

Independent

Member APNS & CPNE

Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah

www.dailyindependent.com.pk Quetta

Ph: 2841470/2841473 REG: No. BC-116 B/ID-445 Vol XXV No 356, Safar 12, 1446 AH Sunday August 18, 2024 Pages 08, Price Rs.15

PM orders tight vigilance against Mpox amid global outbreak threat

Shehbaz Sharif instructs NCOC to remain alert and ensure availability of equipment for detecting the virus

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday directed for keeping strict vigilance on the ad of Monkeypox (mpox) after the World Health Organization (WHO) had declared its outbreak in different parts of the world as a public health emergency of international concern.

Chairing an important meeting on the measures being taken against the spread of mpox virus, the prime minister directed for ensuring effective screening measures at all airports, seaports and borders of the country, besides asking the border health services to keep complete surveillance of the situation.

He also directed the National Command and Operations Center (NCOC) to keep alert and hold daily evaluations of the situation and asked for the provision of all required gadgets and kits for the evaluation of mpox virus.

The meeting was attended by PM's Coordinator on

National Health Dr Malik Mukhtar Ahmad Bharath, Federal Secretary National Health Nadeem Mehboob, Chairman National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) Lt. Gen. Inam Haider Malik, chief secretaries, chief commissioner ICT and other relevant senior officials, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

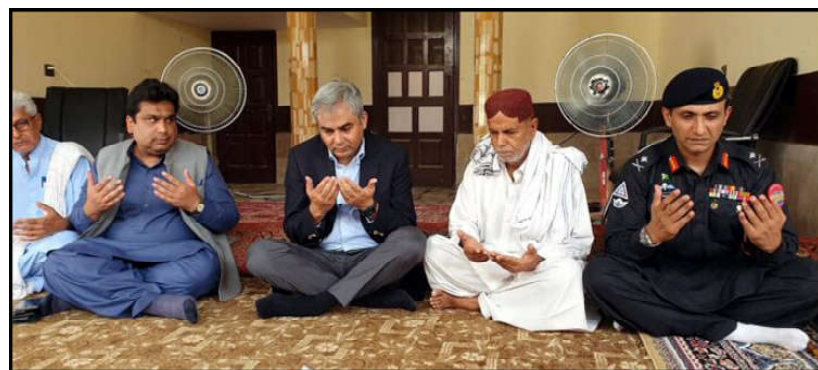
The prime minister further directed for strengthening of coordination among the provincial governments, governments of Gilgit Baltistan and Azad Jammu Kashmir. He asked for the launch of an effective and complete awareness campaign, besides hinting at getting weekly briefings over the mpox situation.

The meeting was apprised of the situation about the spread of the monkeypox virus. A person in District Mardan was diagnosed as a carrier of the virus. The resident had just returned to Pakistan from abroad where he was employed.

Continued on page 2



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting on the measures against spread of Monkeypox virus.



TURBAT: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi offering Fataha for departed soul of Shaheed Deputy Commissioner Zakir Baloch

PML-N under Nawaz leadership always served masses, launched mega uplift projects: Tarar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar said on Saturday that under the leadership of Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) had always done

South Asia's first Motorways network in the country, he said while addressing a press conference here.

He said it was Nawaz Sharif who took steps for ease of business, initiated power generation projects and provided facilities to

Mariam Nawaz has given a big relief to consumers in Punjab in terms of electricity," Tarar said adding it was historic and unprecedented step which would cost Rs 45 billion. He said a former caretaker minister who was also making hue and cry over power tariff, now should come forward and laud the Punjab government's initiative.

He said that in 2018 when the tenure of the PML-N government ended, inflation was only 4 per cent and GDP growth rate was over 6 per cent. He said that yesterday Nawaz Sharif rightly said that the people were hit by inflation and sky rocketing prices of daily use items during the era when £ 190 million scam emerged, when Tosha Khana and cypher cases emerged and Punjab was at the mercy of Farha Gogi

investors. Tarar said that Punjab government had taken a good step by providing subsidy to electricity consumers.

"Chief Minister Punjab

Continued on page 2



Nawaz Sharif, during his first term as prime minister, initiated mega development projects including

the politics of services to the masses and provided them maximum facilities.

Nawaz Sharif, during his first term as prime minister, initiated mega development projects including

NA speaker forms committee to probe PTI MNA's derogatory remarks

Committee will have authority to include five female members from parliamentary parties, submit report in 15 days

ISLAMABAD : The Speaker National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, expressed dismay over derogatory remarks made by MNA Iqbal Afridi regarding the attire of a female officer of the K-Electric company during the meeting of the Standing Committee on Energy on Friday the 16th August, 2024.

Taking action on inappropriate and derogatory remarks made by Member of the MNA Iqbal Afridi, about the attire of a female officer, the Speaker has established a fact-finding committee to investigate

the incident thoroughly.

This special investigative committee will be chaired by Federal Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar and will include MNAs Syed Naveed Qamar, Syed Amin-ul-Haque, Malik Muhammad Amir Dogar, and Maulana Abdul Ghafour Haideri. Additionally, the committee has been empowered to include five female members from various parliamentary parties to ensure a comprehensive and balanced review. The committee will submit its report to the Speaker within 15 days.

JI announces nationwide protest against inflated bills on August 28

KARACHI (INP) - Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Emir Hafiz Naemur Rehman has called for a nationwide protest on Aug 28.

Hafiz Naemur said at a press conference that people's stoves were being shut down.

"Electricity is expensive and there are more taxes. Traders and salaried people are worried," he said.

He said few IPPs had looted billions of rupees. "Why should the common man support IPPs," he questioned and demanded that electricity prices

should be reduced.

Nawaz Sharif and CM Maryam Nawaz announced reduction in electricity prices which, he said, was an eyewash.

The Jamaat emir criticised that they had reduced Rs14 only for two months.

He said the Sindh government had a budget of Rs3,000 billion. "The Sindh government has received 62 percent of the money from the federal government. Karachi pays taxes and the entire system of the federal government works."

Visits Turbat to condole martyrdom with family: Zakir Baloch would always be remembered, says Naqvi

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi visited Turbat on Saturday.

The Federal Minister visited the residence of martyr Deputy Commissioner Panjgur, Zakir Baloch and condoled his death with his father, Kunar Baloch and other bereaved family members.

The Inspector General Frontier Corps South, Major General Bilal Sarfraz Khan, RPO Makran, Deputy Commissioner and other high ups were also accompanied with the Federal Minister.

He expressed deep grief and sorrow over the martyrdom of Zakir Baloch.

Mohsin Naqvi comforted the father of martyr Deputy Commissioner Panjgur and appreciated his

morale.

The Interior Minister announced financial assistance of Rs. 20 million for the family of Deputy Commissioner Zakir Baloch.

He also handed over the letter of allotment of a plot to the father of Zakir Baloch.

Meanwhile, he also conveyed the special condolence message of the President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif to father of the martyr.

Referring to the financial assistance, the Federal Minister said that it is not alternative to life of any person but it is a very minor endeavour for the care of family of shaheed Zakir Baloch.

He said that it is our

Continued on page 2

Langove satisfied with security arrangements in Quetta

Directs to expedite measures for prevention of street crimes

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Provincial Minister for Home, Mir Ziaullah Langove has expressed satisfaction over the security arrangements in Quetta city.

He directed to the Quetta police to expedite measures for prevention of the street crimes in the city.

The Minister Home was on surprise visit to Quetta city on Saturday.

Mir Ziaullah Langove visited different parts of the Quetta city and reviewed the security arrangements. The Minister also met the people during his visit

to the metropolis.

While expressing satisfaction over the arrangements made for security in the city, the Minister Home directed to the concerned authorities to expedite measures for prevention of the street crimes.

Speaking on the occasion, Mir Ziaullah Langove said that it is responsibility of the provincial government to protect life and property of the people.

He urged the people to extend cooperation to the law enforcement agencies including police.

Deputy Chairman Senate commends NADRA's efforts to simplify ID card issuance in Balochistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Chairman Senate Syedaal Khan Nasar Saturday praised the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) for its efforts to simplify the process of issuing identity cards for the people of Balochistan.

During a meeting with the Director General of NADRA Balochistan, he highlighted the challenges faced by the province, its big size and remote areas often make it difficult for residents to obtain identity cards. He suggested that NADRA could provide better services in these areas by deploying mobile

teams and implementing other appropriate measures to facilitate the process.

The Director General NADRA assured the Deputy Chairman Senate that every possible effort would be made to address these concerns and to make the identity card issuance process more accessible for the people of Balochistan.

Deputy Chairman Nasar also extended his condolences to the DG on the passing of his mother-in-law. He prayed to the Almighty to grant the departed soul eternal peace and to provide the bereaved family with the strength to bear this loss with fortitude.

Imran Khan says: Gen (Retd) Faiz's arrest does not intimidate me

Conspiracy was hatched twice to assassinate me

RAWALPINDI (Online): PTI founder Imran Khan said Saturday conspiracy was hatched twice to assassinate him.

"I am not fearful of any one. Had there been fear of any one I would not have demanded judicial commission on May 9 incident. Conspiracy was hatched twice to murder me.

The constitution is being trampled on the matter of reserved seats of national assembly. I am not fearful due to arrest of Gen (Retd) Faiz. There is no facilitation for me in jail. All is false.

I have no network. Jammers are installed nearby my cell. Mobile don't work in jail. PML-N had left behind financial deficit amounting to 19.5 billion dollars. Chief jus-

stice is providing protection to election commissioner on polls rigging. It is being said that he will be granted extension in service. The institutions are being ruined due to fraud set up. Wrong things are being done by police and FIA, he said this while talking to journalists outside court room Saturday.

He held Nawaz Sharif has said PTI is behind inflation and destruction of economy. PML-N had left behind deficit of 19.5 billion dollars.

Conspiracy was hatched twice to kill me. First conspiracy was made in Wazirabad and second was hatched in Judicial complex.

Responding to question with reference to May 9 incident PTI founder said

May 9 case can end within an hour. I was subjected to torture and was kidnapped on whose order. It can be ascertained within an hour who stole CCTV. They make decisions under what law. All the evidence are held by them. I can get publish article within an hour if I will.

He remarked the biggest fraud was committed with us on February 8. Chief justice has blocked all. Chief justice is providing protection to chief election commissioner on polls rigging.

Now efforts are under way to grant extension in service to chief justice. Chief Justice is working on an agenda. Remarks were given on 190 million pounds to influence the case.



QUETTA: Provincial General Secretary PML(Q) S.R. Nasir meeting with Governor Balochistan Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail

Three persons injured in blast near UoB

Independent Report QUETTA: Three persons got injured in an explosion took place near University of Balochistan, Sariab road on Saturday.

According to the police, the explosive device went off with a big bang on Sariab road near the University.

Three passers-by got injured as they were hit by the splinters. The rescue teams and police rushed towards the spot and cordoned off the area. The injured persons identified as Ehsanullah, Hakimullah and Abdullah were shifted to the Sandeman Hospital for treatment.

In the meantime, bomb disposal squad also reached the spot and started investigations.

PM's five-year economic plan finalized

ISLAMABAD (INP): The main objectives of the Prime Minister's ambitious five-year economic plan have been finalized, with an official announcement expected soon.

The plan encompasses a broad range of targets, including GDP growth, export expansion, Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) benchmarks, a privatization agenda, and strict fiscal deficit controls. Additionally, it focuses on achieving a primary balance surplus, boosting the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP), increasing investment, and implementing strategic plans for overseas and agricultural sectors. Key reforms in energy, expenditure reduction, farmers' credit lending, and FBR digitization are also integral to the plan.

The five-year strategy aims to cap GDP growth at

6 percent while controlling inflation within the 7 to 8 percent range. The fiscal deficit is targeted at 6 percent of GDP for the current fiscal year, with a planned reduction to 4.7 percent in the following year. By 2026-2027, the fiscal deficit is expected to drop to 3.6 percent, with further improvements anticipated by 2028.

Export growth is a major focus, with plans to double exports to over \$60 billion within five years. Sources from the PM office indicate that the government intends to increase exports by \$5 to \$6 billion annually. Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif has directed the preparation of a plan in collaboration with commercial banks to enhance farmers' credit lending, with a formal announcement of the five-year economic plan expected soon.

Sindh, KP, Balochistan also demand power tariff reduction like Punjab

KARACHI (INP): The recent announcement of a Rs 14 per unit reduction in electricity tariffs in Punjab by PML-N Supremo Nawaz Sharif has sparked a strong reaction from Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), and Balochistan.

As per details, citizens in these relief-deprived provinces are demanding similar relief, saying they are also suffering due to high electricity bills.

In Karachi, people are asking why they should not get the same relief as Punjab, especially since Karachi pays the most taxes. People demand the government to announce relief for the entire country, not just Punjab. They urged that poor people live in all provinces and should be given the same relief as those in Punjab.

In Balochistan, citizens called the power tariff reduction a biased step, saying that electricity bills are high everywhere and relief should be given across the board. They are criticized Nawaz Sharif for only thinking about Punjab, demanding that he should consider the needs of all provinces.

In Peshawar, citizens told ARY News that why they should pay more for electricity when people in Punjab get it cheaper. They are demanding that Maryam Nawaz and Shehbaz Sharif reduce electricity tariffs for the entire country.

It is pertinent to mention here that former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif yesterday announced a major relief for electricity consumers in Punjab.



QUETTA: View of site after hand grenade blast occurred at Sariab Road while police officials investigate the site, in Quetta.

AJGL golfers celebrate Pakistan's Independence Day in style

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a patriotic bid to hoist the national flag higher, the Ace Junior Golf League (AJGL) celebrated Jashn-e-Azadi with a series of Azadi Matches across the country in Lahore, Karachi, Islamabad and Peshawar.

Around 134 junior golfers registered and 116 competed. "The AJGL progressive regimen is a telling observation," Lt. Gen (ret'd) Hilal Hussain, patron-in-Chief AJGL said, according to a press release issued on Saturday.

"The participation of a large number of juniors is a source of pride for AJGL Chairperson Dr Asma Afzal Shami," while expressing her deep commitment to the golf and its development in Pa-

kistan. Reflecting on the Azadi Matches, the Lahore Azadi Match held at Gymkhana Club was marked by the Club's signature hospitality. The unwavering support of Shaikat Javed, Convener of Lahore Gymkhana Golf Club, has been instrumental in fully sponsoring, thus, establishing AJGL Monthly Medal Matches and an Azadi Match as a permanent fixture in the Club, thus cementing the foundation of the Ace Junior Golf League.

The Garrison Greens in Lahore also holds a special significance in the history of the Ace Junior Golf League, as it was the venue for the inaugural event, marked by a lively atmosphere. Maj. (ret'd) Amjad Chaudhry's

persistent backing of the League's founders has enabled AJGL to thrive.

The Defence Housing Authority (DHA) Golf Club in Karachi has become a stalwart supporter of the Ace Junior Golf League's Karachi Chapter, serving as its hub, as per the instructions of Brig. Sheeraz Kashif, the club secretary. The inaugural event to the ongoing Monthly Medal Matches and Azadi Match, DHA Golf Club, Karachi has consistently demonstrated its commitment in nurturing the game of golf at its grassroots level.

In Islamabad, the prestigious Bahria Garden City Golf Club has been graciously chosen as the new headquarters of the Ace

Junior Golf League, a testament to the relentless dedication of Brig. (ret'd) Saeed Dar, the Club Secretary, under the guidance of the President, Air Commodore Muhammad Ilyas, Bahria Garden City Golf Club, has become a hub for junior golfers, providing a sponsorship and a platform for juniors to hone their sporting skills and realize their full potential.

Secretary, KPGA, Col. Sreid0 Imtihan and Secretary PGC, Sqn Ldr (ret'd) Saqib have gone an extra mile to facilitate and finance the AJGL Monthly Matches. In the recently held Independence Day Cup, Prize Distribution Ceremony, the chief guest not only appreciated the junior, as a token of encouragement; he gave cash prizes to all the participants.



PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi attending as chief guest Influencers event organized by Nexus by Maxum at Governor House



CHAMAN: Deputy Commissioner Chaman Raja Athar Abbas and other high officials attending funeral prayer of Levies Risalder Major Aziz Ahmed Khan Achakzai

Terrorist killed in Gujranwala firefight with CTD personnel

GUJRANWALA (INP): A terrorist was killed in an exchange of fire between Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) personnel and terrorists in Aimanabad area of Gujranwala on Saturday.

According to a CTD spokesperson, three terrorists managed to escape from the spot after the shootout. Weapons, safety fuses, explosives, cartridges and explosives were recovered from the possession of the slain terrorist, spokesperson said.

Help is being sought

from NADRA to identify the slain terrorist, said CTD spokesperson.

Terrorists of the banned organization were planning terror attacks at key locations, spokesperson said. A case has been registered in the incident and search operation is on to find the escaped terrorists and CTD conducted a raid to make an arrest on a tip-off, said spokesperson.

CTD officials said the Counter-Terrorism Department is taking all possible steps for safe Punjab.

Integrated emergency response center to be established in Muzaffarabad

Independent Report. MUZAFFARABAD: High-level meeting was held under the chairmanship of the Director General of the State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA) to discuss the establishment of an Integrated Emergency Response Center (IERC) in Muzaffarabad.

The meeting was attended by the District Health Officer, Director Admin SDMA, Director Operations SDMA, Direc-

tor Rescue 1122, and Assistant Director Civil Defense. The SDMA, Health, and Civil Defense departments jointly discussed the IERC's establishment.

The IERC aims to provide a swift and coordinated response to any emergency or unexpected situation, ensuring the protection of precious human lives. It was decided that the center will be partially established by August 20, 2024.

Expert urges parents to be cautious of waterborne, vector-borne diseases

ISLAMABAD (APP): As the monsoon season intensified, public health expert Dr. Suleman Otho Saturday issued a timely warning to parents and caregivers to remain vigilant and monitor their children closely for potential health risks.

"With the increased moisture and humidity, the risk of waterborne and vector-borne diseases also rises," he said while talking to a private news channel.

Dr. Otho specifically advised watching out for symptoms such as fatigue, lethargy, unresponsiveness, abnormal movements, and difficulty breathing, which

could be indicative of a serious underlying condition.

Stay alert and take proactive steps to ensure your loved ones stay safe and healthy during this monsoon season, Dr. Suleman Otho.

"Early detection and treatment can make a significant difference in preventing long-term damage or even saving a life," he stressed.

"The monsoon season brings with it a range of health risks, including waterborne diseases like cholera, diarrhea, and typhoid, as well as vector-borne diseases like dengue, chikungunya, and malaria.

PM orders...

Continued from page 1

He was quarantined and his condition was out of danger, the meeting was further apprised. It was told that no local transmission of mpox was detected in Pakistan. The WHO, on August 14, declared the spread of mpox virus a public health emergency after which the NCOC issued a national advisory. The required instructions in this regard had been issued, the meeting was briefed.

The federal and provincial governments were launching awareness drives in this regard, whereas the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) would supervise the flights arriving from abroad.

The provincial governments, governments of Gilgit Baltistan, Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Islamabad Capital Territory administration had allocated isolation wards and beds in the largest hospitals for the possible mpox virus cases.

Zakir Baloch would always...

Continued from page 1

responsibility to take care of the family of the martyr. Speaking to the father of Zakir Baloch, Mohsin Naqvi said that we are proud of the courageous father like him who got all his children educated.

He said that the whole nation presents salute to the father of martyr son.

He said that he was grieved over martyrdom of Deputy Commissioner Panjgur.

He said that Zakir Baloch was dutiful, hardworking and brave officer.

He said that the martyr DC Panjgur would always be remembered in our hearts. Besides, Mohsin Naqvi prayed that may Allah Almighty rest the departed soul into His eternal peace and give enough strength and patience to the family to bear the tragic loss of his death.

It may be mentioned here that Deputy Commissioner Panjgur Zakir Baloch was martyred by unknown armed men in Khad Kucha, Mastung while he was on his way to Panjgur from Quetta.

Abrar Ahmed Kamran Ghulam to miss first Bangladesh Test

Sports Desk

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has announced that spinner Abrar Ahmed and top-order batter Kamran Ghulam will not be part of the squad for the first Test against Bangladesh.

PCB stated that both players have been released to represent Pakistan Shaheens in the second four-day match against Bangladesh A, starting on 20 August in Islamabad.

Selectors have opted to rely on a pace attack for the Rawalpindi Test due to overcast conditions, deciding not to include Abrar in the playing XI.

Instead of being benched, the spinner has been assigned to Pakistan

Shaheens to gain match practice ahead of the second Test, scheduled to start on 30 August.

Kamran Ghulam has also been released from the Test squad and will captain Pakistan Shaheens in the upcoming four-day match.

Previously, Saud Shakeel led the Shaheens in the first four-day match against Bangladesh A.

The exclusion of these two players reduces Pakistan's Test squad to 15 members for the first match.

However, both Abrar and Kamran are expected to rejoin the squad for the second Test, bringing the total number of players back to 17.

Regional Director of Provincial Ombudsman visits agricultural training institute in Sakrand

Independent Report

SAKRAND: Regional Director of Provincial Ombudsman, Shaheed Benazirabad, Khan Muhammad Zardari, visited the Agricultural Training Institute in Sakrand on the special instructions of Provincial Ombudsman Sindh, Muhammad Suheil Rajput (Sitara-e-Imtiaz).

During the visit, Zardari inspected the academic, admission, and examination blocks, seminar hall, library, and computer lab. He praised the institute's efforts in stabilizing Sindh's agriculture and termed it a "model institution" providing excellent agricultural education despite limited resources.

Zardari expressed satisfaction with the institute's administrative performance and emphasized the need for the relevant department to play its role in further improving the institute and providing modern facilities. The institute's administration briefed Zardari on its performance and work. He also planted a tree in the institute's park during the visit.

PML-N under Nawaz leadership

Continued from page 1

and bad governance was at its worst.

He said during that time inflation reached 23 percent and the present regime with its hard work had brought it down to 11 percent and there were projections of further decrease.

The government has reduced the price of petroleum products as a gift to the nation on the occasion of independence day when it was celebrating the victory of Arshad Nadeem in Paris Olympics. Earlier, he said the PM had given Rs 50 billion relief to upto 200 unit power consumers for three months. He said that the package announced by Punjab chief minister would provide Rs 14 relief per unit to consumers using upto 500 units per month.

He expressed the hope that with the steps taken by the federal and Punjab governments, the masses would get considerable relief and situation would further improve in the near future.

Pakistan Army has its own mechanism of self-accountability and recent arrests were done after transparent investigations.

He lamented that a political leader had fostered the politics of chaos, anarchy and division in the country and he in collusion with Faiz Hameed conspired to spread unrest in the country and worked against the integrity of the country.

Tarar asked who brought back the terrorists in the country.

The founding chairman of PTI had said that the Taliban should come back.

"All these people were involved in the efforts of PTI's founder to spread chaos and anarchy in the country as PTI's founder chairman did politics of manipulation by nexus."

He said that those who harmed the peace of the country will meet their fate. He said Imran was mastermind of the plot against the solidarity of the country

and recently arrested persons were his companions.

He assured that all those linked with this gang would also be brought to book irrespective of their status.

He said like Pakistan Army, other institutions should also start self-accountability process.

The minister said that federal government and Balochistan government had launched a joint venture of 28000 solar tube well programme which would not only save electricity but also provide relief to the farmers.

Prime Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif, he added, had asked for suggestions for right sizing and down sizing. Under this scheme non functional departments were being shutdown to reduce expenditure of the government, he maintained.

About PTI leader Latif Khosa's remarks about the spouse of Chief Justice of Pakistan, he said such remarks did not suit a learned person like him. He said that Imran and his cronies during PTI rule filed a reference against Qazi Faez Isa and brought his wife Serena Isa in the court. He said instead of accusing Serena, Latif Khosa should remember when an audio call of the mother-in-law of former chief justice was leaked. Tarar said, Khosa should have asked then that PTI cases should not be referred to Umar Ata Bandial as he was biased towards PTI.

Responding to media persons questions, he said that the government was taking both short term and long term steps to reduce power tariff and task force was working on this agenda. To a question, he said that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister should also make announcement for awarding Paris Olympics hero Arshad Nadeem. He also urged the KP government to provide sports facilities to its masses.

NA body highlights Edu Ministry's role in educational policies, implementation

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training an insightful and detailed briefing to the National Assembly Standing Committee on Federal Education and Professional Training, about the Ministry's role in the development and implementation of educational policies and professional training frameworks.

The second meeting of the Committee was held on Friday at National Assembly Secretariat under the chairmanship of Dr. Azim Uddin Zahid Lakhvi, MNA.

Secretary, Ministry of Federal Education and Training said that their mandate encompasses the advancement of educational quality, expansion of access and enhancement of vocational training programs, all geared towards achieving national development objectives.

The Ministry's performance highlights included significant progress in curriculum reforms, educational accessibility, and skills de-

velopment, underscoring its dedication to fostering an inclusive and progressive educational environment that meets the diverse needs of the nation's workforce.

The Chairman of the Committee stressed on enhancing the budgetary allocation to the universities. He affirmed the Committee's steadfast support for initiatives poised to make a lasting impact on the nation's educational landscape.

Emphasizing the importance of enhancing educational opportunities and addressing existing disparities, the Chairman emphasized on the committee's commitment to support measures that enable students to achieve their educational aspirations and contribute meaningfully to national development.

The Committee Members also noted that the schools in peripheral areas of Islamabad are deprived of the facilities being provided to elite areas. The committee's emphasized on improving educational stan-

dards and ensuring equal opportunities for all students.

In addition, the Committee highlighted that the support provided from certain NGOs has been beneficial, it often lacks long-term sustainability.

They emphasized the necessity for the Ministry to ensure the continuity of these initiatives, stressing that educational priorities should be established by the Ministry itself. This approach will ensure a more coherent and sustained effort in addressing the educational needs of the nation and supporting the development of students as future contributors to the country's progress.

The Committee Members commended the Ministry's recent four-month initiatives, particularly in aligning skill-building efforts with 21st-century competencies, curriculum and assessment reforms, infrastructure improvements, and student support enhancements.



QUETTA: Balochistan Sarafa Association Chairman, Sardar Jabbar Khan Khilji along with others addresses to media persons during press conference at Quetta press club

Government honors Chinese scientist with Tamgha-i-Quaid-e-Azam

ISLAMABAD (INP): Prestigious Tamgha-i-Quaid-e-Azam award was bestowed upon Chinese scientist Liu Xinmin for his outstanding contribution to bilateral relations and scientific advancement.

Announcement of this effect was made at a ceremony held on the occasion of Pakistan's 78th Independence Day, Gwadar Pro reported on Saturday.

Professor Liu, the Chief Scientist of the Institute of New Drug Technologies at Ningbo University and Co-Director of the Sino-Pakistani Cooperation Centre on Traditional Chinese Medicine (SPCCTC) received this national honor in recognition of his pivotal role in fostering Sino-Pakistani cooperation in traditional medicine.

The announcement highlighted Professor Liu's pioneering achievements since the establishment of the SPCCTCM in 2021 – the first of its kind in Pakistan at the national level.

This center has catalyzed fruitful international collaborations between over 30 Chinese and Pakistani enterprises engaged in research and development, education, medical services, and production of traditional medicine products, particularly in the fields of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and Unani Tibb.

With Professor Liu's efforts, partnerships were

institutions.

One of Professor Liu's most notable achievements is the orchestration of the first clinical multicenter study of a traditional Chinese patent medicine, Jinhua Qinggan Granules, for COVID-19 treatment at the International Center for Chemical and Biological Sciences' (ICCBS) National Clinical Research Center.

Moreover, he facilitated the inaugural Sino-Pak 'Seeds in Space' project, an unprecedented endeavor that saw seven types of Pakistani medicinal seeds journey into space aboard China's spacecraft.

The seeds returned to Earth after six months in orbit, bringing with them the promise of new genetic traits and possible medical breakthroughs.

The Tamgha-i-Quaid-e-Azam, one of Pakistan's highest civilian honors, is bestowed upon individuals who have rendered exceptional service to the nation or made outstanding contributions in their respective fields.

Professor Liu Xinmin's receipt of this award underscores the deepening ties between China and Pakistan, particularly in the realm of science and medicine.

The investiture ceremony, where Professor Liu and the other recipients will be formally decorated with their awards, is scheduled for March 23, 2025.



QUETTA: Children are enjoying bath into rainwater during heavy downpour of monsoon season, in Quetta

Ambassador of Myanmar sees potential of bilateral cooperation in tourism with Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Myanmar to Pakistan, Wunna Han on Saturday said that there is a vast potential of cooperation between Pakistan and Myanmar in the tourism sector, for which future paths can be determined between the two countries.

There is a lot of potential for tourism in the northern regions of Pakistan, especially Gilgit-Baltistan, which needs to be highlighted at the global level, Ambassador of Myanmar to Pakistan, Wunna Han told APP. The ambassador said that the northern regions of Pakistan, especially Gilgit-Baltistan, are very beautiful and rich in natural beauty, where there are six major mountain peaks of the world.

He said that he visited Skardu and nearby the world-famous plateau Deosai Park and these places are considered among the most beautiful tourist places in the world whose natural beauty can be seen.

The ambassador of Myanmar said that Gilgit-

Baltistan's tourism potential by drawing parallels with his country's cultural heritage by expressing the hope that the local business community to unlock the tourism potential of the region will bear fruit.

The envoy said that apart from this, there is a lot of potential for religious tourism in Pakistan and Myanmar, for which the dialogue between the two sides should continue.

He said that Pakistan is the centre of Indus Civilization of which Taxila is counted among the centers of Buddhist civilization. He said that apart from Taxila, districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Mansehra and Swat also have a historical heritage of Buddhist civilization in which religious tourism can be promoted.

Replying to economic and trade ties between both of the countries, he said that the present trade volume between Myanmar and Pakistan is US\$70 million far less than their latent potential. He said that Myanmar's exports to Pakistan are fruits, vegetable

products, wood, seafood, jute and other textile fibres, and medicinal plants being imported from Myanmar.

Pakistan's exports to Myanmar include military technology, medicament mixtures, cement, medicinal plants, leather, cotton fabrics, and electro-medical apparatus, he said.

It is pertinent to mention that in January 2012, then President of Pakistan, Asif Ali Zardari visited Myanmar, and the visit focused on enhancing bilateral trade between the two countries.

In this visit, the Pakistani side proposed a Preferential Trading Area (PTA) along with a Free Trade Agreement (FTA).

During this visit, the establishment of a joint ministerial commission as well as cooperation in the oil and gas sector was also proposed.

A Bilateral Agreement in Science and Technology exists between the two states, and it was inked during former President General Pervez Musharraf's visit to Myanmar in May 2001.



ISLAMABAD: A group photo of Indonesian Charge D'Affaires, Rahmat Hindiarta Kusuma with the participants on the occasion of the flag hoisting ceremony at the Indonesian Embassy marks 79th independence day of Indonesia. Ceremony was led by Charge D'Affaires of the Embassy Rahmat Hindiarta Kusuma and attended by Embassy officials, Indonesian diaspora and guests from cross section of the civil society.

Flag hoisting ceremony solemnly held in Indonesian embassy to celebrate 79th Independence Day

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia on Saturday held the flag hoisting ceremony to celebrate Indonesia's 79th Independence Day this morning at the Embassy's premises, led by the Chargé d'Affaires of Indonesia, Rahmat Hindiarta Kusuma.

It was the culmination of a series of pre-events in welcoming the auspicious day to maintain unity and mutual respect among Indonesians, as well as strengthen patriotism to the homeland.

Embassy's officials along with their families and hundreds of Indonesian Diaspora based in different cities of Pakistan, attended the ceremony in Indonesian traditional fervor.

Besides, guests of honor from prominent religious leaders, journalists and experts from reputable think tanks, and representatives of the dynamic business community were also present on the special occasion.

A moment of silence was observed to pay tribute to the national heroes, followed by the reading of the text of proclamation of Independence. The ceremony concluded with the special prayers for the Country and renewed commitment to avidly make Indonesia prosperous, harmonious, advanced, and invincible.

At the Flag Hoisting Ceremony called in Indonesian language by "Upacara Bendera", the Embassy's Flag Hoisting Team which consists of a smartly turned-out group of Indonesian students had the honor to receive the Indonesian flag from the Chargé d'Affaires as an Inspector of the Ceremony. The team subsequently raised the red-white flag solemnly with the playing of the Indonesian National Anthem, "Great Indonesia," or "Indonesia Raya".

Meanwhile, addressing the gathering, Chargé d'Affaires of Indonesia, Rahmat Hindiarta Kusuma said that on behalf of the Indonesian Embassy, I express my sincere gratitude and high appreciation to all of you for joining us at the very special moment of Indonesian Independence Day.

Indonesia and Pakistan, the two largest Muslim countries in the world, dosti zindabad!" he said in the spirit of freedom and friendship between the two brotherly countries.

"Looking forward to Indonesian Expo 2024 in the Centaurus Mall which will officially be open this afternoon. See you in

Jakarta, Surabaya, Yogyakarta, Bandung, and anywhere in Indonesia," he concluded his remarks by inviting all those present to be closer to Indonesia.

Moreover, as appreciation for their great achievement, the Chargé d'Affaires honored a group of Indonesian students in Pakistan with the certificate of appreciation for pursuing their higher level academic programs with distinction.

On the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, CEO D Watson Group, asked for congratulations to Indonesia on Independence day. Looking forward to another invitation from the Indonesian Embassy," Mr. Tariq Ullah Sufi, CEO Hamza Veg. Oil Refinery, & Ghee Mills (Pvt.) Limited. "I appreciate the way you organize this special event. My prayers are always with you and the Embassy," said Sahibzada Sultan Ahmed Ali, Chairman Muslim Institute.

After the Ceremony, the Indonesian Chargé d'Affaires escorted all guests of honor to the Embassy's Hall for small and simple reception by serving Tumpeng, the cone-shaped rice dish as an inseparable part of celebrations and other important events in Indonesia.

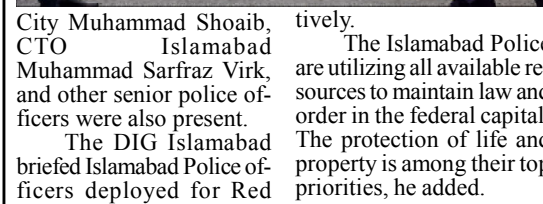
Security officers briefed for effective duty

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: According to details, Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG) Islamabad, Syed Ali Raza, briefed the security officers on maintaining law and order and preventing any untoward incidents, a public relations officer said.

He said that, on this occasion, SSP Operations Arslan Shahzaib, SSP Safe

Zone security on their duties in light of the current situation. He instructed them to remain alert during patrols and to keep a watchful eye on suspicious persons. Strict orders were issued regarding proper uniforms and discipline.

The DIG further instructed the officers to be prepared at all times and to perform their duties effectively.



City Muhammad Shoaib, CTO Islamabad Muhammad Sarfraz Virk, and other senior police officers were also present. The DIG Islamabad briefed Islamabad Police officers deployed for Red

DC reviews Monkeypox screening measures at Islamabad Airport

ISLAMABAD (APP): In response to growing concerns about Monkeypox, the district administration has taken proactive steps and Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz, personally visited Islamabad Airport to review the screening process for incoming international passengers.

According to a spokesperson for the Islamabad Capital Territory

(ICT), the DC visited the airport to evaluate the existing measures for screening travellers. He instructed that the screening process be expedited to ensure the timely identification of any potential Monkeypox cases. The DC said that health department personnel have been deployed at the airport, where every passenger arriving from overseas is being thoroughly screened.

NHMP North Zone spokesman, Muhammad Saqib said that due to continued intermittent rainfall slippery road conditions were prevailing on M-1 from Islamabad to, Kot Momin, Dera Ismail Khan Swat and Thakot. Saqib



ISLAMABAD: Work in progress on a construction project at Karnal Sher Khan Road in the Federal Capital.

NHMP advises motorists to adopt protective measures during rains

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Highway and Motorway Police (NHMP) on Saturday called upon road users to follow safety precautions while driving on rainy roads.

NHMP North Zone spokesman, Muhammad Saqib said that due to continued intermittent rainfall slippery road conditions were prevailing on M-1 from Islamabad to, Kot Momin, Dera Ismail Khan Swat and Thakot. Saqib

added that slippery conditions could lead to an increased risk of accidents, particularly for those travelling at high speeds.

He said that NHMP officials were providing briefings to the motorists at Toll plazas about the precautionary measures and road conditions. He advised the travellers to get updated information on NHMP helpline 130 and also contact NHMP social media accounts before starting the journey.

In a nutshell, prioritizing large-scale tree plantation is more than just a conservation initiative; it's a holistic approach to tackling Pakistan's environmental, social, and economic issues.

This strategy not only helps in disaster resilience and public health improvement but also contributes to energy conservation and sustainable development. By adopting this approach, Pakistan can forge a path towards a greener, healthier, and more prosperous future for all its citizens.



ISLAMABAD: President Pakistan Muslim League (Z), Muhammad Ejazul Haq and other offering fathia at the grave of late Gen Muhammad Zia ul Haq in the Federal Capital.

Govt to integrate climate resilience into National Planning: Coordinator PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam, on Saturday, said that the government has initiated various policies aimed at integrating climate resilience into national planning.

According to PTV News, she said that national adaptation plans, climate change policies, and water policies must be aligned to effectively manage climate risks. She highlighted Pakistan's significant vulnerability to climate

change, referencing the substantial losses the country has endured over the years due to climate-related events. Romina Khurshid Alam underscored the urgent need for climate and disaster risk financing to enhance resilience against the growing threats posed by climate change. The government was committed to incorporating climate considerations into all aspects of national development to ensure sustainable future growth and resilience to environmental challenges, she added.

Last survivor of PIA's 1965 Cairo air crash passes away

ISLAMABAD (APP): Former Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) general manager of public affairs Salahuddin Siddique has passed away in London.

He was 93.

Siddique was the last one to pass away among the six passengers who had survived the 1965 PIA plane crash in Cairo, a media report said. He retired from the PIA in 1980.

A PIA plane flying from Karachi to Cairo crashed on May 20, 1965, some 20 kilometres away from the Cairo airport. The inaugural PIA flight was going from Karachi to London via Dhahran in Saudi Arabia and Cairo. There were a total of 128 persons onboard the ill-fated plane, including passengers and crew.

Urban flooding expected in multiple cities across country

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) on Saturday has warned of potential urban flooding due to the combination of heavy rain and strong winds in various cities. According to a private news channel, NDMA alert said that multiple cities including Lahore, Sialkot, and Narawal are particularly at risk of urban flooding from heavy downpours over the next 24 to 48 hours and a medium to high-level flood surge is also expected in the Chenab River.

Abdullah urges IIOJK voters to harness ballot power, discard BJP leaders

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Conference President Dr. Farooq Abdullah Saturday called upon the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) to hold the BJP accountable for its failures in the territory, urging them to use their ballot power to bring about change.

According to Kashmir Media Service, speaking at a rally in the Nagrota area of Jammu, Farooq Abdullah highlighted the BJP government's inability to bring prosperity to IIOJK, urging the public to teach the saffron party a resounding lesson in the upcoming Assembly elections.

The NC leader described the BJP as a deception, noting that its tenure has brought nothing but hardship to the people of the occupied territory.

He emphasized that the forthcoming elections offer a crucial opportunity for voters to express their dissatisfaction with the BJP's poor governance.

PMD revises weather advisory amid heavy rain expected across country

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has updated its weather advisory, indicating a shift in the monsoon system from Karachi and lower Sindh towards central and upper Sindh, as well as Balochistan. According to PMD alert issued here Saturday, the likelihood of heavy rain in Karachi has diminished, while the city may still experience light to moderate rainfall.



ISLAMABAD: A view of rain water accumulated on IJP Road during heavy rain in the twin cities.

Two-day tourism summit concluded

ISLAMABAD (APP): 2nd Two-Day Tourism Summit, organised by the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) concluded with a resolve to boost the tourism sector of the country.

The summit was held at Skardu from August 13-15, which brought together ambassadors and diplomats from 10 friendly countries along with business leaders and media representatives. The event was organised with an aim to showcasing

Pakistan's soft image and attracting tourists from around the globe, said a press release. On this occasion, the ICCI also honoured the visiting ambassadors and diplomats with awards in a dignified ceremony, acknowledging their significant contributions to promoting business relations and tourism between Pakistan and their respective countries. This recognition highlighted the ICCI's gratitude for their ongoing support and cooperation in exploring innovative opportunities.

Judges duty roster in respect of IHC for next week issued

ISLAMABAD (Online): Judges duty roster of Islamabad High Court (IHC) for the next week has been issued.

Duty roster has been issued by deputy registrar under directives of Chief Justice (CJ) IHC.

According to roster only three judges will be available from August 19 to August 23.

According to judges duty roster 3 single and 1 division bench have been constituted for hearing the cases in next week.

CJ IHC Amir Farooq has returned after one week court's vacations.

Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb and Justice Babar Sattar will be available for hearing the cases.

5 Judges of IHC will not be available due to court's vacations.

Special division bench and larger bench will also be available in view of need in next week.

Summer vacation in IHC will end on September 10.



ISLAMABAD: Children bath in stagnant water at a construction site along Kernal Sher Khan Road.

Aggressive tree plantation: A key solution to Pakistan's heatwaves, ecosystem health

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan, one of the most affected countries by climate change, faces severe challenges due to escalating heatwaves and widespread deforestation. Although numerous tree planting campaigns are active across the country, these efforts are insufficient to address the scale of the crisis.

Tree planting is not just a strategy but a crucial tool in managing climate challenges, improving public health, and protecting agriculture and the environment. As highlighted by the Global Climate Risk Index, Pakistan's vulnerability to climate threats underscores the urgent need for intensified and consistent tree plantation initiatives.

According to the Global Forest Watch, Pakistan had 648,000 hectares of tree cover in 2010, account-

ing for 0.74% of its land area. However, by 2023, the country lost 148 hectares of tree cover, releasing 60.2 kilotons of CO2. Since 2001, Pakistan has lost 9,940 hectares of tree cover, representing a 1% decrease since 2000, and emitted 2.88 million tons of CO2 equivalent. Deforestation, driven largely by human activities, has been a major issue, with 4.1% of tree cover loss occurring in areas affected by such activities.

In 2024, Pakistan has reported 1,534 high-confidence VIIRS fire alerts, a significant increase compared to previous years. The highest number of fire alerts recorded in a year was 1,869 in 2018. From July 5, 2021, to July 1, 2024, there have been 59,835 VIIRS fire alerts. Forest fires, primarily caused by

human negligence, are the leading driver of deforestation in Pakistan.

Recent fire incidents in June, particularly in Margalla Hills National Park—which spans 12,605 hectares and is managed by the Capital Development Authority (CDA) and Islamabad Wildlife Management Board (IWMB)—highlight the severity of the situation. These fires, often exacerbated by heatwaves, have become increasingly frequent and intense due to climate change and human negligence.

Addressing these challenges requires concerted efforts. Public awareness campaigns and more educational seminars are essential to emphasize the importance of tree planting and the need to avoid practices that could trigger fires, such as cooking and smoking in

forested areas.

Naseer Memon, a renowned climate change and natural disaster expert, stresses that sustainable plantation involves choosing the right species. Ecologically harmful and invasive species should be avoided, and post-plantation care must not be overlooked in the pursuit of high planting targets.

Dr. Ghulam Raza Bhatti, a botanist at the Botanical Garden, Biodiversity & Conservation, notes that Pakistan's diverse terrain—from the coast to the K2 Mountains—supports a variety of ecological zones and forest types. This diversity necessitates a variety of vegetation suited to different ecological zones.

In Islamabad, the city's undulating landscape offers several areas suitable

for tree planting, including avenues, major and emerging arteries, parks, green belts, residential areas, educational institutions, and government offices. Urban tree cover is crucial for enhancing the city's environmental quality.

Dr. Ghulam Raza highlighted the need to seek expert advice before planting saplings, as not all trees are suited to every region or ecosystem.

Choosing the appropriate species for the specific environmental conditions is essential for ensuring successful growth and maximizing the environmental benefits.

Additionally, Pakistan is grappling with a severe energy crisis, with rising power consumption putting immense pressure on the national grid. To address this, promoting exten-

sive tree plantation—especially of fast-growing species suitable for biomass energy—can serve as a pivotal strategy. By diversifying its energy sources and reducing reliance on fossil fuels, Pakistan can move towards a more sustainable energy future.

This strategy not only helps in disaster resilience and public health improvement but also contributes to energy conservation and sustainable development. By adopting this approach, Pakistan can forge a path towards a greener, healthier, and more prosperous future for all its citizens.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

Sunday August 18, 2024

Lasting damage

What started off as a desperate attempt to choke public criticism of state institutions is now threatening to shake the very foundations of Pakistan's budding digital economy. This week, internet users experienced a higher-than-usual level of difficulty accessing internet services.

As industry leaders sounded the alarm, warning that IT businesses were considering relocating, the government finally acknowledged that it has been updating its "web management system", its euphemism for a firewall meant to monitor Pakistanis' online activities. The admission came from the young IT and telecom minister, Shaza Fatima Khawaja. Thus far, her ministry had either feigned ignorance or not been truthful about the internet connectivity problems across the country, even attributing them to 'technical faults' on the end of various service providers.

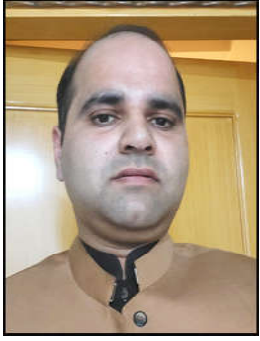
While Ms Khawaja was pooh-poohing internet users' concerns about the effects of the firewall before a Senate committee, one of the world's largest platforms for freelancers had already begun labelling the accounts of Pakistani gig workers as 'unavailable'. Fiverr, which is popular with Pakistani workers offering their services in the global digital economy, said that it felt compelled to warn its clients that Pakistani freelancers' ability to complete projects on time may be affected by the internet disruptions they are facing.

This is nothing short of a major crisis. Pakistan is one of the biggest suppliers of labour to the global online workforce; the third largest, in fact, according to the University of Oxford's Online Labour Index. In a country where decent employment is difficult to come by, many young men and women have been selling their skills to foreign clients through the internet, netting a solid income for themselves and much-needed foreign exchange for the country.

Though Pakistani gig workers generally enjoy a positive reputation, their reliability is now in question. Both rights activists and experts kept pointing out that implementing a firewall and restricting internet services could have unforeseen consequences.

Armed with Maslow's hammer, the authorities refused to listen. Now, they may have imperilled the future of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of young workers by broadcasting to the world that Pakistanis in the gig economy cannot be relied upon because their government keeps interrupting their access to the internet on a whim. The long-term consequences of this policy could be devastating. If Pakistan continues to be seen as an unreliable partner in the global digital economy, it risks losing a significant source of foreign exchange and stifling the growth of its IT sector. The state should not allow itself to be so blinded by its desperation that it ends up setting the whole forest on fire just to smoke out a few mischief-makers. Such short-sighted policies may only push even more youth towards agitation against the state.

Journalists in Balochistan face numerous challenges



Muhammad Umer

"If you don't have courage to go against all odds, stay home, leave journalism and do some other work of less risk. Yes, Journalists in Balochistan face numerous challenges including life threats while doing public interest stories," said the young journalist Nótéazai working for leading national English Daily.

Fear of being the next soft target of the elements, you are going against always remains. However, unless you don't cross

the red line and push the boundaries you are not audacious enough to make justice to your stories, he remarked.

Akbar Nótéazai is one of the journalists whose story has been included by Global Investigative Journalism Network (GIJN) in the list of top investigative stories of the year 2023. The story features "Private Jails of the influential leaders in Balochistan".

Despite numerous challenges in the volatile province of the country, he said, "I have been lucky enough that I did not receive any life threat as received to many my other colleagues."

The dynamics and unique geographical position of Balochistan province have made it battle field making no room for the journalists to cover the issues freely.

Challenges the journalists face include fear from miscreants, self-censorship, and pressure from powerful individuals or organizations that

Somehow compromise their independence and integrity. Pressures from various sources, often lead to biased reporting.

In such situation, rare often risk their lives to report on sensitive issues such as human rights abuses, political unrest, and the scourge of corruption.

Additionally, limited access to resources and infrastructure, coupled with inadequate protection measures, further compound the difficulties they encounter in fulfilling their duties.

M o h a m m a d Kazim Mengal, the

representative of the BBC, who has penned hundreds of stories on number of public interest and sensitive issues, was yet displeased with the trend of Journalism.

"It is the compromised journalism that we are doing. The unreal journalism has not only increased the plight of an ordinary man but also caused loss of the journalist prestige," Mr Kazim deplored.

With loss of their prestige, journalists have to face pressure and abhorrence from the society. When you can not report the reality, don't highlight the ills, than it is the society that suffers, he further deplored. President of Balochistan Union of Journalists, Khalil Ahmed said, referred to reporting in the province as so-called journalism. As many

as 41 journalists lost their lives in line with their duties in Balochistan and nobody now dares to put his life at risk.

he stressed.

The Balochistan province, in terms of free journalism, is the worst one in the region as there is zero tolerance on certain issues of public interests.

"Despite the challenges, there are some positive indicators for journalists working in Balochistan. These include the resilience and dedication of few local journalists who continue to report on important issues despite the risks involved," Spokesman Balochistan government Shahid Rind said.

Furthermore, advancements in technology have enabled journalists to disseminate information more

effectively, allowing them to reach wider audiences and amplify their voices.

The provincial government, Mr Shahid said under the leadership of CM Balochistan Sarfaraz Bugti is committed to ensure journalists are free to report.

However, stressed the need for highlighting the issues faced by an ordinary man and marginalized segment of the society.

Undoubtedly, the lack of adequate protection for journalists and limited access to resources can further undermine their ability to report freely and objectively. However, the light at the end of the tunnel is that despite these challenges, many journalists in Balochistan continue to work tirelessly to uphold the principles of journalism and bring important stories to light.

Building standards: fit for purpose?

Rihab Khalid | Hamdul Moeez Riaz

Although Pakistan contributes minimally to GHG emissions, its extreme climate vulnerability threatens its economy and food, water and energy security.

Pakistan's construction industry is exacerbating these woes with its unplanned, unregulated development and unsustainable practices. Despite expanding populations, unchecked urban sprawl, and rising energy demands, building policies remain entrenched in outdated colonial-era standards. As a result, the construction sector often pursues energy-intensive and spatially inefficient developments, disregarding Pakistan's unique climate and culture.

Influenced by Western modernist principles, current architectural and urban planning practices fail to address issues such as inappropriate building density, height restrictions, unfavourable street layouts and building setbacks.

Exclusive urban zoning, separating residential and commercial areas, limits multi-functionality and increases transportation

needs, particularly disadvantaging low-income communities and restricting socioeconomic opportunities for women. Policy shortcomings and inadequate enforcement have brought the architectural, engineering, and construction industry into sharp relief.

Energy provisions were introduced in Pakistan's building codes in 2011, but they did not cover residential buildings or address urban-scale issues. The launch of the Energy Conservation Building Code (ECBC) 2023 is a significant step towards greater sustainability and climate resilience. The revised code includes efficiency mandates for the residential sector, promotes renewable energy, and targets both new and existing building retrofits. It emphasises passive design strategies and water conservation to ease pressure on overloaded infrastructures and overcrowded urban areas.

However, a review of the ECBC reveals areas for improvement. The code heavily relies on international standards, such as ASHRAE, and includes lists of material specifications that may not be en-

tirely suitable for local conditions. It fails to promote the use of local, sustainable building materials and overlooks the potential for upcycling waste from industrial processes and debris for new construction. For example, "green concrete", an alternative to traditional concrete, can create lighter, more cost-effective, and better-insulating systems with reduced carbon footprints by incorporating fly ash, recycled aggregates, and slags. However, no mention of such sustainable alternatives is found in the ECBC, which also lacks discussion on environmentally feasible building typologies specific to Pakistan's different climatic zones.

Although the ECBC emphasises building envelope performance and system efficiency, it places less focus on designing spatial configurations that optimise performance, enhance multi-functionality, and ensure accessibility. While it acknowledges issues like horizontal sprawl and advocates for more compact, vertical expansion, the types of housing and spatial configurations for improved functionality, accessibility and inclusivity

remain unexamined. Also, while passive design strategies for vertical buildings are included, it exempts high-rise, commercial, and office buildings from these requirements.

Another shortcoming is the ECBC's reliance on prescriptive standards rather than performance-based ones. Its specific material and product specifications limit flexibility and innovation. In Pakistan, this approach marginalises traditional, vernacular construction techniques that are often more climate-responsive, resource-efficient, and culturally appropriate. In contrast, many developed countries, like those in Scandinavia, have adopted performance-based criteria, focusing on energy use, thermal comfort, and indoor air quality. These countries set specific energy performance or carbon emission targets without dictating how to achieve them, allowing for greater innovation, and advancing towards net-zero buildings.

Pakistan's economic progress is stymied by weak policy enforcement, and an outdated, clientelist political system, raising doubts about the ECBC's

effective implementation. Apart from the need for energy auditors and skilled professionals to monitor and assess building performance, concerns remain about code compliance in rural, peri-urban, and informal housing sectors. Estimates show that about 30 million people live in informal housing in urban Pakistan, with limited access to basic services. Retrofitting these areas to ECBC standards will be costly due to the high costs of energy-efficient materials and technologies, compounded by limited financing options and absence of property ownership or credit history among the poor.

The government must enhance support for energy-efficient systems and technologies through grants and subsidies, encouraging partnerships for innovative energy efficiency and urban planning. For energy performance ratings and certifications, it is crucial to bolster the capacity and number of skilled professionals to conduct energy audits and performance evaluations. It is also essential to promote building research and innovation, update educational curricula, and cultivate cutting-edge design practices

that are climate-responsive and culturally relevant.

Adopting performance-based standards focusing on outcomes, like energy use intensity, can enhance flexibility and innovation in achieving efficiency goals. These regulations articulate desired outcomes without dictating specific methods, allowing for greater adaptability and alternative approaches. For example, South Africa is exploring performance-based strategies to improve informal housing quality, including incremental development. This approach develops various performance ratings for houses, enabling solutions that vary in efficiency, performance, and resilience levels, tailored to specific contexts.

While regularly updating building codes is essential, it is equally important to encourage the use of local, sustainable materials such as bamboo, earth, mudbrick, and lime. Integrating traditional knowledge with technological innovation can yield effective adaptation strategies. Further, standardised practices should account for both social and technical factors in design, development, and enforcement.

Lost in transition

Aamir Latif Siddiqui

Teacher education reform in Sindh was initiated, in the recent past, by the Reform Support Unit under the Sindh Teacher Education and Development (TED) Policy in 2009. The policy was focused on rationalising the roles of the Provincial Institute of Teacher Education (PITE) and the Bureau of Curriculum and Extension Wing (BoCEW).

The policy also emphasised universal teacher standards and competencies for hiring, training, and continuous professional development, as well as upgrading pre-service teacher education from certification courses to graduation as the entry qualification for teaching. Under the policy, an apex body for managing teacher education and development in Sindh was also proposed. Later, the Sindh Teacher Education and Development Authority (STEDA) was established in 2012.

The PITE Sindh was established in 1995 under the Teacher Training Project, assisted by the Asian Development Bank. It was part of a nationwide initiative to improve the quality of education through better teacher training. In 1970, the Directorate of Education Extension and Specialised Services was founded, re-titled as the Bureau of Curriculum and Extension Wing in 1972, and given administrative control over all teacher training institutes (TTIs) by 1976.

Since 1976, all TTIs have been under the administrative control of the BoCEW. However, in January 2003, the administrative control of government elementary colleges and colleges of education was abruptly handed over to the PITE Sindh. This sudden shift, without any

plan or justification, created chaos and confusion. After a brief administrative handover to PITE, these institutions were reverted to the BoCEW in September 2005. Before this, the curriculum wing of the Bureau of Curriculum and Development merged with the Sindh Textbook Board in 2002, while the remaining part of the BoCEW was renamed the Directorate of Research and Assessment.

This was another exercise in reform-based institutional restructuring, again without any plan. These haphazard efforts yielded nothing except the lack of certainty. An inconsistent management, with little understanding of education, always seemed to prefer impromptu suggestions for implementation with immediate effect.

The 18th Constitutional Amendment in 2010 led restructuring to adopt additional roles and responsibilities. The Sindh School Education Standards and Curriculum Act in 2014 transformed the BoCEW to the Directorate of Curriculum, Assessment and Research; the Curriculum Wing and Curriculum Council were established. The roles of the PITE, DCAR and STEDA were reiterated.

A vital feature of the Sindh TED, 2009, was the replacement of certification courses such as the primary teaching certificate and certificate of teaching with graduation for entry qualification in the teaching profession. It was intended to bring the profession of teaching into the mainstream. If anybody wanted to be a doctor, engineer, or lawyer or wished to get a job in some other professional field, he or she would have to get four- to five-year specialised education in that area to get a degree. However, for the teaching profession, there were

only certification courses.

The Sindh government introduced the four-year B.Ed. (Hons) Elementary and two years Associate Degree in Education (ADE) in 2012. With the support of the USAID-funded Teacher Education Project, the four-year B.Ed. (Hons) curriculum was designed by local experts in collaboration with the Teacher College of Columbia University, which the Higher Education Commission has approved. A meandering recruitment rules

to upgrade pay and scale for pro-pective teachers was also integral to this new pre-service teacher education paradigm. It was thought that this would attract quality human resources to the teaching profession.

The amended recruitment rules of 2014 paved the way for two years of ADE as an entry qualification for the junior elementary school teachers in BPS-14 and B.Ed. (Hons) Elementary for elementary school teachers in BPS-16. All this worthwhile investment was wasted when the School Education and Literacy Department modified the recruitment rules in 2021 and announced hiring teachers on graduation basis, without any professional degree for teaching.

Aside from provincial institutions such as the PITE and STEDA, Sindh has 43 TTIs.

Instead of unending reform-based restructuring and investing in untidy proposals, the government should focus on institutional reforms intended to produce the required B.Ed (Hons) Elementary and Secondary graduates, catering to the emerging needs of the public and private sector.

The required number can be realised after teacher-mapping is conducted across the province. -- Courtesy Dawn

Privatising life

Masood Lohar

In Pakistan today, the struggle for basic utilities epitomises a broader crisis of governance and societal inequality. The once taken-for-granted amenities have become luxuries for many, creating a chasm between the rich and the poor. Unreliable utilities, inadequate public services, and a pervasive sense of insecurity define daily life for millions of Pakistanis.

The unreliability of gas supply forces parents to keep a gas cylinder in hand to ensure their children get food on time. This uncertainty extends to water, with piped water rarely available in many areas. Households increasingly rely on tankers to meet their daily water needs, a costly solution that further strains already tight household budgets.

Supply of electricity and back-breaking bills are a regular highlight of mainstream and social media. Many prominent artists and other civil society icons feature in videos crying over high bills. In underprivileged areas, power cuts can last for hours, disrupting daily life and economic activities. Even in middle to upscale neighbourhoods, power outages remain a significant inconvenience. Residents in affluent areas often invest in generators or solar modules, with their choices heavily influenced by income and social status. This disparity highlights the inequality in coping mechanisms available to different segments of the population.

Public transport in Pakistan is inefficient, prompting affluent families to own one or more cars, contributing to the urban chaos and environmental degradation that

plague the cities.

The same is the case of education. Children from middle to upper class families attend private schools. Though for lower and upper middle classes, this creates a significant financial burden for families, it is seen as a necessary investment keeping in view standard education in government institutions.

Access to clean drinking water is another critical issue. Tap water is unsafe for drinking, so bottled water is a necessity. Prices range from Rs70 per litre for standard options in areas like Shireen Jinnah Colony to over Rs400 for high-end brands in affluent neighbourhoods.

The pervasive sense of insecurity in Pakistan is perhaps most visible in the ubiquitous presence of private security guards in front of affluent homes and localities. This reliance on private security is a stark indicator of the state's failure to ensure public safety. The fear of crime extends to everyday activities; walking down a residential street with a smartphone is fraught with danger due to snatching, because phone prices have skyrocketed, exacerbated by the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority's tax hike. Numerous incidents of citizens being killed during phone-snatching attempt have been reported.

The state's failure to provide comfort, security, and justice has led to a profound erosion of faith in the government. Persistent fear of loss and insecurity defines the daily life of ordinary Pakistanis, eroding their trust in the state's merit and national identity. This denial of justice and basic rights has split Pakistan into two distinct groups: the elite, with

power, money, and often dual nationality, and millions of poor citizens who lack any hope of justice or the ability to obtain fair wages, respect, and basic amenities.

Despite billions spent on governance machinery, privatisation of basic needs has become a hallmark of everyday life in Pakistan. The state's inability to meet the basic needs of its citizens is its betrayal of the trust of its subjects. It is not a sign of a thriving free market but rather a symptom of a failing state that cannot provide its citizens with the essentials for a dignified life.

The human cost is immense. The daily struggle for basic utilities, the fear of crime, the financial burden of private education and security, and the lack of clean drinking water take a toll on the mental and physical health of the population. Children grow up in an environment where uncertainty and insecurity are the norms, impacting their development and future prospects.

The widening gap between the rich and the poor, coupled with an ineffective state apparatus and denial of justice, has left ordinary citizens in a vicious circle of misery. American psychologist Abraham Maslow, in his 'hierarchy of needs' implies that unmet basic needs can lead to significant negative consequences for individuals and society. Maslow's theory suggests that fulfilling basic needs is essential for people's prosperity. The state is a mother; it cannot have any other role. British philosopher John Locke says when the people are made to feel that the state is their enemy, they will inevitably rise up against it. -- Courtesy Dawn

CM Murad urges parents to trust government for polio eradication

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, taking serious notice of the refusal cases during the ongoing 10-day polio eradication drive, said that there was no provision for refusal and urged parents to cooperate in eradicating the crippling disease from the province and the country.

Murad Shah directed the health department to make the polio-eradication campaign more effective. "I would not accept any type of refusal from the parents," he said and added that he had issued strict instructions to the district administration and the police to deal with the refusal cases.

"Throughout the world, even smaller and less developed countries have got rid of polio but we, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, are still rearing the virus by refusing to administer polio drops to their children," he said and added, "enough is enough, we would not allow any parent to refuse giving polio drops to their children."

"We understand that this is a sensitive issue. There are certain prejudices, misunderstandings and taboos associated with the administration of polio," he admitted and assured that while the government is spreading awareness, he urged the parents to trust that the Sindh government would take great care children of this nation.

"We want a polio-free Pakistan and the government of Sindh would play a parental role," the premier of the province said. Murad Shah launched a 10-day vital anti-polio campaign on August 14 with the slogan 'Get rid of polio.'

The chief minister said that a special anti-polio campaign has been launched in 85 union councils of the city targeting over 1.1 million children under five to receive oral polio vaccine drops. Under the campaign, 1,037,000 children (ages four months to five years) would receive fractional inactivated polio vaccine (f-IPV) injections.

The CM has strongly directed the administration and health department to make the campaign successful, achieve the target, and report to him.



PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi is called on by Pakistan Sports Writers Federation delegation at Governor House.



PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Asardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur presiding over a joint meeting of various departments to review the programs regarding the employment of new youth.

Pakistan Sports Writers Federation delegation calls on Governor KP

PESHAWAR (APP): A delegation of the Pakistan Sports Writers Federation (PSWF) on Saturday called on Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, at the Governor House on Saturday.

The delegation, led by President Amjad Aziz Malik, included members from Peshawar, Islamabad, Lahore, Quetta, and Karachi.

During the meeting, the delegation presented various proposals for the promotion of sports across Pakistan, including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Governor Kundi emphasized that combating terrorism can be achieved by keeping sports fields active and vibrant. He highlighted the significant talent present in the province, noting that many talented athletes are participating in national and international competitions through their efforts. The governor pointed out the lack of support and facilities for sports in the province, saying that sports fields are deserted and promising players receive no guidance. He stressed that sports serve as a positive message for Pakistan worldwide. He also mentioned that he had invited promising athletes from Peshawar, Swat, Chitral, Dir, DI Khan, Waziristan, and other districts to the Governor House to encourage the youth who are making a name for themselves in sports through their initiative. Governor Kundi emphasized the importance of merit-based decisions to bring out true sports talent.

Ask Sindh govt to give relief in powers bills, Maryam tells Kamal

Orders measures to address potential flooding

LAHORE (APP): Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif Saturday responded to a demand by Muttahida Qaumi Movement leader Mustafa Kamal that cut in electricity prices should be given across country.

In her message on the social media website 'X', she said, "Dear brother Mustafa [Kamal], Punjab has not obtained the relief free of cost for the people of Punjab, but by paying money. "The Punjab government has paid Rs. 45 billion from its own budget. I will feel heartily pleased if you talk with the Sindh government so that it should also provide same relief to the people of Sindh. Thank You," she added.

Meanwhile, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has directed the authorities concerned to take protective measures in advance in areas of Koh-e-Sulaiman in Dera Ghazi Khan in view of the potential flood situation.

She ordered strict implementation of standard operating procedures (SOPs) and also issue guidelines for residents of low-lying areas inundated in various districts.

In view of potential flooding, the residents of affected areas should be shifted to relief camps on time, she instructed and ordered to continuously monitor flood drains in Narowal, Sialkot, Shakargarh and other cities. Livestock in the villages should also be moved to safe places well in time.

CM Maryam also directed the relevant authorities to ensure availability of snake bite vaccine in relief camps. She said immediately restore traffic in the areas affected by landslides. She added Deputy Commissioners should monitor rescue and relief activities in the districts.

Health minister says no Monkeypox case in Punjab

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Health Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique has announced that no case of monkeypox has been reported in Punjab so far, while an alert has been issued to the authorities concerned.

The announcement came after a high-level working group meeting was held on Saturday, led by Provincial Health Ministers Khawaja Salman Rafique and Khawaja Imran Nazir. The meeting was held to review the current situation regarding the monkeypox virus.

The meeting saw participation from key stakeholders, including officers, medical experts, representatives from the World Health Organization (WHO), civil aviation authorities, and other technical experts. Discussions focused on precautionary measures, diagnosis, and treatment protocols to combat the potential spread of the monkeypox virus.

In line with WHO guidelines, it was decided that health care workers in isolation wards would be vaccinated as a first step in preventing any outbreaks. Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique emphasized that Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are being prepared to respond swiftly to any potential cases of monkeypox.

Khawaja Imran Nazir reassured the public, stating, "There is no immediate threat from monkeypox, but caution is necessary."

He also noted that airport authorities have been instructed to screen passengers for the virus, and the Institute of Public Health (IPH) has been directed to train master trainers for this purpose.

Four killed, 3 injured in roof collapse incidents

FAISALABAD (APP): Four people, including three factory workers and a woman, were killed while three others sustained multiple injuries in roof collapse incidents in different parts due to a rain here on Saturday.

A Rescue 1122 spokesman said that heavy rains hit Faisalabad on Friday which continued up to Saturday with intermittent intervals and caused roof collapse incidents in various parts.

He said that three factory workers, including 40-year-old Rizwan of Waziristan, 18-year-old Wasif and 30-year-old Musawwar of Kot Addu were killed while their co-worker Rasheed (35) of Sahiwal was shifted to hospital when they all were buried beneath the debris in a factory due to a collapse of its rundown roof in the FIEDMC Area.

Similarly, 35-year-old Abida Shehbaz was also killed when an old roof of her house caved in due to the rain in Chak No.431-GB Barala Tandlianwala.



ABBOTTABAD: View of site after traffic accident of tourists vehicle due to over speeding and break failed.

AC adjourns hearing of Al-Qadir trust reference till Aug 21

RAWALPINDI (Online): Judge Nasir Javed of Accountability Court (AC) Islamabad has adjourned till August 21 hearing of Al-Qadir trust reference based on 190 million pounds financial scandal on the request of the counsels of accused. The important witness of NAB and investigating officer of the reference could not be cross examined for the 6th time on Saturday due to it.

Both the accused, NAB prosecutor general Sardar Muzaffar Abbasi, Amjad Pervez, counsels of the accused including barrister Suleman Safdar, Usman Gill and Zahir Abbass Chaudhry appeared in the court.

NAB investigating officer Mian Umar Nadim who was to be cross questioned by the counsels of the accused was also present on the occasion. But he could not be cross questioned.

The counsels for the accused filed new petition in the court during the hearing of the case taking the plea that our petition about the board meeting of NAB which was rejected by the court has been challenged in Islamabad High Court (IHC). Its hearing has been fixed in IHC on August 19. Therefore, today's hearing be adjourned.

Counsel for NAB objected that the counsels for the accused were using delaying tactics.

PA speaker expressed satisfaction on professional training of rescuers

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Assembly Speaker Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan expressed his satisfaction on professional training of rescuers in the Emergency Services Academy.

He was presiding over a ceremony of 438 passing-out rescuers trained for Sindh Emergency Rescue Service at Emergency Services Academy Lahore here on Saturday.

Speaking on the occasion, he congratulated the passed-out rescuers & their families and instructors of the Emergency Services Academy. He said, "I pay tribute to our national hero Arshad Nadeem for bringing pride to Pakistan. There is no doubt that the unwavering efforts of Dr. Rizwan Naseer led to the United Nations certification of Rescue 1122. Where there is discipline, efficiency, merit, and courage, examples like Rescue 1122 are set. I also congratulate the Chief Minister of Punjab for introducing the first air ambulance service in Punjab. Rescue 1122 has truly set a standard. The new rescuers have two key responsibilities: to save lives and to uphold the reputation and quality of the organization." He said that rescuers from other provinces who completed the lifesaving training in the Academy are also carrying the message of brotherhood from Punjab.

"Above all I would like to mention here that we being Pakistani take pride that our Pakistan Rescue Team of Emergency Services Academy is the first United Nations INSARAG Certified Team in South Asia and due to this certification the Rescue Team responded to the Turkiye earthquake and saved many lives.

PFA imposes heavy fines over hygiene rules violations

LODHRAN (APP): Food safety teams inspected various food points and imposed heavy fines for violation of hygiene rules.

The teams under the supervision of Director Operations South, Asif Iqbal, made inspections of sweets and bakers, hotels, restaurants, supermarkets, and various other food points. According to details, three sweets and bakers near Bahaudin Zakariya University Bosan road, Adda Billi Wala, and 17 Kassi in Multan were fined a total of Rs 80,000 due to improper food storage, presence of expired ketchup, contaminated ovens and other machinery, and lack of medical certificates for food handlers. Similarly, a supermarket near Sabzar Metro Station was fined Rs 40,000 for having expired.



LAHORE: Scenes of devastation in the provincial capital after strong winds and heavy monsoon rains.

Shakeel Khan's corruption allegations undermine PTI's good governance claims

PESHAWAR (APP): The credibility of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)'s claims of good governance in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has been exposed following serious allegations of corruption and maladministration levied by Shakeel Khan, the party's former Provincial Minister for Communications and Works Department.

Shakeel Khan in his resignation has described as "systemic corruption" within the PTI-led government, challenging the party's previous assertions of effective and transparent governance in KP. In the resignation letter addressed to the Chief Minister KP, the close aide of PTI from Bathkela constituency of Malakand district in the provincial assembly contended that PTI deviated significantly from its commitment to bring reforms in socio-economic sectors and provide relief to the underprivileged.

Shakeel asserted that he would provide a detailed account of the issues behind his resignation in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly.

Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif, Adviser to the Chief Minister for Information, confirmed that Shakeel Khan's resignation followed a summary submitted to the KP Governor to denotify him as provincial minister.

Saif stated that the decision was based on the recommendations from a good governance.

Officials suspended under Awami Agenda Program

KOHAT (APP): Commissioner Kohat Division, Syed Motasim Billah Shah and Deputy Commissioner Abdul Akram Chitrali on Saturday visited various offices, schools and hospitals under the Awami Agenda program and suspended 35 officials.

According to details, the commissioner visited the offices of health, education, excise and taxation department, WSSC areas and Grid Stations.

Officials of the education department, two lady doctors.

Minister lays foundation stone for auditorium in medical college

HYDERABAD (APP): Sindh Minister for Universities and Boards Muhammad Ali Malkani attended Independence Day Celebration at the college of Liaquat University of Medical and Health Sciences (LUMHS) in Thatta district on Saturday.

While addressing the participants he said the college was a fulfillment of their dream which was realized by Vice Chancellor Dr Ikram Din Ujjan and his team.

He added that thanks to the college the youngsters seeking medical education in Thatta could now pursue their medical studies in their own city.

He expressed hope that the college's graduates would also serve the people of Thatta after completing their study.

The VC also expressed his views on the occasion and shared the plans for future expansion.

Earlier, a foundation stone laying ceremony was held for the construction of an auditorium.



KARACHI: A view of cake cutting ceremony on the eve of Indonesia National Day at Indonesian Consulate.

Three rape accused arrested

FAISALABAD (APP): Thikriwala police have arrested three rape accused on the orders of the City Police Officer (CPO) Faisalabad.

A police spokesman said here on Saturday that a woman of Lahore had filed a complaint that accused Imran alias Mani Odh and his 3-4 unidentified accomplices subjected her to gang-rape when she along with her boyfriend Muhammad Waseem was staying the Havailey of his friend, Abdur Raheem at Chak No.275-JB, while waiting for a bus to travel to Lahore on August 14.

Receiving information, CPO Kamran Adil took serious notice and directed the police to immediately arrest the culprits.

Minister pays tribute to Nawaz, Maryam

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Agriculture Minister Ashiq Hussain Kirmani welcomed on Saturday the Punjab government decision about providing relief to people consuming up to 500 units of electricity in the province.

According to official sources here he said that the Punjab government was working day and night and taking various public welfare oriented steps under the dynamic leadership of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz.

He said that it was very unfortunate that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf had only created unrest in the country. He paid tribute to PML-N President Nawaz Sharif and Punjab CM Maryam Nawaz for announcing reduction in electricity price for people consuming up to 500 units in Punjab and added that the PML-N had fulfilled yet another promise made with the people.

PIIA hold session on 'Political Crisis in Bangladesh'

KARACHI (APP): The Pakistan Institute of International Affairs (PIIA) held a session titled 'Political Crisis in Bangladesh' here on Saturday.

Former High Commissioner of Pakistan to Bangladesh Rafiuzzaman Siddiqui and former Chairperson of Department of International Relations University of Karachi Professor Syed Sikander Mehdi were the guests of the event.

While speaking on the occasion, former High Commissioner of Pakistan to Bangladesh Rafiuzzaman Siddiqui said that how India reacts to the current situation in Bangladesh was interesting.

The people of Bangladesh were all up in arms against India, who were once staunch supporter of her (India), he said.

Rafiuzzaman Siddiqui said that Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and Jammāt-e-Islami (JI) could enter into a coalition, which he considered good for Pakistan.

He said that Bangladeshi Army had approached the BNP and JI during the current crisis in Bangladesh, which could led them to a coalition and heightened the role of JI. The former High Commissioner said that Pakistan desired to develop brotherly and friendly relationship with Bangladesh.



CHINIOT: Recent rains inundate city roads, city municipality failed completely in draining the rainwater.

Maersk \$2 billion investment set to transform Pakistan's port infrastructure: Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Maritime Affairs Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh on Saturday said that Danish shipping company Maersk will invest \$2 billion in Pakistan's port and transport infrastructure over the next two years.

Talking to PTV News, the minister stated that this significant investment will contribute to the development of infrastructure and will play a vital role in boosting Pakistan's economy. He said that the investment

comes as a result of the efforts made by the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC).

The minister is scheduled to visit Denmark this month to sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between Maersk and Karachi Port Trust, formalizing the investment plans. He said that Karachi has the potential to increase exports and the Ministry of Maritime Affairs is creating an enabling environment for the business community to

tap into this potential. He noted that the government has removed sales tax on processing plants, fishery seeds, and feed within the maritime sector to encourage growth. Additionally, land will be provided for the construction of processing plants to boost maritime exports.

The minister further said that this investment initiative by Maersk reflects progress in Pakistan's maritime and transport sectors and overall economy.



Group photo of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi, SAARC Chairperson Hina Mansab Khan, FPCCI Vice President Aoun Ali Syed, Rawalpindi and Women's Chamber President Sabuhi Hussain, journalists and other delegations.

Traders announce nationwide strike on August 28 against IPPs, FBR taxes

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Central Organisation of Traders and All Pakistan Anjuman-e-Tajiran have announced a nationwide shut-down strike on August 28 to protest against FBR's tax policies.

In a joint press conference, Kashif Chaudhry and Ajmal Baloch rejected the scheme, calling it impractical and demanded its immediate withdrawal.

They also called for the removal of withholding taxes imposed on essential items, including pulses and flour. Trade leaders urged the government to review agreements with Independent Power Producers (IPPs), eliminate taxes and the slab system on electricity bills, and roll back recent increases in gas prices, extra security charges, and oppressive slabs.

They demanded the withdrawal of FBR's SROs G-236 and H-236 and called for an end to free utilities and fuel

allowances for the President, Prime Minister, and other officials. They suggested that government officers should use smaller vehicles instead of luxury cars.

Traders demanded the removal of General Sales Tax on food items, stationery, poultry, medicines, and other essentials.

They also called for the reversal of heavy taxes on the export sector, and the withdrawal of recent increases in income tax slabs for private employees and traders.

The trader leaders urged the government to raise the income tax exemption threshold in line with inflation, withdraw new taxes on real estate and the construction industry, restore the gain period, and curtail the unlimited powers granted to FBR officers.

They also called for the abolition of the interest-based economy to ensure economic stability.

Price of roti increased by Rs5 amid inflation

PESHAWAR (INP): The people of Peshawar are facing another financial blow as inflation continues to take a toll on everyday commodities.

The district administration has announced a Rs5 increase in the price of roti, according to a notification issued by the deputy commissioner of Peshawar.

As per the new pricing, a 125-gram roti will now cost Rs20. Previously, a 120-gram roti was sold for Rs15. These new rates have been implemented immediately across the district.

The district administration says the price hike was introduced on the recommendations of the Price Review Committee, which cited the rising cost of flour as the key reason behind the increase.

According to the local naanbai, the price of an 80kg bag of flour has surged from Rs7,000 to Rs8,900, prompting the need for price adjustments.

Despite the price increase, the naanbai are voicing concerns that they are still operating at a loss due to the rising costs of ingredients. "Even with the new bread prices, we are still facing losses," said one tandoor owner, highlighting the ongoing challenges in the sector.

PU holds seminar on marketing blunders

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab University (PU) Department of Graphic Design and Postgraduate Research Centre of Creative Arts organized a seminar on 'Learning from marketing blunders - Sady Wal Tak Sajna' here on Saturday.

On this occasion, Chairman Department of Graphic Design Prof Dr Ahmad Bilal, Head of Marketing and Corporate Communications in JazzCash Syed Asad Rizvi, faculty members and students were present.

In his address, Prof Dr Ahmad Bilal said that this seminar is part of a series leading up to the International Conference on Creative Arts (ICCA-24). He said that ICCA-24: 100 Years of Lahore Cinema, is taking place at the Old Campus, to celebrate the century of Lahore cinema, as 1924 was the birth year of cinema. In the previous century cinema was the driving force of every other industry and firstly

commercials were also shown on cinema screens, he added.

In an insightful presentation, Syed Asad Rizvi explored the evolving landscape of modern advertising, shedding light on the latest trends and the significant challenges that brands face in today's competitive market. He highlighted both the triumphs and pitfalls of some of the famous campaigns of leading global brands.

He showcased how top global brands have succeeded by navigating industry complexities. He also examined critical mistakes that led to the downfall of several prominent brands, offering valuable lessons for advertisers, marketers and business leaders.

Former Principal of the College of Art and Design, Prof Shahnawaz Zaidi, congratulated the Department of Graphic Design for organizing an excellent seminar featuring a top industry practitioner.



ISLAMABAD: A view of activities at I-11 Fruit and Vegetable Sabzi Mandi in the Federal Capital.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb at the launch of BYD - a global frontrunner in electric vehicles and renewable energy solutions - in Pakistan.

Governor KP stresses for natural resources development

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Faisal Karim Kundi on Saturday emphasized the need to focus on harnessing the province's mineral resources and natural gifts for generating foreign exchange for the province and the country.

He shared these views during a meeting with Nauman Bashir, General Manager of the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan, who visited the Governor House in Peshawar.

The meeting decided to establish offices in Chitral and Dera Ismail Khan, considering the abundance of minerals and other resources as well as their geographical significance.

Governor Kundi highlighted that projects such as the Gem and Geological Institute of Pakistan, Honey Testing Laboratory, Peaches Pulp Processing Plant, converting waste marble into useful material, Bio-Equivalence Laboratory, Data Processing Unit, Mountain Fresh Value-Added Fruit Processing Hub, and Women Business Incubation Center would open new avenues for provincial development.

He said that these

initiatives would help align Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's fruits, minerals, and other commodities with global standards.

The meeting also discussed strategies to accelerate these projects.

The Director General of the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan invited Governor Kundi to attend an upcoming expo in Chitral next month as a guest of honor, which he accepted.

Meanwhile, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi expressed deep concern over the deteriorating security situation in the southern districts of the province. During a discussion with a delegation led by journalist Muhammad Usman from district Bannu, he criticized the provincial government's criminal silence on the matter.

Kundi emphasized the need to address the backwardness of these areas and noted that the federal government has allocated funds in the budget for the critical Chashma Lift Canal project. He said that the swift commencement of this project would transform not just the southern districts but the entire province.

In another meeting,

renowned spiritual leader and Sajada Nasheen of Darbar Taunsa Sharif, Khwaja Nasir Mahmoodnr, met with Governor Faisal Karim Kundi.

He congratulated the governor on his appointment, praising it as a commendable decision by the party leadership.

During their discussion, Governor Kundi expressed his dedication to fulfilling the trust placed in him by the leadership.

He emphasized the need to make Khyber Pakhtunkhwa a haven of peace, economic prosperity, and to enable women and youth to play significant roles in societal development.

He reflected on the sacrifices made by the province in the fight against terrorism, including the tragic loss of lives in the Army Public School attack.

Kundi also pledged to overcome obstacles faced by marginalized and disadvantaged communities in the development process.

Khwaja Nasir Mahmood lauded the governor's commitment and prayed for the country's development, peace, and stability.

HYDERABAD: Residents of Latifabad burn bushes and blocked road as they are holding protest demonstration against prolong electricity load shedding in their area, in Hyderabad.



HYDERABAD: Residents of Latifabad burn bushes and blocked road as they are holding protest demonstration against prolong electricity load shedding in their area, in Hyderabad.

ADC Revenue reviews performance of revenue officers

BAHAWALPUR (APP): A meeting was held in the committee room of the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Office under the chairmanship of Additional Deputy Commissioner Revenue Ameer Taimur to review the performance of revenue officials from August 1 to August 15.

It was reported that during this period, a total of 24.36 million rupees were collected in the form of water charges, 7.4 million rupees in agricultural income tax, over 20.9 million rupees in transfer fees, and over 26 million rupees in stamp duty, all deposited into the government treasury.

Assistant Commissioners from across the district and other revenue department officials attended the meeting. The Additional Deputy Commissioner Revenue emphasized the need for further improvement in the collection of government dues and called for better performance in the field.

He stressed that there should be no delay or negligence in collecting government dues. The meeting also reviewed other revenue-related matters and the individual performances of officials.

Price Control Magistrates impose fine of more than Rs 2.93 mln for overpricing

BAHAWALPUR (APP): Following the directives of the Chief Minister of Punjab, Deputy Commissioner Bahawalpur Zaheer Anwar Jappa is ensuring the active role of price control magistrates to eliminate overpricing and hoarding. From August 1 to August 16, the magistrates inspected prices at 21,601 shops, carts, and business centres across the district. During this period, they imposed fines exceeding 2.93 million

rupees for violations, sealed 8 shops, and arrested 146 offenders. Assistant Commissioners and price control magistrates are visiting fruit and vegetable markets at dawn to monitor the auctioning of produce and to ensure that food items are sold at the prescribed rates. The Deputy Commissioner has instructed that price lists be prominently displayed to prevent difficulties for consumers during purchases.

DPM reviews measures over urea availability

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Saturday chaired a meeting to review various measures to ensure ample availability of urea at suitable rate during the upcoming wheat cultivation in Rabi season.

The meeting, held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, expressed its satisfaction on the availability of urea and its price during the current Kharif season.

The meeting was attended by Minister for Industries and National Food Security Rana Tanveer, Minister for Petroleum Dr Musadik Malik, Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal, Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Khan Cheema, relevant secretaries and other officials, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

said in a press release.

The meeting decided that the Petroleum Division would ensure continuous supply of gas to all fertilizer plants for the Rabi season. The decision was taken to avert the negative impacts caused by imports upon the country's reserves.

The deputy prime minister stressed upon the provincial governments to increase their vigilance of markets so that prices should remain stable and the profiteers should not get a chance of profiteering.

With provision of uninterrupted gas supply, the fertilizer plants would run on full capacity and with sufficient production and buffer stock, the price of urea bag would be stabilized. The stable price was a good news for the farmers and rural economy, the press release in Urdu language said.



LAHORE: A nomadic man is making toys in his hut to earn for livelihood.

People to get relief in electricity bills: Bilal Yaseen

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Food Minister Bilal Yaseen has said that the initiative aimed at reducing bills of people consuming up to 500 electricity units will definitely provide relief to them.

In a statement issued here on Saturday he said that PML-N Quaid Nawaz Sharif and Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz had really provided big relief to the people.

He said that after the relief in price of 'Roti' now people would get relief in electricity bills as well.

Bilal Yaseen said that Punjab was heading towards development under the able leadership of Punjab CM.

Political opponents were again hatching conspiracies to halt the country's development journey, he added.

He further said that the Punjab government in line with the vision of Punjab CM Maryam Nawaz was focusing on providing maximum relief to people.

BYD launches electric, hybrid vehicles in Pak with SIFC's support

ISLAMABAD (APP): BYD, a leading Chinese New Energy Vehicle (NEV) manufacturer on Saturday showcased its range of electric and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles in Pakistan in collaboration with the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC).

According to PTV news, the BYD's formal entry is being launched in partnership with Mega Motor Company (Private) Limited, a subsidiary of Hub Power Company Limited.

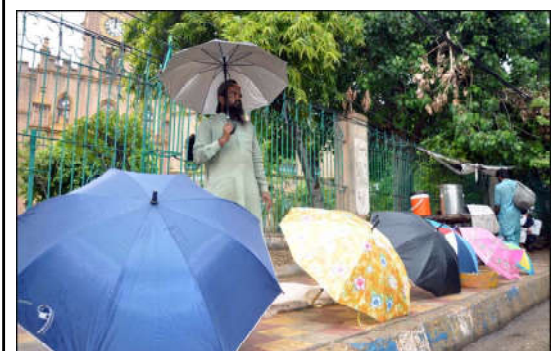
The collaboration between BYD and the SIFC, which was first announced in March 2024, is part of a broader strategy to enhance Pakistan's automotive sector with cutting-edge technology.

The initiative is aligned with the SIFC's core priority of reducing environmental pollution and advancing sustainable development in Pakistan.

BYD, which became the world's leading NEV seller in 2023, is expected to play a pivotal role in this green transformation of the nation's automotive landscape.

The initiative represents a significant step forward in introducing eco-friendly automotive technology to the Pakistani market.

This will mark the beginning of BYD's operations in the country, bringing a diverse selection of NEVs to Pakistani consumers.



HYDERABAD: Vendor sells umbrellas to earn his livelihood for support his family, as demands of umbrella increase in city during the monsoon weather, at roadside stall in Hyderabad.

SNGPL disconnects seven metres, removes five illegal extensions

LODHRAN (APP): The Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) UFG Control Task Force intensified its crackdown against gas pilferers, disconnected seven meters and removed five illegal extensions across the region.

According to details, a consumer metre was being used illegally in a colony on which the metre was disconnected. Another consumer metre was on non-billing and was installed at a site on which the metre disconnected.

Five meters were disconnected due to tampering and sent to the laboratory.

Five consumers, who were found providing gas to more than one household, had their illegal extensions removed.

Gaza talks paused as Hamas rejects 'new conditions'

Monitoring Desk

DOHA: Gaza ceasefire talks in Doha were paused only a day after they began, as the United States offered a "bridging proposal" to Israel and Hamas to seal a deal, with Israel asking the US, Qatar and Egypt to put pressure on the Palestinian group to accept the new proposal before talks resume in Cairo next week.

Hamas did not take part in the Doha talks, as its senior official Izzat al-Rishq said Israel "did not abide by what was agreed upon" in the July 2 negotiations, and rejected what it called the "new conditions" which include keeping Israeli troops inside Gaza.

The US said that the two days of talks in Doha were "serious and constructive" and that Washington, represented by CIA Director William

Burns, offered ideas to close an agreement to ward ending the 10-month conflict.

"This proposal builds on areas of agreement over the past week, and bridges remaining gaps in the manner that allows for a swift implementation of the deal," said a White House statement signed by co-mediators Qatar and Egypt.

Talking to reporters in the White House's Oval Office, US President Joe Biden said, "We are closer than we've ever been" to a ceasefire in Gaza "but we're not there yet."

"I don't want to jinx anything... we may have something. But we're not there yet."

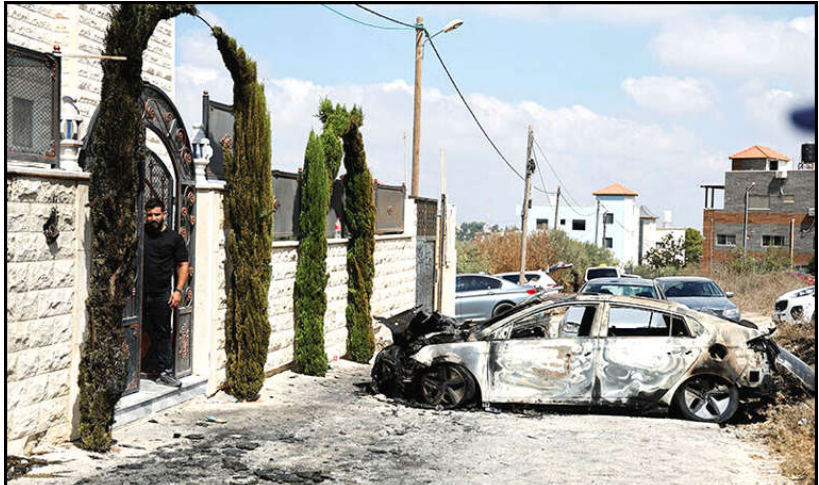
"It's much, much closer than it was three days ago. So, keep your fingers crossed."

Hamas, which has

been informed about the latest round of talks as it did not send any delegation to attend the Doha session after the recent killing of its leader, demands "a complete ceasefire, a complete withdrawal from the Strip, a normal return of the displaced and a (prisoner) exchange deal" without restrictions.

An Israeli official said its delegation in Doha was heading home and that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was expected to meet US Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Monday.

White House national security spokesperson John Kirby said, "We believe coming out of Doha this is a positive step forward, but it is just a step forward. There's an awful lot of work that still needs to be done."



A Palestinian man stands near a vehicle destroyed during an Israeli settlers' attack in the village of Jit in the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

Biden, Harris make upbeat show of unity in joint appearance

Monitoring Desk

MARYLAND: US President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris made their first joint public appearance since Biden withdrew from the 2024 presidential race. The pair took the stage at a community college in Maryland to discuss the economy as well as the administration's efforts to reduce the costs of prescription drugs.

Joe Biden and Kamala Harris made an upbeat show of unity Thursday as they held their first joint public event since Harris replaced the president as the Democratic Party's candidate in November's election.

Chants of "Thank you Joe!" rang out from the audience at a community college in the Maryland

suburbs outside Washington.

Biden announced a major deal to reduce medication prices for retirees on social welfare programs.

But the biggest star was Biden's vice president who has surprised many by uniting the Democratic Party and surging in the polls against Republican Donald Trump since her abrupt entry into the White House race. "She can make one hell of a president," Biden said of Harris. Shortly after the joint appearance, Trump delivered rambling remarks from his New Jersey golf club, before taking questions from a handful of journalists.

Harris has a "very strong communist lean" and will mean the "death of the American dream," he said.

Indian hospitals hit as doctors strike to protest rape, murder of Kolkata medic

Monitoring Desk

NEW DELHI: Hospitals and clinics across India turned away patients except for emergency cases on Saturday as medical professionals started a 24-hour shutdown in protest against the brutal rape and murder of a doctor in the eastern city of Kolkata.

More than one million doctors were expected to join the strike, paralysing medical services across the world's most populous nation. Hospitals said faculty staff from medical colleges had been pressed into service for emergency cases.

The strike, which began at 6am, cut off access to elective medical procedures and outpatient consultations, according to a statement by the Indian

Medical Association.

A 31-year-old trainee doctor was raped and murdered last week inside the medical college in Kolkata where she worked, triggering nationwide protests among doctors and drawing parallels to the notorious gang rape and murder of a 23-year-old student on a moving bus in New Delhi in 2012.

Outside the RG Kar Medical College, where the crime took place, a heavy police presence was seen on Saturday while the hospital premises were deserted, according to the ANI news agency.

Mamata Banerjee, the chief minister of West Bengal, which includes Kolkata, has backed the protests across the state.



People wait for their turn at a government hospital in Hyderabad during a nationwide doctors' strike against the rape and murder of their colleague in India's West Bengal state.



SUBANG (Malaysia): An injured Palestinian child is escorted by officials, after being airlifted from Egypt for medical treatment, at an air force base.

Russian diplomat sees US 'approval' behind attack on gas pipelines

Monitoring Desk

MOSCOW: Russia's ambassador to Washington said on Friday that he did not believe Ukraine would have attacked the Nord Stream gas pipelines without the tacit approval of the United States, and that Russia would identify and punish those behind the attack. A sharp pressure drop on the pipelines under the Baltic Sea was registered on September 26 2022 and seismologists detected ex-

plosions, triggering a wave of speculation about who sabotaged the multibillion-dollar project that carried Russian gas to Germany.

No one has claimed responsibility for the blasts, which occurred off the Danish island of Bornholm and ruptured three out of four lines of the system. The Wall Street Journal reported on Thursday that Ukraine's top military commander approved the 2022 attack on the gas pipelines.

Held Kashmir to see first polls in a decade

Monitoring Desk

NEW DELHI: Assembly elections in India-held Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) will be conducted from Sept 18 to Oct 1, the Election Commission of India (ECI) announced on Friday, setting the stage for the first major electoral exercise in the disputed region since its dismemberment in August 2019. The last polls were held in the unbroken state in 2014. Meanwhile, assembly elections in the BJP-ruled Haryana will be held on October 1, the ECI said.

The counting of votes will take place on October 4. In 2019, elections in Haryana were held along

with Maharashtra and Jharkhand. Chief election commissioner Rajiv Kumar said polls in held J&K would be held in three phases on September 18, September 25, and October 1. The polls will be held in single phase on October 1 in Haryana. Mr Kumar said there was great enthusiasm among the people in held J&K and they wanted to participate in the poll process. "People want elections to be conducted there as early as possible. The long queues at the polling booth in J&K during the Lok Sabha elections are proof that people not only want change but also want to raise their voices."



Turkiye's ruling and opposition lawmakers fight after a scuffle between former footballer Alpay Ozalan (unseen), a member of the ruling AKP, and Turkish Workers Party deputy Ahmet Sik (unseen) at the Grand National Assembly in Ankara.

Fisticuffs in Turkish parliament

Monitoring Desk

ANKARA: A brawl broke out in Türkiye's parliament on Friday after lawmakers discussed the fate of a jailed opposition figure controversially stripped of his parliamentary immunity earlier this year.

The lawmakers were meeting after the country's constitutional court earlier this month struck down parliament's decision to oust Can Atalay from his parliamentary seat.

Atalay won his seat last year after having campaigned from prison.

Ahmet Sik, a fellow member of the leftist Workers' Party of Türkiye (TIP), on Friday defended Atalay against the attacks on him by ruling party lawmakers.

"It's no surprise that you call Atalay a terrorist," he said. "All citizens should know that the biggest terrorists of this country are those seated on those benches," he added, indicating the ruling majority.

That comment drew angry responses from ruling party lawmakers, prompting the chairman to call a break.

Court blocks key part of California law on children's online safety

Monitoring Desk

CALIFORNIA: A federal appeals court on Friday left intact a key part of an injunction blocking a California law meant to shield children from online content that could harm them mentally or physically.

The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco said NetChoice, a trade group for companies that do business online, was likely to show that the California Age-Appropriate Design Code Act violated members' First Amendment free speech rights.

California required businesses to create "Data Protection Impact Assessment" reports addressing whether their online plat-

forms could harm children, such as through videos promoting self-harm, and take steps before launch to reduce the risks.

Businesses were also required to estimate the ages of child users and configure privacy settings for them, or else provide high settings for everyone.

Civil fines could reach \$2,500 per child for each negligent violation, or \$7,500 per child for each intentional violation.

Circuit Judge Milan Smith wrote for a three-judge panel that the first requirement was likely unconstitutional because California had less restrictive ways to protect children.

41 injured Palestinians flown to Malaysia

Monitoring Desk

SELANGOR: Forty-one Palestinian civilians who suffered various injuries in the conflict in Gaza were flown to Malaysia on Friday for treatment, officials said.

The Palestinians, aged between eight months and 62 years, were flown to the majority Muslim nation from the Egyptian capital Cairo onboard two Malaysian air force transport aircraft.

Russia says Ukraine used Western rockets to destroy bridge in Kursk region

Monitoring Desk

MOSCOW: Russia's foreign ministry said Ukraine had used Western rockets, likely U.S.-made HIMARS, to destroy a bridge over the Seym river in the Kursk region, killing volunteers trying to evacuate civilians.

"For the first time, the Kursk region was hit by Western-made rocket launchers, probably American HIMARS," Maria Zakharova, spokeswoman for the Russian foreign ministry.

West Bank village in shock after attack by Jewish settlers

Monitoring Desk

HEBRON: The Israeli settlers who attacked Hassan Arman's village of Jit in the occupied West Bank had a simple aim, he says: "To burn, kill, or destroy"—all of which took place on Thursday night.

Residents hid in fear while dozens of settlers ransacked their northern village, burning homes and cars, until eventually a young Palestinian man was shot dead.

Arman, whose car was destroyed by fire during the attack, said he had "never seen anything like it" in Jit as he opened the charred door of his vehicle. Inside, everything had melted, leaving just a skeleton of twisted metal.

When the Jewish settlers reached his house, they were "in full uniform, armed

with knives, a machine gun and a silencer", he said.

A few houses down, Muawiya Al Sada struggled for words as he stood in the scorched remains of his living room. Only the burnt wooden frame of his sofa remained after the cushions and fabric went up in flames.

"After they burned the house there, they came to this house, broke the windows, and threw fire-bombs — Molotov cocktails — inside," he said, while shards of glass from his window panes crunched under the weight of his boots.

Sada and his neighbours then heard gunshots which they later learned caused the death of Rashid Sulait, 23, who was said to have been shot in the back.

French foreign minister says Gaza truce 'necessary' for regional peace

Monitoring Desk

BEIRUT: French Foreign Minister Stéphane Sejourne said Thursday from Beirut that a cease-fire in Gaza was "necessary" for peace in the region including Lebanon, as talks resumed in Qatar aiming to end the conflict.

"We are all worried about the regional situation," Sejourne said after meeting parliament speaker Nabih Berri, an ally of Lebanon's Hezbollah group.

France "supports Lebanon, and in this context and in the context of regional peace, we hope for the ceasefire... in the Gaza Strip, which... will be necessary to guarantee peace in the region," he said.

Hezbollah has traded near daily fire with the Israeli army since the Pales-

tinian militant group Hamas's October 7 attack on Israel sparked the Gaza war.

Fears of an all-out conflict have spiralled since an Israeli strike killed a top Hezbollah commander last month.

Hours later, an attack blamed on Israel killed Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran, prompting both Hezbollah and Iran to vow retaliation.

Before his arrival, Sejourne said in a statement on X that his visit aimed to "support ongoing diplomatic efforts towards de-escalation in the region".

His trip comes a day after US envoy Amos Hochstein visited Beirut and said there was "no more time to waste" for a Gaza ceasefire.

Hundreds evacuated as forest fire rages in Turkiye's Izmir for 3rd day

Monitoring Desk

IZMIR: Firefighters are battling a strong forest fire in the Aegean resort city of Izmir for a third day, Turkish media and officials said on Saturday, with hundreds more people evacuated overnight.

Helicopters and water bombers which were grounded due to strong winds continued their fight against the flames on Saturday morning, the NTV news channel reported.

The fire started on Thursday and was quickly spread to residential areas by winds blowing at 50 kilometres an hour.

Turkish Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya said that 900 residents in five affected districts were evacuated overnight in Izmir.

A witness told AFP that thick smoke had turned the sky grey, with the smell of smoke hanging over the city, the third most-populated in Turkiye.

"Currently, two planes and eleven helicopters are continuing to inter-

vene," said Agriculture and Forestry Ministry Ibrahim Yumakli, saying that residents of the city should not be "worried".

Around 1,600 hectares (3,900 acres) have been affected, the minister said. Six other fires continue to rage in forest areas in other cities in Turkiye, including northwestern Bolu and Aydin in the west.

Over 300 personnel are actively involved in the firefighting efforts in the Aegean province of Aydin's Bozdogan district — using 32 fire trucks, 11 water tankers, and five bulldozers, Anadolu Agency reported.

The fire in Karsikaya district has already destroyed 16 homes and forced the evacuation of 87 houses and 45 businesses.

An animal shelter was also evacuated as the fire spread, and smoke from the burning forests has affected multiple parts of the city, including the Bayrakli and Cigli districts.

Seoul residents sweating with record 'tropical nights' weather

Monitoring Desk

SEOUL: Residents of South Korea's capital are resorting to novel ways to beat the heat as a century-old weather record fell on Friday following a 26th "tropical night" in a row — when the temperature stays above 25 degrees Celsius (77 Fahrenheit).

"I take a cold shower before bed and tie freezer packs around my electric fan to cool the air," Lee Ji-soo told AFP Friday.

Overnight temperatures in Seoul have sizzled above 25 degrees Celsius for 26 days in a row, officials said on Friday, marking the longest streak since modern weather observation began in 1907.

Such evenings are widely known as "tropical nights" in South Korea.

Much of the world is enduring a summer of sweltering weather, with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warning last month of an "extreme heat epidemic", and calling for action to limit the impact of climate change.

The intense heat in Seoul is expected to continue, according to the met office, setting a record ev-

ery day until next week.

"The cold air is not coming down from the north," Youn Ki-han, director at Seoul's Meteorology Forecast Division, told AFP. "Usually around this time the temperature drops in the morning and evening... but currently we aren't seeing any signs of that yet," said Youn. As temperatures soar, residents struggle to find ways to cope with the sweltering nights.

"I think I turn on my air conditioner 23 hours a day," said Kim Young-sook, who lives in Gangnam district, an affluent neighbourhood in Seoul.

"I'm worried my dogs will become too hot — even during at night." That isn't an option for Lee Ji-soo, who straps icepacks to her fan. "I do have an air conditioner but I just can't afford the electricity bill," she said.

"The air is suffocating sometimes. I don't know how long I can live like this."

Data from Korea Power Exchange showed South Korea's electricity demand hit an all-time high on Monday as people battled the heatwave with air conditioners and fans.

President urges people to actively participate in Monsoon Tree Plantation Campaign

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari has urged all Pakistanis, particularly the youth, to actively participate in the Monsoon Tree Plantation Campaign 2024 by planting as many trees as possible to support the national objective of increasing tree cover in the country. "As we embark on the Monsoon Tree Plantation Campaign 2024, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all Pakistanis for their unwavering dedication to preserving our environment," he said in a message on Monsoon Tree Plantation Campaign 2024.

This campaign is not just a seasonal initiative; it is a crucial aspect of our national duty to protect and nurture the natural beauty and resources of our beloved country, he said.

Additionally, the president said, "Trees are the foundation of life. They provide us with clean air, regulate our climate, and support diverse ecosystems".

In the face of escalating environmental challenges, he said the significance of tree plantation cannot be overstated.

Holy Prophet (PBUH) also encouraged planting trees and is reported to have said, "If the Hour (the day of Resurrection) is about to be established and one of you is holding a palm shoot, let him take advantage of even one second before the Hour is established to plant it".

The president highlighted that currently, only about 5% of Pakistan's total land area is covered by forests, which are under severe pressure due to increasing demand for wood and other land uses.

"Through this Monsoon Tree Plantation Campaign, we have the opportunity to make a lasting impact on our environment and secure a greener, healthier future for our younger generation. I want to emphasize that forestry remains a top priority on Pakistan's development agenda," he added.

Furthermore, he said under the Delta Blue Carbon initiative, Pakistan has undertaken successful mangrove restoration, increasing mangrove cover by 300% since 1990. "Over 2 million mangroves have been established in Sindh to

mitigate the impacts of Climate Change, which also earned \$27 million by trading carbon credits in the international market."

He said another restorative initiative is "The Living Indus Program" which contains components aimed at halting deforestation and received the UN Decade of Restoration Flagship Award.

President Zardari highlighted that the Government alone cannot preserve and enhance our forest wealth without the cooperation and engagement of our communities.

"This requires the involvement of different strata of society and I hope they would lend their hand in this auspicious venture. It is essential that our younger generation understands the pivotal role forests play in addressing climate change. We are committed to building capacity, enhancing education, and promoting innovation to advance this important mission", he said stressing that this campaign should be a symbol of our commitment to sustainability and our love for the land that sustains us.

He said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, the Federal capital and the provinces have taken steps on a joint priority basis. He said that the Ministry of Health is ensuring continuous monitoring daily and the government is closely monitoring the situation.

He said that the ministry is in full contact with the provinces and on the instructions of the prime minister, a meeting is being conducted on daily basis. He

Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad said that in the provinces including the federal capital, laboratories are allocated for the diagnosis of Mpx.

Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad said that in the provinces including the federal capital, laboratories are allocated for the diagnosis of Mpx.



Astola Beach of Pasni has been ranked among the top 70 most beautiful beaches in the world

Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad says: Surveillance, screening enhanced for Monkeypox

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister's Coordinator for Health Dr. Malik Mukhtar Ahmad on Saturday said that the government has formulated a comprehensive strategy to protect the people from the Monkeypox (Mpx).

Addressing a press conference, Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad said that people need not worry as only one case of Mpx has been reported in Pakistan. He added surveillance and screening are in place at all airports and points of entry.

Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad said that in the provinces including the federal capital, laboratories are allocated for the diagnosis of Mpx.

Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad said that in the provinces including the federal capital, laboratories are allocated for the diagnosis of Mpx.

He said that cases of Mpx have been reported from Africa and people coming from Africa, America and the Gulf countries will be monitored.

He said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, the Federal capital and the provinces have taken steps on a joint priority basis. He said that the Ministry of Health is ensuring continuous monitoring daily and the government is closely monitoring the situation.

He said that the ministry is in full contact with the provinces and on the instructions of the prime minister, a meeting is being conducted on daily basis. He

appealed to the public to isolate themselves at home if their family has a travel history and Mpx symptoms.

Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad added in such a situation contact a qualified doctor and follow the doctor's instructions in case of having any such symptoms.

He said that this virus has been found in 99,000 people in the world and only 200 patients died and all others recovered. He said that symptoms may take 10 to 15 days to appear and spending too much time with the patient can spread it. It is better if the patient is quarantined, he said adding that fever medicines are used for Mpx.

Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad said that in the provinces including the federal capital, laboratories are allocated for the diagnosis of Mpx.

1,400 daily wage employees of Quetta Metropolitan Corporation terminated

QUETTA (APP): As many as 1,400 daily wage employees of Quetta Metropolitan Corporation have been terminated.

Commissioner Quetta and Administrator of the Metropolitan Corporation, Muhammad Hamza Shaqqaat informed journalists on Saturday that several ghost employees were discovered due to which strict action was taken. He said that the daily wage employees who were becoming a financial burden on the institution have been immediately terminated.

He stated that the number of terminated employees is 1,400, which in-

cludes employees from sanitation, fire, and other departments. Ghost employees, who were not performing their duties, have been terminated, while only those employees in the fire department who were regularly performing their duties will be rehired by the Metropolitan Corporation, he affirmed.

The administrator further mentioned that any future recruitment will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, and relevant officers of the Metropolitan Corporation have been instructed not to issue salaries to any daily wage employees after August 16.



TURBAT: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi talking with media men

If any May 9 occurs now, I will take its responsibility: Marwat

RAWALPINDI (Online): PTI leader Sher Afzal Marwat has said he met PTI founder Imran Khan after 3 months on Saturday and all the differences have been reconciled.

PTI founder has entrusted me the responsibility in regard to August 22 public meeting. I said assign responsibility to me, he said this while talking to journalists outside Adiala jail Saturday.

I have buried all the differences under the directives of PTI founder. All the matter has finished on the assurance of PTI founder.

He held only PTI founder can expel Sher Afzal Marwat.

I said to PTI founder if any complaint comes

then ask from Barrister Gohar and Ali Amin.

Barrister Gohar has given clear message there will be no differences in party now.

We will first go to Lahore. People have objection over my visit to London. We will not hear anything against Shibli Faraz, Umar Ayoub and others.

If any May 9 occurs now I will take its responsibility, he stated. I will now evolve all planning without asking from PTI founder. Then no one should say later that it has been done under the order of PTI founder. We will stage peaceful protest.

We all including students, lawyers, farmers will lead protest.

Pak envoy in UAE urges community members to support legal banking channels

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates Faisal Niaz Tirmizi on Saturday urged all Pakistani community members to support and promote legal banking channels for sending remittances.

"It was a pleasure to attend the Media Briefing & Engagement Event titled "HUNDI PE WAAR" to

promote legal remittances to Pakistan," the ambassador said in a post on X account.

Tirmizi attended an event arranged by Index Exchange in Dubai and also highly appreciated and congratulated it for playing its role in spreading awareness among Pakistani diaspora by launching a full-fledged media campaign.

71 meat shops sealed; 21 butchers arrested by Quetta administration

QUETTA: The Quetta administration raided over 200 meat shops located in different parts of Quetta city on Saturday.

According to an official handout issued here, as many as 71 meat shops were sealed and 21 butchers arrested on the charges of violation of official price list. The arrested butchers were sent to the jail for further process. The raids were conducted on Kasi road, Arbab Karam Khan road, Samungli road, Joint road, Aalam Chowk, Bakelita, Prince road, besides Kuchlak. The Assistant Commissioners and Magistrates took part in the campaign against the profiteers.

During the raids, the situation of cleanliness and hygienic conditions were also reviewed.



ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to Prime Minister on Health, Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad Bharrath addressing press conference regarding Monkeypox virus.

3 labors died as factory roof collapses in Faisalabad

ISLAMABAD (APP): At least three workers died on the spot, while another one sustained injuries when the roof of a factory collapsed due to rain in Faisalabad on early Saturday morning.

According to rescue officials, the roof of a room inside the factory collapsed due to rain in the Faisalabad area. As a result, three workers were killed and one was injured, the PTV news channel reported.

The rescue officials stated that the roof collapsed in a factory manufacturing cement roofs.

Officials stated that the roof of the living room of the laborers in the factory was not strong. The bodies and injured had been

removed from the debris and shifted to the hospital.

The Chief Minister of Punjab, Maryum Nawaz, had also expressed deep condolences and sympathies with the families of the laborers who lost their lives in the factory roof collapse incident in Faisalabad.

The CM offered heartfelt sympathies and prayed for the departed souls.

The Chief Minister had directed the relevant authorities to provide all necessary assistance and support to the bereaved families.

An investigation into the incident had also been ordered to avoid such mishaps in the future.



MULTAN: Jam-at-Islami (JI) Chief, Hafiz Naeem-ur-Rehman addresses to protesters during JI protest demonstration against massive unemployment, increasing price of daily use products and inflation price hiking of electricity and petrol, in Multan.

Internet outage case: LHC orders parties to submit response

LAHORE (INP): The Lahore High Court (LHC), giving a protective decision on the petition against the shutdown of the internet across the country, ordered all the parties to submit their answers at the next hearing.

The LHC summoned representatives of the federal government, the Ministry of Information, and Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) to the next hearing and ordered that the representative of each party should ensure attendance in the courtroom.

The Lahore High Court adjourned further hearing of the case till August 21.

It is pertinent to note that yesterday the recent shutdown and disruption of internet across the country was challenged in the LHC.

ment, PTA and others were made parties in the petition filed by Nadeem Sarwar.

It was argued in the petition that internet and social media applications have been shutdown in the country without notice and reason.

It was stated in the petition that the business and even every sphere of life is being affected by this shutdown, while it is also a violation of fundamental rights.

The court was requested to nullify the federal government's decision to shut down the internet and issue orders to fully and immediately restore the internet in the country.

Notably, on August 15, the Upper House Senate Standing Committee on Information Technology had directed to solve the problem of slow internet, and social media apps in the country within two weeks.

NHA Chairman launches tree plantation campaign

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman of the National Highway Authority (NHA) Muhammad Sheheryar Sultan has inaugurated a Tree Planting Campaign on the NHA road network by planting a sapling on the Thalian Airport carriage-way.

According to an NHA spokesman, the campaign aims to plant over 46,000 saplings and wild plants along the Islamabad-Peshawar Motorway (M-1) this year.

The chairman said that tree plantation was a form of Sadaqah Jariyah (ongoing charity).

He said that Pakistan was among the countries most affected by climate change and reiterated the NHA's commitment to increasing greenery, reducing temperatures and mitigating the impacts of climate change through this national initiative.



KARACHI: Senior leader of MQM, MNA Mustafa Kamal addressing a Press conference

'India's stubbornness main reason of unresolved Kashmir dispute'

ISLAMABAD (INP): The All Parties Hurriyat Conference Azad Jammu and Kashmir (APHC-AJK) chapter has appreciated the statement of Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch in which she said India is involved in war crimes and genocide in occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

APHC-AJK chapter General Secretary Advocate Parvaiz Ahmad Shah in a statement issued in Islamabad said the FO Spokesperson has openly expressed that Pakistan is neither holding any bilateral talks with India nor is there any negotiation about trade across the Line of Control.

He said with this statement, all rumours have ended, in which it was said that there were talks between the two countries about trade along the Line of Control.

always played its role to highlight the Kashmir dispute at the global level and is desirous of a just and sustainable solution to the Kashmir dispute but due to India's rigid Kashmir policy this long-pending issue has remained unresolved for the past seven decades.

The Hurriyat leader said Pakistan has advocated the Kashmir dispute in every forum of the world, including the United Nations, and has given moral, political and diplomatic support to Kashmiris.

Advocate Parvaiz Ahmad said the Kashmiri people are grateful to Pakistan, which has always played its role in highlighting the Kashmir dispute at every forum in the world. He said that India itself had taken the Kashmir issue to the United Nations and had assured before the international community to settle it.

Water aggression by India leads to deluge in Rivers Chenab and Ravi

LAHORE (INP): Just like the case in the past, India has once again resorted to water aggression as it has opened the spillways of River Ravi and River Chenab without prior warning, inundating thousands of villages and millions of acres of land in Punjab on Saturday.

At a time when the country is struggling to cope with the losses caused due to heavy monsoon rains, the release of water into the rivers by a hostile neighbour has further exacerbated the situation.

It has led to a significant rise in the water level at Qadirabad Barrage in River Chenab and the water level is still rising rapidly. The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), on the other hand, has said that it is expected to go up to 250,000 cusecs.

MQM wants unanimous power tariffs in entire country: Mustafa Kamal

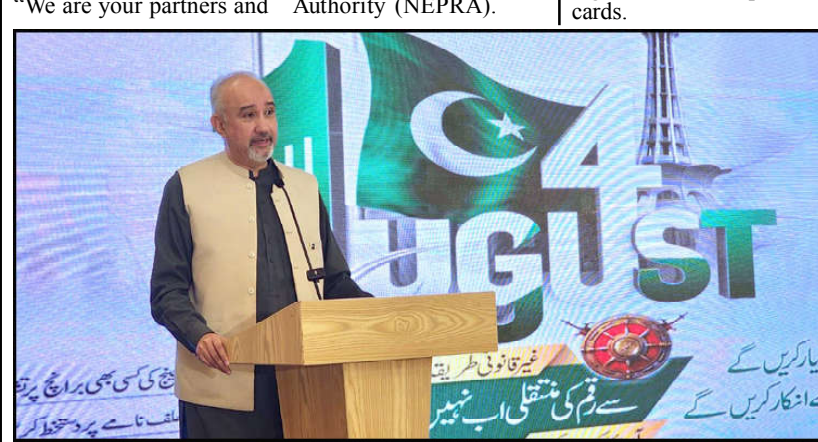
KARACHI (INP): We consider Nawaz Sharif the leader of entire Pakistan, but his yesterday's media talk has alienated us, MQM leader Mustafa Kamal said here on Saturday.

"We are not forced to think, we won't get relief being not the part of Punjab," MQM-Pakistan's leader talking to media here said.

"The MQM will not accept it. If there is no package in Sindh and you tell us to talk with the provincial government," Kamal said. "We are your partners and

not the Sindh government's," he retorted.

"We want unanimous power tariffs in the entire country, there will be no compromise over it, the relief must be for whole Pakistan," MQM leader emphasized. Mustafa Kamal had earlier demanded of government in a media talk to cancel the capacity charges agreement with local independent power producers (IPPs). Talking to media in Islamabad after visiting the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA).



DUBAI: Ambassador Faisal Niaz Tirmizi, Pakistan's Envoy to UAE addresses an event arranged by Index Exchange.

Central Govt lacks solid majority, collapse at any moment: Javed Latif

MULTAN (INP): Javed Latif, a senior leader of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), has cast serious doubts on the stability of the current central government, suggesting that it could collapse at any moment.

While talking with a private TV channel, Latif emphasized that the government lacks a solid majority and is vulnerable to potential destabilizing forces, such as a sudden gust of wind.

Latif's comments reflect a growing frustration within his party regarding the perceived facilitation of political opponents and the broader political landscape.

Two years ago, Latif and other PML-N members voiced concerns about the facilitation provided to rival parties, although some members of his party remained skeptical at the time.

Latif accused senior figures of being complicit in this facilitation, suggesting that some of these individuals now need to explain

their past actions. He also criticized the ongoing consequences of the 2017 decisions, questioning whether future rulings will continue to be influenced by political motivations rather than merit.

Latif argued that the current government was installed as part of a broader arrangement, and claimed that his party is now suffering as a result. He warned that if the party's interests are not safeguarded, both the state and the political system are at risk. Additionally, Latif pointed out the silence of Nawaz Sharif amid the political turmoil and the need for a transparent explanation of the facilitation provided to rival parties.

He criticized the selective nature of justice and the perception that the media portrays Pakistani politicians negatively. He called for a fair and unbiased approach to resolving cases, emphasizing that all political disputes should be handled based on merit rather than favoritism.



QUETTA: Vice Chancellor Bolan Medical College, Dr. Shabbir Ahmed Lehri visiting Nawab Ghaus Bakhsh Raisani Memorial Hospital

Another former Adiala jail official 'returns' home after arrest

RAWALPINDI (INP): Former Adiala jail deputy superintendent Zafar Iqbal returned home after his arrest on charges of aiding former prime minister Imran Khan.

According to media reports, Zafar, the Adiala jail former official was arrested on August 13 for interrogation regarding the ongoing issue regarding aiding Imran Khan in jail. Earlier, Former Inspector General (IG) Prisons Shahid Saleem Baig also returned his residence in Lahore following what is said to be a 'two-day detention'.

3 notorious dacoits killed in police encounters

KHAIRPUR (INP): Three notorious dacoits were killed and another was injured and arrested in two different police encounters in Khairpur, police said on Saturday. According to police, SHO police station Shah Hussain and SHO Gumbat received information that robbers were looting people by blocking the roads on Mangahan Wari Link Road and Paki Nako.

When the police party reached the spot, there was a fight between the police and the robbers and in the ensuing fight, 3 notorious robbers were killed while one robber was injured.

Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Khairpur said the dead robbers have been identified as Liaquat Shar, Nisar Ahmed Shar and Abid Mitlu.