

KARACHI (INP): Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) has suffered a financial setback exceeding Rs 21.81 billion due to the prolonged grounding of its aircraft for maintenance, as revealed in a recent audit report. According to the report, routine maintenance of PIA's aircraft took between 44 to 239 days, far longer than standard timeframes.

SYRIA (Reuters): An airstrike on a vehicle in eastern Syria near the porous border with Iraq killed at least five fighters from pro-Iran units, two security sources in the region told Reuters. One of the sources said the strike was carried out by a drone, but could not specify which military the drone belonged to. The second source said it targeted fighters as they changed shifts at a checkpoint.



PESHAWAR: Relatives and Army officials carrying the coffin of Lt Uzair Shaheed before the funeral prayers.

Israel broadens evacuation orders after shelter attack

Pakistan condemns Israeli attack on Al-Tabeen School

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP): The Israeli military ordered more evacuations in southern Gaza early Sunday after a deadly airstrike on a school-turned-shelter in the north killed at least 80 Palestinians, according to local health authorities. Israel said it targeted a militant command post, killing 19 fighters.

ISLAMABAD, Aug 11 (APP): Pakistan Sunday condemned in the strongest possible terms the Israeli attack on Al-Tabeen School in eastern Gaza on Saturday, which led to the death of over 100 civilians, injuring many more. In a statement, the Foreign Office Spokesperson said, attacking an overcrowded school sheltering displaced persons, particularly when they were performing morning prayers, was a horrific, inhuman, and cowardly act. "The indiscriminate targeting of civilian populations and facilities is a grave violation of international humanitarian law and constitutes war crimes." Israel must be held accountable for these war crimes and genocide in Gaza, she said adding, "We call on the international community, especially the United Nations and backers of Israel, to take immediate steps to bring an end to the Gaza genocide and to protect the people of Gaza."

Israel has repeatedly ordered mass evacuations as its troops have returned to heavily destroyed areas where they had previously battled Palestinian militants. The vast majority of Gaza's population of 2.3 million people have been displaced by the 10-month-old war, often multiple times. Hundreds of thousands have crammed into squalid tent camps with few public services or sought shelter in schools like the one struck on Saturday. Palestinians say nowhere in the besieged territory feels safe.

The latest evacuation orders apply to areas in Khan Younis, including part of an Israeli-declared humanitarian zone from which the military said rockets had been fired. Israel accuses Hamas and other militants of hiding among civilians and launching attacks from residential areas. Khan Younis, Gaza's second-largest city, suffered widespread destruction during an air and ground offensive earlier this year. Tens of thousands fled again last week after an earlier evacuation order.

Hundreds of families carrying their belongings in their arms left their homes and shelters early Sunday, seeking elusive refuge. "We don't know where to go," said Amal Abu Yahia, a mother of three, who had returned to Khan Younis in June to shelter in their severely damaged home. "This is my fourth displacement," said the 42-year-old widow, whose husband was killed when an Israeli airstrike hit their neighbors' house in March. She said they went to Muwasi, a sprawling tent camp along the coast, but could not find any space.

Ramadan Issa, a father of five in his 50s, fled Khan Younis with 17 members of his extended family, joining hundreds of people walking toward central Gaza early Sunday. "Every time we settle in one place and build tents for women and children, the occupation comes and bombs the area," he said, referring to Israel. "This situation is unbearable."

Gaza's Health Ministry says the Palestinian death toll from the 10-month-old war is approaching 40,000, without saying how many were fighters. Aid groups have struggled to address the staggering humanitarian crisis in the territory, while international experts have warned of famine. The war began when Hamas-led militants burst through Israel's defenses on Oct. 7 and rampaged through farming communities and army bases near the border, killing some 1,200 people — mostly civilians — and abducting around 250 people. The United States, Egypt and Qatar have spent months trying to mediate a cease-fire and the return of the roughly 110 remaining hostages, around a third of whom Israeli authorities believe to be deceased. The conflict has meanwhile threatened to trigger a regional war, as Israel has traded fire with Iran and its militant allies across the region. The strike on Saturday hit a mosque inside a school in Gaza City where thousands of people were sheltering. The Gaza Health Ministry said 80 people were killed and around 50 wounded. The Israeli military disputed the toll and said it killed 19 Hamas and Islamic Jihad militants in a precise strike, releasing what it said were their names and photos. Hamas and Palestinian

activists disputed the military's claims, saying two of the 19 had been killed in earlier strikes and that others were known to be civilians or opponents of Hamas. Gaza City and the rest of the north have been surrounded by Israeli forces and largely cut off from the world since late last year, and it was not possible to independently confirm the accounts from either side. The U.N. human rights office says Israel has carried out "systematic attacks on schools," which have served as shelters since the start of the war, with at least 21 hit since July 4, leaving hundreds dead, including women and children. European leaders condemned the strike, while the U.S. said it was concerned about the reports of civilian casualties. Vice President Kamala Harris, speaking to reporters traveling with her in Phoenix, Arizona, on Saturday, said: "Yet again, far too many civilians have been killed."

"We need a hostage deal and we need a cease-fire," she said. "The deal needs to get done and it needs to get done now."



GAZA: Families take what they can carry as they leave their homes and shelters in Khan Younis on Sunday.

President urges youth to seize opportunities

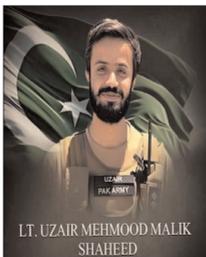
ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari urged young Pakistanis to seize the opportunities available to them, dream big, and work tirelessly for the betterment of their beloved country. In a message on the occasion of International Youth Day observed on August 12 every year, he said, "On this International Youth Day, I extend my heartfelt greetings to Pakistan's vibrant and dynamic youth, who are the torchbearers of our nation's future. Today, we celebrate not just the potential of our young generation, but also their invaluable contributions to our country's progress."

He said, "The youth of Pakistan are our most valuable asset as they are the dreamers and leaders of tomorrow. It is our duty to provide them with the opportuni-

ties and resources they need to fulfil their potential and build a prosperous, peaceful, and progressive Pakistan." "The Prime Minister's Youth Programme stands as a testament to our commitment to empowering our youth. Through initiatives like the Youth Laptop Scheme, which has distributed 600,000 laptops nationwide, we are ensuring that our students are equipped to succeed in the digital world. The Youth Business Loan program, having disbursed 186 billion rupees, has given rise to a new generation of entrepreneurs who are creating jobs and driving economic growth. Additionally, the Youth Skill Development Programme has provided training to 450,000 young individuals, enabling them to contribute meaningfully to our society," he added.

Lt Uzair embraces martyrdom

F.P. Report



RAWALPIND: On 11 August 2024, Lieutenant Uzair Mehmood Malik (age: 24 years, resident of District Attock) embraced Shahadat at Combined Military Hospital, Peshawar. On 09 August, fire exchange took place between security forces and Khawarij at three different locations in Tirah Valley of Khyber District. At one of the locations in Bagh, Lieutenant Uzair Mehmood Malik, leading his troops from the front, fought bravely and sent four Khawarij to hell. However, during intense fire exchange, the officer got critically injured and was under treatment at CMH Peshawar. Today he succumbed to injuries and embraced Shahadat. Security Forces of Pakistan are determined to eliminate the menace of terrorism from the country and such sacrifices of our brave officers and soldiers further strengthen our resolve.

Meanwhile, President Asif Ali Zardari Sunday expressed grief over the martyrdom of Lieutenant Uzair Mehmood Malik who had sustained injuries in an attack on forces in Tirah valley. In a statement, he condoled with the bereaved heirs over the martyrdom of Lt Uzair Mehmood Malik. He paid tribute to the martyred army officer for sacrificing his life while defending the country. The President expressed determination to continue operations against the terrorists. He prayed for the elevation of ranks of the martyred and for patience for the bereaved family. Moreover, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif paid tribute to Lieutenant Uzair Mehmood Malik on his martyrdom after sustaining injuries in an operation against Khawarij terrorists in Tirah valley few days back. In a statement on Sunday, he prayed for the elevation of ranks of the martyr and patience for the bereaved family. Lt Uzair Mehmood Malik while leading the army jawans eliminated four Khawarij terrorists, he said adding the officers and jawans of Pakistan army were removing the Al-Khawarij fitna from the Pakistani soil. He said, "he and the whole nation pays tribute to the brave officers and jawans of Pakistan army." He said Pakistani nation stood shoulder to shoulder with the army in the war against terrorists. "Our martyrs and their families are pride of the whole nation," he added.

Iran's president proposes an ex-nuclear negotiator as FM

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP): Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian on Sunday proposed former nuclear negotiator Abbas Araghchi as the country's new foreign minister and also sought to appoint a woman as roads and housing minister. If approved, she would be Iran's first female minister in more than a decade. Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf read out the list of proposed ministers to lawmakers. The hard-line-dominated chamber will have two weeks to review qualifications and give a vote of confidence to the proposed ministers. Araghchi, 61, a career diplomat, was a member of the Iranian negotiator team that reached a nuclear deal with world powers in 2015 that capped Tehran's nuclear program in return for the lifting sanctions. In 2018, then-President Donald Trump pulled the U.S. out of the deal and imposed more sanctions on Iran. Pezeshkian said during his presidential campaign that he would try to revive the nuclear deal.

Pezeshkian named Gen. Aziz Nasirzadeh, an F-14 Tomcat pilot, as defense minister. He was chief of the Iranian Air Force in 2018-2021. This would be the first time that a member of Iran's air force headed the defense ministry. Pezeshkian proposed Farzaneh Sadegh as roads and housing minister. Sadegh, 47, is currently a director in the ministry. She would become only the second female minister in Iran since the 1979 Islamic Revolution. It is unclear, however, whether she will be approved. The hard-line parliament seeks more cultural and social restrictions on women based on its interpretations of Islamic sharia. Many lawmakers voiced their opposition when her name was read by the speaker during Sunday's session. The only previous female minister to be approved by parliament since the revolution was in 2009, when President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad secured a post for Marziyeh Vahid Dastgerdi as health minister. Iranian presidents have,

however, appointed women to be vice presidents, a role that is not subject to parliamentary approval. Last week, Pezeshkian appointed Zahra Behrouz Azar as vice president in charge of women's and family affairs. The first female minister in Iran's history was Farrokroo Parsa, who served as education minister in 1968-1971. Revolutionary authorities executed her after the 1979 revolution that ousted the pro-Western monarchy and brought Islamists to power. Pezeshkian proposed Eskandar Momeni, a relatively moderate police general, as interior minister. The ministry deals with enforcing the mandatory wearing of the Islamic veil on women. In 2022, the death of Mahsa Amini in police custody after she was arrested for improper wearing of the hijab led to nationwide protests. Pezeshkian, then a lawmaker, wrote at the time that it was "unacceptable in the Islamic Republic to arrest a girl for her hijab and then hand over her dead body to her family."

Harris says she supports eliminating taxes on tips

LAS VEGAS (Reuters): U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris told supporters in Nevada on Saturday she supported eliminating taxes on tips, taking a similar position to her rival Donald Trump in an effort to win over service workers, an important constituency in the state. Harris and her Democratic running mate, Minnesota Governor Tim Walz, wrapped up a multi-day tour of battleground states on Saturday with their stop in Nevada, a western state that could play a pivotal role in the Nov. 5 presidential election. "It is my promise to everyone here when I am

president we will continue to fight for working families, including to raise the minimum wage and eliminate taxes on tips for service and hospitality workers," Harris said. Harris said she would work to drive down consumer prices, vowing to "take on big corporations that engage in illegal price-gouging" and corporate landlords that unfairly raise rents on working families, as well as going after big pharmaceutical companies to drive drug prices lower. Trump, who told a rally in Las Vegas in June that he would seek to end taxation of income from tips, accused Harris of stealing his policy proposal.

"Kamala Harris, whose 'Honeymoon' period is ENDING... just copied my NO TAXES ON TIPS Policy," Trump said on his Truth Social app. "The difference is, she won't do it, she just wants it for Political Purposes!" A Harris campaign official said her proposal would require legislation to be passed by Congress. "As president, she would work with Congress to craft a proposal that comes with an income limit and with strict requirements to prevent hedge fund managers and lawyers from structuring their compensation in ways to try to take advantage of the policy," the official said.

Hasina Wajid blames US for her removal from power

NEW DELHI (Arab News): Bangladesh's ousted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who is currently taking refuge in India, has accused the US of playing a role in her removal from power as she promised a prompt return to Dhaka. Hasina was forced to resign and fled to neighboring India on Aug. 5, following weeks of nationwide demonstrations and a deadly crackdown on protesters, which emboldened a student-led movement to oust her regime after 15 years of uninterrupted rule. The 76-year-old said Washington was to blame for her ouster in a message issued for supporters of her Awami League party, which appears to be her first statement since she left Dhaka. "I resigned, so that I did not have to see the procession of dead bodies. They wanted to come to power over the dead bodies of students, but I did not allow it. I resigned from the premiership. I could have remained in power if I had surrendered the sovereignty of Saint Martin Island and allowed America to hold sway over the

Bay of Bengal," she said in a statement, which was first reported by India's English-language daily The Economic Times. "I beseech the people of my land, 'Please do not be manipulated by radicals.'" Hasina was referring to St. Martin's Island, Bangladesh's sole coral reef island located in the northeastern part of the Bay of Bengal, alluding to years-old rumors claiming that the US was seeking control over the island to turn it into a military airbase. The US Embassy in Dhaka did not immediately respond to Arab News' request for comment on Sunday. "If I had remained in the country, more lives would have been lost, more resources would have been destroyed. I made the extremely difficult decision to exit. I became your leader because you chose me, you were my strength," Hasina said. "With the grace of almighty Allah, I will return soon. The Awami League has stood up again and again. I shall forever pray for the future of Bangladesh, the nation which my great

father strived for. The country for which my father and family gave their lives." Hasina, 76, was one of the world's longest-ruling female leaders and has played a pivotal role in Bangladesh's politics, a nation of about 170 million people that declared its independence in 1971. She is the daughter of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the country's charismatic founding leader, who was killed in 1975 in a military coup when Hasina was 28. She served as prime minister from 1996 to 2001 and regained power in 2009. Under her leadership, Bangladesh became one of the fastest-growing economies in the region, with World Bank estimates showing that more than 25 million people in the country have been lifted out of poverty in the last two decades. But critics say she has grown increasingly autocratic and called her a threat to the country's democracy, with many saying that the sudden collapse of Hasina's government had reflected a broader discontent against her rule.



LAHORE: Pakistan's javelin gold medalist of the Paris Olympics 2024, Arshad Nadeem, waves to the crowd upon his arrival at Allama Iqbal International Airport. —APP Photo

Arshad Nadeem reaches home

LAHORE (APP): Arshad Nadeem, the national hero who won the gold medal for Pakistan in the Paris Olympics-2024, reached his native place in Mianchanu in the form of a convoy, where he received a warm welcome.

The entire village came to welcome the national hero, while showering flowers and currency notes. They danced to the beat of drums and also displayed fireworks while the atmosphere echoed with slogans.

When gold medalist Arshad Nadeem reached home, emotional scenes were seen; his mother welcomed her son with a hug, while Arshad Nadeem became overwhelmed with emotions while relatives and women presented flowers.

The national hero said that he was feeling very happy to get unprecedented respect and love.

He said, "I am grateful to the government and the people for the wonderful welcome. I am very happy that everyone is honoring me. I will make full preparations for the 2028 Olympics again to bring laurels to the country."

Arshad Nadeem said that Neeraj Chopra is like a brother and a friend.

Earlier, the national hero reached his native place in the form of a caravan, Arshad Nadeem's friends and family members welcomed him at Mian Chanun Bypass and showered him with flower petals. "Arshad Nadeem Zindabad" slogans were raised. Posters were also displayed at the entrances of the city.

LAHORE (APP): Provincial Information Minister and leader of Muslim League-N-Azma Bokhari has said on Sunday that certified thieves, corrupt and incompetent people will now give them a lecture on corruption.

Azmi Bokhari, while responding to Barrister Saif's statement, said that instead of making propaganda about Lahore's Mayo Hospital, the KP government should focus on the plight of Lady Reading, Khyber Teaching Hospital, in the province, where, even free medicines were stopped.

She said that Maryam Nawaz had started free medicines in all government hospitals soon after she came to power, adding the Chief Minister

WASA MD reviews rainwater disposal

LAHORE (APP): Water and Sanitation Agency Managing Director Ghufan Ahmad on Sunday visited different areas in the provincial capital and reviewed the rainwater drainage operation.

According to WASA sources here, the MD personally monitored the ongoing rainwater drainage operation. Most of the areas including Qurtaba Chowk, Waris Road, Empress Road, Copper Road and other areas had been cleared along with rain, sources added.

Imam of Masjid Nabawi reaches Lahore

LAHORE (APP): The Imam of Holy mosque 'Masjid Nabawi' His Excellency Dr. Salah Al-Budair reached Lahore on his next leg of visit to Pakistan.

Upon arrival at a local hotel, Speaker Punjab Assembly Malik Muhammad Ahmed Khan and Local Government Minister Zeeshan Rafiq welcomed the Imam. The Imam of Masjid Nabawi was presented a bouquet by Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif. Salah Al-Budair thanked

the people and government of Punjab for the warm welcome.

Speaker Punjab Assembly Malik Muhammad Ahmed Khan in his welcoming comments said, "Honoured Imam, I welcome you to Lahore from the core of my heart. For sanctity of Masjid Nabawi is an integral part of our faith".

Speaker Malik Ahmed Khan said that on behalf of the people of Punjab and the government, I request you to pray for all of us.

"You certainly honored us by visiting Punjab", he

said. On this occasion Local Government Minister Zeeshan Rafiq welcomed the distinguished guest and said that Masjid Nabawi is a very holy place for Muslims. "Dr. Al-Budair's arrival in Pakistan is a blessing for us. The honor of meeting Imam Masjid Nabawi will be remembered for the rest of my life", he said.

Zeeshan Rafiq said that the visit of the honorable Imam will further strengthen friendly relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

PPP considers minorities as equal citizens

KARACHI (APP): Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Sindh chapter's General Secretary, Waqar Mehdi, on Sunday said that his party considered non-Muslims equal citizens of Pakistan as enshrined in our Constitution.

In his message, Senator Mehdi said, "President Asif Ali Zardari, during his previous tenure, announced to observe August 11 as National Day for the Minorities."

He said, "PPP always stood by the minorities, and the party had a minority wing."

Waqar Mehdi said, "PPP considers that all citizens living in the country are equal irrespective of their religious thoughts, beliefs, ethnicity, and color, and our constitution also gives them equal status and rights."

He said, "PPP has taken revolutionary measures for giving representation to

minorities in all decision-making institutions, including assemblies."

He said, "Electing a Christian member as the Deputy Speaker of the Sindh Assembly is a clear reflection of the fact that his party considers minorities as equal citizens of the country."

Mehdi said that on this day, we should make a commitment not to let any injustices be done to our non-Muslim citizens.

KP govt should focus on hospitals: Azma

LAHORE (APP): Provincial Information Minister and leader of Muslim League-N-Azma Bokhari has said on Sunday that certified thieves, corrupt and incompetent people will now give them a lecture on corruption.

Azmi Bokhari, while responding to Barrister Saif's statement, said that instead of making propaganda about Lahore's Mayo Hospital, the KP government should focus on the plight of Lady Reading, Khyber Teaching Hospital, in the province, where, even free medicines were stopped.

She said that Maryam Nawaz had started free medicines in all government hospitals soon after she came to power, adding the Chief Minister

of Punjab has started a program of revamping all government hospitals.

"Hence, consider before giving us a lecture on good governance on the administration of hospitals and educational institutions of our province," she said.

Azma Bokhari said that people in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were being given anti-state narratives instead of education and health. She said students of colleges and universities were being incited to violence and hatred, those who incite the young generation to rebellion are in Adiala Jail today. This is a proper lesson for the rest, she added.

Bokhari said, "Glory be to Allah, the certified thieves, corrupt and incompetent people will now lecture us on corrup-

tion, whose hospitals, universities and colleges in their own province, are closing down due to lack of funds.

They should not worry about the hospitals of Lahore," she criticized.

The minister said that government employees protest and strike every week due to non-payment of salaries, and there were no doctors available in the government hospitals of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The minister said that the inmate of Adiala Jail had established a team abroad to monitor the corruption of the KP government. She further said that Chief Minister KP Ali Amin Gandapur's ministers and his assembly members were upset with his corruption and interference in departments.

Role of Tourism and Hotel Industry is pivotal, says Advisor for Tourism

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Advisor to CM on Tourism and Culture Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Zahid Chanzeb has said that Tourism and Hotel Industry are closely related and plays a vital role in boosting economic growth.

He said that tourism sector on the one hand is a pivotal source of economic prosperity, employment, cultural exchange and understandings, improvement in infrastructure, source of Government revenue and overall wellbeing of a region. The Hotel Industry, on the other hand, provides accommodation to tourists and plays a key role in meet-

ing their needs such as food, rest, and entertainment.

He expressed these views yesterday on the occasion of inauguration ceremony of White Forest Hotel at Kalam, Swat.

"The presence of hotels increases popularity of scenic spots and we hope that White Forest Hotel will tend to increase the fame of the area due to the provision of better facilities whereby it will incubate Tourism" the Advisor said.

He further added that spendings by tourists on territorial businesses items would boost the regional economy and causes of employment and general welfare

would be raised.

Zahid Chanzeb said that KP Government is well aware of the hazards confronted in the way of Hotel Industry. "Government is determined to enhance Hotel Industry and is taking consequential steps to subdue the obstacles in the way of Hotel Industry and to provide prerequisites at tourist spots" he assured.

He disclosed that KP Govt is taking steps to provide better infrastructure, transportation and other related facilities at Tourist destinations whereby Hotel Industry would be boosted.

The Advisor informed

that KP Government is intended to devise facile rules and regulations regarding Hotel Industry due to which running of Hotel businesses would be made convenient to run and the overall Industry would be flourished.

The Advisor recalled that skills-based programs for training people associated with the Hotel Industry in the Province would be started very soon. Zahid chanzeb urged administration of White Forest Hotel to hire local citizens on the vacancies created there so that the rate of poverty be reduced and new employment opportunities would be created in the area.

Equal education, employment opportunities provided to minorities: Punjab CM

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has said that all brothers and sisters belonging to the minorities have been provided with equal education and employment opportunities.

In her message on National Minorities Day, she said the minorities enjoy equal rights in Pakistan according to the vision of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. "We stand united under one flag" she mentioned. CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif added, "I salute every brother and sister of Punjab belonging to the minorities. Quaid-e-Azam had declared all the citizens free to visit their worship places. Equality, tolerance and patience aptly define democracy. Every citizen holds an equal status irrespective of their religion, caste and creed. All the cit-

izens are beautiful and colourful flowers of a bouquet. Pakistan belongs to everyone and is equivalent to a land of heaven."

"I while delineating Punjab's road map during my maiden speech declared the minorities as very dear to our hearts" she said and added that Easter was celebrated along with the Christian community in the Maryam Abad church on the eve of Easter Day and 10,000 Christians were awarded eidi."

The CM said that she visited Kartarpur and harvested wheat on the eve of Vaisakhi and took the langar of Sangat. "Punjab holds a unique distinction of being the first province across the globe to enforce registration of the Sikh Marriage Act and work on Hindu Marriage Act and Christian Personal Laws is ongoing which will be submitted in the assem-

blies soon." She noted that the Punjab government for the first time allocated a record budget for the minority communities worth Rs 3.66 billion. Over Rs 4000 million development budget has been allocated for the Minority Affairs department and Rs 2500 million Minorities Development Fund has been allocated as well.

A special quota is being ensured for the minority communities in the government employment and educational institutions. I along with President PML-N Muhammad Nawaz Sharif went to the residence of a Christian sanitary worker to offer condolences over his sad demise. Numerous Christian officers and staff are diligently performing their duties in all government offices including the Chief Minister's Office," she said.

Nasir lauds minorities' role in national development

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Minister for Energy, Planning and Development Syed Nasir Hussain Shah, while lauding the role of minorities, said that minorities had an important role in the educational, social and economic development of the country. He said that PPP had always protected the rights of the minorities.

In a statement issued here Sunday, the provincial minister said that the inclusion of the minorities in government jobs was also ensured. He said that the purpose of observing the Minorities Day was to acknowledge their role and services in the development of the country.

He said that Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto gave the country the Constitution of 1973 in which equal rights were granted to the people living in Pakistan. He said that the protection of lives, property and rights of the minorities were top priority of the Sindh government.

Salik lauds minorities role in country's development

LAHORE (APP): Federal Minister for Religious Affairs Chaudhry Salik Hussain said on Sunday that the minority community has a key role in the construction and development of Pakistan.

The minister said that the government is working for the welfare and the promotion of minorities and religious harmony in the country. Addressing an event held here for minorities, he said that all religions have complete freedom in Pakistan, adding the minority community has a key role in the construction and development of Pakistan and for the promotion of religious harmony in the country.

Earlier in his statement, Minister of Religious Affairs Chaudhry Salik Hussain said that the services of minorities in national fields are commendable. He said the national flag of Pakistan clearly represents minorities, adding "our constitution guarantees the

protection of minorities and social rights."

He said that the promotion of religious harmony is the need of the hour for peace and brotherhood in society. Salik Hussain said that the role of the minority community in the development of the country is commendable, the protection of minorities is the religious responsibility of the government as well as every Pakistani. "We are all united for national integrity and development," he said.

Independence Day celebrations to feature 'Plant for Pakistan'

LAHORE (APP): On the instructions of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, for the first time in the history of Punjab, Independence Day will be celebrated with a Plant for Pakistan campaign, Azadi Float and new national song.

According to official sources, plantation will be done under "Plant for Pakistan" across the province. Apart from this, the Azadi float from Rawalpindi to Lahore will reach Minar-e-Pakistan on the night of August 13. The Azadi float features cultural representations of the four provinces, Azadi Kashmir's Parliament and a model of a mosque of Gilgit-Baltistan.

On the direction of the

Chief Minister of Punjab, there will be plantation marathon competitions among all districts.

Apart from this there will also be a literary recital and a musical concert at Minar-e-Pakistan. Moreover, after 6 years, a new song will also be launched under the Department of Information and Culture, they said.

Lawmakers and civil society will participate at division, district and tehsils including all local hospitals, Fountain House, Old Age Homes, Darul Shafaqat and other institutions.

Videos and photos of the plantation will be uploaded on the plantation dashboard of PITB. Chief

Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif will give special awards with most plantations. Flag-hoisting ceremonies will also be organized at all divisional, district and tehsil headquarters.

There will be cricket, hockey, football, volleyball and kabaddi competitions, sources said, adding local players will also be invited to plant trees under the 'Plant for Pakistan'.

Government and other prominent private buildings across the province will also be illuminated with white and green lights. National flags will be displayed on prominent roads and squares. Meanwhile, national anthems will also be sung on prominent highways.

Dacoit killed in encounter with police

LAHORE (APP): A dacoit was killed while two others were killed in an encounter with police in Sunder here on Sunday.

Police said that they had set up a picket where they saw three suspects on a motorcycle and ordered them to stop. But they did not care and opened firing on the policemen. The police also retaliated and as a result, one of them received severe injuries and died instantly while two other managed to escape.

Later, the killed dacoit was identified as Taimour alias Taimoury. The police recovered a motorcycle, pistol, bullets and mobile from his possession. The police removed the body to dead house for autopsy.

The killed dacoit was wanted in various cases of dacoity. An investigation is underway.

On the direction of the

Tarbela Dam reaches maximum capacity level

LAHORE (APP): The water level at the major reservoir Tarbela Dam is fast approaching the maximum conservation level due to significant monsoon rains in the upper parts of Pakistan.

The water level at Tarbela Dam reached 1544 feet above mean sea level with live storage of 5.421 million acre-feet on Sunday, just six feet below the maximum conservation level of 1550 feet. The minimum operating level at Tarbela Dam is 1402 feet.

According to a press release issued here, the water level at Mangla Dam reached 1209.35 feet as against a maximum conservation level of 1242 feet and minimum operating level of 1050 feet. Live

storage at Mangla Dam was 4.862 MAF.

The water level at Chashma reached 642.3 feet with live storage of 0.07 MAF as against the minimum operating level of 638.15 feet and maximum conservation level of 649 feet.

Filling of both Mangla and Tarbela dams to maximum storage capacity will be a good omen for under stressed agriculture sector and low-cost hydel electricity generation.

Tarbela: Inflows 277300 cusecs and Outflows 219300 cusecs, Kabul at Nowshera: Inflows 65500 cusecs and Outflows 65500 cusecs, Khairabad Bridge: Inflows 238300 cusecs and Outflow 238300, Jhelum at Mangla: Inflows 26500 cusecs and Outflows 10000

cusecs, Chenab at Marala: Inflows 90000 cusecs and Outflows 72500 cusecs.

TLikewise the situation of in and out flow at barrages included Jinnah: Inflows 300000 cusecs and Outflows 292000 cusecs, Chashma: Inflows: 367400 cusecs and Outflows 323800 cusecs., Taunsa: Inflows 442200 cusecs and Outflows 435200 cusecs, Guddu: Inflows 422000 cusecs and Outflows 401200 cusecs, Sukkur: Inflows 355600 cusecs and Outflows 315900 cusecs, Kotri: Inflows 167000 cusecs and Outflows 126400 cusecs., Trimmu: Inflows 63300 cusecs and Outflows 47900 cusecs, Panjnad: Inflows 47500 cusecs and Outflows 35800 cusecs.



LAHORE: Federal Minister for planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal talking to the media after inaugurating Food Asia international Trade fair at Expo Center.



Unraveling Pakistan's Crisis: Who Is Responsible and How Did We Get Here?

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal

UNDERSTANDING the myriad factors that have led Pakistan to its current state is a complex endeavor, one that requires a multi-faceted analysis of historical, socio-political, economic, and international dimensions. The country's journey to its present condition has been influenced by various elements, each contributing in unique ways to the challenges it faces today.

To begin with, any assessment of Pakistan's trajectory must consider its historical context. Since its inception in 1947, Pakistan has faced a series of existential crises, starting with the traumatic partition from India, which led to mass migrations, violence, and deep-seated animosities. The early years were marked by political instability, with frequent changes in leadership and a lack of coherent policy direction. The assassination of its first Prime Minister, Liaquat Ali Khan, in October 16, 1951 was a significant blow, setting a precedent for political violence and instability.

As the new nation struggled to find its footing, the military began to play an increasingly dominant role in politics. The first military coup in 1958, led by General Ayub Khan, set a pattern that would be repeated multiple times. Military rule often came with promises of stability and development but frequently resulted in authoritarianism and repression, stifling democratic institutions and civil society. The military's involvement in politics has had long-term implications, including the undermining of civilian governance and the perpetuation of a security-centric state.

Economically, Pakistan has faced persistent challenges, including periods of significant growth followed by downturns and crises. The 1960s under Ayub Khan saw substantial industrial growth and development, but these gains were unevenly distributed, leading to regional disparities and social tensions. The nationalization policies of the 1970s under Zulfikar Ali Bhutto further disrupted economic stability, as state control over key industries often led to inefficiencies and corruption.

The economic liberalization in the 1980s and 1990s, driven by structural adjustment programs from international financial institutions like the IMF and World Bank, aimed to integrate Pakistan into the global economy. However, these measures often led to austerity, reduced public spending on social services, and increased debt. The accumulation of external debt has been a critical issue for Pakistan, limiting its fiscal space and making it vulnerable to external pressures and economic shocks.

One must also consider the geopolitical context. Pakistan's strategic location has made it a focal point of international interests, particularly during the Cold War and the post-9/11 era. The alliance with the United States during the Soviet-Afghan War in the 1980s brought significant military and economic aid but also had unintended consequences. The influx of arms, the rise of militant groups, and the proliferation of narcotics trade destabilized the region and had lasting impacts on Pakistan's internal security.

The post-9/11 alliance with the United States in the War on Terror further complicated matters. While Pakistan received substantial aid and support, it also faced severe internal strife and violence as militant groups targeted the state. The complex relationship with neighboring Afghanistan and the unresolved Kashmir issue with India have continued to drain resources and focus, detracting from development and governance.

Corruption is a pervasive issue in Pakistan, often with accusations directed at political elites for placing personal gain above national welfare. This results in a persistent lack of accountability and transparency within governance, leading to the misallocation of resources and hindering development initiatives. Historically, each era has witnessed the emergence of new scandals, with the repercussions falling on the leaders of the time as well as the entire nation. Consequently, corruption has led to the deterioration of public trust and the legitimacy of institutions.

Moreover, social factors cannot be ignored. Pakistan's population growth has put immense pressure on its resources and infrastructure. The education system has struggled to keep pace, resulting in a large, undereducated youth population. Health services have similarly lagged, contributing to poor human development indicators. Gender inequality remains a significant challenge, limiting the potential of half the population.

Religious extremism and sectarian violence have contributed to instability. It has been observed that religion has been utilized by the state, either directly or indirectly, for political justification. However, this has occasionally had adverse effects, cultivating an environment of intolerance and hostility.

Given this backdrop, the question of responsibility is complex. There is no single entity or group that can be held solely accountable. Successive governments, both civilian and military, have made decisions that have contributed to the current state of affairs. Political leaders, by prioritizing short-term gains over long-term stability, have played a significant role. The military, with its repeated interventions in politics, has also contributed to the weakening of democratic institutions.

International actors, through their policies and interventions, have influenced Pakistan's trajectory. The role of foreign aid, both as a lifeline and as a tool of influence, cannot be understated. The conditions attached to such aid have often dictated economic policies that may not always align with national priorities.

The citizens of Pakistan also share in the responsibility. While numerous individuals have endeavored to better their nation, some have exacerbated its challenges through involvement in corruption, intolerance, and the perpetuation of divisions. Nonetheless, it is crucial to acknowledge that wider structural problems and systemic shortcomings frequently restrict personal choices.

Addressing the debt crisis and the brink of bankruptcy requires comprehensive and sustained efforts. Structural reforms are necessary to improve governance, reduce corruption, and enhance transparency. Economic diversification is crucial to reduce reliance on external aid and loans. Investing in human capital through education and health services is fundamental to long-term development. Strengthening democratic institutions and ensuring civilian supremacy is vital for political stability.

The role of civil society, media, and the judiciary in holding those in power accountable is also crucial. Public awareness and activism can drive change, as seen in movements for justice and rights. International cooperation, based on mutual respect and equality, can support these efforts without imposing undue burdens.

In conclusion, Pakistan's current state is the result of a confluence of factors, both internal and external. Understanding this complex web is essential for crafting effective solutions.

Responsibility is shared among various actors, including political and military leaders, international stakeholders, and the people themselves. By addressing the root causes and fostering a collective commitment to reform and development, Pakistan can navigate its way towards a more stable and prosperous future.



PESHAWAR: Governor Faisal Karim Kundi cutting the cake to mark National Minorities Day.

Metrix Pakistan hosts KP's largest youth summit

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Advisor on Information, Barrister Dr Saif said that the youth must break free from the confines of materialism and utilize their best abilities for the development of society, emphasized the importance of understanding the realities of life and contributing to the welfare of humanity, and highlighted the significance of preparing for the challenges of the artificial intelligence era, while also appreciating the services of Metrix Pakistan founder and CEO Hasan Nisar in the field of Information Technology (IT).

Metrix Pakistan, in collaboration with the Directorate of Youth Affairs Khyber Pakhtunkhwa successfully organized the province's largest youth summit Metrix Pakistan's 4th Edition at Jinnah Basic School's Colleges in Mansehra, attended by over 5,000 participants. The event featured top government officials, including Babar Saleem Swati, Speaker of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly; Zahid Chanzab, Advisor to the Chief Minister on Tourism and Culture; and Barrister Dr. Saif, Advisor to the Chief Minister on Information and PR.

Speaker Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly Babar Saleem Swati praised Metrix Pakistan's initiatives, stating, "The KP's biggest youth summit, organized by Metrix Pakistan and Directorate of Youth Affairs, is a great step towards empowering the youth of our province. I commend their efforts in bringing together such a large gathering of young people. Our youth is our future, and it is essential to provide them with opportunities to grow and develop. I am committed to supporting initiatives that promote youth development and entrepreneurship."

Zahid Chanzab, Advisor to the CM on Tourism and Culture, exhorted parents to make their children independent and strong, saying, "Make your children capable of speaking the truth and moving forward in society. Encourage them to start small businesses and utilize digital marketing and internet resources to create employment opportunities. Ammad Ali, CEO of Ranking Grow, announced 1000 job opportunities for KP's youth, stating, We are committed to investing in the future of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and we believe that the youth of this province have the potential to drive growth and innovation. Alam Zeb Khan, District Youth Officer, praised the event, saying, this summit is a testament to the power of collaboration between government and private organizations. We look forward to working with Metrix Pakistan on future projects. Hassan Nisar, Founder and CEO of Metrix Pakistan, said, "We are proud to have organized this historic event, which will go a long way in shaping the future of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's youth. Our goal is to provide a platform for young people to engage with leaders, innovators, and change-makers,

and to empower them to become the leaders of tomorrow."

30 Female Scholars Depart for Bangkok on ADB-funded scholarships

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Thirty female students from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have been awarded fully funded master's scholarships under the gender component of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Cities Improvement Project (KPCIP). These students have embarked on their academic journey to the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) in Bangkok. Selected through a highly competitive process from a pool of applicants across the province, the scholars will pursue advanced studies in various disciplines crucial to the region's sustainable development. The scholarships, funded by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) through its Asian Development Fund (ADF) grant, cover all expenses. "The program, reserved exclusively for female candidates, is a testament to the government's commitment to empowering women through higher education and professional development in critical fields," stated Muhammad Daud Khan, Secretary of the Local Government, Elections, and Rural Development Department (LGE&RDD). The students departed from Islamabad International Airport for Bangkok.

CM acknowledges contributions of minorities

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: On the occasion of National Day of Minorities, Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sardar Ali Amin Gandapur has acknowledged the invaluable contributions of religious minorities to the development of Pakistan stating that Islam strongly advocates for the protection of minority rights and equality among all individuals.

In his message, the Chief Minister highlighted that Pakistan's Constitution guarantees social, political, religious, and economic rights to all citizens, regardless of caste, creed, or color. This day reflects our nation's commitment to equality, diversity, and the protection of minority rights.

He maintained that his government is dedicated to ensuring equal opportunities and respect for every individual, regardless of their background. The Chief Minister reiterated the importance of celebrating the rich diversity of cultures, religions, and traditions that characterize our society.

"We are committed to creating an environment where every minority community can thrive, contribute, and play an essential role in our collective progress. Our policies and initiatives are designed to address the unique challenges faced by these communities and promote their empowerment," he stated.

Concluding his message, Chief Minister Gandapur reaffirmed the pledge to inclusivity and mutual respect, urging everyone to work together to build a society where every individual's rights are upheld and their contributions are valued.

ETEA successfully conducts entry test for engineering universities

F.P. Report



PESHAWAR: The Entry Test for admission to BS Engineering programs in public sector engineering universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was held under the auspices of ETEA, the province's sole testing agency. The test was conducted at 12 centers across the province, including Islamabad, Peshawar, Abbottabad, Mardan, Kohat, D.I. Khan, and Swat. ETEA administration ensured strict security measures at all test centers, and considering the intense heat, air-conditioned halls were selected for the test, where students took the test in a peaceful environment. Students expressed satisfaction with the arrangements and thanked the ETEA administration. According to the administration, the results were uploaded to the website within five hours of the successful conduct of the test. This time, to ensure transparency, modern technology was used to upload the answer sheets of the candidates on the website, which were followed by the uploading of answer key two hours later. Students started checking their results as soon as they reached home. ETEA stated that 8,500 students took part in the test, and for the first time, pre-medical students were also given the opportunity to take the engineering test. The results, along with the answer sheets and keys, have been uploaded on the website, allowing students to verify their results.

Hadaf College begins admission in Peshawar, Swabi, and Charsadda

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Admissions for the first year have commenced at Hadaf Colleges' campuses in Peshawar, Swabi, and Charsadda, with a large number of students flocking to these campuses to obtain admission forms. Hadaf Colleges has three campuses in Peshawar and one each in Swabi and Charsadda, all of which are seeing significant interest from prospective students.

In addition to providing top-quality educational facilities in intermediate classes, Hadaf Colleges



offers students equal opportunities to engage in both curricular and extracurricular activities. The colleges

have employed highly skilled and experienced teachers, equipped with the best educational resources,

ensuring excellent academic performance. Hadaf Group of Colleges stands out as a unique,

modern, and high-standard educational institution for students across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

It is noteworthy that Hadaf Colleges also provide scholarships and free education based on students' merit. According to students and their parents, the primary reason for prioritizing admission to Hadaf Colleges is their strong confidence in the institution's high educational standards, as well as the encouragement of students through scholarships and recognition of their academic achievements.

Saiful Malook: A lake of fairytale needs digital media projection

PESHAWAR (APP): The arduous journey from Pakistan's plain districts to the northern highlands of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is instantly rewarded as the travelers encounter the breathtaking beauty of the famous Saiful Malook Lake.

This renowned lake, nestled amidst snow-capped peaks of the Malika Parbat range in Mansehra's Kaghan Valley, captivates the visitors with its fairytale-like charm.

Spanning 1.06 square miles with a depth of 113 feet and sitting at an elevation of 3,224 meters above sea level, Saiful Malook's oval shape with crystal-clear and greenish-blue waters leave an indelible mark on the hearts of millions of tourists each year.

Revered as a lake of legends and princes, Saiful Malook is enveloped by the serene mountains of Malika Parbat in upper Kaghan, offering a peaceful retreat to tourists from the hustle and bustle of everyday life.

Named after the Persian Prince Saiful Malook, the lake attracts both international

and local tourists, particularly during the summer months when its pleasant climate and cascading waterfalls from nearby glaciers add to its allure. The lake is immortalized in Sufi poet Mian Muhammad Bakhsh's epic, "Fairytale of Saiful Malook," which recounts the prince Saiful Malook quest for the fairy princess Badriul Jamala, a journey marked by enchanting stories and unfulfilled longing.

Though Pakistan boasts numerous stunning lakes like Ansoo, Lalusar, Dudipastar, and Sheosar, Saiful Malook stands out for its unique blend of fairytales, striking beauty, and pristine waters.

Manzoorul Haq, a former Pakistani ambassador, attested to the lake's exceptional charm, citing its lasting impression compared to other global lakes destinations.

In the today's digital age, there is a growing recognition of the potential for leveraging social media to enhance mountains and eco-tourism as well as archeology for economic development.

Abu Zafar Sadiq, President



of the Alpine Club of Pakistan, highlighted how the growing digital and social media can transform the tourism landscape in Pakistan. "Saiful Malook and similar breathtaking tourism sites offer stunning vistas and significant economic promise for Pakistan subject to government patronage.

Despite its immense potential, he said Pakistan's tourism sector had struggled to reach its full economic potential mainly due to natural calamities, terrorism and COVID-19.

In 2017, tourism contributed only \$8.8 billion, or 2.9% of GDP, a stark contrast to the \$15 billion, or 5.7% of

GDP, in 2019. The COVID-19 pandemic and security issues exacerbated these challenges, with a notable decline in tourism revenue and employment in Pakistan.

Abu Zafar emphasized the importance of embracing digital innovations, such as virtual tours and social media campaigns, to attract more

visitors.

He advocated for hiring digital professionals and utilizing platforms like GPS and artificial intelligence to promote Pakistan's diverse tourism offerings.

The potential for tourism growth is evident in Pakistan, with the "One Belt, One Road" initiative and China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) playing pivotal roles in improving infrastructure and boosting tourism, transport and hospitality industries. Ambassador Manzoor also suggested that developing attractions like a chairlift between Naran and Saiful Malook could generate significant revenue and enhance the socio-economic conditions of people of the region.

However, challenges remain, including environmental concerns. Efforts to improve waste management and enhance facilities are crucial for preserving the natural beauty of Saiful Malook and other lakes of Pakistan.

Increased litter bins, sanitary workers, and improved parking facilities are among the necessary measures to

maintain the lake's allure.

Professor Naveed Farooq, a lecturer at Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan, underscored the importance of digital showcasing of all lakes for attracting foreign tourists.

"Saiful Malook Ansoo and Mahudhand lakes are gems of Pakistan. Utilizing digital technology to highlight these treasures can draw international visitors in droves and further boost tourism."

The KP Wildlife Department, which oversees Saiful Malook and Lulusar lakes as national parks, is working to ensure sustainable protection and improved tourist facilities.

Future developments, such as a chairlift project and enhanced service areas, aim to elevate the tourist experience while supporting local economies. Overall, as Pakistan continues to enhance its digital presence and infrastructure, Saiful Malook Lake remains a symbol of the nation's rich natural and cultural heritage, poised to attract and inspire millions of visitors from around the world.



In brief

Farewell luncheon hel F.P. Report

KARAK: Sadiq Literary Jirga Teri, District Karak organized a farewell luncheon and mushaira in the honor of Wajid Hamdard, an active overseas member of the Jirga, on Sunday at Salar Farms, Ahmadi Banda, district Karak. On this occasion retired Headmaster Naseer Khattak presided while Nizam duties were performed by Regional Information Officer Bannu Sarwar Mahmood Khattak. President of the Jirga Azizullah Qureshi, Sarwar Mahmood Khattak, Atif Anokhi, Hamza Bawar, Shaheedullah Shaheed, Israr Khattak, Wajid Hamdard, Iftikhar Sharar, Pir Inayat-ur-Rehman, Rizwan, Tauqeer and Zakir presented their poems. Similarly, Dr. Shad Muhammad Khan presented his poem online from Dubai and Haider Bangash from Hangu. Chief Guest Wajid Hamdard thanked all the members of Sadiq Literary Jirga for their great honor. Collective prayer was also offered on this occasion.

BAC organizes exhibition

BAHAWALPUR (APP): Bahawalpur Arts Council (BAC) is organizing a pictorial exhibition and other programs in connection with celebrations of the Independence Day. According to a press release issued here Sunday, pictorial exhibition titled "Travel of Light" will continue till 14th August 2024. On this occasion, Director BAC, Mian Ateeq said that different programs and ceremonies would be held in Bahawalpur to celebrate the Independence Day of Pakistan with national zeal and passion. "The Council has been playing remarkable role in promotion of cultural values through organizing cultural programs and ceremonies," he said.

WASA plans 15 new schemes

FAISALABAD (APP): Water & Sanitation Agency (WASA) has planned 15 new development schemes for Faisalabad to resolve its water supply and sewerage related issues. During a meeting with Director General (DG) Faisalabad Development Authority (FDA) Muhammad Asif Chaudhary, Managing Director WASA, Aamer Aziz briefed that WASA was already executing foreign-funded water supply and sewerage projects while the news schemes would help redress 60 to 70 percent water supply and sewerage problems of the city. New schemes were forwarded to the Punjab government and physical work on them would start as soon as its approval was accorded, he added. Director General FDA Muhammad Asif Chaudhary appreciated the new WASA schemes and hoped for early arrangements of funds for these schemes.

PFA imposes heavy fines

LODHAN (APP): Punjab Food Authority (PFA) on Sunday raided in various areas and imposed heavy fines on food business owners over violation. The PFA teams under supervision of Director Operations South Asif Iqbal, conducted operations in Musa Pak, Qadirpur Raan and Chowk Fawara and imposed Rs 75,000 fine for the presence of dead insects in sweets, poor cleanliness in the production area, and failure to comply with the given instructions.



MULTAN: Caretaker of the Shrine, Makhdoom Zain Hussain Qureshi, lays a flower wreath to inaugurate the three-day 785th Urs celebrations of Hazrat Bahauddin Zakariya (R.A).

NAB sub-office inaugurated in Chaman



F.P. Report

CHAMAN: The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) sub-office in Chaman, Balochistan was formally inaugurated today by Director General NAB Balochistan.

The ceremony was attended by esteemed guests, including Chief Justice of Balochistan High Court, Justice Muhammad Hashim Khan Kakar, Deputy Commissioner Pishin,

business community, representatives of local community, and officers from NAB Balochistan's operations, administration, and intelligence departments.

The establishment of the sub-office in Chaman aims to expand NAB's reach and enhance its efforts to combat corruption in the region. Speaking on the occasion, the chief guest and the Director General NAB Balochistan emphasized the importance of this initiative in promoting accountability and good governance.

The sub-office will provide a convenient platform for the people of Chaman and surrounding areas to file complaints and access to NAB for elimination of corruption and corrupt practices.

With this expansion, NAB reaffirms its commitment to eradicating corruption and ensuring transparency in all spheres of public life.

NOC granted for KUST's BS MLT Program

F.P. Report

KOHAT: Students aspiring to pursue a degree in Medical Lab Technology now have good news—they can now enroll in a registered program right at their doorstep.

In this regard, Kohat University of Science and Technology (KUST)

spokesperson Rashid Ishaq confirmed that the Allied Health Professionals Council of Pakistan has officially issued a No Objection Certificate (NOC) for KUST's BS in Medical Lab Technology program.

The Vice-Chancellor of Kohat University of Science and Technology,

Professor Dr. Muhammad Nasiruddin, praised the efforts of the relevant staff for this achievement.

He also congratulated the students and staff of the department and instructed that incoming students should be informed about the significance and benefits of this program.



GILGIT: Project Director of the 16 MW Power Project briefs Chief Secretary Gilgit-Baltistan Abrar Ahmad Mirza during his visit to the Nalter 14, 16, and 18 MW power houses, inspecting landslide areas and addressing power crises in GB.

Larkanians shows vigor, zeal to celebrate I. Day

LARKANA (APP): As the Pakistan's 77th Independence Day is nearing, the enthusiasm and the zeal is soaring among the people belonging to every walk of life in Larkana to celebrate the day, especially children are showing their vigor, zeal and traditional enthusiasm to celebrate 14th August, the Independence Day of Pakistan, as the sale of national flags and other items is underway in full swing in all main bazaars of the Larkana city.

Go to any market, road side, or a small mohallah shops, and the items most prominently displayed are small Pakistani paper flags, Badges, paper caps, bunting and even large flags.

"Children of course are most eager to buy these items," a shopkeeper of a book store in Bunder Road

Larkana said. Apart from official arrangements to celebrate the 77th Independence Day, people of all age groups are making arrangements on their own by decorating their houses and streets and organizing functions.

A visit to main book-stores in Larkana city showed a great national fervor among the people, who were busy in buying different items to express their enthusiasm for celebrating the Independence Day.

In commercial areas like, Shahi bazaar, Bunder Road, Pakistani Chowk and Jelius Bazaar Larkana, Station Road, Jinnah Bagh Chowk, shopkeepers have set up special stalls for flags and other items.

Booksellers and shopkeepers say stickers and hand held Pakistani stickers are in most demand.

The bazaars are decorated

with national flags where stalls of colorful bunting, Pakistani flag bunting, portraits of Quaid-e-Azam and other national heroes had been set up and badges, caps, balloons and shirts inscribed with "Jashan-e-Azadi Mubarak" were stacked in large numbers.

"However the sale will gain momentum before 14th August," a shopkeeper said. A public holiday, August 14 reminds every one of the sacrifices which were rendered to carve out a separate homeland for Muslims of the Sub-continent. "It is our moral obligation to remind our children of the importance of independence. We should be grateful to Quaid-e-Azam who struggled for the rights of the Muslims of Sub-continent and gave us Pakistan," said a high school teacher Muhammad Ali Ansari.

Action against illegal drug sale on the cards

Jamal Qamar

BANNU: Department of Health has decided to crack down on illegal and foreign drugs in Bannu city and adjacent areas, a strategy has been prepared for the strictest action against the doctors in rural areas, illegal business through a special raiding team.

These views were expressed by Chief Drug Inspector Chaudhry Aurangzeb Khan while addressing a special meeting held yesterday and during a meeting with the delegation of Chemist and Druggist Association.

Alam Khan, District President Shahid Rehman Khattak, Finance Secretary Naeem Rehman Khattak, Kashif Rehman, Abdul Haseeb Qureshi, Asif Khan, Anwarullah Khan and other officials were also present.

People associated with the medicine business should refrain from the sale of illegal and foreign medicines and cooperate with the administration in the ongoing operation of the Health Department in order to catch the law that plays with human lives.

He said that the provincial government And in the light of the special orders of the district administration DHO, action has also been started against the private doctors in urban and rural areas in an effective manner.

They will not forgive those who rob the people in the name, he said that the team of the health department will conduct operations in the inner city and adjacent areas on a daily basis and the people involved will be arrested. Arrange to secure the supply of vaccines and those selling drugs without lines will be jailed

FIA arrest two meter readers among three for power theft

F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: Tanzeem-e-Asateza Pakistan, Khyber chapter demanded of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government to accept and materialize the genuine demands of the Young Teachers Association.

Addressing to a press conference held here in Landi Kotal press club district Khyber on Sunday President Tanzeem-e-Asateza, Pakistan, Khyber Sharifullah Afridi, All Teachers Association, Landi Kotal head Nadir

Shah Afridi, tehsil Chief of Young Teachers Association (YTA) Mubarak Shah and others said that the young teachers were strive hard to impart knowledge to the learners besides unfavorable environment prevailed in schools.

They maintained that being government employees, they should be granted all incentives being enjoyed by other officials.

Earlier, the incumbent provincial government accepted their demands like elimination of pension of teachers, posted after June

2022, regularize adhoc basis teachers, SST posts should be filled permanently, cut in GB fund, benowlent funds etc. however later on it reluctant to fulfill it that is unfair, they remarked.

They regretted that the unserious approach of the government to settle the problems of the young teachers proved their seriousness towards the cause of the rise of literacy ratio in the province.

They went on that the teachers associations stood stern with their young colleagues till they won their rights for them.

Aftab directs early revival of flood-hit causeway

F.P. Report

KOHAT: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs Aftab Alam Afridi Advocate has along with the Chairman Tehsil Gumbat Sajid Iqbal and quarters concerned of C&W Department visited Village Council Sheen Dhand in Jawaki area of Tehsil Dara Adam Khel of Kohat District where he inspected the causeway which had been washed away by the flood at Sheen Dhand due to the recent heavy Moonsoon rains.

The traffic flow has badly been affected due to damaging of the Causeway and people are also facing problems in transportation.

The Law Minister reviewed the restoration of road causeway at Sheen



Dhand after floods and directed the authorities concerned to immediately start work on the affected causeway to ensure smooth flow of traffic and the people of Jawaki do not face any kind of problem.

Aftab Alam also discussed other public issues of the area with the elders present there and assured that the issues of public

interest will be done on priority basis and in this regard any kind of political affiliation or personal likes and dislikes will be taken into consideration.

Meanwhile, the Minister also reviewed the causeway of Turki Ismail Khel which is partially damaged due to rains and directed the quarters concerned to take immediate measures.

Caring for orphans in society Philanthropists urged to play active role



F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The chairman Al-Khidmat Foundation (AKF)'s Orphan care programme retired Air Marshal Farooq Habib has said that all sections of society should play their vital role in educating and caring for the orphan children. He said that without the support of philanthropists and wealthy persons it was not possible to care for the orphans.

He expressed these views while addressing a function after the meeting of the Board of Governors of Aghosh Al-Khidmat Gulabad centre in Lower Dir here on Sunday. The function was also addressed by the Aghosh Al-Khidmat national director retired Air Marshal Arshad Malik, secretary BoG Saeedullah, board members retired Professor Kaleemullah, Faisal Mahmood and others.

The speakers appreciated the Al-Khidmat Foundation's Orphan Care Program and encouraged the Aghoshian children. They said that the sponsorship of an orphan child was equal to the sponsorship of a whole family. The speakers urged the Aghoshian children to work hard to enlighten the name of their family and country.

Earlier, the annual meeting of the Board of Governors (BoG) of the Aghosh Al-Khidmat Gulabad was chaired by its chairman Shahab Hussain. The board members including Faisal Mahmood, Hafizullah Khaksar, Professor Kaleemullah, journalist Haleem Asad, Zakir Hussain, Mohammad Ilyas, Khalid Arsalan, Retired Air Marshal Farooq Habib, Retired Air Marshal Arshad Malik and others addressed the meeting.

The BOG Secretary

Saeedullah informed the participants about the last year's decisions, annual progress, budget, activities of the orphanage and future plans.

The board appreciated the role and management of the centre and approved its annual budget. The meeting approved the purchase of additional land, purchase of a bus for the transport of orphan children staying at the center, installation of solar system and expansion of the centre.

It is to be noted that the Aghosh Al-Khidmat Gulabad has been providing free education, health-care, residence and food to a total of 84 orphans from the Lower Dir, Upper Dir, Malakand, Chitral, Buner and Bajaur districts.

The meeting was informed that Rs 13 million as donation would be collected from various sources for the next fiscal year.

Teachers asks govt to fulfill their demands

F.P. Report

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HYDERABAD: A view of rain water accumulated front of huts at Makki shah area. — APP photo



Father, 4-year-old son killed in Russian air strike on Kyiv region



KYIV (Reuters): A 4-year-old boy and his 35-year-old father were killed in an overnight Russian air strike outside of Kyiv, Ukrainian officials said on Sunday.

Three other people, including a teenage boy, were wounded in the attack just east of the capital, which President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said involved a North Korean-made missile.

He did not offer further detail but

Ukrainian emergency services earlier said the victims' home in the Brovary district was struck by debris from a downed Russian missile.

Footage posted by Ukraine's State Emergency Service showed workers digging through a pile of debris in the darkness and lifting the body of a child from underneath it.

"According to preliminary information, the Russians used a North Korean missile in this attack — yet

another deliberate terrorist strike against Ukraine," Zelenskiy wrote on X, adding that experts were still examining the weapon.

Moscow's overnight strike also included 57 Iranian-made attack drones that were launched across Ukraine, 53 of which were destroyed by air defences, Kyiv's air force said.

It said that Russia had fired a total of four North Korean-made KN-23 missiles, but did not specify the fate of the other three.

Reuters could not independently verify the reports. Zelenskiy's top adviser had earlier said the Brovary fatalities were the result of a downed drone.

Zelenskiy, in his statement, called for "a full-fledged air shield" from Ukraine's partners and permission to strike deep inside Russia with Western-provided weapons.

There was no immediate comment from Russia. Moscow denies targeting civilians with its attacks but has targeted critical infrastructure beyond the front line of its 29-month-old invasion that has killed thousands and displaced millions of Ukrainians.

Rwanda's Kagame sworn in for fourth term



KIGALI (AFP): Rwandan President Paul Kagame has been sworn in for a fourth term after sweeping to victory in an election last month with more than 99 percent of the vote.

Several dozen heads of state and other dignitaries from African nations attended the inauguration ceremony on Sunday at a packed 45,000-seat stadium in Kigali, where crowds had started gathering from the early morning.

Kagame took the oath of office before Chief Justice Faustin Ntezilyayo, pledging to "preserve peace and national sovereignty, consolidate national unity".

The outcome of the July 15 poll was never in doubt for Kagame, who has ruled the small African nation since its 1994 genocide, first as de facto leader and then president.

He won 99.18 percent of the ballots cast to secure another five years in power, according to the National Electoral Commission.

Rights activists said the 66-year-old's overwhelming victory was a stark reminder of the lack of democracy in Rwanda.

Only two candidates were authorised to run against him out of eight applicants with several prominent Kagame critics barred.

Democratic Green Party leader Frank Habineza scraped into second place with 0.5 percent of the votes against 0.32 percent for independent Philippe Mpayimana.

Kagame is credited with rebuilding a ruined nation after the genocide when members of the Hutu majority unleashed 100 days of attacks targeting the Tutsi minority, killing about 800,000 people, mainly Tutsis but also Hutu moderates.

But rights activists and opponents have said Kagame rules in a climate of fear, crushing any dissent with intimidation, arbitrary detentions, killings and disappearances.

Kigali is also accused of stoking instability in the east of its much larger neighbour the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

Angolan President Joao Lourenco, who was among those attending Sunday's ceremony, was due to have private talks with Kagame on a DRC ceasefire, the Angolan presidency said.

Luanda brokered the agreement last month after a meeting between the foreign ministers of the DRC and Rwanda, which is accused of backing the M23 rebel group fighting Kinshasa's armed forces.

But on August 4, the day the deal was supposed to take effect, M23 rebels — who have seized territory in the east since launching a new offensive at the end of 2021 — captured a town on the border with Uganda.

With 65 percent of the population aged under 30, Kagame is the only leader most Rwandans have ever known.

"I proudly cast my vote for President Kagame and made it a priority to be here today to witness this historic inauguration," said Tania Iriza, a 27-year-old trader, one of the tens of thousands of Rwandans who turned out for the ceremony.

"His leadership has been transformative for our nation. Under his leadership, Rwanda has risen from our tragic past and forged a path towards prosperity, unity and innovation." Kagame has won every presidential election he has contested, each time with more than 93 percent of the vote.

In 2015, he oversaw constitutional amendments that shortened presidential terms to five years from seven but reset the clock for the Rwandan leader, allowing him to potentially rule until 2034.



Khartoum: Men standing near to the buildings destroyed by recent floods in Southern Sudan.

Philippines says actions of China air force 'illegal', 'reckless'

MANILA (Reuters): Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Sunday condemned Chinese air force actions in waters of the South China Sea claimed by both countries, calling the actions "unjustified, illegal and reckless".

Manila and Beijing accused each other on Saturday of disrupting their militaries' operations around the Scarborough Shoal in the first incident since Marcos took office in 2022 in which the Philippines has complained of dangerous actions by Chinese aircraft, as opposed to navy or coast guard vessels.

The Philippine military on Saturday condemned "dangerous and provocative actions" when two Chinese aircraft dropped flares in the path of a Philippine aircraft during a routine patrol around the shoal on Thursday.

The Chinese embassy in Manila did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Sunday.

The Scarborough Shoal is one of Asia's most contested maritime features and a flashpoint for flare-ups over sovereignty and fishing rights.

Chester Cabalza, president of the Manila-based think tank International Development and Security Cooperation, said China's actions were a "show of force" in response to Manila's participation in multi-nation drills that promote freedom of navigation and overflight.

"After a series of gray zone tactics at sea, we may probably see dog fights up in the sky if China continues its growing antagonism in the Philippines' air and defence zones," Cabalza said.

Beijing claims almost all of the South China Sea, a conduit for more than \$3 trillion of annual shipborne commerce, including parts claimed by the Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei.

China rejects a 2016 ruling by the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague that Beijing's expansive claims had no basis under international law.

The tower operator did not respond to a request for comment.

Police arrest climber who tried to scale Eiffel Tower

PARIS (Reuters): A climber scaled the north face of the Eiffel Tower in Paris on Sunday, the last day of the Olympics, before he was intercepted by police mid-way up, police said.

"At 2.45 pm, an individual was seen climbing

the Eiffel Tower. The police immediately intervened and arrested the individual," a police spokesman said.

Videos posted on social media showed the bare-chested climber skirting the Olympic rings as he made his way

up without ropes. In one, the grinning climber can be heard saying to bystanders "bloody warm, innit?" as he is escorted off the viewing platform by police.

The tower operator did not respond to a request for comment.

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Landslide in Uganda kills at least 18 people

KAMPALA (Aljazeera): A landslide at a rubbish dump in Uganda's capital, Kampala, has killed at least 18 people, authorities have reported as they continue to search for survivors.

Police announced the death toll on Sunday, two days after torrential rain broke off a huge chunk of rubbish at Kiteezi, the city's only landfill site. The landslide buried people, livestock and homes as residents slept.

Authorities had reported eight confirmed deaths on Saturday, but the number

of casualties has risen as rescuers dig for survivors. Authorities said on Sunday that the death toll had risen to 18, according to the Associated Press.

"The rescue operation is still ongoing until we are sure no one is trapped," police spokesperson Patrick Onyango said, according to AFP.

Fourteen people have been rescued as well as several animals, he added, cautioning that more people could still be trapped.

"In our estimation, about 1,000 people have

been displaced by the incident, and [we are] currently working with other agencies of government and the community leadership to see how to help the affected people," he said.

The Uganda Red Cross said tents have been set up near the site for those displaced by the landslide.

Kiteezi has served as Kampala's sole rubbish dump for decades, which has turned it into a giant hill. Residents have often complained about hazardous waste polluting the environment and posing a danger.

Kampala Mayor Erias Lukwago said on Saturday that the landfill was at capacity.

"This is a disaster and was bound to happen," he said. Similar incidents have taken place around sub-Saharan Africa due to poorly managed mountains of rubbish.

In 2017, at least 115 people were killed in Ethiopia, crushed by a landslide at a landfill in Addis Ababa. In Mozambique, at least 17 people died in a similar disaster in Maputo in 2018.

Families of Brazilian plane crash victims gather in Sao Paulo

SAO PAULO (AP): Families of victims of an airliner crash in Brazil are gathering Sunday at a morgue and hotels in Sao Paulo as forensics experts work to identify the remains of the 62 people killed in the accident.

Local authorities said the bodies of the pilot, Danilo Santos Romano, and his co-pilot, Humberto de Campos Alencar e Silva, were the first to be identified. Brazilian media said another four people were identified at the Sao Paulo morgue, which did not confirm the information.

Sao Paulo state government said in a statement Sunday morning that the searches ended at 10:45 p.m. on Saturday, 33 hours after the crash, with the remains of all 34 males and 28 females among the victims recovered. It added that the wreckage remains at the site so investigators can continue their work.

The ATR 72 twin-engine turboprop operated by Brazilian airline Voepass was headed for Guarulhos international airport in Sao Paulo with 58 passengers and four crew members aboard when it went down Friday in Vinhedo, 78 kilometers (49 miles) north of the metropolis. Voepass said three passengers who held Brazilian identification also carried Venezuelan documents and one had Portuguese.

At least eight physicians were aboard, Paraná state Gov. Ratinho Júnior said. Four professors at Unioeste university in western Paraná were also confirmed dead.

Three-year-old Liz Iba dos Santos, who was travelling with her father, was the only child known to be on the passenger list. The remains of Luna, a dog that was

traveling with a Venezuelan family, was also found in the wreckage.

Sao Paulo's morgue began receiving the bodies Friday evening, and it asked victims' relatives to bring in medical, X-ray and dental records to help identify the bodies. Blood tests were also done to help identification efforts.

The few family members speaking about the tragedy did so on social media.

Tânia Azevedo, who lost her son Tiago in the crash, was put up in one of the hotels in Sao Paulo, but said in a posting that she was waiting to go to the morgue.

"I believe Tiago is somewhere trying to help the other people wounded who also need light and love," she said. "I couldn't go there (to the morgue). I am here waiting. It is dark here, I need some light and love myself."

Images recorded by witnesses showed the aircraft in a flat spin and plunging vertically before smashing to the ground inside a gated community, leaving an obliterated fuselage consumed by fire. Residents said there were no injuries on the ground.

It was the world's deadliest airline crash since January 2023, when 72 people died on a Yeti Airlines plane in Nepal that stalled and crashed while making its landing approach. That plane also was an ATR 72, and the final report blamed pilot error.

Metsul, one of Brazil's most respected meteorological companies, said Friday there were reports of severe icing in Sao Paulo state around the time of the crash. Local media cited experts pointing to icing as a potential cause for the

accident. A video shared on social media channels Saturday shows a Voepass pilot telling passengers on a flight from Guarulhos to the city of Cascavel that the ATR 72 has flown safely around the world for decades. He also asked passengers to be respectful to the memory of his colleagues and the company and asked for prayers.

"This tragedy doesn't hit only those who perished in this accident. It hits all of us," the unidentified pilot said. "We are giving all our hearts, all our best to be here and fulfill our mission to take you safely and comfortably to your destination."

Police restricted access to the main entrance of the Sao Paulo morgue where bodies from the crash were being identified. Some family members of the victims arrived on foot, others came in minivans. None spoke to journalists, and authorities requested that they not be filmed as they came.

A flight carrying more family members from Paraná state landed Saturday afternoon at Guarulhos airport. A minivan sponsored by the airline was provided to transport them to the morgue.

Sao Paulo state government said 26 families have already attended the morgue for identification efforts, with more expected on Sunday.

An American Eagle ATR 72-200 crashed on Oct. 31, 1994, and the U.S. National Transportation Safety Board determined the probable cause was ice buildup while the plane was circling in a holding pattern. The plane rolled at about 8,000 feet and dove into the ground, killing all 68 people on

board. The U.S. Federal Aviation Administration issued operating procedures for ATRs and similar planes telling pilots not to use the autopilot in icing conditions.

Brazilian aviation expert Lito Sousa cautioned that meteorological conditions alone might not be enough to explain why the Voepass plane fell in the manner it did Friday.

"Analyzing an air crash just with images can lead to wrong conclusions about the causes," Sousa told The Associated Press by phone. "But we can see a plane with loss of support, no horizontal speed. In this flat spin condition, there's no way to reclaim control of the plane."

Brazil's air force said Saturday that both of the plane's flight recorders had been sent to its analysis laboratory in the capital, Brasilia. The results of its investigations are expected to be published within 30 days, it said.

Marcelo Moura, director of operations for Voepass, told reporters Friday night that while there were forecasts for ice, they were within acceptable levels for the aircraft.

In an earlier statement, the Brazilian air force's center for the investigation and prevention of air accidents said the plane's pilots did not call for help or say they were operating under adverse weather conditions.

The ATR 72, which is built by a joint venture of Airbus in France and Italy's Leonardo SpA, is generally used on shorter flights. Crashes involving various models of the ATR 72 have resulted in 470 deaths going back to the 1990s, according to a database of the Aviation Safety Network.



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'White gloves' to hide US fingerprints

ALTHOUGH the National Endowment for Democracy of the United States claims to be "a private, nonprofit foundation dedicated to the growth and strengthening of democratic institutions around the world", as a report released by the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Friday indicates, it is anything but.

Receiving funding directly from, and reporting to the US Congress, promoting "democracy" is only a pretext for its efforts to subvert state power in other countries, meddle in other countries' internal affairs, incite division and confrontation, mislead public opinion, and conduct ideological infiltration. It acts as the US government's "white gloves" in carrying out subversion, infiltration and sabotage across the world. To fulfill its mission, NED has developed four core institutions that are respectively responsible for supporting local political groups, promoting trade unions and labor movements, winning over private enterprises and building networks with local reporters and scholars.

Compared with the document, "Fact Sheet on the National Endowment for Democracy", the Foreign Ministry published two years back following the organization's barefaced interference in the situations in China's Hong Kong, Xinjiang, Xizang and Taiwan, the latest report, "The National Endowment for Democracy: What It Is and What It Does", outlines not only some of NED's recent subversive moves around the world, but also some criticism of its ugly role by the international community including some figures in the US.

None of the hotspot issues in the world today, ranging from the Russia-Ukraine conflict and the Middle East crisis to the Iran and Korean Peninsula issues and the rising tensions in the Asia-Pacific, can be separated from NED's covert and overt activities. As a middleman between the US government and its local proxies in foreign countries, NED is trying to take advantage of advanced technology to seamlessly dock its initiatives with the US' geopolitical strategies. As the Foreign Ministry said in the report, it is imperative all countries see NED's true colors, be vigilant and guard against its activities.

The world is moving toward multipolarity, and there needs to be greater democracy in international relations. Every country has the right to pursue a development path suited to its national realities and the needs of its people.

No country is in a position to lecture others on democracy and human rights, still less use them as an excuse to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries. The international community should uphold humanity's common values of peace, development, fairness, justice, democracy and freedom, and its members should engage in exchanges and dialogue on the basis of mutual respect and equality, and work together to contribute to the progress of humanity. Issuing the report represents the latest move by China to fulfill its global responsibility as a major country to uphold international fairness and justice.

Dubai's four-day week trial

AN announcement by Dubai authorities that for the next seven weeks employees at 15 government entities will work a four-day week has generated a buzz among those advocating for a rethink about society's relationship with the workplace. The pilot scheme, which will also see shifts reduced to seven hours, is in line with Dubai, and the UAE more widely, consistently seeking ways to improve people's living conditions.

For as long as almost anyone alive almost anywhere in the world can remember, work life has followed a familiar pattern: five days on, two days off. The week, the weekend. That model has its roots in the Europe of the Industrial Revolution. In the Gulf, this arrangement became the norm in the mid-20th century, largely a byproduct of the global oil industry's role in the region's nascent economies. But a 21st-century world of Zoom calls, hybrid working and flexible hours is making it necessary to question long-held assumptions.

The UAE has a well-deserved reputation for innovation. From striving to diversify its economy to investing in renewable energy, the country takes a pro-active, long-term approach to meeting the challenges thrown up by an age of disruption. It is unsurprising, then, the country would serve as a stage for innovation in the area of work-life balance. Country-wide adoption of remote working when needed is one way, in addition to Sharjah's successful introduction of a four-day working week in 2022. There are pros and cons to a four-day week; proponents say it can improve employees' mental health, increase job satisfaction, boost productivity and help organisations to retain talent. Critics claim it can lead to scheduling difficulties and may not be suitable for every industry. What is necessary to prove or disprove these claims is evidence, and Dubai's pilot scheme will give the authorities plenty of data upon which to make a policy decision.

In this regard, Dubai is in step with other countries that have examined the consequences of a four-day week, with interesting results. A six-month study of 41 Portuguese companies last year revealed that a shortened working week led to work exhaustion falling by 19 per cent and challenges to maintaining a work-life balance dropping from 46 per cent to 8 per cent. In 2022, nearly 3,000 employees across 61 British companies that trialled a shorter working week reported lower stress and better health. None of the participants wanted to return to a five-day week.

What is different in Dubai is the fact that this trial is being led by the government. State buy-in is an important part of embedding such major societal and economic changes. Dubai is also an international hub for commerce and finance; the findings from this trial could determine if less work and more play can complement and maintain a booming UAE economy.

This approach of valuing employee welfare while remaining focused on delivery was articulated by Abdullah Al Falasi, director general of the Dubai Government Human Resources Department. "We aim to improve the quality of life of employees and enhance the sustainability of government resources," he said, adding that this "ultimately contributes to consolidating Dubai's global position as a preferred city for living and working by providing a new model experience that integrates the elements of quality of life".

For those Dubai employees embarking on this study, the next seven weeks will be an interesting journey. If successful, it is a journey that more employers may consider taking in the months and years ahead.

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After Hasina: Cautious optimism for BD's future

Shafquat Rabbee

By all quantifiable measures, Bangladesh's now deposed Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was the most entrenched, dominant and brutal dictator the country had seen since its independence. She jailed, exiled and eliminated most of her political peers like no other ruler in South Asia's history. She brought all the branches of the Bangladeshi state under her command with such great efficacy that at some point she became the state.

Yet, a leaderless movement of college students challenged her with marches with pre-announced dates and venues. In a matter of weeks, these young revolutionaries drew the nation with them into the streets to the point that Hasina had to catch a helicopter to flee. They achieved something that established political rivals of the former prime minister had tried for over a decade but failed consistently.

While the young revolutionaries and their supporters have much cause to celebrate, the road ahead for the country will not be without challenges.

A recipe for a successful student movement

The beginning of the end for Hasina came as a group of young people started making demands for the removal of an unfair quota system in the distribution of civil service jobs, which was essentially giving preferential treatment to the relatives of her political cronies.

In organising their protests, the students created a distributed co-leadership structure, where the leaders held the role of coordinators. They called their coalition the Students Against Discrimination movement. The coordinators came from both public and private educational institutions.

What could have been quelled with some simple promises of future reforms was inflamed by crass comments by the prime minister and brutal suppression by her security forces. But the protest organisers were battle-tested and knew exactly what to expect.

Just six years ago, many of them had participated as teenagers in another massive wave of demonstrations which focused on the country's lawless transportation sector. Those protests erupted after a commercial bus ran over two students. The vehicle that caused these deaths was owned by a company linked to a relative of a minister.

Just like in 2024, in 2018 the youth were beaten mercilessly by Hasina's civilian militia, that is, the student wing of the Awami League party. The use of violence managed to suppress the protests, but not before this generation of revolutionaries had gained enough experience in organising successful protests, creating alternative command structures, using improvised communication techniques under internet blockades and evading government surveillance, etc.

All of these skills helped them in their successful bid to oust the most ruthless dictator in Bangladesh's history.

Is this the end for Sheikh Hasina?

Hasina has had to leave

Bangladesh before. While she was residing in Europe, a bloody coup took place against her father, President Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, in 1975, which killed almost all of her family. She extended her stay abroad and only came back to the country in the early 1980s. She quickly gained prominence on the political scene and managed to create a cult-like following among the members of her father's Awami League.

Following another military coup in 2006, both Hasina and her main political rival, Khaleda Zia, were about to lose their right to participate in politics in Bangladesh. Zia refused to go into exile and stayed in Bangladesh under house arrest. Hasina took the safe

The possibility of a successful counter-coup to facilitate her return to Bangladesh is improbable at the moment, given the popular resentment towards her rule. The fact that no other political figure of her stature had ever had to flee the country facing the rage of the people has permanently damaged Hasina's reputation as an invincible leader. After all, she was chased away by hundreds of thousands of youths wielding sticks and bricks, while her men had all the guns and were shooting indiscriminately. This inglorious exit will make her future comeback politically untenable.

exit and spent time in Europe and the United States before returning to Bangladesh. She contested the 2008 election and won with a landslide.

But her triumphant return to power in 2008 is unlikely to be repeated. Given the massive bloodshed and indiscriminate killings that took place throughout her tenure, it will be extremely difficult for the 76-year-old Hasina to revive her political fortunes this time.

General Waker Uz Zaman, the military chief who eventually asked Hasina to leave the country, happens to be a relative of hers through marriage. However, the possibility of a successful counter-coup to facilitate her return to Bangladesh is improbable at the moment, given the popular resentment towards her rule.

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What lies ahead for Bangladesh

An interim caretaker government headed by one of Hasina's nemeses, Dr Muhammad Yunus, Bangladesh's only Nobel laureate, was sworn in on August

8, three days after Hasina fled. Dr Yunus, one of the few prominent political figures who is respected across the nation, will be the chief adviser, a title equivalent to prime minister.

The 16-person advisers' panel (the equivalent to cabinet ministers) that he chose includes civil society luminaries, several of whom had received international accolades. Among the advisers are two leading coordinators from the ranks of the student movement. Dr Yunus and his selected advisers received positive media and public acceptance so far, but they have a difficult job ahead.

At the moment, student organisers are demanding Bangladesh politics to be wiped clean of politicians

large Bangladeshi Hindu population. Gobinda Chandra Pramanik, one of Bangladesh's most prominent Hindu community leaders, has sought to assuage Indian fears, stating that Hindus are facing just as much anarchy as the rest of the country at the moment and things are gradually calming down as volunteers from major political parties are showing up to protect the Hindu community.

The cabinet of advisers and major political parties in general may need to address Indian pressure so that personnel who posed serious national security threats to that country do not return to power. That negotiation will be complicated.

Hasina's geopolitical chessboard was to counter American concerns on human rights by addressing India's security fears and engaging with China's business interests. Now, the future government may be busy blunting Indian security concerns by delivering on the Americans' anxieties about China. Orchestrating this geopolitical dance will benefit from the broad international acceptance that Dr Yunus brings, but execution and delivery may still be difficult.

The main task for the interim government remains organising a new general election. Demands for a tribunal to prosecute thousands of illegal deaths and gross human rights violations either locally or internationally may make things complicated for the Awami League's participation in a future national election. The party itself may also predicate its future electoral participation on conditions favouring a return of Hasina's clan, if not Hasina herself.

All other parties will also have to navigate legal difficulties, given the serious criminal charges filed under Hasina against her political opponents to make them ineligible for contesting elections. That includes Tarique Rahman, the de facto leader of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, who is serving a life sentence over his alleged role in a 2004 plot to assassinate Hasina. Bangladesh's largest Islamic political party, Jamaat-e-Islami, was banned on August 3 and had been barred from running in elections since 2013.

Given the immense hurdles, it is likely the current interim government in Bangladesh will last several months, if not at least a year. Upon swearing in, the advisers gave no indication regarding the duration of their tenure.

Many Bangladeshis are calling for the overthrow of Hasina their second independence - the first one being breaking away from Pakistan 53 years ago. There is exuberance and hope for a better future everywhere. But optimism should be cautious. Whether this latest revolution enshrines a fairer, freer, less brutal and democratic Bangladesh depends on the practicality of the demands placed by the revolutionaries and the dexterity of the new administration, regarding not only managing them but also addressing pressures from external forces.

Sudan needs peace now

Hafed Al-Ghwell

The civil war in Sudan that began in April 2023 is on the verge of plunging the entire Horn of Africa into turmoil. With nearly 10 million people internally displaced and more than 25 million facing acute hunger, the humanitarian toll is already catastrophic and continues to escalate.

This tragedy stems from an unending cycle of failed peace initiatives and the intensification of the conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces. Ironically, each attempt at peace seems only to exacerbate the war, plunging civilians deeper into despair.

The chaos in Sudan mirrors previous conflicts in Africa, yet the implications of this one are uniquely alarming. The US special envoy for Sudan, Tom Perriello, has warned that the civil war could devolve into a multi-decade version of "Somalia on steroids," potentially transforming Sudan into a permanent failed state.

As the conflict continues to rage, the risk grows of a

the entities involved. However, these peace efforts have allowed the warring factions to exploit the myriad initiatives to buy time, escalate the fighting, and worsen the civilian suffering.

The biggest hurdle remains the lack of differentiation between the well-intentioned efforts in search of peace, and the strategic gambles in pursuit of geopolitical advantages among rival powers. As a result, instead of a single coherent and inclusive peace process, what we have now is a muddled mess that makes any effort redundant at best and counterproductive at worst.

This uncoordinated flood of peace processes has allowed the Rapid Support Forces and the Sudanese Armed Forces to cherry-pick the initiatives with which they engage, based on whether or not they seek to prosecute the egregious acts committed by either faction, which range from blocking humanitarian aid to perpetrating war crimes.

Despite repeated international warnings and

Despite US efforts to revive peace talks, success remains elusive and attempts so far have consistently failed to secure a lasting ceasefire. This reflects the complex and entrenched nature of the conflict. The Biden administration's policy on Africa has come under fire for unforced missteps. For example, misreading the civil war as merely a localized conflict while ignoring its potential for becoming an extraterritorial clash among rivals, which some experts believe has contributed to the unfolding crisis.

regional conflagration threatening to pull in neighboring countries such as Ethiopia, South Sudan, Chad, Libya, and the Central African Republic. The geopolitical fallout of this could be immense, with illicit flows of drugs, weapons, and fighters destabilizing an already volatile African continent.

Al-Fashir, a heavily populated Sudanese Armed Forces stronghold in Darfur, exemplifies the potentially dire consequences of the conflict. As the Rapid Support Forces advance on the city, which is home to nearly 3 million people, aid groups fear widespread atrocities including gender-based violence, torture, and massacres.

Across Sudan, civilians are caught in the crossfire and face relentless bloodshed and deprivation. Attempts to provide aid are thwarted by the combatants' strategic embargoes. The situation is dire. The US State Department has confirmed that both sides have committed war crimes, with the Rapid Support Forces and its allied militias accused of engaging in forms of ethnic cleansing.

Unfortunately, the responses by the international community to the crisis so far have been worse than inadequate, mostly diverted as they are by other global conflicts and rising tensions elsewhere. Despite US efforts to revive peace talks, success remains elusive and attempts so far have consistently failed to secure a lasting ceasefire.

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Beyond the fighting, the geographic and strategic significance of Sudan has drawn a multitude of other actors into the peace-making arena. Aside from the US and Saudi Arabia, neighboring countries, regional organizations and other global powers have all tried and are still trying to mediate.

The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, the League of Arab States, the African Union, and the UN are just a few of

sanctions, the hunger for military advantage continues to outweigh the desire for peace. Neither side is prepared to commit to any grand bargains in the interests of peace, or even a temporary ceasefire that freezes this brutal conflict and allows for more sophisticated diplomacy to take place while the guns grow cold.

It cannot be overstated how rapidly the window of opportunity for influential actors to enforce a credible peace is closing.

In the absence of a credible, enforceable and widely accepted peace process, Sudan risks emulating Libya's fragmented political future or becoming a perma-failed state akin to Somalia. If the past few years of UN mediation in Libya has taught the international community anything, it is that waiting for both sides to fight to a stalemate and then seeking bargains with the elite among this unselected and unaccountable lot will only create a new ruling class as disconnected from the public as the current belligerents.

If Sudan is to find peace and keep it, therefore, the public must also have a significant and meaningful voice in any resolution. Failure to ensure this will only result in grave consequences that extend far beyond Sudan.

Recent history is rife with examples of how conflicts can easily spill over borders, as seen with how the turmoil in Libya has affected the Sahel region, and how the inconclusive war against Daesh has left splinters active and able to destabilize parts of West, Central, and Southern Africa.

Sudan, with its population of about 50 million people, poses an even greater risk. The flow of refugees, fighters, and weapons could disrupt fragile states across Africa and beyond. Such instability would severely hamper efforts to counter extremism, with Sudan likely serving as a haven for terrorist groups—as was the case with Al-Qaeda during the 1990s.

As the civil war in Sudan rages on, the grim reality is that each failed peace initiative not only prolongs the conflict but also deepens the suffering of millions of civilians. The world can no longer afford to turn a blind eye to this crisis, or allow self-interested actors to undermine concerted efforts to make peace and restore stability.

Biden looks for legacy on foreign front

Joe Biden viewed the Asia-Pacific region as key to his foreign policy when he took office as president in 2021. However, the crisis in Gaza and the wider Middle East since late 2023, and Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, has shifted his administration's focus in consequential, unexpected ways.

The fact that the Middle East remains uppermost in the minds of the Biden team was once again illustrated when US Secretary of State Antony Blinken cut short by a day a recent trip to Asia so that he could be present at a White House meeting between Biden and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on July 25.

Nonetheless, with about six months remaining in office, Biden and Blinken still seek to craft a foreign policy legacy in the vast Asia-Pacific arena.

It was regarding this, and reassurances about US commitment to the region, that Blinken engaged with allies during his recent trip to the region. The Biden team's achievements include the development of deeper partnerships across the region since 2021, including with India, Japan, Australia, South Korea, and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Moreover, in October 2021 Biden said the US on his watch would defend

Taiwan if China attacked, which was an apparent departure from Washington's long-held foreign policy position of "strategic ambiguity" on this issue. While the White House asserted there had been "no change in our policy," Chinese President Xi Jinping complained the US was seeking "all-around containment, encirclement, and suppression against us."

This was the context that shaped Blinken's trip last month. It was his 18th to the region since taking office in 2021 and took place very soon after Biden's withdrawal from the 2024 presidential race. The overall stated goal of the visit, which might be his last as secretary of state, was "advancing a free and open" Asia-Pacific.

There was also a great need to offer reassurances about US policy on the region under the next president. Allies in Asia have significant concerns about what a second Trump presidency might bring, not least because while he was in office between 2017 and 2021 he indicated that the six-decade-long US military presence in Japan and South Korea might be reduced or eliminated entirely.

The Biden team, meanwhile, has plans to establish in Japan a new Joint Force Headquarters for the almost 55,000 US military personnel stationed there. This is proposed as a counterpoint

Andrew Hammond

to Japan's planned Joint Operations Command for its own armed forces.

Blinken's visit in July, his longest tour of the region as secretary of state, encompassed visits to six countries. It began in Laos, where he attended the annual ASEAN Regional Forum alongside the foreign ministers of ASEAN member states and regional powers such as China, Australia, Japan, Russia, South Korea, and India.

He then headed to Vietnam to offer condolences following the death of communist leader Nguyen Phu Trong. Last year, Washington and Hanoi upgraded their ties to the level of a comprehensive strategic partnership. Moreover, US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen has proposed Vietnam as a "friendshoring" destination to help diversify US supply chains away from China in advance of a pending US decision that would potentially upgrade Vietnam to "market-economy status."

Blinken also visited Tokyo, where he and US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin held "2+2" talks with their Japanese counterparts, during which they concluded that China's "foreign policy seeks to reshape the international order for its own benefit at the expense of others." They also took part in a

meeting of the so-called "quad" nations, with their Japanese, Australian, and Indian counterparts.

Austin also joined Blinken in the Philippines for more "2+2" talks, given that Manila, like Tokyo, has a mutual defense treaty with the US. The final two important stops on the tour were Singapore and Mongolia.

All this activity reinforces the fact that Biden and Blinken have not lost sight of their longer-term ambition to intensify the US "pivot" toward the Asia-Pacific region. This, despite the fact that Biden's greatest international legacy as president might be his determined defense of Ukraine, and his wider statecraft that has helped to strengthen the fragile Western alliance.

While Russia remains the main immediate threat to Washington's security interests, this has done little to alter the administration's view that Beijing remains the paramount, longer-term challenge.

In Laos, Blinken reiterated this point to his Chinese counterpart, Wang Yi, and expressed specific concerns about Beijing's "destabilizing actions" in the South China Sea, through which trillions of dollars of shipborne trade passes each year to destinations including the Philippines, which since the election of

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. in June 2022 has moved toward closer relations with the US.

Blinken also criticized China's extensive support for Russia's defense-industrial base, which NATO leaders recently said in a joint statement had been a "decisive enabler" of Russia's war against Ukraine. The US and Europe have in recent months accused Beijing of sending large amounts of dual-use goods to Moscow, and have sanctioned businesses in Hong Kong and mainland China.

Blinken's meeting with his Chinese counterpart also followed the recent interception by North American Aerospace Defense Command of two Russian and two Chinese bombers close to Alaska. It was the first time aircraft from those nations had been spotted in the area operating in a coordinated fashion.

Taking all of this together, the next six months might therefore prove to be one of the most important periods in the recent history of the Asia-Pacific, as Biden and Blinken seek to nail down their legacy in the region.

While the uncertainties surrounding a potential second Trump term continue to grow, there will be a determined effort to double down on US attention to the region and reemphasize the US pivot there.

Ehtesham Shahid

Digital currencies can boost inclusion in Middle East and Asia

Digital currencies are emerging as a beacon of hope in the often-elusive dream of financial inclusion, particularly in Asia and the Middle East.

The latest evolution of this promise comes in the form of central bank digital currencies, which are poised to revolutionize cross-border payments. By offering more efficient and inclusive financial solutions, central bank digital currencies can reshape the financial landscape and create new opportunities in regions long underserved by traditional banking systems. However, they need to address inherent inefficiencies of the payment system if they are to achieve their full potential.

For the uninitiated, central bank digital currencies, popularly known as CBDCs, are digital forms of official currencies issued and regulated by nations' central banks. To understand how they work, think of a digital wallet on your smartphone or in a mobile banking app; instead of holding only your bank's default digital currency, your wallet could also hold the central bank's digital currency, which could be used to pay for goods and services, transfer money to others, or savings, just like physical cash.

CBDCs offer inherent advantages in financial transactions, including greater transparency and security, thereby helping to reduce fraud and money laundering.

Judging by the growing number of nations exploring the potential implementation of a CBDC, they are, quite literally, gaining currency. The International Monetary Fund recently reported that 130 nations, together accounting for 98 percent of the world's gross domestic product, were investigating the possible introduction of a CBDC. A survey conducted by IMF country teams indicated that of 31 economies in the Middle East and Central Asia, 19 were either considering or actively exploring the possibility.

One of the most significant benefits of digital currencies is their potential to expand access to financial services. In many parts of Asia and the Middle East, large segments of populations remain unbanked or underbanked, often as a result of lack of physical banking infrastructure or stringent identification requirements. Digital currencies, accessible using mobile phones and the internet, offer a viable solution to this. By giving them the ability to bypass traditional hurdles to banking, more individuals can participate in the financial system, making it easier for them to save, invest, and make transactions.

Moreover, digital currencies can facilitate faster transaction times than traditional banking systems. This efficiency can help individuals and businesses manage their finances more effectively and with fewer

delays. Digital currencies can also offer a safer and more secure alternative in economies still heavily reliant on cash. They reduce the risks associated with carrying and storing cash, especially in high-crime areas.

The high cost of financial transactions is a barrier for many people in these regions. Traditional banking systems and remittance services often impose hefty fees, which can be prohibitive to people on low incomes. Digital currencies lower these costs significantly. Reduced transaction fees, including for cross-border remittances, mean digital currencies make the transfer of money, domestically and internationally,

initiatives in Gulf Cooperation Council member countries aim to modernize financial systems and extend their reach to underserved populations.

While the benefits are clear and far-reaching, the adoption of digital currencies can be challenging due to low levels of digital and financial literacy, limited internet access in remote areas, and regulatory uncertainties.

Governments and financial institutions must therefore invest in education and infrastructure to ensure the benefits can be fully realized. Additionally, robust regulatory frameworks are essential to protect users and maintain economic stability in the long run.

Digital currencies have

Digital currencies can facilitate instant transactions, reduce wait times, and generally improve the user experience. This immediacy is crucial for businesses and individuals who rely on timely payments to manage their finances and sustain their operations. Governments in Asia and the Middle East are increasingly recognizing the potential of digital currencies to support financial inclusion initiatives. Central banks are also exploring the potential of CBDCs to enhance monetary policy, improve payment systems, and reduce reliance on cash. Such initiatives in Gulf Cooperation Council member countries aim to modernize financial systems and extend their reach to underserved populations.

more affordable.

This is particularly beneficial to migrant workers in the Middle East, many of whom send money home to their families in Asia. In other words, lower transaction fees make more financial services more accessible, affordable, and efficient, digital currencies can play a pivotal role in transforming the economic landscape of these regions.

As more governments, businesses and individuals embrace this digital revolution, the potential for a more inclusive and prosperous future becomes increasingly attainable.

However, efforts to realize this potential will require that the numerous technical, regulatory, and educational challenges are addressed, to ensure digital currencies can be effectively and safely integrated into the global financial system.

Amid the inherent obstacles, such as low digital and financial literacy, distrust in financial institutions, and limited wealth, the adoption of CBDCs might be restricted, yielding only minimal advantages. While the benefits remain the same, each country must therefore weigh the opportunities alongside the associated challenges it will face.

It is not too late to build a principled and powerful EU

Every year when European parliamentarians return from their summer break, the calls for a structural overhaul of the EU seem inevitable. This year will be no exception, though the impetus for change might be more powerful than ever.

The EU is facing numerous daunting, even existential, challenges. War rages on its doorstep, economic competitiveness lags, and deep social polarization persists. Political uncertainty in France and indecision in Germany compound the fragility of the EU at the same time as an unpredictable leadership transition in the US threatens to usher in a prolonged period of American isolationism, leaving Europe with little choice but to take its fate into its own hands.

The EU has managed to overcome severe disruptions in recent years, from sovereign debt crises to the withdrawal of the UK. But in the present geopolitical environment it is weak, vulnerable, and ill-prepared to handle the challenges it faces. A major reason for this is the enduring influence of populist forces that weaponize concerns about illegal migration and openly defy European unity.

For example, Prime Minister Viktor Orban, who has led Hungary's government since 2010 (after previously holding the office between 1998 and 2002), has seemingly made it his mission to erode the rule of law in Hungary and across

the EU, while undermining European cohesion.

Last month, his government assumed the rotating presidency of the Council of the EU. Within days, he paid surprise visits to Kyiv, Moscow and Beijing to discuss a potential Ukraine peace deal. It was a clear bid both to exploit the EU's institutional apparatus and to undermine it strategically.

He also attended, again with no warning or coordination with the EU, the summit of the Organization of Turkic States, which includes as an "observer" the internationally unrecognized Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

EU leaders scrambled to clarify that Orban had no mandate to represent the EU externally, let alone to negotiate any kind of peace deal for Ukraine. To highlight the fact that Orban was acting out of turn, the EU's foreign policy chief, Josep Borrell, stripped Hungary of the right to host the next meeting of member states' foreign and defense ministers, a responsibility that normally falls to the nation that holds the presidency of the Council of the EU.

Unfazed, Orban proceeded to announce a new fast-track visa system that would enable citizens of eight countries, including Russia and Belarus, to enter Hungary without security checks, raising fears about the integrity of border-free travel in the Schengen Area, and EU security more broadly.

Ana Palacio

Orban has also sought, with his counterpart in Slovakia, to use EU levers to force Ukraine to end its ban on the flow of Russian oil through the Druzhba pipeline, part of which runs through Hungarian territory.

Most recently, Hungary blocked a joint EU statement on "irregularities" during the presidential election in Venezuela, prompting Borrell to issue a separate statement.

EU leaders can attempt to carry out all the damage control they want, but Orban is achieving his goal of making the bloc appear confused, discordant, and weak. Having internalized key lessons from the Soviet era, he knows that empires and institutions begin to falter once they become objects of ridicule.

This has contributed to the growing impression that in a world increasingly defined by geopolitical power plays and realpolitik, the moral authority of the EU and its commitment to values-based governance are quaint and ineffective relics of the past. A lack of visionary leadership and cohesion among key members have only compounded the problem.

Not only has the once-powerful Franco-German engine of European integration run out of steam, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen's new mandate, which she secured by crafting an ambiguous platform

that sought to appeal to a broad spectrum of interests, seems unlikely to bring profound change.

Against this backdrop, forging a coherent vision on critical issues such as competitiveness, innovation, and defense will prove difficult, at best. Those who stand to gain the most from this situation are spoilers, such as Orban, who have learned how to exploit disunity and ambiguity.

During previous crises, from the Brexit negotiations following the withdrawal of the UK to the EU's previous dealings with Hungary over Orban's assaults on democracy and the rule of law, the bloc has relied largely on a legalistic and technocratic approach, which has often left it worse off.

But calls for the EU to start speaking the "language of power" have gone unheeded.

And while proposals for strengthening Borrell's mandate in his role as the EU's high representative for foreign affairs and security policy have been advanced, they represent little more than cosmetic changes.

To regain its footing, the EU must act with greater urgency and resolve, even if that entails uncomfortable confrontations with member states. And to thrive in the world of today and tomorrow it must once again establish itself as an indispensable partner for the US.

This means strengthen-

ing its economy, not least through innovation. It also means heeding the advice of Robert Gates, a former US defense secretary, to engage more effectively with younger generations of Americans. In short, bolstering the image of the EU, which often is viewed more negatively than the images of individual member states, is essential.

With US President Joe Biden now a lame duck after his decision to withdraw from the upcoming presidential election, Ukraine and Europe have entered a period of elevated vulnerability. Russia's hybrid attacks could escalate in the coming months, posing a significant challenge for the EU, especially with Orban at the helm of the council.

If the US presidential election in November returns Donald Trump to the White House, pressure for a "negotiated peace" in Ukraine could intensify, further disrupting an already fragile geopolitical landscape.

The EU faces a stark choice. It can either continue to allow internal and external forces to weaken it or it can act boldly to reclaim its integrity and strengthen its influence. From encouraging innovation and bolstering the rule of law to establishing and implementing a shared foreign policy vision, the EU must demonstrate that it can be both principled and powerful. Otherwise, it risks being left behind.

Iranian regime finds that those who set the fires can get burned as well

One thing is for sure: Iran and Hezbollah are discovering, day after day, the limits of their murderous confrontation game against Israel. This is a game played with the blood of Lebanese, Palestinians, Iraqis, Syrians, and Yemenis. However, the danger level has reached a peak for the Iranians and their main armed wing in the region, Hezbollah in Lebanon.

The shattering retaliation against Israel that was promised in the days following the assassination in Tehran on July 31 of the chairman of the Hamas Political Bureau, Ismail Haniyeh, has not been delivered. Nor has Hezbollah retaliated to the killing of one of its commanders a day earlier in a southern suburb of Beirut. Instead, only the dozens of videos that flooded social media have served to promote the image of the "resistance."

We are now faced with a reality that seems fluid. The escalation of the conflict might decline in light of

intensifying US and Western negotiations with Tehran that aim to find a way for the regime, and its armed wing in Lebanon, to climb down from its threats which have been broadcast widely on social media and TV.

Why is that? Simply because the party that wants to retaliate to an offense that happened in Tehran, and to a huge loss in the southern suburb of Beirut, will not simply throw themselves into a diplomatic mess with the Americans, thus indirectly, with the Israelis.

This is a far cry from what happened on April 13 and 14, when Iran retaliated against the bombing of its consulate in Damascus on April 1.

Every single party involved has agreed to firstly, save Tehran's face, and also to spare Israel major losses. That was a good day, as we say.

Ali Hamade

aster in Gaza.

According to a Western diplomat in Beirut, Israeli authorities are not afraid of the prospect of Iranian attacks that could cause serious damage in Tel Aviv or other large residential areas. This would justify an even more brutal Israeli retaliation in the heart of Tehran, Isfahan or even Qom, Iran's religious capital.

The same goes for attacks by Hezbollah, the secretary-general of which was eager to list in detail for his devoted audience, during his most recent televised appearance on Tuesday, the industrial targets in Israel that might be targeted by his Iran-aligned militia.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu continues to set one trap after another in an attempt to drag Hezbollah down a slippery slope that leads to a fatal error and justifies an Israeli military campaign that includes attacks on Beirut and vital targets in other parts of Lebanon.

This suggests the Israelis perhaps are ready to embark on a large-scale, longer-term confrontation in Lebanon.

Observers who closely monitor diplomatic engagement with Iran can see that serious work is being done in an effort to persuade Iran to choose deescalation, and for good reason: Not only could the results be very costly for Israel should Tehran follow through with its threats, it would be extremely costly for Iran and its allies as well.

This is the gist of the messages Hezbollah has been receiving from the British and Americans, delivered through the Lebanese government, which has completely surrendered to the will of the militia. These messages describe impatient Israeli authorities who are waiting for Hezbollah to put into action the threats of its secretary-general so that they can escalate the war to extreme limits.

This greatly diverges from the position that prevailed during the first 10

months of this war of attrition against Israel in which Hezbollah is now taking part. The current phase is very dangerous. Iran feels it must respond to Israel's presumed assassination of Haniyeh on its territory. Hezbollah also feels it has to respond to the assassination of the No. 2 in its hierarchy in a strike that took place in the heart of the southern suburbs of Beirut.

So the search is on for a smart diplomatic solution that would allow both sides, the Iranians and the Israelis, to step back from a difficult and dangerous situation and avoid a potentially devastating war that looms larger than ever.

The main question remains: Will the Americans, through the Biden administration, manage to pull off a peacekeeping feat that would inevitably benefit Democratic candidate Kamala Harris in the presidential election on Nov. 5?

In short, the regime in Iran, long a master of playing with fire, might now be realizing that pyromaniacs can get burned as well.

Escaping the cycle of excessive waste paper

Hassan bin Youssef Yassin

The world is going through a tremendously difficult time, with wars, crises and environmental calamities almost everywhere we look.

These concerns require our highest attention. Yet we must also look at other aspects of our lives and consider what effect our individual actions are having on global welfare and the health of our planet.

The other day I had people over for dinner and received several gifts in nicely wrapped boxes with ribbons. In my thoughts, I returned to my childhood and wondered how we have become so accustomed to such rituals, yet do not consider their broader impact.

Many of you will know that I don't really know when I was born. At the time, paper and writing were something of a luxury — there was no need to issue a piece of paper recording something as inconsequential as a date of birth.

Today, despite the various screens in front of which we spend our days, we are inundated with

paper — in our letter boxes, at the office, in endless catalogs, cards and wrapping paper.

Global paper consumption has increased by 400 percent over the last 40 years, despite the simultaneous revolution in computing.

Pulp and paper generate the third-largest amount of industrial air, water and land emissions in Canada and the sixth largest in the US. It is among the top five most energy-intensive industries globally and occupies at least 17 percent of all landfill space across the world.

My thoughts were spurred by the many Hallmark occasions beyond birthdays, Christmas or Eid. Commercial interests have pushed us into buying cards and extravagantly wrapped gifts for all sorts of occasions, from Mother's Day to Valentine's Day, from Chinese New Year to a wedding anniversary.

And, in response, we send thank you cards. While cards and wrapping paper will often claim to contain a certain percent-

age of recycled material, they are usually covered in chemical inks, glitter, shiny surfaces and sticky tape, all of which are essentially microplastics that will prevent any paper content from being recycled.

Instead of obeying commercial interests and acting out of force of habit or convention, let us reconsider our everyday actions.

We all know we should use less water at home, switch off lights and appliances, and reduce food waste through healthy habits.

Likewise, as individuals we should think more about our habits and mark occasions with a more meaningful hug and kiss, or a sincere word, instead of an extravagantly wrapped gift and card.

If we can all be a little more thoughtful in our daily lives, we can reduce both a great deal of waste and the environmental impact of our actions.

Most of all, we can set a positive example for the next generation, so that they may pick up healthier habits than our own.



'Arrival of 800 companies from 70 countries to boost country's economic image'

LAHORE (APP): Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan on Sunday said that the arrival of 800 companies from 70 countries to Pakistan would boost the country's reflection in the international markets.

The minister said that things were rapidly improving and especially the arrival of 800 companies from more than 70 countries to Pakistan was encouraging and good omen, said a press release issued here.

Federal Minister for Board of Investment, Privatization and Communications Abdul Aleem Khan and Federal Minister of Commerce Jam Kamal Khan while addressing the 9th Footwear Manufacturers Association Show, said the present government intends to increase investment in the country and for this purpose, we are making serious efforts to put more investment.

The Minister for Commerce said that the energy crisis would have to

be dealt with for the promotion of commercial activities, as well as the ease of business and issues related to FBR had to be resolved.

Addressing on the occasion, Federal Minister for Board of Investment, Privatization and Communications Abdul Aleem Khan said that the positive results had also been started to emerge and the participation of more than 800 investors and companies from 70 countries in the recent conference in Karachi was proof of this.

He said that our companies should market their brands to other countries in a good manner and take positive steps keeping in view the competitive atmosphere, international standards and modern trends.

Abdul Aleem Khan said that the bilateral partnership of Pakistani companies and Chinese institutions had been already started through mutual investment while there was sufficient scope for export of leather

industry, footwear and sports goods for which the Board of Investment would provide all kinds of facilitation.

He said that China and Pakistan can prove to be a big market for each other in various products and the Ministry of Commerce is providing full support to the investors of both countries in the light of the orders of the Prime Minister.

Meanwhile, Federal Ministers Abdul Aleem Khan and Jam Kamal Khan inspected the products displayed in the 9th Pakistan Footwear and Manufacturers Show and appreciated the standards of Pakistani companies where 25 prominent Pakistani and Chinese companies participated, China Association invited Federal Ministers Abdul Aleem Khan and Jam Kamal Khan to visit China.

Later, they participated in the B2B meeting between Chinese and Pakistani companies where they said that the visit to

China last month led by the Prime Minister had been very beneficial and the Pakistani Embassy in China had increased the number of Commercial and Trade Officers up to 20 in order to promote trade activities between the two countries.

Senior persons of Chinese companies presented shields to the federal ministers and appreciated their cooperation.

Responding to questions in media briefing besides the 9th Footwear Manufacturers Association Show, Abdul Aleem Khan said that the privatization of PIA was progressing smoothly, 6 companies have been shortlisted and the date of October 1 has been fixed. The loss of 100 billion will be saved and the citizens will get an international standard airline, he added.

The federal minister said that all the state owned enterprises in deficit would be privatized as doing business was domain of private institutions and not the government.



LAHORE: Federal Minister for Privatization, Board of Investment & Communications Abdul Aleem Khan along with Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan inaugurated 9th Pakistan Footwear, Material & Machinery Show 2024.

51 illegal gas connections disconnected

F.P. Report

LAHORE: In a continued effort to combat gas theft, Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) has intensified its crackdown across Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Islamabad, resulting in the disconnection of 51 illegal gas connections and the imposition of fines totaling Rs 0.55 million.

In Bahawalpur, one connection was disconnected due to illegal gas use, with an additional 13 connections cut off for using compressors unlawfully. Meanwhile, in Mardan, four connections were terminated for illegal gas usage, accompanied by a fine of Rs 0.28 million imposed on the offenders.

In Faisalabad, the regional team disconnected one illegal connection and imposed a fine of Rs 0.04 million. The crackdown in Multan was particularly extensive, with 31 illegal connections disconnected. In Sheikhpura, one illegal connection was cut off, and a fine of Rs 0.23 million was imposed for gas theft.

Pakistan-China to launch new electric motorcycle

ISLAMABAD (INP): In a significant development towards sustainable transportation, Pakistani and Chinese enterprises have collaborated to introduce an electric motorcycle with swappable batteries.

This agreement is expected to pave the way for further advancements in the electric vehicle (EV) industry between the two countries, according to a report published by Gwadar Pro on Sunday.

Hammad Khalid, a business consultant announced the exciting collaboration between Super Asia Motors Pvt Ltd of Pakistan and China's EGO New Green Energy Technology Limited.

Together, they are introducing an innovative Electric Motorcycle with swappable batteries. This motorcycle is designed to cater to both commercial and domestic customers.

Additionally, their plans

extend to introducing this technology to the 3-wheeler commercial market.

Hammad said the swappable battery allows you to swap your empty battery for a fully charged one within 10 seconds.

You can continue your trip without interruption, extending your range, and making it possible to bring your battery inside to charge. During long rides you can bring an extra battery with you which can be swapped at home or at the office.

The newly introduced bike will boast several other key features including a top speed of 90 km/h, a range of 200 km with two batteries, swappable solar-powered batteries conveniently available at petrol stations, and the ability to save up to 70% per kilometer.

Additionally, it offers strong, dependable, durable, and cost-saving pollu-

tion-free travel.

"This cutting-edge project brings state-of-the-art technology to Pakistan, with a focus on locally developing components and parts. It also reflects our unwavering commitment to clean energy and job creation in Pakistan," hammad added.

In recent years, Pakistan and China have been working together to introduce electric motorcycles in Pakistan, with the goal of promoting eco-friendly transportation and reducing carbon emissions.

Numerous Chinese companies, in partnership with local Pakistani enterprises, are expanding Pakistan's electric vehicle industry.

The introduction of these electric motorcycles is anticipated to significantly lower travel costs for consumers while contributing to a greener future by minimizing environmental impact.

Economic strategies:

PIAF proposes collaborative approach between govt, traders

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Industrial and Traders Associations Front (PIAF) has proposed a collaborative approach between the government and the business community, stressing the government to engage with industry stakeholders to formulate successful economic strategies.

The PIAF (Anjum Nisar group) Chairman Faheemur Rehman Saigol said that this collaboration is especially crucial in this economic unstable condition. It is imperative that the government involves the business community in shaping economic policies, he asserted.

He argued that aligning the interests of the government and businesses is essential for creating an economic framework that is not only robust but also sustainable in the long run.

At the core of national progress lies a well-defined

economic agenda, he stated, underscoring the importance of a cohesive plan to put the economy on a track of sustained growth. He stressed that economic stability is paramount for addressing various societal challenges and fostering an environment conducive to prosperity.

Media reports called for a fully-fledged and sound plan with a highly competent team to handle local challenges forthwith, but unfortunately, they have no solid plans or directions.

He foresees this year full of challenges for businesses and industries in Pakistan due to political uncertainty on global and local fronts. The government should come up with drastic measures to give confidence to local industrialists-cum-entrepreneurs and foreign investors through industry-friendly and investment-friendly policies.

A cornerstone of the proposed economic initiatives

is the advocacy for a comprehensive 5-year export policy. He emphasized that such a policy would provide a roadmap for enhancing the country's global competitiveness.

He outlined that a strategic export policy is vital for diversifying the economy, creating job opportunities, and ensuring a steady influx of foreign exchange. He said that PIAF serves as a rallying cry for a united effort towards economic progress.

The call for transparent economic strategies, international engagement, and a collaborative approach between the government and the business community underscores the urgency of prioritising economic development for the collective well-being of the nation. Faheemur Rehman Saigol said all political parties should provide their economic stability plans to avert further losses and delays, warning that

numerous global issues are impacting world economies. He said the upcoming government should prioritise resolving the energy crisis by providing sufficient and affordable electricity and gas to industries. The import bill should be reduced by imposing bans on luxury products. He highlighted controlling inflation to ensure affordable living costs for the masses and containing the cost of production for businesses at a local level.

'Effective strategy adopted'

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Punjab Minister for Industries, Commerce, Investment & Skills Development Department Ch. Shafay Hussain, while addressing a ceremony held here, said that an effective strategy has been adopted to bring new domestic and foreign investment in the province. All possible facilities are being given to the investors to speed up the process of industrialization. Business facilitation centers have been established in 6 major cities of Punjab, he said and added that NOCs are being issued rapidly from these Business Facilitation Centers for establishing new factories.

He highlighted the strong interest and support from Pakistan's renewable energy sector. AIKO, a global leader in photovoltaic technology, is expanding into Pakistan with the introduction of its top-efficiency N-Type ABC Modules. This move highlights AIKO's dedication to providing cutting-edge, sustainable energy solutions to growing markets.

Kashif for adopting Chinese model for economic growth

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC) Chief Executive Officer Mian Kashif Ashfaq said on Sunday that Pakistan, grappling with economic challenges, could learn from China's experience by prioritizing quality over quantity in its growth strategies.

Talking to a delegation of leading architects led by Mohsin Ali Mughal here, he added that investing in human capital, enhancing technological capabilities, and promoting industrial modernization were crucial steps. He said strengthening governance and implementing effective regulatory frameworks could attract foreign investment and foster a business-friendly envi-

ronment.

Pakistan could benefit from adopting sustainable practices in its energy and infrastructure sectors, mirroring China's green growth initiatives. By focusing on innovation, education, and sustainable development, Pakistan could create a resilient economy capable of withstanding global challenges, he maintained. Collaboration with China through initiatives like the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) could further accelerate Pakistan's economic transformation, helping it reach new heights in economic growth and development.

On this occasion, Moh-

sin Ali Mughal said China's shift to a quality growth model offers valuable lessons for Pakistan as it seeks to elevate its economy.

Over the decades, China transitioned from rapid, quantity-focused growth to a more sustainable and inclusive development strategy. This model emphasizes innovation, technology, and green growth, aiming to boost productivity and improve living standards. The focus on high-quality infrastructure, advanced manufacturing, and digital economy had allowed China to maintain robust economic growth while addressing environmental concerns and reducing inequality, he added.

BMP wants practical steps to achieve \$60b export target for 3 years

— Anjum Nisar says enhancement in exports requires wide structural reforms

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry's Businessmen Panel has stressed the need for taking practical steps to achieve the government exports target of \$60 in next three years, putting the economy on a sustainable growth trajectory by providing incentives to the industry.

FPCCI former president and Businessmen Panel (BMP) Chairman Mian Anjum Nisar lamented that the economy is facing multiple challenges of stagnant exports, high inflation, low growth and declining foreign reserves, with fiscal accounts under immense pressure on account of heavy interest payments.

He said that the present

situation shows the government would find it difficult to achieve the industrial growth and export target, leading to more pressure on foreign exchange reserves of the country.

He asked the government to address the underlying structural vulnerabilities through smooth energy supply at competitive rates, as country's overall export proceeds continued to shrink.

As imports fell more than the decline in exports, the trade balance of goods and services improved. Exports are constrained by domestic production issues related to the slowdown of demand in the main export markets and high domestic production costs.

Imports are currently constrained by sluggish domestic demand and

administrative measures to protect the official foreign reserves level.

Since no immediate reversal of these developments is envisaged, the trade balance may further stabilize or further improve somewhat in the upcoming months.

He observed that the low textile and clothing exports is gaining momentum over the past five months owing to multiple factors including high energy costs, stuck-up refunds and a slump in global demands despite the massive depreciation of the rupee. He believes that one of the main reasons behind low exports was the exchange rate instability. The discontinuation of duty drawbacks on local taxes and levies by the government has also created liquidity issues for

the export sector.

Mian Anjum Nisar said that the government has increased the gas and electricity tariffs and, at the same time, also the subsidy has been phased out, which will further increase the cost of production.

Month on month increases in consumer prices may be countered by a further mean reverting international commodity prices and some exchange rate stability due to decreased pace of depreciation. The overall money supply growth remains compatible with a return to low and stable inflation.

But the outlook of M2 is broadly dependent on fiscal accounts which are under immense pressure on account of heavy interest payments and rehabilitation spending. Nonetheless, the

first 6 months of CFY have ended with some developments; containing fiscal deficit and surplus in primary balance due to effective fiscal management.

The State Bank of Pakistan is also enacting a contractionary monetary policy to contain inflationary pressure. However, a larger portion of volatility in the current price level is explained by supply-side factors.

The textile exports remained weak mainly due to the demand and supply challenges being faced by the sector. Global recession, which reduced the purchasing power in key export markets, also resulted in lower bookings of orders, he added. Inventory piled up at large global retailers, while gas shortages and increased costs of working capital in the

country also played a role in the decline, he said.

He stated that a major enhancement in exports requires huge and wide structural reforms, urging the government to take business community on board, who are the real stakeholders in preparing policies to enhance exports, which is prerequisite for economic growth. As part of the agreement with the IMF, the government has announced discontinuing subsidies on energy for the export sector.

It is to be noted that while chairing a meeting of the National Export Development Board, the prime minister tasked the authorities concerned to take the country's annual exports to \$60 billion within three years. The prime minister asked the com-

merce ministry and other relevant departments to take all necessary measures to achieve the given target.

He said the country's exports crossed the \$30 billion mark during the previous fiscal year, and the government's policies also took the IT exports to over \$3.2 billion.

The prime minister asked the ministry to resolve the issues pointed out by the exporters and present a report within two weeks.

He said that he would personally chair the National Export Development Board meeting every one-and-half months.

Calling for collective efforts for the country's development, he paid tribute to the business community and investors for their role in increasing exports

despite tough circumstances.

Prime Minister Shehbaz asked the commerce ministry to finalise the policy proposals, in coordination with representatives of the potential export sectors.

He also tasked the Ministry of National Food Security to improve extension services, in coordination with provinces, to enhance agricultural exports.

He said that the delivery time of Pakistani goods to Europe and America should be reduced by solving the problems related to the shipping of exports immediately.

Similarly, the commerce ministry and Board of Investment should ensure cooperation regarding the transfer of Chinese export industries to Pakistan.



In brief

Mir Hamza talks to PCB Digital

LAHORE (Web Desk): National cricket team fast bowler Mir Hamza has stated that representing Pakistan is unparalleled. In a conversation with PCB Digital, Hamza emphasised that consistent performance is essential for representing the country, noting that it took him significant time to secure a place in the team through improved performance. Reflecting on the tour of Australia, Hamza shared his positive experience of bowling alongside Shaheen Shah Afridi. He praised Afridi for his encouragement and support. Hamza recalled that during the Melbourne Test, Shaheen Shah Afridi took two wickets early in the match, inspiring him to think about claiming wickets as well. He also took two wickets in an over but expressed regret that the team did not win the Test. He mentioned that the team missed Naseem Shah during the Australia tour, suggesting that his presence might have changed the match's outcome. Hamza highlighted the hard work put in for the Australia tour and noted the benefits of playing consistent domestic cricket. With a busy season ahead, he emphasised the importance of maintaining fitness.

Chinese netizens celebrate

BEIJING (Wang Su): The Stade de France witnessed Pakistani javelin star Arshad Nadeem's remarkable throw of 92.97 meters in the Olympic Games Paris 2024 men's javelin throw final. In a thrilling performance, Nadeem secured the first-ever individual gold medal for his country, setting a new Olympic record to beat defending champion Neeraj Chopra from India. Nadeem's achievement resonated far beyond the stadium, capturing the hearts of sports enthusiasts worldwide, including Chinese netizens. Chinese viewers expressed their joy and admiration for the "Ba Tie" - meaning "Pakistani Iron Brother" - on social media platforms. A China Central Television commentator enthusiastically shouted out Nadeem's monster throw, and comments flooded in, saying, "He has given wings to the javelin!" "Incredible! He's a hero!" "92.97 meters! Bravo! Congrats Iron Brother! First OLYMPIC RECORD!"... Chinese netizens on Weibo, China's version of X, even created a trending tag: "Nadeem surprises his coach's sunglasses off". The tag garnered tens of millions of views, with one user humorously remarking, "OMG the coach's reaction is adorable; he couldn't believe his eyes!" Since its Olympic debut at the London Games in 1948, Pakistan has earned a total of 11 medals over a span of 76 years. However, the last time Pakistan claimed gold was four decades ago, during the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics, when the men's field hockey team secured the top prize. Arshad Nadeem's remarkable victory in the javelin throw at the Paris Olympics finally breaks the country's 40-year wait for a prestigious gold medal in its Olympic journey. Nadeem's throw shattered the previous Olympic record of 90.57 meters, set by the Netherlands' Andreas Thorkildsen at the Beijing 2008 Olympics. Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif took to social media to congratulate Nadeem, writing, "You've made the whole nation proud young man".

Shan Masood opens up about Pakistan's strategy in Test cricket

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan Test captain Shan Masood has opened up about the strategy of his side in the red-ball cricket going forward. Shan Masood-led side is scheduled to play a two-match Test series against Bangladesh, as part of the ICC World Test Championship (WTC) 2023-2025. Currently, Pakistan are ranked fifth in the WTC points table. They are set to play nine Test matches in the current cycle. The series against Bangladesh will be followed by three home Tests against England. Pakistan will then visit South Africa for two matches before returning home to play two games against West Indies. Shan Masood, while addressing a news conference, shared that his side is aiming to play with positive intent to win matches, which will help them improve their standing in the WTC. "If we need to compete in the World Test Championship, we need to

secure victories, which requires showing intent and positivity in every aspect of the game, whether it's batting, bowling, or fielding," Masood said. "Our focus will be on achieving the best results for Pakistan. We need to win a significant number of the nine upcoming Test matches," he added. The captain also highlighted the advantages that work in his team's favour as they prepare for a packed Test schedule. Despite changes in management, the core players remain the same, which contributes to team stability. Additionally, he emphasized that Pakistan will have the home advantage in seven out of nine games, which is a significant positive for the team. "There have been changes in the management, however, the squad is almost the same," Shan stated. "We have worked on changing the mindset to play according to the situation."

"The positive thing is that we are playing at home and our players will be familiar with the conditions. We need to take advantage of it, but the key will be to handle mental and physical pressure," he concluded. The first Test of the two-match series between Pakistan and Bangladesh is scheduled to be played from 21 to 25 August in Rawalpindi, while the second match will be played from August 30 to September 3 in Karachi. Pakistan squad for Test series against Bangladesh: Shan Masood (c), Saud Shakeel (vc), Aamir Jamal (subject to Fitness), Abdullah Shafique, Abrar Ahmed, Babar Azam, Kamran Ghulam, Khuram Shahzad, Mir Hamza, Mohammad Ali, Mohammad Hurraira, Mohammad Rizwan (wicket-keeper), Naseem Shah, Saim Ayub, Salman Ali Agha, Sarfaraz Ahmed (wicket-keeper) and Shaheen Shah Afridi.

Sport greats pledge to take Pakistan to new heights



ISLAMABAD (APP): As the nation dons the green and white to celebrate its 77th Independence Day, Pakistan's sporting heroes have come forward with more than just messages of congratulation. The legends, whose feats have raised the country's stature on the global stage, have expressed a shared pledge to take Pakistan to new heights in the world of sports. Across hockey fields, squash courts, boxing rings and Olympic arenas, these icons have not only brought home medals and trophies but also inspired the generations to come. Talking to APP, they have expressed a renewed commitment to steer the nation toward a brighter, more prosperous future in sports. They also pledged to uphold the legacy of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan. Former hockey great, Khawaja Junaid while congratulating the nation on the Independence Day, underlined the need to focus on grassroots to revive the national game of hockey. "Our future in hockey lies in our youth," said Junaid, who has recently been appointed as focal person on Sports for Prime Minister's Youth Programme.

"We need to invest in our young players, giving them the training and resources they need to shine on the global stage. On this Independence Day, I pledge to work towards nurturing the next generation of hockey stars," added Khawaja, who also runs a hockey academy. Pakistan's pro pugilist Muhammad Waseem said, "Wherever we go in the world, we recognize that there is no place like home (Pakistan). We should make our country a strong and powerful nation." He expressed his gratitude to the country, saying, "This country has given me everything; this is my identity."

Former World Squash Champion Qamar Zaman said, "Pakistan has given us a lot. This is the time to work together to take our beloved country forward." He urged the need to celebrate Independence Day with a renewed resolve to make sacrifices for the country's safety, survival and security. Recalling his accomplishment as a player he said, "Whatever I have achieved today is because of my country. This country has given me a lot. I got the opportunity to represent Pakistan at the international level with pride."

Former squash player Amir Atlas said, "Pakistan is our beloved country, and our forefathers sacrificed a lot to have a separate homeland. We should value our freedom." He wished all Pakistanis a "Happy Independence Day", saying, "Pakistan Zindabad! (Long Live Pakistan)". Tennis ace Aqeel Khan expressed his love for the country, saying, "We have got our country after a lot of struggle and sacrifices. I wish all Pakistanis a very Happy Independence Day! Pakistan Blind Cricket Council (PBCC) Chairman Syed Sultan Shah said sports unite countries. There is no scarcity of talent in our country. We will have to identify this talent and polish it to earn laurels at the international level. The words and commitments of these legends offer a powerful reminder of the nation's potential. Their voices, filled with pride and determination, inspire hope that the future of sports in Pakistan can indeed be brighter than its illustrious past.

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Karachi City FC bags National Women's Football Club C'ship



ISLAMABAD (APP): Karachi City Football Club clinched the National Women's Football Club Championship 2024 title by humbling Legacy FC 4-0 in the final played here at Jinnah Stadium of

Pakistan Sports Complex on Saturday night. The grand finale took place between the two top teams, with Karachi City FC showcasing their exceptional skills and strategy. In the first half, Karachi City FC took a 2-

0 lead over Legacy FC. Rameen Farid scored the first goal for Karachi City FC in the 14th minute, followed by Sarah's goal in the 28th minute. The team's momentum continued in the second half, with Zahmena scor-



Another boy brings glory for Pakistan by winning gold medal

BANGKOK (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan's Aamir Khan has once again made headlines by winning a gold medal in the 7th International Taekwondo Championship held in Bangkok. Swat's pride Khan demonstrated his exceptional skills and determination on an international stage, bringing glory to Pakistan. The championship, which featured competitors from various countries, saw Aamir Khan emerging victorious after a series of intense matches. In the first round, he faced off against a competitor from India, securing a decisive win. The second round saw him battling it out with a Nepalese opponent, where his skill once again led him to victory. The final round was the ultimate test, as Aamir took on a skilled athlete from the Philippines. In a display of remarkable technique and unwavering focus, Aamir Khan outperformed his opponent, clinching the gold medal for Pakistan.

ISLAMABAD (APP): Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in Men's while Islamabad A and Punjab in Women's were victorious in the first leg of pool round of Independence Day Inter-Provincial Basketball Championships here at the Liaquat Gymnasium of Pakistan Sports Complex on Sunday. On the first day of the five-day championship mens event, Punjab thrashed Islamabad B with margin of 42 points as Punjab won the match with 89-47 points. Safiullah scored 26 points, Muhammad Abdullah scored 20 points for winning side while Muhammad Umer and Ahmad Ihsan scored 10, 10 points respectively for Islamabad. In the second match, KP defeated Islamabad A by in a close encounter by 73-70 point. Abdul Wahab 23, Umer Khan scored 18 points for KP while Usman Awan scored 20 and Raja Farhan scored 10 points for losing side. In women's category, Islamabad A defeated Khyber Pakhtunkhwa by 51-32 points with the some excellent performance of Asma Khan scored 12 and Maruf Alvi scored 8 points played vital role in Islamabad victory. In the second match, Punjab defeated Islamabad B by 67 points against 43 points. Ayman Mehmood of Punjab scored 17 points, Khadija Mushtaq scored 14 points for Punjab while Shanzlye Bibi scored 9 points for losing side. This event is one of the series for the promotion of Basketball organised by under the supervision of Federal Basketball Association (FBBA).

Punjab, Islamabad A earn victories

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Closing ceremony of 28th Chief of the Naval Staff Open Golf C'ship held



F.P. Report

KARACHI: Mr. Ahmed Baig of Royal Palm Golf Club finally clinched the title of 28th CNS Open Golf Championship 2024 while Mr. Muhammad Shabbir of Margalla Greens Golf Club remained the runner-up in Professional category. The closing ceremony of the four day long Championship was held today at the picturesque Karachi Golf Club (KGC). Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf was Chief Guest of the occasion. Chief of the Naval Staff, while commending the untiring efforts of Pakistan Navy, KGC staff and the organizers for seamless conduct of the Championship, also congratulated the winners for their remarkable success. He also lauded the high standards of the game which proved exciting and quality entertainment to the golf participants. He also appreciated the sponsors and media in supporting the game of golf and conduct of the Championship. The matches were conducted in Professionals, Senior Professionals, Junior Professionals, Amateurs, Senior Amateurs, Veterans, Ladies and Junior categories. Beside Professionals, Mr. Muhammad Tariq won the title of Senior Professional category while Master Muhammad Ashsah became the Champion in the Junior Pro category. In Amateur category, Mr. Omer Khalid stood as the Gross winner while Mr. Muhammad Zia Hai remained as the Net winner. In addition, a special prize of 'Toyota Fortuner' was awarded to Mr. Muhammad Qasim for scoring 'Hole in One'.

More than 600 enthusiastic golfers from across the country participated in this prestigious event. The Prize Distribution Ceremony was held and attended by large number of Dignitaries, Sponsors, Media persons and Seasoned Golfers.

Tahir's half century vain as Stars defeat Shaheens by 47 Runs



DARWIN (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan Shaheens fell 47 runs short against Melbourne Stars in their second match of the Top End T20 series on Sunday at the Gardens Oval in Darwin. Tayyab Tahir's unbeaten half-century (57 not out, 43b, 6x4s, 1x6) went in vain as Shaheens finished with 128-9 in 20 overs in pursuit of the 176-run target. Opening batter Sahibzada Farhan scored 26 off 13 balls clubbing hit seven fours for his 43-ball 55 while his partner, Chandrasinghe, contributed 47 off 42 balls which involved four boundaries and two sixes. Following Haseebullah's (11, 20b, 1x6) departure in the seventh over with the scorecard reading 44-2, the

Shaheens batting line-up collapsed as they lost seven wickets for just 47 runs. Tayyab and Arif Yaqoob added an undefeated 37-run partnership for the last wicket. Earlier, Melbourne Stars, after opting to bat first, got off to a strong start as the opening pair of Liam Blackford and Ashley Chandrasinghe stitched a 91-run partnership off 74 balls. Blackford hit seven fours for his 43-ball 55 while his partner, Chandrasinghe, contributed 47 off 42 balls which involved four boundaries and two sixes.

Leg-spinner Arif Yaqoob drew the first blood for Shaheens as he dismissed Blackford. Three overs later, Dylan Brasher (10, 9b, 1x4) was sent packing by Jahandad Khan, bringing an end to a 27-run second wicket partnership. Sam Elliot (17 not out, 8b) and Arjun Nair (36 not out, 15b, 3x4s, 3x6s) added a quick-fire 55-run partnership off just 23 balls for the fifth wicket that lifted the Stars to 175-4 in the allotted 20 overs. For Shaheens, Jahandad bagged two wickets while Arif dismissed one batter. Pakistan Shaheens will play their next match against Tasmania at the DXC Arena, Darwin on 13 August. **Scores in brief** Melbourne Stars won by 47 runs. Melbourne Stars 175-4, 20 overs (Liam Blackford 55, Ashley Chandrasinghe 47, Arjun Nair 36 not out; Jahandad Khan 2-33, Arif Yaqoob 1-24) Pakistan Shaheens 128-9, 20 overs (Tayyab Tahir 57 not out, Sahibzada Farhan 26; Reiley Mark 4-32, Arjun Nair 2-12).

Hassan wins marathon as Olympic endurance gamble



PARIS (AFP/APP): Sifan Hassan's endurance gamble at the Paris Games finally paid off after she sprinted away for Olympic marathon gold in the French capital on Sunday. The Ethiopian-born Dutch athlete came into the marathon on the back of two bronze medals won in the 5,000m and 10,000m in an astonishing bid for podium placings in three events. And Hassan did not disappoint, holding off Ethiopian Tigst Assefa for victory in an Olympic record of 2hr 22min 55sec. It mirrored Hassan's efforts in the Covid-hit Tokyo Games three years ago when she also won three medals: two golds (5,000m, 10,000m) and a bronze (1500m). Assefa took silver in 2:22.58, with Kenya's Hellen Obiri claiming bronze (2:23.10). "It was not easy," said Hassan. "Every moment in the race I was regretting that I ran the 5,000m and

10,000m. I was telling myself if I hadn't done that, I would feel great today. "From the beginning to the end, it was so hard. Every step of the way, I was thinking, 'Why did I do that? What is wrong with me?' "I've never pushed myself through to the finish line as I did today." Hassan, who won the 2023 London Marathon on her debut at the distance and then produced the second best time ever in winning the Chicago Marathon in October in 2:13.44, said the Olympic gold was a crowning glory. "I was so happy in the London Marathon, but today I'm more happy, I can't believe I'm Olympic marathon champion!" she said. "The marathon is something else. When you do 42 kilometres in more than two hours and 20 minutes, every single step you feel it so hard and so painful. "When I finished,

the whole moment was a release. It is unbelievable. I have never experienced anything like that. Even the other marathons I have run were not close to this." - Gruelling climb, perilous descent - The 42km-long marathon course headed out of central Paris on a loop to Versailles, mimicking a key moment from the French Revolution: the Women's March on Versailles, on October 5, 1789, which led to French King Louis XVI finally agreeing to ratify the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen. The route included a 436m climb and 438m descent. The maximum gradient on the route was 13.5 percent. The 31-year-old Hassan suffered on the gruelling ascent at the 1:38 mark and it looked like that might have been it for her bid for a historic treble. But Hassan is nothing if not a tough competitor and she quickly reeled in the lead group on the perilous descent. Assefa and teammate Amane Beriso Shankule pushed on. The Kenyan trio of Sharon Lokedi, defending champion Peres Jepchirchir and Obiri stuck with the two Ethiopians as they went through 30km in 1:43.59. Hassan was toe-to-toe with the east Africans and at the 33km mark, the pack was down to five, Jepchirchir dropped.



In brief

Six drug dealers arrested

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested six drug dealers and recovered more than 8 kg drugs from their possession during crackdown here on Sunday. According to police spokesman, Rawat police seized 2.5 kg drug from Sohail. Similarly, Jatali police held Iftikhar and recovered 1.6 kg drug from his possession, while, R.A Bazaar police found 1.6 kg drug from Khurram. Following operation, Airport police confiscated 1.3 kg drug from Muzaffar. Additionally, Naseerabad police recovered 600 gram of charas from Yasir and Gujjar Khan police recovered 560 gram of charas from Zakir. Police have registered separate cases against all the accused and started further investigation. City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalid Mehmoos Hamdani commended police teams and emphasized that the crackdown on drug dealers would be continued in order to eradicate crime. He made it clear that illegal businesses like drug dealing would be shut down. No leniency will be observed while dealing with drug dealers, he said.

Cleanliness drive continues

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi Waste Management Company (RWMC) is making all-out efforts to keep the city clear of any problems during rains. According to the RWMC spokesman, the RWMC carried out the cleanliness of nullahs and choked drains during continued rainfall and deputed additional sanitary workers to clean and dredge major drains to avoid urban flooding. He said that additional staff had been assigned duties in three shifts to ensure cleanliness around the clock so that some sanitation-related problems could not become hurdles in the smooth flow of water. He said that complaints received on social media platforms were also being addressed promptly. Meanwhile, the communication teams of RWMC were carrying out its anti-dengue awareness campaign in the various areas of the city to create awareness about the growth, incidence, treatment and prevention of dengue. The teams also distributed waste bags and leaflets among the masses and educated them about the importance of cleanliness and the prevention of dengue. In a message, RWMC has requested the people to keep an eye on junkyards, schools and under-construction buildings which lead to the spread of dengue larvae and also make sure to leave no place wet or with stagnant water.

376,500 cusecs water released

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Sunday released 376,500 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 451,000 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1544.00 feet and was 146.00 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 277,300 cusecs and 219,300 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1209.35 feet, which was 161.35 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 26,500 cusecs and 10,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 352,300, 435,200, 401,200 and 315,900 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 65,500 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 64,200 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

Constitution ensures equal minorities' rights: Naqvi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi has said that minorities in Pakistan have equal rights and the Constitution of Pakistan provides complete guarantees for the protection of their rights.

In his special message on National Minorities' Day, Mohsin Naqvi said, "our religion and constitution teach us to treat minorities with kindness and respect". He stated that our Holy Prophet (PBUH) and Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah also emphasized the protection of minorities' rights.

Interior minister said, "Minorities have played a key role in the country's progress and development. I pay tribute to all minority communities for playing a constructive role in the country's development as their role in this regard cannot be ignored."

He said, "the government is striving to promote social harmony and egalitarian society". "On this day, we must reaffirm

our commitment to take more effective and practical steps to protect the rights of minorities", the minister stressed.

Mohsin Naqvi meets Turkish ambassador Dr. Mehmet Pacaci: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi met with Turkish Ambassador Dr. Mehmet Pacaci at the Ministry of Interior.

During the meeting Pakistan-Turkey bilateral relations and matters of mutual interest were discussed in detail. Furthermore, both sides agreed to enhance cooperation in the fields of security, police, and civil armed forces. It was also decided to send Pakistani police officers to Turkey for training under the exchange program.

On the occasion, the minister said that from August 14 this year, Turkish citizens will be able to obtain free online visas. He added that this step will make it much easier for Turkish brothers and sisters to visit Pakistan.

He stated that he will visit Turkey in October at the invitation of the Turkish Government, where productive steps will be proposed to increase mutual cooperation. The minister mentioned that Pakistanis consider Turkey as their second home. "Both countries have long-standing religious, cultural, and trade ties and we are desirous of further strengthening these relations", he added.

The release of Pakistani prisoners in Turkey was also discussed in the meeting and it was agreed to soon finalize the agreement in this regard.

Turkish Ambassador Dr. Mehmet Pacaci said that Turkey renders huge importance to the brotherly relations with Pakistan and will continue the cooperation with Pakistan in various fields. Federal Secretary Interior Khurram Ali Agha and Additional Secretary Interior Riffat Mukhtar Raja were also present on the occasion.

Chairman NPC emphasizes educating youth

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Nazaria-i-Pakistan Council (NPC), Mian Mohammad Javed Sunday highlighted the need to educate the younger generation about the sacrifices rendered by our forefathers and national heroes for acquiring a separate homeland.

He said, "Transferring the legacy of our forefathers to the younger generation is our national responsibility." "I belong to the generation who has witnessed the creation of Pakistan, enthusiasm and countless sacrifices of lives, property and honour for the sake of the country. Women and children were even part of this struggle who fearlessly used to raise the slogans "Ley Key Rahain Gey Pakistan" and "Ban Key Rahey Ga Pakistan", he said.

In an interview in connection with the Independence Day, falling on August 14, Prof. Javed said, "Independence Day is a perfect time to acknowl-

edge the numerous sacrifices rendered by our forefathers who gifted this homeland, it is our utmost responsibility to make this country strong, invincible and prosperous for the next generations".

He pointed out, "One thing shall be remembered that Pakistan was established through a mass movement under the leadership of Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah as per the vision of Allama Muhammad Iqbal to enable Muslims to live with religious and ideological independence.

"It is heartening to see that still people have the same enthusiasm and patriotism about running our country according to the principles described by the founder of Pakistan in his speeches however the only need is to foster unity and work for the betterment of country", he said.

Prof. Javed said that Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, in his speeches, has always advocated the principle of equality and

justice to ensure the basic rights and well being of humanity. "Quaid-i-Azam's thoughts to implement an Islamic democratic system based on equality, justice and human values for all are the beacon of light for the nation", he said.

"Our forefathers have sacrificed their lives to acquire this homeland on the basis of an ideology and now it is our responsibility to transfer this heritage and ideology to the future generations to make this country a prosperous one", he said.

The chairman urged the nation to follow the guiding principles of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and promote the ideology of Pakistan in real spirit. About the NPC activities, the chairman said, "The council is diligently working on the promotion of the ideology of Pakistan through conducting programmes in educational institutions besides using social media network works in line with modern requirements."

Police remain silent on SI's misconduct

ISLAMABAD (APP): A citizen Usman Ghani has accused Islamabad police high-ups of shielding a sub-inspector Saif ul Islam who was allegedly involved in manhandling, illegal detention and torturing at Shalimar Police Station.

According to details, the applicant Usman Ghani visited Shalimar Police Station with a companion for the solution of a matter between the two parties. Upon arrival, Sub-Inspector Saif-ul-Islam allegedly questioned Usman's identity in a disrespectful manner. When Usman asked for the officer's name, the sub-inspector reportedly dragged him to the lockup, detaining him without any formal charges. The plaintiff Usman claimed his requests for a

glass of water were ignored, and an hour later, he was coerced into signing a blank paper. He was also threatened with false charges if he disclosed the incident.

The citizen Usman Ghani has also submitted a written complaint to the DIG's office, but no action was taken despite of several follow-ups. According to Usman, after the media reported the incident, he received a call from the SDPO Circle Office. However, when he visited the office, the SP was unavailable and his calls went unanswered.

The sources indicated that police officers, in coordination with Sub-Inspector Saif-ul-Islam, delayed responding to Usman's complaint, possibly attempting

to prevent CCTV footage from being made public.

The complainant expressed frustration over the lack of response from the Islamabad police, questioning why the authorities were protecting a lower-ranking officer.

In his appeal to the DIG Operations, the IG Islamabad and the Federal Minister of Interior, Usman sought justice, pointing out that the delay in action raises serious concerns about police accountability.

He questioned whether similar treatment would have been meted out if the victim had been a relative of a senior officer. Usman urged the authorities to ensure that justice prevails for all citizens, regardless of their status.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi in a meeting with Turkish Ambassador Dr. Mehmet Pacaci. —APP Photo

Youth is future of Pakistan: Mashhood

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman of the Prime Minister Youth Programme (PMYP) Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan has said that youth comprising 65 per cent of the population was the future of Pakistan.

Talking to APP here Sunday, Mashhood said the young generation can play a major role in the prosperity and stability of the country and Pakistan has a talented youth and has a pivotal role in advancing the country towards fast-paced development.

"We are dedicated to preparing our youth to excel in diverse fields, from technology-driven industries to traditional crafts. This holistic approach will enable them to contribute meaningfully to Pakistan's socio-economic development," he added.

The Chairman PMYP added that youth were misled in the recent past from the right path. "We know what is happening in Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Libya and Yemen; where youth is on the street, unemployed and without education."

The same attempt, he said was also made here to destroy Pakistan but Pakistan under the slogan of Azm-e-Istehkam" or the Resolve for Stability has a comprehensive plan showing Pakistan's commitment to securing long-term stability including economic, diplomatic and security components to achieve a stable and prosperous Pakistan.

Two members bike lifters gang apprehended

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have apprehended two members of a gang involved in motorcycle theft and recovered 07 stolen motorcycles from their possession during an operation here Sunday.

According to police spokesman, Taxila police conducted raid and arrested motorcycle lifters gang who were identified as Waqar and Hassan Ali.

Police have registered separate cases against both of them and further investigation is in progress.

SP Potohar Nasir Nawaz praised the Taxila police for their team work and assured that the suspects would be brought to court with solid evidence to ensure their punishment.

Governor Kundi calls on Imam of Masjid-i-Nabvi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi held a special meeting with Dr. Salah Bin Muhammad Al-Budair, the Imam of the Masjid-i-Nabvi.

During the meeting, Governor Faisal Kundi welcomed Dr. Al-Budair to Pakistan and expressed the deep affection and respect Pakistan's people have for Saudi Arabia.

He praised Saudi Arabia's leadership for its role in the development of the Kingdom and emphasized the importance of peace, stability, and interfaith harmony in Pakistan.

Governor Kundi requested

Dr. Al-Budair's prayers for peace and prosperity in the province and invited him to come Peshawar during next visit to Pakistan.

Dr. Salah Bin Muhammad Al-Budair commended Governor Kundi's character and sentiments, reflecting the broader feelings of the Muslim Ummah. He affirmed Saudi Arabia's commitment to peace and described the relationship between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan as one of enduring Islamic brotherhood.

He assured that his prayers are with Pakistan, especially Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, for peace and development and prom-

ised to visit Peshawar during his next trip to Pakistan. Dr. Al-Budair also invited Governor Faisal Karim Kundi to his home in Madinah on his next visit.

Saudi Ambassador Nawaf Saeed Al-Maliki hosted a special event in honor of Islamic scholars and notable figures.

The event was attended by Governor Faisal Karim Kundi, Sindh Governor Kamran Tessori, and a large number of scholars from various Islamic sects. During the event, Saudi Ambassador Al-Maliki addressed Governor Kundi as his brother and introduced him to Dr. Al-Budair.

DIG orders foolproof security

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Territory Deputy Inspector General (DIG), Syed Ali Raza on Sunday directed police officers to make foolproof security arrangements to ensure the safety and security of citizens on the occasion of Independence Day.

According to a police spokesman, an important meeting under the chairmanship of DIG Islamabad was held to ensure foolproof security arrangements on the occasion of Independence Day. On this occasion, SSPA officers, Zonal SPs, SDPOs and SHO were also present.

DIG issued instructions to all the officers to organize rallies on the occasion of Independence Day in their respective areas. He emphasized that all the officers stay in the field and ensure law and order and traffic flow, take action against one-wheeling. "Also initiate action against one-wheeling and workshops manufacturing motorcycles for this purpose", he added.

Additionally, DIG Ali Raza ordered a crackdown on cars and motorcycles with unauthorised or fancy number plates. He instructed the deployment

of special forces at entertainment venues and markets, as well as mobile patrols from police stations, CTD commandos, and Dolphin Force units to address illegal activities.

"Harassment and violation of the law will not be tolerated under any circumstances" he said adding that on the occasion of Independence Day, there should be an effective crackdown against law-breaking elements.

Islamabad Police is taking all possible measures to protect the life and property of the citizens, said DIG Islamabad Syed Ali Raza.

River Chenab likely to experience medium flood

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Flood Commission (FFC) has said that medium flood is expected in River Chenab and medium to high level flows also likely in nullahs in catchments of rivers Ravi and Chenab in next 24 hours.

According to daily FFC report on Sunday, at present River Indus is flowing in "Medium Flood" in Taunsa-Guddu reach. It is in "Low Flood" in Tarbela-Kalabagh reach and at Sukkur Barrage while River Kabul continues to flow in "Low Flood" at Nowshera.

All other major rivers in the Indus River System i.e.

Rivers Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, and Sutlej are discharging normal flows, the report said. The current Combined Live Storage of the country's major reservoirs (Tarbela, Mangla & Chashma) stands at 10,353 MAF (77.53% of the total live storage capacity of 13,354 MAF).

According to the Flood Forecasting Division (FFD), Lahore, Yesterday's trough of Westerly Wave over northern parts of Afghanistan lies over northern parts of the country and yesterday's upper air cyclonic circulation over central Jharkhand (India) lies over south

Uttar Pradesh (India).

Active monsoon trough extends from Bay of Bengal to Northeastern Punjab. Moderate to strong moist currents are penetrating upper parts of the country from Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal up to 5,000 feet. Seasonal Low persists over northeast Balochistan.

According to FFD, Lahore scattered to widespread thunderstorm rain of Moderate to Heavy intensity with isolated Very Heavy Falls is expected over the upper catchments of all the major rivers along with Islamabad during the next 24 hours.

Pakistan – a country with boundless culture, heritage

ISLAMABAD (APP): The history of mankind is rich with countless occurrences – wars, conquests, rise and fall of dynasties, renaissance, revolutions, bloodshed, religious or social extremism, attire, food and festivals evolving specific civilizations.

Each era had its own dynamics, gains and losses, intolerance and rigidity, customs and traditions as well as religious practices. People in those eras used to abide by different, norms, laws and the religious practices in vogue then, strictly gluing to their traditions and verdicts of tribal rulers, kings or sultans.

After the long eras of traditions, religion or creed based empires like Romans, Greeks, Babylon's, Omiad's and Abbasids caliphates - the emergence of new codes transformed ancient system to pluralist societies. Ottoman Empire could be perhaps the last broader and diverse mention worthy empire, existing on basis of religion but

housing people from different communities, caste and creeds.

With its dismantling during early 20th century, a wave of nationalism emerged wherein caste, creed and races learnt to live together in one state. Then, the binding force among them was nationalism - over and above their caste, creed or religion.

Pakistan is also a unique country, boasting of its decade long struggle to get independence purely on a religious slogan and sustain thereon as a separate nation with slight tinge of boundless cultures and heritage mingled with the tints of pluralism.

Here the people of different caste, creed, customs and language live together and for them being Pakistani is the foremost recognition and a binding force for them motherland comes first.

"Every nation dreams of national strength and prosperity and for this, it needs rule of law, social justice and a peaceful soci-

ety," remarked MNA Dr Ramesh Kumar Vankwani. "Countries or nations with discriminatory policies ultimately lose their identity as 'United They Stand and Divided They Fall'."

Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah materialized the dream of great, poet and philosopher Allam Dr Muhammad Iqbal for an independent homeland for Muslims of sub-continent where people following different caste and creed could live together with harmony. "For us Pakistan is our mainstay. No matter to which religion, caste or creed we belong to. Our foremost identity and our top priority is, and must be, Pakistan," Vankwani said.

Seeing from the religious or historic perspective, we see the followers of different religions. But, once they travel outside Pakistan – they are Pakistanis – over and above their religion, caste, or creed. For them, becoming a Pakistani comes first and above all. Chief Executive

Officer (CEO), Indus River Valley Institute (IRVI), Zain Mustafa said, "The present land we call Pakistan, its ancient people of different places and the River Indus, have always been a space of inclusivity, diversity and tolerance. That is what makes Pakistan unique, its cultural heritage so colorful, rich and diverse and its traditions a unique asset to be celebrated."

"From one outer border to the other edge - Nagarparkar to Kalash - Pakistan has 9,000 years history where Muslims have been living together with Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, Christians and followers of other religions," Zain stated.

About unique cultural heritage, he said, as we are the gateway to East, we are also melange of all the fluid knowledge brought here through ancient Silk Road and before. "Siblings to Sumeria and Egypt, there is more to celebrate than not. These are cultural roots embedded in our land that bind us as one

nation and one people."

CEO, Centre for Culture and Development (C2D), Dr Nadeem Omar Tarar also see Pakistan as a unique state in terms of geography, culture and ethnic diversity. "We can see Pakistan as a country that has not been carved out of an ethnic or linguistic group but almost from a geological space providing separate homeland for Muslims of the sub-continent."

He said the ethnic and cultural variations are beauty of our country integrating people from different caste, creed and languages together. "Being diverse in culture, Pakistanis adopted Urdu as a shared language to be spoken by the entire nation along with other regional languages spoken in different regions of the country."

He mentioned that archeological sites are the signposts of history that predate Pakistan. Although, Pakistan as a territorial unit came into existence in 1947 but its geography is archaic hav-

ing sites like Harappa, Mohenjodaro, Mehargarh and Taxila.

"We have lots of archeological sites to explain our heritage. There are traces of ancient civilizations into our contemporary life," Dr Tarar noted. "Utensils present in Taxila Museum used 3000 years ago are still used by the people in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The material culture of archeological sites still resonates in our daily life."

"There is a sense of unity and Pakistan can employ these archeological sites to promote tourism and boost its prehistoric heritage. Anybody visiting here can clearly see a Muslim country, responsibly custodian of Buddhist, Hindu, Jain, Christian religious sites and monuments," he said. Just to conclude, we have a lot to promote our cultural diversity and image across the globe as a peace loving society and to erase the imprints of an extremist society and nail nefarious propaganda of our enemies.

Reconstructed of highway

TIRINKOT (Pajhwok): Some residents of Uruzgan have urged IEA to reconstruct the Uruzgan-Kandahar highway in a standard manner. Local officials say they have shared the problem with the ministry concerned and reconstruction work on the highway will be launched in near future. The Uruzgan-Kandahar highway is about 165 kilometres long, many parts of this highway were damaged due to the past conflict and flash floods.

The Frontier Post

AFGHANISTAN

Safar 06 1446 — Monday, August 12, 2024

1,200 complaints registered

KABUL (TOLONews): Abdul Ghafar Farooq, spokesperson for Ministry of Virtue and Vice, told TOLONews that over 1,200 complaints have been registered in the ministry's Complaint Hearing Commission in the past six months. Registered complaints nearly 200 cases have been resolved and some are still under review. Abdul Ghafar Farooq stated, "The total number of registered complaints has reached 1,221, of which 170 have been resolved."

Ex-MP Mujahid case yet to be finalised

KABUL (Pajhwok): The Ministry of Interior (MoI) says the case of Allah Gul Mujahid, a former Wolesi Jirga member, is in progress and has not been finalised yet.

Soon after the IEA takeover, Allah Gul Mujahid was arrested in Kabul, but then released and he left the country for neighbouring Iran.

From there, the then lawmaker went to Turkey before returning to Afghanistan after being persuaded by Contact Commission in July 2023.

On May 12, Kabul police said Mujahid had been arrested in connection with the murder of Qari Saeddullah, who was killed



on February 28, 2024.

The Contact Commission had said Mujahid was held in connection with the murder case, not for his past actions. Recently, some social media users wrote that the ex-legislator had been executed.

But Mufti Abdul Matin Qane, spokesman for MoI, told Pajhwok the case of Mujahid was in progress and was yet to be finalised.

Meanwhile, the Supreme Court's media office also rejected as mere rumours reports regarding Mujahid's execution and said his case was in progress.

Imported hurdles bring solar car making to a standstill

BALKH (TOLONews): A solar car manufacturing company in Balkh province, which began operations six years ago with an investment of over six million dollars, is now facing serious challenges.

The company's officials stated that they have purchased a significant amount of lithium batteries from abroad but have yet to obtain the necessary permits to import them into the country.

According to them, they have produced over 170 cars during this period but have not been able to sell a single one.

Haseebullah Barakzai, the director of the solar car manufacturing company, said, "Amin Noor Manufacturing Company started its operations six years ago with the goal of producing electric cars for the sake of the environment. Since then, we have produced 174 cars. However, due to the non-arrival of lithium batteries, which were being imported from abroad, the current government has not granted permission despite our three requests.

Consequently, that section of our company has been technically halted. To continue employing our workers, we have activated the battery production section, where we produce 24 types of batteries ranging from 30 to 220 amps."

Some workers have called on officials in the caretaker government to support the activities of this factory to resume car production.

Qaedmad Naseri, a worker, said, "The batteries we produce here are of very high quality, and our request to the government is to support manufacturing factories so that job opportunities are created for the youth, allowing them to serve their country."

Baradar meets with Ulema over challenges



KABUL (Ariana News): Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar met with members of the Ulema Council of Nimroz province to discuss a range of issues including access to clean water, border issues and others.

The meeting was also attended by the acting ministers of Foreign Affairs, Communications and Information Technology, Water and Energy, as well as the chairman of Da

Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat (DABS).

During the meeting, Ulema Council members praised the IEA for the improved security in the country and emphasized that the people of Nimroz are committed to supporting and adhering to the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan's policies.

The council raised concerns about extending electricity to remote districts, ensuring access to clean drinking water, strengthen-

ing telecommunications networks, expanding telecommunications coverage in remote areas, providing necessary irrigation water, and addressing border issues, among other problems.

Baradar responded by highlighting that various projects are currently underway across different sectors, which have significantly improved living conditions.

Baradar acknowledged that after over four decades of war, there is now an

opportunity for national development, though many inherited problems remain.

He assured the representatives that the Islamic Emirate is committed to gradually addressing these issues in line with the priorities of the people, given time and resources.

The issues raised by the Nimroz Ulema Council members during the meeting were referred to the relevant ministries, which were urged to follow up where possible.

IE urges British diplomat to assist Afghanistan



KABUL (Ariana News): Noor Jalal Jalali, the Acting Minister of Public Health, met with Robert Dixon, the Chargé d'Affaires of the British Embassy to Afghanistan, and asked the UK for help in the health sector.

According to a statement issued by the ministry, the two officials dis-

cussed the treatment of drug addicts, cooperation in maternal and child health, and attracting international aid to Afghanistan's health sector.

"Many addicts were treated in the past two years, and a large number of them are still being treated in the center of Kabul and the addiction treatment

centers of the provinces," Jalali said.

He also noted the importance of cooperation of international organizations and asked the UK for assistance.

Dixon meanwhile pledged his country's continuous cooperation for Afghanistan's health sector, the statement read.

New Kabul: Progress on Afghanistan's largest urban project

KABUL (TOLONews): The Ministry of Urban Development and Housing has announced that work on the second section of the first phase of the New Kabul project in Deh Sabz is currently underway, with 25% completion so far.

Kamal Afghan, the spokesperson for the

Ministry of Urban Development and Housing, told TOLONews that the estimated cost of constructing the first phase of this project is \$6.5 billion.

According to Afghan, investors from Turkey, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and Iran have expressed interest in the construction of this major project.

Kamal Afghan told TOLONews: "Currently, thank God, work is ongoing in the second section of the first phase. The practical work of this project has progressed 25% by a private company, and every day, officials from our ministry monitor the work to ensure that fundamental tasks proceed according to the plan."

The Ministry of Urban Development and Housing has described the New Kabul project as one of the largest projects in the country and has stated that its implementation is a priority for the Islamic Emirate.

The New Kabul project,

covering an area of 740 square kilometers north of Kabul, has the capacity to accommodate 3 million people.

Some workers on the New Kabul project are pleased with the job opportunities provided and have stated that undertaking job-creating projects in any part of the country can have a positive impact on the national economy.

Saifullah, a worker on the New Kabul project, said: "We've been working here for almost a year, and we are happy to earn a halal livelihood for our families."

Abdul Mubin, another worker, said: "Regarding New Kabul, we are also happy for our fellow citizens who will come here, obtain plots, and get blocks. We are pleased."

Meanwhile, officials from the contracting company for the New Kabul project told TOLONews that currently, around 600 people have been provided with jobs in the first phase.

Sayed Moqadam Amin,

the head of the contracting company for the New Kabul project, said: "Work is actively ongoing on roads and water supply in three directions, sections A, B, and C. Every day, over 600 people are engaged in work with heavy and light machinery."

Shakir Yaqoubi, an expert in economic affairs, said: "The more this project is implemented according to standards, the more likely it is to succeed and be accepted by the donors, which could lead to increased assistance in the project's implementation."

According to information from the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing, the New Kabul project is one and a half times larger than the current city of Kabul.

The project plan was designed during the presidency of Hamid Karzai in cooperation with a Japanese company and includes the areas of Deh Sabz, Kalakan, Shakardara, Qarabagh, Istalif, and part of Bagram district.

Five people killed, three injured in Afghanistan last week

KABUL (Pajhwok): Last week, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) rejected the International Organisation for Migration's (IOM) report that eight million Afghans have migrated in the past nearly five years, IEA also rebut claim that Daesh wing present in Afghanistan is a threat to Europe, and the torture video of an Afghan in Iran sparked different reactions.

Casualties: Last week, five people were killed and three others injured in Afghanistan in different incidents.

Two people disturbing security were killed by security forces in the Bagram district of Parwan province.

Last week, three people were killed and as many injured as a result of a clash between Jogyan in Sar-i-Pul City, the capital of Sar-i-Pul province.

Reports said that seven people were killed and one injured in Afghanistan in the previous week.

Before the regime change in August 2021, hundreds of people, including civilians, security forces and insurgents, would get killed and injured every week.

Demand for reopening embassies:

Last week, Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) Deputy Prime

Minister Mawlawi Abdul Kabir during a meeting with the ambassadors and diplomats of Great Britain, Canada, Italy, France, South Korea, Australia, Germany and USA extended invitation for the reopening of their embassies in Kabul and conducted their affairs from Kabul, the meeting took place in Doha.

IOM's report rejected: The Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (MoRR) has rejected the IOM's report released on Aug 2nd in which it was stated that nearly five million Afghans migrated to European countries from Afghanistan.

The Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (MoRR) said: "No major migration in Afghanistan took place since Soviet Union invasion, unfortunately, in order to attract the attention of donors, some organizations publish false information about Afghanistan, which directly affects the Afghan people."

Torture of Afghan refugee in Iran sparked reactions:

Some social media users last week posted a video in which an Afghan immigrant named Seyed Mehdi Mousavi was brutally tortured by Iranian police. In this video, it can be seen that the said Afghan migrant fell to the ground

and an Iranian officer put his knee on his neck, and around this young migrant, women can be seen begging for his release.

Roznama Itlaat reported that the victim's name is Seyed Mehdi Mousavi, he is a resident of Nicha locality of Helmand's Naumish district and he was tortured by Iranian police officers in Damavand area of Tehran.

The Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (MoRR) has voiced deep concern over the mistreatment of Afghan refugees in Iran, following the circulation of disturbing images on social media.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) Afghanistan strongly condemned the recent incidents of ill-treatment by the Iranian security officials with the Afghan refugees in Tehran.

A statement from the ministry said such ill-treatment has aroused the deep concern of the Afghan government, and biased groups are trying to manipulate such incidents to cause frictions in the positive and good relations between the two countries.

Hence, in addition to expressing gratitude to the Iranian nation for hosting Afghan refugees in Iran, Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan-Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation

urged the authorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran to identify the perpetrators of the recent inappropriate incidents and don't allow anyone to violate the rights of Afghan refugees, causing the frustration of the Afghan people.

Last week, an Iranian security official stressed that illegal immigrants should leave Iran by the end of this year. Ahmad Raza Radan, a senior Iranian security official, told IRNA that illegal migrants should leave Iran by the end of this year and return to their country of origin.

Sayed Rasoul Mosavi, deputy Iranian Foreign Minister, said that prejudice behaviour against refugees was the agenda of strangers.

On wrote on his x.com that no authority or individual in Iran accept biasness against refugees and consider such acts against Islamic brotherhood and sprite of hospitality.

He said: "The way Iranian are compliance to laws and regulations similarly foreign individuals are compliance and respect Iranian laws."

UN concerns against Daesh unfounded:

Last week, UN Counterterrorism Office Head Vladimir Voronkov said Daesh, or the Islamic State, in Afghanistan

"remains a significant concern", but the Islamic Emirate rejects such apprehensions as mere "propaganda". He said: "ISIL-K has improved its financial and logistical capabilities in the past six months, including by tapping into Afghan and Central Asian diasporas for support."

But Zabihullah Mujahid, chief spokesman for Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA), wrote on X: "Concerns raised by Western countries and institutions regarding the extensive and escalating threat of ISIS in Afghanistan are unfounded and driven by propaganda."

According to him, the security forces of Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) have undertaken a serious fight against the ISIS in Afghanistan and have significantly weakened them.

"Furthermore, the entire territory of Afghanistan remains firmly under the control of the Islamic Emirate, leaving no room for independent or external groups to operate," Mujahid added.

Canada support to Afghanistan:

Last week Canada announced three million aid to Afghanistan and said the amount would be dispatched in 2024 as part of Ottawa humanitarian aid to Afghanistan.

"We work here, but they take us away, calling us beggars. They don't give us anything, nor do they allow us to work," said Waris, a child laborer.

"I don't beg; I work. There is no one else at home to work for us," said Sediqa, another child laborer.

The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs said it is supporting the children.

Samiullah Ebrahim, the spokesperson of the Ministry of Labor and

Social Affairs, said: "Those children who are introduced to the Ministry by the committee for collecting beggars, most of whom are engaged in hard labor, will be taken in by the Ministry in orphanages where they will be cared for."

Earlier, the United Nations said on World Day Against Child Labour that approximately 160 million children worldwide are deprived of education and engaged in work.

Child laborers in Kabul plead for govt support



KABUL (TOLONews): A number of child laborers in the capital said that due to the absence of a guardian in their families, they are forced to work on the streets from dawn to dusk.

They are asking the acting government officials for support. Zahra is one of these working children who, with her small hands, carries the heavy burden of her family and shines shoes to cover the expenses.

This 10-year-old girl said

that she is the sole breadwinner for her family of six.

Zahra shared her challenges with a TOLONews reporter: "My father is sick and in the hospital, and my mother doesn't work and stays at home. The Taliban had also taken me, not allowing me to work."

Other children, like Zahra, are also busy working in the corners of the capital. They urge the acting government officials to cooperate with their families.

"We work here, but they take us away, calling us beggars. They don't give us anything, nor do they allow us to work," said Waris, a child laborer.

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Herat potato yield up 20 per cent



Herat, farmers are busy harvesting their years' worth of effort from the potato fields.

Mohammad Rasul, one of these farmers, planted potatoes on three jiribs of land this year.

He said that due to adequate rainfall and sufficient water in the Harirod River this year, potato fields have yielded more crops compared to last year.

"This year, there is more water compared to previous years, and there was a lot of rain; the potatoes yield is very good," Mohammad Rasul told TOLONews.

Meanwhile, some other farmers are concerned about the decrease in potato prices in the markets.

"When four kilograms of potatoes are imported from Iran, they are sold for 120 afghani (around \$1.7), but

our domestic potatoes, which are of the best quality, are sold for 55 afghani per four kilograms," said Jalil Ahmad Sadeqi, a farmer.

"We bought four kilograms of potatoes for 100 to 120 afghani and purchased chemical fertilizers at a very high price, but now that our potato harvest season has arrived, they are buying from us at 50 to 45 afghani per four kilograms, and if they buy at a good price, it's 55 afghani," said Basir Ahmad, another farmer.

According to the Herat Department of Agriculture and Irrigation, this year, 1,200 jiribs of land in the province are used for potato cultivation, and over 22,000 metric tons of potatoes will be harvested in Herat this year.

Prime Minister reaffirms commitment to minority rights

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has reaffirmed the government's commitment to safeguarding the rights of minorities as enshrined in the 1973 Constitution.

Addressing a gathering at the Pakistan Muslim League (N) headquarters here on Sunday on Minorities Day, the Prime Minister emphasized the significance of August 11, a date that commemorates Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's historic speech advocating equal rights for all citizens, irrespective of their religion.

In his address, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif welcomed minority representatives and military officers, highlighting the diverse makeup of the nation. He reiterated that Quaid-e-Azam had envisioned a Pakistan where everyone, including Muslims and minorities, would enjoy complete freedom to practice their faiths, a vision that continues to guide the country today.

He condemned the ongoing violence in Gaza, denouncing the atrocities committed by the Israeli government under Prime Minister Netanyahu. He criticized the global community's muted response to these acts, calling it a grave failure of international organizations tasked with maintaining global peace.

Reflecting on the contributions of Pakistan's minority communities, the Prime Minister acknowledged their significant role in the country's progress and prosperity. He highlighted the contributions of Christian, Hindu, Sikh, and Parsi communities to various sectors, including education, defence, trade, and justice. The Prime Minister paid special tribute to minority figures who have served the nation in times of war and peace, citing examples such as Cecil Chaudhry and Justice Cornelius.

The Prime Minister also recognized the historical challenges faced by minorities in Pakistan, emphasizing the need for ongoing efforts by both federal and provincial governments to ensure their security and protection. He reassured the minority

communities that the government is committed to addressing their concerns and improving their quality of life.

He reiterated the PML-N's longstanding support for minority rights, stating that the party, under the leadership of Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, has always advocated for the inclusion and protection of minorities. He concluded by reaffirming the government's dedication to upholding the vision of Quaid-e-Azam and ensuring that minorities continue to play an integral role in the nation's future.

Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar, Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Ch Salik Hussain also spoke.

Federal Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazir Tarar, senior PML-N leader Khawaja Saad Rafique and other federal and provincial ministers, parliamentarians, representatives of minorities, senior civil and forces officers and a number of citizens attended the ceremony.



LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif addressing a ceremony organized in connection with National Minorities Day on Sunday.

Trump campaign says it was hacked, blames Iran

NEW YORK (Reuters): Donald Trump's US presidential campaign said some of its internal communications were hacked and blamed the Iranian government, citing past hostilities between Trump and Iran without providing direct evidence.

The Republican's campaign statement came shortly after news website Politico reported it had begun receiving emails in July from an anonymous source offering authentic documents from inside Trump's operation, including a report about running mate JD Vance's "potential vulnerabilities."

Reuters has not inde-

pendently verified the identity of the alleged hackers or their motivation.

The Trump campaign referred to a Friday report from Microsoft researchers that said Iranian government-tied hackers tried breaking into the account of a "high-ranking official" on a US presidential campaign in June.

The hackers had taken over an account belonging to a former political advisor and then used it to target the official, the report said. That report did not provide further details on the targets' identities.

A Microsoft spokesperson declined to name the targeted officials or provide additional details after the report was published.

Iran's permanent mission to the United Nations in New York said in an email that "the Iranian government neither possesses nor harbours any intent or motive to interfere in the United States presidential election."

"We do not accord any credence to such reports," it added in response to the Trump campaign's allegations. On Friday, in response to Microsoft's findings, Iran's UN mission told Reuters that its cyber capabilities were

"defensive and proportionate to the threats it faces," and that it had no plans to launch cyberattacks.

The former president had tense relations with Iran while in office. Under Trump, the United States killed Iranian military commander Qassem Soleimani in 2020 and withdrew from a multilateral Iran nuclear deal.

"The Iranians know that President Trump will stop their reign of terror just like he did in his first four years in the White House," Cheung said.

Trump survived an assassination attempt in July. While there have been no suggestions that the suspect was linked to Iran, CNN reported last month that the US had intelligence about an Iranian plot against Trump. Iran has denied such charges.

Late last month, a senior intelligence official told reporters in a briefing that Tehran and Moscow maintain their same presidential preferences as in past cycles, where Iranian operatives will attempt to tear down the Republican ticket while Russia has made efforts to smear Democrats, according to prior intelligence community assessments.

China backs Iran in defending security

BEIJING (Reuters): China supports Iran in defending its "sovereignty, security and national dignity," Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi told Iran's acting foreign minister in a phone call on Sunday, according to a statement by China's foreign ministry.

In the phone call, Wang repeated Beijing's denunciation of the assassination of Hamas chief Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran on July 31, saying the strike had violated Iran's sovereignty and threatened regional stability.

Iran and the Palestinian group Hamas have accused Israel of carrying out strike that killed Haniyeh.

Israel has not claimed or denied responsibility for the killing, which has fueled concern that the war between Israel and Hamas in the Gaza Strip was turning into a wider Middle East war.

4.4 magnitude earthquake shakes Swat

PESHAWAR (INP): Tremors were felt in Swat, Mingora, and surrounding areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as an earthquake with a magnitude of 4.4 struck the region on Sunday.

According to the Seismological Centre, the earthquake's depth was recorded at 200 kilometres, with the epicentre located in the Hindu Kush mountain range. Experts note that frequent earthquakes have become the norm in the subcontinent, warning that if this trend continues, it could potentially disrupt land connectivity between certain parts of Pakistan and India.

Zelenskyy indirectly acknowledges daring military incursion onto Russian soil

KYIV, Ukraine (AP): Days after Ukraine began a surprise military incursion into Russia's Kursk border region, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has broken the government's silence on it by indirectly acknowledging the ongoing military actions to "push the war out into the aggressor's territory."

Zelenskyy's comment came in his nightly address late Saturday.

Ukraine's incursion into Russia continued for a sixth day Sunday. It's the largest such attack since Moscow launched its full-scale invasion on Feb. 24, 2022 and is unprecedented for its use of Ukrainian military units on Russian soil. Ukraine's raid into Russia caught Moscow

unaware and was an embarrassment to Russian military leaders who have scrambled to contain the breach. Evacuation of civilians living in Russia's border areas with Ukraine continued Sunday. Russian state television aired footage of evacuees at a tent camp in the city of Kursk. According to the report by RTR, more than 20 temporary accommodation centers have been set up in the region.

The exact aims of the operation remain unclear, and Ukrainian military officials have adopted a policy of secrecy, presumably to ensure its success. Military experts have said that it is likely intended to draw Russian reserves away from the intense fighting in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region, while a presidential adviser suggested that it may strengthen Kyiv's hand in any future negotiations with Russia.

But Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said Sunday that Ukraine "understands perfectly well" that the recent attacks

"make no sense from a military point of view."

"The Kyiv regime is continuing its terrorist activity with the sole purpose of intimidating the peaceful population of Russia," she added.

Overnight into Sunday, a Russian drone and missile barrage on Kyiv killed two people, including a 4-year-old boy.

Russia attacked Ukraine with four ballistic missiles and 57 Shahed drones, Ukraine's air force said. Air defenses shot down 53 of the drones.

The bodies of a 35-year old man and his son were found under rubble after missile fragments fell on a residential area in Kyiv's suburban Brovary district, according to Ukraine's State Emergency Service. Another three people in the district were wounded in the attack. It was the second time this

month that Kyiv has been targeted, said Serhii Popko, head of the Kyiv City Military Administration.

Popko said ballistic missiles didn't reach the capital, but that suburbs took the hit, while drones aiming for the capital were shot down.

Zelenskyy, citing preliminary information, said that Russia had used a North Korean missile in the strike. Ukraine and the U.S. have previously said that Russia has used North Korean missiles in the war.

Zelenskyy reiterated calls to Western allies to step up assistance to Ukraine, and that "to really stop Russian terror, we need not only a full-fledged air shield that will protect all our cities and communities, but also strong decisions from partners — decisions that will remove restrictions on our defensive actions."

Indo-Pak javelin rivalry at Paris Olympics sends rare peace message back home

KARACHI / NEW DELHI ((AA): As Pakistan's Arshad Nadeem won a gold medal in the men's javelin in Paris on Thursday, thousands of miles away, his close Indian rival Neeraj Chopra's mother was among the firsts to congratulate him.

Back home, Nadeem's mother, swamped by hundreds of cheering crowds in her remote village of Mian Channu town of northeastern Punjab province, did not forget to reciprocate Chopra's mother's gesture immediately.

The hulking javelin thrower broke a 118-year Olympic record with a staggering 92.97-meter throw, comfortably beating his arch-rival Chopra who had to settle for a silver medal.

It not only ended Pakistan's 40-year gold medal drought but also marked the first individual gold for the South Asian country, as all of the medals have come through field hockey.

"I am very happy for him (Nadeem). He is also like a son to me," Saroj Devi, Chopra's mother, told reporters outside her home in the Panipat district of India's northern Haryana state.

"It makes no difference if he has won the gold and we have won the silver. It's all about hard work," Devi, attired in brown shalwar-kameez (a loose trouser and a shirt) and covering her head with a matching dupatta (long sheet), said in Punjabi language with a patent Haryanvi accent.

"I am happy with the silver (medal)."

Paying back in the same coin, Nadeem's mother, Razia Parveen wished Chopra luck in the future.

"He (Chopra) is a good friend and brother of Arshad. He is very much like Arshad to me," she told Anadolu.

lose. No issues if he (Chopra) could not win this time. He can make it next time," she went to say.

The two mothers' magnanimity and sportsmanship earned accolades from both sides of the border as netizens took to social media platforms to praise the gesture.

"Mothers are the same" remained the top trend on social media as sports lovers from both countries shared video clips of the two.

"If governments are in the hands of mothers, they will never allow wars," commented one user, referring to a string of disputes between the two nuclear neighbors, who have fought three full-fledged wars since 1947.

Already heightened tensions between the two sides have further ebbed following India's unilateral decision to strip the disputed Jammu and Kashmir valley of longstanding special status in August 2019, prompting Islamabad to downgrade its diplomatic relations with New Delhi.

Rivals and friends

Javelin has been a little-acknowledged sport in cricket-frenzied Pakistan. It's Nadeem who brought this sport to the limelight in Pakistan after he finished fifth in the event in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics with a best attempt of 84.62m.

Chopra had won the gold medal with an 87.58m throw. The two have faced off each other on six occasions, and it is the first time Nadeem defeated Chopra in the Paris Olympics.

Moment of hope

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi also lauded Devi for her comments about Nadeem. "The interview of your mother showed the spirit of a sports family. The way she said about the gold medal and she said 'he (Nadeem) is also my son'... this is the spirit. I

want to congratulate the family," Modi said in a telephone call to Chopra.

Impressed with the mothers' gestures, peace activists urged the two governments to take the lead to resume the long-stalled talks between the two arch-rivals.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapr chairing a meeting on launch of Public Complaint Track and Trace Portal

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نیشنل یوتھ ڈیویژن ایوارڈ 160 ایوارڈ 1300 سے زائد جیتنے والے	100 ایوارڈ کے لیے، ہر ایوارڈ جیتنے والے کو 300,000 روپے کی رقم ملے گی۔	450,000 ایوارڈ کے لیے، ہر ایوارڈ جیتنے والے کو 260,000 روپے کی رقم ملے گی۔	186 ایوارڈ کے لیے، ہر ایوارڈ جیتنے والے کو 279,000 روپے کی رقم ملے گی۔	روزگار EMPLOYMENT
25 ایوارڈ کے لیے، ہر ایوارڈ جیتنے والے کو 150,000 روپے کی رقم ملے گی۔	100,000+ ایوارڈ کے لیے، ہر ایوارڈ جیتنے والے کو 100,000 روپے کی رقم ملے گی۔	595,000 ایوارڈ کے لیے، ہر ایوارڈ جیتنے والے کو 100,000 روپے کی رقم ملے گی۔	تعلیم EDUCATION	
16 ایوارڈ کے لیے، ہر ایوارڈ جیتنے والے کو 150,000 روپے کی رقم ملے گی۔	18,000+ ایوارڈ کے لیے، ہر ایوارڈ جیتنے والے کو 90,000 روپے کی رقم ملے گی۔	137 ایوارڈ کے لیے، ہر ایوارڈ جیتنے والے کو 137 روپے کی رقم ملے گی۔	شمولیت ENGAGEMENT	
300+ ایوارڈ کے لیے، ہر ایوارڈ جیتنے والے کو 150 روپے کی رقم ملے گی۔	150+ ایوارڈ کے لیے، ہر ایوارڈ جیتنے والے کو 150 روپے کی رقم ملے گی۔	150+ ایوارڈ کے لیے، ہر ایوارڈ جیتنے والے کو 150 روپے کی رقم ملے گی۔	ماحول ENVIRONMENT	

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