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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 proposed merging the Ministry of Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan with the Ministry of State and Frontier Regions (SAFRON). The proposal involves closing 28 institutions

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.

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

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



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

PM hails Punjab gov't's historic relief Nawaz Sharif announces Rs 14 per unit electricity relief in Aug, Sept bills

PML-N supremo blames Imran-led gov't for skyrocketing inflation

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

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

The decision, according to Nawaz, comes after careful reduction of expenditures across various sectors, allowing the govern-

ment to allocate Rs 45 billion towards this relief effort. The move is expected to ease the financial burden on citizens during these hard months. He highlighted that this is not the first relief effort from the government. Earlier, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had announced similar support for consumers using up to 200 units of electricity per month.

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



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

Security forces kill three terrorists in N. Waziristan

RAWALPINDI (INP): Security forces have killed three terrorists during an intelligence-based operation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (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 Fina al Khawarij were sent to hell, while one Khawarij got injured." Weapons and ammunition were also recovered from the terrorists, who were actively involved in terrorist activities against security forces as well as the targeted killings of innocent civilians, it added.

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

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

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

All five unidentified bodies were tied to the poles after being shot dead. Well-placed sources in the local administration said that the identity of the victims remains unknown

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

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

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

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



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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Chief Minister was speaking to the lady police cops who had performed duties during protest demonstrations in Quetta and Gwadar, here on Friday.

The Inspector General of Police, Abdul Khaliq Sheikh and DIG Police Quetta, Aitezaz Ahsan Goraya were also present on the occasion.

The Chief Minister bucked up the lady police cops on discharging duties during tough circumstances.

The Chief Minister said that the lady police cops are the pride of Balochistan. He said that they are the real face of Balochistan and custodians of its traditions. He regret-

fully pointed out that those speaking of Baloch nationalism actually harassed the women police cops, and as such violated the Baloch traditions.

The Chief Minister said that the people witnessed that who broke the law, and who violated the Balochi traditions by harassing the female police personnels. He questioned that whether the women deputed in the police belonging to the respectable families and tribes don't fall in the tribal traditions which otherwise are claimed.

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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 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.

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

Pakistan refrains foreign govts from interfering in internal affairs

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

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

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

Mumtaz Zahra further said that Iran has every right to defend itself. Israel should be held accountable for such actions. The spokesperson of the Foreign Office also



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

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Petition against detention of deputy Supdt Adiala jail admitted for hearing

RAWALPINDI (Online): Justice Muhammad Raza Qureshi of Lahore High Court (LHC) Rawalpindi bench has admitted for hearing the petition against arrest of deputy superintendent Adiala Jail Rawalpindi.

After initial hearing of the petition the court issued notice to Baironi Sadar police station and sought reply on August 20.

Memona Riaz wife of Muhammad Akram, deputy superintendent Adiala jail Rawalpindi had filed petition making home secretary Punjab, defence secretary, Superintendent jail, IG Punjab and SHO Police station Sadar Baironi police respondents.

The petition was filed through Emman Mazari

advocate and Hadi Ali Chatha advocate.

The petitioner has taken plea that secret intelligence agencies arrested her husband illegally from his residence located in officers colony of jail on August 14 early in the morning. The petitioner gave application to respective police on August 15 for registration of case but police neither provided any information nor was any case registered by them.

On August 15 night the home of the petitioner was raided illegally without search warrant and all the devices in home were shut and taken into possession.

Later it came to knowledge through media that husband of the petitioner has been arrested on the

charges of facilitating PTI founder Imran Khan in jail.

It has been said in the petition that this way the basic constitutional rights of the petitioner and her husband were usurped despite there seems to be no offence on the part of her husband apparently. The petitioner does not know her husband has been kept why and where. It is feared he will be subjected to physical and mental torture. It was said in the petition while citing article 10 and 10-A of the constitution that transparent trial should be conducted in respect of her husband besides giving him opportunity for his defence.

It was essential as per law that he would have been presented in court within

24 hours of his detention. But it was not done so.

The petitioner has prayed the court to approve her petition for hearing. It should be made binding on police to register case of illegal detention. Meeting of her and her children be arranged with her husband. The court should order the respondents of the petition to inform the court about all the reasons behind the detention.

On the occasion of preliminary hearing of the petition Emman Mazari advocate appeared in the court. The court after hearing the arguments of the petitioner issued notice to police station Sadar Baironi and directed to file detailed reply on August 20.



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



QUETTA: A delegation of Balochistan Civil Secretariat Staff Association led by Provincial Minister Haji Ali Madad Jattak meeting with Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti

NHA Chairman launches tree planting campaign

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman of the National Highway Authority (NHA) Muhammad Sheheryar Sultan Friday inaugurated a Tree Planting Campaign on the NHA road network by planting a sapling on the Thalian Airport carriage-way.

According to an NHA spokesman, the campaign aimed to plant over 46,000 saplings and wild plants along the Islamabad-Peshawar Motorway (M-1) this year.

The Chairman said that planting trees was a form

of Sadaqah Jariyah (ongoing charity). He noted that Pakistan was among the countries most affected by climate change and reiterated the NHA's commitment to increasing greenery, reducing temperatures and mitigating the impacts of climate change through this national initiative.

The tree planting campaign will be carried out in three phases; in the first phase, 23,000 saplings, including olive trees, local fruit-bearing and shade trees and forest plants, from the NHA Gate to the

Thalian Interchange on the Islamabad-Peshawar Motorway (M-1) would be planted.

In the second phase, two 23,000 saplings around the road network near the Burhan and Brahma Bahtar Interchanges would be planted. The third phase will focus on making the section of the motorway from the Islamabad Toll Plaza to Brahma Bahtar environmentally friendly, green, and aesthetically pleasing. This year, the country has set a target to plant over 100 million trees.



QUETTA: Chief Secretary Balochistan Shakeel Qadir Khan addressing Divisional Commissioners and Deputy Commissioners Conference

Nawaz Sharif announces....

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another significant project introduced by the chief minister, which involves providing solar panels to people in need. The project, with an estimated budget of Rs 700 billion, aims to bring comfort to poor, lower-middle, and middle-class citizens.

He expressed his hope that these measures would alleviate the financial strain on the common people and praised both the PM and the CM for their commitment to the welfare of citizens.

He called on other provinces to follow Punjab's example and take similar steps to improve the lives of their people. He also reflected on the government's ongoing efforts over the past six to seven months to provide relief to the public.

Reflecting on past political challenges, Nawaz Sharif lamented that Pakistan's progress had been repeatedly disrupted by conspiracies against him.

He recalled how his government had successfully managed the economy, reducing interest rates to 5.25 per cent and maintaining a stable dollar rate. He questioned who was responsible for the current economic challenges, including the high interest rates and the return of the IMF. He especially named the PTI chief for this situation and financial crunch facing by the

country.

Nawaz Sharif concluded by vowing to stay connected with the people and continue working towards the betterment of the country.

Meanwhile Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday welcomed the historic package for the electricity consumers announced by Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif under the leadership of PM-N President and former Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif.

"The decision to reduce electricity rates by Rs 14 per unit for consumers who use up to 500 units per month is a notable example of a people-centric initiative by Nawaz Sharif and the Punjab Chief Minister," the prime minister said in a statement issued by the PM Office.

He said under the guidance of Nawaz Sharif, public relief had remained the government's top priority since day one of assuming his office.

Recently, he said the federal government had announced relief for the electricity consumers using up to 200 units per month by cutting the size of its annual development budget by Rs 50 billion.

He highlighted that under the leadership of Nawaz Sharif, the government was taking steps to make the lives of the people easier.

Institutional reforms to ease...

Continued from page 1

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.

Federal Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal, Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Khan Cheema, Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb, Federal Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain, Minister of State for Information Technology and Telecom Shaza Fatima, Minister of State for Finance Ali Pervaiz Malik, Deputy Chairman Planning Commission Jahanzeb Khan, Prime Minister's Coordinator for National Health Dr. Malik Mukhtar Ahmed Bharath, Prime Minister's Coordinator Bilal Azhar Kayani and relevant senior government officials participated the meeting.

Can't hand over administrative...

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He said that while the women police personnels were harassed, still the state demonstrated the patience.

But our patience may not be considered as our weakness, he added.

He also announced that those involved in harassment of the female police personnels would be taken to task. He also assured them of his full patronage saying that the government would always stand by them. He exhorted the female police personnels to

work for restoration peace and protection of the people. He also asked them to follow the oath of loyalty with the state taken by them assuring them that the government is with them and no one would be allowed to take law in their hands. He assured to provide resources to put the police force on the modern lines and increase their professional capacity.

Besides, the female police personnels would be imparted modern training of self defence and policing.

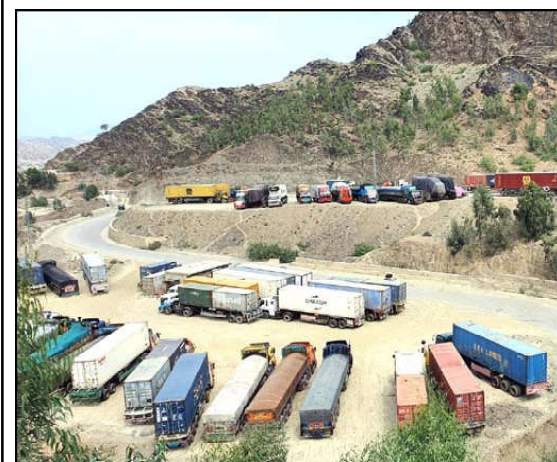
COAS vows to support youth...

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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 of a healthy and prosperous society.

The event was attended by 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. Notable legends included Jehangir Khan, Isalah Ud Din, Shahbaz Senior, Sohail Abbas, Muhammad Asif and Aisam-ul-Haq. The event was also attended by Arshad Nadeem's close relatives, associates and coaches. Athlete, Arshad Nadeem expressed gratitude and emphasized the immense potential of Pakistani youth, stressing the importance of hard work, positivity, and perseverance in overcoming challenges and achieving success.



LANDIKOTAL: A large number of cargo vehicles parked near Torkham Border that cannot cross the border due to lack of documents after the implementation of the Temporary Admission Documents (TED) policy, in Landikotal.

Harassment of women, not acceptable under any circumstances: Tarar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attallah 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.

"Already in our society women face difficulties," he said adding it was a manifestation of PTI fascism that was coming to fore.

He said Iqbal Afridi's party membership should be suspended in order to ensure justice.

PTA, NTL collaboration to enhance telecom licensing efficiency

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) and NADRA Technologies Limited (NTL) have successfully launched the biometric verification service for telecom companies and license applicants.

According to the press release issued on Friday, the initiative is another step towards ease of doing business in Pakistan and this new facility will enable applicants to complete their

identity verification process with ease and efficiency.

As of August 14, 2024, the nationwide network of NADRA e-Sahulat franchisees will be used for biometric verification of the officials of telecom service providers. This initiative follows a formal agreement between PTA and NTL, aimed at facilitating the identity verification process of telecom service providers applying for licenses.

Sisters of Imran moves SC against CJP remarks about 190 million pounds

ISLAMABAD (Online): Sisters of former Prime Minister (PM) Imran Khan have filed miscellaneous petition in Supreme Court (SC) against Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) remarks about 190 million pounds in Monal Restaurant and Margalla Hills case.

The miscellaneous petition was filed by Aleema Khan and Uzma Khan.

The petitioners requested in the petition that remarks in respect of 190 million

Monal restaurant case pounds be withdrawn and CJP Qazi Faez Isa should not hear any case related to Imran Khan.

They took the plea we have right to go to Judicial Council on misconduct against CJP Qazi Faez Isa. The remarks by CJP Qazi Faez Isa about 190 million pounds will influence the case.

They said Margalla case has no relevance with 190 million pounds case. But his remarks can influence

the case.

It is pertinent to mention here that CJP Qazi Faez Isa during hearing of Margalla Hills case had remarked while making mention of 190 million pounds case that 190 million pounds wala too a builder but no news will run against builder. When we ordered then abuses were flung on court. We had ordered to return the money of people.

Public advised to stay vigilant as Zika, Mpx cases continue to rise

ISLAMABAD (APP): Renowned Infectious Disease Specialist Dr. Syed Faisal Mahmood on Friday sounded a warning bell while urging the public to remain vigilant and take necessary precautions against the spread of vector-borne diseases such as Zika, dengue, and mpx.



QUETTA: MPA Zarak Khan Mandokhail meeting with Governor Balochistan Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail

Talking to PTV news channel, Dr. Mahmood stressed the need for monitoring potential outbreaks and taking preventive measures to minimize transmission risk, adding, Monkeypox a rare and highly infectious disease has been reported in several countries, sparking concerns about its spread.

Pakistan refrains foreign,....

Continued from page 1

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. It is to discourage the misuse of the visa policy.

He also said that Pakistan is presiding over the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), and the process of ensuring the participation of the participating governments in the SCO meeting is ongoing.

APP adds Pakistan on Friday strongly condemned the illegal storming of Al-Aqsa Mosque by hundreds of extremist settlers, led by officials from the Israeli occupation authorities, Foreign Office spokesperson Muntaz Zahra Baloch said.

In her preliminary remarks during the weekly briefing, she stated that "knowledge is power" in the fight against infectious diseases.

By understanding the symptoms of monkeypox and taking simple precautions, individuals can protect themselves and their loved ones from monkeypox and other vector-borne diseases, he added.

and Islamic character of the occupied city of Jerusalem," she said.

"Yesterday marked a tragic milestone in the ongoing conflict affecting the people of Gaza," she said, adding that Israeli occupation forces have killed 40,000 individuals, the majority of whom were women and children. The ongoing genocide in Gaza should cease, and Israel must be held accountable for its war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The spokesperson stated that Pakistan would continue to extend political, diplomatic, and moral support to the Kashmiri people for a just and peaceful resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, in accordance with UN Security Council Resolutions.

Strongly condemning the killing of four Kashmiri youths by Indian troops in the Doda district of Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK), she said this brutal action by the Indian occupation authorities served as yet another example of their illegal and oppressive measures against Kashmiri people.

"We urge the international community to take immediate and decisive action to hold India accountable for its egregious human rights violations in IOJK and to take steps to protect the rights and freedoms of the Kashmiri people."

Foreign Office spokesperson said that the 7th session of the Pakistan-Türkiye Bilateral Political Consultations (BPC) was held in Islamabad last week. Foreign Secretary Muhammad Syrus Sajjad Qazi led the Pakistani delegation, while the Turkish side was led by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Nuh Yilmaz.

She said the discussions covered all facets of bilateral cooperation between Pakistan and Türkiye. The two sides agreed to bolster high-level bilateral engagement, fully implement existing agreements, and upgrade the Pakistan-Türkiye Strategic Economic Framework (SEF). They also committed to enhancing cooperation in areas such as trade and investment, energy, security and defense, information technology, culture and tourism, education, and consular matters.

EXTENSION OF DATE

The Office of the Executive Engineer Maintenance Division - I Quetta called Notice inviting tender on 16th August 2024 in daily Newspapers vide PRQ No. 432/31.07.2024 and TSE-242507511463, TSE-242507511413 The technical proposals submission and opening date is hereby extended from 16th August 2024 to 23 August 2024. The timings of the Submission / Opening and other terms and conditions will remain same.

Executive Engineer
Maintenance Division - I Quetta
PRQ No.588/16-08-2024
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Pak, Russia multi-sphere ties moving on a positive trajectory: Sehar Kamran

ISLAMABAD (APP): The bilateral relations between Pakistan and the Russian Federation are forging ahead on an upward trajectory, with both nations actively exploring multifaceted cooperation opportunities in sectors such as trade, energy, and diplomacy," said Sehar Kamran, Member of National Assembly, on Friday.

"Whether in trade, energy, or diplomatic engagements, the relationship between Pakistan and Russia is strengthening across all dimensions. Both countries possess vast untapped potential for collaboration. Russia is a major energy exporter, and Pakistan can benefit from its oil and gas resources. Similarly, Pakistan can provide regional connectivity and trade corridors to Russia," she said, talking to APP.

Sehar Kamran, who has represented Pakistan at numerous international forums in Russia, including BRICS, SCO Women Congress, IPU Assembly, and others in recent years, noted that the past two decades have seen a significant enhancement in Pak-Rus-

sian diplomatic ties, driven by consistent high-level interactions.

She referred to a congratulatory letter from the Russian Ambassador in Islamabad, Albert Khorev, on Independence Day, which read: "The Russian Federation attaches great importance to its relations with Pakistan, and I am confident that their steadfast and consistent development serves the best interests of both our peoples. I appreciate your important and constructive role in our bilateral engagements."

"It underscores our strong friendship... It was truly heartening to see the colors of the Pakistani flag illuminated in Moscow. This reflects the deepening bilateral ties and the strong bond of friendship between our two nations," she said in her reciprocal letter to the envoy.

On her X timeline, Sehar Kamran also responded to a congratulatory video message by the Russian ambassador on Pakistan's 78th Independence Day, in which she reaffirmed her commitment to continuous efforts for

stronger bilateral relations, emphasizing the potential for deeper collaboration in various fields.

Ambassador Albert Khorev said in his message, "Russia and Pakistan have already been friends throughout the years, and I am sure that we will see our already robust and fruitful relations reach new heights and help both our countries thrive. Pakistan is home to incredibly talented, hardworking, and open-hearted people, and I'm confident that they are the nation's greatest asset."

The PPP parliamentarian, also the recipient of the Russian State Award in recognition of her efforts to promote bilateral relations, mentioned last year's visit of former Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari to Russia and high-level interactions, which instilled new impetus into bilateral ties.

Calling it a stepping stone in bilateral ties, she mentioned the shipment of Russian crude oil to Pakistan and said that Pakistan was also outlining a process to open barter trade with neighboring countries of Russia, Iran, and Afghanistan.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Coordinator on health Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad Bharath chaired high level meeting regarding M pox in Ministry of Health.

Tajikistan Embassy hosts Pakistan Roadshow for tourism opportunities

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Embassy of Tajikistan in Islamabad hosted the event entitled "Tajikistan — Pakistan Roadshow" to present tourism opportunities here on Friday.

The event was attended by Tajikistan's Ambassador, Yusuf Sharifzoda, management of the Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation, representatives of travel agencies of Tajikistan, and 150 representatives of the tourism sector of Pakistan, a news release said.

The management of almost seventy travel companies and tour operators, airlines, local media, television and radio, as well as

the employees of diplomatic missions of Central Asian countries were also present.

Atadjan Movlombov, Ambassador of Turkmenistan to Pakistan and Dean of Diplomatic Corps, specially attended the event.

The Tajik delegation presented the tourism potential of their country to the participants of the event.

Moreover, ten memorandums of cooperation were inked with Pakistani tourism companies, which were simultaneously invited to the Travel Market in Tajikistan, scheduled for late September 2024.

The General Director of Somon Travel LLC Umedjon Saidzoda said that those present were able to learn about the tourist attractions and opportunities in Tajikistan. He said that future of tourism in Tajikistan is bright. Saidzoda further said they are proud of their country's success in the international arena.

He said that from August 8 through August 15, representatives of several travel agencies of Tajikistan visited Pakistan, as well as held business meetings with central and regional public and private structures of the tourism sector in the country.

Rana Mashhood says: Revival of economy govt's topmost priority

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman of the Prime Minister Youth Programme (PMYP) Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan has said that the revival of the economy was the priority of the government and efforts were underway to address this challenge.

Talking to the media here on Friday, Rana said that PMYP in collaboration with the National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTC) was equipping young individuals with both high-tech and conventional skills to empower them for future opportunities.

He informed that as

many as 1.5 million youngsters would be trained to get employment abroad stating, "Our goal is to ensure that every young Pakistani has the skills necessary to succeed in today's competitive landscape. By focusing on both high-tech and traditional skill development, we aim to enhance employment prospects and foster economic growth." Referring to the recent maiden visit of Commonwealth Secretary-General Rt Patricia Scotland to Pakistan, he said that the mutual interest between Pakistan and the Commonwealth will help promote cooperation in various fields of youth development programmes.

Resolving public issues purely on merit is our foremost priority: DIG

ISLAMABAD: According to the details, following the special directives of the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, Syed Ali

tions to the concerned officers for timely action on merit.

He also directed them to send reports to his offices in the given time



Nasir Ali Rizvi, the DIG Islamabad Syed Ali Raza said that the Islamabad Police is committed to resolve public issues on priority.

He said this while listening to the complaints and issues of the public as well as police officials during the Khuli Kachehri held at his office. Senior police officers were also present on this occasion.

During the Khuli Kachehri, he listened to the complaints of the citizens and marked their applica-

frame.

He further said that strict action will be taken against officials involved in bribery or corruption and a zero tolerance policy will be adopted in this regard.

He emphasized that Islamabad Police would not leave any stone unturned to secure the lives and property of the citizens. "Such interaction would be continued in future to provide maximum relief to the citizens," he added.

Chinese delegation visits CDA headquarters, discuss infrastructure development

ISLAMABAD (APP): A high-level delegation from the China State Construction Engineering Company (CSCEC) arrived at the Capital Development Authority (CDA) headquarters on Friday to discuss various infrastructure development projects in the city.

The delegation was briefed on several ongoing and upcoming projects in Islamabad, including transportation systems, public buildings, and urban development initiatives.

Muhammad Ali Randhawa, Chairman of CDA, expressed his appreciation for the Chinese company's contributions to Pakistan's infrastructure development, citing their timely completion of

projects with transparency.

The CSCEC, one of the world's largest construction and investment companies, has already completed several high-profile projects in Pakistan, including the S u k k u r - M u l t a n Motorway Section, Arfa Karim Tower in Lahore, and the JF-17 Thunder aircraft project.

During the meeting, the Chinese delegation expressed deep interest in participating in various CDA projects, from design and construction to funding acquisition.

The two sides discussed the various stages of project development, exploring opportunities for collaboration and innovation.



ISLAMABAD: A view of overloaded green line bus with passengers at Islamabad Highway in the Federal Capital. The passengers rush in green line bus during daily last bus service timing.

CDA chairman reviews ongoing plantation drive, beautification plan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman CDA, Muhammad Ali Randhawa, on Friday, presided over a meeting to discuss the ongoing plantation campaign and beautification plan for Islamabad. The meeting outlined the steps taken so far and the future plans to make Islamabad a more eco-friendly and beautiful city.

As part of the plantation drive, free saplings are being distributed to citizens through stalls set up in various centers, markets, and parks. Additionally, door-to-door distribution of free plants is also underway.

The Chairman emphasized the importance of involving the business community and civil society to make the drive more successful. To ensure effective

implementation, the city will be divided into four zones, with concerned officers and staff responsible for landscaping and beautification work in each zone.

The corporate sector is also expected to play a significant role in making Islamabad eco-friendly and beautiful. Renowned architects and landscaping experts will be consulted for the beautification and upliftment of Islamabad.

The plan includes beautifying interchanges, flyovers, loops, and highways, as well as planting fruit trees on medians and green belts along roads. Inspiration will be drawn from other cities' horticulture, and adequate lighting arrangements will be made along flyovers and bridges.



ISLAMABAD: NDMA & Ministry of Climate Change & Environment Coordination organized a National Seminar on Climate & Disasters Risk Financing at NUTECH.

Senator Afnan Ullah promises swift solution to Pak internet crisis

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Senator Afnan Ullah Khan Friday expressed serious concerns over the slow internet speed and assured that the government is taking timely measures to restore stable internet connectivity, promising a swift resolution to the issue within a few days.

Talking to a private news channel, he stated that the relevant authorities are working diligently to address the technical issues and ensure that internet services are restored to their optimal levels.

With the government's proactive approach, Senator Khan expressed confidence that the issue will be resolved within a few days which will bring relief to the affected parties and revitalize Pakistan's digital economy.

Responding to a query, he further explained that the slow internet speed

has already taken a devastating toll on Pakistan's economy with estimated losses of at least Rs500 million, adding that the situation is further exacerbated by the disruption of essential online services, including media downloads and uploads on WhatsApp.

This has not only affected personal communication but also hindered business operations, causing irreparable damage to the country's digital landscape, he added.

To another query, Senator Khan stressed that the government is committed to upholding freedom of expression, but also recognizes the need to prevent the spread of misinformation, hate speech, and online harassment.

He assured that the laws will strike a balance between individual liberties and societal responsibilities, promoting a culture of respectful and constructive online discourse.

IHC issues order for recovery of Azhar brothers

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has issued a written order in the case of arrest and detention of two missing brothers that violates Articles 4, 9, and 10 of the Constitution of Pakistan.

During the hearing, Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb remarked that action should also be taken against those who were involved in the illegal detention of citizens.

The court has set a deadline of August 20 for the recovery of the two brothers, who are linked to Azhar Mashwani, a focal person of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI).

The court granted the authorities until August 20 to fulfill its orders regarding the recovery of the missing brothers.

Ayaz Sadiq condoles demise of Syed Zafar Hashmi's sister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker of the National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq Friday expressed his condolences on the passing away of senior journalist Syed Zafar Hashmi's sister.

In a message to Syed Zafar Hashmi, the Speaker conveyed his deep sorrow and sympathy over the loss. He expressed solidarity with Syed Zafar Hashmi and his family during this difficult time.

The Speaker prayed to the Almighty to grant the departed soul eternal peace and to provide the bereaved family with the strength to bear this loss with fortitude.

AIOU celebrates 50 years of educational excellence

ISLAMABAD (APP): Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) proudly celebrates its 50th year of service, having educated nearly 5 million students across the nation during this period. As the university continues its mission to provide accessible education, admissions for the Autumn 2024 semester are now open. Vice-Chancellor Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood emphasized the university's commitment to ensuring that no child in Pakistan is deprived of their basic right to education. He highlighted that AIOU offers fee concessions and scholarships to support underprivileged and deserving students.

Crackdowns against alms-seekers continues

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a coordinated effort led by the Deputy Commissioner of Islamabad, Assistant Commissioners and Magistrates have launched an operation targeting professional beggars across various areas of the Federal Capital.

According to the spokesman of Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration, the operation resulted in the arrest of 27 professional beggars. The arrests were made by Assistant Commissioners in different jurisdictions.

The Assistant Commissioner City apprehended 10 beggars near Jamia Masjid Rumi and Faisal Market. In the Pothohar area, six beggars were arrested, while the

Assistant Commissioner Rural area detained eleven beggars from P. S. Lohibher, Sahala, and nearby areas.

The arrested beggars were taken to the police station. Meanwhile, minors found begging were sent to the Edhi Center for care and rehabilitation.

This operation is part of a daily crackdown supervised by the Assistant Commissioners, aimed at addressing the issue of begging in Islamabad.

The ICT admin has planned to continue their daily operations to address the issue of begging in Islamabad. The focus will remain on arresting professional beggars and providing care for minors found on the streets.

3 die after chairlift rope breaks in Kohistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): At least three people fell into the river after the rope of the chairlift broke in Upper Kohistan on early Friday. According to the police, the tragic incident took place in Barseen where the tourists were enjoying a ride on the chairlift when the rope broke and the three fell into the river.

The police said that as soon as the incident was reported, the operation was started to search for the ill-fated tourists who fell into the river.

The bodies of the victims were retrieved by rescue teams, the drowned bodies were identified as Naseeb, Sher, and Fida, police informed.



ISLAMABAD: Salaried class people hold a protest against massive tax imposed by the government outside NPC.

PDM Chief advises residents to exercise caution during extreme monsoon spell

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief Meteorologist, Pakistan Meteorological Department Sardar Sarfaraz on Friday forecasted an intense monsoon spell across the region until August 19.

He said the concerned authorities strongly advised people living around rivers to exercise extreme caution and remain vigilant to mitigate the impending calamity. Talking to a private news channel, he reminded residents to stay vigilant and take necessary precautions to ensure their safety, adding that people living near nullahs and rivers asked to follow evacuation orders and prioritize their safety above all.

The situation is grave, but with precautions the impact of the disaster can be mitigated, he assured.

Chief Meteorologist Sardar Sarfaraz said that monsoon winds are expected to enter lower Sindh

from August 16. He said Karachi is likely to experience moderate rain with thundershowers between August 17 and 19. "Heavy rain may occur in some areas," he noted.

In anticipation of further monsoon activity, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has issued an urban flooding alert for parts of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa until August 18, he added.

The alert of heavy rainfall, flash flooding, and urban flooding in low-lying areas, posed a significant threat to life and property, he said.

Residents in affected areas are advised to exercise extreme caution, avoid traveling to flood-prone areas, and stay tuned for updates, he stressed. The NDMA has also directed local authorities to take necessary precautions, including evacuating high-risk areas.

PTI found hatching conspiracy against national institutions on May 9: Irfan

ISLAMABAD (APP): PML-N Senator Irfan ul Haque Siddiqui on Friday said that PTI leaders have found hatching conspiracy against the national institutions on May 9.

PTI should bear the cost of attempting to create rift among the national institutions and vandalism on May 9, he said while talking to a private television channel.

Following the organized plan made by the founder, the last regime of PTI had sent prominent leaders of PML-N to jail on false cases, he said. The PTI must face action for sabotaging peace and creating hurdles for sensitive institutions, he added.

In reply to a question about the role of PTI in national politics, he said the PTI members who joined the assembly should come forward for resolving the political issues. Commenting on the accountability process in the armed institutions, he said that Pakistan Armed forces have best accountability system for their officers.

He suggested that judiciary should evolve the similar mechanism to strengthen the judicial system.



ISLAMABAD: Indonesian diplomat women looks a traditional truck art vehicle placed at a shopping mall during Indonesian Expo 2024, in the Federal Capital.

Islamabad Police to provide foolproof security to foreign delegation: Jawad Tariq

ISLAMABAD: Following the special directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, the DIG Security division Jawad Tariq chaired a high-level meeting regarding security during the visit of a foreign delegation to Islamabad.

Senior police officers of Islamabad Police, as well as officers from other law enforcement departments, attended the meeting. During the meeting it was decided that foolproof security would be provided during the delegation's stay and movement, and all necessary arrangements would be ensured.

Similarly, complete checking of all routes will be carried out by bomb disposal squads, and the route will be monitored through security cameras.

Quick response teams will remain on high alert during the delegation's movement, and suspicious individuals will be closely monitored to prevent any anti-state elements from achieving their nefarious objectives.

Full coordination among all law enforcement agencies will be ensured, and an alternate route plan will be issued to manage traffic flow and provide all necessary facilities to the delegation.

The DIG Security Division said that, the delegation's security would be made foolproof, and modern cameras would be used for aerial surveillance to enhance security and ensure monitoring.

With the assistance of the CDA, shrubs on both sides of the greenbelt along the route will be cleared.



ISLAMABAD: CDA workers work on restoring stalls after the fire at H-9 weekly bazaar in the Federal Capital

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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 Awais 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.



In March of this year, I was entrusted with the responsibility of leading the Metropolitan Corporation Quetta. It's been five months since I assumed this charge, and I have spent the last two years in Quetta. The general perception about this city has always been that administrative affairs, especially cleanliness, are severely neglected. Now that the city's sanitation department is under my supervision, it's important to shed light on some critical facts.

The common belief is that the employees of the Metropolitan Corporation do not work and that the organization is plagued by rampant corruption. Due to a lack of awareness about the realities of the Metropolitan Corporation, accusations of embezzlement in funds are often made. However, the truth is quite the opposite. The fact is that the staff of the Metro-

politan Corporation is diligently and tirelessly engaged in their duties. The workers are always present on duty and work to the best of their abilities even in the most challenging circumstances. So, why does the Metropolitan Corporation face so much criticism? Is it that the department lacks the will to work, or are there specific factors that have rendered the entire department helpless in the face of the city's deteriorating conditions?

To answer these questions, we must consider some fundamental truths:

1. The vehicles of the Metropolitan Corporation require approximately 40,000 liters of petrol every month, a consumption pattern that has remained consistent for the past five years. In 2019, the situation was the same, but what was the price of petrol then, and where are the prices now? The threefold increase in petrol prices has left the Metropolitan Corporation unable to operate its machinery. The expenses have soared to the point that the department is now in debt to the tune of one billion rupees.

2. Besides petrol, there are numerous other expenses. There aren't suffi-

cient funds to pay workers' salaries, without which the system cannot run even for a day. The workers have not been paid for the past six months. Just think, if a municipality cannot pay its employees, how can it expect them to work?

3. The harsh reality is that the Metropolitan Corporation has been severely neglected. For the past two decades, no funds have been allocated for the purchase of new machinery. Dumpers and excavators were bought 30 years ago, and now they are not even capable of lifting their own weight, let alone garbage. The cost of repairing the machinery could consume the entire administrative budget of the department. So, who would take on the burden of repairing these machines?

4. The department has been operating without elected representatives for the past five years. It has not been given any development schemes. There is no budget for road repairs, streetlights, maintenance work, or other daily expenses. 5. A few years ago, all the towns of the Quetta Development Authority and all the wards of the District Council were merged into the Metropolitan Corpora-

tion, but the required funds were never provided. The already overburdened Metropolitan Corporation had to shoulder an even heavier load. The workload increased manifold, but the budget remained frozen, with no increase whatsoever. There is a continuous complaint that the department is not interested in the cleanliness of Kuchlak and Nawakali. But without adequate funds, how can the department perform its duties effectively? Holding the officers of the Metropolitan Corporation accountable is unfair because they are not responsible for these challenges. It's not right to blame the department's officers and workers for problems that stem from a lack of resources while ignoring the real issues at hand. And that certainly isn't a solution either. There are many responsible officers in the department who work day and night despite resource shortages. Thanks to the dedication of such passionate officers, the administrative affairs continue to function, and the system has never been paralyzed.

The fact is that the officers, staff, and workers of the Metropolitan Corporation are diligently fulfilling their duties, and this is some-

thing that deserves every bit of praise. Individuals like Ashfaq Badini, Ali Raza, Abdul Haq Zehri, Bilal Yasinzi, Hasil Khan, Shah Saud, Sarwar Zehri, Anwar Lehari, Abdullah, Abdul Haq Achakzai, Khalid, Qasim, Ismail, Nemat, Naseeb, Baig, and many others are constantly engaged in their work. Undoubtedly, the dedication and passion of these individuals are invaluable, and they are the pride of our department.

The Metropolitan Unions also face criticism from various quarters, but if we look closely, they have never made any illegal demands. These unions of workers, employees, and laborers have always fought for their legitimate rights. I have no hesitation in admitting that I have been somewhat partial when it comes to the demands of these unions.

Upon thoroughly examining the issues faced by the Metropolitan Corporation, I've realized just how severe the problems confronting the workers are.

Now the question is, how do we deal with this dire situation? How do we tackle the challenges faced by the Metropolitan Corporation? How do we ensure exemplary governance

and cleanliness in the city? According to the Chief Minister's vision, the only way forward is through Public-Private Partnerships. When a patient requires a ventilator, immediate action is taken to save them rather than getting bogged down in paperwork and risking delays. Similarly, the Metropolitan Corporation also requires immediate action because the department cannot afford the burden of bureaucratic complications, legal nuances, or red tape. Public servants often face the constant threat of accountability from various departments, which leads to unnecessary delays in the completion of tasks.

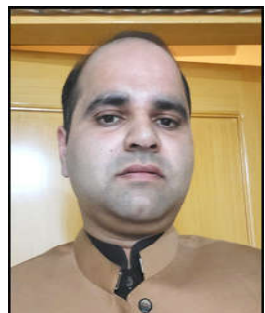
The modern world is moving towards privatization, and governments around the globe are focusing on regulation and facilitation because government departments operating through traditional methods can never provide more effective results than the private sector.

Therefore, the solution to the problems faced by the Metropolitan Corporation also lies in Public-Private Partnerships. The faster we cross this milestone, the quicker we will ascend the ladder of progress. God willing.

Challenges and the path forward for Metropolitan Corporation Quetta

By Muhammad Hamza Shafqaat,
Commissioner/Administrator Quetta

Health Benefits of Fasting



Muhammad Umer

The month of Ramadan brings with it not only blessings and spiritual benefits but also various health benefits. Fasting has numerous advantages for our health, with one of the greatest being the increase in human growth hormone (HGH) and changes in genes that have positive effects on brain cells, the digestive system, and

immune function. Fasting helps in prolonging and improving your table is adorned with fruits, and aiding in the elimination of toxins from the body, thus detoxifying it. During Suhoor (pre-dawn meal), opt for easily digestible foods such as grains, lean proteins, and beneficial fats that provide sustained energy. Make sure to include yogurt and buttermilk in your diet, and make an effort to consume at least eight glasses of water throughout the night to prevent dehydration.

Avoid lying down immediately after eating Suhoor or Iftar (meal to break the fast) as it can lead to digestive issues. If possible, refrain from consuming heavy meals during Iftar and instead

opt for a glass of water and a fruit salad. The healthier you table is adorned with fruits, and the healthier you will be. Minimize the consumption of fried snacks such as samosas, and women should try to prepare yogurt-based snacks, samosas and other snacks at home using healthy oil, while avoiding unhygienic outside options that can lead to indigestion and other issues.

During Ramadan, hospitals experience a surge in emergency cases, primarily due to the consumption of outside food and careless eating habits. Excessive consumption of greasy foods during Iftar can contribute to heart problems. Avoid cold drinks

during Iftar as the day-long fasting can dehydrate your kidneys, and the gases in cold drinks can have adverse effects on them. The purpose of fasting is not to indulge in oily and high-sugar foods. Maintain balance in your food and drink choices even during Iftar parties. Do not turn your stomach into a storage room, avoid overeating, and increase the consumption of salads and cucumbers in the evening meal to replenish the body's water levels.

Increase the intake of meat, vegetables, fruits, and lentils, and avoid processed foods that are often high in salt, which can contribute to high blood pressure. Pay attention to your weight

because after a day of fasting, careless eating during Iftar can lead to weight gain.

Maintaining a check and balance in your pre-dawn meal (suhoor) and the meal to break the fast (iftar), will feel a reduction in body weight. Incorporate light physical activity, such as a short walk.

After suhoor and iftar, as this will help you feel active throughout the day and aid in digestion. Take extra precautions with diet if you have diabetes, heart disease, or high blood pressure. Diabetic patients should regularly monitor their blood sugar levels to adjust their medication or insulin dosage and prevent dangerous spikes or prolonged

hunger. Being careless with your food choices can significantly increase blood sugar levels. Diabetic patients can consume fruits such as apples, guavas, melons, and papayas. Those with heart conditions should avoid foods high in saturated fats, which are often found in butter and fatty items. Patients with high blood pressure should limit their salt intake and get their blood pressure checked at least twice a week at a nearby clinic. During the blessed month of Ramadan, prioritize your health because when you are in good health, you can perform your worship in a more fulfilling manner, which is the main purpose of this month.

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 fulfillment. 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, dependency is a sin, and procrastination and quick-fixes are considered undesirable. Therefore, one must con-

tinue their effort in the struggle to solve problems 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 its cause and consequence of the unprecedented com-mo-o-d-i-f-i-c-a-tion 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 see 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, Sindh, Gilgit-Baltistan, 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 Punjab 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, countryside alternative to the game of the thrones, we will all be reduced to freelancers for ruin. -- Courtesy Dawn

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 Maqсад App, a locally designed

educational tool that utilizes Google technologies. Students who used the Maqсад App for just one month observed a notable 24.3 per cent increase in test scores compared 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.



KARACHI: Secretary U&B Noor Ahmad Samoo, CEO Tech Valley Umar Farooq, and the vice-chancellor of the public sector university sign an MOU for allocating 1000 scholarships in Google Career Certificates. Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, Chairman HEC Prof. Tariq Rafi, and others witnessed the ceremony at CM House.

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 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 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.

The Governor assured the ICRC of full support from the Governor House, encouraging collaborative efforts to improve health and education in these underserved areas.

Meanwhile, representatives of the

Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) also called on Governor Faisal Karim Kundi at the Governor House.

The delegation included female presidents from Rawalpindi, Attock, and Hazara Women Chambers, as well as presidents and officials from the Mardan, Charsadda, Haripur, and Mohmand Chambers.

During the meeting, the women business leaders expressed their concerns about the lack of government support for women's chambers in the province.

The delegation also requested the establishment of an agricultural university in the northern districts from the federal government.

The delegation highlighted various issues affecting industrial development in the province, including inadequate electricity, roads, and other essential infrastructure.

They proposed the creation of an incubation center in Rawalpindi for training women entrepreneurs and advocated for a community center for skilled women.

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

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 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.

Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said that the current parliament is committed to the welfare of the people and country through effective legislation. Speaker National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said that close liaison between the federation and the provinces is key to overcome the challenges faced by the country.



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.

KP CM 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 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 "Ehsaas Apna Ghar Program" was reviewed.

Under "Ehsaas 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.

The meeting was attended by provincial cabinet members Muzammil Aslam, Syed Fakhir Jahan, Mashal Azam, Amjad Ali, Abdul Karim Tordhair and Additional Chief Secretary P&D Syed Imtiaz Hussain Shah, Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister Amjad Ali Khan, and other relevant officials.

Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa underscored that each district should receive its fair share based on population, merit, and without political bias.

He stressed the need for transparency in the implementation process to ensure that the benefits of these programs reach the youth, particularly those in remote and underserved areas. The meeting discussed the pilot project under the Ehsaas Rozgar Scheme, which will offer soft loans up to ten million rupees.

These loans are intended for individuals with the skills.



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.

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.

Subsequently, the court reserved its verdict on the petition.

The petitioner submitted that disruption in internet service and slow speed were severely affecting individuals associated with IT. He also submitted that those conducting online businesses were facing significant difficulties. He pleaded with the court to direct the concerned authorities to end the disruption in internet service.



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

City administration finalizes rain arrangements: Mayor

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 coordination 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.



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.

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

KARACHI (APP): 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 Johio, 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.

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 Masood Anwar, Members P&D Board, Head of relevant departments and other representatives of the relevant provincial departments attended the meeting.

LDA seals another 14 properties

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Development Authority (LDA), in its ongoing crackdown against illegal constructions and unauthorized commercial properties in the city, sealed another 14 properties on Friday.

Following the directives from LDA Director General (DG), Tahir Farooq, the teams conducted operations on Allama Iqbal Town and in Mustafa Town, sealing and demolishing over one dozen properties due to illegal constructions and unauthorized commercial activities.

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. CBDPMC Centres: 7 centres established, benefiting 5,650 men and 5,350 women. Safe Havens: 1 scheme in Kumrat, benefiting 900 men and 900 women. The journalists were also apprised of access Route including 1 scheme in Kandia.



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

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.

According to the data, 58 motorbikes,

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.

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 HLE 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.

The Committee members also engaged in an in-depth discussion on the ML-1 Project. Senior officials provided a briefing on the project's operations, key milestones, and the status of existing railway lines.

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.

"Banks & DFIs can take clean exposure (facilities extended based on cashflows of an SME secured solely against personal guarantees) of up to Rs 10 million on an SME borrower," the circular read and further clarified, "the clean exposure limit shall not include the clean consumer financing limits like Credit Card and Personal Loans, allowed to a sponsor of the said SME under Prudential Regulations for Consumer Financing". The central bank had already revised the definition of SMEs amending the respective regulations- Regulation SE R-1 and Regulation ME R-1. As per revised definition an enterprise having Annual Sales Turnover up to Rs150 million to be categorized.

SBP injects over Rs900bn into market

KARACHI (APP): The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) injected Rs900.6 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 16, 2024 for 7-day and 28-day tenors and accepted 12 bids cumulatively amounting to Rs755.6 billion.

The central bank received 7 bids for 7-day tenor cumulatively offering an amount of Rs719.9 billion at the rate of return ranging between 19.58 to 19.59 percent while 13 bids were received for the 28-day tenor offering an amount of Rs318.6 billion at the rate of return ranging between 19.57 to 19.60%.

The SBP accepted 6 quotes for 7-day tenor amounting to Rs550 billion at 19.59% rate of return while 6 quotes for 28-day tenor amounting to Rs205.6 billion.

Korean ambassador stresses boosting trade with Pakistan

SIALKOT (APP): Ambassador Park Ki Jun of the Republic of Korea has called on Sialkot exporters to seize opportunities in Korea's international trade markets to enhance bilateral trade between Pakistan and Korea. He made these remarks during a meeting with exporters at the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) on Friday. The meeting was attended by Abdul Ghafoor Malik, President of SCCI; Wahab Jahangir, Senior Vice President (SVP) of SCCI; Yeonjeong Yoo, Assistant Public Diplomacy Officer; and members of the Sialkot business community.

In his address,

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

Ambassador Park also stressed the importance of enhancing people-to-people contacts between Korean and Pakistani business communities. He underscored that economic cooperation between Korea and Pakistan is crucial for boosting trade

ties and noted the cordial relationship enjoyed by both nations.

The ambassador praised Sialkot for its role as a key export hub in Pakistan and recognised its contributions to the national economy and infrastructure development. He expressed enthusiasm for exploring new opportunities for collaboration between South Korea and Sialkot, promising full support in facilitating business matchmaking for delegates visiting South Korea.

Ambassador Park lauded the unique export culture of Sialkot and the self-help-driven socio-economic development achieved by its exporters.

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, 170 of them recorded gains and 220 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 50 companies remained unchanged.



LAHORE: A worker is preparing fan wings at his workshop at Railway road in the Provincial Capital.

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, thereby exploiting consumer rights by making partial disclosures on its packaging.

Transparency in advertising is crucial for informed consumer decisions, as TVCs often serve as the first point of contact between consumers and a product.

The CCP's Paint Order 2012 explicitly mandated that inclusion of a token without proper disclosure would be deemed to have lacking a reasonable basis with regards to prices, and thus falling under Section 10(2)(b) of the Act.

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.

The SPI for the lowest consumption groups of Rs 17,732-22,888 also witnessed a nominal increase of 0.01 percent whereas for consumption groups from Rs 22,889-29,517; Rs 29,518-44,175 and above Rs 44,175.

Australian High Commissioner visits NARC

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan, Neil Hawkins on Friday visited National Agricultural Research Centre.

The High Commissioner held a meeting with Chairman Pakistan Agriculture Research Council (PARC), Dr. Ghulam Muhammad Ali (S.I.) and discussed matters relating to agriculture sector research and development, said a press release.

Dr Ali briefed the envoy about PARC and its ongoing high tech research activities.

Following the meeting, he also visited National Institute for Genomics and Advanced Biotechnology (NIGAB) and Plant Genetic Resources Institute (PGRI).

Farmers advised to cultivate moringa

FAISALABAD (APP): The agronomists from University of Agriculture Faisalabad have advised farmer community to cultivate moringa (suhanjana) over maximum land. In a press release issued here on Friday, they said that moringa is a plant rich in numerous qualities, which is irreplaceable, so its cultivation can change the destiny of the motherland.

Its plant contains two times more protein than yogurt and milk.

Food groups exports grew 44.77% in 1st month 2024-25

ISLAMABAD (APP): Food group exports from the country during the first month of the current financial year grew by 44.77 per cent as compared to the exports of the corresponding month of the last year.

During the month of July 2024, food commodities valued at \$475.767 million were exported as compared to the exports of \$328.632 million in the same month of the last financial year, according to the data of the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics.

During the period under review, the rice exports from the country witnessed about 75.70 per

cent growth as 274,004 metric tons of rice valued at \$205.746 million were exported as compared to the exports of 172,302 metric tons of rice worth \$117.102 million in the same period of the last year. Meanwhile, the exports of fish and fish preparations grew by 0.55 per cent, whereas meat and meat products exports recorded about 5.73 per cent growth respectively.

About 9,713 metric tons of fish and fish preparations worth \$18.928 million and meat and 8,404 metric tons of meat products costing \$36.849 million were exported in the first month of the current financial year.

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 delegation included Sultan Ahmed Sheikh, Advocate Supreme Court (former Chairman PIPRA), Syed Aquil Ali Shah (Chairman PIPRA), Saleem Ghulam Hussain, Advocate Supreme Court (Senior Vice Chairman PIPRA), Salman Ahmed Sheikh, Advocate High Court (Member Managing Committee PIPRA), and Didar Karim, Advocate High Court (Honorary Secretary PIPRA), according to a news release on Friday. 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 and assured the delegation of IPO-Pakistan's commitment to supporting initiatives from the legal community.



ISLAMABAD: A vendor arranging and displaying Fruits to attract the customers at weekly bazaar in the Federal Capital.

Effective steps to increase wheat production: Toru

PESHAWAR (APP): KP Minister of Food, Zahir Shah Toru has said that the provincial government has taken effective measures to increase the production of wheat and utilizing all available resources and to store it safely.

He expressed these views while presiding over a consultative meeting organized under the auspices of the Food Department here on Friday.

Additional Secretary Food Department Ashfaq Khan, Director General (DG) Agriculture Research Department Dr. Abdul

Rauf, Director Food Yasir Hasan, Director Technical Dr. Abdul Sattar Shah and other relevant officials attended the meeting.

The meeting was given a detailed briefing regarding wheat production and its storage in the province.

The meeting was told that Pakistan is among the top ten countries in wheat production worldwide.

The meeting was also informed in detail about wheat production at provincial level and challenges in this regard.



Senator Jam Saifullah Khan, Chairman Senate Standing Committee in Railways presiding over a meeting of the committee at Parliament Lodges Islamabad.

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 again on Friday in an effort to hammer out a Gaza ceasefire agreement as Israel continued to slam targets in the Palestinian enclave. Gaza health officials reported separately on Thursday that the death toll there had surpassed 40,000 people after more than 10 months of fighting.

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

A US official briefed on the discussions in Doha, who declined to be identified, told Reuters that Thursday's talks were "constructive." "This is vital work. The remaining obstacles can be overcome, and we must bring this process to a close," US national security spokesperson John Kirby told reporters at the White House. Israel, meanwhile, pressed its assault on Gaza. Gaza health officials said at least six Palestinians were killed on Thursday night in an Israeli air strike on a house in Jabalia in northern Gaza Strip. Israeli troops earlier hit targets in the southern cities of Rafah and Khan Younis. In a statement issued late on Thursday on Telegram, Hamas politburo member Hossam Badran said Israel's continuing operations were an obstacle to progress on a ceasefire. Hamas officials did not join Thursday's talks.

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

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.

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

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

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

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

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

UK police charge two teenagers with right-wing terror offences

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Iraq says announcement on date for end to US-led coalition mission postponed

Monitoring Desk
CAIRO: Iraq's foreign ministry said on Thursday that an announcement on an end date for the US-led coalition's mission has been postponed due to the "latest developments." It did not identify the developments.

The U.S.-Iraq Higher Military Commission, comprising officials from both countries, discussed details of withdrawing advisers from military sites, the foreign ministry said in a statement.

On Aug. 5, at least five U.S. personnel were injured in an attack against a military base in Iraq.

Iraq wants troops from the U.S.-led military coalition to begin withdrawing in September and to formally end the coalition's work by September 2025, Iraqi sources have said, with some U.S. forces likely to remain in a newly negotiated advisory capacity.

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 bargaining 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, while Big Pharma blocked Medicare from being able to negotiate prices on behalf of seniors and people with disabilities," President Joe Biden said in a statement. "But we fought back—and won."

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, the report said.

The hacking group works by gleaming information about targets and tailoring "phishing" efforts to dupe 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. Google said it disrupted APT42 attempts to hack the campaigns of Biden and Trump in 2020.

In May and June of this year, the Iranian hacker group's targets included personal email accounts of about a dozen people affiliated with Biden or Trump and Google blocked numerous attempts by APT42.



Britain's Prince Harry, and his wife Meghan, Duchess of Sussex, Colombia's Vice President Francia Marquez, journalist Maria Ressa and panellist Felipe Galvis Vice President of Luminate attend the "Responsible Digital Future" Forum at EAN University, in Bogota, Colombia.

1.4 mn girls banned from Afghan schools since Taliban return: UNESCO

Monitoring Desk
PARIS: At least 1.4 million girls in Afghanistan have been denied access to secondary education since the Taliban returned to power in 2021, with the future of an entire generation now "in jeopardy", the United Nations' cultural agency said Thursday.

Access to primary education has also fallen sharply, with 1.1 million fewer girls and boys attending school, UNESCO said in a statement as the Taliban authorities marked three years since retaking Afghanistan on August 15, 2021.

"UNESCO is alarmed by the harmful consequences of this increasingly massive drop-out rate, which could lead to a rise in child labour and early marriage," the agency said.

"In just three years, the de facto authorities have almost wiped out two decades of steady progress for education in Afghanistan, and the future of an entire generation is now in jeopardy."

There are now nearly 2.5 million girls deprived of their right to education, representing 80 percent of Afghan school-age girls, the UN agency said.

The Taliban administration, which is not recognised by any other country, has imposed restrictions on women that the UN has described as "gender apartheid."

Afghanistan is the only country in the world to stop girls and women attending secondary schools and universities.

Modi renews push for common civil code

Monitoring Desk
NEW DELHI: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Thursday he wanted to press ahead with a national common civil code of law, a proposal bitterly opposed by Muslim activists as an attack on their faith.

India's 1.4 billion people are subject to a common criminal law but rules vary on personal matters such as marriage, divorce and inheritance. The proposed civil code would standardise laws across all religious communities but has been bitterly opposed by Muslim activists and liberals as an attack on the largest religious minority.

However, the Hindu nationalist leader said during an annual Independence Day address that the different laws divided the nation.

Mexico to send US diplomatic note over donations to Mexican civil groups

Monitoring Desk
MEXICO CITY: Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador told a morning press conference on Wednesday that he would send a diplomatic note to the United States over what he called interference regarding US donations to opposition civil organizations. The president cited US funding for Mexicanos Contra la Corrupcion y la Impunidad, an anti-graft NGO which has investigated possible corruption in his administration as well as that of his predecessors.

"We have dealt with it here several times, it has been made public but now we are going to handle it in the appropriate way through the letter I am going to send President Biden."



NEW YORK: People gather to protest a campaign event for Democratic presidential candidate Vice President Kamala Harris. Pro-Palestinian activists organised a 'Sound the Alarm for Gaza' protest to disrupt the event, put together by New York Democratic officials as they continue to bring attention to the Israeli aggression in Gaza.

Bangladesh may ask India for Hasina's extradition

Monitoring Desk
DHAKA: As cases rise against her, including murder accusations, Bangladesh will decide whether to ask India to extradite former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who resigned and fled to New Delhi last week, the country's de-facto foreign minister Mohammad Touhid Hossain said on Thursday.

Hossain said in an interview he did not want to speculate, but noted that Hasina was facing "so many cases". If the country's home and law ministries decided, "we have to ask for her...return to Bangladesh", he said.

"That creates an embarrassing situation for the Indian government," he said, adding that India "knows this and I am sure they will take care of it".

He did not elaborate. India's foreign ministry did not immediately respond to a request seeking comment.

Jamaica declares southern state of emergency after Sunday night killings

Monitoring Desk
KINGSTON: Jamaican Prime Minister Andrew Holness on Wednesday 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.

Holness said he hoped the measure would prevent reprisal killings, saying intelligence had warned there was a "very high probability" of retaliation attempts.

Five people have been arrested so far in relation with Sunday's shootings, Holness said. Holness noted that while the number of gangs estimated to be active in the country has shrunk from 400 to 185 in five years, the figures remain "very high."

Vietnam's top policeman added to Communist Party's powerful Politburo

Monitoring Desk
HANOI: Vietnam's ruling Communist Party on Friday added the country's most senior police officer to its elite Politburo, the government said, another sign of the growing political clout of its powerful internal security agency.

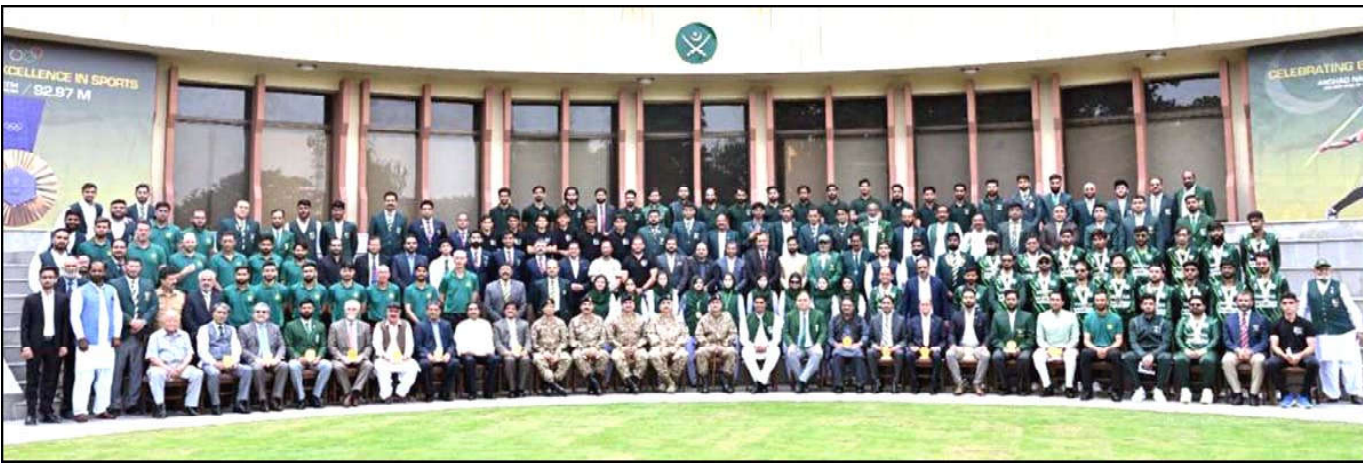
The promotion of 58-year-old Luong Tam Quang comes less than two months after he became Minister of Public Security, taking over when predecessor To Lam was chosen to be the country's president in May. Lam in early August officially took on the additional post of party general secretary, Vietnam's most powerful role, following the death of leader Nguyen Phu Trong after 13 years at the helm of a party that has ruled the country for nearly half a century. Vietnam officially has no paramount ruler and is led by the four "pillars" — the party chief, president, prime minister and the parliament chairman.

Three of the four positions are now held by former top police officials.

Quang's appointment as a 15th member of Vietnam's top decision-making body comes at a time of significant political upheaval, stemming from a far-reaching anti-graft campaign that saw the downfall of scores of officials, including former ministers, two presidents and a house speaker.



People gather as volunteers search to retrieve the bodies of residents killed by a landslide due to heavy rainfall in a landfill known as Kiteezi that serves as garbage dumping site, in the Lusanja village, outside Kampala, Uganda.



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.

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

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

Independent Report QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail has expressed optimism about the better relations between Pakistan and Russia in future.

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

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

Jamali who called on him here at the Governor's House on Friday. During the course of meeting, matters were discussed about emerging political and economic changes, new prospects of development and cooperation between the Asian countries and promotion of economic growth and regional coordination.

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

He said that Pakistan is starting new era of development and cooperation. He said that Pakistan has

the capability to become hub of economic and trade activities from all perspectives, whether it is the blue economy, land trade, tourism or the profitable opportunities of investment in the country.

He also expressed the belief that Pakistan could break the statuesque of the whole region. Therefore it is necessary to benefit from the profitable opportunities of investment.

He said that we are determined to mobilize our strength of cooperation and partnership for building bright future of the nation and coming generations.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Governor said that we can form such a healthy society by forging unity among our ranks which prefers diversity and promotes partnership. He was speaking to a delegation of Christian

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Installation of firewall, closure of internet challenged in IHC

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

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

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

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



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

BITT highlights achievements of various personalities

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

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

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

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

Awais Jadoon, Chairman of the Balochistan In-



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

NA body expresses dismay on overbilling, IPPs performance

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The meeting was attended by MNAs, Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhary, Sheikh Aftab Ahmed, Raja Qamer ul Islam, Chaudhry Naseer Ahmed Abbas, Syeda Nosheen Iftikhar, Rana Muhammad Hayat Khan, Mr. Muhammad Shahryar Khan Mahar, Mr. Khurshid Ahmed Junejo, Mr. Nauman Islam Sheikh, Syed Abar Ali Shah, Syed Waseem Hussain, Mr. Junaid Akbar, Mr. Sher Ali Arbab, and Malik Muhammad Aamir Dogar. Mr. Muhammad Iqbal Khan and Syed Rafiqullah, 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.



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

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

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik on Friday emphasized the need for a customized template for disaster-impacted sectors, robust anticipatory actions and efficient post-disaster reconstruction using local materials and skills.

The NDMA convened a seminar on Climate and Disaster Risk Financing at the National University of Technology (NUTECH) here that brought together experts, policymakers, and stake-

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

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

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

Disaster Risks, that was participated by Chairman NDMA, Lieutenant General, Inam Haider Malik, PM Coordinator on Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam, Resident Representative, UNDP, Samuel Rizk, Executive Director, SDPI, Abid Qaiyum Suleri, Member DRR, NDMA, Idrees Mahsud and Arup Chatterjee from ADB.

The seminar aimed to emphasize the significance of global stock takes which are required to be transformed into executive actions as adopted in previous COP events.



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

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

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

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

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

The development came days after incarcerated PTI founder Iman Khan, in a stern message from Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi, warned mem-

bers of his party's government in KP that they would be held accountable for corruption and governance issues in their departments.

In line with the directions of Khan, the PTI constituted a three-member committee to monitor corruption and governance in KP, where the party formed government after the February 2024 general elections. It should be noted that Khan decided to constitute the committee after provincial minister Shakeel, during a meeting with him in jail, complained about embezzlement in various departments of KP.



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

PNS Hunain visits Turkish Ports of Golcuk, Aksaz

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

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.



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

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

67% of Pakistan Railways' tracks have exceeded lifespan

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

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

Senator Kamil Ali

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

Also present on the occasion were Abdul Samad Achakzai, Amanullah Shadman, Jumma Khan, Syed Sher Muhammad

Agha, Maulana Abdul Wasey, Jahangir Khan Achakzai, Abdul Karim Noorzai, Maulana Sardar Muhammad Khondoi has stated that basic secret of development of the nations lies in the knowledge.

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

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

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

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