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## Caretaker GoB decides to take wholehearted measures against hoarding, smuggling of edible items

CM Mir Ali Mardan Domki issues standing directives to all secretaries, Divisional commissioners, deputy commissioners and Balochistan Food Authority high ups to provide immediate relief to general public

### Independent Report

QUETTA: The interim government of Balochistan has decided to take wholehearted measures against smuggling and hoarding of the edible items as well as for prevention of adulteration and price control in the province.

In this regard, the caretaker Chief Minister Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki has issued standing directives to all administrative secretaries of provincial government departments, divisional commissioners, deputy commissioners and Balochistan Food Authority (BFA) to take necessary action in this regard.

The caretaker Chief Minister has also directed all the concerned to provide immediate relief to the general public without any delay.

In addition to this, the Chief Minister also directed to take stern action against profiteers making the price control committees effective. Similarly, result-oriented action should be taken against those involved in hoarding and smuggling of Urea, sugar and other edible goods in the districts. Mr. Domki directed the district administration.

He also directed to the BFA high ups to deal with those involved in the adul-

teration of the food items with iron hands.

The caretaker Chief Minister directed the police to provide security to the teams of Food Authority engaged in the action in this regard.

He asserted that it is right of the people to get quality food free of adulteration and it is responsibility of the government to ensure it.

He said that those involved in hoarding, smuggling and adulteration are stigma of the society. He stressed that all concerned departments and administration should ensure protection of rights and interests of the masses.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Provincial Minister Sardar Asifur Rehman Durrani meeting with Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki

## GoB decides to back QESCO in anti-power pilferage drive

QUETTA: The Government of Balochistan has decided to back the Quetta Electric Supply Company (QESCO) in its campaign against electricity pilferage campaign launched all over the province.

According to an official notification issued here, the task force has been formed at the provincial and divisional level.

The provincial task force would be headed by

the Additional Chief Secretary Home while divisional task force would be led by the respective divisional commissioners.

The task forces would monitor the anti-power theft drive in the province, mentioned in the notification.

It may be mentioned here that QESCO had launched massive campaign against the power theft in the province three days back.



A man carries belongings out of his damaged house, in the aftermath of a deadly earthquake in Moulay Brahim, Morocco

## 9,234 appear in tests conducted for admission in four medical colleges of Balochistan

QUETTA: In all 9,234 candidates were appeared in the entry test (MDCAT) conducted for admission in four different medical colleges of Balochistan province here on Sunday.

The candidates including 5,249 males and 3,983 females appeared in the entry tests conducted at the main campus of Balochistan University of Information Technology, Engineering, Management Sciences (BUIEMS), under the arrangements of Bolan University of Medical and Health Sciences (BUMHS).

The caretaker Provincial Minister for Health, Dr.

Amir Muhammad Khan Jogezi inspected the entry test and expresses satisfaction over the arrangements made for it.

According to the organizers, the answer keys of the entry test would be issued at the website of BUMHS.

It may be mentioned here that there were 200 MCQs in the entry test and the duration of test was of three hours and 30 minutes.

The chief coordinator for MDCAT 2023 for Balochistan, Professor Dr. Shabbir Ahmed Lehi and professors of the University monitored the entry test.

## CM's education friendly initiative Rs. 1.25 b released 11 public sector universities

QUETTA: The caretaker provincial government led by Chief Minister Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki released the budget of 11 public sector universities of the province.

According to an official hand out issued here on Sunday, the budget of Rs. 1.25 billion has been released to the public sector universities of the province on directives of the caretaker Chief Minister.

The initiative of caretaker Chief Minister regarding release of funds for the universities is being dubbed as the education friendly and appreciated by all concerned. This also means that the caretaker provincial government is determined to resolve the financial issues of the universities under leadership of the Chief Minister.

## 20 injured in Zhub bus, truck collision

ZHOB (INP): At least 20 people including women and children were injured in collision between passenger bus and a truck at D.I Khan National Highway on Sunday.

According to details, a Zhub bound passenger bus coming from Peshawar got out of control of driver due to failure of brakes and rammied into an onion laden truck near Sarah Khawara area of Zhub.

As a result of accident, 20 people including four women and eight children were injured.

The injured were shifted to hospital where condition of some wounded people was stated to be critical.



Caretaker Federal Minister for Interior Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti and Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi addressing a press conference in Islamabad.

## Bugti says No mercy for smugglers, vows to eliminate terrorism

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Interior Minister Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti said on Sunday that the government has adopted zero tolerance policy to curb smuggling of US dollars, sugar, fertiliser and petroleum products.

"The federal government has started action by registering cases against the elements involved in illegal activities," said Bugti while addressing a press conference here.

The interior minister said law will take its course if anyone found guilty in crimes like, Hundi, Hawala, Smuggling of sugar, wheat, fertilizers and other illegal activities.

It is prime responsibility of the people to keep a vigilant eye in their surroundings, said Bugti urging the masses to report such activities for timely action.

He stated that the government has taken a tough stance on terrorism, adding all resources were being utilized to purge the menace of the country.

Regarding the Chitral attack, Bugti commended the Pakistan Army's swift response and the people's resilience against terrorism.

He stressed that the government would not allow anyone to impose their agenda through force and will defend every inch of the territory.

Interior Minister expressed hope that the Afghan government would uphold its Doha agreement, ensuring that Afghan soil was not used against anyone.

Furthermore, Bugti mentioned ongoing efforts to address illegal immigration, with plans to repatriate illegal immigrants in the near future.

## Nation observes death anniversary of Quaid-e-Azam today

ISLAMABAD (Online): Pakistani nation will observe death anniversary of the founder of nation Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah today.

Various organizations will hold ceremonies to pay tribute to the father of nation and political and social leaders will address these ceremonies.

Newspapers will publish additional additions and PTV and other national and regional channels will broadcast special programs to honor the founder of nation.

## Seven terrorists killed, six critically injured in Chitral fire exchange

RAWALPINDI (APP): As many as seven terrorists were killed while another six got critically injured during an intense fire exchange that took place between the security forces and terrorists in the general area Ursoon, Chitral District on Sunday.

According to the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR), the Army troops effectively engaged terrorists location.

The sanitization of the area was being carried out to eliminate any other terrorists found in the area.

The locals of the area appreciated the operation by the security forces and expressed their full support to eliminate the menace of terrorism from the country, the ISPR said.

## No country has recognized Kashmir as part of India: Jilil Abbas

ISLAMABAD (INP): Caretaker Minister for Foreign Affairs Jilil Abbas Jilani has said that Kashmir is a disputed territory and no country of the world has recognized it as a part of India.

Jilil Abbas Jilani in a media interview said Pakistan wants a peaceful neighbourhood and peaceful relations with all its neighbours, including India.

He said for peaceful relations, India must create a conducive atmosphere, including withdrawing August 5 2019 actions in the occupied territory, release of all illegally detained Kashmiri Hurriyat leaders and activists languishing in different jails of India and the territory and withdrawal of troops from Kashmir.

To a question the foreign minister said the Kashmir dispute has been pending with the United Nations for the last several decades and legislation by India cannot affect its disputed status.

## Allies may be running away from elections: Bilawal



HYDERABAD (Online): PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari said on Sunday it may be the case that his party's allies in the erstwhile Pakistan Democratic Movement-led ruling coalition were "scared" and "running away from elections".

"I have been telling my allies for the past 18 months that if you get scared, you die [in politics]. Unfortunately, the rest of our political allies have been scared. They are afraid. They run away from by-elections and local government

Continued on page 2

## Massive crackdown launched to combat power theft

ISLAMABAD (APP): A massive crackdown has been launched by the Caretaker Government to combat the alarming surge in power theft and to take stern actions against the culprits involved.

On the directives of the government, the Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) has expedited the drive against power pilferage and caught 105 meters and imposed fine of Rs 7.567 million for stealing electricity in various areas

of the company in the current month.

IESCO chief Dr Muhammad Amjad said that during the current crackdown against electricity thieves, the field formations checked 5,743 meters and found 105 meters of the electricity consumers involved in power theft through various means.

As many as 73 meters were found tampered while 22 were getting direct

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## Big action of FIA, seized a huge consignment of dollars

QUETTA (Online): Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has raided a house in Quetta and dollars worth one crore were recovered.

According to sources, FIA acted on a tip-off and the accused Mushtaq Khan and Agha were arrested from the house in Hazara Town area of Quetta.

Ijaz was taken into cus-

ody. On the identification of the accused, a huge amount of dollars hidden in the house was recovered, the value of which is said to be one million dollars.

It was told that efforts were being made to smuggle these dollars abroad. Further investigation of the accused is underway.

## PM Kakar says Task force to determine sizes of federal, provincial govts

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar Sunday said a task force headed by the finance minister would determine the sizes of federal and provincial governments, look at options to better manage pension funds, besides making efforts to rationalize public expenditure and increase revenue.

In an interview with a private television, he said, "We are convinced that there is a need to rationalise expenditure and increase the revenue of the government to create a viable state and lessen existential threats due to economic vulnerability."

He said the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) was attempting to help achieve appropriate governance and address the reasons for ill govern-

nance in the past.

The civil institutions were lax in their working in the past but now the army leadership with its organizational strength had increased the level of confidence of civil service which had renewed energy to implement policies and achieve goals, he added.

The prime minister said the government was optimistic about investment from Saudi Arabia in the backdrop of talks between Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia Mohammed Bin Salman and Pakistan's chief of army staff.

The government was planning for a visit of the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, adding the visit would be aimed at fully exploiting economic opportunities in the country.



KARACHI: Caretaker Balochistan Minister for Information and Public Relations Jan Achakzai addresses a press conference at Press Club.

## Drive to curb drug cultivation, Iranian oil, currency smuggling underway: Jan Achakzai

KARACHI (INP): smuggling is used for terrorism."

"We have seized nearly 117 illegal currency businesses and more than 500 stations selling Iranian petrol. During the anti-currency smuggling drive, over \$10 million was recovered in Quetta. We are also taking steps to secure the supply line of Sindh and Balochistan borders."

"60 Afghan citizens have been arrested to stop drug cultivation. We want to make Balochistan an international investment hub. We are also addressing the complaints regarding the law and order."

Jan Achakzai said, "Balochistan government is taking steps to eliminate currency smuggling. Money earned through



KILLAABDULLAH: Commissioner Quetta Division Muhammad Hanza Shafiqat inspecting an ongoing operation for elimination of narcotics

## 20 more godowns abolished, drugs burnt: Grand operation continues against narcotics in K. Abdullah

QUETTA: The grand operation remained continued against narcotics in Killa Abdullah district on third consecutive day, Sunday.

During the operation, 20 more godowns were abolished and different drugs stored there were set ablaze by the concerned agencies.

Needless to mention here is that Pak Army, Frontier Corps (FC), Levies and

Anti-Narcotics Force are taking part in the anti-narcotics campaign being driven in the border district.

The operation was started on directives and supervision of the Commander 12 Corps, Lt. General Asif Ghafoor.

Meanwhile, the Commissioner Quetta Division, Muhammad Hanza Shafiqat also visited the Killa Abdullah and reviewed the operation.



QUETTA: Caretaker Provincial Health Minister Dr. Amir Muhammad Jogezi inspecting entry test (MDCAT) for medical colleges

## Pakistan Cricket Board issues NOC to Sindh Premier League

**PCB Chairman Chaudhry Zaka Ashraf hopes successful hosting of SPL to contribute to a new chapter in sports history of Sindh; SPL President Arif Malik considers NOC a crucial milestone; Nasir Shah emphasizes SPL embodies vision of Chairman Bilawal**

**Independent Report**  
KARACHI: In a remarkable development regarding cricket in Sindh, Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has issued No-Objection Certificate (NOC) for the Sindh Premier League (SPL) the other day.

NOC was officially granted by PCB in a crucial meeting of SPL President Arif Malik and former provincial minister Nasir Hussain Shah with PCB Chairman Chaudhry Zaka Ashraf at the PCB headquarters.

Also present at the meeting were PCB Director Domestic Nadeem Khan and other high-ranking PCB officials.

The decision regarding grant of NOC for SPL has sparked jubilation among players, team owners, and officials in Sindh.

The SPL, which is being aligned with the vision of People's Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Syed Nasir Hussain Shah, promises to mark a new chapter in sports history, according to Chairman PCB Zaka Ashraf.

Speaking on the occasion, Nasir Hussain Shah emphasized that the SPL embodies the vision of Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. The league's goal is not only to nurture cricket talent in Sindh but also to showcase the rich culture of the region to the world. He expressed his delight at the PCB's issuance of the NOC for SPL, crediting former Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah and his cabinet for their tireless efforts in transforming the league from an idea into reality. Nasir Hussain Shah expressed optimism about the SPL's inaugural edition's success.

He said that players who never had a chance to showcase their talents should be included in the league.

He stated that the PPP chairman was showing special interest in organizing the first provincial league. His instructions are not only to highlight the cricket talent of Sindh but also to showcase the culture of Sindh through this league, Nasir noted.

Chairman Chaudhry Zaka Ashraf expressed the hope that successful hosting of the SPL would contribute to a new chapter in the sports history of Sindh and would continue to play a pivotal role.

Chaudhry Zaka Ashraf echoed these sentiments, highlighting the potential of SPL to make a significant impact on Sindh's sporting landscape and beyond. SPL President Arif Malik, while considering the NOC a crucial milestone, expressed renewed enthusiasm for the league's preparations. He acknowledged the pressure that comes with the approval, pledging to ensure a brilliant organization and promising the fans the best and most competitive cricket.

Arif Malik expressed gratitude to the PCB for recognizing their efforts and granting the NOC.

He acknowledged that while the NOC approval brought joy, it also placed pressure on them to organize the league brilliantly, ensuring that cricket fans could enjoy the best and most competitive cricket.

According to the playing conditions, the game will continue from this point tomorrow with no overs lost. Pakistan have fielded an unchanged playing XI for this high-voltage clash. Meanwhile, India have made two changes with one of them being forced after Shreyas Iyer

picked up a spasm in the back moments before the toss and will be replaced by KL Rahul. Jasprit Bumrah has also replaced Mohammad Shami in India's lineup.

After beating Bangladesh by seven wickets in their first Super Four match, the Men in Green will look forward to continuing their excellent form in the Asia Cup.

"We will bowl first. I think there is a bit of moisture, we need to use that. Always, India-Pakistan is high intensity, but we will take it match to match. As a team, we are playing well, we are focused on this one," Pakistan captain Babar Azam said at the toss.

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picked up a spasm in the back moments before the toss and will be replaced by KL Rahul. Jasprit Bumrah has also replaced Mohammad Shami in India's lineup.



## Pakistan-India clash to resume today after rain mars yet another Asia Cup 2023 match

Batting first India were 147/2 in 24.1 overs when rain paused game

### Sports Desk

COLOMBO: Amid incessant rain, umpires on Sunday decided to call off the Asia Cup 2023 Super 4 clash between arch-rivals Pakistan and India for today and the game will continue from the same point from tomorrow (Monday) with no overs lost.

Pakistan won the toss and decided to bowl first against India in the high-voltage clash. When the match was stopped due to rain, India were 147/2 in 24.1 overs.

At one stage it seemed that a 34-over match would be possible but rain once again returned to dash the hopes of cricket fans.

According to the playing conditions, the game will continue from this point tomorrow with no overs lost.

Pakistan have fielded an unchanged playing XI for this high-voltage clash. Meanwhile, India have made two changes with one of them being forced after Shreyas Iyer



KARACHI: Caretaker Minister for Energy, Muhammad Ali in a group photo after the meeting with Pakistan Petroleum Dealer's Association. Abdus Sami Khan, Chairman of the Association, and other members are also in presence.

## Hawala Hundi, Iranian oil smuggling: Details of officials, politicians and dealers submitted to PM House

ISLAMABAD (Online): Details of officers, politicians and dealers involved in hundi business and Iranian oil smuggling have been provided to Prime Minister House.

Sources said that this report has been submitted by the government agency, according to the report, 722 currency dealers in Pakistan are involved in hundi business.

The highest number of hawala hundi dealers are 205 in Punjab, 183 dealers in KP and 176 dealers in Sindh doing hundi business, 104 dealers in Baluchistan and 37 dealers in Azad Kashmir involved in hundi, 17 dealers doing hundi business in Federal Capital Islamabad.

According to the report, more than 2 billion 81 million liters of oil is smuggled from Iran to Pakistan annually.

The earning from Iranian oil smuggling are used by terrorists, 76 dealers are involved in oil smuggling in the areas adjacent to the border.

995 pumps sell Iranian oil across the country, 90 government officials are involved in Iranian oil smuggling, 29 politicians are also involved in Iranian oil business, PSO vehicles are also involved in the transportation of Iranian oil from Iran.

Oil comes to Pakistan smuggled in Iranian vehicles, Iranian oil smuggling vehicles are called Zam Yad.

## PTI claims Dar kidnapped from Karachi, forcibly disappeared

KARACHI (Online): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has alleged that its party leader Usman Dar has been abducted and forcibly disappeared from Karachi.

In the statement issued by PTI, it is said that Usman Dar was abducted by unknown persons from Malir area of Karachi.

The statement demanded that a new series of enforced disappearances of PTI leaders had begun, Usman Dar should be recovered and produced before a concerned court.

Tehreek-e-Insaf said that first Aun Abbas Bappi, then Sadaqat Abbasi and now Usman Dar were kidnapped, this new strategy to crush the party and this will also fail like the previous tactics.

## Sri Lanka slashes Asia Cup ticket prices by up to 95pc to fill empty stadiums

### Sports Desk

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka Cricket slashed ticket prices for the Asia Cup by up to 95 per cent on Sunday after costs were hiked 40-fold and matches were played in near-empty stadiums. Tickets for One-Day Internationals (ODI) in crisis-hit Sri Lanka have generally cost around 250 rupees (\$0.78) previously.

That was hiked to 10,000 rupees for the Asia Cup, which is being organised by the Pakistan Cricket Board despite largely taking place in Sri Lanka, and fans in the cricket-mad island country have stayed away in droves.

Barely 7,000 home supporters turned out for Sri Lanka's Super Four clash against Bangladesh on Saturday at the 35,000-capacity R. Premadasa Stadium in Colombo, leaving the hosts facing the embarrassing sight of ranks of empty seats.

## Allies may be running...

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elections, and maybe, they now want to run away from general elections," he said while addressing the public at the inauguration ceremony of Hussanabad Water Filtration Plant in Hyderabad.

His statement appeared to be a criticism of the PPP's allies for prioritising delimitation over holding elections within the constitutionally mandated 90-day period following the dissolution of assemblies.

The PPP was one of the major allies in the coalition, which also included the PML-N and Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam (Fazl), that came to power after ousting former prime minister Imran Khan through a no-confidence motion in April last year.

The coalition's term in the government ended on August 9 with the premature dissolution of the National Assembly, three days ahead of its constitutionally mandated period.

According to Article 224 of the Constitution, elections should be held within 90 days — by November 9 in this case — of the premature dissolution of the NA.

However, the Election Commission of Pakistan has ruled out elections being held this year, citing the need to conduct fresh delimitation of constituencies

after the notification of new 2023 digital census results. The ECP refers to Section 17(2) of the Elections Act on the matter, which states: "The commission shall delimit constituencies after every census is officially published."

For its part, the PPP has taken a tough stance for elections within three months, standing against its former allies who seem to be favouring polls after the completion of the delimitation process, which could stretch them beyond the constitutionally mandated limit of 90 days.

However, PPP Co-Chairperson and Bilawal's father, Asif Ali Zardari, said in a statement yesterday that "completing the delimitation exercise was necessary before holding polls".

But, when Bilawal was queried on the statement that seemed a deviation from the PPP's stance, he stated his preference to stick by decisions made by the party leadership, i.e. elections within 90 days, instead of his father's stance, saying he was only "bound to follow his father in family matters".

"You should ask Zardari Sahib [why he issued this statement]," he replied to a question posed by a reporter, who referred to his father's statement in support of elections being held after fresh delimitation.

## PR spends Rs.1862m for rehabilitation of track between Kotri-Khanpur

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Railways is spending Rs. 1862.84 million for the rehabilitation of 518 kilometers of track between Kotri-Khanpur under the project of Immediate Track Safety Works (ITSW-1).

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

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

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

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

A PC-1 amounting to Rs. 4930.22 million for the rehabilitation of track machinery has been approved, which would ensure the quality of track

maintenance work.

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

The project of upgradation of Main Line-1 at a cost of \$6.683 billion has been negotiated with the Chinese side for completing the ML-1 in two phases consisting of four packages, he added.

The assets of Pakistan Railways are mainly related to the track (11881 kilometers), and rolling stock (15699), and most of these assets have lived their useful life.

## Fakhar Zaman wins hearts after helping out ground staff in Pakistan, India clash



COLOMBO: Netizens took to social media to praise Pakistan's top order batsman Fakhar Zaman as he helped ground staff put on covers as the rain interrupted the Super 4 match between arch-rivals India and Pakistan being played in Colombo on Sunday.

The game interrupted in the 25th over due to a heavy downpour, saw the ground staff rushed to put on the covers.

A short video clip which has since gone viral on social media, shows Fakhar Zaman lending a helping hand to the ground staff in covering the pitch.

The left-handed batsman can be seen holding the covers and running alongside the ground staff.

This little gesture has garnered praise from netizens on social media.

"Fakhar Zaman helped the ground staff to cover the ground. Nice gesture from Fakhar Zaman," a user named Wasim Akram wrote on his X — formerly known as Twitter — account.

"A helping hand for the ground staff from Fakhar Zaman," wrote the Pakistan Cricket Board's (PCB) official X handle.



QUETTA: President Balochistan Assembly and MP's Hostel Officers Welfare Association Zafar Rand speaks during a press conference.

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power supply, he said and added that a fine of Rs 7.567 million was imposed on the power pilferers while charging over 177,000 units.

He said on the directives of the Federal Minister for Energy, the IESCO launched the crackdown against electricity thieves and their facilitators in all circles including Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Attock, Jhelum and Chakwal circles.

All operation circles, including In-charge Executives and SDOs, were rigorously inspecting industrial, commercial, domestic and other tariff categories within their respective areas, the IESCO chief said.

He said that the local administration and police were also assisting the Company to carry out the operations. He expressed confidence in the success of this government-led campaign, with the full dedication of officers and staff.

He emphasized that electricity theft put extra

burden on the public and government institutions adding that both the agencies and the public need to work together to combat this menace.

Dr. Khan appealed to the consumers to demonstrate their national and moral responsibility by reporting electricity theft and facilitators to the Anti-Power Theft focal person at mobile number 03195991304 or to the Complaint and Monitoring Cell at numbers 0519252933.

Meanwhile, the Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) has taken strict action against eight officers; five Executive Engineers (XENs), two Sub-Divisional Officers (SDOs) and a Line Superintendent (LS) for conniving in electricity theft and giving new power connection to a dead defaulter, the LESCO spokesman disclosed.

He said LESCO Director (Customer Services) Rai Mohammad Asghar took action against those

officers after they were proved guilty in their respective departmental inquiries.

Sharing the details, the spokesman said that Mehmood Alam Qureshi, Sub-Divisional Officer (SDO) of Qila Sattar Shah area has been removed from service for conniving in the electricity theft, and on the similar charges, an Executive Engineer (XEN) of Sheikhpura Rashid Soomro will not be considered for promotion in the next grade for two years and he will stick in Grade-18 during this period.

Director (Customer Services) Rai Mohammad Asghar also issued orders for stopping annual increment of XEN Manawala area Muhammad Rizwan for one year, as he was found involved in facilitating the electricity thieves.

After conducting a detailed inquiry, the Company also took departmental action against the following officers on the

charge of giving new electricity connection to a dead defaulter, who owed more than Rs 30 million dues to LESCO, in the area of Kot Abdul Maalik.

Mohsin Ali of Gulshan Ravi (DDT Northern Circle) has been demoted from Executive Engineer of Grade-18 to an SDO of Grade-17; Muzamil Hussain, XEN of Kot Abdul Maalik area, will not be promoted for two years and he has been made permanent at Grade-18 for one year; the annual increment of XEN (M&T) Najamul Hasan has been stopped for one year; promotion of Ali Abbas, SDO Kot Abdul Maalik, has been stopped for two years and he has been made permanent at Grade-17 for one year; and Line Superintendent-1 (LS-1) Mirza Aqeel Baig, who was serving as Head Draftsman in Northern Circle, has been demoted to Line Superintendent-2 (LS-2) and made permanent as Line Superintendent for one year, the spokesman said.

Director (Customer Service) Rai Mohammad Asghar said that the LESCO was committed for observing zero tolerance policy on facilitation of power theft and the officer/official or field staff proved guilty of having connivance with electricity thieves would not be spared, adding that operation against electricity thieves would continue with full swing.

The Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO) has also nabbed 87 people on the charge of power pilferage in different parts of its region during past 24 hours.

FESCO spokesman Tahir Sheikh said that Company's anti-theft teams conducted surprise checking of electricity supply meters in eight districts of the region and detected electricity theft at 87 points.

The power pilferers were stealing electricity through various modes. Therefore, the FESCO teams removed their elec-

tricity supply meters and confiscated their entire material in this regard.

The FESCO also imposed Rs. 13 million as fine on more than 310,000 detection units. Separate cases were also got registered against the power pilferers while further action against them was under progress, he said.

The Peshawar Electricity Supply Company (PESCO) has so far removed over 500 direct hooks during ongoing operations against electricity pilferers in the province.

"More than 500 direct hooks have been removed so far while fines for more than 7 million have been charged against electricity theft," spokesman PESCO told APP.

As per the government's directives, he said the anti-electricity theft operations continued in the province on war footings and more than 250 requests for lodging FIR have been submitted.

Meanwhile, 10 superintendent engineers of PESCO were assigned the duties of focal persons with a direction to make contact with provincial task force and divisional commissioners to curb electricity theft and provide relief to all those consumers who pay electricity bills.

The Provincial Task Force with an assistance of police, district administration and other relevant departments were directed to remove direct electricity hooks and make recovery from defaulters on the priority basis. In this regard, the deputy commissioners would lead the task force at their respective districts and report regarding the removal of direct hooks and recovery of outstanding dues would be submitted to the caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on daily basis.

The Hyderabad Electric Supply Company (HESCO) has launched a crackdown against power theft in the HESCO region.

Large-scale crackdown against electricity thieves was continued on in HESCO region on Sunday. According to spokesperson, raids were conducted in several areas of region including Hyderabad, Tatta, Umarkot, Badin, Mirpurkhas, Khipro, Dgri, Nawabshah, Tando Allahyar, Sakrand, Tando Jam, Chamnbar, Kotri, Jamshoro, Nooriabad, Sehwan, Bhan Syedabad, Sanghar, Qazi Ahmad, Daulatpur, Saeebad, Tando Adam, Shahdadpur, Matiari, and other areas, witnessed the disconnection of 4,891 illegal connections.

Furthermore, 27 transformers were removed and 3 remote control devices were used for electricity theft were being used for illicit power consumption. In addition to these actions, a recovery of more than 35.6 million rupees was also made from defaulters and the letters were submitted to the respective police stations for the registration of FIRs against 167 individuals.

## G20 summit: Ashrafi dispels propaganda surrounding Saudi Crown Prince's visit to India

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Ulama Council Chairman Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi on Sunday addressed the concerns and disinformation surrounding the visit of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to India during the ongoing G20 summit. In a video statement, he clarified that the visit should not be misinterpreted and emphasized the strong relations between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. Ashrafi mentioned the G20 summit taking

place in India, where leaders from various countries, including Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, were participating. He dispelled propaganda surrounding the visit and revealed that the Saudi Crown Prince was expected to visit Pakistan soon, accompanied by members of his cabinet. During this visit, they were anticipated to announce further investment plans in Pakistan, bolstering economic ties, he added. Paying tribute to Chief of Army Staff, General

Syed Asim Munir, he attributed the foreign investments from Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries to his unwavering efforts. Addressing the concerns of certain disillusioned elements about the visit, Ashrafi stated that the R20, a group of religious leaders representing G20 countries, had not convened in India due to reservations regarding human rights violations against minority communities, especially Muslims, in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kash-

mir (IIOJK). Pakistan played a crucial role in bringing this issue to the attention of the religious leadership of R20 countries, he added. Furthermore, Ashrafi noted that Saudi Arabia, Turkiye, and Egypt did not participate in the G20 Working Group's meeting held in India, underscoring the complexities of the situation. In conclusion, he reaffirmed Pakistan's strong identity and fraternal ties with Saudi Arabia, expressing hope that these relations would continue.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Health Minister, Dr. Nadeem Jan addresses during the National Health Research Conference.



ISLAMABAD: A view of Afghan refugees installed solar panel system outside their tent house on a green belt outside Press Club in Federal Capital.

## Pakistan to host global health security summit

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan will be the first country in the world to host the Global Health Security Summit later this year. This was shared by Federal Secretary Health Iftikhar Shallwani while chairing a meeting to launch the preparations for the global moot on Friday.

The meeting was attended by senior health officials, leading public health experts and representatives of partner agencies. The Prime Minister has accorded approval to holding the summit later this year which will bring together 500 participants including around 70 country delegates.

Pakistan is the current chair of Global Health Security Agenda and hosting this conference will enable us to showcase our strong resolve and commitment to the cause of saving our people and the global community from the pandemics, said the Secretary Health while addressing the participants.

"We are a resilient nation and have together done remarkably well in fighting the CoVID pandemic."

There is a great deal that Pakistan can contribute to the knowledge and

experience of the global community in the fight against pandemics, he added.

Pakistan has most recently faced the ravages of unprecedented floods and the resultant spread of disease, highlighting the urgent need to strengthen disease response and surveillance systems.

The recent pandemic has shown that spread of infectious disease in any part of the world is a threat to the entire global community. Therefore it is a shared responsibility, the meeting was told.

The meeting agreed on the thematic areas to be discussed in the summit which will include several panel discussions.

A number of committees were constituted by the Secretary Health to ensure the holding of the mega event in a befitting manner.

The international moot will culminate in issuance of an Islamabad Declaration that would reflect the global commitment to fighting the spread of disease in unison and ensuring an optimal level of preparation through a stronger and resilient health infrastructure, shared Iftikhar Shallwani.

## JKSDMI will continue to expose ugly, cruel face of India to world

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Chairman of Jammu Kashmir Self-Determination Movement International (JKSDMI), Raja Najabat Hussain, has said that his organisation will continue to expose the ugly and cruel face of India to the whole world.

Raja Najabat Hussain expressed these views while addressing a dinner given in his honour by the former Director General of Mangla Dam Housing Authority Chaudhry Zulfiqar Azam.

He said the international community, instead of looking at their trade interests with India, should look at the ongoing human rights violations and massacres of innocent people and make all political and social relations with India subject to the end of ongoing human rights violations in India.

He said the dangerous way in which India has started the massacre of the people of occupied Jammu and Kashmir and the mi-

norities living in India can prove to be very dangerous not only for this region but also for the whole world. He will continue to fight the cause of Kashmiris until the entire Jammu and Kashmir becomes fully independent and joins Pakistan, he maintained.

Raja Najabat Hussain said the people of occupied Jammu and Kashmir want to join Pakistan, want to merge with Pakistan despite suffering oppression by India, and consider themselves to be a part of Pakistan in practice. He also demanded of the G20 countries to play their practical role to immediately stop the atrocities committed by the Indian forces in Jammu and Kashmir.

The Chairman of Umeed Welfare Trust, UK, Raja Mehrban Hussain, former Political Secretary to Azad Kashmir Prime Minister Amir Zeshan Jaral, former Councillor Syed Aftab Hussain Shah, Vice Chairman of Cantonment Board, Mangla Cantt.



ISLAMABAD: People walk past in front of colorful painting wall of a school at sector F-6 in Federal Capital.

## AC seals five shops for selling sugar at exorbitant prices

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a crackdown on profiteers, Assistant Commissioner Pothohar Nahel Hafiz on Sunday sealed five shops, and seized 100 KG sugar for selling at exorbitant prices in H-13, Golra Morr and Jhangi Syedan localities. He visited shops along with a team of officials from the Food Department. He checked the prices of sugar and found that they were much higher than the government-set rates. The shopkeepers were warned that they would face further action if they continue to sell sugar at exorbitant prices. The Assistant Commissioner's action is a welcome step in the fight against profiteering.

## Motorway Police recovers stolen car from Swabi

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Highways and Motorway Police (NH&MP) on Friday recovered a car stolen from Rawalpindi near Swabi. According to the details, a white Corolla was stolen from Rawalpindi Area Police Station Saddar and the information was given to the Motorway Police which started the search for it.

Meanwhile, a vehicle was found abandoned near Karnel Sher Khan Interchange on Peshawar-Islamabad Motorway. After investigation, it was found that it was the same vehicle that was stolen from Rawalpindi and a fake number plate was installed on the vehicle.

## Walk held to sheds light on illiteracy crisis

ISLAMABAD (APP): SOS Foundation on Friday organized an awareness walk to mark World Literacy Day here. Children from various schools, educationists, social workers, and individuals from all walks of life have participated in the walk to share a common goal for eradicating illiteracy in Pakistan. The event aimed to spotlight the critical issue of illiteracy and the alarming number of 1.8 million out-of-school children who are currently being overlooked.

## Sardar Attique says: Pak defence, accession of Kashmir part of Kashmiris' faith

ISLAMABAD (APP): The former prime minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Muslim Conference chief Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan has said that geographic and ideological defence of Pakistan and accession of Kashmir to Pakistan are part of Kashmiris' faith.

According to Kashmir Media Service, Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan addressing a function held in connection with Pakistan Defence Day said, "We fully acknowledge from the core of our hearts Pakistan's sacrifices for the cause of Kashmir and Kashmiri sac-

rifices for defence of Pakistan. Kashmiris and people of Pakistan are bound in one ideology sharing the same future." A resolution passed on the occasion reiterated that the people of Jammu and Kashmir resolutely stand by the brave armed forces of Pakistan for the defence and prosperity of the motherland. "It is our sacred obligation which shall be fulfilled at all costs", the resolution added.

Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan paid glowing homage to the martyrs of Pakistan's armed forces for national defence in 1965.

## Nilofer for proactive role of media to mitigate GBV issue

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairperson National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) Nilofer Bakhtiar said media can significantly contribute towards change by raising the awareness about the societal norms surrounding Gender Based Violence (GBV) and its reshaping. Talking to APP on Sunday, she said that NCSW exhorts media to play a positive, ethical and responsible role in highlighting these critical issues of GBV

through their various platforms. She said the NCSW called upon the criminal justice system to end the prevailing culture of impunity regarding cases of gender-based violence. NCSW would take relevant measures including the establishment of inquiry committees, awareness-raising in their institutions, displaying the Code of Conduct and Anti-Harassment Act at Workplace on their website as well as at prominent spots on campuses.



ISLAMABAD: A view of deserted Constitution Avenue in Federal Capital, due to Asia Cup 2023 super four one-day international (ODI) cricket match between India and Pakistan.

## CDA taken all possible steps for fulfilling religious needs of minorities

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Capital Development Authority (CDA) has taken all possible steps to fulfill the religious needs of minority communities in the federal capital. "The CDA has allocated two crematorium grounds, measuring 0.49 acres and 0.50 acres, for the Hindu and Buddhist communities respectively in Sector H-9," an official in the authority told APP on Sunday. Moreover, the official said that graveyards

have been provided for Christians (9.01 acres), Bhaiss (1.70 acres) and Qadianis (3.424 acres) in Sector H-9 and Sector H-8 of the capital. He said this move aims to ensure that all communities have access to appropriate facilities for their burial rites. The CDA has also addressed the issue of sewage treatment and water recycling, highlighting its commitment to environmental sustainability.

## Health research critical to achieve targets: Dr Nadeem

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Health Dr. Nadeem Jan on Sunday said that promoting and prioritizing health research was of critical importance in achieving goals in the health sector.

Presiding over the closing session of two day national health research conference, the minister said that no one could deny the importance of research for the promotion of health sector. While addressing top experts from the health sector and heads of organizations hailing from across the country who participated in this conference, Dr. Nadeem said the conference afforded deep confluence of knowledge, expertise and dedication.

He appreciated the keynote speakers, invited

## Maj Bhati's martyrdom's day to observe on Sep 12

ISLAMABAD (Online): Nishan-e-Haider holder hero of 1965 war Maj Aziz Bhati's martyrdom's day will be observed on Sep 12 (Tuesday). Floral wreath will be laid on the national war hero's grave and fateh khani (prayers) will also be held. Ceremony will be across the country to pay tribute to the martyrdom. Maj Aziz Bhati sacrificed his life during Pak-India 1965 war at the Lahore front.

talks and thought-provoking panel discussions, all of which have contributed to enriching the insights of health research in Pakistan.

The conference has helped develop a better understanding of challenges and in comprehending the framework of health research, the minister remarked. Dr. Nadeem Jan said we have collectively contributed to share knowledge that has the potential to reshape our nation's health landscape.

The minister appreciated Health Research Institute-National Institute of Health, Higher Education Commission of Pakistan, Pakistan Science Foundation and Pakistan Academy of Sciences for organizing this landmark conference.

The two-day moot

had discussions around emerging areas of research, delving into pharmaceutical research and drug development showcasing the pivotal role of innovation in transforming healthcare delivery and outcomes, knowledge exchanged, collaborations established and ideas germinated.

These activities aim to serve as the foundation upon which we build a stronger foundation for health research in Pakistan.

The meeting was a gateway to promote networking among funding agencies, researchers, policymakers and stakeholders besides being a platform for research innovation and necessary insights to steer the future of health research in Pakistan toward new horizons.



ISLAMABAD: A view of smoke rising in garbage dump alongside a road at sector G-7 is creating air pollution and harmful for the health of area residents showing negligence of concerned department in Federal Capital.

## Prof. Iqbal to address inaugural session of 78th UNGA science summit

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Director of ICCBS and Coordinator General of COMSTECH, Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary has been invited to address the inaugural session of the 78th United Nations General Assembly Science Summit. This esteemed global event, set to take place in New York from September 12-29, 2023 will host an impressive lineup of 1,450 speakers from across the world, making it a momentous occasion in the realm of science and diplomacy, said a news release issued here Sunday.

Managing Director, Science Summit, Dr. Declan Kirrane at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) has invited Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary to address the inaugural session this year. Prof. Choudhary will address the opening session of the Science Summit on 12th September, 2023 as among the first speakers of the 1,450 speakers taking part in UNGA78 session. The Science Summit at the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly will take place in New York from September 12-29.

## Health experts urge to ban nicotine products

ISLAMABAD (APP): The health activists are urgently advocating for a ban on emerging tobacco products in the country due to their highly addictive nature. The Society for the Protection of the Rights of Child (SPARC) issued a press release highlighting the critical need for a ban on these harmful tobacco and nicotine products, which are gaining popularity among children and young adults in the country.

It is important to note that this misinformation is actively propagated by the large tobacco industry in an attempt to expand its consumer base across various age groups.

Malik Imran Ahmed, Country Head of the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids (CTFK), emphasized that Pakistan currently lacked comprehensive legislation addressing the promotion, sale, and advertisement of e-cigarettes and similar products.

## Youth at risk: cyberbullying epidemic grips Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): In today's fame-driven world, where one's worth is often measured by their social media followers, Pakistan has emerged as a prominent player with over 72 million internet users. However, this growing access to free social media platforms has brought about significant concerns regarding e-security. Pakistan ranks as the 5th largest mobile phone market in Asia. Internet regulation falls under the jurisdiction of the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) and the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA). Data from these authorities highlights alarming issues within our society, ranging from privacy breaches and disagreements to political rivalries, disinformation, and the targeting of religious and gender minorities.

Development Working Group on Broadband And Gender defines cyber violence against women, encompassing hate speech, publishing blasphemous content, hacking, intercepting private communications, identity theft, online stalking (criminal harassment), and uttering threats, which can even lead to convincing a target to end their own life. It is crucial to acknowledge the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, which recognizes online intimidation, threats, privacy breaches, and identity theft against vulnerable groups, primarily women.

blackmail. According to the Digital Rights Foundation (DRF), they report over 146 monthly calls to their cyber harassment helpline, with 57% of the complaints coming from women and 30% from men. Punjab accounts for 57% of the reported cases, followed by Sindh with 15%.

The most concerning aspect of the DRF's report is the age group between 21 and 25, with the majority of victims falling in the youth sector. The exponential spike in cyber harassment cases was noted with the advent of the coronavirus pandemic and increased internet accessibility.

Research Gate suggests that individuals subjected to social media trolling or cyberbullying are 1.9 times more likely to contemplate suicide. Nearly 90% of Pakistani university students surveyed re-

ported experiencing cyberbullying, with higher socioeconomic status individuals being more susceptible.

Cyberbullying knows no boundaries and affects individuals across all age groups and backgrounds. Even prominent figures, including politicians, celebrities, and internet personalities, have not been immune to its harmful impact. Notably, even the caretaker prime minister found himself targeted by online trolls, with increased Pakistani emigration becoming a contentious topic in the cyber world.

One tragic case involved Dr. Amir Liaquat, a renowned anchor, politician, and media personality, who took his own life following the leak of explicit videos. E-security breaches have taken lives in Pakistan, with misinformation being a significant contributor to

the problem.

To establish a secure internet society, parental guidance, teacher involvement, and law enforcement are essential. Monitoring teenagers' online activities is crucial to reduce cybercrimes and protect them from online abusers, identity theft, cyber intimidation, stalking, financial fraud, and more.

The Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act 2016 (PECA) addresses defamation, extending the right to file complaints to any member of the public, even if they are not directly defamed. PECA criminalizes false information that harms a person's privacy or reputation when intentionally and publicly displayed.

Social media activist Shareef Ali Dawar shared his traumatic experiences of being threatened, bullied, and relentlessly trolled for expressing certain opinions.

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## Lack of clarity

The chaos and confusion within the ranks of those hoping for the Constitution to be upheld has weakened their hand. Consider the PTI, which has recently demanded that President Arif Alvi exercise his constitutional power and announce a date for the general elections forthwith.

According to a press release, the party's core committee passed a unanimous resolution to this effect during a recent meeting. Interestingly, there was no mention of who actually attended the meeting or where it was held.

With most of the party's senior leadership currently in prison or on the lam, the PTI is trying to put up a brave face. However, it clearly is in no position to be making demands.

Then there is the PPP, which seems rather confused about its commitment to constitutional principles. Just days ago, the party's central executive committee said it would push the Election Commission — legally, if need be — to ensure elections were held within the stipulated time frame.

Publicly, however, top PPP leaders have seemed a lot more flexible on election dates. It is, therefore, unsurprising that many believe the party's sudden remembrance of democratic values is little more than a bargaining chip.

Meanwhile, the legal fraternity, too, has entered the fray. But while the Supreme Court Bar Association and the Pakistan Bar Council both seem to be in agreement that elections must not be delayed, they stand divided on other matters. The former recently hosted the All Pakistan Lawyers Convention to put forth the legal community's demands from a single platform, but the PBC chose not to attend.

President Alvi stands at the centre of the crisis, but he, too, seems to be having second thoughts after a tentative attempt to assert his position. With the pressure building on him to announce a date, rumours have been circulating that a recent visit from two high-profile officers might be the reason why he has been keeping a low profile.

Whatever the separate challenges being faced by each of these stakeholders, they need to demonstrate some unity of purpose if they are truly committed to upholding the Constitution. There are some in this country who view the law as an inconvenience in the way of their grand plans.

Much damage has already been done thus far because the resistance to their unlawful actions has been weak and unorganised. Now, the only hope for those who wish to see the constitutional order restored is to refocus their energies on the core demand — free and fair elections within 90 days.

The ongoing assault on the Constitution must be resisted if the nation is to continue hoping for a democratic future. It may yet be an attainable goal. The mistake made in allowing the KP and Punjab elections to be delayed must not be repeated.



**Muhammad Amir Rana**

The recent cross-border infiltrations and operational strikes by terrorist networks operating from Afghanistan have raised concerns about the Afghan Taliban's direct involvement in these attacks. A terrorist group cannot launch massive cross-border attacks involving a significant number of terrorists inside Pakistan without the support and approval of the Taliban regime. If these doubts have any substance, this is tantamount to declaring war against a state.

Social media and online media reports are also circulating about the Haqqanis' direct involvement in these intrusions, citing security officials. This may surprise those who believed that close ties existed between the Haqqanis and the Pakistani security establishment, as the relationship between the two has now apparently become strained. The extent of this perceived bitterness in relations is not known, and neither the Haqqanis nor the Pakistani establishment have officially indicated the nature of any dispute between them. However, Pakistan has officially registered its protest concerning the involvement of Afghan fighters in the attack on the military cantonment in the Zhob district of Balochistan.

Only if there is official confirmation from one of the parties about the dispute, can we speculate about its nature based on several factors. It is a fact that the TTP has a close relationship with the Haqqanis that has overseen the negotiation process between the government and the TTP. This process failed, causing some initial dents in the confidence of Pakistan's security institutions. Religious, ideological, tribal, and political factors are also important from various perspectives. The

organisational relationship between the Afghan Taliban and Pakistani militant groups has evolved over time, especially after the resurgence of the former in their country. The Afghan Taliban developed a nexus with the Pakistani establishment and militant groups, which, while not mutually exclusive, involves complex relationships among the three actors.

Pakistan has strategic interests in Afghanistan and has often been accused of paying no heed to the presence of the Taliban on its soil. The Taliban, in turn, have relied on safe havens, financial support, and fighters primarily from Pakistan and other neighbouring states like Iran. Militant groups in Pakistan have provided human resource to the Taliban; many of these fighters became disillusioned due to shifts in the state's policies on jihad. While the 'Quetta shura' hesitated to recruit Pakistani fighters, the Haqqanis and 'Peshawar shura' actively incorporated them, creating both combat units and financial and logistical supply chains. Al Qaeda has also influenced these Pakistani militants, further radicalising them

against the state.

Historical accounts may reveal more surprising details, but so far, the most comprehensive research on the Taliban movement has been conducted by Antonio Giustozzi. In his book *The Taliban at War*, Giustozzi notes that a unique aspect of the Haqqani Network is its direct recruitment of Pakistani fighters. As of 2015, around 10 per cent of the 'Miranshah shura's' forces were Pakistani, primarily drawn from other jihadist groups such as TTP, Lashkar-e-Taiba, and Lashkar-i-Jhangvi.

According to reports, the significant presence of volunteers from Pakistan as well as other countries has contributed to the Haqqanis' image as being more aligned with global jihadist movements like Al Qaeda, as opposed to the Quetta shura. The Peshawar shura is also believed to have been heavily reliant on Pakistani militants, expanding its reach to other cities in the country, where it's said to have recruited hundreds of Pakistanis.

In summary, Pakistan has underestimated the potential problems posed by

fighters who have been part of the Afghan Taliban, especially compared to the TTP and its affiliate groups with whom it initiated talks under the Haqqanis' supervision. Reports are that thousands of these fighters may have returned to Pakistan, many of them apparently joining the TTP and its factions, and the rest remaining under the patronage of various Taliban commanders, including the Haqqanis. News has appeared about the TTP and its allied social media accounts about faction mergers or small militant groups joining the TTP, usually involving militants who were once directly engaged with the Taliban.

The Haqqanis have accommodated many in their government and security forces, including Adnan Rasheed, a former Pakistani Air Force employee, who joined Al Qaeda and specialised in jailbreaks. Adnan Rasheed was released from Bannu jail in April 2012 by militants. However, the Taliban cannot accommodate all these fighters, and with their return to Pakistan increasingly likely, they are supporting their cause for fight-

ing within Pakistan. Pakistan had concerns that these returning militants would continue their terrorist activities. During talks with the TTP, it became clear that the TTP and other terrorist groups had no intention of ceasing their activities. If these individuals were to be integrated into the general population, they would pose a greater risk, not just through terrorist activities but also by spreading the ideological influence of the Taliban and Al Qaeda.

These terrorists, now led by the TTP, are exploiting Pakistan's vulnerabilities with regard to territory, resources, and support base. The recent terrorist attacks in the Zhob and Sherani districts of Balochistan, along with the intrusion into Chitral, are all components of a broader strategy. Al Qaeda apparently had an eye on the region which borders Chitral since long for establishing a new base for supporting terrorist movements in the region, including China. This situation is precarious for Pakistan and the Taliban regime, and they must find a solution before it worsens. -- Courtesy Dawn

## Presence of militants

## Looking homeward, dizzily



**Ghazi Salahuddin**

As the poet said: 'They are not long, the days of wine and roses'. Any extravagant retreat from the daily rigours of our lives, if we are at all able to secure it, does come to an end. And so I have to return to the raw winds and old wounds of Pakistan after an absence of about six weeks. This, to be sure, is not an unusual experience for me. Since both our daughters live abroad, these trips have become an annual feature for many, many years. There is generally no great excitement about leaving Pakistan and coming back after an interval. But why am I so anxious about it on this occasion? What is different now, in my personal state of affairs or in the larger context of the country's social, political and economic circum-

stances?

Yes, the thoughts that I feel burdened with as we leave our elder daughter's house in southern California are somewhat unusual, even scary. Strangely, this apprehension relates to both personal and collective concerns. At one level, there is this pain that I share with a large number of ageing parents living away from our children and grandchildren. It poses the existential question of whether to emigrate to be with the loved ones or stay, nearly unattended, in Pakistan. The cost of living apart is horrendous, and not just in a material sense.

Somehow, this sensation of getting precariously old has deepened. At the same time, the idea of shifting to an alien territory is to be decisively rejected, in spite of passionate persuasions and sober arguments that we have to deal with. That Pakistan has become a great place to go away from is valid for younger people who are fearful of raising their children in a society that has apparently lost its bearings.

It is truly disconcerting to find Pakistanis, in the country and abroad, who have little faith in the future of their country. For many, it is the problem of making ends meet. For others, it is law and order. I know a family that left the country because of what they perceived was the drug scene in the elite schools of Karachi. Actually, it is a system that is broken — administratively, morally and intellectually.

Then, the country is at present passing through a specific phase when the caretakers, who are being taken care of by superior forces, are in office and the process of cleaning the PTI stables, in the aftermath of May 9, is continuing. Meanwhile, the army leadership is getting into gear to mend Pakistan's economy, as some developments have certified this week.

On Wednesday, Chief of Army Staff Gen Asim Munir asserted, on Defence Day, that "a strong economy is a must for the country's impregnable defence". This linkage between economy and military defence was further clarified the next

day, on Thursday, when the top brass resolved, in a Corps Commanders' meeting, to "wholeheartedly" assist the government in curbing all illegal activities that hamper economic growth and stability.

Earlier, on Sunday, the COAS had assured the business community, in a widely covered session, of fostering transparency in dollar exchange and interbank rates. This contributed to some strength in the value of the Pakistani currency, though not enough to raise the spirits of an economically ravaged populace. In any case, it will be interesting to see how the military can play a role in GDP growth.

I have just become aware of the army's intended advance into the battlefield of the economy because I had resolved to by and large keep away from news from Pakistan during this vacation. I also avoided political conversations with Pakistani expatriates. A large number of Pakistanis in the US are ardent supporters of Imran Khan and, considering their lack of under-

standing of the existing realities, it is pointless to talk to them.

For that matter, I have not carefully been watching Pakistan. There has been no conscious attempt to catch on with realities that are emerging in the public domain. In a vague sense, I do suspect that some kind of change is in progress. Conventionally they say that the more things change in our country, the more they remain the same. But it should also be true that the more they change, the more they cannot be the same.

This would mean that I am not returning to the same Pakistan that I had left. Hence, it is fair to wonder if there is more hope now or less. In other words, what direction do perceptive observers see the country moving — and it would be fine if they say that it would be worse before it gets better. Ah, will things ever get better?

Why not? An eternal optimist may argue, with a disdain for what he can see with open eyes and think with an open mind. In fact, this is what the rulers must do; see and

think. And, to compensate for their inadequacies in this regard; listen. Listen to those certified social scientists, historians and scholars who are becoming an endangered species in our political habitat.

You see, a kind of gloom is intruding on my mind as I return to Pakistan. I should instead be looking back at the time I have spent with the family in settings that felt like a dream. We were, for that brief interval, not concerned about the worries of the world and what I was reading about the epidemic of anxiety spreading in the United States did not affect our joy of being together. One is to be very lucky indeed to be able to steal such moments of bliss in a life that is generally not very rewarding.

However, I should admit that there was usually an undercurrent of melancholy in meetings with old friends and close relatives. Like in novels and arty movies, such close encounters can reveal new truths about relationships that, ultimately, are our real sustenance. -- Courtesy TheNews

No decisions should be taken by any institution in isolation, nor by any leader on a whim. The chain is only as strong as its weakest link. To that end, forging broad political consensus on national security imperatives is an absolute must.

Secondly, most of our vulnerabilities stem from our weak economy. We spend more than we earn, obliging us to depend on foreign donors. Internal and external debts are mounting. Exports are stagnant. Doing business in Pakistan is not easy. Corruption is pervasive, and the inflation rate is so high that the life of the common man has become miserable. The need of the hour is to give the highest priority to reviving our economy and building a national political consensus on economic policies. Unless we are economically resilient, modern warfare against us will remain a serious threat to national stability.

Thirdly, in a hybrid warfare environment, image is as important as reality. Since 9/11, Pakistan's image has been associated with terrorism and extremism. Hostile lobbies ensure that this image remains, despite the fact that Pakistan has fought against terrorism like no other nation has. Creative cultural diplomacy can help change the way the world looks at Pakistan, building on our strengths: glorious civilisational heritage, mighty mountains, and multiple faiths. Our film industry, academia, and diaspora can also help project our true image to millions of people around the world.

Addressing our vulnerabilities and inculcating good governance is the best way to defend our country in the years ahead. Our problems are monumental and may appear insurmountable, but failure is not an option. As Nelson Mandela said: "It always seems impossible until it's done." -- Courtesy Dawn

## Sleepless in Karachi



**Muna Khan**

When I moved to Hanoi in 2008 to work at a newspaper as a copy editor, my toughest challenge was re-adjusting my meal timings. Our shifts began at 2pm, ended at 9pm and we received a half-hour break to grab dinner around 6pm, so we could only really go in the neighbourhood to eat. Vietnam is a diner's delight especially when it comes to street food and affordable cafés all over cities, towns, villages. You're never starved for options.

Hanoi awoke by sunrise and was dead by 9pm. So of course, I adjusted. I ate breakfast by 8am, lunch at noon and dinner at 6pm, even on my days off. Everyone did. I have continued this habit, with exceptions and only in Pakistan where I'm convinced we're all owls. Whenever I have struggled with sleep, I have modified my routine to accommodate it — sometimes with supplements, tweaking diet, exercise, not watching television news past 8pm, etc. But for the last year or so, I am struggling to sleep again and am sicker, slower, unhappy.

I suspect I am not alone. I am consumed with thoughts about the economy, the country's security, the speed at which we seem to be moving towards martial rule and how this impacts my family's future. I do not know what else to disconnect from without living in a world oblivious to one's surroundings.

There is a saying how sleep is a luxury few can afford; I think the same is true for living in delusion,

homo sapiens ate but there are new studies to show our ancestors ate grains and carbs and gluten — things that cause fear today.

We can return to practising our ancestors' habits but can we break our reliance on our devices which play a major role in disrupting our sleep environment and behaviour? It's not about X hours of sleep a night but consistent hours of sleep.

Light majorly impacts the circadian rhythm which is why the neuroscientist podcaster Andrew Huberman (must watch) recommends spending 20 minutes in natural light within an hour of waking to regulate mood and energy levels. Most of our internal clocks follow the sun's pattern. The more exposure you have to artificial light post sunset, the more disrupted your circadian rhythm and sleep.

I have avoided all doctors' following advice because I know it will be my next toughest challenge: switch off screens at least two hours before bedtime. The device's blue light disrupts the sleep cycle as it suppresses the production of melatonin, a natural hormone which helps us feel sleepy. I admit whenever I read a book in bed, I fall asleep quicker but I'm struggling to break the Netflix habit.

While it will be hard, it is also the only advice I can truly afford to do along with drinking three litres of water (12 glasses a day), most of it in the day, the last glass being two hours before I sleep. And eating my last meal four hours before I sleep if it is meat and two hours if it is plant based. However, hearing my doctor's number one advice had a profound impact on me and inspired this column: practice happiness. It is key to good sleep. -- Courtesy Dawn

## Redefining defence



**Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry**

Every Sept 6, Pakistan marks Defence Day to celebrate the determination of the nation and its armed forces to defend the country against India's aggression in 1965. The war lasted only 17 days, and peace was restored by the Tashkent Agreement of 1966. As happens in most wars, there were no real winners. India was unable to penetrate Pakistan's defences. Pakistan could not liberate Jammu and Kashmir illegally occupied by India.

Regrettably, the experience of 1965 war did not prevent the two countries from fighting another war in 1971, leading to the separation of East Pakistan. In 1999, another limited war took place on the Kargil heights. However, in this century, the two neighbours have never fought a major war though they came close to it during the military stand-off of 2001-02. One reason is the nuclear deterrence that both countries established in May 1998. The other main reason is that the nature of war has changed. We are living in the age of hybrid wars, where kinetic action is the last resort, and much of the battle is waged in the information, economic and other domains to break the will of the enemy. This is sometimes referred to as the fifth-generation of war.

With the advent of artificial intelligence, we are witnessing the onset of sixth-generation warfare. Defence Day should be an occasion to prepare

the nation to guard against today's complex wars that blend conventional, unconventional, economic, cyber, and psychological warfare, media manipulation, cultural invasions, and relentless propaganda to create confusion about the core values that hold a nation together. On most occasions, the target may not even know it is under attack.

An argument is often made that much of what Pakistan is facing is because of its own doing; we should, therefore, not blame others, and instead, address our own vulnerabilities. Others, however, believe we cannot disregard the possibility of hybrid war imposed by our detractors, manifested vividly in concerted disinformation campaigns, economic coercion, lawfare, and even cyberattacks. The National Security Policy, that was announced last year, advised a comprehensive approach to national security, comprising not just traditional defence but also economic and human security.

Hence we must be reminded that Pakistan needs a robust defence strategy that employs all elements of national power. Fortunately, our diplomacy is resilient and can serve as the first line of defence. Our armed forces are disciplined and organised. Our nuclear capability deters possible aggression. The entire nation got together against the menace of terrorism. We have a young intelligent human resource, which if educated and trained can serve the nation well. We are also blessed with agricultural and mineral wealth. And our diaspora is dynamic and ready to serve the motherland.

These are notable strengths. However, we need a strategy that integrates all these elements of national power. First and foremost, we need a whole-of-the-nation approach on matters of national security.

## Interim CM Punjab will consider upgrading major hospitals with support of Muslim Hands Pak

LAHORE (Online): It has been decided in principle to hand over the management of 1000 schools of Punjab from Muslim Hands Pakistan.

A 6-member delegation of Muslim Hands Pakistan met the Caretaker Chief Minister of Punjab Mohsin Naqvi, Chairman of Muslim Hands Pakistan Syed Lakht Hasnain gave a briefing about welfare activities.

The Caretaker Chief Minister of Punjab was informed in the briefing that Muslim Hands Pakistan is running 117 schools in Punjab, health and education welfare projects are being run in various districts of South Punjab, market-based IT to guide the youth towards self-reliance.

18 schools of excellence and 35 model schools are being run in Punjab.

On this occasion, it was decided in principle to entrust the management of 1,000 schools of Muslim Hands Pakistan to Pakistan.

The Secretary Schools Education was directed to fix the rules and regulations with Muslim Hands Pakistan and to settle the issues regarding the MoU between the Government of Punjab and Muslim Hands Pakistan within a week.

In the meeting, the proposal to entrust the management of orphanages and Darul Aman to Muslim Hands Pakistan was also reviewed. Caretaker CM said that with the cooperation of private

sector and welfare organizations, the standard of education in government schools will be raised, with the cooperation of Muslim Hands Pakistan, consideration will be given to upgrade the emergency rooms of major hospitals.

This will encourage private organizations to improve the education and health sectors.

Chairman Muslim Hands Pakistan Syed Lakht Hasnain said that they are ready to work together with the Punjab government to serve the people. Provincial Caretaker Information Minister Aamir Mir, Program Director Khalid Mehmood Qureshi, Syed Javed Jilani, Mian Umar Farooq, Rana Umar, Raja Arsalan Nusrat were present on the occasion.



HYDERABAD: Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari along with Kashif Ali Shoro, Mayor Hyderabad offering Dua after unveiling the plaque during the inauguration ceremony of 6 MGD Water Filter Plant, at Hussainabad in Hyderabad.

## Pakistan leadership urged to go along global changes with competence, unity

LAHORE (APP): International Human Rights Movement Central Chairman Muhammad Nasir Iqbal Khan has stressed the need for Pakistan's leadership to address the profound global shifts currently under way.

In a statement, issued here on Sunday, he highlighted the importance of eradicating incompetence and establishing a distinctive national position through wisdom and competence.

He pointed out that influential global powers, including the United States, have shown evident inclinations concerning Pakistan and India. He

urged Pakistan's leadership to abandon complacency and naivety, urging immediate action. He stressed the necessity for political and defence leaders to reevaluate their strategies in light of recent developments in neighboring countries.

Khan underlined the importance of ending retaliatory politics and fostering unity within Pakistan. He called for swift organisation, strategic planning, and correct prioritisation to reshape the nation's destiny. He also emphasised the significance of Pakistan's economic independence from the dollar as a harbinger of a

new era for the national economy.

Regarding external pressures and threats, he asserted that Pakistan must make independent decisions about its future without compromising its sovereignty. He highlighted the pivotal role of the Pakistan Army in countering external pressures and economic hostilities. Addressing critics of the Pakistani military, Khan warned that those who fail to recognise reality would be seen as remnants of ignorance. He emphasised that political and economic stability of Pakistan relies on the strength of the Pakistan Army.

## Transport Minister inquires after those injured in metro bus accident

LAHORE (APP): Provincial Caretaker Minister Transport Ibrahim Murad conducted a visit to the emergency department of Ganga Ram Hospital, here on Sunday.

He inquired about the wellbeing of individuals injured in the metro bus accident and assessed the available medical facilities. The minister directed the hospital administration to provide the best medical facilities to the injured.

During the visit, Minister Ibrahim Murad stated that as a result of the incident, 10 individuals were injured, and the hospital was currently providing the best medical

treatment to the patients. An order has been issued to initiate an investigation into the incident. Action would be taken against those responsible for negligence in the metro bus incident, he warned.

Ibrahim Murad emphasised that the Punjab government would bear all expenses for the treatment and care of the injured citizens. He also mentioned that comprehensive planning and necessary measures would be taken in the future to prevent such incidents. "May Allah grant a speedy recovery to all the injured individuals in this incident," he prayed.



JAMSHORO: VC LUMHS Prof. Dr. Ikram Din Ujjan visiting during the entry test for admission held at Liaquat University of Medical and Health Sciences (LUMHS) in Jamshoro.

## HEC invites applications for London Commonwealth scholarship programme

LAHORE (APP): The Higher Education Commission (HEC) has invited applications for the London Commonwealth Scholarship Programme, in Masters and PhD disciplines.

The HES local chapter sources told APP on Sunday that the Commonwealth Scholarships are funded by the Commonwealth and Development Office in London. Out of 30,000 scholarships, 26 programmes are available for Masters and 30 programmes for PhD. Application deadline for the current HEC Commonwealth Masters and PhD scholarships is October 17, and applications must be submitted on both the HEC and Commonwealth portals.

Moreover, the

Government of Switzerland, in collaboration with the Higher Education Commission (HEC), has also announced an 'Excellence Scholarship Programme' for Pakistani students for the upcoming academic year 2024-25.

The HEC sources further told APP that one-year post-masters research, three-year post-masters, PhD and one-year Post-Doctoral Programmes (PDP) have been announced for the aspiring candidates.

The last date for submission of applications with the Swiss embassy is September 30.

More details are available on the official website, the HEC local sources told APP. The main purpose of the Swiss Government Excellence Scholarships.



MUZAFFARABAD: Deserving women showing their Rashan cards as stands in a queue for collecting free food package distributing from Mohammed Bin Rashid Al-Maktoum Global Initiatives.

## Crackdown on illegal sugar hoarding launched in Faisalabad

FAISALABAD (APP): The district administration has launched crackdown on illegal storage of sugar in the revenue limits of Faisalabad to check its artificial shortage and sale in black.

A spokesman for the local administration said here on Sunday that sugar was an essential commodity for human consumption, but some elements created its artificial shortage to mint money. Therefore, the district administration had launched a vigorous drive against hoarding of sugar so as to ensure its availability in the market in addition to its sale on government fixed rate.

He said that Assistant Commissioner (AC) Sammundri Suleman Mansha conducted surprise raid at a godown

near Salooni Jhal and recovered more than 300 bags of sugar. These bags were stored illegal to sell them in the black for profiteering.

The AC sealed premises of the godown while further action against sugar-dealer was under progress, he added.

He further said that district administration on other hand also started negotiation with the management of sugar mills and business community so that this commodity could be sold out to the general public at government-fixed rate.

The first round of the negotiation remained successful and it was hoped that this commodity would be available easily for the people in Faisalabad on its fixed rate very soon, he added.

## Two killed, 4 injured in firing incidents

FAISALABAD (APP): Two persons including a teenager boy were killed while four others sustained multiple injuries in two separate firing incidents in Faisalabad during the past 12 hours.

Rescue 1122 spokesman said here on Sunday that two rival groups exchanged fire in Chak No 30-JB on Narwala Road to avenge an old enmity.

In this clash, 18-year-old Abdullah Akram of Chak No 28-RB received serious bullet injuries and died on-the-spot whereas Rescue 1122 shifted 60-year-old Akram, 27-year-old Bilal Akram and 38-year-old Umar Farooq to Allied Hospital in a critical condition.

In another incident, 55-year-old shopkeeper Aslam Jan of Chak No 105-GB Bangay Jaranwala was killed when in-laws of his daughter opened indiscriminate firing at him in his shop.

## ANF recovers 10 kg drugs in 5 operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting five operations across the country managed to recover 10 kg drugs and arrested two accused including a woman.

According to an ANF Headquarters spokesman, 60 grams of weed was recovered from two parcels confiscated from a courier office in Rawalpindi.

Both the parcels were booked from the UK for Azad Kashmir.

In another operation, Ice drug was recovered from a parcel booked for Australia at a courier office in Gulberg, Lahore.

1550 grams of Ice drug was concealed in sheets, bags and other items.

A woman resident of Lahore and a Nigerian national who booked the parcel were arrested.

In the fourth operation, 1 kg hashish was recovered from a parcel booked for Karachi at Lahore Airport. In the fifth operation, 8320 grams of hashish concealed for smuggling were recovered from Zakhra Khel area of Khyber. Separate cases under the Anti-Narcotics Act were registered against the accused while further investigations are under process.

## Father, son shot dead over old enmity

MANDI BAHAUDDIN (INP): Two including father and son were killed and another person injured in firing of armed men over old enmity here on Sunday, police said.

According to details, armed men of rival group opened fire at members of opponent group in Sohawa Dera Mandi Bahauddin.

As a result of firing, 60-year-old Muhammad Akram and his son Anas 18, were killed on the spot while another person sustained bullet wounds. The attackers fled the scene. The bodies and injured were shifted to DHQ hospital.

## RDA lodges FIR against owners of 'Ruden Enclave'

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) has lodged a FIR in Saddar Baroni police station against the owners of an illegal housing scheme namely 'Ruden Enclave.'

According to a RDA spokesman, Metropolitan Planning and Traffic Engineering Directorate (MP&TE), RDA on the directives of the Director General Muhammad Saif Anwar Jappa lodged FIR No. 1260/2023 in Saddar Baroni police station against the owners namely Rahimuddin and Usman Shahid.

He informed that the sponsors were also warned to immediately stop marketing of illegal housing scheme.

The owners of the illegal housing were

illegally advertising the project which was not approved. The housing society was also running a social media campaign for publicity of the project, using pictures of a meeting with Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, he said adding, the RDA enforcement squad was sent for an operation against the housing scheme but, the representatives of the illegal housing scheme presented a stay order.

He said that the illegal housing scheme was misleading the general public as it's not an approval project.

The spokesman said that the RDA on the special instructions of the DG had advised the citizens not to invest in illegal and unauthorized housing schemes.

## DC assures normalcy in Chitral

PESHAWAR (APP): Deputy Commissioner Lower Chitral, Muhammad Ali Khan, stated on Friday that the law and order situation is normal in the district, and tourists can visit any tourist destination without any fear. In a video message from his office, along with DPO Ikramullah Khan, he mentioned that additional reinforcements of FC, police, and Levies personnel have been deployed in the border area with Afghanistan, where terrorists attacked an FC checkpoint. He further stated that our security forces successfully repulsed the attack, resulting in the death of a large number of terrorists. The deputy commissioner emphasized that life is normal in the Chitral district.



MULTAN: Members of Punjab Teachers Union are holding protest demonstration for acceptance of their demands, at Multan press club.

## Bid to smuggle non-custom paid goods foiled; worth Rs 519mln goods seized

PESHAWAR (APP): The Customs Collectorate Enforcement Team, in cooperation with DI Khan police on Friday conducted a successful operation and foiled a bid to smuggle non-custom paid goods worth Rs 519 million to different parts of the country.

The spokesman of the customs collectorate, Sohail said that three trucks and five containers were also seized in the Darazinda area of district DI Khan.

He said that the

trucks and containers were full of smuggled goods, including imported cloth, electronic gadgets, black tea, and other precious items, adding that the local police and customs authorities were jointly investigating the seized goods. He said that the value of smuggled goods, including vehicles, was estimated at Rs 519 million, including goods worth Rs 389 million and trucks and containers worth Rs 130 million.

Sohail said this was one of the biggest cases made by customs.

## Police constable laid to rest

RAWALPINDI (APP): A police constable was laid to rest who embraced martyrdom during an encounter with dacoits in Bahria Town Rawat.

According to a police spokesman, Regional Police Officer (RPO) Syed Khurram Ali, City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalid Hamdani, SSP Operations Faisal Saleem, senior police officers, the family of the martyred constable, and numerous police personnel participated in the funeral prayer.

Constable Adeel Zafar had bravely confronted dacoits during an encounter in Bahria Town Rawat, where he was martyred due to dacoits' gunfire.

## Best possible security arrangements made for Chehlum: CPO

RAWALPINDI (APP): Best possible arrangements including security were made for the Chehlum of Hazrat Imam Hussain (RA), said City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi Syed Khalid Mehmood Hamdani.

The CPO said that over 4,000 well-equipped cops and officers were deployed to ensure security foolproof.

Similarly, 250 traffic wardens and officers were also deployed for the smooth flow of traffic on city roads and to facilitate the mourners, he informed.

Monitoring of the main procession was ensured with the help of CCTV cameras besides

aerial surveillance. Police personnel were also deployed on top of high-rise buildings on the route of the Chehlum procession, he mentioned.

The CPO also appreciated the efforts of the cops to maintain peace and order on the Chehlum.

The processions of Hazrat Imam Hussain (RA) Chehlum, taken out from different localities of the city after passing through their traditional routes culminated peacefully on Thursday night.

The main 'Zuljinnah' procession was taken out from Imambargah Ashiq Hussain. It passed through its traditional routes.



KARACHI: Jamat-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.

## Factory owners, citizens warned against burning of trash

LAHORE (APP): Environmental experts have issued a stern warning to both factory owners and citizens, urging them to refrain from burning trash due to its detrimental impact on human and animal health. The Deputy Commissioner's office had previously imposed a ban on the incineration of various materials, including trash, tires, shoes, plastic, and raw wood in all brick kilns throughout the district.

According to environmentalist Mahmood Khalid Qamar,

the combustion of prohibited materials, such as trash, plastic, and treated wood, poses a grave threat to the environment. These substances release toxic chemicals into the atmosphere, resulting in air pollution. This polluted air, when inhaled by both humans and animals, gives rise to severe health risks and leaves deposits in the soil, surface water, and on plants. Qamar emphasizes that open burning, in general, poses a significant risk to the environment and public health.

Director General

Mazhar Zaheer Abbas Malik, in a recent statement to the media, issued a stern warning to factory owners, cautioning against the use of plastic and shoes as fuel sources in combustion.

He emphasized that strict actions would be taken against those who fail to comply. Additionally, he urged farmers to refrain from burning rice crop residues, as this practice leads to soil, groundwater, lake, river, and stream pollution. Furthermore, outdoor burning of crop residues

carries the risk of sparking wildfires. Malik stressed the importance of burning only approved materials and adhering to state regulations to mitigate these harmful effects.

Naseem-ur-Rehman Shah, the Director of the Environmental Protection Department (EPD), pointed out that burning trash not only results in the production of polluted ash and smoke but can also release hexachlorobenzene (HCB) into the environment. HCB is a highly persistent toxin that degrades slowly in the air,

enabling it to travel long distances in the atmosphere.

Shah noted that any violation of garbage burning regulations would lead to immediate consequences, including the sealing of the unit or kiln, imprisonment, fines of up to Rs100,000, and the initiation of legal proceedings against industrial unit or kiln owners. Furthermore, he emphasized that brick manufacturing is only permitted using the new eco-friendly zigzag technology.



PESHAWAR: Safety wall of Faqirabad Bridge seen broken that may cause any accident and also inviting authorities to draw their attention towards issue, in Peshawar.

## Railways Minister charts plan for revenue boost, safety enhancement

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Railways Minister Shahid Ahsraf Tarar is actively pursuing measures to enhance railway revenue, as revealed during his recent visit to the PR headquarters here on Sunday.

During the visit, he reviewed the performance of various railway departments, emphasizing the importance of efficient resource utilization and the completion of projects in the public interest.

The minister also stressed the need to prevent track material theft and secure redundant tracks while directing the

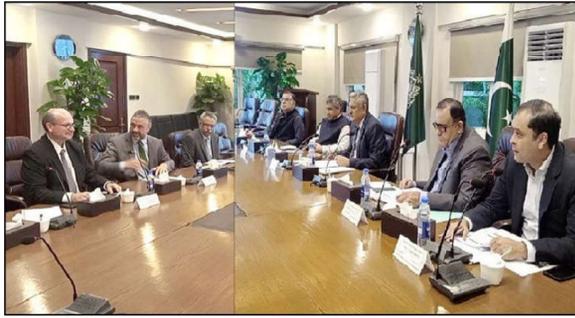
ministry to compile a progress report on transitioning the railway network to solar energy. In a bid to boost freight revenue, he has instructed measures to be taken.

Furthermore, Minister Tarar ordered improvements to the signal system for enhanced safety and called for a plan for the disposal of unusable coaches and locomotives. He expressed his commitment to revitalizing the dignity of the railways and personally ensuring timely payment of salaries and pensions to employees.

In a significant move, it was decided to upgrade

the post of Railway Police Constable to Grade 7, underscoring the importance of safety during travel. The minister pledged swift action in case of train accidents.

During his visit to the Mughalpur Workshop in Lahore, Minister Tarar received a detailed briefing on its functioning and performance. He also sought recommendations or a business model to increase revenue from the workshop's output. The Chairman of Railways, CEO Railways, IGP Railway Police, and principal officers were present during this important review.



KARACHI: A delegation of World Bank meeting with Provincial Finance Minister Muhammad Younis Dhaga.

## Implementing structural reforms key to stimulate sustainable growth: BMP

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Businessmen Panel (BMP) of Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI) has stressed the need for implementing structural reforms for good governance, curbing unproductive state expenditures, expanding the tax base, fostering public-private partnerships, and reallocating resources to critical sectors to stimulate sustainable growth, as the country is facing with daunting economic challenges, posing a serious threat to the viability of the industry.

Chairman BMP and

former president FPCCI Mian Anjum Nisar observed that it was imperative to understand that fiscal discipline cannot be achieved and sustained without initiating structural reforms. He said that the government in the 2023 budget extended substantial subsidies and grants to loss-making entities, which, in turn, were not only failing to make positive contribution but were also incurring significant losses. We must maintain fiscal discipline and establish controls to create fiscal space to extend relief to the masses.

Quoting the reports, the business leader said

that the budget deficit continues to grow, entangling Pakistan in an unrelenting cycle of debt. Even if we exclude the impact of debt servicing, our revenues fall short of covering other expenses, implying that all these were met from borrowed funds. At the close of the fiscal year (FY) 2022-23, Pakistan recorded a budget deficit of Rs 6.52 trillion, equivalent to 7.7% of the GDP, a slight decrease from the previous year's 7.9% of GDP. However, in absolute figures, the budget deficit surged by a substantial 24%, or Rs 1.26 trillion, within just one year.

## Naqvi, CCIs presidents discuss industrial promotion

LAHORE (APP): Presidents of the chambers of commerce & industry (CCIs) met Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi to discuss proposals for promotion of industries here at the CM Office on Sunday.

Six major CCIs will submit their recommendations for one-window operation of industries.

"We would provide all possible facilities and resources for the promotion of industries in Punjab," the caretaker CM said adding that no problem would be faced in setting up a new industry and running the old industry.

It was agreed that six main chambers would submit their comprehensive proposals, which would be considered for making functional one-window operation.

Matters and issues of industries relating to the provincial departments would be resolved at a single place. All NOCs for the establishment of new industrial units and the old industries would be also get various NOCs through one-window.

The federal government departments

would be allowed to set up their desks at one window on matters relating to electricity and gas.

In the first phase one window operation would be launched in Lahore, Multan, Faisalabad, Sialkot, Gujranwala and Rawalpindi. The provincial departments would be mandated to settle the matters relating to industries within the stipulated period of time.

The CCIs presidents paid tributes to CM Mohsin Naqvi for ensuring timely completion of development projects. President Lahore Chamber Kashif Anwar acknowledged that CM Mohsin Naqvi proved by doing untiring work that if intention is honest and positive then everything is possible.

President Multan Chamber Mian Rashid Iqbal hoped that the expectations of traders linked with CM Mohsin Naqvi will be fulfilled. President Faisalabad Chamber Doctor Khurram Tariq said that holding consultations with the Chambers of Commerce and Industries is an appreciable step and economic activities.

President Mian Rashid Iqbal hoped that the expectations of traders linked with CM Mohsin Naqvi will be fulfilled. President Faisalabad Chamber Doctor Khurram Tariq said that holding consultations with the Chambers of Commerce and Industries is an appreciable step and economic activities.



QUETTA: Vendor sells apples to earn his livelihood for support of his family, at a roadside located on Joint road in Quetta.

## Afghanistan trade surges as Taliban clamp down on heroin, UN report

NEW YORK (Online): Methamphetamine trafficking in and around Afghanistan has surged in recent years, even as the Taliban have curbed heroin trafficking since taking power, a United Nations report said on Sunday.

"The surge in methamphetamine trafficking in Afghanistan and the region suggests a significant shift in the illicit drug market and demands our immediate attention," said Ghada Waly, executive director of the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

The Taliban, who regained power in August 2021, announced a ban on the production of narcotics in Afghanistan, the world's main opium producer. Taliban officials say its security forces are clamping down on Afghan poppy farmers and destroying crops.

While heroin trafficking has slowed, the UNODC said in a statement, meth trafficking "has intensified since the ban".

Meth seizures in and around Afghanistan jumped 12-fold in the five years through 2021. Between 2019 and 2022, nearby countries such as Iran and Pakistan also reported increased seizures. Countries as far away as France and Australia have reported seizing methamphetamine that likely originated in Afghanistan, it said.

The UNODC said much of the meth from Afghanistan was made with pre-cursor ingredients such as those found in some cold and flu medication.

Afghanistan is home to the ephedra plant, which can be used to make methamphetamine, but the UNODC said the quantities needed to produce the drug and the risk of unreliable crops meant that Afghanistan's production did not depend on the plant alone.

"Common cold medications and industrial-grade chemicals are more efficient and cost effective for the manufacture of methamphetamine and thus pose a far bigger threat," the UNODC said.



KARACHI: People are buying essential commodities at a Sahulat Bazar established by Pakistan Markazi Muslim League (PMML), in Karachi.

## 4,126 cases reported in crackdown against power theft during last 4 days

ISLAMABAD (APP): To reduce the growing circular debt in the power sector, the Interim Government under an ongoing crackdown campaign for power theft reported 4,126 cases in the country.

To bring the culprits involved to justice as per statistics of four days (September 7 to 10) of the Ministry of Energy (Power Division) Electricity Anti-Theft Campaign Live monitoring of several areas across the country, so far 51 people have been arrested in this regard and 1,164 First Information Report (FIRs) have been registered. The amount of detection recovered by the ministry during these days was Rs 24,991,298 while the amount of detection charged is Rs 3,20,745,749. As per data of discos, the number of cases was 4,126 and units charged were 7,794,283.

In Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO), the number of cases was 1,133, the total units charged were 3,723,996, the amount of detection charged was 1,592,716,53 and the amount of detection recovered was 906,8210.

The FIRs requested were 1,131 while registered are 685 and 18 persons have been arrested. In Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO), the number of cases was 1,133, and the total units charged were 3,723,996. The amount of detection charged was Rs 1,59,271,653 and the amount of detection recovered was Rs 9,06,82,10. The FIRs requested were 1,131 while registered are 685 and 18 persons have been arrested. In Gujranwala Electric Power Company (GEPCO),

## Cut in taxes on real estate sector to attract US\$ 5-6bn foreign investment: ICCI

ISLAMABAD (INP): Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari has called upon the government to reduce heavy taxes on the real estate and construction sector that would bring US\$ 5-6 billion foreign investment within a short time and help revive the revive the economy.

He said that the business activities of around 70 allied industries are dependent on the real estate and construction sector, so its better growth would boost of the business activities of all allied industries and stimulate the economic growth of the country.

This was stated by him while addressing as chief guest at a reception hosted in his honor by the prominent real estate developer Sial Sarfraz.

## PBF backs govt decision to close shops at 7pm

LAHORE (APP): The Pakistan Business Forum (PBF) backs the decision of the caretaker government to close markets and commercial centres by 7pm from October 1 to save energy, calling it a step toward a more civilized society.

Talking to media on Friday, PBF Punjab Chairman Muhammad Naseer Malik said steps for energy conservation recommended under this plan, such as the closure of shops and commercial centres by 8pm, switching to LED lights and upgrading geysers to make them more energy efficient, could help the country save up to \$1 billion annually.

PBF District President of Sargodha, Faisalabad, Lahore and

Mandi Bahauddin; Abdullah Mumtaz Kabloon, Mian Kashif Zia, Momin Ali Malik and Mirza Abdul Ghani respectively also accompanied him.

The chairman stated that neither Europe nor the United States could afford the luxury of keeping commercial areas open until 12 in the night. "No country has a lifestyle as irresponsible as ours." He added that circular debt "is eating the country like termites and this move will save electricity" and that the provinces have agreed to implement this decision as well which was appreciated. The PBF district presidents also suggested that the district administration should ensure that shops.

## Naqvi announces to provide sugar to public on subsidized rates

ISLAMABAD (INP): Punjab Caretaker Punjab Chief Minister Mohsen Naqvi has announced to provide sugar to public on subsidized rates.

He said that the provincial government will sell sugar at special stalls at model bazaars and Sunday bazaars.

Talking to a delegation of sugar mill owners in Lahore on Sunday, Mohsin Naqvi said that sugar mill owners will sell sugar to provincial government at a rate of 140 rupees per kg.

The caretaker chief minister said that this reduction in sugar prices will directly benefit the people of the province.

## IESCO detects 105 meters, imposes Rs 7.567 mln fine on power pilferers

ISLAMABAD (APP): On the directives of the government, the Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) has expedite drive against power pilferage and caught 105 meters and imposed fine of Rs 7.567 million for stealing electricity in various areas of the company in the current month.

IESCO Chief Dr Muhammad Amjad in a statement said that during the current crackdown against electricity thieves, the field formations checked 5,743 meters and found 105 meters were involved in electricity theft through various means.

As many as 73 meters were found tampered while 22 were getting direct power supply, he said.

He said fine of Rs 7.567 million has imposed on the power pilferers while charging over

177,000 units.

He said on directives of the Federal Minister for Energy, the IESCO launched crackdown against electricity thieves and their facilitators in the all circles including Islamabad-Rawalpindi-Attock-Jhelum and Chakwal circles.

All operation circles, including Incharge Executives and SDOs, were rigorously inspecting industrial, commercial, domestic, and other tariff categories within their respective areas, the IESCO chief said.

He said local administration and police were also assisting the company to carry out the operations. He expressed confidence in the success of this government-led campaign, with the full dedication of officers and staff.

## Punjab Excise department to launch online registration of vehicles

LAHORE (INP): Punjab Excise and Taxation Department is all set to launch a mobile application for online registration of the motor vehicles to simplify the process which was considered to be cumbersome in the past.

In a bid to provide convenience to the people, the Punjab Excise and Taxation Department is set to launch a mobile application, simplifying the process of vehicle registration.

In a statement, DG Excise said that the new computerised application will be launched in a phased manner from tomorrow. "Now data of vehicle and its owner can be better protected", he noted. "An excise official will personally visit the owner for vehicle registration," he said.



LAHORE: People purchase used items due to price hiking, at makeshift weekly market near Minar-e-Pakistan in Lahore.

## Secretary Mines chairs meeting on Sand Stone Drain Scheme

SARGODHA (APP): A meeting of the Steering Committee for Sargodha Sand Stone Drain scheme was held under the chairmanship of Secretary Mines Babar Aman Babar, here on Sunday.

The meeting was attended by the Director-General Mines, P&D, Agriculture Department, and Irrigation Department officers.

The consultant briefed the steering committee on the progress of the drain scheme's feasibility report.

The secretary said that the Mines Department had developed a viable revenue plan under the supervision of the Chief Minister of Punjab. This scheme was also a part of the Mines Department's revenue generation plan.

## IMF urges pact to boost its resource quota, strengthen world economy

NEW DELHI: It is vital to increase quota resources for the International Monetary Fund (IMF) before year-end, its chief, Kristalina Georgieva, said on Sunday, while urging members of the G20 bloc to deliver on a promise of \$100 billion a year in climate funds.

In a declaration at its summit in New Delhi this weekend, the grouping vowed to tackle debt vulnerabilities in low and middle-income countries "in an effective, comprehensive and systematic manner", but offered no fresh plan of action. "G20 members must lead by example in delivering on the promises of \$100 billion per year for climate finance, supported by strengthening the multilateral development banks," Georgieva said in a statement at the end of the two-day summit.

"Countries also need to mobilise domestic resources to finance and manage the green transition through tax reforms, effective and efficient public spending, strong fiscal institutions, and deep



QUETTA: A cobbler repairing old shoes for selling purpose at Weekly Bazar at Joint Road.

## Five-days training workshop on productivity assessment concludes

ISLAMABAD (APP): A 5-day international training workshop for assessors of the productivity specialist's certification programme concluded here, the other day.

National Productivity Organization (NPO) in collaboration with the Asian Productivity Organization (APO), in Japan organized the training workshop. Seventeen from APO member countries and five local participants attended the training while resource speakers from Singapore, Malaysia, and Mongolia delivered the lectures.

The workshop was aimed at developing qualified assessors in national productivity organizations that can

serve as APO-accredited certification bodies and explain the methods, criteria, and competencies required to conduct assessments for the certification of productivity specialists. The speakers addressing the closing ceremony of the event were of the viewpoint that the programme would help in promoting the cause of producing certified productivity professionals to support the agenda of creating a productivity improvement culture in Pakistan.

Addressing the event as chief guest, Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI).

## Distinction b/w filer and non-filer must be abolished: PIDE Conference

Independent Report ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) Macro Policy Lab recently hosted the "Fixing Fiscal Policy" Round Table Conference in Islamabad. The event addressed the persistent challenge of fiscal indiscipline in Pakistan and sought to chart a visionary path for the nation's fiscal policy.

In his introductory remarks, Dr. Nasir Iqbal, Associate Prof. and Chief of Macro-Policy Lab, PIDE said that the Round Table Conference, "Fixing Fiscal Policy," aims to unite policymakers and thought leaders to foster collaboration and develop

local solutions in the fiscal framework of Pakistan. By bringing together academia and policymakers, we seek to chart a visionary path of fiscal policy in Pakistan for the future, transcending

occasion Dr. Nadeem ul Haque, VC PIDE said that three things need to be focused on for the fixation of fiscal policy.

Firstly, the role of the government is crucial in ensuring effective fiscal management. Secondly, taxation and expenditure must be carried out in a transparent manner with

accountability. This includes how to collect taxes, how to spend them, and where to allocate funds. Lastly, debt management is also an important aspect that requires attention.

Dr. Ashfaq Hasan Khan, Principal of the School of Social Sciences & Humanities, NUST while speaking at the roundtable meeting said that to address economic challenges, it is important to immediately reset the role of the government from being an active player to a facilitator. This would involve eliminating the current regulation-based regime and transitioning towards a rule-based economy. The use of a

regulatory guillotine would help in the elimination of unnecessary No Objection Certificates (NOCs). A rule-based approach, coupled with monitoring and evaluation, would ensure a more efficient and effective economic system.

Distinguished participants included senior economists, researchers, and fiscal experts from various institutions across the country, such as the Ministry of Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, P&D Baluchistan, QAU, SZABIST, the US Embassy, ADTMA, P&D Punjab, IUI, NUST, and COMSATS.



ISLAMABAD: A meeting of the Steering Committee for Sargodha Sand Stone Drain scheme was held under the chairmanship of Secretary Mines Babar Aman Babar, here on Sunday.

## G20 summit wraps up in New Delhi; Macron says it confirms isolation of Russia

**Monitoring Desk**  
NEW DELHI: The G20 summit in New Delhi ended on Sunday as India handed over the bloc presidency to Brazil, while both the US and Russia praised a consensus that did not condemn Moscow for the war in Ukraine but called on members to shun the use of force.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi asked the group's leaders to hold a virtual meeting in November to review progress on policy suggestions and goals announced at the weekend.

"It is our responsibility to look at the suggestions that have been made to see how progress can be accelerated," he said in a statement.

On Saturday, the group adopted a Leaders' Declaration that avoided

condemning Russia for the war but highlighted the human suffering the conflict had caused and called on all states not to use force to grab territory.

The consensus came as a surprise. In the weeks leading to the summit, sharply differing views on the war had threatened to derail the meeting, with Western nations demanding members call out Moscow for the invasion and Russia saying it would block any resolution that did not reflect its position.

Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, the head of the Russian delegation, said the summit was a success for India as well as the Global South, the world's developing countries.

The Global South's position in the talks helped prevent the G20 agenda from being overshadowed

by Ukraine, he told a press conference. "India has truly consolidated G20 members from the Global South."

White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan told reporters the summit declaration "does a very good job of standing up for the principle that states cannot use force to seek territorial acquisition or to violate the territorial integrity and sovereignty or political independence of other states".

Germany and Britain have also praised the resolution, but Ukraine said "it was nothing to be proud of".

French President Emmanuel Macron said on Sunday that the G20, which was founded to solve international economic issues, was not necessarily the place to expect diplomatic progress on the war in Ukraine.



Brazil President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, U.S. President Joe Biden, UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen pay their tributes at the Rajghat, a Mahatma Gandhi memorial, in New Delhi, India.

## Biden says Vietnam deal is about global stability, not containing China

**Monitoring Desk**

HANOI: President Joe Biden insisted Sunday that he is not trying to start a "cold war" with China as he made his first visit to Vietnam, saying his goal is to provide stability around the world by building U.S. ties with Vietnam and other Asian countries.

"We have an opportunity to strengthen alliances around the world to maintain stability. That's what this trip is all about," Biden said at a news conference. "It's not about containing China. It's about having a

stable base." The U.S. president came to Hanoi as Vietnam is elevating the United States to its highest diplomatic status as a comprehensive strategic partner, evidence of how far the relationship has evolved from what Biden referred to as the "bitter past" of the Vietnam War.

The expanded partnership reflected a broader effort across Asia to counter China's influence as Biden has said Vietnam wants to show its independence and U.S. companies want an alternative to Chi-

nese factories. But Biden is pursuing these agreements while simultaneously trying to cool any tensions with China.

Biden, meeting earlier Sunday with Vietnam's leaders, welcomed the two countries' new partnership and said he hoped progress could be made on climate, the economy and other issues during his 24-hour visit to Hanoi. "We can trace a 50-year arc of progress between our nations from conflict to normalization to this new elevated status."



U.S. President Joe Biden attends a meeting with Vietnam's Communist Party General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong, at the Communist Party of Vietnam Headquarters in Hanoi, Vietnam.

## Zelensky dismisses compromise with Putin, pointing to Prigozhin's death

**Monitoring Desk**

KYIV: Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky has said the death of Yevgeny Prigozhin — the Russian mercenary leader whose plane crashed weeks after he led a mutiny against Moscow's military leadership — shows what happens when people make deals with Russian leader Vladimir Putin.

As Ukraine's counter-offensive moves into a fourth month, with only modest gains to show so far, Zelensky told CNN's Fareed Zakaria he rejected suggestions it was time to negotiate peace with the Kremlin.

"When you want to have a compromise or a dialogue with somebody, you cannot do it with a liar," Volodymyr Zelensky said. He said when Putin

understood that a big part of society supported Prigozhin, "he killed him. But before he killed, he gave him promises, the territory of Belorussia (Belarus), gave him new locations, the Africa issues and businesses, a lot of different things."

The Wagner leader's dramatic death, which followed a short-lived rebellion that threatened the authority of the Russian president, was a warning to be heeded, Zelensky suggested. While the United States and other key Ukrainian allies continue to supply weapons to Kyiv, and stress that conditions to pursue a "just and durable" peace are not yet in place, a handful of world leaders, such as Brazil's Lula Da Silva, have put the onus on Ukraine to end the war.

## Japan PM Kishida says he plans cabinet reshuffle, economic measures

**Monitoring Desk**

JAPAN: Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said he plans to reshuffle his cabinet as early as Wednesday, and to compile a package of drastic economic measures soon after.

"I'm thinking of conducting a personnel change of party leadership and of the cabinet as early as the 13th," Kishida told a press conference in New Delhi on Sunday, on the sidelines of a G20 summit meeting.

Kishida, who said last month he planned to compile a package of economic measures in September, told the press conference that he aimed to draw up comprehensive steps.

## Russian, Chinese officials attend North Korea anniversary parade

**Monitoring Desk**

SEOUL: North Korea marked its founding anniversary with a parade attended by leader Kim Jong Un as well as Russian diplomats and a high-ranking Chinese delegation, state media said on Saturday, as Pyongyang deepens ties with Moscow and Beijing.

Kim met with the visiting Chinese delegation led by Liu Guozhong, vice-premier of the State Council, the second such visit by top officials from Beijing in six weeks. The two sides announced their aims of "further intensifying the multi-faceted coordination

and cooperation" between the two countries, according to a separate KCNA report. Russian diplomats also attended the event, as well as a Russian military song-and-dance ensemble which had arrived in Pyongyang to mark the occasion, KCNA reported.

Moscow expanded its official presence in North Korea shortly before the parade, with its Pyongyang embassy saying this week that it had been allowed to bring in 20 diplomatic and technical staff — the first such rotation of personnel since 2019.

## Putin discusses Niger crisis with Malian leader-Kremlin

**Monitoring Desk**

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin on Sunday held a phone call with the interim leader of Mali, Assimi Goita, and discussed topics including anti-terrorism efforts and the crisis in Mali's neighbour Niger, the Kremlin said in a statement. According to the statement, the two leaders agreed that the crisis in Niger, where a July coup ousted President Mohamed Bazoum, could only be resolved by diplomatic means. West Africa's main regional bloc, The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS),



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un attends a celebration event marking the 75th anniversary of the founding of the country.

## Israeli delegation attends UN heritage conference in Saudi Arabia in first public visit by officials

**Monitoring Desk**

JERUSALEM: An Israeli delegation arrived in Saudi Arabia on Sunday to attend a U.N. conference on world heritage sites, in the first public visit by government officials to the kingdom, an Israeli official said.

The delegation is led by the head of Israel's Antiquities Authority, Eli Escusido, and includes diplomats, the official said. It is not a bilateral visit, and it was unclear whether they would meet with Saudi officials.

The official was not authorized to discuss the matter with media and spoke on condition of anonymity. The official noted that Israel took part in a video game competition in Saudi Arabia earlier this year.

The visit comes as Washington is pushing to broker normalization of relations between Israel and Saudi Arabia, which are believed to have quietly cultivated ties in recent years over their shared suspicion of Iran. A formal agreement would be a historic step toward integrating Israel into the wider region, but it faces major challenges.

## Scientist shocks peers by 'tailoring' climate study

**Monitoring Desk**

PARIS: In a controversial bid to expose supposed bias in a top journal, a US climate expert shocked fellow scientists by revealing he tailored a wildfire study to emphasise global warming.

While supporters applauded Patrick T. Brown for flagging what he called a one-sided climate "narrative" in academic publishing, his move surprised at least one of his co-authors — and angered the editors of leading journal Nature.

## Climate activists block Dutch motorway in major protest

**Monitoring Desk**

THE HAGUE: Climate change activists blocked a major motorway in The Hague on Saturday in a protest against Dutch fossil fuel subsidies, the latest high-profile action by the Extinction Rebellion group that attracted several thousand demonstrators. Police deployed water cannon against some of the activists, who have threatened a permanent blockade of the motorway, vowing to "stay or come back every day" until fossil fuel subsidies are dropped. Many protesters had come equipped with umbrellas and donated bathing suits or waterproof coats in preparation for the police water cannons.

## Excluding Russia from grain deal talks will not be sustainable, Erdogan says

**Monitoring Desk**

NEW DELHI: Any initiative to revive the Black Sea grain deal that isolates Russia is not likely to be sustainable, Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said in a press briefing after the conclusion of the G20 summit in New Delhi on Sunday.

Russia quit the deal in July, a year after it was brokered by the United Nations and Turkey, complaining that its own food and fertiliser exports faced obstacles and insufficient Ukrainian grain was going to countries in need.

Russia, Ukraine and Turkey are going to con-

tinue to discuss the grain deal, Erdogan added.

Russia is willing to send free grain to poorer countries, which Turkey favours, he told reporters, adding that Qatar had also agreed.

Erdogan said he was not "hopeless" about reviving the grain deal.

The Turkish president also held talks with Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida at the sidelines of the G20 summit regarding efforts to revive the deal, two sources with knowledge of the matter said, without giving further details.

## Russia carries out overnight drone attack on Ukrainian capital

**Monitoring Desk**

KYIV: Russia fired nearly three dozen drones at Kyiv early on Sunday, with blasts ringing out across the Ukrainian capital and the surrounding region for around two hours and debris falling across several city districts, Ukrainian officials said.

Ukraine's air force said the military destroyed 26 out of 33 drones launched by Russia, all of which targeted Kyiv and the region around it.

Reuters witnesses heard at least five explosions across Kyiv, where the nighttime sky was illuminated by blasts from air defences engaging the targets. A plume of smoke rose from in between buildings.

Kyiv resident Liudmyla said she heard the buzzing of the Iranian-made drones before a blast wave shattered windows in her building and the jars on her windowsill. "It was a very frightening experience - I can't even put it into

words."

Fragments from downed drones fell on five different districts, said Mayor Vitali Klitschko and the city's military administration. Klitschko said one person had been injured.

The state emergency service later reported that debris had fallen in three districts but that there was no serious damage.

Kyiv region Governor Ruslan Kravchenko wrote on Facebook that an unspecified infrastructure facility and eight houses had been damaged as a result of the overnight strikes.

There was no immediate comment from Russia about the attacks. Moscow has conducted regular air strikes on Ukrainian population centres far from the eastern and southern front lines of its 18-month-old invasion.

A Russian attack killed 17 people on Wednesday in the eastern city of Kostiantynivka, Ukrainian officials said.

## Niger military accuses France of deploying forces with eye to 'intervention'

**Monitoring Desk**

NIAMEY: Niger's coup leaders have accused France of gathering forces, war materials and equipment in several neighbouring West African countries with a view to "military intervention".

Relations with France, Niger's former colonial power, degraded after Paris stood by ousted president Mohamed Bazoum following the July coup. "France continues to deploy its forces in several ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) countries as part of preparations for an aggression against Niger, which it is planning in collaboration with this community organisation," Niger's regime spokesman Colonel Major Amadou Abdramane said on Saturday.

The Sahel state is also embroiled in a standoff with the West African bloc ECOWAS, which has threatened to intervene militarily if diplomatic pressure to return Bazoum to office fails.

In his statement, Abdramane said France had deployed military aircraft, helicopters and 40 armoured vehicles to Cote d'Ivoire and Benin. "Military cargo aircraft have enabled large quantities of war material and equipment to be unloaded in Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire and Benin, to name but a few," he added.

On August 3, Niger's coup leaders renounced several military cooperation agreements with France, which has about 1,500 soldiers stationed in the country as part of a wider fight against jihadists.

Paris, which refuses to recognise the military regime in Niger, does not consider the soldiers who overthrew the president as party to those cooperation deals. The military regime meanwhile maintains France's forces are now "illegally" stationed in Niger.

On Tuesday, a Paris defence ministry source told AFP that the French army was in talks with the military regime over withdrawing "elements" of its presence in Niger, confirming comments made the previous day by the Niger's regime-appointed Prime Minister Ali Mahaman Lamine Zeine.

Every day for more than a week, thousands of people have gathered in the Nigerien capital Niamey around a military base housing French soldiers to demand their departure.

## Trudeau intends to take up 'Indian interference' with Modi

**Monitoring Desk**

VANCOUVER: Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau intends to address concerns of 'foreign interference', including those related to India during the G20 summit. However, it's uncertain how Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi will respond.

Singh Nijjar and the potential involvement of Indian foreign elements.

Trudeau's arrival in New Delhi coincides with the G20 summit, where climate issues, security, gender equality, and the Russian invasion in Ukraine are prominent topics.

Trudeau, whose government has now approved a public inquiry into allegations of foreign interference, is also concerned about this issue. In Singapore, he mentioned that his schedule was being finalised, and a meeting with Modi in India had not been confirmed.

Trudeau, whose Liberal government recently launched a public inquiry into foreign interference allegations, also stressed the importance of scrutinising countries beyond just China.

He stated: "We must remain committed to protecting Canadians from any and all forms of interference."

## UN envoy urges donor support for battered Syria facing an economic crisis

**Monitoring Desk**

DAMASCUS: The United Nations special envoy for Syria Sunday urged donors not to reduce their funding as the war-torn country's economic crisis spirals.

Syrian President Bashar Assad's decision last month to double public sector wages and pensions further skyrocketed inflation and fueled ongoing protests that shook the southern Druze-majority province of Sweida and nearby Daraa.

Initially sparked by deepening economic misery, angry residents in greater numbers began to call for the fall of Assad, similar to that of the country's 2011 uprising that turned into an all-out civil war.

The U.N. estimates that 90% of Syrians in government-held areas live in poverty and that over half

the country's population struggles to put food on the table.

As the conflict, now in its 13th year, reached a stalemate Syrian government reclaimed large swathes of lost territory with the help of its key allies in Russia and Iran in recent years.

With international donor support dwindling, U.N. agencies have been cutting programs due to budget cuts for years. The U.N. estimates that some 300,000 civilians died during the first decade of the uprising, while half of the pre-war population of 23 million were displaced. "The situation inside of Syria has become even worse than it was economically during the height of the conflict," U.N. special envoy for Syria, Geir Pedersen, told reporters in Damascus following a meeting with Syrian Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad.

## Musk's X sues over having to post moderation policies

**Monitoring Desk**

SAN FRANCISCO: Elon Musk's X Corp on Friday sued the state of California over a law requiring social media companies to publicly post their policies regarding hate speech, disinformation, harassment and extremism.

The parent company of X, formerly known as Twitter, argued in a federal suit that the law referred to as AB 587 violates its free speech rights.

"The true intent of AB 587 is to pressure social media platforms to eliminate certain constitutionally-protected content viewed by the State as problematic," the suit contended.

"The state is compelling social media companies to take public positions on controversial and politically charged issues."

## Japan says swarms of tourists defiling sacred Mt Fuji

**Monitoring Desk**

FUJIYOSHIDA: On a grey, rainy Saturday a steady stream of four buses arrive at a base station of Japan's Mount Fuji depositing dozens of lightly dressed foreign tourists in front of souvenir shops and restaurants. The scene evokes a theme park image, not the veneration most Japanese would expect below the 3,776-metre (12,388 ft) mountain worshipped as sacred by the Japanese, and a source of pride for its perfectly symmetrical form.

"Hey, no smoking here!" a souvenir store at-

tendant barked, addressing a man dressed in shorts and holding a can of beer in front of the red 'torii' gate symbolising the entrance to the Shinto shrine up ahead.

Mt Fuji, which straddles Yamanashi and Shizuoka prefectures in eastern Japan, has always been popular with local and overseas tourists. But a recent surge in inbound tourists to Japan has led to extreme levels of pollution and other strains, authorities say, adding they may be forced to take drastic measures such as restricting the number of visitors.



U.N. special envoy for Syria Geir Pedersen meets with Syrian Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad, in Damascus, Syria.

## Mushaal asks G20 to focus on ending HR abuses in IIOJK

**Demands to press India to settle Kashmir dispute**

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Human Rights and Women Empowerment Mushaal Hussain Mullick has urged the G20 countries to use the opportunity to force the worst human rights violations in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) and ensure a lasting solution to the Kashmir dispute.

Mushaal, the wife of incarcerated Hurriyat Leader Yasin Malik, in a statement on Sunday pressed the G20 member countries, including US, UK, EU, China, France, Russia, Canada, Japan, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and Türkiye to play their proactive role to resolve the Kashmir dispute because regional peace could not possible without settlement of the issue.

She stressed that the international community

should look at the ongoing human rights violations and massacres of innocent people instead of looking at their trade interests with India.

Mushaal demanded that the G-20 countries should make all political and social relations with India subject to the end of ongoing human rights violations in the occupied valley.

"Let's say you had no G-20 statement, headlines would say G-20 is finished, G-20 could be replaced by blocs like BRICS and G-7. So in a way by having a statement we keep the platform and the organisation alive," she said.

The SAPM said the Indian fascist government crossed all limits of barbarism and state terrorism and the world powers were well-aware of the fact that the occupied valley was turned into a largest open

prisoner and torture cell.

She said many of the political figures, human rights defenders and journalists, including Yasim Malik, the Chairman Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), prominent political figures Shabbir Ahmad Shah, Farooq Dar and Khurram Parvez, the Program Coordinator of the Jammu and Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society (JKCCS) and the Chairperson of the Asian Federation Against Involuntary Disappearances (AFAD) and Irfan Meraj (journalist/human rights activist) were illegally detained in frivolous, bogus and politically motivated cases.

Mushaal said the notorious occupation authorities unleashed a reign of terror and used the rapes of women as the weapon of war, besides committing the worst war crimes.



KARACHI: Members of Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat are holding Azmat-e-Sahaba and Ahlebait rally, at Shahrah-e-Quaideen in Karachi.

## Pakistan-Kyrgyzstan to collaborate in healthcare sector: Dr Zhumaliev

ISLAMABAD (APP): Dr Zhumaliev, Member Kyrgyz Republic Parliament and leader of the delegation currently visiting Pakistan on Sunday said that his visit signified demonstrating the highest degree of mutual interest between both countries in further strengthening bilateral trade relations, particularly in the healthcare sector.

Speaking at a reception hosted in his honour by Chairman Kyrgyzstan Trade House Meher Kashif Younis, he said the promotion of trade and industry between the two countries holds significant potential, said a news release issued here.

"By identifying areas of common interest and fostering partnerships, we can pave the way for increased economic cooperation and growth," he added.

He said it was a significant and promising development in the realm of bilateral relations between Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan.

"The possibilities for collaboration are vast and promising in the field of medical education, both countries can benefit from knowledge exchange, joint research projects, and student exchanges," he remarked.

He said, "It will undoubtedly contribute to the development of our respective healthcare systems."



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

## Seminar on women rights and gender based violence held in Quetta

QUETTA (APP): The Ministry of Human Rights on Friday held an awareness-raising event on women's rights and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) for the local communities of Quetta. The objective of the event was to enhance the understanding of communities, regarding the rights of women and GBV, its negative impact on society, and ways in which it could be addressed through community-based measures, and the role of the Ministry of Human Rights in addressing these issues.

The event focused on areas like women's rights, pro-women laws, institutional rehabilitation, referral, and other protective measures in place for survivors of GBV. More than 145 participants from various communities including women, students, transgender, civil society representatives, lawyers, education officers, health officials, district administration officers, and the me-

dia, participated in the session. Amreen Guland and Rubina Zehri from the Women Development Department Quetta said that violence is not only physical but economic and psychological as well.

Shahzad Ahmad Khan, Director-IC, Ministry of Human Rights, explained in detail the laws for protection against GBV, their sections, offenses, and punishments. He said that women constitute more than half of the population of Pakistan. Economic, physical, and psychological violence prevents them from joining the formal or informal economy, which not only causes harm to the victims and their families but also hinders the economic progress of the nation as a whole. Fauzia Shaheen, Baluchistan Commissioner on the Status of Women, and Farkhanda Aurangzeb, NCHR member Baluchistan, explained various laws in Baluchistan related to women's rights.



QUETTA: Secretary Education Abdul Rauf Baloch presiding over a review meeting regarding progress of NGOs in education



BAHAWALPUR: Rescue personnel evacuate people on a boat from a flooded Ahmedpur Sharqia area.

## Rescuers hunt for survivors of Morocco quake with over 2,000 dead

**Monitoring Desk**  
MARRAKECH: Rescuers searched on Sunday for survivors of Morocco's deadliest earthquake in more than six decades, with more than 2,000 people killed by the disaster that has laid waste to villages in the mountains outside Marrakech.

Many people spent a second night in the open after the 6.8 magnitude quake hit late on Friday. Relief workers face the challenge of reaching the most badly affected villages in the High Atlas, a rugged mountain range where settlements are often remote and where many houses crumbled.

Large chunks of a cliff had broken off and fallen on the road near the small town of Moulay Brahim, partly blocking a winding road connecting Marrakech to the Atlas Mountains.

The latest Interior

Ministry figures put the death toll at 2,012, with 2,059 people injured, including 1,404 in critical condition.

Morocco has declared three days of mourning and King Mohammed VI called for prayers for the dead to be held at mosques across the country on Sunday.

The World Health Organization said more than 300,000 people have been affected by the disaster.

"The next 24 to 48 hours will be critical in terms of saving lives," Caroline Holt, global director of operations for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, said in a statement.

Search and rescue efforts would be prioritised alongside making sure survivors were taken care of, she said, noting the importance of providing safe drinking water.

The village of Tansghart in the Ansi area, on the side of a valley where the road from Marrakech rises up into the High Atlas, was the worst hit of several visited by Reuters journalists on Saturday.

Its picturesque houses, clinging to a steep hillside, were cracked open by the shaking ground. Those still standing were missing chunks of wall or plaster. Two mosque minarets had fallen.

Abdellatif Ait Bella, a labourer, lay on the ground, barely able to move or speak, his head bandaged from wounds caused by falling debris.

"We have no house to take him to and have had no food since yesterday," said his wife Saida Bouchich, fearing for the future of their family of six with their sole breadwinner so badly hurt.



WASHINGTON: Ambassador Masood Khan and Senator Chris Van Hollen attending the Annual Meeting & Gala Dinner of the DMV chapter of APPNA as Chief Guests

## PPP supports elections in 90 days, Shazia Marri

MANANWALA (Online): Former Federal Minister Shazia Marri has said that Pakistan People's Party is in favour of elections in 90 days.

Benazir Income Support Program is nothing less than a blessing for the poor people of Pakistan, from which the women of the country are benefiting, she added.

She also mention the propaganda regarding him of the export of 97 billion dollars on social media is condemnable, which has nothing to do with reality.

These views were expressed by former federal minister Shazia Marri while talking to the delegation from Mananwala led by the provincial candidate PP 141 Sheikhupura Rana Rizwan

Ali Raffaqat of Mananwala.

She said that the workers of Pakistan People's Party should prepare for the elections. The People's Party is the representative party of the poor people and the workers, which has always fought for the rights of the workers and the poor. People's Party's candidate for Provincial Assembly PP 141 Rana Rizwan Ali Raffakat made further recommendations regarding the Benazir Income Support Program in his constituency so that the women of the constituency can benefit more and twenty five thousand women from my constituency can benefit from the Benazir Income Support Program.



QUETTA: Activists of the newly regularized Joint Action Committee BDA hold a protest in favour of their demands along with their children in front of the Quetta Press Club.

## Pakistan rejects holding of illegal, so-called elections in Karabakh

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan considered Karabakh as the sovereign territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan and any attempt to conduct the so-called elections there by the illegally installed regime was legally and morally reprehensible.

"Such an attempt is also a grave violation of the UN Charter and principles of established international law," Spokesperson, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said in a press statement, on Sunday, in response to a query regarding the so-called presiden-

tial elections in the territory of Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan on Saturday condemned the so-called elections held in the territories of its Karabakh region, calling it an "extremely provocative step." "This is a clear violation of Azerbaijan's sovereignty and territorial integrity, is by no means admissible and tolerable," Azerbaijan Foreign Ministry statement maintained. It said that the "provocations by Armenia" had a detrimental impact on the normalization process and hindered the international efforts.

## Pak-Saudi joint naval exercise continue in Arabian Gulf

RIYADH (Online): Joint naval exercises of Pakistan and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) Navy are going on in the deep sea of Arabian Gulf in Saudi Arabia.

According to the details, Pakistan and Saudi navies are continuing joint military exercises in the ongoing naval exercises called Al-Bahr 14 in the Persian Gulf of Al-Jubail region of Saudi Arabia.



KARACHI: Caretaker Federal Minister for Energy Ali Muhammad Chairing a meeting with officers of K electric

## Only two dams country wastes \$10bln worth water

ISLAMABAD (Online): Due to the presence of only two dams in the country, water worth 10 billion dollars has been wasted in the country.

According to sources of water resources, since April 1 this year, 1 crore 32 lakh acre feet of water has been carried to the sea.

The total capacity of water storage in the country is 1 crore 33 lakh acre feet, still the total inflow of water in the rivers is 1 lakh 88 thousand cusecs, 93 thousand cusecs of water is being carried to the sea from Kotri Barrage.

Up to 1.4 million acre feet of water is likely to be lost in the sea by October 1. From October 1 to April 1, 2024, the provinces will face water shortfall in Rabi season.

## Bugti expresses deep grief over martyrdom of Police Constable Adeel Zafar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Interior Minister Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has expressed his deepest grief over the martyrdom of police constable Adeel Zafar, who was martyred in an encounter with robbers in Rawat on Sunday.

He also prayed for the speedy recovery of the two injured constables, Asher and Adil and also appreciated their bravery for putting their lives in the line of duty.

## Biden administration not interfering in Pak politics: US senator

WASHINGTON (Online): Democratic Party Senator Chris Van Halen said that the Biden administration is not interfering in Pakistani politics.

The US was instrumental in getting the IMF to come forward with emergency economic relief in the case of Pakistan.

According to the details, the DMV chapter of the Pakistan Doctors' Organization was held in Washington in which US Senator Chris Van Halen participated as the chief guest.

Talking to the Pakistani media on this occasion, he said that he has been in contact with the Biden administration for a long time. I can say with full of my belief that US has not made any attempt to engineer anything in Pakistan's politics.

United States, other

democracies and people of Pakistan are interested in ensuring that elections are free and fair.

The Democratic Party senator said that it is up to the people of Pakistan to decide their leaders, to ensure that the will of the people of Pakistan is heard and reflected, elections must be absolutely free and fair.

Senator Chris Van Halen further added that a good relationship with Pakistan is important for stability and security around the world, that is why the Biden administration wants to have a very strong bilateral relationship with Pakistan, to see the help of the United States after the floods in Pakistan.

US played a very important role in ensuring that the IMF came forward with its emergency economic relief.



QUETTA: Caretaker Home Minister Mir Muhammad Zubair Jamali meeting with Syed Attaullah Shah Bukhari

## Implementing principles of Quaid-e-Azam will lead Pak on path of development: Raja

ISLAMABAD (APP):

While paying heartfelt and rich tribute to Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah on his 75th death Anniversary, Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervaz Ashraf said, "following the principles outlined by Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah in letter and spirit will lead Pakistan on the path of development and progress."

In a message on the death anniversary of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, he said that Pakistan was passing through a challenging time and surpassing these challenges required implementing the

Quaid's teaching in their true spirit.

Raja Pervaz Ashraf said that Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah never compromised on his principles. He also said every Pakistani needs to follow the principles of tolerance and forbearance for peaceful coexistence of a pluralist society.

He also said that Quaid-e-Azam always followed principles of democracy and his struggle was constitutional. He stressed on the need to follow the principles of democracy and tolerance to transform Pakistan into a prosperous and welfare state.

## Afghanistan ready to resolve all issues with Pak through dialogue

KABUL (Online): The detailed statement of the Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the continuous closure of the Torkham border has come out.

The Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that all issues with Pakistan are ready to be resolved through dialogue.

Our security team reconstructing an old outpost at Torkham was fired upon.

## Pak-UAE to sign free trade agreement by September end

ISLAMABAD (INP): The South Asian nation of more than 240 million.

"Emirates delegation is planned for end September to finalize the FTA between Pakistan and UAE," Ejaz said, adding the visit would be focused on trade, investment, and economy, Arab News reported.

Pakistan's ambassador to the UAE, Faisal Niaz Tirmizi, said both nations were optimistic about signing the agreement, officially known as the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), during the upcoming visit. "There are some issues which are being negotiated and we would like to finalize the deal when they come," Tirmizi said.

The UAE had already signed FTAs with around nine countries and was working with Pakistan on it, according to the ambassador.