imran Khan incited violence to avoid the law, provoked his workers who attacked the police, rangers and state institutions. He even used children and women as human shields to avoid arrest, she remarked.



HYDERABAD: Activists of Pashtunkhwa Mili Awami Party (PKMAP) are holding protest demonstration against Bajaur Blast, at Hyderabad press club.



## Ahsan lauds PIDE's efforts in expanding its research dissemination network

**Independent Report**  
ISLAMABAD: The Chancellor acknowledged economic research's pivotal role in shaping nations' future worldwide. He emphasized that economic research at PIDE serves as a navigator for policymakers, guiding them toward informed choices that align with the long-term interests of Pakistan. By fostering international cooperation and addressing global challenges, PIDE's research plays a significant role in contributing to a stable and harmonious global economy. Underlining the government's commitment to equipping Pakistan with an intellectual arsenal, the Chancellor outlined the "5 Es Strategy" focusing on increasing exports, building a knowledge economy, addressing environmental and climate change challenges, securing sustainable energy and infrastructure, and promoting equity and empowerment.

PIDE's role in evidence-based research and carving better policies and strategies was highlighted as pivotal in addressing the challenges faced by the nation. The Chancellor ap-

plauded PIDE's efforts in expanding its research dissemination network through various social media platforms, webinars, and the RASTA Competitive Grants Program for Policy-Oriented Research, which has successfully created a network of over 2000 researchers and academicians. This was stated by the Honorable Minister of Planning Development & Special Initiatives, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal at the groundbreaking ceremony of PIDE's own new building in H-8/1 Islamabad.

During the Ground Breaking Ceremony, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, in his address as a chief guest, emphasized the significance of PIDE as the nation's premier think tank, emphasizing that it goes beyond being just a building; it is an intellectual powerhouse and a crucible of ideas where brilliant minds converge to address the complexities of Pakistan's economic challenges. He further underlined the institute's commitment to harnessing the power of intellect for an equitable and thriving future for the people of Pakistan.

Research and innovation, the Chancellor asserted, hold the key to national progress and development. In today's rapidly evolving global landscape, research serves as a guiding compass, illuminating the path toward prosperity, sustainability, and societal advancement. By unlocking new frontiers of knowledge and catalyzing transformative change, research empowers the nation to harness human ingenuity and creativity. The new PIDE building, the Chancellor declared, will provide a state-of-the-art home for the think tank's ongoing pursuit of knowledge and understanding. This smart, vertical, and environmentally friendly campus will further strengthen PIDE's tradition of excellence and its commitment to walking the talk. He concluded by expressing his best wishes for the successful completion of the construction and the future endeavors of PIDE. He emphasized his belief that PIDE's new home will solidify its position as the nation's leading think tank and contribute significantly to Pakistan's journey towards becoming a knowledge economy.



ISLAMABAD: PIDE VC, Dr. Nadeem ul Haque presenting souvenir to Federal Minister Ahsan Iqbal during inauguration of the foundation stone of PIDE's new building. Pro VC Dr. Durre Nayab, and other important dignitaries are also present on the occasion.

## LAJA, EU and UNDP hold consultative workshop to enhance access to legal aid in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Under the European Union-funded 'Deliver Justice Project', the Legal Aid and Justice Authority (LAJA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) here on Sunday jointly organized a two-day consultative workshop to improve access to legal aid in Pakistan.

The workshop brought together representatives from the government, rule of law institutions, national and international partners and civil society organizations to discuss LAJA's mandate and provide recommendations to LAJA/government regarding how to ensure access to justice through legal aid in a sustainable manner. LAJA was established under the LAJA Act 2020 to provide legal, financial and technical assistance for access to justice for poor and vulnerable groups in society on criminal cases. The key functions of LAJA are to provide legal aid/assistance to poor and vulnerable groups, particularly women and children; enhance public awareness of legal aid and laws in Pakistan; research legal aid and pro bono legal services in Pakistan; and advise the

government on the right to a fair trial and due process of the law.

Under the European Union-funded 'Deliver Justice Project', the UNDP Pakistan's Rule of Law Programme and LAJA organized the two-day consultative workshop aiming to identify challenges faced by LAJA and develop recommendations to feed into a new strategic plan for LAJA to effectively implement its key functions.

Dr. Muhammad Raheem Awaan, Director General, LAJA, attended the workshop along with Dr. Federico Romoli, International Aid/Cooperation Officer on Rule of Law, Delegation of the European Union to Pakistan and Mr. Rana Kaiser Ishaque, Assistant Resident Representative, UNDP Pakistan. Representatives from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and UN WOMEN also participated in the workshop.

Ms. Mehnaz Akber Aziz, Parliamentary Secretary for Law and Justice Ministry, Government of Pakistan, attended the closing ceremony of the two-day workshop as a chief guest where all the key recommendations were pre-

sented. She stated, "LAJA has a strong standing in the chain of the Criminal Justice System of Pakistan to provide legal aid and access to justice to vulnerable groups of society. We remain committed to strengthening LAJA to implement its mandate and encourage all justice sector stakeholders to extend support for enabling LAJA to serve the citizens of Pakistan."

In his address, Dr. Muhammad Raheem Awaan, Director General, LAJA, underlined, "LAJA has a huge responsibility to improve awareness of legal aid and ensure access to justice for all in Pakistan. We are optimistic that initiatives like these will play an instrumental role in achieving that goal." He thanked the European Union and UNDP Pakistan for their support in bringing all the important stakeholders under one roof to discuss and resolve roadblocks that impede LAJA from implementing its key functions successfully. Dr. Federico Romoli, International Aid/Cooperation Officer on Rule of Law, Delegation of the European Union to Pakistan, with a separate note thanked the LAJA, UNDP, UN Women, and UNODC, for their efforts.

## Mirwaiz completes four years of continued illegal house detention

ISLAMABAD (APP): All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) senior leader in occupied Jammu and Kashmir, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq completed four years of continued illegal house detention.

According to Kashmir Media Service, the authorities have kept Mirwaiz under house arrest since August 04, 2019, a day before the Modi regime revoked the special status of JIOJK.

APHC in a statement issued in Srinagar said without any written order or any charges against him, he is undergoing arbitrary and extrajudicial detention, leading to the suspension of all his fundamental human rights and freedoms, and his responsibilities as the Mirwaiz of Jammu and Kashmir.

What is ironic is that the authorities at the highest level deny this and say he is free while a police and paramilitary contingent remains permanently stationed outside his residence disallowing him from leaving it, it deplored.

It said it is an acknowledged fact that the Mirwaiz has always advocated and led initiatives even at personal cost, for a peaceful settlement of the Kashmir dispute through talks.

APHC said that jailing Kashmiri political leadership, cadres, activists, journalists, arresting youth on a daily basis, terminating Kashmiris from employment, framing and executing laws that disempower local people, engineering demographic change, gagging media and seizing resources, all as a means of establishing peace and an approach to problem solving is the way of the current dispensation. What is to be seen is how long this approach is followed and implemented, it added.

APHC said for its part it will continue to safeguard the rights and interests of people of Jammu and Kashmir and advocate dialogue, good neighborly relations, peaceful coexistence.

## ICRC honors King Fahd's enduring legacy advancing Islamic unity, education

ISLAMABAD (APP): The International Consortium for Religious Diplomacy (ICRC), a non-profitable organization, on Sunday, marked the 18th death anniversary of King Fahd bin Abdulaziz Al Saud highlighting his remarkable achievements in serving the Ummah and leaving a lasting impact on the Muslim world. Born on March 16, 1921, in Riyadh, former King Fahd, a revered leader, ascended to the throne of Saudi Arabia on June 13, 1982 till 2005, leading the nation into an era of unparalleled progress and prosperity.

Addressing the event virtually from Riyadh, Saudi embassy's Press Attaché Dr. Naif Al-Otaibi said King Fahd was a visionary ruler who understood the importance of unity among Muslim nations and worked tirelessly to strengthen ties between them.

Shedding light on one of King Fahd's most significant contributions in fostering Islamic solidarity through the establishment

of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), now known as the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. This international organization brought together Muslim-majority countries, providing a platform for diplomatic collaboration and addressing issues of common concern, ranging from political conflicts to economic development and humanitarian assistance, he maintained.

He said King Fahd's dedication to education and knowledge also left a profound impact on the Ummah adding that he generously supported educational institutions worldwide, emphasizing the importance of knowledge in advancing societies.

Dr. Naif said his philanthropic endeavors included the establishment of King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals in Saudi Arabia, which became a center of excellence for science, engineering, and technology, contributing significantly to the development of human resources in the region.



ISLAMABAD: A view of tree branch fallen on a furniture shop in Sitara Market due to heavy rain in Federal Capital.

## Scientists find bacteria that can curb malaria transmission

ISLAMABAD (APP): An entirely novel approach for malaria control, and has potential to further reduce the huge burden of malaria in endemic countries and is more evidence that through deploying a range of prevention approaches, we may be able to finally eradicate this terrible disease," said Thomas Breuer, Chief Global Health Officer, GSK. The scientists working on next generation malaria medicines observed mosquitoes from an An. stephensi colonies in their insectary were no longer able to sustain P. falciparum infection—the most prevalent and fatal type of malaria in Africa, as well as other parts of the world, Medical Daily reported.

The potentially ground-breaking research suggests that the laboratory findings could be successfully translated to the field for malaria control, said the team led by scientists at GSK Pharma along with those from Johns Hopkins University in the US.

"Delftia tsuruhatensis TRES Cantos 1 (TC1) is an

entirely novel approach for malaria control, and has potential to further reduce the huge burden of malaria in endemic countries and is more evidence that through deploying a range of prevention approaches, we may be able to finally eradicate this terrible disease," said Thomas Breuer, Chief Global Health Officer, GSK. The scientists working on next generation malaria medicines observed mosquitoes from an An. stephensi colonies in their insectary were no longer able to sustain P. falciparum infection—the most prevalent and fatal type of malaria in Africa, as well as other parts of the world, Medical Daily reported.

Experiments confirmed that a particular strain of Delftia tsuruhatensis, which has been named TC1, was responsible for the loss of infectivity.



ISLAMABAD: large numbers of people are arrive to enjoying at Lake view Park during Sunday Holiday in Federal Capital.

## Mangla Dam's maximum water level of 1242.00 feet, only 7.50 feet away

ISLAMABAD (APP): Only 7.50 feet of water is left to reach the stipulated maximum 1242.00 feet of Water level Mangla Dam which reached much close to its maximum conservation level as it recorded the level of 1234.50 feet above mean sea level on Sunday, official sources said. Following the swift continual melting of glaciers and torrential rains at the upper reaches of the Himalayan Jammu & Kashmir State, Water level in country's second biggest Mirpur AJK-based Mangla dam is swiftly rising as the water level is rapidly getting close to its stipulated highest 1242.00 feet level, the official sources told APP here on Sunday. Jhelum River to the reservoir at Mangla was reported 43200 cusecs with the outflows of 10000 cusecs from the reservoir Sunday, the sources said. The overall position of the river inflows and out-

flows at Tarbela, Mangla and Chashma along with the reservoirs levels and the barrages remained on Sunday as under:-

Rivers: Indus at Tarbela: Inflows 231200 cusecs and Outflows 186900 cusecs, Kabul at Nowshera: Inflows 46800 cusecs and Outflows 46800 cusecs, Khairabad Bridge: Inflows 281800 cusecs and Outflow 281800, Jhelum at Mangla: Inflows 43200 cusecs and Outflows 10000 cusecs, Chenab at Marala: Inflows 82300 cusecs and Outflows 54300 cusecs, Barrages: Jinnah: Inflows 216100 cusecs and Outflows 208100 cusecs, Chashma: Inflows: 237500 cusecs and Outflows 241600 cusecs, Taunsa: Inflows 195700 cusecs and Outflows 180500 cusecs, Guddu: Inflows 248700 cusecs and Outflows 219800 cusecs.

## More than 1700 citizens get fine tickets over violation of speed limits in I'abad

**Independent report**  
ISLAMABAD: The squads of Islamabad capital police checking speed



limits through cameras issued more than 1700 fine tickets to road users over violations during the ongoing year, a police relations officer said.

Following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP), he said that a special campaign is underway to check violations while various squads headed by Chief Traffic Officer Islamabad are performing duties at main roads of the city and taking action against the violators of speed limits.

During the ongoing year, action was taken

main roads including Srinagar Highway and Faissal Avenue.

The CTO Islamabad Dr. Syed Mustafa Tanveer said that efforts are underway to ensure a disciplined traffic system in the city and he also appealed to the citizens to follow rules.

He said that Islamabad capital police personnel have been directed to ensure implementation on traffic rules and regulation irrespective of status and rank and demonstrate patience and politeness while issuing traffic violation tickets to the road users.

## Marri grieved over loss of precious lives in train accident

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister of Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Shazia Marri has expressed her heartfelt sorrow over the loss of human lives in the Hazara Express accident.

In a message issued here, the federal minister prayed for the speedy recovery of those injured in the train accident.

She assured that the government will leave no stone unturned in the treatment of the injured.

The government will ensure that such incidents do not happen in the future through an inquiry into the incident and taking further safety measures, she said.

## Senate standing committee meets today on PEMRA regulatory bill

ISLAMABAD (Online): Senate standing committee will meet today (Monday) in Parliament house to discuss PEMRA Regulatory bill.

According to Senate spokesperson Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory amendment bill 2023 will be reviewed in meeting. He said it is request to all stakeholders to submit their amendments, suggestions, Reforms in Committee secretariat before meeting. According to spokesperson it was decided in committee yesterday that all stakeholders will submit their opinion in written form in committee.

## Rivers Indus, Sutlej continue to flow in low flood: FFC

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Flood Commission (FFC) has said currently Rivers Indus in Guddu-Sukkur reach and Sutlej in Sulemanki-Islam reach are experiencing low flood. According to daily FFC report on Sunday, rest of the major rivers of Indus River System (Jhelum, Chenab & Ravi) are discharging normal flows. Present Combined Live Storage of major reservoirs (Tarbela, Chashma & Mangla) is 12.367 MAF i.e. 92% of the total value of 13.443 MAF.



ISLAMABAD: Motorists on their way at Islamabad Highway in Federal Capital, Section 144 imposed in major Pakistani cities after Chairman PTI arrest.

## Anoushay requests prayers Shamoon injured in car accident

ISLAMABAD (Online): Famed Pakistani actor and director, Shamoon Abbasi, renowned for his remarkable portrayal of antagonistic roles in the entertainment world, has sustained injuries in a recent car crash. The incident took place recently, and his sister, actor Anoushay Abbasi, took to social media to inform his fans about the unfortunate mishap.

Taking to her Instagram Story, Anoushay shared the specifics of the accident, mentioning that her brother suffered significant bleeding and broken teeth due to the impact. While the situation was undeniably distressing, she assured his fans not to be anxious and requested their prayers for his speedy recovery.

"As you all know, Shamoon bhai got into an accident earlier today,"

penned Anoushay on her Instagram Story. Alhamdulillah, he is okay. Thank you so much for all your concerns. He broke his tooth and he's obviously in pain, but otherwise, he's in good health. Remember him in your prayers."

Shamoon holds a prominent position in the Pakistani entertainment industry. His exceptional acting skills and versatility have earned him immense admiration from both audiences and critics alike. He is widely recognized for his outstanding performances in negative roles, where he brings depth and intensity to his characters, leaving a lasting mark on viewers.

As news of the accident spread, fans and well-wishers flooded social media with messages of concern and support. They sent their heartfelt prayers and best wishes.



ISLAMABAD: Youngsters are bathing in a water pond alongside road in Federal Capital.

## 4 members of criminal gangs arrested; cash, valuables recovered

**Independent Report**  
ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Police Nilore and Phulgrah police team have arrested four wanted members of two criminal gangs involved in numerous criminal activities and recovered cash, mobile phones and weapons with ammunition from their possession, a police public relations officer said.

He said that, following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP), the Islamabad Capital Police had categorically started a crackdown against criminal elements, in order to save the precious lives and property of citizens.

Following these directions, a Nilore police team used technical and human resources and succeeded in apprehending two wanted members of a dacoit gang involved in numerous dacoity activities.

The accused were identified as Mamoon Zaman and Faizan Hussain. Police team also recovered cash, mobile phones and weapons with ammunition from their possession.

Meanwhile, the Phulgrah police team used technical and human resources and succeeded in apprehending two wanted members of a thief gang involved in numerous theft activities.



Daily Voice of Masses  
**Independent**  
Monday August 07, 2023

**No surprises**

Pakistan's twisted political saga continues without the slightest deviation from a tired and predictable script. PTI chairman Imran Khan has been found guilty of "corrupt practices", disqualified from representing the people of Pakistan, fined Rs100,000, and sentenced to three years in jail for good measure.

If Mr Khan's actual 'crime' seems irrelevant and of little moral significance, it is because former prime ministers Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, Nawaz Sharif, Benazir Bhutto, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy faced similar treatment at the hands of the state; none of the charges levelled against them withstood the test of time.

Indeed, considering the frivolity of the charge and severity of Mr Khan's punishment, one need not reach too far back in history to find a parallel. Where Mr Sharif's political dreams were cut short over an unrequited salary, Mr Khan's political career has been rudely interrupted over failing to properly declare certain gifts he received as prime minister. In neither case, can the severity of the punishment be said to have fitted the 'crime'.

There is no denying that Mr Khan blundered by not complying with the ECP's asset declaration rules as strictly as he should have. However, months of reporting on Toshakhana records have since established that very few of those who received gifts in an official capacity may be able to pass similar scrutiny if their records were to be examined with the same vigour.

Given that context, for the court to hand Mr Khan the maximum possible sentence for the offence he was charged with seems excessive. The punishment is all the more problematic after the concerns raised by several observers over the manner in which the trial was conducted and the seeming haste with which the judgement was issued. Of course, Mr Khan is entitled to appeal the sentence, and he may earn a reprieve, but the intended damage may have been done by then.

It must be asked why our state periodically subjects popular leaders to such humiliation when it routinely ignores far more serious crimes. This is, after all, the same country where a clear constitutional edict to hold elections within a specified time frame was wilfully cast aside earlier this year, and there still haven't been any consequences for the actors involved in the farce.

The fact is that Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto were not, and Imran Khan will not be rendered irrelevant to Pakistanis over some technical knockout. The fate of a politician rests in the hands of their constituency, and no amount of external interference can change this simple relationship. The experiment was tried in the earlier two cases and failed, and the state seems to be repeating the same mistake, only to weaken a fraying social contract further.



**Muhammad Amir Rana**

Following last month's terrorist blasts in KP, a police officer's tears flowed at the funeral of his lost comrades. One can only imagine the strain of facing colleagues and bereaved families as they endure the constant threat of terrorist assaults. Primarily in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the less-equipped and undertrained police force has valiantly battled terrorists for two decades, suffering severe losses. The Taliban's rise in Afghanistan briefly ignited hopes of peace. Yet, the stark reality is a brutal surge in violence, with policemen now directly in the line of fire.

Although the police are a prime target, other law-enforcement agencies have also suffered casualties in terrorist attacks and during counterterrorism operations. Since the Afghan Taliban takeover in August 2021, the outlawed

**Why does TTP target police?**

Teheek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and similar groups have attacked security forces 368 times, resulting in the death of 652 personnel and 1,049 injured. According to the Pak Institute for Peace Studies' database, police have incurred significant casualties, with 244 deaths, while the military has lost 101 personnel, Levies 55, and FC 29. Since 2001, when the terrorism threat escalated in the country, 2,100 police personnel have been killed and 7,000 injured.

Despite the risk to life and limb, the police force's morale remains high. One example is a policeman who chased and attempted to stop a suicide bomber targeting a mosque in Khyber recently, saving numerous lives. However, a question raised by policemen and their families is why they are the primary targets of terrorists.

Several theories and explanations exist, including the belief that the police are a soft target because they lack the training to combat militants or conduct counterterrorism operations effectively. The KP Police argue that they have successfully prevented militants from infiltrating the country's heartland. While a combination of fac-

tors may be at play, the TTP contends that the police pose a significant obstacle to their plan of targeting the army and have warned the force multiple times to disassociate itself from the military.

The TTP's justification for attacking the police force appears to be a strategy to erode trust among law-enforcement agencies. Data shows that most attacks occur at police stations in or near urban centres, far from military installations. This strategy suggests their capability to spread the conflict beyond borders, thereby supporting the Taliban's claim that the TTP operates within Pakistan, and not from safe havens inside Afghanistan.

Pakistan has formally protested, urging the Taliban to stop the TTP from attacking the country, but Kabul has yet to acknowledge this publicly. International watchdogs and organisations, including a United Nations Security Council monitoring committee, support Pakistan's assertion that the TTP seeks to regain control in Pakistan's former tribal areas. The UN report explains how the TTP has gained momentum in Afghanistan since the Afghan Taliban's

takeover two years ago and how other terrorist groups operate under its cover.

The TTP's attacks on the police are part of a broader scheme to demoralise them, reduce their resistance, and propel the military towards the cities. The TTP understands that the military isn't ideally fit to handle police duties, potentially triggering public resentment. They tested this strategy in Swat and observed similar outcomes in the tribal district after the Fata merger. The Taliban used a comparable strategy in Afghanistan, enabling them to seize cities and establish shadow governments. Creating divisions within the law-enforcement agencies and between security forces and the public is a dangerous tactic.

The TTP and its affiliate groups are extending their influence to Balochistan districts near Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, southern Punjab, and northern Sindh — regions that form the country's backbone — by connecting all provinces and major transport lines. If the TTP successfully establishes terrorist bases and allies with Baloch sub-nationalist groups in these areas, it could compromise

Pakistan's internal security, including CPEC.

The TTP has been modelling itself on the Afghan Taliban, including establishing a presence in Balochistan. The Afghan Taliban's presence dates back to 1996, while the TTP only emerged in 2007 and initially showed no interest in Balochistan. Over time, as it solidified its power in former Fata, the TTP created its Balochistan chapter, known as Teheek-i-Taliban Balochistan. The TTP has also expanded its outreach into Punjab, including the outskirts of Islamabad. This highlights the TTP's increasing reach across vital regions within Pakistan.

Underestimating the threats posed by terrorism only aids the terrorists. The ideological strength of these groups, bolstered by an extensive network of religious madrassahs and groups, should not be underestimated, as the TTP can exploit the religious and ideological paradigm of the religious institutions. The TTP can inspire the graduates of religious institutions through its narrative and portray counter-offensives by law-enforcement agencies as oppressive.

Religiously motivated terrorist groups are good at

cultivating narratives and developing their arguments. The TTP and the Islamic State-Khorasan group are competing in this domain, but both share common objectives when it comes to the Pakistani state. The state mostly focuses on kinetic measures, and even if it creates a message to counter the terrorists' propaganda, it cannot inject this into people's minds as narratives need a conducive political environment to grow. Another challenge the police face is their public image; neither the state nor the department has paid the needed attention to it.

In any case, police are a key component in countering the terrorism threat, requiring strengthening and adequate intelligence support. This enables them to maintain the safety of cities and free up the army and paramilitary forces to deal more effectively with border threats. Counterterrorism departments exist in every province, but the ones in KP grapple with several issues, such as tenure security, capacity, training and budgetary constraints. Crucially, faith in the police and CTDs from superior security institutions and civilian governments is indispensable. — Courtesy Dawn



**Dr Imran Khalid**

Amidst their divergent ideological outlooks, US President Biden forged an unlikely alliance with Italian PM Giorgia Meloni during her recent visit to Washington (July 27), and he appears to have ostensibly succeeded in ensnaring her into the American orbit on Italy's position on the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

Though Meloni did not mention anything pertaining to Italy's participation in the BRI after 2024 at their joint talks with the media, it seems she has embraced the US stance on this matter to some extent. This development could be seen as a strategic win for the US, possibly reconfiguring the geopolitical landscape and challenging China's ambitions under the grand framework of the BRI.

While advancing two vital strategic aims from Biden's perspective, Meloni's visit to the US can

be termed as rather positive. First, it secured Italy's unwavering commitment to bolster Ukraine's military endeavours in countering Russia, strengthening transatlantic solidarity. Second, and of equal significance, it offered indirect reassurance that Italy will part ways with China's BRI once its pact with the country lapses in March 2024. The Biden Administration had previously hailed Meloni's predecessor economist and former Italian prime minister Mario Draghi for his intellectual prowess and as one of America's most staunch allies across the Atlantic.

However, with Meloni's ascent to power in last September as the first far-right leader to serve as premier in Italy's post-World War II republic, the Biden Administration was seriously concerned about the ascent of hard-right populism, both in Europe and the US.

"You just saw what's happened in Italy in that election. You're seeing what's happening around the world. And the reason I bother to say that is we can't be sanguine about what's happening here, either," Biden said in an address to the Democratic Governors Association after Meloni's victory.

Meloni's political party — the Brothers of Italy, named after the opening words of Italy's national anthem — traces its origins back to a faction formed by nostalgia-driven advocates of Mussolini's fascism. However, Giorgia Meloni, undeterred by historical associations, vehemently rejects any suggestion of yearning for Mussolini's era.

In her autobiography, she unequivocally dismisses notions of holding a cult-like admiration for fascism, asserting her ideological distance from such controversial vestiges of the past. During her visit to Washington, Meloni forthrightly acknowledged the ideological disparities between her party and the Democrats. Yet, she dismissed these divergences as obstacles to collaborating with the Biden Administration.

"Evidently, I'm in sync with the Republican Party. That doesn't impede me from having an excellent relationship [with the US president]," said Meloni at a news conference following her meeting with Biden. This squishy approach certainly made it easier for Biden to seek her cooperation on the subject of the BRI. While acknowledging

that the meeting broached the topic of Italy's involvement in the BRI, Meloni tried to make clear that Washington's stance on the matter was not imposed upon her.

Although eager to affirm her autonomy, she emphasized that Washington DC did not dictate her choices. However, observers discern tangible signs of US influence in her approach to the BRI. While Meloni seeks to demonstrate sovereignty over decision-making, the complexities of geopolitics often intertwine national interests and international pressures, as evident by her 'tactical ambiguity' on the matter of the BRI.

Apparently, Meloni confronts a defining choice, torn between preserving Italy's interests and bowing to Washington's anti-China narrative. The BRI, a strategic target of US counteraction, stands at the heart of her decision.

Italy's former prime minister Giuseppe Conte shook the geopolitical landscape by inking the memorandum of understanding on BRI cooperation with China back in March 2019. This bold step made Italy the first G7 nation to join the initiative, much to the dismay of the EU and the US.

Such bold foreign policy decisions are emblematic of Italy's tumultuous political scene, where a revolving door of more than 10 prime ministers since 2000, including Silvio Berlusconi, has left an indelible mark on its politics. The rhetoric of Italy's independence, touted by successive prime ministers, is in contrast with the reality. The presence of seven US military bases, hosting army, navy, and air force personnel, casts a long shadow over the country's claim about autonomy in foreign policy. Recently, under Meloni's leadership, Rome has further aligned itself with the US in countering China's rise. Strengthening ties with Taiwan and collaborating on defence matters with Japan and India reflect Italy's proactive role in the strategic manoeuvring of global powers in the Asia Pacific particularly.

However, Italy's geopolitical alignment with the US has not translated into any tangible economic gains. The Italian economy is passing through a long phase of stagnation, spanning 16 years, which has been further aggravated by the Covid-19 pandemic and the Ukraine conflict. Amidst Italy's unremarkable economic perfor-

mance, it becomes prudent for the country to consider persisting with initiatives like the BRI, which offer the prospect of vital infrastructure development and economic expansion. Both Meloni and her predecessor Draghi have exhibited a consistent commitment to aligning Italy with America's assertive and militaristic agenda, often at the expense of their country's economic interests.

Following Meloni's meeting with Biden, the prospect of Italy decisively withdrawing from the BRI has gained heightened importance. Such a move could potentially place Italy on the wrong side of the divide with potential repercussions on its long-term economic interests. In the days ahead, Meloni's stance on the BRI could hinge on two crucial factors. First, her anticipated visit to China, and a meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping, play a role in shaping her perspective. But, on the other hand, the impending Italian presidency of the G7 club in 2024 adds further complexity to the equation, as it may also entangle her approach to the BRI in a web of intricate equations. — Courtesy TheNews

**Energy Projects Energising CPEC**

**By kamran Raja**

Energy has remained the core focus of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and helped to reduce power shortage in Pakistan. CPEC is expected to have a significant impact on the energy sector in Pakistan. The corridor includes a number of energy projects, including hydropower plants, coal-fired power plants, and wind farms.

These energy projects have a number of benefits for local people. First, they are helping to reduce Pakistan's reliance on imported energy. Currently, Pakistan imports a significant amount of its energy, which is a drain on the country's economy. The energy projects under CPEC will help to reduce this reliance, which will save the country money.

Second, the energy projects under CPEC are creating jobs. The construction and operation of these projects require a large number of workers, which will provide employment opportunities for local people.

Third, the energy projects under CPEC are helping to improve the lives of people in rural areas. Many people in rural areas do not have access to electricity. The energy projects under CPEC have helped to bring electricity to these areas, which will improve the quality of life for many people.

In addition to these benefits, the energy

projects under CPEC are also expected to have a number of positive social changes. For example, they are expected to help to reduce poverty and improve education and healthcare.

Overall, the energy projects under CPEC are expected to have a significant positive impact on the lives of local people in Pakistan. They will help to reduce reliance on imported energy, create jobs, improve access to electricity, industrial growth and bring about positive social changes.

CPEC is making ways for Pakistan to achieve its sustainable energy needs, especially to build its renewable energy power generation capacity from the current 4 percent to 30 percent in 2030. The energy cooperation on CPEC is ongoing between China and Pakistan. Overall, there are 21 energy projects under this fate-changing project initiative between both countries. Among these, around a dozen have been completed, and the rest are in the process of completion and are at different stages of development progress.

In fact, Pakistan was a country that experienced an acute energy crisis previously. Electricity shortages exceeded 7,000MW in the year of 2011. The energy shortage emerged because Pakistan had lacked the power generation capacity. The energy shortfall emerged largely due to the failure of at-

tracting the investment at a level required for expansion and maintenance of power generation on pace with the growing demand.

However, after the launch of CPEC, Pakistan has constructed new power generating plants which has drastically enhanced the country's energy generation capacity. At present, Pakistan has acquired the capacity to produce more electricity than its requirement. According to the statistics of Pakistan Economic Survey 2019-2020, Pakistan acquired the installed capacity of 35,972MW in 2020. In the same year, Pakistan's consumption capacity stood around 25,000MW. Previously, the primary structural problem of power sector was expansion of power generating units which has already been addressed under the CPEC energy framework and installation of power plants outside of CPEC cooperation.

In total, around 12,000 megawatts of energy would be generated through 21 energy projects envisioned under the ambit of CPEC energy projects. The 21 energy projects will cost around USD \$ 25 billion. At the moment, over a dozen energy projects have been completed and operationalised at full capacity.

Energy projects completed under CPEC featuring advanced technologies and lower cost not only provided a so-

lution to Pakistan's electricity shortage, which was a historic achievement for the country but also helped Pakistan improve its energy structure and reduce the cost of power generation.

According to official sources, the total installed capacity of CPEC energy projects, including that of coal, wind, solar and hydropower, stands at 6,570 MW. They generated 28,549.94 Gwh and 25,772.48 Gwh power respectively in FY 2020-21 and FY 2021-22, accounting for 22.03% and 18.37% of the total generation in Pakistan.

As the CPEC energy projects replaced the costlier energy production from furnace oil and diesel to coal and renewable energy resources in the last five years, the energy needs of Pakistan have been fulfilled at lower prices, driving growth in the export-oriented industries.

The Karot Hydropower Plant, the first hydropower investment project under CPEC, and the second phase of the Thar Block II power station project both went into commercial operations in succession in year 2022. The hydropower plant provides Pakistan with clean yet low-priced electricity while the coal-power project taps into Pakistan's coal resources for power generation, economizing local precious foreign exchange resource.

Additionally, there are many other hydro-

power projects which are under construction. Suki Kinari Hydropower project with an installed capacity of 870MW is almost complete and will be operational at the end of this year.

Other CPEC-related hydropower projects include Kohala Hydropower Project and Azad Pattan Hydropower Project. Furthermore, Diamer Bhasha, Neelum Jehlum, Mohmand, and Dasu Dams are also contributing towards Chinese commitment to provide clean and affordable energy in Pakistan.

When renewable energy is talk of the town across the world, Belt & Road Initiative of China is not behind in contributing towards green revolution. On similar lines, CPEC energy investments from China are now focusing on green energy. It won't be an exaggeration if we say that 2023 brought a new era in Sino-Pak cooperation in renewable energy, as we have witnessed extremely encouraging signs in green energy sector between the two friendly nations.

Until now, renewable energy sources make up a very minor fraction of Pakistan's overall power generation mix. According to a recent report of the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority, the installed capacity for wind and solar accounts for roughly 4.2% (1,831 MW) and 1.4% (630 MW) of a total of 43,775 MW, respectively.

China is already the

biggest investor in green energy in Pakistan. Currently, out of the \$144 million in foreign investment in solar PV plants in Pakistan, \$125 million is from China, accounting for nearly 87% of the total.

Thanks to Chinese investments, a few weeks ago Federal Power Minister Khurram Dastgir Khan inaugurated two new wind energy projects in Jhimpir, Thatta District, Sindh, with an aim to produce cheaper and clean electricity through indigenous energy sources. Wind projects in this region have been one of several renewable energy projects to have received Chinese investment in recent years. Around 90 kilometers from Karachi, Jhimpir is the heartland of the country's largest 'Wind corridor', which has the potential to produce 11,000 megawatts (MW) of energy from green resources.

Another major development took place in Wind Energy promotion when Beijing-based multinational wind turbine manufacturer, Goldwind Corporation launched the first-of-its-kind solution factory in Pakistan. The Solution Factory aims to develop localized solutions for Pakistani wind power plants.

In conclusion, CPEC energy projects have improved the power industry in Pakistan and contributed to economic growth by increasing power supply with high efficiency at lower cost.



## Murad chairs PCIC meeting, decides to start KCR Project

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Sunday presided over the 11th meeting of the Provincial Coordination & Implementation Committee (PCIC) and decided to take over the Karachi Urban Transport Company (KUTC) to start Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) Project and resolved land issues of Malir Expressway to speed up work on the project.

The PCIC meeting was attended by provincial ministers Imtiaz Shaikh, Sharjeel Memon, Nasir Shah, Mayor Karachi Murtaza Wahab, Special Assistant to CM Qasim Naveed, Corps Commander Karachi Lt Gen Babar Iftikhar, Chief Secretary Sohail Rajput, Chairman P&D Hassan Naqvi, PSCM Fayaz Jatoi, Commissioner Karachi Iqbal Memon, MD

SSWMB Imtiaz Shah and others.

The Chief minister was told that the Karachi Urban Transport Company (KUTC) would undertake the Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) project. The company was still under the control of the federal government.

The chief minister said that he would talk to the prime minister to take over the KUTC which was responsible to fulfill the documentation of the KCR project.

The CM was also told that Pakistan Railways had demanded equal value of land from the Sindh government to handover the Right of Way (RoW) of KCR. At this, the chief minister said that the Sindh government had given land to the railway authorities purely for railway purposes. "The KCR is also a train and it would

operate on the same track, then why the railway authorities were demanding value of the land," he questioned.

The chief minister directed the DS Railways, present in the meeting, to resolve the issue and give the go-ahead to the provincial authorities so that it could be communicated to the Chinese authorities to initiate the KCR project.

It was pointed out that the National Railways Administration (NRA), China required to conduct an updated feasibility study of the KCR Project. At this the P&D Chairman told the CM that the feasibility study has been done and sent to Chinese authorities.

The chief minister said that now the Chinese authorities have to make a Framework agreement to start the project.



KARACHI: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Mariyum Aurangzeb in a meeting with Karachi Press Club Member Governing Body during her visit to Karachi Press Club.

## Kundi inaugurates BISP Tehsil office in Paniala

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Faisal Karim Kundi on Sunday inaugurated Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) Tehsil office in Paniala.

Addressing the inauguration ceremony, the special assistant said the establishment of the BISP office in Paniala was the beginning of the first government office in this Tehsil.

Paniala was given the status of Tehsil several years ago, but till date no Tehsil level office of any provincial department has been established here, he astonished.

He said today a promise made with the people of Paniala has been fulfilled as a fully equipped office has been

inaugurated here.

He said that 28,000 deserving people were benefiting in Paharpur Tehsil which include women from Paniala. Now, the women of this area would have the facility at their door step, he said and vowed that a nutrition office would also be established here.

Faisal Kundi said that he had written a letter for establishment of NADRA and Passport offices in Paniala, adding, he himself would meet with Interior Minister soon for the purpose.

He said "we always prioritized serving the people and make efforts for the development of the area and its people."

He regretted that the people of Paniala were deprived of CPEC interchange, adding, he

would write a letter to National Highways and Motorway Chairman to build an interchange here on CPEC route.

Faisal Kundi said he would request to the prime minister to release funds for the mega projects which the premier had inaugurated in Dera Ismail Khan recently.

He said that he was always ready to join hands with his political opponents for the sake of regional development and prosperity.

On this occasion, he received public complaint of bribery against a BISP retailer. On which, the special assistant directed the BISP officials to investigate the matter transparently and if the retailer found guilty then his device should be blocked and such retailers must be blacklisted.

## Durrani inaugurates 'Kalam Bibi Intl Women Institute' at Bannu University

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): National Assembly Deputy Speaker Zahid Akram Durrani has inaugurated the 'Kalam Bibi International Women Institute' here at the University of Bannu in Bannu.

In this regard a ceremony was held wherein Zahid Akram Durrani was chief guest. On this occasion, the deputy speaker was accompanied by former MPAs Fakhr-e-Azam and Qari Gul Azeem. Bannu University Vice Chancellor Dr Khair uz Zaman gave a briefing to the deputy speaker.

Addressing the ceremony, Durrani said it was a long standing demand of the people to have a university for women in the area and this institute would help to ensure provision of quality education to the female students of the area.

He acknowledged the role of Federal Minister for Planning Development &

Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal and the Higher Education Commission (HEC) in establishment of this institute.

He said the institute established at a cost of Rs 25.4 million would be totally solarized.

He said the southern districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including Bannu remained neglected during the last government of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) as no funds were released for development of these areas. He said the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) led federal government was making efforts to ensure quality education across the country as it plays a key role in the development of any society.

The 'Kalam Bibi International Women Institute' would provide an opportunity to local females to get quality education at their doorstep.



KARACHI: Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Karachi Chief, Hafiz Naem-ur-Rehman addresses to media persons during press conference held at Idara-e-Noor-ul-Haq in Karachi.

## SAPM says: PML-N believes in serving masses only

SARGODHA (APP): Special Assistant to Prime Minister (SAPM) on Gas and Energy Chaudhry Hamid Hameed has said that the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) believed in serving masses by launching public welfare and national development programmes.

While talking to APP here at Sargodha on Sunday, he said the PML-N initiated a number of development projects across the country including Sargodha to materialise the dream of national progress and prosperity, adding that Pakistan was making progress speedily in 2018 when the PML-N government was toppled under a deep-rooted conspiracy. The minister said that petrol was available at Rs 65 per litre, sugar at Rs 52 per kg and US dollar rate was Rs 110 in 2018 when an incompetent person like Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan was imposed on the nation. He said that Imran Khan promoted culture of hate, which caused attacks and ablaze of monuments of national heroes.

that Imran Khan failed in his nefarious designs as people recognised his true face on May 9, adding that Imran Khan was a hypocrite as he dubbed others as looters but at the same time he plundered national wealth through his cronies. He said that Imran Khan enjoyed power for four years but due to ill-conceived policies of his government, the country mired into multifaceted crises and people experienced its consequences badly. The SAPM said the PML-N always introduced pro-people policies for national development. It steered the country out of crises in 2013 when the menace of load-shedding and terrorism were afflicting the nation. Mian Nawaz Sharif not only controlled load-shedding and terrorism but also put the country on the road to progress and prosperity, he recalled. Now, Pakistan was again passing through a critical phase. If masses repose confidence in the PML-N again during upcoming general election, it would not only overcome the crises but also restart national development, he added.



FAISALABAD: Interior Minister Rana Sana Ullah Khan is cutting ribbon to inaugurate Nadra Registration Centre at Union Council 117 Dhanola.

## Pakistan can become developed nation through digitalization: Governor

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori on Sunday said that in order to rank Pakistan among the developed nations of the world, we should have to adapt to the digital age.

He said this while addressing a seminar titled "Digital Business" held here at the Baharia Auditorium. Governor also distributed shields among the participants of the seminar.

He said that organizing activities and providing awareness regarding digital businesses was a better step.

The governor said that in the future, most of the marketing activities will be converted into digital marketing.

Kamran Tessori said that technology was developing rapidly all over the

world and in every few weeks a new technology supersedes the existing one.

Awareness of modern technology has become essential otherwise we will be left far behind in the digital revolution, Sindh Governor said, adding that the "Artificial Intelligence" was showing its essence all over the world and e-commerce has facilitated online business.

He said that marketing has been digitalized and the social media has now become the field of marketing.

Governor said there is no greater weapon than knowledge and we can join the developed nations only through it.

Governor also distributed shields among the participants of the seminar.

## Bilawal takes notice of train accident

KARACHI (APP): Chairman of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Sunday took notice of the Hazara Express train accident that occurred near Nawabshah on Sunday and directed the relevant authorities to investigate it.

According to the statement issued by Media Cell Bilawal House, Chairman PPP expressed his heartfelt condolences and sympathy to the families of the passengers who died in the unfortunate accident near Sirhri railway station and prayed for eternal peace for departed souls. He issued instructions that his party workers should also participate in rescue activities with the rescue teams of the Sindh government. He also urged the Sindh government to ensure better treatment for the passengers injured in the accident.

## Kundi grieved over Nawabshah Train accident

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): Special Assistant to the prime minister on Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Faisal Karim Kundi on Sunday expressed his deep grief and sorrow over the tragic accident of Hazara Express in Nawabshah district of Sindh.

In a statement, the special assistant said the Hazara Express train accident has made whole the nation sad.

He said Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari was in constant contact with the Sindh administration and monitoring the relief activities.

He commended the role of local administration and rescue organizations in rescue operation.

## Justice Raza Ali takes oath as acting CJ of AJK

MIRPUR AJK (APP): Justice Raza Ali Khan on Sunday takes oath as Acting Chief Justice (CJ) of the Supreme Court (SC) of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK).

The AJK President Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry administered the oath of office to Justice Raza Ali Khan as Acting CJ of the apex Court of the AJK State at a ceremony held at the President's House in the State metropolis.

The swearing-in ceremony was attended among others by Chief Justice High Court, Justice Sadaqat Hussain Raja, Justice Sardar Liaquat Shaheen, Justice Mian Arif

Hussain, Justice Syed Shahid Bahar, Justice Sardar Muhammad Ejaz, Justice Ghulam Mustafa Mughal, Chief Election Commissioner Abdul Rashid Salharia, Raja Tariq Javed Chairman Service Tribunal, Mushtaq Ahmed Tahir, Member Service Tribunal, Chaudhry Muhammad Munir Judge Election Tribunal, Raja Rashid Naseem Chairman Environmental Tribunal, Farooq Muhammad District and Sessions Judge Muzaffarabad and others.

Honorable judges of the Supreme Court and High Court of AJ&K, members of the AJK Bar Council, Supreme Court Bar Association.



HYDERABAD: Special Assistant to CM Sindh on Sports and Youth Affairs, Arbab Lutfullah inaugurating the Construction of Squash Complex at Public School during inauguration ceremony held in Hyderabad.

## 16 uplift schemes approved in Sahiwal

CHICHAWATNI (APP): Divisional Development Working Party (DDWP) of Sahiwal approved 16 uplift schemes worth Rs 3.468 billion for the division.

Official sources said on Sunday that two development schemes would be executed in Sahiwal, three in Pakpattan and 11 in Okara districts. A special meeting of the Divisional Development Working Party was held at the Commissioner's Office, with Commissioner Sahiwal Shoaib Iqbal Syed in the chair. Director Development Qayyum Qudrat, Deputy Director

Technical Imran Khan, divisional and district officers of the departments concerned attended the meeting.

The details of approved schemes had been submitted to the provincial government. The most important project presented to the provincial government was the reconstruction of 6.5-km Old GT Road passing through Sahiwal city, in which 2.2 km of single-track road would be made dual carriage-way at a cost of Rs 1.73 billion, and the entire road would be carpeted.



KARACHI: Passengers sit worried at platform as trains are late from their original schedules after a Hazara Express accident near Nawabshah, at Cantt Station in Karachi.

## FNF holds workshop regarding prevention of child abuse

PESHAWAR (APP): Friedrich Naumann Foundation Pakistan (FNF) on Sunday organized a training workshop on the prevention of child abuse for relevant stakeholders in Peshawar.

The workshop had 30 participants from Peshawar and nearby districts, including teachers, journalists, social workers, lawyers, students, and representatives from other relevant departments.

The workshop was attended by FNF Pakistan's Head of Program, Muhammad Anwar, child rights expert Imran Takkar, and Peshawar based senior journalist Shamim Shahid. Imran Takkar briefed the participants on

different aspects of child abuse and emphasized the need to build synergy for the cause.

He highlighted that in 2022, 4253 cases of child abuse cases were reported, indicating that 12 children become victims of sexual abuse every day, marking a 30 percent increase compared to 2021.

Imran Takkar added that child abuse often leads to various psychological problems, causing victims to grow up fearful and experience mental health issues.

During the event, Muhammad Anwar, FNF Pakistan's Head of Program, said that symptoms of molestation include frightening behaviors such as nightmares, depression, abnormal fear.

## Flood in river Sutlej Local communities, PDMA helping affectees to mitigate effects

MULTAN (APP): Feeling pain of those displaced, whose belongings are taken away by flood and who felt dejected to witness so much water after almost 36 years, the local communities and relatives came forward to lend helping hands by providing them shelters and food despite arrangements made by Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) for flood affected people around river Sutlej.

A ferocious flood is witnessed this year in river Sutlej submerging hundreds of acres of land leaving thousands of people homeless, but the generous assistance of local community remained exemplary.

Punjab Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) has also established relief camps, equipped with different sorts of facilities including availability of food, healthcare, fodder for animals and camps but most of the affectees sought shelter at their relatives' or friends' homes instead of camps so far.

During last three decades, the flow of water in river Sutlej was on decrease and the river had

almost dried up near Bahawalpur. Noticing this trend, people had constructed structures in low-lying areas of the river, which are now under water.

The flood water also entered into scores of adjacent "Mauzajat" and damaged hundreds of homes and crops on thousands of acres. Although, the majority of the farmers have picked crops, especially maize which is a popular crop of the region.

A citizen namely Sajjad Saldaira, a resident of Sahuka (Burewala)

talking to APP informed that a good number of flood-affected people left the river bed and sought shelter in relatives and friends' homes.

He informed that he himself managed accommodation for 15 families. Relatives, friends and other people were exhibiting kind gestures in this crucial time for flood-hit people, he said, adding the majority of displaced people were farmers and the cattle holders whose animals had also been adjusted.

Another citizen, Qasim also spoke and

informed that he also provided residence facility to two families, while a good number of flood-hit families were living in their village.

Responding to problems in the areas, he stated that the government should increase number of medical professionals as some people were facing health complications. Similarly, the availability of fodder for cattle should be managed properly and the administration should provide "Wanda" to feed animals as due to flood, there was a shortage of fodder for cattle.



HYDERABAD: Activists of Peoples Party Shaheed Bhutto (PPP-SB) are holding protest demonstration against the auction and excavation of Karoonjhar, at Hyderabad press club.



## State Minister says: Agricultural development vital for economic revolution

SARGODHA (APP): State Minister for Industries and Production Tasneem Ahmed Qureshi said on Sunday agricultural development was vital for bringing about an economic revolution in Pakistan.

Talking to APP here, he said the agriculture sector was facing various challenges including limited access to modern farming techniques, inadequate irrigation facilities, fragmented land holdings, and insufficient post-harvest storage and processing infrastructure.

He said these factors were affecting productivity and contributing to food insecurity. He said that food insecurity continued to be a significant issue in many parts of South Asia as well. On the other hand, the region had made

progress in recent years in reducing poverty and improving overall food security he added.

He urged that efforts must be made at the national and international levels to address food insecurity issue in South Asia, adding that the initiatives should include promoting sustainable agricultural practices, improving irrigation and water management, enhancing infrastructure for storage and transportation, investing in rural development, strengthening social safety nets, and supporting nutrition programmes to address malnutrition.

He said that Pakistan had a rapidly growing population, which placed significant pressure on food production and

availability. "As the population increases, the demand for food increases, and meeting the nutritional needs of all individuals becomes more challenging," he added. Tasneem Qureshi said high poverty rate was a major contributor to food insecurity, not only in Pakistan but in South Asia as well, as many people in the region lacked financial resources to access an adequate and nutritious diet consistently.

He said the region was too vulnerable to climate change impacts, including erratic monsoon patterns, droughts, floods, and cyclones. These factors were resulting in crop failures, livestock losses, and disruptions in food production and distribution systems, exacerbating food insecurity, he added.



LAHORE: Railway Minister Khawaja Saad Rafique Inaugurate Steel Shop at Mughalpur Railway workshop.

## Trade, industry adversely affected due to aggressive economic measures: Saigol

ISLAMABAD (INP): Chairman Pakistan Industrial and Traders Associations Front (PIAF) Chairman Faheemur Rehman Saigol has said that the trade and industry have adversely affected due to the aggressive economic measures, high borrowing rates, inflation, oppressive taxation and unstable currency as many were forced to close their operations.

In a joint statement along with senior vice chairman Nasrullah Mughal and vice chairman Tahir Manzoor Ch, he observed that the ever-increasing cost of production in the country is the real threat to both large-scale manufacturing and small-scale businesses, as frequent upward revisions in policy rate and continuous fluctuations in rupee against dollar are posing further challenges.

The PIAF office bearers said that the

government does not have any pragmatic plan to address this liability, apart from asking for more loans to repay existing debt. Likewise, the target for current financial year's exports is too low to meet the country's revenue.

According to the data, the pace of growth in LSM industries is suffering because of restrictions imposed on imports that have caused a shortage of imported raw material. The steep currency devaluation has also made raw material expensive and business models unviable.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) assessed that the pace of negative growth in big industries could have been slower had the government not imposed restrictions on imports. The central bank has issued the guidelines to commercial banks about the allocation of foreign currency for import purposes.

## Younis says: Visit of Iranian FM to strengthen trade ties

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator to Federal Tax Ombudsman Meher Kashif Younis Sunday said the visit of the Iranian foreign minister to Pakistan has the potential to promote regional economic integration and bolster trade relations between the two countries by exploring opportunities for further economic cooperation.

Talking to a delegation of industrialists led by Shahid Nazir here today he said such high-level engagements can lead to trade agreements and initiatives to strengthen bilateral trade and economic ties.

He said barter trade is need of the hour in prevailing global scenario

which he added must be fully exploited to highest level. Pakistan and Iran had a long history of trade relations and have engaged in bilateral trade, covering various sectors like energy, agriculture, and manufacturing.

He said both countries share a border, which facilitates cross-border trade and economic cooperation. He said "currently Iran is exporting 144MW of electricity to Pakistan, and this figure is expected to double upon the completion of power projects in Pakistan."

Iran has the potential to export 500MW of electricity to Pakistan. He said latest figures show annual trade between Iran and Pakistan.

## Global rice price index reaches record high in 12 years

LAHORE (APP): The world rice price index of the United Nations Food Agency (UNFA) experienced a notable 2.8 percent rise in July, as compared to June, reaching the highest level recorded in almost 12 years.

The overall world food price index also notably rebounded in July after experiencing two-year lows, said a UNFA report issued here.

This hike in prices was mainly driven by excessive demand in key exporting countries and India's decision to restrict its rice exports, it said.

The Food and Agriculture Organisation's All Rice Price Index (ARPI), that tracks rice prices among major exporting nations, estimated an average of 129.7 points last month, a notable rise from June's 126.2 points.

Likewise, the score from July was much higher.

## Pakistan is hopeful to get Indian rice market

KARACHI (Online): Pakistan is busy in attempts to attract buyers of Indian rice as India has imposed ban on rice export due to rising pricing.

In recent season 6% rise witnessed in Pakistan on rice cultivation.

However due to hoarding and profiteers, Pakistan's people are bearing the price rise of 30% was witnessed in rice market.

According to statistics in last Pakistan exported 3.73million ton rice whose price was \$2.15 billion.

In fiscal year 2021-22 export volume was 25% less and regarding dollars it was 14.5% lesser. Devastation of crops due to flood was declared the main reason of this decline.



Leaders of Pakistan Business Forum along with Advisor to Investment Board Feroze Shah presenting souvenir to President Dr. Arif Alvi during a meeting.

## Pakistan to achieve just, clean energy transition for future generations: Musadik

ISLAMABAD (APP): "Pakistan will not just talk green but will achieve a just and clean energy transition; with or without rest of world for our future generations", said Dr Musadik Malik, Minister of State for Petroleum Division here on Sunday.

He was speaking at parliamentary consultation titled "Towards a Sustainable Future: Inclusion of Just Energy Transition and Climate Action in Election Manifestos 2023", jointly organized by Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) and Parliamentary Taskforce

on SDGs, a news release said.

The State Minister said that Russia-Ukraine crisis caused unproportional energy inflation for the developing countries, thwarting the clean energy transition and access. Therefore, it is imperative that just and clean energy transition be supported with finance mobilization for developing countries to enable technology transfer and indigenous development, he said and stressed that accountability for clean energy transition should be extended equally across

the table and not just on developing countries.

Dr. Musadik emphasized that Petroleum companies in Pakistan including Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL), Pakistan Petroleum Limited (PPL), Pakistan State Oil (PSO) had been urged to transition into energy companies and were looking to invest in renewable energy.

Romina Khurshid Alam, Special Assistant to Prime Minister, emphasized that prioritizing climate action and renewable energy while designing party.

## Delegation of Realtors calls on Chairman FBR

ISLAMABAD (APP): Under the direction of Minister for Finance and Revenue, a delegation of Realtors on Sunday called on Chairman Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) Malik Amed Zubair Tiwana, in order to address and resolve taxation issues concerning real-estate transactions.

The direction was issued by Finance Minister during the 90<sup>th</sup> meeting of National Assembly Standing Committee on Finance and Revenue, said a news release issued here.

The meeting was presided by the Chairman FBR and attended by the delegation of Realtors led by Sardar Tahir Mehmood, President Federation of

Realtors Pakistan, and the team of FBR officers.

Chairman FBR assured the participants that their concerns will be addressed and best possible facilitation will be ensured for removing difficulties arising on account of implementation of tax laws.

He directed his team to ensure proper coordination and consultations with the Realtors in this regard.

The Chairman further pointed out that under the Stand-by Arrangement with International Monetary Fund, any new tax exemption, concession or preferential tax treatment may not be possible at this time.

## DCMs asked to monitor operation against defaulters

MULTAN (APP): Director Commercial Multan Electric Power Company (MEPCO), Asad Hammad on Sunday directed the Deputy Commercial Managers (DCMs) of operation circles to monitor the ongoing operation against defaulters.

It is the responsibility of operational officers to collect monthly electricity bills and dues and negligence in this regard will not be tolerated, he said.

## Govt provides best opportunities to women investors: SM Tanveer

LAHORE (Online): The President of Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry Sahiwal, Hamira Bukhari, met Provincial Minister of Industry and Commerce SM Tanveer on Sunday.

In the meeting held at the Chief Minister's Office, the promotion of cottage industry and the economic activities of women investors were discussed.

DG Industries Ayesha Hameed and Additional Secretary Commerce were also

present in the meeting.

President Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry Sahiwal Humaira Bukhari demanded that ladies club in Sahiwal be allowed to use women investors for their economic activities.

Speaking on the occasion, Provincial Minister of Industry and Commerce SM Tanveer said that the government is following an effective strategy to provide business and commercial opportunities in the province.



CHINIOT: A farmer is plucking Guavas fruit from trees in a farm outskirts area of city.

## Thar coal - a panacea to Pakistan's energy deficiency

ISLAMABAD (APP): Being 28<sup>th</sup> largest reserve, the Tharparker coal can prove to be a panacea to Pakistan's energy deficiency by producing billions of tone oil and cheaper electricity for domestic, commercial and industrial consumers.

Blessed with 175 billion tons of coal, the reserve is equivalent to 50 billion tons of oil which is more than Saudi Arabian and Iranian oil reserves. These reserves are equal to 2,000 trillion cubic feet of gas which is 68 times higher than Pakistan's total gas reserves.

Since the outgoing coalition government had specifically focused on the

development of this project, experts pin hopes that its culmination would help overcome energy deficiency and save hefty and precious foreign exchange spent every year on the import of fossil fuels like coal, oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG).

In many countries, coal is used as a cheaper source for generating electricity as global coal reserves are estimated to be around one trillion tons, while coal-fired based power plants contribute nearly 37 per cent of global electricity generation.

According to Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Sindh Engro Coal Mining

Company (SECMC) Amir Iqbal, unlocking indigenous Thar coal reserves can generate approximately 100,000 megawatts (MW) electricity for the next 250 years. "This project alone can ensure energy security of Pakistan besides reducing power tariff significantly."

He said coal is considered a cheap energy resource in Pakistan to catch up with future energy requirements of domestic and commercial consumers as during the last five years coal-based power production had also witnessed a significant increase.

"We need to shift to local coal resources to scale

## Need stressed for increasing UK-Pakistan bilateral trade to £ 10 billion

ISLAMABAD (APP): London-based prominent Pakistani businessman Raja Muhammad Adil on Sunday said that there are great opportunities to develop business relations between the UK and Pakistan which need to be exploited.

The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) hosted a reception in the honor of Raja Muhammad Adil in which he shared his life long struggle in the UK and achievements in the field of business.

He said that he went to London in 1963 and started his professional life there as a bus driver. However, later he started business life from a small shop and achieved remarkable success in the field of business.

He said that all these achievements were the

result of continuous hard work and struggle. In London, he has always helped Pakistanis and some of them have made a mark in politics and business.

In his message to the youth, Raja Muhammad Adil said that today's youth is looking for shortcuts for success, but success in any field requires constant hard work and struggle with integrity.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtavani, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry paid tribute to Raja Muhammad Adil for achieving numerous achievements in the field of business. He said that Raja Muhammad Adil is an ambassador of Pakistan in London and has also been playing an active role in the UK Pakistan Chamber of Commerce.



MULTAN: Labourer is busy unloading corn cobs from a delivery truck at the vegetable market.

## Malaysia-Pakistan bilateral trade surpasses \$ 1.8 bln: Malaysian HC

ISLAMABAD (APP): The High Commissioner (HC) of Malaysia to Pakistan, Ambassador Mohammad Azhar Mazlan said that the annual bilateral trade volume between Pakistan and Malaysia has surpassed USD \$ 1.8 billion and both nations are determined to further strengthen their trade and investment collaboration in multiple sectors.

Speaking at a ceremony honoring Pakistan's former participants of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) under the BRI framework,

(MTCP), the High Commissioner emphasized the untapped potential for growth, stating that "Pakistan and Malaysia have the capacity to increase trade volume up to USD \$ 10 billion annually."

He underscored the significance of mutual collaboration, given that both Pakistan and Malaysia are integral partners in the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), with Pakistan implementing the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) under the BRI framework.



Federal Minister for interior, Rana Sanaullah Khan, inaugurating various projects of Electricity supply to sadhar, Faisalabad.

## Egypt, UAE discuss economic cooperation

CAIRO (Xinhua/APP): Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sisi held talks on Saturday with the President of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan in Egypt's New Alamein City, where they discussed further economic cooperation between the two countries.

The two presidents addressed ways to strengthen "the frameworks and mechanisms of joint cooperation between the two countries, including in the economic

## Promoting handwoven carpets needs new strategy: PCMEA

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan Carpet Manufacturers and Exporters Association (PCMEA) Senior Vice Chairman Usman Ashraf has said that there is a need to work on a war footing to increase exports and in order to gain a share in the global market, an effective strategy for marketing and promotion of export products will have to be formulated, which is not possible without government support.

In a statement issued here on Sunday, he said

undue delay in issuance of refunds and issues like credit financing should be resolved immediately. He further said that Pakistan's hand-made carpets industry, which was recognized in the world, has faced severe difficulties in the last one and half decades, the price of which we were paying in the form of losing our share in the global market.

Usman Ashraf said it was an industry which does not burden the government.



FAISALABAD: Workers are busy in their work on power loom in a local factory.



## Russia launches burst of missile and drone attacks, Ukraine says

**Monitoring Desk**  
KYIV: Ukraine said Russia bombed a blood transfusion centre near the front line in a wave of air strikes overnight while Moscow reported that it had shot down a drone heading to the capital on Sunday in the third such attack in a week.

Both countries have stepped up attacks on each other's troops, weaponry and infrastructure supporting the war as Ukraine seeks to dislodge Russian forces who have dug in across southern and eastern Ukraine since their invasion last year.

The Moscow-appointed head of Crimea said the Chonhar bridge to the peninsula, which was annexed from Ukraine by Moscow in 2014, had been damaged by a missile strike. Another of the three road links between Crimea and Russian-occupied

parts of mainland Ukraine, near the town of Henichesk, was shelled and a civilian driver wounded, a Moscow-appointed official said.

### Ukraine calls Jeddah talks productive, Russia calls them doomed

**Monitoring Desk**  
RIYADH: A senior Ukrainian official said on Sunday that talks in Saudi Arabia to make headway towards a peaceful settlement of the war with Russia had been productive, but Moscow called the meeting a doomed attempt to swing the Global South behind Kyiv.

More than 40 countries, including China, India, the United States, and European countries, but not Russia, are taking part in the Jeddah talks that are expected to end on Sunday without any written concluding statement. Ukraine and its allies have said the talks are an attempt to secure broad international support for principles that Kyiv wants to be the basis for peace, including the withdrawal of all Russian troops and the return of all Ukrainian territory to its control. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has said he wants a global summit to take place based on those principles later this year. Eighteen months after Russia invaded Ukraine, any prospect of direct peace talks between Kyiv and Moscow appears remote.



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un gives field guidance at a major weapon factory in this image released by North Korea's Korean Central News Agency.

## Philippines says China blocked, water-cannoned boat in South China Sea

**Monitoring Desk**  
MANILA: The Philippines on Sunday accused China's coast guard of blocking and water-cannoning a Philippine military supply boat in the South China Sea, condemning the "excessive and offensive actions" against its vessels.

China's coast guard countered that it had implemented necessary controls under the law to deter Philippine ships, which it accused of trespassing and carrying illegal building materials. China claims sovereignty over almost the entire South China Sea, an assertion rejected internationally, while Malaysia, Vietnam, Brunei, Taiwan and the Philippines have various claims to certain areas.

Beijing often irks its neighbours with maritime actions they call aggressive and with longer-term activities like building islands on reefs and equipping them with missiles and runways.

A Chinese coast guard vessel on Saturday blocked and water-cannoned the chartered Philippine boat on a routine troop rotation and resupply mission, "in wanton disregard of the safety of the people on board and in violation of international law", the Armed Forces of the Philippines said.

It said in a statement the incident occurred near the Second Thomas Shoal, which Manila calls Ayungin Shoal, a submerged reef where a handful of its troops live on a rusty World War Two-era U.S. ship that was intentionally grounded in 1999.

## N. Korean leader Kim tours weapons factories and vows to boost war readiness in face of tensions

**Monitoring Desk**  
SEOUL: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un toured the country's key weapons factories, including those producing artillery systems and launch vehicles for nuclear-capable ballistic missiles, and pledged to speed up efforts to advance his military's arms and war readiness, state media said Sunday. Kim's three-day inspections through Saturday came as the United States and South Korea prepared for their next round of combined military exercises planned for later this month to cope with the growing North Korean threat.

Tensions on the Korean Peninsula are at their highest level in years as the pace of North Korea's missile tests and the joint U.S.-South Korea military drills, which Kim portrays as invasion rehearsals, have both intensified in a tit-for-tat cycle.

Kim praised the factory's efforts to employ "scientific and technological measures" to improve the quality of shells, reduce processing times for propellant tubes and increase manufacturing speed, but also called for the need to develop and produce new types of shells.



Belarus' exiled opposition leader Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya gives an opening speech during the New Belarus conference in Warsaw, Poland.

## Russia's Medvedev suggests Ukrainian ports will be hit again

**Monitoring Desk**  
MOSCOW: Former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev on Saturday suggested Moscow would launch more strikes against Ukrainian ports in response to Kyiv's attacks on Russian ships in the Black Sea, and threatened to hand Ukraine "an ecological catastrophe".

Medvedev, who is deputy chairman of Russia's Security Council, a body chaired by President Vladimir Putin, spoke after Ukrainian sea drone attacks on a Russian warship in the port of Novorossiysk, and against a tanker near Crimea, which Russia annexed from Ukraine in 2014.

Putin chaired a meeting of the Security Council on Friday which Medvedev attended following the attack on Novorossiysk, in which the Olenegorsk Gornyy, a Russian Navy landing ship, was reported to have been badly damaged.

The United Nations and some Western and African countries have urged Russia to return to the grain deal.



South Korean pilgrims greet Pope Francis after he announced the city of Seoul, South Korea, the next celebration of the World Youth Day (WYD) 2027, at the end of the Holy Mass on the last day of World Youth Day (WYD) at Parque Tejo in Lisbon, Portugal.

## Closing youth festival in Portugal, pope shares 'old man's' dream of peace

**Monitoring Desk**  
LISBON: Pope Francis closed an international festival of Catholic Youth on Sunday with a huge outdoor Mass and his own "I have a dream" speech, saying it was for world peace, especially for Ukraine.

About 1.5 million people attended his closing Mass at a riverside park in the Portuguese capital, the Vatican said, quoting local authorities. Many of the faithful slept outdoors, having attending a vigil there on Saturday night, and they gathered in sweltering heat.

Speaking after the Mass, the 86-year-old Francis urged the young people to take the fraternal experiences of the six-day jamboree back home and apply them to their daily lives.

"Dear friends, allow

## Saudi Arabia, Bahrain urge citizens to leave Lebanon after Palestinian refugee camp clashes

**Monitoring Desk**  
BEIRUT: Bahrain called on its citizens Saturday to leave Lebanon "for their own safety" hours after Saudi Arabia did the same without giving a reason.

The decision by the two Gulf nations came after days of fighting in the largest Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon between members of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas' Fatah group and militants of Islamic groups.

The four days of fighting in Ein el-Hilweh camp near the southern port city of Sidon has left 13 people dead and dozens wounded. Bahrain's Foreign Ministry said Bahrainis should abide by the government's previous decisions to avoid travel to Lebanon. The Saudi embassy in Beirut posted a statement late Friday night on X, formerly known as Twitter, calling on its citizens to avoid going to areas where there are "armed conflicts" and also to leave Lebanon quickly.

## Iran boosts navy with missiles, drones as US offers guards for Gulf ships

**Monitoring Desk**  
DUBAI: Iran has equipped its Revolutionary Guards' navy with drones and 1,000-km (600-mile) range missiles, Iranian news agencies reported on Saturday, as the U.S. offers to put guards on commercial ships going through the Gulf's Strait of Hormuz.

Referring to the possible presence of U.S. guards, Iranian armed forces spokesperson Brigadier General Abolfazl Shekarchi said the region's news agencies were "capable of ensuring Persian Gulf security" themselves.

"What do the Persian Gulf, the Gulf of Oman and the Indian Ocean have to do with America? What is your business being here?" Shekarchi was quoted as saying by the semi-official Tasnim news agency.

State news agency IRNA said the Revolutionary Guards' weapons include "various types of drones... and several hundred cruise and ballistic missiles with a range of 300 to 1,000 km are among the systems and equipment that were added to the capabilities of the Guards' navy today."

## Ukraine strikes Chonhar bridge to Crimea

**Monitoring Desk**  
KYIV: The Chonhar road bridge linking mainland Ukraine to Crimea was damaged by a Ukrainian missile strike on Sunday, Russia's RIA news agency cited the Moscow-appointed head of Crimea, Sergei Aksyonov, as saying.

RIA cited acting Kherson regional governor Vladimir Saldo—another Moscow appointee—as saying the strike on the bridge, one of three road links between Crimea and mainland Ukraine, involved an Anglo-French Storm Shadow missile. He did not provide any evidence.



A firefighter works inside the burnt-out building of the University of Economics and Trade, which was reportedly hit by shelling in the course of Russia-Ukraine conflict in Donetsk, Russian-controlled Ukraine.

## 2 dead, 57 rescued from migrant shipwrecks off Italy's Lampedusa

**Monitoring Desk**  
ROME: Italy's coastguard said on Sunday it had recovered two bodies and rescued 57 people off the southern island of Lampedusa, amid reports that more than 30 people were missing following two shipwrecks.

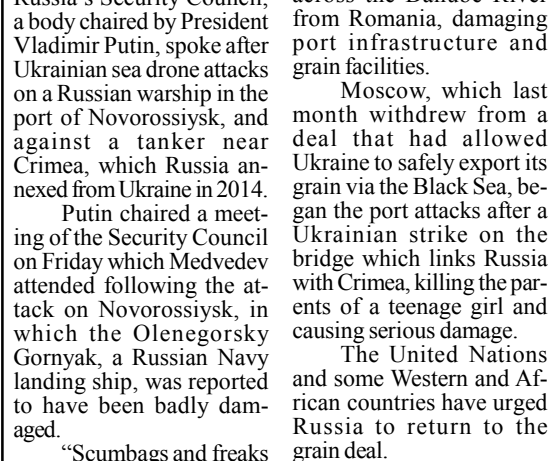
The Ansa news agency, citing survivors' accounts, reported that two migrant boats that had set off from the port of Sfax, a hotspot for Tunisia's migration crisis, had sunk on Saturday on their way to Europe. One was carrying 48 people, the second 42, Ansa said, adding that the coastguard found the survivors about 23 nautical miles (46 km) south-west of Lampedusa, as well as the two victims—a woman from Ivory Coast and her one-year-old child. A coastguard spokesperson said he could only confirm the number of survivors and the recovery of two bodies.

More than 2,000 people have arrived in Lampedusa in the last few days after being rescued at sea by Italian patrol boats and NGO groups, as strong winds further complicate the situation around the island.

## Missing Mexican woman Maria Fernanda Sanchez found dead in Germany

**Monitoring Desk**  
MEXICO CITY: Police in Germany reported that they found the body of a 24-year-old Mexican woman who disappeared in Berlin at the end of July and whose case has garnered widespread attention in Mexico.

Authorities said the body of Maria Fernanda Sanchez, for whom Interpol had issued a yellow search notice, was found floating in a canal by a person walking along a bridge in Berlin's Adlershof neighborhood.



Mourners carry the body of a Palestinian who was killed during clashes with Israeli settlers, in a hospital in Ramallah, in the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

## China floodwater diversions to populated areas unleash wave of online anger

**Monitoring Desk**  
BEIJING: Nearly one million people in China's northern Hebei province were relocated after record rains forced authorities to channel water from swollen rivers to some populated areas for storage, sparking anger online over the homes sacrificed to save Beijing.

The vast Hai River basin covers an area the size of Poland that includes Hebei, Beijing, Tianjin. Over a span of one week from late July, the region with a population totalling 110 million experienced its most serious flooding in six decades, with Hebei, particularly Baoding prefecture, the worst hit.

According to flood control laws, when basin-wide flooding causes reservoirs, the first line of defence, to exceed their limits, water may be temporarily channelled to so-called "flood storage areas"—including low-lying populated land.

On July 31, Hebei province opened seven of its 13 designated flood storage areas, including two in the city of Zhuozhou in Baoding south of Beijing and north of Xiongan, a zone President Xi Jinping aims to develop into an economic powerhouse serving Hebei, Beijing and Tianjin.

On Aug. 1, Hebei's Communist Party Secretary Ni Yuefeng called Xiongan a top priority for the province's flood prevention work, according to local state media.

On his visit to flood storage areas in Baoding, Ni added that it was necessary to reduce the pressure on Beijing's flood control and create a "moat" for the Chinese capital.

"Beijing should foot the bill", wrote a netizen on the popular Chinese microblog Weibo.

In other posts on Zhuozhou, netizens said residents weren't aware they lived in a flood storage area and the rights of the minority had been sacrificed.

## Niger coup weakens West's 'fight against terror' in Africa

**Monitoring Desk**  
PARIS: The coup in Niger will undermine the fight against resurgent terror groups in Africa's Sahel region, France's defence minister said this week, accusing the country's junta of taking "hostage" not just President Mohamed Bazoum but the entire country.

Speaking in an interview with this news agency, French Armed Forces Minister Sebastian Lecornu praised the "strong" actions of regional West African group ECOWAS, which has given the junta until Sunday to restore democratic rule or face the threat of military action.

Lecornu echoed comments by other Western officials and observers that the coup had come at a precarious moment when several terror groups including Boko Haram, the militant Islamic

## Prosecutors call for restraining order after Trump's defiant post

**Monitoring Desk**  
WASHINGTON: Prosecutors flagged a threatening social media post from Donald Trump in a late-night court filing on Friday, arguing that it suggests the former US president might intimidate witnesses by improperly disclosing confidential evidence received from the government.

On his Truth Social site, Trump wrote: "If you go after me, I'm coming after you!" on Friday afternoon, a day after he pleaded not guilty to charges that he orchestrated a criminal conspiracy to try to reverse his 2020 election loss to Democrat Joe Biden.

## Libyan governing body's vote to replace its head adds uncertainty to the country's split politics

**Monitoring Desk**  
CAIRO: One of Libya's top governing bodies elected a new head on Sunday, in a development that could further fracture the country already split between two rival administrations.

Members of the Supreme Council of State, which is separate from both of the governments and is based in the capital of Tripoli, voted for Mohamed Takala to be the body's new leader. Takala would take over from former head Khaled el-Meshri, a powerful figure who had been key in negotiations over the

## Lukashenko opponents unite, plan 'New Belarus' passports

**Monitoring Desk**  
WARSAW: Exiled opponents of President Alexander Lukashenko met in Poland on Sunday, on the eve of the third anniversary of their unsuccessful post-election protests, to display unity and plan strategy including the issuance of "New Belarus" passports. Set up in August 2022 by Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, the self-declared government-in-exile has opened more than 20 alternative embassies and information centres abroad.

Tsikhanouskaya, 40, a former English teacher who fled after running against Lukashenko in a 2020 vote.



A group of people shows posters in front of the Parque Tejo stage for the XXXVII World Youth Day, in Lisbon, Portugal.



## PM Shahbaz says Serving ailing humanity; a collective responsibility of all

LAHORE (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday said that all those who were tasked with the onus to serve humanity, should strive for the provision of free-of-cost health and education facilities to the poor and deprived segments of society. The prime minister was addressing a conference arranged here to create awareness about the elimination of Hepatitis-C in the country arranged at Pakistan Kidney and Liver Institute (PKLI).

Addressing the participants, the prime minister said it was their collective responsibility to serve the poor and deprived masses by setting up health facilities like the PKLI in line with the vision of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of the nation, and in accordance with the concept of the welfare state.

The event was attended by Governor Punjab

Muhammad Balighur Rehman, ministers, experts and relevant authorities.

The prime minister termed the event a historic and said that he always desired to see PKLI working on the pattern of Johns Hopkins of the USA.

He said the PKLI journey started in 2014, when he requested Dr Saeed Akhtar to set up a state-of-the-art institute for the kidney and liver diseases in Punjab province.

The prime minister said that the institute was established with an autonomous body to rid it of any official red tape.

The project was launched in 2015 and was completed in 2018 when the first kidney transplant was performed, he recollected.

The prime minister said that till this day, a total of 1000 transplants had been performed at PKLI which was another milestone.

The PKLI had now Rs 15 billion in the trust fund which would help in providing free treatment to the poor people, he added.

He observed that previously, they used to send liver disease patients to other neighbouring countries. PKLI was established in the country which entertained patients irrespective of class and without discrimination, he said, adding it was also an essence for the creation of Pakistan for which Quaid and a large number of people gave huge sacrifices.

He regretted that the poor people in the country suffered while the rich had all the resources to get treatment for themselves at the best facilities in the world.

The prime minister said during 2018, about 26 Hepatitis C filter clinics were established in the province under the umbrella of PKLI where patients were treated with great care and with free medicines.



LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif offering dua after unveiling plaque during the groundbreaking ceremony of PKLI University and Launching of the National Hepatitis C Elimination Campaign.

## CPEC shifts focus of geo-political cooperation to geo-economic fruition

LAHORE (APP): The dedication and untiring efforts of the incumbent government and China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) diplomatic, technical staff of both countries have shifted the focus of cooperation from geo-politics to geo-economics by bringing it to fruition, experts said on Sunday.

They said that CPEC was playing a key role in transforming the development landscape of Pakistan with the launch of several multi-billion-dollar projects. As of now, more than 150 countries, with 75 per

cent of the world's population and half of the world's GDP, have signed up to the BRI. CPEC, a principal component of BRI, aims to connect Pakistan's Gwadar port city to China's Xinjiang region through a network of roads, railways, and pipelines, he said.

To a query Anwar said that CPEC has the potential to significantly impact the entire region. Under CPEC, both governments have decided to overcome the then energy crisis in Pakistan, he said, adding that to guarantee energy security, multiple projects.

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NAWABSHAH: Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Murad Ali Shah visit site after a train derailed as rescue operation is underway, at Sarhari Railway Station.

## PTI threw "petrol bomb of inflation" on people: Marriyum Aurangzeb

KARACHI (APP): Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Sunday criticized the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) four-year rule which triggered extreme inflation in the country due to wrong economic policies and massive corruption of its leadership.

"The people fully know the difference between development, destruction and conspiracies," she said while drawing a comparison between the destructive policies of the PTI government, and development-oriented and public-friendly initiatives of the coalition government in the last 15 months.

Addressing a news conference at the Karachi Press Club, she recalled that

the PTI pelted petrol bombs on the police when the PTI chief's residence in Zaman Park was raided.

She said the PTI chief was the mastermind of May 9 incidents when the Law Enforcement Agencies' vans, mosques, ambulances, memorials of martyrs and sensitive installations were set on fire.

On the contrary, she said the three-time prime minister brought prosperity and development in the country by ending load-shedding and curbing terrorism. Nawaz Sharif launched China Pakistan Economic Corridor, made the country's defence impregnable and spread network of roads across Pakistan, she added.

Marriyum said curbs were imposed on the media

and freedom of expression during the four-year of the PTI, however, the press clubs across the country provided a platform to the then opposition leaders to spread their messages among the masses and high-lights of the PTI regime. She said the PTI chairman was declared "predator" for media by the international organization, but Pakistan ranking in press freedom improved during the last fifteen months of the coalition government. She said the PEMRA Ordinance of 2002 was a "black law" which was enacted by a dictator, but it was the coalition government which introduced amendments after twelve months of extensive consultation.

## PML-N to empower youth with info-tech skills: Ahsan Iqbal

NAROWAL (APP): Federal Minister for Planning and Development Prof Ahsan Iqbal Chaudhry said on Sunday the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) wanted to empower youth of the country with info-tech skills and it was making all-out efforts in that direction.

Speaking as the chief guest at the "Digital Narowal" event held at E-Library here, he said now his entire focus was on launch of modern-day projects for the youth of the country. He said recently the first convocation of the University of Narowal was held, which had been delayed for the past four years. He said the PML-N believed in merit

only. "It is very easy to talk of merit, but PML-N government is demonstrating through practical steps that it believes in merit and only merit. Laptop scheme for



brilliant students is the process of recognising the talent of our youth," Ahsan Iqbal said. The federal minister said that with the laptops given by the PML-N government, lakhs of students were freelancing from Pakistan and earning handsome amounts of money for their families.

## CM condoles death of sister of Syed Aslam Shah

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Abdul Qudus Bizenjo has expressed condolence and grief over death of sister of former Coordinator, Prime Minister and former Political Secretary to Chief Minister Balochistan, Syed Aslam Shah.

The cousin and representative of Chief Minister, Mir Naseer Bizenjo visited the residence of Syed Aslam Shah and condoled with him the death of his sister, on behalf of the Chief Minister.

He also offered fataha for the departed soul.

## Ex-MPA Prince Ahmad joins race for caretaker CM of Balochistan

QUETTA (INP): Former Member of the Provincial Assembly (MPA) Prince Ahmad Ali has thrown his hat into the ring for the highly contested position of caretaker Chief Minister of Balochistan. According to sources, several members of the Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) have been actively lobbying to secure the candidacy of Prince Ahmad Ali for the caretaker CM position.

They have engaged in discussions with the leadership of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N). Prince Ahmad Ali,

who previously served as an elected member of the Balochistan Assembly from Hub Lasbela after the 2013 elections, brings with him experience and familiarity with the region's political dynamics.

On the other hand, the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI) has nominated former Member of the National Assembly (MNA) Usman Badini as its candidate for the caretaker Chief Minister position. J

However, the race is far from one-sided, as other potential candidates have emerged from different political factions.



ISLAMABAD: Vice Chancellor Mir Chakar Khan Rind University Sibi, Professor Dr. Qadir Baksh Baloch meeting with Chairman HEC Dr. Mukhtiar Ahmed.

## Chairman PTI's arrest is reward for actions: Ghafoor Hydari

JACOBABAD (Online): Senator Abdul Ghafoor Haideri of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam said arrest of Chairman PTI is reward for his actions, upcoming elections should be conducted under the constitution.

Workers should prepare for general elections, he said these things in a meeting with the delegation led by Ameer of JUI Jacobabad Dr. AG Ansari.

Senator Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haideri said that Chairman PTI's misbehavior with the country and the people cannot be found in history.

Further he said JUI has buried the Jewish agent and his agenda, the future is of those who serve the country, Islam and humanity. He maintained that the workers should make exten-

sive preparations for the general elections in the country, carry the message of JUI from door to door and actively participate in the membership drive of JUI.

The upcoming elections will be held under the constitution, the workers will prepare for the general elections. On this occasion, Balochistan Assembly Opposition Leader Advocate Malik Sikander Khan, Central Ruyat Hilal Committee Member Haji Abal Malik Brohi, District Council Alhaj Saeed Rabnawaz Chachar, Mufti Abdul Shakur Kahosa, Qari Kifayatullah Kahosa, Mohammad Kakar, Engineer Hamadullah Ansari, Abdullah Abbas, Mujahid Mir Hasan Barro.



QUETTA: All Parties Hurriyat Conference Leaders, Zahid Safi, Azeem Butt and Shahid Butt addressing a press conference, at Quetta press club.

## Appeal right intact for Imran: Tarar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Law, Azam Nazir Tarar, stated on Sunday that former Prime Minister Imran Khan still possesses the right to appeal the verdict, and the punishment awarded to Khan in the Toshakhana reference was in accordance with the law.

Speaking in the Senate, the Minister mentioned that the PTI chairman had been provided an opportunity to demonstrate his innocence, but now, since he has been convicted, he must face the consequences. The Minister further stated that out of 40 court summonses related to the reference, the PTI chairman appeared only three times, and these assets were the basis for his conviction.

He pointed out that, in contrast to Imran, former prime ministers Nawaz Sharif and Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani did not possess the right to appeal the verdicts issued against them.

## Kamran Murtaza stages symbolic walkout in protest of census handling

ISLAMABAD (APP): JUI-F member Kamran Murtaza on Sunday staged a symbolic walkout from Senate, in a protest of the government's handling of the census and its methodology for population counting, while also drawing attention to anomalies and the reduction of population in Balochistan. Speaking on a point of order in Senate, Murtaza claimed that the latest digital census had reduced the population of Balochistan by 6.4 million. He staged a walkout in protest, citing anomalies in the census process.



QUETTA: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Pakistan and Mili Yakjehti Council Pakistan Central President, Sahibzada Abul Khair Muhammad Zubair addresses during seminar on Ittehad-e-Ummat organized by Mili Yakjehti Council held at Quetta Press Club.

## E-service centre to facilitate Quetta's dwellers

QUETTA (APP): The Balochistan government under the leadership of Chief Minister Mir Abdul Qudus Bizenjo has prioritized public welfare projects for providing facilities to the people and improves service delivery in the province.

The present government has taken historical steps and launched several development projects for the well being of people of province, a handout issued here on Sunday said.

According to the vision of Chief Minister, an e-service centre in Quetta has been officially func-

tional under the Science and Information Technology Department to provide services to the citizens under a one-window operation.

The establishment of that facilitation centre in Quetta will reduce the burden on the district government while ensuring prompt service delivery for citizens. The aim is to streamline the work of different departments through a one-window operation for citizens. In the first phase of the project, the services of four departments would be provided at the e-facilitation centre to improve public services.

With the digitization of Revenue Department, the centre would provide e-services regarding the land record to the masses.

With the installation of e-service centre, the registration and submission of fee in the Excise and Taxation Department has been made easy and efficient.

The acquisition of birth certificate, character certificate and other necessary documents has been made very easy through e-facilitation centre.

A police desk is also set up at the e-service center and resolving public issues related to police.

## Upper House clears HEC (Amendment) Bill, 2023 to strengthen higher education

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senate passed the HEC (Amendment) Bill, 2023 on Sunday with a majority vote, and the bill aims to strengthen and revitalize the Higher Education Commission (HEC).

The Bill was moved by Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar with 23 votes in favour and 16 in opposition. The prime minister has been given the controlling authority of the Higher

Education Commission. The primary goal of the bill was to strengthen the higher education sector in the country and guarantee access to quality education for everyone.

The term of appointment for the Chairman of HEC has been extended to four years from the previous three years. This change aims to promote stability and continuity in the commission's leadership, leading to improved long-term planning and policy implementation.

The bill's objective is to rectify discrepancies present in the existing HEC Ordinance 2002. The 18th constitutional amendment has diminished the regulatory authority of HEC, leading to inadequate legal power for enforcing standardization in the higher education sector.

Earlier, Senator Irfan Siddiqui, Chairman of the Standing Committee on Federal Education and Professional Training, presented the committee's report on the bill to amend the Higher Education Commission (Amendment) Bill, 2023.



QUETTA: Deputy Speaker Balochistan Assembly Sardar Babar Khan Musakhail meeting with President BNP-Awami and Provincial Minister for Agriculture Mir Asadullah Baloch.

## Dar asserts low possibility of error in unanimously approved digital census

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of Finance and Revenue Muhammad Ishaq Dar Sunday emphasized that the digital census, which was unanimously approved by the Council of Common Interests (CCI), has a lower possibility of error. Defending the digital census in the Upper House while speaking on a point of order, Leader of the House Ishaq Dar pointed out that the decision regarding the new census was made by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government. He informed the Senate that Rs 34 billion had been spent on the endeavor.

He mentioned that the census had received approval from eight members of the CCI.

The finance minister mentioned that comprehensive details had been provided to all provinces. The average population growth stands at 2.55 percent, compared to 2.44 percent recorded in the 2017 census. Balochistan has the highest growth rate at 3.25 percent. The digital population census incurred an expenditure of 34 billion rupees, he told.

The finance minister also revealed that a minister from the previous government had caused harm to Pakistan International Airlines (PIA). He asserted that reforms were being implemented to enhance aviation.



RAWALPINDI: President Ex-Servicemen Society Rtd Gen Abdul Qayyum Abdul Qayyum addressing during a ceremony title Pakistan Day.

## AJK PM warns Matching response to every Indian misadventure at LOC

MIRPUR AJK (APP): Azad Jammu and Kashmir Prime Minister (AJK PM) Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq has said that any aggression or misadventures by India on the Line of Control (LOC) shall be paid back in the same coin.

Addressing a special session of the AJK Legislative assembly held in connection with Youm e-Estehsal in the State metropolis late Saturday, the PM, while referring to the highly provocative statement by an Indian minister, made it clear to India that any attempt of infringing the AJK's territorial integrity would be responded to with full force.

The PM said that India should take a lesson from recent history when

an Indian Air Force jet violated our airspace in 2019. He said that the whole world witnessed what happened in the aftermath and how the Indian warplane was downed by the PAF.

"If India attempts to repeat the mistake, then India will get a befitting reply on its own soil", the PM said. "So long as the custodians of Kashmir's freedom movement are alive, the caravan of the freedom movement will continue to march towards its destination", the PM said.

Reiterating his government's commitment to the Kashmir cause, the PM said that all available resources would be used to highlight the Kashmir issue both at national and international level.

## Half million Muslim murders in post independence India

SRINAGAR (Online): From independence till now more than half million Muslims has been murdered in 93,647 incidents of killing muslims. Aljazeera report shows that quarter of million (250,000) muslims was killed in 16 riots and more than 700,000 became homeless.

Biggest Hindu-Muslim riot of India's history occurred in Ayodhya in 1992. On December 6, 1992 Babri Mosque was demolished and more than 3000 muslims were killed.

In 1989 extremists killed more than 9000 muslims in Baghalpur in

Behar state of India. In 2020 amid muslim killing riots more than 150 muslims were killed and hundreds were injured.

Massive rise was witnessed in anti muslim sentiments after 2014. Modi government made dozens of anti-muslim laws like citizen law, Gau Rakhshak, divorce and veil after coming in power.

Huge rise was also witnessed in Bollywood in producing anti muslim movies in last decade.

After India Pakistan division more than 50,000 muslims has been burned or changed into Temple.