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PM Shahbaz salutes security forces for preventing Bannu Cantonment assault



for the families who lost loved ones, underscoring the unmatched sacrifices made by the Pakistan Army and security forces in combating terrorism.

He commended the security forces for their courage in confronting and decisively eliminating ten terrorists, emphasizing his unwavering resolve to eradicate terrorism from the country.

The prime minister prayed for the elevation of ranks in paradise for the martyred soldiers of the Pakistan Army, which included Naib Subedar Muhammad Shehzad, Hawaldar Zil-e-Hussain, Hawaldar Shehzad Ahmed, Lance Naik Saib Ali, Sepoy Ashfaq Hussain Khan, Sepoy Sobhan Sajed, Sepoy Imtiaz Khan, and Sepoy Arsalan Aslam.

Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday expressed his admiration for the security forces for effectively thwarting a major attack on Bannu Cantonment. In his statement, the PM vehemently denounced the terrorists for the assault on Bannu Cantonment and reiterated the nation's steadfast backing of the security forces in their ongoing fight against terrorism. The prime minister expressed heartfelt sympathy and sorrow



More people to benefit from clinic on wheels, CM Maryam Nawaz

Soon Times Correspondent LAHORE Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz said on Tuesday that the Punjab Government was trying to expand the scope of field hospitals and clinic on wheels across Punjab. Punjab CM met senior MPA Saeed Akbar Khan Nawani.

During the meeting, duo discussed development projects in Punjab as well as other issues faced by the people. MPA Nawani appreciated the CM for successfully implementing development schemes during her first 100 days in the government, adding that the Punjab Government's

performance is worth emulating for other provinces due to its people-friendly policies. Expressing her desire to expand the scope of field hospitals and clinic on wheels, Maryam said that the government would bring 500 more field hospitals on roads to help people, hoping that thalassemia centres will be

established in all district headquarters hospitals of Punjab. Moreover, she said that services would be provided 24/7 at basic health units across Punjab, adding that Anaesthesia experts, Peds and Cardiologists would visit these hospitals on a weekly basis.

NAB team reaches Adiala Jail to question Khan, Bushra Bibi



Soon Times Correspondent. RAWALPINDI: The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) team arrived at Adiala Jail to investigate PTI founder Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi, in a new Toshakhana reference. Jail sources said that deputy director Mohsin Haroon is leading the NAB team interrogating Khan and Bushra Bibi. The couple is incarcerated in connection with the new corruption reference. The NAB team is investigating them for the third consecutive day.

Interior Minister Naqvi lauds security forces for thwarting Bannu terror attack



Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD Federal Minister for Interior and Narcotics Control Moinuddin Naqvi on Tuesday lauded security forces for thwarting terror attack carried out by the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in Bannu Cantonment. In his condolence statement, Minister Naqvi expressed his sympathies with the families of the martyred personnel. He further said that our brave soldiers fought gallantly in the face of terror and reduced.

Justice Mushir Alam declines SC ad-hoc judge role



social media after the nomination of ad-hoc judges has been deeply discouraging," the letter read. "In the current circumstance

s, I regret that I am unable to serve as an ad-hoc judge," he conveyed.

Yesterday, the Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa proposed four retired judges for the appointment as four ad-hoc judges for three years in the apex court. It included Mushir Alam, Mazhar Alam Miankheil, Maqbool Baqar and Sardar Tariq Masood. In this regard, the chief justice summoned the JCP meeting on July 19 to consider the nominees.

The summary, sent by CJP Isa to all JCP members, stated that having perused the Registrar's note and reviewed the statistics.

Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD Former Supreme Court Judge, Justice (Retired) Mushir Alam has declined the appointment as an ad-hoc judge through a letter penned to the Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP) on Tuesday. Expressing gratitude, Justice Alam wrote, "God has honoured me beyond my position...I am thankful to the Judicial Commission for the honour of being reappointed as an ad-hoc judge."

Embracing temporary relief: Sanam Javed, family shifted to KP House



enjoying her freedom following a direction of the Islamabad High Court that restrained her arrest till Thursday. The court has also summoned records of cases registered against her.

The PTI leader and her family members were welcomed at the KP-House following the direction of Chief Minister KPFC, Ali Amin Gandapur. The CM was in contact with the husband and father of Ms Javed.

Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Sanam Javed and her family have been shifted to KP House, a guest house in Islamabad. Sanam Javed is currently

10 terrorists killed, eight soldiers martyred in Bannu Cantt attack: ISPR



Soon Times Correspondent RAWALPINDI Ten terrorists were killed in an attack after they tried to force their way into Bannu Cantonment on Monday, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said about the latest terrorism act targeting the military in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa which has been witnessing a surge in violence after the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) members were allowed by resettle in the erstwhile tribal region. A statement issued on Tuesday also mentioned that eight army

men were martyred in the terror attack and noted that the swift action taken by security forces helped avoiding massive destruction and loss of human lives. The ISPR described the response given by security forces as valiant action which, it said, was an expression of military's resolve to fight terrorism. On the other hand, the ISPR also said that the Hafiz Gul Bahadur Group, currently operating from Afghanistan, was responsible for the latest attack and had acted in a similar way in the past too.

Pakistani descent Shabana Mahmood appointed UK's first woman Muslim Lord Chancellor



LONDON (Web Desk) In an epoch-making ceremony at the Royal Courts of Justice, Shabana Mahmood, a Pakistani origin MP took oath on the Holy Quran as she was sworn in as the first female Muslim Lord Chancellor of the United Kingdom. According to the law in the UK, the Lord Chancellor is secretary of state for justice and the minister of the Crown responsible for the administration of the

courts and legal aid in England and Wales. The new Lord Chancellor has vowed to continue "defending the international rule of law and upholding human rights" during her swearing-in ceremony. Justice Secretary Shabana Mahmood stressed that the judiciary must make decisions "without political pressure and undue influence", pledging to be a "champion for the rule of law" during the event at the Royal Courts of Justice. Ms Mahmood, who took oath in front of several family members and friends, becomes the first female Lord Chancellor to be sworn in before a Lady Chief Justice, and the first employed member of the Bar of England of Wales to hold the position. She said in her speech that she was "the first Lord Chancellor to speak Urdu".

Pakistan condemns terrorist attack on mosque in Oman



Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD Pakistan has strongly condemned the dastardly terrorist attack on Imam Bargah Ali bin Abu Talib in Wadi Kabir in Muscat, Oman that resulted in multiple casualties including the death of four Pakistanis. In a press release, the Foreign Office said, "We are heartened that the government of Oman has neutralized the attackers. Pakistan has offered all

possible assistance to Omani authorities in the investigation and in bringing to justice those responsible for this heinous crime during this holy month of Muharram. The statement mentioned that the Pakistan Embassy in Oman had remained in contact with Omani authorities for the identification and repatriation of the mortal remains of the two Pakistani martyrs. Additionally, a helpline was set up to handle inquiries from the Pakistani community in Oman and to assist them. Ambassador Imran Ali was also visiting local hospitals to check on the well-being of injured Pakistani nationals.

United in remembrance: Countrywide processions, majalis honour Imam Hussain's sacrifice

Mobile phone services along the routes of processions in multiple cities will remain partially suspended.



Soon Times Correspondent LAHORE/ISLAMABAD To honour and remember the martyrdom of Imam Hussain (AS) and his companions, processions and majalis (religious congregations) are being meticulously organised across the country today, the ninth of Muharram. Elaborative security measures have been put in place, and thousands of police and other law-enforcement

personnel are deployed to prevent any untoward incidents. Processions, majalis and mourning will continue in Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar, Quetta, Rawalpindi, and other cities of Pakistan. Mobile phone services along the routes of processions in multiple cities will remain partially suspended. Arrangements for water and food (Langar Hussaini) will also be made for mourners along the procession routes.

LAHORE The main procession of the 9th Muharram ul Haram was taken out from Pandu Street, Islamabad, and it would be culminated at Khema-e-Sadat after following its designated route. Walk-through gates, barbed wire, containers, and barriers have been installed to prevent unauthorized access. ISLAMABAD A procession departed from Imambargah Asna Ashre, G-6 and

return to its starting point. All access points except the designated entry and exit points for the procession will be sealed. KARACHI In Karachi, the 9th Muharram procession has started from Martin Quarters and will arrive at Nishtar Park by 12:00 noon. The main procession departed from Nishtar Park at 1:00 PM, and will conclude at the Husseiniyah Irania Imam Bargah, following the designated route.

IMF agreement boosts Pakistan's Funding prospects: Moody's

PAKISTAN: Global rating agency Moody's on Tuesday said that Pakistan's staff-level agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has improved the funding prospects, but the ability to sustain reforms is key to easing liquidity risks.

In a press release, Moody's stresses that Pakistan's success depends on its ability to sustain key reforms to mitigate liquidity risks and ensure the programme's long-term viability.

The 37-month Extended Fund Facility Arrangement (EFF), agreed upon July 12 and awaiting IMF Executive

Board approval, is expected to provide credible financing and attract further support from bilateral and multilateral partners.

"If approved, which we expect is likely, the new IMF programme will improve Pakistan's (Caa3 stable) funding prospects. The programme will provide credible sources of financing from the IMF and catalyze funding from other bilateral and multilateral partners to meet Pakistan's external financing needs," the agency stated.

Moody's underscores the importance of Pakistan's commitment to

implementing extensive reforms, such as broadening the tax base, eliminating exemptions, adjusting energy tariffs in a timely manner to restore sector viability, improving state-owned enterprise management, advancing privatization, phasing out agricultural support prices and subsidies, and enhancing anti-corruption, governance, and transparency measures. Additionally, gradual trade policy liberalization is crucial.

Despite these steps, Moody's acknowledges potential challenges, including social tensions arising from the high cost of living, which may be aggravated by higher taxes and energy

tariff adjustments. The possibility of the coalition government lacking a strong mandate to consistently implement these tough reforms also poses a risk.

Pakistan's external position remains fragile, with significant external financing needs over the coming years. The country's foreign exchange reserves are currently well below the necessary level, making it vulnerable to policy missteps. Weak governance and high social tensions could further impede the government's reform efforts, potentially threatening the completion of IMF reviews and access to external financing.

Political Unrest and Public Panic



Amjad Rana

discipline, and create an environment conducive to investment and economic growth. These issues require a concerted effort, here's more detailed information on the various aspects affecting Pakistan's economic and political landscape. Pakistan has experienced numerous changes in leadership and government over the years. These changes often lead to policy discontinuity and short-term planning, which hamper long-term economic development. The complex relationship between civilian governments and the military has often resulted in political instability. Military interventions and coups have disrupted democratic processes and governance. The judiciary in Pakistan has sometimes played an active role in political matters, further complicating the political environment. High-profile cases and judicial reviews of government actions add to the uncertainty. Corruption at various levels of government remains a significant issue. It diverts public resources away from essential services and infrastructure, leading to inefficiencies and economic losses. A cumbersome and inefficient bureaucracy slows down decision-making processes and the implementation of policies. This inefficiency is often exacerbated by political interference. Limited transparency in governmental operations and public sector spending reduces accountability and fosters an environment where corrupt practices can thrive. Pakistan has struggled with a high fiscal deficit due to low tax revenues and high public expenditure. This deficit often leads to borrowing, which increases the national debt. Maintaining low levels of foreign currency reserves makes it difficult for Pakistan to manage its external debt and imports, leading to economic vulnerabilities. High levels of public and external debt strain the economy, as significant portions of the budget are allocated to debt servicing rather than development projects. Inflation in Pakistan is driven by factors

such as devaluation of the currency, high energy costs, and supply chain disruptions. These factors contribute to the increasing cost of living. High inflation erodes the purchasing power of the average Pakistani, making it difficult for many to afford basic necessities like food, healthcare, and education. Pakistan has sought financial assistance from the IMF multiple times. These bailouts provide temporary relief but often come with conditions requiring economic reforms and austerity measures. Programs typically require Pakistan to implement austerity measures, such as reducing subsidies, increasing taxes, and cutting public spending. These measures can be politically unpopular and challenging to implement. Improving tax collection and expanding the tax base are critical for increasing government revenues and reducing the fiscal deficit. Inefficiencies and financial losses in the energy sector is essential for reducing the burden on the national budget and ensuring reliable energy supply. Promoting industrialization and improving trade policies can help diversify the economy, increase exports, and reduce dependency on imports. Strengthening social safety nets can protect vulnerable populations from the adverse effects of economic reforms and inflation. Pakistan's geopolitical position, especially its relationships with neighboring countries and major powers, affects its economic stability. Tensions and conflicts in the region can disrupt economic activities and deter foreign investment. Engaging in favourable trade agreements and partnerships can help Pakistan access new markets and boost its export sector. These challenges require a multifaceted approach involving political stability, governance reforms, economic restructuring, and effective implementation of policies. Sustainable development and long-term economic growth will depend on the ability of Pakistani leadership to navigate these complex issues and make difficult but necessary decisions.

The Bureaucracy Of Pakistan A British Colonial System and A Staunch Resistance To Reforms & Progress.



Iftikhar Uddin Anjum

The bureaucratic system in Pakistan traces its roots to the colonial administration, where it was designed to control and manage the local populace efficiently. Post-independence, the structure remained largely unchanged, with the same rigid hierarchical system continuing to dominate. Over the decades, despite numerous attempts at reform, the bureaucracy has remained a bastion of inefficiency and corruption. In Pakistan, bureaucracy, ostensibly designed to facilitate governance and ensure the smooth functioning of state machinery, has often been criticized for being an impediment to progress. The bureaucratic system in Pakistan, an inheritance from the British colonial rule, has morphed into a complex, inefficient and often corrupt entity that significantly hinders the country's development. At its core, Pakistan's bureaucratic system is highly centralized and hierarchical. This structure fosters a culture of excessive control and minimal accountability. Bureaucrats often enjoy significant discretionary power, which they wield without adequate checks and balances. This centralization has led to a disconnect between the decision-makers and the people affected by those decisions, creating a gap that perpetuates inefficiency and dissatisfaction among the populace. Corruption within the bureaucracy is rampant. The bureaucratic echelons are often seen as lucrative positions, where personal gain takes precedence over public service. Nepotism and favoritism further exacerbate the problem, as appointments and promotions are frequently influenced by personal connections rather than merit. This has led to a system where the most competent individuals are sidelined and those with the right connections rise to positions of power, regardless of

their capability or integrity. One of the most significant issues with Pakistan's bureaucracy is its staunch resistance to reforms. Over the years, multiple governments have initiated various reforms programs aimed at making the bureaucracy more efficient and accountable. However, these initiatives have largely failed due to the entrenched interests of those within the system. Bureaucrats, who benefit from the status quo, often resist changes that would curtail their power and influence. This resistance to change has perpetuated a cycle of inefficiency and corruption. The infamous bureaucratic red tape is a significant barrier to development in Pakistan. The cumbersome and often convoluted procedures required to get anything done within the bureaucracy discourage innovation and stifle economic growth. Entrepreneurs and businesses frequently find themselves bogged down by excessive paperwork and procedural delays, which not only increases the cost of doing business but also dissuades investment. The inefficiencies within the bureaucracy have a direct impact on governance and public service delivery. Essential services such as healthcare, education and infrastructure development are often hampered by bureaucratic delays and mismanagement. Projects that could benefit the public are delayed for years and funds allocated for development often go unutilized or are misappropriated due to lack of oversight and accountability. Political interference is another critical issue that hampers the effectiveness of Pakistan's bureaucracy. Politicians often interfere in bureaucratic appointments and decision-making processes, using their influence to further their own interests. This politicization undermines the autonomy of the bureaucracy and erodes public trust in the system. Bureaucrats, in turn, often align themselves with political patrons, further entrenching the cycle of corruption and inefficiency. A glaring example of bureaucratic inefficiency and corruption can be seen in the police service of

Pakistan. The police, meant to maintain law and order, are often criticized for their lack of professionalism, corruption, and politicization. Promotions within the police service are frequently based on political affiliations rather than merit, leading to a force that is poorly equipped to handle the challenges of modern law enforcement. This has led to a decline in public trust and an increase in crime rates, further destabilizing the social fabric. Addressing the bureaucratic malaise in Pakistan requires a multi-pronged approach focused on reform and accountability. Firstly, there is a need for comprehensive civil service reform that emphasizes merit-based recruitment and promotions. The introduction of modern management practices and continuous training for bureaucrats can enhance efficiency and professionalism within the system. Secondly, there must be stringent measures to combat corruption. This includes establishing independent anti-corruption bodies with the power to investigate and prosecute corrupt officials. Whistleblower protection laws can also encourage individuals to report corrupt practices without fear of reprisal. Thirdly, decentralization is crucial. Devolving power to local governments can bridge the gap between decision-makers and the public, ensuring that policies are more attuned to the needs of the people. This can enhance accountability and improve service delivery at the grassroots level. The bureaucratic system in Pakistan, with its deep-rooted inefficiencies and corruption, stands as a significant impediment to the nation's progress. While the challenges are formidable, they are not insurmountable. Through comprehensive reform, stringent anti-corruption measures, and decentralization, it is possible to transform the bureaucracy into a force for good. For Pakistan to realize its full potential, it must tackle the bureaucratic behemoth that has long hindered its path to progress. Only then can the nation hope to achieve sustainable development and improved quality of life for its citizens.



"Inimitable Security Arrangements for 10th Muharram Procession Completed

Special Arrangements on CM Punjab Instruction in Sargodha Division: 7683 Police Personals Along With 3500 Volunteers Are on Routes for Security" . Mr. Sohaib Ahmad Bharth.



Soon Times Correspondent Sargodha.

To ensure inimitable law and order across the province on the occasion of 9th and 10th Muharram Processions, the Provincial ministers have been tasked, by Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif, to review security and civic arrangements in their assigned divisions. In this regard, the Minister for Communication and Works / Law Punjab Mr. Sohaib Ahmad Bharth has been visiting every district of Sargodha Division since last three days, observing and reviewing arrangements on procession routes in Sargodha, Mainwali,

Khushab and Bhakkar. During his visit to Sargodha, he had detailed briefings from Commissioner and Regional Police Officer Sargodha about security and civic arrangements on procession routes. He also met with members of Divisional peace committee and licence holders of processions. He thoroughly inspected yom e Ashur routes of all four districts. While talking to licence holders, Mr. Sohaib Ahmad Bharth said that Punjab Government had been taking all possible steps to ensure that no untoward incident could happen anywhere. He also requested licence holders to cooperate with local administrations and to follow

procession routes and stipulated time of the processions. "A total 5457 Majalis, 1220 Processions are being taken out in Sargodha Division while as many as 7683 police personals along with 3500 volunteers are performing law and order duty for the protection of processions and Majalis. Special teams of Rescue 1122 and Health department officials are on high alert to tackle any untoward situation" Mr. Sohaib added. He, moreover, said that special "Sabeel Camps" have been set up on the routes of procession for the participants on the direction of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif.

No decision taken yet to ban PTI, says FM Dar

Govt to deliberate on decision and consult allies before taking any decision on banning PTI, says Dar



Soon Times Correspondent Islamabad

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar said Tuesday that the decision to impose a ban on the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has not been taken yet by the federal government.

Upping the ante against the embattled Imran Khan-founded party, the federal government led by Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) decided to ban the former ruling party as well as file references against the top PTI leaders founder — Imran Khan, Arif Alvi and Qasim Suri — under Article 6 (high treason) for dissolving the National Assembly in April 2022.

Dar, while addressing a press conference in Lahore today, clarified that Federal Minister for Information Attaulah Tatar had clearly announced a day ago that the government would deliberate on the ban on the PTI and make a decision after consulting its allies.

Decision would be taken according to the law and the Constitution," the deputy premier assured.

"Whatever decision we take, it would not be above the law and the Constitution, nor politically motivated," he added.

It is noteworthy to mention here that Tatar blamed the former ruling party

for May 9 riots, foreign funding from questionable sources, and illegal dissolution of assemblies during the no-confidence move against the former premier Khan in April 2022.

"PTI is foreign-funded"

"May 9 events are unacceptable," said Dar, adding that however, national integrity should be prioritised at any cost.

"Whoever is involved in the May 9 riots must face penalties. Either it's us or anyone else, if someone is working against the country, then it will be unacceptable," Dar insisted.

The May 9 riots had erupted following ex-PM Khan's arrest from Islamabad High Court (IHC) premises last year in which protesters targeted government and military installations.

Commenting on possibilities to initiate political dialogue, he said, "Reconciliation is possible as I have always worked for it."

Referring to the PTI's 2014 countryside sit-in. "During the PML-N rule, I negotiated with the PTI to end its sit-in with the permission of then premier Nawaz."

He, however, said that "political reconciliation is possible but not at the cost of compromising the country's integrity."

"The party [PTI] is foreign-funded," Dar said, "It was already proved by the

Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) besides ascertaining that the donors were not only Muslims but also Jews and Christians."

The FM said that the ECP declared the PTI "a foreign-funded party" on the basis of undeniable facts as per the law and the Constitution.

New cases against incarcerated ex-PM Dar, while answering a question regarding the government's involvement in new cases against the ousted premier Khan, rejected the claims and said that the incumbent government was not involved in any kind of tampering with the process of the law and the Constitution.

"We are not like Imran Khan, neither we are summoning FIA DG [Federal Investigation Agency Director-General] at all times nor calling the National Accountability Bureau's (NAB) DG or chairman."

"The cabinet is doing its work [...] the law and the Constitution will make their way."

The statement came after the former premier Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi were arrested and remanded in the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) custody in a new reference related to Toshakhana gifts last week.

The arrest was made after their acquittal in the iddat case — also known as the un-Islamic nikah case — which was the last hurdle in the couple's release from Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail.

Moreover, Khan's arrest had also been declared in 12 cases related to May 9 mayhem a day ago and an anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Lahore granted his 10-day physical remand.

"PML-N, PDM took responsibility"

In his initial remarks, the foreign minister said that Pakistan became the 24th largest economy in a short period of three years in 2016 under the leadership of former prime minister Nawaz Sharif when "inflation rate was only 2%, general inflation rate was standing at 3.6% and with the growth rate of 6%."

Jl raises the flag of protest against fuel price hike

Soon Times Correspondent LAHORE:

Jamaat-e-Islami has rejected the recent increase in petroleum product prices, terming it unjust to the public.

In a statement, JI spokesman, Qaiser Sharif said his party would not tolerate the burden on the public and would stage a sit-in in Islamabad on July 26.

He announced the launch of a movement titled "Haq do avam ko (Give people their rights)" to protest against anti-people policies.

Jl head Hafiz Naeem-ur-Rehman will lead the sit-in.

He said the JI would approach courts and



take to the streets to demand public rights. The protest will continue until their demands are met, he added.

Qaiser Sharif claimed that people from all walks of life, including scholars, lawyers, traders, farmers, laborers, and industrialists would participate in the sit-in.

Khawaja Asif doubles down on criticism of judiciary after reserved seats verdict



Doubling down on the criticism of the judiciary following the Supreme Court's July 12 verdict on the reserved seats case in favour of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Defence Minister Khawaja Asif on Tuesday urged the courts to refrain from giving "political verdicts" and to pass judgements that uphold their respect.

"I respect the courts but courts should also get themselves respected and the politicians should not be mistaken as being too weak," he said while addressing a press conference in Sialkot on Tuesday.

The defence minister's remarks came days after the Supreme Court issued its short order in the reserved seats case, declaring the Imran Khan-founded party eligible for reserved seats for women and minorities in the assemblies.

Amid criticism pouring in from all political quarters, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) has defended its decision to ban the PTI as Defence Minister Khawaja Asif said consultations would be held with the allies of the ruling coalition and the ruling party would bring the matter in parliament.

Information Minister Attaulah Tatar announced Monday that the federal government had decided to ban the PTI and initiate Article 6 proceedings against then prime minister Imran Khan, then

president Dr Arif Alvi and then deputy speaker of the National Assembly Qasim Suri for dissolving the National Assembly in April 2022.

"The PTI only intends to ascend to power. Article 6 applies to those who violate the Constitution," the defence minister said highlighting the need to invoke the treason charges against the PTI leaders.

Asif said the PTI leaders are involved in lobbying in a bid to persuade the foreign powers to speak against Pakistan.

"The content of court proceedings, whenever initiated, were launched against politicians," Asif said.

"Does an institution not commit contempt as it does not dispose of 2.6 million cases? I respect the judiciary but the judiciary itself needs to make itself worthy of respect by giving verdicts in line with the Constitution — that are not political in nature."

"Why did the judiciary not take any notice of the 2018 election results, then? Didn't they see the result of the 2018 general elections?" Asif raised questions, coming hard on the judicial system for what he said "providing a cover to the May 9 culprits".

"Was a contempt of court clause invoked against any single judge for giving an extra-constitutional ruling?" the minister said.



A delegation of journalists from Balochistan and China International Communications Group called on Ambassador of Pakistan to China H.E. Mr. Khalil Hashmi at Pakistan Embassy in Beijing on July 16, 2024.



No surprises expected as Syrians vote in parliamentary poll



DAMASCUS
Syrians in government-held areas were voting in their fourth parliamentary election since civil war erupted in 2011, a poll expected to keep President Bashar al-Assad's ruling Baath party in power. The election came amid overtures from Ankara towards Damascus, after ties were severed following the start of Syria's war in 2011, with Assad saying he was open to meeting Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan depending on the encounter's content. Voting was calm in most areas, but a war monitor and a local media outlet reported anti-election protests in southern Sweida province, the heartland of Syria's Druze minority, which has seen regular demonstrations for almost a year.



Gaza rescuers say dead and wounded in new school strike

GAZA CITY
The civil defence agency in Hamas-run Gaza said on Monday (Jul 15) that an Israeli strike on a school in Gaza City killed at least one person. The strike on Salah al-Din School in Gaza City's Al-Rimal neighbourhood was the latest to hit schools, many of which have been turned into shelters for people displaced by the Israel-Hamas war in the Palestinian territory. At least six schools have been hit over the past nine days.



Israel hits Gaza from land, sea and air as Hamas pulls out of truce talks

Shells rained down on the neighbourhoods of Tal Al-Hawa, Sheikh Ajlin and Al-Sabra in Gaza City.

GAZA
Israel struck the southern and central Gaza Strip on Monday and carried out raids that killed "a number of" militants, the Israeli military said, as hopes faded for a truce and hostage release deal being secured any time soon. Hamas announced on Sunday it was pulling out of truce talks after an Israeli strike targeting the head of the group's military wing, Mohammed Deif, killed scores of Palestinians. Israel hammered the Gaza Strip from the air, sea and land Monday as the war in the Palestinian territory showed no sign of abating, with Hamas saying it was pulling out of truce talks. Shells rained down on the neighbourhoods of Tal Al-Hawa, Sheikh Ajlin and Al-Sabra in Gaza City, AFP correspondents reported, while eyewitnesses said the Israeli army had shelled the Al-Mughraqa area and the northern outskirts of the Nuseirat refugee camp in central Gaza. Paramedics from the Palestinian Red Crescent said they had retrieved the bodies of five people, including three children, after Israeli air strikes in the Al-Maghazi camp, also in the central Gaza Strip. Meanwhile, eyewitnesses reported Israeli gunship fire east of Khan Younis, in southern Gaza, and shelling and Apache helicopter attacks in western areas of the southernmost city of Rafah. The Israeli military said in a statement that it was continuing its activity throughout the coastal territory, and said it had conducted raids in Rafah and central Gaza that killed "a number of" militants, as well as air strikes throughout the strip over the past day. It also said its naval forces had been firing at targets in Gaza. **TALKS ON HOLD**
The relentless bombardments came as prospects dwindled for a truce and hostage release deal being secured any time soon. Hamas, the Iran-backed Islamist group that Israel has been fighting in Gaza for over nine months, said on Sunday it was withdrawing from ceasefire talks.

Trump picks Ohio Senator JD Vance as vice presidential running mate

MILWAUKEE (Reuters)
Donald Trump has chosen Ohio Senator JD Vance to be his vice-presidential pick. On his Truth Social network Trump said that, "After lengthy deliberation and thought, and considering the tremendous talents of many others, I have decided that the person best suited to assume the position of Vice President of the United States is Senator J.D. Vance of the Great State of Ohio." Donald Trump selected JD Vance, a Republican US senator from Ohio, as his running mate on Monday, elevating a politician who once criticized the former president in acid terms but has since become one of his most stalwart defenders. The news, carried on Trump's Truth Social media website, emerged at the start of the four-day Republican National Convention in Milwaukee to nominate the party's presidential ticket. The selection of James David Vance, author of the bestselling memoir "Hillbilly Elegy," could increase the odds of Trump supporters turning out for the Nov. 5 election as the Ohio native is deeply popular with the Republican candidate's base. A staunch conservative from a Republican state, Vance is unlikely to bring many new voters into Trump's corner, however, and may even alienate some moderates. Some Trump supporters had pushed him to select a woman or person of color as his No. 2 to expand a coalition that skews toward white men.

President Joe Biden says it was a 'mistake' to say he wanted to put a 'bull's-eye' on Donald Trump



WASHINGTON
President Joe Biden told NBC News in an interview Monday that it was a "mistake" to say he wanted to put a "bull's-eye" on Republican nominee Donald Trump, but argued that the rhetoric from his opponent was more incendiary while warning that Trump remained a threat to democratic institutions. The remark in question came during a private call with donors last week as Biden had been scrambling to shore up his imperiled candidacy with key party insiders. During that conversation, Biden declared he was "done" talking about his poor debate performance and said it was "time to put Trump in the bull's-eye," saying Trump has gotten far too little scrutiny on his stances, rhetoric and lack of campaigning. The NBC interview — during which, at times, Biden grew defensive under questions about his fitness for office — came as the president and his reelection team prepared to resume full-throttle campaigning after a brief pause following the weekend assassination attempt on Trump. The Biden campaign let loose a flurry of criticism after the GOP nominee announced freshman Sen. JD Vance of Ohio as his running mate. "He's a clone of Trump on the issues," Biden told reporters as he headed to Nevada for a series of speeches and campaign events. "I don't see any difference." He expanded on that during the NBC interview, telling Lester Holt that Vance has the same policies as Trump when it comes to abortion, taxes and climate change, adding, "He signed onto the Trump agenda, which he should, if he's running with Trump." Once Vance was tapped as Trump's vice-presidential pick, the Biden campaign hit send on a fundraising solicitation signed by the president, and his team issued a blistering statement saying he picked the freshman senator because he would "bend over backwards to enable Trump and his extreme MAGA agenda."

Sports & Showbiz



Haris to captain Pakistan Shaheens' white-ball side in Darwin



LAHORE
Web Desk
Mohammad Haris has been appointed as Pakistan Shaheens white-ball captain for the 20 over matches and nine-team Top End T20 series to be played from 4-18 August in Darwin, Australia. Haris last captained Pakistan Shaheens in the ACC Men's Emerging Teams Asia Cup 2023 in Colombo. In the final, Pakistan Shaheens defeated India by 128 runs to successfully defend the title. Pakistan Shaheens are already in Darwin for two four-day matches against Bangladesh 'A' from 19-22

US men's basketball team builds big lead then holds off Australia for 98-92 win in Olympics tuneup



Web Desk
There was a lot for the U.S. Olympic team to like. And a lot not to like. Anthony Davis scored 17 points and grabbed 14 rebounds, Tyrese Haliburton came up with a pair of late 3-pointers that helped stop a freefall by the Americans, and Joel Embiid — finished with 10 for the Americans, who are playing host to a pair of exhibitions at Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, this week. They'll play Serbia there on Wednesday. Joek Landale scored 20 for Australia, which got 17 from Josh Giddey and 14 from Dyson Daniels. The U.S. led by 24 midway through the third quarter, yet saw that lead cut to six with 5:05 left after Australia went on a 39-21 run. But Haliburton had the next six points on his 3s, pushing the lead back to 92-80. Australia cut it to 90 on two separate occasions, but Booker went 4-for-4 from the line in the final 8 seconds to ensure the U.S. would escape. "Third quarter, we started turning the ball over," U.S. coach Steve Kerr said. "We gave up a ton of points at the basket. Back cuts, offensive boards and so, the game shifted. It's a good lesson for us. Better to learn that lesson now than later. And this will be a good tape for us to watch. But I give Australia a ton of credit. They were great. They fought. They were really physical. Took it to us in the last quarter and a half and really made it a game." That was the group on the floor when the Americans took a game that was tied at 19-19 with 3:15 left in the first and turned it into a 39-23 lead — a 20-4 run in a span of just over 5 minutes. Kerr used that group as his starting five to open the second half. But it's become a clear trend already — when the U.S. goes to its bench and can't replace All-Stars with other All-Stars, it's just going to be a massive problem for opponents who don't have anywhere near that same level of depth.

Shannen Doherty, 'Beverly Hills, 90210' star, dies at 53



LOS ANGELES
Shannen Doherty, the "Beverly Hills, 90210" star whose life and career were roiled by illness and tabloid stories, has died at 53. After years with breast cancer, Doherty died Saturday, according to a statement from her publicist, Leslie Sloane. "The devoted daughter, sister, aunt and friend was surrounded by her loved ones as well as her dog, Bonnie. The family asks for their privacy at this time so they can grieve in peace," Sloane said Sunday. The news was first reported by People magazine. Her illness was publicly revealed in a lawsuit filed in 2015 against her former business managers, in which she alleged they mismanaged her money and allowed her health insurance to lapse.

Bailey confirms Warner not considered for 2025 ODI Champions Trophy



SYDNEY (Web Desk)
David Warner won't be considered for next year's ODI Champions Trophy after he said he would be open to playing the tournament despite announcing his international retirement. As Warner did in January when he said last year's ODI World Cup would mark the end of his career in the format, he repeated his call about the Champions Trophy in a recent social media post following the end of the T20 World Cup which marked the conclusion of his Australia career. But George Bailey, Australia's national selector, said Warner was considered fully retired and the legacy he has left as an all-format player should be appreciated. "Our understanding is that David is retired, and [he] should be commended on what has been an incredible career across all three formats," Bailey said. "Certainly, our planning is that he won't be there in Pakistan. "You never know when Bull's joking... think he's just stirring the pot a bit. He's had a wonderful career, can't celebrate it enough, and think as time goes by,



his legacy of what he has done for Australia and we reflect back that, the legend of a player is only going to continue to grow. But as far as this team goes and the journey to transition to some different players, in his case across all three formats, it's going to be exciting." However, Bailey added that the selectors were not moving on from other players around white-ball cricket even as they shifted focus to the future, particularly with the T20 squad for the tours of Scotland and England which featured a call up for Cooper Connolly and Jake Fraser-McGurk, following the Super Eight exit in West Indies.