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CM stresses importance of IT skills for jobs, announces 1,000 Google Scholarships

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah emphasized the importance of youth embracing Information Technology (IT) to secure employment in today's digital world. "The diverse range of skills and certifications available in the IT sector, empower individuals to earn a livelihood from home." This he said while speaking at a meeting before signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Tech Valley and 10 public sector universities at CM House.

The meeting was attended by Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, Chairman of the Higher Education Commission, Sindh Prof. Tariq Rafi, Secretary of Information Technology Noor Samoo, Secretary of Universities & Boards Abbas Baloch, vice-chancellors of the participating universities, Google Education Consultant Umar Farooq, and CEO of Tech Valley, Umar Farooq.

"It's essential for

our youth and children to develop skills in e-marketing, AI, animation, web design, and other technologies," Mr Shah said and added that these abilities would empower them to be self-sufficient and competitive in the global market.

The Chief Minister was briefed on Google Chromebooks across Sindh's educational institutions. In association with the Education Department, Tech Valley has launched Google Chromebooks and conducted teacher training. The Chromebooks, known for their lightweight design, long battery life, and user-friendly management, are expected to significantly enhance the learning experience.

The CM was informed about the impact of the Maqsd App, a locally designed educational tool that utilizes Google technologies. Students who used the Maqsd App for just one month observed a notable 24.3 per cent increase in test scores com-

pared to the other students. An MoU signed between the Universities & Boards Department and Tech Valley will enable the distribution of 1,000 Google Career Certificates scholarships among 10 public sector universities in Sindh. Half of these scholarships are allocated to female students.

The universities participating in the program include, NED University of Engineering and Technology, Dawood University of Engineering and Technology, Sindh Madressatul Islam University, Allah Bux Soomro University of Art, Jamshoro, Government College University Hyderabad, Sindh Agriculture University, Tando Jam, Quaid-e-Awam University of Engineering, Science & Technology, Nawabshah, Begum Nusrat Bhutto Women University, Sukkur, Aror University of Art, Architecture, Design & Heritage, Rohri, Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University, Larkana.



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah presides over a meeting of 10 public sector universities and Tech Valley to allocate 1000 scholarships in Google Career Certificates at CM House.

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 Af-

airs 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. He emphasized that curtailing government expenditure was his top priority.

The goal of the government's institutional reforms was to lessen the burden on the national treasury and enhance the quality of services provided to the public, he said.

The PM directed that institutions failing to demonstrate adequate public service performance and burdening the national exchequer should be either terminated immediately or privatized without delay.

The prime minister vowed to personally oversee the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA), an organization supporting small and medium enterprises, and directed that SMEDA be brought under the Prime Minister's Office.

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.

The COAS reaffirmed the commitment to support and empower not only sportsmen, but the entire wealth of Pakistani youth to achieve excellence towards a prosperous Pakistan. The COAS highlighted the need for Youth Engagement, Development and Entertainment as essential cardinal points of a healthy and prosperous society.



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.

All religious communities enjoying complete freedom in Pak: Governor Sindh

KARACHI (APP): Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori on Friday said that all religious communities in Pakistan were enjoying full freedom to practice their faith. However, the nation is currently facing numerous challenges.

Governor Sindh stressed the need to foster interfaith and intra-faith harmony. He further stated that societal attitudes must change to achieve this goal.

Governor Kamran Khan Tessori congratulated the organizers on the successful conduct of the conference, calling it a commendable effort deserving of high praise.

The event was at-



Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supreme Nawaz Sharif addressing the press conference along with Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz in Lahore.

IGP meets newly recruited DSPs, emphasizes discipline, integrity

KARACHI (APP): Inspector General of Police (IGP) Sindh, Ghulam Nabi Memon, met with 44 Deputy Superintendents of Police (DSPs), including 10 DSPs from the legal cadre recruited through the Sindh Public Service Commission, at the Central Police Office in Karachi.

The newly recruited DSPs, who have recently joined the Sindh Police Department, were welcomed by the IGP, said a news release on Friday.

During the meeting, IGP Ghulam Nabi Memon shared insights from his service career, emphasizing the importance of discipline, integrity, and honesty in policing.

He encouraged the young officers to make discipline a core value in their lives, stating that it would earn them greater respect within the force. The IGP also highlighted the Sindh government's decision to increase the quota for women in police jobs to 15 percent.

IGP Sindh also congratulated the DSPs and urged them to remain committed to their principles and impartiality while performing their duties as police officers.



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

Teachers' attendance monitoring system to be made more effective: Shah

Independent Report
KARACHI: Sindh Minister for Education Syed Sardar Ali Shah on Friday said that the monitoring system to ensure teacher attendance in schools was being made more effective in Sindh. He warned that strict action will be taken against absent teachers.

He said this while speaking to media representatives after leading a rally in Malir district. The rally was organized by the Sindh Education Department in connection with the admission drive.

Secretary Education Sindh Zahid Ali Abbasi, social activist Shahzad Roy, elected representative of Malir, MPAs Sajid Johkio, Raja Razzak, Yusuf Murtaza Baloch, Special Assistant to Chief Minister Saleem Baloch, and other local leaders of the People's Party participated in the event.

Representatives from UNICEF, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and other international organizations also attended.

During the awareness rally, participants carried banners and placards highlighting the importance of education. They chanted slogans like "Parhy ga Sindh, Barhy ga Sindh" and others. The Minister Sindh Syed Sardar Ali Shah led the rally alongside students and participants.

Syed Sardar Ali Shah said that the Sindh Education Department has started the admission drive today, as part of its efforts to boost education accessibility and enrollment rates in the province.

He emphasized that education is a fundamental right according to the constitution.



KARACHI: Sindh Education Minister Syed Sardar Ali Shah leading rally on the occasion of New Admissions Drive in District Malir.

KMC inks MoU for tree plantation campaign

KARACHI (APP): Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab said that planting trees is considered a continuous charity in religious terms, and it is also a significant contribution from a social perspective.

He made these remarks while speaking at a ceremony held on Friday at Aziz Bhatti Park, where a memorandum of understanding for mutual cooperation in the tree plantation campaign was signed between KMC's Department of Parks and Horticulture and Faizan Global Relief Foundation (FGRC).

The Faizan Global Relief Foundation (FGRC) has handed over 25,000 saplings to KMC for tree plantation in the city. We should embrace our environment and land, and start planting trees today rather than tomorrow. He said that this was a virtuous deed, and every citizen should participate in it.

Three years ago, an agreement was made with FGRC regarding tree plantation, and today, a memorandum of understanding has been signed to extend it for another three years. He said that under this agreement, Faizan Global Relief Foundation will provide KMC with 75,000 plants annually, ranging from four to six feet in height.

Sindh Governor summons PA session on Monday

Independent Report
KARACHI: Sindh Governor Mohammed Kamran Khan Tessori has summoned a session of the Provincial Assembly of Sindh to meet on Monday, August 19.

The session will begin at 3:00 p.m., according to a notification here on Friday.

President praises security forces for successful operation against Khawarij terrorists

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Friday commended the security forces for launching successful intelligence-based operation against Khawarij terrorists in North Waziristan.

In a statement issued by the President House, the president praised the bravery of the forces for killing 3 terrorists in the operation.

He vowed to continue operations against the Khawarij until the complete elimination of terrorism.

The whole nation is united against the menace of the terrorism, President Zardari said.

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 Khawarij," the army's media wing said in a statement.

"During the conduct of the operation, intense fire exchange took place between the troops and khawarij, as a result of which, three Khawarij of Fitna al Khawarij were sent to hell, while one Kharij got injured."



KARACHI: Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori addressing International Inter-Faith Peace Conference.

Education boards directed to announce exam results by Sept 15

KARACHI (APP): Provincial Minister for Universities and Boards Muhammad Ali Malkani on Friday directed all educational Boards to ensure announcement of examination results not later than September 15 and preparation be made to hold annual examinations in March 2025.

Chairing a meeting of chairmen of all educational boards of the province, minister asked Board management to ensure the use of OMR sheets in the exams so that transparency could be ensured.

Malkani said no private centre would be established in the board exams in next year while examinations would be conducted in the month of March. He asked the Secretary Universities and Boards department Muhammad Abbas Baloch to write letter to provincial education department for convening Steering Committee meeting for the purpose.

The chairmen of the boards were strictly directed to ensure putting QR code on the certificates, marks sheets and the admit cards failing which action would be taken against responsible officials. Muhammad Ali Malkani directed to prepare a centralized web portal of the department on which all the boards will be linked and monitored. In order to minimize human intervention in the examination process, Malkani directed all the chairmen to implement automation system in the boards.

He also directed to prepare centralized web portal on which all boards should be linked so that monitoring could be ensured. The meeting also decided to form a "Question Bank" for examination questions and a committee headed by Additional Secretary Abrar Ahmed Jaffer was constituted while all board chairmen were asked to submit their input for formation of the said bank.

The minister directed board chairmen to send details to the finance department and resolve salary issue of the employees by get quarterly allocated budgetary funds.



PESHAWAR: A view of damage police 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.

Arrest of retired military personnel internal affair of Pakistan: 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 Patick 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.

Thundershower forecast for Karachi

KARACHI (APP): Pakistan Meteorological Department on Friday predicted rain-wind or thundershower (few heavy falls) in most parts of the Sindh province including Karachi during the next 24 hours.

The thundershower is predicted in Sukkur, Ghotki, Shikarpur, Kashmore, Khairpur, Naushahro Feroze, Dadu, Shaheed Benazirabad, Larkana, Jacobabad, Karachi, Hyderabad, Thatta, Badin, Tando Allahyar, Tando Muhammad Khan, Tharparkar, Mithi, Mirpur Khas, Umartkot and Sanghar.

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; Wahub 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 Delegation 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

conditions, the preparation for "Ehsas Apna Ghar Program" was reviewed.

Under "Ehsas Apna Ghar Program" interest-free loans up to 1.5 million rupees would be offered to low income people for construction of new house, renovation & improvement of existing house or owning an apartment.

During a joint meeting of the relevant departments, the chief minister highlighted the importance of a realistic and equitable approach to these initiatives.

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

Punjab said that the coalition government should run successfully to bring political stability in the country, adding that political stability is vital to the economic development of the country. He expressed his determination to strengthen the relation between the federation and Punjab and play every possible role for the improvement of the province. On this occasion, the Governor of Punjab appreciated the role of Speaker National Assembly for conducting the proceedings of the House impartially and smoothly.



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.

Later, as the proceedings resumed, the law officer requested time to submit a detailed response to the petition, stating the need to consult with the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority regarding the slow internet speed.

However, the court noted that this was a public interest petition and that appropriate orders would be issued, besides questioning the level of seriousness of the law officer.

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, Qatar 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

a hostage exchange deal. "Hamas looks at the ongoing negotiations in Doha regarding a ceasefire and a hostage exchange from a strategic perspective with the goal of ending the aggression on Gaza," he added. Mediators planned to consult with Hamas' Doha-based negotiating team after the meeting, the US official told Reuters. The Israeli delegation includes spy chief David Barnea, head of the domestic security service Ronen Bar and the military's hostages chief Nitzan Alon, defence officials said.

The White House sent CIA Director Bill Burns and U.S. Middle East envoy Brett McGurk. Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani and Egypt's intelligence chief Abbas Kamel also took part.



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 Gaza said on Thursday that the death toll from the conflict had reached at least 40,005 people, with another 92,401 wounded.

"Today marks a grim milestone for the world," Turk said in a statement. "Most of the dead are women and children. This unimaginable situation is overwhelmingly due to recurring failures by the Israeli Defence Forces to comply with the rules of war," he added.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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 measures in place and are not aware of any security breaches of our systems resulting from those efforts." Google's threat analysis group continues to see unsuccessful attempts from APT42 to compromise personal accounts of individuals affiliated with President Joe Biden, Vice President Harris and Trump, the report said.

The hacking group works by gathering information about targets and tailoring "phishing" efforts to lure victims into revealing log-in information for accounts like Gmail. Examples given in the report included posing as a think tank or other credible contact to lure victims to fake video meeting landing pages, where log-in credentials are needed to take part. While technical tools abound in hacker arsenals, some opt for "social engineering" tactics that trick people into clicking on booby-trapped links or logging in to realistic replicas of legitimate web pages.

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 officials released few details about how they arrived at those calculations.

The newly negotiated prices will impact the price of drugs used by millions of older Americans to help manage diabetes, blood cancers and prevent heart failure or blood clots. The drugs include the blood thinners Xarelto and Eliquis and diabetes drugs Jardiance and Januvia.

It's a landmark deal for the Medicare program, which provides health care coverage for more than 67 million older and disabled Americans. For decades, the federal government had been barred from bartering with pharmaceutical companies over the price of their drugs, even though it's a routine process for private insurers.

"For years, millions of Americans were forced to choose between paying for medications or putting food on the table.

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.

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.

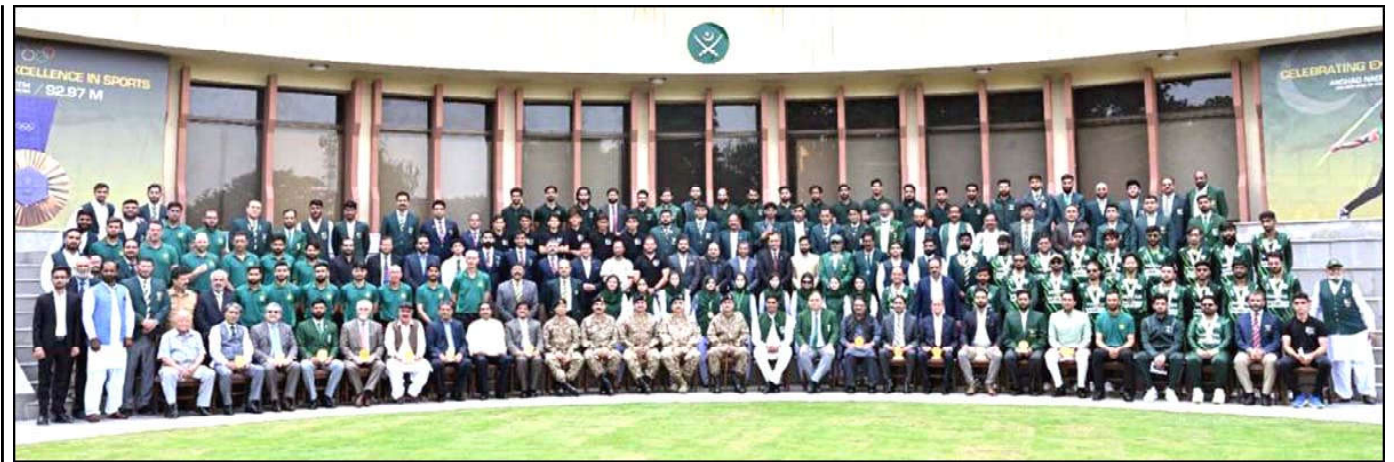
Similarly, the losses of K-Electric have been reduced from 40% to 15% since privatisation.

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 Afhab Ahmed, Raja Qamer ul Islam, Chaudhry Nasser Ahmed Abbas, Syeda Nosheen Ifkhar, Rana Muhammad Hayat Khan, Mr. Muhammad Shahrar 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 Aamir 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.

Nawaz Sharif blames Imran-led govt for skyrocketing inflation

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supreme Nawaz Sharif has attributed the skyrocketing cost of living to the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government, saying that it was the Imran Khan-led regime that brought the International Monetary Fund (IMF) back to the country.

Addressing a press conference flanked by Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz in Lahore on Friday, the three-time prime minister said that the issue of price hike commenced in the PTI government, adding that he knows about the pain the people of Pakistan are going through.

The PML-N's top leader said he recalls the time in 2017 when there was no price hike issue with people living an easy and comfortable life, adding that he became premier in 2013, his government worked on the economy, making it one of the world's best-performing economies.

At that time, the world praised the country for its emerging economy, as the PML-N-led government took the US dollar to Rs95, Nawaz said. "However, the government had to keep the greenback pegged at Rs104 for the next four years owing to exports and some

Pakistan refrains foreign govt 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.

Talking about the health issues, the spokesperson stated: "We have seen the World Health Organization (WHO) advisory on monkeypox, the Ministry of National Health can only give a formal response in this regard".

The spokesperson of the Foreign Office added that there are active diplomatic missions of Pakistan and Afghanistan and there are high-speed contacts in all areas of mutual relations between the two.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has changed the visa guidelines for officials of the National Assembly Secretariat and Senate Secretariat.



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

City administration finalizes rain arrangements: Murtaza

KARACHI (APP): Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab on Friday said that arrangements for water drainage have been completed on all major roads and streets under the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation, and constant co-ordination with relevant town administrations and other agencies is being maintained for rain arrangements.

He said that special instructions have been issued to the relevant departments to keep the drainage machinery in ready condition and to keep the staff on alert for rainwater drainage work, in light of the Meteorological Department's forecast of a new spell of rain starting on Saturday.

He said that three large dewatering pumps, excavators, dumpers, and small dewatering pumps have been delivered at the KMC head office here.

One of the three large dewatering pumps will be stationed at the KMC head office, another at the M.A Jinnah Road near the Merewether Tower, and the third at the Governor House, as these areas experience significant water accumulation during rains, he

said.

He said that preparations for drainage have been completed in advance of the rains.

He requested citizens to be patient during heavy rains as the drainage process may be slow temporarily, but as soon as the rain stops, water drainage will begin quickly. The citizens should be assured that the municipal administration is fully aware of its responsibilities and has taken all necessary measures.

Barrister Murtaza Wahab also mentioned that the flow of water in all major storm water drains in the city is normal, and there are no obstacles to drainage as choking points have already been cleared and drain cleaning is ongoing.

He added that during the rains, KMC's city wardens will also be present on roads and highways to maintain traffic flow and provide guidance to citizens.

The Mayor Karachi said that he will personally visit various areas of the city during the rains to assess the situation and issue instructions to relevant officials and agencies to ensure that citizens are protected from any unpleasant situations during the rains.

Four suspects involved in street crimes arrested

KARACHI (APP): In a joint operation by the Pakistan Rangers Sindh and District East Police, four suspects were arrested in Sohrab Goth, Karachi, for their involvement in street crimes and robberies.

The operation, based on intelligence, also led to the recovery of arms and ammunition.

According to a Rangers spokesperson on Friday, the arrested suspects have been identified as Asad Khan alias Ameer Sahib alias Qari (the group's ringleader), Muhammad Yousuf, Ghazanfar alias Uzmi, and Osama Sultan. The suspects have been linked to multiple incidents of robberies and looting in collaboration with various dacoit gangs across Karachi.

During the initial investigation, Asad Khan, alias Qari, confessed to robbing a milk supplier near Nipa Bridge in February 2024, taking away Rs. 0.375 million.

SRSO celebrates Arshad's achievement in Olympic

SUKKUR (APP): In connection with Independence Day of Pakistan, a colourful event organized by Sindh Rural Support Organization (SRSO) to celebrate the achievement of Arshid Nadeem in the Olympic Games 2024.

Community children and NPGP- trained youth under National Poverty Graduation Programme by SRSO showed enthusiasm during the eve.

According to a release issued by SRSO Spokesperson, on Thursday, the event took place at the Community Cluster School managed by FAS-SRSO in Village Qabalo, Tehsil Garhi Yasin, district Shikarpur.

Speakers paid glowing tribute to Arshad for winning the gold medal and said the country's youth should get inspiration from this great achievement.

Court sentences man to 9 Year for leaking TikTok star's indecent photos

KARACHI (INP): A Judicial Magistrate (East) in Karachi has sentenced a man to nine years in prison for circulating indecent photos of a female TikTok star.

The court found the accused, Altaf Ali, guilty of the charges after the prosecution successfully proved the case. In addition to the prison sentence, the court imposed a fine of Rs. 60,000 on the convict. The verdict stated that failure to pay the fine would result in additional jail time.

The case began when the TikTok star filed a complaint with the FIA Cyber Crime Circle, alleging that Altaf Ali had invited her and her mother to his home under the pretext of a work project.

According to the complainant, the accused spiked their drinks with sedatives, rendering them unconscious.

Karachi administration rejects allegations of procurement violations in Malir Expressway Project

Independent Report

KARACHI: The Local Government and Housing Town Planning Department has strongly rejected allegations of procurement violations in the Malir Expressway Project (MEX/MEW), which claimed that the national exchequer suffered a loss of approximately Rs 27.5 billion due to irregularities in the bidding process.

In a detailed response to a letter from Transparency International Pakistan, the department emphasized that the procurement process strictly followed the Sindh Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (SPPRA) Rules 2010, including international competitive bidding principles. All required documents and public disclosures were made available, and no objections were raised by SPPRA during the process.

The department clarified that all participating bidders met the eligibility criteria, including submitting necessary tax documents, contrary to the allegations. Registration with the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) was not a mandatory condition for all consortium members, except where required by law. The department rejected the allegations as baseless and fabricated, ensuring transparency and fairness in the procurement process.



HYDERABAD: Advisor to CM Sindh, Abdul Jabbar Khan unveiling the plaque during the inauguration ceremony of Zeeshan Law College (ZLC) held at Latifabad in Hyderabad.

281st annual Urs of Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai to begin from Tuesday

HYDERABAD (APP): The 281st annual Urs of Hazrat Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai (RA) will commence from Tuesday 20th August at Bhit Shah amid foolproof security. A high-level meeting in this regard under chairmanship of the Deputy Commissioner Matiari Muhammad Yousuf Shaikh was held to review final arrangements for the event. During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner directed town administration and Public Health Engineering Department to remain vigilant as the meteorological department forecast heavy rain. He directed that full preparations should be made on a war footing basis for dewatering, he warned that no negligence would be tolerated in this connection.

According to an official handout, the three-day event will feature the laying of Chadar at the Shrine, establishment of a Cultural Village in Shah Jo Baag, Malakhro, Agriculture and Livestock Exhibition, Sugharan Jee Katcherhri, Latif Adabi Conference,

Harassment of women, not acceptable under any circumstances: Tarar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar on Friday said that harassment of women was not acceptable in any form or under any circumstances.

In statement, he strongly condemned the incident of assaulting a woman during the meeting of National Assembly Standing Committee on Energy.

The minister said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf should take action against its MNA Iqbal Afridi.

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 Hameed and others have nothing to do with the party and leadership."

Workers evacuated as fire breaks out in Karachi plastic factory

KARACHI (INP): Workers were evacuated as a massive fire broke out in a plastic factory located in SITE area of Karachi on Friday. According to fire brigade officials, the fire in the plastic factory has intensified and seven vehicles of the fire brigade are engaged in extinguishing the blaze. There are plastic goods in the factory while the workers of the factory were evacuated safely and there is no loss of life, officials said.

Police arrest suspects for manufacturing drugs

MIRPURKHAS (APP): The CIA Police on Friday conducted a successful operation and arrested four suspects in a factory which manufacturing harmful drugs and recovered drug manufacturing machine and raw material. In-charge, CIA, Inayat Ali Zardari supervised the operation.

SSP Mirpurkhas Captain @ Asad Ali Chaudhry told APP that during last night under the supervision of In-charge CIA and SHO Sindhri, Inspector Niaz Khoso, the police team, on tip off, arrested four accused in a dangerous drug manufacturing factory.

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 Turkiye and participated in EX TURGUTREIS-X with Turkish Coast Guard Ship GELIBOLU.



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 Navy. During stay at Golcuk, Commanding Officer of PNS HUNAIN called on Turkish Navy Fleet Commander Vice Admiral Kadir Yildiz and Commander of Golcuk Naval Base Rear Admiral Ali Tuna Baysal.

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) Faiaz had apologized to me in the mid of October, he said this while talking to journalists in Parliament house Friday.

The dirty politics



HYDERABAD: Activists of Markazi Muslim League (PMML) are holding protest demonstration against massive unemployment, increasing price of daily use products and high inflated bills of electricity, at Hyderabad press club.

DC directs officials to clear LUH routes

HYDERABAD (APP): The district and traffic police as well as the Anti Encroachment Cell have been directed to clear the routes leading towards Liaquat University Hospital from all types of traffic congestion and encroachment.

These directives were given at a meeting of the Traffic Management Board which was held under the chair of Deputy Commissioner Hyderabad, Zainul Abedin Memon, at his office here on Friday.

He recalled that the Civil Hospital Traffic Management Plan had already been prepared by Secretary District Traffic Management Board Javed Iqbal in consultation with the Traffic Police Hyderabad.

He said the plan had also been given the approval from his office.

According to him, the plan's primary objective was to eliminate encroachment and illegal parking around the LUH to ensure that ambulances and other vehicles carrying patients could reach the health facility without coming across any hindrance.

Additionally, he instructed that all food centers, including those in Liberty Market Food Street, should be asked to operate within their designated boundaries.

The DC asked the officials to take strict action against one-way violations and other traffic infractions across the city.



KARACHI: Volunteers are planting a sapling during Monsoon Tree Plantation Drive under the supervision of Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM-P) Burns Road Town, at Kidney Hill Park in Karachi.

IBA University launches Sarsabs Sukkur tree plantation drive

SUKKUR (APP): Sukkur IBA University launched its "Sarsabz Sukkur" plantation drive, a week-long initiative designed to enhance the city's greenery.

The program commenced on Friday with an event on Nisar Ahmed Siddiqui Road, Sukkur IBA University, where Commissioner Sukkur, Fayaz Hussain Abbasi, and Vice-Chancellor (VC) Professor Dr Asif Ahmed Shaikh inaugurated the drive by planting the first trees.

The initiative, which involves students, faculty, and staff of the university, aims to plant approximately 10,000 trees along the roads surrounding the

university and throughout Sukkur. The launch ceremony highlighted the drive's goal of developing environmental responsibility and beautifying the city.

Commissioner Fayaz Hussain Abbasi emphasized the importance of collective action. "Every person's contribution is crucial," he stated. "When we unite in our efforts, we can truly make a difference, he said and added that let's all contribute to a greener Sukkur."

The drive also includes an awareness walk to be organized at the Press Club to educate the public about the benefits of greenery and encourage community involvement.



LARKANA: Commuters are facing difficulties in transportation due to stagnant rainwater due to poor sewerage system caused by heavy downpour of monsoon season, in Larkana.