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PM directs to accelerate execution of identified projects under SIFC

COAS reaffirms army's all-out support to caretaker govt

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Monday directed the authorities concerned to accelerate the realisation of identified projects by capitalising enabling environment, already achieved through Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC).

The prime minister was chairing the 4th Apex Committee Meeting of SIFC - the inaugural meeting under the caretaker government - to continue positive impetus under the Council.

The meeting was attended by Chief of Army Staff, entire federal cabinet, chief ministers, provincial ministers and high-level government officials.

The meeting was given a wholesome review of SIFC initiatives, encompassing progress in key areas and benchmarks achieved thus far in a short span of time.

Prime Minister Kakar appreciated the efficient functioning of SIFC through a collaborative "Whole of Government Approach" for achieving

horizontal and vertical synergy.

The Apex Committee appreciated SIFC's outreach strategy to achieve global traction and ongoing engagements with brotherly/friendly countries including productive visits of high-level delegations from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Islamic Organization for Food Security (IOFS).

The Apex Committee expressed confidence on SIFC initiatives and displayed its resolve and support in maintaining positive trajectory towards the

revival of country's economy.

The body also endorsed the projects, approved by the previous government, for attracting investments in key sectors of agriculture, livestock, mining, minerals, information technology and energy.

The Army Chief reaffirmed Pakistan Army's all-out support to the caretaker government for continuity of policies in a bid to revive country's economy and steer Pakistan towards progress and prosperity.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar chaired the 4th apex committee meeting of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC).



KARACHI: President Dr. Arif Alvi chairing a meeting with representatives of banking industry to review progress on initiatives for financial inclusion, gender equality and issues of banking sector at Sindh Governor House.

President Alvi for strengthening financial inclusion, gender equality

KARACHI (APP): President Dr. Arif Alvi Monday asked the banking institutions to take measures to further strengthening financial inclusion and gender equality in the sector.

Besides ensuring easy and accessible financial services to women and differently-abled persons, he emphasized the banking sector to focus on providing more employment opportunities and financing facilities as well as extending job training and financial literacy to them.

The president was chairing a meeting of representatives of banking industry here at the Sindh

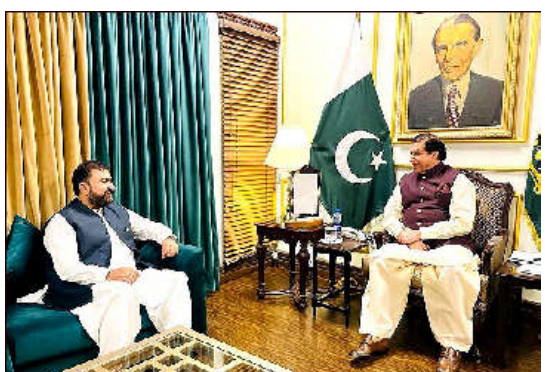
Governor House to review progress on initiatives aimed at financial inclusion of women and differently-abled persons, progress on measures taken to ensure employment and financial opportunities for them, and other issues of the banking industry.

The meeting was attended by senior officials of State Bank of Pakistan and chief executive officers of different commercial banks. Terming meaningful participation of women in economic activities vital for progress and prosperity of the country, the president said it was encouraging to see the ratio of female in bank account holders and

banking sector jobs had recorded a significant growth in previous years but still more efforts were required by the sector to promote gender equality and inclusion of all segments of the society for achieving the objectives of inclusive banking.

He said the jobs for the people with disabilities could be tailored in the banking industry and the process of bank account opening could be made easy further.

President Alvi also proposed the bank officials to explore part-time job avenues in their institutions for the household women.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Interior Sarfraz Ahmad Bugti in a meeting with the Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf

Mayor Karachi for accelerating work to bring streetlights on solar system

KARACHI (APP): Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab on Monday directed the officials concerned that work should also be accelerated to bring streetlights to the solar system and take whatever approval is required from him. He said this by chairing a high-level meeting with the officers of the engineering department in his office.

Earlier, as an administrator, he had started work to bring streetlights to the solar system in Karachi, but then this work was stopped, the engineering department should start the work of solar streetlights from Shahrah-e-Faisal and gradually extend it to other important roads and streets of Karachi, he said.

Murtaza said that non-functioning of street lights except load shedding hours on the city's major corridors like Shahrah-e-Faisal, Rashid Minhas Road, Shahrah-e-Pakistan, Mai Kolachi Road, M.T.Khan Road and other main roads and highways cannot be tolerated any further. He

said that the engineering department must ensure that the street lights installed on all these roads are kept lit within a week and the concerned engineers should visit the areas personally and take immediate steps where required, but provide convenience to the citizens at any cost.

On this occasion, Deputy Mayor Karachi Salman Abdullah Murad, Municipal Commissioner Syed Afzal Zaidi, Director General Engineering Azhar Hussain Shah, S.E Electrical & Mechanical Abbas Ali Shah, S.E I & QC Anees Ahmed Khan, Chief Engineers of various zones and districts, XENS, Executive Engineers and other officers were also present.

Mayor Karachi took strict notice of the shutdown of streetlights on various main roads and streets of the city during the meeting and directed the Director General Engineering to fix the vigilance system immediately.

Relief to masses in electricity bill, caretaker govt's priority: Solangi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi on Monday said the complete focus of the government was on providing relief to the masses in electricity bills.

"We are focusing on how to provide relief to the masses instead of delving into discussion that who is responsible for expensive electricity," the minister said while talking to a private TV channel.

He said the caretaker government took the oath on August 17, and the consumers received inflated bills of the month of July.

Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar had taken notice of inflated electricity bills,

Solangi said, adding, "We are responsible caretaker government and cannot ignore the issue."

He said tomorrow the issue would be taken up by the Federal Cabinet which would explore the ways to pass on relief to the public without violating the International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme.

The minister resolved that the cabinet would decide in favour of passing on the relief to the masses.

He said the prime minister held a meeting with the relevant stakeholders today too. The media should inform the masses about the reasons behind increase in electricity bills, he said while responding to a query.

Countrywide protests continue against inflated electricity bills

KARACHI (INP): People across the country are protesting against the inflated electricity bills to assert pressure on the government for relief.

The protesting masses have been demanding that the government should end the provision of free electricity to the notables and provide them relief as the bills they have been receiving are more than their salaries.

Protest demonstrations were held in several parts of Karachi. Masses carrying banners and placards along with their children criticized the government for making their lives miserable.

People staged protest demonstrations in Karachi's area of Ayesha Manzil, Korangi, Five Star Chowrangi, Yaseenabad,

Labour Square and others. The enraged people set their electricity bills on fire.

Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) have announced protest demonstrations against the inflated electricity bills. It may be noted that Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar on Sunday chaired an emergency meeting at the Prime Minister's House and discussed the issue of rising power bills.

In several areas of Lahore, people came out on the streets against high electricity bills. The angry protesters said they could not feed their families if they pay electricity bills. They threatened that they would stage sit-in inside Wapda House if taxes were not withdrawn.

Meanwhile, government employees and businessmen also registered their protest against the inflated electricity bills. They demanded that facility of free electricity to officers should be withdrawn.

The members of Wasa Phool Union also protested in the offices against the increase in electricity bills.

On the other hand, Hali Road traders vent their anger against huge increase in electricity bills. Anjuman-i-Tajran President Babar Mahmood Butt said if the increase in electricity bills was not withdrawn, they would be forced to take to the streets.

Hundreds of citizens surrounded the grid station at Bakra Mandi and burnt electricity bills. They chanted slogans against the government.



KARACHI: People holding protest demonstration against massive unemployment, increasing price of daily use products, inflation price hiking and the highly inflated electricity bills

Sindh Finance Minister directs to clear dues of ex-govt employees

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Caretaker Minister for Finance Mohammad Younus Dagha has directed the finance department to take immediate measures to clear the dues and payments of retired and serving government officials who have been suffering due to non-clearance of their dues for the past two years.

Younus Dagha was chairing a meeting with the officers of the Finance Department on Monday at his office to review the working of the District treasuries.

The minister was told that the cases of over 20,000 retired government officials have become overdue in past three years due to low budgeting against the heads of pension commutation, gratuity and LPR.

The liability has soared to Rs 36 billion and

the retired employees are facing a queue of two years in various District Account offices of the province.

The minister was briefed that several cases of massive irregularities were found in the District treasuries in which the officials found involved were penalized. However, the system cannot still be termed as foolproof for any such fraud in the future. Younus Dagha directed the Secretary of Finance to remove the ill-reputed treasury officials from their positions and take disciplinary actions against them. He also directed the senior officials of the finance department and AG Sindh to engage with IT experts and devise mechanism to make the computer system effective to check for any manipulation in future.

US dollar climbs to another historic high against Pak rupee

KARACHI (INP): The Pakistani rupee's pathetic run against the US dollar seemed not ending as the greenback soared to another historic high in interbank trading on Monday.

According to the information received from currency dealers, the Pakistani rupee depreciated by 20 more paisas against the US dollar and was currently being traded at Rs301.20, a historic high. On Friday last also, the Pakistani rupee had hit a new record low against the US dollar, as it settled at Rs301 in the interbank market. At close, the rupee had settled at Rs301 after a decrease of 78 paisas or 0.26%.

In a key development, Caretaker Federal Minister for Commerce and Industries Dr Gohar Ejaz had stressed the need for early operationalization of the EXIM Bank for enhancing Pakistan's exports. The enhancement of exports is critical as Pakistan struggles with low foreign exchange reserves. The central-bank held foreign exchange reserves decreased by \$125 million on a weekly basis, clocking in at \$7.93 billion as of August 18, on account of debt repayments, data released on Thursday last showed.



ISLAMABAD: Former Mayor of Karachi Farooq Sattar is talking to media persons along with others outside Election Commission of Pakistan in Federal Capital.

Wali assures all possible efforts to promote tourism in Sindh

Says government will work seriously to make Gorakh Hill a tourist destination of international standards

Independent Report

KARACHI: Caretaker Provincial Minister for Tourism and Environment Arshad Wali Muhammad has said that he will continue all possible efforts to promote tourism in Sindh and the provincial government will work seriously to make Gorakh Hill a tourist destination of international standards. He expressed these views while addressing a meeting held in his office regarding the completion and development of the

caretaker provincial minister while giving a presentation of the Gorakh Hill project, in which Gorakh Hill will be provided with a favorable environment for the movement of international tourists, provision of facilities at the tourist spot, and standard food items for tourists. The measures taken at the government level to prevent accidents and boarding lounging arrangements were highlighted; moreover, the issues of safe passage for



Gorakh Hill project. On this occasion, Secretary Tourism Abdul Aleem Lashari, Executive Director Gorakh Hill Project Muhammad Ali Makhdoom, Executive Engineer Faisal Naich and other senior officers of the organization were present. Executive Director Muhammad Ali Makhdoom informed the

transport and accommodation at cheap rates were also taken into consideration. The caretaker provincial minister instructed the officers that the Gorakh Hill project can become the best recreational spot of Pakistan if the facilities are provided here that should be present in any hilly recreational spot.

MQM delegation meets CEC

ISLAMABAD (Online): MQM has proposed to complete the delimitation of constituencies and revision of electoral lists before general elections.

He said that delimitation of constituencies after census is a constitutional requirement. We also demand that delimitation of constituencies and revision of electoral lists should be completed as soon as possible.

He said that delimitation of constituencies may not decrease or increase the number of seats in the national or provincial assembly in the country but there may be a difference in the number of seats at district level.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

The PPP stirs

Is the PPP coming around to the realisation that it has made a big mistake? After quietly succumbing, along with the PDM parties, and controversially approving the results of the last census just days before the 15th National Assembly was dissolved, it now seems to be having trouble coming to terms with the implications of its decision.

It is worth recalling that the party had consistently protested the census's results till the time came for their approval. Independent observers had warned repeatedly that validating the census at the eleventh hour would give the authorities an excuse to delay elections beyond the constitutionally mandated 90-day limit, and the PPP had been cognisant of this eventuality throughout.

It had, therefore, come as a shock when it was reported that the Council of Common Interests' eventual decision to approve the results was a unanimous one. The party now claims it was told there would be no change in election timelines due to the CCI's decision.

To be clear, the PPP is taking the correct line: there is no room for any further violation of the Constitution on any pretext, delimitations included. However, it is difficult to accept the PPP's excuse for its abrupt U-turn at face value, given how calculated the party's politicking generally is.

It is difficult to believe that its leadership could have been so credulous as to believe, even momentarily, that their approval of fresh census results would not automatically result in the need for fresh delimitation of constituencies.

There is considerable speculation as to what actually changed their mind, but whatever the case may be, it appears that the party has now decided to take a forceful stand on the matter. The PPP announced its position following a recent meeting of its Central Executive Committee, saying it will be firmed up once its representatives meet the chief election commissioner next week.

The party's refusal to accept any delay in the elections has placed it in opposition to its erstwhile partners in the PDM-led coalition government. With the PML-N and JUI-F, along with others, throwing their weight behind the ECP's decision to go for fresh delimitations, this may push the PPP and the beleaguered PTI into the same corner.

The sight of Aitzaz Ahsan seated at the PPP's CEC meeting has already piqued a lot of interest. A PPP stalwart, Mr Ahsan had long been out of favour with his party's central leadership.

His sympathies for his Zaman Park neighbour are also well known. Was he there to bring the bitter rivals together, if only for the sake of upholding the Constitution? It is a tantalising possibility for those who have grown weary of the recent listlessness in political activity. Any ripple in these placid waters is welcome news.

Proceed to the route



Saeed Ahmed

Pakistan is getting deeper into a constitutional quagmire. The unending series of political manoeuvres over the past couple of years have caused much economic damage to the country while eroding public trust and confidence in a democratic and political dispensation.

The ramifications of the current constitutional and political crisis stretch beyond the judicial and democratic systems to affect macroeconomic stability.

The dissolution of the Punjab and KP assemblies earlier this year, as part of a strategic political move aimed at securing a PTI government during the upcoming elections to the National Assembly, precipitated a crisis that continues without respite. This plan was thwarted by the coalition government by refusing to provide funds and administrative support to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to conduct by-elections within 90 days.

The Supreme Court's decisions to hold by-elections in the provinces were flouted by the executive relying on the powers of parliament. Such a scenario, where the Supreme Court's orders are disregarded by other organs of the state, signifies a collapse of both the judicial system and the polity. Article 224 of the Constitution unequivocally states that elections for a legislature — dissolved before the completion of its five-year term — must be held within 90 days after its dissolution. The purpose of a caretaker

government is to facilitate elections and run the day-to-day affairs of the government.

Accordingly, de facto extension in the term of the caretaker governments in Punjab and KP is against the spirit of the Constitution. Unfortunately, this precedent of extending terms could now be used to delay general elections beyond the stipulated 90 days and the caretaker federal government may also potentially perpetuate its term indefinitely, violating the constitutional norm.

The ECP's decision to initiate fresh delimitation of constituencies, following the approval of the Council of Common Interests for the 2023 population census, is a declaration that general elections may not be held within the constitutional limit of 90 days.

The delimitation process typically takes a minimum of four months to complete and could extend considerably due to possible litigations by the affected candidates. Therefore, the ECP decision has exacerbated uncertainty. If the fate of the Supreme Court's orders to hold by-elections in Punjab is any indicator, then general elections seem to be a distant dream.

Timely elections as stipulated in Article 224 are imperative to mitigating the political tension and prevent impending constitutional, political, and economic crises before they become insurmountable.

Thanks to the IMF-supported Stand-By Arrangement, Pakistan has just averted an imminent sovereign default risk. While the SBA has helped the retreat of near-term vulnerabilities, it remains a short-term bridging arrangement, and the new government after the elections will need to engage with the IMF for an extended financing arrangement to meet crucial me-

dium-term fiscal and external financing needs.

The SBA programme comprises two reviews scheduled for November 2023 and February 2024. The assumption behind this schedule was the installation of a new elected government by November 2023.

It may be recalled that prior to SBA approval, IMF staff had met the representatives of Pakistan's major political parties — the PML-N, PPP, and PTI — and all these parties expressed written support for the SBA's key objectives and policies ahead of the approaching national elections.

While requesting a nine-month SBA, the Pakistani authorities had also communicated to the Fund that a new short-term financing arrangement was needed until national elections were held and the installment of a newly elected government, empowered with a strong mandate to take medium-term decisions, took place later in the year. The route to achieving economic prosperity and the well-being of citizens traverses strong democratic traditions and institutions. Our Constitution has clearly defined the boundaries of the polity, which must be honoured.

Manipulating the document out of reasons of political expediency will lead us nowhere. Instead, our direction should be guided by the Constitution itself, rather than being influenced by vested interests. Failing to do so will inevitably steer us towards the abyss of political and economic turmoil. In our journey towards establishing a strong and progressive democratic state, we must follow the constitutional path. When such direction is lost, the best action is to retrace our steps and proceed to the route that leads to our mapped destiny. -- Courtesy Dawn

Invisible heroes



Aisha Khan

In a world where recognition often gravitates towards the apex of power, the unsung champions of success remain hidden in plain sight. These dedicated individuals wield their skills as the unseen cogs in the machinery of achievement, always first in the line of confronting challenges and last in receiving credit. While headlines chronicle the triumphs of a few, it is the quiet dedication of the many that propels victory and makes success possible.

Mountain climbing serves as a perfect analogy for talking about people who lead from the back to make a summit possible.

An expedition starts with many people, including porters and guides, but as it advances, the support circle narrows and centres around persons with specific skillsets needed for advancement. On reaching the summit, the triumphant mountaineer is hailed for his achievement, but little mention is made of the names without whom the win would not have been possible.

The climate journey of Pakistan is replete with stories of contributions made by people who have worked silently from behind the scenes to make milestone moments possible, but who are not adequately recognised.

Climate negotiations provide a multilateral platform where countries get the opportunity to demonstrate leadership capacity for pitching creative ideas, lobby for agendas and galvanise support for agreement by consensus.

Seeing only through

the narrow lens of Nationally Determined Contributions takes away from the larger purpose of convenings at multilateral spaces. This is a platform for debate, discussion, sharing perspectives and steering the process forward.

This space was used effectively by Pakistan's Foreign Office in 1992 at the Earth Summit in Rio to create a niche role for itself by drafting the language used in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Over the years, somehow the country ceded this space, making its participation a token presence with no meaningful contribution in negotiations.

COP27 marked a turning point, where a strategic plan to combine political frontloading supported by technical interventions created the perfect mix that made Loss and Damage possible. The powerful duo of former minister Sherry Rehman and Ambassador Nabeel Munir was supported by a variety of sub-set groups who worked tirelessly to make the landmark L&D outcome possible.

While the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination takes the lead at COP meetings, Pakistani diplomats play a pivotal role at the negotiations. Capitalising on the G77 plus China presidency, Pakistan reclaimed lost space at COP27 with its able leadership and technical backstopping.

Over the years, for a variety of reasons, we have fallen victim to the malaise of maligning the country and giving disproportionate space to prophets of doom. There is a mounting tendency to see everything through the lens of negativity, and negligence in shining light on achievements. This constant self-flagellation takes a toll on individual morale and dissipates the energy needed for promoting excellence in

work. The climate journey is difficult but not impossible to navigate. Despair, gloom, complaints and accusations are not going to fix the problem, and will certainly take away from our resolve to find solutions.

Moving forward will require team work, a well-thought-out strategy that covers all the important bases, and actors to work in unison.

The appointment of Ambassador Munir as chair of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation should be seen as a recognition of his skills and used for strategic planning. SBI work has been at the heart of implementation issues under the convention, the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agree-m-ent. Taking a lead from this achievement, the Foreign Office should use it to promote excellence and formalise the structure of its negotiating strategy by building a core team for steering the agenda.

The Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination is ideally positioned to improve coordinated actions and convenings among stakeholders. The services of civil society champions like Kashmala Kakakhel, who routinely provides advice on climate finance, and other actors should be used for strengthening strategic partnerships.

Pakistan has political commitment, able negotiators, a vibrant civil society and a cohort of experts, but lacks coordination. This communication gap creates misunderstandings and misplaced expectations.

It is time for Pakistan to build a team to carry the climate agenda for landing points. There are a variety of groups, each skilled in their craft, who can serve as critical parts of the whole under an umbrella strategy that covers negotiations at COP and actions at home. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

Gohar asks for framework to take exports of Pharma industry to 1 bn dollars

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Commerce and Industry Dr. Gohar Ijaz asked for a framework to take the exports of the pharma industry to one billion dollars.

He said this in a meeting with a delegation of Pakistan Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Association (PPMA), led by Chairman Farooq Bukhari, said a press release issued here.

The main agenda of the meeting was the strategy to increase exports of the pharmaceutical industry.

During the meeting, an ambitious target of achieving a one-billion-dollar export milestone for the industry was set.

Dr. Gohar Ejaz expressed his unwavering commitment and support to the pharmaceutical sector, not only in his official capacity but also on a personal level.

He assured the delegation of his dedication to creating an environment conducive to the industry's growth.

He further emphasized the importance of focusing on exports as a

means to enhance the country's economic conditions. In a remarkable display of patriotism, Dr. Gohar Ejaz announced his decision to donate his entire income for the year to the welfare of the country. This gesture showcased his deep concern for the well-being of the nation and his dedication to its progress.

Recognizing the need for a competitive edge in the global market, the minister urged the pharmaceutical delegation to formulate a comparative policy framework.

Despite difficult conditions Business community plays active role in country's economic development

LAHORE (Online): A delegation of All Pakistan Crockery Importers Association met Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman here today at Governor House Lahore. During the meeting, the delegation apprised the governor of Punjab about the various problems faced by them.

Speaking on this occasion, Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that despite the difficult conditions, the business community is playing an active role in the country's economic development. Governor Punjab said that all businesses are very important even if it is a small shop.

He said that business not only leads to social-economic development, but also provides employment opportunities to millions of people. He further said that the government is well aware of the problems of the business community and steps are being taken to provide them conducive environment.



SIALKOT: President Chamber of Commerce Abdul Ghafoor Malik presenting a shield to Farrukh Amil Chairman Intellectual Property Organization of Pakistan.

PSX loses 192 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) shed 192.61 points on Monday, showing a negative change of 0.40 percent, closing at 47,478.61 points against 47,671.22 points the previous trading day.

A total of 184,138,134 shares were traded during the day as compared to 192,036,691 shares, whereas the trading value of shares was recorded at Rs 6.465 billion against Rs 6.528 billion on the last trading day.

ML-1 to start by end of this year: Railways CEO

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Railways Chief Executive Officer Shahid Aziz said that work is underway for improvement of railway track and ML-1 project will start by the end of this year.

He said this while responding to questions of people on Facebook e-court on Monday.

He said that all possible steps were being taken for the betterment of train operation and to facilitate passengers.

The CEO said that more trains would be restored on availability of racks and improvement of resources.

In Green Line, quality service and food standard was well maintained, he



LAHORE: A delegation of All Pakistan Crockery Importers Association met Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman at Governor House Lahore.

added and said its fare was finalized keeping in view the facilities provided in it. Shahid Aziz said that in view of security, CCTV cameras had been installed at all big railway stations and its horizon would be expanded to other stations as well.

He further said that if Pakistan Railways get some investment it could become profitable department. He said, "We want that government of Pakistan bears the burden of pensioners so that burden of railways can be reduced to some extent."

Due to limited resources there were difficulties in timely payment of salaries, he maintained.

China's Internet users total 1.079b with steady app growth

ISLAMABAD (APP): China's Internet users totalled 1.079 billion by June 2023, an increase of 11.09 million since December 2022, alongside steady growth in internet applications, a report revealed Monday.

China's Internet penetration reached 76.4 percent, according to the statistical report on China's

Internet development released by the China Internet Network Information Center, Xinhua reported.

Regarding Internet applications, as of June 2023, the user scale of instant messaging, internet video, and short video stood at 1.047 billion, 1.044 billion, and 1.026 billion, respectively.

Pak, Iran, Turkiye trade route can be vital to China's BRI Project: PCJCCI

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan, Iran and Turkiye Road Transport Corridor, in conjunction with the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) project, will prove to be a game-changer in promoting regional trade among the four friendly nations.

Pakistan-China Joint Chambers of Commerce and Industry (PCJCCI) President Moazzam Ghurki expressed these views in a think-tank meeting on Pak-Turkiye-China tripartite trade, here on Monday.

He said that Turkiye, like China, had been an all-weather friend of Pakistan

and the friendly relationship was now more integrated into international trade because of CPEC and BRI projects, which had created new opportunities for Turkiye as well as Pakistan.

Turkiye's exports to China would be able to route through Pakistan towards China, he said, asserting that Islamabad-Tehran-Istanbul Road Transport Corridor Project was successfully carrying commercial cargo on Pakistani trucks to Turkiye and vice versa up to Chinese markets.

The PCJCCI Senior Vice President Fang Yulong

said that both countries shared positive trade relations and the investments by Turkish companies in Pakistan had increased by over US\$1 billion.

The two countries also signed a Strategic Economic Framework agreement that covers a broad spectrum of cooperation in science and technology, defense, tourism, education, and health. He said that PCJCCI would enhance Chinese investment in this sector to create a sustainable economic triangle amongst the three friendly states.

LCCI demands cut in power tariff

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) on Monday expressed deep concern over increase in electricity tariff, over-billing, and nationwide protests against them and has urged the government to cut the electricity tariff.

LCCI President Kashif Anwar, Senior Vice President Zafar Mahmood Chaudhry and Vice President Adnan Khalid Butt said in a media statement here that recent electricity bills had left the industry, trade and

people in a lurch. They said that nationwide protests against over-billing, hike in tax and multi-fold increase in electricity prices could lead to an economic stress and the country could not afford such circumstances.

LCCI office-bearers said that the government should provide free electricity and stop electricity theft instead of increasing the electricity prices.

They demanded that facility of free electricity for all segments should be

withdrawn immediately as the country, facing economic challenges and enormous debt burden, could not afford to provide such facilities. They said that no tax should be levied on electricity bills up to 300 units. They said that electricity was the main raw material of industries, if such anti-industry measures were not avoided, the manufacturing sector would be completely destroyed and the country would remain only a trading place.

CM GB chairs Apex body meeting, reviews law & order situation

GILGIT (APP): Caretaker Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan, Haji Gulbar Khan on Monday chaired the meeting of Apex Committee and reviewed the current law and order situation in the province.

All Senior officers including Chief Secretary, IG Police, Home Secretary, all other LEAs officers and field formations attended the meeting.

Following decisions were made:

Nobody shall be allowed to take law into hands and violate the SOPs for maintenance of law and order and strict action shall be taken against the violators.

Any person indulging into hate speech and religious intolerance shall be proceeded against as per relevant provision of law.

Any person propagating hate speech and such like material on Social Media shall be taken to task and legal action shall be taken without any impunity.

Security of life and property of all citizens shall be ensured through strict enforcement of law.

Movement of all vehicles plying from and to down country through KKH, JSR and Babusar Top shall be made safe and secure by deployment of Karakoram Task Force and

Police throughout the route. Nobody shall be allowed to block any road and immediate legal action shall be taken against the violators.

Heavy contingents of GB Scouts, Rangers and Police shall be deployed in all major cities of GB to ensure peace and safety of people.

Moreover, CM, GB directed the Parliamentary Committee headed by Minister Home to meet religious leaders of various sects and ask them to ensure strict adherence to the provisions of Code of Conduct agreed by all sects so as to ensure durable peace in the region.



LAHORE: Chairman Bahawalpur Heritage Organization, Engineer GA Farooq along with Mr. Niaz Hussain Lakhvira called on Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman at Governor House Lahore.

Governor Punjab for preserving cultural heritage of Uch Sharif

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LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman has called upon the government and non governmental organizations to play their role in preserving, protecting cultural heritage of historic Uch Sharif besides promoting tourism in the city.

The Governor Punjab was talking to Chairman Bahawalpur Heritage Organization Engr. G. A. Farooq and Niaz Hussain Lakhvira who called on him at the Governor's House here on Monday.

Balighur Rehman hailed services of Bahawalpur Heritage organization in promoting cultural heritage of Uch Sharif.

Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman further said Uch Sharif is home to one of the ancient cultures in the country, and it must be preserved. He said Uch Sharif is full of prospects of religious tourism for its affinity with Alexander the Great and a seat of Sufis and Sants between the 12th and 15th century.

Earlier, a delegation of All Pakistan Crockery Importers Association called on Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman.

During the meeting, the delegation apprised the Governor about various problems faced by them.

Speaking on this occasion, Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman said despite difficult conditions, the business community is playing an active role in the country's economic development.

The Governor Punjab said all businesses are very important even if it is a small shop.

He said that business not only leads to socio-economic development but also provides employment opportunities to millions of people.

He further said the government is well aware of the problems of the business community.

PCB reveals Star Nation Jersey for ICC Cricket WC

LAHORE (INP): The Star Nation Jersey signifies more than a mere piece of apparel; it embodies the profound connection between Pakistan's cricketing heroes and their steadfast supporters.

The Pakistan Cricket Board unveiled the Star Nation Jersey today at a grand ceremony held at Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore. The ceremony, led by Mr Zaka Ashraf, Chairman of the PCB Management Committee, marked a significant step as the national team prepares for the forthcoming ICC Cricket World Cup 2023.

The Star Nation Jersey signifies more than a mere piece of apparel; it embodies the profound connection between Pakistan's cricketing heroes and their steadfast supporters. Drawing inspiration from celestial bodies, each star symbolises brilliance, aspiration, and the radiant glow of cricketing achievements. This design philosophy encapsulates the spirit of cricketing excellence, resonating deeply with every Pakistani cricket enthusiast.

Zaka Ashraf, Chairman of the PCB Management Committee: "The Star Nation Jersey bears witness to the enduring bond between our cricketers and the passionate fans who stand by them through every match. This jersey encapsulates our rich cricketing heritage and the luminous future that awaits."

Usman Waheed, Director - Commercial: "The Star Nation Jersey isn't just a uniform; it's a canvas woven with stories, sacrifices, and triumphs. Each star on this jersey represents the unwavering support of our fans and the radiant legacy of our cricketing heroes."



LAHORE: Chairman Pakistan Cricket Board Zaka Ashraf unveiling the new kit of Pakistan Cricket Team for Asia Cup, during media talk at Gaddafi Stadium in Provincial Capital

Jaranwala incident Registrar LHC raises objection over petition seeking judicial inquiry

LAHORE (Online): Registrar office Lahore High Court (LHC) has raised objection over the petition filed in the court in connection with judicial inquiry into Jaranwala tragedy. Registrar office while raising objection said the application filed in connection with judicial commission is not attached.

The petition has been filed by Grace Bible Fellowship church Pakistan. LHC will hear objected petition. Chief secretary, home secretary, IG Punjab and police officers Faisalabad have been made respondents in the petition.

The petitioner has taken the plea that false and unrealistic incident of desecration of the Holy Quran took place on August 16. One person made announcement in the mosque which ignited provocation among others. 25 churches and over 200 homes were set ablaze in Jaranwala. The homes of Christians were looted and later were destroyed. The mob desecrated divine books.



GILGIT: Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Haji Gulbar Khan chairing a high level meeting of Parliamentary Peace Committee on current law and order situation in Gilgit-Baltistan at CM Secretariat.

IG FC urged to expedite release of vehicles at Torkhem border

PESHAWAR (APP): Chairman Pak-Afghan Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PAJCCI), Muhammad Zubair Motiwala has requested IG FC KP to intervene in the resolution of the slow processing of vehicles loaded with empty containers at the Torkhem border.

This situation is further aggravated on a daily basis and due to the delays the number of stuck containers is also increasing, Motiwala added.

In a letter sent to IG FC and Secretary Commerce Ministry of Commerce, Muhammad Sulaeh Ahmad Faruqi, Chairman PAJCCI apprised that complaints were being received from our members pertinent to the stoppage and slow release of vehicles loaded with empty containers at the Torkhem border.

ANF seizes 75 kg drugs

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) Pakistan while conducting seven operations across the country, managed to recover 75 kg drugs and arrested 7 accused including a woman, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Monday. He informed that in an operation at Islamabad International Airport, 1.6 kg heroin and 344 grams ice drug were recovered from the possession of a passenger, resident of Mustang who was leaving for Qatar on flight number PK-287.

Pak to host UN Peacekeeping Ministerial preparatory meeting on Aug 30-31

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan will host a preparatory meeting of the forthcoming United Nations (UN) Peacekeeping Ministerial in Islamabad on August 30-31.

The meeting will be held under the theme of "Safety and Security of UN Peacekeepers."

Japan is co-host of the meeting being held at the Centre for International Peace and Stability (CIPS), Pakistan's premier training institute offering courses, workshops and seminars to UN peacekeepers from all over the world, Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press release on Monday. The foreign minister and the defence minister will deliver keynote addresses at the preparatory meeting.

International News

Top US and Chinese commerce officials express support for easier trade, but deep differences remain

BEIJING (TLTP): Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo and her Chinese counterpart expressed a desire to improve trade conditions on Monday, as Raimondo began a visit to Beijing aimed at warming chilly relations, but neither side appeared willing to make concessions on the other's main demands.

Raimondo joined American officials including Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen in July who have visited China in the past three months. They expressed optimism about improving communication but have announced no progress on technology, security, human rights and other disputes that have plunged relations to their lowest level in decades.

For its part, Chinese leader Xi Jinping's government wants to revive foreign investor interest in China as it tries to reverse a deepening economic slump.

Beijing is ready to work together to "foster a more favorable policy environment for stronger co-operation" and "bolster bilateral trade and investment," Commerce Minister Wang Wentao told Raimondo.

Wang gave no details of possible initiatives. Raimondo said the two sides are working on establishing "new information exchanges" for "more consistent engagement."

"It is profoundly important that we have a stable economic relationship," she said. "I believe that we can make progress if we are direct, open and practical."

Beijing broke off dialogue with Washington on military, climate and other issues in August 2022 in retaliation for a visit to Taiwan by then-Speaker Nancy Pelosi of the House of Representatives. The mainland's ruling Communist Party claims the self-ruled island democracy as part of its territory and objects to foreign governments having contact with it.

The state press has given positive coverage to the American visits to Beijing, but China has given no indication it might change trade, strategic, market access and other policies that irk Washington and its Asian neighbors.

Raimondo told reporters before leaving Washington she was looking for "actionable, concrete steps" to move forward in commercial relations but gave no details. She said she was realistic that the "challenges are significant."

The visits take place under an agreement made by Xi and President Joe Biden during a meeting last November in Indonesia.



Volunteers get ready to take off in the Loch Ness Project Research Vessel, Deep Scan, as they take part in the largest Loch Ness Monster hunt for 50 years in Scotland, Britain.

Israeli air 'aggression' puts Aleppo airport out of service

Syria says

DUBAI (AA): An Israeli air "aggression" put Aleppo international airport out of service, the Syrian defence ministry said on Monday.

"The Israeli enemy carried out an air attack ... targeting Aleppo International Airport. The aggression caused material damage to the airport's runway and put it out of service," a military source said. The Israeli military declined comment.

Citing a military official, said Israeli planes coming from the Mediterranean Sea carried out the attack at around 4:30 am. There were no casualties reported. The airport has been targeted several times this year, including two attacks in March that also put it out of service.

Israel has carried out hundreds of strikes on targets inside government-controlled parts of Syria in recent years, including attacks on the Damascus and Aleppo airports, but it rarely acknowledges or discusses the operations. Of the strikes target Syrian military forces or Iranian-backed groups.

Israel has targeted airports and sea ports in the government-held parts of Syria in an apparent attempt to prevent arms shipments from Iran to militant groups backed by Tehran, including Lebanon's Hezbollah.

Thousands of Iranian-backed fighters from around the region joined Syria's 12-year conflict helping tip the balance in favor of President Bashar Assad's forces. Aleppo, which suffered widespread destruction in Syria's civil war, was again heavily damaged in the deadly 7.8-magnitude earthquake that hit Turkey and Syria in February.

Erdogan to visit Russia for talks with Putin

ANKARA (AFP): Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is to visit Russia "soon" for talks with Vladimir Putin on reviving a deal to ship grain across the Black Sea, his party spokesman said Monday.

The meeting will take place in Russia's resort city of Sochi, Erdogan's ruling party spokesman Omer Celik told reporters, adding that Turkey hoped to avert a looming "food crisis."

The Bloomberg news agency had earlier reported that Erdogan could meet the Russian leader on September 8 before Erdogan travels to New Delhi to attend a G20 summit.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters that a meeting was being prepared "intensively", without giving a time or place for the talks.

Erdogan has used his good relations with Moscow and Kyiv to try to bring the two sides into formal peace talks.

Turkey helped negotiate the only major agreement signed by the warring sides since the February 2022 invasion—a deal to ship grain from three Ukrainian ports across the Black Sea.

Russia scuppered the UN-backed agreement last month, launching repeated attacks on Ukrainian port infrastructure and warning that it may consider any ships in the Black Sea as military targets.

Russia says 'detained' US embassy 'informant' on Ukraine

MOSCOW (AFP): Moscow said Monday that it had detained a Russian citizen and former US consulate employee in Vladivostok for allegedly passing information about the Ukraine conflict to American diplomats. The Federal Security Service (FSB) said in a statement it had "suppressed the illegal activities of Robert Robertovich Shonov", accusing him of being an informant for the US embassy in Moscow. The announcement is the latest in a series of diplomatic spats building pressure on strained ties between Moscow and Washington, particularly over the conflict in Ukraine. The FSB said Shonov had begun handing information to US diplomats in September last year about the conflict and mobilisation, an unpopular move in Russia that saw an exodus of military-aged men. It added that Shonov had been tasked with gauging protest sentiment in Russia's regions ahead of presidential elections scheduled for next year. The FSB said that Shonov had reported to two diplomats in the political department in the US embassy in Moscow, Jeffrey Slin and David Bernstein, and that it planned to question the men. Diplomatic tensions between Russia and Western countries, particularly the United States, have been deteriorating for years and both sides have ordered the other to cut staff numbers at diplomatic facilities, hampering their functions.

Five migrants killed in boat capsized off Greece

ATHENS (APP): Five people including an 11-month girl died Monday and 54 people were rescued when two migrant boats sank off Greece, officials said. The first capsized took place around 3:00 am (0000 GMT) off the island of Samos near the Turkish border. The coastguard rescued 37 people, including a woman who had died, government spokesman Pavlos Marinakis and the coastguard said. About four hours later, another boat sank near the Greek island of Lesbos. Four migrants died, including an eight-year-old boy and three girls, aged 11 months, eight years and 14 years, Marinakis said.

Public broadcaster ERT said 1,100 people had arrived in Greece in August against 789 in July and 608 in June, citing government figures. It said 10,790 migrants and arrived in Greece in the first eight months of this year against 5,216 in the previous corresponding period. In June, an overcrowded fishing trawler carrying up to 750 people who had been picked up in Libya sank off Greece.

Canada expects 900,000 overseas students this year

News Desk

OTTAWA: Canada is concerned about the overall integrity of the system that educates hundreds of thousands of international students and not just the added pressure they put on housing, Immigration Minister Marc Miller said in an interview with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. Canada is on track to bring in 900,000 international students this year, Miller said in the interview aired late on Saturday, which was more than at any point in history and roughly triple the number who entered the country a decade ago. The university ecosystem that brings in foreign students "is very lucrative and it's come with some perverse effects, some fraud in the system. Some people taking advantage of what is seen to be a backdoor entry into Canada," Miller said.

Zelenskiy says Elections could happen under fire if West helps

KYIV (INP): Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy, responding to calls by a US senator this week to announce elections in 2024, said voting could take place during wartime if partners shared the cost, legislators approved, and everyone got to the polls. Elections cannot currently be held in Ukraine under martial law, which must be extended every 90 days and is next due to expire on Nov. 15, after the normal date in October for parliamentary polls but before presidential elections which would normally be held in March 2024.

Top American legislators visited Kyiv Aug. 23, among them Senator Lindsey Graham, who heaped praise on Kyiv's fight against Russian President Vladimir Putin but said the country needed to show it was different by holding elections in wartime.

Zelenskiy, in a television interview with Natalia Moseichuk, an anchor for the 1+1 Channel, said he had discussed the issue with Graham, including the question of funding and the need to change the law. "I gave Lindsey a very simple answer very quickly," he said. "He was very pleased with it. As long as our legislators are willing to do it."

He said it cost 5 billion hryvnia (\$135 million) to hold elections in peacetime. "I don't know how much is needed in wartime," he said. "So I told him that if the US and Europe provide financial support. He added, "I will not take money from weapons and give it to elections. And this is stipulated by the law."

Taliban ask Iran to Train Afghan Health Workers

TEHRAN (Online): The health minister of the Taliban called on Iran to provide training for Afghanistan's healthcare workers.

A 7-strong delegation from the Iranian Parliament had a meeting with the acting minister of public health of Afghanistan in Kabul.

The Taliban minister, Qalandar Ebad, expressed gratitude to Iran for its broad assistance to the Afghan health and medical sector.

He also demanded that the Afghan healthcare workers receive training and education in Iran's medical and educational centers.

The Iranian lawmakers have already held meetings with a number of other Taliban ministers in Kabul.

Federal judge to set date for historic US versus Trump trial

WASHINGTON (AFP): A federal judge is expected to set a date on Monday for what could be one of the most momentous trials in American history: the United States of America versus Donald J. Trump.

Special counsel Jack Smith has asked for the trial of the 45th US president—who faces charges of conspiring to overturn the 2020 election which he lost—to begin on January 2, 2024.

Trump's attorneys have countered with a proposed date of April 2026 — well after the November 2024 election in which the real estate tycoon is seeking to return to the White House. Trump took to his social network, Truth Social, before the hearing got underway to demand that the case be dismissed, calling Smith "deranged" and accusing President Joe Biden of sowing "division, anger."

President says:

IT, inclusive education open paths to progress for differently-abled persons

KARACHI (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Monday said that information technology and artificial intelligence opened paths to progress for differently-abled persons while inclusive education could sensitize the society about their importance and struggle.

The president expressed these views in a meeting with the delegation of Special Olympics Pakistan here at the Sindh Governor House. First Lady Begum Samina Alvi was also present on the occasion.

President Alvi said the future was not only bright

only for the people with normal abilities, but had also become friendly and helpful for the differently-abled people due to the evolving society of artificial intelligence and information technology. Access to knowledge and information had broadened to all with emerging technologies, particularly mobile phones with Internet facility, he added.

The president said that the spirit of inclusive education was that the children with disabilities could also receive education along with normal children, however, the need for special schools arose only in case

of special abilities.

He said the "society becomes sensitized through inclusive education, so much so that the normal children realize the hard work and importance of the children with disabilities".

The president advised the special athletes to exhibit the same spirit in earning their livelihood with which they play sports.

Begum Samina Arif Alvi, on the occasion, said that the children with disabilities were equally important to the society if they were given some necessary skills and special education.

Both the president and the first lady met the special athletes and congratulated them on their participation and winning of awards in the World Summer Games Berlin 2023.

Special Olympics Pakistan Chairperson Ronak Lakhani thanked the president and the first lady for encouraging the special athletes.

Total 176 countries had participated in the World Summer Games Berlin 2023. Pakistani special athletes participated in 11 sports events and won 83 medals, including 11 gold, 32 silver and 40 bronze.



HYDERABAD: Markets are seen closed due to strike call by traders against rise in electricity bills, at Channi market.



KARACHI: Begum Samina Arif Alvi is being presented with memento during the interactive dialogue session on Breast Cancer Awareness, Mental Health and Inclusion of Differently Aabled Persons organized by World Health Organization, at Hamdard University.

First Lady for creating awareness on socio economic, health issues

KARACHI (APP): First Lady Begum Samina Alvi on Monday called for creating awareness on health and socio-economic issues, particularly the high mortality rate due to breast cancer, the neglected issue of mental health, and well-being and the rights of persons with disabilities.

She urged teachers, students, mediapersons, and health professionals to play their proactive role in that regard which would help create an equitable and inclusive society, she added. The first lady was speaking at an Interactive Dialogue on Breast Cancer, the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) and Mental Health Issues, organized by the World Health Organization (WHO) at Hamdard University.

Besides experts from the fields of Oncology, Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, and faculty members and students of Hamdard University, Technical Advisor from WHO, Head of WHO-Sindh, Chancellor Hamdard University, Vice Chancellor Hamdard University, Leading Consultant Medical Oncologist, and Head of Department (HoD) of Psychiatry Dow

University also attended the event. Begum Alvi said Pakistan had a high mortality rate in the South Asian region due to breast cancer, and numerous lives could be saved by diagnosing the disease at an early stage.

She stated that breast cancer was curable, provided it was diagnosed early. Besides having a balanced and healthy lifestyle, women must adopt the habit of a five-minute self-examination every month to detect the disease at early stages and seek medical help if they notice any lump or unusual change in their bodies, she added. She said she had been raising awareness about breast cancer since 2018 and due to the efforts of her team and support from the media, more women with breast cancer were being diagnosed at early stages.

As regards mental health and well-being, Begum Alvi said the topic of mental health and stress was often neglected in Pakistan due to its social stigma.

"The people neglect their mental health and do not seek professional advice," she added.



Tournament Director Cdre Faisal Zafar addressing during media brief of 1st Commander Karachi & 2nd Interdepartmental Elite National Boxing Championship 2023

Journey to progress pivoted on adherence to good governance principles: Sami

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Muhammad Sami Saeed on Monday said the journey to progress and development pivoted on adhering to the principles of good governance in institutions and the system.

Chairing a review meeting on governance-related issues, he stressed that the process of development should continue by adhering to the principles of good governance in institutions and the system.

Officials from the Governance Section of the

Ministry of Planning participated in the meeting.

The minister said the cross-cutting function of the governance section called for its proper and efficient monitoring of all projects. Sami Saeed underscored that the economic and social outcomes obtained from the projects should be closely monitored while focusing on the optimal utilization of every single penny incurred on the projects. He added that projects of national importance should be continued on a priority basis to pass on their due benefits to the masses.

Imaan Mazari arrested again after release from Adiala jail

ISLAMABAD (Online): Anti Terrorism Court (ATC) Islamabad accepted bail plea of Imaan Mazari and Ali Wazir in sedition case and Imaan Mazari was released.

However she was again arrested.

The ATC accepted bail plea of Imaan Mazari and Ali Wazir against the surety bonds

in the sum of Rs 30000 each. Later Imaan Mazari was released from Adiala Jail. However she was again arrested soon after she was released.

Islamabad police arrested Imaan Mazari who gave some necessary instructions to her counsel from van.

PEMRA holds bidding for auction of cable television network for 5 cities

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) on Monday held bidding for auction of cable television network rights for five cities including Taxila, Chua Saden Shah, Fateh Jang, Hazro and Pindi Gheb.

In the bidding, Multi Cable Network won rights for Taxila and Wah Cantt, while for Chua Saden Shah, IJWA Friends Network was awarded license.

For Fateh Jang, Hazro and Pindi Gheb, Seven Stars Cable was awarded license after successful bidding.

Senior officials of PEMRA including Senior Director General (Operations and Distribution), Javed Iqbal, DG Finance Shameem Gul Durran, DG Operations, Media Muhammad Tahir, DG Licensing (Broadcast Media), Tariq Mehmod and DG Licensing (Distribution) Junaid Nagi were present during the bidding.

Earthquake jolts various cities of KPK, Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (Online): Severe earthquake tremors have been felt in various cities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) including federal capital Islamabad.

According to details, fear and panic spread in the provincial capital Peshawar, Attock, Swat, Dirbala, Malakand, Shabqadar, Abbottabad, Mardan and its surroundings and people came out of houses in panic.

According to seismological center, the magnitude of earthquake was 5.2 on rector scale while epicenter was in the Hindukush region of Afghanistan.

Seismological center said that the depth of earthquake has been recorded at 184 Km underground.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Two ships namely, Vancouver and Al-Karamu, carrying Container and Coal, berthed at Container Terminal and Bulk Terminal, respectively on Sunday. Meanwhile three more ships, MSC Shay, Okyroe and Southern Robin, carrying Container, Mogas and Chemicals also arrived at outer anchorage of the Port Qasim during last 24 hours. A total of 07 ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours.

Out of them three ships, Vancouver, Maersk Nyasa and Al-Jassasiya sailed out to sea on Monday (today) morning, while three more ships, LRI Charm, Calypso Gas and Al-Karamu are expected to sail on same day afternoon.

Aneeq urges Saudi govt to increase Pakistan's Hajj quota as per new census

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Aneeq Ahmed, in a bid to accommodate the growing population of Pakistan, on Monday called upon the Saudi government to expand the Hajj quota for pilgrims.

In an exclusive conversation with APP, he highlighted the discrepancy between the current Hajj quota and the country's population figures.

"Presently, Pakistan's allocated Hajj quota stands at 179,210 pilgrims, a number that falls short of accurately

representing the nation's population.

The recently conducted census revealed that Pakistan's population has surged to 241.49 million, with an annual growth rate of 2.55 per cent," he added. Minister Aneeq took the opportunity to discuss this matter during a recent visit from his Saudi counterpart, Dr. Tawfiq bin Fawzan Al-Rabiah. Dr. Al-Rabiah, acknowledging the concern, assured him of an increase in the Hajj quota, subject to the completion of necessary procedural formalities.

Pakistanis residing in Britain bridges between two countries: Sanjrani

ISLAMABAD (INP): Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani acknowledged the vital role played by Pakistanis residing in Britain termed them as bridges between the two countries. He urged immediate attention to the challenges faced by these expatriates and stressed the need for swift resolution. The Chairman Senate was talking to Pakistan's newly designated High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, Dr. Muhammad Faisal, who called on him here at the Parliament House on Monday. He

warmly congratulated Dr. Faisal on his recent appointment, expressing his good wishes for his tenure. Sadiq Sanjrani expressed that Dr. Faisal's role as the Pakistani High Commissioner would further enhance the already strong bilateral ties between Pakistan and the United Kingdom. Emphasizing the importance of collaboration between the two nations, the Chairman Senate urged Dr. Faisal to actively promote cooperation in the fields of environment, trade, IT, education and

other sectors. Highlighting the potential for economic growth and stability, Chairman Senate exhorted British businessmen to explore investment opportunities in Pakistan. He underscored that the confidence of investors would contribute significantly to the country's economic stability. Additionally, Chairman Senate emphasized that strong business and economic ties would serve to strengthen the bond between the people of both nations.

Flood funding for Pakistan is more or less on track: UN Resident Coordinator

KARACHI (APP): The United Nations (UN) Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator in Pakistan Julien Harneis said that the size of challenges is massive and the flood funding for Pakistan is more or less on track.

While talking about the Sustainable Development Goals Dialogue at Karachi Press Club (KPC) here on Monday, he said that the size of challenges to Pakistan was massive and there were millions of people, who were affected in the floods of 2022.

He said that the International Conference on Climate Resilient Pakistan, which was co-hosted by the Government of Pakistan and the United Nations (UN) in Geneva had pledged to provide over \$9 billion to support the people and the government of Pakistan.

Harneis said we continue to keep active. And, 'Everybody wants to get things faster.'

He was of the view that a commitment of over 9 billion dollars was expected. The Resident Coordinator said that the UN needed to keep working with Pakistan and needed to contribute to fixing the challenges.

He said that 2.5 million people became homeless due to floods and efforts being made to provide them with houses.

Harneis said that they were on a visit to 12 Pakistani cities and after Karachi their next destination would be Hyderabad, and Sukkur and the visit would continue until the last destination.



KARACHI: Students of different school and college holding banners are participating in the "Clean and Green Walk" in Provincial Capital.

PTI rally organisers booked in seven cases in Karachi

KARACHI (INP): Seven cases were registered on Monday against those who took out a rally of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) in Karachi.

The cases were registered at Malir, Korangi, Sharqi, Malir city, Khokhrapar, Tipu Sultan, Brigade, Soldier Bazaar and Bahadurabad police stations. The participants of the rally continued to cause traffic jams on various highways," the text of the cases read.

"The cases have been registered on the government's complaint," police said.

It is to be noted here that Karachi police detained several members of the PTI on Sunday who had reached the city's Numaish Chowangi area while participating in a bike rally organised to express solidarity with incarcerated PTI chief Imran Khan.

10 people were nominated in cases at Bahadurabad police station, 15 at Brigade, 17 at Tipu Sultan, seven at Soldier Bazaar, eight at Malir city and 23 at Khokhrapar police stations.



KARACHI: Residents of Old City Area Timber Market blocked road burn tyres as they are holding protest demonstration against prolog and electricity load shedding and the highly inflated electricity bills, held in Karachi

Intelligence agency of enemy country involved in Jaranwala tragedy: IGP

LAHORE (APP): Inspector General of Punjab Police Dr Usman Anwar said on Monday that intelligence agency of the enemy country was involved in the Jaranwala tragedy.

Addressing a press conference, he said they had broken the network of the enemy and assured the nation that such incidents would not happen in future. The tragedy was an attempt to foment a clash between Muslim and Christian communities, he said and added that religious scholars and civil society played their role in controlling the situation.

He confirmed that the three main accused of the tragedy had been arrested and those responsible for the conspiracy would be brought to justice at any cost. He said that showing the true spirit of the religion, Muslims presented their mosque to the Christian community for worship. Some miscreants damaged houses and places of worship, he added.

He said all possible help was being given to the victims.

SHC seeks report from Sindh govt to address issue of illegal parking

KARACHI (INP): The Sindh High Court (SHC) on Monday sought a report from the provincial government and the DIG Traffic to address the issue of illegal parking across the metropolis.

To address the issue of charging illegal parking fees and illegal parking, a hearing was held in Sindh High Court (SHC) where the advocate of KMC and petitioner presented before the court.

The advocate petitioner highlighted the double parking issues across Karachi, after which the court directed the petitioner to pinpoint areas where double parking is very common.

During the proceedings, the lawyer claimed that both DMC (District Municipal Corporation) and KMC (Karachi Metropolitan Corporation) have been actively involved in providing parking facilities.

However, the court raised concerns regarding

the permission and regulation of double parking within the city, prompting questions about how such practices could be allowed by KMC and DMC.

Expressing over the condition of a parking plaza, the court questioned the advocate of the Karachi Municipal Corporation (KMC) regarding the purpose of parking plaza. However, the KMC lawyer replied that the parking plaza falls under the jurisdiction of the Karachi Development Authority (KDA).

The court highlighted that significant funds had been invested in constructing the parking plaza and questioned why it was not being used properly. The issue of motorcycle parking fees was also brought up during the proceedings. The petitioner pointed out that the fee had been fixed at Rs10, but the parking mafia is charging Rs30 for motorcycle parking.



LARKANA: Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA) leader and Former MPA, Moazam Ali Abbasi addresses to media persons during press conference held at Larkana press club

Delay in holding general election unacceptable: Nayar Bukhari

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan People's Party (PPP) secretary-general Nayar Hussain Bokhari has said his party wants timely general elections in Pakistan and any delay is not acceptable.

Bokhari in his statement said PPP understands the supremacy of the constitution. Our stance is clear on elections he said. He said, today, people are facing the brunt of inflation and held the PTI government responsible for this current economic turmoil. PTI government violated the agreement with the International Monetary Fund, which destabilised the country's economy, Bokhari said. Delay in elections will

not provide relief to any political party, he made it clear. Commenting on the smear campaign against IHC CJ Justice Aamer Farooq, the PPP leader said statement should be discouraged.

Last week, Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Central Executive Committee (CEC) decided to advocate the organisation of the general elections in 90 days after the dissolution of the National Assembly. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari chaired the session of the PPP CEC to make key decisions including general elections and consultations with the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP).