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Chinese Embassy condemns terrorists' attack on Chinese Convoy in Gwadar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chinese Embassy in Pakistan on Sunday strongly condemned the terrorists attack on a Chinese Convoy in Gwadar and asked Pakistani authorities to conduct a thorough investigation of the attack, severely punish the perpetrators and take effective measures to prevent similar incidents from happening again. According to a statement issued here by the Chinese Embassy, "A convoy carrying Chinese citizens was attacked near the port of Gwadar in Balochistan, Pakistan."

Balochistan CM contacts political leaders

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo on Sunday contacted political leaders to develop consensus on the name of the Caretaker Chief Minister.

In this regard, he also contacted with Balochistan opposition leader Malik Sikander Khan Advocate and discussed on the establishment of caretaker government. Chief Minister talked with Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani and Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) Mir Khalid Khan Magsi about setting up of caretaker regime in the province. The Chief Minister also contacted the senior political leadership of the province saying that soon progress was expected in the name of caretaker Chief Minister in Balochistan by consultation of political leaders including opposition leader.

Govt steered country out of severe economic, political crises in 16 months: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday said his government steered the country out of severe historic economic and political crises and external challenges and protected the interests of the people and the Pakistani state during the 16 months.

Addressing the nation, he said time and history would be witness that his government saved Pakistan from default and the subsequent economic disaster waiting to happen, safeguarded national interests, restored the trust of friendly countries and provided relief to people after the devastat-

ing floods.

He said after the end of the constitutional tenure of his government, he was handing over power to the caretaker government.

"My conscience is clear that I served honestly and transparently and followed the constitution. "He congratulated Anwarul Haq Kakar for becoming the caretaker prime minister and expressed hope that he would ensure free, fair and transparent elections in Pakistan and protect the right to vote of the people."

The caretaker prime minister is appointed after consultation between him and leader of the opposition Raja Riaz.

"He thanked the political leadership and people for reposing trust in his leadership and government."

PM, Musadiq discuss political situation

RAWALPINDI (NN): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday met former Minister of State for Petroleum Dr Musadiq Malik and discussed the overall political situation and matters of mutual interest. The prime minister appreciated the performance of the ministry led by Dr Musadiq in difficult economic conditions.

Earlier, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif congratulated Anwaarul Haq Kakar on his appointment as caretaker prime minister and expressed the confidence that he would ensure holding of free, fair and impartial elections in the country.

The prime minister said that trust reposed by all parties in Kakar's name proved their proper choice as the upcoming caretaker PM was an educated person and patriot.

COAS speech at Azadi Parade at PMA Kakul

F.P Report

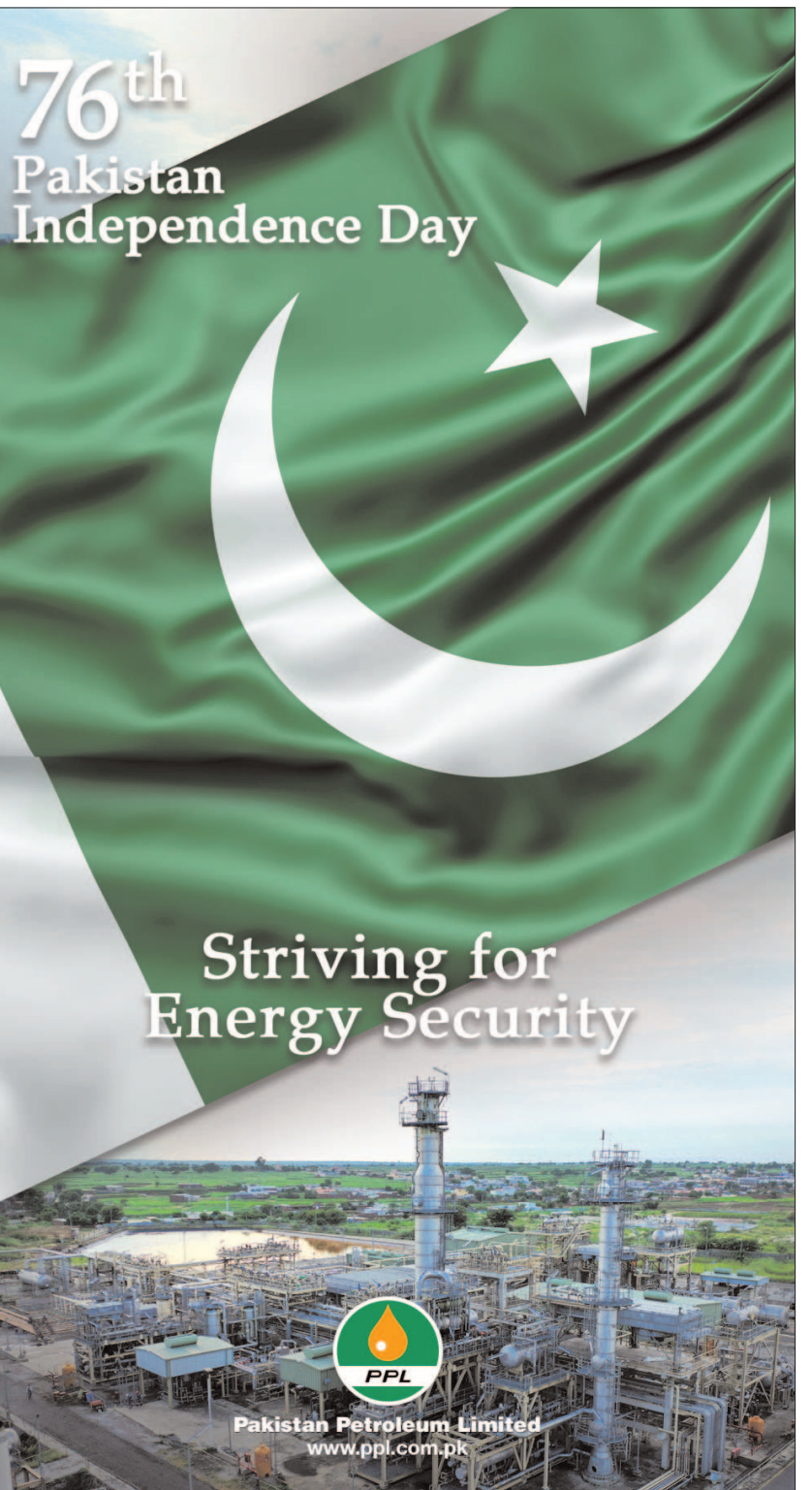
KAKUL: I wish to congratulate you all on completion of 76 years of Independence, and for celebrating 14th August with the glorious tradition of an immaculate and inspiring Parade at Pakistan Military Academy. Alongside the national fervor of rejoicing this day, every year, 14th August brings back to us an opportunity for revival of pledge, for total commitment and unflinching

resolve, for a bright future of our motherland. You all stand tonight to honour 'Independence', which came as a result of the vision of our great leaders, and the relentless efforts and sacrifices of our forefathers. This day reminds us of the spirit behind the creation of this country, "Pakistan ka matlab kia - La illaha Illallah" which was rooted in the ideology of the Two Nation Theory, and the manifest destiny of the Muslims of Sub

ContinentFor 76 years, we have maintained this tradition of celebrating freedom, equality and quest for happiness, which we must continue to cherish, every day of our lives. We are here to reinforce the patriotic spirit of serving our homeland, a land of countless opportunities and immeasurable bounties. Our great country and the nation will Inshallah continue to rise, in line with the aspirations of our forefathers, the people of Pakistan and for a

bright future of the coming generations

We are passing through interesting times, a watershed era, fraught with challenges, geo-political wrangling, increasing power contestation, hegemonism and jingoism. We continue to withstand the evil designs of the inimical forces; forces of instability and chaos, which are eager in their failed attempts to undo Pakistan. Let me caution them all, in the words of our great Quaid.





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Rector's MESSAGE



There is no end to learning or enhancing the skill set. The quest to gain knowledge and skills is an intrinsic character of a human being. It never lets one stop acquiring knowledge and inspires success.

In order to achieve an objective, one needs to dream and then act to fulfill those dreams. One has to be courageous and decisive in following dreams to achieve success. Education paradigm is shifting very fast. The power of distance and online learning has been realized in a very short span of time by the World leading Universities. The outreach of universities has gone up by many orders. Now the major work is to develop tools, means and resources to deliver education using modern digital media. Virtual University of Pakistan through its founding Rector started its operations almost two decades ago and has a rich experience of delivering quality education. The time for Virtual University has come to lead the way for content development needed for asynchronous mode of teaching. Virtual University is the future of education and realizing the burden of economics, it is best suited for learning and earning in parallel. It is the best choice university for those, who cannot relocate themselves due to one or the other reasons, particularly our female class. We aim to take education to their homes. I am fully confident that our students are and will become shining stars in all domains of the society and contribute to make Pakistan prosperous.

A Federal Government university, which stands as a Paragon of modernity and academic excellence, not only in Pakistan but throughout the expanse of South Asia.

academic and research activities continue round the clock through its state of the art LMS (Learning Management System).

The University has developed around 400 video courses placed on open courseware, which are free to use by students of other universities. Virtual University of Pakistan has four dedicated TV channels for delivering its educational content, which gives it an unmatched outreach.

Virtual University uses a combination of video lectures, and online tutorials for imparting knowledge. However, it follows a very formal assessment and evaluation system in the same fashion as used in any conventional Higher Education Institution (HEI), where examinations are conducted in a formal, proctored environment at designated examination centers throughout the country. Although the academic programs follow the semester system, the University offers its students a complete flexibility to study at their own pace and place. A comprehensive student-teacher interaction and support is provided through the VULMS (Learning Management System). VU has developed a unique computer based intelligent examination system, which other institutes and organizations also use in conducting their tests/exams.

VU conducted the first ever online ECAT/Engineering entrance/admission test for engineering universities of the Punjab, where as many as 111 VU campuses were allocated for 34,000 participants across the Punjab. A mobile application was also launched to help participants in locating their test centers and sitting arrangements. The whole process was monitored and recorded via CCTV and IP cameras. The test was conducted under the strict monitoring of the University and Pakistan Engineering Council.

Virtual University of Pakistan also conducted an online admission test for Ghulam Ishaq Khan Institute (GIKI) where a total of 3,000 students appeared for admission test in 20 designated centers all over Pakistan. Other than above, VU has also conducted many recruitment test of privileged Government organizations.

VU also conducted MOJO (mobile journalism) training for the journalists of Pakistan at Islamabad and Lahore. Training the entire cream of media

The Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting graced the event as Chief Guest of the ceremony and appreciated the efforts to promote digital learning and skills. VU also signed MoU with three Universities of Southern Baluchistan to strengthen the local people with latest technology and to equip them with market oriented degree programs. VU also joined hands with Taleem foundation to disseminate education in far flung areas of Baluchistan. In a larger public interest, during the era of pandemic VU offered free of cost PCR machines to the Institute of Public Health.

VU always utilized the state infrastructure for the betterment of the general public, in this perspective VU has offered free of cost hands on training for the students of different public sector colleges. VU has Mobile Bio Lab which is facilitating the students of smaller cities of not only VU but other government institutions as well.

VU has always come up with different ideas, as University has organized two events of training the faculty members under British Council for Computer Science, Math and Bio Science department.

200+ facilitation centers known as virtual campuses of the University across Pakistan provide its students a great opportunity to participate in academic and extracurricular activities. The Virtual University of Pakistan also offers the option of study from home, which is good for students having a computer and good internet connection.

In a very short span, Virtual University has made an impact in producing trained human resources in the freelancing market, which has started contributing to the country's economy. This is achieved through hand crafted skill based courses in the DigiSkills project. The DigiSkills program has equipped more than 2.0 million youth, freelancers, housewives, professionals, and other diverse groups of society with knowledge, skills, tools & techniques necessary to seize the opportunities available globally and locally to earn a decent living and contribute to the economy. The program has put Pakistan at the 4th position on the World map of freelancing.

Virtual University of Pakistan has been awarded another project of national importance which is to develop a model and its execution in blended learning through "Blended Virtual Education Project for Knowledge Economy." The project is aimed to enhance the enrollment by a factor 3 in tertiary and technical education and training in collaborative selected universities and institutions in all provinces

The Virtual University, Pakistan's first university based completely on modern Information and Communication Technologies

established by the Federal Government in 2002 as a public sector, not-for-profit institution. VU's mission is to provide extremely affordable, world-class education to students eliminating any kind of geographical restrictions. Virtual University of Pakistan takes pride as a pioneer in imparting education using free-to-air satellite television broadcasts and the Internet.

VU allows students to enroll in its rigorous academic programs regardless of their physical locations including the remote areas and Pakistani overseas diaspora. Virtual University of Pakistan holds a Federal Charter, making its degrees recognized and accepted all over the country as well as overseas. Currently, more than 94,000 students have graduated and more than 132,000 students actively pursuing their education including 2,033 overseas students in more than 80 degree and diploma programs.

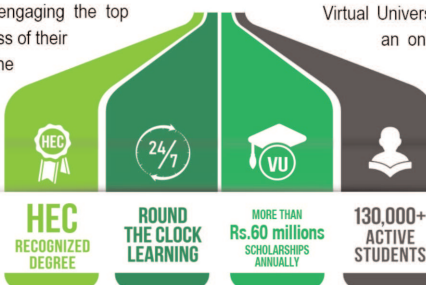
The degree programs are HEC recognized and prepared on the guidelines of HEC. Virtual University has a very affordable fee structure and it never deprives any deserving student because of non-payment of fee. The University has a substantial amount of merit and need based scholarships. Virtual University's alumni are working nationwide and overseas in Government and Private sectors including multinational companies.

The University started its operations in 2002 and in a short span of time, extended its outreach to over one hundred and fifty cities of the country with 200+ facilitation centers (known as virtual campuses) providing infrastructure support needed for its students to perform their usual academic activities.

Virtual University is the first University in Pakistan to offer E-Learning opportunities by engaging the top faculty of the country, regardless of their institutional affiliations, for the development of hand-crafted courses.

Virtual University aims at providing the best courses to not only its own students but also to students at all over the country. Virtual University of Pakistan was the only university that was not affected by the recent pandemic situation.

In Virtual University, learning never stops as the



(mobile journalism) training for the journalists of Pakistan at Islamabad and Lahore. Training the entire cream of media



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In brief

Man kills wife, commits suicide

KHAIRPUR (INP): A man committed suicide after shooting dead his wife in Tehsil Nara in Khairpur on Sunday. As per the reports, a man opened fire on his wife in Tehsil Nara over some domestic issue. As a result, the woman died on the spot. Soon after killing his wife, the man also ended his life by committing suicide. Police shifted both bodies to a hospital. They also started an investigation.

2 coalminers die of suffocation

HARNAI (INP): Two coalminers die of suffocation in Harnai coalmine of Balochistan on Sunday, Levies sources said. According to details, the incident took place in Shahrigh Mines area No. 151, Block VI, coalmine No II, where toxic gas accumulation in the coalmine. Two coalminers engaged in routine work died of suffocation due to toxic gas. Bodies were pulled out of the coalmine and shifted to hospital.

Teenage girl's body found

OKARA (INP): The body of a teenage girl who drowned in Lower Bari Doab while taking a bath was recovered on Sunday, two days after she went missing. The girl, Reshma (13), was last seen on Friday afternoon when she went to the canal to bathe. When she did not return home, her family began to search for her. They eventually contacted Rescue 1122, which launched a search operation. The rescuers found Reshma's body on Sunday morning near Gamber Jhaal. The body was handed over to her family. The cause of death is still being investigated. However, it is believed that Reshma drowned after she was swept away by the strong current in the canal. This is a tragic incident, and our hearts go out to Reshma's family and friends. We hope that they will find comfort in the memories of her.

Man shot dead in DG Khan

DG KHAN (INP): A man was shot dead by unknown persons near Taunsa Morr Factory in DG Khan on Sunday. Local people informed Rescue 1122 about the injured person and sought rescue assistance. The rescue team reached the spot but the man could not sustain his injuries and died. The deceased was shot in the chest and head, said Rescue 1122 officials. Police reached the site for collecting evidence of the incident. The identity of the deceased person is yet to be ascertained. Further investigation is in process. The motive behind the killing is not yet known. Police are looking into all possible angles. This is the second such incident in DG Khan in recent weeks. On July 25, a man was shot dead near his house in Satellite Town. The motive behind that killing was also not known.

Newborn baby kidnapped

SAHIWAL (INP): A woman kidnapped a newly born baby from the Gynae Ward of Government Haji Qayyum Hospital in Sahiwal on Sunday. Protesting against the incident, family members of the child demanded the police to arrest the woman and recover their little one. Police said a woman named Tayyaba, a resident of Bilal Colony, had given birth to a child last night. Quoting baby's family, the Force said that a woman who was present in the same ward after seeing that the mother had slept, took the baby away with her.

Three die in separate incidents

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): Three persons died in separate incidents in Dera Ismail Khan, the police and Rescue 1122 officials said here on Sunday.

A police spokesman said that a 35-year-old man named Rizwan Yaqubzai son of Sahib Jan resident of Maddi area filed a report with Kulachi Police Station that he along with his 29-year-old brother Zafran was coming home after grazing goats. His brother was sitting behind him on a bullock cart loaded with firewood when unknown person fired at his brother as they reached Gandhi Suf Hidayat Ullah area. As a result, Zafran died on the spot and the assailant fled from the scene. The police registered a case against unknown accused and started investigations.

In another incident, one Mulazim Hussain resident of Malekhi area of Parao tehsil was buried under the debris as the wall of his house collapsed on him, a Rescue 1122 official said.

Similarly, 18-year-old boy namely Faheem son of Abdul Rasheed was electrocuted while fixing electric wiring of his home in Yarikhel area within the limits of Kirri Khaisur police station, said police spokesman.

Independence Day preparations in full swing: Like other cities of the country, the preparations have been finalized to mark Independence Day in Dera Ismail Khan city with full zeal and fervour as the bazaars (markets) and different roads were decorated with national flags and lighting.

The markets witnessing unusual rush as the residents are still enthusiastically engaged in purchasing unique and colourful items to mark the day with great pomp and show.

The citizens have hoisted national flags at rooftops of their houses and shops. All the government buildings and historical structures in the city have been decorated with colourful

lighting which gives an illuminated view arousing inner passion, love and reverence for the motherland.

Besides shops in main bazaars, vendors have set up stalls of colourful bunties, national flags, banners and pictures of national heroes who played key role in independence of the country. The air is quite charged with sense of patriotism due to soul-stirring national songs that echoed at almost all sale points of Independence Day's items.

Some people can be seen with their vehicles and motorcycles decorated with big national flags and banners in order to look unique and celebrate the Independence Day to their heart's content. However, the citizens have underlined the need for the traffic police to take effective measures to prevent road stunts by the youngsters who usually find such occasions an opportunity to go on such dangerous practices putting their own and the lives of others at risk.

76th I.Day celebrations across Hazara Division

ABBOTTABAD (APP): Like other parts of the country, the 76th Independence Day is being joyously celebrated in various regions of the Hazara Division.

Comprehensive preparations have been diligently carried out at the government level.

Deputy Commissioners of the region oversee the official ceremonies in multiple areas of the Hazara Division, including Abbottabad, Mansehra, Haripur, Batgram, Upper Kohistan, Lower Kohistan, and the Torgarhar district.

In Abbottabad, Deputy Commissioner Khalid Iqbal, Batgram, Deputy

Commissioner Tanveer ur Rahman, Haripur, Captain (R) Aun Hyder Gondal, Mansehra, Deputy Commissioner Captain (R) Bilal Shahid Rao, Torgarhar district, Deputy Commissioner Anwar Zeb Khan, Kohistan Upper, Deputy Commissioner Shakeel Ahmad Khan in Kohistan Lower and Irfanullah Mahsud, are set to hoist the national flag at their respective offices during the Independence Day event.

Throughout all the districts within Hazara Division, government buildings have been splendidly decorated with lights, while the

flags flutter in the spirit of patriotism.

Meanwhile, five people were burnt to death when a car caught fire after overturning here on Sunday, rescue sources said.

According to details, driver of an over speeding car lost control over the steering and it turned turtle near Jharikas Interchange in district Haripur of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The car caught fire after the accident and five people present in the car were burnt to death.

Bodies of the deceased stated to be hailing from district Bannu were moved to hospital.

Traders hold cake-cutting ceremony

HYDERABAD (APP): The President Hyderabad Chamber of Small Traders and Small Industry, Muhammad Farooq Shekhani, conveyed heartfelt felicitations to the nation on the occasion of the 76th Independence Day of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

He stated that each year, the sun of Independence Day rises with new hopes, and the Pakistani nation consistently observes this day in a splendid manner.

He remarked that this occasion calls for a renewal of the strong resolve to make the motherland a hub

of peace, progress and happiness in accordance with the vision of the, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

According to a press release issued on Sunday, he expressed these sentiments while addressing a cake-cutting ceremony held in connection with Independence Day at the Secretariat of HCSTSI.

He further emphasized that Independence is blessing of Almighty Allah. It has been 76 years since Pakistan was formed but still we have not reached the point where we should

be economically. It is the responsibility of the government, the business community and every Pakistani to construct a strong and prosperous nation with abundant resources for the coming generations.

On this occasion, Vice President Muhammad Ismail Farooq, Former President Muhammad Altaf Memon, Saleem-ud-Din Qureshi, Dolat Ram Lohana, Muhammad Akram Ansari, members of the Executive Committee, conveners, and a large number of general body members were present.

Drug peddler arrested, 1.3kg hashish recovered

SIALKOT (INP): Muradpur Police in Sialkot arrested a notorious drug peddler, Bilal Iqbal, on Sunday with 1.3 kg of hashish.

The police said that they had been conducting a crackdown on drug peddlers in the area and had received a tip-off about Iqbal's activities. A team of police officers conducted a raid on his house and recovered the hashish from his possession.

A case has been regis-

tered against Iqbal and he is being held in police custody. The police said that they are investigating Iqbal's network of suppliers and distributors. This is the latest in a series of arrests made by the police in Sialkot in recent months. In June, the police arrested a drug dealer with 2.5 kg of heroin. In May, the police arrested a drug dealer with 1 kg of cocaine.

The police said that they are committed to cracking

down on drug peddling in Sialkot and that they will continue to make arrests until the city is rid of this menace.

The arrest of Bilal Iqbal is a major success for the police and it sends a clear message to drug peddlers that they will not be tolerated in Sialkot. The police are urging the public to cooperate with them in their fight against drug peddling and to report any suspicious activity to the police.

Independence and Pakistan Navy: Safeguarding sovereignty at sea

Ali Basit

The Pakistan Navy, since its inception in 1947, has played a vital role in securing the maritime frontiers of the nation and protecting its national interests. As we commemorate the day of independence, it is imperative to acknowledge the unwavering commitment of the Pakistan Navy in defending the country's sovereignty, promoting regional stability, and fostering international cooperation at sea. This article explores the profound significance of the Pakistan Navy in maintaining independence and safeguarding the nation's maritime interests.

With the partition of the

Indian subcontinent in 1947, the newly formed Pakistan inherited a small naval force comprising of a very few naval ships and personnel. However, recognizing the strategic importance of a naval force, Pakistan embarked on a journey to establish a robust navy capable of safeguarding its maritime boundaries. Over the years, the Pakistan Navy has grown into a modern maritime force equipped with advanced platforms, cutting-edge technology, and highly trained personnel.

During its formative years, the Pakistan Navy faced the challenge of building a naval force from scratch. With limited resources, the navy focused on developing infrastruc-

ture, training personnel, and acquiring essential naval assets. It acquired surplus ships, minesweepers, and patrol craft from various countries to establish its fleet. The 1970s witnessed a significant expansion and modernization of the Pakistan Navy. The acquisition of destroyers, frigates, and submarines marked a major milestone. The induction of submarine capability brought a new dimension to the navy's operational capabilities. Furthermore, the establishment of the Karachi Shipyard & Engineering Works (KS&EW) and the Pakistan Naval Academy (PNA) enhanced indigenous shipbuilding and human resource development capabilities.



MULTAN: Vendor displaying National flags and other stuff to attract customer in preparation for Independence Day.

4 killed, 7 hurt in vehicle collision

KARAK (INP): At least four people including woman and children were killed and seven others injured in a multiple vehicles collision on Indus Highway at Spina Mor in Karak on Sunday.

According to details, overturning of oil tanker caused slipperiness on road resulting in collision between an ambulance, a mini-truck and a car.

The accident led to death of four people including a woman, children besides leaving seven others injured as one of the vehicle also fell into gorge after collision. The bodies and injured were shifted to District Headquarter and Lachi Hospitals.

Inter-district robber gang busted

CHENAB NAGAR (INP): The police busted an inter-district robber gang besides recovery of and stolen valuables valuing over a million rupees.

Taking notice of surge in crimes, a police team headed by SHO Chenab Nagar Umar Farooq launched a crackdown against criminals in its jurisdiction.

During operation, two members of inter-district robber gang comprising Humayun Khan and Junaid Ramzan wanted in more than 20 cases of murder and robberies were apprehended.

The police also recovered the stolen goods worth more than 1.1 million rupees from the proclaimed offenders.

Two traders killed

DERA BUGTI (INP): Two traders were shot dead and as many were abducted by dacoits on Indus Highway in the limits of Naper Kot police, Dera Bugti on Sunday.

A complete shutdown was observed and a sit-in was held in Dera Bugti against the killings and kidnapping of the traders.

The protesters blamed the police for being in connivance with the dacoits kidnapping and killing innocent people.

They also lambasted the government for its negligence and ineffectiveness.

They demanded that the government recover the abducted traders immediately and ensure the arrest of the dacoits.

76th Independence Day:

Kashmiri rights activist felicitates Pakistani nation

MIRPUR (APP): On the evening of 76th Independence Day, veteran Kashmiri rights activist and Hurriyat leader Altaf Hussain Wani has extended his heartfelt felicitations to the people and the government of Pakistan.

In a statement issued here on Sunday, the APHC leader said that the creation of Pakistan was no less than a miracle of the 20th century.

"This miraculous development, which happened under the visionary leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah has not only changed the course of history in the region but also its geography", Wani said, adding that what's

happening with religious minorities in India, today, speaks volumes about the vision and political farsightedness of Jinnah and other leaders of the Pakistan movement whose relentless struggle ultimately led to creation of a separate homeland for Muslims of the subcontinent.

Referring to Pakistan's role in promoting the Kashmiris' just cause, he said, "We owe a debt of gratitude to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for its all-out moral, political and diplomatic support to our just and legitimate struggle".

Extending his best wishes for peace and stability, progress and prosperity of

Pakistan, Wani said that a strong and stable Pakistan was a guarantor for the freedom of Kashmir.

He expressed optimism that the incumbent government would leave no stone unturned to help Kashmiris seek their internationally recognized right, the right to self-determination for which they have offered unprecedented sacrifices.

Terming the Kashmir issue as an unfinished business of the partition of the Indian subcontinent, the APHC leader said that the dream of a vibrant, stable and prosperous Pakistan would remain elusive unless Kashmir was freed from Indian bondage.

‘Azadi Jeep Rally’ organized in D.I.Khan

D.I.KHAN (APP): An ‘Azadi Jeep Rally’ was organized here in the city in connection with Independence Day celebrations.

The rally, jointly organized by District Administration, Pakistan Army and Regional Sports Office, was started from ‘Bab-e-Dera’ and culminated at Bisaki ground after passing through different routes including New Bannu Chungi, Fountain Chowk, Topanwala Chowk and GPO Chowk.

The rally was participated by members of the Peace Committee, civil society, business community and a large number of citizens.

The participants of the rally were holding national flags and chanting slogans of ‘Pakistan-Zindabad’ and

‘Pakistan Army Zindabad’.

Speaking on this occasion, Deputy Commissioner Mansoor Arshad said that organizing such events would help to further encourage the security forces of the country and discourage its enemies.

He said Pakistan would remain a peaceful country and all the conspiracies being hatched against it would be failed.

District Police Officer Abdul Rauf Babar Qaisrani said the rally was aimed to give a message to anti-state elements that we are living nation and the peace would be maintained in the country at any cost.

Regional Sports Officer Anwar Kamal Burki said organizing this event was aimed to give a soft mes-

sage to the world that we remember our independence and the agenda of a separate land for Muslims of Sub-Continent.

Hundreds of jeeps and other vehicles, decorated with national flags, participated in the rally.

Motorcyclist crushed to death

BUREWALA (APP): A motorcyclist was crushed to death while another sustained injuries in a collision between a truck and motorcycle near Village 187/EB Gagu Mandi, here Sunday.

According to a police spokesman, Abdul Majeed resident of Masoom Shah Road along with his friend Muhammad Iqbal was returning home from the shrine of Baba Fareed.

All of a sudden, a speeding truck collided with a motorcycle on the premises of Gagu Mandi police station. Resultantly, Abdul Majeed died on the spot while Muhammad Iqbal sustained injuries.

The rescue officials shifted the body and injured to a nearby hospital, however, the relevant police started the investigations into the incident by taking the truck into custody, while the driver managed to escape from the scene.

Doctors’ negligence claims pregnant woman’s life

NAWABSHAH (INP): A pregnant woman lost her life at a private hospital in Qazi Ahmad Hospital area of Nawabshah when she was administered wrong injection, reported on Sunday.

The 27-year-old woman, Azeema was taken to a government hospital, but she could not survive.

Woman's death due to doctors' negligence led to protest by her family members, while, police, on the other hand, registered FIR of the incident before shifting the body to Civil Hospital for the post-mortem.

Talking to media, family members of the deceased said that Azeema's condition deteriorated when a doctor administered injection to her without first checking her blood pressure and heart beat. They demanded arrest of the doctors as soon as possible.

In 1965 war, Operation "Dwarka" launched by Pakistan Navy caused irreparable damage to Indian Navy, vehemently destroyed the Indian Radar system. In addition, Pakistan Navy's submarine Ghazi moved its patrol to Bombay harbor to challenge enemy's ships namely INS Vikrant and INS Mysore to dock out and get destroyed. This psychologically affected the Indian Navy's operational maneuvers. Yet again in the 1971 war, sinking of Indian warship Kukri brought an immense wartime casualty by PNS Hangor, is the only incident after WWII where in any conventional submarine sank a Warship. Furthermore, the detections of Indian Navy submarines,

after Pulwama military standoff, by Pakistan Navy evidently portrays its effective employment strategy coupled with superior professional acumen.

Over the past seven decades, the Pakistan Navy has evolved into a professional and capable maritime force. From its humble beginnings, the navy has successfully navigated challenges and pursued a path of development, modernization, and self-reliance. With a focus on indigenous capabilities, technological advancements, and international cooperation, the Pakistan Navy remains committed to safeguarding the maritime interests of the nation and contributing to regional and global peace and security.



Niger coup supporters protest West African military force

NIAMEY (AFP/APP): Thousands of Niger coup supporters took to the streets on Friday to protest against plans by West African nations to deploy a military force to the country, as a key regional meeting on a possible intervention was scrapped.

ECOWAS had approved a "stand-by force" to reinstate elected President Mohamed Bazoum, with the EU's top diplomat expressing concern about his conditions in detention since he was ousted by members of his guard on July 26.

Chiefs of staff from member states of the West African bloc had been set to attend a meeting on Saturday in Ghana's capital Accra, regional military sources had said on Friday.

But they later said the meeting had been suspended indefinitely for "technical reasons".

The sources said the meeting was originally set up to inform the organisation's leaders about "the best options" for activating and deploying the standby force. ECOWAS has yet to provide details on the force or a timetable for action, and the leaders have emphasised they still want a peaceful solution.

The last-minute cancellation came as thousands of coup supporters rallied near a French military base in Niger on Friday.

Protesters near the base on the outskirts of the capital Niamey shouted "Down with France, down with ECOWAS". Niger's new leaders have accused former colonial power France, a close Bazoum ally, of being behind the headline ECOWAS stance against the coup. Many protesters brandished Russian and Niger flags and shouted their support for the country's new strongman, General Abdourahmane Tiani.

"We are going to make the French leave! ECOWAS isn't independent, it's being manipulated by France,"

said one demonstrator, Aziz Rabeh Ali, a member of a students' union.

France has around 1,500 troops in Niger as part of a force battling an eight-year jihadist insurgency.

It is facing growing hostility across the Sahel, withdrawing its anti-jihadist forces from neighbouring Mali and Burkina Faso last year after falling out with military governments that ousted elected leaders.

Niger's new leaders scrapped defence agreements with France last week, while a hostile protest outside the French embassy in Niamey on July 30 prompted Paris to evacuate its citizens.

The European Union and the African Union joined others in sounding the alarm for Bazoum on Friday. "Bazoum and his family, according to the latest information, have been deprived of food, electricity and medical care for several days," said EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell. UN rights chief Volker Turk said Bazoum's reported detention conditions "could amount to inhuman and degrading treatment, in violation of international human rights law".

The AU said "such treatment of a democratically elected president" was "unacceptable".

German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock warned that the "coup plotters must face harsh consequences should anything happen" to Bazoum or his family.

Top US diplomat Antony Blinken said he was "dismayed" by the military's refusal to release Bazoum's family as a "demonstration of goodwill". A source close to Bazoum said: "He's OK, but the conditions are very difficult". The coup leaders had threatened to assault him in the event of military intervention, the source added. Human Rights Watch said it had spoken to Bazoum earlier this week. The 63-year-old described the treatment of himself, his wife and

their 20-year-old son as "inhuman and cruel", HRW said.

"I'm not allowed to receive my family members (or) my friends who have been bringing food and other supplies to us," the group quoted him as saying. "My son is sick, has a serious heart condition, and needs to see a doctor," he was quoted as saying. "They've refused to let him get medical treatment."

Under pressure to stem a cascade of coups among its members, ECOWAS had previously issued a seven-day ultimatum to the coup leaders to return Bazoum to power.

But the generals defied the deadline, which expired on Sunday without any action being taken.

The coup leaders have since named a new government, which met for the first time on Friday.

Since 1990, the 15-country bloc has intervened in six of its members at times of civil war, insurrection or political turmoil. But the possibility of intervention in deeply fragile Niger has sparked debate within its ranks and warnings from neighbouring Algeria as well as from Russia.

Moscow, whose influence in the region has grown, said a military solution "could lead to a protracted confrontation" in Niger and "a sharp destabilisation" across the Sahel.

The president of ECOWAS member Cape Verde, Jose Maria Neves, spoke out against a military intervention on Friday and said his country was unlikely to participate in such a campaign.

Military-ruled ECOWAS nations Mali and Burkina Faso have warned an intervention would be a "declaration of war" on their countries.

General Salifou Mody, Niger's new defence minister, made a brief visit to Mali on Friday, according to a Malian presidential adviser speaking on condition of anonymity.

Malaysians vote in 6 state elections seen as referendum on Anwar

KUALA LUMPUR (AFP/APP): Malaysians in six states went to the polls Saturday to vote for state assembly members in elections widely seen as a barometer of support for Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim's unity government.

While the elections are unlikely to immediately affect Anwar's current two-thirds majority in parliament, analysts said his hold on power could weaken if his Pakatan Harapan coalition suffers a setback, especially among Malay Muslim voters in the largely Islamic Southeast Asian nation. Polls closed at 6:00 pm (1000 GMT), with the results expected to be known later Saturday.

Voter turnout was between 56-70 percent of the more than 9.7 million registered voters as of 4:00 pm, the Election Commission said.

The results for the 245 assembly seats at stake in the states of Kelantan, Terengganu, Kedah, Penang, Selangor and Negeri Sembilan are expected to be known within hours.

Of the six, Anwar's coalition currently holds Negeri Sembilan and the country's two richest states: Selangor, home of Malaysia's biggest port, and Penang, which hosts a thriving semiconductor industry.

The other three states are controlled by an influential rural-based Malay Muslim alliance led by former prime minister Muhyiddin Yassin.

Malays account for two-thirds of

Malaysia's 33 million population, which includes large ethnic Chinese and Indian minorities.

Anwar, in an appeal on Facebook on the eve of the polls, urged voters to give his coalition a "clear and strong mandate... to bring a better agenda for all races in this country".

The 76-year-old, who had campaigned on a promise of reforms in last year's general elections, is pushing for a more inclusive society where other races are allowed greater participation, while his opponents want primacy of the Malay Muslim majority. Opposition coalition Perikatan Nasional has expressed confidence in making further inroads.

One key Perikatan member is the Malaysian Islamic Party, or PAS, which aims to create a theocratic state. Having won 49 parliamentary seats, or more than 20 percent of the 222-member parliament last year, PAS has in recent months stepped up racial and religious rhetoric to shore up support. "I feel quite excited and I hope Perikatan can win again in this area," said housewife Jamilah Baharin, 48, who voted in Kedah state, a PAS stronghold.

PAS spokesman Khairil Nizam Khirudin told AFP that Anwar "promised a lot but has not delivered".

James Chin, a Malaysia expert at the University of Tasmania in Australia, said the election was being watched for the level of support reformist Anwar draws among Malay

Muslims.

He warned of "dire" consequences if Anwar loses even a single state.

"The first direct implication is that he cannot undertake any major reforms or fundamental structural reforms to the economy or to politics," Chin told AFP.

"This will force his hand and Anwar (will have) to adopt a more pro-Malay and pro-Islamic policy. That means the end of reforms."

A loss could prompt MPs to shift allegiances over the next 12 months, "putting a question mark about the future of Anwar as the prime minister", Chin added.

A win, however, would give Anwar "enough political capital to carry out real reforms", Chin said.

Anwar became prime minister last November following a political impasse that saw his party win the most seats in the general election but fall short of the outright majority needed to form a government.

That forced him into an alliance with former foes in the United Malays National Organisation to secure a two-thirds parliamentary majority and approval from Malaysia's king to form a "unity government". The coalition has so far held together in a country that had seen three leadership turnovers in as many years after scandal-tainted Najib Razak was voted out as prime minister in 2018 over massive corruption at state fund 1MDB.

Migrants on France's Channel coast undeterred by latest deaths

LOONPLAGE (AFP/APP): "Crossing the Channel, it's playing with our lives," Hajji Mahmud acknowledged.

But despite the dangers, the Afghan migrant remained determined to attempt the crossing, even after the deaths of at least six of his countrymen early Saturday when their vessel sank. In the makeshift camp at Loon-Plage on the north coast of France, some 15 tents were scattered behind an embankment near a pile of burning rubbish. Mahmud lives there with a group of other Afghans, some of them very young, and hoping for a better life in Britain.

"If we had a good life in Afghanistan, a good government, a good education system..." he said.

He entered the European Union through Croatia. What he would like, he says, is for the French and English police to help him cross the Channel without having to risk his life.

But he knows he won't get that. "We'll suffer until we manage to cross," he said.

The French and English coastguard said two people were still missing late Saturday after this latest disaster, when the boat carrying more than 60 people capsized. Many of those on board -- most of the around 60 people rescued -- were Afghans, like him, plus a few Sudanese people with them. A few of those on board were minors.

For France's State Secretary for the Sea Herve Berville, it was "a terrible human tragedy", adding to what is already a grim toll. Five migrants died at sea and four went missing while trying to cross to Britain from France last year. In November 2021, 27 migrants died when a boat capsized in the Channel.

But many migrants are still willing to risk the crossing. According to the authorities on the north coast of France, there are currently around a thousand people waiting to take their chance. Bilal and Basir are two of them, camped out on an old canopy installed under a tarpaulin sheet.

If their families knew about the latest sinking, they would never let them attempt the crossing, they said. They had in fact meant to try to get across the previous night but they

had missed the boat, they said. Nevertheless, they insisted they will try again.

"My sister, my uncle, are in England," said Basir, aged 22. "My dream is to learn because we know English and we (would) like to learn in their universities, or college," said 20-year-old Bilal.

But 36-year-old Kurdish Iraqi exile Abu Mohamed admitted he was having second thoughts about risking the journey. "If I see that it's very risky, I'm going to try to stay in France," he told AFP. Some 30 kilometres away, at the French channel port of Calais, two 16-year-old Sudanese were among the survivors.

"In France, it's complicated for us," said one of them. "There's racism, nobody wants us, we sleep in the street and nobody cares, we can't work." They will keep trying to make the crossing to England, they told AFP, hopeful of reaching there safely and studying computing.

Saturday's deaths were "a predictable and avoidable drama", says Pierre Roques who works at the L'Auberger des Migrants ("Migrants Inn") -- an alliance of associations

offering migrants support.

"The United Kingdom is moving towards completely extreme solutions to stop the crossing, which will have no effect apart from increasingly endangering people," he added.

He cited Britain's controversial plans to outlaw asylum claims by all arrivals via the Channel -- transferring them instead to third countries, such as Rwanda - - or the plan to house some migrants on barges off the coast, also fiercely by rights groups. For the people he was working with, these policies add to their worries, but will not stop them risking the crossing.

"There will be other tragedies," said Regis Holy, captain of a lifeboat that brought five of the survivors back to Calais.

The migrants who had given everything to get this far, would keep risking everything to make the crossing. "It will never stop," he warned. The groups working with the migrants have repeatedly denounced the policy of the local authorities to regularly force the migrants from their makeshift camps, to keep them moving.

Miss Universe cuts ties with Indonesia chapter after harassment allegations

W A S H I N G T O N (AFP/APP): The Miss Universe Organization has cut ties with its Indonesia franchise, it announced days after allegations of sexual harassment, and will cancel an upcoming Malaysia edition.

In the complaint, more than a half dozen women said all 30 finalists for Miss Universe Indonesia were unexpectedly asked to strip for a supposed body check for scars and cellulite two days before the pageant's crowning ceremony in Jakarta. Their lawyer said Tuesday that five of the women had their pictures taken. "In light of what we have learned took place at Miss Universe Indonesia, it has become clear that this franchise has not lived up to our brand standards,

ethics, or expectations," the US-based Miss Universe Organization posted Saturday night on social media site X, formerly known as Twitter.

It said that it had "decided to terminate the relationship with its current franchise in Indonesia, PT Capella Swastika Karya, and its National Director, Poppy Capella." It thanked the contestants for their bravery in coming forward and added that "providing a safe place for women" was the organization's priority.

Jakarta police spokesman Trunoyudo Wisnu Andiko said Tuesday that an investigation into the women's complaint has been launched.

The Indonesia franchise also holds the license for Miss Universe Malaysia,

where there will no longer be a competition this year, according to the New York-based parent organizer.

In a lengthy statement posted to Instagram, Indonesia franchise director Capella denied involvement in any body checks.

"I, as the National Director and as the owner of the Miss Universe Indonesia license, was not involved at all and have never known, ordered, requested or allowed anyone who played a role and participated in the process of organizing Miss Universe Indonesia 2023 to commit violence or sexual harassment through body checking," she wrote.

She added that she is against "any form of violence or sexual harassment." The Jakarta compe-

tition was held from July 29 to August 3 to choose Indonesia's representative to the 2023 Miss Universe contest, and was won by Fabienne Nicole Groeneveld. Miss Universe said it would make arrangements for her to compete in the finale, scheduled for November in El Salvador.

This year's Indonesia pageant also came under fire for announcing a "significant change in this (year's) competition guidelines" with the elimination of its minimum height requirement after it had crowned a winner. In its statement, the Miss Universe Organization said it wanted to "make it extremely clear that there are no measurements such as height, weight, or body dimensions required to join a Miss Universe pageant worldwide."

Three killed in building fire in French Riviera city

NICE (AFP/APP): Three people died in a fire that broke out early Sunday in a residential building in the center of the French Riviera city of Grasse, firefighters said.

Three others were seriously injured and four had lighter injuries, they said, adding that the fire had been extinguished. "The condition of the victims can always change," Aymeric Soufflet from the firefighting service told AFP.

The origin of the fire in the historic center of Grasse considered the world's perfume capital, was not immediately clear.

It affected the top three floors of the five-storey building, whose

facade was partially blackened by the flames. "The fire mainly affected the stairwell," Jean-Christophe Demarte, head of the rescue operation, said, adding the flats mostly sustained smoke damage.

Firefighters were alerted by local residents at around 3:00 am (0100 GMT). They found the body of a person who had jumped out in front of the edifice and two other corpses inside. "An alarm started beeping and then I heard cries," said Martine, a woman who lives in an adjoining building and who only gave one name. "A woman cried out for help shouting 'Fire!' and asked me to call the fire service, which is what I did. A

man from the floor above tried to come down to avoid the flames but he fell," she added. The building is in a square in the old town which is lively in summer and popular with tourists for its restaurants, fountain, and the small pedestrian streets running off it. The mayor Jerome Viaud said the building did not have a structural problem but that renovation works on the facade and communal areas were planned in October.

"Today it's too early to say what was the cause of the fire if it's criminal or accidental," he said.

An investigation is underway to determine the cause, the city's prosecutor said.

How Ecuador became one of the most violent countries in Latin America

QUITO (AFP/APP): Only a few years ago, Ecuador was an island of peace wedged between Colombia and Peru, the world's largest cocaine producers.

But since 2018, drug seizures and homicides have increased alarmingly, blamed widely on transnational organized crime groups.

The assassination Wednesday of centrist candidate Fernando Villavicencio -- up to then second in polls ahead of the August 20 presidential election -- has shaken the country to its core.

Six Colombians have been arrested in connection with the shooting attack outside a campaign rally, and a seventh died in a gun-battle with security agents.

Drug-linked violence in Ecuador last year propelled the homicide rate to 26 per 100,000 inhabitants, nearly double the previous year's level. President Guillermo Lasso, who has been battling the drug gangs but been unable to stem the rising violence, has accused "organized crime" of

killing Villavicencio, a former journalist who had denounced corruption and received death threats from the drug gang known as Los Choneros.

Interior Minister Juan Zapata has said there are more than 13 organized crime groups operating in Ecuador, the oldest and most powerful of which is Los Choneros, now allied with the Sinaloa cartel of Mexico. But the country's military intelligence says it has identified as many as 26 active narco-trafficking gangs, which are heavily armed and with numbers that experts said could perhaps rival Ecuador's 60,000-strong police forces. Analysts told AFP the wars on drugs in Mexico and Colombia have put pressure on the cartels in those countries -- as well as Albanian mafias -- prompting them to set up operations in Ecuador.

For the narco-traffickers, Ecuador's ports on the Pacific provide useful points from which to export cocaine to Europe and the United States.

The gangs were attracted as well by the country's porous borders, dollarized economy, widespread corruption and lack of money laundering controls, the experts said. Jorge Restrepo, director of Colombia's CERAC think tank, said the cartels can operate in Ecuador "at a lower production cost."

"Ecuador has a policy of fighting organized crime that has not prevented government forces and judicial organizations from being infiltrated by drug-linked organized crime," he told AFP. Luis Cordova Alarcon, who heads a program on conflict and violence at the Central University of Ecuador, dates the beginning of "extreme criminal violence" to a deadly car bombing in January 2018.

The attack partly destroyed a police headquarters and wounded 23 people in a town on the border with Colombia.

It was blamed on a dissident of the Colombian guerrilla group FARC, who murdered three journalists

working for Quito's El Comercio newspaper and was killed that year by Colombian security guards. The car bomb attack was followed by bloody prison massacres between rival drug gangs that left 430 inmates dead over the following three years. Much like in Mexico, Ecuadorans began to see dismembered bodies left in the streets, corpses hanging from bridges, and kidnappings-for-ransom in which captors cut off their victims' fingers or ears.

Among the victims of violence in Ecuador have been mayors, judges, prosecutors and dozens of innocent civilians. Cocaine seizures, meantime, have steadily risen. Experts say the growing number of seizures, and police crackdowns in the prisons from which many drug-gang leaders operate, have only made things worse. "Ecuador is becoming increasingly violent because of the way the state intervenes through its security forces, capturing the ring-leaders and increasing cocaine seizures," said Cordova Alarcon.

WHO urges swift action as dengue cases surge in Bangladesh

DHAKA (Xinhua/APP): As a significant surge in dengue fever cases has gripped Bangladesh, the World Health Organization (WHO) called for efforts to control the mosquito vector population and minimize individual exposure such as using mosquito repellents and wearing long-sleeved clothes.

The outbreak, which escalated rapidly since late June, has seen a total of 69,483 confirmed cases and 327 related deaths between Jan. 1 and Aug. 7, with a case fatality rate

of 0.47 percent, according to a report released by the WHO on Friday. It said the cases were reported from all 64 districts in the South Asian country.

In July, 43,854 cases and 204 deaths were reported, accounting for 63 percent of the total cases and 62 percent of the deaths. The sharp increase in numbers is unprecedented compared to the past five years, emphasizing the gravity of the ongoing outbreak, said the WHO. "The higher incidence of dengue

is taking place in the context of an unusual episodic amount of rainfall, combined with high temperatures and high humidity, which have resulted in an increased mosquito population throughout Bangladesh," the WHO said.

Dengue fever, a viral disease transmitted by Aedes mosquitoes, causes an acute illness that usually develops symptoms such as headache, high fever, exhaustion, severe muscle and joint pain, swollen glands, vomiting and rash.

HAVANA (AFP/APP): When summer temperatures start to sizzle in Havana, in-the-know locals head not to the beach but to seaside pools built by wealthy Cuban families in the first half of the last century.

Now abandoned and filled with seawater, the pools that survived the 1959 revolution are in the western Havana neighborhood of Miramar that flourished in the 1940s and 1950s with lavish mansions and luxury hotels.

"These swimming pools are a tradition. From gener-

ation to generation, we come here," said Boris Baltrons, 44, accompanied by his daughter, sister and nephew. "These houses belonged to rich people. At the time, everyone had their own little pool," he explained, pointing to traces of Spanish tiles that originally lined the walls.

Known only to locals, the pools are at the end of a rubbish-strewn walk. Swimmers sometimes share the pools with fish, crabs and even small octopuses. "It's not a beach like Varadero, but children can

have fun here," said Alberto, a 38-year-old scientist, referring to the seaside resort east of the capital. He came on foot with his family, before sunset, to take a dip in one of the open-air swimming pools.

Havana's closest sandy beaches are about a 20-minute drive away, a luxury not everyone can afford on the Communist island where fuel shortages are common. Many of Cuba's swimming pools that require fresh water have fallen into oblivion, including ones built within sports

facilities during the first decades of the revolution.

These days they are used by skateboarders, graffiti artists, videographers and children playing soccer.

One of Cuba's most famous pools is the "Giant Pool" -- measuring 5,000 square meters (54,000 square feet) -- inaugurated by Fidel Castro in the 1970s in Alamar, a Soviet-influenced housing complex in Havana. Today, the island's lush vegetation has begun to devour parts of this vast slab of blue concrete, now deserted.

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A ray of hope

Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar has been nominated as the caretaker Prime Minister of Pakistan after a consensus was reached between Prime Minister Shabaz Sharif and opposition leader Raja Riaz during a recent meeting on the issue. According to the Prime Minister's Office, the Prime Minister and the opposition leader jointly signed the advice and sent it to President Dr Arif Alvi to get formal consent from him. The opposition leader told the media that during the consultation process, the main theme was that the caretaker Prime Minister should be a non-controversial personality from a small province. The opposition leader proposed the name of Senator Anwar Kakar for the top slot and Shahbaz endorsed his proposal.

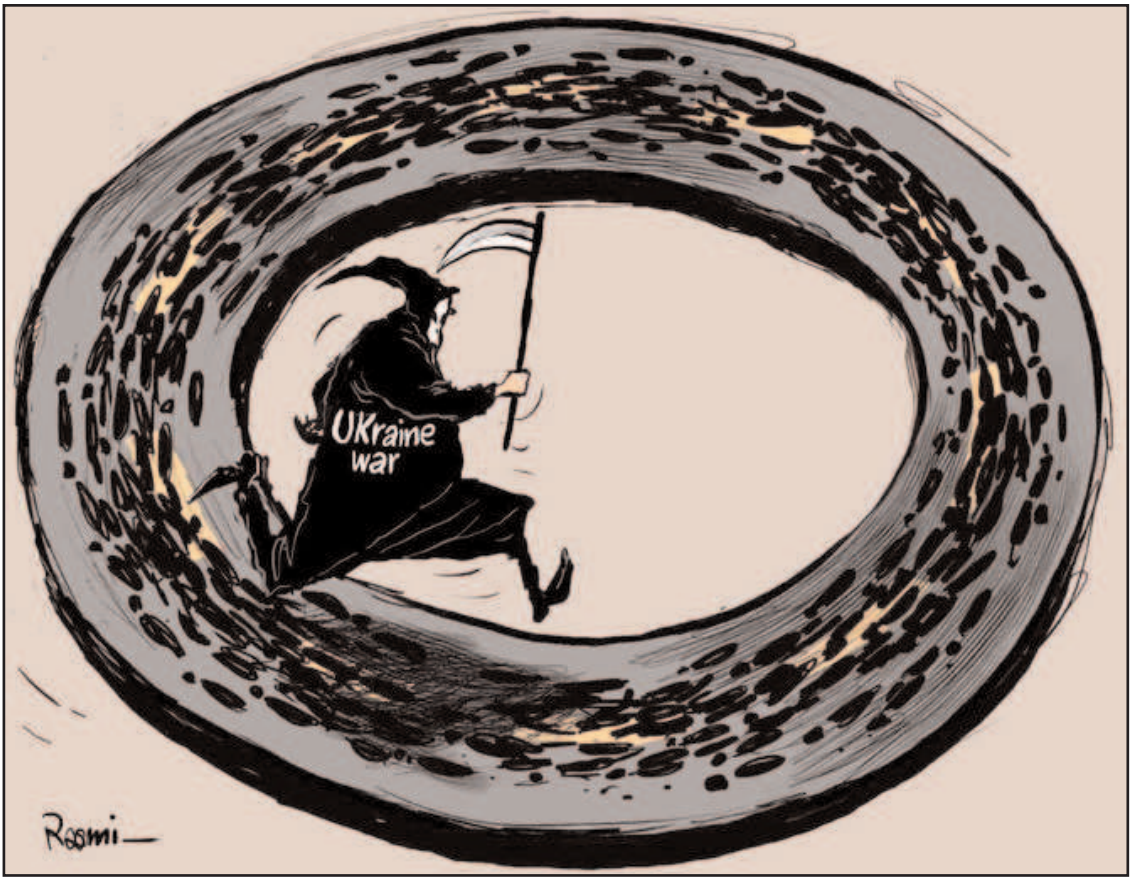
Another important milestone was covered by the chaos-hit nation smoothly when a consensus was built between the outgoing government and the opposition on finalizing the name of Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar as caretaker prime minister, that is a sane and highly adorable achievement in the prevailing situation. Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar is a noble person and reputed politician, and well versed in political and administrative skills necessary to steer the country through a crucial election period. The Senator has previously worked as Spokesperson for the Balochistan government during Balochistan Awami Party (PAB) tenure and has good ties with civil and military establishment. The newly chosen caretaker Prime Minister hails from the least developed region in the poverty and violence hit Balochistan province, which commonly owes serious grievances from the centre regarding the manipulation of mineral resources, oil, gas and gold reserves that least benefit the Baloch people. Meanwhile, armed insurgency and flourishing terrorism are other issues that worsley affect the social life and economic development in the province. Therefore, as son of soil, a great responsibility rests over the shoulder of the caretaker Prime Minister to resolve long-standing issues of its native province which includes but not limited to ending simmering Baloch insurgency through political dialogue, resolution of the issue of Baloch missing persons along with clarification of doubts among a particular section of Baloch people regarding the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which is real path of growth and prosperity for the Baloch people. As a media outlet, the Frontier Post will take advantage of this opportunity by suggesting that in the limited timeframe of the next few months, Mr Kakar should particularly focus on the Redo Diq gold mining project, issues relating to Gwadar, initiation of a public-private partnership in CPEC projects, promotion of fishery industry in Balochistan along with concerted efforts to curb corruption and improve law and order situation in the country that is crucial before, during and after the electoral process. Realistically, the new incumbent can make the Pakistanis realize that Balochistan is a province that can only change the destiny of the whole of Pakistan.

There had been doubts and apprehensions regarding a neutral and impartial interim setup that can oversee the governmental affairs and smoothly steer the country through the election season so the electoral process completes successfully and smoothly. The nomination of An-war-ul- Haq Kakar was a good omen for Pakistan. Currently, the country faces overlapping problems relating to the economy, security, law and order situation, while the caretaker Prime Minister has a heavy responsibility regarding the appointment of a capable and credible caretaker team of Ministers to steer the country through these challenges.

Hopefully, Kakar's federal team and provincial caretaker governments would also be neutral and notable individuals. The interim setup should play its constitutional role in administering the reins of the country until the next elections and will show its best performance in holding a transparent, free, fair and timely election in the country. At the same time, all state institutions and political parties must support the caretaker setup in fulfillment of the great task of holding credible elections, so this nation moves toward political stability and economic revival.

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Global community faces an impossible choice in Libya

Hafed Al-Ghwel

After more than a decade of political morass, Libya's future hangs precariously in the balance between two less than optimal outcomes. One is an enduring status quo that is a playground for self-interested political elites, hybrid actors and serial agitators, atop the disaffected masses. The other is the formation of a so-called "unity government" headed by the very ruling elite that has repeatedly thwarted the country's post-2011 aspirations.

The status quo is as unwieldy as it is untenable. The revolving door of power facilitates the rise and fall of chimeric influencers, some of them politically aspirant, others militarily potent, all of them cloaked in a veneer of national interest while working only to further their own parochial agendas.

Meanwhile, most of the views from abroad merely offer guided tours of this maze of malignancy and its debilitating toll on a society adrift in a volatile situation that has left Libya suffocating on the threshold of chaos, with instability the only constant.

Just this week, the surprising departure of Khalid Al-Mishri as head of the High Council of State underscored the shifting sands in the balance of power. The council is recognized by most of the international community as part of Libya's official governing structure, serving as an advisory body to the House of Representatives. Its primary role is to help guide the nation through a turbulent transition process, while addressing security issues and attempting to reconcile deep-rooted internal divisions in the country.

The council's leadership therefore directly influences the prospects for Libya's stabilization, since effective leaders can facilitate dialogue and foster unity among competing factions, potentially creating an environment conducive to political reconciliation and stability. Conversely, inconsistent or self-interested leadership can inflame tensions and disrupt an already fragile process of transition.

Al-Mishri's departure is yet another illustration of the country's unpredictable political climate and the fragility of its key institutions. The unforeseen ouster of a five-year incumbent serves only to introduce additional uncertainty at a critical juncture when Libya is striving for a lasting political settlement and stable policy frameworks, to legitimize future elections that might produce the country's first-ever democratically elected government.

Such leadership changes also affect the council's ability to effectively advise the House of Representatives, contribute to critical policy decisions, including the implementation of electoral laws, and help facilitate the drafting of a constitution.

At the same time, opportunists continue to pursue their own personal ambitions and petty rivalries, even if it means manipulating or subverting ongoing political processes.

This constant state of flux is a significant contributing factor to disaffection among the Libyan public, raising the risk of even more turbulence in the years ahead, which is not helped by an enduring distrust of state institutions.

Divisive politics and the presence of regional and external actors who have stakes in the Libyan conflict also play a part in exacerbating the difficulties in achieving consensus or a unified national vision.

Similarly afflicted with the maladies that mean such pursuits are granted only some measure of symbolic importance while practical effectiveness remains questionable.

After all, even the most well-intentioned consensus-building endeavors are not immune to the influence of a ruling elite who are loath to relinquish their monopoly on power. They therefore continually interfere and use their resources and influence to steer out-

have no qualms about undermining democracy in Libya just adds to the national strife about this faux harmony among elites, leaving Libyan spirits just as embattled as before.

Obviously, the implications of entrusting the country's future to this ruling cabal are grave, and thus indefensible. Theoretically, such a government could help to stabilize the situation in Libya. Realistically, however, its only "success" would be to bring an element of predictability to the nation's woes — a sort of "managed chaos," so to speak.

However, it also runs the risk of hardening the divisions between the various factions vying for their place in the sun, while offering a veneer of legitimacy to vested interests, thereby perpetuating the very structures of power that are responsible for Libya's present quagmire.

Meanwhile, other paths that sought to realize Libya's post-Qaddafi aspirations for democratization raised plenty of hope, only to wither under the weight of the country's ever-changing dynamics. Disruptive influences — internal and external — continue to shape and reshape the course and the discourse, rendering obvious solutions ineffective and erstwhile feasible transitions, infeasible.

The global community, fatigued by the enduring Libyan quagmire, now finds itself in the testing position of having to choose the lesser of two evils.

The unfortunate inevitability of this, due to the external support for stabilization oscillating between the halfhearted and the blithely half-baked, leaves much to be desired.

However, few alternatives exist outside of engagement by an international community that finds itself backed into a corner and forced to choose between facilitating a unity government, with all its inherent flaws, or resigning itself to a protracted and volatile status quo.

While neither option is particularly appealing, shying away from proactive involvement would only risk exacerbating the instability. The challenge now is to strike a delicate balance between securing stability without entrenching a political landscape that is unresponsive to democratic reform.

By reassessing priorities, aligning regional interests and focusing on long-term solutions rather than short-term gains, the international community can still contribute in a meaningful way to Libya's stability, help prevent further devastation and avert direct threats to regional, and global, security.

One can only hope, for Libya's sake and that of its people, the final choice pays more than just lip service to the principles of unity and democracy. It is incumbent on the international community to select the lesser of two unpalatable options, and in doing so work diligently to shape a future in which Libya's impossible choices can become, at last, a little less impossible.

Cuts to foreign aid hurt donor countries as well as the recipients

Yossi Mekelberg

It is a rare occasion indeed when the source of the most critical verdict on a particular government policy is the minister in charge of the very policy that is found to be falling far short of what is desired and what the government previously committed itself to.

Andrew Mitchell, the British minister of state for development and Africa, whose responsibility is to maximize the benefits of the UK's humanitarian aid — and who is known for not mincing his words — has published a report that reveals the devastating consequences of his own government's deep cuts to its foreign aid budget.

Most worryingly, the report by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office admits that the effects of reducing Official Development Assistance will be severe in all areas of development, but that the worst effects will be on programs for helping women and girls.

It was not so long ago that the UK was regarded as a global development powerhouse. Not any more. It was Conservative Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, during his time in charge of the country's finances when he was chancellor of the exchequer, who reduced Britain's spending on foreign aid, supposedly as a temporary measure, from 0.7 percent of gross national income to 0.5 percent. This cut represented a saving of about £4 billion (\$5.1 billion) a year, which was supposedly to be used to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the domestic economy.

The decision is perhaps understandable, given the pressure on the British economy as a result of the pandemic and the current cost-of-living crisis, but still it hardly justifies harming people whose very existence depends on funding for aid programs.

The cuts to British aid mean that since 2020 there have been significant reductions in the numbers of bilateral aid programs, which has hindered the objective of fostering greater equality. The analysis by Foreign Office civil servants reads like an unfolding horror show, in which deaths, devastation and loss of human potential are guaranteed.

For example, it seems the UK has, for all intents and purposes, given up on Afghanistan by cutting 76 percent of aid to the country. It is thereby abandoning some of the world's most vulnerable women and girls, on whom the Taliban has imposed severe restrictions that violate their human rights "and (is) systematically erasing them from public spaces." The cuts to UK aid now additionally leave them without access to critical services such as health services and education.

In Africa, it is feared thousands of women will die during pregnancy and childbirth as a direct result of the aid cuts, and 200,000 will face the prospect of unsafe abortions.

There is something unbearably flippant about decisions to cut foreign aid. After all, those who suffer as a result do not vote in the donor country's elections, let alone register their views about government policies in opinion polls.

Reducing support for the most vulnerable is probably most popular among Conservative politicians and their supporters in the UK, second only to deporting asylum seekers to Rwanda or incarcerating them on floating detention barges.

But it is a shortsighted policy that lacks vision or any genuine plan; and not only in light of the obvious moral-ethical imperative to help those most in need. Reducing assistance to low-income countries only exacerbates their economic, social and political woes. This can only serve to further destabilize them, which in turn damages our own national interests, including security concerns and the prevention of radicalization. It also hinders our access to natural resources, reduces the chances to trade with economies that are growing instead of shrinking, and affects our ability to jointly address the challenges resulting from climate change and global health issues.

No wonder Sunak's announcement of the cut in

aid funding, made while he was serving in Boris Johnson's government, was described by five former British prime ministers — John Major, Tony Blair, Gordon Brown, David Cameron and Theresa May, three of whom are Conservatives — as a "strategic mistake."

A target for high-income countries to give at least 0.7 percent of their gross national income in aid was set by the UN General Assembly in 1970. More than 50 years later, only five countries — Sweden, Norway, Luxembourg, Denmark and the Netherlands — have consistently reached or exceeded this target. The UK achieved the milestone for the first time in 2013, under a statutory obligation to meet it.

It remains to be seen whether Sunak's "temporary" measure, which the Treasury has said will be rescinded by 2028, will turn into a permanent one, although the Labour Party has promised to restore the 0.7 percent obligation upon what currently seems its likely return to power at the next general election, scheduled to be held by January 2025.

Although foreign aid to developing countries is not without negative side effects — and debates about whether or not it creates a culture of dependency, and the misuse of some of the funds leading to corruption, are not invalid — its overall contribution to the well being of both the donor country and the recipients is unquestionably invaluable.

If wealthier countries are serious about achieving all, or most, of the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals — which include an end to poverty and hunger, the creation of jobs, ensuring health and well being for everybody, universal education, gender equality, and clean water and sanitation for all people — then foreign aid is an absolute necessity.

Most importantly, it should not be viewed as charity. In some cases, foreign aid comes with the stipulation that part of the money is spent in the donor country; this strengthens relations between the giver and the recipient but also helps to prevent political instability caused by radicalization and unwanted mass migrations, and the effects these have on donor countries.

Opposition to cuts in foreign aid does not mean ignoring the economic difficulties many developed countries are currently facing, or the domestic political implications that many politicians are too afraid to deal with for fear of frightening voters.

However, even when such cuts are temporary measures they nevertheless have immediate and devastating effects on vulnerable people, and it is impossible to simply start aid programs up again later at the point at which they were abandoned. Instead, many projects will be forced to start over from a worse position, among a more distrusting local population.

The Foreign Office analysis suggests that in Yemen, for example, the cuts to the UK aid budget mean half a million women and children will no longer receive healthcare, which in many cases will result in death. In South Sudan, the lives of tens of thousands of children suffering from severe acute malnutrition are at risk. Those who survive will miss out on essential vaccinations, which will leave a harmful long-term legacy.

It is inconceivable that out of an annual budget of nearly £1,200 billion, the UK government is unable to find the required sums for lifesaving humanitarian aid. This merely serves to further underline the fact that such policies are typical of a Conservative Party that habitually turns its back on those in the most dire straits, whether they are seeking asylum or need help in their home countries.

It is time for MPs with common sense and a strong moral compass, from all parties, to take a stand and rebel against Sunak's xenophobic policies that are not only shaming the UK, a country that used to care about the less fortunate, but in the process are compromising the nation's own interests.

Climate change challenges require bold leadership

The 2015 Paris Climate Accords came at a time of relative geopolitical harmony, including in relations between China and the US. It is sometimes forgotten that one of the key developments that preceded the landmark agreement was months of intensive diplomacy between Beijing and Washington, culminating in a bilateral climate pact in November 2014.

The shared global leadership that was on display then is, sadly, largely lacking on the world stage right now but must be revived, at least in relation to this most fundamental of issues. As we move into what UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has described as the age of “global boiling,” the history books will not look favorably on failure to agree greater cooperation on the issue.

This is especially the case given the fact that so many parts of the world are already suffering the effects of climate change. In recent weeks, for example, parts of China, including Beijing, have been battered by the heaviest rain in 140 years. The country has also recorded its hottest-ever temperature, 52 degrees Celsius (125.6 degrees Fahrenheit), amid the wider heat waves that have also affected Europe and North America.

One model that has been proposed to concentrate minds on the issue is a form of “war-time leadership.” This would involve a determined focus on the core objective of tackling climate change, while forging a greater sense of national and global unity on the issue, and with the involvement of the private sector a key element for achieving a positive outcome.

One example here of what the success of such an approach might look like is the way in which the

COVID-19 pandemic drove the discovery and development of vaccines, rapidly and at scale.

One of the key challenges to forging such a sense of unity is the darker geopolitical landscape now compared with 2015, and not only because of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. For example, tensions are also running significantly higher between China and the West, which greatly complicates the pathway to a step change in

Andrew Hammond

Environmentally sustainable and inclusive economic growth, and to actions such as reversing land degradation, accelerating ecosystem restoration, halting biodiversity loss, and promoting a resilient blue economy.

However, there was no breakthrough on hugely scaling up the use of renewable energy, or on reaching an agreement to phase out fossil fuels, especially coal.

This provoked exaspera-

ing a critical period in which “we’re facing death and seeing that climate change is not an idea just of science; it is real and it hurts.” Populations face the growing prospect of “baking in an oven,” he added.

The lack of progress on the issue is also frustrating Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. His country holds the presidency of the G20 this year and he still has high hopes for this year’s summit, even though it takes place against the

the four focus themes for the G20 this year would be green development and sustainable development (the other two are empowerment of women and technological transformation).

Modi must therefore start banging heads together in the coming weeks in an attempt to get some movement on climate issues. He is well aware that while the G20 was once widely viewed as having seized the mantle from the G7 as the premier forum for international cooperation and global governance, in the past decade and a half it has failed to realize the full scale of the ambition some thrust upon it. This is in part because it has no formal mechanisms for ensuring implementation and enforcement of agreements between the leaders of member states.

Modi must therefore try to make his personal mark as host of the G20, not least because it could affect his prospects for reelection as prime minister next year. As a savvy politician, he is well aware of the prestige the G20 enjoys.

Moreover, he is keen to buttress his government’s credentials as a global green leader. To that end, he has highlighted the fact that India is one of the top five countries in terms of installed renewable energy capacity, and met its targets for installed capacity of electricity generated from non-fossil-fuel sources nine years ahead of its target date of 2030. With Modi under pressure in the run-up to the main G20 summit, he will try above all else to exceed expectations in terms of outcomes. Whether he achieves this, however, will depend to a significant extent on whether geopolitical divisions within the grouping improve or escalate in the weeks ahead.

The pinnacle of all this will be the leadership summit in New Delhi in September. It will be attended by about 30 heads of state and governments from G20 member states and other invited countries, including Bangladesh, Egypt, Mauritius, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Oman, Singapore, Spain and the UAE, plus representatives of international organizations such as the UN, the World Health Organization, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

climate change leadership.

The spike in geopolitical tensions was in full view at the recent G20 meeting of environment ministers, when there had been high hopes for greater accord despite wider geopolitical disagreements.

Collectively, G20 nations account for about 80 percent of carbon emissions. Yet while there is no better forum, in theory, to try to push forward the climate agenda, its results have been pitiful so far this year. As the world endures the hottest temperatures on record, G20 member nations have made virtually no progress on climate policy fundamentals.

Yes, after their meeting at the end of July the G20 environment ministers did issue a long outcome document committing to envi-

tion among some ministers and officials, including EU Environment Commissioner Virginijus Sinkevičius, who said “we simply are nowhere” and “the glass is ... certainly empty when we look at G20 commitments to address climate change.” Noting that some delegations had even tried to row back on previous climate pledges, he added that “we cannot be driven by the lowest common denominator or by narrow national interests. We cannot allow the pace of change to be set by the slowest movers in the room.”

It is not only officials who are critical of attitudes and progress but also scientific experts such as Peter Newman, a member of the UN’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. He said humanity is enter-

backdrop of the most unpredictable global landscape in years, if not decades. In total, India will host more than 200 meetings in about 50 cities, involving ministers, top officials and representatives of civil society.

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India decided that two of

Why the world needs to prepare now for the next disease pandemic

Hardship, crisis, misfortune, and mistakes often provide the most valuable insights. The COVID-19 pandemic is a case in point.

For all the suffering that the virus has caused, it has also highlighted the steps that countries must take, both collectively and individually, to prepare for future global public-health emergencies. Now, with the pandemic seemingly in the rearview mirror, the question is whether political leaders around the world will take its lessons to heart.

This is not a trivial question. Over the past few decades, disease outbreaks have triggered a recurring cycle of panic and neglect among policymakers. But in light of the human, economic, and social devastation wrought by COVID-19, we can and must break this pattern.

If COVID-19 has taught us anything, it is that factors such as climate change, human encroachment on wildlife habitats, population growth, urbanization, and low-cost travel make it increasingly likely that we will face more devastating pandemics in the not-too-distant future. A 2021 study found that the yearly probability of extreme epidemics could increase up to three-fold in the coming decades. It would be extremely reckless not to take decisive action now to mitigate this looming threat.

Another crucial lesson

from COVID-19 is that all countries must have robust health systems capable of responding quickly and effectively to an emergency while simultaneously addressing ongoing health-care needs. Even well-resourced countries struggled to perform this complex balancing act during

Jose Manuel Barroso

All of this underscores the imperative for wealthy countries to step in and provide critical assistance. Throughout the pandemic, these countries’ governments, recognizing that deadly pathogens are indifferent to national borders,

All of this underscores the imperative for wealthy countries to step in and provide critical assistance. Throughout the pandemic, these countries’ governments, recognizing that deadly pathogens are indifferent to national borders, repeated the mantra that “no one is safe until everyone is safe.” And yet, despite this lofty rhetoric, lower income countries found themselves last in line for diagnostics, vaccines, treatments, and other crucial supplies. Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance (whose board I chair) had to wait months before the COVAX facility it established in 2020 managed to overcome vaccine hoarding and export bans and start shipping significant quantities to the countries most in need.

the pandemic, resulting in millions of deaths and severe economic damage.

Governments around the world owe it to their citizens to make significant and sustained investments in areas such as disease surveillance, outbreak response capabilities, primary healthcare services, and healthcare worker training. Such investments are needed not only in wealthier countries but also in lower-income countries that cannot afford them on their own.

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need.

The good news is that ensuring equitable access to vaccines and other crucial interventions is an achievable goal. There are several steps that governments can take to prepare for the next pandemic and ensure that all countries, regardless of their wealth, have the

making a joint effort to establish vaccine manufacturing facilities in several dozen locations across Africa. This manufacturing network could minimize potential supply bottlenecks and enhance the availability of other vital vaccines, for diseases such as cholera, for which current production fails to meet demand.

Initiatives such as the pandemic accord, which is currently being debated among the World Health Organization’s member states, promise to promote greater equity and effectiveness in pandemic prevention and response. While negotiations over the details are still ongoing and will probably continue until the agreement comes to a vote at the 2024 World Health Assembly, governments could benefit from participating in the process and should commit to abide by the accord once it is approved.

Although COVID-19 no longer dominates news headlines, it is crucial that we maintain the political will to establish equitable vaccine access and not revert to our pre-pandemic complacency. Today’s political leaders have a historic opportunity to foster a more inclusive global order, and they have a responsibility to act boldly before the next public-health emergency. Failing to do so will condemn us all to relive the traumas of the past three years.

Sinem Cengiz

between Ankara and Cairo, especially at times of antagonism between them, it also represents the most important aspects of their regional cooperation.

It is not only Palestinians who are frustrated with the lack of political progress and the failure to establish national unity; regional states such as Türkiye are trying to carve out a role for themselves as mediators between rival Palestinian groups, and are uneasy over the continuing rift that benefits no one but only Israel.

In the delicate balancing act between Palestinian groups and Israel, Ankara has even rejected Tel Aviv’s request to deport Hamas leaders living in Türkiye,

We must protect children from extreme heat

Ranvir S. Nayar

mental and emotional development.

According to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the more heat waves children are exposed to, the greater the chance they will experience health problems, including chronic respiratory conditions, asthma and cardiovascular diseases, especially as the increasing frequency and intensity of dust storms in hot areas put children at higher risk of exposure to microparticles and acute respiratory tract infections. It also has an effect on their education and their future careers, the CDC added.

Children can even be affected before birth, because prenatal exposure to dust events can lower birth weights, reduce gestational time, and increase infant mortality.

The challenges children face as a result of intense heat seem likely to persist

local level.

But if we are to address the overwhelming number of serious effects, only coordinated global action by all countries and large businesses will help. For now, such action remains anything but coordinated, even at regional level let alone globally.

Moreover, a significant amount of money is needed, whether to fund short-term measures that can alleviate the immediate effects of heat waves or the long-term action needed to slow or reverse global warming.

Whether we are providing more air conditioners, building additional health-care centers, encouraging better nutrition, or ensuring access to clean and safe drinking water, all of these projects and many more require a whole lot of money, which is clearly something poorer countries do not have.

Yet despite years of promises and renewed pledges, wealthy countries

One study predicted that increasingly intense heat waves will affect more than 100 million people by 2060, and by the year 2100 about half of the MENA population — including 205 million children under the age of 17 years, and 108 million adolescents between the ages of 15 and 24 — will face a very real risk of annual exposure. Not only that, but the number of days of intolerable heat each year is projected to increase, especially in areas where population density is already high and where most of the population growth in the MENA region is predicted, including coastal areas and major and expanding urban locations including Amman, Aden and Baghdad, along with cities in southern Iran and Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Algeria. But it is not only in the poorest and most densely populated areas, such as parts of South Asia or MENA, that children face the greatest risks of extreme heat. Even the most advanced and wealthy nations in North America and Europe are not safe. Whether in rich or poor countries, children are set to suffer the consequences of the actions of their parents and grandparents. Studies suggest that these increasingly intense heat waves will take a huge toll on children’s health, as well as their growth and physiological, psychological, mental and emotional development.

for decades, until something concrete is done to deal with carbon emissions globally, especially in the rich nations that continue to emit several times more carbon per capita than even the most polluting developing nations.

But there are plenty of ways to reduce at least some of the risks in the meantime. For example, greater use of cooling devices such as air conditioners in schools offers some respite from the heat and helps to reduce the effect on learning.

Initiatives that protect children from lengthy exposure to sun or dust in open areas can also help. These are relatively easy fixes and can be implemented at a hyper-

are still clearly unwilling to live up to their long-standing commitments to provide upward of \$100 billion annually to reduce the effects of climate change on poorer countries.

Moreover, rich countries have also been less than generous in sharing the technology that can help developing nations cut their own emissions and so play a part, however small, in reversing global warming.

The government departments and nongovernmental organizations that work with children also need to carry out more long-term studies on the effects of heat waves on children, and develop solutions to minimize the risks future generations face.

Turkiye’s balancing act between Hamas, Fatah and Israel

Turkiye, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia have held significant meetings in the past few weeks on issues that pose threats to their interests and to the stability of the region. While all eyes were fixed on the Ukraine-Russia war and the peace summit in Jeddah, two crucial meetings took place in Ankara and Cairo with the aim of forestoring Palestinian unity.

On July 26, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan hosted Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh at the presidential palace. The talks took place behind closed doors, and no details were made public. In late July, senior figures from the Palestinian factions met in Cairo to discuss

Palestinian national unity and a comprehensive vision toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The last time the leaders of Fatah and Hamas met publicly was in June 2022 in Algeria during that country’s Independence Day celebrations, their first encounter in more than five years. The meeting in Egypt was part of an attempt to find common ground between the rival Palestinian groups, but it is viewed as another failure—just like more than dozens of similar attempts since 2007, including the talks in In Algeria. The main disagreement between the two leaders is over the strategy for achieving their common purpose for Palestinians, and their rivalry for power. Both are

engaged in a struggle to win the hearts and minds of not only the Palestinians, but also regional states.

Unity among Palestinian entities and a balance between Palestine and Israel requires a delicate balancing act, fine diplomacy and cooperation from regional countries. Palestine represents significant common ground for Türkiye and Egypt, two regional states that have reconciled after decade-long tension in relations. Ankara and Cairo consider the Palestinian issue and the resolution of the Palestine-Israeli conflict to be a shared objective and a common vision for regional stability. Although Palestine has occasionally been an area of competition for regional influence

meeting with Erdogan and Haniyeh in Ankara, Benjamin Netanyahu was due to travel to Türkiye in the first visit to Ankara by an Israeli prime minister since 2008. The trip was postponed after he underwent surgery to implant a cardiac pacemaker, and Israel remains roiled by protests over contentious judicial reforms. It is still not clear if or when the visit will take place, but if it does it is likely to consolidate Turkish-Israeli normalization, which is viewed by Ankara as a positive development in serving the Palestinian cause.

Unlike Fatah, Hamas spoke out against the Ankara-Tel Aviv rapprochement and was uneasy about Ankara’s statement that

despite the restoration of diplomatic ties between the countries. Israeli officials have been insisting on this since 2020, and the latest demand came when Defense Minister Benny Gantz visited Türkiye in October. Ankara has repeatedly stated that it does not consider Hamas to be a terrorist group, and would not expel its members from Türkiye. Moreover, Ankara suggested that it aimed to lead efforts to unify Hamas with Fatah, rather than exclude the former from the process. In the early 2000s, Türkiye initiated the Ankara Forum as a confidence-building mechanism between Palestine and Israel.

A day after Abbas’s

Palestinian parties were in favor of it. In contrast, a few days after Türkiye and Israel said they would restore full diplomatic relations and reappoint ambassadors for the first time since 2018, Abbas paid a visit to Ankara that signaled Fatah’s positive stance towards the normalization.

Praising the Turkish leadership’s efforts to unite Palestinian groups, Abbas has even said the Palestinians will name a square in Ramallah after Erdogan “in appreciation of his big and important role” in supporting the Palestinians, who pin hopes on him to heal the Palestinian internal rift.

There are hopes that normalization of ties between Ankara and Tel Aviv will

push the former to play a bigger mediation role between Hamas and Israel — similar to that of Egypt and Qatar — on many issues, most notably prisoner swaps and economic incentives for people in the Gaza Strip. It could also ease potential future tension that could lead to a new military escalation between Israel and Hamas.

With the current momentum, Ankara is likely to keep its relations balanced with the parties to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, while also balancing between Fatah and Hamas. Ankara continues to insist on the two-state solution, while it is progressing in relations with Israel at the same time on several issues, economic, energy and political.



Dollar hits Rs302 in open market

KARACHI (INP): The US dollar hit 302 against the rupee in the open market, going beyond the boundaries marked by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to keep the difference in open and interbank exchange rates in the range of 1 per cent to 1.5 per cent, says media reports.

“The US dollar rates kept fluctuating during the day and reached as high as Rs302,” said Zafar Paracha, general secretary of the

Exchange Companies Association of Pakistan. On Friday, the dollar traded at Rs296 in the open market.

Mr Paracha said the dollar rate was higher than the prices being quoted in the media. Some currency dealers said the dollar’s appreciation was not mainly because of the currency’s shortage but due to uncertainty surrounding the caretaker government.

“The perception about the interim government in

the currency market is that it will be independent of any political pressure, which means it will strictly follow the IMF instructions to implement the exchange rate,” Mr Paracha said.

Under the \$3 billion Standby Arrangement signed with the IMF in late June, the previous coalition government agreed to maintain a single currency rate in both interbank and open markets, with a slight difference of up to 1.5pc

increase in the open market’s value. It was also quoted in the media that the IMF wanted 20pc devaluation of the rupee in the current fiscal year, which means the dollar should be in the range of Rs330-340 by the end of June next year. Currency dealers believe that despite the higher foreign exchange reserves of the State Bank, the dollar is on the rise due to this arrangement with the IMF.

PIAF warns of record inflation, as high cost hurting economy

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Industrial & Traders Associations Front (PIAF) has warned the record inflation and high cost of doing business would hurt economic growth, demanding a careful policy to keep it in control.

PIAF Chairman Faheem ur Rehman Saigol said that the most serious threat to the economy in the current fiscal year would be inflation, as the government plan of approaching the donors for further financial assistance will bring a fresh wave of price-hike, because inflation is already hitting economy due to continuous raise in oil prices and depreciation of local currency.

He predicted that inflation would remain high and may even increase further due to market frictions caused by relative demand and supply gap of essential items, exchange rate depreciation and recent upward adjustment of administered prices of petrol and diesel.

The PIAF leader called for keeping check on government expenditure and

high cost of debt servicing to contain budget deficit, as the Pakistan’s federal budget deficit projection has been revised to history’s highest to over Rs 6 trillion, highlighting the unending fiscal woes that have pushed the country into a debt trap despite putting additional burden of billions of rupees on industry in the current fiscal year.

Expressing serious concern over the high jump in country’s budget deficit, PIAF Chairman Faheem ur Rehman Saigol said the revision has been made in light of agreement with the International Monetary Fund, which exposed the massive underreporting of expenditures at the time of budget presentation by the Finance ministry.

This is a highly unsustainable level and has already pushed the country into a situation where debt restructuring seems to be the only viable option.

The PIAF chairman maintained that the failure to reform the tax system and increase revenue collection is a major factor behind heavy domestic and

foreign borrowings by the government.

In view of the low level of available FX reserves, the debt management strategy of Pakistan may have to be revisited, to ensure the stability of Pakistani rupee and restoration of international capital markets’ confidence in the economy of Pakistan.

In the last fiscal year, Pakistan had registered a record federal budget deficit of Rs 5.5 trillion, breaching the annual target by a wide margin of Rs 1.5 trillion.

He advised the government to avoid hard restructuring, which is painful. Instead, it urged Pakistan to go for debt re-profiling with the official and commercial creditors under the G20 Common Framework. He stated that debt stabilisation was unlikely in the short term given the need to address the flood consequences and finance the current account deficit.

At the same time, international rating agencies have continued to downgrade Pakistan in 2022-23 in the CCC category and the sovereign USD yield

curve is now inverted, reflecting market expectations of default and ensuing restructuring by Pakistan.

He said that due to the lagged effect of floods, production losses, especially of major agriculture crops, has not yet been fully recovered. Consequently, the shortage of essential items has emerged and persisted. Inflation may further jack up as a result of second round effect.

He said the IMF loan would have devastating effects on the economy, as with more taxes and increased rates of utilities, cost of production would further increase. This will render Pakistani exports uncompetitive in the global market.

PIAF chairman said that there is a consensus that a low inflation rate helps economic activities, while high inflation hurts economic growth. The high inflation environment affects decision making of all economic agents in economy, like investors, savers, consumers and producers through uncertainty about the expected payoffs from their decisions.



MULTAN: Labourers busy unloading vegetables on delivery truck at vegetable market.

Import, export volume reaches 2.93t

NANJING (Xinhua/APP): East China’s economic powerhouse Jiangsu Province recorded a total import and export volume of 2.93 trillion yuan (about 409.29 billion US dollars) from January to July, the customs of Nanjing, capital city of Jiangsu, said Sunday.

The figure, including exports of 1.89 trillion yuan and imports of 1.04 trillion yuan, accounted for 12.4 percent of China’s total volume of imports and exports during the same period.

Growth of private enterprises in terms of imports and exports over the past seven months was outstanding, totaling 1.28 trillion yuan, a year-on-year increase of 4.4 percent, while the province’s foreign-invested enterprises and state-owned enterprises achieved import and export volumes of 1.39 trillion yuan and 255.9 billion yuan, respectively.

Jiangsu’s trade with countries along the Belt and Road reached 853.92 billion yuan, accounting for 29.2 percent of the total. The amount of 853.92 billion yuan was an increase of 3 percentage points compared to the same period last year.

Exports of mobile phones, automotive parts and ships showed rapid growth in the first seven months of 2023, reaching 79.19 billion yuan, 46.46 billion yuan, and 35.09 billion yuan, respectively.

Carpet manufacturers assured of their issues resolution soon

LAHORE (APP): Chief Collector Customs Rabab Sikandar assured the Pakistan Carpet Manufacturers and Exporters Association (PCMAEA) on Sunday of giving due consideration and resolving their issues.

In a meeting with the PCMEA office-bearers here at the Association’s office, she said she would take action on all the suggestions made by the businessmen. She acknowledged the role of hand-knotted carpet industry in job creation and strengthening economy of the country and assured that her department would support the sector as hundreds of thousands of people were attached with it.

She also urged the carpet association to prepare a comprehensive presentation regarding all their problems and the Customs officers concerned would brief the carpet manufacturers, exporters and other stakeholders in this regard.

“The concerns and suggestions raised regarding the suspended SRO 492 and newly issued SRO 545 related to carpet products temporarily imported for repair, rewash and refinishing will be taken into consideration immediately and there is an effort to give a positive reaction regarding the extension of the period end-

ing this month,” she mentioned. PCMEA Senior Vice Chairman Usman Ashraf and senior central leader Shahid Hasan Sheikh informed Chief Collector Customs Rabab Sikandar about the long-standing problems faced by exporters of handmade carpets and requested her to solve them.

They demanded that the concerned departments should improve communication with the exporters to solve the problems and it is suggested to appoint a focal person for effective communication and resolving the problem.

They said that the industry of handmade carpets is a cottage industry, there are various stages involved in making a carpet and it is a slow process of many months and similarly, carpets that are temporarily imported from foreign countries for repair, rewash and refinishing require time for re-manufacturing and returning them.

“In this regard SRO 492 was very suitable for us but now the period has been shortened by SRO 545 and the extension period is coming to an end next week, which is causing serious concern among the exporters,” they added.

They said that the indus-

try of handmade carpets is the recognition and pride of Pakistan all over the world. There is a demand that the duties of foreign countries should be reduced, if handwoven carpet products are also included in the free trade agreement with various countries, then our exports can increase many times.

Chief Collector of Customs Rabab Sikandar said that exporters are the backbone of the economy, therefore, their problems would be solved. She further said seminars would be conducted jointly regarding implementation of various laws and ‘we will take stakeholders into confidence in this regard.’

Usman Ashraf presented her with a souvenir and a handmade carpet by the PCMEA the association. The Chief Collector Customs Rabab Sikandar also reviewed the various stages of hand-made carpets in the Carpet Training Institute (CTI).

Focal Person of Member Customs and Collector Sialkot Nair Shafiq, Senior Central Leaders Abdul Latif Malik, Carpet Training Institute (CTI) Chairman Ejazur Rahman, Senior Member Riaz Ahmed and others were also present.

Issues of carpet industry to be resolved on priority basis: Rabab

LAHORE (INP): Chief Collector Customs Rabab Sikandar said the issues of carpet industry raised by office-bearers of Pakistan Carpet Manufacturers and Exporters Association (PCMAEA) would be given due consideration and resolved at the earliest. She also assured of due action on all the suggestions made by businessmen.

She acknowledged the role of hand-knotted carpet industry in job creation and strengthening the economy of the country and assured that her department would support the sector as hundreds of thousands of people were attached with it.

She expressed these views during the visit of Pakistan Carpet Manufacturers and Exporters Association (PCMAEA) along with Focal Person of Member Customs and Collector

Sialkot Nair Shafiq. Rabab Sikandar also urged the Carpet Association to prepare a comprehensive presentation regarding all their problems and the concerned officers of the department will personally come to you for briefing.

She said, “The concerns and suggestions raised regarding the suspended SRO 492 and newly issued SRO 545 related to carpet products temporarily imported for repair, rewash and refinishing will be taken into consideration immediately and there is an effort to give a positive reaction regarding the extension of the period ending this month.”

On this occasion, Senior Vice Chairman of the Association Usman Ashraf, Senior Central Leader Abdul Latif Malik, Shahid

Hasan Sheikh, Chairman of Carpet Training Institute Ejazur Rahman, Senior Member Riaz Ahmed and others were also present.

Senior Vice Chairman Usman Ashraf and Shahid Hasan Sheikh informed Chief Collector Customs Rabab Sikandar about the long-standing problems faced by exporters of handmade carpets and requested him to solve them. They said that the concerned departments should increase communication with the exporters to solve the problems and it is suggested to appoint a focal person for effective communication and problem solving.

They said that the industry of handmade carpets is a cottage industry, there are various stages involved in making a carpet and it is a slow process of many

months and similarly, carpets that are temporarily imported from foreign countries for repair, rewash and refinishing require time for re-manufacturing and returning them. “In this regard SRO 492 was very suitable for us but now the period has been shortened by SRO 545 and the extension period is coming to an end next week, which is causing serious concern among the exporters,” they added.

They said that the industry of handmade carpets is the recognition and pride of Pakistan all over the world. There is a demand that the duties of foreign countries should be reduced, if handwoven carpet products are also included in the free trade agreement with various countries, then our exports can increase many times.

Chinese airlines to resume direct flights from Brisbane to China

SYDNEY (Xinhua/APP): China Southern Airlines will resume direct flights from Australia’s Brisbane to south China’s Guangzhou in mid-November to boost tourism and personnel exchanges between the two countries.

The airlines will start to fly four non-stop services a week from Nov. 17, its fourth direct flight route

between the two countries, said the airlines on Sunday.

The Queensland government expects the airlines to land 59,000 inbound seats at Brisbane International Airport in the first year of operation, and almost 278,000 inbound international seats over three years, generating nearly 441 million Australian dollars (about

286.7 million US dollars) for the state’s visitor economy.

In 2019 before the pandemic, China was Queensland’s leading source of international visitors with 497,000 Chinese travelers contributing just over 1.61 billion Australian dollars (about 1.05 billion US dollars) in overnight visitor expenditure, according to the

Queensland government.

CEO for Australia-China Business Council Queensland Elizabeth Sullivan said the return of these flights is hugely important for facilitating two-way direct people-to-people links, particularly for those in the trade and investment space, and across the broader community, including in tourism and education.

Ever-increasing production cost real threat to trade and industry

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry’s Businessmen Panel (BMP) has said that high cost of doing business has proved to be dangerous for the trade and industry, as ever-increasing cost of production is the real threat to the economy amidst frequent upward revisions in policy rate and continuous fluctuations in rupee against dollar.

FPCCI former president and Businessmen Panel (BMP) Chairman Mian Anjum Nisar, while strongly rejecting the significant jump in electricity prices and hike in gas tariffs to meet the IMF condition, has said that it will put additional burden of billions of rupee on consumers. In a statement

issued on Sunday, the Chairman of the BMP observed that it is unfortunate that the authorities in all governments continued to approve billions of rupees’ additional burden on consumers through a direct tariff increase and an indirect increase through the withdrawal of subsidies given to exporters and farmers earlier.

He said that the government liquidity and external vulnerability risks are elevated and there remain considerable risks around it’s ability to secure required financing to fully meet its needs for the next few years. Mian Anjum Nisar said that constant hike in power tariff has pushed the electricity prices higher and added to the already soaring cost of trade and industry.

The Businessmen Panel chairman asked the govern-

ment to shut down all expensive oil-based power plants to ensure availability of cheaper energy for consumers. He condemned the government for shifting power distribution companies’ inefficiencies’ burden to the consumers by jacking up the tariff under the guise of Fuel Charges Adjustment.

It is to be noted that the authorities had pledged to stop any further rise in circular debt adding that around Rs 250 billion was added to the gas circular debt annually though the actual figures are available with Petroleum Division. However, if 11.5 percent price hike for SNGPL and 11 percent tariff for SSGC was not implemented then the circular debt will rise to Rs 740 billion. At present, the gas tariff for residential consumers is Rs 450 per

mmbtu in the Sui Southern Gas Company system against the prescribed price of Rs 850 per mmbtu and Rs 400 per mmbtu in the Sui Northern Gas Pipeline Limited system against the prescribed price of Rs1,007 per mmbtu, showing a significant gap between sale price and actual cost of gas.

Moreover, there will be an additional increase of Rs3.62 per unit in the cost of electricity on account of quarterly surcharge to collect Rs73 billion, excluding the impact of the pending fuel cost adjustments.

FPCCI former president and Businessmen Panel (BMP) Chairman observed that the aggressive economic measures, high borrowing rates, inflation, oppressive taxation and unstable currency have been negatively affecting running businesses.

With a view to deal with fiscal challenges Mian Anjum asked the economic managers to work on the three-way strategy by implementing short-term goals that will help to keep generating resources for smooth fiscal operations, medium-term goals where they should focus on financial inclusion, documenting the economy by designing a system where all businesses can be registered and properly document their income including collection of sales tax, initiating the process of privatization as well as improving governance by introducing reforms in each sector. As a long-term goal, the country must focus on improving its human capital, and revamping IT sectors by extending facilitations and providing all the requisite supports.

In the same way, we also need to work on designing a comprehensive and proactive strategy to tackle challenges related to strengthening border security and implementing effective and comprehensive Anti-Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing measures holding accountable and taking to task all those who are involved in illegitimate activities, undermining both our economy and national interests.

The BMP Chief said that the economic managers did not have any pragmatic plan to address this liability, apart from asking for more loans to repay existing debt. Likewise, the target for current financial year’s exports is too low to meet the country’s revenue.

The conventional approach of focusing solely

on improving exports while pursuing a passive and imprudent foreign policy towards neighboring countries, poses a significant challenge in meeting export targets. Despite strained relations, the United States remains the largest importer of Pakistani products. Still, there are no efforts to tap into the vast markets of neighboring countries or negotiate trade agreements with them. Even though Pakistan and China enjoy close relations yet the volume of exports to China is significantly lower compared to USA. Furthermore, the existing Pakistan China Free Trade Agreement (PCFTA) tends to benefit Chinese-origin corporations more than Pakistani businesses, giving them greater market access at the expense of Pakistani products.

Mian Anjum Nisar said that the all governments in past had been neglecting two important factors, namely, Information Technology and export of human capital that together can contribute towards generating foreign exchange and mobilizing revenue. It is essential to concentrate on nurturing a skilled workforce and assisting them in securing international employment opportunities. This approach would have a positive impact on our foreign policy and help in building foreign exchange reserves. Given the era of the fourth industrial revolution, Pakistan should prioritize facilitating IT businesses, enabling their access to international markets. By doing so, we can assert our fair share in the international market for IT-related exports.



In brief

Azadi Cup from Monday

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Azadi Cup Tenpin Bowling Tournament would kick off at Leisure City Bowling Club, Jinnah Park, Rawalpindi from Monday. According to President, Pakistan Tenpin Bowling Federation (PTBF), Ijaz ur Rehman, Men and Women players from all over the country would take part in the tournament. A total of eight competitions would be played in the tournament including men's single, men's doubles, ladies singles, Amateur, Deaf, team event, Inter-Universities and Inter Schools. The semifinal and finals of the tournament would be played on August 16 and 17, respectively. After the finals, the concluding ceremony would be held on August 17 in which trophies and certificates would be delivered to the winning players.

Independence Day Marathon Race

PESHAWAR (APP): The Independence Day Marathon Race will be organized on August 14 wherein athletes from all across Hazara Region would participate. Regional Sports Officer Ahmad Zaman told media men on Sunday. He disclosed that all arrangements for the smooth conduct of the Independence Day Marathon Race would be made well in time so that the Independence Day would be celebrated like in other parts of the country. There will also be Azadi Cup Squash, Badminton, Judo, Karate, Table Tennis alongside the Marathon Race, which will start from Board Office Abbottabad and end at Hockey Stadium Abbottabad. The closing ceremony will be held at Hockey Stadium and exhibition hockey matches regarding Janshan-e-Azadi would also be organized. Regional Sports Officer Hazara Ahmad Zaman Khan said that these events will be ideal for the promotion of sports.

Women Catchball C'ship begins

KARACHI (APP): The National Women's Catchball Championship under the auspices of the Pakistan Catchball Federation has started at Karachi University. Pakistan Catchball Federation, President, Maqbool Arain inaugurated the two-day championship, said a communique here on Sunday. Twelve teams from across the country are participating in the championship, which has been divided into four groups, Sindh Green, City School and Happy Home School in Group A; Punjab, Islamabad, and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) in Group B, Balochistan, City School DK and Suceptor College in Group C; while Group D includes teams from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh White, and Karachi University. The final match of the championship will be played on August 14. At the end of the final, prizes will be distributed among the winning players.

Kane says he joined Bayern to win titles

MUNICH (Agencies): England captain Harry Kane left boyhood club Tottenham Hotspur after 19 years to join European powerhouse Bayern Munich in search of titles, the Bundesliga's record signing said on Sunday. The 30-year-old Kane, who joined on a four-year deal on Saturday for a reported 100 million euros (\$109.44 million) plus add-ons, made his debut only hours later as a second-half substitute in Bayern's 3-0 loss to RB Leipzig in the German Super Cup.

Pegula stuns Swiatek to reach Montreal final

MONTREAL (Agencies): Jessica Pegula of the United States upset world number one Iga Swiatek on Saturday before wet weather left the American waiting to discover the identity of her WTA Montreal Open final opponent.

Fourth seed Pegula took advantage of an error-strewn display by Poland's Swiatek to complete a 6-2, 6-7 (4/7), 6-4 victory in 2hr 30min. But heavy rain over the Montreal region washed out Saturday's second semi-final between third seed Elena Rybakina of Kazakhstan and 15th seed Liudmila Samsonova.

Rybakina, who battled through weather delays on Friday before clinching her semi-final berth in the early hours of Saturday morning, or Samsonova will now face a gruelling double-header with a well-rested

Pegula awaiting in the final.

"It feels great," Pegula said after her win over Swiatek. "No better way to earn it, right? It was tough match. I felt like I was in control. But as the world number one does and a champion, she played some really great tennis at the end of the second set and in the third. So, she made me earn it."

Reigning French and US Open champion Swiatek, meanwhile, was left reflecting on a scratchy display that saw her suffer no fewer than 11 breaks of serve.

A jittery first set opened with five straight breaks of serve before Pegula finally managed to hold to take a 4-2 lead. Swiatek continued to struggle with her serve in the next game, and Pegula was soon 0-40 up.

Although Swiatek fought back to level at deuce, she

was soon in trouble again, yanking a forehand wide at break-point down to give Pegula a 5-2 lead. Pegula then served out for the set, taking a 1-0 lead with an emphatic ace down the middle. Pegula threatened to wrap up victory quickly in the second set, serving for the match at 5-4 only to drop serve before Swiatek went on to force the tiebreak.

Pegula had Swiatek under pressure in the breaker, taking a 4-2 lead, before the world number one rattled off five straight points to level the match and force a decider. It seemed as if Swiatek had weathered the storm in the final set, breaking Pegula twice early on to take a 4-2 lead. But once again Swiatek's service game unraveled, Pegula holding for 4-3 before breaking to make it 4-4.



MONTREAL: Jessica Pegula of the United States of America and Iga Swiatek of Poland lock hands at the net after their match on Day 6.

England eye to 'unretire' Ben Stokes for World Cup defence

LONDON (Agencies): England's white-ball coach Matthew Mott eyeing to bring the 2019 World Cup hero Ben Stokes out of retirement to be part of the squad for their World Cup defence in India later this year.

Motts is also planning to take a gamble on fast bowler Jofra Archer amid his fitness vows, as he is 'a proven performer.'

English selectors are expected to announce an 18-player squad for the ICC Cricket World Cup 2023 in India this Tuesday, which will be further trimmed down to the final 15 prior to September 28, as per ICC rules.

Matthew Mott has told the media that there are two elements, 'a call from Jos Buttler to his fellow England captain Stokes' and 'an updated medical report on another hero of 2019 in Archer' would be crucial before the selectors finalise the squad.

"Jos will probably lead the way on that communication (with Ben Stokes), but Ben's pretty straight with all of us. We will see if he's keen," Mott said.

He further emphasized Stokes's importance to the team in all three aspects of the game.

"There has not been a clear direction on what he's going to do yet, but we are still hopeful. I've always said his bowling would be a bonus, but just look at what he brings with the bat, even in the field," said Mott.

"Watching him throughout the whole Ashes series, he had such a great presence. He's done it for years when it comes to performing in one-day cricket and so he's an invaluable commodity," he concluded.

Ben Stokes, announced his retirement from ODI cricket during the home series against South Africa last year. He made his ODI debut in 2011 and represented England in 105 ODI games.

The decorated all-rounder scored 2919 runs, including three centuries, and took 74 wickets in his glittering ODI career.

He played a vital role for England with his unbeaten 84 in the 2019 ODI World Cup against New Zealand and forced the match into a super over before Jofra Archer's super over helped England lift their maiden ODI World Cup title by 'the barest of margins'.

Jofra Archer was also a

hero for England in their successful World Cup campaign in 2019.

However, his career has been plagued with injuries as he managed to play only seven games since the World Cup final against New Zealand in 2019.

However, the English coach is ready to take a risk, as Archer has been a 'match-winner' for the English side. "There is a high chance that we will take a risk on a proven performer that has done it on the world stage,"

"We are planning for him to be available. Obviously, a lot of things have to go his way and it will be a tight timeline but with players like that you are going to give them every opportunity to prove their fitness, and so we will keep an open mind."

The England selection committee will also announce ODI and T20I squads to face New Zealand and Ireland in limited-overs series from August 30 to September 26.

World champions England will kick off their World Cup campaign in the opening game against 2019 finalists New Zealand on October 5 at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad.



GOSFORD: Chloe Kelly of England runs with the ball during a training session at Central Coast Stadium on August 13, 2023 in Gosford, Australia.

Waziristan Independence Day Jeep Rally begins from Peshawar

PESHAWAR (APP): Waziristan Independence Day Jeep Rally organized by Department of Tourism Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Culture and Tourism Authority got under way from Peshawar Sports Complex amidst great enthusiasm.

The rally started its journey toward scenic Waziristan's Razmak valley and then to Gomal Zam Dam in Waziristan. More than 50 4x4 jeeps from all over the country are participating in the rally, DG Tourism Authority Barkatullah Marwat told APP soon after the departure of the Jeeps Rally.

The race will be held on August 14 on a 7 km track at Gomal Zam Dam, DG Tourism Authority Barkat Ullah Marwat informed. The race consists of three different categories, DG Tourism Authority Barkatullah Marwat said.

Race jeeps in A category, 2000 cc and above in B category and 2000 cc jeeps in C category will participate, Barkatullah Marwat said. He said to celebrate Pakistan's 76th Independence Day celebrations are also being continued in the adjoining districts.

He said steps have been taken to promote tourism in the merged districts and through this way the same would be highlighted to the rest of the world and with local and foreign tourists. He said through this way construction of building, rest houses and rest areas in the merged districts have also been planned so that to ensure facilitation to the tourists on a permanent basis.

Pakistan training camp for Afghanistan ODIs, Asia Cup to kick off today

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan cricket team's training camp for the upcoming ODI series against Afghanistan and Asia Cup 2023 will commence on August 14, Monday (tomorrow).

A brief three-day training camp will end on August 16, Wednesday, before the team departs for Sri Lanka on August 17.

All-rounder Faheem Ashraf, who has returned to the ODI squad after a two-year hiatus will also be a part of the training camp along with Abdullah Shafiq and Saud Shakeel.

Notably, Saud Shakeel is only part of the Pakisyan ODI squad which will take on Afghanistan in a three-match series. He has played five ODIs and his last was in March 2022 when Pakistan chased down 348 against Australia with six wickets in hand in Lahore.

Salman Ali Agha and Mohammad Wasim Jr. will also be part of the training camp, while Haris Rauf, Mohammad Rizwan, Tayyab Tahir and Shaheen Afridi will join the Pakistan training camp on August 16. However, the players who are participating in the ongoing Lanka Premier League (LPL) will join the team directly in Hambantota. PCB has also called eight additional players for Pakistan's training camp.

An 18-member Pakistan squad will take on Afghanistan in Sri Lanka from 22 to 26 August and it will be trimmed to 17 players for the Asia Cup, commencing on 30th August at Multan Cricket Stadium.

The opening game will see host Pakistan face Nepal. The squad was finalised following consultations between the national men's selection committee – which also includes Mickey Arthur, Grant Bradburn and Hassan Cheema (secretary) – and Pakistan captain Babar Azam.

Pakistan's Squad: Openers: Abdullah Shafique, Fakhar Zaman and Imam-ul-Haq

Middle order: Babar Azam (captain), Salman Ali Agha, Iftikhar Ahmed, Tayyab Tahir and Saud Shakeel (only for Afghanistan series).

Wicketkeepers: Mohammad Rizwan and Mohammad Haris

Spinners: Shadab Khan (vice-captain), Mohammad Nawaz and Usama Mir

Pace all-rounder: Faheem Ashraf

Pacers: Haris Rauf, Mohammad Wasim Jr, Naseem Shah and Shaheen Afridi.



LAUDERHILL: West Indies players wait on the decision on Tilak Varma's dismissal, West Indies vs India, 5th men's T20.

Kohli lauds Babar as 'the top batsman in the world'

NEW DELHI (Agencies): Former Indian captain Virat Kohli spoke highly of Pakistan's all-format captain Babar Azam, and termed him "the top batsman in the world".

Virat Kohli shared his first encounter in Manchester with Babar Azam when Imad Wasim introduced Babar to Kohli.

"The first interaction I had with him [Babar] was during the 2019 [ODI] World Cup after the game in Manchester. I've known Imad [Wasim] since the Under-19 World Cup, and he said Babar wanted to have a chat," Kohli said.

He further talked about the meeting and the friendship they shared since that first meeting. "I saw a lot of regard and respect from him from day one, and that hasn't changed," he added.

Kohli then termed Babar as the top batter across the globe and claimed that he enjoys watching Babar play.

"He is so down to earth character, he will go a long way as a player. He is probably the top batsman right now across all formats. He performs so consistently and I've always enjoyed watching him play."

Babar Azam is currently sitting at the top of the ODI batting ranking, the position which was once held by Virat Kohli. Both batters are celebrated across the globe as the best batters of this era.

However, despite the comparison and debates regarding who is better, the cricketers always displayed mutual respect for each other.

Last year, in July Babar came out in support of Virat with a motivating

tweet, "This too shall pass. Stay strong" and received an overwhelming response from the cricket fans.

Virat, also responded to Babar's supportive tweet for him in a challenging phase of his career, while also wishing latter the luck. "Thank you. Keep shining and rising. Wish you all the best," Virat replied to Babar in his tweet.

They will come face to face in the Asia Cup, when Pakistan and India will collide at Kandy on September 2.

The Asia Cup is scheduled to treat the fans with as many as three India-Pakistan games if both teams reach the final.

The arch-rivals will also feature in the most anticipated clash of the ODI World Cup at Narendra Modi Stadium on October 14.



TADWORTH: Charley Hull of England plays her tee shot on the second hole during the final round of the AIG Women's Open at Walton Heath Golf Club.

Mbappe reinstated by PSG but Neymar 'probably leaving'

PARIS (Agencies): French superstar Kylian Mbappe was reinstated in Paris Saint-Germain's first team on Sunday just as Neymar was said to be negotiating a move to join the cash-rich Saudi league.

It has been a rocky build-up to the new Ligue 1 season for champions PSG with both Mbappe and Neymar left out of new coach Luis Enrique's team for Saturday's underwhelming opening goalless draw against Lorient.

After being sidelined for several weeks amid an ongoing contract dispute Mbappe watched from the Parc des Princes stands.

But the club's prize asset is now back in the fold, for the time being at least.

"After very constructive and positive discussions between Paris Saint-Germain and Kylian Mbappe before the PSG-Lorient match, the player was reinstated in first team training this morning," PSG said in a statement.

Brazilian star Neymar was in contrast conspicuous by his absence on Saturday, the official line being he was suffering from a "viral syndrome".

A source told AFP on Sunday that the 31-year-old Brazilian forward "no longer figures in the club

or manager's plans".

Neymar, who joined PSG for a record 220 million euros (\$241m) from Barcelona in 2017, is "probably leaving", the same source added.

Neymar was said to be in talks with a club from the Saudi Pro League.

French sports daily L'Equipe reported that Al-Hilal is the club that has tabled the offer.

Last month Al-Hilal made a 300-million-euro (\$328 million) bid for Mbappe, though the striker reportedly refused to meet with officials from the team.

Neymar underwent surgery on his right ankle in early March, only returning to join PSG on their pre-season tour of Asia.

His time at PSG has been blighted by a catalogue of injuries.

Although he helped the club to the 2020 Champions League final he has often been sidelined for key games.

If Neymar does end up moving to Saudi Arabia he will join a growing list of top players lured to the oil-rich kingdom since Cristiano Ronaldo moved to Al-Nassr in January.

- Mbappe stand-off - After a summer of flux at the Parc des Princes

filled with new arrivals, doubts over Neymar's future and Lionel Messi's departure, it is the Mbappe stand-off that dominates the headlines.

The France captain has refused to sign an extension to his PSG deal, meaning he can leave for free next year, with Real Madrid long seen as his preferred destination.

Qatari-owned PSG want to sell him now and bring in a significant transfer fee for a player who cost 180 million euros (\$198 million) from Monaco in 2017.

"The position is very clear. If Kylian wants to stay, he must sign a new contract. We can't let the best player in the world today leave for free. It's impossible," PSG president Nasser al-Khelaifi said last month.

Mbappe had not been allowed train with the first team and played only one of PSG's five warm-up games and was not invited to the pre-season tour in Japan and South Korea.

He sat alongside fellow 2018 World Cup winner Ousmane Dembele, who completed his transfer from Barcelona earlier Saturday, as Luis Enrique handed debuts to six players against Lorient.



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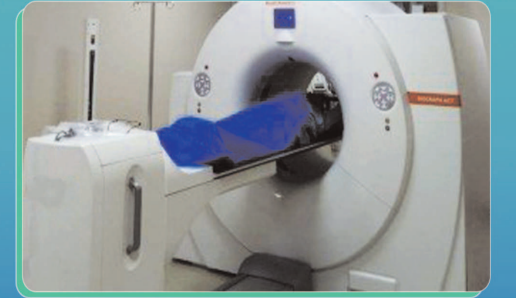
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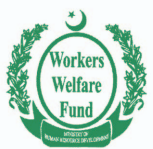


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ریسپانچر اسپتال سولر پنچ کے ساتھ

20,000 animals being vaccinated

JALALABAD (Pajhwok): A campaign has been launched to vaccinate 20,000 animals against goat plague or Peste des petits ruminants disease in 13 districts of Nangarhar. The provincial Department of Agriculture and Livestock in a statement sent to Pajhwok News said the drive kicked off today. The statement quoted agriculture director Maulvi Abdul Sattar Mohammad as saying the Holland Committee for Afghanistan had provided 20,000 Goat Plague vaccine doses.

Country hit by fuel price hike

KABUL (Agencies): Following the increase in the price of fuel on local markets, MoIC said this is a knock-on effect of higher oil prices on the global market. Spokesman for MoIC, said that price of fuel in Afghanistan is dependent on global markets, but that efforts are ongoing to keep it from rising. “There are two main reasons why the price of oil has risen in the markets, one is that the war in Ukraine has a direct effect on the world markets and the rates have risen.”

Asia is comparable to a living body composed of soil and water. The heart that beats inside the body is Afghanistan. The destruction of Afghanistan would be the destruction of Asia. And in its progress and prosperity lies the well-being of Asia. - Allama Iqbal

6 Afghans dead, 2 missing as UK-bound migrant boats sink

KABUL (Khaama Press): Six Afghans have tragically lost their lives, while two others remain missing at sea. The incident occurred as small boats carrying migrants, including children, capsized in the English Channel, according to British media on Sunday. On Saturday, French prosecutors initiated a criminal investigation in response to the most recent tragedies stemming from illicit journeys organized by human traffickers. These incidents underscore the pressing need for swift and comprehensive

action to address the grave consequences of these illegal activities. Philippe Sabatier, the Boulogne prosecutor, said the latest two disasters happened “in the early hours, in poor weather and worsening sea conditions. “Six Afghan males died, and most of those involved were also from Afghanistan. They included minors,” he said. A fragile vessel carrying approximately 66 individuals was observed in distress at approximately 2:00 AM, situated just off the shores of Sangatte near Calais

Beach. Five Afghan men, aged in their 20s and 30s, were declared deceased at the scene, while a sixth individual was airlifted to the hospital; however, he subsequently passed away. On Saturday, yet another small migrant boat tragically sank in the Channel. Among the passengers, 22 individuals were fortunately rescued, although one remains in critical condition, as reported by Sabatier. The identities of victims remain unknown, as several were travelling without papers.

Security, transparency facilitates investment opportunities for all

KABUL (Agencies): Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, in the conference organized by Afghan investors in Turkey, said that with the establishment of a central system in Afghanistan under the Islamic Emirate, facilitated investment opportunities for all the citizens and foreign companies.

According to a statement released by Prime Minister Office, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar participated in a meeting attended by Afghan investors living in Turkey. Almighty Allah had mercy on the Afghans who freed from twenty years of occupation and enjoy nationwide security that they had wished for decades, he said.

In the past 20 years, the safety of Afghans, especially national businessmen and investors, at risk, but fortunately, with the establishment of the Islamic



Emirate, they are safe and work in secure environment, he added.

Deputy Prime Minister for Political Affairs in a conference organized by Afghan investors living in Turkey said that with the establishment of a unified central administration in Afghanistan, investment opportunities have been provided not only to Afghans, but also to foreigners, citing a contract and joint investment in the Ghorian Mine in Herat province by Afghans, Euro-

pean and Asian investors.

This comes as the Supreme Leader of Islamic Emirate has directed the formation of an economic advisory board where representatives of businessmen and investors would be also members.

At the end of the meeting, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, said that Afghanistan is free from any discrimination and it is the common home of all Afghans who can live in peace and harmony with each other.

Troops who do not wear uniforms to be punished, says: MoD

KABUL (TOLONews): The Ministry of Defense said that all troops have been provided with uniforms and that those who neglect wearing them will be punished.

Enayatullah Khwarizmi, a spokesman for the Defense Ministry, said that the uniforms are from the previous government, but its color may change soon.

“The leadership of the Defense Ministry has ordered that the (uniform) should be used in military centers and we—all personnel of the defense ministry -- should follow the order of the ministry of defense,” he said.

“The materials and clothes from the previous government remain with us. We are now using them based on the decree of the Defense Ministry,” Khwarizmi said.

Meanwhile, military analysts said that the uniform is a serious need for the troops.

“Uniforms and military clothes are the obvious symbols of the military and are the reality of the society. Without military uniforms, it cannot be clear whether they are military or not,” said Asadullah Nadim, a military analyst.

This comes as residents of Kabul meanwhile called on the Islamic Emirate to take serious actions to implement the wearing of uniform among the defense and security forces.

“Uniforms are an important issue. If the Islamic Emirate’s forces have uniforms, the criminal rate will be reduced in the country,” said Javid, a resident of Kabul.

This comes as citizens have repeatedly voiced concerns about the lack of wearing uniforms by the Islamic Emirate’s forces.

Afghanistan participates in 49 international events in a year, collects 23 medals



KABUL (TOLONews): Presenting an annual review, officials from the country’s sports department revealed that over the course of the past year, they initiated more than 3,000 dedicated programs, both specialized and official, to advance the realm of sports within Afghanistan.

Afghanistan’s sports authorities emphasized that the nation’s athletes actively participated in 49 international events over the span of a year, ultimately securing an impressive tally

of 23 medals. “Engaging in diverse disciplines, our athletes have achieved notable success, securing three gold, ten silver, and ten bronze medals,” noted Abdul Wadud Haqqani, Director of the General Directorate of Physical Education and Sports.

The report also spotlighted the challenges faced by Afghan athletes, including the hurdles encountered in obtaining visas.

“Around 15% of international competitions rema-

ined inaccessible to our athletes due to visa delays and insufficient funds,” disclosed Abdulmoman Rad, Technical and Professional Head of the General Directorate of Physical Education and Sports.

Meanwhile, Daad Mohammad Akhtari, the head of the National Olympic Committee shed light on the budgetary concern stemming from the non-transfer of funds by the International Olympic Committee and the Olympic Council of Asia to

Afghanistan.

“The ongoing issue of Afghanistan’s Olympic budget is actively being addressed, and solutions will be forthcoming through the concerted efforts of the International Olympic Committee and the Olympic Council of Asia,” assured Akhtari.

In their presentation, the officials underscored the value of their programs, designed to foster growth and advancement in both local and global sports arenas.

Every country can invest in Afghanistan’s lithium sector: Azizi

KABUL (TOLONews): Speaking to Reuters, the acting Minister of Commerce and Industry, Nooruddin Azizi, said that every country can invest in the lithium sector of Afghanistan.

Azizi also talked about his recent visit to Kazakhstan, saying that the delegation discussed facilitating international financial transactions with private banks in a bid to ease the Afghan banking sector’s isolation.

“Every country can invest in Afghanistan’s lithium sector because the hope of the people of Afghanistan is lithium and I don’t want lithium to be wasted by a company, a country, a person or a hundred people,” Azizi told Reuters.

Nooruddin Azizi, acting Minister of Commerce and Industry, led a business delegation to Kazakhstan last week.

In addition to banking he discussed the possibility of preferential trade tariffs, telecommunications projects and transit routes, including

for possible shipments of Russian oil to South Asia, Reuters reported.

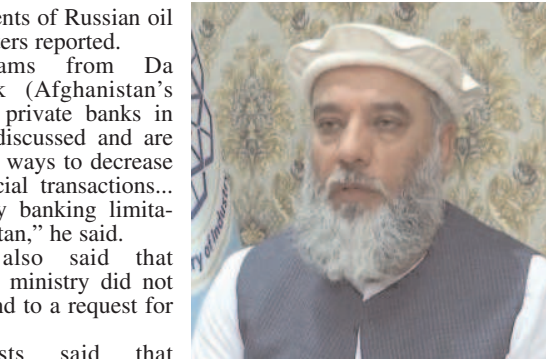
“We had teams from Da Afghanistan Bank (Afghanistan’s central bank) and private banks in Kazakhstan, they discussed and are trying to find good ways to decrease the price of financial transactions... we don’t have any banking limitations with Kazakhstan,” he said.

But Reuters also said that Kazakhstan’s trade ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The economists said that Afghanistan’s lithium mines are important and strategic.

“Lithium is one of the strategic minerals of Afghanistan which is important in Afghanistan economic stability. Therefore, the deal about the Afghanistan lithium is a strategic move which relates to the Afghanistan national security and foreign policy,” said Sayed Masoud, an economist.

“Afghanistan is among three countries which have the major lithium of



the world. The future of technology is reliant on lithium. If it is managed well, and with proper contracts based on proper conditions, it can take Afghanistan out of poverty,” said Azeraksh Hafizi, an economist.

Based on the information of the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum, various countries including China have expressed interest in investing \$10 billion in Afghanistan’s lithium mines.

MoIC pledges addressing media, journalists problems: Khairkhah

KABUL (Agencies): Acting Information and Culture Minister Mullah Khairullah Khairkhah, at the meeting of Commissions on Media Violation, Information Access said the Ministry is pledged to address the media and journalists’ problems in the country.

A meeting attended by Deputy Minister of Publications Affairs

Mohajer Farahi, the head of the Media Supervision Department Dr. Abdul Wahid Rayan, and other members of the Commission held to discuss challenges faced by media in the country.

Acting Minister Mullah Khairullah Khairkhah in this meeting said: “The Ministry of Information and Culture is pledged to address problems of jour-

nalists and the media and supports media in the light of the country’s culture, national values, and Islamic laws”.

Acting Minister Khairkhah said through the commission we strive to attract donor support to media and journalists as much as possible.

Meanwhile, officials member of the Commissions on Media

Violation, and Information Access shared details to report on the activity of the commission with Acting Minister Khairkhah and stressed that the commission did well so far.

To end the commission officials reminded that they move forward with the mission of the commission by the Islamic and national values of the country.

9 killed, 4 wounded in Afghanistan last week

KABUL (Pajhwok): The Pakistani officials recently alleged Afghans were involved in rising insecurity in that country, but the Islamic Emirate has repeatedly denied such allegations. The caretaker government says it does not want any country, especially its neighbours, to be insecure.

Casualties Last week, nine people were killed and four others wounded in various incidents of violence across the country.

Unknown gunmen killed a 21-year-old girl in Takhar, a farmer in Parwan, a moneychanger in Kandahar, an 18-year boy in Daikundi and a man in Sar-i-Pul.

Security officials said unidentified assailants lobbed grenades into a house in Nangarhar, leaving two children dead and three others wounded.

Local officials say the body of a young man, who had gone missing seven months ago, was found in Uruzgan. Unknown men entered a house and stabbed one man to death and injured his wife in Takhar.

In the previous week, 11 people had been killed and eight others injured in various incidents across the country.

Before the regime change in August 2021, hundreds of civilians, insurgents and security personnel would be killed and

maimed every week.

Islamabad’s claim and Kabul’s response

Pakistan once again accused Afghan citizens of being involved in terrorist incidents in that country.

“The involvement of Afghan nationals in terrorist incidents in Pakistan is detrimental to regional peace, stability and deviation from the Doha Peace Agreement by the interim Afghan government,” said in a statement.

The interim government once again rejected Islamabad’s allegations that Afghanistan was involved the current wave of terrorism in the neighbouring country.

The caretaker administration made clear it did not back terror attacks and would not allow anyone to use Afghanistan’s soil against Pakistan.

Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan’s spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said of Pakistani authorities had again blamed Afghans for insecurity there instead of securing their country.

In a statement, he said IEA emphatically rejected the allegations and reminded Pakistan that Afghanistan itself had just come out of prolonged conflict and did not want any country, especially its neighbours, to be insecure.

He reaffirmed Afghanistan’s stated position that it would not allow anyone to use Afghanistan’s territory

against a third country. However, he explained, it did not mean Afghanistan was responsible for the security of any regional country.

Mujahid remarked: “Unfortunately, our region remained the victim of the US-led foreign invasion over the past two decades and wrong policies of some regional countries, whose effects are still being felt.”

The spokesman revealed 18 Pakistani IS-K fighters, who were in involved in explosions and other attacks, had been killed in operations by IEA forces in the past one year.

Dozens of other militants had been arrested in the country and evidence of their activities was available, Mujahid continued.

“Instead of blaming Pakistan for such activities, Afghanistan has tightened its security. Al-hamdu Lillah, we have seen positive outcomes,” he said.

Also, acting Minister of Defense Maulvi Mohammad Yaqoob Mujahid said if someone from Afghanistan with the intention of waging jihad, this war was not considered jihad.

Also last week, some media outlets reported the IEA leader had issued an order against attacks in Pakistan, but the caretaker government spokesman denied these reports.

Mujahid clarified Maulvi Hibatullah Akhundzada

had not issued any decree on attacks in Pakistan. However, the Darul Ifta had issued a fatwa barring Afghans from going to war abroad without orders from the leader of the Islamic Emirate.

He explained based on the fatwa, sending people to war abroad should be in line with orders from the IEA leader.

“This is clearly a Sharia order issued by the Darul Ifta, not by Amirul Momineen (Islamic Emirate leader). The Darul Ifta has stated the mujahideen (Islamic Emirate’s troops) abroad for war is not jihad and that in such situations, the order of the Amir ... is compulsory,” he maintained.

The acting Afghan ambassador in Islamabad met religious leaders and scholars. Ambassador, Sardar Ahmad Shakib met Siraj-ul-Haq, the Jamaat-i-Islami central amir.

The two sides expressed their commitment to strengthening bilateral relations for peace and stability in the region.

In addition to achievements of the Islamic Emirate in the past two years, historical, religious and cultural ties between Pakistan and Afghanistan were discussed.

Mullah Baradar’s trip to Turkey

At the head of a delegation, deputy prime minister for economic affairs Mu-

llah Abdul Ghani Baradar on Tuesday left for Turkey to attend a conference and meet host officials.

Baradar met Nail Olpac, the head of Foreign Economic Relations Board of Turkey (DEiK), and other businessmen and Afghan entrepreneurs in Istanbul on trade-related issues and investment opportunities in Afghanistan.

Baradar assured Afghan and Turkish businessmen of improved security in Afghanistan, saying the ground had been paved for investments, according to the statement.

He said the Islamic Emirate supported businessmen and traders by providing them more facilities in areas of mining, agriculture, power generation, communications, trade and other sectors.

Continued positive interaction urged

Acting Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi and UNAMA head Roza Otunbayeva, discussed the “continuation of positive interaction” between the UN and the Islamic Emirate.

Muttaqi met said the government had created a suitable environment for transparent and independent distribution of international aid in the country.

Watch on aid

The Special Inspector General for Afghanistan’s Reconstruction (SIGAR)

said Afghanistan’s central bank lacked independence from the caretaker government and adequate safeguards against money-laundering and terror financing.

In its quarterly report, the US watchdog told Congress the caretaker government’s interference in NGOs’ work had escalated, leading to a steady decline in humanitarian access in 2023, with a 32% increase in incidents between January and May 2023 as compared to the same period in 2022.

It says most recent publicly available data from BHA showed there were a total of 110 incidents related to IEA interference in April 2023 alone.

Senate Foreign Affairs Committee head Michael MacCaull called for greater monitoring of US assistance to Afghanistan.

But Mujahid said: “We strongly reject this claim. No interference from IEA in the work of NGOs and organisations; especially in their financial areas, is taking place. All organisations are working according to their procedures.”

“Just in case someone complains about lack of transparency in distribution or about security concerns, the Islamic Emirate cooperates with the institutions, but does not interfere in their affairs. We reject such reports,” Mujahid added.

Acting Refugee and

Repatriation Minister Khalil Rahman Haqqani alleged aid organisations distributed only 20 percent of aid and pocketed the rest.

Haqqani said this at a meeting with UN humanitarian aid coordinator Daniel Andres, the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation said in a statement on its social media platform X, formerly known as Twitter.

Haqqani and Andres exchanged views on problems and the current situation of Afghan refugees in foreign countries and establishing coordination between Afghanistan and the United Nations.

He said: “Many aid organisations distribute only 20 percent of aid to people and pocket 80 percent of it.”

Acting Foreign Minister Maulvi Amir Khan Muttaqi says the government has created a suitable environment for transparent and independent distribution of international aid in the country.

Girls’ education

The caretaker government, which has suspended education for girls above the sixth grade, said the decision was not permanent and a solution would be sought within the framework of Sharia.

The Education Ministry had said whenever proper uniforms in line with Sharia and Afghan culture were

designed and approved, the IEA leadership would allow the reopening of girls schools above class sixth.

Indonesian President Joko Widodo and Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Hissein Ibrahim Taha emphasised on the access of girls to education in Afghanistan.

In addition, UN Secretary General’s Special Adviser Leonardo Garnier said it was “vital” for the international community and the United Nations to maintain pressure on IEA due to restrictions on girls’ education.

Influential figures and university teachers in eastern Nangarhar province asked the interim government to allow women to pursue higher education and give government posts to all those eligible.

During a meeting with Interior Minister Sirajuddin Haqqani, the elders said the nation should see itself in the government.

Haqqani told the elders that problems and shortcomings existed, but they would be addressed by working together with the nation with patience and courage.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in a report says about 118.5 million girls around the world are deprived of education.

Senators dismayed at annulment of Review of Judgments and Orders Act

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Parliamentary leaders of the parties, part of majority alliance in the Senate, on Sunday expressed their disappointment over the annulment of Review of Judgments and Orders Act, 2023 by the Supreme Court of Pakistan.

They said that the principle of separation of powers was clearly defined in the constitution, and that legislation was the sole prerogative of the parliament.

They said declaring the Act null and void by the SC was unfortunate, and that the apex court should refrain from interfering in the affairs of the parliament. Yesterday, Senator Irfan Siddiqui had submitted an adjournment motion to the Senate on the annulment of the Supreme Court (Review of Judgments and Orders) Act 2023 by the Supreme Court.

The adjournment motion says that there is a clear impression in the decision that the Supreme Court Rules are above the power of Parliament to legislate. Depriving a person of the right to appeal is killing the demands of justice, the adjournment says adding that the SC judgement is an open insult to the

Parliament, a curtailment of the power of the Parliament to legislate and a strike at the constitutional right to a fair trial. The motion states that throwing away the law passed by 442-member parliament by three judges is an insult to democracy.

The motion has been tabled in the Senate for immediate consideration of the situation arising out of the annulment decision by the Supreme Court. The motion was filed today in the notice branch of the Senate via e-mail under Rule 87 of the Senate's Rules of Procedure.

In the adjournment motion based on seven points, it is said that the three-member bench of the Supreme Court has issued a decision declaring the law passed by both the houses of the Parliament and ratified by the President of Pakistan invalid, which should be considered immediately. The main purpose of this Act of Parliament is to ensure the right of "fair trial" under Article 10-A of the Constitution and the requirements of justice under various other Articles to give the right of appeal to those persons who have been convicted by the

Supreme Court on suo motu notice (184-3).

Senator Irfan Siddiqui explained in the adjournment motion that a person convicted by the Sessions Court has the right to two appeals in the High Court and the Supreme Court, while in the case of punishment under 184-3, the first decision of the Supreme Court is considered last and final which is against the basic human rights and justice requirements.

In the adjournment motion, it has been stated that the decision has given a clear impression that the rules made by the Supreme Court in 1980 (Rules), are above the Parliament's power of legislation. It means that the SC Rules are above the Rules made by the Majlis-e-Shura (Parliament). Senator Irfan Siddiqui has said in the adjournment motion that depriving a person of the right to appeal is killing the demands of justice.

The court ruling said that in 1973, the constitution framers did not provide for the right of appeal under Article 184-3. He said that the wise 1973 Constitution framers would not have imagined that there would be a time when the scope of

184-3 would be expanded without limit. Under this, a citizen can be severely punished with disqualification from politics for life and he will not have the right to appeal. If the framers of the Constitution had realized this indiscriminate and unfair use of discretion, they would probably have scrapped this provision or given the right to appeal.

It has been said in the adjournment motion that reserving the decision for 53 days and pronouncing it two days after the dissolution of the assembly by the Supreme Court, is an act done in not good faith.

Senator Irfan Siddiqui said that this decision is an open insult to the Parliament. It curtails the power of Parliament to legislate and strikes at the constitutional right to a fair trial. This decision has raised questions on the honour and respect of the Parliament. It is also an insult to democracy for three judges to overturn the law of the 442-member Parliament.

Siddiqui has demanded that the Senate consider this serious issue and take up this matter of immediate importance for necessary action.

Caretaker PM Kakar to quit party, Senate membership

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Caretaker Prime Minister-designate Anwaarul Haq Kakar has decided to resign from party membership and the Senate.

Kakar stated that he would resign from the membership of the Senate and the Balochistan

Awami Party (BAP).

Kakar mentioned that now, as he is responsible for ensuring free and fair elections in the country, for which he needs to cooperate with the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), he has decided to resign from

the Senate.

It should be noted that Kakar, who is the eighth nominee of the caretaker prime minister, will take the oath tomorrow. A decision will be made about the caretaker cabinet after assuming the charge.

China vows strong response over Taiwan VP's US visit

BEIJING (AFP/APP): China on Sunday vowed "resolute and forceful measures" over a weekend trip by Taiwan Vice President William Lai to the United States it said it was closely monitoring.

"China is closely following the development of the situation and will take resolute and forceful measures to safeguard national sovereignty and territorial integrity," an unnamed spokesperson for the foreign ministry said in a statement published online.

Lai -- a candidate in Taiwan's presidential elections next year -- is officially making only transit stops in the United States en route to and from Paraguay, where he will be attending the inauguration of president-elect Santiago Pena. Taiwan is claimed by China, which has vowed to take the territory one day -- by force, if necessary -- and has ramped up political and military pressure.

"China is firmly opposed to any form of official exchanges between the US and Taiwan, is resolutely opposed to separatists seeking 'Taiwan independence' entering the US under any name and for any reason, and firmly opposed to any form of official contact between the US government and the Taiwanese side," the spokesperson said.

"China expresses strong dissatisfaction with and strongly condemns the US insistence on arranging William Lai's 'transit' to the US," the spokesperson added, labelling Lai a "downright troublemaker". Before boarding his flight on Saturday afternoon, Lai told reporters he planned to "interact with leaders from various countries in the world and also meet delegations from like-minded countries" during his trip to Paraguay. "I will... let the international community know our many efforts to maintain peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region," Lai said.

Soldier martyred, 4 terrorists killed in Bajaur clash: ISPR

PESHAWAR (APP): A soldier was martyred and four terrorists were killed during a clash in Bajaur tribal district. "On night 12/13 August 2023, security forces conducted an Intelligence Based Operation in general area Charamang, Bajaur District on reported presence of terrorists. During the conduct of operation, intense fire exchange occurred between security forces and terrorists. During the operation, four terrorists were sent to hell while one terrorist was apprehended," said ISPR in a press release.

Weapons, ammunition and explosives including a suicide vest was also recovered from

the terrorists, who remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities against security forces and killing of innocent citizens, especially suicide blasts. During intense exchange of fire, Sepoy Muhammad Shoaib (age 24 years, resident of District Kohat), having fought gallantly embraced Shahadat. Sanitization of the area is being carried out to eliminate any terrorists found in the area. Security forces of Pakistan remain determined to eliminate the menace of terrorism from Pakistan. **Two terrorists killed amid swift response to attack on military convoy in Gwadar** The security forces on Sunday killed two

terrorists in a swift response to the attack made on a military convoy in the morning in Gwadar district.

The terrorists attacked a military convoy in Gwadar at 1000 hours, an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) press release said.

The terrorists used small arms and hand grenades during the activity, however, due to efficient and swift response, two terrorists were sent to hell with no harm to any military or civil persons.

, it said. The ISPR said, "Security Forces of Pakistan remain determined to thwart efforts of the enemies of peace and prosperity in the country."

PPP urged nation to void hate, division: Bilawal

KARACHI (APP): Chairman of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Independence Day has urged the nation to work together to end the hatred and division from society as well as work hard to make Pakistan a country that other nations of the world can give examples of its democracy and prosperity. While extending greetings to the nation on Independence Day, he expressed good wishes for all Pakistanis. He said that today is the day to pay

homage to Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and his companions, who struggled for freedom under his leadership and made sacrifices. "August 14 symbolizes making the impossible possible through peaceful political and democratic struggle," he said adding that the Day is also the occasion to ask ourselves whether today's Pakistan has succeeded in achieving all goals that our founding fathers had set and dreamed of at the time of its

establishment.

"In the light of the vision of the Quaid-e-Azam, we still have a long way to go and work hard to establish a strong federal democratic state and a society based on tolerance and equality," he continued. Bilawal said that his party is the true torchbearer of the ideology and principles of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, who was a unique democrat and statesman believed in religious tolerance.

Russian forces kill seven including baby in Ukraine

KYIV (AFP/APP): Seven people including a newborn baby, her 12-year-old brother and their parents were killed on Sunday by Russian shelling in the southern Ukrainian region of Kherson, officials said.

Also among the victims was a Christian pastor, officials said, adding that another 13 people received injuries. The three adults and two children were killed in the village of Shyroka Balka in the region of Kherson, Interior Minister Igor Klymenko said on messaging app Telegram, releasing pictures showing the aftermath of the shelling attack. One photo showed a column of black smoke rising above a house. "A husband, wife and their 23-day-old daughter were killed by enemy artillery fire," Klymenko wrote.



LAHORE: Former Minister of State for Petroleum Dr. Musadiq Masood Malik calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Independence Day preparations in full swing

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Preparations in connection with the celebration of Independence Day on Monday (August 14) are at its bloom across the country in Pakistan.

National flags, bunting, pin badges, green and white dresses, toys and other accessories have been put on display on the stalls.

A multitude of stalls have sprung up across the length and breadth of the country, proudly showcasing an array of national symbols. The striking tricolor of the national flag, fluttering bunting, commemorative pin badges, and attire in the emblematic green and white hues fill these vibrant displays.

Shelves adorned with toys and other thematic accessories exude an air of festivity, inviting citizens to partake in the celebration. As the clock ticks closer to Independence Day, eager citizens are seizing the opportunity to adorn their homes and surroundings with patriotism. National flags, bunting, portraits of the founding fathers, and evocative posters are making their way into homes,

amplifying the spirit of national unity.

The federal capital, Islamabad, has undergone a breathtaking transformation. Main thoroughfares are now adorned with a kaleidoscope of flowers and twinkling lights, infusing the city with an aura of enchantment. Carefully curated images showcasing Pakistan's rich cultural tapestry and iconic landmarks grace the streets, captivating the gaze of passersby.

Throughout the nation, the monumental gesture of hoisting the national flag remains a central theme. With unwavering reverence, the tricolor emblem will grace the facades of key public and private edifices, symbolizing the collective determination that birthed the nation.

In a culinary salute to freedom, numerous food establishments have unfurled their 'Azadi' deals, beckoning food aficionados with enticing discounts. Meanwhile, boutiques and stores have unveiled a captivating array of 'Azadi' attire, allowing individuals to express their patriotic fervor through

fashion. The airwaves resonate with resonant tributes, as both Radio Pakistan and Pakistan Television transmit special broadcasts that celebrate the indomitable spirit of Pakistan's heroes. These transmissions serve as a poignant reminder of the sacrifices that paved the way for the nation's existence. Radio Pakistan and Pakistan Television are broadcasting special transmission to highlight the services and sacrifices of heroes of Pakistan Movement and to pay tributes to their extra ordinary contributions for making Pakistan a reality.

Meanwhile, in connection with the 77th Independence Day celebrations, Azadi Parade is being held at Pakistan Military Academy in Kakul tonight (Monday night). Chief of Army Staff, General Syed Asim Munir will be the Chief Guest on this occasion. The Cadets will present a spectacular display of drill parade while a special tribute will be paid to the martyrs who laid their lives for the motherland.

Maui wildfires deadliest in century as death toll hits 93

KAHULUI (Reuters): The death toll from the Maui wildfires in Hawaii reached 93 on Saturday, according to the Maui County website, making it the deadliest U.S. wildfire in more than a century, with the total likely to rise as cadaver dogs sift through the ruins of Lahaina.

The scale of the damage came into sharper focus four days after a fast-moving blaze leveled the historic resort town, obliterating buildings and melting cars.

The cost to rebuild Lahaina was estimated at \$5.5 billion, according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), with more than 2,200 structures damaged or destroyed and more than 2,100 acres (850 hectares) burned. Hawaii Governor Josh Green warned at a press conference on Saturday afternoon the death toll would continue to increase as more victims were discovered. Dogs trained to detect bodies have covered only 3% of the search area, Maui County Police Chief John Pelletier said.

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