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dailyindkhi@gmail.com

Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah

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PM announces Rs 50b relief package to benefit 25 m domestic power consumers

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday announced Rs 50 billion package to provide a relief of up to seven rupees per unit to around 25 million domestic power consumers, falling in the protected category for three months till September. "Today, an amount of Rs 50 billion has been allocated to provide a relief of Rs 4-7 per unit as a concession to our protected category consumers using up to 200 units a month for three months period from July to September. This will benefit around 25 million domestic power consumers which constitute around 94% of the total consumer base," the prime minister said addressing a ceremony held to discuss the prevailing issues related to electricity bills and reforms in the power sector. He said that the federal government had scraped the said amount from its development budget to realise its commitment to public relief, contrary to the hollow claims of the previous governments. He also assured the people of further relief as the government got a fiscal space consequent to its ongoing measures of taxing the elite class, expanding the tax net, closing the non-performing entities and plugging the holes, causing financial leakages. He told the gathering of federal ministers and senior government officers that during its previous 16-month stint, the coalition government saved the country from default by putting its politics at stake. Referring to the PTI-led government in the past, the prime minister recalled the tall claims of eliminating corruption within 90 days and repatriating \$300 billion from abroad. Instead, he said the sugar and wheat scams surfaced and the 190 million pounds coming from the UK through the NCA could not land in the national kitty as was supposed to be done. Similarly, the same government announced a sudden decrease in oil prices causing loss to the national kitty, just for political gains, at a time when the prices were skyrocketing in the global market. The prime minister said that under the leadership of Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, the incumbent government took responsibility for public service and would collectively face the challenges to put the country on track to progress. He said the government was going to sign a three-year programme with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and had also taken it on board about the relief announced for the domestic power consumers.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif briefing parliamentarians regarding power sector reforms.

President for adopting holistic approach, prudent financial policies for country's development

LAHORE (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Tuesday called for adopting a holistic approach and prudent financial policies to put the country on path to development. He said that different sectors of the economy, especially the agricultural sector, needed to be developed along modern lines. He added that the government was planning to tax agricultural income as per the International Monetary Fund's conditions, however, the provincial governments would be leading the initiative to tax large land-holding farmers in accordance with their profitability and expenditures. The President gave these remarks while addressing the Professor Waris Mir Memorial Seminar, here. A large number of journalists, academicians, political workers, and members of the civil society attended the event. Speaking on the occasion, the President highlighted that the social media had given power to the people by amplifying their voices, however, recent years had also witnessed a grouping in the media. He cautioned that a strong religious lobby in the world was manipulating and managing perceptions aiming to sow divisions in Muslim societies. He said that he was a supporter of the freedom of press and had always tolerated harsh criticism from the media. He said that societies needed to be careful against agenda-driven information. The President highlighted that one had to face trials and tribulations in life, however, one needed to stay steadfast in the face of challenges. He paid rich tribute to the political struggle and sacrifices of Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Shaheed for democracy, saying that Pakistan People's Party had a history of facing pressures and assassinations, however, continued its struggle for the cause of democracy in Pakistan. He said, "Assassination attempts and political pressures could not deter us from our mission as we firmly believe that life and death are in Allah Almighty's hand." The President also paid rich tribute to the services and contributions of Late Professor Waris Mir towards democracy and journalism. He also appreciated Faisal Mir and Hamid Mir for taking forward the legacy of their father. Senior Journalist Hamid Mir, while speaking on the occasion, called for putting an end to the culture of political victimization and upholding the 1973 Constitution in its true spirit. Senior Journalist Sohail Warraich paid tribute to the services of the late Professor Waris Mir for journalism and democracy. Appreciating the political wisdom and the reconciliatory role of the President, he said that the country was in dire need of political reconciliation and the President could play an instrumental role in addressing the political and economic issues faced by the country.

Sindh CM orders timely drainage of rainwater in Karachi

KARACHI (INP): Sindh Chief Minister (CM) Syed Murad Ali Shah issued directives to municipal and other institutions to ensure coordinated efforts to address issues related to rainwater drainage and traffic management during the ongoing rains. He directed the Traffic Police to be more active in managing traffic in Karachi especially in areas where uplift works are being carried out to avoid difficulties for citizens. He also emphasised the need for better traffic management in areas where development work is underway. The chief minister directed the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) and cantonment boards to carry out coordinated efforts to ensure effective rainwater drainage and facilitate citizens. CM Murad also directed the Transport Department has expedited work on the Red Line Corridor project to alleviate the difficulties faced by residents of Gulshan Iqbal and Taimur Nagar.



RAWALPINDI: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Army Chief General Syed Asim Muneer carrying the coffin of captain Muhammad Osama Bin Arshad Shaheed after funeral at Chaklala Garrison Rawalpindi.

Sindh govt appoints 29 parliamentary secretaries amidst budget strain

KARACHI (INP): The Sindh government has expanded its cabinet significantly by appointing 29 parliamentary secretaries, adding to the already substantial administrative lineup. This move includes appointments across various departments, with each parliamentary secretary set to receive extensive perks such as additional allowances, official vehicles, and housing benefits. Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah oversaw the appointments, assigning responsibilities ranging from food and transport to health and education. The decision has sparked debate over the fiscal responsibility of such expansions amidst ongoing economic challenges faced by the province. Critics argue that the allocation of resources for these positions, including foreign travel and medical allowances, raises questions about priorities amidst broader financial deficits.

Mayor Karachi inspects different parts of city after rain

KARACHI (APP): Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab on Tuesday visited different parts of the city after the rain. He observed that despite the rain, the situation remained under control in various areas, and the process of drainage through storm-water drains continued smoothly. He assured that if further rains occur, Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) will continue its efforts in collaboration with other civic bodies to ensure that citizens do not face difficulties during the monsoon season. Murtaza Wahab mentioned that some areas of Karachi received more rain than others, and according to the Meteorological Department's forecast, more rainfall is expected. However, the KMC has completed prior arrangements to manage these rains effectively.



KARACHI: Sindh Minister for Excise and Taxation, Transport, and Mass Transit, Sharjeel Inam Memon along with others addresses to media persons during press conference held at Excise, Taxation, Narcotics Control Department office.

Sindh may embrace localised urban flooding, medium level overflows in Nullahs: NDMA

ISLAMABAD (APP): The NDMA's National Emergency Operations Center anticipated on Tuesday that under the influence, scattered rainfall, windstorms, and thunderstorms were expected across various regions of the Sindh province, including Kashmore, Karachi, Hyderabad, Thatta, Umerkot, Badin, Mithi, Tharparkar, and adjacent areas within the next 12 to 24 hours. "Likely impacts may include localized urban flooding/overflows of Nullahs in aforementioned areas at risk," the NDMA said in a news release. The NDMA has advised PDMA and Local Administration to closely monitor the situation and take appropriate measures to safeguard the population at risk. People dwelling in low-lying areas are advised to take extra caution and undertake emergency preparation given potential urban flooding. Communities at risk are also advised to follow instructions from local authorities. The public is urged to download NDMA's 'Pak NDMA Disaster Alert' mobile app for timely disaster alerts, guidelines and precautionary measures.



LAHORE: President Asif Ali Zardari addressing the Professor Waris Mir Memorial Seminar.

Commissioner visits water treatment plants, gets detailed briefing

KARACHI (APP): Commissioner Keamari Junaid Khan and Chief Operating Officer Water Corporation Asadullah, Project Director Nizamuddin Sheikh and other officers were also accompanied by the Commissioner. Syed Hassan Naqvi observed all stages of sewage treatment at Treatment Plant 1 and 3 and also inspected MPS Pumping Station Covered Screen, Wind Screen Lagoons SPS Pumping Station and Canals. He inspected the treatment of water from the main pumping station after receiving the sewage water through the conduit and were told that the water is passed through various stages after removing the garbage and then taken to sea through the canal.

IGP reviews installation of tracker in police vehicles

KARACHI (APP): In a meeting at the Central Police Office Karachi, chaired by IGP Sindh Ghulam Nabi Memon, the installation of trackers in police vehicles and fuel economy measures were reviewed, and further instructions were provided. Attendees included DIGPs Telecommunication and Transport, AIGP Headquarters Sindh, Project Director IT, and representatives from a private tracker company. DIGP T&T detailed the trackers installed in police vehicles, emphasizing their importance, utility, and fuel-saving benefits.

NA Speaker announces panel of Chairpersons for 7th session

ISLAMABAD (INP): Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Tuesday announced six-member panel of chairpersons to conduct the business of 7th session of the House in the absence of Speaker and Deputy Speaker National Assembly. The panel consists of Zahid Iqbal, Abdul Qadir Patel, Romina Khurshid Alam, Amin ul Haq, Shahida Begum and Riaz Fatyana who would chair the house proceedings in absence of the Speaker and Deputy Speaker National Assembly during the 7th session.

Govt authorizes premier intelligence agency to intercept calls, message under law: NA told

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar on Tuesday informed the National Assembly that the government authorized the country's premier intelligence agency to intercept calls and messages or trace a call in the interest of national security or in apprehension of a crime under section 54 of the Pakistan Telecommunication (Re-organization) Act, 1996. Responding to a point raised by leader of the opposition in the National Assembly Omar Ayub Khan, the minister said that it was not a new law rather it came into force since 1996 and further reshaped its section 54 of Pakistan Telecommunication re-organization Act 1996. He said no previous successive governments including of Pervez Musharraf's martial law changed this provision and still it was intact. He quoted the section 54 of the Act which says, "Notwithstanding anything contained in any law for the time being in force.



KARACHI: A 7-members delegation of Managing Committee Karachi Customs Agents Association led by General Secretary Mehmoodul Hassan meeting with Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori.

DPM Dar chairs high-level meeting to review preparations for President Ilham's visit

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Prime Minister (DPM) and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Tuesday chaired a high-level meeting to holistically review preparations and arrangements for the upcoming official visit of President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev. The meeting especially focused on trade and investment relations between the two brotherly countries, Ministry of Foreign Affairs posted on X account. The meeting was attended by Ministers for Commerce, Planning and Development, Privatization, Communication and Power along with the Ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan to Pakistan Khazar Farhadov and senior officials of Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Azerbaijan president due in Islamabad on July 11 for a two-day visit

ISLAMABAD (APP): President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev is scheduled to undertake an official visit to Pakistan from July 11-12, 2024, at the invitation of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. During the visit, President Aliyev will hold meetings with President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, a Foreign Office press release said.

Captain martyred, two terrorists killed in gun fight in North Waziristan

RAWALPINDI (INP): A Pakistan Army captain embraced martyrdom while two terrorists were killed in a gun fight in K h y b e r Pakhtunkhwa's (KP) North Waziristan district, Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said on Tuesday. According to military's media wing, an exchange of fire took place between security forces and terrorists on 9 July 2024 in North Waziristan district. "During the fierce engagement, the Pakistani Army troops effectively engaged the terrorists' location, as a result of which two terrorists were gunned down," the ISPR said. However, during the intense exchange of fire, Captain Muhammad Osama bin Arshad, 24, resident of Rawalpindi District, embraced martyrdom. Meanwhile, the military's media wing said that sanitisation operation was being carried out to eliminate any terrorists found in the area. "Security forces of Pakistan are determined to eliminate the menace of terrorism from the country and such sacrifices of our brave soldiers further strengthen our resolve," it added.

DCs directed to ensure rain emergency plans be implemented

KARACHI (APP): Commissioner Syed Hassan Naqvi on Tuesday directed all the Deputy Commissioners (DCs) to ensure implementation rain emergency plans in letter and spirit. In view of the rains, the Commissioner directed them to stay in touch with all relevant organizations to maintain order during showers. Meanwhile, the DCs have informed the Commissioner that the concerned organizations have already been alerted after the rains and they were in the field for water drainage while all Assistant Commissioners have also been directed to remain in the field and be ready to deal with any emergency situation.



KARACHI: Members of Quaid-e-Azam Management Board and others are paying homage to the Madar-e-Millat, Mohtarma Fatima Jinnah during their visit at Quaid-e-Azam Mausoleum on the occasion of her Death Anniversary.

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Supplementary grants

The ex post facto parliamentary approval of huge unbudgeted expenditures of Rs9.4tr — up by 389pc from Rs1.9tr sanctioned a year earlier — during the last two fiscal years underlines how the government is abusing the powers it derives from the Constitution to deal with possible budgetary shortfalls, and unexpected new expenditures or cost overruns. This practice of altering the original budget by obtaining retrospective approval of fund re-appropriation or new expenditures made during a given fiscal year, without parliament's nod to supplementary budget statements, is not new. But the rapid growth of these unauthorised expenditures affirms that the fiscal authorities have lately been interpreting Article 84 rather liberally to bypass parliamentary and public scrutiny. This is despite the fact that the constitutional provision is meant to give the government access to funds for unforeseen financial needs in times of emergencies or contingencies to ensure the unhampered functioning of public services.

A story on the excess expenditures by three successive governments between May 2023 and May 2024 through supplementary grants reveals that subsidies and the power sector, water division, defence and civil armed forces and related agencies stand out in exceeding budgetary allocations or securing finances for unbudgeted expenditure and initiatives.

Many expenditures for which the government sought retrospective parliamentary approval have little to do with emergencies or contingencies. Several expenditures, such as additional funds for CPEC security, military pensions and other retirement benefits, the Green Corporate Initiative of the armed forces, Pakistan-Iran border fencing, K-Electric and public power generation plants, etc, could have been anticipated when the original budget was passed.

The abuse of a constitutional provision meant for unforeseen financial needs betrays bureaucratic disdain for parliament and public opinion, in fact, even democracy. It is also a sort of violation of a 2013 Supreme Court observation that "the amounts as approved in the budget passed by the National Assembly have to be utilised for the purpose specified in the budget statement."

Any re-appropriation of funds or their utilisation for some other purpose, though within the permissible limits of the budget, are not justified... "The recent re-appropriation of funds for need-less payment of 'honoraria' to PMO officers, as well as for parliamentarians' development schemes and renovation and construction of judges' residences at a time when the government has implemented additional taxes of Rs1.7tr underscores the urgency for restricting the government's powers under Article 84 to alter the approved budget, except in extreme cases.

Even when an expense is made in emergency situations, it should be immediately brought before parliament for debate and approval to ensure the integrity of the budget, avoid unnecessary additional expenses and reduce digressions from the approved original spending framework. These changes are crucial to ensure tight fiscal discipline and contain budget deficits.

Arifa Noor

Drip, drip, drip... the drops fall, big and small. There is a conversation here, an incident there. A snatched conversation with an acquaintance, a long chat with a friend. All of them quiet interactions, small, unnoticeable incidents unworthy of retelling. But the drops are unending; they are so many that they eventually become puddles left after the monsoon rains. Here, there and everywhere, some deep and some shallow, some deceptively deep while others can be skipped.

But there they are. And they are not going away.

A friend needs a visa, to somewhere in the glittery West. Well-travelled and well-educated and no stranger to the country in question — but there are no appointments to be had. She had travelled there more than once, as to other parts of the world. But visa appointments are not to be had. In hushed tones, it is whispered that visa appointments are being 'sold' for hundreds of thousands, as well as the

approval or checking of documents. The amount of money changing hands varies greatly but such is the rush of people trying to leave the country that few are willing to dismiss the numbers as wild exaggerations.

During another casual conversation, a colleague says his relative paid 10 lakh rupees to try to get out. But, he says, in all seriousness, if someone asks, "officially, the bribery rate is only two". What is official about the rate of bribery is beyond comprehension.

A visit to a medical centre turns into a painful exchange when a young doctor asks seriously if what happened over 70 years ago was really worth it. He stumbles over the question because it is so difficult to put into words, even though he is careful to wait until none of his colleagues are nearby when he shares this burden.

Another friend bemoans his lack of social life. There are hardly any people left to socialise with. What happened? Most of them have moved away in the past couple

Conversations

of years; they all left the country.

An old college friend from somewhere in Africa messages to ask about the American school because she has an application from a teacher who was employed at one in Pakistan. Is the school any good, she asks?

Asking a colleague to explain the intricacies of the economy leads to a conversation about how everyone appears to be in a bad mood. They are always ready for a fight and the tiniest of irritations leads to an argument or a loud exchange, at work or in public. I didn't need to ask why and he didn't need to explain further.

A WhatsApp message from a friend settled abroad reveals that he ran into a Pakistani waiting tables at a restaurant, who turned out to be PhD in engineering from south Punjab and had left a teaching job to migrate. The friend then added that in recent times, he has run into many educated Pakistani migrants in basic jobs.

These conversations are not recent. They happened over months and

even years ago. And most of them, like a random drop of water, did not even register. They got brushed away, as one does when on a dry, clear day, suddenly, there is a tiny sensation of wetness on a hand or a bare arm.

All these happened before the latest budget, which has imposed new taxes on what a friend calls the moral backbone of society ie the salaried class, and indirect taxes on the poor, while everyone who had the power and access to get relief managed to do so, beginning with the civil and military bureaucracy, which will get plots from the state and sell them without paying the tax that ordinary civilians will have to do. The military also managed to delay pension reform for a year.

The parliamentarians increased their perks, while also ensuring fat chunks of development funds. The PML-N saved their voters in the trader class. As the phrase goes, everyone who was anyone got to wash their hands in the Ganges. But for the rest, there is the mantra of the difficult days. In In-

dia, the politicians promise 'achay dinn' while we have to settle for mushkil ones.

So many far better equipped at finance and the economy have explained this in detail in article after article and podcast after podcast.

And now the drops are forming deep puddles of dirty water.

Conversations among white-collar, ordinary people are about how not to pay taxes. Others have complicated conversations about establishing companies on foreign shores.

And the hopelessness afflicting the ordinary souls is creeping up.

A wealthy businessman speaks of family members who had left these lands long ago. They did the right thing, he said, I too should have moved and now I will. It was no longer possible to run a business in Pakistan, he added. He explains that over time whatever he has running in Pakistan might just slowly and steadily downsize and shut down.

Another one says friends have moved away not because they can't af-

ford to live comfortably in Pakistan but because life is less stressful elsewhere.

The conversations are endless. Neither are they new. But with each passing year and each political development, they become more desperate and more pessimistic. The budget is merely one such incident. It is so critical but there is so much more. The lack of tolerance and the lynchings; the unending blocking of X; the draconian laws; the enforced disappearances.

This sense of despair is not even recognised by those ruling us, who continue to talk down to the people, or rather at each other. For what else can one call the interminable conversations about the need for IMF programmes, the divisions between the judiciary or the parties (Fawad Chaudhry and Javed Latif got more attention in talk shows than the budget) and the vague promises of billions headed our way as investment? It is more than a disconnect; it's a lack of respect for those who live in this country. -- Courtesy Dawn

Fable of the bicycle and a plane

Jawed Naqvi

The inability to accept defeat with grace comes from an authoritarian streak found in enfeebled democracies. Donald Trump and Narendra Modi, for example, are peas in a pod in this regard. Modi has an added problem — his compulsive obsessive rivalry with *bête noir* Jawaharlal Nehru's back-to-back three-term tenure as India's first prime minister. It reminds one of the soirée where a wet-behind-the-ears Urdu poet earned the wrath of a master versifier.

Legendary Firaq Gorakhpuri was waiting for his turn at the late-night *mushaira* when he felt compelled to chide a young poet for suspiciously plagiarising his lines to compose a bad verse. The young man pleaded innocence, adding a tad grossly that he was delighted to be involved in an intellectual accident with the master poet. Firaq's response was withering: "One has heard of bicycles crashing into bullock carts. But a bicycle crashing into a plane?"

President Murmu, however, had to indulge Modi's persistence. "The world can see Indians have for the third time formed a government with a stable and full mandate," she said. "This has happened after six decades. People have shown trust in my government for the third time." Murmu was clearly reading an address drafted by Modi's office to the new parliament, earning endless applause from the treasury benches.

Full mandate? Stable government? In which case why did the markets, revered by BJP acolytes as a thermometer of the nation's health, crash so nervously when the results came in on June 4? Worse, they crashed after Modi and his home minister exhorted investors in TV interviews to bet on their victory. The markets picked up only when help came from two regional parties who had little in common with the BJP's communal agenda.

That's precisely what everybody other than the BJP accepts. After the loss of 63 MPs, Modi's party was reduced to a minority of 240. Rajiv Gandhi resigned as prime

minister after he was reduced from a mammoth 400-plus seats to become the leader of the single largest party in 1989, but short of a majority. Rajiv was a democrat, so he preferred to sit in the opposition, despite commanding the highest tally.

Third stable term? Is that why Modi rushed to the two leaders from Bihar and Andhra Pradesh too haste, who included a man who was only recently vying to become convener of the opposition alliance and the other who rose in politics as a Youth Congress leader? Modi sought their support, and the duo dictated their fanciful financial terms for their states, whose burden if fulfilled could be prohibitive for current and future taxpayers. Thus, it remains a point to ponder as to how long the alliance remains stable.

In the rush to keep the job, Modi broke a sacred democratic convention. While getting the two anchors to endorse their support, he tellingly didn't hold a mandatory meeting of his own party's MPs, a standard democratic requirement. Unlike the presidential system,

the prime minister must be elected by his or her party's MPs before getting the president's nod. It's widely believed that by holding a meeting of the National Democratic Alliance, while studiously dodging the meeting of BJP parliamentarians, he was delaying the blame game for the electoral debacle, which reportedly is waiting to burst into the open.

Everyone, except the BJP, sees the election results as a clear rejection of Modi's communal politics, and of his hateful speeches against Muslims during the election. To rub in the point, the prime minister's handpicked candidate was trounced in Banswara, the constituency in Rajasthan from where Modi had exhorted Hindus to mistrust Muslims, claiming they would steal their women's mangalsutras and even their buffaloes. Muslims were infiltrators, he said venomously. The hand-picked election commission unsurprisingly wouldn't book him. Remember a court had ordered Indira Gandhi to be removed as prime minister for using an election

podium built by the Public Works Department.

Still, the elections were a great leveller. The BJP's candidate from Ayodhya was also crushed by a Dalit leader from the INDIA alliance, literally mocking Modi for embarking on his polarising campaign by hurriedly inaugurating a half-built temple to Lord Ram. In another religiously loaded rebuke, Modi's candidate from Chitrakoot lost. The epic Ramayana tells us that Ram, Sita and Lakshman spent most of their exile years in the woods of Chitrakoot, in present-day Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.

Facts are sacred, opinions free. The fact is that way beyond the moral grasp of the current incumbent of the high office, Nehru had publicly pleaded with his party to relieve him of his post as prime minister in 1958. The high office he earned came from spending nine years in jail and marching as a foot soldier of India's freedom movement. His experience as Gandhi's lieutenant prepared him for the job. On April 29, 1958,

the Congress Parliamentary Party found itself facing an unprecedented crisis. Nehru requested the party's permission to retire as prime minister after guiding the country for four decades. Serving the country had been exhilarating, Nehru's biographer M.J. Akbar quotes him as telling fellow MPs. But he now wanted a respite from "this daily burden" to do "some quiet thinking" and return to "myself as an individual citizen of India and not as prime minister."

As one Congress MP remarked, "Jawaharlal wanted time to think about how to save the world from the hydrogen bomb but had no complications about dropping a hydrogen bomb on the Congress." When Nehru's party rejected the offer to resign, Akbar recalled in a tribute in 2011, "letters of congratulation and relief came from both Dwight Eisenhower in Washington and Nikita Khrushchev in Moscow". Modi might as well follow his bugbear to test the love the world leaders have for him. To begin with, he could offer to resign, and let his party take the call.

Boom or doom?

Dr Niaz Murtaza

Narratives about Pakistan verge on two extremes. The narrative of all our regimes has been that it is on the verge of take-off that will land it in the august company of the Asian Tigers. But such imaginary flights to glory disappear mysteriously like Malaysia Airlines flight MH370. Then there are the prophets of doom who see a collapse soon. But despite close calls, the country has dodged many bullets since 1971.

Which outcome is more likely? On the boom side, the Asian Tigers are one is a leap too far. Can we even match South Asian horses like India and Bangladesh with whom we share a DNA? They are no Asian Tigers. Out of the four economic aims — stability, durable growth, equity and sustainability — they have only the first two via a neoliberal model, with sustainability eluding even the Tigers and others globally. For a nation fed by its state with a false sense of superiority over Hindus and Bengalis, it's a rude shock how far it lags behind them.

Despite similarities with them, we have huge lags that make this outcome hard. There were the congenial ones. India had been a state for centuries and also inherited most of the administrative, economic and political legacy the British left behind. Bangladesh had ethnic homogeneity which further crystallised into a strong sense of nationhood due to 25 years of exploitative West Pakistan rule pre-1971. India and Bangladesh's freedom drives were led by grassroots leaders pursuing democracy. Pakistan was a divided, brand new state led by elites looking to escape democracy and majoritarian Hindu rule.

So, if even modest

These varied birth conditions led to, and were compounded by, three catastrophic choices made by our elite rulers (especially non-elected ones) fearful of losing power: economic dependence on big states, political autocracy and social religiosity. So, we are now the breeding ground for many perverse economic, social and political traits that undercut national progress. This includes a severe gap in social capital and trust due to decades of autocracy and exploitative rule, which undermine cooperation and conflict resolution, and a lack of economic dynamism and creativity due to economic dependence and social extremism.

Our main economic problems — fiscal and external deficits and low growth — reflect these societal traits. The fiscal deficits, given low tax revenues, reflect the social mistrust in the state, while the external deficits and poor growth expose the lack of societal creativity and dynamism.

But these traits aren't immutable. All were grafted onto society by elites and can be excised via a counter-effort. However, one doesn't see a strong reformist social group on the horizon with clear ideas that can uproot the exploitative ruling set-up to usher in even economic stability and durable growth let alone equity and sustainability. The task is not just of following the right policies but of societal transformation that only popular movements, and not autocratic regimes, can undertake. The middle class is often billed for this role. But our middle classes and expats are still in the infancy stage of chasing populist messiahs bereft of solid ideas.

So, if even modest

progress seems elusive, is doom inevitable? Many say no badly run state can avoid doom for long. We face almost every political and economic path that has led states to doom: religious and ethnic insurgencies, nuclear stand-off, slow growth, high fiscal deficit and debt, depleted reserves and weak currency.

Climate change will hit us more badly to aggravate these issues. The three-er-its from insurgents are still not as strong as in Yemen, Somalia etc. But our econ-omic issues are grim. Recent state economy-ic collapses have come from high fiscal deficits and money supply growth causing hyperinflation (Zimbabwe) or high external deficits causing currency collapse and default (Sri Lanka).

Zimbabwe had 250 million per cent inflation caused by money supply growth above 50pc for years even before hyperinflation. Our highest money supply growth was less than 20pc during 2019-2023. Covid-19 and terrorism caused Lankan foreign revenues from remittances and tourism to fall hugely to just \$2.6 billion and the current account deficit reached 5pc. Our recent external profile is better but still similar to this. Though it's improving, external shocks and state policies can quickly reverse it.

So, while the chances of even limited boom are near-zero, the chances of economic doom, though not near-certain, are surely high. The best that we can hope for from the current ruling coterie is that it avoids economic doom. For long-term boom, and that too an equitable one, we must keep scouting the horizons for the rise of better social groups. - Courtesy Dawn

Revitalizing slums: Inclusive solutions for viable rehabilitation

By Umm-e-Maliha

Slums often evoke the picture of neglect and desolate congested population with temporary housing and unhygienic condition. They are in suburbs of a city, infamous for their infrastructure deficiencies and elevated crime level. Nonetheless, it's crucial to understand these negative stereotypes and recognize the mankind and capability of locals.

As per United Nations Human Settlements Program, 56% of Pakistan's urban communities resided in slum residence as of 2020. These societies are not only overloaded with the country's resources but people having some goals and human resilience. Residents end up renting out their new homes to return to slums due to proximity to jobs and low living costs. Earlier initiatives to rehabilitate slum residents by offering government-subsidized housing, frequently unsuccessful because of inadequate fulfillment of resident's basic needs like socio-economic needs. For instance, Dharavi Redevelopment Project in India, the project aimed to provide the subsidized housing to slum's residents but failed because of discrepancy of requirement and solutions.

Therefore, it is necessary to consider all the basic needs of slum residents while planning and implementing the rehabilitation programs. There are successful programs that use strategies considering the local requirements and conditions. These are Kenya slum upgrading program, Minha Casa Minha Vida program Brazil, Baan Mankong Program, Medellin's urban transformation. These programs not just improve sanitary conditions but also offer real advantage to the community.

Efforts to rehabilitate slum areas in Pakistan have seen range of results but The Orangi Pilot Project (OPP) in Karachi emerged as a one of the successful projects. Initiated in the 1980s, the OPP directed on upgrading housing and sanitation in Orangi Town, one of major informal settlements in Karachi. Regardless of such successes, Pakistan still encounters hurdles in slum rehabilitation, such as limited resource and rapid urbanization. Continued emphasis on community-driven initiatives and sustainable urban planning is critical for achieving lasting improvements.

Other feasible strategy. These programs, by offering small loans for business ventures and housing upgrades can enable residents to recover their living conditions and economic opportunities. In addition, slums up gradation initiatives should emphasize the provision of vital services like fresh water, sanitary conditions, public health, and education.

Coordinating with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and private sector entities can potentially overcome resource constraints. Like, the Urban Resource Centre in Karachi collaborates with local communities to deal with urban challenges, urging for the rights and needs of slum inhabitants.

The key to rehabilitating slums requires recognizing and exploiting the potential of their inhabitants. By engaging residents in decision-making processes and delivering support based on their needs, we can rehabilitate these underprivileged areas into development communities. It is time to provide slum inhabitants a seat at the stakeholders' table for decision making, making sure that their voices are heard and their dreams are supported.

Developing microfinance programs targeted at slum dwellers is an

Finance Minister meets with PMLTC CEO, discusses energy sector reforms and collaboration

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Tuesday met with the President and CEO of Pak Matiari-Lahore Transmission Company (PMLTC) Ms. Zhang Lei to discuss various aspects of energy sector development and cooperation.

The meeting was also attended by Deputy CEO Ma Desheng and CFO Wang Bo, said a news release.

The minister acknowledged the contributions of PMLTC to infrastructure development and assured the delegation of required support through relevant government channels.

Finance minister meets Chairman Nestle Pak

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Tuesday met Chairman Nestle Pakistan Syed Yawar Ali and Ex-President Farmers Association of Pakistan Afaq Ahmed Tiwana to explore avenues for enhancing the growth of Pakistan's agriculture and livestock sectors.

Minister of State for Finance and Revenue Ali Pervaiz Malik and Member-IR Policy Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) also attended the meeting, said a news release.

The minister thanked the delegation for their constructive proposals. He underscored the government's commitment to support these vital sectors through enhanced financing mechanisms.

The minister assured that relevant ministries would be consulted to consider the proposed framework, aiming to translate it into actionable policies that drive tangible results. Syed Yawar Ali shared insights on the current state of these sectors and emphasized their potential to significantly increase yield productivity and exports.

Syed Yawar Ali and Afaq Ahmed Tiwana appreciated the government for prioritizing agriculture and livestock in its policy framework.



QUETTA: A delegation of representative of Zamindar Action Committee meeting with Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti. Provincial Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries are also present.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Industries and Production, Rana Tanveer Hussain chairing 11th meeting of the National Coordination Committee on Small Medium Enterprises Development.

500kV Double Circuit Quad Bundle transmission line to enhance national grid's capacity

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's quest for energy security and economic growth, said a press release issued here Tuesday.

"As we inaugurate this critical piece of the project, we also celebrate the collaborative efforts that have brought us to this point. From the hardworking engineers and dedicated workers to our valued partners and supporters, your collective contributions have been invaluable. This transmission line is more than just a technological achievement, it is a symbol of progress and a testament to our commitment to building a resilient and reliable energy network", he said.

He said the project is a cornerstone of our strategy to improve grid infrastructure, directly impacting the quality of life for millions and supporting the continuous operation of essential services. A robust and dependable energy supply is the backbone of economic growth and this transmission line will support CPEC industrial zones, Special Economic Zones (SEZs), and urban centers, creating an environment that is conducive to investment and development, he said.

Govt needs to engage businessmen for workable economic policy: Ahsan

ISLAMABAD (INP): President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari has urged the government to devise a viable solution to boost industry and businesses through providing affordable electricity and imposing nominal taxes.

In a statement here on Tuesday, he highlighted that exorbitant taxes, high power costs, and a poor law and order situation severely impact the economy and could further accelerate unemployment. There was no justification for maintaining exorbitant interest rates at 20.5%



ISLAMABAD: A vendor is displaying Bananas attraction for customers on his loading van alongside a road, in the Federal Capital.

Pro rata billing system to eliminate overbilling issue in Pesco region: Pesco chief

PESHAWAR (APP): In this regard and explaining that this software did not remove consumers from the protected category. Instead, the implementation of the pro rata billing system had increased the number of protected consumers.

In March 2024, the number of protected consumers in PESCO was 1.85 million, which increased to 2.217 million in April. Similarly, this number reached 2.462 million in May. However, the number of protected consumers decreases due to increased electricity usage in the summer.

Zong expands data network with addition of 400 new 4G sites in H1, 2024

ISLAMABAD (APP): The private mobile operator - Zong 4G - has announced the successful expansion of its network with over 400 new 4G sites added in the first half of the current year.

This significant expansion solidified Zong 4G's position as the second largest data network in the country.

This effort underscores the company's commitment to providing widespread and reliable connectivity. Currently serving 49 million customers, Zong aspires to democratize access to data across Pakistan, said a news release issued on Tuesday. In addition to expanding its network, Zong 4G has concluded an extensive network modernization project to address capacity challenges.

The company replaced 2T2R technology with advanced 8T8R, focusing particularly on enhancing the customer experience for remote projects along the CPEC route.

As part of its commitment to network sustainability, Zong 4G completed over 1,400 power upgrades in H1-2024. The upgrades featured Li-Ion solutions, known for their fast-charging capability and longer life compared to traditional battery banks.

Senior management from Huawei and ZTE also joined Zong 4G in celebrating these achievements, pledging their continued support for future endeavors.

CCP Green-lit merger of SCL in JKSM

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has approved a Scheme of Arrangement for the merger of M/s. Shamim and Company (Pvt.) Ltd with M/s. JK Sugar Mills (Pvt.) Ltd.

JKSM is a private limited company with the business of production and sale of sugar or related products in Pakistan, said a press release issued here on Tuesday.

JKSM primarily produces refined white sugar, along with three by-products namely, molasses, bagasse, and mud. SCL, since 1967 is into the business of manufacturing and distribution of PepsiCo products across Pakistan.

The Phase-I competition assessment by the CCP identified two relevant markets namely, "Sugar and by-products" and "Non-alcoholic beverages". As per the Scheme of Arrangement, the transaction involves merger of SCL with JKSM.



MULTAN: A worker weighing and packing good quality mangoes into the boxes for delivery to the other City.

Advisor to Ombudsman for steps to enhance revenue of Pakistan Post

KARACHI (APP): Advisor Federal Ombudsman Regional Office Karachi Seema Shakil, on Tuesday, paid a visit to Pakistan Post GPO Sadder Karachi to inspect facilities being offered to public.

The senior advisor, while speaking to media at the occasion, said that federal Ombudsman is the only institute that resolves the grievances of citizens without any fees while they don't need assistance of lawyer as well.

The officials of Ombudsman secretariat conduct visits and inspections of federal government departments and organizations engaged in public service delivery to review their performance and service delivery status and forward their findings and recommendations for not only resolving the public grievances but also to address the issues faced the relevant institution, she mentioned.

Though the customers present in GPO expressed satisfaction on available facilities and services, she said and added, waiting area for customers need to be improved and water and other basic facilities should be made available there.

Seema Shakil said that complaints filed to Ombudsman office by public against the Pakistan Post were mostly about lost parcels. In case of missing of booked parcel the customer was eligible to receive a compensation amount up to Rs.1000 irrespective of the value of the goods dispatched, she pointed out and stressed on the need of enhancing the compensation amount as well as ensuring insurance of parcels at the time of booking.

The advisor urged on measures for improving efficiency and revenue of Pakistan Post and remarked that revenue enhancement through tapping the unexploited resources will help strengthening financial position of the postal services as well as overall service delivery status.

She along with Ombudsman office's focal person for media Taqi Muhammad Soomro and other officials inspected different counters for booking of post articles.

Ali Pervaiz says: Reforms in energy sector to be introduced shortly

ISLAMABAD (INP): Minister of State for Finance, Revenue and Power Ali Pervaiz Malik massive will be introduced in energy sector shortly which will ensure a sustainable and efficient energy sector for the future. During an interview with PTV News on Tuesday, he stated that the government was adopting a multi-faceted approach to overhaul the energy sector.

Ali Pervaiz Malik further stated that the managing capacity charges and decreasing the off-grade utilization was needed to reduce per unit capacity costs. Emphasizing the importance of shifting towards local fuel sources to decrease dependence on imported fuels, he highlighted the ongoing efforts in local exploration. A significant portion of the reform strategy involves the privatization of distribution companies (DISCOs) and generation companies (GENCOs).

He said that inefficient and obsolete furnace oil plants currently incurring costs despite being non-operational would be scrapped, auctioned, or liquidated. "Efficient plants will be put on a privatization model," he added.

The state minister said that the government was working on establishing a robust regulatory framework to safeguard consumer interest's post-privatization. The government is working to enhance corporate governance and auditing practices in the DISCOs.

Flour price reduced

FAISALABAD (APP): Price of flour bags have been reduced across the district Faisalabad to facilitate the masses.

A spokesman of local administration said here on Tuesday that on special direction of Chief Minister Punjari Maryam Nawaz, the government had made reduction in the flour bags and new rate for 10 kilograms (kg) flour bag was fixed as Rs.800 while 20 kg bag would be available at Rs.1600.

In this connection, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Abdullah Nayyar Sheikh also directed the price control magistrates as well as assistant commissioners and officers of the Food department to ensure the availability of flour bags on its new price.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance & Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb in a meeting with the Chairman Nestle Pakistan and Ex-President Farmers Association of Pakistan.

Dr Mughal says: Budget has nothing for masses but distribution of resources among legislators

LAHORE (INP): President of Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW), Dr Murtaza Mughal has said that the federal budget has nothing for masses but it is only distribution of resources among legislators. He said that differences among major political parties regarding budget was not aimed to facilitate countrymen but about their share in resources. In a statement issued on Tuesday, he said that Rs 16 billion have been earmarked for development projects in the budget, which will be used to please the members of national and provincial assemblies and supporters.

Dr Murtaza Mughal said that if there were some reduction in the development budget, electricity tariff would not have to be hiked to unbelievable levels. Still, the rulers were not concerned about people's problems and were busy shaping their future.

The government was making life difficult for the masses through taxes and blaming the IMF, which was not a reality, he added.

The President PEW said that the government had increased its current expenses by 24 per cent, for which the right to live has been taken away from the people and the salaried class.

According to a recent survey, 94 per cent of people want to leave the country because they don't see anything here.



QUETTA: Anjuman-e-Tajran Balochistan Central President, Abdul Rahim Kakar along with Hazrat Ali Achakzai, Jaffar Khan Kakar and others addressing to media persons during press conference held at Quetta press club

DG Agriculture says: Punjab gov't striving for welfare of farmers

BAHAWALPUR (APP): Agriculture Department will guide farmers on crop cultivation, better yields, and proper use of agricultural medicines at the Farmer Facilitation Centers by the Punjab government is a farmer-friendly initiative where fertilizers, quality agricultural medicines, and spray machinery are available at reasonable rates.

Farmer Facilitation Centers have been established throughout Punjab to provide relief to farmers as per the instructions of the Punjab government. The

Key role of social media in enhancing citizens' engagement in different processes: Ahsan

ISLAMABAD (INP): Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Tuesday highlighted the significance of social media, calling it an 'essential tool' in promoting citizen engagement, transparency and participation in government and political processes.

"Citizens' engagement, transparency and participation in government and political processes have been revolutionized by social media platforms, enabling instant communication, mobilization, and dissemination of information," he said.

The minister expressed these views while addressing an event titled "Digital Democracy in Action: Enhancing Engagement through Social Media," organized by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

He said social media platforms provided spaces for dialogue, enabling people from all walks of life to voice their opinions, share concerns, and contribute to the national and political discourse, adding "The democratization of communication fosters a more inclusive and participatory political environment."

As of 2023, Ahsan Iqbal said Pakistan had over 71 million social media users, representing a penetration rate of approximately 31 percent of the total population.

"This widespread use signifies the potential reach and impact of digital engagement," he said social media

had the potential to enhance government transparency and accountability through real-time updates and direct communication channels, under which government officials could keep the public informed about policy decisions, developments, and initiatives.

"Social media has proven to be a powerful tool for mobilizing communities and advocating for social change. It empowers grassroots activism and ensures that marginalized voices are heard," the minister observed.

The minister also warned of the potential risks associated with social media, including misinformation and fake news, which could lead to public panic, social unrest and undermine trust in democratic institutions.

ings and events organized by CUPA from July 6 to July 9, said a news release received on Tuesday.

The delegation is engaged in productive discussions on transforming societies through education, exploring best practices from international assessments, and examining Cambridge's role in climate education.

During his speech at the Cambridge Schools Conference, Dr. Siddiqui said, "Our bilateral ties with the United Kingdom have historically been strong, with far-reaching educational collaborations that have enriched both nations."



KARACHI: Commuters are facing difficulties in transportation due to stagnant rainwater due to poor sewerage system caused by heavy downpour of monsoon season, at Malir Model Colony area.

Maqbool Siddiqui for fostering of collaboration with CUPA

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training, Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, said that the aim of his visit to Cambridge University Press and Assessment (CUPA) is to foster collaboration and focus on improving educational standards and addressing mutual challenges.

The minister, along with other senior officials from the Ministry, including Ali Raza, Education Advisor to the Chief Minister of Punjab, and Syeda Zia Batool, Chairperson of PEIRA, is participating in a series of high-level meetings and events organized by CUPA from July 6 to July 9, said a news release received on Tuesday.

PM congratulates Daanish School student over 1st position in BISE Lahore exams

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday congratulated Muhammad Ayan Kashif, a student of Daanish School for clinching the first position in the matriculation examination of Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, Lahore.

The prime minister, in a statement, said that Ayan Kashif of Daanish School Mianwali proved his mettle by scoring 1190 marks in the board examination.

Also felicitating Ayan Kashif's family and teachers, the prime minister said the male and female students of Daanish School had set a new example of success and capability.

Int'l community must recognize Pak for hosting huge refugee population: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday urged the international community to recognize the burden being shouldered by Pakistan while hosting such a large refugee population and demonstrate collective responsibility.

The prime minister, in a meeting with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Filippo Grandi at the PM House, reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to address the protection and safety needs of people in vulnerable situations and underscored that the international community needed to be mindful of the socio-economic challenges and security threats being faced by Pakistan in this regard, according to a PM Office press release.

While recalling Pakistan's longstanding partnership with UNHCR, the prime minister appreciated the UN agency's support to Pakistan in hosting Afghan refugees for over four decades. He noted that despite numerous challenges, Pakistan had hosted Afghan refugees with exemplary respect and dignity.

He sought UNHCR's support in mobilizing adequate resources to supplement Pakistan's efforts in this regard and urged the UN body to play its role in promoting durable solutions to address the situation of Afghan refugees, including through safe and dignified return and reintegration in their homeland, as well as third-country relocation. The UN High Commissioner expressed gratitude for Pakistan's generosity and hospitality in hosting millions of Afghan refugees for the past many decades and assured that UNHCR would continue to work closely with Pakistan to fulfill the basic needs of the Afghan refugees.

UN High Commissioner Grandi is on a three-day official visit to Pakistan from July 7-9, 2024.



ISLAMABAD: UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.



KARACHI: Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori addressing the students during first session of consoling.

SC reserves verdict in SIC's appeal regarding reserved seats

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court on Tuesday reserved the judgment after hearing the arguments from respondents in an appeal of Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) regarding reserved seats.

A 13-member bench of the apex court, led by Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa, comprising Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah, Justice Munib Akhtar, Justice Yahya Afridi, Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan, Justice Jamal Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Justice Athar Minallah, Justice Syed Hassan Azhar Rizvi, Justice Ayesha Malik, Justice Shahid Waheed, Justice Irfan Saadat Khan and Justice

Naeem Akhtar Afghan, heard the case.

Barrister Salman Akram Raja and SIC's Faisal Siddiqui presented their arguments before the court during the hearing which was live streamed on the website.

During hearing, Faisal Siddiqui argued that Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) participated in general elections of 2018 but didn't win a single seat but it was given three reserved seats.

He said that the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) didn't take decision regarding BAP as per the law. He said that Jamiat Ulema e Islam (JUI-F) was also given reserved seats of minorities.

No intention of returning to politics: Asad

LAHORE (INP) Former federal minister Asad Umar stated on Tuesday that he currently has no intention of re-entering practical politics.

During a media interaction following his appearance before an anti-terrorism court regarding the May 9 arson cases, Asad wished former prime minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi and former finance minister Miftah Ismail good luck with their newly formed political group.

When asked if he would join Awam Pakistan, Asad replied that he would not be joining Shahid Khaqan Abbasi's political party.

Earlier, Asad Umar, who recently underwent leg surgery, appeared before the Anti-Terrorism Court seeking interim bail in the May 9 arson cases.

During the hearing, the former minister pleaded with the court, "I have recently had surgery. I have difficulty walking. My attendance is complete. Please allow me to leave." Subsequently, the court granted him permission to leave upon completion of his attendance.

Wafaqi Mohtasib's services always for early redressal of complaints: Ejaz Qureshi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Wafaqi Mohtasib, Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi on Tuesday stressed the pivotal role of businessmen and industrialists in the economic development since they provided jobs to large number of people.

He made these observations while addressing a programme organized by the Sheikhpura Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The event was attended by Wafaqi Tax Mohtasib Dr. Muhammad Asif Jah, Fauzia Viqar, Federal Ombudsman Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace (FOSPWAH), Wafaqi Banking

Mohtasib, Siraj-ud-Din Aziz besides representatives of the Federal Insurance Mohtasib and leading personalities belonging to Commerce and Industry in the region.

The Wafaqi Mohtasib said that in view of the important role of the Chamber of Commerce, a separate portal was being set up with the cooperation of Chamber of Commerce for fast track resolution of the problems being faced by business community. "The complaints lodged through this portal, if not resolved within 30 days, will be automatically transferred to the Wafaqi Mohtasib's Office for further action", he observed.

DC Sukkur reviews development schemes

SUKKUR (APP): Deputy Commissioner (DC) Sukkur, Dr Raja MB Dharejo presided over a meeting to review development schemes in the district under the annual development program on Tuesday.

In the meeting, Deputy Director Planning, XEN Public Health and other officers of departments concerned participated. Deputy Director Planning and Development briefed the DC about ongoing and new schemes in the district. The DC directed officers concerned to ensure the completion of the schemes on time and warned that no compromise would be made on the quality of the material.

AJK govt plans to settle post-1990 Kashmiri refugees on permanent basis: AJK PM

MIRPUR (APP): Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), Prime Minister, Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq on Tuesday said that permanent settlement of post 1990 Kashmiri refugees, pouring in from Illegally Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) into AJK, was his government's priority.

"The AJK government in collaboration with the government of Pakistan, will use all resources for the resettlement of the Kashmiri refugees", he said this while speaking the inauguration and foundation stone laying ceremony regarding the construction of

750 houses for the post 90s refugees in the state metropolis.

Reiterating his commitment of rehabilitating the Kashmiri refugees, the prime minister said the government would never leave in lurch the members of the migrant community who were forced to leave their homes and hearth by the Indian occupation forces.

"Refugees are our brothers. Providing all the basic facilities to them is our first priority", he said. He said, "We salute the people of Occupied Kashmir for their courage and resilience in the face of Indian oppression".

Commissioner for expediting legal action against power pilferers

HYDERABAD (APP): Divisional Commissioner Ahsan Ali Qureshi presided over a meeting of divisional enforcement committee for controlling power theft at his office. Addressing the meeting, the Commissioner said that strict legal action was being taken against power thieves with the assistance of Police, FIA and HESCO. He said that minimizing duration of load shedding was conditional to improve recovery of electricity bills. The Commissioner got update from HESCO officers about power supply to Daud Pota Library from express feeder and directed to complete that work in stipulated time so that students would not face any difficulty.

He directed officers of all departments to submit fortnightly reports to Chief Secretary and make the drive more effective. The Commissioner directed HESCO officers to appoint focal persons in every district who should remain in close contact with Police and fulfill legal formalities in registering FIA against defaulters. The Commissioner sought reports from Deputy Commissioners of all relevant districts about actions against power theft.

Deputy Commissioner Hyderabad Zain ul Aabdeen Memon, officers of Police, HESCO and other departments were also present in the meeting while DCs of other districts attended the meeting through video link.



LARKANA: Rangers and Police officials carry out the combing search operation against criminals as security has been tightened in city to maintain law and order situation during the Holy Month of Muharram-ul-Haram, in Larkana.

Mayor directs officials to address water shortage problem

HYDERABAD (APP): The Mayor of Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (HMC) Kashif Ali Shoro has taken notice of the public complaints regarding shortage of filtered water supply from Hyderabad Water and Sewerage Board Corporation (HW&SBC).

The mayor spokesman informed here on Tuesday that Shoro visited the corporation's filtration plants on Jamshoro road, accompanied by Managing Director of HW&SBC Zahid

Khemptio and other officials and consultants.

He told the officials that he was receiving complaints about shortage or lack of water supply from many parts of the city.

Shoro warned the officials that the prevailing situation of water supply shortfall would not be tolerated.

The Mayor asked the officials to make a comprehensive plan to issue all the bottlenecks causing disruption in the water supply.

CEO of software company killed over payment issue, accused held

KARACHI (INP): Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of a software company was stabbed to death by an employee over payment issued here on Tuesday. Police arrested the accused.

According to details, over issue of non-payment of salary, an exchange of hot words took place between employee Shoaib Shah 24, and Naveed Khan 40, CEO of call centre located inside Kawish Crown Plaza, Karachi.

After verbal clash, the culprit stabbed CEO with sharp edged knife killing him on the spot.

The police arrested the murderer who was also a software engineer.

The body was shifted to Jinnah Hospital for postmortem and police after registering a case into the incident started investigations.

Two killed in clash over property dispute

LARKANA (INP): Two people were killed when armed men of two groups clashed over property dispute here on Tuesday, police said.

According to details, members of two groups of Kalhoro community which were in dispute over ownership of piece of land traded fire near Mohenjo Daro, in Larkana district.

As a result of cross firing, two people including Barkat Ali Kalhoro and Mazhar Ali Chaki were killed on the spot.

Police reached the scene and shifted the bodies to hospital for postmortem.

A case was registered into the incident and raids were being conducted to arrest the culprits.



LARKANA: Political Secretary to PPP Chairman, MPA Jameel Ahmed Soomro addresses to media persons during press conference, at Larkana press club.

HESCO CEO meets DIG, seeks police cooperation in anti-theft campaign

HYDERABAD (APP): The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Hyderabad Electric Supply Company (HESCO) Muhammad Roshan Otho met with the Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG) Hyderabad Tariq Razaque Dharejo, and requested police assistance during their anti-theft campaign.

According to the HESCO spokesperson, the DIG assured him that the police in 8 districts of Hyderabad region will fully cooperate with them for this campaign and FIRs will be registered against electricity thieves as well as their arrests will be ensured. On this occasion, a plan of action was also formed for the recovery of outstanding dues.

Meanwhile, the Divisional Commissioner said that police and recovery magistrates have been assigned to take legal action against those involved in

electricity theft. This announcement was made during a meeting of the Divisional Enforcement Committee for Electricity Theft Prevention, which included officials from HESCO, police, FIA and other departments.

The Commissioner Hyderabad also asked for an update from the HESCO officials regarding the supply of electricity to the Daudpota library from the express feeder and directed that this work be completed as soon as possible.

He also directed them to expedite the process to ensure students studying at the library do not face any inconvenience.

The Commissioner directed HESCO officers to appoint their focal persons in each district who will be in close touch with the police and fulfill legal requirements in registering FIRs.

Murderer among four outlaws held, arms recovered

KARACHI (INP): The police arrested four outlaws including a murderer and recovered weapons during separate actions in different areas of the metropolis on Tuesday.

During a raid in Ittihad Town, the police arrested killer of sister with murder weapon.

A robber was injured and held with arms after exchange of fire with police near Landhi graveyard.

In New Karachi, two robbers including Anees and Waqas were arrested with weapons after an encounter. Separate cases against the detainees were registered at respective police stations and investigations were underway.

One-day free eye camp held in Sukkur

SUKKUR (INP): A team of ophthalmologists from Al Shifa Eye Trust Hospital Sukkur, in collaboration with the Rajput Bandhani Welfare Association, organized one-day free eye camp at New Goth area on Tuesday.

On the occasion, eye specialists conducted complimentary check-up of the patients, focusing on diagnosing and treating various eye conditions, with a particular emphasis on cataracts. The free medical camp was aimed to extend essential eye treatment to the Rajput Bandhani Community ensuring that individuals had access to quality healthcare services.

Ayub denounces federal budget as 'economic terrorism against Pakistanis'

ISLAMABAD (INP): Omar Ayub, the leader of opposition in the National Assembly, slammed the ruling PML-N on Tuesday, denouncing the federal budget for the financial year 2024-25 as economic terrorism against the people of Pakistan. Interacting with media alongside his PTI colleague Babar Awan here, Ayub highlighted Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's admission of the IMF's role in budget preparation.

He lamented that electricity rates were set to exceed Rs100 per unit in the coming days and the US dollar, which was artificially pegged at around Rs275, would climb to

Rs300. Regarding the cases against PTI leadership, Ayub said these were politically motivated falsehoods and only meant to keep former prime minister Imran Khan, his spouse Bushra Bibi, former foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi and other PTI leaders behind bars. He, however, expressed confidence that these cases would soon conclude.

Drawing parallels with George Orwell's political satire 'Animal Farm', Ayub criticised the current state of Pakistani politics, chiding the incumbent prime minister and his coalition of governing with ignorance of the challenges faced by common Pakistanis.



HYDERABAD: Residents of Hosri are holding protest demonstration against high handedness of affluent people, at Hyderabad press club.

Advisor to Ombudsman for provision of facilities at saving centers

KARACHI (APP): Advisor to Federal Ombudsman Regional Office Karachi, Zakir Hussain, on Tuesday directed officials concerned to make proper arrangements for account holders and customers particularly senior citizens at National Saving Centers.

The advisor, in a briefing to media at Federal Ombudsman regional office Karachi, informed that an inspection visit of National Saving Center Saddar Karachi was carried out

the other day to review the facilities and functioning of the center.

The team of Federal Ombudsman Secretariat observed that there were insufficient arrangements for account holders who come to the center for receiving monthly savings on different saving schemes, he stated adding that the center management was directed to make proper arrangements for customers particularly the senior citizens who face hardship while waiting for their turn.