

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Vice Chairman Shah Mehmood Qureshi congratulated the nation on 76th Independence Day of Pakistan, hoping that the PTI workers would celebrate the Independence Day with renewed enthusiasm and spirit as per the desire of their beloved leader and PTI Chairman PTI Imran Khan.

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RAWALPINDI (PPI): PTI president and former Punjab chief minister Chaudhry Parvez Elahi was arrested again shortly after his release from Adiala Jail on Monday. According to the sources, Elahi was released from Adiala Jail after the period of his detention expired. However, he was arrested again by the NAB Lahore in assets beyond known sources of income case soon after he was released.

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Anwaar Kakar takes oath as caretaker PM

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar here on Monday took oath as the caretaker prime minister of Pakistan. President Dr Arif Alvi administered the oath to the caretaker prime minister in a ceremony at the President's House.

Outgoing prime minister Shehbaz Sharif, Chairman Senate SadiqSanjrani, Governor Punjab Balighur Rehman, Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi and leading politicians of various political parties also attended the ceremony.

Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee General Sahir Shamshad Mirza, and other high-ranking officials were also present on the occasion.

Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar took oath of office as the 8th caretaker Prime Minister of Pakistan on August 14, 2023. He was elected as an independent Senator from Balochistan province for a tenure of March 2018 to March 2024.

He is also one of the founding members of Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) and was appointed as the central spokesperson of the party in 2018. While serving as Senator, he was the chairman of Senate Standing Committee on Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development and as a member of the Business Advisory Committee, Finance and Revenue, Foreign Affairs, and Science and Technology. Earlier, he served as spokesman for the government of Balochistan from December 2015 to January 2018.

An avid intellectual, with keen insight on the issues faced by Pakistan, particularly Balochistan province, Mr Kakar has been sharing his perspective at academic and policymaking platforms, both nationally and internationally. These include interactions with students and faculty members at Pakistan's top-ranking universities, closed-door sessions with the country's policymakers, briefings to the country's political and military elite, sessions

on building the Balochistan narrative with the diplomatic corps based in Islamabad, as well as a significant number of nationally televised political talk shows.

Born in 1971, he hails from Muslim Bagh, KillaSaifullah district of Balochistan. Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar holds a Master's degree in Political Science and Sociology from the University of Balochistan. He is an alumnus of the prestigious National Security Workshop from the National Defence University, Islamabad. He is also Patron-in-Chief of the Voice of Balochistan, an independent perception building initiative he masterminded. Mr. Kakar is fluent in English, Urdu, Persian, Pashto, Balochi and Brahvi.

Meanwhile, the Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar was presented guard of honour in a ceremony at the Prime Minister House.

A smartly turned out contingent of Pakistan's armed forces presented the guard of honour. National anthem was also played on the occasion. Outgoing Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif received the new prime minister on his arrival. The caretaker prime minister met the officers and staff of the Prime Minister House.

Outgoing prime minister felicitated Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on becoming caretaker PM and expressed his best wishes for him. Earlier, outgoing prime minister was also given guard of honour. He reviewed the guard of honour as the contingents of the armed forces presented a salute to him. Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar bid farewell to the departing prime minister.

Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar also here assumed his responsibilities after taking the oath of office. The PM sought briefing from all ministries on important matters.

Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar also held a meeting with a delegation from Balochistan. Senator SarfrazBugti and Mir Khalid Lango were part of the delegation. The delegation felicitated the prime minister on assuming office and expressed their best wishes for him.

Military leadership felicitates nation F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: The military leadership has extended heartfelt congratulations to the nation on the 76th Independence Day of Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

A statement issued by the ISPR stated that this day reminds us of the vision, fortitude and countless sacrifices which our ancestors offered, to realise our elders and great Quaid's dream of a free and independent country. It said that thousands of sons' of soil have laid down their lives for defence of the motherland and to preserve the cherished dream of freedom of our forefathers.

The statement added that we should pledge on this day that irrespective of the challenges we face today, we will preserve and strengthen the peace, societal harmony and unity among the Nation. We will not let inimical forces to succeed, which are hell bent to create fissures and division among the armed forces and people of Pakistan.

The ISPR stated that armed forces, with the support of Nation, will always defend the territorial integrity and peace of the motherland and continue to serve the nation as per the aspirations of people of Pakistan, InshaAllah.

Murad for consensus caretaker setup

KARACHI (INP): Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah on Monday said that the People's Party hopefully will become the largest party of Pakistan in the next election. He was talking to media after inaugurating Machhli Chowk to KANUPP road in Karachi.

He said the PPP has ruled Sindh for last 15 years and hopefully it will become the largest party of Pakistan in the next election. "We are sure the PPP will emerge as the largest party in Karachi," CM Shah said. "The MQM and Jamaat-e-Islami are saying the PPP did nothing," a journalist asked. CM replied with "no comments".

Talking on the caretaker setup in Sindh, chief minister said that the two sides have discussed several names and one of them will become the caretaker chief minister of Sindh. "Hopefully, we will reach to consensus in the time till 12 tonight," he said.

"In previous two periods, we had reach to decision on the final day of consultations," he said. "If failed to reach agreement, me and the opposition leader will suggest two names to the parliamentary committee," he said. "It is a misconception that the name will come from some other place," he added. Chief Minister was earlier briefed about dualization project of the Hawkes Bay Road. The road has been built by the KMC under the Competitive and Livable City Project of the World Bank. "Machhli Chowk to KANUPP road has been built with a cost of 1.15 billion rupees," the CM was briefed.

Google celebrates Pak I-Day

ISLAMABAD (INP): Google has celebrated Pakistan's Independence Day with a special doodle artwork featuring a toothed whale species that is endemic to Pakistan — The Indus River dolphin.

Today's annual Doodle celebrates Pakistan Independence Day 2023! On this day in 1947, Pakistan gained its independence and became a sovereign nation after almost 200 years of British occupancy. Following the Indian Independence Act in 1947, Muslim Indians wanted their own independent nation-state and started the Pakistan Movement.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi administering the oath of office to Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar as the caretaker Prime Minister, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Alvi for promoting rule of law

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Monday said Pakistan could be put on the path of development and prosperity by promoting the rule of law, democracy, provision of basic human rights, eradication of social injustices and poverty.

The president paid the heartiest tributes to the founders of Pakistan who struggled for independence of Pakistan and the hundreds of thousands of people who embraced martyrdom for Pakistan. President Alvi stressed the elite of the country to take responsibility for poverty alleviation and promotion of education and health, which he said were inter-connected with each other.

He said currently 27 million children were out of school across the country and needed to enrol in schools. He stressed that every child should be enrolled in school which could only be possible through resources. He said everybody should pay his or her due tax so that the government could get more resources to provide maximum facilities to the people.

Similarly, he said good health was also vital for nation-building. The president said although it was necessary to explore natural

resources buried under the land but the actual wealth was built in our minds which should be fully utilized. He stressed the need to look into the areas of the latest technologies, IT, industries and agriculture. He quoted Allama Iqbal as saying that without women's participation; no nation could develop and prosper. Therefore, he called upon the women folk of the country to work for the development of the country by actively participating in all areas. Quid-i-Azam, he said also encouraged his sister Fatima Jinnah to fully participate in the country's politics.

The president also expressed solidarity with the people of occupied Kashmir. He hoped that by the will of God, soon Kashmir would become part of Pakistan. He vowed to the people of Kashmir not to leave Pakistan's support for their just struggle. He also thanked the friendly countries including China, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Iran, Turkiye, and Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) for supporting Pakistan in its difficult time. He said Islam always preached peace and love even when the world was desecrating the holy Quran.

Change of guards ceremonies held F.P. Report

KARACHI, LAHORE: In a splendid commemoration of the 76th Independence Day on August 14, a spectacle of honor and reverence unfolded at the hallowed mausoleums of Pakistan's visionary founding father, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, and the revered poet-philosopher, Allama Muhammad Iqbal.

The day dawned with the resounding echoes of a 31-gun salute in the heart of the federal capital, harmonising with a corresponding 21-gun salute in provincial headquarters. With a symphony of discipline and fervor, the mausoleums of Jinnah and Iqbal stood as silent witnesses to a ceremonial changing of the guards. Dressed impeccably, cadets from the prestigious Pakistan Naval Academy assumed their positions, embodying the ethos of tradition and pride that the nation holds dear.

The atmosphere was charged with their unwavering commitment as they accepted the honor of guarding the resting places of those who had sown the seeds of Pakistan's existence. At the mausoleum in Karachi, Commodore Muhammad Khalid, Commandant of the Pakistan Naval Academy, graced the occasion as the chief guest. A reverent floral wreath was laid at Jinnah's resting place, a silent pledge renewed by each petal, that the spirit of unity and resilience shall remain unwavering.

Meanwhile, Lahore radiated with a similar fervor as a meticulously turned-out contingent from the Pakistan Army took up their positions around the Mazar-e-Iqbal. Division Major General Qaiser Suleman led this graceful exchange of guards at the mausoleum of Allama Iqbal, his hands laying a wreath with the respect and admiration that generations have nurtured for the poet-philosopher.

PML-N leader Hina harassed

LONDON (INP): Former MPA of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz, Hina Parvez Butt, was allegedly attacked while walking on the road with her son in London. The PML-N leader alleged that it was PTI supporters who not only harassed her and shouted slogans at her, but also threw bottles.

Hina Butt claimed that PTI supporters threw cold drink and water bottles at her while she was walking on the streets of London with her son. Hina Butt had also met PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif two days ago. She said she was followed and harassed for 30 to 40 minutes. She added that the harassers did not even care about her minor son.

In one of the videos, Hina could be seen exiting a money exchange, as a group of people holding PTI flags follows her out and shouts slogans calling Nawaz Sharif a "thief". In another, a woman could be heard calling Hina names and throwing bottles at her from behind. Tweeting a video of the assault and harassment, Hina asked if such uncivilized people were making Pakistan proud or with such acts or defaming it.



KARACHI: Chief Minister Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah and Governor Sindh Kamran Tessori visits the mausoleum of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah on the occasion of 76th Independence Day.

Kashmiris to observe Black Day today

MIRPUR AJK (APP): Like all previous years Jammu and Kashmir State people living on both sides of the line of control and the rest of the world would observe India's independence day falling on August 15 (Tuesday) as Black Day.

Kashmiris observe August, 15 Indian independence day every year as a black day to reiterate ever-lasting hatred against India and to register strong protest over Delhi's forced Aug 05, 2019, sinister action of scrapping the special status of the internationally recognized Jammu and Kashmir state.

Kashmiris observe India's all national days including independence day as black day to condemn India for constantly denying Kashmiris birth right to self-determination and to apprise the external world of India's ongoing worst reign of state terrorism making people of occupied Jammu Kashmir state besieged, at gunpoint of over two million of her military and paramilitary troops.

India has unleashed history's worst atrocities and state terrorism against the people in Indian Illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) fighting for the liberation of the motherland from the forced Indian rule for the

past 76 years. "The observance of the scheduled Indian Independence Day as the black day is also aimed at expressing indignation against Indian imperialism for forcibly keeping the bulk part of the State in her unlawful and forcible occupation for the past 76 years," organizers said.

"Anti-India rallies followed by protest demonstrations in all small and major cities and towns at both sides of the LoC, will be the hallmark of the day", an AJK government spokesman told APP here Monday. "Participants of the protest rallies will wear black bands around their arms as a sign of hatred against India, according to the organizers of the special black day programs."

"Black flags will be hoisted atop the private buildings by the protesting Kashmiris at both sides of the LoC," according to the reports. In Azad Jammu & Kashmir, anti-India rallies will be staged and processions will be brought out in all small and major cities including AJK's capital city of Muzafferabad and all other nine district headquarters of Mirpur, Kotli, Bagh, Bhimbher, Palandri, Rawalakot, Haveli, Jhelum Valley and Neelum valley by the people belonging to walks of life to reiterate

severe hatred against the Indian imperialism.

Participants of the rallies will march in major city streets carrying black banners and placards to express hatred against India for turning the IIOJK into the world's largest prison perpetuating brutalities and human rights abuses in the occupied state since August 05, 2019 – the black day in Jammu & Kashmir State's history following revocation of the special status of the disputed Jammu & Kashmir at the gunpoint by the despotic and fascist BJP-led Indian government. In Mirpur, DC Ch. Amjad Iqbal told APP that a major protest rally to observe the Indian Independence Day as the black day would be taken from District Courts premises in the city on Tuesday-August 15 at 10.30 a.m under the auspices of the National Events Organizing Committee Mirpur district, the grand forum of all public representative organizations representing all segments of the civil society, according to the local authorities.

"A large number of people from all shades of public opinion will attend, like all previous years to observe the Indian independence day as Black day," the authorities underlined.

(Continued on Back Page)



President confers civil awards on Pakistani citizens, foreign nationals

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on the occasion of Independence Day conferred civil awards on citizens of Pakistan as well as foreign nationals for showing excellence and courage in their respective fields and for martyrs of COVID-19.

The investiture ceremony for the following civil awards will take place on Pakistan Day on March 23, 2024:-

(i). NISHAN-I-IMTIAZ
1. Mr. Muhammad Hafeez Qureshi (Late) Nuclear Science (Poetry / Writing)
3. Mr. Islahuddin Siddiqui Sports (Hockey)
4. Syed Qaim Ali Shah Public Service
5. Raja Zafar Ul Haq Public Service
6. Dr. Shamshad Akhtar Public Service
7. Air Marshal (R) Najib Akhtar Public Service
(ii). HILAL-I-PAKISTAN
8. HRH Prince Khalid bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud Services to Pakistan
9. Mr. He Lifeng Services to Pakistan
(iii). HILAL-I-SHUJAAT
10. Mr. Mushtaq Ahmed Sukhera Gallantry
(iv). HILAL-I-IMTIAZ
11. Brig. Syed Sarfraz Ali (Late) Strategic Planning & Development
12. Prof. Dr. Shahid Mahmood Baig Science
13. Prof. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed Education
14. Prof. Dr. Iqar Ahmad Khan Education
15. Prof. Dr. Muhammad Umar Education/ Medical Sciences
16. Mr. Rahat Ali Khan Arts (Qawwali/ Singing)
17. Mr. Mohammad Ahmed Shah Arts (Culture)
18. Mr. Mehmood Ahmed Tahir Bhatti Film Direction & Fashion Designing
19. Mr. Muhammad Anwar Masood Literature (Poetry)
20. Mr. Zahid Malik (Late) Journalism
21. Dr. Muhammad Amjad Saqib Social Services
22. Mr. Ahmed Irfan Public Service
23. Raja Naeem Akbar Public Service

24. Lt. Gen. (R) Muhammad Akram Khan Public Service
25. Brig. Atif Rafique Public Service
26. Dr. Muhammad Jehanzeb Khan Public Service
27. Syed Tariq Fatemi Public Service
28. Mr. Tariq Bajwa Public Service
29. Mr. Tariq Mahmood Pasha Public Service
30. Mr. Shahid Khan Public Service
31. Mr. Sibtain F. Haleem Public Service
32. Capt. (R) Zahid Saeed Public Service
33. Mr. Zahid Zaman Public Service
34. Mufti Abdul Shakoor (late) Public Service (Religious Scholar)
35. Syed Babar Ali Philanthropy
36. Prof. Dr. Adil Najam Education
(v). HILAL-I-QUAID-I-AZAM
37. Mr. Luo Zhaohui Services to Pakistan
38. Mr. Ning Jizhe Services to Pakistan
39. Mr. Nong Rong Services to Pakistan
40. Mr. Sha Zukang Services to Pakistan
41. H.H. Sheikh Mansoor Bin Zayed Al Nayan Services to Pakistan
42. Dr. Muhammad Al Jasser Services to Pakistan
43. Mr. Jin Liqun Services to Pakistan
44. Mr. Sultan Bin Abdul Rehman Al-Marshad Services to Pakistan
45. Mr. Oktay Memis Services to Pakistan
46. Mr. Khalifa Bin Jassim Al-Kuwari Services to Pakistan
47. Mr. Najy Benhassine Services to Pakistan
48. Mr. Young Ye Services to Pakistan
49. Julien Harneis Services to Pakistan
50. Mr. Knut Ostby Services to Pakistan
51. Mr. Philippe Steinmetz Services to Pakistan
52. Dr. Sebastian Paust Services to Pakistan
53. Michal Rossman Services to Pakistan
54. Joe Moyer Services to Pakistan

(vi). SITARA-I-PAKISTAN
55. H.E. Engineer Talal Bin Abdullah Al-Otaibi Services to Pakistan
(vii). SITARA-I-SHUJAAT
56. Mr. Tariq Mahmood Gallantry
57. Mr. Muhammad Aamir Naseem Gallantry
58. Mr. Majid Saleem Malik Gallantry
59. Mr. Akhtar Hayat Khan Gallantry
60. Lt. Cdr. (R) Muqaddas Haider Gallantry
61. Mr. Muhammad Younas (Shaheed) Gallantry
62. Mr. Nizam Ullah (Shaheed) Gallantry
63. Mr. Rahat Saleem (Shaheed) Gallantry
64. Mr. Ghulam Abbas (Shaheed) Gallantry
65. Mr. Abdul Latif (Shaheed) Gallantry
66. Mr. Saeed Ahmed (Shaheed) Gallantry
67. Mr. Ajmal Masih (Late) Gallantry
68. Mr. Muhammad Ramzan (Shaheed) Gallantry
69. Mr. Shams Ullah (Shaheed) Gallantry
70. Mr. Muhammad Sohrab (Shaheed) Gallantry
71. Mr. Asad Ullah Khan (Shaheed) Gallantry
72. Mr. Israr Muhammad Gallantry
73. Mr. Zia Ullah Khan (Shaheed) Gallantry
74. Mir Zubair Mahmood Gallantry
75. Mr. Muhammad Adnan Gallantry
(viii). SITARA-I-IMTIAZ
76. Mr. Castaldo Fabio Massimo Services to Pakistan
77. Meer Behrose Regi Services to Pakistan
78. Dr. Jamshed Iqbal Science
79. Prof. Dr. Amjad Siraj Memon Science
80. Dr. Abid Mehmood Science (Agriculture Research)
81. Dr. Sumeera Ikram Science (Chemistry)
82. Dr. Muhammad Sarwar Metallurgical Engineering & Material Science
83. Syed Raza Akhlaq Engineering
84. Dr. Abdul Manan Engineering (Aero Space)
85. Dr. Muhammad Nzar Guidance, Navigation &

Trajectory Design
86. Mr. Naveed Maqbul Nuclear Safety
87. Prof. Dr. Mahmood Ayyaz Education
88. Ms. Shama Hafeez Education
89. Prof. Dr. Zulfiqar Ahmed Bhutta Education
90. Prof. Dr. Sohail Nadeem Education
91. Prof. Dr. Muhammad Farooque Hassan Education
92. Qari Hafiz Buzurg Shah Al Azhari Arts (Qira'at)
93. Ms. Malika Junaid Arts (Architecture)
94. Mr. Bilal Lashari Arts (Direction, Cinematography, Script writing)
95. Mr. Satish Anand Art (Film Production/ Distribution)
96. Mr. Abdul Karim Baryalai Arts (Literature)
97. Mr. Javed Bashir Ahmad Arts (Singing)
98. Mr. Faakhir Mehmood Arts (Singing)
99. Ms. Shabnam Arts (Singing)
100. Mr. Wasif Nagi Journalism
101. Ms. Naila Kiani Sports (Mountaineering)
102. Ms. Saira Furqan Social Services
103. Mr. Farhan Faruqi Social Services
104. Dr. Amanullah Kassim Machiyara Public Service
105. Mr. Aziz Memon Public Service (Humanitarian & Community Services)
106. Mr. Abdul Quddoos Bizenjo Public Service
107. Dr. Syed Kaleem Imam Public Service
108. Mr. Lal Jan Jaffar Public Service
109. Mr. Muhammad Noor Miskanzi (late) Public Service
110 Mr. Sher Baz Khan Public Service
111. Dr. Rashid Bajwa Public Service
112. Ms. Ismat Jabeen Afridi Public Service
113. Mr. Shuaib A. Malik Public Service
114. Mr. Mervyn Francis Lobo Public Service
115. Mr. Waqar Ahmed Chouhan Public Service
116. Mr. Mohsin Hassan Butt Public Service
117. Mirza Ikhtiar Baig Public Service

118. Dr. Nadeem Jan Public Service
119. Mr. Fahad Haroon Public Service
120. Mr. Naeem Uz Zafar Public Service
121. Mr. Muhammad Sarwar Gondal Public Service
122. Khawaja Zaka ud Din (late) Public Service
123. Sardar Ramesh Singh Arora Public Service
124. Mr. Arif Habib Public Service
125. Mr. Muhammad Nadeem Javaid Public Service
126. Mr. Jameel Ahmed Public Service
127. Dr. Muhammad Sohail Rajput Public Service
128. Mr. Asim Ahmed Public Service
129. Mr. Ali Tahir Public Service
130. Mr. Kazim Niaz Public Service
131. Mr. Sualah Ahmed Faruqi Public Service
132. Mr. Duraid Qureshi Public Service
133. Lt. Col. Khalid Mahmood (Retd) Public Service
134. Mr. Muhammad Raghib Hussain Public Service
135. Prof. Mufti Munib ur Rehman Public Service (Religious Scholar)
136. Mr. Saleem Bukhari Journalism
(ix). PRESIDENT'S AWARD FOR PRIDE OF PERFORMANCE
137. Dr. Muhammad Afzal Environmental Biotechnology
138. Prof. Dr. Faisal Shafait Science
139. Mr. Shakeel Ahmed Science (Physics)
140. Mr. Waseem Azhar Nuclear Engineering
141. Mr. Asim Mahmood Qureshi Engineering (Metallurgy & Materials Science)
142. Mr. Muhammad Tariq Chemical Engineering
143. Mr. Abrar Ali Engineering (Mechanical)
144. Mr. Shahid Bashir Engineering
145. Dr. Rizwan Asghar Computer Engineering
146. Dr. Nasir Mohy-ud-din Embedded Computer & IC Design
147. Dr. Syed Bilal Hussain

Shah Aerodynamics
148. Dr. Naveed Iqbal Khan Durrani Aerospace Engineering
149. Dr. Muhammad Asad Strategic Communication Systems
150. Dr. Saqlain Akhtar Engineering (Aerospace)
151. Mr. Saleem Ud Din Engineering (Electrical)
152. Dr. Imtnan-Ul-Haque Qazi Engineering (Space Sciences & Technology)
153. Mr. Muhammad Imran Zafar Structural Engineering
154. Prof. Dr. Bushra Mirza Education
155. Dr. Umer Shahbaz Education
156. Dr. Kashif Kifayat Education
157. Dr. Naveed Arshad Education
158. Prof. Bilquis Shabbir Education (Medical Sciences)
159. Dr. Amjad Mehboob Medicine
160. Mr. Muhammad Khalil (late) Arts (Karakul cap making)
161. Mr. Muhammad Riaz Arts (Lacquer art)
162. Ms. Shakar Bibi Arts (Balochi embroidery)
163. Mr. Gulab Khel Arts (Rubab playing)
164. Ms. Shazia Manzoor Arts (Singing)
165. Ms. Dhai Bai alias Mai Dhai Arts (Singing)
166. Mr. Hamayoon Khan Arts (Singing)
167. Mr. Inayat Hussain Bhatti (late) Arts (Film Acting, Production, Direction, Script Writing)
168. Mr. Zulfiqar Ali Attre Arts (Music Composing)
169. Mr. Ajab Gul Arts (Acting / Direction)
170. Mr. Ishrat Abass Arts (Drama/Theater/ Radio/ Actor)
171. Mr. Shakir Zeb Arts (Music Direction)
172. Mr. Abdul Jabbar Gull Arts (Sculpturing)
173. Mr. Qadir Bux Mithoo Arts (Comedy)
174. Mr. Mehboob Ali Arts (Artist & Designer, Woodcut Print Specialist)
175. Ms. Mussarrat Kalanchvi Arts (Urdu / Saraiki Fiction & Playwriting)
176. Mr. Adnan Siddiqui Arts (Acting, Host, Production)
177. Ms. Zubaida (Naghma)

Arts (Film Artist)
178. Mr. Hassan Askari Arts (Film Direction/Writing)
179. Mr. Mashkoor Raza Arts (Painting)
180. Ms. Sheema Karmani Arts (Classical Dancing/Choreography)
181. Mr. Naseer Baig Mirza Arts (Comparing, Writing, Producer)
182. Mr. Ajab Khan Arts (Calligraphy & Painting)
183. Mr. Baqir Abbas Arts (Flute playing)
184. Ms. Farha Mehmood Rana Arts
185. Mr. Noor Din Alias Chacha Noora Arts (Shoe Making)
186. Mr. Ghulam Hussain Anjum Literature (Poetry/Writing)
187. Mr. Nazeer Qaiser Literature (Poetry/Writing)
188. Mr. Afzal Ahmad Syed (Syed Afzal Ahmad) Literature (Poetry/Writing)
189. Mr. Hisam-ud-Din Aseer Mengal Literature (Poetry/Writing)
190. Mr. Hameed Razi (Abdul Hameed Razi) Literature (Writing)
191. Mr. Ahmad Hussain Mujahid Literature (Poetry/Writing)
192. Mr. Ghulam Abbas Alias Abbas Tabish Literature (Poetry)
193. Mr. Khalid Masood Khan Literature (Writing, Poetry & Columnist)
194. Ms. Farkhanda Bokhari (Late) Literature (Poetry & Writing)
195. Mr. Muhammad Ilyas Literature (Writing)
196. Dr. Nasrullah Khan Nasir Literature (Poetry / Research)
197. Mr. Shakeel Jazib (Rana Shakeel Asghar) Literature (Poetry)
198. Mr. Ghulam Muhammad Arif Najmi Journalism (Photography)
199. Mr. Suhail Sarwar Warraich Journalism
200. Mr. Salman Ghani Journalism
201. Ms. Ifrah Wali Sports (Skiing)
202. Mr. Muhammad Sharif Tahir Sports (Wrestling)
203. Mr. Zaman Anwar Sports (Wrestling)

Pakistan to be made modern, prosperous country: Faryal

KARACHI (APP): The Central President of Pakistan Peoples Party Women's Wing Faryal Talpur has said that today is the day of renewal of pledge to make Pakistan a truly modern, prosperous and democratic country. In her message on the occasion of Independence Day, she congratulated the countrymen on Independence Day and said that freedom was a great blessing, and Pakistan was our identity.

She said that our elders under the leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah fought a long and historic struggle and made unprecedented sacrifices to achieve this blessing and recognition. "Today we salute our benefactors."

Faryal Talpur said that Quaid-e-Azam Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto strengthened Pakistan created by the Quaid-e-Azam by giving gifts of a unified constitution, nuclear program and economic revolution. Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto took revolutionary steps to restore democracy and ran the country in the light of Quaid-e-Azam's thoughts and ideas.

The Central President of Pakistan Peoples Party Women's Wing Faryal Talpursaid that former President Asif Ali Zardari foiled a conspiracy against the country by raising the slogan of Pakistan Khappay. She said that PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari was actively working to make his homeland a prosperous and strong country, about which every Pakistani could proudly tell the world that this was the Pakistan of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. The PPP leader said that despite all the challenges the country was facing, the future of Pakistan was bright because the Pakistani nation was a resilient, undaunted and united nation.

Information Department office is beautifully decorated with green crescent flags

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The 76th Independence Day of the beloved Pakistan was celebrated with full national enthusiasm at Barrack No. 95, Sindh Secretariat, Sindh Information Department. Director General Public



Relations, Sawai Khan Chalgri, hoisted the green crescent flag in the air. Director Admin Muhammad Yousif Kabooro, Director Press Information Hasan Asghar Naqvi, Director Publication Mansoor Ahmed Rajput, Director

Planning Fida Hussain Baladi, Director Imtiaz Ahmed Joyo, Director Shabih Siddiqui, Faisal Farooqui and other officers and staff members of the Information Department were present on this occasion. Director General Public Relations Sawai Khan Chhalgri addressing on the occasion said that today reminds us of great sacrifices. He said that we have to work together for the development of our country and the prosperity of the people.

The Information Department office has been decorated with beautiful flags and electric lamps for the Independence Day celebrations.

Together we can attain heights envisioned by our forefathers: Aneela

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: As we commemorate the 14th of August, we not only reflect upon the essence of independence but also contemplate the profound vision that gave rise to our nation. Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah once articulated, "With faith, discipline, and selfless dedication to duty, there is no worthwhile goal beyond your reach". This was stated by Dr. Aneela Mahfooz Durrani, Secretary of the Higher Education Department, on the Independence Day.

This statement encapsulates the fundamental principles of our cherished Pakistan - Unity, Faith, and Discipline. Within the realm of higher education, these tenets serve as our daily compass, ensuring that our youth, the future of Pakistan, receive the caliber of education they rightfully deserve. The Higher Education Department



remains resolute in its commitment to diligently serve our nation and the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, she said.

As we progress, let us collectively pledge to uphold the painstakingly

acquired independence of our nation and to advance the principles upon which Pakistan was established. Together, we can attain the heights envisioned by our forefathers, she added.

Flag-hoisting ceremony held at LGH

LAHORE (APP): In Connection with the 76th Independence Day celebrations, a ceremony took place at Lahore General Hospital (LGH) and Principal Postgraduate Medical Institute (PGMI) Prof. Dr. Muhammad Al-Fareed Zafar, along with professors, Medical Superintendent Prof. Nudrat Sohail, and health professionals, hoisted the national flag. The nursing students presented the national anthem and national songs, and the audience took part with enthusiasm.

The green flag was saluted by all. The nursing students were green dupatta and the participants greatly appreciated and applauded the flag hoisting.

Addressing the ceremony, Prof. Al-Fareed Zafar said that the living nations use the glorious traditions, sacrifices and golden days of their past as a torch to move forward and said that August 14 is a historic day for all Pakistanis and the message of happiness and joy should be disseminated. At the same time, the day demands a revival of commitment for sacrifice, love and national unity, he added and said: "By putting into practice the golden principles of the Quaid-i-Azam, 'Unity, Faith and Discipline' we will continue to do our utmost for development of the country."

Tree plantation activity and Flag hoisting ceremony on 76th Independence Day at PNSC

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Like every year, Pakistan National Shipping Corporation celebrated 76th Independence Day of Pakistan.

The celebration commenced with recitation of Holy Quran. The Chairman PNSC, Rear Admiral Jawad Ahmed, SI(M) hoisted the National Flag along with Executive Directors, Officers and Staff.

Furthermore, he planted a tree in the premises of the building. In the end of the



event, prizes were distributed amongst the participants of Interdivisional Speech Competition on a

Students of Everest Grammar High School celebrated Independence Day

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Independence Day was celebrated with great enthusiasm in the education institutions of Karachi like the rest of the country. The students of Everest Grammar High School in Golestan Johar celebrated the Independence Day in a grand manner.

Director Private School, Sindh madam Rafia Mulla spoke. Addressing the presidential ceremony of the



school, Director of Private School Sindh Madam Rafia Mulla said that it is the grace

of Allah that we are the inheritors of a free nation and a free country, so this country is a great honor and pride for us.

Everest Grammar High School Principal Mrs. Asma Naeem Director Syed Naeem Administrator Syed Mueez said that freedom is a blessing for us, so we should always value freedom and play a better role in the service of the country and the nation.

Prizes were distributed among the students.

Grand ceremony to celebrate Independence Day organized by Rawal Sharjeel Inam Memon

F.P. Report

HYDERABAD: On the special instructions of former Provincial Information Minister and Pakistan People's Party leader Sharjeel Inam Memon, a grand ceremony to celebrate Independence Day by Pakistan was organized by People's Party leader Rawal Sharjeel Inam Memon at Tando Jam Bypass.

On this occasion the largest Pakistan's flag in the history of Sindh was remained center of attention of the people while Sindh's

famous singers Tufail Sanjrani and Asghar Khosa received a lot of applause from the people by performing songs. Rawal Sharjeel Memon participating in ceremony as chief guest talking to the media on this occasion said that today the biggest event has been organized in Hyderabad on the occasion of Independence Day which aim to send a message to the world that we all Pakistanis are united under the shadow of the green flag and by the good grace of Almighty Allah Pakistan will remain intact.



On this occasion, Pakistan People's Party's local leaders and other dignitaries participated while a large number of people were present there

who were chanting slogans of Pakistan Zindabad. On this occasion the cake of Pakistan's 76th Independence Day was also cut.



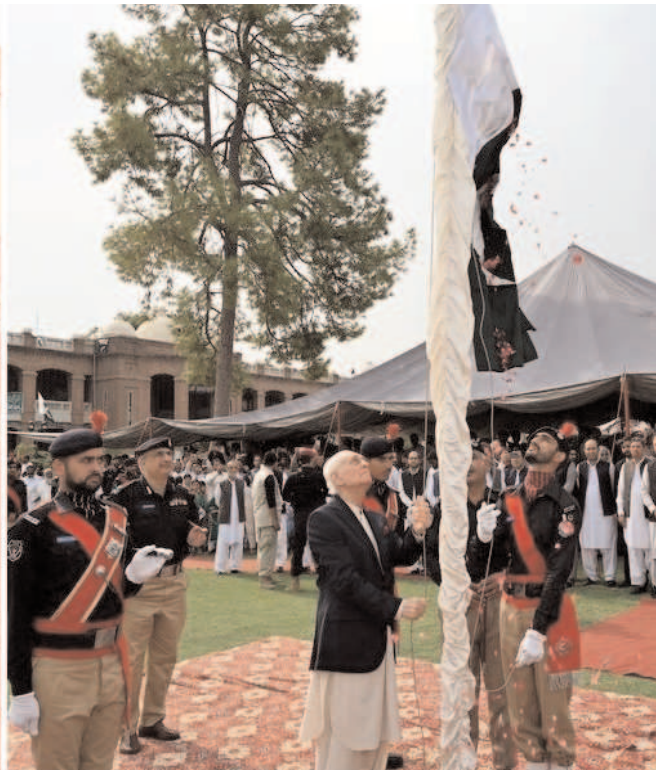
Flag hoisting ceremony held at Governor House

PESHAWAR (APP): An impressive national flag hoisting ceremony was held at Governor house Peshawar in connection of 76th Pakistan's Independence Day on Sunday.

Governor Haji Ghulam Ali hoisted the national flag. Besides others, the ceremony was attended by former Governor Iqbal Zafar Jhagra, former ministers, politicians and people of different walks of life.

National anthem was played. Police contingent presented salute. Prayers for progress and prosperity of Pakistan was offered.

The governor congratulated the entire nation on 76th independence day of Pakistan.



PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam, Chief Justice Peshawar High Court Justice Muhammad Ibrahim Khan and Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan hoisting national flags in connection with 76th Independence Day of Pakistan.

76th Independence Day dawn with 21-gun salute in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): The 76th Independence Day dawned with 21-gun salute in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including Peshawar here on Monday.

The 21-gun salute was held at Captain Karnal Sher Khan Shaheed Stadium Peshawar. Later, flag hoisting ceremonies were held in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Special prayers were

also offered in mosques for progress and prosperity of the country and eternal peace of the martyrs of Pakistan Movement.

An impressive flag hoisting ceremony was held at Governor House Peshawar attended by former ministers, politicians and people of all walks of life. Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam

Ali hoisted the national flag. National anthem was played and police presented salute.

The celebrations functions in all districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including merged areas amid slogans of Pakistan and Quaid e Azam Zindabad.

A declamation contest was held here at private

school on topic of role of Quaid e Azam in Pakistan Movement. The speakers threw light on sacrifices offered by our forefathers during creation of motherland.

Anaya Bibi, a 3rd grade student said Father of the Nation, Quaid e Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah had special love with people of KP and its students for their

excellent role during Pakistan Movement.

Quaid e Azam had visited Islamia College Peshawar on three occasions to acknowledge the momentous services of its students during Pakistan Movement.

"Quaid e Azam had no weapon or police but was endowed with the power of advocacy, education and

solid arguments skills that immensely helped him to achieve Pakistan."

She said Pakistan was created after numerous sacrifices and the best way to make it economically strong by strictly adhering to gold principles of Quaid e Azam like unity, faith and discipline.

Laiba Farooq, a 5th grade student said the

nations celebrate their independence day with great pomp and show to aware their young generation about importance of freedom.

The best tributes to heroes and martyrs of Pakistan Movement was to work hard in our selected professions to make the country's economically strong and invincible."

She said Quaid e Azam was a great symbol of independence and democracy who strongly believed in power of masses and that was the major reasons that he had created Pakistan on August 14, 1947 within seven years after adaptation of historic Pakistan Resolution in Lahore on March 23, 1940.

PDMA celebrates 76th Independence Day with enthusiasm national zeal

PESHAWAR (APP): The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa celebrated Pakistan's 76th Independence Day on Monday with remarkable enthusiasm and zeal.

From senior management to junior colleagues, the entire PDMA staff embraced the celebrations wholeheartedly.

Guided by the Chief Secretary and led by the proactive Secretary of Relief and the Director General of PDMA, captivating activities unfolded

on August 13th and 14th.

The PDMA Headquarters, adorned with lights and flags, presented a mid-night fireworks spectacle on August 13th, instilling a sense of pride and unity.

At 8:00 AM on August 14th, a majestic flag hoisting ceremony led by Director General PDMA Janat Gul Afridi symbolized the nation's unwavering commitment to freedom.

Harmonious voices united as PDMA staff sang the national anthem on August 14th, paying tribute to the sacrifices made for inde-

pendence. Demonstrating their dedication to the environment, a tree-planting ceremony and cake-cutting highlighted a greener Pakistan. Patriotic banners further fostered a sense of unity.

PDMA staff enthusiastically participated in an invigorating walk on August 14th, followed by a heartfelt prayer for the nation's well-being. Director HR/Admin PDMA, Muhammad Iqbal Wazir, extended his gratitude to all staff members for their enthusiastic engagement and significant contributions.

PHC celebrates I.Day with flag hoisting ceremony

PESHAWAR (APP): In commemoration of Independence Day, a flag hoisting ceremony was held at the Peshawar High Court. Chief Justice Peshawar High Court, Justice Muhammad Ibrahim Khan, raised the national flag during the event. Judges, members of the High Court Bar Association, District Bar Association, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bar Council officials, members and staff of the Peshawar High Court were present on this occasion.

The police contingent saluted the national flag with honor and respect. Symbolizing the spirit of freedom, pigeons were released on this occasion. The Peshawar High Court building was adorned with flags, balloons, banners, and decorations.

The ceremony marked a significant gesture of unity and patriotism, as legal professionals, officials, and the public came together to celebrate the nation's independence.

'Golden Tree Plantation Campaign' inaugurated

PESHAWAR (APP): In commemoration of Independence Day, a colorful event was organized at the University of Engineering and Technology (UET) Peshawar and 'Golden Tree Plantation Campaign' inaugurated in this regard.

The special guest of the occasion was Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Iftikhar Hussain. The esteemed guest hoisted the national flag and joined partners in singing the national anthem.

During the event, he expressed that the free atmosphere in which we breathe today in Pakistan is a result of the immense sacrifices and tireless efforts of our forefathers and leaders. He emphasized that it is our national duty to cleanse Pakistan of all evils through unity and harmony, contributing our roles in its progress.

Following the flag hoisting ceremony, Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Iftikhar Hussain initiated a tree planting drive by planting a sapling at the Engineering University.

He also inaugurated the 'Golden Tree Plantation Campaign' as part of the initiative.

The event was attended by a significant number of participants, including Dr. Khizar Azam Khan, the Registrar of the Engineering University, Professor Dr. Misbah Ullah, the Treasurer, senior faculty members, and staff.

IPS celebrated Independence Day, Azadi plantation drive

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: On 14th August, IPS celebrated Independence Day at the Institute of Professional Studies (IPS) in Peshawar under the name "Azadi plantation drive".

Participants were Mr. Bilal Afridi (Director of IPS), Mr. Afzal Khan, Mr. Mufti Asad Gul, and other employees. The Director and other speakers at this event emphasized the importance



of teaching the next generation the true meaning of

freedom. To accomplish the objectives for which

Pakistan was founded, youth should play their part.

Special ceremony marks Independence Day in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): A central ceremony to commemorate Independence Day was held at the Provincial Civil Secretariat here on Monday.

The event was graced by the presence of Caretaker Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Muhammad Azam Khan, who inaugurated the proceedings by hoisting the national flag.

Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Nadim Aslam Chaudhry, Inspector

General of Police Akhtar Hayat, Gandapur, Additional Chief Secretary Zubair Asghar Qureshi, Principal Secretary to the

Chief Minister Amjad Ali Khan, provincial administrative secretaries, district officials, members of civil society, media representatives, and students also participated in the ceremony.

As part of the celebrations, the police contingent saluted the national flag and played the national

anthem.

Chief Minister Muhammad Azam Khan also cut a cake to mark the occasion and planted a tree within the premises of the Secretariat as part of the Independence Day festivities.

Students from local schools added to the festive atmosphere by presenting patriotic songs, enhancing the spirit of the occasion.

The Secretariat building was adorned with electric lights and national flags to

create a vibrant atmosphere.

The event not only marked Pakistan's Independence Day but also celebrated the unity and spirit of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The participation of government officials, police personnel, students, and civil society members highlighted the collective commitment to remembering and honoring the sacrifices made for the nation's freedom.



PESHAWAR: Acting president SCCI Ejaz Khan hoisting national flag during a ceremony in connection with 76th Independence Day of Pakistan.

UoP celebrates 76th I.Day

PESHAWAR (APP): University of Peshawar (UoP) on Monday celebrated the 76th Independence Day with national zeal. The Independence Day was celebrated at Autism Unit Department of Psychology, University of Peshawar.

Children and their parents were in attendance while Dean Faculty of social sciences Prof. Dr. Johar Ali was the chief guest. Chairperson Department of Psychology Prof. Dr. Erum Irshad greeted the chief guest and presented him with a bouquet.

The event started with the recitation of the Holy Quran followed by the National anthem. Children who had undergone successful therapy and were presented with gifts and certificates. Their parents expressed gratitude and shared their views about the unit and their experience with other parents.

Different activities were arranged for children and their parents to help foster their bonding, increase compliance in children and provide opportunity for fun and recreation.

The event was concluded with cake cutting and refreshments.

Flag hoisting ceremony held at SCCI

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A flag hoisting ceremony was held on the eve of 76th Independence Day at the premises of the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) here on Monday.

Ijaz Khan Afridi, Acting SCCI president, hoisted the national flag during the ceremony in which a great national enthusiasm and fervor was demonstrated by participants present on the occasion and congratulated the whole nation on eve of 76th Independence Day.

He also paid glowing tribute to sacrifices of armed forces for the motherland, because today, we are living as an independent nation, he added.

The SCCI's Secretary General Sajjad Aziz and Saddar Gul, Fazl I Wahid, Ishtiaq Muhammad, Asif Aziz along with members of the business community and staff attended the ceremony. The participants on the occasion expressed solidarity with people of

Kashmir and prayed for integrity, solidarity and sustainable peace of the country, especially economic stability. He said the day of August 14 reminded us about the commitment to give sacrifices for economic development, stability and peace and prosperity of the country.

Ijaz Khan Afridi vowed to follow the motto of the founding father of Pakistan, Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, "Unity, Faith and Discipline".

The acting SCCI's chief said the country will put on a path of development and sustainable progress by following the quotes of the father of the nation, Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah. He advised the youth to do hard work for construction and development of the country and render every sacrifice for the motherland.

On the occasion, the acting SCCI chief thanked members of the business community and staffers for attending the ceremony.

Khyber Medical University celebrates 76th Independence Day

PESHAWAR, (APP): A colorful ceremony was organized by Khyber Medical University (KMU) Peshawar in connection with the 76th Independence Day on Monday.

Prof. Dr. Rubina Nazli, dean basic medical sciences was the chief guest while Director Academics Dr. Zille Huma, President of KMU Welfare Society Dr. Mujibur Rahman, faculty, admin staff, and many students were also present on this occasion.

The event started with the unfurling of the flag on the lawn of the university

and a salute to the national flag by the security guards of the university, after which the participants recited the national anthem together.

Apart from speech competitions, documentaries, skits, and national songs were presented at the event, and quiz competitions were organized among children which were highly appreciated. Meanwhile, Professor Dr. Zia ul Haq Vice Chancellor of KMU said that celebrating Independence Day with enthusiasm is a sign of living nations.

He said that our forefathers got Pakistan after immense sacrifices and hardships and now protecting this trust is our shared national responsibility.

He said, we celebrated the 14th August Independence Day in all constituent and affiliated campuses of Khyber Medical University (KMU) with great zeal and enthusiasm.

He said that it is necessary to study the poetry of Allama Iqbal who has given us the true message of freedom in his poems to know the value and price of freedom.

Iqra School celebrated Independence Day

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Independence Day was marked at Iqra School, village Mulazai, Tehsil Mathra, District Peshawar with zeal and fervour. Muhammad Bilal, FO Peshawar organized the event in coordination with the school management. Village Nazim, Mufti sahib, activists, volunteers, and students participated in the event. The event started with the recitation of the Holy Quran followed by the National Anthem sung by the students. Speeches were delivered that highlighted the importance of Independence. The speakers explained that the day reminds us to renew our commitment to serve our country with dedication and play our role in the progress and development of our homeland. They emphasized that struggle and sacrifices of our forefathers for independence should not be forgotten and we must work hard to achieve the cherished objectives of our ancestors to make Pakistan a strong and prosperous country.



PESHAWAR: DG Sports KP Capt. (Retd) Khalid Mehmood along with Ex-MNA Haji Baz Gul and Ex-Senator Haji Gul cutting a ribbon to inaugurate Beretta Shop. —F.P photo



In brief

Senior journalist shot dead

SUKKUR (PPI): Senior journalist, former president of Sukkur Press Club and KTN Bureau Chief Jan Muhammad Mehr, was shot dead when unidentified persons opened fire at him on Monday. According to details, Mehr left office for his home and when he reached near Qasim Park, unidentified assailants opened fire at him, injuring him seriously. He was shifted to a local hospital in a critical condition, but he succumbed to his injuries. SSP Sukkur Singhar Malik has said that they had traced the location of the suspects and soon they would be in police custody. Sukkur Union of Journalists has announced 10 days of mourning.

Job age limit raised

QUETTA (PPI): Balochistan government has granted general relaxation in upper age limit up to 43 years for government jobs, officials said Monday. Outgoing Balochistan Chief Minister Abdul Quddus Bizenjo has signed the summary of Services and General Administration Department, granting general relaxation in upper age limit up to 43 years for government jobs. According to the summary, the initiative would provide employment opportunities in the public sector to many jobless youths. It is pertinent to mention here that the Sindh government in January 2023 approved a summary for increasing the upper age limit for its jobs to 43 years for government jobs. The government of Sindh allowed relaxation upto maximum of 15 years in the upper age limit to all the applicants applying for the vacancies Sindh government departments.

Flag hoisting ceremony held

SARGODHA (INP): Like in other parts of the country, the 76th Independence Day of Pakistan was celebrated in Sargodha with national fervour, and the national flag-hoisting ceremony was held at Main Campus Arts Council here. Commissioner Sargodha Ajmal Bhatti, Deputy Commissioner Capt (ret'd) Shoaib Ali, Regional Police Officer (RPO) Shahrukh Kamal Siddiqui and District Police Officer (DPO) Muhammad Faisal Kamran hoisted the national flag with the echoes of national anthem and the salute by a police contingent. Later, addressing the ceremony, the commissioner said that great sacrifices were offered for creation of an independent homeland for the Muslims of Subcontinent and now all countrymen must play a role for development of the country. He expressed his determination that the flag of Pakistan would always fly high.

Independence Day celebrated

OKARA (INP): The Independence Day was commemorated with great patriotic zeal at the University of Okara here on Monday. Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Muhammad Wajid, along with Renala Khurd Assistant Commissioner Chaudhry Ziaullah, hoisted the flag at the Okavian Square. The university graduates presented a march-past and national anthem was played. A large number of administrative staff, faculty members and students attended the ceremony. The flag-hoisting ceremony was followed by cake-cutting and plantation on campus. In his special message, the VC vowed to inculcate professional skills and characteristics such as honesty, truthfulness and patriotism among the students so that they could serve the nation well.

Independence Day celebrated in Mardan

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Like other parts of the country, the 76th Independence Day of the country was celebrated here on Monday in Mardan region with full enthusiasm and grandeur. Independence Day celebrations were organized in Mardan, Swabi, Charsadda and Nowshera.

However, the biggest event was held at Pakhtunkhwa House Mardan. Commissioner Mardan Yousaf Rahim, Regional Police Officer Muhammad Sulaiman, Deputy Commissioner Mardan Captain Retired Abdul Rahman, City Mayor Himayatullah Mayar, DPO Najeeb Rahman officers of various government departments, dignitaries of the city, media representatives, students of schools participated in large numbers.

As per the Commissioner's vision, six position holders of declamation competitions from the platform of Reading Club showcased their talents at today's special event. Deputy Commissioner Mardan Captain Retired Abdul Rehman in his address congratulated the nation on Independence Day and said that the spirit of the Pakistani nation is worthy of appreciation who protected their freedom under difficult circumstances and met every challenge.

Mentioning the spirit of the people of Mardan in particular, he said that Mardan was at the forefront of the entire province in helping the victims of the recent earthquake in Turkiye. He said that any nation needs passion to move forward and our nation is full of passion.

In his speech, Mayor Mardan Himayatullah Mayar said that our elders sacrificed their lives in the struggle against the British colonial rule. Freedom is a blessing, but we did not understand the importance of freedom and faced difficulties. He said that there is still time for us to fulfill our responsibilities with national spirit to protect our freedom and achieve a proud place in the community of nations.

76th Independence Day celebrated in Dir too

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The 76th Independence Day of Pakistan was also celebrated with spirit and zeal in parts of the Lower Dir here on Monday. The district administration in collaboration with the youth affairs' department arranged a function at Balambat with additional deputy commissioner Abdul Wali Khan in the chair. Plantation was also made during the function.

On the occasion the ADC said that those who laid down their lives and sacrificed their blood for Pakistan would not be forgotten. At the end of the event shields and commendation certificates were awarded to students, guests and notables by the ADC, VC University of Dir and District Youth Officer.

Different government and private schools and political parties like Jamaat-i-Islami, PTI and PPP also arranged colourful functions to mark the Day. The public, teachers and students participated in the Independence Day celebrations. Various speech competitions, naat and national songs were held in the district jail Timergara. The students presented speeches, naat, tableaus, poems and national songs. Foolproof security arrangements were made at all the venues.

The sub divisional administration also arranged different functions in their respective areas

wherein general public and students of educational institutions showed keen interest in the Day's celebrations.

Several join JUI-F in Dir: Scores of political workers have announced to join the Jamiat Ulema Islam Fazl during a function held at Saligram Rabat which was addressed by the JUI-F village council chairman Maulana Nabi Shah and others.

Those who joined the JUI-F included Bakht Sher, Ikramullah, Hussainullah, Anwar Sher, Habibullah, Younus Khan, Jamshed, Maaz Khan, Haji Muhammad and others. Addressing the function, Maulana Nabi Shah said the JUI-F would form the next government in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as all other parties had badly failed to deliver. He said the JUI-F workers believed in serving local communities and it would never leave alone the new entrants.

ANP workers' convention: Addressing a workers' convention at Odigram, the Awami national party central spokesman Zahid Khan, district president Haji Bahadar Khan, Malik Ayub Khan, Malik Mustaan Khan and others said the Pukhtun were not terrorists. They said that Pukhtun blood was being shed in parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan. The ANP leaders said the Bajaur suicide blast had refreshed the wounds of the Babra massacre. Mr Zahid Khan clarified that a negative campaign was being run against him on social media. He said that he had recently met with the ANP's Asfandiar Wali Khan and Aimal Wali Khan and they both had resolved his grievances.

The ANP leaders condemned the May 9 and 10 riots and termed it a conspiracy against the state and its institutions. They said that all elements involved in the May 9 and 10 riots should be punished exemplarily so that no one could dare in future to attack state institutions. They said that cases should be registered against the PTI leaders instead of its workers as all had been done on their dictation. The speakers said that there had been no internal differences in the Lower Dir chapter of the party and the workers should get united for the party cause.

Police claimed recovering seven kidnappes

KASHMORE (PPI): Police on Monday claimed to have recovered seven kidnapped persons, including a child, in katcha area operation.

The police recovered Waqar Abbasi, Ahmed Khan Unar and Asghar Bhatti, who were kidnapped a month ago. The police operation was continued for seven hours in katcha area.

Aug 14 celebrated in WCLM hospital

Sahibzada Afridi

KOHAT: 14 th August Independence Day celebration was held in Women and Children Liaquat Memorial Hospital Kohat on Monday.

The function was attended by Deputy Commissioner Kohat Dr. Azmat Ullah Wazir, District Police Officer Kohat Farhan, Additional Deputy Commissioner Miss Rena Suherwardi, Assistant Commissioner Usman Ashraf, Principal KIMS Prof. Dr. Mussarat Jabeen, Prof. Dr. Fauzia Gul and other staff of LMH. Organized by MS LMH Dr. Hashim Jamshed Syed, District Gynecologist Dr. Hina Zahra, HMC Member Pir Shahnawaz, Paramedic President Syed Rashid Bukhari, Social Worker Pir Tanveer Shah and other staff of LMH, in the function, detailed light was thrown on various aspects of independence moment and way forward for progress and prosperity of Pakistan was suggested.

I-Day celebrated at IUB

F.P. Report

BAHAWALPUR: On the occasion of the 76th Independence Day, the flag hoisting ceremony was held at Abbasia Campus of the Islamia University, here Monday. Vice Chancellor (VC) of the Islamia University of Bahawalpur Prof. Dr. Naveed Akhtar hoisted the flag.

Deans, senior teachers, dignitaries, and students were present on this occasion. Speaking on the occasion, VC said that Pakistan was acquired with the promise that this kingdom would be an ideological laboratory for the Muslim Ummah.

"Here, the philosophy of Muslim life will be implemented and the protection of economic, political, financial, social, and social rights will be guaranteed for the Muslims of this region." "Therefore, today is a day full of joy and renewal. We all have the responsibility to work together on the principles of unity, faith, organization, and belief of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah to brighten the name of our country.

Beyond regional, linguistic, and sectarian differences, we need to become an independent nation and fulfill our responsibilities in building Pakistan, he added. On the occasion, the VC remotely inaugurated the Jinnah Corner established in Sir Sadiq Muhammad Khan library with financial support from Bahawalpur Garrison. The great cultural, social, and historical heritage of Pakistan had been preserved in Jinnah Corner.

"Books, journals, and rare photographs related to the freedom movement are kept at the center. There is also a study research area in a room at Jinnah Corner and audio videos based on the speeches of the founder of Pakistan," he informed.

August 14 celebrated with zeal in Khyber



F.P. Report

JAMRUD: The 76th Independence Day was celebrated by the tribesmen of Khyber on Monday with national enthusiasm and with pledged to work hard to take the country to the new height of progress and development.

Youm-e-Aazadi is observed annually on 14 Augusts is a national holiday tin Pakistan. It commemorates the day when Pakistan achieved independence and was declared a sovereign state following the end of the British Rule in 1947. The Day was dawned with special prayers, offered in the mosques for the prosperity and solidarity of the country.

Earlier, Bab-e-Khyber and other government buildings were illuminated with colorful lights. On Sunday and Monday mid-night fireworks shows were set up at Bab-e-Khyber and at Hamza Baba sports

ground that fascinated the spectators.

In Landi Kotal a main function was organized inside the tehsil compound that was attended by the Assistant Commissioner, Landi Kotal Irshad Mohmand as a chief guest while city mayor Haji Shah Khalid and tribal elders were among the participants. National flag was hoisted and the national anthem was presented by the school children.

A simple but impressive gathering was organized in the Rescue 1122 office, Jamrud. Additional Deputy Commissioner (relief) Nauman Ali Shah was the chief guest on the occasion.

He hoisted the national flag and the smart contingent of the Rescue 1122 workers saluted to it. Cake was also cut on the national day and appreciation certificates were bestowed on the best Rescue 1122 volunteers. Flag march was also conducted by the Rescue 1122 and other line

departments in Jamrud.

In the same way national flag hoisted ceremony was held teshil building Bara that was attended by Additional DC Haseeb-ur-Rehman Khalil, District Police Officer (DPO) Saleem Abbas, Assistant Commissioner, Bara Shahabuddin, tehsil chairman, Landi Kotal Haji Shah Khalid, political elites, tribal elders, representatives of minority and members of civil society. Cake was also cut to celebrate Independence Day.

Addressing on the occasion, speakers said that our forefathers got the Independence following rendered matchless sacrifices and it was binding on us to protect it. Live nation celebrates their independence with great pomp and show to aware their young generation about the importance of freedom, they added. At the end prayers were offered for the progress, prosperity and solidarity of the country.

Oil tanker catches fire, driver cleaner killed

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: An oil tanker driver identified as Islam Gul 30 s/o Fazal Gul and his cleaner Rohullah 21 s/o Gul Wali, residents of Pabbi Railway station Nowshera were burnt alive when the tanker suddenly caught fire at Bandagai area in the jurisdiction of Talash police station here late on Saturday night, residents and officials said.

They said the loaded oil tanker hit a roadside electricity pole and fire engulfed it within no time. The fire flames also damaged two adjacent shops and a religious seminary while the fuel was burnt. Residents said that a blast sound was also heard after which the tanker caught fire.

The Rescue 1122 fire-fighters along with three fire vehicles and two ambulance vehicles rushed to the site and started efforts to overcome the fire. After a hectic effort for one and a half hours the fire was controlled.

The deceased's bodies were shifted to the district headquarters hospital Timergara and later dispatched to Nowshera. The Talash police registered a case and started further investigations.

Meanwhile power sup-

ply to consumers of two feeders from the Saddo grid station remained disrupted for over 20 hours as the fire flames had damaged the transmission line as well. The power consumers of Talash, Bandagai and Dushkhal suffered hard as it took more than 20 hours to restore the power supply. The residents demanded PESCO to shift all the roadside electricity poles as such incidents frequently occurred.

National conference on plant sciences concluded at Sheringal university: A three-day national conference on plant sciences and climate change organized by the department of Botany, Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University (SBBU) Sheringal Upper Dir concluded here the other day. Briefing local journalists, the event organizer Dr Khan Sher termed it a successful initiative of the varsity that would help raise mass awareness regarding climate change.

Faculty members, students from various universities, researchers and subject experts attended the event. The SBBU vice chancellor Dr Muhammad Shahab, former vice chancellor Dr Khan Bahadar Marwat, former VC Agriculture University

Peshawar Dr Muhammad Qaiser and chief organizer Dr Khan Sher addressed the concluding session.

They said that owing to the current global scenario, more such conferences and seminars should be arranged so that the general public, students and teachers could be made aware of the severity and intensity of the climate change and enable them to cope with it. They asked the people to avoid forest cutting as it was the major cause of climate change. According to a declaration issued at the conclusion of the conference, a decision was taken that a comprehensive strategy for coping with climate change would be devised. It was declared that measures for reducing environmental pollution and Carbon levels would be adopted.

Dr Khan Sher said the valuable insights and contributions of researchers enriched the conference and left a lasting impact on all participants. He said the conference provided a platform for intellectual exchange and knowledge dissemination. Skills and appreciation certificates were distributed among students, organizers, researchers and guests on the occasion.

Bajaur turns olive green with locals adopting this profitable business

KHAR (APP): Together with abundance of minerals, gemstones reservoirs and scenic natural beauty, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's seven merged tribal districts especially Bajaur and Waziristan are most suited for olive farming due to their compatible soil, climate condition and ecological diversity.

Once became aware of the potential of their fertile land, the hardworking tribal people's response to this profitable olive farming business have turned Bajaur green. Thousands of olive trees planted in plains and mountains of seven tehsils of Bajaur district on Mohmand-Bajaur road as well as lush green olive valleys of Talash at Dir Lower catch attention of visitors once they pass through these areas.

From Barang to Khar and Nawagai to Chamarkand tehsils of Bajaur, the locals with active support of KP agriculture and forest departments have planted olive trees in abundance whose yields are contributing greatly to their wellbeing. Sharifullah Bacha (64), a progressive farmer from Salazarai tehsil, has hired extra labourers to plant the available olive stock on his eight-acre land during monsoon

season. "I have planted 5,000 olive plants in spring season this year and would plant another 5,000 saplings during current monsoon through Ashar plantation," he said.

Hoping for monsoon rains in the mountainous region for his new plants, Bacha said, "provision of ample water for these plants is must, without which farmers can suffer great financial losses." Ziaul Islam Dawar, Director Agriculture Extension Bajaur said under KP government's olive promotion project, grafting in over 250,000 wild olive trees was achieved while olive orchards on 150 acres were successfully raised in Bajaur.

Ahmad Said, former Project In-charge, Promotion of Olive Trees Cultivation on Commercial Scale (POTCCS) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa told APP that the entire Malakand division including Bajaur and Dir districts, merged areas' South Waziristan, Orakzai and Khyber tribal districts were most suited for olive cultivation. He said around 4.4 million hectares land in KP, Punjab, Balochistan and erstwhile Fata were suited for olive cultivation.

Talking to APP, Ahmad said

Spain was producing about 45 percent of the total world's edible oil from olive cultivation on 2.6 million hectares, while Pakistan despite having a vast suitable area of 4.4 million hectares for olive farming was importing around 75 percent edible oil to cater its domestic needs. When asked about measures needed to enhance olive production, Ahmad said the first olive promotional project funded by the Italian government was launched on June 1, 2012 under which olive cultivation on over 1,500 hectares were achieved.

Later, this project worth Rs 3.82 billion was handed over to Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC) after devolution of Pakistan Oil Development Board (PODB) on February 12, 2012, which was later completed on June 30, 2015, he added. The federal government in order to capitalize on the good work of the Italian-funded project launched Promotion of Olive Trees Cultivation on Commercial Scale (POTCCS) project worth Rs2.3 billion in 2015.

Ahmed informed that under the project, about 6.5 million wild olive plants were naturally

raised in thickly olive-covered mountains and plains areas through enclosures at Bajaur, Dir, Waziristan, Manki Sharif Nowshera and others districts besides Potohar region of Rawalpindi and Balochistan. Around 70 million wild olive trees were identified in KP including 11 million in Bajaur district, he said.

In addition to completion of grafting in 400,000 wild olive trees, olive saplings were planted over 400 acres across Bajaur by farmers that have already started giving fruits. "It requires five years for an olive tree to produce fruits. Normally one kilogram of olive fruits produce 200-milliliter oil from 100 kilograms a farmer can get 17 to 20 liters easily while one liter extra virgin olive oil is sold at about Rs2200 to Rs2500 per liter," he said.

Ahmad said one tree can give a farmer Rs15,400 to Rs20,000 income per year and that olive fruits can also be sold for Rs120 per kilogram easily in the local market. "The exotic olive plants mostly imported from Spain, Italy, Tunisia, Malaysia, Morocco, and Turkey are relatively more costly than indigenous wild olive and efforts are

being made to increase production of indigenous plants through grafting in wild olive trees to encourage farmers to go for commercial olive farming," he added.

Approximately, 1.3 million olive plants and orchards on 14,000-acre land would be raised in Bajaur, Dir, South Waziristan and other potential districts of KP by 2027. Similarly, under POTCCS project, 50,000 acre additional land would be brought under olive cover in the country. Olive cultivation on over 25,000 acres has already been completed under the project with major share from Dir Lower, Bajaur and Potohar region of Punjab.

Oil extracting machines in Bajaur and Dir districts were chemical free, he said, adding Pakistan's olive oil also had great demand internationally due to its purity and better quality. Dr Muhammad Naem, Professor of Economics Department, Swabi University said Pakistan was spending billions of rupees on imports of edible oil including soybean, palm oil, sunflowers and other related commodities since 1970 despite 4.4 million hectares

land suitable for olive plantation.

He said around 3,000 tons of olive oil worth Rs1.241 billion had been imported during 2017-18. Pakistan was spending about USD 4 billion annually on the import of edible oil, he said, adding the country's annual requirement of edible oil was about five million tons with 16 kilogram per capita edible use. "In 2006, Pakistan's edible oil import bill was only USD 615 million that jumped to record USD 3.8 billion in 2022 while the country was currently producing only six metric tons."

Muhammad Ibrahim Khan, Deputy Project Director, the 10 billion trees project said out of 70 million wild olive tree plants discovered in KP, 40 million would be grafted in the next five years with the support of the Agriculture department. He said 25,000 olive trees were planted in Azakhel Nowshera in the last two years. The experts said olive farming had great potential in Bajaur and the government's constant patronage would help increase farmers' income and alleviate poverty, besides proving a harbinger of making Pakistan self-sufficient in edible oil.



Putin cracks down on pro-war opposition

MOSCOW (Agencies): After Russian dictator Vladimir Putin launched the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, he swiftly eliminated the liberal anti-war opposition. But Putin now faces a threat from the other side – pro-war hawks who criticize Russia's political and military leadership for mishandling the war effort.

As Russia's war against Ukraine faces one setback after another, the pro-war camp is more and more dissatisfied with Putin. And after going seemingly too far, they now face a similar fate to the liberal opposition that they despise – repression. In late June, Putin faced a rebellion by Wagner Group founder Yevgeny Prigozhin, who had harshly criticized Russia's military leadership. Prigozhin, having thousands of armed men behind him, reached a deal with the Kremlin, allowing Wagner mercenaries to relocate to Belarus.

Prigozhin was among the best-known hardliners, with his Wanger mercenaries actively taking part in Russia's war against Ukraine. The brief and unsuccessful mutiny has seemingly caused a rift between the Kremlin and the vocal pro-war camp. Prigozhin's exit left convicted war criminal Igor Girkin as the most prominent opponent of Putin in the pro-war opposition. Despite opposing Prigozhin's rebellion, Girkin was arrested in July. Other pro-war imperialists critical of Putin have also faced criminal cases and arrests. The pro-war opposition may trigger new rebellions or instability if Russian troops perform poorly on the battlefield, Russian political analyst Dmitry Oreshkin told the Kyiv Independent. "If there are no successes or if there are defeats (on the Ukrainian front), this opposition from the 'ultra-patriots' will increase," he said. After Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the repressions against the liberal opposition reached an all-time high.

Dozens of people have been jailed for criticizing the war against Ukraine. In December 2022, liberal politician Ilya Yashin was sentenced to 8.5 years in jail on charges of spreading fake information about the Russian army. In April 2023, another liberal politician, Vladimir Kara-Murza, was sentenced to 25 years in jail on charges of high treason and libel against the Russian army – one of the longest sentences handed down to a political prisoner. On Aug. 4, a Russian court also sentenced opposition leader Alexei Navalny to 19 years in a maximum security prison on extremism charges for creating the Anti-Corruption Foundation, a peaceful civic watchdog.

Navalny had been serving a 2.5-year

prison sentence since 2021 and a separate 9-year sentence on fraud charges since 2022. According to the Russian independent publication Verstka, the latest verdict means he will be in jail until the late 2040s. All these cases have been recognized as politically motivated by international human rights organizations and governments. Until recently, the situation with the pro-war opposition has been different.

Before 2014, the Kremlin cracked down and purged the left-wing and right-wing hardliners. Putin was afraid of ultra-radical nationalists and the far left more than of liberals, Russian political philosopher Sergei Sazonov told the Kyiv Independent. "They purged the 'patriotic' opposition, and that's why (those who remained) supported the annexation of Crimea and the invasion of the Donbas in 2014," he said. After years of purges, the radical left and right mostly supported Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, and their goals were aligned with those of the Kremlin. There had been no major crackdown on the pro-war opposition during the invasion before Girkin's arrest.

But as Russia failed to achieve a quick victory over Ukraine and demonstrated numerous blunders during the invasion, the pro-war camp became more critical. Oreshkin told the Kyiv Independent, "it's clear to Putin now that the threat comes not from pro-European opposition but from the ultra-patriotic camp." "As soon as Putin disappoints people with meager military results, they start criticizing him," Oreshkin said in a July 26 interview with Novaya Gazeta Europe, an independent Russian publication. "The worse Putin's affairs are, the more his team is concerned with (cracking down on opponents)." He also said that the window for allowed criticism is getting smaller by the day.

"Earlier, one was banned from using obscene words against the president," Oreshkin said. "Now, it's not enough. One is supposed to praise him and say that he's a strategic genius." Russian political analyst Georgy Satarov said that "the regime tends to persecute anything that stands out," regardless of whether Putin's opponents are pro-war or anti-war. He argued that Prigozhin's June 23-24 rebellion had contributed to the crackdown.

"Prigozhin's march was an important factor," he told the Kyiv Independent. "It demonstrated the regime's instability and triggered seismic changes." Political blogger and journalist Michael Nacke also linked the crackdown on the pro-war opposition to the Wagner rebellion. "It has become obvious to Vladimir Putin that criticism leads to mutinies," he said on his blog on July 10.

Bazoum to be charged with high treason: Junta

NIAMEY (BBC): Niger's military junta has announced plans to prosecute deposed President Mohamed Bazoum for high treason and undermining national security. This is the latest sign that the junta intends to resist international pressure to return power to Mr Bazoum.

He has been held in the basement of his palace since the military staged a coup about three weeks ago. Mr Bazoum was in "good spirits" despite being held in "difficult" conditions, his doctor said after a visit. Visit was approved amid growing international demands for Mr Bazoum's release.

But in a sign that it is hardening its position, the junta said in a statement read out on state TV that it had gathered evidence to prosecute "the deposed president and his local and foreign accomplices for high treason and undermining the internal and external security of Niger". It did not give further details. Mr Bazoum, 63, is being held captive with his wife and son and there were growing concerns about their health.

Gen Abdourahmane

Tchiani, the head of the presidential guards unit, declared himself Niger's new ruler on 26 July after overthrowing him.

The West African regional bloc Ecowas has threatened military action to reverse the coup, but it has so far failed to follow through on its threat. The coup leaders have warned they will defend themselves against any intervention. Ecowas has also imposed sanctions on the junta, including cutting electricity to Niger. This has caused blackouts in the capital Niamey, and other major cities.

A high-powered delegation of Muslim clerics from neighbouring Nigeria met junta leaders in Niamey in a bid to mediate an end to the crisis. Junta-appointed Prime Minister Ali Mahamane Lamine Zeine said he was optimistic that talks with Ecowas would take place in the coming days "to discuss how the sanctions against us will be lifted". The coup in Niger mirrored similar takeovers in neighbouring Burkina Faso and Mali, amid an

Islamist insurgency and a growing Russian influence in the wider Sahel region through its mercenary group Wagner.

Despite his captivity, Mr Bazoum was able to publish an article in The Washington Post stating that he was a hostage and that the coup would have "devastating consequences for our country, our region and the entire world". Mr Bazoum is reported to have lost a "worrying" amount of weight, while his 20-year-old son, who has a chronic medical condition, was also reportedly denied care. UN human rights chief Volker Turk described the conditions of the detention as inhumane, degrading and in violation of international human rights law.

His daughter Zazia, 34, who was on holiday in France during the coup, told the UK-based Guardian newspaper last week that her father, mother and brother had no clean water or electricity and were living on rice and pasta. Fresh food was rotting in the fridge because there was no power, she said.

Cambodia school shut after explosives unearthed

CAMBODIA (Agencies): Thousands of pieces of unexploded ordnance left over from Cambodia's civil war have been unearthed inside a school in the country's northeast, authorities have said. Decades after the brutal conflict and a US bombing campaign starting in the 1960s, the country remains among the most heavily bombed and mined in the world.

Deminers discovered more than 2,000 explosives, including more than 1,000 M79 grenades, inside the grounds of a high school in Kratie province over three days, said Heng Ratana, director general of the Cambodian Mine Action Centre. He told the AFP news agency that the explosive remnants were found after the school cleared land to expand a garden. "The school has been closed temporarily," Heng Ratana said.

Images showed some of the masses of dug-up explosives, rusted over and stacked in rows. "It is a huge stroke of luck for the students. These explosive devices are easy to explode if someone dug into the ground and hit them," he said. The site was a military station during the war, he added, and an operation to clear the grounds would probably uncover more. Cambodia's civil war lasted until 1975, with the United States and what was then North and South Vietnam backing various parties. The effects of the US bombing campaign and minefields left behind have long been felt in tragic ways, with roughly 20,000 Cambodians killed over the last four decades after stepping on landmines or bombs. Clearance work continues to this day, with the government vowing to clear all mines and unexploded ordnance by 2025.

Madagascar presidential aide charged

LONDON (BBC): The Madagascar president's chief-of-staff has been charged in the UK with seeking a bribe from a gem mining firm. Romy Andrianarisoa and an associate are accused of offering the British firm Gemfields licences in Madagascar in return for around £225,000.

She and her associate, Philippe Tabuteau, have been charged with requesting, agreeing to receive or accepting a bribe. Both were remanded in custody after a brief court appearance. Ms Andrianarisoa, 46, and French national Mr Tabuteau, 54, are also accused of trying to land a 5% equity stake in any Gemfields Madagascar projects, according to the National Crime Agency (NCA).

The agency said that the pair were arrested in the Victoria area of central London at a meeting where they were suspected of having attempted to solicit a bribe. Andy Kelly, the NCA's head of international corruption, said: "I am grateful to Gemfields for bringing this matter to our attention and for their ongoing cooperation with the investigation."

HRW calls for safeguards for Haitian security force

NEW YORK (Reuters): International security assistance for Haiti's police should include safeguards to prevent abuses, Human Rights Watch (HRW) said, as debate intensifies over a Kenya-led force to help stem worsening gang violence. Haiti's unelected government requested urgent help last October as heavily-armed gangs expanded their control over large parts of the country, driving a humanitarian crisis amid bloody turf wars that have displaced some 200,000 people.

Wary of supporting a government many Haitians consider corrupt, no country answered the call for a foreign security force until Kenya stepped forward last month. A UN report is due this week, after which the plan, with US backing, will pass to a Security Council vote. In a report published on Monday, HRW said it had interviewed 127 people in Haiti. Many reported widespread sexual violence and a lack of basic needs.

"I want the international community to bring peace if they can," 42-year-old mother Rosie told HRW researchers in a report. "There's no water, no electricity, no food, no peace." The researchers noted that most people interviewed supported an international force helping police, though safeguards are needed, such as monthly UN situation reports, independent abuse oversight and investigation bodies. It also urged the neighboring Dominican Republic and United States to stop deporting migrants back to Haiti.

Past UN peacekeeping missions left behind a cholera epidemic that killed over 10,000 and over a hundred allegations of sexual abuse of women and children. There have been no



reparations. HRW documented dozens of cases of rape - often collective - but said these are vastly under-reported due to fear of reprisals and lack of trust in authorities. Most victims it spoke to had not received medical attention. The government has said it has helped thousands of rape victims through support such as legal certificates, medical aid and emergency contraception, but local rights groups say the state has been paralysed and impunity is normalised. "The rapes and killings happen every day at Deye Mi," said 34-year-old Anne, whose Port-au-Prince neighborhood has been besieged by the powerful G9 Alliance fighting rival G-Pep gang. "There's only one road into the area, and there's a pile of bodies there," added Natalie, 42. She said she was raped on her way home

from the market and her 16-year-old son was killed days later while coming home from school. A humanitarian officer told HRW sexual violence had become usual practice in gang-controlled areas "simply because they have the power to do so".

Fighting has also moved to farmlands as many suppliers are unable to move food across the country. The UN ranks Haiti alongside Yemen and Somalia as the countries most at risk of communities entering starvation. HRW said a multinational force should secure access to roads, ports and hospitals so food, aid and people can move. "We can't run from one place to another all the time to flee these attacks," said Quentin, 30, left homeless after an attack on his neighborhood. "If the situation continues like this, it's like we're already dead."

Migrant boats in Mediterranean: Why are so many people dying?

LONDON (BBC): In grainy photographs shot from a plane circling overhead, four people adrift in a small, metal boat in an expanse of the Mediterranean Sea wave their arms in distress. It later emerges that the group - a 13-year-old boy, two men and a woman - are the only survivors of a shipwreck that they say killed the other 41 people they were travelling with. The four survived by floating with inner tubes and lifejackets until they found another empty boat, likely from a previous migrant crossing, and clambered in. They spent several days drifting before being rescued. A day after news of the tragedy emerged, migrants in the Tunisian city of Sfax prepared to make the same crossing.

One man, who had fled fighting in Sudan's western region of Darfur, told BBC Arabic that he planned to seek asylum in Tunisia, but was ready to board a boat if this didn't work. "I just survived a war, I have nothing to lose," he said. Another, from Kenya, dreamed of a better life for his family in Europe. If they go ahead with the journeys, the two men will join thousands of others who have risked their lives this year on what has been dubbed the world's most dangerous migration route. Experts told the BBC that badly designed and overcrowded boats, stormy weather, and gaps in international efforts were all factors in the danger - and one search-and-rescue NGO described the central Mediterranean as a "cemetery".

If it feels like you are seeing more reports of shipwrecks this year in the central Mediterranean, then both crossings and deaths do appear to be on the rise. People making the journey set sail from the shores of North Africa, usually for Italy. European border agency Frontex says the central Mediterranean is the "most active route" into the European Union, and that reported crossings are at their highest since 2017. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has recorded more than 1,800 migrant deaths in the central Mediterranean so far this year, compared to 1,400 for the whole of 2022.

Among the migrant shipwrecks this year was an overcrowded fishing vessel off the coast of Greece, which killed hundreds in one of the worst humanitarian disasters in the Mediterranean in

recent years. The IOM says there is strong evidence that many shipwrecks are "invisible": unrecorded boats disappearing with no survivors, meaning the real death toll is likely to be much higher. Those embarking on the perilous voyage come from around the world and have various reasons for wanting to reach Europe, from fleeing war or torture, to searching for jobs.

After being rescued from an overcrowded rubber raft this summer, one 16-year-old boy from the Gambia told the BBC he left home three years ago to "hustle hard and help my family". He was aware of how dangerous the journey was, having lost an 18-year-old friend to the crossing, but he said this did not deter him - his friend had "lost his life for his family and his society and his nation". This year, Tunisia has overtaken Libya as the main point of departure - amid a wave of racism against black Africans.

Some say the Libya crossing remains more dangerous, both for geographical and political reasons. "In terms of fatalities, I think that the opening up of the Eastern Libya route (from territories controlled by Wagner-supported militias) is having a bigger impact," said Nando Sigona, a professor at the University of Birmingham, and a migration expert. "It is much longer and it also brings boats at the border between Italian and Greek national waters - two governments currently not too keen to be seen as providing rescue operations to migrants at sea," he said, citing the Greek shipwreck in June by way of example.

Migrants are typically travelling on overcrowded and unseaworthy boats, with limited flotation devices should they capsize. Types of boats include rubber rafts and fishing vessels - on the Tunisian route, metal boats are common. Frontex spokesperson Chris Borowski described them as "coffins in water". "Combine this with the fact that usually there are dozens of these launched at one time with 40 or more people on board and you have a recipe for disaster," he said.

Mr Borowski said that "greedy people smugglers" used metal boats to offer "discount" crossings as they competed for migrants' business. Crossings are

seasonal, with more attempts in the summer. But weather can be unpredictable and successful journeys can take days. "If storms occur - or the seas are rough - which may become more frequent with climate change, there is a much greater risk to life," IOM spokesperson Ryan Schroeder said.

"Sometimes not even bad weather deters smugglers from sending people out to sea," he added, pointing to the boats that recently capsized near the island of Lampedusa, which were launched despite rough seas. And Mr Borowski says poor weather makes spotting boats in distress even more difficult. "Imagine searching for a Vauxhall Corsa from the air in an area the size of the UK. Now try looking for a dozen or more in the open sea," he said. "This is the daunting challenge in the central Med. This, combined with an unforgiving sea - especially when the weather turns bad - as we have seen in recent days."

While Frontex offers "general oversight and technical support", Prof Sigona says national governments mostly govern search and rescue (SAR) operations in the central Mediterranean. The IOM's Mr Schroeder said SAR efforts are no longer as "proactive, comprehensive or adequately resourced" as they were during the big Mare Nostrum rescue operation led by Italy in 2013-2014. Under the current system, Mr Schroeder said the IOM was concerned that "SAR gaps, alleged delays in rescue, and reported lack of response to distress calls may be contributing to tragedies on this route". NGOs operating rescue vessels on the central Mediterranean were more critical. The route has become increasingly deadly "because of a reckless policy of deterrence and neglect that European states have been pursuing for years", Wasil Schauseil, communications co-ordinator at SOS Humanity, claims. German NGO Sea-Watch said the EU had "willingly created a cemetery". It said there was a lack of SAR co-ordination and that "illegal pullbacks" were being conducted by the Libyan coastguard, which the EU has equipped and trained. In addition, last month, the EU signed a \$118m (£90m) deal with Tunisia to try to reduce "irregular" migration.

Ecuador was calm and peaceful

GUAYAQUIL, Ecuador (AP): Belen Diaz was walking home from college one evening when a motorcycle carrying two men made a menacing U-turn. Terrified that she was about to be robbed for the eighth time in three years, the teaching student banged on a cab window until the driver drove her home. Diaz got away safe, but there was an unrelated fatal shooting the next day outside her gated community of two-story homes on the edge of the Ecuadorian port city of Guayaquil.

Ecuador was one of the calmest countries in Latin America until about three years ago. Today, criminals prowl relatively wealthy and working-class neighborhoods alike: professional hitmen, kidnappers, extortionists and thousands of thieves and robbers. Mexican and Colombian cartels have settled into coastal cities like Guayaquil and grabbed chunks of the trade shipping hundreds of millions of dollars of cocaine from neighboring Colombia and Peru to countries overseas. One of the candidates in a special Aug. 20 presidential election had a famously tough stance on organized crime and corruption. Fernando Villavicencio was fatally shot in broad daylight despite a security detail that included police and bodyguards.

"No one is safe from the insecurity in the country," Anthony Garcia, who packs shrimp, said after the Villavicencio assassination. "We are at the hands of drug trafficking, of evil in its entirety." The country's National Police tallied 3,568 violent deaths in the first six months of this year, far more than the 2,042 reported during the same period in 2022. That year ended with 4,600 violent deaths, the country's highest in history and double the total in 2021.

The causes are complex. All, though, revolve around cocaine. Cartel-aided gangs are battling for control of the streets, prisons and drug routes to the Pacific. Dwindling state coffers, political infighting, corruption and soaring debts created funding gaps in social and law-enforcement programs. The COVID-19 pandemic turned hungry children and unemployed adults into easy recruits for criminal groups. Criminals are increasingly demanding payments from businesses and terming the fee a "vacuna" — vaccine — as in immunity from crime.

"COVID came and went and left us vaccines, but a different type of vaccines," said Holbach Muñeton, president of the National Federation of Provincial Chambers of Tourism of Ecuador. Shopping and dining is a

different experience these days. Convenience stores, auto part shops and pharmacies have floor-to-ceiling metal bars that prevent customers from entering from the sidewalk. Malls have metal detectors at the entrances. The bars and restaurants that survived the pandemic have fewer tables and close early. Reports of robberies have soared. Data from the National Police show 31,485 cases were reported last year, about 11,000 more than in 2020.

Garcia, the 26-year-old shrimp packer, has been robbed twice this year. Thieves in Guayaquil stole his phone one time during his morning commute. Another time, he was robbed after he went out to have a couple of drinks. Restaurant owner Carlos Barrezueta said there are spots in Guayaquil where sales have dropped to a tenth of what they once were. Ecuadorian authorities attribute the unprecedented violence to a power vacuum triggered by the killing in December 2020 of Jorge Zambrano, alias "Rasquira" or "JL," the leader of Los Choneros. Founded in the 1990s, the group is the country's largest and most feared gang. Members carry out contract killings, run extortion operations, move and sell drugs, and are the law inside prisons. Los Choneros and the similar groups Los Lobos and Los Tiguerones have been

fighting over territory and control, including within detention facilities, where at least 400 inmates have died since 2021. The gangs have links to cartels from Colombia and Mexico, including the Sinaloa and Jalisco New Generation groups.

"Since the year 2000, we had already seen the Mexican cartels here," said Rob Peralta, a former member of a National Police intelligence unit. "But definitely, in recent years, these criminal groups have garnered more influence here through local gangs, which they empowered, and today they have more weapons than the police themselves." Outgunned, unprepared and underpaid, law-enforcement officers don't dare enter parts of crime-ridden neighborhoods or the wings of some prisons, where dismembered bodies, as well as high-caliber weapons, grenades, belt feeders and drugs, have been found when the government deploys the military and additional police after vicious riots.

Guayaquil is the epicenter of violence. About a third of this year's violent deaths took place in Ecuador's second-largest city, home to the country's main commercial port and a large prison complex. Built on flat land at the end of the Andes, the city stretches along the brown Amazonian waters of the Guayas

River, with only a few tall buildings, and homes and small businesses such as pharmacies dominating the landscape.

The province of Guayas, which includes Guayaquil, is the country's most populous with about 4.5 million people. In the first half of the year, the province saw 976 business robberies, according to National Police data, just 12 short of last year's total. In Socio Vivienda, a sprawling public housing neighborhood, shop owners, pedestrians, police — everyone — talks in whispers. Their eyes bounce around as if someone is watching them 24/7. The neighborhood's police station is surrounded by bags of dirt placed as protection after a shootout earlier this year. Save for a handful of officers chatting by the door, the building looks abandoned.

Police officers across the country walk around with outdated bulletproof vests, and a shortage of ammunition was not addressed until recently. People in some neighborhoods have pitched in to buy gasoline for police cars. Muñeton said the tourism industry in Guayaquil recently arranged for a private university to let police officers use its dorms because their barracks have leaking roofs and lack air conditioning.

Stray bullets are now everyone's concern. One pierced the door of the home of 12-year-old Daniel

Mosquera on July 19 and hit him in the back. His mother, Caterina Aguirre, said he lost a kidney and the ability to move from the waist down. But unlike many mothers of gun violence victims in other countries, Aguirre, 29, said she is not demanding punishment for the perpetrators. She prefers "divine justice" and only wants better health care for her son. That's common even among the non-religious, as nobody wants to attract additional attention. Indeed, fear and distrust have tinged the warmth and politeness characteristic of Ecuadorian society.

People constantly look behind their backs, and some, like Diaz, have come up with elaborate plans to avoid being victimized. Diaz, who is studying to one day become a college professor, carries two cell phones. She never uses one of them, but has downloaded apps to make it look like her everyday phone. She plans to hand thieves that one next time she is robbed. She does not go out in the evenings or dare download dating apps. "We don't know who we're friends with anymore," Diaz, 32, said. "I'm going to stay single forever. I can't go dating on these weird apps. I mean, imagine, they could kidnap me! Life is not what it used to be."

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Terrorists' message to Mr Kakar

THE Chinese Embassy in Pakistan and the Chinese Consulate General in Karachi have strongly condemned an attack on a convoy of Chinese engineers working on a project in the port city of Gwadar, Pakistan. The convoy was ambushed by bombs and gunshots on their way from the airport to the port on Sunday morning. All Chinese personnel remained safe and have been properly relocated to a safe destination. The Chinese mission in Pakistan asked the Pakistani side to severely punish the attackers and to take effective measures to ensure the safety of Chinese nationals and institutions engaged in multiple development projects there. The Chinese mission further endorsed that China will continue to work with Pakistan to jointly address the threat of terrorism and effectively protect the security of Chinese personnel, institutions and projects in the country. A banned Baloch insurgent group, Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) claimed responsibility for the attack. Meanwhile, Pakistani security forces launched a security clearance operation in the area, killed one terrorist and injured three others involved in the attack.

The monster of terrorism is flourishing unrestrictedly in the AfPak region, as unceasing armed conflicts, political chaos, and persistent economic volatility had turned the nations across Durand line into an epicentre of anarchism and violence. Unfortunately, warring jihadist Mullahs and tribal warlords never faced a lack of fresh blood and immature minds to accomplish their nefarious agendas, fuel their communal strife, and propagate extremism and terrorism in this universe. In fact, sloganeering of Jihad and nationalism had been the most effective tools of the terrorists for subversion and brainwash of the youths in a disadvantaged society while poverty, illiteracy, unemployment and ignorance provide them breeding ground to cultivate underprivileged people to carry forward their anti-state activities without any pause.

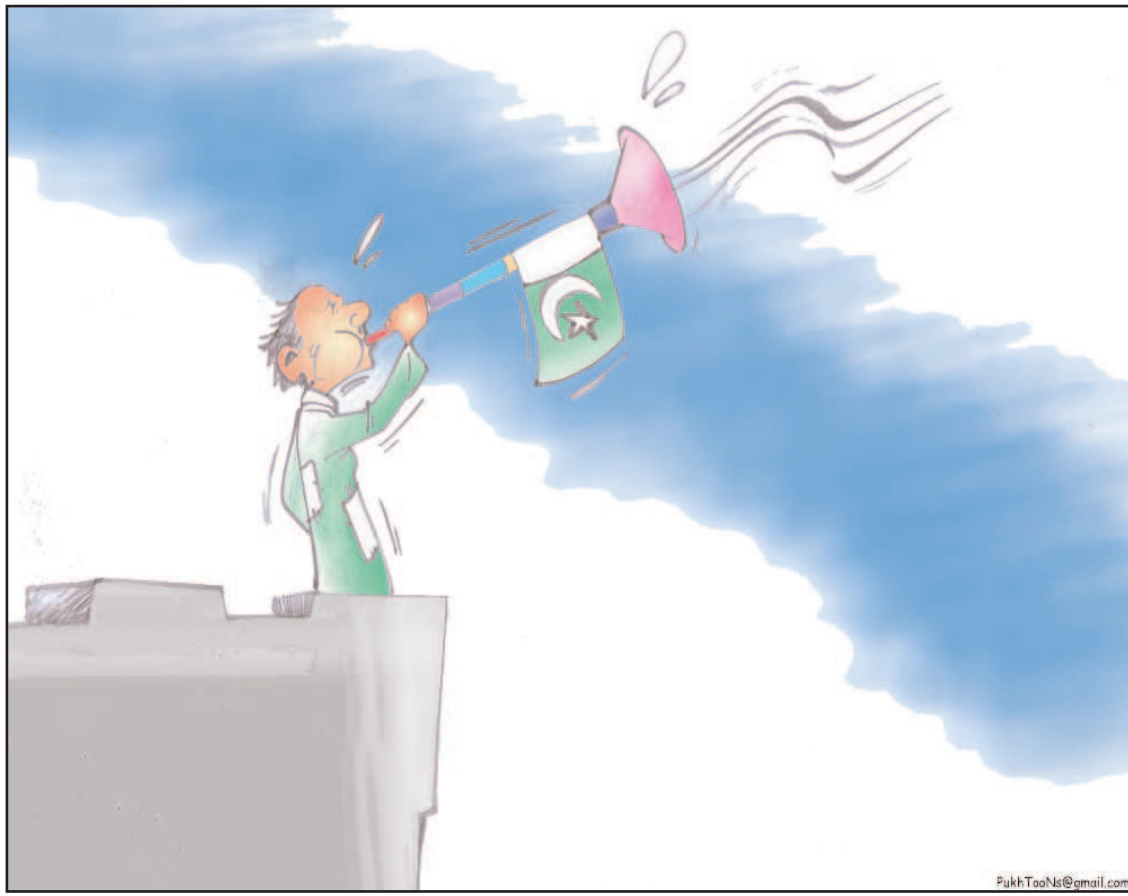
Historically, Balochistan had been the soft target for anti-Pakistan forces because of its peculiar geographical location and demography, political issues and smear separatist insurgency that had been at a low brawl throughout the past five decades but it got a threshold after the killing of former Baloch leader Nawab Akbar Bugti during a security operation in 2006. Meanwhile, the construction of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has pushed Balochistan in the centre stage of the ongoing tussle between major powers, along with attracting a renewed hostility from New Delhi which constituted a spacial desk at RAW Headquarters to support Baloch insurgents and sabotage

CPEC projects in violence hit Balochistan. Historically, arrest of Indian spy and serving Naval Officer Kulbuhshan Yadhav by the Pakistani LEAs was a clear evidence of New Delhi's sponsorship of terrorist activities inside Pakistan. Apparently, the global rivalry and foreign conspiracy not only undermined the normal pace of development in the province but also derailed and slow down the growth and development work under the CPEC projects. Over the years, common Baloch has suffered through the civil insurgency, while the latest wave of CPEC focused terrorist activities are further pluming their economic woes for other several decades.

The recent attack on Chinese convoy working on the CPEC is a message to newly crowned caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar Kakar, who must take this as a challenge and try to resolve this issue by using all out resources including political talks, Baloch tribal jirga, secret Intelligence operation and kinetic use of the military force to wiped out this menace from the poverty stricken province once and for all. Realistically, Nawabs and Sardars are equally responsible for the backwardness of Balochistan, who sent their children to Switzerland and Great Britain for higher education and leisure but didn't allow ordinary tribesmen to get education and improve their lives. This feudal system gave birth to unceasing poverty and illiteracy while Baloch insurgency is another product of this feudalism. That prompted a few Baloch Nawabs to claim their heirloom right to govern the people of the province. we have already mentioned during these pages that MP Kakar currently owes a unique position as a caretaker Prime Minister and a son of soil. He can play a crucial role in the resolution of unsolvable puzzle of Balochistan issue. The government must take the Baloch people on board to initiate a province wide crusade against the Baloch insurgents and indoctrinate a common Baloch about the future prospects of the ongoing development and energy projects under the CPEC that will not only fail foreign conspiracy against province but will lead to a sustainable economic growth and prosperity for a common citizen in the future. For that end, Mr. Kakar must mobilize LEAs and SIAs to build pressure on separatist groups and engage Baloch tribal elders and political leadership to resolve the Balochistan issue on permanent basis. It would be a great victory of Baloch and a magnificent gift for the people of Pakistan.

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Renewable energy is a foolish fantasy

Bryan Leyland

AS things stand the 'net zero' policies adopted by many governments, including those of the US and UK, are doomed. Professor Kelly, a Cambridge University engineer, has shown that the cost for the UK could exceed £3 trillion. A lack of key resources makes net zero by 2050 impossible at any cost.

This is because a net zero, low cost electricity supply largely based on wind and solar power is unachievable. Wind power is becoming more and more expensive and offshore wind farm projects are being abandoned as uneconomic. Operation and maintenance costs are much higher than expected. Many manufacturers are losing money and some have very serious ongoing maintenance problems.

Solar power is also in serious trouble with steadily increasing costs of raw materials driving the price up. If electricity is expensive, net zero is much harder and more economically damaging to achieve as it requires many energy-intensive activities - transport, heating etc - to be electrified. But that is not the worst problem with renewables. To be a practicable method of supplying electricity, wind and solar power need a low cost, large scale storage technology that will store surplus energy when available and deliver it when needed. The problem is that no such technology exists. But without mass-scale storage, more wind and solar power will lead to major blackouts and intolerable price spikes alternating with price crashes. As wind turbines and solar panels do not help to stabilise system frequency and voltage in the way that thermal powerplants do, even a minor disturbance could collapse a renewables-driven power grid completely.

The only viable and scalable low-carbon power technology is nuclear. Today, more than 400 reactors generate about 10 per cent of world electricity. They are emissions free and reliable. Their only problem is that they are perceived to be dangerous and are violently opposed by some groups. Dangerous, nuclear is not. Per unit of energy

generated, nuclear power has proved to be much safer than any other major power generating technology. Coal, gas and hydropower are respectively 4000, 100 and 35 times more dangerous. In the event of an accident where all power supply is lost, all modern reactors will shut down safely. Over the last 60 years the only nuclear powerplant accident with directly measurable health consequences has been at Chernobyl. The reactor there was operated in defiance of all safety principles and used obsolete technology without shielding: its failure has no relevance to a discussion of normal nuclear reactor safety.

Even Chernobyl's consequences were not large in the context of normal industrial accidents or normal, non-nuclear pollution. It's possible to say, as the UN does, that 50 people died as a direct result of the Chernobyl accident and that as many as 4000 people worldwide may have had their lives shortened over the decades because of it. Industrial accidents have commonly killed hundreds or even thousands of people: ordinary air pollution results in tens of thousands of deaths every single year in the UK alone. The disposal of nuclear waste is not a major problem. I have stood in the hall at Sellafield where 75 per cent of the UK's high level waste is stored. Although the waste was only about 2 m below my feet I was not exposed to dangerous levels of radiation. After about 1000 years, the radiation will have reduced to safe levels. By contrast, large dams can stand for more than 2000 years and remain a terrible, looming menace. If they are abandoned, they will eventually fail and drown thousands of people: there have already been some terrible dam disasters involving massive loss of life. Nuclear waste can be safely isolated and forgotten: dams can't. There is also the prospect of today's nuclear 'waste' becoming an economic source of new fuel should demand and prices rise in future. It should be noted that this would not mean expensive electricity: fuel accounts for only a small fraction of the

cost of nuclear energy. In the Western world the construction of large modern reactors has suffered from poor project management, financing problems and regulatory delays that have resulted in major overruns in cost and time. This need not have happened: the Russian and Chinese are successfully building similar reactors. More than 50 reactors are under construction right now and even more are planned. The Western world needs to get its act together!

Many different designs of small modular reactors which are built on a production line basis are proposed and several are now under construction. None of them can melt down and release radiation. A major cause of delays and excessive costs is a regulatory regime that was designed to cope with the situation many years ago when the technology was evolving rapidly and radiation risks were not well understood. It is unsuitable for licensing identical modern mass produced reactors. US requirements are even more onerous than those of the UK and Canada. All three regimes require that radiation exposure of workers has to be "As Low As Reasonably Achievable". This vague requirement needs to be replaced with a level of radiation that is known to be safe. People living in Ramsar in Iran are exposed to natural radiation 10 times greater than the regulated level: research has shown that they suffer no ill effects as a result. There are other areas around the world where natural background radiation is at levels which would be unacceptable in today's nuclear industry, yet local residents suffer no ill consequences. Should we adopt the Ramsar level? A rapid switch from expensive, impractical wind and solar power to reliable nuclear is the only way of meeting the net zero goal while keeping the lights on and society in general functioning. So how do we get from here to there?

As a first step, politicians and the public will need to be educated on the benefits of nuclear power. They should be reminded that wind and solar farms last

for less than 25 years while nuclear power stations have a life of 80 years or more. Governments and the industry need to mount a major publicity campaign extolling the virtues of nuclear power and emphasising its safety and its ability to provide a reliable and economic emissions-free supply. The media must learn to stop exaggerating the risks of nuclear power: and this doesn't only apply to Chernobyl. The reporting of the Fukushima reactor incident was hysterically inaccurate, leaving many people with the impression that major hazards occurred. In fact, according to the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation, health effects from Fukushima radiation are unlikely ever to be discernible - and yes, this includes the plant workers and everyone else in the world. Yet such was the media coverage at the time and thereafter that to this day very few people are aware of this reality. Germany even decided to shut down its reactors as a result, and is now building new coal power stations which will do far more damage to the people of Europe than the Fukushima reactors ever did to anyone. At the same time nuclear manufacturers, users and regulators must agree on what is really needed in the way of regulation and levels of radiation. They must agree on internationally acceptable standards for reactor design and safety with the aim of providing a blanket approval for reactors of identical design rather than the current practice of repeating the process for each reactor in each country. Nuclear power needs to be recognised as a low emissions source of electricity that is superior to wind and solar power. Subsidies, mandates and other enormously expensive policies intended to promote wind and solar power must be abandoned and the money switched to expediting nuclear power. Governments need to face the fact that wind and solar power can never deliver their net zero dreams of low cost, reliable, emissions free electricity. They have only two realistic options: switch to nuclear power, or abandon net zero.

Russo-Ukrainian war

Erik E. Mueller

PRESIDENT Vladimir Putin and Russia have given Ukraine an excuse to provide a haven for organizations aimed at destroying the current Russian state and its allies in Chechnya and Belarus. Since 2014, militant groups from Russia, Belarus, Chechnya and elsewhere have established themselves as allies of Ukraine in its fight against Russia and its aligned forces.

These groups started forming during the 2014-2022 Donbas War, but more groups have formed and taken up arms alongside Kyiv's soldiers since the February 2022 Russian invasion. The formation of these groups in Ukraine and their actions against Russia's interests is blow-back for Russian military activities in Chechnya and Ukraine, its backing of Alexander Lukashenko's government in Belarus, and Moscow's own governance at home.

Among the newer organizations are those with goals focused on Russia, Chechnya, and Belarus. There are the neo-Nazi and Russian ethnonationalist Russian Volunteer Corps (RVC) as well as the politically inclusive and democracy-promoting Freedom of Russia Legion (FRL). Both these groups seek to overthrow Putin's government. There is also the Separate Special Purposes Battalion (OBON), a Chechen separatist organization aimed at establishing an independent Chechen Republic of Ichkeria. Additionally, there is the Belarusian Kastu? Kalino?ski Regiment (KKR) that seeks to topple Lukashenko's government in Minsk. Some have fought with Kyiv since before the February 2022 invasion. Among these groups are Chechen separatist outfits like the Dzkhokhar Dudayev Battalion (DDB) and Sheikh Mansur Battalion (SMB) that have fought alongside Ukrainian forces against Russian separatists and their allies since 2014. Some of the newer groups consist of fighters who served as part of non-state groups during the Donbas War, with some fighters from the RVC and KKR having fought with far-right groups including the Ukrainian Azov Brigade.

Russia's backing of separatists in the Donbas from 2014-2022 is likely the inspiration for allowing these groups to organize, train, equip, fundraise, and fight alongside Ukrainian forces. These groups provide Ukraine with extra manpower to combat Russian-aligned forces. They also can serve as proxy forces to promote Ukrainian interests and fight its enemies abroad. Kyiv has already permitted RVC and FRL raids into Russian territory from Ukrainian territory. Both groups appear set to carry out further raids and attacks against Russian forces. It is possible that Ukraine might go on to allow the DDB, SMB, OBON, or other Chechen separatist allies to launch an armed campaign in Russian territory as well - something that may have already begun.

Russia's invasion as well as its past backing of groups in Ukraine are likely reasons why Kyiv does not seek to prevent these groups from carrying out armed action within Russian territory. Beyond Russia, should Belarus

choose to send troops to support Russia, Ukraine could allow the KKR and other Belarusian allies to carry out raids into Belarus. Many of Ukraine's nonstate allies see Russian defeat in the Russo-Ukrainian War as a rung on the ladder toward achieving their ultimate goals. For Russian groups like the RVC and FRL, the war could present an opportunity to organize armed opposition to directly engage in fighting Russia to overthrow Putin's government. For Chechen groups, the war could be a way to weaken Russia and reopen an opportunity for Chechnya to split away from Moscow and remove the government of Ramzan Kadyrov. For the KKR, the war may present an opportunity to weaken Lukashenko's grip on power by significantly impeding or ending Russia's capacity to continue providing support to his government in Belarus.

Allying with Ukraine also could provide these groups with overt support for their overall causes. For instance, last fall, Kyiv recognized Chechnya as a Russian-occupied territory (though it has refrained from recognizing anyone as the legitimate government of Grozny). In the future, it may more overtly back the projects of groups like the KKR and FRL that seek to overthrow the current governments and establish democratic futures in Belarus and Russia respectively. However, support for the objectives of other groups is unlikely. For instance, Kyiv is unlikely to back RVC's efforts to establish a Russian ethnostate. In this circumstance, Ukraine seems to have made an alliance based on a shared enemy rather than support for the RVC's ideological project. Backing these groups presents risks for Ukraine. For instance, the RVC appears to be working with and supporting other neo-Nazi groups like the Polish Volunteer Corps and the German Volunteer Corps, made up of Polish and German nationals respectively. They could collaborate with neo-Nazis from other countries like the United States. This may cause tensions between Kyiv and its allies, especially if these groups seek to use military training, combat experience, and weapons from their time in Ukraine to carry out violence at home.

Additionally, incursions from Ukraine into Russian territory may further escalate the conflict. Kyiv may also be blamed if its non-state allies commit war crimes or attacks that target civilians using weapons and equipment they obtained while fighting alongside Ukrainian forces regardless of how these tools came into their possession. Ukraine may be blamed whether or not it supported or had knowledge of such attacks in advance. Kyiv may also bear reputational costs due to its affiliation with extremist organizations - especially given that Moscow has justified the invasion with false claims that Ukraine is a neo-Nazi-dominated state. Though alignment with these groups presents clear benefits in the near term, Ukraine should be cautious since these groups could turn on it at any time should their interests no longer align with those of Kyiv.

The Moscow Times

Perverse as it sounds, Donald Trump in a prison cell may be the worst possible outcome

Emma Brockes

IT seems a long time ago, but there was a brief period, after Joe Biden's inauguration and before the 6 January hearings and the start of campaigning for next year's presidential election, when it was possible to avoid Donald Trump for days at a time. He was still there, obviously, wandering the corridors at Mar-a-Lago, Gloria Swanson-style, and posting screeds to Truth Social. But there was no real reason to think about him and, for that short period, he was returned to his essential state: just another person posting unhinged rants online.

This is not where Trump is now - in the US, at least. Thanks to a raft of legal actions, culminating earlier this month in the justice department's arraignment of the former president for allegedly trying to overturn

the 2020 election result, Trump is not only front and centre every day, but in danger of ascending to a new position in the news cycle: political martyr and victim of a witch-hunt. Given the preposterousness of the events leading up to this moment - only recently, a jury found Trump liable for defamation and sexual abuse - it seems inevitable we should find ourselves here.

Trump, of course, is keenly aware of the potential in his superficially dire situation and has already leaned fully into it. In campaign stops across the US, and with the threat of jail hanging over him, he is doing the thing we know from experience to be the man's absolute forte: siphoning the heat and energy from any given charge against him and refracting it back on his enemies. "They

want to silence me because I will never let them silence you," he told a crowd in New Hampshire on Tuesday. As the New York Times pointed out this week, his new campaign message for the 2024 election is: "I'm being indicted for you". (A woman at the New Hampshire event told the reporter, nonsensically but with heart: "What, am I next?") It is an exceedingly weird and insoluble problem. From experience we know that the only blows that land on Trump are either ridicule - recall his face when Obama mocked him, all those years ago, during the White House correspondents' dinner - or ignoring him. Of the two, only the latter really promises results. In the shocked days after Trump's election in 2016, I recall that

Obama's moment of mockery was singled out as an example of precisely the kind of leftwing self-indulgence that dislodged the first pebble in Trump's psychology, and ended in his run for the White House. It is a mistake to take the man seriously; indicting him on four criminal counts of allegedly attempting to overturn a democratic election is the very definition of taking someone seriously. And yet, in a functioning democracy, how on earth might one let this pass?

As such, the unfolding of the latest and most serious legal action against Trump highlights a stark divide between the political and judicial rationales for pursuing him. As has already been observed, Trump is on exceedingly thin ice with Moxila A Upadhyaya, the

judge who set the terms of his conditions for release pending trial. In the last week, Trump posted what might be construed as vague threats in the direction of any prospective juror ("If you go after me, I'm coming after you!"), raising the possibility of a scenario in which he is yanked to jail and campaigns for the presidency from his cell. There is, in the current climate in the US, nothing pleasing about this image. In fact, with every passing day, and with a perversity no amount of exposure to Trump can ever quite normalise, Trump in jail seems like the worst possible outcome. Campaigning from a prison cell would lend Trump a righteousness exceeding even his present grandiose narrative, and widen the sweep of his supporters by offering them a wildly romantic and dramatic

cause to join. What remains so hard to grapple with is that in spite of the deadly seriousness of the events that got us here - it is easy to forget, sometimes, that people died on 6 January - as ever with Trump, one senses the wink behind every gesture. When he tells supporters, as he did in March, "I am your retribution", his language is like a biblical script with Mel Gibson behind it, a hokey narrative that serves two purposes: it offers a genuine cause for aggrieved supporters to latch on to and, simultaneously, it extends an invitation to join him in a cosmic joke against everyone else. One imagines Trump in jail, his demeanour unchanged, which is to say that of an after-dinner host, smirking and shrugging and rolling his eyes as he says: "I'm like Jesus Christ at this point."

Experts’ take on 6G Technology

MOBILE communication has transformed the world in the past four decades, with each decade witnessing the emergence of at least one new generation technology. While 5G technology opened the door to the internet of things, 6G aims to further advance this concept by evolving into a platform for "connected intelligence".

The 6G technology is expected to help mobile communication networks to connect a vast array of smart devices, enabling real-time connectivity between the physical and digital worlds through artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning. Also, it will likely enable people to access and retrieve a wealth of information in real time, and help them enter an intelligent, interconnected world. As such, 6G will usher in the next wave of digitalization. While 6G is still in the initial stage of development, industrial circles believe it will have a unified network that bridges the virtual and physical spaces, facilitating "connected intelligence". The 6G technology, experts say, will incorporate diverse networks, including cellular, satellite and drone-provided communication to facilitate information collection. In particular, densely distributed small satellites forming an "airborne wireless network", will cover the entire planet. This distinct feature sets 6G apart from previous

generations of communication networks. In terms of network performance indicators, 6G is expected to significantly improve the transmission rates, end-to-end latency, reliability, spectrum and network efficiency and more, thus meeting the diverse network needs of vertical industries. More important, 6G will incorporate domestic AI technology as far as machine learning in the design of end-to-end mobile communication systems is concerned. It will provide AI services everywhere and all the time, optimizing system performance and user experience.

A key disruptive technology of 6G will be the use of radio waves for monitoring the physical world to send and retrieve signals, and enable advanced perception capabilities.

The 6G technology will help boost production, improve people's lifestyle, enhance efficiency, promote innovation in the information and communications technology (ICT) sector, and create new opportunities for the digital economy. The technology's potential applications include integrated air, space and ground communication, which will allow users to seamlessly access mobile broadband in cities, rural areas, and even on airplanes and ships. It is thus clear that 6G will help empower industries, inte-

Chen Zhi

grate various sectors, and create, for instance, smart factories, promote connected vehicles and boost telemedicine. Moreover, 6G will help meet the requirements of users beyond 5G, which include but are not restricted to, precise motion control and immersive communication in augmented and virtual reality. The global race for 6G has begun, with experts saying the technology is likely to enter the market around 2030. In 2019, the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology established the IMT-2030 (6G) Promotion Group, providing a platform for industries, research institutions and operators to deepen cooperation and collaboration in ICT. And the Ministry of Science and Technology, along with other departments, formed the National 6G Technology Research and Development Promotion Working Group and the National 6G Technology Research and Development Expert Group to promote further research in 6G. Chinese internet companies and equipment manufacturers have been conducting research in 6G based on their respective technological advantages. For example, China Mobile, after proposing the world's first systemic 6G network architecture, achieved breakthroughs in key technologies such as new wireless trans-

mission, new network protocols and digital twin networks.

In fact, China Mobile collaborated with Tsinghua University, Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications and other institutions to develop six sets of technology prototype samples. And major equipment manufacturers such as Huawei and ZTE have intensified research in 6G. For instance, in 2022, Huawei released a white paper on 6G, which is a comprehensive analysis of the potential apps, requirements and supporting technologies for 6G wireless networks. The 6G technology's requirements and industrial ecosystem are more complex than that of existing high-tech ecosystems, because it uses cloud computing, AI, edge computing and other advanced technologies. So, Chinese companies, universities, and research institutions need to intensify collaboration to boost research.

But since experimentation in key technologies and determining the different application scenarios are critical to achieving breakthroughs in high-tech, it is necessary to establish platforms for collaboration in 6G technology, create more international cooperation opportunities, and jointly explore and validate 6G with partner countries, thereby creating a mutually beneficial, open and cooperative global 6G industrial ecosystem.

The China Daily

The coming BRICS currency diversification

Dan Steinbock

THE pressure toward the diversification of world currency reserves is longstanding. It intensified after 2008, but has escalated since 2022. It is a prime topic in the next BRICS Summit that's likely to further intensify the trend. In 2016, US Treasury Secretary Jack Lew cautioned that "the more we condition the use of the dollar and our financial system on adherence to US foreign policy, the more the risk of migration to other currencies and other financial systems in the medium-term grows."

Both the Trump and Biden administrations have ignored Lew's warning. One consequence has been the Global South's rising interest in the BRICS, which will have its next, highly-anticipated summit in South Africa in late August. A key topic in Johannesburg will be the BRICS quest to develop alternative payment systems to US dollar. In May - oddly, amid the US banking crisis - economist Paul Krugman attributed the "de-dollarization" brouhaha to crypto-cultists and Putin's sympathizers, as if the trend was nothing but a misguided anti-patriotic melee. However, as Krugman noted, much of world trade remains invoiced and settled in US dollars; many banks based outside the United States nonetheless offer dollar-denominated deposits; many non-US corporations borrow in dollars; central banks hold a large share of their reserves in dollar assets; and so on. The assumption was that, a bit like diamond, US dollar is forever. In reality, no dominant reserve currency has had an indefinite life-span.

What Krugman failed to understand is that it is precisely the current coercive monopoly of the US dollar - the world's disproportionate dependency on US dollar in trade invoicing and settlement, and the dollar reliance by non-US corporate and financial giants, and dollar's high share in central banks' reserves - that increasingly worries not just the Global South, but an increasing number of major economies in the West. When the dollar is weaponized by the US foreign policy in the name of international community but without the broad support of international consensus, it puts trade invoicing and settlement, foreign corporates, financials and central bank reserves at risk.

True, recently US Secretary of Treasury Janet Yellen said there's still no alternative to the dollar-based monetary system. Then again, not so long ago, she also warned about a catastrophic scenario if Washington failed to agree on a (still another) new debt limit. Similarly, the British, too, touted the blessings of their sterling pound until 1914. But that primacy ended with the overstretch of the UK

economy after 1945. The early 21st century has its unique characteristics, but it won't be that different.

How is the BRICS contributing to diversification? Thanks to its organizational flexibility, the bloc makes possible unilateral, bilateral and multilateral measures. Analytically, these range from gradual reforms to more unilateral individual measures. These, in turn, are driven by the original BRICS founder economies (Brazil, Russia, India and China), the new aspiring members and the coalition partners who share its vision and are considering membership as well. Some 22 countries have formally applied to join the group, while an equal number of states "have been informally asking about becoming BRICS members," according to Anil Sooklal, South Africa's ambassador-at-large responsible for ties with Asia and the BRICS. Reportedly, countries looking to join the bloc include Argentina, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. Indeed, the rising number of populous and large emerging economies make possible the kind of "network effects" and "positive spillovers" that will be critical to launch the new critical infrastructure for the proposed alternative global financial system. However, what the BRICS offer is not simple de-dollarization. The goal is not to eliminate the dollar, which is typically the depiction by the critics and political adversaries of the BRICS, particularly in the West. At the eve of the Ukraine conflict, Atlantic Council characterized Russia and China as "partners in de-dollarization." That, in turn, was portrayed as "an alternative to the US-dominated SWIFT" [the currently dominant payment system]. Touted widely in the West, the cooperation of Russia and China is understood as a de jure alliance, and de-dollarization as a ploy for dollar substitution.

The realities are a bit less scandalous and more nuanced. The BRICS have little to do with rogue states seeking covertly to subvert international order. Rather, like asset managers who seek to maintain appropriate diversification in their portfolios, the BRICS' strategic objective is diversify and recalibrate rather than simple de-dollarization. The skeptics say that the dollar has been buried many times before. Why should it die this time? But who says it would have to die. The more, the merrier. Most BRICS economies still rely significantly on the US dollar, whereas those that have been sanctioned by the US and/or its allies have significantly reduced their dollar reserves, often opting for gold instead. What the major BRIC economies seek for is a more diversified global currency regime. The pres-

ent path is untenable. If it is not remedied gradually and over time, it will change through a major world crisis, disruptively. The BRICS goal is not to replace the dollar. Rather, it is to diversify the monetary system so that it would better reflect today's world economy.

In historical view, it's far from a new idea. John Maynard Keynes made a similar argument for the proposed supra-national currency bancor (the name was inspired by the French banque, "bank gold") in Bretton Woods in 1944. But the idea was torpedoed by the US negotiators, who wanted to replace the UK pound with the dollar as the world's major reserve currency. However, Keynes cautioned that the dollar primacy would result in great uncertainty and volatility following the reconstruction and recovery of Western Europe and other major economies. That's what ensued in 1971, when President Nixon ended unilaterally the convertibility of the dollar to gold. Though introduced as a temporary measure, it made US dollar a permanently floating fiat money. As gold no longer offered a yardstick for value, the perception of value replaced value itself. The consequent price shock reverberated across the world. With the twin oil crises, it was followed by the quadrupling of oil prices, then runaway inflation and stagflation, and eventually record-high US interest rates and massive rearmament drives.

In geopolitics, the US has continued to lean on major Western economies and Japan, but in international economy it refused to renounce the exorbitant privilege. As a net consequence, the dollar monopoly contributed to asset bubbles in the 1980s, early '90s, early 2000s and finally in 2008. Amid the Great Recession, China's central bank governor Zhou Xiaochuan revived the idea and urged major Western economies to "reform the international monetary system." Great pledges were made in Brussels, Washington and Tokyo, but nothing much happened. Hence, the efforts at complementary development institutions and critical infrastructure, including the BRICS New Development Bank (NBD), the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), the Bridge and Road Initiative (BRICS), and the quest for new currency arrangements. The BRICS do not want to subvert the world order. Rather, they seek to foster one vis-à-vis diversification. Nonetheless, global currency arrangements must not just the interests of Americans who account for 4.1 percent of the world population. It must also reflect the aspirations of the multipolar world economy in which global growth prospects are driven by the large emerging economies.

Sunak’s North Sea oil policy a setback for COP28

Ranvir S. Nayar

BRITISH Prime Minister Rishi Sunak last week visited Scotland to announce the opening of exploration in the Rosebank oil and gas field, which is said to hold the UK's largest untapped oil reserves in the North Sea, amounting to more than 500 million barrels.

Sunak said that he would be granting more than 100 licenses to commence exploration in order to meet the UK's energy security requirements. He insisted that the new exploration would be entirely in line with the net-zero emissions target that the UK has set for itself, under which the country is committed to achieve net zero by 2050.

Nonetheless, Sunak's announcement riled the entire ecological community in the country, which immediately trashed his claims that the new exploration would not derail the UK's efforts to meet its net-zero targets. Sunak defended his claims, saying that importing fossil fuel energy was at least three to four times more carbon-intensive than producing it domestically. Environmentalists immediately questioned this, saying that most of Britain's oil and gas imports come via pipeline and hence their carbon intensity is definitely not more than what would be achieved by local production. But even more seriously, British North Sea oil production is ranked among the dirtiest in the world in terms of carbon intensity. According to a study by financial rating agency Standard & Poor's, as North Sea oil fields are among the

oldest active fields in the world, their carbon intensity in production is about 12 kg of carbon dioxide per barrel of oil. And the UK's carbon intensity in these fields is three times higher than Norway's, largely due to the age of the British fields and the large quantity of gas that is flared. In another study, Britain ranked in the bottom half of oil and gas producers in terms of the carbon intensity of their production.

The critics also rightly questioned the opening of a new oil field for development at a time when the immense damage climate change can cause is already being witnessed all over the world. Even the UK is witnessing its share of severe weather events, including droughts and prolonged heat waves. In such a scenario, this decision reeks of the typical double-tongued speeches that leaders around the world have been making for decades, and especially since the Paris climate agreement was signed at the end of COP21 meeting in 2015. Since then, all nations have failed to deliver on their commitments to cut carbon emissions, which were already extremely feeble and far below the actual cuts needed to keep the global mean temperature rise to within 1.5 degrees Celsius since the era of industrialization began. The commitments made in Paris will not even curb the rate of growth in atmospheric carbon

levels, let alone actually bring down the levels of this family of noxious gases that humankind has released into the atmosphere.

After it was pulled up by the country's High Court in July 2022 because its policies failed to detail how the country would actually achieve its goal of net zero by 2050, the UK government released a detailed action plan, outlining where the cuts in carbon emissions would come from. One of the biggest commitments made in this plan was the transition of all of the UK's electricity to renewables by 2035. This is perhaps the most significant commitment, as the government has also decided to increase its electrification of the transport network, which could lead to a growth of up to 60 percent in the country's demand for electricity. In the 31 years since 1990, the UK has reduced its carbon emissions from power generation by a significant 73.4 percent, which has come on the back of an aggressive phase-down of coal-powered plants and a rapid increase in renewable energy sources, notably wind farms, where the UK is one of Europe's leaders. Today, renewables account for about 40 percent of total power generated in the country.

Thus, it is highly surprising that Sunak has opted to enhance North Sea oil drilling, since the UK is far from tapping all of the wind power it can generate, let alone looking at

other renewable energy sources like solar or tidal power. With the declining cost of renewable energy, there is no valid argument that Sunak can put forward for choosing to expand the production of fossil fuels instead of boosting clean, green energy sources. His critics cite the pattern of the prime minister tending to side with big business, whatever the cost, and his latest announcement only gives them another stick to beat him with.

Moreover, not only has the UK failed to meet its commitment to cut emissions, but it has, jointly with every other developed economy, failed to deliver on the oft-repeated commitment of paying \$100 billion every year to finance the transition of developing economies toward green energy. More than a decade of broken promises means that the amount required now exceeds \$3 trillion and is rising as each year passes by. Coming as it does less than four months before the next climate change summit, COP28, gets underway in Dubai, this announcement means Sunak is hardly likely to have won any fans among the green warriors or developing country leaders that he and his team will certainly run into in the UAE. Instead of taking the lead in helping to create an atmosphere conducive to clear negotiations and firm outcomes in Dubai, Sunak has muddied the waters and damaged the atmosphere, both literally and figuratively, with his latest announcement.

Pride, hope, betrayal: The story of Ain Al-Hilweh is the story of Palestine

Ramzy Baroud

AIN Al-Hilweh is known as the "Capital of Palestinian Shatat." The term might not stir many emotions among those who do not fully understand, let alone experience, the harrowing existence of ethnic cleansing and perpetual exile - and the tremendous violence that followed. "Shatat" is roughly translated into "exile" or "diaspora". However, the meaning is much more complex. It can be understood only through lived experience. Even then, it is still not easy to communicate. Perhaps, the Kafkaesque blocks of concrete, zinc and rubble, towered one on top of another and serving as "temporary shelters" for tens of thousands of people, tell a small part of the story.

On July 30, violence returned to the crowded Palestinian camp, claiming the lives of at least 13 people. Scores more were injured and thousands have fled. Yet, most of the refugees stayed, because several generations of Palestinians in Ain Al-Hilweh understand that there is a point where running away serves no purpose, for it neither guarantees life nor even a dignified death. The massacres of the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in September 1982 were a testament to this collective realization. Before writing this, I spoke to several people in South Lebanon, and sorted through many articles and reports describing what is taking place in the camp now. Yet, the truth is still blurry or, at best, selective.

Many in Arabic media have largely relegated Ain Al-Hilweh to a symbolic representation of a rooted Palestinian pain. Mainstream Western media was hardly concerned about Palestinian pain, but focused mostly on the "lawlessness" of the camp, the fact that it

exists outside the legal jurisdiction of the Lebanese army, and the proliferation of weapons among Palestinian and other factions engaged in seemingly endless and supposedly inexplicable infighting. But Ain Al-Hilweh, like the 11 other Palestinian refugee encampments in Lebanon, is a story of something else entirely, more urgent than mere symbolism, and more rational than being the result of lawless refugees.

It is essentially the story of Palestine, or rather, the destruction of Palestine at the hands of Zionist militias in 1947-48. It is a story of contradictions, pride, shame, hope, despair and, ultimately, betrayal. It is not easy to follow the timeline leading up to the latest round of violence. Some suggest that the fighting began when an assassination attempt - blamed on Fatah fighters in the camp - was carried out against a leader of a rival Islamist group. The attempt failed and was followed by an ambush, carried out by alleged Islamists who killed a top Fatah commander and several of his bodyguards. Others suggest that the assassination of Abu Ashraf Al-Armoushi, a military general from Palestinian National Security, was completely unprovoked.

Yet others, including Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati, blamed outside forces and their "repeated attempts to use Lebanon as a battleground for the settling of scores." But who are these entities, and what is the point of such meddling? It gets murkier. Though impoverished and overcrowded, Ain Al-Hilweh, like other Palestinian camps, is a greatly contested political space. In theory, these camps are meant to solidify

and protect the right of return for Palestinian refugees. In practice, they are also used to undermine this internationally enshrined right.

The Palestinian Authority of Mahmoud Abbas, for example, wants to ensure Fatah loyalists dominate the camp, hence laboring to deny Palestinian rivals any role in South Lebanon. Fatah is the largest Palestinian group within the Palestine Liberation Organization. It dominates both the PLO and the PA. In the past, the group lost its dominance over Ain Al-Hilweh and other camps. For Fatah in Lebanon, it is a constant struggle for relevance. Ain Al-Hilweh is important for the PA, even though the PLO under Abbas' leadership has largely disowned the refugees of South Lebanon and their right of return, and instead has focused mostly on governing specific regions in the West Bank under the auspices of the Israeli occupation.

Yet, Lebanon's refugees remain important for the PA for two main reasons: one, as a source of validation for Fatah and, two, to stave off any criticism of, let alone resistance to, the Western-backed Palestinian camp, in Lebanon and everywhere else. Over the years, hundreds of Ain Al-Hilweh refugees have been killed in Israeli bombings, but also by Palestinian-Lebanese and Palestinian-Palestinian infighting. Israel carried out most of the killings to ensure Palestinian resistance in Lebanon is eliminated at source.

The rest of the violence was carried out by groups that sought dominance and power, sometimes for their own sake, but often as proxy militias for outside powers. Trapped in the middle are 120,000

people, the estimated population of Ain Al-Hilweh - and, by extension, all of Lebanon's Palestinian refugees.

Not all Ain Al-Hilweh's inhabitants are registered Palestinian refugees. The latter is estimated by the UN refugee agency, UNRWA, at about 63,000. The rest fled there following the Syrian war, which swelled the population of the Lebanon camps and heightened existing tensions. The entrapments of refugees, however, are manifold: the actual physical confinement dictated by the lack of opportunities and acceptance in mainstream Lebanese society; the great risks of leaving Lebanon as undocumented refugees smuggled across the Mediterranean; and the feeling, especially among older generations, that leaving the camps is tantamount to the betrayal of the right of return. All of this is happening in a political context, where the Palestinian leadership has completely removed the refugees from its calculations, where the PA sees the refugees only as pawns in a power play between Fatah and its rivals.

For decades, Israel has sought to dismiss the discussion on Palestinian refugees and their right of return. Its constant attacks on Palestinian refugee camps in Palestine itself, and its interest in what is taking place in the Shatat, is part of its quest to shake the very foundation of the Palestinian cause. Infighting in Ain Al-Hilweh, if not brought under total and lasting control, might eventually get Israel exactly what it wants: presenting Palestinian refugees as a liability to host countries and, ultimately, destroying the "Capital of Shatat," along with the hope of four generations of Palestinian refugees to, some day, go back home.

Ukraine attacking Putin’s weakest spot

Richard Kemp

WHILE all eyes are on the land war in Ukraine, the greater strategic prize for Kyiv could well be found in the war at sea - something quite remarkable for a country without a conventional navy. In two days, two major Russian ships have been hit by maritime attack drones, both operating in the vicinity of Novorossiysk, Russia's main Black Sea oil port which exports 600,000 barrels a day.

They illustrate both Russia's vulnerability at sea and the potential opportunity to inflict severe economic damage on Moscow. This was particularly true of the attack on the oil tanker Sig, thought to have been sailing to Feodosia on the Crimean coast to load a cargo of jet fuel. Damaging or even sinking vessels like the Sig and the Olenegorsky Gorniyak will have an impact on Russian military logistics, but the consequences go well beyond that.

Just hours before the Sig was hit, the Ukrainian State Hydrographic Office issued a warning that the whole of Russia's Black Sea coast, from Taman to Sochi, was now a "war risk" zone to all ships. That followed a declaration from Ukraine's ministry of defence in July

that all vessels heading to Russian controlled ports on the Black Sea may be treated as carrying military cargo. Perhaps that was considered rhetorical pay-back for Moscow's threats against shipping headed to Ukrainian seaports. But backed up by the two drone strikes in a few days - with perhaps more to follow - the latest warning could be enough to deter many civilian cargo vessels from plying to any port in the designated area, inflicting a severe shock on Russia's economy.

To understand the extent of this threat to Moscow, just follow the oil exports. They have become the lifeblood of Russian government revenues. The oil trade - mainly to China and India - generates the foreign currency needed to keep the rouble in equilibrium. And for all the talk of Russian pipelines, Putin is still reliant on Black Sea ports to ship a vast amount of oil abroad. Any sudden reduction of this capacity cannot be compensated by new pipelines, which take years or decades to build. Moscow predictably branded the Black Sea drone attacks as terrorism. That would be an accurate description of its own

threats against Ukraine's grain exports and recently intensified attacks against grain infrastructure, intended as they are not to cripple Kyiv's economy but to pressure the West by starving the world.

But targeting Russia's war economy is a legitimate act of self defence, so long as Ukraine adheres to the laws of war in its maritime campaign. Kyiv ought to go further, by stepping up the strikes and turning the targeting of Russian oil into a major new front in the war. Yet, as often happens, Ukraine may soon be hampered by concerns from Washington DC. The Biden administration took the lead in sanctions that kept Russia in the oil business, designed to minimise Moscow's revenues while avoiding further energy price rises. Now the White House will be terrified by the prospect of a gas price hike in the run up to a presidential election.

In figuring out his various strategic conundrums, President Zelensky will have to balance what would be a natural desire to inflict as much damage as possible on the enemy with the need to hold together the support of his allies. But this is for sure: he has correctly identified Putin's weakest spot.

The Guardian



SBP Governor pays respects to Quaid-e-Azam

— lauds Quaid's role in establishment of State Bank of Pakistan

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Addressing the flag hoisting ceremony to mark the 76th Independence Day at State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) head-quarter at Karachi, Governor SBP, Mr. Jameel Ahmad paid rich tributes to Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and his companions who despite adversities, led the freedom struggle and won an independent state for Muslims of subcontinent. He recalled the hostile circumstances the nascent state of Pakistan endured during its initial days and how it made to rely on others in order to perform financial and banking activities. These unfavorable circumstances eventually culminated in the establishment of State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) for economic independence of the country.

The ceremony, attended by the senior management of the Bank and a large number of SBP officials along with their

families, commenced with the hoisting of National Flag by the Governor SBP amid playing of the national anthem by a band of Pakistan Navy. A smartly turned out contingent of the Internal Bank Security Department (IBSD) presented the Governor the Guard of Honor. A choir consisting of students from the Garage School of Karachi presented heartwarming national songs, which were highly appreciated by the audience. Mr. Jameel Ahmad also planted a tree to commemorate the Independence Day of the country.

Addressing the gathering, Governor Mr. Jameel Ahmad recounted the extraordinary achievements of the central bank during the last 76 years; chief among them was gaining the confidence of Pakistanis. Following the best international practices, the Monetary Policy Committee of the SBP is now an independent forum that



decides about the monetary policy, keeping in view medium term inflation targeting and the country's economic conditions. SBP also keeps abreast Parliament of its targets and

activities through annual and bi-annual reports since it is accountable to the people's parliament and public. Besides, it also issues Financial Stability Review (FSR) that highlights

the main risks facing the financial system and assesses the resilience of the financial system to those risks.

Mr. Ahmad highlighted that the world economy remained

under pressure in near past that also resulted in an increase in inflation in Pakistan. These conditions were further aggravated due to floods and delay in IMF program review. Governor SBP, Mr. Jameel Ahmad, said that the nine-month Stand-by Arrangement (SBA) agreed with the IMF has improved foreign reserves of the country and largely resolved near term issues pertaining to the external sector of the economy.

Governor State Bank observed that the SBP was making significant strides towards Digital Banking, Green Banking and Islamic Banking. He specifically mentioned issuing a Licensing and Regulatory Framework for Digital Banks in line with international best practices, growth of fintechs and practical efforts for transformation of the banking system into Shariah-compliant banking.

Mr. Ahmad also termed development of next Strategic

Plan, improvement in liquidity management and Shariah Governance framework under the third five-year Strategic Plan of Islamic banking industry.

On this occasion, a special exhibition of Pakistani Postage Stamps titled 'Pioneers of Freedom'- a series by the renowned artist Mr. Saeed Akhtar-was arranged in the SBP Museum.

The exhibition portrayed the pioneers of freedom struggle who rose against the foreign rule and bravely led the freedom movement. Mr. Ahmad also inaugurated display of a small scale cultural dioramas (working 3D Models with sound and movement) prepared by a respected artist Abdul Kareem Solangi (Pride of Performance), representing different cultural aspects of Pakistan. Governor SBP and other dignitaries took keen interest in the photographs and extolled the work of artists.

NBP celebrates Pakistan's 76th Independence Day



F.P. Report

KARACHI: National Bank of Pakistan (NBP) celebrated Pakistan's 76th Independence Day by organizing a flag-hoisting ceremony at the Head Office. The National flag was hoisted by Mr. Rehmat Ali Hasnie, President & CEO, NBP along with executives, employees, and their families.

Paying tribute to the national heroes of Pakistan, Mr. Rehmat Ali Hasnie said, "at National Bank of Pakistan, we take immense pride in playing our part in driving the nation's eco-

nom progress. With an unwavering commitment to excellence in banking, we shall continue to foster growth and prosperity, empowering businesses and individuals alike to reach new heights of financial success. Through innovative solutions and dedicated services, we aim to be the cornerstone of Pakistan's economic development, supporting dreams and aspirations on the path to a brighter future. I am glad to share that Nation's Bank will be celebrating its Diamond Jubilee next year."

Sharing his thoughts on the auspicious occasion,

Mr. Hasnie said, "as the President and CEO of the nation's bank, I am committed to providing enhanced opportunities and facilitating growth opportunities for both our institution and the nation we serve. Together, we shall forge a path towards a brighter future, where prosperity and success are shared by every citizen of Pakistan."

Throughout the years, the bank has garnered numerous accolades, reflecting its unwavering commitment to excellence. Notably, it received the esteemed GDEIB Awards in 2023, followed by the

Asian Banking Award in 2022 as well as ranking No. 1 in agriculture financing by the State Bank of Pakistan in 2023.

National Bank of Pakistan has always focused on developing financial products to cater to the rapidly changing demands of Pakistani consumers. To enhance accessibility and convenience, the Bank is integrating non-banking sectors into the financial realm, promoting nationwide adoption of Digital Banking.

Proactive strides are taken towards impactful CSR by involving local communities, and fostering collaborative initiatives for sustainable change. Through continuous engagement, the bank bridging social gaps, enriching lives and strengthening its bonds with the society it serves.

At the end of the ceremony, the President National Bank of Pakistan thanked all the employees for attending the event. All the participants prayed for the progress, peace, and prosperity of the country and the well-being of the nation.

SCCI holds flag-hoisting ceremony

SIALKOT (APP): Leading exporters hosted a national flag-hoisting ceremony at the lawns of Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) here on Monday in connection with Pakistan's 76th Independence Day celebrations.

SCCI President Abdul Ghafoor Malik hoisted the national flag besides cutting a special cake to rejoice the celebrations at a special ceremony, held at the SCCI auditorium.

He highlighted the Pakistan Movement and paid tribute to national heroes over their struggle and role in getting an independent state in the shape of Pakistan for the Muslims of the Indo-Pak Subcontinent, a Pakistan as envisaged by Poet of The East Allama Iqbal.

The SCCI building was illuminated.

SCCI Senior Vice President Wahub Jahangir, Vice President Amer Majeed Sheikh, former SCCI Senior Vice President (SVPs), Vice President (VPs) and a large number of Sialkot exporters attended the ceremony.

Europe stocks edge higher

LONDON (AFP/APP): European stocks mostly climbed on Monday, recovering from pre-weekend losses though traders were keeping a wary eye on the risks for China's property sector, which sent Asian markets into the red.

Developer Country Garden missed bond payments and warned of multi-billion-dollar losses, deepening concerns over China's heavily indebted real estate sector and the potential fallout on the world's second-largest economy.

Frankfurt and Paris were up in early exchanges, though London was trading lower.

Hong Kong and Singapore shares ended down more than one percent. Tokyo closed down by a similar amount while Shanghai and Manila also closed in the red.

Country Garden's shares were down more than 18 percent at the close, days after its billionaire boss Yang Huiyan said the firm was "facing the greatest difficulties since our establishment".

Privately owned Country Garden is on Forbes' list of the 500 largest companies in the world.

The firm has long been deemed financially solid but was unable last Monday to make two bond payments, and after a 30-day grace period, the company risks defaulting in September if it still cannot pay.

Like its heavily indebted competitor Evergrande, any collapse of Country Garden would have catastrophic repercussions for the Chinese financial system and economy.

Fears for Chinese property companies were causing regional markets' gradual decline, said Stephen Innes of SPI Asset Management.

"This negative sentiment has spread to other Asian markets, resulting in a generally subdued atmosphere across all exchanges," he said.

UBL, Bank Alfalah celebrate Independence with Overseas Pakistanis



F.P. Report

KARACHI: The overseas Pakistanis are one of our nation's most valuable assets. With almost 9 million overseas Pakistanis spread across the globe, their contribution to Pakistan, especially its economy, through remittances, cannot be under-

scored enough. Pakistani banks as institutions which channelize these remittances play a vital role in streamlining the process and bringing the overseas Pakistanis closer to home and their loved ones.

As part of commemorating Pakistan's 76th Independence Day, United Bank Limited (UBL) and

Bank Alfalah (BAFL) in association with State Bank of Pakistan's Remittance Initiative held two back-to-back events in Dubai, UAE.

The main objective of the events was not only to celebrate Pakistan's Independence Day but also to impart to the invitees, knowledge about how to remit back to Pakistan through proper banking channels and be able to bring happiness to loved ones back home and how their remittances can bring a positive momentum to the nation's progress and development.

The first of these events was held at a local Community Ground in Dubai, on 13th August

2023. Filled with thousands of enthusiastic blue-collared workers of Pakistani origin, this event included a musical evening followed by a flag hoisting ceremony at the end of the event to commemorate the Independence Day. The event on the 14th of August was held at a local hotel. This event comprised of speeches followed by a musical performance. Both events were followed by dinner.

Government dignitaries from the Consulate of Pakistan in Dubai, State Bank of Pakistan and Pakistan Remittance Initiative, along with senior executives from UBL and BAFL, were present at both occasions.

Flag hoisting ceremony held at FPCCI

LAHORE (APP): A ceremony was held here at the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) Regional Office to hoist the national flag and mark the 76th Independence Day of Pakistan, on Monday.

As the national anthem was played, Muhammad Nadeem Qureshi, Regional Chairman FPCCI, and Mian Anjum Nisar, Vice President SAARC Chamber of Commerce and

Industry, raised the flag to the mast before a gathering of executive committee members and the representatives of trade bodies.

Muhammad Nadeem Qureshi and Mian Anjum Nisar congratulated all Pakistanis on the occasion of Independence Day. They were confident that nation's enthusiasm would pave the way for political, economic and social stability in the days to come.

"May our solidarity

move our dear homeland on the path of progress and prosperity, and may all of us Pakistanis raise the flag of Pakistan as usual," Qureshi prayed.

Qureshi said that business community has a crucial role in developing the country's economy. Millions of people are getting jobs in the country due to the business community, he said, asserting that no country in the world could develop without a business community.

LCCI celebrates 76th Independence Day, hoists national flag

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry (LCCI) reverberated with patriotic zeal as the national flag soared high on its mast, commemorating the 76th anniversary of Pakistan's emergence as an independent and sovereign nation.

To the harmonious strains of the national anthem, LCCI Acting President Zafar Mahmood Chaudhry, along with Vice President Adnan Khalid Butt, Vice President SAARC Chambers Mian Anjum Nisar, former presidents Sheikh Muhammad Asif, Muhammad Ali Mian, Chairman PIAF Faheem-ur-Rehman Saigol, LCCI former office-bearers, Executive Committee members, market leaders and representatives of associations ceremoniously raised the flag before an exuberant assembly here at the LCCI building on Monday. The event commenced with a recitation from the Holy Quran.

The LCCI acting president extended heartfelt felicitations to the entire nation on the auspicious occasion of Pakistan's 76th Independence Day.

While celebrating the

momentous day, he paid tribute to the visionary leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, underscoring his pivotal role in shaping the destiny of Pakistan. He reiterated that Pakistan was conceived as a bastion of religious freedom and a platform for social and economic equality for all its citizens.

Emphasising the significance of August 14, Mian Anjum Nisar and Sheikh Muhammad Asif articulated

that this day transcends mere commemoration; it signifies the termination of foreign subjugation and the birth of a sovereign nation, forged by the collective aspirations and cherished ideals of its Muslim populace.

Reflecting on Pakistan's post-independence journey, they acknowledged the considerable strides made, yet acknowledged the substantial work that remains to be undertaken to realize the nation's aspirations. Expre-

ssing optimism, they urged the current leadership to formulate and enact policies that would propel the nation into a new era of progress and economic prosperity.

LCCI Vice President Adnan Khalid Butt rallied for a renewed commitment to the ideals envisioned by the Quaid and called upon all citizens to unite in their efforts to meet his expectations. Tabish Zafar also delivered a heartwarming speech at the end.



KARACHI: Student of Bahria College Karachi celebrating 76th Independence Day during function.



In brief

Cycle rally arranged

FAISALABAD (APP): District Sports Department has organized a cycle rally to celebrate 76th Jashan-e-Azadi here on Monday. District Sports Officer (DSO) Sajida Lateef inaugurated the rally by waving national flag at D-Type Chowk Sammundri Road. More than 200 cyclists participated in the rally which passed through various roads and streets of the city up to Nallaywala on Canal Express Way.

Real Madrid sign Chelsea goalkeeper

MADRID (BBC): Real Madrid have signed Spain goalkeeper Kepa Arrizabalaga from Chelsea on a season-long loan. The 28-year-old will cover for Madrid's regular number one Thibaut Courtois, who will miss most of the season with an anterior cruciate ligament injury. Kepa has made 163 appearances for Chelsea since joining from Athletic Bilbao for £71m in August 2018 - the highest fee ever paid for a goalkeeper. He faced competition at the Blues from summer signing Robert Sanchez. Fellow Spaniard Sanchez, a £25m arrival from Brighton, started Sunday's Premier League opener against Liverpool. Chelsea sold Senegal international goalkeeper Edouard Mendy to Saudi Pro League side Al-Ahli earlier this summer. Kepa's exit leaves 31-year-old Marcus Bettinelli as the only other senior goalkeeper in their squad, alongside 20-year-old Lucas Bergstrom and 19-year-old Eddie Beach. Real Madrid opened their campaign with a 2-0 win at Athletic Bilbao on Saturday, with England midfielder Jude Bellingham, an £88.5m summer arrival from Borussia Dortmund, among the scorers.

Murray named in Davis Cup team

LONDON (BBC): Andy Murray has returned to Great Britain's Davis Cup team for the ties against Australia, France and Switzerland in Manchester next month. The three-time Grand Slam champion was left out of the squad for the 3-1 win against Colombia in February. Murray, 36, was integral to Britain's 2015 victory - their first Davis Cup win in 79 years. The top two nations in Group B of the group stage in Manchester qualify for November's finals in Malaga. All of GB's ties will be broadcast on BBC iPlayer and the BBC Sport website and app. Neal Skupski, Cameron Norrie and Dan Evans have also been selected for the 10-time champions who were eliminated in the group stages of last year's Finals. "It's been a long time since we played in the North West and I'm sure we are going to feel and hear a lot of energy from the fans," GB captain Leon Smith said.

Romain to miss tournament

PARIS (BBC): France fly-half Romain Ntamack has been ruled out of a home Rugby World Cup because of a ruptured anterior cruciate ligament. Ntamack, 24, injured his left knee in Les Bleus' 30-27 World Cup warm-up win over Scotland. France, who are hosting the World Cup, play New Zealand in the opening game on 8 September at Stade de France. Bordeaux Begles' Matthieu Jalibert will likely replace Ntamack as France's starting fly-half. Ntamack limped off the field in the second half against Scotland and underwent a scan on his knee on Monday.

Nida Dar meets PCB Chairman Management Committee Zaka Ashraf

LAHORE (APP): Nida Dar, captain of Pakistan women's team and members of the national women's team met with the Chairman of the PCB Management Committee, Zaka Ashraf here on Monday. The meeting was held on the sidelines of the Women Player Development Program orientation of the Lahore Qalandars, where Zaka Ashraf was invited as chief guest. In the meeting, Women Wing head Tania Mallick and Chief Operating Officer, PCB Salman Naseer were also present.

During the meeting, Chairman Management Committee Zaka Ashraf acknowledged women cricketers' dedication and contribution to the sport. He on the auspicious occasion of 76th Independence Day announced the introduction of the first-ever

domestic contracts for women cricketers and also a substantial raise in central contracts for women cricketers. He affirmed his commitment to furthering the progress of women cricketers across the nation and assured them of his continued support. He reiterated the importance of providing equal opportunities, resources, and facilities which included more cricket grounds to women cricketers, enabling them to excel at both the national and international levels.

Zaka Ashraf said: "I am extremely pleased to witness the remarkable progress our women cricketers have made in recent times. These athletes showcase exceptional talent and serve as true ambassadors of our nation. The dedication they exhibit on the field reflects their commitment to the sport and the pride they bring to

Pakistan.

"As we move forward, the PCB has decided to improve their contracts and our focus is to ensure that our women cricketers receive the respect, support, and opportunities they need to do well in this game."

Nida Dar and the women cricketers congratulated Zaka Ashraf on his recent appointment as the Chairman of the Management Committee and commended his proactive initiatives aimed at the growth of women's cricket in Pakistan. The players conveyed their enthusiasm for the future of women's cricket under the leadership of Zaka Ashraf and thanked him for his continuous support of women's cricket. The PCB will make the announcement on women's contracts in due course of time.

Neymar transfer news

Al-Hilal agree deal with Paris St-Germain for Brazil forward

PARIS (BBC): Paris St-Germain have agreed a deal to sell Brazil forward Neymar to Saudi Pro League side Al-Hilal for about 90m euros (£77.6m) plus add-ons.

The transfer is subject to the 31-year-old completing a medical and all necessary paperwork. Neymar, who joined PSG for a world-record fee of £200m in 2017, was left out of their squad for the Ligue 1 draw against Lorient on Saturday. He was not part of coach Luis Enrique's plans for the new season.

His exit also fits PSG's strategy of moving away from the 'Galacticos' era of signing high-profile players for big fees and significant wages, with Lionel Messi also leaving the club earlier this summer.

Neymar was understood to be earning in the region of 25m euros (£21.6m) annually at the French side.

He will reportedly be paid 150m euros (£129.2m) a year in Saudi Arabia - six times the amount he earned at PSG. The Brazilian made 173 appearances for PSG, helping the club win 13 trophies, including five Ligue



1 titles, as well as reaching the 2020 Champions League final. However, his time in the French capital has also been hampered by a number of ankle injuries.

The former Barcelona player had surgery in March that caused him to miss the rest of the season and he only resumed training in July. He missed two of Brazil's matches at the 2022 World Cup after being injured in their opening group match. The forward also missed the 2019 Copa America after suffering torn ligaments in his right ankle and was out for several weeks in 2021 with a similar injury. News of the Neymar deal comes just 24 hours after PSG's Kylian Mbappe was reintegrated back into

first-team training after positive talks with the club.

The France forward, 24, had been in a contract stand-off amid a desire to join Real Madrid but could now extend his contract at PSG, with his current deal due to expire next summer.

Mbappe was also left out of the squad for the Lorient game and watched the match from the stands. Last month, PSG gave Al-Hilal permission to talk to Mbappe after the Saudi side made a world-record £259m bid. If completed, the Neymar deal will continue a remarkable summer spending spree by Saudi clubs, underlining the league's ambition to be one of the top competitions in the world in the next few years.

Beaumont hits first century in women's competition

LONDON (BBC): Tammy Beaumont crashed the first century in The Hundred women's competition with a spectacular 118 in Welsh Fire's win against Trent Rockets.

The England batter was dropped on 32 and over-turned being given out lbw on 75 but otherwise dominated, hitting 20 fours and two sixes in her 61 balls.

Her score is the best in either the men's or women's Hundred and the Fire's 181-3 is also a women's record.

Rockets made a decent fist of the chase but ended on 140-5 to lose by 41 runs.

"I don't know what just happened to be honest," Fire captain Beaumont told Sky Sports.

"I just had an absolute day out. It was great to put on a show for the fans."

She has not played a T20 for England since January 2022, having been dropped for more attacking batters, but reached her fifty from 25 balls and three figures from 52. The 32-year-old right-hander played brilliantly through the off side, including striking four

fours in succession off debutant seamer Cassidy McCarthy, while also hitting

off-spinner Bryony Smith over long-on for her two sixes.

After putting on 81 with Sophia Dunkley and exactly 100 with Sarah Bryce, who made 31 not out, Beaumont was finally caught off the penultimate ball at deep square leg by Joanne Gardner, who put down a straightforward chance to remove Beaumont in the same position earlier on. "It is amazing," said Beaumont, who was congratulated by every Rockets player and given a standing ovation by the Cardiff crowd.

Pegula overpowers Samsonova to clinch Montreal Open crown

MONTREAL (AFP/APP): Jessica Pegula overpowered a weary Ludmila Samsonova to clinch the second WTA 1000 title of her career on Sunday with a victory in the Montreal Open.

The 29-year-old American world number three dominated her Russian opponent from start to finish to claim a whirlwind 6-1, 6-0 triumph in just 49 minutes.

Fifteenth-seeded Samsonova had battled through to the final after winning a gruelling three-set semi-final earlier Sunday against third seed Elena Rybakina in a match held over from Saturday due to torrential rain. But the challenge of winning twice in one day ultimately proved

too much for Samsonova, a rampant Pegula determined to claim her second elite WTA title after victory in Guadalajara last year.

"I know obviously physically she wasn't feeling her best, but at the same time I played a really clean match," Pegula said after her win.

"I don't think I made any unforced errors or anything. I played kind of a perfect match."

Pegula admitted, however, that she would have preferred to have faced a properly rested Samsonova.

"It's not ideal... it sucks when you feel like you're not on a really fair playing ground, especially someone like her who is such a great player," Pegula said.

Samsonova, meanwhile, said the schedule had taken its toll, with little time to rest and recuperate between the semi-final and the final.

"I didn't have time to regenerate because I was in the physio room to tape all my body, and it takes one hour. I was out of the court and then again in, it was strange," she said.

Pegula, a quarter-finalist at the Australian Open and Wimbledon this year, was quickly into her groove with an early break in the opening set to go 3-1 up.

A superb crosscourt forehand put her 4-1 up before the visibly tired Samsonova was broken again in the sixth game to leave Pegula serving for the set.



SARGODHA: Additional Deputy Commissioner Revenue Mohsin Salahuddin with players during an event organized by Sports Department at Gymnasium on the occasion of 77th Independence Day celebration.

Steven Finn announces retirement

LONDON (Agencies): England fast bowler Steven Finn has announced his retirement from all forms of cricket. He suffered a knee injury that kept him out of action for most of 2023 and led to him calling time on his 18-year career.

"I have been fighting a battle with my body for the last 12 months and have admitted defeat to it," Finn, 34, said in a statement shared by Sussex, his county. "I feel incredibly lucky to have been able to play cricket as my vocation since I made my debut for Middlesex in 2005. The journey hasn't always been smooth, but I have loved it, nonetheless."

Finn played 36 Tests, 69 ODIs and 21 T20Is after making his international debut in 2010 against Bangladesh. He showed his wares early in his career, returning 14 wickets in England's win in the men's Ashes of 2010-11. He also picked up 12 wickets - the second-most for England - in the 2015 Ashes that they won. Overall, he finished with 125 wickets in Tests, 102 in ODIs and 27 in T20Is. Having played most of his domestic cricket for Middlesex, Finn moved to Sussex in 2022 and picked up 21 wickets in 20 appearances for them across formats. He bows out with 570 wickets in first-class cricket.

"To have played 125 games for England, including 36 Tests, far surpassed what I dreamed of," Finn said. "I wanted to thank Sussex Cricket for their support over the last 12 months especially and for welcoming me wholeheartedly into the club at the beginning of last season. It really is a great place to play cricket and I'm sorry that I wasn't able to play more of a part on the field since joining the club."

"Cricket has given me a lot and I hope to give back to the game in some capacity in the future. But, for now, I'll enjoy watching on without wondering whether my body will be able to make it through another day's cricket." Paul Farbrace, Sussex head coach, paid tribute to Finn and said, "Steven has been a fantastic bowler for Middlesex, Sussex and England. I have had the real pleasure of watching him develop from a young bowler in the pathway to being three times Ashes winner.

ILT20: Shaheen Afridi signs with Desert Vipers for three seasons

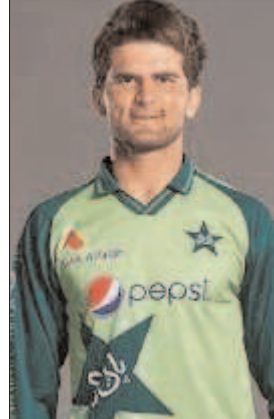
LAHORE (Agencies): Shaheen Shah Afridi has signed with Desert Vipers for the second season of the UAE's ILT20, and will become the first Pakistan player to play in the league when it takes place in January next year. He has joined on a three-year contract.

"I am excited to join the Desert Vipers. I know there are many Pakistan cricket fans in the UAE and I hope they will support our team in the upcoming ILT20," Afridi said in a statement.

With the season scheduled to begin on January 13, Afridi will join the group after returning from Australia after the New Year's Test in Sydney.

Last year, Vipers had signed Azam Khan, which would have made him the first Pakistan player in the ILT20, but the PCB eventually did not grant him the no-objection certificate to play in the league.

The PCB, under current



chairman Zaka Ashraf, has softened its stance on allowing players to participate in various T20 leagues, after the players had expressed displeasure last year on the restrictive terms imposed under the administration at the time, led by Ramiz Raja.

The PCB administration under Najam Sethi, Ashraf's predecessor, was also understood to have been negotiating with ILT20 about making Pakistan players avail-

able.

"Shaheen is a player of world-class calibre who has had a significant impact not only for Pakistan but for every team he's played for in recent times," Vipers director of cricket Tom Moody said on their new signing. "He offers a huge amount as an impact pace bowler that has destroyed many, many top-orders and he also boasts terrific leadership skills that will add a huge amount of value to the Desert Vipers moving forward."

Afridi will join a bowling attack that already has Wanindu Hasaranga, Matheesha Pathirana, Tom Curran and Sheldon Cottrell among others.

Vipers retained many of their players after finishing runners-up in the inaugural season.

The list includes captain Colin Munro and opener Alex Hales, who finished as the highest run-scorer of the tournament.

South Africa name 18 for one-day games against Australia

JOHANNESBURG (AFP/APP): Cricket South Africa on Monday named 18 players for a five-match one-day international series against Australia next month, the team's last outtings before the Cricket World Cup in India.

But not all the players will be travelling to India for the tournament in October and November.

A 15-man World Cup squad will be named on September 5, two days before the first one-day international.

Some of the squad will be hoping to impress in three Twenty20 internationals before the one-day series. They include Dewald Brevis, 20, who is set to make his international debut during the T20 series. A hard-hitting batsman and leg-spin bowler, he will also be part of the one-day squad.

Brevis has only played in four first-class matches but has already been signed up by T20 franchises in

India, South Africa, the West Indies and the United States. He made 162 off 57 balls in a domestic T20 match for the Titans against the Knights last October.

Batsmen Matthew Breetzke, 24, and Donovan Ferreira, 25, were other newcomers in the T20 squad but were not picked for the one-day games.

Star players Quinton de Kock, David Miller, Heinrich Klaasen, Anrich Nortje and Kagiso Rabada will be rested from the T20 games but will appear in the one-dayers.

Left-arm spinner Keshav Maharaj, who ruptured his left Achilles tendon during a Test match against the West Indies in March, is scheduled to make his return to cricket during the T20 series.

Squads: T20 internationals: Aiden Markram (captain), Temba Bavuma, Matthew Breetzke, Dewald Brevis, Gerald Coetzee, Donovan Ferreira, Bjorn Fortuin,

Reeza Hendricks, Marco Jansen, Sisanda Magala, Keshav Maharaj, Lungi Ngidi, Tabraiz Shamsi, Tristan Stubbs, Lizaad Williams, Rassie van der Dussen

One-day internationals: Bavuma (captain), Brevis, Coetzee, Quinton de Kock (wkt), Fortuin, Hendricks, Jansen, Heinrich Klaasen, Maharaj, Markram, David Miller, Ngidi, Anrich Nortje, Wayne Parnell, Kagiso Rabada, Shamsi, Stubbs, Van der Dussen

Fixtures: August 30, first T20I, Durban
September 1, second T20I, Durban
September 3, third T20I, Durban
September 7, first ODI, Bloemfontein
September 9, second ODI, Bloemfontein
September 12, third ODI, Potchefstroom
September 15, fourth ODI, Centurion
September 17, fifth ODI, Johannesburg

Mission Impossible: the quest for World Cup tickets

LONDON (Agencies): It's the cross-cultural event of the northern summer. It's a vibe, it's a thing, it's mainly about selling tickets. On the one hand, a big pink slice of neon smiles and feel-good frippery. On the other, classical cinematography, weighty themes and serious-looking men in old-fashioned clothes. We are, of course, talking about Barbenheimer and the ongoing attempts to create a world where Test cricket can happily coincide with T20.

It's not quite the same as watching both back-to-back in one sitting, but launching into a month of the Hundred the day after the conclusion of the one of the most box-office men's Ashes of all time - not to mention a critically acclaimed women's series - felt like a pretty similar move by the ECB.

Although a BBC-accredited doofus with a microphone literally describing Maitlan Brown as "a little Barbie yourself" during the opening game was probably not the look they were after.

No doubt the Ashes will be up for several awards when the academy sits down to take a view. Ben Stokes proclaimed afterwards that the series between England and Australia was "generally what Test cricket needed" - which must be good news for the likes of South Africa, Sri Lanka and West Indies, who barely have two cents to rub together, never mind two Tests. But then, like Oppenheimer, what would the discussion around the format be without a heavy dose of nihilism?

As for whether we will ever reach a point with T20 leagues where people say, "I've had Enough" - well, it seems very much moot. The Hundred was dreamed up by the ECB to insulate English cricket from the biting winds sweeping through the game's shifting global landscape, but while arguably doing more for feminism than Barbie, it already faces being cannibalised by the free marketeers investing heavily in Major League Cricket, Global T20

Canada and the like. Where does that leave us, the humble fan? Well, sit down and shut up because cricket's version of Mission Impossible is the 50-over World Cup - is soon to be showing on all channels. Just don't ask about getting tickets to see that one.

Tell us you're a byword for administrative incompetence without telling us you're a byword for administrative incompetence - amirite, BCCI? Then again, if you're in charge of organising a World Cup, more than a decade after your team last managed to win the tournament, then perhaps building in a little extra home advantage is to be expected. Touring teams will not only have to spend six weeks getting used to the conditions, the travel and the cultural differences - they're also going to need a dedicated backroom staffer keeping an eye on the fixtures to make sure their next match hasn't been brought forward a day and moved from Lucknow to Hyderabad at short notice.



In brief

NHMP celebrates independence day

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Highways and Motorway Police North Zone on Monday celebrated 76th Independence Day of Pakistan with traditional enthusiasm. The day started with the recitation of the Holy Quran and prayers for the development and prosperity of Pakistan, said a press release. The main flag hoisting ceremony was held at Zonal Office Motorway North Zone. DIG Motorway North Zone, Mohammad Yusuf Malik was the chief guest of the event. On this occasion, he reiterated that Motorway Police would maintain their traditions of ethical behaviour, timely help and protection of the life and property of the passengers. Flag hoisting ceremonies were also held at Sector Offices, Line Headquarters and Beats centres. Gifts were also distributed along with road safety briefings at all main toll plazas of Motorway, North Zone.

World Humanitarian Day

ISLAMABAD (APP): World Humanitarian Day will be marked on August 19 (Saturday) across the globe including Pakistan the day honors all humanitarians who have worked in the promotion of the humanitarian cause, and those who have lost their lives in the cause of duty. It aims to increase public awareness about humanitarian assistance activities worldwide and the importance of international cooperation. World Humanitarian Day is a day dedicated to humanitarians worldwide, as well as to increase public understanding of humanitarian assistance activities. The day aims to honor humanitarian workers who have lost their lives or injured themselves in the course of their work and to acknowledge the ongoing work of humanitarian staff around the world. Many communities and organizations try to increase the importance of humanitarians by distributing publicity and information material. Additionally, some try to speak to the press to help spread these key messages of World Humanitarian Day, while other groups organize public events worldwide that feature humanitarian work. For the year 2010 and beyond, it is anticipated that World Humanitarian Day will focus on particular humanitarian themes to help increase public awareness. Humanitarians provide life-saving assistance to millions of people worldwide. They place their own lives at risk to help others in conflict zones and areas of natural hazards.

Professors Imran Shehzad and Khalid Mahmood took the stage to shed light on the historical underpinnings that culminated in the birth of Pakistan, rekindling the flame of sacrifice and valor that led to the nation's independence. Across town, Islamabad Model College for Girls (IMCG) I-8/3 bore witness to a heartwarming flag-hoisting ceremony that set the tone for a day of profound significance. Principal Professor Sadia Ibrar led a tree-planting initiative that symbolized growth, mirroring the nation's evolution since its inception. The college grounds became a canvas for students to showcase their talents through painting and essay competitions, while soul-stirring renditions of national anthems echoed in the air. At Islamabad Model College for Boys (IMCB) H-9, the air was charged with an air of historical reverence. As the flag



ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi viewing a painting exhibition to pay tribute to Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah on Pakistan's Independence Day.

Educational institutes ring in 76th Independence Day with zeal, zest

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 76th Independence Day reverberated through the corridors of various educational institutions in the capital city as they came together to celebrate the historic occasion with unparalleled fervor.

With a united spirit, students and staff from multiple Islamabad Capital Territory colleges orchestrated a symphony of events that showcased their deep-rooted patriotism and commitment to the nation.

The festivities commenced at Islamabad Model Postgraduate College H-8, where the national flag was unfurled by Dr Muhammad Khalid, the esteemed principal of the college. Standing alongside dedicated college staff, the flag rose high, embodying the ideals of freedom and unity.

Professors Imran Shehzad and Khalid Mahmood took the stage to

soared to the heavens, enlightening speeches delved into the historical tapestry that wove Pakistan into existence. Principal Professor Javaid Iqbal Mughal emphasized the pivotal role of educators in nurturing the next generation, fostering a brighter future for the nation. IMCG (Postgraduate) F-7/2 address invoked a surge of patriotism, while Dr Irum Shiekh eloquently articulated the nation's call for determination and hope to surmount present challenges. In a symbolic gesture, Principal Dr. Fouzia Tanveer Sheikh planted a sapling in the college garden, symbolizing the growth and progress that the nation continues to achieve.

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Tourists urged to abide by traffic rules to avoid traffic congestion in Murree

RAWALPINDI (APP): Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Liaquat Ali Chhatta has urged the tourists to strictly abide by traffic rules to avoid traffic congestion and untoward incidents in Murree.

According to a Commissioner Office spokesman, the Commissioner during a visit on Sunday night reviewed the traffic situation in Murree and visited various roads to observe the traffic load. He also issued necessary instructions to the authorities concerned to regulate traffic.

Traffic was normal on Jhika Gali, Lower Topa and Guldana Road but, there was heavy traffic load at GPO Chowk and Kashmir Point due to Independence Day celebrations.

The Commissioner was informed that traffic was being diverted to other routes by installing diversions at Toll Plaza and Satra Meel. Entry of more vehicles in Murree had been stopped on Sunday night as over 14,000 vehi-

cles were present in Murree. Traffic police and administration were working hard to control heavy traffic load, he added.

The spokesman said that a comprehensive security and traffic plan had been devised by Rawalpindi District Police for Independence Day that includes the deployment of more than 800 personnel during the night of August 13 and 14 as well as the establishment of several checkpoints to control one-wheeling in Murree.

The district and traffic police were implementing special security and traffic plan for Murree to facilitate the tourists coming to the hill station to celebrate Independence Day.

He said, depending upon the crowd and parking situation, the entry of vehicles would be restricted in Murree. Special police squads had been formed to prevent one-wheeling and maintain traffic in Murree, he said. The spokesman said that special arrangements had been made for

Murree with the establishment of special pickets at all entrances of the hill station to prevent one-wheeling and implement the orders of the district administration. Chief Traffic Officer Rawalpindi Taimoor Khan had directed the authorities concerned to take strict action against one-wheelers, and warned that no negligence would be tolerated in this regard.

He said that on the occasion of Independence Day, no one would be allowed to take the law into their hands and hooliganism and road blocking would not be tolerated under any circumstances. He appealed to the parents to keep an eye on their children and avoid giving them a bike or car so that they don't face any legal trouble.

Meanwhile, Rescue-1122 Murree had also chalked out an emergency plan to handle any emergency, if any. As part of the plan, all emergency vehicles were deployed at strategic locations keeping in mind the timely response at different places.

RDA celebrates 76th Independence Day

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) on the directives of the Director General (DG) Muhammad Saif Anwar Jappa here on Monday celebrated the 76th Independence Day and organized a flag hoisting ceremony at RDA Office.

RDA Office, Murree Road from Chandni Chowk to Faizabad and Airport Road, markets, plazas, and several buildings were decorated beautifully with green national flags, bunting, and paintings and also illuminated with colorful lights.

The DG also visited the camp office set up by RDA on Murree Road and checked the work done by the authority to celebrate Independence Day in a befitting manner.

Traditional horse dance and drum (dhol) performances were also organized at RDA main office and the Camp office on Murree Road.

The DG on the occasion said, "Our forefathers achieved freedom by making countless sacrifices and facing numerous

difficulties."

He also congratulated the citizens on Independence Day.

The DG said, "Today is very important day for us and while celebrating the Independence Day, we should remember the sacrifices of the elders especially Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah who gave us Pakistan and succeeded to make a country for the nation."

"If Quaid-e-Azam had not fought for Pakistan, this country would not have existed today," he said adding, "We are happy to celebrate the Independence Day but, we should also remember our leaders and their struggle."

The DG said, "We should always support the Armed Forces of Pakistan. Today we are living with honor and dignity because of the endless sacrifices of the Armed Forces."

He said, "The Pakistan Army is always ready to tackle all kinds of threats and situations."

AIOU marks Pakistan's 76th Independence Day

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) on Monday resonated with patriotic fervor as it commemorated the 76th anniversary of Independence Day.

The campus came alive with spirited festivities, reflecting the nation's unity and pride. The celebrations kicked off with a display of honor and respect as the university's security guards extended a ceremonial guard of honour to AIOU's Vice Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood. With pride and solemnity, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood hoisted the national flag, symbolizing the enduring spirit of Pakistan.

Amidst the air of unity, a collective prayer was offered, invoking blessings for the prosperity and progress of Pakistan. Decked in vibrant shades of green and white, exuberant children expressed their profound love for the nation through heartwarming performances of national songs, eloquent speeches, and a captivating tableau aptly titled "Pakistan Zindabad" (Long Live Pakistan).

Distinguished guests graced the occasion, underscoring the international significance of the day. Among those in attendance were Aleksandr Mikhailov, Anastasiia Tenikhina, and Rasim Akhatov from Russia. The Turkish delegation was represented by Dr. Halil Tokar, Director of Yunus Emre Institute, Balqees, Consul of the Turkiye Embassy, Education Attaché, Mehmet Toyran.

MoFE&PT unites departments to commemorate Independence Day

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a remarkable display of unity and patriotism, multiple departments falling under the umbrella of the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training (MoFE&PT) on Monday came together to mark Pakistan's 76th Independence Day.

The event was an embodiment of the nation's journey, values, and aspirations, celebrated through a series of engaging activities. The offices of various departments operating under MoFE&PT were transformed into vibrant displays of thematic decorations, capturing the very essence of the occasion. This symbolic gesture paid homage to Pakistan's relentless pursuit of independence and development, underlining the collective commitment towards safeguarding the country's sovereignty.

A poignant flag-hoisting ceremony took place across all MoFE&PT departments, accompanied by special prayers that echoed the sentiments of national integrity, solidarity, and progress. This solemn act further reinforced the unwavering dedication to a united and prosperous Pakistan. The ceremony reached its crescendo with the resonant strains of the National Anthem, symbolizing the unbreakable bonds that bind the nation together. Demonstrating an unwavering commitment to environmental sustainability, the Federal Directorate of Education (FDE), Private Educational Institutions Regulatory Authority (PEIRA), and Higher Education Commission (HEC) orchestrated tree plantation drives in schools and universities. This monumental initiative highlighted the shared responsibility of nurturing an eco-friendly and sustainable Pakistan.

The celebrations seamlessly merged with the realms of art and culture, as the National College of Arts (NCA) took the lead in

orchestrating a multi-faceted tribute. The tribute included an inspiring Art Exhibition, a captivating short video competition showcasing Pakistan's 77-year journey of achievements, and an engaging art competition focused on "Reflecting the Social Challenges of Pakistan." These artistic endeavors provided an illuminating perspective on Pakistan's evolution and its ongoing efforts to surmount contemporary challenges.

The literary sphere came alive with schools, colleges, and universities affiliated with FDE, PEIRA, and HEC hosting captivating competitions. Students enthusiastically participated in Poem, Mili Nagma (Patriotic Song), and Speech competitions, creating a platform for the young minds to connect with Pakistan's rich heritage and future aspirations.

Adding a touch of literary brilliance to the festivities, the National Book Foundation (NBF) organized an enlightening book exhibition. This thoughtful initiative enriched the celebrations by fostering a deeper understanding of Pakistan's literary tapestry and intellectual endeavors.

Cultural engagement flourished through traditional dress code competitions, artfully organized by FDE and PEIRA schools and colleges. These interactions showcased Pakistan's diversity and unity in a visually appealing manner.

In a show of remarkable solidarity, esteemed organizations including the National Commission for Human Development (NCHD), Basic Education Community Schools (BECS), Directorate General of Religious Education (DGRE), Prime Minister's Education Reform Program (PMEB), and Pakistan Boy Scouts Association (PBSA) orchestrated spirited rallies steeped in patriotic fervor.

Ethiopian Envoy felicitates Pakistan on 76th Independence Day

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

Jamal Beker Abdula on Monday extended warm and heartfelt congratulations to the government and people of Pakistan on their 76th Independence Day.

He assured the Pakistani nation of his unwavering commitment to further strengthening and deepening the bilateral relations between the two countries. "By taking special initiatives and fostering robust cooperation in various fields, we can propel our nations towards a new era of enhanced partnership and mutual prosperity," he added.

"The exchange of knowledge, experiences, and appreciation of each other's cuisine and culture has been an enlightening journey for me. Pakistanis are a lovely nation, and I am grateful for the friendship and cooperation extended to me during my tenure here," the ambassador remarked.

strong bond anchored in history and culture between Pakistan and Ethiopia has been evident in the warm hospitality and camaraderie extended to me and my team during my stay," the ambassador said.

"As we look forward to the future, let us remain steadfast in our resolve to work together towards a brighter, more interconnected world," he said. The ambassador believed that by strengthening the bonds of friendship and cooperation, both the countries could achieve greater heights and bring lasting benefits to the two nations.

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HR Ministry, HelpAge Int'l partner to develop rules for ICT Senior Citizens Act

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Human Rights (MoHR) and HelpAge International have collaborated to organize the second consultative meeting on the Rules and Regulations for the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Senior Citizens Act, 2021 which is going to be a landmark legislation to protect the rights of elderly people living a less empowered social life.

The meeting was held here attended by stakeholders including retired government officials and representatives from relevant ministries and departments, a news release said.

The discussions focused on the draft rules and regulations for three key areas of Senior Citizens Card,

Establishment of Old Age Homes, and Privileges provided to senior citizens under the Act: (20% discount on the medical facilities and retirement benefits for the older people).

The first meeting on the rules and regulations was held in June 2023, during which the Recruitment Rules for the Senior Citizens Council were finalized. The second meeting is part of a series of consultative meetings that will be held to finalize the rules and regulations and ensure the implementation of the ICT Senior Citizens Act, 2021.

The Chief Guest Director General (MoHR) Abdul Sattar in his closing remarks said, "The MoHR and HelpAge International are committed

to ensure that the rights of senior citizens are protected and that they have access to the services and benefits that they need. The development of the Rules and Regulations for the ICT Senior Citizens Act is an important step in this process."

The meeting was attended by retired government officials and representatives from civil society organizations who had worked to make the Act a reality.

Representatives from the relevant ministries, including the Ministry of Health, Planning Commission, NADRA, Bait-ul-Maal, and the MoHR, also attended the meeting and provided their recommendations and suggestions.



ISLAMABAD: Tourists are visiting Federal Capital on a double-decker bus on the occasion of 77th Independence Day celebration.

Ministry warns of floods

KABUL (Agencies): The Ministry of Water and Energy has warned of possible floods on Tuesday and Wednesday in a number of provinces, especially in areas around Afghanistan's river basins and along the actual rivers. According to a statement issued by the ministry, river levels could rise considerably due to heavy rain and melting snow. The ministry also warned that flash floods could occur in Kabul this week.

The Frontier Post

AFGHANISTAN

Muharram 27, 1445 — Tuesday, August 15, 2023

France takes over probe

KABUL (Pajhwok): French prosecutors are probing the deaths of at least six Afghan migrants in a boat sinking incident, says a media report. Seeking to cross the Channel between France and England, the migrant boat capsized in the wee hours of Saturday. There were 66 people in the boat bound for England. AFP quoted France's junior minister for the sea, Herve Berville, as blaming "criminal traffickers" for the deaths, pledging a crackdown on smuggling networks.

Universities await Taliban's approval to readmit women

KABUL (Khaama Press): Afghanistan's universities are ready to readmit female students. However, the ruling Taliban's leader has the ultimate say on when that might happen – if it happens at all, an education official said.

In December, Afghanistan's Minister of Higher Education, Neda Mohammed Nadeem, said that imposing the university ban was imperative to maintain gender segregation and align with his concerns about certain subjects conflicting with Islamic principles.

He asserted that the restriction imposed by the supreme leader of the Taliban, Hibatullah Akhundzada, will continue until further notice.

An advisor from the Ministry of Higher Education, Mawlawi Abdul Jabbar, emphasized that universities stand fully prepared to welcome back female students immediately upon receiving the direc-

tive from Akhundzada to lift the ban. However, he could not provide a definitive timeline for the potential decision.

Akhundzada "ordered that the universities be closed, so they closed," he told Associated Press. "When he says they are open, they will open the same day. All our leaders favour (restarting girls' education); even our ministers favour it."

The Taliban had given assurances of providing girls access to high school education, citing that classes would recommence as soon as logistical challenges related to uniforms and transportation were addressed. However, despite these assurances, girls continue to be denied classroom entry.

In a move that sparked worldwide condemnation, the Taliban prohibited women from attending educational institutions as of last December. This deci-

sion came from a previous restriction limiting girls' access to education beyond the sixth grade, a policy implemented shortly after the Taliban regained control in August 2021. Notably, Afghanistan is the sole country to impose extensive bans on female education.

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His remarks come just days before the upcoming second anniversary of the Taliban's power control. This impending milestone serves as a reminder of the evolving geopolitical landscape and the intricate challenges that have emerged since the Taliban's resurgence.

25 suicide attackers detained

KABUL (TOLNews): The Ministry of Interior (MoI) said that at least 25 suicide attackers have been detained in various provinces of the country over the past two-years.

A spokesman for the MoI, Abdul Matin Qani, said that 15 of the detainees were Pakistani nationals.

"The intelligence and investigative forces of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan had their discoveries and detained the criminals and more than 25 who were trying to commit suicide here," he said.

Qani said that the Islamic Emirate thwarted two attacks on the Tajikistan and Uzbekistan borders.

Meanwhile, analysts said that preventing security incidents can improve the trust of the neighboring countries of the Islamic Emirate.

"Preserving relations with neighboring countries based on international diplomatic laws is fundamental. The neighboring countries should be assured about security on their border from Afghanistan," said Sadiq Shinwari, a military analyst.

"Afghan soil should not be used against other countries including neighboring countries," said Akhtar Rasikh, military analyst.

Baradar holds talks with Turkey's minister of trade



KABUL (Khaama Press): During his recent visit to Turkey, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, acting Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs of the de facto administration, met with Omer Bolat, Turkey's Minister of Trade.

The meeting served as a platform for comprehensive discussions between the two sides, delving into various critical topics, including trade, investment,

regional connectivity, and substantial progress in bolstering economic collaboration between the two countries. The participants thoroughly exchanged insights, exploring opportunities to deepen their economic ties and enhance mutual growth.

During this visit, Baradar provided detailed insights into enhancing trade relations with Turkey. He emphasized bolstering investments in industrial zones and

supporting small and medium-sized enterprises. Additionally, discussions revolved around creating an air corridor to connect the two countries and coordinating exhibitions to further foster bilateral economic growth.

Baradar also strongly advocated establishing a collaborative chamber of commerce and a notable push for increased Turkish investment within Afghanistan.

Bolat, in a reciprocating

gesture, provided Baradar with firm reassurances regarding Turkey's unwavering dedication to bolstering bilateral trade. Moreover, he emphasized Turkey's resolute commitment to streamlining and fostering investments from Turkish sources into Afghanistan. Bolat assured that a seamless collaboration among all pertinent agencies would be diligently undertaken to achieve these objectives.

450 instructors educated abroad returned: Nadim

KABUL (TOLNews): The acting Minister of Higher Education Neda Mohammad Nadim said that 450 lecturers have returned to the country following the completion of their master's and doctorate programs abroad.

Speaking at a gathering of university lecturers attended by the Deputy Prime Minister for Political Affairs, Nadim reaffirmed the commitment of his department to advanced higher education in the country. Nadim said that efforts have been made over the last two months toward initiating master's and doctorate programs across diverse disciplines.

He said 350 other instructors have also been sent abroad for education programs. "More than 450 instructors who have gone to masters degree education programs abroad have returned to the country," Nadim said.

Speaking to the same gathering, the political deputy of the Prime Minister, Mawlawi Abdul Kabir, said that universities



were previously run through offers of embassies, and that many academic areas were being used for politics.

"Some will conduct their expertise in the medical field and some will do it in engineering, we don't oppose it," he said.

Meanwhile, the instructors who returned to the country urged the Islamic Emirate to pay their salaries while they were studying abroad.

"Some of our salaries have remained unpaid for the past two-years. It has been two-years that we have been waiting. It has

been two years since the Islamic Emirate came to power, but our salaries have not been paid," said Wahidullah Shamal, university instructor.

"They have not paid the salaries for less than a year. We are ready. It has been two years since the Islamic Emirate came to power, but no one has paid anything," said Hedayatullah, an instructor of Takhar University.

But the Ministry of Higher Education pledged that it will pay the salaries of the instructors and reclaim their lands grabbed by other individuals.

Carpet exports surge by 30 per cent

KABUL (TOLNews): The Ministry of Industry and Commerce has revealed that the export of Afghan carpets has seen an upswing of 30% over the past four months when compared to the same period last year.

According to ministry data spanning from the solar months of Hamal to Saratan (March 21 to July 22), Afghan carpets worth more than \$7 million have been exported to various countries, including Turkey, the United States, the United Arab Emirates, Italy, and Uzbekistan.

"During the initial three months of the first quarter of [solar year] 1402, carpet exports reached \$4,470,000," stated Abdul Salam Jawad, spokesperson for the Ministry of Industry and Commerce.

Notably, some carpet exporters spoke about a notable surge in direct exports of Afghan carpets to European and American nations. In the past year, our sales have increased, and a significant number of our customers are from abroad. We are now also facilitating our own transfers," revealed Mohammad Sabir, a carpet vendor.

Sayed Mohammad, another carpet vendor, emphasized the quality of Afghan carpets, expressing hope for support from the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan to further boost production and sales in this sector.

"Our carpet is the best in the world. The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan should help us and our investors to have production and sales in this field," Mohammad said.

The Union of Carpet Producers and Exporters emphasized the positive impact of international exhibitions on promoting the Afghan handwoven carpet industry. Hosting such exhibitions has proved pivotal in driving exports upward.

IEA strives to provide proper working environment for university professors

KABUL (Agencies): Deputy Prime Minister for Political Affairs Mawlawi Abdul Kabir, said that they are trying to provide a better working environment for professors of Afghan universities. Deputy Prime Minister for Political Affairs, Mawlawi Abdul Kabir raised this issue during a meeting with around 450 Afghan university professors in Kabul, which was organized for the encouragement of the country's academic figures.

University professors and academic figures of Afghanistan are the assets of this country and the Islamic Emirate never wants to lose them, he emphasized. In the past two years,

it has been proven that no university professor or school teacher in Afghanistan has been threatened, rather they have been respected and their benefits and salaries have always been paid on time by the Islamic Emirate, he added.

Mr. Kabir said that the universities are centers of science and knowledge, not the place for promoting foreign cultures and beliefs which was driven under the former administration.

Sheikh Mawlawi Nada Mohammad Nadim, Acting Minister of Higher Education, who participated in this meeting said, after the return of the Islamic Emirate, nearly 450 Afghan university profes-

sors who moved abroad to continue their studies have returned for serving the country's youths with their knowledge.

On the other hand, Acting Minister of Information and Culture Mullah Khairullah Khairkhan, said that extensive efforts should be made for intellectual revival of the young generation, and the opportunity gained after several years should be used well.

Later on, Mawlawi Noorullah Nouri, Acting Minister of Border and Tribal Affairs, and Sheikh Mohammad Khaled Hanafi, Acting Minister of Vice and Virtue, stated that the future of the country is dependent on professors

and that professors at Afghan universities need to inspire students with Islamic and patriotic spirit.

Meanwhile, some of these professors who have returned to the country said the goal of their reunion with their people was to assist the youth in their knowledge and self-sufficiency of Afghanistan in terms of education.

They added that stability and progress of Afghanistan is not possible without education and they want to start teaching again in universities to achieve this goal.

It is worth noting that these professors had traveled abroad to complete their master's and doctoral studies.

Japan's envoy engages with IEA on women's rights



KABUL (Agencies): Japan's ambassador to Afghanistan says he has been raising concerns about restrictions on women's rights during meetings with the Islamic Emirate's leaders.

The Japanese embassy in Afghanistan, partially resumed work in Kabul in September last year after temporarily relocating to

Qatar after the collapse of the former government.

Ambassador Okada Takashi, who has been talking with the people of Afghanistan as well as meeting with the IEA's leaders, recently spoke to NHK online.

Okada said two years after the Taliban returned to power, cities and towns

appear to be regaining a sense of normalcy but that people still struggle just to survive.

He said they are facing hardships such as shortages of food because foreign aid has been lagging and the economy is in the doldrums.

Okada talked extensively about the rights of women and girls, which have been eroded during the past two years, NHK reported. He said he repeatedly told IEA leaders that women's support is essential to stabilize the country.

He expressed hope that change could occur in the future as there seem to be members of the IEA who support introducing a more relaxed policy on women, NHK reported.

Three killed in explosion at hotel in Khost city

KHOST (Agencies): An explosion rocked Khost city on Monday morning, claiming the lives of at least three people and injuring a number of others.

Khost police confirmed the incident and said the explosion took place at a hotel close to Spin mosque in the city.

Early reports indicate Waziristan refugees were among the casualties.

Police said the dead and injured have been taken to hospital and the leadership of the provincial administration has ordered officials to provide proper medical treatment to the injured.

Security forces have cordoned off the area and have started an investigation into the incident. No group or person has yet claimed responsibility for the explosion.



Businessmen living abroad show interest in investing in Afghanistan

KABUL (Agencies): Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Mawlawi Sadrazam Osmani in an online meeting with Omar Ebrahim Khel, an Afghan investor, and businessman living in Germany, discussed and exchanged views on various issues, especially investment in the agriculture sector.

A statement released by Ministry of Agriculture, stated that Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Mawlawi Sadrazam Osmani, emphasized on nationwide security for the safety of the public, saying the current situation is highly suitable for investors and businessmen to invest inside the country.

He said the cultivation of cotton, sugarcane, safflower and saffron are



among the best alternative plants for poppy in the country, adding that work should be done for the prosperity and marketing of these plants inside and outside the country.

In the meeting, Omar Ebrahim Khel assured that he is ready to return and take part in the development of his homeland by

his investments.

Afghan investors living abroad in the past also expressed their interest in investing in the agriculture sector inside the country.

Funding dries up as humanitarian needs at all-time high in Afghanistan

KABUL (Agencies): The 2023 Afghanistan Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) is currently experiencing substantial critical funding gaps amounting to at least \$1.3 billion, leaving vulnerable Afghan families staring down the barrel of hunger, disease and even potential death as winter approaches.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said in a statement that with humanitarian needs at an all-time high due to the

third consecutive year of drought-like conditions, worsening poverty and heightened vulnerabilities following forty years of conflict, only a short window of opportunity exists to bring in vital assistance and supplies before the lean season and winter starts, and lives are lost.

According to a recent analysis by humanitarian partners, severe underfunding has already led to a massive reduction in the number of people targeted for food assistance each

month – down from 13 million at the beginning of the year to 9 million between March and April, and 5 million people in May, while some 262 static and mobile health facilities have had to discontinue health service provision, impacting access to primary health care services for two million people.

Some 2,800 community-based classes face closure in August affecting more than 141,000 children – more than half of them girls – should no

additional funding be received, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said.

Further cuts in food rations are inevitable over the coming months if additional funds are not received, the statement read.

"Funding is urgently needed to get ahead of winter and pre-position critical humanitarian supplies before many areas get cut off in October due to freezing temperatures and heavy snowfall."

KP CM visits policelines to pay tribute to martyrs on Indipendence Day

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan on the eve of Independence Day visited the Policelines here on Monday to pay tribute to martyrs. During the visit, the Chief Minister paid tribute to the fallen heroes by laying a wreath at the memorial and observed a moment of silence in their honor.

He also offered Fatiha and prayed for the elevation of the martyrs' ranks. Accompanying the Chief Minister were Chief Secretary Nadim Islam Chaudhry, Inspector General of Police Akhtar Hayat Khan Gandapur, and other officials. The Chief Minister's visit emphasized the significance of remembering and honoring the sacrifices made by the brave martyrs who laid down their lives for the nation's freedom.

The CM conveyed heartfelt felicitations to the entire nation and espe-

cially the people of KP. He emphasized the importance of renewing the commitment to the ideals that led to the creation of Pakistan and highlighted the sacrifices of the Muslims of the subcontinent. Chief Minister Azam Khan recognized that Pakistan's establishment was the culmination of the immense struggle and sacrifices made by millions of Muslims, which has resulted in the current era of peace and prosperity.

He acknowledged the monumental debt of gratitude owed to the forefathers and called for sustained efforts to transform Pakistan into a prosperous and developed nation. Chief Minister Azam Khan expressed that the birth of Pakistan was the result of the sacrifices made by countless Muslims, and it is due to those sacrifices that Pakistan now breathes in an atmosphere of peace. He underscored the duty of every citizen to play a role in building a progressive and flourishing nation.

Chief Minister stressed unity

among all sections of society, transcending regional, ethnic, and linguistic divisions, for the genuine freedom and development of the country. He remarked that while the value of the countless sacrifices for freedom cannot be measured, the real purpose of freedom can be fulfilled by living up to the dreams of the forefathers. In pursuit of this objective, Chief Minister Azam Khan highlighted the necessity of a free and sustainable practical wisdom to extricate the country from internal, external, and financial crises, as self-reliance and economic stability are essential for national defense.

He urged everyone to recommit to making Pakistan a great nation according to the vision of its founders and prioritize national interests over political or personal gains. He also paid tribute to the armed forces, police, and young people who have sacrificed their lives for the defense and security of Pakistan.



RAWALPINDI: A man carrying his child on his shoulders trying to move in a flooded street at Kohati Bazaar area after heavy rain.

2 killed in incidents of celebratory firing

KARACHI (INP): Two persons, including a woman, were killed in Karachi when people resorted to aerial firing to express their jubilation over the country's 76th Independence Day, police said on Monday.

A 25-year-old woman and a man named Abdul Wahab were killed in Numaish Chowrangi and Lyari, respectively when they were hit by stray bullets. On the other hand, over 50 people, including women and children, were injured in different parts of the city. Three persons were injured in Korangi, Landhi and Mehmoadabad No 6 when they were hit by stray bullets.

Sources added that 29 persons who were injured in these incidents were shifted to Jinnah Hospital, while 24 to the Civil Hospital. Similarly nine people with injuries were brought to the Abbasi Shaheed Hospital. Islamabad Police on its toes to ensure security on Aug 14.

Islamabad Police are fully prepared to ensure security on the occasion of the country's 76th Independence Day as over 1,500 police personnel and officers have taken their positions in different parts of the federal capital while special pickets have also been set up. As many as 550 police officers and personnel are separately performing duties to regulate traffic.

Special police pickets have been set up to keep an eye on the youth indulging in one-wheeling. Apart from that, special police contingents have been deployed at parks and other public places, while police personnel, Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) commandos and special squads of the Dolphin Force are patrolling the city's roads.

Police have made it clear that at no cost hooliganism would be tolerated, and those taking the law into their own hands would be dealt with an iron hand.

Despite the fact that section 144 was imposed in the federal capital, workers of a political party openly violated it, while all night police and FC personnel kept chasing them. Police said they had also arrested an Afghan national from outside the F-9 Park and recovered weapons from him.

Pak Navy celebrates 76th anniversary of Pakistan

F.P. Report

KARACHI: An inspiring Change of Guard ceremony was held at mausoleum of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah as the entire nation celebrated 76th anniversary of Independence of Pakistan. Smartly turned out contingent of Pakistan Naval Academy cadets and sailors clad in ceremonial dresses, assumed guard duties at Mazar-e-Quaid with enthusiasm, traditional spirit and military customs.

Commandant Pakistan Naval Academy, Commodore M Khalid graced the occasion as Chief Guest and reviewed the guard. The Chief Guest and cadets of Pakistan Navy presented Quami Salam to the Father of the Nation, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. The ceremonial mounting of Guard was followed by laying of floral wreath at the Mazar-e-Quaid by the Chief Guest on behalf of Chief of the Naval Staff, officers and men of Pakistan Navy. Later on, the Chief Guest offered

Fateha and recorded his remarks in the visitor book and paid rich tribute to our beloved Quaid.

Earlier, the day dawned with Gun Salutes and special prayers were offered in all Naval mosques for solidarity and progress of the country and particularly for the success of Kashmiri struggle. Pakistan Navy Ships and Establishments were illuminated in Navy's traditional manner. Flag hoisting ceremonies were held at designated Units of Pakistan Navy at Islamabad, Karachi, Lahore and Coastal Areas.

Various independence day activities were held at Pakistan Navy units/establishments including singing of national anthem in the morning, PN Band Display and Flag Hoisting Ceremony at Pakistan Maritime Museum, Boat Rallies at Karachi Harbour, Marathon Races, Cycle Races were also part of the celebrations. PN ship celebrated independence day during overseas deployment at foreign port.

Independence Day cele-

brations at Pakistan Navy educational institutions were also held where school children presented tableaux on national songs and declamation contests were held highlighting the importance of Independence Day. President of Pakistan has also approved military & civil awards to Officers, CPOs/ Sailors and Civilians of Pakistan Navy on the occasion of independence Day. The awards include Hilal-e-Imtiaz (Military), Sitara-e-Imtiaz (Military) and Tamgha-e-Imtiaz (Military).

In addition, awards of Khidmat (Military) have been approved for Master Chief Petty Officers, Chief Petty Officers and Sailors. Letters of Commendation from Chief of the Naval Staff have also been approved for Officers, Master Chief Petty Officers, Chief Petty Officers/Sailors and civilians. Pakistan Navy celebrated Independence Day with a firm resolution to safeguard the country against any belligerence.

Another indictment looms for Trump

WASHINGTON (Agencies): Prosecutors investigating Donald Trump's efforts to overturn the 2020 election in the US state of Georgia were expected to begin presenting evidence to a grand jury on Monday for what could be a sprawling, multi-defendant indictment.

The case would be the fourth brought against the 77-year-old Republican this year and could lead to the first televised trial of a former president — a watershed moment in US history — featuring charges typically used to bring down mobsters. "There will be multiple co-defendants more likely than not, showing a pattern of unlawful conduct to overturn the election in Georgia: hacking, false statements, harassment, etc.," Georgia State University political analyst Anthony Kreis said in a social media post.

Judicial analysts expect an indictment by the end of Tuesday, predicting that Atlanta-area prosecutor Fani Willis will wrap the

allegations against Trump and multiple co-defendants into one case under Georgia's Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organisations (RICO) law. The southern state, which President Joe Biden won by fewer than 12,000 votes in 2020, presents perhaps the most serious threat to Trump's liberty as he seeks his party's nomination to bid for reelection in 2024.

Even if he is returned to the Oval Office, he would have none of the powers in Georgia that presidents arguably enjoy in the federal system to self-pardon or have prosecutors drop cases. Trump posted a number of messages to his Truth Social platform calling the matter "ridiculous" and urging a local election official whom he identified by name and called a "loser" not to testify to the grand jury. "Those who rigged and stole the election were the ones doing the tampering, and they are the slime that should be prosecuted," Trump said.

RICO statutes are usually used to target organised

crime, and anyone who can be connected to a criminal "enterprise" can be convicted if there is a pattern of crime committed through that enterprise. But the broader Georgia law allows prosecutors to string together charges committed by different defendants without proving the existence of a criminal organisation. One incident highly likely to feature among the charges is a now infamous phone call Trump placed to Georgia officials asking them to "find" exactly the number of votes he would have needed to overturn Biden's victory.

Analysts are also expecting individuals — possibly including the former president — to face charges over a scheme to send bogus certification of a supposed Trump victory in Georgia to the US Congress. And the sweeping case may well bring in harassment of two Fulton County poll workers and the accessing of sensitive data from an election office in a rural county south of Atlanta, one day after the 2021 Capitol riot.

China's defence minister visits Russia

MOSCOW (Agencies): Chinese Defence Minister Li Shangfu is visiting Russia and Belarus in a show of support as the West attempts to isolate the two allies over Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

Li departed on Monday on the six-day trip, during which he will deliver an address at the Moscow Conference on International Security and meet defence leaders from Russia and other nations, China's defence ministry said on its social media account, citing spokesperson Colonel Wu Qian. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov is due to speak at the conference on the topic of the "Majority World countries' search for ways to development outside Western mechanisms, including strengthening multilateral associations of a new type", Russia's official TASS news agency reported.

Representatives from about 100 countries and eight international organisations had been invited to attend, it said. They will "discuss various aspects of security in the conditions of the establishment of a multipolar world order, ways to restore constructive international cooperation in the context of aggressive claims by Euro-Atlantic elites for world domination", TASS said, quoting the Russian foreign ministry spokesperson.

China's foreign ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said Chinese and Russian leaders "have maintained strategic communication in different ways on various issues". "The two sides had orderly high-level exchanges of views on extensive topics including bilateral cooperation and issues of joint concern," Wang told reporters at a daily briefing.

"The two countries will continue to advance the China-Russia comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership in the new era," he said. That was an apparent reference to a joint statement issued by Russian President Vladimir Putin and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping in Beijing last year just prior to Russia's February invasion in which they declared a "no-limits friendship".

Xi, meanwhile, visited Moscow in March, sending a message to Western leaders that their efforts to isolate Moscow over the fighting in Ukraine had fallen short.

41 killed as rain hits Indian Himalayas

NEW DELHI (Agencies): Torrential rain in India's Himalayas triggered landslides over the weekend that have killed at least 41 people, with over a dozen trapped or missing, officials said on Monday. Unusually heavy rain and melting glaciers have brought deadly flash floods to the mountains of India and neighbouring Pakistan and Nepal over the past year or two, with government officials increasingly blaming climate change.

Television footage from India's Himachal Pradesh state showed houses flattened by landslides, buses and cars hanging on the edge of precipices after roads gave way, and hundreds of people at rescue sites as emergency workers struggled to clear debris.

"Again, tragedy has befallen Himachal Pradesh, with continuous rainfall over the past 48 hours," the state's chief minister, Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, said in a post on the messaging platform

X, formerly known as Twitter.

"Reports of cloudbursts and landslides have emerged from various parts of the state resulting in loss of precious lives and property." At least 41 people have died in rain-related incidents since Sunday and 13 were still missing, according to a report by the state disaster management department, seen by Reuters. In one the most deadly incidents, a temple collapsed in the state capital, Shimla, with rescuers pulling out at least nine bodies, the chief minister said.

Television footage showed swollen rivers breaking their banks in Himachal and neighbouring Uttarakhand state, where record rains have also damaged roads and infrastructure. The India Meteorological Department issued a "red alert" for both Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand on Monday and has forecast rainfall

intensity to reduce Tuesday onwards. Parts of Himachal and Uttarakhand received as much as 273mm and 419mm of rain in 24 hours till 8:30 am local time on Monday, the weather office said.

Schools and other educational institutes have been ordered to close in Himachal Pradesh and people in danger were being moved to safety in shelters, state officials said. Uttarakhand state authorities announced the Char Dham pilgrimage route would be closed till Tuesday after landslides. "This is the first time we're seeing multiple cloudburst incidents and widespread damage in Himachal Pradesh," said state disaster management official Praveen Bhardwaj. In Solan district, houses collapsed, killing at least seven people, and a mother and her child were killed in Mandi district when their house collapsed, Bhardwaj said.

Maui wildfire survivors decry lack of warnings

WASHINGTON (Agencies): As the death toll from the deadliest US wildfire in more than a century ticks towards 100 in the Hawaiian island of Maui, there is growing anger among residents who say government inaction contributed to the heavy loss of life.

Officials have confirmed 96 deaths and warned that the figure was likely to rise as recovery crews with cadaver dogs work their way through hundreds of homes and burned-out vehicles in Lahaina. The historic coastal town was almost destroyed by the fast-moving inferno and survivors said there had been no warnings. When asked why none of the island's sirens had been activated, Hawaii Senator Mazie Hirono said she would wait for the results of an investigation announced by the state's attorney general.

"I'm not going to make any excuses for this tragedy," Hirono, a Democrat, told CNN. "We are really focused, as far as I'm concerned, on the need for rescue, and, sadly, the location of more bodies." More than 2,200 buildings were damaged or destroyed as the fire tore through Lahaina, according to official estimates, wreaking

damage estimated at \$5.5bn and leaving thousands homeless. The wildfire is the deadliest in the United States since 1918, when 453 people died in Minnesota and Wisconsin, according to the nonprofit research group National Fire Protection Association.

Questions are being asked about how prepared authorities were for the catastrophe, despite the islands' exposure to natural hazards like tsunamis, earthquakes and violent storms. In its emergency management plan last year, the state of Hawaii described the risk wildfires posed to people as being "low". Yet the layers of warning that are intended to buffer a citizenry if disaster strikes appear not to have operated. Maui suffered numerous power outages during the crisis, preventing many residents from receiving emergency alerts on their mobile phones.

No emergency sirens sounded and many Lahaina residents spoke of learning about the blaze from neighbours running down the street or seeing it for themselves. "The mountain behind us caught on fire and nobody told us jack," resident Vilma Reed, 63, told AFP news agency. "You

know when we found that there was a fire? When it was across the street from us." Reed, whose house was destroyed by the blaze, said she was dependent on hand-outs and the kindness of strangers and was sleeping in a car with her daughter, grandson and two cats. The New York Times reported that firefighters sent to tackle the flames found some hydrants had run dry.

"There was just no water in the hydrants," the paper quoted firefighter Keahi Ho as saying. Noelani Ahia, a Maui community leader in western Lahaina, told Al Jazeera that residents are coming together to take care of each other "as we have always done in Hawaii". "We have been removed constantly — by the tourist industry, plantations, over development — and now we have this disaster and all this open land," Ahia said, referring to the parts of the historic town that have been burned down to the ground. Al Jazeera's Shihab Rattansi, reporting from Kaanapali, Maui, said areas in western Lahaina remain closed off as the search efforts continue. Rattansi said water, electricity and communications remain cut off in the area but life goes on with help from the community.

Pakistan marks 77th Independence Day

(Continued from Page 1)

"The Muslims of India wanted a homeland for themselves where they could freely order their individual and collective lives in accordance with the teachings of Islam. This day marks the culmination of a democratic and political struggle in our quest for freedom from colonial rule," he wrote.

Reflecting on the significance of this day, he wrote that it gives us the opportunity for introspection. "We should reflect on the nation's progress so far, prevailing challenges, and opportunities for growth. It is a time to renew our commitment to building a stronger and more prosperous Pakistan as envisioned by the Father of the Nation." He then urged people to pledge to uphold the principles of democracy, freedom, equality, tolerance, forgiveness, socio-economic justice, and moral and ethical values, as enunciated by Islam.

"On this important day, let's also remember our oppressed brothers and sisters in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), facing Indian atrocities for

decades." "India's illegal actions, including ending Jammu and Kashmir's special legal status in 2019, have further deteriorated the human rights situation in the valley in the form of extra-judicial killings, torture, and illegal detentions," he stated as he reaffirmed the country's dedication in standing with our Kashmiri brethren.

He further urged the entire Pakistani nation to work wholeheartedly for the country's development. "There is a need to unite to cope with the social, political, economic and security challenges facing the Nation today. So, let's resolve that we will not hesitate to offer any sacrifice for the security, prosperity, and development of the country," he wrote.

Meanwhile, outgoing Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has said that the nation is celebrating the anniversary of Pakistan's independence. In his message for Independence Day, he said on this auspicious occasion, he extended his heartfelt congratulations to the entire nation, including overseas Pakistanis. "This day holds a special significance in our hearts, for this historic day saw an unprecedented

freedom struggle culminating in the establishment of the State of Pakistan.

"Today, we pay rich tributes to the men, women and children who got together under the dynamic leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah to struggle for the creation of a land they could call home," he stated. "In the process, they established a glorious example of commitment and devotion to the cause of Pakistan. I also take this opportunity to pay homage to the Quaid-e-Azam's visionary leadership and other leaders without whom the dream of Pakistan could not see the light of day."

"The nation will eternally remain indebted to them for gifting us with the precious gift of freedom," the PM said, adding the freedom struggle for a separate homeland represented an idea whose time had come, an idea rooted in self-assertion and hope of a better tomorrow. It was for a country where our people could explore their potential and live in peace in line with their glorious traditions, ethos, culture, and values. The idea of Pakistan was much bigger than we can imagine, the PM maintained, adding it was

an aspiration shaped by a fear of living under the majoritarian principle advocated by Congress.

PM Shehbaz further said there was no denying the importance of the many milestones we have achieved in the last seven and a half decades, often against opposing circumstances. "We have faced the worst natural disasters, conflicts and wars and always managed to build back better. All along the way, we have jealously guarded the gift of freedom that we so passionately prize," he added.

He also recognised the importance and the urgency of Kashmir's struggle for freedom that spans well over seven decades. "As we celebrate Independence Day, we stand in complete solidarity with the oppressed people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJK), who are waging a struggle for their right to self-determination. "Pakistan remains committed to providing political, moral, and diplomatic support to them. Despite a four-year military siege and complete information blackout, the people of IIOJK have displayed remarkable resilience and

defiance against the Indian oppressive apparatus," he said, calling upon the international community and human rights organisations to take note of the rights abuses in IIOJK.

"Our stance remains firm, advocating for a peaceful resolution of the dispute in line with the UN resolutions, recognizing the right of Kashmiri people to decide their own future through a free and fair plebiscite. "The spirit of independence continues to inspire Pakistanis to overcome challenges and work towards a nation that embodies the principles of justice, equality, and prosperity for all," he concluded.

Meanwhile, Punjab interim CM Naqvi extended heartfelt congratulations to the nation on the country's Independence Day. In his message, released Sunday, he expressed his felicitations to all his countrymen on this significant day. He acknowledged the immense blessing of freedom and expressed gratitude to Allah Almighty for enabling his countrymen to breathe in the world as a sovereign nation.

The chief minister underscored the need to comprehend and uphold the

intrinsic worth and honour of a nation that is free. He paid tribute to the countless Muslims who dedicated their lives to kindle the flame of liberation and the venerable forebears of our liberated land. Paying homage to the unparalleled valour of those who laid down their lives during the Pakistan Movement, he emphasised the significance of their sacrifice in pursuit of a peaceful nation.

The CM, in his message, called for introspection and learning from past experiences to chart a promising path forward. He stressed the imperative of adhering to the tenets of faith, unity, and organisation, with each individual playing an integral role in the nation's advancement. Naqvi asserted the shared responsibility of bequeathing a harmonious, robust, and flourishing Pakistan to the forthcoming generations.

He underscored the pivotal role of exemplary unity and solidarity in confronting the challenges that lie ahead. He called upon all citizens to renew their commitment to prioritise the nation's growth over personal interests and collaboratively elevate the stature of Pakistan.