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Morocco earthquake kills over 1,000 people, rescuers fear more casualties

News Desk

MOROCCO: A powerful earthquake in Morocco has killed more than 1,000 people and injured hundreds more, the country's deadliest in more than six decades, toppling houses in remote mountain villages where rescuers dug through rubble for survivors.

The quake struck in Morocco's High Atlas mountains late on Friday night, damaging historic buildings in Marrakech, the nearest city to the epicentre, while the most badly affected areas were in the mountains nearby.

The Interior Ministry said 1,037 people had been

killed and another 672 injured by the quake, gauged by the US Geological Survey at a magnitude of 6.8 with an epicentre some 72 km (45 miles) southwest of Marrakech.

In the village of Amizmiz near the epicentre rescue workers picked through rubble with their bare hands.

"When I felt the earth shaking beneath my feet and the house leaning, I rushed to get my kids out. But my neighbours couldn't," said Mohamed Azaw. "Unfortunately no one was found alive in that family. The father and son were found dead and they

are still looking for the mother and the daughter."

Online adds: Morocco's deadliest earthquake in decades has killed at least 1000 people, officials said on Saturday, causing widespread damage and sending terrified residents and tourists scrambling to safety in the middle of the night.

The interior ministry said another 672 people were injured, including 205 in critical condition.

The 6.8-magnitude quake struck a mountainous area 72 kilometres (45 miles) southwest of tourist hotspot Marrakech at 11:11pm (10:11pm GMT)

on Friday, the US Geological Survey reported.

Strong tremors were also felt in the coastal cities of Rabat, Casablanca and Essaouira.

"We felt a very violent tremor, and I realised it was an earthquake," Abdelhak El Amrani, a 33-year-old in Marrakech, told AFP by telephone.

"I could see buildings moving. We don't necessarily have the reflexes for this type of situation. Then I went outside and there were a lot of people there.

People were all in shock and panic. The children



Continued on page 2 A general view of damage in the historic city of Marrakech, following a powerful earthquake in Morocco



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of notables from Balochistan led by Haji Aziz Hasni, called on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar.

ECP obligated to conduct fresh delimitations, hold polls as per Constitution: Zardari

Bilawal says Zardari's delimitation statement his own view, sticks to timely polls' demand; PPP chairman says he is bound to follow Zardari's advice in family matters but not when it comes to the political affairs

KARACHI (INP): PPP Co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari emphasized on Saturday that the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) was obligated to conduct the delimitation of constituencies following the census results, stressing the importance of the electoral watchdog adhering to the Constitution in holding polls.

The statement from the key PPP figure comes a day after party chairman Bilawal Bhattu Zardari called for timely elections and within the constitutional timeframe of 90 days during a media interaction

in Karachi on Friday. The ECP has ruled out elections this year, while the 90-day limit for holding polls following the dissolution of the National Assembly (NA), as mandated under Article 224 of the Constitution, ends on November 9. It reasons its decision to push elections beyond November 9 on the basis of the notification of results of the new digital 2023 census and Section 17(2) of the Elections Act, which states: "The commission shall delimit constituencies after every cen-

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QUETTA: Members of Pashtunkhwa Milli Awami Party are holding protest demonstration against the Digital Census, held at Manan Chowk in Quetta

Govt files review petition over SC decision on Review of Judgments Act

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Ministry of Law has filed a review petition against the Supreme Court verdict on Review of Judgments and Orders Act 2023.

The law ministry has pleaded to the apex court to review its August 11 verdict.

A three-member bench of the apex court headed by Chief Justice Bandial and comprising Justice Ijazul Ahsan and Justice Munib Akhtar had declared the legislation as void in its verdict. Justice Munib Akhtar had also written an additional note in the verdict on the legislation.

The law ministry has sought 15 days' time from the court for submission of additional documents. The Registrar Office granted

the plea, sources said. The apex court had nullified the Supreme Court (Review of Judgments and Orders) Act on August 11, 2023.

The Supreme Court in its short verdict remarked that the parliament had no power to enact such legislation. An affected party had given right to appeal against court decisions of the cases under Article 184 (3) of the Review of Judgments Act.

The Supreme Court (Review of Judgments and Orders) Act was challenged by Riaz Hanif Rahi advocate and others, pleading with the court to declare the new act of law as void.

According to petitions, the Supreme Court Review of Judgments and Orders Act 2023 contravenes the Constitution.

Notables from Balochistan call on Caretaker PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation of notables from Balochistan province led by Haji Aziz Hasni, on Saturday, called on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar.

The delegation congratulated the prime minister on assuming the office and expressed their good wishes, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

President appoints Dr Kausar as fed. minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Saturday appointed Dr Kausar Abdullah Malik as the federal minister in the caretaker federal cabinet.

The President made the appointment on the advice of the caretaker prime minister under Article 224 (1a) of the Constitution.

PG NAB Justice (Retd) Asghar Haider resigns

ISLAMABAD (Online): Prosecutor General (PG) NAB Justice (Retd) Syed Asghar Haider has resigned.

The service tenure of PG NAB Justice (Retd) Syed Asghar Ali was to be completed in February 2024.

The investigation into 190 million pounds scandal had been completed. The reference was to be filed in this month. The reference cannot be filed in accountability court without the approval of PG.

The meeting of executive board and approval of cases stand suspended without prosecutor general.

The approval of PG is must for revival of cases if NAB amendment is nullified.

PG has sent his resignation to chairman NAB. PG NAB resignation has been received in Prime Minister House.

President, PM express grief over damages caused by severe earthquake in Morocco

People, govt of Pakistan stand in solidarity with effectees: FO

ISLAMABAD (INP): President Dr Arif Alvi and Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar have expressed grief and sorrow over the losses caused by the earthquake in Morocco.

In their separate statements on Saturday, the President and Prime Minister condoled with the quake affected families.

The President expressed solidarity with the people and government of Morocco. He also prayed for the speedy recovery of those injured in the calamity.

Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar said in this hour of diffi-

culty, Pakistan stands with the brave people and government of Morocco and will provide them all possible support.

Meanwhile in a tweet, the Prime Minister said our hearts ache for those affected by the severe earthquake in Morocco.

He said Pakistan extends its hand in unity and support to Morocco in this trying time.

Caretaker Federal Minister for Human Rights, Khalil George has expressed grief and sorrow over the loss of life and property caused by the earthquake in

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Pakistan pursuing pro-active diplomacy; relations with outer world improving: FM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Foreign Minister Jilil Abbas Jilani says Pakistan is pursuing a pro-active diplomacy and its relations with other countries are improving. He was addressing a news conference in Islamabad on Saturday flanked by Caretaker Interior Minister Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti, Information Minister Murtaza Solangi, IT Minister Dr Umar Saif, Law Minister Ahmed Irfan Aslam and SAPM on Overseas Pakistanis Jawad Sohrab Malik following a meeting of Special Investment Facilitation Council.

The Foreign Minister said the SIFC meeting was briefed about Pakistan's

foreign policy.

He said our relations with China are very strong and ties with the United States are witnessing positive trajectory.

Jilil Abbas Jilani said that Pakistan also enjoys good relations with Saudi Arabia, Middle East, GCC, South Asian and Central Asian countries.

Terming Africa as an important region, Jilil Abbas Jilani said Look Africa Policy has been formulated and our relations with African countries will be further enhanced. He said the ties with European countries also hold significance and trade with the EU will be promoted. The Foreign Minister said steps are being taken to solve the

problems of international investors. Jilil Abbas Jilani said long-term visas will be provided to the investors.

Speaking on the occasion, Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti said the Interior Ministry has made visa policy business friendly. He assured to issue visas to international investors on easy terms.

The Minister said special measures have been taken to prevent smuggling and the government has a zero-tolerance policy against this menace.

He said Law enforcement agencies have achieved great success in the war against terrorism. He warned that no one will be allowed to impose their agenda at gunpoint.

Caretaker Minister for HR visits Quetta

Independent Report

QUETTA: Caretaker Federal Minister for Human Rights Khalil George visited Quetta for the first time after assuming the portfolio of the ministry. The people of the area, including the Christian community, gave him a grand welcome and he was escorted to his residence in the form of a procession.

The people of the area congratulated him on becoming the caretaker federal minister. The federal minister walked as an expression of solidarity with the Christian community. Later, the caretaker Federal

Minister for Human Rights, Khalil George, while talking to journalists, said that for the first time in the 76-year history of the country, a ministry like human rights has been given to the Christian community. The minority and especially the Christian community are deeply grateful for this. The federal minister further said that love for Pakistan is in every vein. Khalil George assured the Christian community and the people of the area that serving the people is the first priority and will try to solve the problems of the people at their doorsteps.



Caretaker Federal Minister for Human Rights Khalil George talking to the media on his arrival to Quetta

Senator Qadir says Bilateral trade activities between Pakistan & UAE to increase in coming months

Independent Report

QUETTA: Chairman Standing Committee on Petroleum and Resources and political and economic affairs expert Senator Abdul Qadir on Saturday said that bilateral trade activities between Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates will increase greatly in the coming days and months.

While this will lead to the promotion of friendship and cooperation between the two countries, it will also lead to relief for Pakistan, which is suffering from severe economic crisis and pressure, he said in his statement issued here.

He said that during the last one year, mutual trade between Pakistan and United Arab Emirates has increased by ten percent and the mutual trade has increased from ten billion dollars to eleven billion dollars.

He said that there is a very strong possibility of a free trade agreement between Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates, there has been a welcome warmth in relations between the leadership of Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates since last year and the leaders of both the countries have visited each other.

This is also very important for Pakistan because the Free Trade Agreement will reduce trade tariffs and increase Pakistan's income substantially, he said.

He said that during the last one year, mutual trade between Pakistan and United Arab Emirates has increased by ten percent and the mutual trade has increased from ten billion dollars to eleven billion dollars.

Food and fuel prices keep fuelling inflation

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI) witnessed a surge for the seventh consecutive week after an increase in food and fuel prices, the latest figures released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics show, says in media reports.

Hence, the SPI was recorded at 279.89 points against 277.21 registered in the previous week, according to the PBS data released on Friday, as the prices of 32 items increased, five decreased and 14 items remained unchanged.

For the week ending September 7, the upward movement in SPI from 277.21 points to 279.89 points was mainly a result of 17 per cent hike in tomatoes price followed by masoor pulse 10.87pc, sugar 6.73pc and garlic 4.66pc. As far as the non-food items are concerned, the diesel price was up diesel 6.28pc, LPG 5.19pc and petrol 5.12pc.

When it comes to the year-on-year comparison, the increase in SPI stood at 26.32pc mainly due to wheat flour 117.71pc, gas 108.38pc, sugar 107.36pc, cigarettes 100.16pc.

Solangi calls Moroccan envoy to condole over devastation caused by quake

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi Saturday telephoned Moroccan Ambassador to Pakistan Muhammad Karmoune to express grief and sorrow over the loss of precious lives and property due to the devastating earthquake in Morocco.

Expressing solidarity with the people of Morocco, Murtaza Solangi said the Pakistani nation shared the grief of the affected families. "Pakistani nation and government are standing by the side of Moroccan earthquake victims at this difficult time," Murtaza Solangi remarked.

Murtaza Solangi said, "Pakistan will provide all possible help and support to the people of Morocco, including health facilities."

He said, "Pakistan will not leave the people of Morocco alone in this time of need. The caretaker minister prayed to Allah Almighty to rest the victims of the earthquake in eternal peace and also prayed for the speedy recovery of the injured.

First-ever kidney transplant performed in BINUQ

QUETTA (APP): Dr. Hayat Kakar, the first kidney transplant surgeon of Balochistan and the fourth kidney transplant surgeon of the country has performed the first-ever successful kidney transplant operation at Balochistan Institute of Nephro-Urology, Quetta (BINUQ).

According to details, Dr. Hayat Kakar received his degree from the College of Physicians and Surgeons in Kidney Bladder and Renal Tract Diseases and obtained his FCPS degree from the Sindh Institute of Urology (SIUT).

After successfully obtaining a degree in the field of kidney transplantation, he named the title of being the fourth kidney transplant surgeon in Pakistan and the first in Balochistan.

Earlier, the Balochistan Institute of Nephro-Urology had to invite a team from outside to perform kidney transplantation and they were paid Rs one to two million.



QUETTA: Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar and Caretaker Home Minister Captain (Retd) Mir Zubair Khan Jamali addressing Awami Jirga in Muslim Bagh

Advantage Pakistan ahead of India clash: Babar Azam

LAHORE (Online): Pakistan skipper Babar Azam said Saturday his side will have an edge over India in their Asia Cup Super Four clash, with a bowling lineup ready to win matches and tournaments.

The arch-rivals meet again in Colombo on Sunday after their group match was abandoned due to rain, which has played havoc with the 50-over tournament that is a precursor to the upcoming ODI World Cup in India.

Pakistan won their opening match of the Super Four stage and a second win will further enhance their chances of making the final on September 17.

But rain in the Sri Lankan capital is expected to play spoilsport again in the match, for which a reserve day has been kept aside.

"You can say we have the edge as we have played back-to-back cricket here (in Sri Lanka) and in Pakistan," Azam told reporters.

"It has been two-and-a-half months in Sri Lanka including the Test series, Lanka Premier League, Afghanistan series, and now the Asia Cup.

"So you can say it will be an advantage (for us)." Pakistan's pace trio of Shaheen Shah Afridi, Naseem Shah, and Haris Rauf have stood out with 23 wickets between them and played a key role in the team's performance so far.

Shaheen, a left-arm quick who leads the bowling, rattled India with his opening burst in the group match, taking the key wickets of skipper Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli.

Azam said the team believes their bowlers can win them titles. "Proud to have the fast bowlers that we have. One of the best (in the world)," said Azam.

"Fast bowlers win you tournaments and matches and I have total belief (in) them. The line-up that we have including Naseem and Faheem (Ashraf) is the best lot that we have. They have

the belief and how they bowl in partnerships.

Meanwhile Pakistan is gearing up for their second Super 4 clash in Asia Cup against their traditional rivals, India, scheduled for Sunday in Colombo.

The Men in Green are likely to go with the same playing XI, which registered a seven-wicket victory over Bangladesh in Lahore on Wednesday.

Pakistan replaced Mohammad Nawaz with Faheem Ashraf in the last game, and the all-rounder bowled well, conceding 27 runs in seven overs, while picking the important wicket of Shikib Al Hasan, who was looking in ominous form and was building an important partnership with Mushfiqur Rahim. In contrast, Mohammad Nawaz had struggled with his bowling in the earlier Group A match against India in the tournament, which could be a contributing factor in his expected absence from the upcoming game.

Chairman PTI violated Secret Act: Khattak

ABBOTTABAD (Online): Head of PTI Parliamentary Parvez Khattak said that Chairman PTI had violated Secret Act.

While talking to media in Abbottabad Parvez Khattak said that I am not seeing elections in the country. If matter goes to court then it will take more time.

We want that election go ahead further so we will get time for preparation.

Elections will not be held on request of lawyers. Delimitation of constituencies will be conducted.

The decision of court will be accepted. Parvez Khattak further said that we were not in favor of clashing with institutions. Chairman PTI kept telling lies and nation thought that he was the savior.



PESHAWAR: Members of Peshawar Bar Association are holding protest demonstration against massive unemployment, increasing price of daily use products, inflation price hiking and the highly inflated electricity bills, nearby KPK Assembly building

Shakil Shaikh, other officials suspended over alleged irregularities

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has appointed an ad-hoc committee to immediately suspend Shakil Shaikh and other officials of the Regional Cricket Association Islamabad (RICA) involved in alleged irregularities on the election affairs.

According to the notification issued by the PCB, Shakil Shaikh and Nasir Iqbal have been suspended from their posts with immediate effect as a result of the inquiry conducted on the complaint of Presidents of cricket clubs of Islamabad against the elec-

tion process of Regional Cricket Association Islamabad, while the affairs of the Islamabad region have been transferred to a three-member committee.

The ad-hoc committee headed by Muhammad Junaid Akhtar while the members include Abdus Sami and Ajmal Sabir. Pakistan Cricket Board has directed Shakil Ahmed Shaikh to immediately hand over all the records of regional cricket association Islamabad to the newly formed ad-hoc committee as they are authorised to run the day to day affairs for the period of 30 days.

Maryam Nawaz likely to visit Karachi, other Sindh cities

KARACHI (INP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Senior Vice President Maryam Nawaz is expected to visit Sindh this month, it was learnt on Saturday.

According to sources, the PML-N chief organiser is likely to visit Karachi and Hyderabad later this month for the reorganization of party in Sindh.

"The schedule of her visit to Karachi and Hyderabad is being prepared," sources say.

The announcement of the new office-bearers of PML-N Sindh is also expected during her visit to Sindh.

In this connection, party's provincial chapter has started making preparations for the proposed visit of Maryam Nawaz. Sources said that many notable personalities from Sindh would join PML-N during her visit. Separately, Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has decided to kickstart his election campaign today (Saturday).

According to details, the former foreign minister will reach Badeen today alongside a visit to Thatta and Sajawal.

It's confirmed; Nawaz Sharif is coming next month

LONDON (INP): Nawaz Sharif – the three-time former prime minister who is also the supremo of PML-N – is returning to Pakistan next month after spending four years in exile as the country grapples with economic turmoil and political uncertainty with the date for fresh general elections yet to be decided.

It was Nawaz himself who ended months of speculations after confirmed the news during a meeting with party leaders and workers in London, albeit without revealing the exact date.

Nawaz had reached London on November 19, 2019 as he fell critically ill in prison, allegedly because of an attempt to poison him. His return is considered critical to the chances of PML-N winning the upcoming elections as the party dented its own chances thanks to rising prices during the 16-month stint of the Shehbaz Sharif-led coalition government.

Earlier, it was reported last month that the PML-N had decided to employ an aggressive strategy in the next general elections, as party sources said the responsibility "to carry out the attack" had been mainly assigned to Maryam Nawaz – the PML-N vice-president

known for her hardline stance and considered the ultimate crowd puller after her father who will also be following this approach.

Under this strategy, the PML-N election campaign will revolve around exposing the conspiracies hatched and vendetta faced by the party leaders and targeting some important personalities while sharing secret audio recordings and other documentary proof.

The purpose of this is to explain the factors behind the conspiracies against the elder Sharif and her daughter who doesn't mince words while explaining her point of view – the factor differentiating their politics with that of Shehbaz who believes in a conciliatory approach. On the other hand, Shehbaz and his son Hamza Shehbaz – who enjoyed a brief stint as the Punjab chief minister – will focus on pacifying tactics and share the development work carried out by the party during its government tenures, the sources said.

Meanwhile, a comprehensive campaign would be launched on mainstream and social media before and after the return of elder Sharif who is now scheduled to fly back home in October.



QUETTA: Inspector General of Police Balochistan Abdul Khaliq Sheikh inaugurating training hall at Police Training College Quetta

PSB reviews preparations regarding Davis Cup Tie

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) Director General Shoaib Khoso chaired a meeting to review the arrangements and preparations for holding the Davis Cup Tie to be played in Islamabad this month.

Pakistan Tennis Federation (PTF) Col. @ Gul Rehman, Deputy Director General Pakistan Sports Board Saeed Akhtar, officials of law enforcement agencies were also attended the meeting.

Director General Shoaib Khoso directed the PSB officials to complete all the arrangements for the Davis Cup Group II tie to be played between Pakistan and Indonesia on

the green courts of the Pakistan Sports Complex from September 15th. He said that Pakistan Sports Board will provide all possible facilities.

The Pakistan Davis Cup team includes Aisam-ul-Haq Qureshi (Playing Captain) while players comprise Aqeel Khan, Muhammad Shoaib, Muhammad Abid and Barkatullah will be part of the team against Indonesia.

The training camp for the Davis Cup is already underway under the supervision of former Davis Cup player Mushaf Zia, who is selected as coach to oversee the training camp.

Designated CJP Qazi Faez invited fellow judges for dinner on 17 September

ISLAMABAD (Online): Designated new Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa has invited his fellow judges for dinner after taking oath.

A dinner invitation has been given by Justice Qazi Faez Isa on 17th September. Judges have received an official notification from Justice Qazi Faez Isa and his wife.

Current Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial has also been invited to dinner.

Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial will retire on 16TH September and Justice Qazi Faez Isa will take oath as Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) on 17th September and Dinner will be given to all Supreme Court judges on the same day.

Demos in Srinagar continue against anti-people policies of authorities

SRINAGAR (INP): The residents of Gaw Kadal area of Srinagar, the summer capital of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, staged a protest against the anti-people policies of the authorities.

According to Kashmir Media Service, the protestors, mostly women, blocked the Gaw Kadal Bridge to protest against the installation of Smart Meters by the authorities.

Many demonstrators said that their electricity supply was cut off after they resisted the move.

"They (authorities) are using these coercive tactics so we may bow down to their decisions. But we question this strategy of the administration. Is this within the ambit of law?" asked a protestor.

This was the fifth protest in the area against installation of Smart Meters.

President, PM express grief...

Continued from page 1

Morocco. The Minister said that he is with the government and people of Morocco in this hour of trial.

Khalil George further said that he sympathizes with the affected families for the loss of life and proper FO: The people and Government of Pakistan stood in solidarity with the Kingdom of Morocco and expressed their heartfelt sympathies and condolences at the tragic loss of lives in deadly earthquake.

In a statement on Saturday, Spokesperson Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Muntaz Zahra Baloch said, "We have also conveyed our offer of assistance to Morocco."

She said that Pakistan Embassy in Rabat has reached out to the Pakistani community to inquire about their safety.

"As per initial reports all Pakistani nationals are safe. We will continue to monitor the situation to facilitate them in the wake of this tragedy," she added.

According to Moroccan state media, at least 820 killed and 672 were injured after a powerful earthquake of magnitude 6.8 struck Morocco.

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were crying and the parents were distraught. "The power went out for 10 minutes, and so did the (telephone) network, but then it came back on," he added. "Everyone decided to stay outside."

Faisal Baddour, an engineer, said he felt the earthquake three times in his building.

"People went out into the street just after this total panic, and there are families who are still sleeping outside because we were so scared of the force of this earthquake," he said. "It was as if a train was passing close to our houses."

Frenchman Michael Bizet, 43, who owns three traditional riad houses in Marrakesh's old town, told AFP that he had been in bed at the time of the quake.

"I thought my bed was going to fly away. I went out into the street half-naked and immediately went to see my riads. It was total chaos, a real catastrophe, madness," he said.

The 43-year-old shared video of piles of rubble from collapsed walls in the streets.

Footage on social media also showed part of a minaret collapsed on Jmaa el-Fna square in the historic city.

An AFP correspondent saw hundreds of people flocking to the square to spend the night for fear of aftershocks, some with blankets while others slept on the ground.

Houda Outassaf, a local resident, told AFP he was walking around the

Morocco earthquake kills over 1,000....

square when the ground began to shake.

"It was a truly staggering sensation. We're safe and sound, but I'm still in shock," he said.

"I have at least 10 members of my family who died... I can hardly believe it, as I was with them no more than two days ago."

Fayssal Badour, another Marrakesh resident, told AFP he was driving when the earthquake hit.

"I stopped and realised what a disaster it was... The screaming and crying was unbearable," he said.

The interior ministry said authorities have "mobilised all the necessary resources to intervene and help the affected areas."

The regional blood transfusion centre in Marrakesh has called on residents to donate blood for those injured.

In the town of Al-Haouz, near the epicentre of the quake, a family was trapped in the rubble after their house collapsed, local media reported.

"We heard screams at the time of the tremor," a resident of Essaouira, 200km west of Marrakesh, told AFP.

"People are in the squares, in the cafes, preferring to sleep outside. Pieces of facades have fallen."

The USGS PAGER system, which provides preliminary assessments on the impact of earthquakes, issued a red alert for economic losses, saying extensive damage is probable and the disaster is likely



QUETTA: Metropolitan Corporation Administrator, Jabbar Baloch, CMO Officer Abdul Waheed Badini, Chief Fire Officer Abdul Haq Achakzai, Chief Sanitation Officer Anwar Lahri and others are supervising the general cleanliness of the Metropolitan Corporation office during campaign, in Quetta

substantial earthquake just outside Marrakesh, Morocco," he said in a post on X. "We stand ready to help our Moroccan friends in whatever way we can."

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz also offered his condolences. Terming it as bad news for the country, he said, "In these difficult hours, our thoughts are with the victims of the devastating earthquake. Our sympathy goes to all those affected by this natural disaster."

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said he was "pained" by news of the quake.

"In this tragic hour, my thoughts are with the people of Morocco," Modi said. "Condolences to those who have lost their loved ones. May the injured recover at the earliest. India is ready to offer all possible assistance to Morocco in this difficult time."

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez offered his condolences on Saturday to relatives of the victims of the "terrible" earthquake.

"All my solidarity and support to the people of Morocco in the wake of this terrible earthquake... Spain is with the victims of this tragedy and its families," he wrote on X.

The President of France, Emmanuel Macron said "We are all devastated after the terrible earthquake in Morocco. France stands ready to help with first aid."

French Foreign Minister Catherine Colonna expressed "solidarity" with the North African country as well.

UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said "My thoughts are with everyone affected by the terrible earthquake in Morocco last night."

Foreign Minister James Cleverly said they will help Morocco "in whatever way we can."

"Devastating news of a



QUETTA: Chairman of Pakistan Milli Tehreek, Syed Rabbani Agha addresses to media persons during press conference held at Quetta press club



Federal Secretary Health Iftikhar Ali Shallwani addressing two day National Health Research Conference in Islamabad

National Heritage & Culture Division plans to revive cultural, literary heritage

ISLAMABAD (APP): A comprehensive plan has been developed by the National Heritage & Culture Division (NH&CD) to revive the cultural and literary heritage of the nation. The revival plan was presented during a meeting at the Division, with Caretaker Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Jamal Shah presiding. The revitalization plan was introduced during a meeting at the Division, with Caretaker Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Jamal Shah leading the discussion. During the meeting, a thorough discussion took place regarding several initiatives in line with the vision of the Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture. Additionally, the meeting delved into the details of an upcoming three-day national-level conference focused on cultural education and literature, with an emphasis on Pakistani children and youth. This conference is scheduled to be

organized in the near future. The minister instructed all departments to work together in developing an annual calendar encompassing youth-oriented leadership programs and cultural events. These events would include artist camps, youth festivals, talent hunts, film festivals, music concerts, exhibitions, youth leadership conferences, and theatrical performances, among various other art forms. The goal is to coordinate efforts across departments to maximize their impact on the youth. Federal Minister Jamal Shah explained that as part of the revival plan, mentorship programs will be set up to connect young individuals with experienced artists and mentors, with the aim of preserving and promoting our cultural heritage. He also mentioned the initiation of calligraphy courses in Madaris, designed to instill artistic appreciation in the minds of young Madaris students. Furthermore, the minister highlighted the establishment of youth volunteer groups and forums, which will actively collaborate with relevant departments and nurture their potential future leadership roles in advancing inclusivity. He mentioned that a talent hunt show will be launched in partnership with PTV and PBC. Additionally, the minister expressed the intention to present excellence awards and prizes to the youth. Furthermore, he put forward the idea of creating a heritage channel to actively promote our cultural and literary heritage. The meeting also addressed the revitalization of cultural infrastructure within the Islamabad Capital Territory. The goal is to transform these facilities into vibrant hubs of activity, thereby generating employment opportunities for artists across various domains. This initiative serves as a model, with the aim of encouraging provinces to adopt similar approaches.

Health research critical to making progress in medical field

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Secretary Health Iftikhar Shallwani on Saturday emphasized prioritizing health research as it is of critical importance to making progress in the health sector. Inaugurating the two-day National Health Research Conference, he said that evidence-based decision-making is of pivotal importance in meeting the challenges that confront us in the provision of health care to the masses. He was addressing top health research experts and public health leaders from across the country. Top public health leader Dr. Zulfiqar Bhutta, Chairman Board of Governors National Institute of Health (NIH) delivered his keynote address making a strong case for priority to health research. The two-day National Health Research Conference has been jointly organized by the National Institute of Health, the Higher Education Commission, the Pakistan Academy of Sciences, and the Pakistan Science Foundation. The main objective of the conference is to promote collaboration and networking among funding agencies, researchers, policymakers, and allied stakeholders and also to provide a platform for research funding agencies to present their experiences and research. This conference is a unique opportunity for researchers, healthcare professionals, academicians and policymakers to come together to share knowledge, discuss the latest trends in health research and explore new ideas and collaborations. The conference covers a wide range of topics including health research contextualization and prioritization, emerging areas of research, pharmaceutical research, and drug development besides formulating a draft Islamabad Declaration for Health Research prioritization and capacity strengthening in Pakistan.

Pink eye infection: Special guidelines issued to airports, airlines

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Sindh health authorities have issued special guidelines to the airports and airlines after a rise in pink eye infection or conjunctivitis cases on Friday. The provincial Border Health Services (BHS) director Dr. Murtaza Shah said in a statement that guidelines have been issued to the medical staff and airlines after a rise in pink eye infection cases. The airlines have been directed to ask the infected passengers to contact the doctor of the health department at the airports. Dr. Shah clarified that no travel ban is imposed on the passengers infected with Pink Eye, however, the health department's doctor will give travel advice to the infected traveller after examination. Pink eye is caused by a virus or bacteria that is very contagious and spreads easily and quickly from person to person. People can reduce the risk of getting or spreading pink eye by following some simple self-care steps.

Court issues non-bailable arrest warrants for Arshad's wife

ISLAMABAD (INP): In a surprising move, a local court in the federal capital issued on Saturday non-bailable arrest warrants for Samia Arshad, the widow of senior journalist Arshad Sharif. The senior journalist and former anchor was killed in Kenyan capital Nairobi on October 23 where he was living in self-exile. The warrants were issued against Samia Arshad and 18 others by Judicial Magistrate Abbas Shah over their non-appearance before court as witnesses in the Arshad Sharif murder case. Arshad Sharif's wife, son, producer Ali Usman and 16 others are among the witnesses in the FIR registered on behalf of the state into the murder of senior journalist Arshad Sharif. As per the slain journalist's family, the FIR was registered on behalf of state not at the request of Arshad's family and they already rejected the FIR. Earlier, Kenyan investigative journalist Brian Obuya raised concerns over the delay in the probe findings into the senior journalist Arshad Sharif murder case. Brian Obuya said that the investigators have spent a very long time completing the probe into the Arshad Sharif murder case. He criticised that neither any report was issued after the probe into the journalist's assassination case nor the names of the accused Kenyan policemen were disclosed.

No luck for PTI leaders as judge hearing cipher case still on leave

ISLAMABAD (INP): The court proceedings on the post-arrest bail applications filed by former prime minister and PTI Chairman Imran Khan and party Vice Chairman Shah Mehmood Qureshi in the cipher leaking case once again could not be held on Saturday as the Official Secrets Act Court Judge Abul Hasnat Zulqarnain is still on leave. The case was adjourned without holding any proceedings. The court staff fixed the case for hearing on September 11. On Thursday, the PTI lawyers appeared in the Special Court hearing cases registered under the Official Secrets Act. They requested the court staff to fix their petitions for Sept 9. But the staff told them that Judge Zulqarnain would be back on duty on Monday (Sept 11) and it would be better if their petition was fixed for Monday. But the PTI lawyer insisted that if the judge was available on Saturday (Sept 9), they would give their arguments. So, on the PTI lawyers' insistence, the court staff fixed their pleas for Sept 9.

Pakistan leaders grieved over loss of lives in Morocco earthquake

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistani top leadership on Saturday expressed the grief over loss of lives and property in a severe earthquake that jolted Morocco. Earlier on Friday night, a powerful 6.8 magnitude earthquake struck Morocco, leaving nearly 632 people dead and 239 injured, the country's interior ministry said in an updated toll on Saturday. Of those injured, 51 were in a critical condition, the ministry said. Several buildings were destroyed during the earthquake, sending residents of major cities rushing from their homes. Moreover, a local official said most deaths were in mountain areas that were hard to reach. In their separate messages, the Pakistan leadership including President Dr. Arif Alvi, Caretaker Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar, former premier Shehbaz Sharif and former foreign minister and PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari have expressed their grief over the loss of precious lives and damages caused to infrastructure after a strong earthquake hit central Morocco. In his statement, President Dr. Arif Alvi on Saturday expressed his grief over the loss of precious lives and damages caused to infrastructure after a strong earthquake hit central Morocco. The PML-N Presi-



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Portugal to Pakistan Frederico Silva visiting the different stalls of traditional stuff of Pakistani Culture during "Craft Bazaar" organized by Serena Hotels, in collaboration with Nomad Art Gallery

Crackdown begins against corrupt officers to prevent power theft

ISLAMABAD (INP): The power division has initiated an unprecedented crackdown against the corrupt officers to tackle power theft. As per details, the power division stated that the operation began against the officials who were facilitating the people in power theft. The spokesperson said that so far action was taken against 1914 corrupt officers, which includes 351 officers from LESCO, 138 officers from GEPCO, 195 officers from FESCO, 219 officers from IESCO, 314 officers from MEPCO and 299 officers from PESCO. Furthermore, more than 2,199 cases of power theft have been brought to light different distribution companies whereas FIRs have been registered against 1,955 individuals and 21 individuals have also been arrested. On September 6, the caretaker federal government announced plans to launch a crackdown across the country on electricity theft in a bid to reduce the ballooning circular debt in the power sector. The power minister said that there are 10 distribution companies in Pakistan that are facing a total loss of Rs589 billion annually. He said electricity theft and nonpayment of electricity bills are the major causes of this huge loss. It is pertinent to mention here that the inflated power bills triggered country-wide protests from Karachi to Khyber and protests in some parts of the country turned violent. The protesting masses have been demanding that the government should end the provision of free electricity to the nobles and provide them relief as the bills they have been receiving are more than their salaries.

IHC fixes Sep 28 for hearing contempt of court case against IG

ISLAMABAD (INP): Islamabad High Court (IHC) has fixed for hearing contempt of court case against IG Islamabad Akbar Nasir Khan for arresting Shireen Mazari despite court's order. Islamabad High Court (IHC) has fixed the case for hearing on September 28. Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb will hear the case. IG Islamabad has filed unconditional apology in the case. Either IG Islamabad apology will be accepted or the proceedings will go ahead will be decided by court on next hearing of the case.

India witnessing surge in Hindutva fascism since Modi's rise to power

ISLAMABAD (INP): India is witnessing a rising tide of Hindu fascism since Narendra Modi became Prime Minister of the country in 2014. Indian minorities and Muslims in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir are bearing the brunt of this surging Hindu fascism. Hate crimes against Muslims and other minorities have soared across India in the last nine years. Narendra Modi, who is a member of extremist Hindu organization RSS which follows Nazi ideology, is known all over the world for Hindutva-related activities. Under Modi, the Hindutva ideology has become mainstream politics in India and the RSS-BJP combine is hell bent upon converting the country into a Hindu Rashtra. The killer of thousands of Muslims in Gujarat, Narendra Modi is systematically advancing his Hindutva policies in IIOJK and across India. The RSS-backed BJP government in India has systematically implemented such laws that discriminate against the Muslims and other minorities. Modi's extremist Hindutva policies have serious implications for not only South Asia but also the whole world and the international human rights bodies must come forward to save the Indian minorities and Kashmiri Muslims from the Hindu fascism.

Campaign for registration of house servants and tenants data in full swing

Independent Report ISLAMABAD: According to details, following the special orders of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital Police "Knock the Door" campaign for the registration of employees and tenants is in full swing, a public relations officer said. He said that, during this campaign various teams of Islamabad Capital Police are going to the streets and door-to-door to ensure the registration of tenants and domestic workers as well as



houses from Sumbal Police Station jurisdiction. The purpose of this campaign is to avoid any untoward incident by maintaining law and order in the federal capital adding that the registration of tenants and domestic workers could not only keep a close watch on miscreants but also prevent the elements their house in order to collect the data. Unregistered employees and tenants could be involved in serious incidents like theft and robbery by impersonating as a common citizen and Islamabad Capital Police is trying to provide a safe environment to the citizens of the federal capital by using all its resources.

Police Khidmat Markaz issued 71,064 General Police verification certificates

Independent Report ISLAMABAD: Police Khidmat Markaz of Islamabad Capital Police have facilitated citizens with different services like issuance of character certificate, foreigners' registration, registration of tenants and domestic servants, a police public relations officer said. He said that, following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad capital police is taking all possible steps to provide maximum facilities to the citizens of Islamabad adding that several steps have been taken by the police in this regard. He further said that Police Khidmat Markaz has received 71,302 applications for a general police verification certificate during the ongoing year. On which 71,064 general police verification certificates were issued to the citizens after complete verification by concerned police stations while the work on remaining applications were under process. For general police verification certificates, applicants must bring his/her original CNIC. In case, the Islamabad address is not mentioned on applicant's CNIC, he must bring residential proof or rental agreement.

Separate MDCAT exam likely for flood affected students

ISLAMABAD (APP): The separate MDCAT examination for the students of flood affected areas will be convened after consultation with the provincial governments. According to a circular issued by the Acting Registrar of Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC), all aspects and any other valid reason in this regard will be discussed with provinces. It added that Caretaker Federal Minister for Health Dr. Nadeem Jan had taken sympathetic view to the plight of those flood affected students who intend to appear in the MDCAT examination, going to be convened on September 10, 2023. It said that some PMDC approved syllabus will apply which is already available on PMDC website. The council clarified that MDCAT examination is going to be convened nationwide on the already decided date which is September 10, (Sunday) 2023.



ISLAMABAD: A view of the over-loaded truck travelling at Express Way during rainy weather early in the morning, which may have chance of an incident, in Federal Capital.



ISLAMABAD: A view of the newly installed Martyrs Monument at Fatima Jinnah Park in Federal Capital.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent
Sunday September 10, 2023

Lawyers' strike

The call for a nationwide strike today by the Supreme Court Bar Association has stirred memories of 2007, when the black coats took to the streets to put pressure on a military-led dispensation to cede to constitutionalism.

The Lawyers' Movement, as it came to be known, was won due to the efforts of the legal fraternity, but there were significant contributions too from politicians, the media, and civil society, each of which played a distinct role in pushing back against an oppressive regime that had persistently refused to obey the laws of the land.

The dictator in question was eventually convicted of high treason, but lessons from their mistakes and excesses were never learnt. Over time, the tumult and turbulence which marked the end of that regime seem to have been forgotten, and we now see a new set of actors toying with the Constitution, undermining the judiciary, suspending civil liberties and suppressing dissent.

It is, therefore, no surprise that the veterans of that movement are once again taking the lead in efforts to mobilise the legal fraternity against what they see as a 'creeping martial law' disguised as an effort to 'stabilise' the country.

The resolution passed at the All Pakistan Lawyers Convention organised by the SCBA reads like a charge-sheet against the state: it demands the release of all political prisoners, an end to the security establishment's meddling in political matters, upholding the Constitution and rule of law, and the primacy of civilian supremacy.

It also opposes the trial of any civilian in military courts, calling it a negation of fair trial, due process and other fundamental rights, demands general elections within the 90-day period defined in the Constitution; warns the government to stop interfering in the judiciary's working; and seeks punishment for those who continue to defy the court's orders.

These demands can hardly be described as radical or revolutionary. Indeed, they seem rather straightforward in that they simply reiterate that the respective roles each stakeholder has been assigned by the state must be adhered to.

It reflects poorly on Pakistan's civil society leadership that it is not organisations dedicated to protecting basic liberties and fundamental rights that are taking the lead in asserting these demands, but professional lawyers distressed at our escalating social decline. In the past, advocates for human rights — Asma Jahangir and I.A. Rehman foremost among them — would boldly fight for what few dared demand.

But with these icons no longer among us, it seems as if somewhere, somehow, even those who were once dedicated to the prosperity of our people have gradually lost their conviction. One continues to hope that the silence of Pakistan's brightest is born more of inexperience or inaction, rather than any enduring disillusionment or apathy.



Ahmed Bilal Mehboob

This is an extraordinary phase of Pakistan's political life. None of the five directly elected legislatures are in place and both the federation and the four provinces are being governed by unelected caretaker governments — not just for 90 days which is the maximum period mandated by the Constitution, but for extended periods.

The caretaker governments in Punjab and KP were formed in January and are already into their ninth month. If elections are held in February next year, as is widely believed in view of the ongoing delimitation exercise, the two provincial governments would complete 14 months by the time the elected governments are sworn in.

The caretaker federal

and the remaining two governments of Sindh and Balochistan would complete six months by the time the elected governments are in place.

In the past 38 years since the system of caretaker governments was devised and made part of the Constitution, caretaker governments have never existed for this long. The only time the caretaker setup existed longer than the mandated period was in 2008 when the election date, and therefore the caretaker period, was extended by about 40 days due to the assassination of Benazir Bhutto and the resulting riots that erupted in many parts of Pakistan especially Sindh. Even this non-compliance with the constitutional provision was later post-facto regularised by inserting Article 270BB (General Elections 2008) in the Constitution through the 18th Amendment.

Continuation of unelected caretaker governments for extended periods runs counter to the spirit of democracy and the Constitution — more specifically to the latter's preamble where it is stated that "...the state shall exercise

its powers and authority through the chosen representatives of the people".

The new parliament will, therefore, have to debate the question of validation of the delay in election and the extended period of caretaker governments once the new National Assembly takes oath. The Supreme Court has already pronounced that the requirement of election within 90 days is not flexible.

The delay in election and extended rule of the caretaker governments may be one of the most serious deviations from the Constitution in recent times, but it is, by no means, the only instance when constitutional and legal niceties were pushed aside. The KP caretaker cabinet took oath on Jan 26, 2023, and from the get-go, the strong and well-documented political affiliation of most caretaker ministers was obvious.

The subject was extensively discussed in the media, and the concerned political parties made no secret of the affiliation of these ministers. The only complaints these parties made was that the 'quota' of these parties in the cabi-

net was not as much as they thought they deserved.

It is surprising how such a partisan caretaker government was allowed to be sworn in, in the first place. When one of the ministers addressed a political party's public gathering, the Election Commission of Pakistan sprang into action and advised the caretaker chief minister to sack the minister concerned. After the minister resigned on July 24, the ECP asked the chief minister to sack almost the entire cabinet which was involved in politics.

Although the ECP's direction to enforce the impartiality of the caretaker government before the general election is a welcome step, the continuation of the partisan ministers for a full seven months shows the lax attitude towards the Constitution and the Elections Act, 2017, whose Section 230(1)(d) requires caretaker governments to be impartial towards all parties and candidates. It is difficult to imagine how a person affiliated with a political party can be impartial to other parties.

Another example of taking constitutional and

legal requirements casually is that of a sitting senator — a founder-member of his party the Balochistan Awami Party — who was selected by the outgoing prime minister and leader of the opposition to be the caretaker prime minister.

It is commendable that Mr Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar resigned from the Senate and the basic membership of BAP before taking oath as prime minister. This tradition set by the prime minister, which was in line with legal requirements, was, however, not respected by one of the members of his cabinet, Sarfaraz Bugti, the interior minister, who continues to be a senator, with the Senate website identifying his affiliation with the BAP. As these lines were being written, even the ECP had not raised any objection to his political affiliation. How can there be two rules about political affiliation for caretaker federal and provincial ministers?

Although the National Assembly was dissolved a month ago, and the Constitution stipulates that elections to the new assembly take place within 90 days of the dissolution, the poll schedule has not been re-

leased. Even the basic question of who is authorised to decide the polling date seems to be in dispute. Both the president of Pakistan and the ECP claim the authority. Even if there is a lack of clarity in the Constitution, the Supreme Court should quickly step in and give an authoritative interpretation of the Constitution.

Two important pieces of legislation, the Army (Amendment) Act, 2023, and the Official Secrets (Amendment) Act, 2023, were passed by parliament before the National Assembly was dissolved. When the Acts were notified by the law and justice ministry, after the lapse of the statutory 10 days allowed to the president to either sign or raise questions, the president used a social media post to deny he had signed the Acts.

This casual attitude towards the Constitution and the laws of the land so close to elections is rather scary. Can state institutions and the holders of high office re-dedicate themselves to upholding the Constitution in letter and spirit? -- Courtesy Dawn

Dismissing the Constitution

Reclaiming the air we breathe



Sherry Rehman

Air pollution is not Pakistan's latest killer, but it has certainly become a serial one. For a country with low emissions on a global scale, our record on air pollution is cause for action at scale. Conservative estimates suggest that 128,000 people die in Pakistan from air pollution annually.

Air quality is no Instagram filter one can swipe away. Even without extensive data, our ambient air at its worst represents a growing density of poison in the very air we breathe. The smog we see cloaking our cities is no film-noir caprice of the weather, but an index of a visible deterioration of air quality in many of our big cities. Lahore in particular regularly ranks as one of the most polluted cities in the world, while Pakistan

scored third in the most polluted countries of the world in 2021.

This is not a good place to be. In winter, especially when the deadly smog rises, children cannot go to school on some days in Punjab's cities which get no sea breeze currents unlike coastal cities, the disease burden of respiratory illnesses rises, airports become paralyzed and motorways inoperable due to almost zero visibility. The air is not fit to breathe.

At a global level, the UN rates pollution as one of the triple planetary crises challenging humanity, and recent reports indicate that the damage it does to human health has been underestimated. According to the European Respiratory Journal, air pollution is estimated to have killed 6.7 million people globally in 2019. They also say that the impact of the climate emergency and human health has now become "irreversible". Air pollution from domestic toxins, however, can be reduced appreciably.

What causes such high rates of air pollution in Pakistan's cities? Air quality is not accurately measured in Pakistan, in fact

quite patchily, wherever the meters are installed. But wherever it is formally measured the annual average PM2.5 exceeds the WHO standards in large margins. Particulate matter is a mixture of micro-solids or liquid pollutants, but size matters because the smaller they are, like the tenth of a hair strand in diameter, the more deadly their impact, because they easily enter the bloodstream via inhalation.

Key sources of air pollution in the country include vehicular and industrial emissions, open burning of waste, household emissions, as well as agriculture and land use emissions. Deforestation, climate change and a rising energy demand graph propel the continued and expensive reliance on fossil fuels, as opposed to renewable energy sources, as other push factors amplifying air pollution.

Growth presents its own challenges, especially with reference to the sheer numbers of people commuting within cities. Unchecked population growth has led to urban pressure, and an explosion in the number of vehicles crowding the streets. From

2007 at 5.2 million vehicles to 26.5 million in 2018, for instance, is a huge private transport burden. Typically, heavy traffic congestion and use of low-quality fuel contributes in spades to ambient pollution. Low-quality fuels produce hazardous pollutants such as carbon monoxide, hydrocarbons, NOx, lead and other particulate matter. Although Euro-2 fuel is banned in Lahore, the slow pace of switching to better grade fuels is adding to the mix.

Visible to the watery, naked eye is the pollution chugging out of unregulated smokestack chimneys in the country. The factories near and within Lahore, as well as Islamabad, Peshawar and Karachi, not to mention other industrial clusters, are notoriously slack in their environmental protection laws. Factories without nitrogen oxides (NOx) and sulphur oxides (SOx) scrubbers are often fined, but continue with their emissions, even if they have to turn to mid-night production cycles to avoid black smoke detection. Smoke from brick kilns where coal, plastic, tyres and other raw material is burnt also adds to

the mix of toxins in the air because they produce sulphur dioxide, carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, nitrogen oxides, mercury, arsenic, chromium, lead and cadmium. Although the use of zigzag technology can change the emission mix, many kiln owners across Punjab are unable — because of high costs — to make that transition.

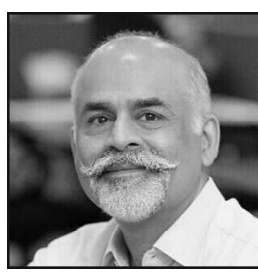
Crop residue burning has been making the news as a high pollutant, particularly in the Indian and Pakistani Punjab regions, because it emits a type of black carbon which has adverse effects on human health and the ecosystem. Farmers do this because of the perceived advantage of cost-efficiency and higher soil fertility. However, studies have shown that burning crops offers no wins, as water retention and soil fertility goes down by 25-30 per cent.

Third, households are encouraged to reduce emissions by switching to low-emission cooking technologies. This means transitioning to improved efficiency biomass cookstoves, and cleaner fuels like LPG and electricity for cooking. Acting on this will have a double ben-

efit of reducing air pollutants both at indoor and outdoor levels. The fourth intervention recommended in the NCAP is the prevention of open burning of Municipal Solid Waste. This intervention applies at landfill sites which require best practices to reduce the chances of fires breaking out at existing sites, and is really a core function of municipal governance. It may trigger waste-contractor migraines, but nothing more than that.

The NCAP playbook is no rocket science. It advocates EVs, but doesn't count on all cars being prototypes of Tesla tomorrow. Electric vehicles are the future, as is clean-energy powered public transport, but the ethos is simple: while the combustion engine is on the road, it needs regulating. The scientific estimate of SCLP (short-lived climate pollutant) inventory accounts suggests that these high-priority actions can reduce PM2.5 emissions by 38 per cent by 2030 compared to baseline scenarios. By 2040, these interventions can reduce emissions by 81 per cent. -- Courtesy TheNews

Bill of riots



Shahzad Sharjeel

Burning utilities bills is all the rage across the country these days. Amidst stifling inflation, the choicest incentive is reserved for electricity generation and distribution companies by the rioting public. We are all, at least partially if not equally, responsible for the dire straits we find ourselves in.

TV anchors are hyperventilating about consumers' inability to pay ever-increasing power tariffs. Their guests, usually fellow anchors or damp squibs who have been advising successive governments, offer mealy-mouthed excuses.

No one mentions the importance of a diverse energy portfolio, ie, the right mix of hydel, renewable, and thermal generation sources. The elephant in the room is why acquiring nuclear power plants is such an uphill task for us. What made nonproliferation such a non-starter?

Everyone amongst us has enjoyed subsidised fuel, electricity and gas. When we could hardly afford one air conditioner, we ran five thanks to the subsidy. The circular debt has been accruing ever since. In the 1980s, a group called Madagascar had a hit song that went: "Everybody wants to see the rainbow, but nobody wants the rain; everybody wants to feel the good times, but no one can stand the pain." The pain is here, the wounds are self-inflicted.

Everyone who votes without caring for manifestos, does not hold their representatives accountable, and demands they and

their ilk pay progressive taxes is responsible for the situation. People who can afford to and yet do not convert their homes and businesses to renewable energy are responsible. People who cannot afford such conversion are guilty of not demanding easy access to finance.

Anyone breathlessly asking when the next elections will be held without asking the prospective losers — for there will be no winners in a long time — how they would resolve the multiple crises is responsible. Everyone who supports Tom because he lives on, or Harry for being handsome, or Dick for just being himself is responsible.

Fundamentalists against river diversion are responsible, for dams cannot be built without it and a lot of hydel generation opportunities are lost due to it. Fundamentalists against population management are responsible for you cannot feed a population of nearly 250 million that continues to grow at a dizzying pace without diverting rivers.

All who celebrate May 28 are responsible, for it came with a self-fulfilling prophecy of "we will eat grass". All elected and unelected rulers are responsible for skewed policies and priorities; we are responsible for letting them get away with it.

The question is not how to bring down the bills, but how to increase income and purchasing power. We spend more than we earn and import more than we export. Expenses can only be curtailed up to a point, beyond that all you can do is increase earnings, ie, taxes and exports. Economists just cannot agree on a universal tax-to-GDP ratio required to run a modern state; however, anything less than 15 per cent would barely cover running the judicial system and policing, forget education and health, what

to talk of investment in infrastructure and environmentally sustainable, reliable and affordable sources of energy.

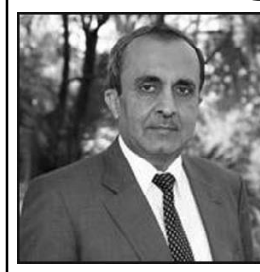
DDT was banned in most parts of the world in the early 1970s, but we are hooked to it: debt, defence, and terrorism. The last 't' can also denote taxes — both from non-collection and squeezing only those already in the tax net perspective.

That the IPPs are evil is another perspective. Imagine leasing a car and then insisting on paying only six instead of 12 annual instalments because for six months it remained parked. Another example of refusing to pay the idle capacity — a name for capacity payment — is to tell your cab driver you will not pay for the time the vehicle was idling at traffic signals or caught in a traffic jam.

The only way to make this unavoidable clause in the power generation and purchase contracts work in our favour is to ensure that the plants are never idle. In other words, we create conditions where the industrial sector demands and consumes as much power as the plants are designed for and the dispatch and distribution system is up to task. It's easier said than done: manufacture what amidst boom-and-bust crop cycles, and an ecology fraught with floods and drought? An unaccountable and visionless leadership, a hapless and heedless electorate, a paranoid worldview, and a pathological aversion to anyone turning a profit do not make a confidence-inspiring and welcoming place for investment.

A few months back, everyone waited for the IMF bailout. As soon as it came, the 'conditionalities' began to rankle. Now, everyone awaits saviours from the sandy lands, but who can save us from ourselves? -- Courtesy Dawn

High Seas Treaty



Jamil Ahmad

Oceans provide a wide range of eco-services that sustain life on Earth for humans, animals, and other species. Oceans regulate climate, drive weather systems, and contribute to meeting the global challenge of food security. Covering two-thirds of Earth's surface, they are a source of oxygen and provide storage for a quarter of the carbon dioxide produced by human actions. The protection of the ocean and its rich biodiversity is, therefore, vital to preventing the planet from becoming uninhabitable.

The current international framework for conserving marine biodiversity is limited to the territorial waters of individual countries. Processes and activities of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity are only applicable to the 39 per cent of oceans that come under the jurisdiction of its parties. Protecting marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction — known as the 'high seas' — remains in uncharted waters, barring a portion in the Antarctic and northeast Atlantic Ocean.

The absence of a global governance system for the high seas — which account for almost two-thirds of the oceans — is a major reason behind the deteriorating conditions of the oceans. It has reduced the impact of multilateral collaboration within the territorial waters of countries.

In the last half century, 66pc of the oceans have been significantly altered as Services. Overfish-

ing is the largest threat to marine ecosystems. Climate change and pollution contribute no less. About 17 million tonnes of plastic waste entered the oceans in 2021, making up 85pc of marine litter, according to the SDG Progress Report of 2023, with projections of doubling or tripling each year by 2040. At this rate, by 2050, there will be more plastic in the sea than fish, unless action is taken.

The oceans were the hottest ever in 2022. Given the rising heat graph, this year may be the hottest. A study by Nature found that a huge part of the oceans has changed colour over the past 20 years due to climate change affecting the marine ecosystem. However, international efforts to find a solution to the challenge of protecting and conserving marine biodiversity on the high seas finally delivered a comprehensive legally binding agreement.

The High Seas Treaty also known as the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Agreement was adopted at an intergovernmental conference in New York in June this year after decade-long negotiations. As an instrument of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, it will bring "protection and sustainable use of marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction" into the remit of global environmental governance.

This treaty will enhance the ability of UN agencies like UNEP, WMO, etc, to work collaboratively with governments, scientists, industry, and environmentalists to protect and ensure the responsible use of marine environments. It will strengthen conservation arrangements under multilateral environmental agreements and complement the Kunming-Montreal Global

Biodiversity Framework, which includes a pledge to protect 30pc of ocean, land, and coastal areas by 2030. Following the adoption of the Water Action Agenda and the Global Biodiversity Framework last year, the agreement is an important breakthrough by multilateral diplomacy with potential for meaningful contribution towards meeting the SDGs. From the perspective of Pakistan and other coastal developing countries with a stake in sustainable ocean economy, the treaty provides for "capacity building and the transfer of marine technology, including the development and strengthening of institutional capacity and national regulatory frameworks or mechanisms". It is set to promote "collaboration among regional seas organisations". The agreement makes environmental impact assessments mandatory before exploration for marine resources is undertaken in areas beyond national jurisdiction, or even within national jurisdiction that may have implications for the high seas.

The treaty aims to achieve its goals by invoking a set of 'general principles and approaches', including the 'polluter-pays' principle and the 'precautionary approach' — two important principles of international environmental frameworks.

In a world facing the disastrous impacts of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution and waste, the High Seas Treaty reflects a renewed resolve of the international community to work together to address common challenges. This long-awaited and much-needed step will fill a void in the architecture of international environmental governance and open new vistas for strengthening regional and international collaboration. -- Courtesy Dawn

Azam stresses to increase power generation capacity

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Chief Minister, Muhammad Azam Khan here Saturday stressed to increase power generation in KP, saying completion of ongoing power generation projects would not only add electricity to the national grid but also help increase the income of the province.

He was chairing the 13th policy board meeting of the Pakhtunkhwa Energy Development Organization (PEDO). The meeting was attended by caretaker minister for energy, Ahmad Jan, Additional Chief Secretary, Zubair Asghar, Secretary Finance, Ayaz Khan, Secretary Law, Shagufta Naveed, Secretary Energy, Tashfeen Haider, Chief Executive Officer PEDO, Engr. Naeem Khan and concerned officials.

On the occasion, the Chief Minister presented

the annual report of PEDO for the year 2022-23. Caretaker CM expressed satisfaction over PEDO's performance expressing hope that PEDO would ensure timely completion of energy generation projects to enhance the energy generation capacity of the province and provide cheap electricity to people.

The meeting also approved the current budget estimate of PEDO for 2023-24 and reviewed the budget for 2022-23.

The meeting was told that revenue of Rs. 47 billion has been generated by energy projects of PEDO and seven hydropower projects of 162 MW have been completed under PEDO while five power-generating projects are in the final stage of completion. The meeting was informed that work is in progress on the 13.5

MW Chappari Charkhel project and 6.9 MW Mujabdeen hydropower projects while work has been started on the 300 MW Balakot Hydropower project with financial assistance from Asian Development Bank. The work would soon start on the 88 MW Gabral Kalam project and 157 MW Madayn hydropower project. Participants of the meeting were briefed that the Civil Secretariat, CM House and CM Secretariat have been converted to solar power while 8000 schools, 187 Basic Health Units and 4000 mosques have also been converted to solar power.

PEDO has also converted 300 mosques of merged districts to solar power. It was told that 356 mini micro hydropower projects are completed in Phase I while work is underway on 291 power projects under Phase II.



KARACHI: Punjab Governor Muhammad Baligh ur Rehman meeting with Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori.

CM orders upgrading police stations across Punjab

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi, during a meeting at his office on Saturday, reviewed the up-gradation and design of police force.

He ordered to repair and upgrade the police stations across Punjab besides repairing of motorbikes of Dolphin Police and vehicles of the Police Response Unit.

The CM said that high quality front desk, investigation room, waiting area and washrooms would be available in the upgraded police stations. He directed the authorities concerned to get repaired

motorbikes of Dolphin Police and vehicles of Police Response Unit within one month along with taking a building on rent as a prompt relief so as to establish new police stations.

CM Mohsin Naqvi stated that a lot of time and money would be spent on making new police stations, adding that police stations would be built by taking buildings on rent according to need. Mohsin Naqvi directed to provide maximum facilities to the visitors in the police stations along with providing an excellent friendly environment. He

ordered to improve the standard of cleanliness in the police stations, saying that police personnel deputed on duty at the front desk should be in uniform.

Inspector General of Police (IGP) briefed the meeting about matters related to up-gradation and design of police force.

Chief Secretary, Additional IG Special Branch, Additional Chief Secretary (Home), CCPO Lahore, Secretary Finance, Secretary Communication and Works, DIG Operations and officials concerned attended the meeting.

Governor directs Interim Home Minister to control street crime

KARACHI (APP): The Caretaker Sindh Home and Prisons Minister Brigadier (Retd.) Haris Nawaz called on the Sindh Governor Mohammed Kamran Khan Tessori at the Governor House here Saturday and discussed the host of issues including law and order situation, peace measures in Sindh province, elimination of street crime from Karachi, installation of CCTV cameras and other matters of mutual interest.

The Governor told the caretaker minister that all possible steps should be taken to protect the

lives and properties of the people. He said that an effective strategy was necessary to eradicate street crime from the metropolis by increasing the police patrolling.

He said that street crime could be controlled with the help of CCTV cameras and the increase in police patrolling.

The Governor appreciated the law enforcement agencies for the best arrangements of security of Chehlam processions. Earlier, the minister gave a detailed briefing to the Governor about his department.



KARACHI: Inspector General Police (IG) Sindh, Riffat Mukhtar along with others being briefed by officials during his visit to Police Facilitation Centre in Karachi.

Discharge of water from fully-packed Mangla dam continues with gradual raise

MIRPUR (AJK) (APP): The discharge of water, with a gradual increase on a daily routine basis from the currently fully-packed country's largest Mangla dam, continued for the 4th successive day on Saturday.

After about a week-long pause only 1.65 feet of water was discharged 4th success day on Saturday from the country's largest fully packed Mangla Dam reservoir since full impounding this season to the stipulated maximum level of 1242 feet official sources said.

"Mangla Dam stands as biggest reservoir in terms of water storage in the country, was filled to its maximum conservation capacity of 1242 feet, on August 17," official sources told APP on Saturday. Mangla Dam contains a minimum operating level of 1050

feet, a present level of 1240.35 feet, a maximum conservation level of 1242 feet, and live storage on Saturday 7.222 MAF as recorded on Saturday, the media wing of WAPDA said on Saturday.

The inflows of the Jhelum river at Mangla reservoir were recorded as 9200 cusecs with outflows of the same 40000 cusecs of water from the dam on Saturday.

At the same time, the position of the river inflows and outflows at Tarbela, Mangla and Chashma along with the reservoir levels and the barrages remained on Saturday as under:-

Rivers: Indus at Tarbela: Inflows 138500 cusecs and Outflows 125000 cusecs, Kabul at Nowshera: Inflows 23600 cusecs and Outflows 23600 cusecs.

Nomad woman, child crushed to death by truck in DI Khan

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): A nomad woman, a child were crushed to death and two persons got injured when a truck hit their caravan in Sarobai area of Darazinda on Saturday morning.

"A truck this morning collided with a Gas Tanker after crushing the caravan of nomads at the inclined area of Sarobai in Darazinda when its driver lost his control over the vehicle," said Rescue 1122 spokesman Aizaz Mehmood.

He said a woman and a child from nomads died on the spot while two people including the driver of Gas Tanker got injured. Besides, a number of sheep, goats and donkeys of the nomads were also crushed to death in the incident.

The truck driver escaped from the spot, he said.

May 9 riots related cases: ATC approves physical remand of Dr Yasmin

LAHORE (Online): Anti Terrorism Court (ATC) Lahore has approved 5 days physical remand of PTI leader Dr Yasmin Rashid in provocative statements against the institutions and arson case.

ATC judge Abher Gul Khan took up the case for hearing Saturday.

Police told the court new clauses of sedition and inciting people for riots

have been included in the case.

It is pertinent to mention here Dr Yasmin Shahid is charged with inciting people to attack on Jinnah House, PML-N office, Askari tower and torching police station Shadman. Cases against the accused are registered against in police stations Gulberg, Shadman and Model town.

Serial killer dacoit arrested, weapon recovered

MULTAN (APP): Police have arrested a serial killer dacoit involved in four murders including a police constable during a special operation launched here on Saturday.

Holding a press conference here, SP Cantt Division Capt (retd) Qazi Ali Raza said that on August 01, 2023, police constable Muhammad Arshad was returning home from duty on motorcycle when he was intercepted by an unknown motorcyclist near Multan Kidney Centre. The criminal opened fire and killed the constable when he tried to drive away motorcycle from the site.

In another incident on the same day, a citizen namely Muhammad Shafique was deprived of cash Rs 11000 and mobile phone and also shot dead by the criminal.

The police registered separate cases number 1686/23 and 1697/23 against the criminals and started the investigations into incidents. Taking action on the incidents, the City Police Officer (CPO) Mansoor-Ul-Haq Rana formed a special team under the supervision of SSP Operations Muhammad Imran to arrest the criminals at the earliest, the SP added. Capt (retd) Qazi Ali Raza said that the police team arrested Muhammad Noman.



LAHORE: Caretaker Health Minister of Punjab Dr Javed Akram talking to media persons after ceremony in Provincial Capital.

Haris Nawaz visits Police Felicitation Centre

KARACHI (APP): Interim Sindh Home Minister Brigadier (Retd.) Haris Nawaz along with IG Sindh Raja Riffat Mukhtar, and Additional IG Karachi Khadim Hussain Rind visited the Police Facilitation Centre established with the cooperation of the Sindh government at Korangi Road here on Saturday.

He appreciated the steps taken to upgrade the facilitation centre. The Minister said that the establishment of Police Facilitation Centre as per the modern requirements was an ideal initiative.

The Minister hoped that the Facilitation Centre would play a significant role in resolving the problems of the people and uplifting the image of the police. On the occasion, IGP Sindh Raja Riffat

Mukhtar said that more Facilitation Centres will be established in the city soon and hoped that all the relevant departments will offer their utmost cooperation in resolving the problems of the citizens. He said that public service was the first priority of police and they main job was to give importance to the public interest.

Earlier, DIG Security and Emergency Services Division Dr. Maqsood Ahmed briefed the Interim Home Minister and IG Sindh that the process of upgradation in the Police Facilitation Centre was accomplished with the sincere efforts of SSU.

He said that Learners' Driving Licenses, Driving License Renewal, International Driving License.

USAID to support different SAU projects

HYDERABAD (APP): The USAID will support different projects of Sindh Agriculture University Tandojam including financial assistance, career preparation, micro-enterprise development and student mental health.

Asma Mohsin, the representative of USAID-funded Higher Education System Strengthening Activity (HESSA) Project and Programme Manager of Student Support Service held such assurance during her meeting with the focal persons of all thematic areas of students' support services of Sindh Agriculture University Tandojam here on Saturday.

According to a university spokesman, the meeting was chaired by the

Dean Dr. Aijaz Ali Khooharo.

The meeting discussed activities and plans of Sindh Agriculture University for the next project year related to Student Leadership, Alumni Engagement, Financial Aid, Career Readiness, Micro Enterprise Development, and Student Support Services regarding mental health.

In his presentation, Dr. Khooharo gave an overarching view of the ongoing endeavors at the university in alignment with the objectives of the HESSA project. He appreciated the efforts of USAID and HESSA and their commitment to enhancing higher education.



MULTAN: Deputy Commissioner Umar Jahangir giving shield to student during the ceremony at La Salle Higher Secondary School.

Commissioner orders stern action to prevent environmental pollution

MULTAN (APP): Commissioner of Multan Division Engineer Amir Khattak directed the relevant officers to launch a comprehensive crackdown against the production units and commercial vehicles causing environmental pollution.

Keeping in view the intensity of the situation of rising environmental pollution and smog, the commissioner on Saturday directed the environment department, district regional transport authorities (RTA), and agriculture department to launch a joint crackdown across the division.

Deputy Director (DD) of Environment Mehr Shamsaad disclosed that the teams visited different areas and inspected production units of commercial vehicles during the last 24 hours.

He said that 69 brick kilns were inspected, out of which five had been sealed for causing pollution

while four FIRs had been registered against kiln owners and a fine of Rs 900,000 had been imposed.

He said that ten industrial units were visited and one was sealed while notices were served to two others over violations.

DD of Environment added that the teams inspected 82 vehicles and challaned 30 while a fine of Rs 56000 was imposed on smoky vehicles causing environmental pollution and smog.

He said, "A fine of Rs 15000 has been imposed on farmers for burning crop remaining," during the crackdown.

He said that as per directives of Commissioner Engineer Amir Khattak, the crackdown would continue on a daily basis without any discrimination.

He urged the masses to cooperate with the environment department in ensuring a clean and pollution-free environment.

Lifesaving skill can't be ignored: Dr Kaleem

MULTAN (APP): In a resounding display of dedication to public safety, Multan's Rescue 1122 stepped up to commemorate International First Aid Day with fervor and commitment, here on Saturday. This celebration underscores the paramount importance of first aid training in the community.

District Emergency Officer Dr. Kaleemullah vehemently argued that this celebration's true meaning lay in acknowledging first aid's ability to save lives. In any emergency, the lives in danger could be saved by dint of swift first aid.

Dr. Kaleem articulated the organization's aspiration to deliver first-aid training to every household in society. This noble vision

aims to empower citizens with the skills needed to act effectively during critical moments, he stated.

To actualize this goal, Rescue 1122 has taken remarkable steps. Training initiatives have been extended to rescue squads at the Union Council level, ensuring that first aid expertise reaches every corner of Multan.

District Emergency Officer Dr. Kaleemullah emphasized trained citizens play a pivotal role as first responders in emergencies, bridging the crucial gap until professional help arrives. Their actions can make the difference between survival and tragedy. In a technological leap, Rescue 1122 has introduced an app that provides online first aid training.

143 held for profiteering, shops sealed

LAHORE (APP): The price control magistrates arrested 143 shopkeepers and sealed various shops over profiteering and hoarding in a crackdown, launched across the provincial capital by the district administration.

On the directions of Lahore Deputy Commissioner Rafia Haider, more than 2,897 sale points and shops were inspected during the last 24 hours, while legal action was taken against 1,163 points. A spokesperson for the district administration told the media on Saturday that cases were also registered against 93 shopkeepers over violation of the rules and 69 violators were imposed penalties in form of fines.

A comprehensive report was presented to the deputy commissioner.



LAHORE: Participants are holding awareness walk in connection of the World Alzheimer's Month organized by Centre for Clinical Psychology Punjab University, held in Lahore.

CBD Punjab announces traffic diversion plan for construction

LAHORE (APP): The Central Business District Punjab (CBD Punjab) has announced a comprehensive traffic diversion plan for construction of Ghora Chowk flyover.

As per a statement issued by the CBD on Saturday, the diversion plan had been developed in close collaboration with the City Traffic Police (CTP) Lahore, to ensure the smooth flow of traffic during the construction phase.

Commuters traveling from Walton Road to destinations like Cavalry, Gulberg, and Firdous Market are advised to use Street No. 6, 5, and 2 Cavalry Ground as their route. Those heading from

Gulberg and Firdous Market to Walton Road should follow the route via Khurshid Alam Chowk, turning left at RA Bazar, and continuing onto Ahmed Bakhs Road for access to Cavalry under the Jinnah Flyover.

Additionally, those traveling from Walton Road to Lahore Cantt. and DHA are encouraged to take a detour within the project area towards Cantt, where a new temporary U-turn towards DHA will be provided at the end of the proposed flyover.

For those moving from Cantt. to Walton Road, the designated route directs them to utilize a detour route beside the project area towards Walton Road.

CTP issues traffic plan for medical entry test at BZU

MULTAN (APP): City Traffic Police (CTP) has issued a route plan for the students to enter Bahauddin Zakariya University (BZU) to appear in the medical entry test going to be held on Sunday.

According to a CTP spokesman, the students from Khanewal and Vehari would use the route from Sahu Chowk for entry through the back gate of the university. The students from Muzaffargarh and Head Muhammadwala would use Syedanwala bypass Chowk for entry through the back gate, while the students from Bahawalpur would use Qadafi Chowk to Nagana Chowk for entry from the back gate.



MULTAN: Rescue 1122 workers are busy training workshop on first aid to mark the World First Aid Day held in Multan.



KARACHI: A view of the broken part of the nullah on road at Jamshed Town causing trouble in smooth traffic flow, which needs the attention of concern authorities.

IIOJK industrial sector at verge of destruction: FCIK

MIRPUR (AJK) (APP): In Indian Illegally occupied Jammu Kashmir State, the Federation of Chambers of Industries Kashmir (FCIK), while expressing grave concern over the growing sickness of scores of industrial units in the turbulent State, has regretted that "the role of the concerned "State functionaries" in analyzing and addressing this critical issue was abysmal and disappointing, says a report reaching here on Saturday from across the Line of Control said.

The occupied Kashmir's business community forum alleged that its policies on revival and rehabilitation of sick industrial enterprises were not being honoured in the J&K State, the report said.

The growing sickness in industry in occupied J&K State had multiple reasons mostly beyond the control of entrepreneurs

which needed to be ascertained and analysed for an appropriate recourse, FCIK said in a statement in occupied Srinagar, the report said.

"The mechanism envisaged for constitution of State Level Revival Committee (SLRC) for analyzing and approving the revival programme of potentially viable sick units and treatment thereof", it said.

"Apart from this, the current policy also makes the applicability of the guidelines for rehabilitation/revival of the sick small and medium level industrial units in the State, the report said.

The FCIK also regretted the discontinuation of the State Level Inter-Institutional Committee (SLIC) which was formed to deal with the problems of coordination for rehabilitation of sick

industrial entrepreneurs in the held State.

The FCIK of IIOJK also expressed its regret over the hostility shown by the puppet State government backing out from its alleged commitment to setting up an Asset Reconstruction Company (ARC) in partnership with J&K Bank as declared by the state government in its Budget Speech of 2015-16 with the aim to do asset stripping where need to be aroused besides formulating a revival package where revival was possible, the report said.

The FCIK, the report revealed has formally taken up the issue with Delhi's installed Chief Secretary of the occupied Jammu and Kashmir State and asked him to take notice of non-implementation of the policies and guidelines by his subordinate departments and Banks.



Caretaker Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication Dr. Umar Saif addressing 'Invest in Pakistan Conference' in Islamabad

Experts for achieving regional energy security thru building trade mechanism

ISLAMABAD (APP): Energy experts on Saturday said that regional energy security can be achieved by building regional energy trade mechanisms and grid by increasing the share of renewable energy to provide it on affordable rates to the consumers.

Addressing an event titled "Energy Security in South Asia and Transition of Sustainable Sources" organized by Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) and Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom Pakistan (FNF), Director Pakistan Office FNF, Birgit Lamm remarked that 60 percent of South Asia's energy demand was

imported, increasing vulnerability to external shocks like Russian-Ukrainian War and dollar exchange rate fluctuations.

She said that energy was a lifeline for South Asian economies and the issue of high energy bills was a shared regional concern and not limited to Pakistan, adding that structural challenges in the regional energy landscape and combined with demographic shifts hampered sustainable economic growth.

Senior Advisor and Research Fellow SDPI, Dr Hassan Daud Butt said that regional energy challenges were common and collaborative,

integrated approach for sustainable, equitable renewable energy transition was the way forward amid rising costs and socio-economic disparities which calls for amplifying efforts for regionally acceptable solutions. He stressed for bolstering regional co-operation beyond political conflicts, making responsive energy policies to tackle evolving economic challenges and global trends as means to uplift marginalized and vulnerable communities and ensuring inclusive access to clean energy in South Asia. Head of Energy Unit, SDPI, Ubaid-ur-Rehman said.



ISLAMABAD: President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari talking to XEN, F-6 Division of IESCO Abdul Rasheed Sarki during his visit to ICCI.

Standardizations key to enhance Pakistan's agriculture exports to China

BEIJING (INP): Pakistan's agriculture sector is poised for a boost in exports to China, through a renewed focus on standardization and quality control.

After fulfilling China's required standardization on meat, chili, and other commodities, Pakistan signed MoUs with China to export these products from Pakistan to China, said Ghulam Qadir, Commercial Counselor, the Embassy of Pakistan, according to a report published by Gwadar Pro on Saturday.

Speaking with a forum titled "International Forum on Standardization Development of Agricultural Products", at the China International Fair for Trade in Services (CIFTIS), Ghulam Qadir said that China is helping Pakistan develop their standards for various crops, such as wheat, rice, cotton, and maize.

This will involve defining

parameters for crop quality, including size, weight, moisture content, and pesticide residue levels, among others.

"Both countries are working together to promote sustainable agricultural practices, emphasizing soil health, water management, and reduced carbon emissions.

These standards aim to protect the environment while ensuring long-term food security. China is also helping Pakistan with the use of fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides, with a focus on minimizing the presence of harmful residues in food items," he added.

Ghulam Qadir further said that over the past few years, Pakistan has made substantial strides in improving its agricultural production, with a particular emphasis on quality control and meeting international standards.

Rupee gains Rs 2 against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani Rupee on Friday gained Rs 2 against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 302.94 against the previous day's closing of 304.94.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 302 and Rs 305 respectively.

The price of the Euro decreased by Rs 2.19 to close at Rs324.48 against the last day's closing of Rs326.67, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese Yen came down by 01 paisa and stood at Rs2.05, whereas a decrease of Rs1.70 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs378.50 as compared to the last closing of Rs380.20.

CAP oppose early markets closure; say will cause Rs3.5tr loss to retailers

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Chainstores across the country, while opposing the government's decision of early closure of markets, has proposed the alternative measures to ensure balanced energy conservation, as the reduction in retail peak hours will reduce revenue by 30%, resulting in sale loss of Rs3.5 trillion, besides total GST and Income Tax collection loss of about Rs300 billion against electric saving of less than Rs62 billion annually. In a letter, written simultaneously to Federal Minister for Energy & Power Muhammad Ali, Federal Commerce Minister Gohar Ijaz and Provincial Industries Minister S.M Tanveer, Chairman of the Chainstore

Association of Pakistan (CAP) Tariq Mehboob Rana stated that recently announced decision by the government is based on an unfounded claim of annual savings of Rs62 billion.

He said that this measure will rather counterproductively cause a significant plunge in revenues of up to 30 percent for retail businesses of which 'Tier-1 retailers' are connected with the FBR-POS system. Such a sharp dip in sales will amount to several hundred billion of rupees of national economic loss across the domestic economy and a proportionate drop in tax collection, while indirect impact to domestic economy is estimated to be much larger.

Govt persuades banks to resume lending money to PIA

ISLAMABAD (INP): There are chances of improvement in the financial condition of the Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) as on the government's intervention, private banks have decided to start giving loans to the airline again.

As per instructions given to banks, funds will be released to the PIA, which is grappling with financial constraints because of the inability to repay interest let alone the principal amount.

It is being hoped that the release of funds, which is expected to start next week, will help better the balance of payment by the national flag carrier.

The airline's management has decided to spend the amount on the purchase of spare parts for planes and other purposes.

Three days ago, Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar

U.S. agricultural futures close mixed

CHICAGO (Xinhua/APP): Chicago Board of Trade (CBOT) agricultural futures closed mixed on Friday, with corn and wheat falling and soybean rising.

The most active corn contract for December delivery fell 2.5 cents, or 0.51 percent, to settle at 4.8375 U.S. dollars per bushel. December wheat lost 4 cents, or 0.67 percent, to settle at 5.9575 dollars per bushel. November soybean rose 3.5 cents, or 0.26 percent, to settle at 13.63 dollars per bushel.

Choppiness is the feature of the market.

CBOT volume remains horribly low as few traders want to add to risk profile ahead of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Crop Report due out Tuesday.

World crop production is declining, but traders want to get past the USDA September report before making any new bull bets. Argentine farm sales of soybeans on the dollar-soybean program have been slower than expected at 500,000 metric tons. With Brazilian farmers cutting first and second crop corn seeding intentions, Chicago-based research company.

Crafts Bazaar held to empower women and communities

ISLAMABAD (Online): Under the auspices of Serena Hotels in collaboration with Nomad Gallery held a crafts bazaar and film festival on Saturday. Ambassador of Portugal Frederico Silva also addressed during Inaugural ceremony of Crafts Bazaar "Empowering women and communities through indigenous crafts" at local hotel. In the upcoming events during the two days of crafts bazaar the documentaries by Nageen Hayat on Pakistan's rich cultural heritage and also on discriminatory laws.



KARACHI: Citizens are refill their gas cylinder with LPG gas at a shop as residents are facing shortage of Sui Gas, at Saddar area in Karachi

SAFCO launched 1st Women Exclusive Branch in Hyderabad

HYDERABAD (APP): The SAFCO Micro-finance Company (Private) Limited launched its first Women Exclusive Branch in Hyderabad near Ali Palace, Qasimabad with an aim to reduce the gender gap and provide financial services on equality.

According to a press release issued here on Saturday, addressing the event, chief guest Tahira Raza, former CEO and

president of First Women Bank Pakistan, said that saving women from financial difficulties will increase their dignity and social status, which was the biggest service of SAFCO.

She said that we need role model men like Suleman G Abro who make ways not only for themselves and their colleagues but also for the sisters, daughters.

Illegal stock of fertilizer recovered

KHANEWAL (APP): The Agriculture Department has recovered illegal stock of fertilizer during a special crackdown against hoarders of fertilizer and pesticides across the district on Saturday. In line with special directives of the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Wasim Hamid Sandhu, the Agriculture Department under the supervision of Deputy Director Agriculture (Extension) Muhammad Iqbal Niazi along with Assistant Commissioner.

IT Minister urges companies to invest in Pakistani startups

ISLAMABAD (INP): Federal Minister for Information Technology Umar Saif has urged the companies to invest in startups in Pakistan.

Addressing an event here on Saturday, he said the government was initiating a whole series of interventions to support them and lower their risk.

"Pakistan has a convenient time zone and world-class IT professionals," adding that the caretaker government was taking measures for digitisation and training of 200,000 IT professionals across the country.

Umar Saif said

Pakistani youth are the second largest online workforce in the world and we are working to make it easy for them to get paid.

There will be no restriction on the IT industry pertaining to dollar transactions, he said, adding that the interim government is removing all barriers to make it possible.

Stressing the significance of Pakistani youth, IT Minister Saif said they are the second largest online workforce in the world and the government was working to make it easy for them to get paid.



FAISALABAD: A view of the long queues outside Utility Store of the Islam Nagar as people are starving to buy grocery on subsidized prices in City.

Electricity related issues of businessmen needed to be resolved: ICCI

ISLAMABAD (INP): President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that open and hanging electric wires in the markets always pose great danger to the shopkeepers, while fire incidents due to short circuit of electricity cause loss of millions of rupees to the plaza owners as well as the shopkeepers.

Therefore, IESCO should address this issue on priority to save the traders from further losses.

Talking to XEN, F-6 Division of IESCO Abdul Rasheed Sarki during his visit to ICCI on Saturday, he said that 5,000 traders are doing business in the Blue Area, but there have been fire incidents 6 to 7 times due to the short circuit of electricity in this

biggest commercial center of Islamabad, which have caused huge losses to the business community, so IESCO should develop its infrastructure on modern lines besides improving the wiring system in all markets.

Ahsan Bakhtawari said that when a transformer burns in a market, there was no back up for it and repair of burnt transformer takes many days. Due to this situation, the perishable items get spoiled causing losses to the traders. He stressed that IESCO should come up with a better solution to this problem to save the traders from further losses. He said that the repair charges of commercial transformers are too high and should be reviewed.

528 power thefts uncovered in Lesco's crackdown, nine arrested

LAHORE (APP): In an intensive crackdown against electricity theft, the Lahore Electric Supply Company (Lesco) apprehended nine individuals and exposed a staggering 528 illegal electrical connections. FIRs have been lodged at police stations.

Under the vigilant supervision of Chief Executive Engineer Shahid Haider, during the operation's second day, all illegal connections had been disconnected. These offenders are now facing a hefty bill of Rs 68.7 million equivalent to 1678.826 units under detection bill.

The list of those charged includes former PML-N Nazim Muhammad Shahbaz who faces charges for 3,126 units (Rs 193,000), Nawaz Doga with 17,311 units (Rs 605,900), Numberdar Haji Mangat Khan for 1,684 units (Rs 75,482); Mustafa Khokhar, a member of Kissan Ittehad, with 1,758 units (Rs 90,125); former PML-N Councillor Umar Daraz, charged for 1,481 units (Rs 55,633); PML-N worker Muhammad Ali Ahmed Nagar, with 982 units (Rs. 44,362); political worker Azam Jatt, facing charges for 11,250 units.



ISLAMABAD: A worker is dusting the fancy flowers pots at nursery in Sector H-9 as in the modern age of the era, now days flowers pots are also become modernize in Federal Capital.

Kitchen Gardening – a cheap source of quality vegetables

FAISALABAD (APP): The agriculture experts have advised general public to adopt kitchen gardening, as it is a cheap source of quality vegetables for human consumption.

A spokesman for the Agriculture (Extension) Department told APP that vegetables played a vital role in catering to the food requirement and kept the human being healthy but per capita consumption of vegetables was very low in Pakistan as compared to the world standard.

He said that the health experts recommended 300 to 350 grams vegetables per day but in Pakistan its consumption was 100 to 150 grams daily.

He said that the vegetables grown under kitchen gardening were fresh and healthy in addition to easily affordable although these were cultivated in the fields or home garden. These vegetables were also free from the ill-effects of pesticides, fungicides, agri toxins and other contaminations whereas its effect on human health was very beneficial.

He said that kitchen gardening generally meant to grow vegetables on a small scale at home so that it could help the grower to meet its daily kitchen needs. The people could grow the vegetables in pots, plastic bags, crates, boxes and open spaces in

their houses. If the space was not available in the house lawn, the same could also be cultivated at rooftop of the house, he added.

He said that the vegetables cultivated under kitchen garden were free from pollution as no chemical, insecticides, fungicides and pesticides were used for their growth.

He said that the vegetables for winter were harvested in September-October and these could be harvested till February-March. The winter vegetables included cauliflower, cabbage, potato, onion, salad, radish, turnip, peas, carrot, spinach, fenugreek, coriander, garlic.

He said that summer vegetables could also be sown during winter by using tunnels. Among summer vegetables included okra, bitter melon, cucumber, watermelon and melon etc.

He said that the winter vegetables should be cultivated at such a site where their plants could get benefit sunlight at least six hours daily. If there was a place in the courtyard or garden where there was shade for a long time, then the people should grow leafy vegetables like coriander, mint, spinach, salad, etc. in these sites.

He said that some vegetables like coriander and mint could meet the needs of a house even they

were cultivated at a small area whereas other vegetables needed more area. Therefore, before planting the vegetables, a diagram should be drawn on a paper and write the selected vegetables in it.

Similarly, the spokesman also suggested cultivating vegetables in rows with sufficient distance between plants and their rows. In winter the rows for vegetable cultivation should be oriented to north-south for getting maximum sunlight.

The birds and pet animals like chicken and rabbits could attack the kitchen gardening vegetables. Therefore, protective fence and bright strips.



ISLAMABAD: An elder vendor holds heavy weight Onion Sack on his back at Fruit and Vegetables Market as due to the extremely high Inflation such vendors, who are in the retirement age are doing hard work to earn daily wages for the livelihood of his family.

Modi uses 'Bharat' for G20 nameplate, not India, amid name-change row

Monitoring Desk
NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi's placard at the opening of the G20 summit on Saturday referred to India as "Bharat", raising speculation of a change of name for the South Asian nation.

India is also called Bharat, Bharata, Hindustan — its pre-colonial names — in Indian languages and these are used interchangeably by the public and officially.

While the country has traditionally stuck to using India in titles such as president or prime minister while communicating in English, President Droupadi Murmu earlier this week referred to herself as the "President of Bharat" in a dinner invitation for a recep-

tion of G20 leaders, sparking controversy.

As Modi declared the summit in New Delhi open on Saturday, he sat behind a table nameplate that read "Bharat", while the G20 logo had both names - "Bharat" written in Hindi and "India" in English.

Such placards have used "India" in the past. Speaking in Hindi, the language spoken by a majority of the population, Modi said "Bharat welcomes the delegates as the President of the G20".

New Delhi is hosting leaders of major economies for the bloc's summit at a new, \$300 million conch-shaped convention centre called Bharat Mandapam, opposite a 16th-century stone

fort.

While some supporters of the name Bharat said "India" was given by British colonisers, historians say the name predates colonial rule by centuries.

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, the ideological parent of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), has always insisted on calling the country Bharat.

Modi's rivals say the change has been forced by the new opposition alliance formed by 28 parties in July called INDIA or Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance, to take on BJP in parliamentary elections next year. A spokesperson for the Prime Minister's Office did not respond to a request for comment.



World Bank President Ajay Banga, Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa and U.S. President Joe Biden pose for the group photo during G20 Summit, in New Delhi, India.

UN atomic watchdog warns of threat to nuclear safety as fighting spikes near plant in Ukraine

Monitoring Desk
KYIV: The United Nations atomic watchdog warned of a potential threat to nuclear safety due to a spike in fighting near Europe's largest nuclear power plant in Ukraine as the forces of the war-torn country continue pressing their counter-offensive on Saturday.

The International Atomic Energy Agency said its experts deployed at the Russia-occupied Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant reported hearing numerous explosions over the past week, in a possible indication of increased military activity in the region. There was no damage to the plant.

"I remain deeply concerned about the possible dangers facing the plant at this time of heightened military tension in the region," IAEA Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi warned in a statement issued late Friday. He noted that the IAEA team was informed that staff at the nuclear power plant had been reduced temporarily to minimum levels due to concerns of more military activity in the area. "Whatever happens in a conflict zone, wherever it may

be, everybody would stand to lose from a nuclear accident, and I urge that all necessary precautions must be taken to avoid it happening," Grossi said.

The IAEA has repeatedly expressed concern that the fighting could cause a potential radiation leak from the facility, which is one of the world's 10 biggest nuclear power stations. The plant's six reactors have been shut down for months, but it still needs power and qualified staff to operate crucial cooling systems and other safety features.

Journalists kept away from Modi-Biden meeting

Monitoring Desk
NEW DELHI: US President Joe Biden was welcomed warmly by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday ahead of the G20 summit in New Delhi, but journalists were blocked from covering the key meeting. Media access to such bilateral encounters on the sidelines of major summits like the G20 is always tightly controlled, but it is rarely blocked entirely.

The incident comes after protracted negotiations were needed before Indian officials agreed to Modi taking one question from US reporters at a press briefing when he made a state visit to Washington.



Emergency services personnel work to extinguish a fire following a Russian attack in Kryvyi Rih, Ukraine.

Musk claims he blocked Ukraine attack on Russian warships

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: US tech billionaire Elon Musk says he prevented Ukraine from wiping out Russia's Black Sea navy fleet last year by denying Starlink internet access — a revelation that prompted a furious response from Kyiv on Friday.

The satellite-based communications system Starlink, operated by Musk-owned company SpaceX, has been deployed in Ukraine since shortly after the country was invaded by Russia in February 2022. The network, which helps increasingly high-tech soldiers to operate in areas where other means of communication are down, is a key battlefield tool for Kyiv.

But the admission by

Musk — who has previously angered Ukraine with proposals including validating Russia's claim to sovereignty over the occupied Crimea region — raises questions about whether Starlink can be fully counted on by Kyiv.

The incident in question revolves around a dramatic plan by Ukraine to cripple Russia's Black Sea naval fleet based in Sevastopol, a strategic harbour in Crimea, which Moscow occupied and claimed to annex in 2014.

"There was an emergency request from government authorities to activate Starlink all the way to Sevastopol. The obvious intent being to sink most of the Russian fleet at anchor," Musk posted on Thursday on his social media platform X, formerly named Twitter.

Boats, helicopters rescue hundreds as storm batters Greece for 3 days

Monitoring Desk
LARISSA: Helicopters winched people from rooftops and military personnel used rubber boats to rescue families from floodwaters up to three metres deep in central Greece on Friday after a devastating rainstorm killed 10 people.

Storm Daniel, which meteorologists said was the worst to hit the country since records began in 1930, pummeled Greece for three days, leaving a trail of ruin after a record summer heatwave that had touched off huge wildfires.

Homes were swept away by torrents, bridges collapsed, roads were made impassable, power lines fell and crops in the fertile Thessaly plain were wiped out.

Civil protection authorities confirmed a death toll of 10, with four people missing.

US, Saudi Arabia and India eye trade corridor

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: The United States, Saudi Arabia, India and other nations are discussing a possible infrastructure deal that could reconfigure trade between the Gulf and South Asia, linking Middle Eastern countries by railroads and connecting to India by port, according to US officials aware of the conversations.

The talks, which have also included the United Arab Emirates and Europe, may or may not yield a concrete result in time for an announcement on the sidelines of this week's Group of 20 (G20) leaders meeting, the people said.

The conversations have been under way for months but are fluid, one of the people said.

The plans for a sweeping, multi-national ports and rail deal would come at a critical time. To counter China's Belt and Road global infrastructure push, US President Joe Biden is pitching Washington as an alternative partner for and investor in developing countries at the G20, especially in the Asia-Pacific region.

It also comes as the Biden administration seeks a broader diplomatic deal in the Middle East that would have Saudi Arabia recognise Israel. The negotiations over a multi-country infrastructure deal were first reported by Axios.

Beyond the diplomatic implications, officials said they hope such an infrastructure deal could reduce shipping times.

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Grand jury recommended charging senator, other Trump allies

Monitoring Desk
ATLANTA: A Georgia grand jury recommended criminal charges against Republican US Senator Lindsey Graham and other allies of Donald Trump as part of its investigation into efforts to overturn Trump's 2020 presidential defeat, said a report released on Friday.

None were ultimately charged when Georgia prosecutors filed a sweeping criminal case against Trump and 18 alleged co-conspirators.

The special grand jury recommended charges against Graham as well as Georgia's two US senators at the time, Kelly Loeffler and David Perdue, the report said. Like Trump, all are Republicans.

Graham, a Trump rival turned golf buddy, denied wrongdoing and said he was fulfilling his oversight duties as the top lawmaker

on the Senate Judiciary Committee when he asked Georgia officials to examine absentee ballots after Trump's defeat.

"We can't criminalise senators doing their job," he said at a news conference in South Carolina on Friday. "The next election, if I have questions I'll do the same thing." The panel also recommended charges against Trump's former national security adviser Michael Flynn, adviser Boris Epshteyn and lawyers Lin Wood and Cleta Mitchell, the report showed.

It was unclear why Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis opted not to bring charges against the six people, and her office did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The six were among 39 people the special grand jury recommended charging in its Dec 15 report.

Israel says it will reopen the main cargo crossing to Gaza

Monitoring Desk
JERUSALEM: Israel announced plans to reopen the Gaza Strip's main cargo crossing on Sunday after closing it earlier this week, claiming authorities had found explosives headed out of the embattled territory. The closure was a severe economic blow to producers across the coastal strip.

The Kerem Shalom crossing was closed on Monday after authorities said they found the explosives hidden in a clothing shipment bound for the occupied West Bank — one of the main markets for Gaza's tiny export sector. Officials feared the explosives were intended for militants in the West Bank.

After an investigation and "necessary adjustments," the crossing was deemed safe to reopen, said COGAT.

Italy's govt approves crackdown on juvenile crime after spate of rapes and youth criminality

Monitoring Desk
ROME: Italy's right-wing government Thursday approved a decree to crack down on juvenile delinquency, broadening conditions under which minors aged 14 or above can be jailed, following a spate of high-profile "baby gang" crimes that gained attention this summer.

The decree was adopted by the Cabinet a week after Premier Giorgia Meloni visited a crime-infested Naples suburb, where two girls were allegedly raped repeatedly by local youths. During the visit, Meloni promised to improve safety in the town of Caivano and to rehabilitate an abandoned, rundown sports complex where some of the alleged rapes occurred.

The decree, which Parliament must either approve as is or modify or drop within months, also includes funding for rehabilitation as well as a provision to name a special safety commissioner for Caivano, a Naples suburb rife with drug dealers and organized crime.

Meloni's government, which came to power last year, has sought to show it is tough on crime.

UK not to change immigration policy to secure India deal

Monitoring Desk
LONDON: Britain has no plans to change its approach to reducing net migration in order to help secure a free trade deal with India, the spokesperson for Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said on Thursday.

There is growing optimism that a free trade deal between the countries could be concluded this year, as both sides agree on the broad contours of the pact, though the remaining topics to be discussed are some of the difficult.

Tropical Maldives heads to polls closely watched by India & China

Monitoring Desk
MALE: People in the Maldives were voting on Saturday in a closely contested election for president of the Indian Ocean archipelago, seen as a battle for influence between India and China.

President Ibrahim Solih, seeking a second five-year term in the Indian Ocean tourist destination, has championed an "India-first" policy during his time in power. He appears to be slightly ahead in the polls.

The coalition backing his main rival, Mohamed Muizzu, has a record of being close to China and has launched an "India out" campaign.

49 civilians, 15 soldiers killed in Mali attacks

Monitoring Desk
BAMAKO: Forty-nine civilians and 15 soldiers were killed in Mali on Thursday when assailants opened fire on a boat on a waterway and raided a camp in Gao region, a hotbed of militancy over the past decade.

Mali's interim government said insurgents from a West African branch of Al Qaeda, called Jamaat Nusrat Al Islam Wal Muslimeen (JNIM), were responsible for the attacks.

The group claimed responsibility for a suicide attack on a military base in north-eastern Mali on Friday. The JNIM said it was behind a suicide bombing on a military base next to Gao International Airport.

Mali is one of several West African countries battling violent insurgencies linked to Al Qaeda and the militant Islamic State group that took root in Mali's arid

north in 2012 before spreading across the region.

Frustration about growing insecurity have spurred military coups in the three worst-hit countries — Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger — since 2020, worrying global powers with strategic interests in the region.

The latest spate of violence began on Thursday when militants fired a shell at the engine of a passenger boat, which was transporting military personnel near Gao.

Soldiers responded with gunfire, but many passengers jumped overboard in panic. Some could not swim.

"Most of the deaths were more by drowning than by bullets," he said.

The other attack on Thursday was on an army base about 230km north of the boat attack.

N.Korea's 75th anniversary: Kim Jong Un hosts Chinese & Russian guests at a parade celebrating

Monitoring Desk
SEOUL: North Korea invited visiting Chinese delegates and Russian artists to a paramilitary parade featuring rocket launchers pulled by trucks and tractors, state media said Saturday, in leader Kim Jong Un's latest effort to display his ties with Moscow and Beijing in the face of deepening confrontations with Washington.

The event in the capital, Pyongyang, which began Friday night to celebrate North Korea's 75th founding anniversary that fell on Saturday, came amid expectations that Kim will travel to Russia soon for a meeting with President Vladimir Putin that could focus on North Korean arm sales to refill reserves drained by the Kremlin's war on Ukraine.

While China has sent a delegation led by Vice Premier Liu Guozhong to the North Korea's anniversary celebra-

tions, Russia sent a military song and dance group. South Korean media speculated that the lack of Russian government officials at the festivities in Pyongyang could be related to preparations for a summit between Kim and Putin, which Washington expects within the month. According to some U.S. reports, it could happen as early as next week.

Putin is expected to attend an international forum that runs from Sunday to Wednesday in the eastern city of Vladivostok, which was also the site of his first summit with Kim in 2019 and is now seen as a possible venue for their next meeting. South Korea's spy agency told lawmakers in a closed-door briefing Thursday that North Korea and Russia could also be arranging an unexpected "surprise" route for Kim's visit to avoid potential.

UN report on Ecuador links crime with poverty, faults government for not ending bonded labor

Monitoring Desk
MEXICO CITY: A U.N. envoy urged Ecuador's leaders Friday to boost enforcement of labor laws and end popular fuel subsidies as part of key policy changes needed alongside their continuing efforts to combat the drug-related crime that has undermined the country's peaceful image.

The report issued Friday by the U.N. special rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights faulted the government for failing to crack down on slavery-like bonded labor, especially among minorities, and pointed to a lack of economic opportunity that has allowed criminal gangs to recruit members. It said money that goes to fuel subsidies should instead be spent on social programs.

"My message to the government is we need to treat insecurity as a problem of poverty and lack of economic opportunities," Olivier De Schutter, the special rapporteur, told The Associated Press ahead of the report's release. "The answer cannot be just law enforcement."

De Schutter's report

stressed that about 34% of Ecuador's people between the ages 15 and 24 live in poverty. He told the AP that many of the youth who dropped out of school during the Covid-19 pandemic never returned to classrooms and "have become easy recruits for the gangs."

The report came nearly a month after Ecuador was rattled by the assassination in broad daylight of presidential candidate and anti-corruption crusader Fernando Villavicencio. The Aug. 9 killing laid bare the fragile state of the country's security. Villavicencio was fatally shot despite having a security detail that included police and bodyguards.

At least two other political leaders have been killed since Villavicencio's assassination, and last week, four car bombs and other explosive devices went off in different cities, including Quito, the capital. Ecuadorian authorities attribute the country's spike in violence over the past three years to a power vacuum triggered by the killing in 2020 of Jorge Zambano.

Blocked roads, crumbling camps as China moves Xinjiang detentions out of sight

Monitoring Desk
ARTUX: A policeman waves reporters away from a desert prison in Xinjiang, part of a network of detention facilities transformed by China's shifting policies in the northwestern region.

Since 2017, more than a million Uyghurs and other Muslims have been swept into internment camps where human rights abuses are commonplace, researchers, campaigners and members of the diaspora say.

Beijing says the facilities were voluntary centres for teaching vocational skills, closed years ago after their inhabitants "graduated" into stable employment and better lives.

Analysts counter that some camps have been refitted as others have shut down.

"Several hundred thousand" people have likely been sent to work at high-security industrial parks while others languish in renamed or repurposed

compounds, said Darren Byler, an assistant professor at Canada's Simon Fraser University who studies detention patterns in Xinjiang.

In July, AFP attempted to visit the sites of 26 alleged camps in Xinjiang named in research by the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI).

Some bristled with staffed guard towers, security cameras and high walls topped with barbed wire, while others lay in disuse.

ASPI, a think tank partly funded by Western governments, used satellite imagery, public documents and other sources to pinpoint the locations.

According to ASPI, at least eight camps dot the landscape around the mostly Uyghur city of Artux.

One alleged detention centre seemed to be built around 2017 and was expanded the following year, the group says.



Activists hold signs promoting Native American participation in the U.S. census in front of a mural of Crow Tribe historian and Presidential Medal of Freedom recipient Joe Medicine Crow on the Crow Indian Reservation.

Pak-Saudi joint naval exercises commence at Al Jubail

ISLAMABAD (APP): The major joint Naval Exercise Naseem Al Bahr-XIV and Deraa Al Sahil between the Pakistan Navy (PN) and Royal Saudi Naval Forces (RSNF) have commenced at Al Jubail, Saudi Arabia.

The ships were warmly welcomed by senior RSNF officials and Pakistan's Diplomatic Staff in Saudi Arabia.

In addition to Naval Ships, Special Operations Forces and Marines of both the navies, helicopters and aircraft of the Royal Saudi Air Force are participating in the exercises.

During the harbour phase, both sides exchanged views on professional subjects and finalised the planning of sea exercises.

For participation in



Commandant Levies Training Center Khuzdar Col. (Retd) Anwar Baloch presenting special to Director Balochistan Levies Force Abdul Ghaffar Magsi.

Power Division shuffles 1,900 officers nationwide to combat theft collusion

ISLAMABAD (APP): Secretary of the Power Division, Rashid Langrial, disclosed that a total of over 1,900 officers have been reassigned as part of efforts to disrupt collusion associated with power theft nationwide. In a statement posted on X, he mentioned that collusion and theft collusion networks involved in power theft are at the core of this issue.

He stated that 248 officers with impeccable integrity have been relocated to the headquarters.

Additionally, a reassignment of more than 1,900 SEs, XENs, and SDOs across the country has been carried out without any "safarish".

Providing specific details, he said a total of 1,914

officers underwent reassignments, encompassing 91 SEs, 533 XENs, and 1,290 SDOs. Simultaneously, 248 officers with unfavorable records were relocated to less significant roles across all 10 districts.

He noted that a comprehensive reshuffling affected a total of 351 officers within LESCO. Additionally, 17 officers were assigned to less critical positions. Within LESCO, 24 SEs, 89 XENs, and 238 SDOs were subject to reassignments. In the case of GEPCO, a total of 138 officers underwent reshuffling, which includes 8 SEs, 42 XENs, and 88 SDOs. Additionally, 13 officers with a questionable reputation were placed in less critical roles.



LANDIKOTAL: People are facing inconvenience after Torkham border closed due to an exchange of gunfire between Afghan and Pakistani forces, at Torkham Border in Landikotal.

Speakers say Mountaineering could not be promoted in Pak owing to lack of resources

Independent Report
QUETTA: Millions of rupees can be earned by declaring mountaineering an industry. These views were expressed by speakers while addressing a seminar titled "Awareness session on mountaineering" held under the auspices of Balochistan Star Shaheen Mountaineering Association at Quetta Press Club.

Addressing the seminar, speakers said mountaineering could not be promoted in Pakistan, particularly in Balochistan, owing to lack of resources and non-availability of mountaineering gears, adding that such department did not exist that undertook rescue operations to rescue foreign and international mountaineers, adding that steps were required to be taken for promotion of tourism and mountaineering sectors of the province.

Urging the need for creating awareness regarding preservation of Eco-system, they said aware-

ness was required to be created for tree plantation and promotion of mountaineering. Lauding the services of the office bearers and mountaineers of Balochistan Star Shaheen Mountaineering Association for mountaineering, caves explorations and climate amelioration, they hoped that BSSMA would continue its efforts to create awareness to preserve trees and mountains.

Seminar was addressed by Muhammad Asif Langove, Assistant Director (Activities), Balochistan Sports Board, Gul Muhammad Kakar of Olympic Association, Muhammad Amin Badini, Secretary Finance, Balochistan Civil Secretariat Officers Welfare Association, Dr. Naseem Khan, President, Balochistan Star Shaheen Mountaineering Association, Bismillah, General Secretary, Asif Sheyan, tribal elder Ziaullah Khan Bazai, Master Yahya Lala, Hafiz Abdul Rasheed and others.



QUETTA: Assistant Director (Activities) Balochistan Sports Board Asif Lango and others distributing certificate among participants of a seminar titled "Awareness session on mountaineering" held under the auspices of Balochistan Star Shaheen Mountaineering Association at Quetta Press Club.



Royal Saudi Naval Forces officials being briefed onboard PNS SAIF by Pakistan Navy officials during joint Naval Exercise Naseem Al Bahr-XIV between Pakistan Navy (PN) & Royal Saudi Naval Force (RSNF) commenced at Al Jubail, Saudi Arabia.

Country Director WB calls on Minister for Finance

ISLAMABAD (Online): Country Director World Bank called on Minister for Finance, Revenue, Economic Affairs and Privatization, Dr. Shamsah Akhtar.

They discussed and reviewed the overall performance of the World Bank ongoing portfolio in Pakistan, and different options were discussed to further expand collaboration in different priority areas to help boost the economic activities in the country.

Dr. Shamsah Akhtar, while welcoming the World Bank team, reiterated that Pakistan values its development partnership with World Bank. She appreciated the efforts of the World Bank management, especially the country team in Islamabad in the economic development of Pakistan.

FBR to launch countrywide crackdown against tax evasion

LAHORE (INP): Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has decided to launch countrywide crackdown against tax evasion, sources said on Saturday.

The taxation authority has prepared a list of 11,000 persons from major cities including Lahore and Karachi, sources said. The list included industrialists, mill owners, traders, property dealers and wholesalers, according to sources.

The grip will be tightened against tax defaulters, and they will also be arrested, sources said.

The FBR's list of tax evaders included people from Karachi, Lahore, Faisalabad, Rawalpindi and Multan.

"We have substantial evidence against tax defaulters," FBR sources said.

"They have to produce documents within one week's period after tax notice," FBR sources added.

A global market research firm in a survey report in June disclosed staggering 956 billion rupees tax

Illegal connections unearthed, arrests made in countrywide crackdown on power theft

LAHORE (INP): With the countrywide crackdown on power theft slowly gaining momentum, the officials of power distribution companies (Discos) assisting in or failing to curb the practice are also on radar as 248 of them have so far been sent to the headquarters and another 1,914 transferred.

In this connection, Energy Secretary Rashid Langrial said it was only the beginning and the ongoing action would be ruthless sans any forgiveness for anyone.

He said over 2,000 power theft cases involving four million units of electricity had so far been unearthed, resulting in at least 21 arrests and fine of over Rs160 million.

Like other regions, Iesco (Islamabad Electric

Supply Company) has also launched an operation that is spread over Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Jhelum, Attock and other areas.

In Punjab, three committees have been formed to check power theft and monitor the situation as different Discos are taking action against the culprits.

As far as the southern Punjab is concerned, the Mepco (Multan Electricity Supply Company) found 319 consumers involved in the practice and registered 316 cases.

Meanwhile, 4,690 illegal connections were suspended by Hesco (Hyderabad Electric Supply Company) during the past 48 hours.

The Hesco has to recover an amount of Rs169 billion from consumers and

is among the worst performing companies in terms of line losses, theft and revenue recovery along with Pesco (Peshawar Electric Supply Company), Sepco (Sukkur Electric Supply Company) and Qesco (Quetta Electric Supply Company).

Similarly, the authorities in the regions of Pesco and Qesco have launched the crackdown as directed by Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar.

Earlier this week, top government officials announced a countrywide crackdown against smugglers and power thieves in attempt to reduce the losses suffered by national exchequer and control the rising prices of different commodities.



LAHORE: Caretaker Federal Minister for Religious Affairs Aneeq Ahmed talking to media persons after visiting Jamia Naemia.

Fai urges G20 to push for all parties' dialogue for Kashmir's peaceful settlement

WASHINGTON (APP): A prominent Kashmiri leader Friday called on the G20 leaders' summit to end its neglect of the decades-old Kashmir dispute and push for a dialogue between all parties concerned — India, Pakistan, and Kashmiri people's leadership — to set a stage for its democratic and peaceful solution.

"Kashmir is a political issue which needs a political solution," Dr Ghulam Nabi Fai, Secretary-General of the World Kashmir Awareness Forum, a Washington-based advocacy group, said in a statement at the event of the summit being held in New Delhi.

He said "Some of the

immediate requirements for such a dialogue include International community's intervention to bring the neglect of the decades-old Kashmir to a quick end, Demilitarization of the State of Jammu and Kashmir on both sides of the cease-fire line, and, Release of all political prisoners namely Mohammad Yasin Malik, Shabbir Ahmad Shah, Masarat Aalam, Aasia Andrabi, and Khurram Parvez." "The leadership of G20 countries need to realize that there is still a great opportunity for peace in Kashmir, but it cannot occur unless the people of Kashmir are permitted to have their own identity," Fai said.



QUETTA: Vice Chancellor of Bolan Medical University, Dr. Shabbir Lehri along with others addresses to media persons during press conference held at Quetta press club.

Mir Hassan Zehri says: Will fight against negative propaganda and conspiracies

Independent Report
HUB: Public circles and local and central leaders and workers of PPP have expressed their anger on the reaction of baseless and false news circulating on social media against Mir Ali Hassan Zehri, a beloved personality of Hub and Lasbela.

People belonging to different schools of thought have strongly condemned the deliberate and well-thought-out plan of some malicious and defeated elements against Mir Ali Hassan Zehri on social media and said that an unsuccessful attempt is being made to damage the reputation of Mir Ali Hassan Zehri, which is less condemnable. Public circles said that Mir Ali Hassan Zehri has made Hub District the strongest stronghold

of Pakistan Peoples Party Hub District and the so-called representative here are afraid of increasing popularity of Mir Ali Hassan Zehri, is day by day and resorted to lies and negative tactics.

The purpose of spreading negative and vile news on social media is only to damage the reputation of Mir Ali Hassan Zehri, but this effort of the evil elements will go in vain because the people love Mir Ali Hassan Zehri and support him.

They have complete trust on him. The opponents are doing such negative actions to save their politics because they know that they cannot compete with Mir Ali Hassan Zehri in the political field, public sectors said that Mir Ali Hassan Zehri is a respectable and business person

and is known as the messiah of the poor and helpless. Mir Ali Hassan Zehri has always served the people regardless of caste and color and this process continues successfully and this is the reason why people are trust his leadership and joining Pakistan Peoples Party.

Reacting to the news circulating on social media, Mir Ali Hassan Zehri said that the way failed elements are doing negative politics, people know that it is all propaganda based on lies.

This is nothing new for Pakistan Peoples Party and its leaders. Such negative tactics have been resisted in the past and in the future, such negative propaganda by such defeated elements will be resisted and given a befitting reply. People have become conscious and will not pay attention to any propaganda.

US mobilizes \$44mn in new U.S-Pakistani diaspora investment

ISLAMABAD (Online): The United States announced the mobilization of more than \$40 million in new U.S.-Pakistani diaspora investment at the USAID "Invest in Pakistan" conference in Islamabad. Four diaspora partners concluded four new Memoranda of Understanding with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) valued at \$44 million — increasing total diaspora commitments to nearly \$200 million. New investment commitments include: SERVINZ Limited: \$5 million for restoring livelihoods in flood-affected areas; Pakfoods LLC Group & NUST - \$9 million for technology;

Jaxeri Investment Corporation - \$25 million for electric vehicle local manufacturing; and, Global Semiconductors Group - \$5 million for training youth in semiconductor and chip design technology.

Addressing the participants at the closing ceremony, U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Donald Blome highlighted the valuable contributions of the U.S.-Pakistani diaspora. "I want to congratulate our four diaspora partners, SERVINZ Limited, Pakfoods LLC Group, Jaxeri Investment Corporation, and Global Semiconductors Group, for signing these MOUs. You are helping unlock Pakistan's investment potential."



LAHORE: Chairman Pakistan Ulema council Hafiz Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi talking to media persons at Bait-ul-Aman in Provincial Capital.

Commissioner reviews anti-narcotics operation in Qila Abdullah, Pishin

QUETTA (APP): Commissioner Quetta Division Muhammad Hamza Shafiqat on Saturday visited Qila Abdullah and Pishin districts and reviewed the ongoing anti-narcotics operation in the area.

Deputy Commissioner Pishin, Jameel Ahmed Baloch briefed Commissioner Quetta regarding the mega anti-narcotics operation.

The security forces have launched a grand operation to eliminate drug production and drug factories in the Qila Abdullah and Pishin districts of Balochistan.

Hamza Shafiqat has expressed satisfaction with the performance of the levies other law enforcement teams, and administrative officers in the anti-drug operation.

He said no effort would be spared to crash the elements involved in the narcotics business and their hideouts.

On the instructions of Corps Commander Balochistan, the Pakistan Army, FC Balochistan, Anti-Narcotics Force, Levies and other law enforcement agencies are participating in the operation.

Some 9 narcotics manufacturing and processing factories were demolished, and manufactured and stored drugs worth millions of rupees were also eradicated.

The operation was finalized in a meeting held on August 28 at Headquarters 12 Corps, in which all stakeholders were agreed.

On August 30, a jirga was also organized in Qila Abdullah under the Anti-Drug Campaign.



PISHIN: On the directives of Commander 12 Corps factories of narcotics being burnt in presence of Commissioner Quetta Division Muhammad Hamza Shafiqat and Deputy Commissioner Captain (Retd) Jameel Ahmed.

NAB prosecutor general Asghar Haider tenders resignation

ISLAMABAD (INP): National Accountability Bureau's (NAB) Prosecutor General Justice (ret'd) Syed Asghar Haider has resigned from his post citing "personal engagements" on Saturday.

According to sources, the Prime Minister's House has received the resignation of Asghar Haider, whose term of office was due to end in February 2024.

Chairman PTI moves SC against official secret act, army amendment act

ISLAMABAD (Online): Chairman PTI Imran Khan has approached Supreme Court (SC) against official secret act and army amendment act. PTI chairman has filed constitutional petition in SC through his counsel Shoab Shaheen making president, secretary National Assembly (NA), ministries of interior and law respondents.

The petitioner has

taken plea in the petition army amendment act and official secret act run contrary to article 10-A, article 8 and article 19 of the constitution. President has not signed act. The petitioner has requested the court to declare official secret act and army amendment act null and void besides suspending both the laws till the decision of the constitutional petition.

Caretaker FM to chair Commonwealth Youth Ministerial Meeting in London

ISLAMABAD (INP): Caretaker Foreign Minister Jilani Abbas Jilani will chair the 10th Commonwealth Youth Ministerial Meeting (CYMM) beginning from Tuesday next in London.

The theme of the meeting is "Aim Higher: Delivering More for Young People in the Commonwealth". It aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, Radio Pakistan reported.

Four core areas of education, employment, engagement and environment identified in the Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP), will be extensively discussed in the meeting.

While in London, FM Jilani Abbas Jilani is also expected to meet the participating Ministers and high-ranking officials of the Commonwealth.

Earlier, it was reported that Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar is likely to attend the

78th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), which opens on September 5.

Caretaker PM Kakar will apparently be the first interim prime minister to represent Pakistan at the UN General Assembly. He will be addressing the UN summit on September 22 and he will return the same day after delivering his speech.

A small delegation will accompany the caretaker prime minister including interim Foreign Minister Syed Jilani Abbas Jilani, interim Information and Broadcasting Minister Murtaza Solangi, interim Climate Change and Law and Parliamentary and Water Resources Affairs Minister Ahmad Irfan Aslam and Foreign Secretary Muhammad Syrus Qazi.

A UN press statement marked Sept 19 as the first day of the high-level general debate that is addressed by world leaders.