

Independent

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PM directs to instantly constitute SMEDA, other vital institutions' Boards

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday chaired a meeting on matters related to the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA), emphasizing the crucial role of SMEs in Pakistan's economy.

He said the small and medium enterprises act as the back bone of the country's economy.

Expressing dismay over the non-functioning of the SMEDA Board, the prime minister directed its immediate constitution, stressing that boards of all institutions vital for the country's economy, should be established without delay.

Additionally, he called for promoting sub-contracting in industries and taking all possible measures to

integrate Pakistani industries into the global supply chain.

The prime minister also ordered to take necessary steps to ensure appointment of the SMEDA's Chief Executive Officer.

Additionally, he also directed to include the people from the private sector in the steering committee.

During the briefing, the prime minister was informed that for the first time, SMEDA Development Fund had been launched for which an amount of Rs 30 billion had been allocated for 6 years. Out of the total, Rs 5 billion have already been provided for the year 2024-25, the meeting was told.

It was informed in the meeting that, there were currently 5.2 million small

and medium enterprises in Pakistan, which account for 40 percent of the country's GDP whereas 31% of country's exports depend on the SMEs.

Apart from non-agricultural employment, SME sector provides 72% of employment while some Rs 491 billion have been provided in the form of bank credit for the SME sector so far, but the bank credit for the SME sector needs to be taken up to Rs 800 billion, the meeting was told.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Ahmad Khan Cheema, Federal Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain, PM's Coordinator Rana Ishaan Afzal, and other relevant high officials.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting on matters related to Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority.

Imran Khan says: Another May 9 incident could have been leveled against us had we held August 22 public meeting

ISLAMABAD (Online): PTI founder Imran Khan has said there was apprehension of chaos on September 22, therefore, Islamabad public meeting was postponed.

Had we held public meeting May 9 like incident could have occurred. This is question of prestige of court. Court allows us to hold public meeting but administration cancels it. Islamabad public meeting has been postponed for last time, he said this in an informal talk with the journalists here in Adiala jail Rawalpindi.

He further stated no judicial inquiry has been conducted so far in respect of May 9, 2023 incident. Had we insisted on holding public meeting on August 22, it was feared May 9 like event could have been shifted to us again.

He held information was given religious parties

are on protest. There is threat for fomenting chaos. Therefore I called Azam Swati and Barrister Gohar and postponed public meeting.

He pointed out they have issued NOC for September 8 public meeting. If any one tries to create any hindrance then on September 8 then they will themselves be responsible.

When PML-N is seized with fear that we are holding talks with establishment then they recall May 9.

I have not to talk with any government of form 47. I will never want country drifts into chaos.

Reacting to security sources statement he said who I am. I am head of the political party of the country. Therefore, I am demanding for open trial of Gen (Retd) Faiz Hameed.

Earlier PTI founder had too said that postpon-

ing the public meeting be not construed his weakness. The public meeting was postponed to avoid unrest, our party believes in peaceful legal and political struggle.

He observed I say to decision makers of the country and not to PDM government they should respect people mandate if they have to save country from ruin. Only constitution and upholding the law can take forward the country. Regarding meeting with Azam Swati and Barrister Gohar in jail he said we have tremendous respect for Khatam-e-Nabuwat. Report has come to us that religious parties are gathering in Islamabad red zone for protection of Khatam-e-Nabuwat. We never want chaos in the country. We took difficult decision to avoid chaos therefore, Tarnol public meeting was postponed, he added.

Sindh & Balochistan assemblies to increase cooperation, vow Speaker BA & Sindh CM

Independent Report
KARACHI: The Speaker Balochistan Assembly, Captain (Retd) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai and Chief Minister Sindh, Syed Murad Ali Shah have expressed consensus on promoting the cooperation between the two provincial assemblies.

The Speaker Balochistan Assembly was in meeting with the Chief Minister Sindh whom he visited in Karachi on Friday.

The Chief Minister Sindh welcomed the Speaker Balochistan Assembly on his visit to Karachi.

During the course of meeting, matters of mutual interests were discussed by Abdul Khaliq Achakzai and Syed Murad Ali Shah.

They also spoke on the sessions and business of the two assemblies during the meeting. Besides they also talked the rains and flashfloods caused due to the climate change in the provinces.

It may be mentioned here that the Speaker Balochistan Assembly reached Karachi on Friday where he met the Chief Minister Sindh, Syed Murad Ali Shah.



KARACHI: Speaker Balochistan Captain (ret) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai meeting with Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah.

Bilawal condoles over martyrdom of police officials in Punjab

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, has expressed deep grief and sorrow over the martyrdom of 14 police officials in an attack by bandits in Punjab.

According to a press release issued here by the party secretariat, he strongly condemned the incident, emphasizing that

maintaining law and order was the responsibility of the provincial government.

Bilawal Bhutto urged the provincial government to deal with the criminal elements with an iron hand.

"I hope that those responsible for the martyrdom of these 14 brave Punjab Police officials will soon be brought to justice," Bilawal Bhutto added.

C-130 plane carrying bodies of Iran accident to arrive in Jacobabad tonight: Nasir Shah

SUKKUR (APP): Sindh Minister for Planning, Development and Energy, Syed Nasir Hussain Shah on Friday had said that the C-130 plane carrying the bodies of Pakistani pilgrims who embraced martyrdom in the Iran accident will arrive at Shahbaz Airport, Jacobabad, at midnight of Friday and added that Sindh government had made all arrangements to shift the bodies to their natives places.

In a video statement released here, the minister said that it was a tragic incident in Iran, where Pakistani pilgrims embraced martyrdom. He stated that on the instruction of PPP

Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, the Pakistani ambassador in Iran and Iranian authorities were contacted to take necessary measures.

He said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had also ordered a C-130 aircraft to transport the bodies of the deceased pilgrims to Pakistan. The aircraft is expected to arrive at Jacobabad Airport after 12 midnight.

He said that Sindh government has made arrangements for the convenience of the bereaved families and over 40 Rescue 1122 ambulances are present at Jacobabad Airport.



SUKKUR: Sindh Minister for Planning, Development and Energy, Syed Nasir Hussain Shah addresses to media persons during press conference, at Sukkur press club.

Nisar Khuhro visits various public sector hospitals

LARKANA (APP): Pakistan Peoples Party Sindh President and Chairman, Public Accounts Committee Sindh MPA Nisar Khuhro on Friday visited various hospitals including Emergency Ward of Chandka Hospital, Emergency Ward of Sheikh Zayed Children's Hospital, Trauma Center.

Taking information from the relatives of patients about the medical facilities and the support of the hospital administration, the Medical Superintendent of Chandka Hospital Dr. Niaz Hussain Dahar and doctors were instructed

to provide better medical facilities and medicines.

Speaking to media, Khuhro said that the purpose of the visit was to review medical facilities provided to the patients.

State-of-the-art facilities have been provided in government hospitals so that the people of the province can get maximum medical facilities.

In response to a question, Nisar Khuhro said that he sympathized with the families of those who died as a result of the accident of Pakistani students in Yazd, Iran.



KARACHI: Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori talking to media persons at Governor House.

Tessori announces results of Hyderabad IT Test

KARACHI (APP): Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori announced the result of the Hyderabad IT test during a press conference here at the Governor House on Friday.

The test, conducted under the Governor's Initiative at Niaz Stadium Hyderabad, was participated by 80,000 youth aspiring for free IT courses. Out of these, 54,000 candidates were declared as qualified.

The successful candidates will now pursue advanced IT courses in Artificial Intelligence, Metaverse, and Web 3.0 under the Governor's Initiative.

Governor Kamran Khan Tessori stated that those who did not pass the test would be given another opportunity. He further announced that registration for the IT course test in Sukkur would begin in a few days, with plans to expand the IT course program across the entire province, ultimately aiming to make the province an IT hub.

Highlighting the economic impact, Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori mentioned that the trainees are currently earning between \$600 to \$800 per month, with some who

previously earned \$150 now making \$250. He emphasized that if one million youth start earning \$1,200 monthly, it would significantly boost the country's foreign exchange reserves.

Governor Sindh also acknowledged the inspiring impact of the Army Chief's address to the youth, which has motivated the IT students training at the Governor House. The students have expressed their desire for the Army Chief to visit them as well.

He extended his gratitude to philanthropists who have generously supported the IT initiative, including national hero Arshad Nadeem, FPCCI, Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin and others who have donated 100 laptops to the IT students. Several philanthropists have also expressed interest in running IT campuses in different cities. In two weeks, the Governor plans to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with Google, aiming to provide Google certification to every IT student. Responding to a question, Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori mentioned that youth from various cities in the province are reaching out, expressing their desire for IT campuses in their areas.

President Zardari summons NA session on August 26

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari has summoned the session of the National Assembly on Monday, August 26, 2024 at 5:00 pm.

The president summoned the session of National Assembly in exercise of the powers conferred by article 54(1) of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

Two real brothers among three shot dead over property dispute

SHIKARPUR (INP): Three people including two real brothers were shot dead over property dispute here on Friday, police said.

According to details, the incident took place at Shahi Bagh road in Lakhi Dar police station jurisdiction in Shikarpur where armed men of Lehar community sprayed bullets at rivals with whom they were in dispute over ownership of a piece of land leaving them critically injured. The attackers fled the scene and three people injured in the firing were rushed to civil hospital where they succumbed to their wounds during treatment. The deceased included two real brothers Nadir Lehar, Mirza Lehar and another person Shakeel Lehar. The bodies were handed over to heirs after legal formalities and police after registering a case against the assailants started raids for their arrest.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal, and British High Commissioner to Pakistan, Ms. Jane Marriott, jointly launched the "District Education Performance Index" in Federal Capital.

Jam Kamal presides Sectoral Council meetings on Pharmaceutical, Chemical Sectors

KARACHI (APP): Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal has chaired two separate sectoral councils meetings on Pharmaceutical and Chemical Sectors were held here at TDAP Headquarter on Friday.

Under Strategic Trade Policy Framework (STPP 2022-25), 16 sectoral councils were formed of different export oriented sectors on March 31, 2022.

Out of these 16 different sectors, two potential sectors are Pharmaceuticals and Chemical Industries which were invited for meetings in TDAP.

These sectoral meet-

ings were attended by other senior officers from Commerce Ministry, DRAP, Pakistan Customs. Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal assured sectoral council members that consultative drive is being implemented under the vision of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif so that policy proposals will be incorporated in the National Export Policy Board.

These meetings were concluded with a commitment to address the outlined challenges and pursue actionable strategies to enhance the export potential on different sectors from Pakistan.

Sindh CM announces compensation for victims of Iran bus crash

KARACHI (INP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has announced financial assistance for the families of the martyrs of the bus incident in Iran. As per the announcement made on Friday, financial assistance of Rs5 million for family of each martyr will be given while Rs1 million each will be given to the injured persons. In this regard, Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah said that the Sindh government has made complete arrangements to bring back the bodies of martyrs on the instructions of Chairman People's Party Bilawal Bhutto.

Saeed Ghani for close coordination among Town, UC chairmen to ensure service delivery

Independent Report
KARACHI: Provincial Minister for Local Government, Saeed Ghani on Friday asked all elected Town chairmen of Karachi division to keep coordination with their Vice Chairmen as well as UC chairmen so that service delivery could be improved.

Presiding a meeting of the 13 Town Chairmen belonging to Pakistan People's Party, Saeed Ghani said Town chairmen must take action on the complaints filed by their Vice Chairmen and Union Committee chairmen.

He said as per the directives of PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, basic facilities should be provided to



people at Town and UC level.

Ghani said all employees and retirees of Town, Municipal and Union Committees/ Councils would be ensured to get timely salaries and pension.

Speaking on the occasion, Senator Waqar Mehdi said PPP Sindh president had sought performance report from party's all elected chairmen. He said Bilawal Bhutto had clearly directed that party organization and elected local bodies representatives must be in close coordination to each other for service delivery.

Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab said all 25 Towns if Karachi division are their own and all would be looked after like the one governed by PPP. He said Karachi would be made city of lights by restoring its past glory.

Meeting was attended among others by SACM Syed Najmi Alam.

Dharejo meets Turk National Defense Minister

Independent Report
KARACHI: Sindh Minister of Industries and Commerce, Jam Ikramullah Dharejo, Friday, hosted Turkiye's Minister of National Defense Yasar Guler during his stop over at Jinnah International Airport Karachi.

Jam Ikramullah welcomed Turkish Minister Yasar Guler on his arrival at JIAP Karachi. The Consul General of Turkiye in Karachi Cemal Sangu and other Turk diplomats were also present at the occasion,

Dharejo, Turkish Minister discuss issues of mutual interest

said a statement issued here.

The Sindh Minister presented the traditional gifts of Sindhi cap and Ajrak to the distinguished

guests while both the ministers also discussed issues of mutual interest.

The Minister of National Defense of Turkey, at the occasion, expressed his gratitude for the hospitality extended by the Government of Sindh. After a short meeting, the Turkiye National Defense Minister left for his homeland.



Jam Ikramullah welcomed Turkish Minister Yasar Guler on his arrival at JIAP Karachi.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Who to believe?

Pakistani netizens, always quick to find humour in the darkest places, have dubbed it 'the return of the shararti (mischievous) sharks'.

Contradicting the state minister for IT, who had on Sunday claimed that slow internet speeds were due to Pakistanis' newfound love for VPNs, the PTA chairman on Wednesday told the National Assembly Standing Committee on IT and Telecommunication that the slowdown was, in fact, attributable to a problem with one of the submarine cables connecting Pakistan to the rest of the world.

A major fault in Pakistan's submarine cables was once, many years ago, attributed to shark activity, much to the amusement of ordinary citizens. It has since turned into a running gag about Pakistan's frequent struggles with unexplained internet failures. That it has resurfaced is a sign of how seriously the Pakistani people are taking the government's flip-flopping on ongoing internet connectivity issues.

It seems worth asking at this point whether the government realises how much damage it is causing to its credibility by repeatedly denying the problems being faced by citizens and then contradicting itself when explaining what may be causing them. Facing the NA committee, the PTA chairman deflected questions regarding the 'firewall' reportedly being rolled out by the state. Later, while speaking to a reporter, he acknowledged that the PTA has been upgrading its 'web management system' but did not elaborate on how this system works. A report published in these pages suggests that this system may be being upgraded to have the capability to throttle and limit content on an application basis, as well as allow URL filtering, IP blocking, including complete blocking of websites, and VPN whitelisting. However, experts warn that any problems with the system could impact a very large number of users because of the way Pakistan's internet is structured. This seems to have been confirmed by experience in recent days.

Pakistan cannot progress in the modern world if the keys to its nascent IT industry are to remain in the hands of a regulatory authority that cannot even prevaricate with consistency. The secrecy surrounding the ongoing tinkering with the internet is giving rise to all kinds of speculation and uncertainty, which, as multiple stakeholders have warned, has been affecting business confidence too. Meanwhile, even established experts seem to be in the dark about what the authorities seek to achieve and at what cost. This is a deeply problematic situation that may have far-reaching consequences for Pakistan. Civilian leaders must continue to demand answers from the PTA and seek clarity on what it is trying to achieve. They must also enforce a system of accountability for those responsible for this new 'web management' technology, especially for the economic losses it has been causing due to frequent disruptions to the internet.

Babies galore

Zubeida Mustafa

Ours is a society where parents start planning their daughter's marriage soon after she is born. Here the social compulsion for couples to prove their fertility is so great that they have their first child within a year or so after tying the knot. Worse still, women are desperate to produce a son to protect their marriage and preserve their marital status. On top of that, we are so prudish that to talk about family planning is considered immoral.

Given the above, can family planning succeed in Pakistan? Whatever the prospects, the sane among us will have to continue to focus their attention on this field because population has become a global issue as the UN's recent World Population Prospects report tells us. It concedes that Earth can no longer sustain the massive population that continues to grow. It is now calculated that the world population will not peak before 2100 when it will stand at 10.3 billion. Pakistan is one of the 126 countries whose populations are still growing. Pakistan's population growth rate has been around 2.5 per cent in the last 25 years. Its total fertility rate is 3.6 while the world average is 2.2 and the replacement rate is 2.1.

In these bleak circumstances comes a ray of hope: a report produced by Research and Development Solutions. It suggests pragmatic strategies to meet supply-side needs, which have been inadequately addressed in this country, leading to many unintended pregnancies, abortions and a high unmet need. Above all, as the writers of this report, Dr Adnan Khan and Ayesha Khan, tell me, these strategies have actually been applied in the Akhtar Hameed Khan

Foundation's Urban Impact Lab and have produced results.

In a nutshell, the report confirmed my observation that our family planning programme has failed to provide the services that many young married couples are looking for. With data gathered from various sources, the report tells us that many utilities — clinics, population centres and contraceptive outlets — exist but are grossly underutilised.

Some utilities do not have even one client in a day. Private facilities show a better outreach but even that is not satisfactory. The Lady Health Workers, who are the backbone of the programme, are ineffective as they are so loaded with numerous non-family planning duties that they give only an hour a week to mobilising women to become contraceptive users. Hence the programme has turned out to be high-cost and ineffective. There is also the problem of the procurement of contraceptives as their import is pretty centralised. Sometimes this leads to shortages that are not warranted.

Dr Adnan recommends the use of technologies to gather information on locations where there is likely to be a need, track users, increase the outreach of utilities and communicate with users. The procurement of contraceptives should also be allowed by the private sector and the government should concentrate on its role of financier rather than provider of services.

At present, Pakistan's contraceptive prevalence rate (CPR) is 34pc with 11 million users. To meet the Sustainable Development Goals, there must be 20m married women of reproductive age using contraceptives by next year. This is an unattainable

target under the present system as only 5m more women will join the contraceptive users' ranks.

By using technology, Dr Ayesha has transformed these vital statistics in her project. In the first phase (2019 for 15 months), in a population of 278,000 with 36,000 women she managed to increase CPR from 33pc to 44pc. Mainly injections and IUCD (intra-uterine contraceptive device) were used with the per user cost amounting to only Rs1,100. In the second phase (2023 for two years) more residents were added — 800,000 with 126,000 women. The results? The CPR shot up dramatically to 51pc. In the second phase, technology was used and the rise in CPR was dramatic.

Dr Ayesha says that if all urban slums were provided with this technology-driven programme, 37m people would be reached. And that is a substantial number.

Will the increase in the outreach of family planning facilities cause people to internalise the 'small family' message? Dr Adnan believes it will not. Once the pressure is withdrawn, they will lapse into having sex without using contraceptives. The narrative has to be changed. I agree. Fundamentally, it calls for the empowerment of women and to teach all and sundry about the rights of the young ones they give birth to.

The need is to treat human development holistically. We have to promote education, provide healthcare, livelihood and shelter for all. Without these basic needs being fulfilled, people will have no control over their lives. Would a man unaware of what lies in store for him worry about the planet being overpopulated? - Courtesy Dawn

Dropped chances

Shahzad Sharjeel

We have been approaching polio wrong all along. It is not just a public health, water, and sanitation problem. Above all else, it is a political economy and geostrategic challenge.

Poliomyelitis is a viral infection transmitted via the oral-faecal route that targets the motor nervous system, leading to paralysis. It is sometimes fatal. Pakistan and Afghanistan are the last holdouts of polio. The fate of the rest of the world depends on these two countries separated by the Durand Line. Those who have been helping Pakistan eradicate polio face a choice: how would they choose if the choice came down to a polio-free world and the status quo in the region?

The custodians of Pakistan's national security must decide if any strategic depth is worth inflicting on the country's future generations this crippling disease and, in the process, being singled out as the nation that took down the entire globe with it because it sought to treat a neighbouring country as its backyard.

The hospitable people in the borderlands regularly take to the streets in the thousands to participate in peace rallies; it is the security apparatus that should realise that we suffered enough by embroiling ourselves in other people's wars and espousing proxies.

If we had informed certain 'guests' that they were not welcome on our soil, those hunting them would not have stooped so low as to go sniffing in the guise of vaccinators. The backlash continues to haunt us.

The political economy of procuring the polio vaccine drops and utilising the Bill and Melinda Gates Founda-

tion IDA buyback programme by successive governments in fits and starts warrants an in-depth investigation. We have a history of under-the-table deals on anything and everything, from wheat imports to sugar exports. What makes us believe some will not salivate when procuring polio drops?

No country in the world has lost as many polio vaccination workers, including health and police personnel, in terrorist attacks as we have. According to reports, more than 200 members of vaccination teams have been killed. The shambolic handling of security strategy in campaigns is among the prime reasons.

Polio eradication is more of a communication challenge than anything else. Mullah Fazlullah was running over 100 illegal FM channels, spewing venom against the vaccine and vaccinators. Pakistan and its development partners were solely focused on vaccine drops, the cold chain, and some attention to inter-provincial movement. No effort was made to counter the negative propaganda in the guise of religion. One cannot think of a single public or community radio channel countering the militant vitriol.

A lack of political will is usually disguised as a lack of capacity. We would have had different results if even five per cent of the polio eradication budget had been earmarked for strategic communication and the right expertise had been tapped.

Photo-ops for prominent personalities administering polio drops are fine but insufficient. An in-depth and nuanced communication strategy is required, with the right messages and messengers reaching every neighbourhood and

street. India and Nigeria did it despite poverty, illiteracy, and myriad insurgency movements to match ours, so why can't we? The poorest corners of Africa have won the battle against this disease; whenever a freak case reappears anywhere, we brace ourselves lest it be traced back to us. The last case Malawi recorded two years ago was traced to a Pakistani strain. We are not too popular around the globe for myriad acts of omission and commission. The world is seeing a tilt towards right-wing, authoritarian leaders vowing to build iron walls to keep out immigrants. Even supposedly friendly countries go about announcing that Pakistani labour is not welcome. Before the world decides to put polio-related travel curbs on us, we need to put all the genres of extremism, militancy, and regression back in the bottle.

All entities trying to help Pakistan need to change tack. They should use all the leverage; any stakeholder who does not cooperate in polio eradication should forget about transit trade, continued facilitation to refugees, defence courses, spare parts for the stockpiled junk, and access to technology.

At times, one feels pity for Bill Gates. He tries his best to help us rid ourselves of polio. One wonders if the amused look on his face during his last meeting with the Pakistani leadership was because he had heard 'resolves to fight polio' before or if he was merely bemused by the matching socks and neckties in the room.

Fourteen new polio cases have already surfaced in Pakistan. We must turn the search for the latest polio case into a hunt for the last one. - Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

Pakistan eyes Turkish expertise to elevate aviation industry

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, while appreciating the success of Turkish aviation industry on Friday, said that collaboration in this sector with Turkiye was an important part of bilateral relations between the two countries.

During a meeting with Chairperson of Pegasus Airlines, Mehmet T. Nane, who was accompanied by CEO of Lucky Cement Limited Muhammad Ali Tabba, the minister noted

that the collaboration in this field was aligned with the Prime Minister's vision to enhance Pakistan's aviation industry.

He also recalled a recent meeting with the Turkish Trade Minister, where both sides discussed various avenues for trade and business collaboration, according to press release issued by finance ministry.

This meeting, he noted, was part of broader strategy to strengthen ties between Pakistan and Turkey in multiple sectors, including

aviation. On the occasion, Mehmet T. Nane presented an overview of the Turkish aviation strategy, highlighting key aspects that could benefit Pakistan's aviation sector. He elaborated on how Pakistan could leverage Turkiye's experience and expertise to advance its own aviation industry.

The discussions were deemed highly fruitful, marking a step forward in Pakistan's efforts to boost its aviation capabilities and foster stronger economic ties with Turkiye.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Three ships, Tolten, X-Press Anglesey and Epic Burano carrying Container and LPG, berthed at Qasim International Container Terminals and Engro Vopak Terminal respectively on Thursday. Eleven ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them three ships Tolten, X-Press Anglesey and New Apex left the port today morning while four more ships, Antares, Epic Burano, Navig-8 Constellation, and Madison Eagle are expected to sail on Friday.

Cargo volume of 142,127 tonnes, comprising 94,464 tonnes of import cargo and 47,663 tonnes of export cargo carried in 3,294 Containers (2,003 TEUs Imports & 1,291 TEUs Export) was handled at the port during the last 24 hours. Four ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them two ships, Solar Roma and Gaschem Mosel & four more ships, Bolan, Beijing, Hyundai Busan, and Maersk Columbus carrying Palm oil, Chemicals, Mogas, and Container are expected to take berths at LCT, EVTL.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, in a meeting with Mr. Mehmet T. Nane, Chairperson of Pegasus Airlines, accompanied by Mr. Muhammad Ali Tabba, CEO of Lucky Cement Limited.

Telenor Velocity, I2I collaborate to transform Pak startup landscape

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a strategic move to bolster Pakistan's growing startup ecosystem, Telenor Velocity, Telenor Pakistan's premier startup accelerator, forged a powerful alliance with Invest2Innovate (i2i).

According to news release by combining Telenor Pakistan's market reach, technological infrastructure, and industry expertise with i2i's proven track record in

nurturing entrepreneurs, this partnership aims to empower startups to scale rapidly and compete on a global stage.

Pakistan's youthful demographic, with 64% of the population under 30, presents an immense opportunity for innovation. With a population of nearly 240 million and 80% teledensity, the country boasts a vibrant startup ecosystem.

SBP injects Rs966.5b into market

KARACHI (APP): State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) injected Rs966.5 billion in the market on Friday through reverse repo purchase and Shariah Compliant Mudarabah based Open Market Operation (OMO). According to OMO results issued here, the SBP conducted Open Market Operation, Reverse Repo Purchase (Injection) on August 23, 2024 for 7-day and 28-day tenors and accepted 20 bids cumulatively amounting to Rs816.5 billion.

The central bank received 19 bids for 7-day tenor cumulatively offering an amount of Rs1,119.4 billion at the rate of return

ranging between 19.58 to 19.65 percent while 2 bids were received for the 28-day tenor offering an amount of Rs16.5 billion at the rate of return ranging between 19.61 to 19.62%.

The SBP accepted 18 quotes for 7-day tenor amounting to Rs800 billion at 19.59% rate of return while 2 quotes for 28-day tenor amounting to Rs16.5 billion were accepted at 19.61% rate of return.

Meanwhile, the central bank also conducted Shariah Compliant Mudarabah based Open Market Operation for 7-day and 28-day tenors and injected Rs150 billion in the market.

SNGPL disconnects eight more connections

LODHAN (APP): Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) UFG Control Task Force cut off eight more connections including one commercial besides removing six extensions. Giving details, SNGPL sources said a consumer was found using a compressor to suck gas, and his connection was severed.

In Gaggi Mandi, a consumer was found using a domestic meter for commercial purposes, and his meter was also removed.

PSX gains 08 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bullish trend on Friday and gained 08.01 points, showing a slight positive change of 0.01 percent, closing at 78,801.43 points against 78,793.41 points on the last working day.

A total of 682,409,886 shares were traded during the day as compared to 804,261,249 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 18.168 billion against Rs 16.975 billion on the last trading day.

Pak-Afghan liaison body demands extension in TAD implementation

PESHAWAR (APP): Businessmen dealing in Pak-Afghan trade have demanded a two-month delay in the implementation of the recently enforced Temporary Admission Documentation (TAD) policy to allow clearance of the long queue of trucks standing on both sides of the border in wait of permission for goods delivery.

The demand was made during a meeting of the Pak-Afghan Liaison Committee held at the Directorate of Transit

Trade Model Custom Collectorate with Additional Director Transit Trade, Dr. Tahir Iqbal Khattak.

According to a press release issued here on Friday, the meeting was attended by Coordinator Pak-Afghan Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PAJCCI), Zia-ul-Haq Sarhadi, Former SVP SCCL, Engr Manzoor Elahi, President Khyber Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Syed Jawad Hussain Kazmi, VP Frontier Custom Agents Association.



HYDERABAD: A worker is busy operating a power loom to prepare cloth in a local factory.

Short-term inflation eases by 0.10 percent

ISLAMABAD (APP): The weekly inflation, measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed a decrease of 0.10 percent for the combined consumption groups during the week ended on August 22, 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 321.72 points as compared to 322.03 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 16.69 per cent.

The weekly SPI with the base year 2015-16 =100 covers 17 urban

centres and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups. Likewise, SPI for the lowest consumption group of up to Rs 17,732, witnessed decrease of 0.24 per cent and went down to 310.29 points from last week's 311.04 points. The SPI for the consumption groups of Rs 17,732-22,888; Rs 22,889-29,517; Rs 29,518-44,175 and above Rs 44,175 decreased by 0.22 percent, 0.15; 0.12 percent and 0.05 percent respectively. During the week, out of 51 items, prices of 21 (41.18%) items increased, 9 (17.64%) items decreased and 21 (41.18%) items remained stable. The items, which recorded major decrease in their average prices on a week-on-week basis included tomatoes (21.96%).



QUETTA: A vendor displaying fresh Melon (Garma) at Joint Road Quetta to attract customers to experience the sweet, juicy flavor of locally grown fruit.

Naem Mir says: Tax table being reviewed to address trader's apprehensions

FAISALABAD (APP): Coordinator to Prime Minister for Tajir Dost Scheme Muhammad Naem Mir has said that tax table is being reviewed to address apprehensions of traders.

Addressing a meeting in the committee room of DC Office here, he said that main objective of PM's Tajir Dost Scheme is to facilitate traders for tax filing. Under this scheme, the traders could get them registered as filer through mobile app without the

help of any consultant. This scheme would help the non-filers to file their income tax returns easily.

He said that under Tajir Dost scheme, the tax table is being reviewed so that apprehensions of the traders could be redressed. He said that powers of tax collection are being transferred at regional level and now Regional Commissioner FBR could review the tax table after consulting the traders and addressing their apprehensions.

Punjab Health minister emphasizes commitment to providing best health facilities

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Health Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique reiterated the government's commitment to enhancing healthcare services across the province. In a meeting with Professor Javed Akram, Head of the Pakistan Society of Internal Medicine (PSIM), and other key officials at the Department of Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education, the minister emphasized the ongoing efforts to provide the best health facilities to the masses. During the discussion, he highlighted that the PSIM has been instrumental in advancing medical services globally, including within Pakistan. He further stated that, in line with Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif's vision, significant improvements are being made in the healthcare system and available facilities. "Allah Almighty has given us a rare opportunity to serve patients in government hospitals," he remarked, underlining the importance of this responsibility. Professor Javed Akram announced that the PSIM is organizing an international conference in November, aimed at furthering medical education.



LAHORE: Punjab Health Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique and Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif in a meeting with Professor Javed Akram, Head of the Pakistan Society of Internal Medicine (PSIM), and other key officials at the Department of Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education.

Justice Chaudhry Iqbal recuses from hearing case against internet shut down

LAHORE (Online) Justice Chaudhry Muhammad Iqbal of Lahore High Court (LHC) has recused from hearing petition against internet shut down and installation of firewall. The petition against internet shut down and installation of fire wall came up for hearing in LHC Friday. Justice Chaudhry Muhammad Iqbal while recusing from hearing petition filed by Judicial Activism Panel ordered to transfer the case to the court of Justice Shakil Ahmad. The court said Justice Shakil Ahmad is

hearing cases similar to this case. The petitioner had taken plea internet and social media apps have been shut down in the country without giving any reason and notice. Every sphere of life and business is being affected due to internet shut down. It was further said in the petition that shutting down internet runs contrary to fundamental human rights. The court was requested to nullify the federal government decision for shutting down internet besides issuing order for complete.



LAHORE: Provincial Ministers for Health Khawaja Salman Rafique and Khawaja Imran Nazeer preside over the 7th meeting of cabinet committee for Dengue and other diseases.

Governor Kundi thanks PM in construction of Dera-Rajanpur road

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, on Friday expressed his gratitude to Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Federal Minister for National Highways Abdul Aleem Khan and the officials of the National Highway Authority (NHA) for their support in the construction of 329 kilometers Dera Ismail Khan to Rajanpur road. In a video message, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi said that the construction work on this

vital road will begin this year. He said that the road will be upgraded from a two-lane to a four-lane highway with the support of the Asian Development Bank, holds immense importance for both Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab. Tenders for the project have already been issued that would usher new era of development, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi added. The Governor also highlighted that construction work on the Ramak to Tibba Qaisarani section of the road will start within this year. The project is divided into four phases, with the Dera Ismail Khan to Ramak to Punjab Tibba Qaisarani section covering 96 kilometers. Additionally, Kundi mentioned that tenders for the Dera Ismail Khan Chashma Lift Canal project will soon be issued. The Prime Minister has allocated 19 billion rupees from the federal budget for this project. Kundi thanked Federal Minister Musadiq Malik and the Chairman of WAPDA for their roles in this initiative. The Governor also revealed that the No

Objection Certificate (NOC) for the Dera Ismail Khan International Airport has been issued, with construction expected to start next year. Kundi emphasized that these mega projects will significantly contribute to regional development, highlighting that practical steps are being taken rather than just making promises. The road and canal projects are set to be inaugurated later this year, while the airport project will commence in the coming year.

Meeting appreciates govt plans, efforts to protect minorities' rights in Punjab

LAHORE (APP): A Chairperson of Punjab Women Protection Authority Hina Parvez Butt highlighted the vision of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz's Digital Punjab and development of the province. She said that under the leadership of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, the rights of women, especially those belonging to religious minorities, were being safeguarded. She added that women in Punjab were making significant contribution to development of Pakistan, and they were prominently visible in every field.



HYDERABAD: People are using boat for transportation due to non-availability of bridge to cross the canal, at Channel Mori in Hyderabad.

Eman Shah says: GB govt's Rs 5bn fund to bridge healthcare gaps for deserving patients

ISLAMABAD (APP): Advisor to Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan, Eman Shah Friday said that Gilgit-Baltistan government has taken a major step towards bridging the region's healthcare gap with the establishment of a Rs 5 billion endowment fund, where the fund will cover treatment costs for deserving patients, alleviating financial distress and ensuring timely medical care. The government's commitment to prioritizing citizens' health and well-being is further demonstrated by plans to increase the fund annually, he said while talking to PTV news. The establishment of the endowment fund is a testament to the Chief Minister's vision for a healthier Gilgit-Baltistan, he added. By providing financial assistance to deserving patients, the government aims to reduce the burden of medical expenses on low-income families and ensure that everyone has access to quality healthcare, he mentioned. For deserving patients in Gilgit-Baltistan, the endowment fund brings a ray of hope, he said, adding, many patients in the region have been unable to access medical treatment due to financial constraints where this fund will now provide them.

ANF recovers 234 kg drugs in four operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting four operations managed to recover 234 kg drugs worth Rs 20 million and arrested five accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Friday. He said that 123.6 kg opium and 108 kg hashish were recovered from a vehicle intercepted on M-1 Motorway Islamabad and two accused were arrested. In another operation, 1.5 kg heroin was recovered from a woman netted near Kamalpur Interchange, Faisalabad. 400 grams ice was recovered from an accused rounded up on Hub River Road Karachi.

GB govt forms committee to address dam affected people's grievances

GILGIT (APP): Chief Minister of Gilgit-Baltistan Haji Gulbar Khan while addressing a high-level meeting regarding the implementation of CBMs for the Diamer Bhasha Dam and Dasu Dam said that these dams are of utmost importance for Pakistan's prosperity. CM GB said the people of Diamer have made sacrifices for the completion of these projects. It is our collective responsibility to address the genuine concerns and apprehensions of the affected people, he added. He said the non-implementation of CBM's has raised severe concerns among the people of Diamer. He added that in a recent meeting with the Chairman WAPDA, the issue of CBM's was also discussed. In the meeting, Brigadier @ Shoaib Tahir, General Manager of Land Acquisition and Resettlement, and General Manager/Project Director Diamer Bhasha Dam Engineer Nizakat Hussain presented the revised CBM plan on the directives of the Chairman WAPDA and briefed about it. On this occasion, the Chief Minister formed a special committee comprising elected members of the Assembly from Diamer.

4 of family found dead in car

SARGODHA (APP): Four members of a family were found dead in a car, in the jurisdiction of Bhera police station on Friday. Motorway police received a call about a suspected car (LEF-7339) at Bhera motorway interchange. On information, the motorway police reached the spot and found five member of a family in a precarious condition in the car. Rescue-1122 volunteers shifted the victims to a hospital where Romeela (60), Mehwish (30), Samer (28) and Auon (4) expired while Umar Qasim (30) was still under treatment. The victims were belonged to Lahore. Doctors said the consumption of tainted food was the cause of death.

International News

Kamala Harris accepts Democratic nomination ahead of US elections with pledge of 'new way forward'

Monitoring Desk WASHINGTON: Kamala Harris accepted the Democratic presidential nomination in Chicago on Thursday before a rapturous crowd, pledging a "new way forward" if she beats Republican Donald Trump in November's blockbuster election. The 59-year-old sought to strike a presidential tone as she delivered a message of unity and opportunity for Americans following one of the most extraordinary turnarounds in US political history. She lashed out at Trump, accusing him of trying to "take our country" backwards and of cosying up to foreign "tyrants" like Russian President Vladimir Putin. "On behalf of everyone whose story could only be written in the greatest nation on earth, I accept your nomination to be president of the United

States of America," the vice president said to huge cheers. "I will be a president who unites us around our highest aspirations," she vowed. The convention became a giant party to celebrate Harris's astonishing ascent from something of a political afterthought to Democratic standard bearer upon President Joe Biden's surprise decision to end his reelection bid. A sea of waving Stars and Stripes flags and chants of "USA" filled the arena as jubilant Democrats anointed Harris. She was later joined on stage by her running mate Tim Walz and their families, as they held their arms aloft while 100,000 red, white and blue balloons tumbled from the ceiling. Country act The Chicks sang a version of "The Star-Spangled Banner" while pop star Pink also performed as the Demo-

crats rolled out a list of celebrity backers. Harris pledged to be a "president for all Americans" in a bid to reach out to undecided voters. With the November election, Americans have a "fleeting opportunity to move past the bitterness, cynicism and divisive battles of the past — a chance to chart a new way forward," she promised. Harris then took aim at 78-year-old Trump, whose campaign has been upended by having to face a woman two decades younger, rather than the increasingly frail Biden, 81. "We know what a second Trump term would look like," she said, referring to a right-wing think tank's blueprint for a future Republican government. "It's all laid out in 'Project 2025,' written by his closest advisors, and its sum total is to pull our country back to the past."



US Second Gentleman Douglas Emhoff, US 2024 Democratic presidential candidate Kamala Harris, Minnesota Governor and 2024 Democratic vice presidential candidate Tim Walz and Tim Walz's wife Gwen Walz hold hands at the end of the fourth and last day of the DNC at the United Center in Chicago, Illinois.

India's Modi meets Zelensky on historic Ukraine visit

Monitoring Desk KYIV: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi met Ukraine's leader Volodymyr Zelensky on a historic visit to Kyiv on Friday, where he is pushing for a solution to end more than two years of war with Russia. Modi embraced Zelensky — who looked visibly emotional — at the Mariinsky palace in Kyiv, in the first ever visit by an Indian premier to Ukraine. The Indian leader is casting himself as a possible peacemaker between Moscow and Kyiv. But his visit comes at a dramatic moment in the two-and-a-half year war, with a diplomatic settlement appearing more elusive than ever. Kyiv's forces are mounting a major incursion into Russia's Kursk region while Moscow's army is advancing in eastern Ukraine.

World's second largest diamond found in Botswana

Monitoring Desk GABORONE: A massive 2,492-carat diamond — the second largest in the world — has been discovered in Botswana, the Canadian mining company that found the stone announced on Thursday. The diamond was discovered in the Karowe Diamond Mine in northeastern Botswana using x-ray detection technology. Lucara Diamond Corp. said in a statement. Lucara did not give a value for the find or mention its quality. But in terms of carats, the stone is second only to the 3,016-carat Cullinan Diamond discovered in South Africa in 1905.

27 killed as Israeli tanks push deeper into Gaza

Monitoring Desk CAIRO: Israeli forces pressed deeper into areas of the central and southern Gaza Strip as they battled Hamas fighters, while Palestinian health officials said on Thursday that Israeli strikes had killed at least 27 people across the enclave. The new escalation comes hours after US President Joe Biden pressed Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on the urgency of sealing a deal for a truce in Gaza and the release of prisoners, the White House said. Separately, US and Israeli delegations started a new round of meetings in Cairo on Thursday to secure a ceasefire deal. Months of on-off talks on a ceasefire have circled the same issues, but Israel and Hamas have stuck firmly to their demands. In the northern Gaza town of Beit Lahiya, a strike on a house killed 11 people, including children and women, the bodies of some of whom had been buried, according to the territory's Civil Emergency Service. Medics said another strike killed six people, including a local journalist, in a house in Al-Maghazi camp in the central Gaza Strip, while five others were killed in separate strikes in the south. Later on Thursday, five Palestinians were killed and several wounded in an Israeli airstrike that hit people near a square in Khan Younis, health officials said. The Israeli military said its forces had intensified their operations in Deir Al-Balah, in central Gaza.

France's Macron holds talks with key political players in a bid to form a new government

Monitoring Desk PARIS: After the excitement of the Paris Olympics and a Mediterranean vacation, now French President Emmanuel Macron has to figure out how to make his country govern again. Faced with a hung parliament, social tensions and ballooning debt, Macron kicked off talks Friday with key political players in a bid to choose a new prime minister who would form a government and end the deadlock created by snap legislative elections last month. Members of the left-wing New Popular Front coalition that won the most seats pressured Macron for a quick decision. Their nominee for prime minister, little-known civil

servant Lucie Castets, said after Friday's meetings in the Elysee Palace that she was ready to govern, and ready for compromise to get things done. But the party only has about a third of the seats in the National Assembly, France's powerful lower house of parliament, and no party has a majority. Macron's centrist alliance came in second and the far-right National Rally came in third. There's no rulebook that requires Macron to name a candidate from the party that won the most seats, or lays out a timeline for a decision. The absence of any dominant political bloc is unprecedented in France's modern Republic.

Body found by Italy rescue divers is Mike Lynch's daughter: source

Monitoring Desk PORTICELLO: Italian divers have retrieved the body of British tech magnate Mike Lynch's 18-year-old daughter, Hannah, who was the last person still unaccounted for after the family's luxury yacht sank this week, a source with knowledge of the situation said. The British-flagged Bayesian, a 56-meter-long (184-foot) superyacht carrying 22 passengers and crew, was anchored off the port of Porticello, near Palermo, when it capsized and sank on Monday within minutes of being struck by a pre-dawn storm. For all the latest headlines follow our Google News channel online or via the app.

21 Indians dead, more feared missing after bus plunges into Nepal river

Monitoring Desk NEW DELHI: Half of the passengers in a bus carrying 43 Indians died on Friday when the vehicle plunged into a rain-swollen river in neighbouring Nepal, according to a spokesperson for the Himalayan nation's armed police. A total of 21 people died and 22 were injured, Shailendra Thapa, a spokesman for the armed police said, adding that all 41 passengers and two crew were Indian and headed to the capital Kathmandu from the tourist city of Pokhara when the accident occurred. Roads in the mountainous region can challenge drivers as they are often narrow and treacherous, making it tough to manoeuvre large vehicles around hairpin curves. Rescuers pulled 22 people from the rain-swollen waters of the Marsyangdi river in the Tanahun district, about 118 kilometres from Kathmandu, of which 12 were seriously injured and airlifted to the capital. Police and army teams climbed down long metal ladders to reach the river, using ropes to pull the injured and dead.

10 migrants drown as boat sinks on Serbia-Bosnia border

Monitoring Desk SARAJEVO: Authorities recovered 10 bodies, including an infant, after a boat carrying migrants capsized on Thursday in the Drina River on the Serbia-Bosnia border, but officials said other people were believed missing. Police said the vessel was carrying several migrants when it flipped near Ljubovija in Serbia, a transit country on the so-called "Balkan route" that migrants use to reach the EU.

UK PM tells China's Xi he hopes for 'honest' discussions

Monitoring Desk LONDON: UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer told Chinese President Xi Jinping on Friday he hoped they could have "honest" discussions about thorny issues as they held the first call between leaders of the countries in over two years. The formal conversation was the first between the pair since Starmer won power last month, and was also the first official call between a British leader and Xi since March 2022. The chat comes amid a period of strained relations between London and Beijing over espionage allegations and Beijing's tightening control over former British colony Hong Kong. The two remain major trading partners, however, and are both permanent members of the United Nations Security Council. According to a Downing Street readout of the call, Starmer noted hope that he and Xi "would be able to have open, frank, and honest discussions to address and understand areas of disagreement when necessary". Such issues include "Hong Kong, Russia's war in Ukraine, and human rights," the readout said. China was Britain's fifth-largest trading partner as of 2023, according to UK statistics, but diplomatic relations were icy under Starmer's predecessor Rishi Sunak. Soon after taking office in October 2022, Sunak declared an end to the so-called "golden era" of UK-China relations trumpeted by former prime minister David Cameron. Sunak characterised China as a "systemic challenge" to UK values. Espionage allegations have since presented additional hurdles to repairing relations, with Beijing saying in June that MI6 recruited Chinese state employees to spy for the UK.

PM Shehbaz seeks proposals to shut down Utility Stores

ISLAMABAD (INP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has sought proposals for shutting down the state-owned Utility Stores Corporation (USC) and replaces it with a new system.

The prime minister also called for proposals within two weeks for an alternative system in place of the Utility Stores.

The government was mulling to give cash amounts to BISP consumers of the Utility Stores.

In the meanwhile, the Utility Stores have stopped sale of subsidized items to the BISP consumers.

The Utility Stores Corporation is a state-owned enterprise that was founded in 1971 and which

operates chain stores throughout the country that provide basic commodities to the general public at prices which are lower than the open market because the government subsidizes them.

It approximately has nearly 15,000 employees and 5,939 store outlets across Pakistan.

It may be mentioned here that the government had already decided to abolish five federal ministries. The ministries on the chopping block were Information Technology, Kashmir Affairs, Science and Technology, Industry and Production, and Health Services.

Later, after having second thoughts, the govern-

ment had decided not to abolish the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination. Some departments under the ministry will be merged instead and the ministry will be right-sized.

The ministry will coordinate with international organizations and provinces to improve healthcare services. The government is also considering transferring employees of merged departments to other departments.

The National Emergency Health Services will be merged with the National Health Institute and the Sheikh Zayed Hospital in Lahore will be handed over to the Punjab government, it was reported.



ISLAMABAD: As per PMs directives, NDMA convened the fourth meeting of National Disaster Response Committee (DRC) at NDMA HQs in Islamabad. The meeting was chaired by Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, Federal Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives and co-chaired by NDMA Chairman Lt. General Inam Haider Malik.

Business leader commends govt's decision to reduce its expenditures

KARACHI (INP): Chairman of the FPCCI Advisory Board and National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance and former provincial minister, Mian Zahid Hussain has commended the decision of the government to decrease its expenditures. Talking to business community on Friday, he termed the cut in government's expenditures vital for economic revival and said that without it economic development of country was not possible.

He said that the condition of people was dete-

riorating due to the continuous increase in taxes, but the government's income was not improving because its expenses were continuously increasing.

Mian Zahid Hussain further stated that the continuous increase in expenditure was not only happening in the current government, but it has been going on for the last several decades, and no government has tried to reduce the expenses. All governments instead have increased their dependence on loans, causing the country to reach the bankruptcy threshold, he added.

The business leader said that it was possible to

reduce people's problems only by reducing expenses, as it will produce other positive results. He said that the PM had announced the elimination of one and a half lakh posts, the impending closure of several institutions or their mergers, and the imposition of a ban on new recruitments. On the one hand, it has been decided to close the National Information Technology Board; on the other hand, it has been decided to speed up the process of privatisation of institutions, which was welcome because the failed institutions were causing a loss of trillions of rupees to the country every year.

Petroleum minister urges PTI to shun hate rhetoric, promote peace

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Petroleum Dr. Musadik Masood Malik on Friday warned the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leadership, particularly Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) Chief Minister should desist from making hate-based statements and spreading chaos in the country.

Talking to a Private news channel, he urged the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leadership to abandon their hate-filled rhetoric and instead embrace a peaceful and constructive approach to politics.

The Minister's warning comes amidst concerns that the PTI leadership has been engaged in a systematic effort to destabilize the country through various means, including the provocative events of May 9.

By perpetuating divisive rhetoric and promoting unrest, the PTI leadership is not only undermining national harmony but

also compromising the country's stability and security, he added.

Malik's warning serves as a reminder to the PTI leadership to prioritize the nation's interests over political expediency and to refrain from actions that could further weaken the country.

Minister for Petroleum revealed that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) Chief Minister had openly threatened to lead a procession to Islamabad, not for a peaceful protest, but for a "qabza" (occupation). Malik emphasized that such a move would not be tolerated at any cost, as it would pose a direct challenge to the law and order situation in the country.

He asserted that the government would not permit anyone to disrupt the peace and stability of Islamabad, and would take all necessary measures to maintain law and order.



HYDERABAD: Deputy Commissioner, Zain-ul-Abideen Memon addresses to media persons during press conference, at his office in Hyderabad.

PTA intensifies crackdown against illegal issuance of SIMs

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) Zonal Office in Lahore, in a close collaboration with the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Cyber Crime Circle, conducted a raid against a telecom franchisee located at Depalpur, District Okara.

According to a press release, prior to this, hundreds of complaints were received from poor female residents of the area regarding the misuse of their fingerprints and the unlawful issuance of SIMs under the guise of distributing Rashan through the BISP program.

During the raid, the

FIA seized 25 suspicious SIMs, and 2 suspected BVV devices. The Retailer of the franchise was arrested at the spot and FIR has been registered by the agency. FIA Cybercrime Circle is further investigating the case.

This action was the result of complaint filed by the PTA with the FIA, concerning the illegal activation of SIMs through the sales channel.

The crackdown is part of PTA's ongoing efforts to curtail illegal issuance of SIMs and underscores Authority's dedication for eradicating the menace.

Regional Federal Ombudsman decides cases related to SEPCO & SSGC

SUKKUR (APP): On the instructions of Federal Ombudsman Ejaz Ahmed Qureshi, the Federal Ombudsman Sukkur Regional head, Syed Mahmood Ali Shah on Friday heard the petitions received against Sukkur Electric Supply Company (SEPCO) and Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) in Larkana.

Decisions were made on the applications while the remaining 2 applications were referred to NEPRA, in addition, deci-

sions were issued on 15 applications filed against Sui Southern Gas Company.

Shah further instructed the officials of the concerned departments to implement the decisions issued by the affected applicants as soon as possible and not to do injustice to anyone while strict action will be taken against the violators of the order. SSGC Deputy Manager, Saeed Ahmed Korejo and the complainants participated.



KARACHI: Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM-P) Leader, Anis Qaimkhani in a group photo along with newly elected cabinet of National Institute of Facilitation Technology (NIFT), at Pakistan House in Karachi.

PMIC CEO visits SAFCO, discusses financial sector challenges & strategies

HYDERABAD (APP): Chief Executive Officer of Pakistan Microfinance Investment Company (PMIC) Yasir Ashfaq visited SAFCO head office and discussed the challenges being faced by financial sector and the strategy to address them with the SAFCO leadership.

Yasir Ashfaq, along with Asghar Ali Memon, head of PMIC portfolio management, reached SAFCO head office in Hyderabad, where SAFCO Microfinance Company founder, president and CEO Suleman G. Abro and MD Syed Sajjad Ali Shah welcomed them and apprised them about the progress of SMC since its transformation into a profitable company.

According to a press release, during the joint discussion, the current situation of the financial sector in Pakistan was reviewed, in which it was expressed that while calamities such as Covid and floods have weakened the national economy, rising inflation has also affected the financial sector. These challenges had also increased the importance of the sector, as the people involved in the business sector needed financial assistance to improve their economic status, which perhaps never before. Answering the questions of the SAFCO team, the head of PMIC expressed his assessment about the opportunities and challenges faced by this sector.



KARACHI: Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan addresses to business community, at Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) in Karachi.

NDMA convenes 4th session of Disaster Response Committee

ISLAMABAD (APP): As per Prime Minister's directives, NDMA convened the fourth meeting of National Disaster Response Committee (DRC) at NDMA headquarters here on Friday.

The meeting was chaired by Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, Federal Minister for Planning and Special Initiatives and co-chaired by NDMA Chairman Lt. General Inam Haider Malik, a news release said.

The session focused on evaluating the progress of directives issued during the third DRC and updates

were provided on response undertaken by the provincial departments during rain emergencies. The plans to address potential emergencies that are likely to happen in the next monsoon spell specifically in South Punjab, Sindh and Balochistan were discussed.

Representatives of Pakistan Railway and National Highway Authority apprised the forum about damages of infrastructure and communication lines during localised rain emergencies.

02 Lyari gangsters arrested in joint operation by Rangers, Police

KARACHI (APP): The Pakistan Rangers Sindh and police in a joint intelligence-based operation, arrested two most-wanted suspects, Ameer Hamza and Haris, in the Kharadar area of Karachi.

The suspects are affiliated with the Ayaz Zehri group of the Lyari gang and have been involved in street crimes. Weapons and ammunition were recovered during the operation, according to a Rangers spokesperson on Friday.

DIG Sukkur reaches Rahim Yar Khan, inquires injured police men

SUKKUR (APP): Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Police, Sukkur Range, Pir Muhammad Shah on Friday reached Shaikh Zaid Hospital Rahim Yar Khan and enquired to injured Police men, who came under rocket attack from dacoits in the Machka area, near the Punjab-Sindh border.

DIGP Sukkur also expressed profound grief and sorrow over the martyrdom of 11 police personnel and said it would not go unavenged. He asked the SSP Ghotki to coordinate with their counterparts in Punjab.

Four killed in a road accident near Sukkur

SUKKUR (APP): At least four people, including a woman, were killed in a truck-car collision on the M5 Motorway in Pano Aqil area, Sukkur district, on Friday.

According to rescue officials, a car was going from Sukkur to Multan when it collided with the truck coming from the opposite side.

Soon after the incident was reported, the rescue teams reached the site and shifted bodies and injured people to the Taluka headquarters hospital for medico-legal proceedings.

It is mentioned here that at least eight people have been killed and ten others have received injuries as a result of the collision between a passenger bus and trailer truck on the Sukkur-Multan motorway this week.

Cop, suspected robber injured in encounter

HYDERABAD (APP): A policeman and a suspected robber sustained gunshot injuries in an exchange of fire on Tharu Khan link road in the limits of Husri police station. The police spokesman informed here on Friday that the encounter occurred between a gang of robbers and a police team at Husri police station. He added that police constable Mumtaz Ali and a suspected outlaw, Sheeraz Nizamani were injured in the incident.

Ahsan concerned over alarming results of District Education Performance Index

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Friday expressed concern over the fall of 58 percent of the country's districts in the medium category of the District Education Performance Index (DEPIx), and remaining in the under-performing.

Addressing a news conference following the release of the DEPIx 2020-23 report, Iqbal said Pakistan's literacy rate of 60 percent was insufficient for progress and must be increased to 90 percent.

"Pakistan's national average score on the index is a modest 53 out of 100, placing the country in the 'Low' performance category," according to the report Compiled by the Planning Commission in collaboration with international experts and government agencies.

The report is the first of its kind to measure district-level education performance, focusing on key outcomes such as access, learning, equity, governance and inputs like infrastructure and public financing.

Ahsan Iqbal said Pakistan's 124 districts have scored an average of 53 percent in education, with no district falling into the high-performance category except Islamabad.

The report highlighted issues such as lack of Internet access and the diminishing role of technical institutions in education.

The minister said the declining quality of education has led to decreased enrollment in government schools and stressed the need for revolutionary measures like providing Internet access in schools, ensuring technological education and increasing digital literacy.

Sindh schools to remain closed on August 26

KARACHI (INP): All public and private schools across Sindh will remain closed on Monday (August 26) on account of the Chehnum of Imam Hussain (RA), the provincial government announced on Friday.

A notification issued for the announcement of the Chehnum holiday stated that the decision of educational institutes' closure was taken by a steering committee of the provincial education department.

The Chehnum of Hazrat Imam Hussain (RA) will be observed on Monday across the province with religious zeal and reverence amid high security. The event marks the culmination of a 40-day mourning period after the martyrdom date of Hazrat Imam Hussain (RA) and his 72 companions in the Battle of Karbala on the 10th of Muharram in 680AD. Mourning processions with Alam, Tazia, and Zuljinnah would be taken out in different cities across the province.



RAHIM YAR KHAN: Federal Minister for Interior, Mohsin Naqvi attending funeral prayer of martyred police personnel in Rahim Yar Khan.

SHC orders return of underage girl to parents after forced marriage

KARACHI (INP): The Sindh High Court has directed the investigating officer to record the statement of a minor girl who was allegedly abducted and forcibly married and ordered her immediate return to her parents.

During the hearing, officials from the shelter home presented the girl before the court. The girl testified that the accused, Rafiqat, had threatened her and taken her to Sialkot, where he forcibly married her.

After hearing her statement, the court instructed

the investigating officer to officially record her testimony and ensure that she is handed over to her parents. The court also concluded the hearing on the petition seeking the girl's recovery.

The petition stated that last year, a 13-year-old girl was abducted from New Karachi by a neighbor named Rafiqat, who took her to Sialkot and forced her into marriage. The case of her abduction was registered at the Khawaja Ajmair Nagri police station.

Child infected with polio detected in Hyderabad

HYDERABAD (APP): A 29-month old child has been detected with polio virus in Hyderabad as a first case reported from the city in the current year. The National Emergency Operation Center for Polio Eradication on Thursday night informed the health authorities that a female child had been detected with Type-1 Wild Polio Virus (WPV1) from her stool test. According to the center, that was the third polio case in Sindh and first in Hyderabad in 2024. The virus has been classified as YB3A and it is 99.22% linked to a virus detected in an environmental sample collected.

Light rain in Sukkur turns weather pleasant

SUKKUR (INP): Light rain in different areas of Sukkur on Thursday night and early Friday turned weather pleasant.

According to local Met official, scattered rain/thunder showers were also expected in Sukkur division on Saturday.

Partly cloudy weather with chances of thunderstorm was predicted for Sunday.

Maximum temperature recovered in Sukkur division on Friday was 35 degrees centigrade.



BADIN: Hamdam Foundation launched its second phase of mangrove plantation in the Badin coastal area, aiming to plant over 100,000 seeds of Avicennia marina, following the successful planting of 20,000 Rhizophora mucronata seed pods earlier this year.



HYDERABAD: Employees of Utility Stores are holding protest demonstration against closure of utility stores, at Qasimabad in Hyderabad.

Special flight carrying bodies of pilgrims reached Sukkur Airport

SUKKUR (APP): The bodies of pilgrims belong to the Larkana division who died in a bus accident in Iran reached here at Sukkur Airport on Friday through a special flight.

The aircraft was landed at Begun Nusurat Bhutto Airport Sukkur in the afternoon. Families of the victims received the bodies.

Airport authorities have already completed the preparations at the airport. At least 32 Pakistani pilgrims travelling to Iraq to

attend Arbaeen of Chelnum of Hazrat Hussain (RA) were killed as their bus crashed in central Iran.

Member National Assembly (MNA), Syed Khursheed Ahmed Shah, Speaker Sindh Assembly Syed Awais Qadir Shah, Minister for Energy Sindh, Syed Nasir Hussain Shah and Spokesperson to Sindh Government and Mayor Sukkur Barrister Arslan Sheikh expressed their condolences and sympathies to the families of the bereaved.