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Protest demonstration in Gwadar to sabotage CPEC: Shahid Rind

Says government has been invited Baloch Yakjehti Committee to sort out the issues through dialogue and extended the offers again for setting on table ; No one is above the law, action will be taken against those who disturb the peace of the province

Independent Report

QUETTA: Spokesperson of Balochistan government Shahid Rind on Saturday said that the intentions behind the demonstration in Gwadar to sabotage the second phase of CPEC.

In a statement issued here, the spokesperson said that the government has been invited Baloch Yakjehti Committee to sort out the issues through dialogue and extended the offers again for setting on table.

He said that women members of assembly have

called the BYC to set on table and hold dialogues to find out a solution to the issue.

The spokesperson said that no one is above the law, action will be taken against those who disturb the peace of the province.

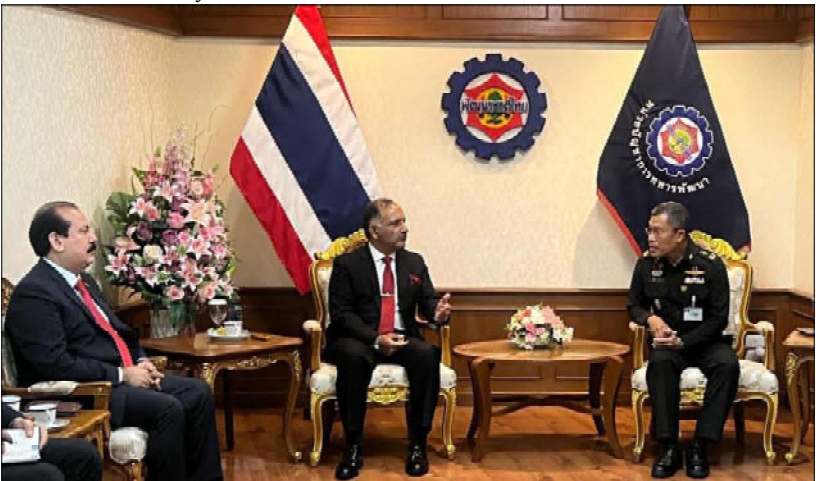
He said that holding a peaceful protest is the right of every one and the government would also facilitate the protest if it held peacefully, but would not allow anyone to take the law in their hands.

Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti on other

day has given a policy statement in the Balochistan Assembly regarding the law and order situation, said Shahid Rind.

He said that Balochistan government has recognized the right of demonstrating peaceful protest, but the BYC should also recognize the administration's right to decide the site for organizing protest.

The spokesperson said the designation of venue for the protest is the responsibility of the local administration.



BANGKOK: Pak NDMA delegation led by Chairman NDMA, Lt. Gen. Inam Haider Malik held a meeting with Disaster Management Counterparts of Thailand.

Mastung firing incident leaves 11 injured, tension runs high

Independent Report

QUETTA: A disturbing incident has unfolded in Mastung, where a long march organized by the Baloch Yakjehti Committee was met with gunfire, resulting in at least 11 individuals sustaining injuries.

Six of the injured are in critical condition and have been transferred to Quetta for urgent medical care. The severity of the situation has sparked widespread concern.

According to eyewitnesses, the security forces opened fire on the convoy of vehicles carrying protesters,

leading to widespread panic and chaos. The vehicles were severely damaged in the incident.

In the aftermath of the firing, protesters have gathered at Nawab Hotel, demanding justice and condemning the use of force against peaceful demonstrators. The situation remains extremely tense.

An investigation into the incident has been launched, and authorities are urged to take swift action to address the concerns of the protesters and ensure accountability for those responsible.

CM Bugti forms parliamentary committee to address missing persons issue

Independent Report

QUETTA: Chief Minister of Balochistan, Sardar Sarfraz Bugti, has established a parliamentary committee to address the issue of missing persons in the province. The committee will be headed by Home Minister Zia Langove.

The committee members include Rahmat Saleh Baloch, Asghar Tareen, Meena Majid Baloch, Prince Agha Umar Ahmed Zai, and Secretary Interior Zahid Saleem Khan.

The parliamentary committee will submit its report to the provincial government on the recovery of missing persons and other related matters.

4 terrorists killed in IBO in Tank: ISPR

RAWALPINDI (INP):

Four terrorists were killed by security forces in an intelligence-based operation (IBO) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Tank district, the media's military wing said on Saturday.

According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the operation took place on the reported presence of terrorists in the area and the terrorists were eliminated after the heavy exchange of fire.

ISPR added that the killed terrorists were also involved in attacks on security forces, kidnapping and target killing of innocent civilians.

The sanitization operation is ongoing to eliminate other possible foreign terrorists in the area.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Nawaf al Maliki called on Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Governor emphasizes multi-faceted approach to unlock youth potential

Independent Report

QUETTA: Governor Balochistan, Jafar Khan Mandokhail, has stressed the need for a multi-faceted strategy to tap into the hidden potential of youth and secure their bright future.

Speaking to a delegation of Balochistan students studying at Bahauddin Zakariya University in Multan, the Governor said that it is time to move beyond traditional approaches and embrace innovation and modernity.

He emphasized the need to equip emerging youth with digital skills essential for rapid progress in today's technology-driven world.

The delegation apprised the Governor of the issues faced by Balochistan students in Punjab's educational institutions, to which the Governor assured his full support in resolving their problems.

Governor Mandokhail said that his administration is working to provide access to quality education, modern skills, and professional training programs in all public sector universities of the province.

He expressed his commitment to empowering youth and building their confidence, saying that he will personally contact the Governor of Punjab to address their issues.

Pak, KSA reaffirm commitment to strengthen beneficial ties

ISLAMABAD (APP):

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar on Saturday held a meeting with the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Nawaf al Maliki to discuss the positive trajectory of fraternal relations between Pakistan and the Kingdom.

In the meeting, the two sides discussed various issues especially enhancing cooperation in different sectors including education, trade and investment.

Secretary Education who participated in the meeting, briefed on the forthcoming conference of Muslim countries on Girls' Education in Islamabad.

Cowardly terror acts cannot weaken nation's resolve against terrorism: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP):

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday strongly condemned the terrorist attack on a police station in district Kurram in which a Frontier Constabulary personnel embraced martyrdom.

Paying tribute to the martyr, the prime minister expressed his heartfelt condolence to his family members.

He prayed to Allah Almighty to elevate the ranks of the departed soul in Jannah.

The prime minister also prayed for a speedy recovery of those injured in the incident and directed that all possible medical assistance be provided to them. He emphasized that such cowardly acts will not shake our resolve against terrorism.

Section 144 imposed in Quetta

QUETTA (INP): All kinds of public meetings, processions and rallies have been banned under section 144 in Quetta.

The district administration also issued a notification to this effect.

The district administration also set up containers for an indefinite period on the roads entering and leaving the city of Quetta including Hazar Ganji, Lakpass, Maghrib Bypass and Sibi Road.



QUETTA: View of road leads towards red zone areas seen closed with help of containers to avoid untoward incident due to security reasons, in Quetta

JIT to probe 'anti-state' social media campaign formed

ISLAMABAD (INP):

The federal government on Saturday constituted a five-member joint investigation team (JIT) to investigate an organized anti-state social media campaign deemed "malicious" and "detrimental" to country's national interests.

The JIT, formed under Section 30 of the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA), 2016, will identify and prosecute individuals responsible for

creating chaos and disorder in Pakistan through online propaganda.

The JIT comprises Islamabad police chief as its convener, two senior Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) officials, director of cybercrime (FIA), director of the counter-terrorism wing (FIA), deputy inspector general (Investigation), and senior superintendent of police (Counter Terrorism Department).

Naqvi talks with Liaquat over JI protest demands

ISLAMABAD (INP):

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has contacted Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) leader Liaquat Baloch over the party's protest sit-in.

Interior Minister in a telephonic conversation with JI Naib Ameer Liaquat Baloch discussed the party's demands in its protest campaign. "The gov-

ernment is very serious to hold talks with Jamaat-e-Islami," Mohsin Naqvi said while talking with Liaquat Baloch.

Ji leader demanded 50 percent concession in electricity bills to the consumers of upto 500 units. Baloch also demanded end of the slab rate system in electricity bills.

President calls NA session on July 30

ISLAMABAD (Online):

President Asif Ali Zardari has called the session of the National Assembly on July 30 at 5 pm.

The President of the State convened the meeting of the National Assembly under Article 54 (1) of the Constitution.

The meeting has been called on the advice of the Prime Minister, the government will pass important legislation in the meeting, certain bills will be presented.

According to parliamentary sources, banning Tehreek-e-Insaf and former Prime Minister Imran Khan, will be a discussed, initiating proceedings under Article 6 against former President Arif Alvi and former Deputy Speaker Qasim Suri will also be discussed.

While the opposition will raise the issue of Imran Khan's release and other public issues.

PM strongly condemns ongoing violence by Israeli forces in Gaza's Khan Younis city

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday strongly condemned the ongoing violent acts of the Israeli forces in Khan Younis city of Gaza, causing the displacement of around 150,000 Palestinians.

The prime minister, in a statement, said that the siege of Khan Younis city had suspended the supply of food and other commodities to the area.

He said the Israeli forces were carrying out the genocide of Palestinians leading to a human catastrophe for which the international community including the United Nations should fulfill its responsibilities.

He said that Pakistan, in its statement at the International Court of Justice, had also effectively raised its voice for the Palestinians' right to self-determination and against Israeli

oppression. Prime Minister Shehbaz reiterated his call for the implementation of the recent decisions of the ICJ and the resolutions adopted by the United Nations.

He said that Pakistan had dispatched around 1200 tons of relief goods to Palestine through Pakistan Air Force planes and another 1500 tons through three ships.

The prime minister said that he had issued special instructions for the enrollment of Palestinian medical students in Pakistani medical colleges to help them continue their education. Calling upon the international community to hold Israel accountable for its war crimes in Palestine, he reiterated that the government and the people of Pakistan stood beside their Palestinian brothers and sisters.



QUETTA: MNA Nawabzada Mir Jamal Khan Raisani visiting Trauma Center in Civil Hospital

Raisani visits Trauma Center, vows to provide modern equipments

QUETTA (APP):

Pakistan People's Party Central Leader, MNA Nawabzada Mir Jamal Khan Raisani visited Civil Hospital Trauma Center and vowed to ensure provision of modern equipments and best medical facilities to the patients.

Jamal Khan Raisani during his visit has inquired the treatment facilities provided to the patients in the trauma center besides holding meeting with doctors of different departments in the

hospital.

He expressed satisfaction over the cleanliness system of the hospital, lauded the efforts of hospital management to providing emergency treatment to the people coming from far-flung areas to the provincial capital.

He reaffirmed commitment that the civil hospital will be equipped with modern machinery soon so that the people of Quetta do not have to go to other cities for treatment.

Balochistan Health Minister approves Menstrual Health & Hygiene Policy

QUETTA (APP):

In a significant step towards improving women's health, Balochistan Provincial Health Minister Sardarzada Mir Faisal Khan Jamali formally approved the Provincial Menstrual Health and Hygiene Policy during a meeting with key stakeholders.

The meeting was attended by Chairperson of the Menstrual Health and Hygiene Working Group (MHMWG) Secretariat, Balochistan, Dr Tahira Kamal Baloch, Provincial

Coordinator of MHMWG, Shahana Tabbasum, and senior officials from the Health Department, Dr Ayaz Ahmad Jamali and Dr Abdul Manan Laakti, said a news release received here on Saturday. The Provincial Health Minister highlighted the importance of the new policy, stating, "This policy is a crucial step in addressing menstrual health and hygiene issues in our province. It reflects our commitment to improving the health and well-being of women and girls."

Nine passengers perish in bus crash in Loralai

LORALAI (INP):

Nine people died and several others were injured when a Daewoo bus overturned in Loralai on Saturday morning.

The bus was travelling from Multan to Quetta when the driver lost its control near Madina Hotel on Dera Ghazi Khan Road.

Police and Rescue personnel rushed to the accident site and shifted the dead and the six injured including a woman to Loralai Teaching Hospital.

Meanwhile the Balochistan government

has expressed deep sorrow over the bus accident in Loralai, which has claimed the lives of at least 3 people so far.

"We are deeply saddened by the loss of precious human lives in the accident," said Shahid Rind, spokesperson for the Balochistan government.

The government has ordered immediate medical aid and better treatment facilities for the injured. An investigation into the causes of the accident is underway.



Ji chief speaking with media said, "Those subjecting Pakistan with oppression won't be allowed more and will get the rights of 250 million countrymen back". "The sit-in will not be ended without achieving its objective", he further said.

He said, the people have pinned hopes on us, "We will not disappoint them", JI Ameer said.

"We will carry the sit-in to entire country if electricity bills would not reduce," Hafiz Naem said.

He announced to hold a historic gathering at Murree Road tomorrow and a public meeting of women on Monday.

Bill to block Pakistan security assistance tabled in US Senate

WASHINGTON (INP):

Republican Senator Marco Rubio has introduced a bill in the US Senate proposing that India be dealt along the same lines like allies like Japan, Israel, Korea, and NATO partners in terms of technology transfers.

Moreover, the bill is aimed at supporting India in addressing threats to its territorial integrity and seeks to choke security assistance to Pakistan if it is found to sponsor militancy against India.

"Communist China continues to aggressively expand its domain in the Indo-Pacific region, all while it seeks to impede the sovereignty and autonomy of our regional partners. It's crucial for the U.S. to continue its support in countering these malicious tactics.

"India, along with other nations in the region, is not alone," Rubio said after introducing the U.S.-India Defense Cooperation Act in the Senate.



QUETTA: Provincial Ministers Mir Sadiq Umrani, Bakht Muhammad Kakar, Mir Shoab Naushwerwani, Haji Noor Muhammad Dummer, Mir Asim Kurd Gailo, Provincial Advisor Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi and MPAs Zafar Agha, Farah Azeem Shah, Salma Kakar and Safia Fazal talking during BA session



GILGIT: President Al-Shifa Trust Major General (R) Rahmat Khan presenting Shield to Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Haji Gulbar Khan during the ceremony of unveiling the foundations stone of Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital

Ikhtair Wali accuses PTI govt for failure to establish peace in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): Pakistan Muslim League (PMLN) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Secretary and former Member Provincial Assembly (MPA), Ikhtair Wali Khan here Saturday that Pakistan Tahrir e Insaaf despite remaining in power of the last 12 years has failed to establish peace in the province.

After 18th constitutional amendment, he said that maintaining peace and law & order was the prime responsibility of the provincial government, however PTI Government was failed to fulfill its constitutional duties and protect people from subversive acts.

He said the recent suicide and bomb blasts including Bannu cantonment bombing and killing of senator Hidayatullah in Bajaur blast had showed the PTI Government's failure to establish peace in the province.

He said the people of Pakistan knew about a political party that had facilitated inimical forces to come back after the operations Zarb e Azb and

Raahul Fasad had broken back of terrorists.

In a statement here, the PMLN leader said that Federal Government had provided about Rs500 billion to the PTI Government for strengthening/equipping of the counter terrorism department (CTD) and police, adding that this huge fund utilized properly for the capacity building of these institutions then no such subversive activities would have happened as the nation saw recently.

He claimed that CM KP has failed to inform people about his government policy about countering of menace of terrorism rather made a tall mere slogan of opposing the anti terror operations.

The PML leader said that it would have been better if the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa made focus on settling the land dispute between the warring tribes in Kurram district where several people were killed and injured in last few days.

Like PTI founder, he claimed that CM KP was also master of taking U turns referring to his chang-

ing statements during Apex Committee, after meeting with the Prime Minister at Islamabad and Bannu public meeting which showed contradictions in his statements and actions.

In the wake of poor law and order situation especially in southern districts including the home district of CM KP, he said that the statement of Ali Amin Gandapur to oppose the operation in KP was totally irrational and beyond his understanding.

The PMLN leader said that all negative attempts to create division among people on the basis of language and caste would be resisted strongly and reiterated that no one would be allowed to take law in hands and target innocent people for accomplishment of their ulterior motives.

He said that PTI was in search of dead bodies as evident of turning the Bannu peace march as violent and politicised it for personal gains.

Besides peace and law and order, he claimed that education and health sectors were marred due to poor policies of the PTI.

PM Shehbaz pays tribute to Capt. Sarwar Shaheed on 76th martyrdom anniversary

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday paid tribute to Capt. Sarwar Shaheed (Nishan-i-Haider), on his 76th martyrdom anniversary, lauded his valor and sacrifice to safeguard the country.

The prime minister, in a statement, said that Captain Sarwar Shaheed embraced martyrdom in the 1948 war by setting an example of courage and bravery.

He said that Capt. Sarwar Shaheed preferred the protection of his motherland to his life and set an eternal example for the generations to come.

The prime minister

said that Captain Sarwar Shaheed's martyrdom anniversary was a reminder for the entire nation of the unparalleled sacrifices of the martyrs.

He said the whole nation could never forget the sacrifices of the officers and men of the Pakistan Army for safeguarding the country.

"The entire nation, including me, is proud of the martyrs of the Pakistan Army and their families. The entire nation stands by the officers and men of the Pakistan armed forces who are defending the country without caring about their own lives," he added.

Modi regime committing worst war crimes in IIOJK: Pasaba-e-Hurriyat

MUZAFFARABAD (INP): Pasban-e-Hurriyat Jammu and Kashmir said that the Bharatiya Janata Party government led by Narendra Modi is committing the worst war crimes in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

Pasban-e-Hurriyat Jammu and Kashmir Chairman Uzair Ahmad Ghazali in a statement in Muzaffarabad on the failed attempt of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to prove himself innocent during Kargil visit said the Kashmiri people know that on August 5, 2019, who ignored the resolutions of the United Nations and who stole their identity?

He said the Kashmiri people also know who unilaterally broke the agreements made with Jammu and Kashmir in the past. He said that Indian imperialism, hidden in the cloak of democracy, has snatched all

the human, political, social and religious rights of the Kashmiri people.

Uzair Ahmad Ghazali said the confiscation of government and civil lands in occupied Jammu and Kashmir and selling them to Indian capitalists and confiscation of properties are revealing the heinous plans of India under which it is trying to test the evil plans of Israel in the occupied territory.

He said the Indian Prime Minister, BJP and the occupying forces are bewildered by the continuous struggle and resistance of the Kashmiri people. He added that the Kashmiri youth would organize resistance against the Indian military occupation on all fronts for their freedom.

He urged the United Nations Security Council to ensure the implementation of its resolutions on Jammu and Kashmir.

IOC apologises for South Korea gaffe in Olympics opening ceremony

SEOUL (AFP/APP): The International Olympic Committee apologised Saturday for a gaffe during the opening ceremony of the Paris Olympics in which South Korean athletes were incorrectly introduced as North Korean.

As the South Korean delegation sailed down the Seine River in the French capital, they were introduced with the official name for North Korea: "Republique populaire democratique de Coree" in French, then "Democratic People's Republic of Korea" in English.

"We deeply apologise for the mistake that occurred when introducing the South Korean team during the broadcast of the opening ceremony," the IOC said in a post on its official Korean-language X account.

The error sparked displeased reactions in South Korea, a global cultural and technological powerhouse that is technically still at war with the nuclear-armed and impoverished North.

South Korea's sports ministry said in a statement it "expresses regret" over the "announcement during the opening ceremony of the 2024 Paris Olympics, where the South Korean delegation was introduced as the North Korean team".

Second vice sports minister Jang Mi-ran, a 2008 Olympic weightlifting champion, has asked for a meeting with IOC chief Thomas Bach to discuss the matter, it added.

The sports ministry has also asked the foreign ministry to "deliver a strong protest to the French side" over the issue, the statement said.

South Korea's National Olympic Committee plans to meet with the Paris Olympics Organising Committee and the IOC to voice their protest, request measures to prevent a recurrence, and send an official letter of protest under the name of the head of its delegation, the sports ministry said.

North Korea was correctly introduced with the country's official name.

Relations between the two Koreas are at one of their lowest points in years, with the North bolstering military ties with Russia while sending thousands of trash-carrying balloons to the South.

In response, Seoul's military blasts K-pop and anti-regime messages from border loudspeakers and recently resumed live-fire drills on border islands and near the demilitarised zone that divides the Korean peninsula.

Businessmen threatened to come to streets against government

ISLAMABAD (Online): After the country's religious and political parties, businessmen have threatened to come to the streets against the government. All Pakistan Association of Traders and Traders Action Committee have issued instructions to the traders across the country to prepare for the protest.

All Pakistan Association of Traders and Traders Action Committee Islamabad President Ajmal Baloch has said in his statement on Saturday that the business community across Pakistan has not only rejected the trader-friendly tax scheme introduced by the government but also the scheme has been termed

anti-trader and demanded the FBR to immediately withdraw the trader-friendly tax scheme SRO and negotiate on the proposals of the trader representatives.

He further said that the valuation table by FBR is impractical and excessive in small cities and various markets including Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi, Multan, Quetta, Peshawar, and Faisalabad. What is the fault of the old tax payers who are also included in this scheme. Increase in tax net is need of time but there is question of capacity of FBR.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Traders President Malik Maher Elahi, Balochistan

Traders Association President Abdul Rahim Kakar, Sindh Traders Association President Abdul Qayyum Qureshi, Sindh Traders Union Chairman Jameel Ahmed Paracha, Azad Kashmir Traders Association President Iftikhar Feroze, Southern Punjab Traders Association President Tariq Addressing an online consultation meeting with Kareem, he further said that 70% of purchases have been reduced in the country. Electricity bills have broken the back of traders. Doing business in such conditions has become very difficult and if the situation continues like this, the traders will be forced to close the business.

Pakistani female mountaineer scales world's twelfth highest peak

GILGIT (INP): Pakistani mountaineer Anam Uzair has achieved a remarkable feat by summiting Broad Peak, the world's twelfth highest peak at 8,051 meters. Hailing from Lahore, Uzair becomes only the second Pakistani woman to reach this summit, following Naila Kayani's historic climb.

Broad Peak marks the second 8,000-meter peak in Uzair's climbing career, with her previous ascent being Manaslu Peak in Nepal. She achieved this milestone today alongside American Pakistani climber Ammar Butt.

The successful ascent was guided by Shahroz Kashif, with support from high-altitude porters Ali Akbar and Ali Hoshi. The team reached the summit at 11:30 AM this morning, celebrating their achievement on social media.

one step ahead of cholera and malaria, and ensure the safety and well-being of your children. Be prepared, be proactive, and let the rains nourish our lives, not threaten them, he added.

Dr Ahmed Kabir said that the studies also confirm incidences of common monsoon infections, such as malaria and diarrhea, were higher during monsoons when compared to other seasons.

He said that tourists were also at high risk as regulating food and water hygiene can be tough during travel adding, that those traveling to endemic areas or forest regions must exercise caution.

Regular exercise, a diet rich in vitamins A and C, zinc and probiotics can build immunity in children and older adults, he further added.

"Diarrhea, gastroenteritis and other infections can be largely prevented by washing hands properly", he said.

The child specialist recommended that consuming boiled and filtered water and warm food stored properly in containers with lids can prevent diseases in the rainy season.

Draining stagnant water and disposing of food waste and debris can also prevent vector-borne diseases, Dr Kabir pointed out.

LAHORE: Chairperson Child Protection Bureau Sara Ahmed and Chairperson Social Protection Authority Jahan Ara Wattoo meeting with Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan

Health experts ask parents to be cautious as malaria, cholera lurk during monsoon

ISLAMABAD (INP): The health experts have advised the parents to be cautious about their children and urged them to take necessary precautionary measures to protect their little ones from contaminated water, poor sanitation and stagnant ponds.

Renowned child specialist, Dr Ahmed Kabir while speaking to PTV news on Saturday was of the view that the children were especially vulnerable to water and vector-borne diseases, similarly, drinking water during heavy rains was also contaminated with germs.

He said that don't let the monsoon rains become a recipe for disaster, stay

one step ahead of cholera and malaria, and ensure the safety and well-being of your children. Be prepared, be proactive, and let the rains nourish our lives, not threaten them, he added.

Dr Ahmed Kabir said that the studies also confirm incidences of common monsoon infections, such as malaria and diarrhea, were higher during monsoons when compared to other seasons.

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Petroleum product prices likely to drop from August 1

ISLAMABAD (INP): A significant reduction in petroleum product prices is expected from August 1, with potential decreases of up to 9 rupees per liter for certain fuels.

Preliminary assessments by OGRA indicate that the price of petrol could drop by 3 rupees per liter, while diesel prices might fall by 8 rupees 50 paise per liter. The price of kerosene is also projected to decrease by 9 rupees 11 paise per liter.

Sources from the Ministry of Petroleum Division attribute these reductions to a global decline in crude oil prices. OGRA is currently preparing the final summary on petroleum prices, which will be submitted to the government for approval.

Pakistan street child football team reveals kit for Norway Cup 2024

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Pakistan Street Child Football Federation has unveiled its new kit for the Norway Cup 2024 as the national team departs for the tournament. The squad left for Norway on July 25 and will kick off their campaign with a group stage match against Norway's Astor Football Club on July 28.

The team, which was the runner-up at the Norway Cup 2023 and the Street Child Football World Cup in Qatar, also secured third place at the 2016 Norway Cup.

The squad, announced recently at Islamabad's Sports Complex, will be led by Captain Muhammad Adeel. The team includes key players Muhammad Kashif, Isa Khan, Shahid Anjum, Abdul Ghani, Muhammad Khan, Muhammad Khan, Daniyal, Owais, Muhammad Osama, Nasir, Obaidullah, Hamza Gul, Aryan, and Adeel Ali Khan. With a strong track record and new gear, the team is poised for an exciting tournament ahead.



BANGKOK: Pak NDMA delegate, led by Chairman NDMA Lt Gen Inam Haider Malik, held meetings with Disaster Management Counterparts of Thailand.

China bags early Olympic golds as rain disrupts Games

Paris (AFP/APP): China grabbed the first two gold medals of the Paris Olympics on Saturday as swimming prepared to take centre stage on a rain-disrupted first full opening day of sporting action.

Asian powerhouses China, who last topped the Olympic medal table in 2008, made a flying start to their latest bid for supremacy, bagging early golds in shooting and synchronised diving.

Teenage duo Sheng Lihao and Huang Yuting won the first Chinese gold in the mixed team 10-metre air rifle event, before conquering divers Chang Yani and Chen Yiwen somersaulted to victory in the women's three-metre springboard final.

Australia also celebrated its first gold with cyclist Grace Brown speeding to victory in the women's individual time trial.

Those were the first golds of 13 up for grabs in Paris on Saturday as wet weather continued to cause headaches for organisers following Friday's deluge at the opening ceremony.

The men's street skateboarding competition, due to take place at the Place de la Concorde in the historic heart of Paris, was postponed until Monday due to rain overnight.

The downpours also disrupted play at the opening rounds of tennis at Roland Garros, with play on the 10 uncovered outside courts delayed.

Torrential rain had lashed participants and spectators in Friday's amphibious opening ceremony, where around 7,000 athletes paraded along the River Seine in an armada of boats before a show-stopping finale which climaxed with a glittering light show at the Eiffel Tower and a performance from singer Celine Dion.

The ceremony received broadly favourable reviews, with France's centre-right Le Figaro daily describing it as "full of surprises but often disjointed."

The International Olympic Committee however was forced to apologise for a gaffe during the ceremony that saw South Korea's athletes incorrectly introduced as North Korean.

Friday's ceremony also angered Christians and conservatives after featuring LGBT+ performers and a racially diverse cast. The French Bishops Conference said the extravaganza had made a "mockery of Christianity."

Elsewhere on the sporting front, swimming was preparing for a battle royale in the pool later Saturday where the first golds will be decided.

Traditionally one of the highlights of the opening week of the games, Saturday's first wave of swimming finals will feature a blockbuster women's 400m freestyle duel pitting American great Katie Ledecky against Australia's defending champion

Ariane Titmus.

Ledecky, stunned by Titmus in Tokyo three years ago, laid down a psychological marker after pipping the Australian in Saturday's heats.

Titmus however rejected suggestions that the heats had given her rival an edge for Saturday's final at La Defense Arena.

"It's a heats swim," said the Australian, who broke the 200m freestyle world record and swam the second quickest 400m ever at the Australian trials last month.

"The only job for me was to get in the middle lanes (for the final) and I tried to conserve as much as I could."

Other gold medals on offer on the first night of action in the pool come in the men's 400m freestyle and the men's and women's 4x100m freestyle relays.

In rugby sevens meanwhile, host nation France stayed on course for a possible gold medal after advancing to a dream final against Fiji at the Stade de France. French rugby idol Antoine Dupont helped the hosts defeat South Africa 19-5 to book their place in the semi-final while Fiji comfortably downed Australia 29-7.

Elsewhere on Saturday, there were wins for Spanish star Carlos Alcaraz, rival Novak Djokovic and women's world number one Iga Swiatek as the Olympics tennis tournament got under way at a rain-swept Roland Garros.



QUETTA: Pakistan Nazryati Party Chairman, Shaheer Haider Sialvi along with others addresses to media persons during press conference held at Quetta press club

Kiyani urges Opposition to find alternative protests strategy; calls for constructive dialogue

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) leader Bilal Azhar Kiyani Saturday urged all opposition parties to rethink their protest strategies and explore alternative methods that do not disrupt life of the public. Talking to a private new channel, he emphasized the need for constructive dialogue and peaceful expression of dissent between government and opposition parties to resolve their differences and finding solutions to problems that benefit the nation.

Kiyani acknowledged the right to protest, but stressed that it should not come at the cost of citizens' daily lives. He encouraged opposition parties to engage in meaningful discussions with the government, focusing on policy reforms and constructive criticism. The call for alternative protest strategies comes as a response to recent road blockades and demonstrations that have caused inconvenience to the general public. Kiyani's appeal aims

Barrister Aqeel pays tribute to Capt. Sarwar on 76th death anniversary

ISLAMABAD (APP): Advisor to the Prime Minister on Law and Justice, Barrister Aqeel Malik on Saturday paid glowing tributes to the Captain Muhammad Sarwar Shaheed (Nishan-e-Haider) on his 76th death anniversary. Barrister Aqeel Malik emphasized that the sacrifices of martyrs like Captain Sarwar will never be forgotten. He called them national heroes who gave their lives for the safety, security, and future of Pakistan. Malik urged the youth to honor these heroes and serve the country with the same dedication and patriotism.



ISLAMABAD: A view of passenger travelling through Green bus as traffic in the Federal Capital started after roads opened by the city Administration.



ISLAMABAD: People enjoy their leisure time at Chattar in the Federal Capital.

CDA Chairman conducts extensive inspection of industrial, recreational sites

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA), Muhammad Ali Randhawa, accompanied by Interior Secretary Khurram Ali Agha, visited various sites on Saturday to promote industrialization, enhancing recreational areas, and maintaining the beauty of Islamabad. During the visit to the Industrial Triangle Kahota, Chairman Randhawa emphasized the need for state-of-the-art development and facilities for industrialists. He directed the elimination of exploitation and provision of special facilities for the IT and telecom industry. He also urged allottees of industrial plots to establish industries promptly. Chairman Randhawa then visited the Diplomatic Enclave, where he reviewed the ongoing uplift work. He instructed that landscaping work be done

Art powerful medium to raise awareness among people

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani on Friday said that art has always been a powerful medium to raise awareness and promote understanding among people. While inaugurating a fundraiser art exhibition at Pakistan National Council of Arts he extended heartfelt appreciation to all the artists who have dedicatedly worked to make this exhibition a success and contributed immensely to our cultural heritage. Such a wonderful work transcends boundaries, connects hearts, and conveys messages that words often fail to express, he said. He said that such initiatives play a crucial role in shaping a positive and soft image of the country on the global stage. "As we continue to face various challenges as a nation, it is the spirit and resilience of our artists that often provide us with hope and a sense of identity. Their work fosters dialogue, encourages empathy, and promotes peace and harmony within our society", he observed while addressing participants.

PTI working on foreign agenda, says Amir Muqam

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf has been working on foreign agenda and the presentation of bill in the US Senate against Pakistan and China has made it quite clear, Minister for Kashmir Affairs and SAFRON Amir Muqam said. "After the US resolution in favor of PTI, the bill presented in the US Senate against Pakistan and China is a message for those who can see the bigger picture," Muqam said. He said, "It has been proven that PTI is working for a foreign agenda." Muqam said that the "PTI is working for lobbies in Pakistan and those lobbies are working for the party abroad." Why was there a sit-in conspiracy at D-Chowk during the Chinese President's visit to Pakistan? The answer is now clear, he said. In addition, he said, "The reason why PTI received foreign funding is also clear now."

PTC, CDA join hands to enhance Margalla Hills' greenery

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Tobacco Company (PTC) Limited and the Capital Development Authority (CDA) have launched a collaborative initiative, "Throw and Grow" to promote the greenery of Islamabad's iconic Margalla Hills. This campaign aims to engage hikers and visitors in contributing to the region's ecological growth, said a PTC news release here on Saturday. At the entrance points of Trail 3 and Trail 5, stalls offering seedballs made from native species like Sukhchain, Pine, and others have been set up where staff will guide participants on how to disperse the seedballs as they hike, taking advantage of the favorable monsoon season for rapid germination. PTC has a proven track record of community-focused activities. It operates six nurseries across Pakistan, with two in Islamabad. It has planted and distributed over 150 million saplings since 1981 through its afforestation program. This year, PTC aims to donate and plant over 2.5 million saplings across Pakistan to support afforestation efforts. Pakistan Tobacco Company (PTC) continues to encourage people from all sections of the society to join the "Throw and Grow" movement and contribute to the Margalla Hills' beauty and biodiversity!

Cholera, Malaria lurk during monsoon-water, "parents ask to beware"

ISLAMABAD (APP): Experts warned on Saturday that this monsoon season can be particularly dangerous and parents should take precautions to protect their little ones from contaminated water, poor sanitation, and stagnant ponds. Speaking to PTV news channel, renowned child specialist DR Ahmad Kabir said that children are especially vulnerable to water and vector-borne diseases, similarly, drinking water during heavy rains is also contaminated with germs. He said that don't let the monsoon rains become a recipe for disaster, stay one step ahead of cholera and malaria, and ensure the safety and well-being of

your children. Be prepared, be proactive, and let the rains nourish our lives, not threaten them, he added. Studies also confirm incidences of common monsoon infections, such as malaria and diarrhea, are higher during monsoons when compared to other seasons, he mentioned. Tourists are also at high risk as regulating food and water hygiene can be tough during travel, he said, adding that those traveling to endemic areas or forest regions must exercise caution. Regular exercise, a diet rich in vitamins A and C, zinc and probiotics can build immunity in children and older adults, he further added. "Diarrhea, gastroenteritis and other infections can be largely prevented by washing hands properly", he said. He recommended that consuming boiled and filtered water and warm food stored properly in containers with lids can prevent diseases in the rainy season. Draining stagnant water and disposing of food waste and debris can also prevent vector-borne diseases. Dr points out. Tourists are also at high risk as regulating food and water hygiene can be tough during travel, he said, adding that those traveling to endemic areas or forest regions must exercise caution.

Early detection & healthy diet can overcome risks of cancer: Expert

ISLAMABAD (APP): Health expert on Friday highlighted that early detection through regular screenings, self-examinations, and media awareness drives for cancer symptoms can significantly improve treatment outcomes and save lives. Talking to PTV news channel, Renowned Oncologist & Cancer Surgeon Dr Kashif Khan said that by being proactive about our health and taking small steps towards a healthier lifestyle, we can significantly reduce our risk of cancer and improve our chances of beating the disease if diagnosed. He emphasized the need for adopting healthy habits such as a balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, regular physical activity, and avoidance of tobacco and excessive alcohol consumption. Dr also encouraged the public to be aware of their family medical history and genetic predispositions, which can increase cancer risk. By combining early detection and healthy habits, individuals can significantly reduce their cancer risk and improve their over-

IRSA releases 329,100 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Saturday released 329,100 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 347,700 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1516.92 feet and was 118.92 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 206,500 cusecs and 200,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1199.20 feet, which was 151.20 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 24,100 cusecs and 12,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 228,900, 196,600, 143,200 and 73,800 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 51,200 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 38,300 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.



ISLAMABAD: A youngster experience the thrill of zip-lining at Chattar Adventure Park in the Federal Capital.

"Exotic Wildlife Pakistan" photo-exhibition to go on display at PNCA

ISLAMABAD (APP): As many as twenty-nine large-size photos of the exotic wildlife of Pakistan captured by Pakistan's Wildlife Ambassador and former senator, Sardar Muhammad Jamal Khan Leghari will go on display at the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) from Monday. The exhibition is being organized by the Snow Leopard Foundation and Devcom-Pakistan (Development Communications Network) in collaboration with the PNCA. A formal ceremony to honor this exhibition will be a part of the Pakistan Wildlife Protection Awards on July 31. This ceremony will recognize the extraordinary efforts of wildlife guards, watchers, and rangers who have shown remarkable courage and dedication in protecting Pakistan's wildlife. Director and CEO of the Snow Leopard Foundation, Dr. Muhammad Ali Nawaz said, "We are thrilled to collaborate with Devcom-Pakistan and PNCA to bring this exhibi-

Induction training continues for newly recruited EST teachers

ISLAMABAD (APP): The induction training for newly recruited teachers in Islamabad continues on Saturday and Sunday as well. According to the Education Ministry, the training aims to support new teachers and equip them with the necessary 21st-century skills and knowledge to maintain discipline and effectively teach their students.

Dawat-e-Islami's prominent volunteer in UK receives prestigious BCA Award

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prominent volunteer of Dawat-e-Islami in the United Kingdom Syed Muhammad Faisal Sami (famously known as Syed Fuzail Raza Attari) has been awarded with the prestigious BCA Award (British Citizen Award), at Westminster, London UK. The Dawat-e-Islami volunteer for the past 19 years has done outstanding humanitarian and social work that impacted thousands of lives in the UK, and throughout the world, a news release said. Syed Muhammad Faisal Sami, from West Midlands, is among 26 exceptional individuals to be honoured with the esteemed British Citizen Award (BCA) at the Palace of Westminster. This recognition celebrates their outstanding contributions to society. Syed received the coveted BCA Medal of Honour for Services to the Community (BCAc). Syed has dedicated over 19 years of his life to volunteering with Dawat-e-Islami UK, aiming to better society by meeting the needs of humanity. He has enhanced communities across the Midlands, nationally and internationally, positively



ISLAMABAD: Traffic in the Federal Capital started after roads opened by the city Administration.

Shabbir Shah hailed for spending 38 long years in jail for political beliefs

ISLAMABAD (APP): Mehmoed Ahmed Saghar, former Convener of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference-AJK and acting chairman of the Democratic Freedom Party (DFP), has lauded senior APHC leader Shabbir Ahmed Shah, the party chairman, for his unwavering commitment to the Kashmiris' struggle for self-determination. Saghar in a statement issued here on Saturday, he praised Shah for completing 38 years in prison and eight consecutive years in India's notorious Tihar jail, saying he has become an icon of the ongoing movement. Shah has spent 38 years of his 68-year life in prisons, detention, and interrogation centers due to his political beliefs. Saghar highlighted Shah's role as a strong proponent of Kashmiris' right to self-determination and his pursuit of a peaceful settlement of the Kashmir dispute in line with UN Security Council resolutions. Despite suffering from acute ailments, Shah remains firm and undeterred in his stance. The DFP leader condemned Shah's illegal detention as sheer vengeance and criticized the Indian authorities for booking him under fake charges since 1968 without proving a single allegation in court.



ISLAMABAD: A view of Bharakau Flyover in the Federal Capital.

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Back in parliament

More than two years after MNAs loyal to former prime minister Imran Khan fatefully resigned from the legislature following the April 2022 vote of no-confidence, the PTI returns to the National Assembly.

The Election Commission has finally acknowledged 39 of the party's 80 returned candidates as 'PTI lawmakers', thereby implementing one part of the Supreme Court's judgement in the reserved seats case. It may be recalled that these 39 candidates had, in one way or another, indicated their affiliation with the party before the Feb 8 general election.

For the 41 more candidates unable to do so, the court had given another opportunity to re-state their affiliation through signed and notarised statements submitted to the ECP. However, even though most of these 41 candidates have already filed their statements, their status remains pending as the ECP is now 'confused' about how their allegiance is to be verified.

Time will tell whether the ECP has been hostile towards the PTI under compulsion or for some other reason. Whatever the case may be, it has appeared obvious for a while that its priorities seem to be something other than midwifing and facilitating the democratic process.

If the Commission were working solely to ensure that all parties with a public mandate were given their rightful place in parliament, it would not have continued dragging its feet on the clear-cut order from the Supreme Court in the reserved seats case. That it is still finding reasons to frustrate the smooth implementation of the verdict is troubling, not least because a host of regime-aligned 'analysts' have appeared on TV screens since the judgement was issued to claim rather confidently that the reserved seats will 'never' be given to the PTI. One hopes that this is not some part of a conscious effort to thwart the Supreme Court.

The remaining lawmakers who wish to be associated with the PTI must be declared to be the party's candidates forthwith, and the process must move on to the allocation of the reserved seats it is entitled to by virtue of its position in the National Assembly.

As 11 judges of the Supreme Court pointed out, it was the ECP's fault that the PTI was unable to take part in the recent general election as robustly as it would have wished. It is, therefore, its responsibility to set right all the wrongs it committed in the process. If some semblance of fairness is restored in parliament, the political system may be able to start functioning as intended.

Faith in the Pakistani democracy has dwindled to dangerously low levels due to the flawed election exercise held on Feb 8, and implementing the Supreme Court's order may even help calm the overall situation and lower the political temperatures somewhat.

Asha Amirali

Pakistan is not usually an early mover on global climate concerns. But at least from one perspective, that is exactly what is happening as rich Pakistanis defect from a fossil-fuel and hydro-dominated power grid to rooftop solar self-generation.

Much has been made of net-metering policies in recent months and the implications of grid defection have been hotly debated, but the basic reality underlying this controversy has somehow evaded comment, which is that a low-carbon energy transition is underway. And it is happening despite the state, not because of it. This unplanned and uncoordinated transition has urgent implications for social equity and the political and institutional arrangements needed to support it.

At the heart of the net-metering kerfuffle is public distribution companies' fear of what is called the 'utility death spiral'. This rather unfortunate name emerges from European and the United States' experiences in which utility com-

panies increase their tariffs, thereby prompting high-income customers to invest in self-generation for some or all of their electricity supply. Utilities thus lose their best customers, forcing them to increase tariffs even further, and the problem is compounded.

Usually utilities tend to overstate the risks posed by customers going off-grid, but curiously, the opposite may be true in Pakistan. The understating is evident in the numbers quoted. Cash-strapped distribution companies and the public exchequer have been sweating about net-metering solar installations whose combined capacity in different accounts varies from approximately 1,000MW to 2,000MW. But if media reporting is to be believed, the scale of the defection is much higher.

Earlier this year, major newspapers reported that 7,500MW of solar panels had been imported into Pakistan just in the first four months of 2024. This is almost a fifth of Pakistan's total installed capacity of 46,000MW. It is a huge number. These panels are probably not all with retailers yet, although

some will be, but it bears noting that unless a new licensing regime is introduced fast, the vast majority of these installations will never be included in power sector statistics.

Installed capacity figures only include grid-connected capacity. They do not include the 'simple' off-grid solar installations that currently require no licence and are selling like hotcakes in every bazaar. The 7,500MW of panels imported this year, 5,000MW imported last year, and the 2,800MW imported the year before that in 2022 are invisible in official frameworks used to plan and regulate the sector.

Such 'invisibility' is of course hardly unique to the power sector. The Pakistani informal economy is enormous, and its unregistered and socially regulated nature enables significant accumulation by some while giving workers and petty producers and traders a raw deal. Informalised self-generation is no different. Unless the state steps in with intent, renewable energy will expand but the costs of this otherwise welcome development will be displaced onto those least able

to bear them.

Grid-dependent households and businesses, the distribution companies that supply them, and those in charge of this country's finances should be much more concerned that they are about what is happening. The poor are already suffering relentlessly as inflation eats away at their already meagre purchasing power — grid defection at the scale implied by import figures will add to this suffering unless the state acts swiftly and decisively to re-balance the costs and benefits emerging from this unplanned transition.

It would behoove us to learn from ongoing debates and experiences around the world on this. South Africa is desperately searching for solutions to this problem, Spain has found that certain measures it took to deal with this have backfired, and Australia has more per capita rooftop solar installations than any other country in the world. At the very least, we would need to begin by putting in place a licensing regime for all rooftop solar generation systems (not just net-metering) and instituting a small charge on them that could cross-subsidise grid-

dependents. The larger the system, the greater the charge. Or lowering fixed costs by not conceding things like dollar indexation in renegotiations with IPPs that have long paid back their debts.

However, all these actions assume a state that has the willingness, capacity, and incentive to care for its poor and set its house in order. Even assuming the best of intentions, no public official can do this if every day in office is spent currying favour with seniors, defending against existential threats posed by party bosses and perpetually incumbent unelected institutions, and navigating fiscal suffocation by debt servicing and defence expenditure.

These are serious structural constraints that no policy reform can fix. It takes a full-blown revolutionary political movement to see out the old and set up the new. Which begs the question: how useful is it really to talk policy in such circumstances? Not much perhaps.

We may not be able to see it yet, but the rise of self-generation, battery storage, and microgrids is truly disruptive and will have far-reaching social repercussions.

Moving away from fossil fuels and large hydro is essential, but so is shielding the poor from the negative effects of this and initiating an equitable, locally owned and democratically organised politics of energy provision. In his book *Access to Power: Electricity and the Infrastructural State in Pakistan*, Ijlal Naqvi concludes that Pakistan's overly centralised state and its commitment to suppressing provincial autonomy is a key contributing factor to the power sector's circular debt.

Peripheral areas most aggrieved by the centre are also the ones that largely do not pay their electricity bills. Enforcing payment in Balochistan for example would start an all-consuming fire, and so the centre accepts this budgetary burden as the price of its heavy-handedness and everyone loses. This centrist authoritarianism must give, and the advent of self-generation systems at household and community level will soon add its weight to existing forces militating for greater democratic control. Unfortunately, the odds of history repeating itself are high. -- Courtesy Dawn

Revolutionary change

Basil Nabi Malik

It is again that time of the year when we start talking about how bad things are, how irreversibly corrupt and inept our system is, and how we need to entirely substitute the old with the new. A new judiciary, a new security apparatus, a new people, perhaps, and as is the mantra every decade or so, a new political party.

Sadly, however, it is always the same story. The system has failed us, so it needs to be changed. Those benefiting from it are bad, but we are not. They are corrupt, but not us. They are disingenuous, but we are not. They represent the status quo, and we are the change you want to see in society. In a nutshell, they promise immediate change, and instant results.

But is such a change sustainable or permanent? The history of Pakistan teaches us that it is not. In fact, if anything, change tends to be incremental. It envisions a step-by-step

approach to making things better. The goal is not to craft a perfect solution, but to acknowledge the deficiencies in the existing ones, and to improve upon it on a day-to-day basis. Some call it tweaking, others refer to it as adjustments, whilst others still refer to it as streamlining. Whichever way you look at it, however, it represents the ability to appreciate the value of what has already been built, whilst acknowledging that it is not perfect, requiring constant work, effort, and improvement. In other words, you don't necessarily have to raze the house and remake it every time you see a problem with it.

But what happens when you don't realise the value of what you already have, or it becomes increasingly difficult to see any positives amongst a sea of negatives? Or when everything seems useless and without justification, simply wrong or unsustainable? In a nutshell, what do you do when all is seen as corrupted and

nothing can be saved?

You reject the validity or utility of the existing solutions altogether, whatever their actual worth, and envision a clean break from the past as the only path forward. It is essentially an attempt to press the factory reset button. It is to acknowledge that all that has preceded the situation was wrong, and what shall proceed now shall be different, and hence, right.

If such a desire stemmed from lessons learnt from our collective past, or an attempt to correct ourselves, one could perhaps be more sympathetic to those who seek to 'substitute' the entire system with something new as opposed to trying to incrementally build upon it. But unfortunately, that is not the case.

The consistent desire to 'substitute' stems from our collective desire to seek quick changes without putting in the effort to bring them about in a sustainable and permanent manner. We seek instant gratifi-

cation, and the work required to obtain it is a mere inconvenience which need not distract us. This has been our problem for almost all our existence.

Whenever we face a difficult period, we choose to uproot what is already established and substitute it with something entirely new. After a while, when again confronted with difficulties, we uproot that new system and then try something else. When faced with further tribulations, we simply rinse and repeat and hope for the best. Our faith in uprooting and re-rooting as a solution to all our ills is extraordinary and astounding, if not perplexing, especially because it has not worked for 75-odd years. Yet, we still believe it will fix everything — the next time.

But it won't, because those talking of a new order or new beginning have yet to learn from the mistakes of the previous order. In fact, talk of substitution and breaking from the past, without actually

learning from it, is the highest form of abdicating any responsibility for all that has gone wrong, refusing to understand where we went awry, and still hoping that the mistakes of yesterday miraculously won't be repeated. It's an attempt to course correct without correcting anything. It is essentially more of the same, and less of what you need more of.

And we are very skillful in this way, that is, in pretending that we actually have the answers to all our problems. But seldom do those answers revolve around rational and incremental paths to progress.

On the contrary, they always start and end with knee-jerk reactions and invasive ideas which seek to destroy what exists in favour of something that does not.

Our problem has never been that the system needed replacing. It is that we don't have the patience to commit to the work and effort

required to bring about the change we want to see in ourselves and our country.

We seek to upend everything because it's easier to look forward to something new than look back at something ugly that was of our own making. It's easier to forget the past than to accept it and acknowledge our role in it. And certainly, it's easier to promise to the public a new beginning rather than looking in the mirror, admitting to our colossal mistakes, assuming responsibility for those mistakes, suffering the consequences of it, and then making the painstaking effort to actually correct them.

It's just easier, less of a hassle, and plainly more convenient, and that is why we prioritise revolutionary changes over incremental progress, because, let's face it, in revolutionary changes, the past becomes irrelevant, and so does any accountability for it.

Extremism virus

Mohammad Ali Babakhel

Many societies affected by extremism mistakenly believe that countering and preventing extremism is the exclusive domain of government agencies.

This perception only provides more space for extremist groups to disseminate their divisive narratives, recruit manpower, increase sympathisers and generate finance. Therefore, to prevent extremism, understanding its signs and the process of radicalisation is equally critical for families and communities.

For instance, families and friends can flag behavioural changes in a person's life, including in their ideology, social relations, and criminal activity. A radicalised person may increasingly use ideological language that discriminates against others. Because the individual may be identifying with an ideology that is different from prevalent norms, one may also observe isolation from society.

Violent extremism describes the acts of a person or group of persons who have decided that fear and violence are justified to achieve ideological or social change and are acting on this belief. Ideology-based VE is propelled by the misinterpretation of religion. The real motivation may be political, but it is justified using religious reasons. During the radicalisation process, a person may start using criminal tactics like vandalism, minor property damage, and trespassing, or protesting in a violent way to draw attention to their beliefs.

There are certain myths about radicalisation. For instance, there is the myth that anyone who experiences radical thoughts is a violent extremist. This is not always true. It is also

a myth that an extremist must be associated with a group. There have been several instances where individuals have been self-radicalised without the support of any group. Another myth is that radicalisation is linked to religion. This, too, is not always true, as there are several extremist organisations that do not have a religious agenda, such as the Red Brigades in Italy.

Leaving an extremist group and rejoining mainstream society are both difficult tasks, but they can be made smoother with the support of both the community and government. During this process, individuals must go through a learning and de-learning process, particularly on how to cultivate positive relationships. Communities need to realise that it is in their collective interest to help people disengage from VE before they hurt others or themselves. This help may be financial, social, and/or emotional.

Though early intervention is best, it requires an understanding of the reasons that make a person choose radicalisation. These reasons may include changes in living or employment status, mental health issues, health and social problems, dropping out of school, negative changes in human relationships, confrontations with family, discrimination and exposure to hateful attitudes, and sometimes overseas events that may have harmed their community.

A simple way for friends and family to deal with a person going through radicalisation is to maintain open communication with them. A positive relationship is the basis for effective intervention. It is better to listen and to understand the reasons behind an individual's radicalisation,

as this may enable the family and friends to be of help to them. For ideological responses, it is better to engage religious and political leaders for guidance.

Effective communication includes reinforcing positive community behaviour and responsibilities, encouraging inclusive language, and promoting peer-to-peer initiatives.

When discussing countering terrorism and VE, it is important to avoid using words that stereotype or link terrorism with religion, ethnicity, or specific communities, either implicitly or explicitly. Language should be used to prevent emphasising differences and divisions, and instead, focus on common values and purposes. Certain words and phrases used by the global media often offend communities.

In developing societies, LEAs often use one-way communication to reflect what the government wants to do. Instead, the focus should be on positive messaging and highlighting what communities can do. Inviting input from communities can prove effective in this regard, as communication strategies should also address community concerns.

Communication should focus on the fact that violence is not a solution and has no place in society. It should use inclusive language that includes positive narratives. The narrative should be based on the principle that violence is not the only choice and that there are other ways to express oneself. Deradicalisation and disengagement require equal attention from communities and governments. Let's stand together against the virus of extremism. -- Courtesy Dawn

Arif Azad

A global and local public health threat, antimicrobial resistance is also a development challenge. AMR occurs when bacteria, parasites, viruses and fungi become resistant to antimicrobial medicines that are used to treat infections. As a result, antibiotics become ineffective and infections increasingly difficult to treat.

AMR in Pakistan is driven by the indiscriminate use of antimicrobials in humans and animals. One study shows an increase of 65 per cent from 2000 and 2010 in the use of antibiotics. The Covid pandemic also saw an upsurge in the use of antimicrobial drugs for treating related syndromes.

AMR caused at least 1.27 million deaths globally in 2019. It has been on the global policy agenda since 2009. However, efforts to accelerate action on AMR got underway in earnest with the publication of the WHO-led global action plans in 2015. In line with the global action plan, states framed their own national action plans. Sadly, progress on the implementation of these plans has been glacial.

Implementation efforts were further set back by the pandemic, which not only diluted the focus on AMR but also diverted scarce health funds to the Covid response in low-income countries.

Yet, in recent years, a series of policy actions have brought back the focus on AMR, as observable in AMR figuring in the G7 and G20 summits. As part of the renewed focus, a UN General Assembly high-level meeting on AMR is being convened on Sept 24, with a view to speeding up coordinated and concerted AMR-related work. In the

AMR crisis

run-up to the meeting, a zero draft was prepared in May 2024, which has been in circulation for member states' response.

The political declaration, as embodied in the zero draft, notes with grave concern that AMR could incur a trillion dollars in additional healthcare costs by 2050; GDP losses could range between \$1tr to \$3.4tr by 2030, with productivity losses as high as \$443 billion. More crucially, treating resistant bacterial infections alone could cost up to \$412bn annually. These economic and health costs necessitate urgent and sustained action by states.

In view of these multiple threats, the political declaration seeks to scale up national and global actions in proportion to the increase in the AMR threat.

The overarching target set out in the zero draft is a reduction in global deaths by 10pc by 2030. This target is to be achieved by stimulating a multifaceted strategy and response.

Furthermore, the political declaration, while acknowledging that 178 countries have developed national action plans, notes that only 52pc of countries have functioning multi-sectoral coordinating mechanisms.

The declaration also expresses the ambition of revising and updating national action plans through the prism of the 'one health and whole of society' approach. These updated national plans should be framed in accordance with national contexts.

The declaration also enjoins upon the member states to put in place prioritised, fully costed and funded national plans. Currently, only 11pc of the member states have produced these

plans, with dedicated financing earmarked in national budgets. The target is for 60pc of the countries to have fully costed and financed plans by 2030.

The declaration puts a lot of stress on infection prevention and control, as well as an antimicrobial stewardship infrastructure to be raised and maintained with adequate funding and a supportive legislative and policy framework. Vaccination, water and sanitation and hygiene form an essential part of the multi-track response.

The declaration acknowledges the lack of regulation of over-the-counter sales of antibiotics, over-prescription of anti-biotics as well as lack of evidence-based standard treatment guidelines and affordable diagnostic tests as the main drivers of AMR. Given the multi-strand nature of the AMR crisis, reversing the situation would require a strong and sustained political commitment at the highest level. The high-level UN meeting on AMR offers an ideal opportunity to engage actively and reaffirm Pakistan's political commitment to the local and global effort to tackle the threat of AMR head-on. As Pakistan's national action plan on AMR is being revised and reframed, the political leadership should prioritise the AMR agenda and set aside the required resources for the revised plan.

More importantly, by sending a high-powered delegation to the UN meeting and signing on all commitments enshrined in the zero draft, Pakistan's senior leadership would be signalling its serious intent to confront AMR as a top national and global priority. -- Courtesy Dawn

Ground-breaking of Al-Shifa Trust's GB Eye Hospital held

GILGIT (APP): Chief Minister (CM) Gulbar Khan of Gilgit-Baltistan broke ground for the state-of-the-art Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) Eye Hospital, which will be operated by the Al-Shifa Trust and provide free, high-quality eye care for all residents in the region.

Parliamentarians, the Chairman of the Rupani Foundation, Force Commander FCNA Major General Kashif Khalil, dignitaries, local notables, and donor representatives attended the ceremony.

Al-Shifa Trust President Maj. Gen. (retired) Rehmat Khan, Chief of Medical Services Dr. Wajid Ali Khan, Project Director Brig. (ret'd) Arshad and others were also present at the event.

CM Gulbar Khan, Naseeruddin Rupani, Chairman of the Rupani Foundation, and other

dignitaries commended the trust on this occasion for their concern for the people's lack of access to high-quality eye care in the isolated region.

They said that in the past, those with eye issues had to go to Islamabad, but many of them could not afford to do so. They also mentioned that things will get better now, which will help the locals.

Speakers noted that this hospital would cover 18 lac people living in 14 districts of GB, of whom 10 to 15 percent face eye issues due to poverty, extreme weather, and improper living conditions. They said the hospital will be established in a 20-kanal area on the Karakoram Highway, which is within reach of locals because it is just three kilometres from the city.

President of Al-Shifa Trust, Maj. Gen. (retired)



KARACHI: Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan meeting with Sindh Governor Mohammed Kamran Khan Tessori

Sindh Governor urges Turkish investors to explore opportunities in province

Independent Report
KARACHI: Sindh Governor Mohammed Kamran Khan Tessori has urged Turkish investors to invest in the province and vowed to provide all possible facilities to them.

He was talking to Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan in Karachi.

The Governor discussed Pakistan-Turkish bilateral relations, business opportunities, cultural matters and other issues of mutual interest with the Foreign Minister of Turkey. Speaking on the occasion, Turkish FM Hakan Fidan said that the Turkish investors are interested in investing in the Sindh province.

CM pledges support for tech innovation, investment

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has said that the Punjab government is committed to creating a supportive environment for technological innovation and investment in the province.

In a meeting with Deputy Chief Executive Officer of Huawei Pakistan, Yu Shaoning, to discuss strategic cooperation for Punjab's digital growth, here on Saturday, she said, "we are determined to use modern technologies for governance, public services, and economic development of people."

The CM reviewed various suggestions and recommendations for leveraging Huawei's technical expertise in the field of digitisation. She discussed cooperation in possible sectors including Smart City, and explored various options for investment in the digital economy.

The Huawei Deputy Chief expressed his commitment to support Punjab's technical initiatives. Senator Pervaiz Rashid, Additional Secretary Sara Hayat and other relevant officers were also present.

NAB pledges compensation for affectees at open court

LAHORE (APP): The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Lahore held a monthly open court session at its Lahore office under the supervision of its Director General Amjad Majeed Aulakh and pledged compensation for the affectees.

The event was attended by 250 affectees of fraudulent housing schemes and other matters of public cheating.

During the session, the DG engaged with the complainants and announced that the Bureau has proposed amendments to the existing housing policy to regulate the open file system to prevent further exploitation of common citizens. He emphasised that NAB would entertain only genuine complaints and also instructed affectees to furnish documentary evidence, including allotment letters and payment receipts, generated by the housing societies, to substantiate their claims.

The DG apprised the affectees of Pak-Arab Housing Society that NAB was poised to distribute cheques worth billions of rupees as part of its efforts to provide relief to victims of housing sector fraud. He revealed that NAB had completed the re-verification process of 2,400 affectees and was preparing to file a reference in the court to bring the perpetrators to justice.

He disclosed that NAB has filed an application in court to cancel the bail of accused persons, including Ammar



LAHORE: Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme, Rubina Khalid called on Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan

Benazir Income Support Programme is largest social security net: Sardar Saleem

Independent Report
LAHORE: Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme, Rubina Khalid called on Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan in Murree. During the meeting, Chairperson of Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Rubina Khalid gave a detailed briefing to Punjab Governor about the functions of the organization.

Speaking on the occasion, Governor Punjab, Sardar Saleem Haider Khan said that the vision of the leadership of Pakistan People's Party is the welfare of the common man and providing them with basic facilities. He said that millions of deserving beneficiaries of Benazir Income Support Programme are the beneficiaries of Benazir Income Support Programme. Governor Punjab said that the Benazir Income Support Programme is the largest social security net that is providing financial assistance to people living below the poverty line. He said that the problems of deserving families registered under the Benazir Income Support Programme in the backward areas should be addressed on priority. On this occasion, Chairperson, Rubina Khalid said that under the Benazir Income Support Programme, financial assistance is being provided on the basis of merit to the deserving women across the country. She said that steps are being taken to include more beneficiaries in the Benazir Income Support Programme.

Later, Punjab Governor, Sardar Child Protection Bureau, Sara Ahmed called on Punjab Governor.

CM Sindh bids farewell to Buhra Jamat leader Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin at airport

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Saturday bid farewell to the spiritual leader of the Dawoodi Bohra Jamaat Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin at Old Terminal.

Sindh Minister for Irrigation Jam Khan Shoro accompanied the CM. Before flying, Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin prayed for the prosperity and security of the people of Pakistan and the world.

It is recalled that Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin, on the invitation of the President of Pakistan Asif Ali Zardari had arrived in Karachi on July 4 and was received by the chief minister.

Earlier, the Syedna CM called on Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin and presented him three copies of over 150-year-old handwritten Tafseer-e-Quran and khutbas of Bohra Jamaat leaders. Syedna thanked the CM for such beautiful handwritten old and rare books.

FIA arrest former DEC Qamber on corruption case

LARKANA (APP): Manwar Ali Solangi, the former District Election Commissioner of Qamber Shahdadkot, who was arrested by FIA Composite Circle in Larkana 5 days ago in the case of embezzlement of 28 lakh rupees in public funds, has been remanded by FIA Composite Circle for the fourth additional Sessions Judge Larkana presented him in the court of Intiaz Ali Shahani on Saturday, where the court has sent the accused to jail on judicial remand.



GILGIT: Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Haji Gulbar Khan is unveiling the foundation stone of Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital.

CJ PHC holds meeting to discuss Case Management Policy

PESHAWAR (APP): The Chief Justice of Peshawar High Court Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim along with Judges, Members of the Administration Committee Chaired a meeting on Case Management Policy with the District & Sessions Judge(s) of Kohat, Hangu, and Orakzai.

The meeting was attended by the Judicial Officers of the three districts. Member of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bar Council, the President Peshawar High Court Bar Association as well as Presidents and General Secretaries of District Bar and Tehsil Bar Association.

Iktiar Khan, the Registrar Peshawar High Court, Peshawar briefly elaborated the agenda of the meeting and welcomed all the participants. Mamrez Khan Khalil, the Addl. the Registrar (Admn) explained the manifest vision of the Chief Justice

Nawaz visits Faisalabad to offer condolences

FAISALABAD (APP): Former prime minister Nawaz Sharif paid a short visit to Faisalabad on Saturday to offer condolences on the demise of Rae Arshad Khan.

He reached Chak No. 40-JB Halwari by a helicopter and met the family of his close associate Rae Arshad to offer condolences. He offered 'Fateha' for the departed soul and expressed sympathies with the bereaved family.

Senior Provincial Minister Mariyum Aurangzeb and family members of the late Rae Arshad Khan were also present.

IGP takes notice of killing of 4 people

LAHORE (APP): Inspector General of Police (IGP) Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar has taken notice of an incident of shooting dead of four people at a carry van near Ludian village of Gujrat, and he asked for a report from RPO Gujranwala.

The IGP directed the DPO Gujrat to form a special team for quick arrest of the accused and said that by investigating every aspect of the incident, the accused should be brought to justice as soon as possible.

5 dacoits arrested, weapons recovered

FAISALABAD (APP): Thikriwala police have arrested five alleged dacoits and recovered cash, illegal weapons and other items from them. A spokesman said here on Saturday that the police conducted raids and succeeded in arresting five active members of a gang including ring leader Yousuf alias Kanta.



LAHORE: Provincial Ministers Khawaja Salman Rafique, Khawaja Imran Nazir and Secretary Health Punjab addressing 7th VCs, Principals & MS Conference

PML-N MPs meet Marriyum, discuss uplift projects

LAHORE (APP): Members of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Punjab Assembly on Saturday met Senior Minister Mariyum Aurangzeb and discussed with her the development projects in their regions.

Chaudhry Muhammad Ashraf, Malik Ghazanfar Abbas Cheena, Zulfiqar Ali and Mohsin Shah Nawaz Ranjha met Mariyum Aurangzeb separately.

Likewise, Sher Ali Gurchani, Sultan Haider, Ameer Sial, Ahmad Raza Manika, Ali Hussain Khan and Malik Shehryar also met the senior minister.

Meanwhile, Chaudhry Khalid Mahmood Jagga, Fida Hussain Wattoo, Asif Khan, Ms. Shafa Saheed were also included in the meeting. Rana Abdul Manan, Kausar Javed, Aung Ali Haider and Ahmed Iqbal also met with the senior minister of Punjab. In the meeting, the development of the province, construction projects in the constituencies and social welfare projects were discussed. The members of the assembly appreciated the steps taken by Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif for the rapid development of the province.

FIA arrests two over visa fraud, human trafficking

LAHORE (APP): The Anti-Human Trafficking Circle of FIA on Saturday arrested two suspects of a group involved in visa-fraud and human-trafficking, while carrying out major operations.

According to a spokesperson, the offices of groups involved in visa fraud and human trafficking were raided at Lakhpat Road and Multan Chungi here, in which two suspects of the group involved in visa fraud and human trafficking were arrested.

The FIA spokesperson said the accused were identified as Mubasher Ahmed and Ijaz alias Jaji, who were found involved in visa fraud and human trafficking.

SC orders closure of stone crushing plants in Suraj Gali

ABBOTTABAD (APP): Supreme Court of Pakistan on Saturday issued a formal written order regarding the shutdown of stone-crushing plants in Suraj Gali, Haripur, following its July 11 hearing.

The Court's decision underscores the global impact of air pollution, highlighting that one in nine deaths worldwide is attributable to it. The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that air pollution causes around seven million deaths each year. The Court noted that Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Pakistan are among the world's most polluted countries, with these four nations representing 2.9% of the global population.

An air quality report presented during the proceedings identified Pakistan as the second most polluted country worldwide. The Court emphasized that a clean environment is a fundamental constitutional right for every citizen.

Additionally, the Court pointed out that environmental pollution threatens not only human health but also animals and vegetation. It contributes to serious health issues such as cancer and cardiovascular diseases.

The court's report revealed that three stone-crushing plants in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are major contributors to environmental pollution.

Two guards kidnapped in Lakhi Ghulam

SHIKARPUR: Two security guards were allegedly kidnapped from a land near Lakhi Ghulam Shah police station in Shikarpur. According to police, the guards, identified as Hussain Bakhsh and Ghulam Rasool, were on duty at a tube well installed on the land of former MNA Ghous Bakhsh Khan Mehr, when they were taken away by armed men on motorcycles. The police have registered a case and launched an investigation, but so far, there is no information about the whereabouts of the kidnapped guards. The police claim that the hostages have been recovered and the kidnappers will be apprehended soon.



SKARDU: An attractive and eye-catching view of Manthoka Waterfall in Kharmang Valley. This waterfall is 180 feet high from the ground and located almost 80 kilometers away from downtown Skardu.

KP Food Authority ends 10-day sample collection and testing drive

93% of samples found substandard, only 7% satisfactory: Report

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety and Halal Food Authority launched its largest-ever milk sample collection and testing drive, collecting 583 milk samples from businesses associated with large and medium-scale dairy operations across the province. Of of total samples, 93% (541 samples) were found to be adulterated, substandard, and harmful to health, while only 7% were satisfactory.

A detailed report was released, following the conclusion of the 10-day special milk sampling and testing campaign. The report stated that 26 teams, led by assistant directors, were formed to collect samples from large and medium-level dairy businesses. The samples were sent for testing to the state-of-the-art laboratory established by the Food Authority in Hayatabad, Peshawar. According to the report, the total samples were collected from approximately 324,000 liters of milk, of which only 7% (42 samples) were found to be of satisfactory quality. Additionally, water was found in 106, formaldehyde in 17, fat deficiencies in 224, and protein and other mineral deficiencies in 488 samples. The report also indicated that 18.18% of the samples contained dry powder milk.



KARACHI: Piles of garbage on the shore of Fish Harbour. It should be noted that despite the ban on fishing, the garbage on the shore is a threat to the development of aquatic life.

Aleem Khan for ensuring privatization of listed entities within given time frame

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Privatization, Board of Investment and Communications Abdul Aleem Khan on Saturday directed the Privatization Commission Board to ensure the completion of the process for the institutions entrusted to them for privatization as soon as possible and ensure a transparent manner in this regard.

The minister presided over the meeting of the Privatization Commission Board which discussed issues related to the privatization of DISCOs and other institutions including Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), said a press release.

The minister said that the restoration and strengthening of the country's economy depends upon the privatization of those countries being run in deficit. He said that the process of privatization will practically reduce the burden on the national exchequer and there is a strong possibility of making the enterprises that are being transferred to the private sector to make them profitable.

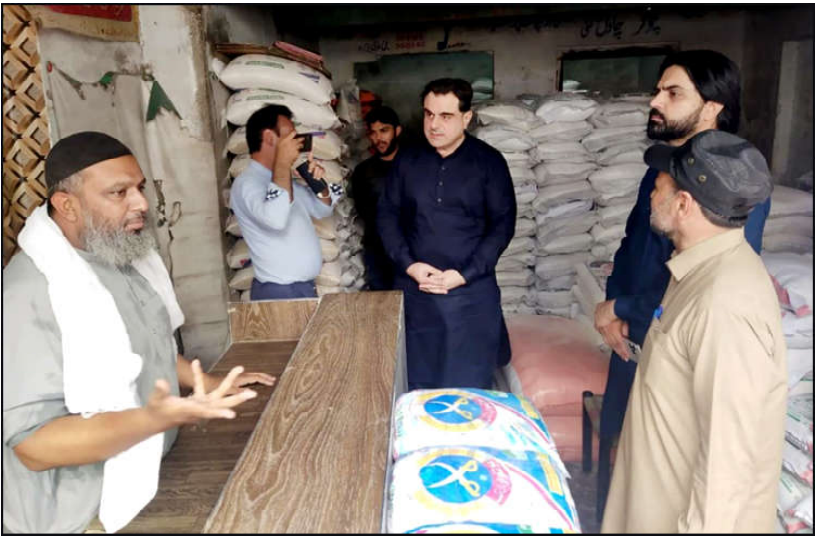
He indicated that privatization of PIA is very important as it would express the seriousness of the private sector regarding privatization and it will make it easier for other institutions to be privatized.

He expressed satisfaction with the overall performance and observed that all the targets should be achieved on time while final recommendations will be sent to the Cabinet Committee for final approval.

Privatization Commission Board unanimously decided that in the first phase, three power generation companies DISCOs will be privatized for which practical work has already been started and all legal matters will be completed by January 2025.

Moreover, the Privatization Commission Board also approved hiring Financial Advisers for these DISCOs and move forward accordingly.

The meeting of the Privatization Commission Board was attended by the Federal Secretary for Privatization, the members of the PCB and the senior officers who unanimously approved the important decisions related to the privatization.



SIALKOT: Provincial Minister for Food Bilal Yasin inspecting flour shops at old galla mandi.

Punjab food minister reviews flour prices in Sialkot

SIALKOT (APP): Provincial Minister for Food Bilal Yaseen paid a surprise visit to Sialkot.

According to a handout, on the instructions of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, the minister inspected the godown of a flour mill located in Ghalla Mandi and reviewed the implementation of prices by flour distributors.

Later, he chaired a meeting at the DC office, which was attended by Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Zulqarnain, Member Provincial Assembly (MPA) Arif Iqbal Hamah, Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Revenue Muhammad Iqbal, Managing Director (MD) Solid Waste Management Company (SWMC) Sialkot Kashif Nawaz Randhawa and District Food Controller (DFC) Nasrullah Khan Nadeem.

The food minister said that the Punjab government had fixed the price of 20kg flour at Rs1640 and the price of a 10kg bag at Rs820, saying that the administration has been mobilized to ensure its implementation. He said that there is abundant supply of flour in the market compared to the demand and directed that the distributors and grocery merchants should display price lists at a prominent place and the district administration should ensure implementation of the prices and action should be taken against elements involved in profiteering.

He said that the Punjab government is determined to control the prices of poultry products. There is a tendency of reduction in prices of poultry due to the actions of the Punjab government, he added.

Agri land degradation to be protected under master plan: Minister

MULTAN (APP): Punjab government has introduced an agricultural package worth over Rs 174 billion to protect agri land from degradation, said Provincial Minister for Agriculture, Syed Muhammad Ashiq Hussain Kirmani.

Addressing a seminar titled "Eco-Smart Mango Production: Challenges and Opportunities" at Muhammad Nawaz Sharif University of Agriculture here on Saturday, he informed that Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz had introduced the package for the first time in Punjab's history under which a master plan for various cities has been prepared to protect agriculture land from degradation. This plan will separate green and brown areas. Additionally, the Mango Research Institute will be upgraded to a Center of Excellence.

The minister urged growers and researchers to develop a comprehensive programme to address mango issues and announced that solar plates would be provided to growers to facilitate their work. He affirmed the commitment to bringing innovation to agriculture under the guidance of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz.

Secretary Agriculture Punjab, Iftikhar Ali Saho, appreciated IT MNSUA VC, Dr Ishtiaq Ahmad Ranjwana and mentioned that the Punjab government was actively extending providing excellent facilities for growers.



LAHORE: Workers busy in preparing huge iron containers for the storage of wheat to the customers at their workplace.

PESCO takes action against 'Kunda' mafia in Dikhan

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) Sub-division Paharpur teams along with Assistant Commissioner Paharpur Allah Noor on Saturday conducted raids against 'Kunda' mafia in the different areas.

During the operation, PESCO teams removed direct hooks, issued warnings and registered cases against those involved in using illegal electricity.

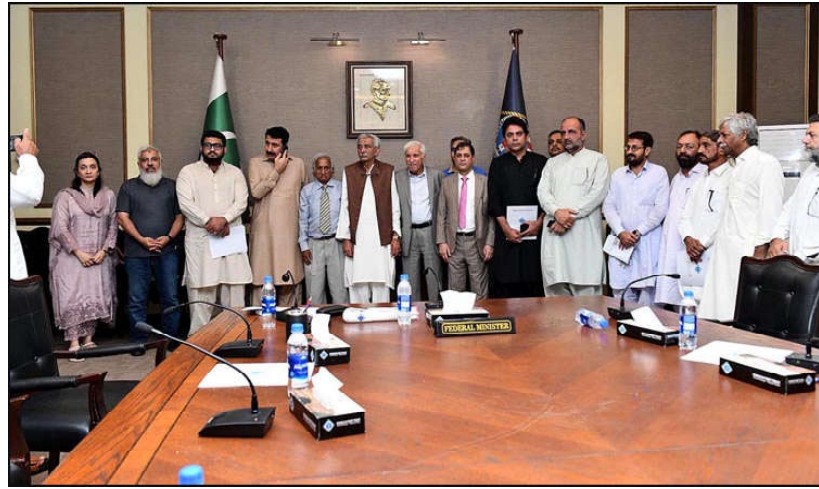
On the instructions of the Superintendent Engineer, PESCO, Dera Ismail Khan Circle, Engineer Fida Muhammad Khan Mehnd, the company's team carried out a grand operation in the different areas of Paharpur, Long Khair Shah and Bandkorai for removing direct hooks and recovery of arrears.

The team visited many streets and removed direct hooks on many poles.

Ginger's price hits all-time high, selling on 900/kg

PESHAWAR (APP): The wave of inflation in Peshawar could not be reduced and ginger in the vegetable market hit an all-time high and now being sold on Rs. 900 in the city wherein the district administration failed to implement the official price issued for various food items here on Saturday.

Likewise, the ginger, the price of garlic also hit high and now being sold at Rs. 800 per kg instead of on official rates Rs. 550. The price of onion also increased with every passing day and now onion is being sold on Rs. 230 instead of on official rates Rs 110. The rates of other food items including tomato Rs 200, potato 180.



KARACHI: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh and Member Standing Committee Syed Rafullah for Maritime Affairs held talks with KDBL employees regarding their issues and demands, at Karachi Port Trust.

Pak-China Institute, PowerChina unveil groundbreaking: 'Aligning Special Economic Zones Policies of Pak, China'

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan-China Institute, in collaboration with PowerChina, has launched a groundbreaking report titled 'Aligning Special Economic Zones Policies of Pakistan and China'.

The report aims to provide a strategic framework for enhancing the economic and industrial collaboration between Pakistan and China through Special Economic Zones (SEZs).

The launch event brought together key stakeholders and experts who shared their insights on the importance of this initiative and its potential impact on Pakistan's economic landscape, a news release said.

In his opening remarks, Executive Director of Pakistan-China Institute, Mustafa Hyder Sayed emphasized the timeliness of the report. He noted that its release coincides with increasing collaboration between China and Pakistan, making it a pivotal moment for both nations.

Sayed highlighted the critical need for Pakistan to adopt export-oriented policies to attract Chinese industries that are relocating to the global south due to rising production costs, business-friendly environments, and market access to regional markets. He stressed that the global economic landscape is highly competitive and Pakistan must position itself as the prime destination for the relocation of key industries by developing unique selling points.

Drawing lessons from China's successful SEZ model, the report outlines what has worked in China and what needs to be adapted for Pakistan. Key takeaways include the necessity to attract investors with flexible policies and strategic locations for industrial zones, particularly near ports and business clusters, akin to the success seen in Shenzhen.

Su Dong, representing PowerChina, underscored the successful completion of 47 projects in Pakistan, with several others under construction. He expressed PowerChina's readiness to continue working closely with Pakistan, extending best wishes for the report's success.

Su Dong emphasized the significance of this collaborative effort in driving economic growth and fostering a stronger bilateral relationship. He reiterated PowerChina's commitment to supporting Pakistan in its industrial development journey, highlighting the potential for future projects and partnerships that can further enhance the economic ties between the two nations.

Federal Minister for Industries and Production, Rana Tanveer Hussain, delivered a keynote speech, lauding China as a great friend of Pakistan. He emphasized the significance of SEZs in attracting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and fostering industrialization, noting that the relocation of Chinese industries, underscoring

FCAA KP to support Businessman Forum in SCCI elections

PESHAWAR (APP): Frontier Custom Agents Association Khyber Pakhtunkhwa announced full support to businessman forum in upcoming Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry elections.

A delegation of FCAA KP led by its president Ziaul Haq Sarhadi held a meeting with the leader of the Businessman Forum former senator Ilyas Ahmad Bilour here in his office, said in a statement here on Saturday.

The FCAA KP Vice President Khalid Shahzad, Vice President Imtiaz Ahmad Ali and executive members Mansoor Ahmad and Noman ul Haq were amongst the members of the delegation.

The meeting was also attended by the SCCI president Fuad Ishaq, Vice President Ejaz Khan Afridi, Former Vice President of the chamber Javed Akhtar and senior member Nadeem Rauf.

Ziaul Haq Sarhadi expressed confidence in the leadership of Businessman Forum former senator Ilyas Ahmad Bilour and said the FCAA will fully support the forum in the forthcoming SCCI's elections.

He informed FCAA came into existence back in 1976 and the latter was registered with SCCI in 1990 and since then the association has stood with the Businessman Forum till date and will continue to support the forum in future.



SIALKOT: President Chamber of Commerce Abdul Ghafoor Malik presenting a shield to Saif Anwar Jappa, Director General, Punjab Housing and Town Planning Agency during Affordable Housing Program at SCCI.

FY 2023-24: SECP registers 27,542 new companies

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) during FY 2023-24 registered 27,542 new companies raising the total number of registered companies to 222,697.

Among new registered companies, 58% were registered as private limited companies, while 39% were registered as single member companies. The remaining 3% registered as public unlisted companies, not for profit associations, guarantee limited companies, trade organizations, limited liability partnerships (LLPs) and foreign companies. Around 99.8% of companies were registered online.

Regarding incorporation, the information technology sector took the lead with 4129 companies, trading with 3666, services with 3302 real estate development & construction with 2992, tourism with 1346, education with 1177, food & beverages with 1103, e-commerce with 942, corporate agricultural farming with 780, marketing & advertisement with 620, textile with 589, mining & quarrying with 574, power generation with 560, engineering with 547, transport with 523, pharmaceutical with 497, chemical with 457, healthcare with 434, fuel & energy with 376, cosmetics & toiletries with 352, logging with 268, communications with 257, auto & allied with 242, broadcasting & telecasting with 215, paper & board with 203.

Maritime Minister chairs meeting to discuss Customs, Shipping Agents' issues

KARACHI (APP): Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Qaiser Sheikh chaired a meeting here the other day at the PNSC building to discuss and resolve trade-related issues faced by trade bodies concerning Pakistan Customs, Shipping Agents, Terminal Operators Companies, and Karachi Port Trust.

The meeting was convened on the directions of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to resolve issues of the stakeholders.

Syed Syedain Raza Zaidi Chairman of KPT, Alia Shahid DG Ports and Shipping, representatives of Karachi Customs Agents Association headed by Mehmood ul Hassan, Maqbool Malik Chairman All Pakistan Custom Agent Association, Asif Sakhi Vice President FPCCI, Khurram Ijaz former Vice President FPCCI, Omer Shafique Collector Customs Enforcement KPT, representatives of Terminal Operating Companies, KICT, KGTL & SAPT attended the meeting.

Minister Maritime Affairs emphasized ease of doing business and coordination amongst all stakeholders to resolve the issue to facilitate and reduce the time taken in cargo clearance.



LAHORE: Deputy Chief Executive Officer Huawei meeting with Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz.

LCCI seeks PM help to address reservations over SRO 350(I)/2024

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) has urged the Prime Minister to address challenges arising from the recent implementation of SRO 350(I)/2024, dated March 7, 2024.

The LCCI spokesman told media here Saturday that in a letter to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the LCCI President Kashif Anwar said that the business community in Pakistan is confronted with multi-dimensional economic challenges.

Kashif Anwar said that business community is facing severe issues in filing their Sales Tax Returns after the implementation of SRO 350(I)/2024, dated 7th March 2024 as it has linked the buyers' ability to file Sales tax return to the compliance of their suppliers.

He said that if any of the suppliers does not file their return, the subsequent buyer is unable to file their sales tax return or has to leave the respective input tax already paid by him to file return.

The LCCI President mentioned a specific and pressing example of this issue involves the Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO), being the sole electricity provider in Lahore, has not filed its Sales Tax Return yet.

He said that due to non-submission of Sales Tax Return by LESCO, every business, being a consumer of LESCO, is unable to file its Sales Tax Returns. This creates a significant bottleneck.

FPCCI announces to approach SC, SIFC on IPPs issue

LAHORE (INP): Former caretaker prime minister, Anwar ul Haq Kakar said that the issue of Independent Power Producers was discussed in the Senate. He said, "We fought for people's rights before, will fight this battle too and those spreading despair about the country's future on social media should know that the country's future is bright."

Former federal minister for commerce and interior, Dr. Gohar Ejaz and Chairman FPCCI's Economic Policy Business Development Think Tank said that the government's negligence towards IPPs was being borne by the people.

LESCO addresses 1,567 complaints

LAHORE (APP): Customers hearings being conducted in LESCO region daily, while during the last day, a total of 1,614 complaints of various types were received out of which 1,567 complaints were redressed on the spot.

The series of public/customers hearings (open kutchehry) are continued in all the eight circles of Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) to address the customers' complaints regarding overbilling and other issues.

LESCO Chief Executive Officer Engineer Shahid Haider told the media here Saturday that the company is continuing with this practice following the special instructions of the Ministry of Power Division, with the aim of solving the problems faced by the LESCO consumers in electricity bills and other matters immediately.

He added that special customers' hearings are being conducted across the LESCO region and the public is also being informed about this in advance through the media and banners installed in the relevant LESCO offices. All the SDOs (Sub-Divisional Officers).



LAHORE: A cobbler preparing traditional shoes (Peshawari Chappal) to the customers at his workplace.

180,000 Gazans displaced in four days

Monitoring Desk

KHAN YUNIS: More than 180,000 Palestinians have fled fierce fighting around the southern Gaza city of Khan Yunis in four days, the United Nations said on Friday, after an Israeli operation to extract prisoners' bodies from the area.

Recent "intensified hostilities" in the Khan Yunis area have fuelled "new waves of internal displacement across Gaza", said the UN humanitarian agency, OCHA.

It said "about 182,000 people" have been displaced from central and eastern Khan Yunis between Monday and Thursday, and hundreds are "stranded in eastern Khan Yunis".

The Israeli military ordered the evacuation of parts of the southern city on Monday, announcing its forces would "forcefully operate" there, including in an area previously declared a safe humanitarian zone.

On Wednesday, Israel said five bodies of prisoners seized during Hamas's October 7 raid had been recovered from the area. Israel's military said on Friday that its forces had "eliminated approximately 100 terrorists" in the city this week.

Israel's military chief, Lt Gen Herzl Halevi, said the prisoners' bodies were pulled from underground tunnels and walls in "a hidden

place". Troops "were near those fallen bodies in the past, we did not know how to reach them" until this week, Halevi said in a statement.

Witnesses and rescuers said heavy battles continued around eastern Khan Yunis on Friday. The Nasser Hospital said 26 bodies were brought to the medical site.

Out of 251 Israelis taken prisoner that day, 111 are still held in Gaza Strip, including 39 the military says are dead.

According to UN figures, the vast majority of Gaza's 2.4 million people have been displaced at least once by the fighting.



Displaced Palestinians from the eastern part of Khan Yunis walk at a temporary camp set up in the grounds of a cemetery in the western part of the city.

Rockets fired at bases hosting US troops in Iraq and Syria

Monitoring Desk

BAGHDAD: Several rockets were launched on Thursday and Friday against bases hosting troops from the US-led coalition in Iraq and Syria, security officials and a war monitor said. Such attacks were frequent early in the war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza but since then have largely halted.

"Four rockets fell in the vicinity" of Ain al-Assad base in Anbar province, an Iraqi security source said.

Another security official said an attack occurred with "a drone and three

rockets" that fell close to the base perimeter.

A United States official said initial reports indicated that projectiles landed outside the base without causing injuries or damage to the base. All sources spoke on condition of anonymity because they are not authorised to speak to the media. At least one rocket also fell near a base of the coalition in the Deir Ezzor province of eastern Syria, according to the British-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights war monitor.

Italy appoints ambassador to Syria to 'turn spotlight' on country

Monitoring Desk

ROME: Italy has decided to appoint an ambassador to Syria "to turn a spotlight" on the country, its foreign minister said on Friday, making it the first G7 nation to relaunch its diplomatic mission in Damascus since civil war consumed the nation. Italy recalled all staff from its embassy in Damascus in 2012 and suspended diplomatic activity in Syria to protest at "the unacceptable violence" of the government of Bashar al-Assad against its citizens.

French minister says foreign involvement not ruled out in rail sabotage

Monitoring Desk

PARIS: France's interior minister said on Saturday he could not rule out foreign involvement in an attack that sabotaged signal stations and cables on the country's high-speed rail network, causing travel chaos on the opening day of the Olympic Games.

Friday's pre-dawn attacks damaged infrastructure along the lines connecting Paris with cities such as Lille in the north.

Police arrest protesters from Dhaka hospital

Monitoring Desk

DHAKA: Bangladeshi police detectives on Friday forced the discharge from hospital of three student protesters blamed for deadly unrest, taking them to an unknown location, staff told AFP.

Nahid Islam, Asif Mahmud and Abu Baker Majumder are all members of Students Against Discrimination, the group responsible for organising this month's street rallies against civil service hiring rules.

At least 195 people were killed in the ensuing

police crackdown and clashes, according to an AFP count of victims reported by police and hospitals, in some of the worst unrest of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's tenure.

All three were patients at a hospital in the capital Dhaka, and at least two of them said their injuries were caused by torture in earlier police custody.

"They took them from us," Gonoshasthaya hospital supervisor Anwar Begum Lucky said. "The men were from the Detective Branch."



People attend a demonstration against the killings and mass arrest of protesters in Dhaka.

Over 300,000 displaced as typhoon lashes China

Monitoring Desk

BEIJING: Typhoon Gaemi pummeled towns in China's coastal Fujian province on Friday with heavy rains and strong winds as the most powerful storm to hit the country this year began its widely watched trek into the populous interior. The storm has affected almost 630,000 people in China's Fujian so far, with almost half of them — over 300,000 people — having to be relocated, Xinhua news agency reported. Earlier this week, it killed several people as it swept through Taiwan and worsened seasonal rains in the Philippines.

Gaemi was packing winds of up to 100.8 kilometres per hour (kph) near its centre, easing slightly from 118.8 kph logged on Thursday night when it landed in the Fujian city of Putian. While Gaemi

has been downgraded to a tropical storm because of slower wind speeds, its vast cloud bands remain a significant flood risk, particularly to rivers in central China already elevated due to summer rains.

Hours ahead of the typhoon's arrival, the Standing Committee of the Communist Party's politburo, helmed by President Xi Jinping, held a special meeting on flood control and urged cadres across the country to protect lives. Efforts must be made to prevent breaches of major rivers and the collapse of large and key medium-sized reservoirs, Xinhua quoted a readout of the meeting as saying. Due to the typhoon, 72 townships across Fujian recorded accumulated precipitation exceeding 250mm, with the highest reaching 512.8mm, local weather bureaus said.

Parade on Seine marks start of Paris Olympics

Monitoring Desk

PARIS: Lady Gaga sang a French cabaret song near Notre Dame cathedral, as athletes were cheered by the crowd along the Seine in the pouring rain and dancers took to the rooftops of Paris in the Olympics opening ceremony on Friday. A fleet of barges took the competitors on a 6km stretch of the river alongside some of the French capital's most famous landmarks. As tradition dictates, the Greek delegation had the honour of leading out the flotilla, as the cradle of the modern Olympic movement. This is the first time an opening ceremony has taken place outside a stadium, adding to the headaches for a vast security operation.

Ruse leads to stunning capture of two Mexican drug kingpins

Monitoring Desk

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden on Friday welcomed the arrests of two notorious leaders of Mexico's Sinaloa cartel as details emerged of an elaborate ruse used to capture the drug kingpins.

Ismael Zambada Garcia, co-founder of the cartel, and Joaquin Guzman Lopez, a son of its other co-founder, were taken into custody in El Paso, Texas, on Thursday.

Biden described the pair as "two of the most notorious leaders of the Sinaloa Cartel" and said US authorities "will continue doing everything we can to hold deadly drug traffickers to account and to save American lives". "Too many of our citizens have lost their lives to the scourge of fentanyl," he said.



Athletes and guests line the Trocadero Gardens venue, in the shadow of the Eiffel Tower, for the opening ceremony of the 2024 Paris Olympic games.

Hungary's Orban says Russia stands to gain as 'irrational' West loses power

Monitoring Desk

BUDAPEST: Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban said on Saturday Russia's leadership was "hyper rational" and that Ukraine would never be able to fulfil its hopes of becoming a member of the European Union or NATO.

Orban, a nationalist in power since 2010, made the comments during a speech in which he forecast a shift in global power away from the "irrational" West to-

wards Asia and Russia.

"In the next long decades, maybe centuries, Asia will be the dominant centre of the world," Orban said, mentioning China, India, Pakistan and Indonesia as the world's future big powers.

"And we Westerners pushed the Russians into this bloc as well," he said in the televised speech before ethnic Hungarians at a festival in the town of Baile Tusnad in neighbouring Romania.

US promises \$240 million to improve fish hatcheries, protect tribal rights in Pacific Northwest

Monitoring Desk

BOISE: The US government will invest \$240 million in salmon and steelhead hatcheries in the Pacific Northwest to boost declining fish populations and support the treaty-protected fishing rights of Native American tribes, officials announced Thursday.

The departments of Commerce and the Interior said there will be an initial \$54 million for hatchery maintenance and modernization made available to 27 tribes in the region, which includes Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Alaska.

The hatcheries "produce the salmon that tribes need to live," said Jennifer Quan, the regional administrator for NOAA Fisheries West Coast Region. "We are talking about food for the tribes and supporting their culture and their spirituality." Some of the facilities are on the brink of failure, Quan said, with a backlog of deferred maintenance that has a cost estimated at more than \$1 billion.

"For instance, the roof of the Makah Tribe's Stony Creek facility is literally a tarp. The Lummi Nation Skookum Hatchery is the only hatchery that raises spring Chinook salmon native to the recovery of our Puget Sound Chinook Salmon," and it is falling down, Quan said.

Rain helps rescuers battle fire in Canadian town

Monitoring Desk

OTTAWA: Steady rain is helping firefighters working to contain a massive wildfire that has devastated parts of the western Canadian tourist town of Jasper, authorities said on Friday.

Jasper is in the middle of mountainous Jasper National Park in the province of Alberta. A huge fast-moving fire has damaged or destroyed up to half the town's structures. Parks Canada said between 10 mm and 15 mm of rain had fallen on Thursday. "This precipitation will likely keep fire behaviour low for the next 72 hours," it said in a statement.

"Crews will take advantage of this time to make as much progress as possible to suppress the wild-

fire and reduce further spread. While rain in Jasper is a welcome sight, warm weather is forecast and will increase wildfire activity."

Authorities have so far declined to give specific details of how many buildings were lost in Jasper, which normally has a population of around 5,000. Video posted to social media showed entire blocks had been burned to the ground.

The town and park, which draw more than 2 million tourists a year to this area of the Rocky Mountains, were evacuated on Monday, when officials estimated there were up to 10,000 people in the town and a further 15,000 visitors in the park.

China's foreign minister warns Philippines over US missile deployment

Monitoring Desk

BEIJING: Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi has warned the Philippines over the U.S. intermediate-range missile deployment, saying such a move could fuel regional tensions and spark an arms race.

The United States deployed its Typhon missile system to the Philippines as part of joint military drills earlier this year. It was not fired during the exercises, a Philippine military official later said, without giving details on how long it would stay in the country. China-Philippines relations are now at a crossroads and dialogue and consultation are the right way, Wang told the Philippine Foreign Secretary Enrique Manalo on Friday during a meeting in Vientiane, the capital of Laos where top diplomats of world powers have gathered ahead of two summits.

Wang said relations between the countries are facing challenges because the Philippines has "repeatedly violated the consensus of both sides and its own commitments", according to a Chinese foreign ministry statement.

"If the Philippines introduces the U.S. intermediate-range missile system, it will create tension and confrontation in the region and trigger an arms race, which is completely not in line with the interests and wishes of the Filipino people," Wang said. The Philippines' military and its foreign ministry did not immediately respond to requests for comment on Wang's remarks. China and the Philippines are locked in a confrontation in the South China Sea and their encounters have grown more tense as Beijing presses its claims to disputed shoals in waters within Manila's exclusive economic zone.

G20 seeks common ground on taxing super-rich

Monitoring Desk

RIO DE JANEIRO: G20 finance ministers are expected to take a first step towards international cooperation on taxing the super-rich Friday, with a deal in Brazil likely to call for individual nations to strengthen their own measures, rather than an international agreement.

The United States and Germany both dismissed the need for a global deal on taxing billionaires, which is backed by France, Spain, South Africa, Colombia and the African Union.

Brazil's Economy Minister Fernando Haddad expressed his confidence in the initiative, and said a final "declaration" to be published Friday would mark a "first step."

This communique will take up the "Brazilian proposal to start looking at international taxation, not only from the point of view of companies, but also from the point of view of individuals called the super-rich."

While Lula was hoping for a minimum tax on the moneyed elite, a compromise is likely to be a call for countries to strengthen their own taxation measures, rather than an international agreement.

The initiative is a key priority for Brazil's leftist president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, who this year heads the G20 grouping that includes the world's major economies, the European Union and the African Union. On Friday, ministers are discussing financing the climate transition and debt, but the two-day meeting in Rio de Janeiro has been dominated by talks on how to stop billionaires from dodging taxes. The discussions will form the basis of talks during a G20 summit on November 18 and 19.

Blinken, in Laos, set for talks with Chinese foreign minister

Monitoring Desk

VIENTIANE: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken arrived early Saturday in Laos, where he will attend a regional meeting and hold talks with his Chinese counterpart, part of a multi-nation Asia visit aimed at reinforcing ties with regional allies in the face of an increasingly assertive Beijing.

The top US diplomat is due to meet China's Wang Yi on the sidelines of an Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) foreign ministers meeting being held in Vientiane.

Blinken has prioritised promoting a "free and open" Asia-Pacific region—a thinly veiled criticism of China's regional economic, strategic and territorial ambitions.

During a series of ASEAN meetings, "the Secretary's conversations will continue to build upon the unprecedented deepening and expansion of US-ASEAN ties", the State Department said in a statement shortly before Blinken touched down in Vientiane.

This is Blinken's 18th visit to Asia since taking office more than three years ago, reflecting the fierce competition between Washington and Beijing in the region.

He notably arrives two days after the foreign ministers of China and Russia met with those from the 10-nation ASEAN bloc—and each other on the sidelines of the summit.

Wang and Sergei Lavrov had discussed "building a new security architecture for Eurasia", according to Moscow's foreign ministry.

Sri Lanka to elect new president on Sept 21 amid critical economic reforms

Monitoring Desk

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka will hold presidential elections on Sept 21, a government notice said on Friday, setting the date for a crucial vote expected to determine the future of reforms in the South Asian nation weathering its worst financial crisis in decades.

Nominations for the election have to be submitted on Aug 15, with incumbent President Ranil Wickremesinghe becoming the first candidate to do so by paying a non-refundable deposit to the election commission, his office said.

Wickremesinghe, 75, took office in July 2022 after widespread protests caused by the debilitating financial crisis forced his predecessor Gotabaya Rajapaksa to flee the country and later resign.

Parliament elected Wickremesinghe to serve out the rest of the five-year term vacated by Rajapaksa who was elected in November 2019.

"This is a critical time for Sri Lanka," said Bhavani Fonseka, senior researcher for Colombo-based Centre for Policy Alternatives.

"An election being called is extremely important for democracy but now the election commission must be allowed to do what they are mandated to do. Having a free and fair election is essential."

Almost 17 million of Sri Lanka's 22 million population are eligible to vote in the poll.

Helped by a \$2.9 billion International Monetary Fund (IMF) bailout programme, Wickremesinghe has stitched back the shattered economy, bringing down inflation from a steep 70% in September 2022 to 1.7% in June, strengthening the rupee and rebuilding previously decimated foreign exchange reserves.

Sri Lanka's economy is expected to grow 3% in 2024 after shrinking 2.3% last year and 7.3% during the height of the crisis.

Bilateral creditors including Japan, China, and India signed up to a \$10 billion debt rework last month, which gave Colombo breathing space to defer repayments for four years and save \$5 billion.



Smoke rises from a wildfire burning in Canada's Jasper National Park after it devoured more than half of a town in western Canada.

Govt policies start showing results, food inflation declined to 2% from 48 percent: Musadik

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Petroleum Dr. Musadik Malik said on Saturday that the government's economic policies have started showing results under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, resulting in a drop in food inflation from 48 per cent to 2 per cent.

Addressing a press conference, he said that overall inflation in the country had also decreased to 12 per cent from 38 per cent due to the government's measures.

He highlighted that inflation in the country is gradually decreasing, and all economic indicators show that the country is moving towards stability. The Minister said alleviating poverty, reducing inflation, and providing job opportunities to the youth are the government's foremost priorities.

Despite economic challenges, the government has allocated Rs 600 billion in the current federal budget to uplift poor people.

The minister said that the current government has allocated funds for the construction of dams, roads, and motorways, which will create job opportunities.

He said development projects are being executed especially in the backward areas to provide job opportunities to locals.

He also noted that Rs 50 billion had been allocated to protect 86 per cent of electricity consumers in the country for the next three months.

He said that the government is determined to provide more relief to the masses and improve hospitals, digitize the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), and privatize state-owned enterprises.

He criticized the previous Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government for giving \$4 billion to the 100 richest people during its tenure.

He said that the government is taking steps to eliminate terrorism, while the opposition speaks

against these measures.

The government has offered dialogue, whereas the opposition talks about destruction, sit-ins, and confrontational politics.

Dr. Malik criticized the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) for their maligning campaign against state institutions and their politics of sit-ins without offering solutions to current problems.

He further accused the PTI leader of taking U-turns and misguiding his followers.

He recalled that the PTI leader used to claim his government was removed by the US, but is now seeking help from the US.

He alleged that the objective of PTI is to destroy the country.

He said that military installations and memorials of the country's heroes were targeted and attacked by PTI workers on May 9.

He claimed that the PTI leader had admitted to the incidents of May 9.



QUETTA: MP Sanjay Kumar Panjwani and others meeting with Provincial Minister for Irrigation Mir Sadiq Umrani

Naqvi takes stern action against corruption and agent mafia

Orders removal of Incharge Passport Office Muzaffargarh

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi has taken stern action against corruption and agent mafia by removing Incharge Passport Office Muzaffargarh Shahid Iqbal from his post.

Mohsin Naqvi ordered disciplinary action against In-charge Passport Office Muzaffargarh, stating that there is no room for corruption in the department.

He further reiterated that strict action will be taken without discrimination on the complaints against agent mafia or corruption.

He emphasized that corruption will not be tolerated under any circumstances during provision of the services to masses.

PIA air hostess arrested for smuggling foreign currency

Independent Report
LAHORE: Asiya Qurban, an air hostess of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), was arrested by customs officials at Allama Iqbal International Airport for smuggling foreign currency.

The air hostess was found carrying Saudi Riyals and US Dollars worth Rs. 37,318, hidden on her person.

The air hostess was offloaded from a Dubai-bound flight after suspicions arose, and a search revealed the hidden currency.

The search revealed Saudi Riyals hidden on various parts of her body.

A case has been registered, and the air hostess has been handed over to the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) for further investigation.

The FIA has launched an investigation into the smuggling attempt.

PIA officials have refused to comment on the incident.

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DC Duki chairs high-level meeting to address law and order concerns

Independent Report
QUETTA: A crucial meeting was held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Duki, Kaleemullah Kakar, to discuss the law and order situation in the region. The meeting was attended by Assistant Commissioner Duki, Zahoor Ahmed Baloch, Assistant Commissioner Loni Biberg Lehri, Risaldar Major Levies Ali Muhammad, Risaldar Levies Israr Ahmed, and all police station in-charges.

The purpose of the meeting was to review the law and order situation in the area and take effective measures against criminal elements. The Deputy

Commissioner reviewed the performance of all officials in detail and issued instructions based on their performance. He made it clear that any negligence in duty would not be tolerated and employees who do not perform their duties honestly would be dismissed immediately.

The Deputy Commissioner emphasized that all officials should take robust actions against criminal elements in their respective areas and take all possible measures to provide security to the public. He said that restoring public trust and ensuring peace and security is our top priority.

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Provincial Minister for Livestock & Dairy Development Bakht Muhammad Kakar offering Fateha for departed soul of Raheem Shah Kakar, uncle of MNA Jamal Shah Kakar

Coordinator NEOC says: Pakistan, Afghanistan agree to carry out upcoming anti-polio drives synchronized

Rafiullah Mandokhail
ZHOB: Coordinator National Emergency Operation Center Captain @ Muhammad Anwar ul Haq has said that effective anti-polio campaigns and improved vaccination coverage can lead to the complete eradication of poliovirus. Beside the polio cases, positive environmental samples have also increased five times this year, but Pakistan is fully committed to win the battle against polio. He was speaking at a high-level polio eradication meeting at the Commissioner Zhub Division office during his visit to Balochistan.

Provincial Coordinator EOC Balochistan Inam ul Haq Qureshi, Deputy Commissioner Mehboob Ahmed Achakzai, Technical Focal Person Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Dr. Najeebullah Marwat, Area Coordinators World Health Organization Dr. Ayaz Chandio, Dr. Ibrahim Kakar, DHO Dr. Muzaffar Shah, Immunization Officer WHO Dr. Nayyar Luni,

Communication Officer ComNet Samad Hariphah, N-Stop Officers Dr. Amin, Dr. Jan Inayatullah, and journalist Rafiullah Mandokhail attended the meeting. The National EOC Coordinator was briefed about the recent polio case in the Sohrab Ghot area of Zhub. The NAO chief said that improving the quality of campaigns is their top priority. Negligence on the part of polio workers and misconceptions that persist in society lead to polio cases.

NA Speaker condemns attack on Kurram police station

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has strongly condemned the terrorist attack on the Kurram district police station.

The Speaker praised the security forces for foiling the cowardly attack and paid tribute to the martyred FC official, Akhsan, who sacrificed his life in the line of duty.

Sadiq said that the nation is proud of brave sons of the soil like Akhsan and that their great sacrifices for the defense of the country will always be remembered. The Speaker expressed his condolences and sympathies with the family of the martyr and assured them that the nation stands with them in this hour of grief.

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BANGKOK: Pak NDMA Delegate led by Chairman NDMA Lt Gen Inam Haider Malik attended 5th Board of trustees meeting of ADPC.

UN officials portray Gaza's 'endless nightmare' of death & destruction

UNITED NATIONS
(APP): Senior UN officials on Friday highlighted the catastrophic humanitarian situation in Gaza, and the escalating threat to aid workers, urging immediate action to prevent further deterioration. Muhannad Hadi, Deputy UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, and Antonia De Meo, Deputy Commissioner-General of the UN agency assisting Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, briefed the Security Council on the dire situation.

"For nearly 10 months now, Palestinians and Israelis have lived through untold suffering, grief, sorrow, and loss. More than two million people in Gaza remain trapped in an endless nightmare of death and destruction on a staggering scale," Ms. De Meo told ambassadors. "Their lives are dominated by fear, thirst, hunger, disease, dehumanization, lack of basic sanitation, and repeated displacement. It is a relentless and often hourly struggle, day in and day out. Famine remains a risk, including in southern Gaza. Communicable diseases are on the rise." The situation is particularly alarming for the 625,000 children in the enclave, deeply traumatized and with their futures at risk. Most UNRWA schools—places of learning for about half of the children, and now used as shelters by the displaced—have been destroyed or severely damaged in Israeli military operations. Eight were struck in the past two weeks alone.

Prior to 7 October last year—the day Hamas and Palestinian armed groups brutally attacked Israeli communities, and the ensuing Israeli military operation—the agency operated 183 schools across the Gaza Strip.

According to reports, more than 38,000 people have been killed, and over 88,000 injured.

Furthermore, the threat of deadly communicable diseases continues to grow by the day against a backdrop of mountains of garbage and sewage overflowing through settlements of displaced people.

People with pre-existing conditions such as cancer, kidney failure, or diabetes are also unable to access the lifesaving treatment they need.



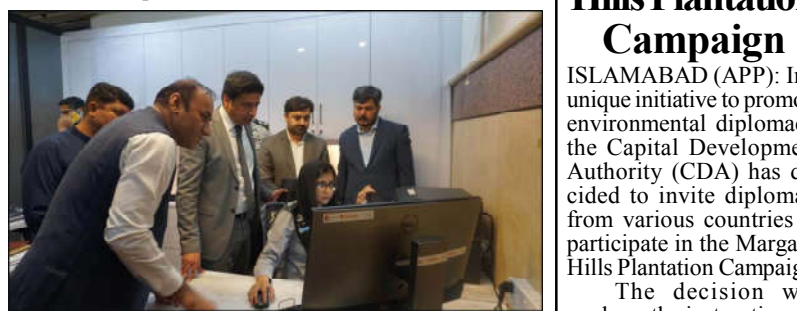
QUETTA: Parliamentary Secretary S&GAD Mir Liaquat Lehari listening problems of people at his office.

FIA Immigration operationalizes 2nd Line Border Control Office at Allama Iqbal Airport

Independent Report
LAHORE: FIA Immigration has operationalized a Second Line Border Control Office at Allama Iqbal International Airport, Lahore.

The office was provided with state-of-the-art forensic and IT equipment to curb irregular migration.

Director Lahore Zone, Mr. Sarfraz Virk, was



This was achieved with the support of ICMPD project funded by Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The FIA has been briefed on the usage of this advanced equipment and its effectiveness in enhancing the FIA's capability to detect fake and forged travel documents.

Weather forecast: Hot and humid weather expected in most districts of Balochistan

Independent Report
QUETTA: According to the Regional Meteorological Center Balochistan, most districts of the province will experience hot and humid weather on Saturday, while the mountainous districts will have partly cloudy skies.

Sunday to Bring Extremely Hot and Humid Weather in Most Districts However, there is a possibility of rain with thunderstorms in Sibi, Dera Bugti, Naseerabad, Kohlu, Zhub, Musakhel, Barkhan, Musakhel, Sherani, Kohlu, Harnai, Sibi, Naseerabad, and Jafarabad from July 29 to July 31.

Records. The highest temperature of 47°C was recorded in Dalbandin during the last 24 hours, followed by Nokundi (46°C), Panjur (44°C), Turbat (43°C), Sibi (40°C), Lasbela and Quetta (39°C), and Gwadar (38°C).

Predicted Rainfall and Thunderstorms

There is a possibility of rain with thunderstorms in Khuzdar, Kalat, Lasbela, Awaran, Panjur, Kech, Ziarat, Zhub, Barkhan, Musakhel, Sherani, Kohlu, Harnai, Sibi, Naseerabad, and Jafarabad from July 29 to July 31.



QUETTA: Voice for Baloch Missing Persons Chairman, Nasrullah Baloch along with others addresses to media persons during press conference held at protest camp outside Quetta press club

NDMA engages in discussions with disaster management counterparts in Thailand

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) delegation, led by Chairman NDMA Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik, actively participated in the 5th Board of Trustees meeting of Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC).

This collaborative effort aims to enhance disaster resilience across the region. The delegation also paid a visit to the Thai Military Department of Development and Disaster Relief Training Center, a news release said.

This exchange promotes knowledge sharing and capacity building in disaster management and relief efforts. NDMA team engaged with Thai Disaster Prevention & Mitigation Department and visited their Emergency Operation Center. Whereby the discussions centered around disaster risk reduction strategies and cooperation.

During visits, Chairman NDMA highlighted the efforts regarding Anticipatory Actions in Pakistan and how these actions can be implemented in Thailand according to their hazard profile. Similarly, Pakistan would be interested in learning from Thailand's Anticipatory Actions protocols as well as identification of areas of mutual interest with NDMA's Think Tank National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM).

He briefed about Pakistan's status as the chair of INSARAG (International Search and Rescue Advisory Group) of Asia Pacific for 2024. He urged Pakistan and Thailand could coordinate by building partnerships with donors and financial institutions to secure resources for climate resilience projects.

To enhance collaborative efforts, he proposed joint simulation exercises specifically designed for Search & Rescue teams. Pak NDMA also invited members of the ADPC board of trustees.



KARACHI: A delegation of Law Department Balochistan in a group photo with former judge Supreme Court Justice (Retd) Khilji Arif Hussain after meeting at ADR Center

National Party disclaims membership in committee on missing persons

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Central Spokesperson of the National Party has announced the disassociation of National Party leader and Provincial Assembly member Mir Rahmat Saleh Baloch from the committee formed by the Ministry of Interior regarding missing persons.

The National Party's Parliamentary Leader stated that they are neither members of any committee formed by the government nor will they be, and that the party's parliamentary leadership was not taken into confidence regarding this matter.

The spokesperson emphasized that the National Party does not recognize or endorse any committee established by the government on the issue of missing persons.

SC orders overhaul of air pollution regulations, demands progress report

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Supreme Court of Pakistan has mandated a comprehensive revision of air pollution regulations, emphasizing the need for stringent measures to combat environmental degradation.

In a detailed 17-page order issued by Justice Mansoor Ali Shah on July 11, the court underscored the fundamental right of every citizen to live in a clean and transparent environment. The ruling highlights the severe impact of air pollution, citing that one in nine global deaths is attributed to it, with the World Health Organization reporting 7 million annual deaths due to pollution.

The court's order notes that Pakistan, along with Bangladesh, India, and Nepal, ranks among the most polluted countries, with Pakistan being the second most polluted nation globally. It highlights the dire consequences of pollution, including increased risks of cancer and heart diseases affecting both humans and wildlife.

The Supreme Court has specifically directed the immediate closure of three stone crushing plants in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) responsible for severe environmental pollution. Additionally, the court has ordered a review of 900 other stone crushing plants operating in KP by the provincial environmental protection agency.

Federal and provincial governments are now required to revise their air pollution regulations and submit a progress report. The court has scheduled further hearings on the case for the first week of November to assess the progress of these critical reforms.



MUZAFFARABAD: Attempts are being made to remove the vehicles stuck in the landslide at Dulai. Dismayed passengers are standing on the roof of the vehicle.

JUI-F backs JI protest against inflation

ISLAMABAD (INP): The leader of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam – Fazl (JUI-F) has voiced support for Jamaat-e-Islami's ongoing protest against rising inflation in Islamabad.

The JUI-F leader, Aslam Ghori highlighting the dire consequences faced by citizens due to the inflation and economic crisis.

He emphasized the severe impact of inflation, stating, "People are committing suicide because of inflation."

He condemned the government's raids on the homes of political workers, calling such actions a "travesty of democracy."

The JUI-F leader argued that setting up barricades to block protesters would only escalate tensions further.