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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting on the matters related to Power Division, Ministry of Energy.

PM Shahbaz vows to tackle power issues, streamlining energy matters on priority

"Whole-of-the-government approach should be adopted to resist power theft"

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday expressed the government's resolve to stop electricity theft, reduce line losses, and improve the power distribution system across the country.

He informed that recently the government had appointed new board chairmen and members in five power distribution companies (DISCOs) through a transparent process. He hoped that these appointments would further improve the performance of DISCOs.

Presiding over a meeting held here to review the matters of Power ministry, the prime minister directed the Power Minister and Secretary Power Division to coordinate with the provinces concerning halting the electricity theft, performance of DISCOs and other matters of the sector.

"A whole of the government approach should be

adopted to resist power theft across the country," the prime minister said.

He directed the provincial governments to maintain the number of police force and Tehsildars as per the DISCOs' needs. He also ordered the concerned authorities to deal with the corrupt elements in the power distribution companies with an iron hand and take strict action against them.

He directed DISCOs to make the kutchehri system more effective and result-oriented for public complaints. PM Shehbaz said that the steering committee formed to shift agriculture tube wells to solar energy in Balochistan should convene immediately.

The meeting was informed that the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) regarding the transfer of agricultural tube wells in Balochistan to solar energy had been notified to the Steering Committee. The meeting was further informed that a package was being prepared regarding the acknowledgement of officers who had shown good performance.

Tarar accuses PTI of anti-national agenda linked to Indian connections

Information minister alleges PTI of aligning with foreign adversaries to further its agenda against Pakistan; Raof Hasan's ties with Indian journalist exposed PTI; Indians bankrolled PTI and calls it "foreign-funded" party; Now, it is understandable why May 9 riots took place; "Faiz-Niazi nexus" embodied "worst example" of hostility towards state

ISLAMABAD (APP): Information Minister Ataulah Tarar criticised the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party, alleging that its connections with Indian elements have exposed its anti-national agenda.

He accused PTI of aligning with foreign adversaries to further its agenda against Pakistan, specifically citing interactions between PTI leader Raof Hasan and Indian journalists as evidence.

Tarar claimed that the collaboration between PTI's founder and Faiz Hameed, along with the party's engagement with anti-Pakistan journalists across the eastern border

and decisions to bring extremist elements back via the western border, represents a severe betrayal of national interests.

He asserted that Hasan's communication with an Indian journalist, known for anti-Pakistan sentiments, has further revealed PTI's disloyalty to the country.

The information minister asserted that PTI, funded by foreign sources, has previously damaged Pakistan's foreign policy through controversial diplomatic channels and is now jeopardising national integrity by relying on foreign patrons.

The minister pointed



out that Hasan's interaction with the Indian journalist mirrored PTI's broader agenda of undermining Pakistan's sovereignty. He suggested that this aligns with the attacks on May 9 and the party's Islamabad-based social media cell, which has been implicated in anti-army propaganda with links to India.

Tarar accused PTI of pursuing a foreign-sponsored agenda that promotes chaos and destabilisation in Pakistan.

He further alleged that the party's foreign funding and recent interactions with Indian journalists confirm its alignment with hostile foreign agendas against Pakistan.

He also criticised Hameed as a significant player in PTI's strategy to create instability and weaken Pakistan's institutions. The information minister emphasised that the collaboration between Faiz, Imran Khan, and Bushra Bibi (Khan's spouse) has led to damag-

ing country's interests and undermining military cohesion.

In conclusion, Tarar claimed that this alliance has orchestrated anti-military rhetoric to incite unrest among serving and retired officers, aiming to create the illusion of confusion and division within the Pakistani military.

Meanwhile Minister for Information, Broadcasting, Culture and National Heritage Ataulah Tarar on Sunday said the anti-state decisions made by the "Faiz-Niazi nexus" had been emerged as the "worst example" of the hostility towards the country.



KARACHI: President Asif Ali Zardari planting a "Neem" sapling at Bilawal House as part of the Monsoon Tree Plantation Campaign.

President for enhancing national forest coverage to mitigate impacts of climate change

KARACHI (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari had called for enhancing the national forest coverage by planting more trees to help mitigate the adverse impacts of climate change and global warming.

He said that Pakistan was one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change and global warming, and urged the youth and civil society in helping increase forest cover and planting more trees to mitigate their adverse impacts.

The President expressed these views while planting a "Neem" sapling at Bilawal House, Karachi, as a part of the annual Monsoon Tree Plantation Campaign on Sunday (August 18) also marks the National Tree Plantation day in Pakistan.

Speaking on the occasion, the President said that "Neem" was an environment friendly tree, offering

numerous environmental benefits, such as clean air, cool shade and acting as a natural mosquito repellent.

He recalled that during Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Shaheed's first tenure as Prime Minister, he had served as the Minister for Climate and had initiated a tree plantation campaign, wherein Neem trees were planted throughout the country.

He said that the need to plant trees had become of paramount importance in view of the rising temperatures in Pakistan.

President Asif Ali Zardari urged the nation, particularly the youth and civil society, to actively participate in the Monsoon Tree Plantation Campaign and plant as many trees as possible in their neighborhoods and surroundings for a better environment.

The President stated

that Monsoon Tree Plantation Campaign was a great opportunity to enhance forest cover, increase greenery in Pakistan, and make our environment healthy and clean. He remarked that enhancing forests and greenery would make our environment healthier and safer for our future generations.

The President said that Pakistan had undertaken successful mangrove restoration, under which mangroves on millions of acres of land had been planted in Sindh. "We are working with commitment to further enhance mangroves cover and plant more trees", he added.

The President said that all segments of society should actively participate in tree plantation campaigns to bring down the temperatures, increase greenery and forest coverage.

Maryam, Nawaz discuss education, health issues with British HC

LAHORE (APP): British High Commissioner (HC) Jane Marriott met Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz and Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N) President Nawaz Sharif on Sunday and discussed education, health, climate change issues in Pakistan.

The meeting held in Murree also discussed increasing education opportunities for students from Punjab in the top universities of the UK.

The Punjab chief minister informed the British HC about sustainable measures being taken for elimination of environmental pollution. During the meeting, it was agreed to benefit from mutual skills to deal with the challenges of climate change.

Maryam informed the British high commissioner about the key performance

indicator (KPI) system for monitoring the police and administration to improve the quality of governance, including the ongoing initiatives for Digital Punjab. The Punjab CM invited British institutions to invest in Nawaz Sharif IT City. She was also informed about the solar panel project in Punjab. She said that Punjab had entered the digitization era and soon it would be leading. The British institutions would be welcomed to establish IT universities, Nawaz Sharif IT Tower projects in Lahore. The City and Twin Towers project are fast approaching completion.

The chief minister appreciated the participation of foreign, Commonwealth and development offices in education and other sectors.



MURREE: British High Commissioner Jane Marriott meeting with Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz and PML-N President Nawaz Sharif

Bilawal seeks report from CM Sindh about damages due to rains

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has sought a detailed report from the Chief Minister of Sindh, Syed Murad Ali Shah, regarding the damage caused by the ongoing rains across the province and the measures taken by the provincial government to assist the affected people.

According to a press release issued by the Media Cell Bilawal House, Chairman PPP expressed his deep concern over the damage caused by the heavy rains in various

parts of Sindh. He instructed the chief minister to provide a comprehensive report on the damages and relief efforts in Sukkur, Larkana, Khairpur, and other areas across the province.

Bilawal Bhutto remarked that the Sukkur and Larkana divisions are once again bearing the brunt of climate change effects.

He directed the mayors of Sukkur and Larkana to ensure the swift drainage of rainwater from the low-lying areas of these cities.



TURBAT: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi laying floral wreath at the Yadgar-e-Shuhada in Frontier Corps Balochistan (South) Headquarters.

11 die, several injured in rain-related incidents

KARACHI (INP): In various rooftop, wall collapse and electrocution incidents during heavy rainfall 11 people were killed and several other injured across the country.

A house's rooftop caved in in Attock's Pindi Ghaeb area leaving four people dead.

Moreover, a four-year little girl died and three other injured in another rooftop collapse incident in Sadiqabad district during rainfall.

Meanwhile, a man electrocuted to death in Tabba Sultanpur area.

The rooftop of a house collapsed in Jacobabad's Garhi Khairo town leaving a mother and son dead. The rain-related incidents claimed three lives in Sindh's Jacobabad district during last 24 hours.

Lightning kills two in Khuzdar

QUETTA (APP): Two persons were killed in lightning strikes as rain lashes parts of the Balochistan province.

Levis officials said that lightning strikes incident was reported in Sarona area of Khuzdar. At least two people and eleven goats died as a result of lightning, it added.

The dead bodies were shifted to hospital for medico-legal formalities.

Visits FC South Headquarter: All stakeholders ought to come on one page for sustainable dev. of Balochistan: Naqvi

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Federal Interior Minister, Mohsin Naqvi has stated that all stakeholders would have to come on one page for sustainable development of Balochistan.

He said that prosperity and development of Balochistan is linked with sustainable peace.

He underlined the need to take comprehensive measures for empowering youth of the province.

He said that Frontier Corps (FC) South is on the frontline to foil the nefarious designs of Fitna al Khawarij.

Shaza refutes reports of internet slowdowns or closures

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Shaza Fatima Khawaja Saturday, refuted reports that the government had slowed down or closed the internet nationwide.

Addressing a press conference, she said, "The news circulating on social media that the government is throttling the internet is completely baseless and has no reality."

She further clarified that issues with certain apps were causing difficulties in downloading, leading to an increase in VPN usage, which contributed to the slowdown in internet speeds. However, she said, "These issues have been resolved due to the government's efforts."

Technical experts and internet service providers were also consulted to address the situation, she added. Shaza Fatima said, "Internet providers, telecom companies, and the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) have been invited to a meeting next week to ensure that



consumers do not face similar issues in the future."

Supreme Court delists election tribunal case

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Supreme Court on Sunday delisted the election tribunal case. A five-member bench, headed by Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa, was scheduled to hear the case on Monday, August 19.

PTI's lawyer Salman Akram Raja filed a request for postponement, stating that senior lawyer Hamid Khan is abroad until Sept 6.

The request asked for the case to be postponed until Hamid Khan returns, as he has also submitted a leave application.



KHANEWAL: Chairman Senate Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani talking to media persons after the Convocation of the Punjab College Mian Channu.

Efforts being made to extend relief, basic facilities to masses: Gilani

MIAN CHANNU (APP): Chairman Senate, Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani, on Sunday, stated that every possible effort was underway to extend relief and basic facilities to the masses and they should be relieved of inflation.

He expressed these views while addressing a convocation as the chief guest at a private college.

"We are giving the incumbent government the right advice, and I am hopeful that we will soon steer the country out of crises and set it on the path to progress. All political parties should play their role in the country's development and prosperity", he maintained.

Gilani congratulated the students who completed their degrees, especially their parents. He said that the youth should make the nation proud with their education and skills and it must become an essential part of the country's economic development along

with their families. The educated youth needs to bring about significant change in society through their acquired education, he said and added that they should introduce new research and innovations in their respective fields.

"Our youth is second to none in terms of talent and capability", Chairman Senate observed.

Later, speaking to the media, he said that Arshad Nadeem was a national hero and he commended him for winning a gold medal for the country in the Paris Olympics.

He said that their elders were among those who made Pakistan, and the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) has rendered great sacrifices for the restoration of democracy. The 1973 constitution given by the late Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was a monumental achievement while differences of opinion were the beauty of democracy, he informed.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Politics of subsidies

That the ongoing electricity crisis could result in political difficulties for the government was obvious from PML-N leader Nawaz Sharif's 'address to the nation' on Friday. The fact that the party supremo himself announced power sops for middle-class consumers confirms that he is making a frantic effort to avert a political crisis in his erstwhile stronghold of Punjab.

Clearly, he wants to rectify the sagging support for his party and is willing to invest personal capital in the pursuit of voters that the party appears to have lost to inflation in general and the escalating energy prices in particular. Mr Sharif also seems to believe that he still has higher approval ratings than his daughter, the Punjab chief minister, and his brother, the prime minister. This would explain why he announced the electricity subsidies, a task that would normally fall to either the prime minister or chief minister.

The announcement of Punjab-specific electricity subsidies also highlights the issue of energy sector provincialisation — both by design and default. Encouraged by greater autonomy under the 18th Amendment, we have seen the provinces trying to gradually venture into cheaper, renewable and hydropower generation. Sindh and KP have also made some strides towards their own transmission network. Such moves indicate a growing awareness among the provinces of the difficulties faced by power consumers due to high prices and blackouts in low-recovery areas.

However, while the problem exists across the country, the Punjab government's ability to divert Rs45bn from its budget towards significant consumer subsidies — for users of up to 500 units per month during August and September — is a step that only a province flush with cash can afford. Others, especially KP and Balochistan, are still facing significant financial distress in spite of their increased share from the federal tax divisible pool under the NFC award. In fact, both provinces are struggling to balance their budgets and produce the surplus required by the centre to contain the consolidated fiscal deficit within IMF-prescribed limits. Even Sindh has limited room for such subsidies for its citizens in case the PPP wants to follow suit.

While the ruling party expects this relief measure to help it politically in Punjab, the step is not going to sit well with voters from the other provinces. There is every possibility that the anger over power prices there will turn towards the PML-N. Nonetheless, the loss of support in smaller provinces should be less of a worry for the party leadership.

The bigger issue is how the IMF, whose executive board is expected to approve the recently concluded \$7bn deal, reacts to it. The lender had not taken very kindly to a similar subsidy announced by the federal government for lifeline consumers. Will it ignore Punjab's extravagance?

Brick in the wall

Muna Khan

I had to join Facebook, Twitter and Slack when I started graduate school in 2016 — for different messaging purposes. I thought all of this could be done on WhatsApp but then, it was not a popular app in the US. My Chinese classmates, meanwhile, found all the apps 'primitive' as they could do so much more back home on WeChat — from messaging to gaming to paying utilities to live streaming.

But you don't have internet freedoms like we do, American students would say, oblivious to Mark Zuckerberg's attempts to chip away at their privacy or how platforms were acquiescing in authoritarian governments' requests to take content down. The few discussions I witnessed in class came off as some sort of nationalism, years of being taught their country was the good guy keeping the bad guy out.

In case you didn't know, the US military paved the way for the internet to be built when the US defence department set up Advanced Research Projects Agency, which created Arpanet in the late 1960s, to allow research institutes to communicate with armed institutes' agencies through a large-scale computer network. That was born from a fear of Soviet attack. The Soviets were attempting to create what we now refer to as the internet, roughly a year after Arpanet, but could not.

Technology has long been used to keep 'enemies' out. Someone or something is always trying to be the gatekeeper of information but the internet has disrupted everything since its birth in 1983. The more it has evolved, the more the attempts to clamp down on it, almost always in the name of security.

Techno-nationalism

— how countries link innovations to identity, stability and national interests — aims to influence global power. Donald Trump, for example, black-listed Huawei Technology over spying concerns in 2019 but thanks to Chinese government support, the company made a remarkable comeback. The US is reportedly thinking of co-opting US allies in a "broader containment campaign" and exploring additional sanctions, reports Bloomberg.

When China created the great firewall in 2000 that is being referenced in conversations about the reported Rs30 billion firewall in place here, it did so to keep foreign influence out, it says. Its techno-nationalism led it to hold an advantage over others (though at the cost of civil liberties). Technological innovations, for example, increase job opportunities, investment and economic growth, maybe even exports if other countries become reliant on your country's technology. This can also lead to global competition as we're witnessing in the China-US rivalry.

In the decade since it created the Made in China 2025 plan, the country may just be able to achieve what it set out to do: reduce dependency on foreign supply chains in industries like AI, robotics and self-driving cars. China's plan is viewed as a threat by, and to, the West.

I'm sure it led to Joe Biden passing the Chips and Science Act, 2022, which gave \$280bn in new funding to boost domestic research and manufacturing of semiconductors in the US. It also gave billions in subsidies for chip manufacturing, billions to public sector research in the sciences, and many incentives aimed at strengthening the country's supply chain with the aim of countering China.

And now, onto our

techno-nationalism which, in a word, is 'cringe', irrespective of who is in charge. It aims to globally isolate us, without giving us tools to enable us to build or empower. We don't have a Chinese superapp like Weibo. We have Vigos and we all know their purpose.

An entire country is being made to pay for the so-called sins of one political party. This is essentially what this firewall is about. This wall's creators, implementers and def-enders have never had to worry about making ends meet.

At the time of writing, the Pakis-tan Software Housing Association warned the country could lose at least \$300 million due to disruptions caused by the firewall. Businessmen are warning of dire consequences. Freelancers have complained of lost opportunities on sites like Fiverr. My friend Mohsin, a fashion designer, told me he has not received an order online in 10 days which is highly unusual. I won't even bother about civil liberties because they have never mattered in the country but I hope they will matter now that the internet has slowed for everyone.

Anything grounded in nationalism produces greater harm because it prioritises security over civil liberties, and favours the wealthy (corporates) who influence policymaking to suit their interests. It clashes with Pakistan's diverse population. Another solution is needed, one grounded in sense and sensibilities. We can't afford the isolation and chaos this firewall is going to bring. Someone explain this to the men in charge, who have much to lose if they go ahead with this firewall.

-- Courtesy Dawn

Indian foreign policy

Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry

When it started its life as an independent country in 1947, India chose a foreign policy that would keep it 'non-aligned' in the polarised environment created by the US-USSR Cold War. India leaned towards the Soviet Union, maintained rather cold relations with the US, sought friendly ties with China premised on the Panchsheel (the five principles of peaceful coexistence), and saw itself as a member of the developing world. In South Asia, it embarked on a hostile relationship with Pakistan for separating from so-called 'Mother India'.

Decades later, India's foreign policy has undergone a paradigm shift, particularly since the dawn of the 21st century. With the US pivot to Asia, India has become the partner of choice for America's Indo-Pacific Strategy that seeks to contain the further rise of China. India's relations with China remain tension-ridden, even though both countries have flourishing economic and commercial ties. With Russia, India maintains a close relationship, notwithstanding the fact that the US-led West and Russia are at daggers drawn over the prospect of Ukraine joining Nato. India is, thus, playing a tight balancing act in its relations with the major powers. It describes its present foreign policy as the pursuit of national interests through 'strategic autonomy'.

With UN-led universal multilateralism on the retreat, India has entered into several mutually incompatible multi-alignments, such as BRICS, SCO, and QUAD. It considers itself a leader of the Global South, and has deepened its ties with East Asia and Africa.

What has helped India maintain largely posi-

tive relations with all major powers is its growing economy and stable democracy. As the world's fifth largest economy, it has sufficient buying power to purchase expensive military hardware from diverse sources, attract foreign investments for its growing economy, particularly its road and rail infrastructure, and enhance manifold its trade with the rest of the world. The Indian diaspora has been mobilised to project a positive image of the country. At the same time, however, divisive Hindutva nationalism, demonisation of minorities, and massive unemployment and high inflation have tarnished its stature.

While a lot has changed in India's global profile, what has not is its foreign policy towards its South Asian neighbours. India continues with its hostile posture towards Pakistan, and pursues a competitive, even rival relationship with China. Its policy to engage only with non-Taliban Afghan groups has failed. It has also bullied Nepal through economic embargos and the occupation of part of its territory. In the south, Sri Lanka often faces tough choices in its relations with both India and China. Bangladesh, surrounded on three sides by India, has experienced suffocating Indian dominance, particularly under Sheikh Hasina Wajed who recently fled to India. The Maldives has often demonstrated its discontent with Indian interference. Consequently, India's 'Neighbourhood First' policy is in the doldrums, undermining its global ambitions.

Central to India's overbearing attitude towards its South Asian neighbours is the China factor. India is unhappy with China's close ties with Pakistan and Chinese attempts to enter into cooperative relations with Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, the Maldives, and even Bhutan whose foreign policy is controlled by India. These countries find China's BRI projects a lucrative option and wish to exercise their own 'strategic autonomy' to benefit from the investments regardless of the Sino-India competition. India needs to recognise the legitimate right of its neighbours to be-neath from the in-vestment opportunities that accompany cooperative engagement with China.

Pakistan is one country that has never accepted Indian hegemony in South Asia. This has been reason enough for India to make every effort to isolate it. The Kashmir dispute is unresolved because of India's refusal to let Kashmir exercise its right to self-determination. India has suspended all contact with Pakistan, especially since 2016, and chosen to demonise the country by harping on the mantra of cross-border terrorism. In fact, it is Pakistan which now faces India-sponsored terrorism. However, since India's economy has done well and is a large market, in contrast with Pakistan's, the world tends to lend a more sympathetic ear to Indian narratives.

For South Asia, India is the elephant in the room. The entire region would benefit if India gave up its dominating posture, and let other South Asian countries exercise the same strategic autonomy vis-à-vis India that the latter wishes to have vis-à-vis the US, China, and Russia. Taking the region along would help India build up its global profile that it cherishes. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

Govt's tourism initiative to put Pakistan's hidden gems on Map: CM's Aide

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to the Chief Minister on Information Eiman Shah on Sunday highlighted the government's focus on promoting tourism, leveraging the country's unique natural treasures to attract visitors and drive economic growth.

Pakistan's hidden treasures, long waiting to be discovered, are now being polished for the world to see thanks to the government's new tourism initiative, Eiman Shah said while talking to PTV news channel.

the Chief Minister said Pakistan is home to a treasure trove of unexplored natural beauty, rich cultural heritage, and ancient history, waiting to be polished and presented to the global community.

Shah noted that the government's tourism promotion strategy includes infrastructure development, facilitation of travel procedures and marketing campaigns to showcase Pakistan's unique cultural and natural heritage.

This multi-pronged approach aims to attract a significant increase in

tourist arrivals, generating revenue and creating employment opportunities, he mentioned.

The Special Assistant also highlighted the government's efforts to promote sustainable tourism practices, ensuring that the growth of the sector benefits local communities and preserves the country's natural environment. By engaging with stakeholders and implementing eco-friendly initiatives, the government aims to create a responsible and thriving tourism industry, he highlighted.



SARGODHA: A mechanic busy repairing bicycle at Liaquat Market.

Local tractors assembling registered 45.74% growth in FY 2023-24

ISLAMABAD (APP): Tractors assembling in the country during the financial year ended on June 30, 2024 witnessed growth of 45.74 percent as compared to the production of the corresponding period of the last year.

During the period from July-June 2023-24, about 46,272 tractors were locally produced as compared to the production of 31,752 tractors of the same period of the last financial year, according to the provisional Quantum Index Numbers of Large Scale Manufacturing Industries (QIM) for June 2024,

released by the Pakistan bureau of Statistics.

The overall Large Scale Manufacturing Industries (LSMI) sector has shown a growth of 0.92 percent during the period from July-June 2023-24 when compared with the same period of last. The LSMI output decreased by 0.03% for June, 2024 when compared with June, 2023 and 4.70% when compared with May 2024, it added.

The production in July-June 2023-24 as compared to July-June 2022-23 has increased in food, wearing apparel, coke & petroleum products.

AC visits Sunday bazaar, fines price gougers

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a bid to protect consumers, Assistant Commissioner City Farhan Ahmad on Sunday conducted a surprise visit to the bustling G-6 Sunday bazaar, scrutinizing price lists and enforcing the plastic bag ban. According to the spokesman of ICT administration, Assistant Commissioner City, Farhan Ahmad, led a team to the G-6 Sunday Market to ensure compliance with price regulations. The officials inspected price lists at various stalls, taking action against two shopkeepers for overcharging customers. The visit aimed to enforce the government's directive on price control and plastic bag usage. On the occasion, he emphasized the ongoing efforts to implement the plastic bag ban, promoting eco-friendly alternatives. During the visit, citizens refused to purchase from vendors without displayed price lists.



LAHORE: People are buying vegetables in Sunday weekly bazaar at Shadman area in the Provincial Capital.

Ease of bilateral visa in Pak, Egypt to strengthen economic, trade ties

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Egypt to Pakistan, Dr. Ihab Abdel Hamid said that the ease of bilateral visas between Pakistan and Egypt will strengthen the economic and trade ties between the two countries and tourism sectors also flourish.

Egypt is also the centre of world tourism due to its historical heritage and Pakistan is also one of the most popular countries for tourism, the Ambassador said.

Diminishing cotton production affecting textile sector

MULTAN (APP): The breathable cotton fabric makes suitable attire given the hot weather conditions which at times turn extreme and is still the choice fabric for many whether at home in casual mood or out to enjoy a party. However, the fluffy cotton flowers that used to dominate the South Punjab landscape are not that much dominating these days. And textile sector does not like the story to go this way.

Khawaja Muhammad Usman, an Industrialist associated with textile and former president of Multan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) said that Pakistan agriculture does not grow as much cotton as the

Ambassador of Egypt to Pakistan, Dr. Ihab Abdel Hamid told APP in an exclusive talk that the northern regions of Pakistan are rich in natural beauty with beautiful landscapes, in which there are six highest mountain peaks in the world. He said that during his visit to Skardu, for the first time, he came to know about the northern regions of Pakistan and the lush green fields Desai region in Skardu is most attractive for world tourists.

Diminishing cotton production affecting textile sector

textile millers' need, to spin, weave and stitch enough yarn, fabric and garments that can turn cotton chain into a smart forex earning machine. The operations chain of cotton economy employs a larger work force from field to ginning factories and onward to textile mills and garment factories.

Pakistan's total work force, according to Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) survey 2020-21, was 71.76 million out of which 67.25 million were employed. Over 37.4 per cent were associated with agriculture, and 37.2 per cent in services sector. Some 25.4 per cent human resources earn working for industry, a significant

The ambassador said that the role of the private sector is very important to increase cooperation in the field of tourism between Pakistan and Egypt, for which the business community of both countries must play their due role in this regard.

He said that Pakistan and Egypt are bound in historical, religious and cultural relations which cover many dimensions, and we have to make the new generation aware of our historical heritage.

Indonesian Expo 2024 in Capital City attracts public attention

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Embassy of Indonesia in Islamabad has been successfully attracting more public attention through the a three-day Indonesian Expo 2024.

The Expo is the first of its kind ever held from August 16-18th 2024, having the iconic shopping center, as part of a series of events to commemorate the 79th Anniversary of the Indonesian Independence Day held at the Centaurus Mall, said a press release issued here on Sunday.

The Indonesian Expo aimed to provide a vibrant cultural backdrop to the business-oriented events as well as programs related to

people-to-people contact. Among schedules on the stage are traditional and cultural shows including Indonesian martial arts called Pencak Silat, creative and religious performances by Indonesian students in Pakistan, and theme-based discussions on crucial issues to bring Indonesia and Pakistan closer in trade, tourism, and investment as well as education and religious moderation. Many options are available during the Expo to elevate public awareness about Indonesia. Thousands of enthusiastic visitors enjoyed the Expo atmosphere by visiting photo booths designed in an iconic Indonesian heritage background.



PESHAWAR: President All Tribal Contractors Association, Haji Zahir Jan addressing a press conference at Peshawar Press Club.

Governor Kundi worries about worsening law and order situation in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi on Sunday emphasized the critical issue of maintaining peace in the province. He said that the situation was dire when judges themselves were not safe, highlighting the deteriorating conditions in the province. The Governor said this during a meeting with a delegation from the Peoples Lawyers Forum led by Sardar Hashmat Nawaz Khan Saddozai. The meeting included key figures such as Shah Fahad Ansari Advocate

Supreme Court and Divisional President of Peoples Lawyers Forum, Sardar Adnan Saddozai District President, Sardar Hizbullah Khan Gundapur Divisional General Secretary, Sardar Qaiser Zaib District General Secretary, and Abid Awan Advocate District General Secretary of Pakistan Peoples Party. Also present were Gohar Rahman Khattak, Provincial President of the People's Lawyers Forum, and Lajbar Khan Khaleel, Provincial General Secretary. Advocate Kundi assured that he would

contact the Chairman of the State Life Insurance Corporation regarding benefits for lawyers. He also proposed that land be identified for a lawyers' colony in Dera Ismail Khan. In addition, he suggested that a judicial complex be established in the Tank area, discussing the matter with the Federal Minister for Law. The Governor proposed allocating a quota for young lawyers in the Judicial Academy that would address the issue of starting LL.M. classes at Gomal University.



PESHAWAR: Members of Christian Community are enlightened candles as they are marking 1st anniversary of Jaranwala Incident, in Peshawar.

Punjab IG instructs all regions to eliminate criminal gangs

LAHORE (APP): Inspector General of Police Punjab, Dr. Usman Anwar, has said that zero tolerance should be ensured for delays in registering FIRs, restricting complainants, and corruption, with strict action to be taken.

He expressed these views while giving instructions to officers during a meeting he chaired at the Central Police Office. He emphasized that the crackdown for arrest of A-category proclaimed offenders should be made more effective, and the rate of challans and recovery should be further

improved. He instructed that DNA samples in cases of abuse against women and children be sent immediately for forensic analysis. In high-profile cases, the quality of investigation and compliance of issued protocols must be ensured at all costs. The IG directed all regions to eliminate criminal gangs and resolve pending complaints on 1787 and the CM Portal within the given timeline. He appreciated the performance of DPOs in districts, including Khushab and Bhakkar.

Flash flooding alert issued in South Punjab districts

LAHORE (APP): The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) has issued a flash flooding alert for several districts in south Punjab over the next 36 hours due to heavy rains on Sunday. The affected areas include the divisions of Dera Ghazi Khan, Multan and Bahawalpur, with a significant risk of flash flooding, particularly in the hills of Dera Ghazi Khan. The commissioners of Dera Ghazi Khan, Multan, and Bahawalpur, along with the Deputy Commissioners of Rajanpur, Kot Adu, Layyah, Muzaffargarh, Khanewal, Lodhran, Vehari, Rahim Yar Khan, and Bahawalnagar, have been placed on high alert. Director General PDMA Irfan Ali Kathia has instructed all relevant departments to stay vigilant and be prepared to handle any emergency situations. Continuous monitoring of the situation is being conducted from the PDMA control room, which operates 24/7. Rescue services, including 1122, are on standby with machinery and staff ready for immediate response.



KHANEWAL: Chairman Senate Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani addressing during the Convocation of the Punjab College Mian Channu.

PMA demands ad-hoc, contractual doctors to be regularised

MULTAN (APP): Pakistan Medical Association (PMA) on Sunday demanded of govt that adhoc and contract doctors be regularized through executive notification and hiring should not be made through locum. Addressing a joint news conference participated by doctors of 25 districts of Punjab at a local hotel, PMA Punjab stated that if Punjab healthcare commission did not meet their demands by September 16, they will be forced to hold sit-in.

PMA Punjab President Dr. Col (Retd) Ghulam Shabbir, PMA

Multan President Dr. Masood ur Rauf Hiraj, PMA Lahore President Dr. Ashraf Nizami, and others stated that the Punjab Healthcare Commission (PHC) has started closing down healthcare facilities. No action is being taken against quackery, and doctors are being unfairly targeted. They condemned the hiring of loving and added that 70 pc of healthcare services were being provided by the private sector, and despite unfavorable conditions, doctors are continuing to work.

DG PARD presents shield to CEO PCP

PESHAWAR (APP): The Director General of Pakistan Academy for Rural Development (PARD) Cpt Adnan Gul has praised the services of Dr Syed Muhammad Ilyas, CEO Paraplegic Center Peshawar (PCP) for the treatment and rehabilitation of patients disabled by spinal cord injuries as well as running the hospital in an efficient manner. He said that this unique medical institution in the entire South Asia will

further march ahead under his leadership. In this regard, he presented a shield to Dr. Muhammad Ilyas on behalf of PARD in a simple ceremony organized in the academy, and declared him as the best teacher for the under training administrative officers. He said that apart from Dr. Ilyas' professional approach, the trainee officers are also appreciative for the medical, social and teaching services of the Paraplegic Center which is a matter of honor.

PDMA rejects rumors of water discharge from India

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Punjab has denied reports circulating in the media that India has released 200,000 cusecs of water into Pakistan. In a statement released on Sunday, the PDMA clarified that no significant water discharge from India has been observed beyond normal levels. The PDMA emphasized that the information attributed to them in various media outlets is incorrect, and no such statement or press release has been issued by the authority.

ANF recovers 78 kg drugs in eight operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting eight operations across the country managed to recover 78 kg drugs and arrested nine accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman. He informed that 2.8 kg ice was recovered from two passengers going to Saudi Arabia and Bahrain at Islamabad Airport. 40.8 kg hashish and 2.4 kg opium were recovered in two different operations conducted near M-1 Islamabad while two accused were rounded up.

Punjab Governor says: People to people contact between Tajikistan, Pak need to be enhanced

Independent Report LAHORE: The ambassador of Republic of Tajikistan, Yusuf Sharifzoda called on Punjab Governor, Sardar Saleem Haider Khan at Governor House Lahore. Honorary Consul General of Tajikistan Mian Nazir Ahmad was also with him. In the meeting, issues of mutual interest, strengthening of bilateral relations between Pakistan and Tajikistan in the fields of trade, culture and education were discussed. Talking on this occasion, Punjab Governor, Sardar Salim Haider Khan said that Pakistan and

Tajikistan have deep brotherly relations due to common religion and culture. The two sides expressed determination to enhance relations in every sector, especially in the field of trade. Governor Punjab said that there are investment opportunities for foreign investors in various sectors in Pakistan and Tajik investors can benefit from the facilities given to businessmen through the Special Economic Facilitation Council. He said that business activities should increase between Pakistan and Tajikistan.



LAHORE: The ambassador of Republic of Tajikistan, Yusuf Sharifzoda called on Punjab Governor, Sardar Saleem Haider Khan at Governor House.

Detractors jealous of Punjab CM's performance: Arora

LAHORE (APP): Provincial Minister for Minorities Affairs Ramesh Singh Arora, in a statement issued here on Sunday, said the excellent performance of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz had made her detractors jealous, which was a clear proof of success of the Punjab government. "The performance of Punjab is being appreciated worldwide, which is a honour for Maryam Nawaz and her team," he said in a statement. He said that a historic budget had been allocated for religious minorities in Punjab, aiming to ensure their

welfare. He emphasised that religious tourism was being promoted throughout the province, which would contribute to enhancing performance of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz and a practical demonstration of the government's commitment to serving people. The provincial minister described the decision to provide relief on electricity bills as a gift to the people of Punjab and announced that the Punjab government.

International News

Israeli strikes in Lebanon and Gaza leave 27 dead

Monitoring Desk BEIRUT: At least 27 people, including two children, were killed in Israeli air strikes, with around 10 fatalities in Nabatieh, south Lebanon, and at least 17 in the Gaza town of Zawayda, according to health officials.

The 10 victims of Israeli airstrike in south Lebanon were all Syrian citizens, state news agency NNA said, adding that a final toll of the strike would be announced after DNA tests were conducted to determine the identity of the victims.

The Israeli military said the airstrike targeted a weapons depot used by Hezbollah fighters.

The Israeli strike came after ceasefire talks between Palestinian Islamist group Hamas and Israel in Doha paused on Friday with negotiators due to meet again next week.

Hezbollah later said in a statement that it had struck the Ayelet Hashahar Kibbutz in northern Israel

in retaliation for the Nabatieh strike. Two soldiers were wounded in a rocket attack from Lebanon, the Israeli military said, adding that a total of 55 rockets had been fired in latest strikes from Lebanon.

Also on Saturday, an Israeli drone targeted a motorcycle in the Qadmous area east of Tyre in south Lebanon, NNA reported, adding that one person was injured. A security source said one person was killed in the motorcycle attack.

Tensions have soared in the region in recent weeks, after a rocket strike blamed on Hezbollah killed 12 children and teens in the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights. Israel responded with the killing of a top Hezbollah commander in the suburbs of Beirut.

At least 17 Palestinians were killed and dozens wounded in the Israeli strike in the Gaza town of Zawayda on Saturday, health officials said, as Is-

rael issued new evacuation orders, citing Hamas rocket fire nearby. Most of the people killed were from the same family and they included eight children and four women, according to health officials. Israel's military said it was aware of the reports of the strike and was looking into them.

"They were asleep in their beds, kids and babies, then three missiles targeted their place," said Abu Ahmed Hassan, a neighbour. The owner of the house was a known merchant, he said. "There are no military activities here at all," he added.

Israel's military spokesperson in Arabic posted instructions on X on Saturday for people in parts of central Gaza, including in Maghazi district which is near Zawayda, to evacuate to a designated humanitarian zone.

He said militants were firing rockets from those locations and that the military was preparing to act against them.



Palestinians stand at the site of an Israeli airstrike on a shelter housing displaced people, amid the conflict between Israel and Hamas, in central Gaza Strip.

Thai king endorses Paetongtarn Shinawatra as prime minister

Monitoring Desk BANGKOK: Paetongtarn Shinawatra was endorsed as prime minister by Thailand's king on Sunday, two days after parliament elected her, paving the way for her to form a cabinet in the coming weeks.

Paetongtarn, 37, becomes Thailand's youngest prime minister just days after ally Srettha Thavisin was dismissed as premier by the Constitutional Court, a judiciary

central to Thailand's two decades of intermittent political turmoil.

Daughter of divisive former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, Paetongtarn won by nearly two-thirds in a house vote on Friday to become Thailand's second female prime minister and the third Shinawatra to take the office, following Thaksin and her aunt Yingluck Shinawatra.

Hamas dismisses 'illusion' that Gaza truce is 'closer'

Monitoring Desk DOHA: A senior Hamas official on Saturday dismissed optimistic talk by US President Joe Biden after negotiations in the Gulf emirate of Qatar.

"To say that we are getting close to a deal is an illusion," Hamas political bureau member Sami Abu Zuhri said. "We are not facing a deal or real negotiations, but rather the imposing of American diktats." He was responding to Biden's comment on Friday that, "We are closer than we

have ever been." Biden spoke after two days of talks in Qatar where Washington tried to bridge differences between Israel and Hamas. The two sides have been at conflict for more than 10 months in the Gaza Strip. Previous optimism during months of on-off truce talks has so far proven futile. But the stakes have significantly risen since the killings in quick succession in late July of Fuad Shukur, a top operations chief of Lebanon's Hezbollah movement, and Hamas political chief Ismail Haniyeh.

Japan's PM Kishida plans US visit

Monitoring Desk TOKYO: Outgoing Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida is finalising plans to visit the US in late September for the UN General Assembly and a possible meeting with President Joe Biden, the Yomiuri newspaper reported on Saturday.

The visit may take place for several days starting on Sept. 22, the report said, citing multiple government sources it did not identify. The Japanese Foreign Ministry, in response to a request for comment from Reuters, said "Nothing has been decided yet".

Israel says investigation underway in Palestinian prisoner abuse case

Monitoring Desk JERUSALEM: Israel is conducting a "robust investigation" of suspects accused of sexually abusing a Palestinian prisoner and is committed to upholding international legal standards regarding the treatment of detainees, the foreign affairs ministry said on Sunday. The UN special rapporteur on torture on Friday condemned what she called a "particularly gruesome".

Harris and Trump offer worlds-apart contrasts on top issues in presidential race

Monitoring Desk WASHINGTON: Vice President Kamala Harris has replaced President Joe Biden atop the presidential ticket, but his "finish the job" campaign mantra can still largely apply to her top policy goals. She's promising to continue a lot of what Biden was doing during the past four years if she's elected to four of her own.

Former President Donald Trump, for his part, is itching to get back to the White House and accomplish what he didn't during his first term.

Since Biden stepped down last month, the vice president has announced few major policy proposals beyond a new push to prevent price gouging by food producers and grocers and plans to cut taxes for families, attempt to bring down homebuying and

rental prices and reduce medical debt. Harris also used a recent rally in Las Vegas, where the economy runs on the hospitality industry, to call for ending taxes on tips paid to restaurant, hotel and other service employees. That came more than a month after Trump used his own Las Vegas rally to promise the same on tips.

Despite her lack of specifics on policy, the vice president has committed generally to some major policy positions on various matters, promising to sign sweeping legislation that's unlikely to clear Congress.

Those include measures codifying the federal right to an abortion, increasing the federal minimum wage, imposing an assault weapons ban, requiring universal background checks for firearm purchases.

More than 120 firefighters tackle blaze at London's Somerset House

Monitoring Desk LONDON: Around 125 firefighters tackled a fire in the roof of London's Somerset house on Saturday, though the historic building's major art collections, including works by Manet, van Gogh and Cezanne, were undamaged.

The London Fire Brigade (LFB) said 25 fire engines were deployed to tackle the blaze after the alarm was raised just before midday. The police said there were no reports of injuries.

Somerset House, on a site which overlooks the River Thames and dating back to 1547, is a former royal palace and stately home and is now an arts, cultural and entertainment centre. "Crews are now working to extinguish the final pockets of fire," Keeley Foster, the LFB's assistant commissioner, told a media briefing. "The fire was located in part of the building's roof

space. The age and design of the building proved a challenge for crews as they initially responded."

She said crews would remain at the site overnight and the cause of the fire was under investigation.

The fire took hold in Somerset House's west wing, where offices and not works of art are located.

The Courtauld Gallery, which houses masterpieces from the Middle Ages to the 20th century, is in the building's north wing.

"It's too early to comment on the building's condition," said Jonathan Reekie, director of Somerset House Trust.

"I'm confident that the damage is to one small part of the building."

He said that although the main Somerset House building would remain closed to the public until further notice, the Courtauld Gallery would reopen on Sunday.

Libya's UN-brokered deal at risk as escalation fears mount

Monitoring Desk TRIPOLI: Reemerging bloodshed and power struggles in Libya have raised fears of a broader escalation, threatening to deal a fatal blow to the UN-brokered political transition and push the war-torn country deeper into turmoil.

The vast North African country of 6.8 million people has struggled to recover from years of conflict after the 2011 Nato-backed uprising that overthrew longtime dictator Moamer Qadhafi. Libya remains divided between a UN-recognised government based in the capital Tripoli and a rival administration in the east, backed by military strongman Khalifa Haftar. Although relative calm has returned in recent years, clashes

still periodically break out between Libya's myriad armed groups. Earlier this month, nine people were killed and several wounded in fighting east of Tripoli between two groups, both affiliated with the UN-recognised government of Abdulhamid Dbeibah.

On Sunday, a group of men, some of them armed, briefly besieged the Central Bank of Libya headquarters in the capital, local media reported, in what they said was an attempt to force the resignation of its governor, Seddik Al Kabir. US ambassador Richard Norland said attempts to oust Kabir were "unacceptable", warning that replacing him "by force can result in Libya losing access to international financial markets".

Chechen leader drives armed Tesla truck, praises Musk in video

Monitoring Desk MOSCOW: The strongman leader of Russia's Chechen Republic, Ramzan Kadyrov, published a video on Saturday showing him driving a gun-mounted Tesla Cybertruck and praising the carmaker's billionaire owner Elon Musk.

Kadyrov, who has ruled Chechnya with an iron fist for over 17 years, is a vocal ally of Russian President Vladimir Putin and says he has deployed thousands of troops to help the Kremlin with its Ukraine offensive. The 47-year-old Chechen leader could be seen behind the wheel of the truck as he drove in the regional capital Grozny, a video posted on his Telegram channel showed.

Govt taking steps to increase investment in petroleum sector: Dar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Sunday said the government was taking steps to increase foreign investment in the petroleum sector by resolving the key issues of the sector.

The Deputy PM, presiding over the first meeting of a committee, formed to consider the issues faced by the petroleum sector's E&P companies and to resolve issues of the industrial sector, resolved to take

every possible step to provide all facilities to the foreign companies that would help attract further investment in the country.

The meeting considered the recommendations to improve the financial system for off-shore exploration.

Deputy PM also directed to prepare a framework to implement the recent amendments made in the Petroleum Policy 2012.

Heads of local and foreign E&P companies, on the occasion, highlighted con-

cerns about the security and stability of the sector due to increased circular debt.

Deputy PM directed the relevant authorities to resolve the issue of circular debts in the power sector on priority.

Private sector members of the committee also expressed their concerns regarding the downstream gas sector and stressed the need to open up the sector to private companies to improve its sustainability.

After detailed discussions, the forum directed

the Petroleum Division to work closely with the industry and other stakeholders.

The forum also directed the Petroleum Division to suggest appropriate amendments to the Ogra Ordinance to introduce a mechanism for the adjustment of gas rates on a monthly or quarterly basis.

On security issues, the Forum directed the Interior Division to work closely with E&P companies and other stakeholders.



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar presides over the first meeting of a committee, formed to consider the issues faced by the petroleum sector's E&P companies.



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar along Raja Sarfaraz khadim Dargah of Bari Imam (R.T) Shrine offering Dua at the closing ceremony of annual urs.

Mashhood urges youth to take lead in shaping Pakistan's destiny

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister's Youth Programme Chairman Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan on Sunday emphasized the crucial role of Pakistan's talented young generation in driving the country towards development, stressing that their energy, creativity, and innovative ideas were essential for propelling the nation forward.

Talking to a private news channel, Khan highlighted the significance of empowering and engaging the youth in the development process, as they possess the potential to bring about transformative change and shape a brighter future for Pakistan.

The Chairman also highlighted the need for youth to adopt a positive mindset, focusing on hope, resilience, and optimism.

He believed that by spreading positivity, the youth could create a ripple effect, inspiring others to work towards a brighter future for Pakistan.

Mashhood also emphasized that the PM's pro-women initiatives are a testament to his dedication to creating a more inclusive and equitable society.

He noted, "Government is working tirelessly to address the challenges faced by women and to provide them with the resources and support they need to succeed."

The Chairman also highlighted the importance of women's participation in the country's development, stating that empowering women is essential for achieving sustainable growth and prosperity.

He urged women to take advantage of the op-

portunities provided by the government and to play an active role in shaping their own futures.

"By supporting women's empowerment, the government aims to create a brighter future for all Pakistanis," Mashhood added.

He expressed his optimism that the PM's initiatives would bring about positive change and pave the way for a more gender-inclusive society.

The Chairman also highlighted the importance of international collaborations and partnerships in empowering young talent.

He suggested that partnerships with foreign universities, organizations, and governments could provide opportunities for knowledge sharing, skill development, and cultural exchange.

Talal Chaudhary says: PTI severely damaged country's economic, political landscape

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senior leader of Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N), Senator Talal Chaudhary said on Sunday that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government, during its four-year tenure, severely damaged the country's economic and political landscape.

Reacting to an alleged chat with an Indian journalist by Raouf Hassan, Talal Chaudhary claimed that Hassan had been in contact with anti-Pakistan foreign journalists, including those from India.

He further alleged that PTI's team was advising the IMF against making deals with Pakistan at the time, and that Hassan was sharing sensitive material with anti-Pakistan journalists.

He said that the chaos and divisive politics in Pakistan were not the result of a single individual, but involved various politicians, political parties, and even individuals within institutions.

Chaudhary alleged that efforts to weaken Pakistan were orchestrated by multiple actors.

He asserted that now, there will be zero tolerance

for anti-state elements.

Stressing the need to improve the quality of life for ordinary citizens, Talal Chaudhary said, "Pakistan is here to stay, and we must strengthen its economy once again."

He urged other political parties and institutions to engage in the process of accountability, insisting that it is vital for the country. "If one key institution has initiated accountability from within, other institutions must follow suit," he added.

Recalling the period before the start of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), he said that deliberate efforts were made to disrupt the country's progress through sit-ins.

Recalling the PML-N government led by Nawaz Sharif, he said, "at that time livelihood of the common man was stable, the stock exchange was thriving, the dollar was under control, and inflation was at its lowest." However, he lamented that certain decisions led to a surge in protest politics, causing significant harm to the national economy.

Shakeel Khan sacked on corruption charges, says Barrister Saif

ISLAMABAD (INP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Advisor Barrister Saif assured that there would be no lawlessness in Islamabad procession.

Addressing a press conference here, he alleged that hurdles were being created by Islamabad administration in the way of the party for staging a public gathering on August 22.

He insisted that there will be no violation of law in the public gathering and all the matters will be completed peacefully. He stressed that the party always organised public gatherings with the approval of the administration.

Giving his response on resignation of minister Shakeel Ahmed, he cleared the air about rumours of corruption in departments

of the KP province.

He clarified that the good governance committee was formed by Imran Khan and the committee probed the matter of corruption complaints against Shakeel Ahmed and considered the statements of various individuals.

The committee asserted that Shakeel was involved in those activities about which complaints were filed, subsequently, the action to sack Shakeel Ahmed Khan was taken on the recommendation of the committee. CM Ali Amin Gandapur sent the summary of Shakeel Khan's sacking to the governor as the committee accused the minister. Shakeel Khan resigned before his sacking and he gave a press conference in this context to remove the reservations.

PA Speaker emphasizes power of unity in fighting plastic pollution

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker of the Punjab Assembly Malik Ahmad Khan has called upon citizens especially students and educated individuals to join forces in the fight against plastic pollution, emphasizing that it is a collective responsibility that requires immediate attention and action.

By treating plastic pollution as a national duty, we can work together to create a cleaner, healthier, and more sustainable future for ourselves and future generations, he said while talking to PTV news channel.

He appealed to the public to adopt eco-friendly alternatives and make conscious choices in

their daily lives to reduce plastic usage.

Khan's call to action underscored the critical need for a paradigm shift in our behavior towards plastic use, recognizing the intrinsic link between environmental conservation and national responsibility.

He stressed that schools and universities must incorporate environmental education into their curricula, empowering students with knowledge and skills to become eco-warriors.

By instilling a sense of environmental stewardship in the younger generation, we can create a ripple effect of change that can help mitigate the plastic pollution crisis, he mentioned.

19 August to be remembered as Black Day in Parliamentary History: Ayaz Sadiq

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker of the National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Sunday said that August 19 will always be remembered as the darkest day in the parliamentary history of the country.

The speaker said, "Ten years ago, on this day, a conspiracy against democracy was hatched, and the Parliament House was besieged and ransacked by the workers of so-called political parties."

"Shameful act is highly condemnable in every sense of the word. Parliament, being the supreme institution, deserves respect and dignity," he expressed these views in his message on the eve of completion of 10 years of the attack on the Parliament.

He also underscored that protecting the sanctity of the Parliament is a collec-

tive responsibility and violating the sanctity of Parliament is unimaginable for any democratic individual.

He lamented that the heartbreaking memories of the day would remain etched in the minds of the people and keep reminding them of the attack on democratic values and principles. He also noted that the attack on the parliament was not only an attack on democracy but also a blow to the basic pillars of the State.

The Speaker praised the bravery and perseverance of all the parliamentarians, staff and security personnel of the Parliament, for defending the Parliament under such hostile circumstances.

The Speaker also appreciated the role of the leadership and MPs of the then government, the largest opposition party in the

Parliament including the Pakistan Peoples Party and other political parties as they played an active role in thwarting the attack on the Parliament and the heinous conspiracy against democracy.

He said that during the heinous attack on Parliament in August 2014 the passage of the MPs was blocked off and attempts were made to paralyze the democratic process. He also said that an aborted attempt was made, but the Members of Parliament bravely foiled this nefarious conspiracy. He also said that the 2014 protests and sit-ins compromised the image of Pakistan around the world. He said that because of sit-ins outside the Parliament, the President of China had to cancel his visit, and as a result, Pakistan lost foreign investments worth billions of dollars.

PTI decries 'changes' in Punjab election tribunals amid electoral disputes

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) on Sunday castigated the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) for attempting to change Punjab election tribunals, appointed by the Lahore High Court (LHC) chief justice to settle electoral disputes.

Addressing a press conference, PTI leader Barrister Salman Akram Raja said that the people of Pakistan cannot forget the February 8 general elections, wherein according to him, the worst rigging took place.

Raja, who had lost his election from NA-128

Lahore, said that the election tribunals in Punjab, appointed by the LHC chief justice, were not allowed to function.

However, he added, the election tribunals in other provinces functioned as per the list provided by the respective chief justices.

"They [the government] fear the most in Punjab," he said, claiming that "many bridges" will collapse if the tribunals — appointed by the LHC chief justice — hear the disputes.

Moreover, the PTI leader said, the one who cre-

ates differences between the institutions and people is 'Pakistan's enemy'.

For her part, PTI leader Meher Bano Qureshi — who also lost the Multan NA-151 seat — said that the democracy's strength lies in women's representation, regretting that only three women leaders were representing the party in Parliament. It is pertinent to mention here that Salman Akram Raja had filed a review petition with the Supreme Court of Pakistan, seeking to make functional the Election Tribunal in Punjab.



ISLAMABAD: Police personnel stands alert in front of a local hotel due to security reason during Pakistan's and Bangladesh cricket team players living in hotel, As the first Test cricket match between Pakistan and Bangladesh on 21 August, at Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium.

Pakistan can benefit from Malaysia's experiences in tourism sector: Ambassador

ISLAMABAD (APP): High Commissioner of Malaysia to Pakistan, Mohammad Azhar Mazlan has said that Pakistan can benefit from Malaysia's experiences in the tourism industry and to achieve technical support from Malaysia in this sector.

Malaysia has a prominent place in the world not only in traditional tourism, but also in religious tourism, Halal industry, agricultural and medical tourism, and Pakistan can get rich benefits from Malaysia's experiences, Mohammad Azhar Mazlan said while talking to APP on Sunday.

The Malaysian envoy said that the potential of the global halal industry is \$3

trillion and there are extensive cooperation and opportunities between Pakistan and Malaysia required in this sector.

He said that Pakistan has to work on a medium and long-term comprehensive policy to promote the tourism industry, in which branding and marketing are important tools.

Azhar Mazlan said that development in Malaysia's tourism sector is not a miracle, but the government of Malaysia had started working on the development of the tourism sector in 1980, allocated funds for marketing and branding and made a comprehensive plan for it.

He said that there is a lot of potential in Pakistan in the halal industry and tourism sector, in this regard, Pakistan can get a lot of benefits in the international market.

He said that Malaysia and Pakistan can promote bilateral cooperation in the fields of tourism and halal industry through enhancing cooperation by the public-private sector.

He said that there is a need for comprehensive planning for bringing investment in potential sectors, including tourism and halal industry in Pakistan. The Malaysian high Commissioner said that the northern region of Pakistan is rich in natural beauty in which six major mountain peaks of the world are found and a major part of the Himalayan Mountain range

is also in Pakistan which is a masterpiece of nature.

Replying to a question, he said that there are 200,000 Pakistani diaspora in Malaysia, who are working in various sectors of the Malaysian economy. He said that these people are important in the strengthening of the relationship between Malaysia and Pakistan, and they are also playing a major role in the development of Malaysia.

Azhar Mazlan said that Pakistan is a hardworking and intelligent nation and international rating agencies are indicating that Pakistan will join the 20 largest economies of the world by 2050. He said that Pakistan also has a young population and 240 million people of the total population of ASEAN are young people and Malaysia is willing to be the gateway of Pakistan to ASEAN countries.

In response to another question, he said that bilateral trade between Malaysia and Pakistan is far below its potential and more work is needed in this sector. He said that negotiations between Pakistan's Ministry of Commerce subsidiary, Trade Development Authority of Pakistan and Malaysia's Ministry of Industry and Trade are ongoing to increase the bilateral trade volume between the two countries, which is expected to increase mutual trade between the two countries.

Indian media's reporting on IIOJK shows blatant partisanship, bias: Report

ISLAMABAD (INP): Indian media is increasingly becoming a mouthpiece for the RSS/BJP, especially concerning the situation of Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

A report released by Kashmir Media Service, today, said the RSS-aligned media's coverage of IIOJK is marked by fabricated and misleading stories about the Kashmiris' freedom struggle.

It said since August 2019, Indian media's reporting on Kashmir has shown blatant partisanship and bias. Bharatiya Janata Party-influenced media is disseminating falsehoods about the real conditions in the occupied territory, it added.

The report said the

portrayal of Kashmir in Indian media consistently distorts the actual ground realities. It said Indian media uses fake news to distract international attention from human rights violations by Indian troops in occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

It lamented that the Indian media excelled at spreading misinformation and fake news, adding the media coverage of Kashmir by Indian outlets represents a severe breach of journalistic integrity.

The report said Indian journalists and TV anchors align their narratives with the Modi regime's official stance on Kashmir and the aggressive and hateful rhetoric of Indian media supports Modi's authoritarian agenda in occupied Kashmir.

Pedestrian dies after being hit by Chinese driver

ISLAMABAD (Online): A citizen was killed in a traffic accident in the limits of Margalla Police Station in the Federal Capital.

A citizen, Waliullah, was killed in a collision with a foreigner's car near Fatima Jinnah Park F-9 Sector.

Passerby Waliullah was walking when suddenly hit by the car of a foreign citizen who has been detained. Waliullah, who is about 23 years old, died on the spot due to the accident. The car is being driven by a Chinese driver who has been identified. The Chinese driver was also slightly injured in the accident. Rescue 1122 shifted Waliullah's body to the hospital. The police reached the spot and started further investigation.



ISLAMABAD: Picnickers are enjoying Sunday Holiday at Shahdra picnic point, in the Federal Capital.

PDMA issues alert regarding flash flooding in southern Punjab

ISLAMABAD (Online): Provincial Disaster Management Authority Punjab says due to heavy rains during next twenty four hours, there is a risk of flash flooding in the southern Punjab region, including Dera Ghazi Khan, Multan, and Bahawalpur divisions.

The PDMA Punjab spokesperson said due to rainfall in the Koh-e-Suleman range, there is a flood situation in the hill torrents of Dera Ghazi Khan and Rajanpur.

Medium-level flood waves are passing through the Rajanpur Kaha, Chachar, Patok and Zangi hill torrents. He informed that a high-level flood wave is passing through the Kala Bagh hill torrent in Rajanpur. The DG PDMA said a high-level flood wave is also passing through the Sakhi Sarwar hill torrent in Dera Ghazi Khan. He said the PDMA and the local administration are on alert due to the flood situation in the hill torrents.

Railways to restore Sir Syed Express on Sept 1

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Railways has decided to restore Sir Syed Express (35UP/36DN) between Karachi Cantonment to Rawalpindi from September 1 under a Public-Private Partnership (PPP).

The Sir Syed Express (35UP) will depart from Karachi Cantonment at 9:00 PM via Hyderabad, Khanpur, Khanewal, Faisalabad, Sangla Hill, Wazirabad, Gujrat, and Jhelum, before arriving in Rawalpindi at 8:55 PM the following day, an official told APP.



ISLAMABAD: Labourers busy repairing Bari Imam Road during repairing and development work in Federal Capital.