



The entire team of "The Asian Telegraph" extends heartfelt wishes Pakistan a very Happy 77th Independence Day, To our valued readers and the entire nation of Pakistan! celebrate with loved ones, share blessings and build a stronger Pakistan together
Happy Independence Day

DPM Dar, Speaker NA arrive Quetta to participate in Independence Day celebrations



QUETTA: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar along with Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Tuesday arrived here to participate in the Independence Day celebrations. On arrival at airport, the deputy prime minister/foreign minister and the Speaker National Assembly were received by Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti, Governor Jaffar Khan Mandokhail, Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal, Speaker Balochistan Assembly Abdul Khaliq Achakzai, Jamal Shah Kakar MNA and provincial ministers Bakht Muhammad Karkar, Raheela Hameed Durrani and Haji Ali Madad Jatak, a press of DPM Office said. The deputy prime minister will participate in 14th August events in Quetta, besides would hold meetings with the governor, chief minister, PML-N provincial leaders and members of parliament. DNA

Shaza, Korean Ambassador discuss digitalization, IT Park project

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja and Ambassador of Korea to Pakistan on Tuesday discussed matters of mutual interest, digitalization and Islamabad IT Park project. During a meeting with the Ambassador, the minister said Pakistan greatly values its ties with Republic of Korea. She said both Pakistan and Korea can benefit from each other's experiences in the field of IT and Telecommunication. She said on the directives of the Prime Minister of Pakistan, steps are being taken for digitalization in the country. Governance, economy and services are being digitized, she added. Shaza Fatima also emphasised upon exchanging tech experts between the two countries and starting joint training program in the field of IT & Telecom. The minister offered thanks to the government of Korea for cooperation in construction of IT Park in Islamabad. "Islamabad IT Park is very important project and government wants its completion as soon as possible", she added. The Ambassador said that Korea wanted to enhance cooperation with Pakistan in the field of IT and Telecommunication. APP



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs Federal Cabinet Meeting.. INP

PM vows for an inclusive, prosperous Pakistan; says economic policies yielding positive results

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif vowing to work collectively for an inclusive and prosperous Pakistan, said that the government's efforts for economic growth and stability had started yielding positive results. "In a short span, our efforts have started yielding positive results. The economy is on its path to stability. The high inflation of 38% has come down to 11.1% (July) and shall be brought down to single digit soon Inshallah," the prime minister said in his message to the nation on the 78th Independence Day being observed on Wednesday. Extending heartfelt felicitations to the countrymen, the prime minister paid homage to the immense sacrifices of forefathers and countless unsung heroes of the Pakistan Movement which led to the creation of Pakistan as an independent and sovereign state on August 14, 1947 through the unwavering and steadfast leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and unmatched sacrifices of our ancestors. He said that over the decades, Pakistan had achieved significant milestones as the resilience of Pakistani people had been tested through natural disasters and economic and social challenges, yet the spirit of determination and unity has always prevailed.

He expressed confidence that the nation would make collaborative efforts with the spirit of independence for the benefit and welfare of the citizens. Also acknowledging the key role of overseas Pakistanis in the progress and prosperity of Pakistan, Prime Minister Shehbaz said that the country was proud of their hard work and achievements and considered them as true Ambassadors of Pakistan to project its positive image to the world. He also expressed gratitude to the Pakistan armed forces, who safeguarded the country's borders and protected its sovereignty. "While we celebrate our freedom, we also remember the brave people of the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJK) and Palestine who have been fighting for their right to self-determination for over seven decades and are facing the worst form of state atrocities," he remarked and reiterated Pakistan's continuous moral, political and diplomatic support to the Kashmiri people in their struggle their universal right to self-determination. The prime minister said that Pakistan would also continue its support for the oppressed Palestinians for their legitimate rights.

"Pakistan stands at a crossroads today. While the common values, rich cultural heritage and diverse traditions continue to bind us together, our economy continues to face significant challenges in the shape of inflation, high-energy costs, unemployment and a growing debt burden." He said that since assuming power after the February 2024 elections, the government's consistent focus was on creating the right conditions for economic growth and stability. He said that Pakistan's rich natural resources and a youthful workforce were true assets. He said the government was taking steps to attract investments to take full advantage of these resources to create job opportunities, speed the pace of industrialization, and bring economic prosperity. The government's focus is also on education and skill development that will further empower our youth and equip them with the tools needed in the competitive global economy, he added. "I am personally supervising the national drive to digitize the entire ecosystem and broaden the tax base so that we can provide relief to those already paying taxes...The government is working hard to bring down the prices of electricity and the nation will see the results soon," he remarked.

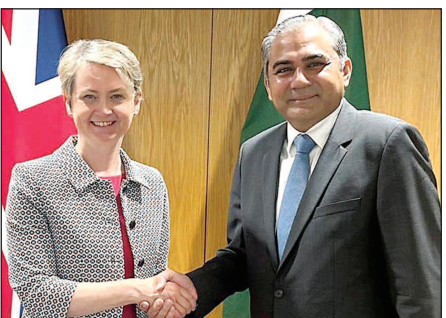
Weakening the Pakistan Army is like weakening the country: Army Chief

KAKUL: Army Chief General Syed Asim Munir said that weakening Pakistan's forces is equivalent to weakening the country. Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir while addressing the Independence Parade at Pakistan Military Academy Kakool on the occasion of the 77th Independence Day of our beloved country said that I congratulate everyone on the great occasion of Independence Day. Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir said that Allah has blessed us with the great blessing of freedom, I congratulate the nation on the occasion of 77th Independence Day. He has given courage and strength to set a successful and great example for future generations. The Army Chief said that the basis of our national consciousness is the ideology of Pakistan, the purpose of the establishment of Pakistan was not only the acquisition of the geographical region, our forefathers made countless sacrifices to achieve the country of Pakistan, Allah gave courage and strength to protect this region. Pakistan is an impregnable country.



General Syed Asim Munir said that historically we as a nation have always emerged stronger after every difficulty, in which the mutual trust of the nation and the forces is the key. It paves the way for aggression. The Army Chief said that the nation's unshakable trust in the Pakistan Army is our most valuable asset, no negative force has ever been able to weaken this relationship of trust and love nor will it be able to in the future. And has taken an oath of external defense. While addressing, he further said that we will not let our sacrifices go in vain at any cost. It is synonymous. Army Chief further said that no negative force can weaken our unity, mutual trust of our nation and forces is key, Pakistan will never be allowed to weaken. General Syed Asim Munir said that Balochistan province is the abode of brave and patriotic people, Pakistan Army, with the cooperation of the government of Pakistan and Balochistan, will continue to play its key role for the integrity and welfare of Balochistan and its brave people. The Army Chief further said that Afghanistan is our brotherly neighboring Islamic country, we want to have very good relations with Afghanistan, our message to them is not to give priority to Fitnah al-Khawarij over their long-standing, benevolent and brotherly neighboring country. Those who create a gap between the state institutions and the people will be disappointed. The Army Chief said that the constitution definitely allows freedom of speech in Pakistan, but the constitution of Pakistan has also clearly demarcated it. He said that the nation's unshakable trust in the Pakistan Army is our most valuable asset, no negative force could ever weaken this relationship of trust and love, nor will it in the future. The Army Chief said that Pakistan's position in every era is of great importance not only in the region and the Muslim Ummah but also at the international level.

Interior Minister calls on British Counterpart



training of Pakistani police officers in the UK was also discussed. The Minister welcomed the British cooperation in this regard and expressed his pleasure that Pakistani police officers would receive regular training in the UK. He emphasized the need to enhance mutual cooperation to tackle illegal immigration, adding that developed and developing countries should take joint actions in this regard. Mohnsin Naqvi said that Pakistan is desirous of enhancing the mutual cooperation in the fields of border management, legal assistance in criminal cases, and curbing illegal immigration. He condemned those who incite people towards violence and said that there would be no leniency for those who incite violence through social media. British Home Secretary Yvette Cooper said that the UK attaches great importance to its relations with Pakistan and would continue cooperation in various fields. Interior Minister Mohnsin Naqvi invited his British counterpart to visit Pakistan. APP

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Interior Mohnsin Naqvi called on British Home Secretary Yvette Cooper during his visit to the United Kingdom. The Minister congratulated Yvette Cooper on assuming the office of British Home Secretary and expressed good wishes for her. During the meeting, matters of mutual interest, including legal assistance in criminal cases, effective border management, and measures to curb illegal immigration were discussed. The

Pakistan is gravely concerned at reports of recurring incidents of theft & illicit sale of nuclear & other radioactive materials in India: Mumtaz Zahra Baloch

ISLAMABAD: In response to a question about Pakistan's reaction to the arrest of a gang in India with radioactive material, the Spokesperson, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mumtaz Zahra Baloch stated "Pakistan is gravely concerned at the reports of recurring incidents of theft and illicit sale of nuclear and other radioactive materials in India. In the latest incident, a gang of individuals were found in illegal possession of a highly radioactive and toxic substance Californium, worth US\$ 100 million in quantity. Three incidents of theft of Californium were also reported in 2021. Last month, five individuals with a radioactive device reportedly stolen from Bhabha Atomic Research Center (BARC) were also found from Dehradun. These recurring incidents call into question the measures taken by New Delhi for the safety and security of nuclear and other radioactive material. These incidents also suggest the existence of a black market for sensitive, dual use materials inside India. The international community seeks an earnest disclosure from the Indian authorities as to how a sealed Radioactive Source (SRS) material, like Californium, was in the possession of the apprehended individuals. SABAH

PN Command & Staff Conference reviews regional maritime situation

ISLAMABAD: Command and Staff Conference of Pakistan Navy concluded here on Tuesday at Naval Headquarters chaired by Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf that reviewed maritime situation in North Arabian Sea and Gulf of Aden and deliberated on measures for safety and security of national sea trade passing through the region. During the conference, matters related to geo strategic milieu, national security, operational preparedness, training and welfare of troops were reviewed. Comprehensive briefing on important on-going and future developmental projects of Pakistan Navy was also given to Chief of the Naval Staff, a Pakistan Navy news release said.



The Naval Chief expressed confidence over combat readiness and significant contribution of the Navy in maritime domain. Chief of the

Naval Staff emphasized on strengthening maritime security and maintaining combat readiness so as to effectively respond to any aggression against Pakistan. He urged on acquisition of niche and novel capabilities while exploiting indigenous sources in order to cope with modern day challenges in maritime domain. Command & Staff Conference is the apex decision making body of Pakistan Navy in which Chief of the Naval Staff along with all Principal Staff Officers and Field Commanders undertake review of Pakistan Navy's Policies and Plans. PR

Visa fee for 126 countries waived under new visa policy: Tarar

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, Culture and National Heritage Attaullah Tarar on Tuesday announced launch of a new visa policy under which visa fee for the nationals of 126 countries would be waived to boost tourism and attract foreign investment in the country. Addressing a news conference, the minister said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif would launch the new visa policy tonight which would allow 126 countries' residents to visit Pakistan in hassle-free manner. The new visa policy which is aimed at simplifying the visa process would come into effect tonight, he added. According to him, the nationals of these countries would get their visas within 10 minutes after filling an online form which had only 30 questions. The visa

would be valid for 3 months and could be renewed in no time, he added. The minister said the residents of Gulf countries would get visa on arrival, while pilgrims would also be facilitated in this regard to boost the religious tourism in the country. The beauty and infrastructural development of Pakistan stunned the foreign tourists who left the country with sweet memories, he said, urging them to visit Pakistan which has been opened its doors to the world including travelers, businessmen and investors. He said Pakistan had vast tourism potential and the government wanted the foreigners to witness the beauty of Pakistan which is endowed with stunning green valleys, famous deserts, beautiful oceans and mesmerizing landscapes. To a query, he said all provincial governments and the secretary interior were informed that dedicated desks would be established to welcome tourists at the



airports. All the stakeholders were taken on the board to ensure safety and security of tourists in the country, he added. He said Gilgit Baltistan received massive inflow of foreign tourists that even surpassed the number of domestic visitors every year. The minister said the government had encouraged the investors in Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and other

countries to invest in the tourism sector of Pakistan which would further bring down lodging prices, and also improve facilities for the tourists. He said the Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation in collaboration with provincial governments would encourage the private sector to invest in Pakistan. At the outset of the news conference, the minister said the entire nation had welcomed and celebrated the victory of Arshad Nadeem who had won a gold medal by breaking a record in Javelin Throw game during the Paris Olympics 2024. An unconventional welcome with water cannon salute was given to Arshad Nadeem at the Lahore Airport on his return from Paris, he added. Besides the federal government, the provincial governments had also celebrated his historic victory, he said, while citing Chief Minister Punjab Maryam

Nawaz's visit to his residence in Mian Channu to honor him on his victory. Tarar said Arshad had held a detailed meeting with the Prime Minister before his departure to Paris. He said revival of departmental sports in the previous PDM regime was a good move which provided a conducive environment to athletes to focus on their trainings without worrying about financial issues. He said Arshad Nadeem would arrive at Islamabad Nurkhan Airbase shortly along with his parents, wife, children and coach by a special aircraft of Pakistan Air Force. A state level protocol would be accorded to Arshad, while a banquet would be hosted today at the Prime Minister's House to honor him, he said, adding tomorrow Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Arshad Nadeem would unfurl the Pakistani flag together in the main event of flag hoisting.

Terming Arshad Nadeem, a beacon for youth, the minister said a biopic telefilm should be made on his life journey from Mian Channu to Paris which was a unique story. He expressed the hope that Arshad's feat would inspire tens of thousands of youth to join sports especially track and field events. He said Pakistan was a resilient nation which got united in case of any calamity like flood or earthquake and it also knew how to celebrate any achievement. The minister regretted that some elements had tried to find negativity from this historic occasion but they failed in their efforts. He urged those elements to shun their negative approach and become part of the national festivities. According to the minister, the federal government had synchronized the August 14 celebrations with all the provinces where grand events were organized for the purpose.

Editor-in-Chief: Amna Munawwar Awan
 Editor: Muhammad Hasam
 Office # 408, 4th Floor, Evacuee Trust,
 Agha Khan Road, F-5/1 Islamabad
 Phone: + 92 51 8354964

A recipe for regional mayhem

AMANAT ALI CHAUDHRY

The 34th report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted to the UN Security Council, pursuant to the latter's resolution 2734, makes for sombre reading. The UN report, which was released in the last week of July, provides an overview of the daunting challenge of transnational terrorism, including the budding alliances between terrorist organizations such as the TTP and Al-Qaeda, the scale of their operations and the potential dangers for regional and global peace and security if the global collaborative efforts are not made to stem the tide of militancy.

The report identifies Afghanistan as the epicentre of terrorism where the presence of the ISIL (or ISKP), TTP, Al-Qaeda in the Subcontinent (AQIS), the East Turkmenistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) and the Turkistan Islamic Party (TIP) has shaped complex security dynamics that not only threaten Pakistan but also have the potential to spill over to the wider region. In what is a clear validation of Pakistan's position, the report highlights the increased terrorism challenge posed by the TTP. It notes the Afghan Taliban's active support, patronage and protection to the TTP inside Afghanistan, factors that have enhanced the latter's operational capacity to the extent that the TTP even targeted Chinese nationals working on a dam project in March this year. The report says, "There is increased support and collaboration between TTP and the Taliban, sharing manpower and training camps in Afghanistan and conducting more lethal attacks under the banner of Tehrik-e Jihad Pakistan."

The more worrisome aspect of the UN report is an ongoing collaboration between Al-Qaeda and the TTP. Al-Qaeda, which remains dormant in Afghanistan, is actively involved in imparting training to local Afghan fighters and TTP operatives including suicide bomber training in the Kunar province. Despite its inability to conduct large-scale external operations, Al-Qaeda is forming collaborations with regional terrorist organizations such as ETIM, TIP, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, and Jamaat Ansaarullah with a focus on expanding itself into Central Asia. It is also using its period of dormancy to reorganize itself and ramp up training activities in an enabling environment of Afghanistan. It is in this context that the increasing cooperation between the TTP and Al-Qaeda can lead to the former becoming an umbrella organization for other terrorist groups. This development, the UN report notes, will escalate the threat against Pakistan. Complicating this scenario is the report's ominous finding that ETIM/TIP and Jaish-al-Adl have jointly planned and executed attacks on Chinese interests.

With the TTP becoming a leading organization in a regional terrorist syndicate actively assisted and facilitated by the Afghan Taliban, the security risks for Pakistan will multiply manifold. The report notes the intensification of TTP-perpetrated terrorist attacks inside Pakistan (more than 800 attacks documented during the reporting period), which mainly targeted military installations. These attacks represent a marked increase from 573 and 203 incidents of terrorism in 2021 and 2023 respectively. The report also highlighted the role of Al-Qaeda in promoting cooperation between the Majeed Brigade and the TTP. The Majeed Brigade has already claimed responsibility for two terrorist attacks, one on the Gwadar port complex on March 2 and another on the naval air base in Turbat. These attacks were perpetrated to send a warning to investors. The report also mentioned one of the member states' concern at the possibility of a future nexus between the TTP, Majeed Brigade and ISK, which will pose a renewed threat to Balochistan and Sindh. The report noted the TTP's use of the modern weapons left by the Nato/US forces in Afghanistan including night vision capability, which they have used in attacking the border posts of the Pakistani military. The collaboration with Al-Qaeda will further help the TTP get access to weapons funded by Al-Qaeda. Pakistan has consistently highlighted the threat posed by the TTP. Over the years, Islamabad has stayed engaged with the Taliban authorities in Kabul to convince them to rein in the TTP. It has also called for more international efforts to suck the financial and operational oxygen out of the TTP and other terrorist organizations that directly threaten Pakistan's security.

While the Afghan Taliban have been fighting ISIL, which has challenged them ideologically, operationally and territorially, the interim authorities in Kabul have chosen to ignore Pakistan's pleadings vis-a-vis the TTP. As noted by the UN report, they have rather given complete support and autonomy to the TTP to carry out the terrorist attacks inside Pakistan. Without the impunity granted to the TTP, Pakistan's security challenges could not have acquired the kind of dangerous levels they have in the last two years.

Despite the non-accommodation of Pakistan's very genuine security concerns by the Afghan interim government, the country has shown strategic patience. Pakistan's approach to dealing with the TTP has been characterized by four planks. First, the Pakistan Army has demonstrated proven capability in eradicating terrorism, destroying its vast network and securing peace in the country. The anti-terrorism campaigns include kinetic actions, intelligence-based operations, and developing a national consensus to purge Pakistan of terrorism of all hues and colours. The fact that the TTP was pushed to Afghanistan from where it is carrying out terrorism inside Pakistan says a lot about the success and efficacy of the military operations. Pakistan will continue to deal with the TTP with an iron hand, going forward. Second, in bilateral engagements with Afghanistan, the Pakistani authorities have reminded the Taliban that the TTP remains a major hurdle in the Afghan Taliban's efforts to win international recognition and become part of the global community. The Taliban have been told that the impunity provided to the TTP will lead to the establishment of a wider, regionalized terrorism syndicate, whose terrorist actions will bring a heavy cost for Kabul.

The writer is an alumnus of the University of Sussex and has a degree in international journalism. He tweets/posts @Amanat222



Khalid Bhatti

The rising tide of students

after the other, also losing the opportunity to reconcile with angry protesters when she refused to apologize for the killings of students. The protests were temporarily paused after the Bangladesh Supreme Court ruled on the quota system. Protesters then put forward demands like a public apology from Hasina for the violence, restoration of internet services, reopening of college and university campuses, and release of those arrested. There was no demand for her resignation at that stage. But when she refused to accept these demands, the protesters returned to the streets, now demanding her resignation. Instead of passionately engaging with protesting students, she resorted to repressive measures. She relied on the police and the

increased inequality in the country, leading to a sharp divide between the rich and the poor. The rich in Bangladesh amass huge wealth at the cost of the working class and the youth. Economic growth in the country has been mainly focused on the garment sector, and other sectors have not been performing well. The garment industry produces low-paying jobs. Educated young people in Bangladesh are not interested in joining the private sector due to lower wages and the casual nature of jobs. These are the reasons that led to the mass movement against the government. Young people have not been satisfied with their economic situation and the lack of decent job opportunities. So, naturally, high levels of frustration had been brewing

Bangladesh into a one-party state. She was not ready to provide an opportunity to the people to express their anger and discontent through democratic means like elections and peaceful protests. She tried everything to crush the opposition and adopted a zero-tolerance policy towards dissent and opposition. She won another term in farce elections held in January this year, which were boycotted by opposition parties. It was clear from the intensity of the protests that people were just looking for an opportunity to express themselves. The high court ruling on the quota system triggered a movement that was waiting to erupt. As soon as the Bangladesh army withdrew its support, the Hasina Wajid-led government collapsed.

The interim government is led by Nobel laureate Dr Yunus. It is not clear how long this interim government will be in place. According to the Bangladesh constitution, an interim government can run the country for up to six months. This interim government comprises academics, former military and civil officers and leaders of the student movement.

Dr Yunus was forced to leave the country by the Hasina Wajid government and had been living in France before his return to the country. His appointment as the head of the interim government is a significant development. The situation has taken a dramatic turn. He was in exile when Hasina was in the government, and now that he is in power, Hasina has fled to India. The student-led political revolution has indeed driven a prime minister out, but the social and economic situation will not improve without a change in economic policies and pro-people radical reforms. Students and young people have paid a heavy price for this revolution, and this revolution is not finished yet.

The writer is a freelance journalist.

Bangladesh has a long history of mass movements challenging incumbent governments

army to deal with the students. She also underestimated the anger and discontent that existed across the country due to her policies. She was also confident that since the economy was growing at a high rate, her tenure was not in danger. Undoubtedly, the economy continued to grow at a fast pace during her rule. While the capitalist class was happy because it enormously benefited from this high economic growth, many sections of Bangladeshi society were left out. In the last two years, inflation in Bangladesh has reached high levels, and many people are experiencing a cost-of-living crisis. Energy prices in the country have increased at least three times, and youth unemployment is also high. Despite having a high growth rate of nearly 6.0 per cent since 2005, the neoliberal economic model has

among university and college students who protested strongly against government policies. When a Bangladeshi high court restored the 56 per cent quota for the families of freedom fighters, minorities and women in public-sector jobs, especially in the civil services, students and young people lost their patience and took to the streets. Even though the Supreme Court overturned the high court decision and fixed the quota at 6.0 per cent, it failed to pacify the protesters.

Amid all this, Hasina failed to understand that high economic growth is not improving the lives of millions of people. In the country of 170 million, 32 million young people are unemployed. So, it is understandable why the students protested the restoration of the quota system. Hasina almost converted

Disclaimer: Views expressed by writers in this section are their own and do not necessarily reflect The Asian Telegraph's point-of-view

History of Pakistan

Today in History



In 2001 a National Housing Policy was approved to review the status of nationwide housing and to identify sources of revenue, land availability, incentives to developers and contractors, and the conditions needed to make construction cost-effective. There are three general classes of housing in Pakistan: pukka houses, and built of substantial material such as stone, brick, cement, concrete, or timber; katchi (or kuchha ["ramshackle"]) houses, constructed of less-durable material (e.g., mud, bamboo, reeds, or thatch); and semi-pukka houses, which are a mix between the two. Housing stocks comprise an equal number of semi-pukka and katchi houses (about two-fifths each), and remaining houses

(roughly one-fifth of the total) are the better-variety pukka houses. Urban areas are dominated by ramshackle neighbourhoods known locally as katchi abadis, which can be found in all cities. In such unplanned and unregulated areas, safe drinking water and proper sanitation are rare (as they are in rural areas), and the buildings themselves are often flimsy and unsafe. Throughout the country, roughly half of all urban residents live in such areas. Pakistan's housing problem increased dramatically with the devastating 2005 earthquake in the northern regions, where more than half a million houses were destroyed or severely damaged over a vast area. The Pakistani government

quickly established the Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (ERRA), which received funding from the World Bank and a large number of other sources. In addition to constructing new earthquake-resistant houses and reinforcing existing structures, the ERRA is repairing roads and other infrastructure in the region. Massive floods in 2010 destroyed or damaged an estimated 1.7 million houses, forcing millions of Pakistanis to move to temporary shelters. Pakistan's literacy rate is substantially lower than that of many developing countries; roughly half of all adults are literate, the literacy rate being significantly higher for males than for females. A substantial pro-

portion of those who are literate, however, have not had any formal education. Educational levels for women are much lower than those for men. The share of females in educational levels progressively diminishes above the primary school level. Education in Pakistan is not compulsory. Since independence Pakistan has increased the number of primary and secondary schools, and the number of students enrolled has risen dramatically. Teacher training has been promoted by the government and by international agencies. Higher education is available at vocational schools, technical schools, and colleges throughout the country.

To be continued....

Sandra Bullock feels 'very tired' after turning 60

Sandra Bullock reflects on her milestone birthday on Hoda Kotb's Today show



Sandra Bullock has recently confessed she was "feeling too tired" one year after the birth of her partner, Bryan Randall. Speaking on the latest episode of Today show, the Speed actress, who

celebrated her milestone birthday on July 26, revealed, "I had so many brilliant and funny things prepared for you (Hoda), for this message, that were just gonna slay it, but you know girl, I'm just too tired!"

"Tired because I had to make my way up that mountain before you got there so I could check out the terrain and see what things look like and you know just get the feel so I could fill you in," she remarked.

Sandra mentioned, "And it's weird, because people seem to want us to be afraid of what it might look like when we get there."

"It turns out it's pretty damn great, it's pretty awesome," she stated.

Sandra further said, "But when you get to the top of the mountain where you're getting ready to go, you're allowed to say it because it doesn't

matter anymore, everything is amazing because you have made it that way." "Thank you for being so incredible to so many people. What you do for a living and how you have to shapeshift every single day, how you navigate your kindness, even when that's not what's coming your way, how you are to those you care about and how you keep them safe, and just who you are as a human being," explained the Miss Congeniality actress. Sandra told the hosts, "We're all pretty lucky to have you, especially your kids. So happy birthday my sweet friend. Thank you for allowing me to be in your circle."

"I feel very grateful and I have your bar set up, up here, so we can look at the view, it's pretty beautiful, but I need you up here, happy birthday," she added.

Showbiz

Tech

Severe solar storm hits Earth

On Monday, the Earth experienced a powerful solar storm that might bring the northern lights to unusually southern latitudes, according to a US agency, as reported by AFP. The US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) reported that a level-four geomagnetic storm, on a scale of five, was detected starting at 1500 GMT.

While these conditions could last for several hours, NOAA indicated that they are not expected to intensify further.

"A severe geomagnetic storm includes the potential for aurora to be seen faintly as far south as Alabama and northern California," NOAA said in a statement, referring to US states. The new solar storm is caused by coronal mass ejections (CMEs), which are explosions of particles leaving the Sun. When these particles arrive on Earth, they disrupt its magnetic field. "There are a lot of auroras now... If it lasts until nightfall here, we might be able to see some," Eric Lagarde, an astrophysicist at the Cote d'Azur Observatory in France, said on X. On Sunday, NASA astronaut Matthew Dominick published on X a



superb photo of the aurora borealis — or Northern Lights — taken from the International Space Station, where he is currently stationed. But solar or geomagnetic storms can also trigger undesirable effects.

For example, they can degrade high-frequency communications, disrupt satellites, and cause overloads on the electricity grid. Operators of sensitive infrastructure have been notified to put in place measures to limit these effects, NOAA said. In May, the planet went through the most powerful geomagnetic storms recorded in 20 years. They caused auroras to light up the night sky in the United States, Europe, and Australia, at much lower latitudes than usual.

Anti-inflammatory diet might lower risk of dementia

Eating a healthy diet that dampens inflammation in the body could lower your odds for dementia, especially if you already have heart risk factors, a new Swedish study shows.

So-called anti-inflammatory diets focus on foods like vegetables, fruits, whole grains, fish and beans and include heart-healthy regimens such as the Mediterranean diet.

In a study involving more than 84,000 older adults tracked for more than 12 years, those who adhered to an anti-inflammatory diet had a 21% lower odds of developing dementia, compared to people who ate an unhealthy pro-inflammatory diet rich in red meats, eggs, dairy and processed foods. When looking specifically at older adults with ailments such as heart disease or diabetes, the risk of dementia fell by 31% when they stuck to an anti-inflammatory diet, reported a team led

by Abigail Dove. She's an investigator at the Aging Research Center at the Karolinska Institute, in Stockholm. MRI brain scans of a subset of more than 9,000 of the participants also showed neurological benefits linked to the healthier diet.

There were "positive changes within the brain," noted Dr. Liron Sinvani, director of geriatric hospital services for North Shore University Hospital, in Manhasset, N.Y.

"Larger gray matter volume — gray matter is good — and lower burden of 'white matter hyperintensities' was seen among those who ate an anti-inflammatory diet, said Sinvani, who wasn't involved in the new research.

She explained that a high level of white matter hyperintensities in the brain is a harbinger for dementia, so the fact that there was less of it in the brains of folks who ate anti-inflammatory reg-

imens was a good sign.

"So really, it's showing not only less clinically diagnosed dementia, but also [healthy] changes in the brain that we see on imaging," she noted. The findings were published Monday in the journal JAMA Network Open.

Dove's team looked at data in the UK Biobank, which has tracked the health of British adults for years. The new study involved more than 84,000 people under the age of 60 who were free of dementia when they entered the database between 2006 and 2010.

Over an average of 12.4 years, 1,559 (1.9%) of the participants developed dementia.

Data on each person's dietary intake was also recorded, and it revealed a significant lowering of the risk for dementia among those who most closely adhered to the anti-inflammatory diet.



Health

Integrating gender perspectives into environmental & economic policies to help build sustainable, inclusive future for all: Yousaf Raza Gilani

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani has said that empowering women to take leadership roles in climate action will lead to more innovative and comprehensive solutions, driving progress in environmental conservation and sustainability.

Chairman Senate expressed these views at a reception hosted in honor of the delegation of Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD) at Parliament House on Tuesday. The delegation was led by Secretary General of AFPPD Dr. Jeth Sirathranout.

Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani has said that impacts of rising temperatures, erratic weather patterns, and natural disasters disproportionately affect women and marginalized communities and it is imperative that response to these challenges is inclusive, equitable, and transformative.

He felicitated Romina Khurshid Alam, Coordinator to Prime Minister on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, the Ministry, Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development, and all the stakeholders for organizing such a significant and impactful conference on an issue that resonates deeply with our national and regional priorities.

The diverse gathering of parliamentarians from Cambodia, Egypt, Japan, Jordan, Indonesia, Iraq, Lao PDR, the Maldives, Mongolia, Nepal, Thailand, Vietnam and Turkmenistan is a testament to our shared commitment to addressing the critical issues of climate change, green economy, gender equality and sustainable development. He also admired dedication to integrating gender perspectives into environmental and economic policies, which would help build a sustainable and inclusive future for our peoples. "Pakistan, like many of our neighboring countries, faces significant vulnerabilities to climate change", Chairman Senate remarked. The Chairman Senate observed that empowering women is not only a matter of social justice but also a strategic imperative for achieving economic growth and environmental sustainability. He said that women, who make up nearly half of our population, have always been key players in managing natural resources and advocating for sustainable practices. Inclusivity is the cornerstone of a successful green economy, he remarked. He said that transition to a green economy is inevitable and prudent to reduce environmental risks and empowering women within this framework is of paramount importance.

Quoting the former Prime Minister of Pakistan Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, "A society where women are marginalized is a society that cannot reach its full potential", Chairman Senate said that her words continue to guide his vision for Pakistan. He said that women bring unique perspectives and solutions to national challenges and their representation in decision-making processes is vital. He specifically acknowledged the role of Mohtarma Fatima Jinnah, Begum Rana Liaquat Ali Khan, Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, Justice Ayesha Malik, and late Asma Jahangir for their contribution in the fields of democracy, women's rights, social justice and equality. SABAH



ISLAMABAD: An illuminated view of Parliament House building decorated with colorful lights for celebrate Independence Day 14th August, in the Federal Capital. ONLINE

Envoys of Vietnam, Maldives & Ireland present credentials to President

Independence Day of Pakistan marks culmination of historic political struggle of Muslims of India for their right to self-determination: Zardari



VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: The envoys of Vietnam, Maldives and Ireland presented their diplomatic credentials to President Asif Ali Zardari, during a credential ceremony, held at Aiwan-e-Sadr. The President received credentials from the Ambassador-designate of Vietnam, Pham Anh Tuan, High Commissioner-designate of Maldives, Uz Mohamed Thoha, and Ambassador-designate of Ireland, Mary O'Neil, who also held separate meetings with the President. Welcoming the envoys, the President felicitated them on their appointment and expressed the hope that they would play their role in further improving mutually beneficial cooperation with Pakistan. The President said that Pakistan wanted to further solidify trade, economic and investment relations with friendly countries in all areas of

mutual interest. He remarked that Pakistan was focused on boosting bilateral trade volume with all friendly countries. He stated that Pakistan offered great investment opportunities in diverse fields and businesses should invest in agriculture, energy, infrastructure, manufacturing, information technology, mining, and green technologies sectors. Earlier, the envoys were presented guard of honour by a smartly turned-out contingent of Pakistan Armed Forces upon their arrival at Aiwan-e-Sadr. Meanwhile, I, President of Pakistan Asif Ali Zardari, felicitate the entire Pakistani nation on the 78th Independence Day of Pakistan. This day marks the culmination of the historic political struggle of the Muslims of India for their right to self-determination. The creation of Pakistan through a peaceful and democratic struggle marks an unprecedented and unparalleled chapter in history. On this day, we pay

homage to leaders and workers of the Pakistan movement as well as our forefathers who rendered innumerable sacrifices for Pakistan.

Today, we need to set aside our differences and work committedly for the unity, integrity, and economic stability of the country in the face of current challenges. Our country has been blessed with abundant human and natural resources and it is our responsibility to utilize these for the welfare of our people. We need to uphold the rule of law, strengthen democratic institutions, and work wholeheartedly in the public interest. Our nation has great hopes from us, and we must strive to meet their expectations.

We need to draw inspiration from the words of our Quaid when he said "If we want to make this great State of Pakistan happy and prosperous, we should wholly and solely concentrate on the well-being of the people, especially of the masses and the poor". It is time to invest in our youth and women, improve service delivery, and create a business-friendly environment to make Pakistan a great nation.

As we celebrate our freedom, let us also remember our Kashmiri and Palestinian brethren, who have been struggling for over seven decades for their freedom and right to self-determination. Pakistan reaffirms its support to the people of the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir and Palestine for their legitimate rights. Let's pledge to work for the uplift of our people and make Pakistan a prosperous country. May Allah be with us all.

SAB recommends exporting 40,000MT sugar to Tajikistan



ISLAMABAD: Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain on Thursday chaired a joint meeting of Sugar Advisory Board (SAB) and the Cabinet Committee on Monitoring Sugar Export which recommended exporting 40,000 metric tons of sugar to Tajikistan. Following this recommendation, the ministry would present updates on the sugar industry to the Cabinet's Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) for a decision regarding the sugar export, a news release said.

The minister also noted that the SAB recommended increasing the export period from 45 to 60 days. During the meeting, representatives of the Pakistan Sugar Mills Association stated that there had been no increase in the ex-mills price of sugar and it had nothing to do with the retail price of the commodity.

They urged the government to take steps to maintain the retail price.

Romina terms women's empowerment crucial for green economy goals

ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to Prime Minister on Climate Change Romina Khurshid Alam has termed women empowerment and gender equality vital for achieving green economy goals in Asian countries.

She was addressing a news conference in connection with Regional Parliamentarians' Meeting on Gender Empowerment for Green Economy in Islamabad today.

Romina Khurshid Alam said it is encouraging to note that parliamentarians of twenty Asian countries demonstrated political will for enhancing women's empowerment in several sectors for achieving the green economy goals.

The participating parliamentarians also unanimously agreed on twelve-point Islamabad Declaration on Gender Empowerment for Green Economy encompassing to address harmful social and gender norms that limit the potential of women.

The declaration includes to invest in emergency preparedness, anticipatory actions, and targeted disaster risk reduction plans and further recognized the importance of data and evidence collection with the major focus on the needs of vulnerable groups, such as women.

It was agreed to promote enabling environments that eliminate discrimination against women and empower them to make informed decisions about their lives.

Cabinet Approves Chief Minister Roshan Gharana Programme

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif chaired 13th meeting of the Provincial Cabinet to decide on important agenda items. The Cabinet approved Chief Minister Roshan Gharana Programme, under which solar home solution will be provided to protected consumers up to 100 units across Punjab. Madam Chief Minister said, "In next two months, a huge project is being launched to give relief to public in electricity bills." The Provincial Cabinet also approved model house of "Apni Chhat.....Apna Ghar" project, under which Rs 15 lakh will be given for building house on a plot of up to 5 marles in urban and 10 marles in rural areas. Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif directed the authorities concerned not to take monthly installments for at least first three months to facilitate borrowers under the scheme. The Cabinet was apprised that electric buses will run in Punjab after Speedy buses. It approved a project to run electric buses in Lahore. 27 buses will reach by December. A model of electric bus was also presented to the cabinet. The Cabinet

gave approval to establish Punjab Grid Company for direct supply of electricity to industries. It also considered provision of affordable electricity to Industrial Park through direct transmission line from Bhiki, Balloki and Quaid-e-Azam Solar Park. The Cabinet approved Amendment to Registration Act 1908 for Revenue Services to Overseas Pakistanis in 8 Countries. Madam Chief Minister said, "Land registration and important documents services will be provided to overseas Pakistanis in 8 countries." She added, "Revenue services will be provided to residents of China, Saudi Arabia, UAE, UK, USA, Italy, Qatar, Bahrain and Spain." The Cabinet also gave approval to Punjab Government's Advertisement Policy, besides approving Feasibility Study of Tourist Glass Train from Rawalpindi to Murree. Madam Chief Minister said, "Murree glass tourist train is a great vision of Muhammad Nawaz Sharif for the development of tourism." She added, "Glass train is also my dream for the development of tourism in Murree." She highlighted, "Murree Glass Train is a first of its kind unique project not only of Punjab but also of Pakistan."

Petrol price slashed by Rs8.47 per litre for next fortnight

PM Shehbaz approves reduction in fuel prices on eve of Independence Day

ISLAMABAD: The petrol price in the country has been slashed by Rs8.47 per litre for the next fortnight, the federal government announced, mainly due to a drop in fuel prices in the global market. As per the latest fuel prices, the petrol price has been cut from Rs269.43 to Rs260.96 per litre. The federal government also reduced the price of high-speed diesel (HSD) from Rs272.77 per litre to Rs266.07 with a cut of Rs6.7. The announcement was made in a statement issued by the Ministry of Information on Tuesday. The fuel price cut comes as a major relief for the masses on the occasion of Independence Day, as the country gears up for the celebration of 77 years of independence tomorrow (August 14).

All set to celebrate 77th Independence Day

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi district administration, police and the citizens are all set to celebrate the 77th Independence Day on August 14, Wednesday with great enthusiasm and national zeal as all the preparations including tight security arrangements have been finalized.

Rawalpindi District Administration, District Police, City Traffic Police, Punjab Emergency Service, Rescue 1122, Civil Defence and other departments concerned have finalized all the arrangements in this regard. Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Engineer Aamir Khattak had directed all the departments to ensure Independence Day celebrations in a dignified manner. Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) is the directives of the Commissioner was also finalizing all the arrangements to celebrate the Independence Day. Director General (DG) RDA Kinza Murtaza had directed the authorities concerned that the markets, plazas, shops and roads particularly Murree Road from Chandni Chowk to Faizabad and Airport Road should be decorated with national flags, bunting, paintings and colourful lights.

She directed all RDA and WASA officers to finalize the best possible arrangements for the day. With the start of August, Jashan-e-Azadi preparations were started here in every nook and corner of the city to celebrate Independence Day with great enthusiasm and national fervour. All the main buildings including Rawalpindi Railway Station, Rawalpindi and Chaklala Cantonment Board offices, Askari Plaza, Mall Road, Metro Track, Murree Road, RDA, WASA and PHA buildings, National Bank Saddar Main Branch, Bank Road, Mall Road and several other areas have been beautifully decorated to mark the Independence Day.

The business community was also actively taking part in the Independence Day celebrations and decorating markets and roads. The buildings have been illuminated and a number of colourful activities have also been planned to mark this occasion with great enthusiasm.

Different public and private departments would hold special functions and activities including seminars, discussion programmes, photographic exhibitions, painting, poetry, national songs and debate competitions with the focus on acknowledging the contribution of leaders of Pakistan movement and sacrifices of national heroes.

The printers and makers of bunting, flags, banners and badges are fully engaged in their business. Jashan-e-Azadi preparations reached at its peak on Tuesday as the citizens were getting ready to celebrate the Independence Day with zeal and zest. Rawalpindi Arts Council (RAC) is arranging exhibitions and other activities to mark Independence Day. According to roadside vendors, the most enthusiastic are the children who

are busy in collecting badges and also beautifying their bicycles with special stickers inscribed with messages of Independence Day. A vendor, Altaf near Chandni Chowk said the demand for the national flag and badges was on the rise after Aug 10, adding that most of the motorists were buying flags to hoist on their vehicles.

Another seller in Liaquat Bagh area namely Majeed said that like every year, this year too the vendors at their stalls on footpaths were doing a roaring business and trying to sell whatever they had as the entire inventory would go waste on August 15. The shopkeepers and footpath vendors had set up their temporary stalls in almost all areas of the town with the start of August, where people were seen busy in buying things at cheaper rates.

A large number of stalls with bunting, flags, badges and other items were established in several city markets including Tench Bhatta, Lalkurti, Saddar, Moti, Raja and Urdu Bazaars, Benazir Bhutto Road, Bunni Market, Satellite Town, Sadiqabad and other areas of the city. Nowadays, national songs are in the air which gives the message that whole the nation is united. Many food outlets have offered 'Azadi' deals with special discounts to attract food lovers while different boutiques and shops also offered a huge variety of 'Azadi' dresses. According to a Rawalpindi district police spokesman, police had finalized all the arrangements to beef up security on Jashan-e-Azadi while over 5300 cops were deployed under the security plan devised for Independence Day.

They were being supported by members of the Elite Force, Women Police officers and officials from the special branch. Special temporary pickets were also set up for snap checking and for cordoning off sensitive areas. Police officers were also deputed on parks and entertainment spots in the city. There were enhanced patrolling from police officers, members of the elite force, Muhafiz Squads and Dolphin Force.

City Police Officer, Syed Khalid Hamdani urged the public not to indulge in any illegal activities on Independence Day such as aerial firing, one-wheeling and rash driving. The police spokesman said Elite Force, Muhafiz Force and Dolphin Force were patrolling the roads and streets while traffic officials were regulating traffic round the clock. The spokesman informed that special security arrangements had also been finalized for Murree. City Traffic Police (CTP) issued a traffic plan to facilitate commuters and the general public on Pakistan Independence Day. According to Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Rawalpindi, Beenish Fatima, special pickets had been erected in the city and on entry points of Murree to thwart one-wheeling on the eve of August 14 and strict action would be taken against one-wheelers. DNA

Ahsan, Mashhood emphasize significance of Independence Day at the "Istehkam-e-Pakistan" seminar

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: The Islamic Research Institute of the International Islamic University (IIU) organized a flag-hoisting ceremony and a national seminar titled "Istehkam-e-Pakistan" on Tuesday at the Faisal Masjid campus as part of the Independence Day celebrations.

The event was graced by Federal Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal, Chairman of the Prime Minister Youth Program Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan, Rector IIU Professor Dr. Samina Malik, along with Vice Presidents, the Director General of the Islamic Research Institute, and a large gathering of teachers and staff members.

In his address, Federal Minister Ahsan Iqbal emphasized the significance of Independence Day as a moment to honour the immense sacrifices made by Muslims. He highlighted that Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's leadership was instrumental in securing the rights of the oppressed in British India.

The minister underscored that the creation of Pakistan on August 14 was not just a historical event but a tri-



umph of ideology—an ideology championed by Quaid-e-Azam and Allama Iqbal that became a beacon of hope in the struggle for freedom. He noted that the founding fathers envisioned Pakistan as a thriving state. Despite initial skepticism about Pakistan's viability, the nation has emerged as a nuclear power, he added.

Addressing the contemporary challenges, Ahsan Iqbal expressed confidence in the resilience and intelligence of the Pakistani people, asserting that pessimists will not succeed in their negative agendas.

He elaborated on the importance of peace, political stability, continuity in policies, and reforms as essential ingredients for development, lamenting the disruption of the Vision 2010

and Vision 2025 development plans. The minister reaffirmed his commitment to overcoming unemployment and inflation and fighting against corruption and anarchy, which he described as major obstacles to national progress.

Paying tribute to national hero Arshad Nadeem, Ahsan Iqbal praised him as a symbol of hard work and determination, urging the youth to follow his example.

Chairman of the Prime Minister Youth Programme (PMYP) Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan, in his remarks, stated that thriving nations learn from their mistakes.

He reflected on the vision of Pakistan's founders, who established the country to uphold minority rights and serve as a bastion of Islamic values.

He highlighted the achievements of Arshad Nadeem, noting that his success demonstrates that determination can overcome resource constraints. Rana Mashhood affirmed that the PM Youth Program is designed to empower the nation's youth, emphasizing that the current government is committed to realizing the dreams of Allama Iqbal and Quaid-e-Azam while safeguarding the fundamental principles of Pakistan.

He also stressed the crucial role of sincerity and dedication in the development of nations.

In her presidential address, Rector Dr. Samina Malik spoke about the invaluable gift of freedom, urging the audience to appreciate its worth by considering the plight of those who lack it. She emphasized that unity is the cornerstone of national development and lauded the International Islamic University for its consistent contributions to the country's progress.

Dr. Malik called for prioritizing education and addressing the financial challenges faced by educational institutions, as these are vital to the nation's growth. She encouraged the youth, reminding them that the entire nation looks to them with hope and expectation.