

# Independent

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www.dailyindependent.com.pk

Gwadar

Ph: 2841470/2841473 Vol: XX No. 42, Safar 11, 1446 AH Saturday August 17, 2024, Pages 04, Price Rs.15



QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti presiding over meeting of Provincial Cabinet

## PM Shahbaz says Institutional reforms to ease burden on national exchequer

Cabinet Committee proposes curtailing 150,000 vacant government posts

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Cabinet Committee on Institutional Reforms Friday recommended for curtailing 150,000 vacant positions, banning contingency recruitment, and outsourcing non-core services like cleaning, janitorial work, which will gradually phase out many positions in grades 1 to 16.

In a meeting, chaired by Prime Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif, for reducing public sector size and expenses, the committee, chaired by the Federal Finance Minister, presented its recommendations for right-sizing in the federal government departments. The Ministry of Finance was asked to oversee the cash balances of other federal ministries.

The committee provided a detailed briefing on recommended reforms for five federal ministries: the Ministry of Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan, the Ministry of State and Frontier Regions, Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication, the Ministry of Industry and Production, and the Ministry of National Health Services.

The committee proposed merging the Ministry of Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan with the Ministry of State and Frontier Regions (SAFRON).

The proposal involves closing 28 institutions across these five ministries, transferring the Privatization Ministry and some other ministries to federal units, and merging 12 institutions within these ministries.

Speaking on the occasion, the prime minister directed that these proposed reforms should be approved by the Federal Cabinet and that a comprehensive plan for their implementation be presented.

## Govt. ready to combat every kind of circumstances: Can't hand over administrative, Govt affairs to armed bands, asserts CM

Mir Sarfraz Bugti exhorts lady police personnels for restoration of peace and protection of general public; announces Rs. 0.5 million for women police cops performing duties during protest demos as token of appreciation

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Bugti has categorically stated that government is ready to combat every kind of circumstances. He said that we can't hand over the administrative and government affairs to the armed bands.

He highly appreciated the lady police officers and personnels who performed during protest demonstrations in Quetta and Gwadar announcing Rs. 0.5 million as token of appreciation.

The Chief Minister was speaking to the lady

## Cabinet approves appointment of 4000 teachers, removes VC of SBKWU: Rind



QUETTA (APP): Spokesman of Balochistan Government Shahid Rind on Friday said that Balochistan Chief Minister chaired the cabinet and approved the appointment of 4000 teachers in the inactive schools of the department in the province.

He said that these appointments would be made for 18 months and at the Union Council level. He expressed these views while addressing a press conference at Chief Minister House here. Mr. Shahid Rind said that several important decisions were taken in the cabinet meeting chaired by Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti.

He said that the Health and education were on top of the agenda in the cabinet meeting. He said that an inquiry report against Vice Chancellor Sardar Bahadur Khan Women's University was presented in the provincial cabinet meeting.

The cabinet has decided to remove the vice chancellor of SBWU after considering the inquiry report, recommendations would be sent to Governor Balochistan to remove the VC.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting on Rightsizing of Government Size.

## Death toll due to fatal virus rises to five: Cases of Congo virus continues to rise as another patient dies of virus in FJH

Independent Report

QUETTA: The number of cases of haemorrhagic fever continued to rise in Quetta as another patient diagnosed with the fatal virus in the Fatima Jinnah Hospital here died on Friday.

According to the FJ Hospital administration, the 42-year male patient admitted in the Hospital on Thursday where he was diagnosed with the haemorrhagic, commonly known as Congo virus.

The patient was provided necessary medical assistance at the Hospital, however, he couldn't survive and died on Friday afternoon.

It may be mentioned here a female patient was also diagnosed with the Congo virus a couple of days back.

The patient hailing from Loralai was also admitted in the FJ Hospital and being treated for the virus.

## PM hails Punjab govt's historic relief Nawaz Sharif announces Rs 14 per unit electricity relief in Aug, Sept bills

PML-N supreme blames Imran -led govt for skyrocketing inflation

LAHORE (APP): In a significant move aimed at providing financial relief to the people of Punjab, Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N) President Muhammad Nawaz Sharif has announced a reduction in electricity prices.

Addressing a news conference alongside Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Friday, he revealed that the Punjab government would provide a relief of Rs 14 per unit for electricity bills up to 500 units for the months of August and September.

The decision, according to Nawaz, comes after careful reduction of expenditures across various sectors, allowing the government to allocate Rs 45 billion towards this relief effort. The move is expected to ease the financial burden on citizens during these hard months. He highlighted that this is not the first relief effort from the government. Earlier, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had announced similar support for consumers using up to 200 units of electricity per month.

Nawaz Sharif emphasised that the Punjab government's actions demonstrate the deep concern of his party, the prime minister, and the chief minister for the lives of ordinary citizens.

## COAS vows to support youth for prosperous Pakistan

Army Chief appreciates Arshad Nadeem's remarkable achievement at Paris Olympics, attributes his commitment, perseverance

RAWALPINDI (APP): Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Syed Asim Munir on Friday appreciated Arshad Nadeem's remarkable achievement of winning Pakistan's first-ever gold medal in a singles' event and setting a new Olympic record in javelin throw, attributing it to his commitment, perseverance, and passion for excellence.

The Army Chief hosted a ceremony at Army Auditorium GHQ to honour Olympian Arshad Nadeem's historic achievement in Paris Olympics 2024 here, an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said.

The COAS highlighted Arshad's inspirational journey from humble beginnings to achieving greatness, emphasizing the importance of hard work and determination.

The Army Chief recognized Arshad Nadeem's achievement as a national pride and highlighted that he has been honoured by the complete nation befitting his achievement.



RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Asim Munir presenting a shield to Arshad Nadeem, Javelin Throw Olympian Gold Medalist during a ceremony in his honor held at Army Auditorium General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi.

## Pakistan refrains foreign govts from interfering in internal affairs

ISLAMABAD (INP): Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch Friday said that foreign governments should refrain from interfering in Pakistan's internal affairs.

The spokesperson of the Foreign Office stated in the weekly briefing that no information has been provided by the US government regarding Asif Merchant. Pakistan is waiting for it.

She added that the people of Bangladesh can solve their problems, but Pakistan is worried about the situation in the Middle East.

Mumtaz Zahra further said that Iran has every right to defend itself. Israel should be held accountable for such actions.

The spokesperson of the Foreign Office also stated that Israel's humanitarian atrocities are continuing in Gaza. 40,000 innocent civilians have been killed in Gaza so far. Pakistan condemns the ongoing Israeli atrocities in Gaza. Israel should be held accountable for the genocide in Gaza.

She continued to say that Indian atrocities are continuing in Occupied Kashmir, Pakistan condemns the martyrdom of four Kashmiris in Occupied Kashmir. United Nations should take notice of human rights violations in Occupied Kashmir.

Mumtaz Zahra said that Pakistan has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Iraqi government regarding arrangements for pilgrims.



QUETTA: A delegation of Provincial Ministers led by Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti meeting with Governor Balochistan Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail

## Zia Langove appointed as SVP of BAP

Independent Report

QUETTA: The central President of Balochistan Awami Party (BAP), Nawabzada Khalid Hussain Magsi has appointed the leader of BAP and Provincial Minister for Home, Mir Ziaullah Langove as senior Vice President of the party.

According to an official hand out issued here on Friday, the Secretary General of BAP, Senator Manzoor Kakar has issued notification of the appointment of Mir Ziaullah Langove as SVP.

Meanwhile, Mir Ziaullah Langove has thanked the party's President and Secretary General and other office bearers on reposing confidence on him.

He also said that he would make endeavours to serve the party and people.

## Conscious efforts being made to steer public sector universities out of financial crisis: Governor

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail has stated that the public sector universities are our assets of future and conscious efforts are being made to steer them out of financial crisis and make them corruption free completely.

He asserted that no compromise would be made on implementation of the merit.

The Governor was speaking to the Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti who called on him at the Governor's House on Friday.

During the course of meeting, Speaker of Balochistan Assembly, Abdul Khaliq Achakzai, provincial ministers, members of the assembly, Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan and other high ups.

During the course of meeting, matters were discussed about steering the public universities out of financial crisis, increasing the rights and authorities of people, formation of corruption free society, and benefits of the ongoing development projects.

The Governor said we have to benefit from the knowledge and experience of the researchers and experts present in the universities to meet the new human needs.

However, he made it clear that no compromise would be made on the merit. He said that there is great importance of the vision for expediting the process of social development and prosperity. He said that we would continue to do work for benefitting from the opportunities and available means along with our political affiliations.

He also said that our consultation would also remain continued in future. He said that we would remain in constant coordination with each other for ensuring the bright future of our province and bringing meaningful change.

Both the leaders were agreed on making amendment in the university Act besides making all the universities according to the modern day requirements.

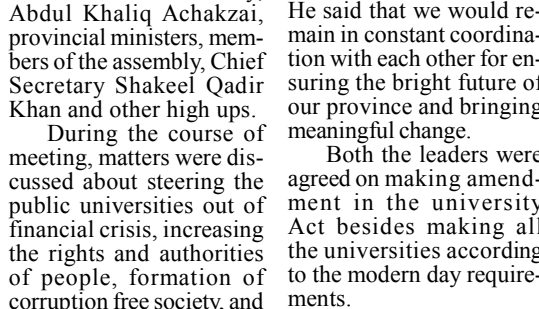
## Arrest of retired military personnel internal affair of Pak: Pentagon

WASHINGTON (Online): US Department of Pentagon Defence has said arrest of retired military personnel is Pakistan internal affair.

US Department of Pentagon Defence Press Secretary Maj Gen Patric Ryder has said in a statement there is stable partnership between Pakistan and US. Arrest of retired military personnel is internal matter of Pakistan. US is committed to work with Pakistan.

The spokesperson further said US will continue to help Pakistan for regional security and achievement of common objectives.

The military and political leadership from both the countries continue to hold talks. We are aware of report and causes of arrest of retired military personnel.



QUETTA: Corps Commander Balochistan Lt. General Rahat Naseem Ahmed Khan, Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti, MNA Haji Malik Shah Gorgage and other offering Fateha after condoling with family of Shaheed Deputy Commissioner Zakir Baloch

## Six individuals from Balochistan will receive high civil awards

QUETTA (APP): As many as six individuals from Balochistan will be awarded high civil awards, a notification issued by the Cabinet Division, Government of Pakistan, announced.

These included Deputy Commissioner Panjgur, Shaheed Zakir Baloch, Captain @ Hamza Anjum for bravery with the Sitara-e-Shujaat, Dr. Shafi Muhammad Bizenjo Shaheed for bravery with the Tamgha-e-Shujaat, Dr. Rababa Baledi for public service with the Sitara-e-Imtiaz, Abdul Rashid Kakar for education with the Pride of Performance, and Nadir Khan Magsi for sports with the Tamgha-e-Imtiaz. These Pakistan Civil Awards will be presented at a ceremony to be held on March 23, 2025.

## Security forces kill three terrorists in N. Waziristan

RAWALPINDI (INP): Security forces have killed three terrorists during an intelligence-based operation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's (KP) area of Razmak, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said on Friday.

"On 16 August 2024, security forces conducted an intelligence-based operation in the general area of Razmak, District North Waziristan, on the reported presence of Khwarij," the army's media wing said in a statement.

"During the conduct of the operation, intense fire exchange took place between the troops and Khwarij, as a result of which, three Khwarij of Fitna al Khawarij were sent to hell, while one Kharij got injured." Weapons and ammunition were also recovered from the terrorists, who were actively involved in terrorist activities against security forces as well as the targeted killings of innocent civilians, it added.

The statement further said that the process of sanitisation in the area is underway to eliminate any other terrorists found in the locale as security forces are determined to wipe out the menace of "khwarij" and terrorism from the country.

## Five bodies found tied to electric poles after being shot dead in Chagai

CHAGAI (INP): The bodies of five unidentified people who were tied to electric poles were found in Balochistan's city of Dalbandin in Chagai district on Friday.

All five unidentified bodies were tied to the poles after being shot dead.

Well-placed sources in the local administration said that the identity of the victims remains unknown at this time.

The sources added that the motives behind these brutal murders are still unclear and the law enforcers were trying to get information about it.

The bodies have been sent to the hospital for post-mortem examination and identification as authorities continue their investigation into the incident.



## Daily Voice of Masses Independent

### High power costs

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's promise to significantly reduce the extremely high power tariffs in the next few days should be taken with a pinch of salt.

On Independence Day, Mr Sharif acknowledged that the electricity bills were everyone's foremost concern, and that without reducing power tariffs, Pakistan's industry, agriculture, and exports could not grow. He said that the government was working round the clock to rectify matters, and that he wanted to ensure 'maximum relief'.

Similar statements have been given by Energy Minister Awan Leghari in recent weeks amid growing criticism of the government's expensive power purchase contracts with IPPs by the powerful textile lobby and some political parties. The only difference is that the minister sees electricity prices decreasing from January — not earlier. How Mr Sharif plans to deliver this miracle in the coming days, or even months, has not been explained.

Indeed, the contracts with the IPPs offering high guaranteed profits to their local and Chinese owners are an issue, but they are only one part of the problem. The issue is complex, with many other factors contributing to our higher-than-regional electricity prices. The government says it is mulling various options to cut power generation costs, such as shifting three coal plants from imported fuel to Thar lignite.

However, these and other solutions will take time before we see any meaningful reduction in generation costs, if at all. The biggest problem is that the challenge of electricity tariffs is largely linked to our overall fiscal troubles and the severe dollar crunch that has led to a sharp depreciation in the value of the rupee over time. This has caused a spike in the cost of imported fuel used to generate electricity, as well as dollar-indexed costs and profits of power producers in recent years, resulting in higher electricity rates for all consumers. Can Mr Sharif, or anyone else, bring down electricity prices even a bit, without actually tackling budget issues and dollar liquidity? That is unlikely.

The good news is that the government has prepared a 'home-grown economic strategy', focusing on export-led growth and the removal of continuing economic bottlenecks to achieve 6pc annual growth, with the help of a foreign consultant. The bad news is that the authorities seem to be second-guessing the plan as it is likely to hurt the business interests of Pakistan's rent-seeking elite; this was evident to many when it deferred its promised announcement on Independence Day. Nonetheless, the sudden unexplained delay in the announcement of the new economic reform plan is not reason enough to suspect the government's intentions. Rather, it raises concerns about vested interests wielding their influence to protect their benefits. Still, we must keep our fingers crossed as perhaps the age of miracles is not over yet.

### Solving problems

Amin Valliani

We all know that life is transitory, limited in time and one has to strive hard for survival. During life's long struggle, one comes across many problems. Sometimes it seems that life is full of problems. They occur every day for everyone and all are engaged in problem-solving as no problem gets solved just by wishing it away. Therefore, solving problems successfully, depends on the right way of tackling them.

The frequent occurrence of problems in life is an opportunity where one can turn to Allah, seeking His help and guidance in problematic situations. Humans have been created as the 'crown of creation', and are born to be problem-solvers. Whenever a person has a problem, he is forced to find a solution. If the solution is based on intelligence and consultation with others, then the result would be solid.

We should not be afraid of problems. They will remain with us as long as we exist. In fact, they are blessings in disguise. They can help us grow and learn important lessons. Some problems have a lasting impact on the life of a person. They set or reset the direction of life. Nature teaches many lessons through problem-solving activities; it opens up new avenues where one can take the positive from the negative. It can help us become stronger, more resilient, more focused and more capable of handling future problems. It also makes us skilled in negotiations and evaluation of matters. If the problem we face does not make us better and stronger, then all our efforts are in vain.

Additionally, solving problem can give us a sense of accomplishment and help us feel

more confident in our ability to handle difficult situations. Finally, facing and overcoming problems and challenges helps us develop a more positive outlook on life and can increase our gratitude for the blessings we receive.

Modern research has also developed many scientific methods of problem-solving, which is now considered the science of overcoming the hurdles that come our way. Problems in need of solutions range from simple personal tasks to complex issues in business and other fields. Sometimes problems emerge due to our own recklessness; at other times, they are nature's test for us. The Holy Quran says ... "And certainly, We shall test you with something of fear, hunger, loss of wealth, lives and fruits, but give glad tidings to As-Sabirin (the patient)" (2:155). When Allah tests believers, they must respond with God-given intelligence.

Problems also occur due to excessive engagement with the material world, which subsequently gives rise to many desires and ambitions. Thus, every individual entertains hundreds of desires in his heart and wants fulfilment. Human desires are driven by a variety of factors including survival instinct, social and cultural conditioning, personal experiences and biological needs.

According to some experts, if even half of one's desires are fulfilled, one is extremely fortunate, but as per Islam one has to strive day in and day out to get results. The struggle itself is a central part of life, despondency is a sin, and procrastination and quick-fixes are considered undesirable. Therefore, one must continue their effort in the struggle to solve prob-

lems and seek fulfilment of earnest desires.

There are certain steps that should be undertaken for problem-solving. The first and foremost is a deep understanding of the problem itself. One must be clear what the problem is about and then come up with a plan to address it. The third step relates to carrying out the plan. This is the step of doing, and looking back at or learning from the exercise. Here one can consolidate the knowledge gained during the exercise.

Throughout the exercise, one needs to be rational and flexible. This enables us to navigate various methods of solving problems. The modern world has everything but it needs the small message of four words: 'turn back to God'. This means that the struggle of problem-solving must be accompanied by the sense of God's presence. One must not forget to pray, as it is the medium whereby believers seek divine help and guidance in order to overcome problems and also seek the fulfilment of their desires.

Performing and reciting prayers with an attentive mind enables us to mend what is broken in life. This is an important step towards healing and finding solutions. The Holy Quran mentions numerous prayers/ duas ascribed to various prophets and believers who have sought help in solving problems. All human beings, including prophets and believers, faced problems. They had desires and wishes and the method they used in addressing their problems and to fulfil their wishes, was prayer/ dua. They have left lasting examples, mentioning how to pray in humility so that our problems are solved. - Courtesy Dawn

### Freelancers for ruin

Aasim Sajjad Akhtar

Another Aug 14 has passed by with familiar proclamations about the evil designs of the proverbial 'foreign hand'. As usual, outside conspirators are complemented by enemies inside our own borders. The list is long and comprised of absurdly opposed actors like retired spy chiefs and a women-led Baloch peace movement. Blanket categories like 'digital terrorism' are devised.

The now months-old ban on social media sites like X has been extended with the operationalisation of a long-touted digital security system (also known as a firewall). Leaving aside for a while the absurd notion that all of this makes us safer, let us focus on the economic fallout that has been triggered.

Pakistan is reportedly the fourth biggest gig economy in the world, with millions of (mostly young) people generating incomes through a host of digital platforms. There can be no romanticising the realities of platform capitalism; it is exploitative, has myriads of gendered effects and is cause and consequence of the unprecedented com-m-o-d-i-f-i-c-a-t-i-o-n of social life. Yet beggars can't be choosers in a country where land grabbing, khaki real estate schemes, hoarding, contraband trade, useless mega infrastructure projects and the like represent the dominant model of 'economic development'.

Unlike most variants of Pakistani capitalism, the gig economy's one saving grace is that it generates some employment opportunities for young, educated segments of the population, thus offsetting some of the demographic pressure that is culminating, with almost two million people joining the labour force annually.

We have been here before. Temporary bans on YouTube, TikTok and other big social media sites have suffocated the livelihoods of those who have had more or less success monetising their content. Increasingly regular moves to suspend mobile data have badly affected precarious workers reliant on food delivery, ride-sharing and many other apps.

The current internet clampdown is affecting all this as well as call centres, software developers, digital marketing and many other sub-sectors. Even basic communications apps like WhatsApp have been crippled. A number of foreign companies — most prominently Fiverr — have suggested they will soon shift their operations away from Pakistan because their daily losses run into the millions. I care less about the profits of multinationals than I do about the call centre workers who are being deprived of even their meagre daily wages.

The latest hybrid regime started off exhorting the need for foreign investment, and has now succeeded in thwarting its own stated imperative. In 2022, digital freelancers brought in \$500 million, which is at least as much concrete currency than we've actually seen come into the country through the much-touted SIFC.

Our khaki-dominated ruling class is so consumed by palace intrigues and the windfall profits of big office that it is unable to see where it is taking what is already a sinking ship. When X and WhatsApp are deemed threats to 'national security' because urban middle class types from military and civilian backgrounds — previously the biggest defenders of the established order — are now using these platforms to criticise the incumbent regime, it is obvious that the

est-ablishment and its lackeys have lost the plot.

It is unsurprising that the powers are petrified by youth-led movements in the peripheries, including the women-led Baloch Yekjeheti Committee. Such movements are anti-establishment, and represent a threat to all warring ruling class factions. But here too even a slightly competent ruling class with an eye for the future would realise the clamping down on social media to suppress the group's reach is a double-edged sword because digital freelancing helps incorporate at least some young disaffected Baloch (as well as Pakhtun, Sindhi, Gilgit-Baltistani, Kashmiri, Seraiki) youth into the system.

But there is little competence here, only gimmicks like 'Digital Pakistan'. Meanwhile young working people in the once-loyal Punjabi heartland are seeing their fragile middle class aspirations go up in smoke, which is, in turn, generating even more disaffection as evidenced not only through political opinions in digital spaces but also in the realms of art and culture.

All of this can certainly be suppressed, but the economic pressure cooker cannot bubble over indefinitely. Let me be clear: the decision to suffocate the digital economy mostly affects white-collar youth. The vast majority of our blue-collar working population has no outlet whatsoever, other than menial jobs and emigration by any means necessary. But they could care less, so we should expect more of the same to come. Without a meaningful, country-wide alternative to the game of the thrones, we will all be reduced to freelancers for ruin. -- Courtesy Dawn

## Commerce News

### PM decides reforms to promote gemstones exports, industry

Says smuggling of precious stones will not be allowed at any cost

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday decided to carry out reforms in the gemstones sector to promote the industry and enhance its exports.

The prime minister, chairing a meeting to discuss the matters pertaining to the reforms in gemstones sector, said that he would personally head the steering committee to promote the industry and its reformation.

He tasked Privatisation Minister Abdul Aleem Khan to ensure the implementation of reforms.

He said the government would launch a project in Gilgit Baltistan to elevate the standards of mining, chiseling and value addition of gemstones industry, assuring the federal government's support to GB government in this regard.

The prime minister said that unfortunately the gemstone sector was

neglected during last 77 years and the precious asset was being wasted through conventional mining methods.

He directed the authorities concerned to formulate an action plan of international standard within a month and take measures for its implementation. He also sought a report on the practical measures for reforms in the gemstone sector and their outcome.

He told the

participants that the government would not allow smuggling of the gemstones and sought a report on the subject within a week, after consultation with the GB government. The prime minister also called for the priority measures to achieve the international certification of Pakistan's gemstones. In the briefing, it was told that a total of 178 licenses had so far been issued for mining of gemstones.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting regarding development of gemstone sector.



SIALKOT: A group Photo of H.E. Mr Park Kijun, Ambassador of Republic of Korea to Pakistan with exporters at Chamber of commerce.

### Senate body stresses modernization of Pakistan Railways is crucial

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Senate Committee on Railways emphasized on Thursday that the modernization and enhancement of the railway system are crucial for ensuring the long-term well-being and prosperity of the nation.

The Committee's meeting was chaired by Senator Jam Saifullah Khan.

During the session, the Committee discussed measures to control corruption within the railway system and inquired about the number of officials held responsible or penalized for corruption

charges over the past five years.

Senator Shahadat Awan suggested that the Ministry of Railways provide comprehensive details regarding instances of fraud within the department. He further argued that attributing the entire loss to pension issues is not justifiable.

Senator Jam Saifullah Khan, Chairman of the Committee, recommended that the Ministry deliver a detailed briefing on the issues raised by Senator Shahadat Awan, particularly concerning theft, corruption, monetary losses, and the

actions taken against the perpetrators.

The Secretary of the Ministry of Railways informed the Committee that there is a clear directive of zero tolerance for corruption. He added that the Ministry is prepared to scrutinize matters as extensively as this august house deems necessary.

He emphasized that the Ministry will thoroughly review audit reports, guided by the Committee's direction, and assured the Committee that all decisions will be made in strict accordance with rules and regulations.

### SBP enhances clean lending limit for SME's to Rs10 million

KARACHI (APP): The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), in order to facilitate Small and Medium-sized Enterprise (SME) sector's access to finance, on Friday, increased clean lending limit for SMEs to Rs10 million.

The banking regulator has made an amendment in Prudential Regulations for SME Financing and SME Regulation SME R-4 regarding Limit on Clean

Facility been updated accordingly to enhance the clean lending limit for an SME borrower from Rs5 million to Rs10 million.

SBP's SME, Housing and Sustainable Finance Department issued a circular in the regard advising heads of all banks and DFIs stringent compliance of the regulatory measures taken in light of National SME Policy 2021.

### CCP imposes Rs 5 mln penalty on Diamond Paint for deceptive marketing

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) on Friday took decisive action against M/s Diamond Paint Industries (Pvt) Ltd., imposing a penalty of Rs 5 million for violating Section 10 of the Competition Act, 2010, which prohibits deceptive marketing practices.

A CCP bench, led by the Chairman Dr. Kabir Ahmed Sidhu and Member Salman Amin, issued an order in response to a complaint filed by Nippon Paint Pakistan (Pvt) Ltd against Diamond Paint's

marketing campaign for its product 'Durasilk' run on various television channels, said a news release. This was the third occasion concerns were raised about omission of material information in Television Commercials (TVC) by paint manufacturers. The investigation found that Diamond Paint, despite including disclaimers on its packaging and shade cards, does not disclose the presence and value of redeemable tokens in its paint buckets in its television commercials.

### Korean ambassador stresses boosting trade with Pakistan

SIALKOT (APP): Ambassador Park Ki Jun of the Republic of Korea has called on Sialkot exporters to seize opportunities in Korea's international trade markets to enhance bilateral trade between Pakistan and Korea.

He made these remarks during a meeting with exporters at the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) on Friday. The meeting was attended by Abdul Ghafoor Malik, President of SCCI; Wahab Jahangir, Senior Vice President (SVP) of SCCI;

Yeonjeong Yoo, Assistant Public Diplomacy Officer; and members of the Sialkot business community.

In his address, Ambassador Park highlighted Korea's strong interest in deepening trade and economic ties with Pakistan, emphasizing the potential of Pakistan as a significant market for business. He proposed further promoting bilateral trade through the exchange of trade delegations and expressed his commitment to strengthening trade relations between the two countries.

Ambassador Park also stressed the importance of enhancing people-to-people contacts between Korean and Pakistani business communities. He underscored that economic cooperation between Korea and Pakistan is crucial for boosting trade ties and noted the cordial relationship enjoyed by both nations.

The ambassador praised Sialkot for its role as a key export hub in Pakistan and recognised its contributions to the national economy and infrastructure development.

### PSX loses 60 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) shed 60.67 points on Friday, showing a negative change of 0.08 percent, closing at 78,045.31 points against 78,105.98 points on the last working day. A total of 600,719,724 shares were traded during the day as compared to 591,065,051 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 21.071 billion against Rs 20.102 billion on the last trading day. As many as 440 companies transacted their shares in the stock market.

### Short-term inflation eases by 0.16 percent

ISLAMABAD (APP): The weekly inflation, measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed a decrease of 0.16 percent for the combined consumption groups during the week ended on August 15, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday.

According to the PBS data, the SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 322.03 points as compared to 322.54 points during the past week. As compared to the corresponding week of last

year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 16.86 per cent.

The weekly SPI with the base year 2015-16 =100 covers 17 urban centres and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups.

However, the SPI for the lowest consumption group of up to Rs 17,732, witnessed a nominal increase of 0.07 per cent and went up to 311.04 points from last week's 310.83 points.



## Governor KP lauds efforts of ICRC, suggest to improve health, education sectors

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Friday lauded the efforts of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and suggested to improve health and education sectors.

He said this during a meeting with Nicolas Lambert, Head of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), at the Governor House. Edith Joseph, the ICRC Sub-Delegation Head for Peshawar, was also present during the meeting.

During the discussion, the ICRC delegation briefed the Governor on the services provided by

the organization. A detailed report was presented, outlining the ICRC's initiatives in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, especially in the merged districts. The report highlighted improvements in the capacity of hospitals and the provision of essential medicines in districts such as Khyber, Kurram, and Bajaur. The ICRC emphasized its commitment to supporting families affected by disasters in Pakistan.

The delegation also shared their ongoing efforts to address emergency situations and natural disasters in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa through partnerships. The ICRC has

previously provided substantial relief to earthquake and flood victims in 2010 and 2022.

The Governor Kundi acknowledged the valuable contribution of the ICRC in the province's relief activities, particularly during natural disasters.

Faisal Karim Kundi suggested that the ICRC focus on enhancing health and education services in the merged districts.

He noted the significant impact of environmental changes and terrorism on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, emphasizing the need for better health and education systems in the province's rural southern districts.



PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi is called on by ICRC delegation Head in Pakistan Nicolas Lambert at Governor House.

## KPCM calls for immediate implementation of Ehsaas Rozgars, Housing Programs

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, has emphasized urgent need to address the issue of unemployment in the province.

He has directed the immediate finalization and implementation of Ehsaas Nauwan Rozgar, Ehsaas Hunar and Ehsaas Rozgar Programs.

Similarly, in order to cater for the housing needs of low income house holds in the province and raise their socio-economic

## Gul Khan appointed as focal person for merged areas

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur, has appointed former MNA from Bajaur, Haji Gul Zafar Khan, as the Focal Person to the Chief Minister for merged areas.

According to a notification issued by the CM Secretariat, his services will be provided on an honorary basis without any compensation or remuneration.

## 13 killed in Punjab road accidents

LAHORE (APP): At least 13 people were killed and 1,356 others injured in 1,236 road accidents in Punjab during the last 24 hours. As many 611 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 745 with minor injuries were treated at the incident site by the rescue medical teams.

The data analysis showed that 704 drivers, 33 underage drivers, 132 pedestrians, and 481 passengers were among the victims of road crashes. The statistics showed that 284 accidents were reported in Lahore, which affected 319 people, placing the provincial capital at top of the list, followed by Faisalabad with 84 accidents and 74 victims, and at third Gujranwala with 72 accidents and 70 victims.

## Punjab Governor says: Everyone should play a positive role for development and stability of the country

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: Punjab Governor, Sardar Saleem Haider Khan today visited the residence of Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq. During the meeting parliamentary affairs and the current situation of the country was discussed. Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq expressed good wishes for Punjab Governor.

Speaking on this occasion, Punjab Governor, Sardar Saleem Haider Khan said that everyone should play a positive role for the development and stability of the country. Governor



LAHORE: Punjab Governor, Sardar Saleem Haider Khan during his visit to residence of Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq discussed the parliamentary affairs and the current situation of the country.

## IPO enhances collaboration with PIPRA

KARACHI (APP): In a bid to promote transparency and inclusivity in the intellectual property (IP) sector, the Chairperson of IPO-Pakistan, Ambassador (Rtd.) Farukh Amil, met with a delegation from the Pakistan Intellectual Property Rights Association (PIPRA).

The discussions centered on IP-related challenges, including Pakistan's accession to international agreements, amendments to IP laws, and fee structures.

The Chairperson emphasized the crucial role of the private sector in advancing the IP system.



RAWALPINDI: Members of the Christian community held a protest demonstration outside the Press Club against the Jaranwala incident.

## LHC reserves verdict on petition against disruption of internet services

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Friday reserved its verdict on a petition filed against the disruption of internet service across the country. The single bench, comprising Justice Shakil Ahmed, heard the petition filed by Advocate Nadeem Sarwar. During the proceedings, the court summoned a federal law officer and ordered him to seek instructions from the relevant quarters until 12 pm, while adjourning the hearing for a short while.

## PDWP approves two development schemes

LAHORE (APP): The 18th meeting of Provincial Development Working Party (PDWP) FY 2024-25 was held under the chairmanship P&D Board Chairman Barrister Nabeel Ahmad Awan, in which two development schemes of Social Welfare and SHC&ME sector were approved with an estimated cost of Rs 3366.896 million.

The approved schemes are as follows: CM Himmat Card Programme for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) at the cost of Rs 2,658.120 million. Establishment of Paeds Burn Centre at Children Hospital, Lahore at the cost of Rs 708.776 million Secretary P&D Board Dr Asif Tufail, Chief Economist P&D Board Masoud Anwar, Members P&D Board, Head of relevant departments and other representatives of the relevant provincial departments attended the meeting.

## UNDP GLOG-II project benefiting people massively

PESHAWAR (APP): The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) recently hosted an exposure visit for journalists, showcasing the significant achievements of the GLOG-II Project. The visit provided journalists with a firsthand view of the project's impact on local communities across the targeted valleys, says a press release issued here on Friday.

During the visit, journalists observed several key achievements of the GLOG-II Project including 70 channels, 19,859 meters in length, benefiting 9,512 men and 9,262 women, protection walls of 178 schemes, benefiting 15,354 men and 14,955 women.

They also observed base Platforms for 61 systems installed.

Slope Stabilization and Bio Engineering: 13 schemes covering 280 hectares, benefiting 4,957 men and 4,859 women.

Renovation of PMD Observatories: 5 observatories renovated.

Renovation of Conservation Sites for Forest Department: 2 sites renovated in Utror and Kalam.

# International News

## Gaza ceasefire negotiations extend to another day as death toll exceeds 40,000

**Monitoring Desk**  
DOHA: Negotiators were to meet in the Qatari capital Doha on Friday in an effort to hammer out a Gaza ceasefire agreement as Israel continued to slam targets in the Palestinian enclave. Gaza health officials reported separately on Thursday that the death toll there had surpassed 40,000 people after more than 10 months of fighting.

This round of negotiations opened on Thursday, and the talks would resume on Friday for a second day, Qatari and US officials said.

A US official briefed on the discussions in Doha, who declined to be identified, told Reuters that Thursday's talks were "constructive."

"This is vital work. The remaining obstacles can be overcome, and we must bring this process to a close," US national security spokesperson

John Kirby told reporters at the White House. Israel, meanwhile, pressed its assault on Gaza. Gaza health officials said at least six Palestinians were killed on Thursday night in an Israeli air strike on a house in Jabalia in northern Gaza Strip. Israeli troops earlier hit targets in the southern cities of Rafah and Khan Younis. In a statement issued late on Thursday on Telegram, Hamas politburo member Hossam Badran said Israel's continuing operations were an obstacle to progress on a ceasefire. Hamas officials did not join Thursday's talks.

Badran said the talks must move toward implementation of a framework agreement accepted previously and achieve a complete ceasefire, withdrawal of Israeli forces, return of displaced Palestinians and



Pheu Thai Party's leader Paetongtarn Shinawatra reacts during a press conference after the Thai parliament confirms her as the country's next prime minister, in Bangkok, Thailand.

## UN rights chief deplors 'grim milestone' of 40,000 Gaza dead

**Monitoring Desk**  
GENEVA: The UN human rights chief on Thursday deplored the "grim milestone" of 40,000 Palestinians reported killed in Israel's 10-month assault on Gaza, accusing the country's military of breaking the "rules of war".

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk blamed Israel for the soaring death toll in the territory.

The health ministry in

## Mpox kills 548 in DR Congo this year

**Monitoring Desk**  
KINSHASA: The Democratic Republic of Congo said on Thursday an mpox outbreak has killed 548 people there this year, as the first case outside Africa of the virus's more dangerous variant was recorded in a traveller in Sweden.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) on Wednesday declared the mpox surge in Africa a global public health emergency, worried by the rise in cases in the DR Congo and the spread to nearby countries.

## Thaksin's daughter Paetongtarn Shinawatra is elected Thailand's prime minister

**Monitoring Desk**  
BANGKOK: Thailand's Parliament elected Paetongtarn Shinawatra as prime minister Friday, continuing the legacy of the political dynasty that began with her father Thaksin Shinawatra, one of Thailand's most popular but divisive political figures.

Thaksin, a former Prime Minister, was ousted by a military coup in 2006, which triggered decades of deep political divisions. Paetongtarn appears to be the beneficiary of a deal her father made with his old conservative foes, allowing the populist party led by her to take power while pushing aside the more progressive party that finished first in last year's election.

Paetongtarn becomes Thailand's third leader from the Shinawatra family, after her billionaire father, who returned from exile last year, and her aunt Yingluck Shinawatra, who lives in exile. Paetongtarn also is Thailand's second female prime minister after her aunt, and the country's youngest leader at 37.

As the only nominee, she was confirmed by 319 votes in favor, with 145 against and 27 abstentions. Paetongtarn is the leader of the Pheu Thai party, the latest of a string of parties linked to Thaksin. She is not an elected lawmaker as that was not required for her to be a candidate for prime minister.

"I really hope that I can make people feel confident, that we can build opportunity and quality of life," she said.

"I hope that I can do my best to make the country go forward."

## Iran hackers target Harris and Trump campaigns: Google

**Monitoring Desk**  
SAN FRANCISCO: Google confirmed that hackers backed by Iran are targeting the campaigns of US presidential rivals Kamala Harris and Donald Trump. A hacker group known as "APT42" linked to Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps went after high-profile individuals and organizations in Israel and the United States, including government officials and political campaigns, according to a threat report released by Google.

Democratic presidential candidate Kamala Harris's campaign said Tuesday it had been targeted by foreign hackers, days after rival Donald Trump's campaign suggested that it had been hacked by Iran.

"In July, the campaign legal and security teams were notified by the FBI that we were targeted by a foreign actor influence operation," a Harris campaign official told AFP. "We have robust cybersecurity

## White House says deals struck to cut prices of popular Medicare drugs that cost \$50 billion yearly

**Monitoring Desk**  
WASHINGTON: The Biden administration said Thursday that drug price negotiations will knock hundreds of dollars — in some cases thousands — off the list prices of 10 of Medicare's most popular and costliest drugs.

The discounts, agreed to after months of negotiations with drug manufacturers, range between 38% and 79% on the medication's list price, which is the cost of medication before discounts or rebates are applied — not the price people actually pay for prescriptions.

Medicare spent \$50 billion covering the drugs last year and taxpayers are expected to save \$6 billion on the new prices, which do not go into effect until 2026. Older adults could save as much as \$1.5 billion in total on their medications in out-of-pocket costs. Administration offi-

## Jamaica declares southern state of emergency after Sunday night killings

**Monitoring Desk**  
KINGSTON: Jamaican Prime Minister Andrew Holness declared a state of emergency in the Caribbean nation's southern Clarendon parish after eight people were killed in separate gun attacks on Sunday night, including a seven-year-old boy.

"This is an opportunity for the government to mobilize fully to have a very serious focus on gangs," Holness told a press conference at his office. "We cannot allow murders to be normalized in our country."

The prime minister did not immediately detail what regulations would be imposed, but these can typically involve nightly curfews, longer detention periods without formal charges and the ability by police to search properties without warrants.

## In Beirut, US envoy says 'no more time to waste' on Gaza ceasefire

**Monitoring Desk**  
BEIRUT: Visiting US envoy Amos Hochstein warned Wednesday the clock was ticking for a Gaza ceasefire that could also help end 10 months of cross-border exchanges between Lebanon's Hezbollah and Israel.

His Lebanon trip comes a day before ceasefire negotiations between Hamas and Israel are set to resume, with top diplomats scrambling to avert all-out war after Iran and Hezbollah vowed revenge for recent high-profile killings.

Hochstein told a Beirut news conference that he and parliament speaker Nabih Berri, a Hezbollah ally, discussed "the framework agreement that's on the table for a Gaza ceasefire, and he and I agreed there is no more time to waste and there's no more valid excuses from any party for any further delay."

"The deal would also help enable a diplomatic resolution here in Lebanon and that would prevent an outbreak of a wider war," Hochstein said.

## UK police charge two teenagers with right-wing terror offences

**Monitoring Desk**  
LONDON: Two teenagers suspected of extreme right-wing terror offences will appear in court in London on Friday, with police saying they both face "extremely serious charges".

Metropolitan Police (the Met) said that an 18-year-old man and a 19-year-old woman were charged on Thursday following a "proactive investigation" by its Counter Terrorism Command unit.



## NA body expresses dismay on overbilling, IPPs performance

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Assembly Standing Committee on Energy (Power Division) while expressing grave concerns on overbilling and performance of Independent Power Producers (IPPs) on Friday sought detailed briefing from IPPs in the next meeting.

The Committee which met with Muhammad Idrees in the Chair discussed overbilling and unannounced load-shedding in Karachi.

Additional Secretary, Ministry of Energy (Power Division) briefed the Committee regarding overbilling and unannounced load-shedding of electricity in Karachi.

He informed the Committee that the means of generation of electricity is not same in every region. The generation of Electricity in Karachi is through thermal resources which is one of the expensive forms of power generation. Under the government uniform tariff policy everyone in the country pays the same price for electricity in spite

the fact that the generation cost in the region is high.

However, the government provides differential payments to K-Electric in form of subsidy just to provide relief to the consumer.

Similarly, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), K-Electric informed the Committee that K-Electric has been facing significant financial losses due to increase in the number of defaulters. K-Electric is facing severe financial constraints that are impacting the ability to provide reliable and affordable energy services.

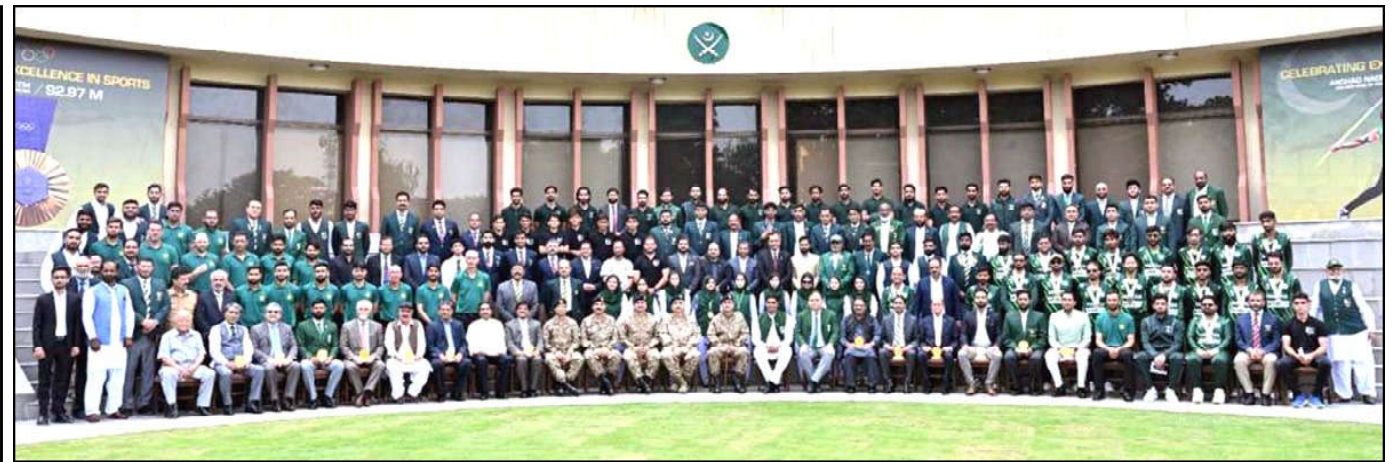
He further informed the Committee that 2000 MW has been added to the National Grid since the company has been privatised. Similarly, the losses of K-Electric have been reduced from 40% to 15% since privatisation.

The Chief Executive Officer, Hyderabad Electric Supply Company (HESCO) while discussing the issue of overbilling informed the Committee that there is no overbilling in HESCO jurisdiction. How-

ever, in case of any individual mistake regarding overbilling, the issue is investigated and bills are corrected as per procedure in vogue.

He further apprised the Committee that 91.8% complaints received in respect of overbilling has been resolved successfully.

The meeting was attended by MNAs, Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhary, Sheikh Aftab Ahmed, Raja Qamer ul Islam, Chaudhry Naseer Ahmed Abbas, Syeda Nosheen Ifkhar, Rana Muhammad Hayat Khan, Mr. Muhammad Shahryar Khan Mahar, Mr. Khurshid Ahmed Junejo, Mr. Nauman Islam Sheikh, Syed Abar Ali Shah, Syed Waseem Hussain, Mr. Junaid Akbar, Mr. Sher Ali Arbab, and Malik Muhammad Amir Dogar. Mr. Muhammad Iqbal Khan and Syed Rafiullah, MNA's/Movers were also present in the meeting. The senior officers from Ministry of Energy (Power Division) and its attached departments also attended the meeting.



RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Asim Munir in a group photo along with sports teams and legendary Olympians including 1984 Olympic and National Hockey Teams, National Cricket Team, Street Football Team, Army Polo Team, Visually Impaired Cricket and Women Goal Ball Teams, Medal Winners of Common Wealth, SAF and Asian Games and participants of Paris Olympics 2024 during a ceremony held at Army Auditorium General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi.

## Ishaq Dar declares arrest of Gen (Retd) Faiz Hamed a miracle

ISLAMABAD (Online): Declaring the arrest of Gen (Retd) Faiz Hamed a miracle, deputy Prime Minister (PM) Ishaq Dar has said such thing have happened for the first time.

I was also among the affectees of Gen (Retd) Faiz Hamed. Gen (Retd) Faiz Hamed had apologized to me in the mid of October, he said this while talking to journalists in Parliament house Friday. The dirty politics has reduced the country to miserable condition, he alarmed. The 24th world economy has lowered to 47th position due to dhamas and dirty politics, he regretted.

We paid heavy cost and still we are paying, he added.

To a question he said joint secretary of Senate took his family with him during visit to IPU. Wife and children of joint secretary took political asylum.

He observed that foreign office will not provide any facility to officers of parliament with reference to visa in coming days. The visa facility will continue to be provided to members of national assembly and members of Senate. Facility will be provided to families of members of parliament but not to friends and mohalla walas.

Due to restrictions on passport thousands of Pakistanis could not return to Pakistan, he stated.

## Governor Balochistan optimistic about better relations between Pakistan and Russia in future

Jaffar Mandokhail hails interest of Russia in restoration of Quetta-Taftan railway track; believes initiative to promote economic activities, investment and bonds among masses; says Pak could break the statuesque of the whole region

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Governor Balochistan, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail has expressed optimism about the better relations between Pakistan and Russia in future.

He also hailed the interest of Russia in restoration of the railway track between Quetta-Taftan believing that the initiative would help promote the economic activities, investment and relations among the people.

The Governor was speaking to the Pakistani ambassador to Russia, Mir Muhammad Khalid Khan

Jamali who called on him here at the Governor's House on Friday.

During the course of meeting, matters were discussed about emerging political and economic changes, new prospects of development and cooperation between the Asian countries and promotion of economic growth and regional coordination.

He said that he is optimistic about future of relations of Pakistan and Russia.

He said that Pakistan is starting new era of development and partnership for building bright future of the nation and coming generations.



QUETTA: Women police officials of Balochistan Police who performed duties during the protests in Gwadar and Quetta meeting with Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti

## Gen Inam says: Pakistan needs to craft country specific customized template for national disaster resilience

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik on Friday emphasized the need for a customized template for disaster-impacted sectors, robust anticipatory actions and efficient post-disaster reconstruction using local materials and skills. The NDMA convened a seminar on Climate and Disaster Risk Financing at the National University of Technology (NUTECH) here that brought together experts, policymakers, and stake-

holders from diverse sectors to enhance Pakistan's disaster resilience.

Inam Haider also highlighted the collation of global best practices to craft Pakistan specific customized templates for all sectors impacted by natural disasters to mitigate risks.

The seminar featured in-depth discussions on Pakistan's Risk Financing profile in the face of climate-induced disasters, poly-disasters, and related emergencies. The Panel discussion was aimed at Financial Preparedness of Pakistan vis à vis Climate and

## Governor Balochistan says All citizens of Pakistan deserve equal honour irrespective of their colour, race & belief

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Governor Balochistan, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail has stated that all citizens of Pakistan whether they are in majority or in minority deserve equal honour irrespective of their colour, race and belief.

The Governor said that we can form such a healthy society by forging unity among our ranks which prefers diversity and promotes partnership.

He was speaking to a delegation of Christian

community who called on him under leadership of the former Member National Assembly, Khalil George, here on Friday.

The Governor assured to provide equal opportunities and facilities to all minorities.

To a query, he exhorted the Christian community to take wholehearted part in the ceremonies for achieving the goal of interfaith harmony.

He also stressed that everyone should get equal opportunities to progress.

## Foreign tourists are safe in flood-hit Astore: NDMA tells PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) on Friday informed Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif that the foreign tourists in the flash flood-hit Astore area were safe and away from the affected area.

The prime minister had directed the NDMA to ensure the safety of the tourists and protect the locals from any troublesome situation.

In a report submitted to him, the NDMA informed the prime minister that the Authority took immediate action on his direction to protect the foreign tourists in the flood-affected area.

It was told that two Italian and an Argentinian tourist were on safe and at a distant location from the affected area.



ISLAMABAD: Director of Agha Khan Foundation for Economic Development Sultan Ali Allana called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif

## KP minister Shakeel Ahmad resigns over 'corruption, bad governance'

CM Gandapur says he has already sent a summary to de-notify the minister

PESHAWAR (INP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Communication and Works Shakeel Ahmad Khan resigned from his post while levelling allegations of corruption and bad governance against the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)-backed provincial government.

Shakeel said that he had sent his resignation to KP Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur.

The development came days after incarcerated PTI founder Iman Khan, in a stern message from Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi, warned members of his party's government in KP that they would be held accountable for corruption and governance issues in their departments.

In line with the directions of Khan, the PTI constituted a three-member committee to monitor corruption and governance in KP, where the party formed government after the February 2024 general elections. It should be noted that Khan decided to constitute the committee after provincial minister Shakeel, during a meeting with him Khan, in a stern message from Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi, warned members of his party's government in KP that they would be held accountable for corruption and governance issues in their departments.

## 67% of Pakistan Railways' tracks have exceeded lifespan

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Secretary of Railways has revealed that 67% of Pakistan Railways' tracks have exceeded their operational lifespan. The revelation was made during a Senate committee meeting on railways chaired by Senator Jam Sadiq Khan on Friday.

The Secretary also disclosed that the design of the Main Line 1 (ML-1) project was altered due to the impact of recent floods. The revised PC-1 now estimates the project's total cost at approximately \$6 billion, down from the initial \$9 billion, despite the significant design changes.

Senator Kamil Ali Agha questioned the unchanged cost despite the redesign, expressing concerns about compromising the project. He also raised alarms about the risks associated with the loans from China. The Secretary assured that there has been no compromise on ML-1's security and management, and emphasized the project's financial viability.

In a related development, the committee was informed that the investigation into corruption involving 10 mysterious employees in Karachi has been inexplicably halted, leaving committee members surprised and concerned.



PESHAWAR: A view of damage police van seen at blast site. At least five people, including two police personnel, have been injured in an explosion at the Warsak Road in the Pir Bala area.

## Basic secret of development of nations lies in knowledge, says Sardar Khondoi

Independent Report CHAMAN: The senior journalist and head of Iqra Ilmi Markaz Chaman, Syed Sardar Muhammad Khondoi has stated that basic secret of development of the nations lies in the knowledge.

He was addressing the ceremony of Independence Day held at the Iqra Ilmi Markaz Boys and Girls High School Chaman the other day.

Another ceremony was organized to celebrate the results of midterm examinations of both the sections of educational institution.

Also present on the occasion were Abdul Samad Achakzai, Amanullah Shadman, Jumma Khan, Syed Sher Muhammad Agha, Maulana Abdul Wasey, Jahangir Khan Achakzai, Abdul Karim Noorzai, Maulana Attallah, Maulana Syed Muhammad, Muhammad Yousaf, Ahmed Shah Naz, besides others.

The chief guest said that education is the key to success for we have to motivate the children to get education.

He also urged the parents to pay full attention towards education of their children.

The students delivered speeches and presented national songs, which enthralled the participants.

In the end, the chief guest and other teachers distributed prizes among the position holder students.



QUETTA: A delegation of Christian community led by former MNA Khalil George meeting with Governor Balochistan Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail

## DCs of Pishin & Naseerabad replaced

Independent Report QUETTA: The Deputy Commissioners of Pishin and Naseerabad have been replaced with new administrative officers, immediately on Friday.

According to an official notification issued here by the Services and General Administration Department (S&GAD), the Pakistan Administrative Service (PAS) officer, serving as Deputy Commissioner, Pishin, Jumma Dad Khan Mandokhail has been transferred and directed to report in the S&GAD.

Similarly, the Deputy Commissioner Naseerabad, Mrs. Batool Asadi has also been transferred and directed to report in S&GAD. Moreover, the PAS officer, Zahid Khan serving as the Additional Secretary, Chief Minister's secretariat, has been posted as the Deputy Commissioner Pishin.

## BITT highlights achievements of various personalities

QUETTA (APP): Pakistan International Think Tank and Friends of Universe Society Pakistan organized the Shaheed Baz Muhammad Kakar Gold Medal ceremony here at a local hotel in Quetta.

Important figures from various walks of life, including former Chief Minister of Balochistan Dr. Abdul Malik Baloch, leaders of political parties, tribal elders, and representatives of civil society, participated in the event.

During the event, individuals who had demonstrated outstanding performance in various fields were awarded the Shaheed Baz Muhammad Kakar Gold Medal.

Those who received awards included Ali Ahmed Kurd Adv for Rule of Law, Syed Nazeer Agha Adv for Social work, Zafar Qadir for Education, Dr Malik Baloch for his services in politics, Dr Wahid Noor for Science & Technology, Abdul Saboor Khan for education Environment and Administration and Dr. Qurat ul Ain Social work and Development.

Awais Jadoon, Chairman of the Balochistan International Think Tank, in his address, said that they have initiated a unique endeavor by honoring individuals from the region who have dedicated their lives to public rights, freedom of expression, the establishment of true democracy, principled struggle against imperialist forces, global peace, and fostering fraternal and equal relations among nations.

These awards, he noted named after such personalities, aim to pay tribute to these great individuals and introduce their achievements to the general public. "The awards are presented to those who excel in various fields, he maintained. The BITT highlighted that this award series, which includes the largest non-governmental civil award series in Asia, covers various categories such as Quaid-e-Azam International Award, Quaid-e-Azam Gold Medal, Quaid-e-Azam Lifetime Achievement Award, Allama Iqbal Award, Allama Iqbal Gold Medal, Nelson Mandela Award, Nelson Mandela Gold Medal Award, marm Khomeini Award, Atatürk Award.

## Bomb blast targeting police van injures four in Peshawar

PESHAWAR (APP): A remote-controlled device bomb blast, targeting a Police van in the Pir Bala area on Warsak Road, injured four people including two policemen here on Friday.

According to Rescue 1122 authorities, the Police van was patrolling on Warsak Road and upon reaching at Pir Bala area was targeted by the blast.

Among the injured two were policemen and two were passersby who all were rushed to Lady Reading Hospital for treatment.



QUETTA: Jamhoori Watan Party (JWP) Provincial President, Nawabzada Gohram Bugti along with others cutting cake during 34th foundation day of JWP held in Quetta.

## PTI has nothing to do with arrests of former army officers: Gohar

ISLAMABAD (INP) - Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Barrister Gohar has clarified that he has not accepted the resignation of PTI Punjab president Hammad Azhar.

Responding to a query on recent arrests of former army officers, Gohar said that he had already given his statement on this issue.

Barrister Gohar further said, "Arrests of Faiz Hamed and others have nothing to do with the party and leadership. Our stand on the current arrests is clear."

He urged that speculations should not be made on this issue.

The PTI chief said that the army has its code of conduct. He asserted that a military trial of a civilian cannot take place.

## Installation of firewall, closure of internet challenged in IHC

ISLAMABAD (Online): Petition has been filed in Islamabad High Court (IHC) against closure of internet owing to installation of firewall.

The petition was filed on Friday making cabinet secretary, IT secretary, and interior secretary respondents. PTA and ministry of human rights are also included in the respondents.

The petitioner has requested the court through petition that installation of firewall which is affecting fundamental rights of citizens be stopped.

Installation of firewall be linked to consultation with all stake holders and protection of basic human rights.



QUETTA: MNA Akhtar Bibi meeting with Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti

## PNS Hunain visits Turkish Ports of Golcuk, Aksaz

ISLAMABAD (APP): The newly commissioned Pakistan Navy Ship HUNAIN, during maiden voyage from Romania to Pakistan, visited Turkish and participated in EX TURGUTREIS-X with Turkish Coast Guard Ship

ISLAMABAD (APP): The exercise focused on various Joint Maritime Operations with the aim to enhance interoperability between both Navies, a Pakistan Navy news release said. Earlier, PNS HUNAIN visited Turkish Naval ports at Golcuk and Aksaz. Upon arrival at the ports, the ship was received by Senior Officials of Pakistan Embassy and Turkish

During the meeting, professional matters of mutual interest and enhancement of bilateral cooperation between both the navies were discussed. Duration stay at port Aksaz, Commander 2nd Destroyer Squadron of Turkish Navy, Commodore Captain Cenktasli along with Commanding Officer of TCG GELIBOLU visited onboard ship and appreciated Navy's role.

