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Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah

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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.



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



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 Plan-

tation 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.



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

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 ad-

dress 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."

She urged people to discuss Pakistan responsibly, as a positive perception would attract investment to the country.

"The government remains committed to supporting the information technology sector."

Highlighting the government's achievements, Shaza Fatima said that ICT export remittances surged to \$3.223 billion during the financial year 2023-24, compared to \$2.596 billion in the previous fiscal year. She credited

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.

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.

Visits FC South Headquarter: All stakeholders ought to come on one page for sustainable development of Balochistan, stresses Mohsin Naqvi

Federal Minister appreciates performance of FC South for establishment of peace and prevention of smuggling; says FC South on frontline in foiling nefarious designs of Fitna alkhawarij; says he is proud of professional proficiency and bravery of officers and personnels of FC South

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.

The Federal Interior Minister was presiding over a meeting at the FC South Headquarter on Sunday.

He was briefed about the operations against the Fitna alkhawarij and smuggling.

Speaking on the occasion, Mohsin Naqvi appreciated the performance of FC South.

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

No compromise to be made on stability of country: Those doing politics of hatred can't be loyal to country: Zia

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Provincial Minister for Home, Mir Ziaullah Langove has asserted that any compromise can not be made on the stability of country under the garb of politics and those doing politics of hatred can not be loyal to the country.

In an official statement issued here on Sunday, the Provincial Minister said that the Indian facilitation was revealed in spreading the anti-state narrative by the PTI leader Rauf Hasan.

He said that the enemy country India is conspiring against Pakistan through the social media and digital terrorism.

He asked PTI to repose confidence on the people of Pakistan instead of appeasing the foreign enemies.

BAP demands ban on PTI

QUETTA (INP) - The Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) has demanded a ban on the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI).

BAP Secretary General Senator Manzoor Ahmed Kakar said PTI's Rauf Hasan's links with Indian journalist were tantamount to anti-nationalism.



QUETTA: Relatives of missing persons hold a protest outside Quetta Press Club.

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; Raouf 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 Raouf Hasan and Indian journalists as evidence.

Tarar claimed that the collaboration between PTI's founder and Faiz



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 for-

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Governor Balochistan says We have to take revolutionary measures by utilizing digital technology in modern era

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail has stated that our institutions have the backbone status in providing infrastructural framework for good governance and strong administration in the country and province.

But expectations of high performance and dignified future of can not be made with the weak backbone, he insisted adding because experience proves that a weak base cannot support the high ambitions.

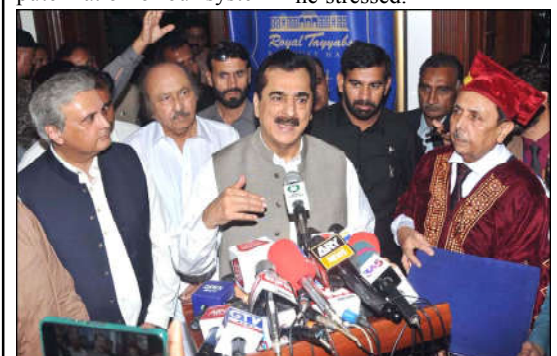
The Governor said that this is our collective misfortune that the particulars and data of our majority institutions and directorates aren't computerized in the fast era of digital information technology even.

He made it crystal clear that if we didn't make computerization of our system

and institutions immediately for meeting the modern requirements and public needs, then we can face serious issues in near future.

Therefore, we have to take steps for taking revolutionary measures in order to remove these flaws just because, our overall performance is badly affected without computerizing our system and the institutions. He regretfully pointed out that it takes several months to pass even a minor file in the government offices. As a result, our precious time, energy and investment is wasted and the common people suffer from long deprivations.

Therefore, it is necessary to speed up the official performance, ensure computerization in the institutions and take concrete steps for removing sense of deprivations prevailing among the people, adding he stressed.



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

High alert declared at all points of entries in Balochistan in context of possible monkeypox outbreak

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QUETTA: The Health Department Balochistan has declared high alert at all point of entries of the province in context of the possible monkeypox break.

In this regard, the Director General Health Services has issued a letter to the District Health Officers of Quetta, Gwadar, Chaghai, Kech, Hub and Chaman instructing them to take all required measures at the point of entries in their districts to detect any suspected case of monkeypox, report it to the focal person for monkeypox response.

It may be mentioned here that Dr. Shahzada Kamran at PDSRU, DGHS, Balochistan) has been designated as the focal person for further guidance regarding shifting to BMCH for testing and management, designated for quarantine and isolation, with proper IPC measures in place. The Director General Health said "your vigilant and proactive measures to be prepared for response will be highly appreciated ensuring the protection of our population from the spread of this deadly infectious disease."

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Karachi Test against BD shifted to Rawalpindi

ISLAMABAD (INP): Due to the deployment of heavy construction equipment and the need to adhere to tight redevelopment schedules for the National Bank Stadium, which is being prepared for next year's ICC Champions Trophy 2025, the Pakistan Cricket Board, in consultation with the Bangladesh Cricket Board, has decided to move the second ICC World Test Championship fixture to Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium.

This decision allows cricket spectators and fans to watch live action of both the Tests, which serve as a preview of a busy and hectic international season for Pakistan cricket. During this period, the national side will play a total of nine Tests, 14 T20s, and at least 17 ODIs from 21 August to 5 April. "We have been guided by the construction experts

on the timelines for the readiness of the venue. They advised that while construction could continue during playing hours, the resulting noise pollution would disturb the cricketers. Additionally, the dust from the construction work could also affect the health and wellbeing of the players, officials, broadcasters, and media.

"Given that construction must continue uninterrupted to ensure the venue is operationally ready for the ICC Champions Trophy 2025, the PCB, after consulting all stakeholders and reviewing operational and logistical matters, has decided to hold both Tests in Rawalpindi.

"At this stage, we will not like to speculate on the hosting of the second Test in Karachi from 15-19 October and will continue to work closely with the architects and construction experts on the safe and secure

hosting of the match, while keeping the England and Wales Cricket Board updated."

The first Test will begin in Rawalpindi on 21 August, with the second Test starting on 30 August. Meanwhile, in Islamabad, Pakistan Shaheens and Bangladesh 'A' will continue with their series. After a drawn first four-day match, the second four-day match will commence on 20 August at the Islamabad Club, followed by three 50-over matches on 26, 28 and 30 August.

Meanwhile Rawalpindi district police and city Traffic Police have finalized the best possible security and traffic arrangements for the Pakistan and Bangladesh cricket test match and practice session at Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium.

The City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalid Hamdani said that the route of the cricket teams would

be monitored through CCTV cameras while snipers would also be deployed on the rooftops at the route and around the stadium.

Elite and Dolphin Force personnel and Rawalpindi district police would be deployed in and around the cricket stadium, he said adding that special teams would patrol in the surrounding areas of the stadium.

A coordinated traffic plan had been prepared for the convenience of the citizens, the CPO said adding, "to ensure foolproof security, the best possible arrangements had been made for the Pakistan-Bangladesh cricket match".

Abbas Afridi's all-round show in vain as Shaheens fall short in Top End T20 semi-final

DARWIN (INP): Pakistan Shaheens fell 30 runs short against Adelaide Strikers in the first semi-final of the Top End T20 series as they scored 167 all out in reply to Strikers' 197-5 on Sunday at the DXC Arena in Darwin.

Mohammad Abbas Afridi's quickfire 29-ball 54 went in vain as the Shaheens ran out of batters with 11 balls still left in the bag. Earlier, he also took three wickets.

In pursuit of the 198-run target, Pakistan Shaheens lost a wicket in second, third, fourth and fifth over as they were reduced to 33-4 in 4.1 overs. Mohammad Harris got off to a steady start scoring 19 off 11 balls with the help of three fours before falling to Tim Oakley in the third over.

Mubasir Khan (18, 12b, 2x6s) and Usman Khan (32, 20b, 2x4s, 1x6) stitched a 32-run fifth-wicket partnership but both fell in the eighth and 11th overs respectively as with the scorecard reading 65-5 and then 91-6.

Abbas, who walked into bat at seven, belted five fours and three sixes during his 29-ball stay on the crease but with no support from other end. Arif Yaqoob (15, 17b, 1x4) and Mohammad Imran Jnr (11, 5b, 1x4, 1x6) chipped in with small contributions but

all in vain as the team was bundled out for 167 in 18.1 overs.

Liam Scott picked up three wickets while Jordan Buckingham and Lloyd Pope had two each to their names. Oakley, Tim O'Connell and Noah McFayden dismissed one batter each.

Earlier, after Shaheens opted to bowl first, Strikers' opening batter Jake Winter smashed a 61-ball 104 hitting six fours and eight sixes to take the game away. He was joined by Harry Manenti (52, 32b, 9x4s, 1x6) in the ninth over as the duo stitched a 73-run fourth-wicket partnership in 7.4 overs, taking the team score from 57-3 to 130-4 in 15.4 overs when Manenti departed.

Sam Rahaley remained unbeaten on 13 off 10 hitting one four as Winter was finally dismissed in the last over of the innings. For Shaheens, Abbas took three wickets while Faisal Akram chipped in with two.

This semi-final loss brings an end to the Pakistan Shaheens tour of Darwin which began with a two four-day match series against Bangladesh 'A' in July followed by two 50-over matches against Bangladesh 'A' and NT Strike. Pakistan Shaheens played seven matches in the Top End T20 series winning five and losing two.

People's welfare top priority of govt: Bilal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Bilal Azhar Kayani, convener of the National Parliamentary Task-force (NPT) on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), said on Sunday that despite the current economic situation in the country, providing relief to the people was top priority of the government.

Talking to a private news channel, he said that the Prime Minister initiated Rs 50 billion energy subsidy package for low-income households that consume less than 200 units of electricity.

The three-month subsidy package will help alleviate issues of around 86 percent of consumers using up to 200 units of electricity, he added.

He said that the Chief Minister Punjab also initiated electricity relief package for the commoners of the province.

Customers using up to 500 units will get a subsidy of Rs14 per unit in August and September, he added. The relief plan, expected to cost Rs 45 billion, will be funded by reducing the province's development expenditures, he further added.

He said that the government allocated development funds for the expansion of IT sector to increase IT exports.

Establishment of institutions like Universal Service Fund (USF) aimed at providing broadband availability across the country, he added.

Kayani said that institutions like Universal Service Fund (USF) were established to provide telecommunication services in un-served and under-served areas of the country.

Provision of Internet throughout the country is among the government's priorities because it is fundamental requirement for any growing economy, he added.

The government, the information technology (IT) industry and all the stakeholders have to work together to solve the problems, he further said.

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AJK Minister emphasizes nurturing youth as national asset

MUZAFFARABAD (APP): Senior politician and Minister for Law, Justice, and Parliamentary Affairs, Mian Abdul Waheed emphasized the critical role of youth as the nation's greatest asset and underscored the importance of nurturing institutions that support their development.

He was speaking at the Prize Distribution Ceremony for Sports Competitions held at the Neelum Campus of the University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (UJJK).

Reflecting nostalgically on the inception of the Neelum Campus in 2013, Minister Mian Abdul Waheed recalled its humble beginnings as a small sapling in Authmuqam. Over the years, this sapling has flourished into a premier institution, playing a pivotal role in advancing higher education in the region.

The minister highlighted the abundant talent in Neelum Valley, stressing the government's responsibility to create opportunities that enable the youth to excel. He expressed satisfaction with the campus's progress and recognized its significance for the valley's youth, given the region's limited economic and job opportunities.

Minister Mian Abdul Waheed extended heartfelt

gratitude to Vice-Chancellor Prof. Dr. Muhammad Kaleem Abbasi for his unwavering commitment to the campus's development. He acknowledged the efforts of all those who have supported the institution since its establishment and assured his continued support, recognizing the campus as a blessing for the people of Neelum Valley.

Vice-Chancellor Prof. Dr. Muhammad Kaleem Abbasi, in his address, shared his vision for the future of Neelum Campus, expressing optimism about its potential to evolve into a full-fledged university. Despite the financial challenges faced by the university, Prof. Dr. Kaleem Abbasi stated that top-tier faculty has already been provided to the campus.

He also reiterated his commitment to expanding academic programs to offer a wider range of choices to students. Additionally, he announced the provision of state-of-the-art computers for the campus and encouraged both faculty and students to act as ambassadors, promoting the institution's growth and reputation.

Director of Neelum Campus, Dr. Malik Sajjad Ahmed Nadeem, presented an overview of the campus's progress and

achievements. He expressed his profound gratitude to Vice-Chancellor Prof. Dr. Muhammad Kaleem Abbasi and Minister Mian Abdul Waheed for their continued support and keen interest in the campus's development.

The ceremony concluded with a lively prize distribution event, where Minister Mian Abdul Waheed and Vice-Chancellor Prof. Dr. Kaleem Abbasi awarded certificates and trophies to the winners and runners-up of the sports competitions.

The Vice-Chancellor congratulated the students on their achievements and presented a special souvenir to Minister Mian Abdul Waheed as a token of appreciation for his support. Director Neelum Campus, Dr. Malik Sajjad Ahmed Nadeem, also presented a souvenir to Prof. Abbasi in recognition of his leadership and dedication to the campus's growth.

During his visit, Vice-Chancellor Prof. Dr. Muhammad Kaleem Abbasi inaugurated newly constructed sophisticated classrooms and staff rooms adjacent to the Neelum Campus. He praised the efforts of Director Dr. Malik Sajjad Ahmed Nadeem for his tireless dedication to the campus's uplift.



NASIRABAD: Deputy Commissioner Munir Khan Kakar being briefed by Assistant Commissioner Ajmal Khan Mandokhail about rain water drainage from city area.

Shaza refutes reports of...

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this increase to the steps taken by the government to boost IT exports. With robust support from the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), the Ministry of IT, the Pakistan Software Export Board, and the IT industry, Shaza Fatima expressed commitment to further enhancing the country's IT exports.

She highlighted Prime Minister Shabbaz Sharif's focus on advancing Pakistan's IT sector and attracting more investment into the industry. She mentioned that the Prime Minister has prioritized national digitalization, formed an interim committee, and prepared a draft bill. The bill has been dispatched to the law ministry, and the government plans to soon establish a National Digitalization Commission, which the Prime Minister will personally chair to advance the digitalization of the economy, governance, and society.

"The Digital Pakistan Policy is paving the way for the next phase of digital transformation. Digital inclusion is a government priority, with a strong commitment to bridging the digital divide between rural and urban areas," she said.

"Digital technologies are essential for the country's progress, and initiatives are being taken for digital innovation and infrastructure development."

Shaza Fatima also stressed the importance of digital payments, noting that the digitization of financial transactions was crucial.

"Efforts are underway to make the federal government paperless as soon as possible," she informed.

She said, "Federal budget allocated Rs 60 billion to the IT sector."

"Rs. 4 billion had been allocated to equip children with essential coding skills, supported by certificates from global tech giants like Google and Meta."

"Due to efforts of the

Prime Minister's efforts, Huawei will train approximately 300,000 children."

Shaza Fatima said, "The government is planning to build IT parks in Islamabad and Karachi. The Islamabad IT Park would be completed by March 2025, is expected to create 10,000 jobs."

She also highlighted the expansion of e-employment centers across the country, with 250 new centers set to open, initiative that started in Punjab under Shabbaz Sharif's leadership in 2011, aimed to provide widespread access to digital employment opportunities.

"Currently, 43 special technology parks are operational, with plans to add 20 more in the coming days."

"Further initiatives included the establishment of an IT City in Islamabad, designed to house all IT-related facilities in one place," she told.

She said, "Three new incubation centers are planned, one of which will be exclusively for women, reflecting a commitment to gender inclusion in the tech industry."

Shaza Fatima also shared inspiring stories of young Pakistani innovators.

"These stories exemplify the potential of Pakistan's youth in the tech sector," she hailed.

"To support startups, a Pakistan Startup Fund will be created, along with the launch of the 'Bridge Start' program, backed by Rs. 1 billion."

She also highlighted the gaming industry, stating that Pakistan has gaming experts and that this industry is generating significant revenue for the country.

"The government is committed to promoting the gaming industry by establishing Centers of Excellence in Gaming and Animation (CEGA) in Karachi and Lahore."

"We hope that through CEGA, Pakistan will be able to increase its share," she added.

Interior Minister flays attack on Police in Lakkhi Marwat

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi on Sunday strongly condemned the attack on a police party in the jurisdiction of Bargi Police Station in Lakkhi Marwat. He paid rich tribute to Constable Nisar Khan, who embraced martyrdom in the attack. The interior minister extended heartfelt condolences to the family of the martyr. He also prayed for the swift recovery of the injured police personnel. Mohsin Naqvi said that we salute the sacrifice of Constable Nisar Khan.

All stakeholders...

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ciated the performance of FC South for establishing peace and prevention of smuggling.

He said that the FC South is playing exemplary role for peace in hard circumstances. Besides, the force is also playing lead role for peace in the province.

Mohsin Naqvi said that he is proud of the professional proficiency and bravery of the officers and personnel of FC South.

He assured that the requirements of FC south would be met remaining in the resources.

During the course of briefing, it was informed that the illegal goods of worth Rs. 4.7 billion were confiscated during last six months.

He was also briefed about the overall professional performance of the FC south.

Earlier, the Federal Interior Minister was welcomed by the Inspector General FC South, Major General Bilal Sarfraz Khan upon his arrival at the FC south Headquarter.

He also visited the monument of the martyrs and prayed for their departed souls.

He paid rich tributes to the sacrifices of martyrs of FC south.



RAWALPINDI: Players of national men's cricket team taking part in training session at Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium. The first Test between Pakistan and Bangladesh will be played at Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium on August 21.



RAWALPINDI: Pakistan and Bangladesh men's cricket teams are being brought for a practice session at Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium. The first Test between Pakistan and Bangladesh will be played at Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium on August 21.

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 de-

velopment 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 also is 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.



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 Raoof 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.



ISLAMABAD: Gypsy persons are searching and collecting onions from discarded by vendors at the Fruit and Vegetables Market.

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.

Furthermore, Khan emphasized the need for community-led initiatives to tackle plastic pollution. He encouraged citizens to organize clean-up drives, participate in beach cleanups, and support local organizations working on environmental conservation.

Responding a query, he also highlighted the importance of climate education and awareness, suggesting that schools and universities should integrate climate literacy into their curricula.

Khan emphasized the need for policy-makers to prioritize climate action, investing in climate-resilient infrastructure, and supporting climate change research and development.

He also pointed out that isolated incidents of suicide and increasing rates of immigration are tragic consequences of the economic strain.



ISLAMABAD: Police personals 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.

Syed Kousar reveals CM's tireless efforts to transform Punjab

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief Minister Punjab's Media Coordinator and Official Spokesperson, Syed Kousar Kazmi revealed on Sunday that the CM is actively engaged in spearheading welfare projects across the province, working tirelessly as a team player to ensure effective implementation and tangible results.

In an interview with PTV news channel, he said the CM is leaving no stone unturned to bring about transformative change and improve the lives of the people of Punjab.

The Media Coordinator and Official Spokesperson also emphasized the Chief Minister's collaborative approach, working closely with various stakeholders, including govern-

ment officials, experts, and community leaders to ensure that the welfare projects are tailored to meet the needs of the people.

This inclusive approach has fostered a sense of ownership and accountability, driving progress and positive change, he added.

Syed Kousar Kazmi highlighted the Chief Minister's dedication to empowering young individuals, recognizing their potential as future leaders and change-makers.

By providing opportunities for growth and development, the CM aims to harness the energy and creativity of Punjab's youth, enabling them to contribute meaningfully to the province's progress, he added.

Information Secy, PIO express grief over demise of DSP Traffic

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Secretary for the Information and Broadcasting, Mubashir Hasan on Sunday expressed deep grief and sorrow over the demise of the Deputy Superintendent Police (Traffic) Rawalpindi Chaudhry Musarat Abbas.

Chaudhry Musarat Abbas is the brother of the Director General Information Department Regional Office Lahore Shafiqat Abbas.

In a joint news statement, both the officers of the Ministry of Information sympathized with the bereaved family and prayed to the Almighty to rest the departed soul in eternal peace.

2 injured as roof collapse in Tangwani

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a tragic incident, at least two people were sustained injured in a roof collapse incident in Tangwani Jafarabad area on early Sunday morning.

According to the police, two people critically injured when a house roof collapsed due to heavy rain fall in Tangwani, a private news channel reported.

Rescue teams rushed to the scene to provide medical assistance and evacuate the injured.

The two individuals, whose identities have not been disclosed, were taken to a nearby hospital for treatment.

Their condition is reported to be stable but further updates are awaited.

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 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.



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

Flash flood likely in Larkana, Jacobanad, Qamar Shandadkot

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Flood Commission (FFC) has said that high-level flash flooding is expected in Sind (Larkana (Jacobabad & Qambar Shandadkot districts) and Hyderabad (Dadu & Jamshoro Districts) Divisions) during the next 36 hours.

According to the daily FFC report on Sunday, the River Indus is flowing in "Medium Flood" in Guddu-Sukkur reach and "Low Flood" between Tarbela-Taunsa reach while the Kabul River also continue

to run in "Low Flood" at Nowshera. Other main rivers (Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi & Sutlej including River Indus at Kotri Barrage) are flowing normally.

The combined live storage of the country's major reservoirs (Tarbela, Chashma & Mangla) stands at 10.927 MAF which is 81.83% of the total available live storage capacity of 13.354 MAF.

Yesterday's well-marked low-pressure system over the Bahawalpur Division has since weakened into a low-pressure area, now centred near the Larkana district. Trough of strong Westerly Wave that developed yesterday persists over the Northern Afghanistan and is expected to impact the upper catchments of rivers Indus, Jhelum and Kabul. Also, moderate to strong moist currents are penetrating Sindh, Southern Punjab and adjoining areas of Balochistan from the Arabian Sea up to 7000 feet, whereas light to moderate moist currents continue to influence upper parts of Pakistan upto 5000 feet.

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Tourists, Murree residents urge CM Punjab for notice broken cable car, chair lift

ISLAMABAD (APP): The tourists and residents of Murree on Sunday decried the out of order cable car and chair lift service in Patriata demanding Chief Minister Punjab, Maryam Nawaz to take notice of the situation and negligence of the authorities concerned.

The Patriata Cable Car has broken down for a year but not a single effort was made by the Tourism Development Corporation of Punjab and the government of Punjab to fix the out of order tourism service, said Tariq Mehmood, a Murree resident and frequent tourist told APP who was heading a foreign tourists' group that went dis-

appointed after finding the service unavailable.

"Murree is the most famous tourist destination of Pakistan and the closest to Islamabad where people from all over the country come to beat the heat during summers. The hotel industry here is thriving but there is lack of public washrooms provided by the government at such a big tourist destination and there is often a shortage of water here," he added. Tariq mentioned that Patriata which is one of the highest point of Punjab province has a chair lift and a cable car. The government of Punjab has spent crores of rupees on the cable works.

Their condition is reported to be stable but further updates are awaited.



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

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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?

Muhammad Amir Rana

On Independence Day this year, the custodians of power issued formal statements. As expected, the leaders praised the nation's resilience in the face of economic hardships and pledged a brighter future. Army chief Gen Asim Munir distinguished between the country's friends and foes. His narrative, likely to shape the national discourse until the next Independence Day, carries significant weight, and its impact will be revealed over time.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif announced the upcoming launch of a five-year programme to provide significant relief to domestic electricity consumers. The civilian leadership of the hybrid regime is grappling with the challenge of preserving its image while taking responsibility for tough economic reforms. All coalition partners, including the PPP, which has benefited mainly without direct accountability, share responsibility for the shrinking space for freedom and activism, both

online and offline. The actual test lies in succeeding in their five-year plan and enhancing their public image.

The army chief has blamed foreign powers for a wave of 'digital terrorism', which aimed to create a gulf between state institutions and the people of Pakistan. In his annual address at a parade held to mark Independence Day at the Pakistan Military Academy in Kakul, he also spoke about the situation along the western border with Afghanistan, the threat posed by the outlawed TTP, and the developments in Balochistan.

His speech echoed that of COAS Gen Ashfaq Kayani in 2009 on the same occasion in which he had elaborated on who the terrorists, and what their objectives, are, declaring that the extremists were attempting to impose a distorted version of Islam through violence. Despite making a clear distinction, Gen Kayani had been reluctant to launch an operation against the terrorists in North Waziristan. Gen Raheel Sharif completed the task later. However, it took a decade and a half af-

ter Gen Kayani's speech to put the good-and-bad terrorist idea into perspective. This happened when the 'good' Taliban captured power in Afghanistan and started supporting the enemies of Pakistan.

The army chief has referred to the TTP as 'Fitna al-Khawarij', a term that has historical overtones in relation to an identifiable sect in Islam, which fought against legitimate calliphates. It is now an official term for the TTP. This clarity should eliminate the distinction between good and bad terrorists if it still exists somewhere among the power elites.

The state institutions' position on terrorist groups, mainly the TTP, is legitimate according to all international norms and the country's Constitution. However, they need to review their approach towards rights movements like the Baloch Yakjehti Committee (BYC) and Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM) and see the political polarisation in the country.

Tying together all security and political challenges into one mass, complicates the challenge.

There is no doubt that both the BYC and PTM are the outcome of the state's wrong policies. Spoilers within the power elites and beneficiaries of the hybrid system in the country are deepening the gulf between the state and marginalised citizens. The state has to review its approach of painting such movements as enemies and foreign-funded movements. The institutions mainly point fingers at the West when tagging someone as a foreign agent. The reality is that Europe and the US prioritise their relationship with the country's powerful institutions to conduct smooth business with the power elites of the state.

Imagine if the state institutions' perceptions changed about the PTM and BYC, and they were considered citizens of Pakistan who were resisting only a few policies and practices of the institutions — practices that had yet to yield the desired results even after applying them for decades. Imagine if such movements were no longer considered peripheral issues and outsourced to power-hungry sardars and other cronies. The whole context

would change. Meaningful interaction between the right movements and the state would start, which would marginalise violent and radical actors. No foreign force could use them if the state was engaging with them.

However, our power elites firmly believe that this is an issue of controlling narratives and the mediums that spread these narratives. They do not look inside, neither do they want to change their perceptions, policies, and practices.

Perception management and narrative control are complicated phenomena, and only authoritarian systems can achieve them through the tools of oppression. The power elites are following the template of authoritarian states, and they believe that state-led propaganda will change the equation in their favour.

The power elites create narratives that blend fact with fiction, often dividing people into 'us' versus 'them'. However, creating this divide weakens social and political cohesion, which religious-based nationalism cannot help strengthen. Paigham-

i-Pakistan, a religious decree against extremism, may be a prime example of how the state-led narrative has not succeeded in changing the minds of the religious clergy in Pakistan.

The power elites need to do some soul-searching to find the solution, which lies in changing policies and practices, and not propaganda techniques. Counter-narratives are essential but it cannot cultivate trust between the power elites and the masses. It has been proven in many cases that people do not believe in state-run narratives, and they need to verify what they hear through independent sources — whatever is available, including reliable mainstream media, social media, and foreign media outlets. The reason is that state narratives are seen as overly controlled and biased; people often perceive them as propaganda designed to manipulate public opinion rather than the truth. People have also stopped believing in journalists who have changed their position and tried to come closer to the state narrative. -- Courtesy Dawn

The Faiz phenomenon**Abbas Nasir**

Former spymaster retired Lt-Gen Faiz Hameed's arrest and the news that he may be facing a field general court martial for activities prejudicial to the military's rules and regulations have understandably generated immense excitement in the media.

Lt-Gen Faiz Hameed occupied two of the most powerful positions in the country's intelligence establishment after he was handpicked by the then COAS Gen Qamar Bajwa as DGC (the 'C' stands for counter-intelligence). It is reputedly the second-most important position in the ISI.

In view of the interest of the institution in Pakistani politics on what it says are national security grounds, the primary role of the position-holder is to be the guardian of the agency's interests — with contending entities in the power structure such as elected governments and even the judiciary.

Gen Bajwa moved him from GOC Pano Akil to the DGC position with the task of delivering the

exit of the then prime minister and his PML-N and ensuring 'positive' results in the 2018 elections. He delivered in no uncertain terms. In fact, insiders say that the seat count of the various parties he mentioned in institutional meetings ahead of the election was more or less what emerged after the polls.

While he served as chief of staff to Bajwa, and earned his confidence, when the latter was commanding a corps, he was also close to retired Lt-Gen Bilal Akbar who was a key member of the Bajwa team as CGS and one of the main initiators of the move against the PML-N government.

It isn't as if the phenomenon is new or has ended. It continues unabated. From the days of Ayub Khan to prime minister Z.A. Bhutto and beyond, all military and civilian leaders have continued to rely on the officeholder to deliver whatever is asked of them without question.

The DGC's ability to 'deliver' is a function of his immense power, which is immune to outside scrutiny. Some civil-

ian leaders have been pretty open about how they used the officeholder to ensure their own members of parliament and the opposition remained in check.

Anyone with even a rudimentary interest in our history and politics will remember names such as Brig Imtiaz Ahmad in the Zia days who was then the boss of IS (internal security) in the ISI. He pursued the dictator's opponents with vigour and also his own commercial interests, earning great infamy during Operation Midnight Jackal, which was aimed at the ouster of the then prime minister Benazir Bhutto.

Former DG ISI, the late Lt-Gen Hamid Gul was open in saying he was instrumental in the formation of the IJI alliance created ahead of the 1988 elections to stop the march of Benazir Bhutto to power as the military was suspicious of her motives and intentions. Later attempts to do the same are chronicled in the late Air Marshal Asghar Khan's case before the Supreme Court.

Other known DGCs include retired Maj-Gen Ehtasham Zamir who birthed the Q League and found enough treasonous PPP MNAs to switch sides, form PPP Patriots and enable government formation. His interview is on record detailing how he managed to put in place a coalition sympathetic, in fact totally subservient, to his boss Gen Pervez Musharraf.

With the electronic media booming during Musharraf's years in power and the military ruler taking on the judiciary in a move that would eventually trigger his downfall, all directors of news at private TV channels dreaded getting a call from the then DGC Maj-Gen Nusrat Naem.

Relatively more recently, Pakistanis became familiar with another DGC who served his boss DG ISI Lt-Gen Shuja Pasha so well that he succeeded him on the top job. Retired Lt-Gen Zaheerul Islam followed in Pasha's footsteps and shared his commitment to rooting out what they saw as corrupt politicians.

When the move against the then prime minister started, the DGI was Lt-Gen Naveed

Mukhtar, who was related by marriage to Nawaz Sharif, and was chosen by the latter to head the agency possibly on account of his sterling track record as DG CT (counterterrorism).

Some sources say that the DGI was informed by Gen Bajwa of the decision to move Maj-Gen Faiz Hameed as DGC and was also told the latter would have complete freedom of action and report to the chief rather than the DGI. As DGC, he delivered in no uncertain terms, in the process earning the trust of the new prime minister. Promoted to three-star, he was appointed DGI.

He may have been an effective DGC and later DGI but he rode roughshod over one and all including respected figures in the media and went after media groups he saw as reluctant to play ball in the ouster of the PML-N government and ensuring a smooth, criticism-free passage of its replacement. It didn't matter to him that the media group was not PML-N-leaning but merely doing its duty as

an independent voice. He tried his best to destroy the media group.

This unbridled power clearly got to his head and he proceeded to rehire on contract retired officers personally loyal to him. He forgot that his predecessors had hardly been on a solo flight. They had always represented institutional interests. When he lost out in the race for the position of army chief following the naming of the senior-most three-star, Gen Asim Munir, to the top slot, he never recovered from what he saw as a setback.

Given the institution's disdain for what it sees as 'disloyalty', Faiz Hameed is reportedly to have acted 'irrationally' since his retirement in trying to undermine the current leadership and is now in the dock reportedly facing serious charges, as are some of his intel minions. The question is: will this reality check make him reflect on his follies or prove a motivation for him to throw others under the bus to get off the hook himself or secure a better deal?

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, blacklisted 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 In-

dia maintain largely positive 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 benefit 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 Kashmiris exercise their 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

CM Sindh chairs high level rain emergency meeting

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah presiding over a high-level rain emergency meeting on Sunday morning said that Sukkur, Dadu, Jacobabad, and Naushehroferoze have received heavy rains ranging from 227 mm to 101 mm, which has inundated the roads and streets, therefore, effective measures must be taken to protect the life and property of the people, and then dewatering efforts may be made.

'I want to see the entire government machinery, including district administration, local bodies, particularly in the rain-affected areas working on the roads, helping people and the Irrigation department patrolling on the embankments of the canals and distributaries to avoid breaches.'

The meeting was held at CM House on Sunday and was attended by Sharjeel Memon, Saeed Ghani, Advisor Najmi

Alam, Mayor Karachi, Murtaza Wahab, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, DG Rangers Major Gen Azhar Waqas, SMBR Baqaullah Unar, Secretary Local Govt Khalid Hyder Shah, Secretary Health Rehan Baloch, DG PDMA Salman Shah, Corps Headquarter and K O M K A R representatives, Director Weather Ameer Hyder, and other concerned.

On Video link Minister Irrigation Jam Khan Shoro, Mayor Sukkur Arshlan Shaikh, Commissioner of Hyderabad, Sukkur, Larkana, Shaheed Benazirabad and Mirpurkhas and Deputy Commissioners attended the meeting through video link. The CM said, as per the report sent to him by the commissioners, Sukkur has received 227mm, Dadu 181mm, Jacobabad 104mm, Khairpur 101mm, and Naushehroferoze 69mm, which was the highest.

Government, Saeed Ghani, informed the CM that he has activated the local bodies all over Sindh and provided them with necessary facilities to work properly in the rain-affected areas.

Commissioner Sukkur Fayaz Abbasi told the CM that the four spells of heavy rains within 25 hours in District Sukkur have downpoured 263 mm, followed by 106 mm in Khairpur district. He added that three spells were dealt with and cleared the roads and low-lying areas within three to four hours while the water of the fourth spell was being dealt with.

In Khairpur district, Khairpur City recorded 106mm of rain, and Kingri Taluka recorded 105mm. Rainwater was drained out from Khairpur City.

The PDMA has provided 35 Diesel Engines, eight Dewatering machines, and 12 Tractor-mounted machines, in addition to two Mirage Trucks for dewatering Mud Pumps.

Minister of Local



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Murad Ali Shah presides over a high level rain emergency meeting held at CM House in Karachi.

“EoP” to boost online virtual tours of country’s scenic spots: Zahid

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: Adviser to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) on Tourism and Culture, Zahid Chanzab visited the head office of a private tourism technology company “Jazz Mosafer” and looked at the ongoing work on the project Eye of Pakistan (EoP) being accomplished jointly in collaboration with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority (KPCTA) and private sector company.

The Online virtual journey of the country’s hill stations and scenic spots would be made possible under this project. Moreover, pre-travel arrangements, weather updates and access to Tourism facilities would also be made available with the click of a special mobile app.

DG KPCTA Tashfin Haider, CEO of Jazz Nusafir Sajad Khan,

Manager Digital Transformation Cell (DTC) Abdul Baseer and other officers of the Authority were present at the moment. Zahid Chanzab eulogized the innovative and round-the-clock efforts of the project officials and acknowledged that the use of modern technology in the tourism industry would make it more functional and greatly contribute to accentuating our natural tourism and cultural resources globally which would ultimately tend to raise government revenue including the precious foreign exchange.

He said that in the modern era, there is a growing trend to endure and evaluate different tourist places in the world without travelling to these places through virtual tourism, which includes technologies such as VR (Virtual Reality), AR (Augmented Reality) and 360-degree videos.



KARACHI: Students of schools and universities are picking up plastic bottles and other garbage from the Seaview Beach during cleanliness drive organized by Jaanisar Organization with support of Pakistan Navy in Karachi.

DG PARD presents shield to CEO PCP

PESHAWAR (APP): The Director General of Pakistan Academy for Rural Development (PARD) Capt @ 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 established for this purpose 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

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.

Dr. Muhammad Ilyas on this occasion said that in addition to the treatment and complete rehabilitation of patients with spinal cord disabilities in the Paraplegic Center.

The treatment and rehabilitation of children suffering from clubfoot and autism are also going on successfully while under a future plan, the treatment and rehabilitation of people with disabilities due to skull injuries would also be carried out at PCP as, he regretted.

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 cuses 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. The organization assured the public that they, in collaboration with the Indus River System Authority (IRSA) and the Irrigation Department, are closely monitoring the water levels of Indian dams 24/7.

Current water flows in the Chenab, Ravi, and Sutlej rivers remain stable and within normal parameters, the PDMA confirmed. The authority urged the public to disregard unfounded reports and rely on official updates for accurate information.

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. 14.4 kg hashish was recovered from the possession of two suspects netted near Shahrah Wali, Karachi and 8.4 kg hashish was recovered from a motorcyclist intercepted in Sato Katla village near Lahore. Six kg hashish and 1.2 kg opium were recovered from an accused held in Sector G-15, Islamabad. 2.2 kg hashish was recovered from the possession of an accused arrested in Sialkot. Cases under the Anti-Narcotics Act have been registered against all arrested accused and further investigations are under process.



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

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. Zoe Ware, Political Consul of British High Commissioner Islamabad was also present.

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. He said that high quality furniture is made in Pakistan; adding that opportunities should be explored in the markets of Tajikistan. Governor Punjab said that people to people contact between Tajikistan and Pakistan need to be enhanced.

Dolphin Squad arrests 20 ‘criminals’

LAHORE (APP): The Dolphin Squad arrested 20 suspects involved in robbery and theft cases and recovered two mobile phones, six motorcycles and Rs 7,000 in cash from the possession of the accused during one week.

Apart from this, Dolphin Squad also arrested five dangerous dacoit gangs and recovered 14 pistols, two rifles, dozens of cartridges, bullets and magazines from the arrested accused. Swift response was given on 1001 calls received on the helpline.

SP Dolphin Shah Mir Khalid said that during patrolling, 60 hardened criminals, 28 absconders, including 42 criminals were arrested. Liquor, heroin, hashish, ice were recovered from the drug dealers. Also, 196 suspicious vehicles and motorcycles were impounded at police.



PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi is called on by people Lawyers Forum delegation 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 religious harmony. The launch of the air ambulance service in Punjab, he noted, was a humanitarian initiative by 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 would soon launch solar panel and housing projects. Arora also mentioned that scholarships for students from religious minorities.



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

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

Peoples 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. He also mentioned plans to discuss with relevant authorities regarding the establishment of a Narcotics Court in Dera Ismail Khan. Shah Fahad Ansari, the Divisional President of the Peoples Lawyers Forum, expressed gratitude to Governor Faisal Karim Kundi.



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

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, for their crackdown on notorious gangs and also praised the excellent command and public service delivery of RPOs Sargodha and Faisalabad.

He reviewed the performance, issues, and challenges faced by the six regions and their districts.

During the meeting, matters related to the arrest of dangerous gangs, recovery, quality of investigation, and challaning were discussed. He also reviewed the situation of controlling serious crimes such as dacoity-murders, blind murders, and kidnappings for ransom.

He directed the Rawalpindi region to improve its performance in investigation, recovery, prosecution and resolution of complaints on 1787.



LARKANA: Motorcyclists passing through rain water accumulated on the road after heavy rain in the city.

PMA demands ad-hoc, contractual doctors to be regularised

MULTAN (APP): 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. However, only hospitals are being equipped with FBR POS systems.

The PMA officials also emphasized that revamping should only be done where necessary and that doctors should be considered stakeholders. They demanded that doctors be hired at Nishtar-2 in Multan.

Healthcare Commission (PHC) has started closing down healthcare facilities. No action is being taken against quackery, and doctors are being unfairly targeted.

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 met 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

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.

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.

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.

Shah also expressed optimism about the potential of tourism to drive economic growth, citing examples of successful tourism destinations around the world.

By leveraging its natural treasures and cultural heritage, Pakistan can become a premier tourist destination, contributing significantly to the country's economic development and prosperity, he added.

Eiman Shah revealed that the government is actively investing in the development of Gilgit-Baltistan's tourism infrastructure.

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.

Special Assistant to 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.



KARACHI: People buy school bags, stationary and uniforms for their children as educational institutes have been reopened after summer vacations, at Urdu Bazar in Karachi.

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, chemicals, fertilizers, pharmaceuticals, machinery and equipment and furniture.

While it decreased in tobacco, textile, paper & board, non metallic mineral products, iron & steel products, electrical equipment.

P@SHA delegation calls on LCCI President

LAHORE (APP): The Pakistan Software Houses Association (P@SHA) has met with the LCCI President Kashif Anwar to discuss ongoing internet disruptions and its negative impacts on the IT sector.

The delegation led by Central Executive Committee Member P@SHA Mudassar Saleem Malik, included key industry figures like Abdul Wahab (CEO, ABFA Technologies), Imad Malik (CEO, Cobuild), Mudassar Naeem (CEO, Peak Solutions), Iftikhar Hussain, and Aamir Iftikhar had a detailed discussion with LCCI President here on Sunday.

After listening to their concerns, LCCI President Kashif Anwar urged the authorities to look into the matter seriously and consult the relevant stakeholders before making any changes in the existing internet system.

"Frequent internet outages, slow speed and high cost are crippling our economy and hindering ability to compete in the global market," he remarked.

Leader of the delegation, Mudassar Saleem Malik, noted that "Fiverr" has even issued cautions against collaborating with freelancers in Pakistan due to these complications, which were caused due to the usage of VPNs by the freelancers to temporarily bypass the internet disruptions, however, switching of IP's always triggers an alert in the security protocol breach.

The delegation also reported that the disruption has caused significant operational downtimes in data centers, with some being offline for



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

Excise dept adds 6500 new property units into tax net

MULTAN (APP): Excise, Taxation, and Narcotics departments added over 6500 new property units, both domestic and commercial, to the tax net, representing an increase of about Rs 40 million in property tax revenue annually.

ETO admin Khalid Hussain Qasoori, while talking to APP here on Sunday, said that the new property units were included after a survey by excise teams. He said that a Rs 900 million property tax target was set for the current financial year, and he hoped that they would achieve 60 percent of the total target by September 30.

The official further stated that the provincial government has announced a five percent rebate offer over full payment of new financial year property taxes through E-Pay.

Over 1m cotton bales arrival recorded at ginneries till Aug 15

MULTAN (APP): Seed Cotton (Phutti) equivalent to over one million (10,75,028) bales have reached ginning factories across Pakistan till August 15, 2024. According to a fortnightly report of Pakistan Cotton Ginners Association (PCGA) issued to media on Sunday, Punjab ginning factories recorded cotton arrival figures of 3,92,736 bales while arrivals to ginneries in Sindh recorded at 6,82,292 bales including 5,12,203 reaching ginneries in Sanghar district alone. Arrivals in Baluchistan were recorded at 26,100 bales. Out of the total arrivals, seed cotton converted into bales was recorded at 10,34,675.



ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja addressing press conference.

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

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Egypt to Pakistan, Dr. Ihab Abdel Hamid has 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.

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.

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.

Dr. Ihab said that for the promotion of economic and trade relations in both countries, the business communities of both sides have to exchange delegations. He said that the current bilateral trade between the two countries is much less than its potential and there is complete consensus between the two countries to increase it.

He said Pakistan Look Africa Policy is very important to increase trade with African countries and Egypt can play its full role in it. Replying to a question, he said that Egypt has the largest population in the Arab countries and is considered the third most populous country in Africa, behind Ethiopia and Nigeria. He said that more of Egypt's population is concentrated around the fertile strip of the Nile River as most of the country is in agriculture.

Punjab govt sends letters to DISCOs for relief in electricity bills

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab government has formally dispatched official letters to the electricity companies for providing relief to the Punjab and Islamabad electricity consumers at the rate of Rs 14 per unit.

On the direction of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif, five distribution companies (DISCOs) have been dispatched official letters. Secretary Energy Punjab Dr Naeem Rauf dispatched letters to DISCOs of Islamabad, Lahore, Gujranwala, Faisalabad and Multan. In a letter, written by the Punjab government informed DISCOs to apprise the electricity consumers about the reduction amounting of Rs 14 per unit under the government package. IESCO, MEPCO, GEPCO, FESCO, LESCO will make reduction in the electricity bills of citizens using between 201 to 500 units.

The difference of amount between the real cost of electricity and provision of relief will be paid by the Punjab government. On the demand of electricity companies, the Punjab government will transfer the required amount to the DISCOs.

PML-N President Muhammad Nawaz Sharif along with Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif announced reduction in the electricity price at the rate of rupees 14 per unit on 16th August.

The Punjab government will provide rupees 45 billion from its own resources in order to provide relief to the people of Punjab and Islamabad.

Under the relief package, the electricity price has been reduced for the consumers using electricity between 201 to 500 units in the two months of August and September.

AC visits Sunday bazaar, fines price gougers

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a bid to protect consumers, Assistant Commissioner City Farhan Ahmad on Saunday 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.



FAISALABAD: A worker is busy in his work at a local factory in the city.

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 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 portion of which is associated with textiles.

They earn livelihood for families by developing products ranging from yarn, towels, bed sheets, fabric, garments, sports garments that fetch dollars from lucrative foreign markets and this national scale effort contributes 60 per cent in the total yearly export earnings for Pakistan. Recently, Vice President, Pakistan Central Cotton Committee (PCCC), Dr. Yusuf Zafar raised concerns over the statistics of ongoing cotton season and forecast the production would likely be around 6-7 million bales, far below what the textile sector and the overall national economy expected.

He attributed the decline to a smaller cultivation area, prolonged heatwaves, unexpected rains, and severe whitefly infestations. It would be far below the textile industry's demand of 16

Indonesian Expo 2024 in Capital City attracts public attention

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Embassy of the Republic 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 such as Rumah Gadang from West Sumatera Province and the Embassy's vehicle in Pakistan's truck art with Indonesian motifs.

Moreover, curious visitors also seem interested in reading the Indonesian short history through a miniature museum and historical display. During the main session of the Indonesian Independence Day celebration on 17 August 2024.



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

ICCI for starting direct flights for Indonesia

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) on Sunday urged the need to start direct flights between Pakistan and Indonesia for further strengthening bilateral trade and investment relations between both the countries. While addressing the flag hoisting ceremony held in connection with the 79th Independence Day of Indonesia in its embassy, Zafar Bakhtawari Secretary General United Business Group and former President ICCI emphasized that direct flight between the two countries, said a press release. The direct air connectivity is much needed to further strengthen the existing relations and to unlock the tourism potential of both sides, he added.

He also extended his greetings to the Charge d'Affaires on behalf of the business community and reaffirmed the commitment to working closely to attain sustainable economic growth and social prosperity for the people of both countries.



SARGODHA: A mechanic busy repairing bicycle at Liaquat Market.

SNGPL apprehends 11 more gas pilferers

LODHAN (APP): The Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) UFG Control Task Force successfully apprehended eleven more gas pilferers red-handedly.

According to details, six consumers were found tampering with meters to steal gas, resulting in losses for the department in terms of UFG (Unaccounted for Gas). Their meters were disconnected, and further departmental action has been recommended.

In Jalalpur Pirwala, three meters were disconnected due to domestic meters being used for commercial purposes, specifically in schools, causing significant financial losses to the department. Fines have been recommended in these cases.

Additionally, in Multan, a domestic meter used for commercial purposes was also disconnected.

The user put resistance by gathering people, but later handed over the meter before the police arrived.

One user's meter was disconnected because it was installed far from the service, leading to gas leakage and losses for the department. Furthermore, three users had their meters relocated closer to the service due to similar issues.

million bales and the shortfall will necessitate the import of approximately 5-6 million bales, the PCCC top scientist said.

The PCCC media focal person and head of CCRI technology transfer wing Sajid Mahmood recalls that cotton production decline started after 2016 due to lack of funding on research. He said that the country's ace cotton research body PCCC had faced financial crisis owing to non-payment. He said, Pakistan achieved over 14 million bales production once and later it remained oscillating between 11-13 million bales. However, after 2016, the production started declining and had touched new low in 2022 with 4.5 million bales when floods had swept away crop lands in South Punjab.

South Punjab Secretary Agriculture Saqib Ali Ateel described climate change as a big trouble confronting cotton and everybody was worried about the unpredictability of weather patterns. Farmers got good results from early farming last year but early sown crop was confronted by heatwave this season. He admitted that cotton area was less this year by around 22 per cent, however, adding that despite troubles, the crop was overall good with better fruiting and flowering. Statistics show that average cotton production remained 8.8 million bales in a decade from 2008 to 2018 but only 5.1 million bales from 2019 to 2022.

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.

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"

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 that a Gaza truce is nearer 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 dictates."

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.



Paetongtarn Shinawatra and Thaksin Shinawatra, Bangkok.

Ukrainian officials urge civilians to evacuate eastern city of Pokrovsk as Russian troops close in Skip carousel

Monitoring Desk

KYIV: Military authorities in the eastern Ukrainian city of Pokrovsk urged civilians to speed up their evacuation Friday because the Russian army was quickly closing in on what has been one of Moscow's key targets for months.

Pokrovsk officials said in a Telegram post that Russian troops are "advancing at a fast pace. With every passing day there is less and less time to collect personal belongings and leave for safer regions."

Ukrainian troops have been trying to divert the Kremlin's military focus away from the front line in Ukraine by launching a bold cross-border incursion into Russia's Kursk region. But Ukrainian Presi-

dent Volodymyr Zelenskyy warned Thursday that Pokrovsk and other nearby towns in the Donetsk region were "facing the most intense Russian assaults."

An aerial reconnaissance soldier with Ukraine's 68th Separate Airborne Brigade who is helping defend the city told The Associated Press by phone on Friday that he faces the same deadly monotony every day: From his position, he flies a drone to identify moving Russian infantrymen. The boom of a mortar follows after he relays the coordinates. Then, more and more infantrymen come in a seemingly endless wave.

"Since the Kursk operation, I haven't noticed any changes.

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.

Venezuelan opposition protests as election dispute drags on

Monitoring Desk

CARACAS: Venezuela's political opposition and its supporters gathered in cities around the country on Saturday to demand recognition of what they say is their candidate's resounding victory in a presidential vote nearly three weeks ago.

The country's electoral authority, considered by the opposition to be an arm of the ruling party, has said President Nicolas Maduro won his third term in the July 28 contest, with just under 52% of the vote. But the opposition, led by former lawmaker Maria Corina Machado, has published online what it says are 83% of voting machine tallies, which give its candidate Edmundo Gonzalez a hearty 67% support.

The disputed vote has

thrown the economically beleaguered nation into political crisis, and a government crackdown on protests has led to at least 2,400 arrests. Clashes connected to the protests have also led to at least 23 deaths. The international community has offered a raft of suggestions for overcoming the nearly three-week-old election crisis - including a new vote - but most have been rejected outright by both the ruling party and opposition. In the capital Caracas, thousands gathered in the eastern part of the city along its main thoroughfare.

Standing on a truck in the center of the crowd, Machado called for independent, international verification of the election and for her supporters to stay in the streets.

North Korea condemns Ukraine's incursion into Russia as act of terror

Monitoring Desk

SEOUL: North Korea condemned Ukraine's incursion into Russia as an unforgivable act of terror backed by Washington and the West, adding it would always stand with Russia as it seeks to protect its sovereignty, state media said on Sunday.

Ukraine's drive into Russia is a product of the anti-Russia confrontational policy of the United States, which is pushing the situation to the brink of World War Three, KCNA news agency said.

The US handed "astronomical" sums of lethal weapons to Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, the report said.



Medical staff shout slogans while holding placards during a protest at a hospital in Mumbai, after a nationwide strike was declared by the Indian Medical Association to protest the rape and murder of a trainee medic at a government-run hospital in Kolkata, India.

Oil spill reported off Venezuela's Caribbean coast

Monitoring Desk

CARACAS: An oil spill, which appeared to originate from Venezuela's El Palito refinery several days ago, has contaminated a bay off the country's north-central coast in the Caribbean Sea, five sources told Reuters on Saturday.

Biologist Eduardo Klein posted satellite images on X that he said showed an oil slick of about 225 square kilometers (87 square miles) in the Golfo Triste and completely covering

Morrocoy National Park, known for beaches lined with palm trees and mangroves.

There was no immediate comment from the state-owned company Petroleos de Venezuela PDVSA or the oil ministry.

The El Palito refinery, with a capacity to process 146,000 barrels of crude oil per day, is Venezuela's smallest oil refining complex and located in the Puerto Cabello municipality on the coast of the cen

'Virtually intact' wreckage of WWI ship amazes divers

Monitoring Desk

LONDON: A team of UK divers has hailed the discovery of a wreck off Scotland believed to be a Royal Navy warship sunk during World War I but still "virtually intact". The team found what it thinks is HMS Hawke - which sank after being hit by a German torpedo in Oct 1914 - in the North Sea earlier this week. Paul Downs, who was among the divers and filmed footage of the long-lost wreck, described it as "a once in a lifetime" discovery given its "unbelievable" condition.

"She is virtually intact," he said. "The state of preservation is unbelievable for a wreck that's 110 years old and came to a violent end." "Lost in Waters Deep", a group which searches for WWI shipwrecks in Scottish waters, spearheaded the years-long effort to find the warship.

The team is now awaiting official confirmation from the Royal Navy after providing it with their findings. Only 70 of HMS Hawke's crew survived, while more than 500 died, after it was attacked by a German U-boat in the early months of WWI. The warship, an Edgar-class cruiser first launched in 1891, was 387 feet long and 60 feet wide. It caught fire, exploded and then disappeared beneath the murky waters of the North Sea off northeast Scotland in less than eight minutes.

Hurricane Ernesto knocks out power in Bermuda but major damage avoided

Monitoring Desk

BERMUDA: Hurricane Ernesto knocked out power, downed trees and flooded parts of Bermuda on Saturday but the British island territory appeared to have escaped major injuries or property damage, officials said after an initial assessment.

The Category 1 storm unleashed powerful winds and whipped up 35-foot (10-meter) seas, leading to power loss for 71% of the territory's 36,000 customers, officials said.

"I'm happy to report that there have been no calls for service for any major incidents or damage to any property, and those calls that we've received over the

last six hours or so are primarily flooding," risk management official Lyndon Raynor said on a government video update.

Some 5.9 inches (150 mm) of rain had fallen and more was expected from the back end of the storm, Michelle Pitcher, director of the Bermuda Weather Service, said on the video.

The US National Weather Service said the hurricane was tracking north-northeast. As of 5 pm EDT (2100 GMT), it had moved about 85 miles (135 km) past Bermuda, which lies some 600 miles (1,000 km) off the Carolina coast, and was expected to continue moving away on Saturday.

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.

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".

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 midnight. 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.

The original building was demolished in 1775 and then rebuilt.

Aid groups in Gaza aim to avert a polio outbreak with a surge of vaccinations

Monitoring Desk

CAIRO: The threat of polio is rising fast in the Gaza Strip, prompting aid groups to call for an urgent pause in the war so they can ramp up vaccinations and head off a full-blown outbreak. One case has been confirmed, others are suspected and the virus was detected in wastewater in six different locations in July.

Polio was eradicated in Gaza 25 years ago, but vaccinations plunged after the war began 10 months ago and the territory has become a breeding ground for the virus, aid groups say. Hundreds of thousands of displaced Palestinians are crowded into tent camps lacking clean water or proper disposal of sewage and garbage.

To avert a widespread outbreak, aid groups are preparing to vaccinate more than 600,000 children in the coming weeks. They say the ambitious vaccination plans are impossible, though, without a pause in the fighting between Israel and Hamas. A possible cease-fire deal couldn't come soon enough.

"We are anticipating and preparing for the

worst-case scenario of a polio outbreak in the coming weeks or month," Francis Hughes, the Gaza response director at CARE International, told The Associated Press.

The World Health Organization and UNICEF, the United Nations children's agency, said in a joint statement Friday that, at a minimum, a seven-day pause is needed to carry out a mass vaccination plan.

The U.N. aims to bring 1.6 million doses of polio vaccine into Gaza, where sanitation and water systems have been destroyed, leaving open pits of human waste in crowded tent camps. Families living in the camps have little clean water or even soap to maintain hygiene and sometimes use wastewater to drink or clean clothes and dishes.

At least 225 informal waste disposal sites and landfills have cropped up around Gaza - many close to where families are sheltering, according to a report released in July by PAX, a Netherlands-based nonprofit that used satellite imagery to track the sites.



Supporters of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro dance as others hold Venezuelan flags during a march amid the disputed presidential election, in Caracas, Venezuela.

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.



NASEERABAD: View of stagnant rainwater due to poor sewerage system after heavy downpour of monsoon season, showing the negligence of concerned department, at different areas of Dera Murad Jamali.

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.

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 supporters Modi's authoritarian agenda in occupied Kashmir.

Priority to restore economy, Ahsan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Planning, Ahsan Iqbal, on Sunday said that the restoration of Pakistan's economy was the government most significant challenge.

Speaking to a private news channel, he said that with dedicated efforts, the country would return to a path of progress and development within the next two to three years.

The government was committed to address these issues and steering the country towards stability, "he said.

The current economic difficulties are because of the reason when the country was handover to an "inexperienced individual" in 2018, he added.

Despite the challenges, the Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) will overcome these financial hardships, as they done in the past.

Gwadar Free Zone inks agreement with Xinjiang Pilot Free Trade Zone

ISLAMABAD (INP): In a fresh strategic move, Gwadar Free Zone (GFZ) has inked a comprehensive economic agreement with Xinjiang Pilot Free Trade Zone (XPFTZ) to build a new pattern of interactive development for logistic, trade, and commercial growth under the framework of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Gwadar Free Zone signed the economic pact and forwarded it to the administration of Xinjiang Pilot Free Trade Zone for needful action. Gwadar Port Authority official told Gwadar Pro.

China Industry Overseas Development Association is also part of the agreement to expedite coordinated development of the

two regions, he added.

"It has been agreed by the contracting parties to jointly promote the economic development of the two trade zones.

Cooperation in the fields of energy, textile, agricultural products, trade and logistics will be enhanced through this agreement," he said, adding that a joint working group would be established to carry out coordination and implementation.

Regular communication mechanisms will be established among the parties.

Gwadar Free Zone comprises two parts, Gwadar South Free Zone spreading over 60 acres and Gwadar North Free Zone spanning over 2221 acres.

Samina deplors atrocities in Kashmir and Palestine

QUETTA (APP): Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri, the chairperson of the Standing Committee of the Senate on Human Rights, said the world has remained a silent spectator on the violation of human rights in Kashmir and Palestine.

In her statement issued here on Sunday, she said that there is so much contradiction in saying and acting on these things in this world. "On the occasion of the International Day of Humanitarianism today, no one has seen the ongoing Israeli atrocities in Palestine. The world has remained a silent spectator on the violation

of human rights in Kashmir and Palestine", she remarked.

She said that thousands of innocent Palestinian Muslims have been martyred, including many innocent children. On the ongoing persecution of Kashmiris in India, other major organizations, including the United Nations Security Council, have not raised a strong voice against the ongoing oppression in Palestine, she added. She said that Israel is stubbornly not willing to stop the self-inflicted war against the innocent Palestinians and this process is going on.



QUETTA: A view of Pakistan Engineering Council election.

Polling held for elections of PEC's body in Quetta

QUETTA: The polling was held in connection with the elections of governing body of the Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) on Sunday in Quetta and different other cities of the Balochistan province as elsewhere in the country.

The polling started at 08:00 AM remained continued till 05:00 Pm without any break. The NADRA's

offices were declared as the polling stations for elections of PEC in Quetta.

The polling was also held in Khuzdar, Dera Bugti, Turbat, Loralai, Hub, Gwadar, Panjgur, Noshki and Naseerabad.

It may be mentioned here that at the outset six panels took part in the elections of PEC. Around 6,000 engineers are registered as voters from Balochistan.

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.



QUETTA: Garbage collectors are searching for useful things for sale by which they can earn their livelihood for support of their families, at a roadside garbage dump located on New Adda area in Quetta.

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 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.

2 injured in roof collapse incident

JAFARABAD (INP): In a tragic incident, at least two people were sustained injured in a roof collapse incident in Tangwani Jafarabad area on early Sunday morning.

According to the police, two people critically injured when a house roof collapsed due to heavy rain fall in Tangwani, a private news channel reported.

Rescue teams rushed to the scene to provide medical assistance and evacuate the injured.

The two individuals, whose identities have not been disclosed, were taken to a nearby hospital for treatment. Their condition is reported to be stable but further updates are awaited.



CHAMAN: Director General Health Services Balochistan Dr. Ameen Khan Mandokhail enquiring about the health of patients during his visit to Civil Hospital.

Secretary C&W directs to all staff of dept to remain high alert in recent rains

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Secretary Communication and Works (C&W) Department, Balochistan, Lal Jan Jaffar has directed to all staff of the department including officers and other staff to remain alert high alert in view of the recent rains in the province.

According to an official hand out issued here on Sunday, the Secretary C&W directed to all staff of the department to get ready along with the necessary machinery to face any emergent situation round the clock.

In addition to this, the Secretary directed to ensure rehabilitation of all the link roads in view of the emer-

gent situation.

He mentioned that the torrential rains are expected particularly in the districts of Naseerabad and Khuzdar divisions as per the prediction and advance information of the Met department.

In view of the situation, he especially directed to the Chief Engineers and district Engineers Officers to remain alert along with their staff and machinery.

He stressed the need to continue process of work of rehabilitation directing the staff of department to take wholehearted part along with the district administration and provincial disaster management authority rescue and operation teams.



QUETTA: Wapda technician is installing electric wires on an electric pole after damages, at Sarki road in Quetta.

Shakeel Khan sacked on corruption charges, says Barrister Saif

ISLAMABAD (INP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Advisor Barrister Saif assured that the party guaranteed 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.

Levies force retrieves two occupied Govt schools from Qabza mafia

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Levies force raided two government schools, which otherwise were occupied by the illegal occupants, in Duki area on Sunday.

According to the Assistant Commissioner Duki, Zahoor Ahmed Baloch, the government schools retrieved from the illegal occupants were handed over to the Education department after taking them back.

The raid was conducted at the Government Middle School Killi Khair

Muhammad Mithi Nasir and Primary School Killi Bojar.

The Assistant Commissioner Duki said that the headmasters and staff deployed in the schools were also absent for long. Both the schools were being used as guest rooms.

He warned that the stern action would be taken against the absentee staff of the schools. He said that there are 123 non-functional schools in Duki district while 145 schools are working as one teacher school in the district.



QUETTA: Chairman Ameenullah Kakar addressing the oath taking of Youth Action Committee.

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. Bilawal Bhutto further instructed that an immediate investigation be conducted into the breach in the dam in Khairpur district, emphasizing the need to minimize the damage and provide prompt assistance to the affected people.

He stressed that the Department of Relief and Rehabilitation and the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) must fulfill their responsibilities in assisting the rain-affected communities.

He assured the victims that the PPP would stand by them and provide unwavering support during this difficult time.

Naqvi expresses deep grief over loss of precious lives in rain related incidents

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi has expressed deep sorrow over the loss of precious lives due to rain-related incidents in various parts of the country. He extended heartfelt condolences to the families of the deceased. Interior Minister prayed for the swift recovery of those injured in the incidents. He said that he was deeply saddened by the loss of life and property caused by various accidents due to the rains. He further stated that we share the grief of the bereaved families and prayed to the Almighty to grant them patience.

However, the joint efforts of the Pakistani government and military leadership have successfully facilitated the ongoing removal of undocumented individuals from the country.

This repatriation effort is a significant step towards addressing concerns related to security and illegal immigration in Pakistan.