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Govt mulls shutting down all utility stores across country

Prime minister seeks recommendations for introduction of alternative system to such stores; Work underway to transfer employees to other departments, says secretary of industry and production

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The federal government has decided to close Utility Stores across the country, a move confirmed by the secretary of industries and production ministry during a Senate Standing Committee meeting on Friday.

The secretary told the meeting the decision was part of a broader strategy of the government to exit non-essential business operations, and that efforts were ongoing to reassign affected employees to other institutions.

The announcement was made during a meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Industry and Production, which was chaired by Senator Aoun Abbas. The secretary emphasized that the

government's aim is to streamline its operations by moving away from activities deemed non-essential.

According to the Utility Store management, the federal government has given them two weeks, while the subsidy on items available at the stores had already ended. According to the management, after the news of closure of the stores, there was concern among more than 11,000 employees, out of which 6,000 were permanent and others on contract and daily wages.

On the other hand, the standing committee took strict notice on the decision to close Utility Stores and sought details on the statement of the industries secretary, Committee Chair-

man Senator Aoun Abbas Bappi expressed concern over the government's decision.

"I was not aware of it. It is a very sad decision. No one was aware of the closure of the stores," he remarked, adding that the government did not know what will happen to the thousands of employees after the closure. "Where will the employees be adjusted? Will people be rendered unemployed?"

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

The prime minister

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QUETTA: A delegation led by former Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami Sirajul Haq in a group photo with Governor Balochistan Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail

Health ministry confirms second case of Monkeypox

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Health on Friday confirmed that second case of Monkeypox has been reported in Pakistan.

According to spokesperson of the Ministry of Health, the patient came from the Gulf countries with symptoms. He added that the Health Desk at Peshawar Airport transferred the patient to hospital timely whose Mpox test was reported positive.

The spokesperson said that the Ministry of Health is ensuring continuous monitoring of the situation.

National Coordinator for Health Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad said that an effective system of screening and surveillance system was functional at all airports.

He added border health staff were working diligently at airports and entry points.

Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad said that the government was ensuring serious measures to keep people safe from epidemics.

BA session summoned from September 2

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QUETTA: The session of Balochistan Assembly has been summoned from September 2 in the provincial assembly's Hall here.

According to an official notification issued here by the Provincial Assembly's secretariat on Friday, the Governor Balochistan,

Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail has summoned the session of provincial assembly at 03:00 PM.

As per the notification, the session would remain continued till September 12, 2024.

There would be five sittings during the session of provincial assembly, mentioned in the notification.

Balochistan torrential rains claim 22 lives including children

QUETTA (INP): The recent torrential rains in Balochistan have claimed 22 lives, including 11 children, and injured 13 others, PDMA on Friday. According to a report by the PDMA, the rains have affected 5,448 individuals and damaged 158 homes, with 622 partially damaged.

Additionally, 102 acres of crops and 35 kilometers of roads have been affected by the flash floods.

The PDMA report also stated that seven bridges have been damaged, and 131 livestock have perished due to the heavy rains.

It is pertinent to mention here that Chief meteorologist Sardar Sarfraz at the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) predicted season's strong monsoon spell from August 26-30, which was expected to impact Balochistan, entire Sindh and southern Punjab where citizens were advised to take necessary precautions to ensure their safety.



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

Naqvi determines to take action against attackers

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has pledged to take stern action against the attackers who killed 13 police personnel in the Kacha area of Rahim Yar Khan.

Presiding over a high-level meeting at Rahim Yar Khan Airport on Friday, Naqvi emphasized the need

for robust security measures and instructed authorities to equip operational forces with modern weapons and safety equipment.

Naqvi described the incident as a "sad tragedy" and directed all necessary measures to prevent such incidents in the future.

He ordered a coordi-

nated operation against the perpetrators, stating that they would be dealt with "iron hands."

Meanwhile the funeral prayers for police personnel martyred in the attack by robbers in Machhka were held at the Sadiq Shaheed Police Lines Rahim

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

Complex problems of Balochistan actually requires serious solution, says Governor

Sheikh Jaffar Mandokhail emphasizes voice of all stakeholders including youth should be involved in process of decision making and equal access to resources and services

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail has stated that the complex issues of the province actually requires serious solution.

The Governor said that he says it with conviction following his affiliation with practical politics spanning around four decades that our diversity is our biggest strength.

Therefore, the major issues of the province can be resolved through wholehearted representation and partnership of the province in the federal and provincial institutions including parliament.

The Governor was speaking to the delegation who called on him under leadership of the central leader of Jama'at-e-Islami, Sirajul Haq here at the Governor's House on Friday.

Also present on the occasion were the provincial minister, Mir Asim Kurd, parliamentary secretary, Barkat Rind and members of the provincial assembly, Maulana Hidayatur Rehman Baloch and Zarak Khan Mandokhail.

Speaking on the occasion, Governor said that sustainable peace and prosperity of the country is linked with peace and prosperity of Balochistan.

He said that we do imagine of such Balochistan where the real issues are resolved through meaningful political dialogue.

He stressed that the voice of all stakeholders including the youth should be involved in the process of decision making and equal access to the resources and services.

He said it is included in our top condition to increase the voice of youth in the policy and decision

making recognizing their important character.

He stressed the need to provide equal opportunities and facilities to the people so that they may polish their learning and creative capabilities.

He also stressed that there is a need to take the existing tense situation and prevailing sensitivity serious by government and all political organizations and civil society.

He insisted that we should take steps in the interest of country and people keeping in view the tense situation of whole region just because we can't afford more hatred and disputes.

The Governor exhorted to the ruling elite as well as the political elders, religious scholars and intellectuals to play wholehearted role in finding peaceful solution to the present tense situation.



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

Ahsan concerned over alarming results of District Education Performance Index

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

He also informed that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has recently estab-

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PM offers aid to Bangladesh amid severe floods

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, expressing profound sorrow and grief over recent catastrophic floods, on Friday offered assistance Bangladesh to help cope with the devastating situation. In a letter to Chief Advisor, Bangladesh Dr. Muhammad Yunus, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif expressed Pakistan's solidarity with Bangladesh during this challenging time.

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

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

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

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

He held information

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

Independent Report

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

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

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

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

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

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

Missing brothers of Mashwani case: Government seems to be beneficiary of enforced disappearances: IHC

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) has given indication to issue strict order in the case pertaining to recovery of two missing professors brothers of Azhar Mashwani.

The court remarked apparently it seems as if government is beneficiary of enforced disappearances. How the people are kidnapped and chief executive does nothing. Attorney

General (AG) had said he would brief Prime Minister (PM). Chief Executive knows about these matters but even then enforced disappearances are taking place.

Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb remarked if government has not to follow due process then what can we say. They cannot estimate how much

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Right to Information Act: A new era of transparency in Balochistan

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QUETTA: In a significant milestone, the Right to Information Act has become a reality in Balochistan, marking a new era of transparency and accountability in the province. The Act, passed by the Balochistan Assembly in 2021, aims to empower citizens with the right to access information held by public bodies.

Addressing the closing ceremony of a two-day training program for Information Officers and Public Accountability Forum members, Imran Khan, Secretary Information, emphasized the importance of implementing the Act in all circumstances. "The Right to Information Act is now a reality, and we cannot ignore it. We must ensure its implementation in letter and spirit," he said.

The training program, organized by AD Balochistan, brought together experts and stakeholders to discuss the nuances of the Act and its implementation. The program featured presentations by renowned experts, including Muhammad Noor Khetran DG PR, Mir Bahram Baloch, and Advocate Abdul Jabbar, who shared their insights on the Act's significance and challenges.



QUETTA: Provincial Secretary Information Imran Khan and Director General Public Relations Balochistan Muhammad Noor Khetran in a group photo with participants of two-days training regarding Public Awareness and Access to Information



ISLAMABAD: Senator Muhammad Abdul Qadir, Chairman Senate Standing Committee on Defence Production presiding over a meeting of the committee at Parliament House.

Pakistan-Ethiopia fraternity park to be established in Islamabad next month

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Governments of Pakistan and Ethiopia on Friday announced to establish a dedicated park in Islamabad next month to foster fraternity and brotherhood between the two countries under the ongoing bilateral cooperation in the area of climate change.

The announcement to this effect was made during a press briefing jointly addressed by Special Envoy and Ambassador of Ethiopia to Pakistan, Jemal Beker Abdula, Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam and Capital Development Authority (CDA) Chairman and Commissioner Islamabad Muhammad Ali Randhawa.

The joint press briefing was held at the Ethiopia Embassy Islamabad, which was followed by a tree plantation ceremony contributing to Ethiopia's record-breaking initiative of planting millions seedlings in one day under the globally recognized Green Legacy Initiative of Prime Minister of Ethiopia Dr. Abiy Ahmed.

Individuals from all walks of life including government officials, diplomatic community, academicians, religious and business fraternity, youth, civil society and media gathered at the Ethiopia Embassy and planted saplings of fruits, vegetables and other species under the Green Legacy Initiative.

Addressing the press briefing, Ambassador Jemal Beker Abdula expressed gratitude to the government and the people of Pakistan for contributing to millions of tree plantation initiative of the Government of Ethiopia.

The ambassador recalled the launch of Ethio-Pakistan Fraternity under the Green Legacy Initiative programme across Pakistan under which not only trees were planted across the country, but also Ethio-Pakistan Fraternity Parks and Enclaves have also been established.

"Climate Change is no more a buzzword rather it is a reality and for that matter we all have to join our forces to deal with the looming threat which is taking more lives than any other global crises," said the ambassador while announcing the launch of the 2nd round of Ethio-Pakistan Fraternity under the Green Legacy Initiative programme in Pakistan.

Missing PTI worker Faizan case: IHC summons IG Police Islamabad on Tuesday, seeks progress report

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) while summoning IG Police Islamabad on Tuesday on the petition regarding recovery of missing PTI worker Faizan has sought progress report.

The petition seeking recovery of PTI missing worker Faizan came up for hearing before Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb of IHC Friday.

The petitioner lawyers Babar Awan, Rizwan Awan, Sardar Masroof, Aamna Ali and others appeared in the court.

Additional Attorney General (AAG), State counsel and police officers also appeared in the court.

The state counsel said in the court nothing has become known so far. The person went missing on July 28 and application was filed with him on July 29.

The counsel for petitioner said he did not entertain our application.

Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb inquired when case was registered on their application.

NA Speaker flays attack on police vans

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker of the National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, on Friday strongly condemned the attack on two police vans in Rahim Yar Khan.

Expressing deep sorrow over the loss of police personnel in the incident, the Speaker extended his heartfelt condolences to the families of the martyrs and wished a swift recovery for the injured officers.

He said that the sacrifices made by the police and security forces in the fight against terrorism and in maintaining law and order in the country will not be in vain.

Legal Aid Society delegation calls on Azam Nazeer Tarar

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation of Legal Aid Society called on Federal Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar on Thursday and discussed issues related to sexual and gender based violence and the organization's extensive work across Pakistan.

The representatives provided detailed briefings on the ongoing efforts to combat sexual violence and the challenges in delivering legal aid to victims.

The minister expressed his commitment for a strategic collaboration between the Legal Aid and Justice Authority (LAJA) and the Legal Aid Society, noting that reforms to LAJA are already underway to enhance legal aid services across the country.

He further emphasized the ministry's commitment to introducing comprehensive reforms in the Qanoone-Shahadat and the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) to protect the rights of victims and witnesses, ensuring that criminal proceedings remain free from external influence.

Tarar reiterated that these legal reforms will ensure the protection of every victim's rights and that no influential party can manipulate or subvert the law. He also commended the Legal Aid Society for its significant contributions and tireless efforts in combating sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) across the country.

He said the Legal Aid Society has been at the forefront addressing SGBV by providing legal aid, enhancing protection mechanisms.

13,452 candidates obtain nomination papers for Islamabad local elections

ISLAMABAD (INP): In preparation for the upcoming local elections in Islamabad, a total of 13,452 candidates have obtained nomination papers so far, reflecting high interest in the municipal polls scheduled for October 9.

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has reported that 356 candidates have already submitted their papers for the positions of Chairman and Vice Chairman. For the former seats, 268 nomination papers have been received by the District Returning Office to date.

The ECP has set the deadline for nomination submissions as August 28, providing candidates with a few more days to complete the process before the elections.

ICT admin launches crackdown on beggars, 15 arrested

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration has stepped up efforts to curb begging in the Federal Capital.

In a recent operation, 15 professional beggars were arrested in a crackdown led by the Assistant Commissioners and Magistrates spearheading the initiative in various areas, said the ICT's spokesman.

In an operation, the Assistant Commissioner City led by district administration teams arrested 5 professional beggars from Jamia Masjid Rumi and Faisal Market. While 6 were arrested in the Pothohar area.

Similarly, the Assistant Commissioner of Rural areas detained four alms-seekers from locations including P.S. Lohibber and Sihala. The arrested individuals were taken to local police stations. Minors found begging were sent to the Edhi Center for care.

This crackdown was part of a daily operation focused on reducing begging in Islamabad. The district administration was planning to expand its efforts by targeting more areas and conducting frequent raids.

The ongoing focus was on arresting professional beggars and ensuring minors on the streets receive proper care. Long-term strategies may include rehabilitation programs and public awareness campaigns to tackle the underlying causes of begging in the city.

Federal Board announces Intermediate Part I & II results 2024

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (FBISE) Islamabad on Friday announced the results of intermediate annual examinations 2024 Part I & II in which the girls again clinched the top slots.

According to the details of results released by the Federal Board, the passing percentage of Class-11 students remained at 58.75%, while in Class-12th the passing percentage was 82.58%.

Furthermore, the number of students participating in the annual examinations of the year 2024 in Grade 11 was 93257, out of which the number of successful students was 53369.

Similarly, the number of students participating in the 12th class was 90,518, out of which the number of successful students remained 72,653.

As per details of position holder students, Arooba Asim belonging to Pre-Medical Group Punjab College for Women Khayaban Sadiq Sargodha clinched the first position by getting 1065 marks.

Meanwhile, Tahreem Imran from Army Public School and College Gujranwala Cantt and Haira Najeer from Army Public School and College Girls Rawalpindi Cantt shared second position by securing 1054 marks.

Similarly, Aafia Wajid from Army Public School and College for Girls Humayun Road Rawalpindi Cantt and Amina Riaz from Army Public School and College Tufail Road Lahore Cantt shared the third position by securing 1053 marks.

In the pre-engineering group, Huda Ali Murtaza from HITEC School and College for Women, Taxila Cantt secured the first position with 1045 marks.

While Abdullah Jawad from Siddique Public School for Boys Madina Town Lohi Bhir Islamabad got the second position by getting 1043 marks.

The third position was shared among Muhammad Haseeb Iqbal from Siddique Public School Madina Town Lohi Bhir Islamabad and Zayna Qasim from Army Public School Fort Road Rawalpindi with 1037 marks.

ESaaS to enhance Pakistan's tech capabilities, resilience efforts to combat climate change: Romina

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator to Prime Minister on Climate Change Romina Khurshid Alam Friday said that Energy Storage as a Service (ESaaS) at an industrial scale is an emerging model, where energy storage systems are offered to customers as a service rather than a traditional capital expenditure.

Speaking as chief guest at the launching and signing ceremony of the "Industry-First Energy Storage as a Service Project" held here at a local hotel, the PM's climate aide said, "With potential role to significantly reducing carbon emissions, the launch of Pakistan's first Energy Storage as a Service project at the industry scale is not merely a technological milestone; it is a bold statement of our intent to lead by example in the global transition to a low-carbon future."

"The groundbreaking initiative represents a pivotal step forward in the present government's commitment to integrate innovative energy solutions and enhance the country's energy infrastructure for better and sustained energy supplies to the people," Ms. Alam remarked.

The initiative was actualized by the Brillanz Group and other key stakeholders involved in developing a transformative ecosystem for sustainability and decarbonization in Pakistan. She said that this project basically aims to revolutionise energy storage capabilities and provide a sustainable solution for our energy needs, aligning with the present government's vision for a greener and climate-resilient future. The PM's climate aide said, "With potential role to significantly reducing carbon emissions, the launch of Pakistan's first Energy Storage as a Service project at the industry scale is not merely a technological milestone; it is a bold statement of our intent to lead by example in the global transition to a low-carbon future."

By adopting such innovative energy solutions that prioritize decarbonization agendas, the present government was sending a powerful message that sustainable practices are at the core of our development strategy, Romina Khurshid Alam stressed, adding that in fact the benefits of this project extended beyond mere addressing environmental concerns.

By reducing diesel consumption, we are not only promoting energy efficiency but also addressing a critical economic vulnerability—our reliance on diesel imports. This reduction helps to mitigate the strain on our foreign currency reserves and shields us, however modestly, from the fluctuations of exchange rates. The PM's climate aide said further that Climate Change & Environmental Coordination ministry was proud to support the launch of the project, showcasing the government's commitment to the strategic partnership with the resource-rich private sector in driving forward the green transformation of the country's industrial sector. "Only by working together (government and private sector), we can future-proof Pakistan's infrastructure, ensuring that it is resilient in the face of climate challenges."



ISLAMABAD: A delegation from Legal Aid Society had a meeting with Federal Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar in Federal Capital.

Constant protests, traffic chaos undermine capital's ideal vision of life

ISLAMABAD (APP): Once revered as a sanctuary of serenity and peace, Islamabad is now entangled in a web of daily strife. For its residents, the idealized vision of life in the federal capital has become an increasingly elusive dream.

The city, previously a symbol of tranquility, is now marred by ceaseless political protests, religious demonstrations, and the ever-present specter of commuting chaos. What was once seen as a haven has transformed into a battleground where daily existence is overshadowed by unrest, making life for its citizens an ongoing struggle.

Doctor Alina Nasir, a 42-year-old medical practitioner, who moved to Islamabad from Azad Kashmir ten years ago for its reputed calm and better employment opportunities, now finds herself grappling with a relentless cycle of stress. "I imagined a peaceful life here, but it's been anything but that," she shares, her frustration palpable. "Every day, I worry about my children's safety, especially when they travel to and from school. The political rallies and roadblocks are constant, making the daily commute a nerve-wracking ordeal."

The city's infrastructure, once designed to accommodate its growing population, now buckles under the strain of frequent demonstrations and political unrest. The roads are often clogged with traffic as protesters stage rallies, leaving residents stuck for hours. This has led to a deteriorating quality of life, where every journey feels like a gamble. Ali Raza, a 45-year-old businessman, echoes Alina's sentiments. "I used to think of Islamabad as a place where I could grow old peacefully. Now, I'm not sure if I can even get to work on time. The protests that break out with little notice create havoc on our streets. It's not just inconvenient; it's dangerous." For families like Jafriy, a school teacher who also relocated to Islamabad from Rawalpindi's far-flung village Kallar Sayedan to provide their children.

SC issues written order in 21 year old murders case

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Friday issued written order on an appeal in case of two murders of Wazirabad, Punjab.

It said that it is apologetic for the delay of 6 years in deciding the appeal from the Shariat Appellate Bench. The accused Imran Alias Mani was accused of double murder and adultery 21 year back. The Supreme Court Shariat Appellate Bench acquitted the accused on the basis of lack of evidence.

The order said that the top court has admitted the appeal on September 18, 2018. The judges should know their duties to deliver justice, unfortunately the Shariat Bench of the Supreme Court remained inactive for a long time. The court said that there is no scope in the Constitution for the Shariat Bench of the Supreme Court to remain inactive.

Senate committee forms sub-committee to analyze country's EV Policy

ISLAMABAD (Online): Senator Aon Abbas chaired the meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Industries and Production held Friday at Parliament House.

The Senate Committee deliberated on the inclusion of cold storage in the industrial sector and the provision of affordable electricity rates. The matter was referred by the Chairman Senate. Officials informed that the ECC approved the matter and forwarded it to the Cabinet for their approval to declare 'Cold Storage' an industrial sector.

Furthermore, the committee was briefed on Pakistan's Auto Policy. Officials informed that 13 automobile companies are currently operating in the country. Initially, there were 3 companies, but as a result of the 2016-21 Auto Policy, 8 new players entered the market. These companies have installed production capacity of 500,000 units annually in more than 40 models with over 100 variants. They contribute 4% to GDP, pay Rs. 300 billion in taxes, and generate over 2 million jobs in the country. Under the 2021-26 Auto Policy, the Ministry has introduced WP-29 safety regulations for auto manufacturers. These safety standards have been adopted by all manufacturers except Suzuki for 6 variants. Suzuki has decided to discontinue 3 variants and redesign the remaining three to comply with WP-29 safety regulations. Senator Saifullah Sarwar Khan Nyazee stated that no car manufacturer should be allowed to produce cars that do not follow WP-29 regulations, questioning who would be responsible for the lives lost in such vehicles. Officials from the Ministry of Industries.



Coordinator to PM on Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam addressing as chief guest at a ceremony about launching of industry-first energy storage as a service project in Islamabad

CDA chairman directs swift implementation of Digital Parking Project

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA), Muhammad Ali Randhawa, on Friday instructed the authorities concerned to expedite the installation of hardware for the Digital Parking Project in Islamabad.

This directive comes after the development of software for the project.

The first phase of the project will focus on introducing digital parking in the city's busiest markets and marakiz.

Chairman Randhawa was chairing a meeting emphasizing the importance of taking all stakeholders, particularly local traders, into confidence to ensure the project's success.

He also directed that parking regulations and charges be finalized, drawing from experiences of other cities and international practices.

The revenue generated from digital parking will be utilized for the beautification, uplift, and repair/maintenance of markets and marakiz.

Notably, Chairman Randhawa stressed the need to include a system that prioritizes senior citizens, women, and people with special needs in the digital parking project.

Five-day anti-polio drive set to launch on Sept 9

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Administration is set to launch a comprehensive five-day anti-polio campaign starting on September 9.

Deputy Commissioner Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon on Friday chaired a meeting to review arrangements for upcoming anti-polio drive.

According to an ICT spokesman, the meeting was attended by District Health Officer (DHO) Dr. Zeem Zia, Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) East and others.

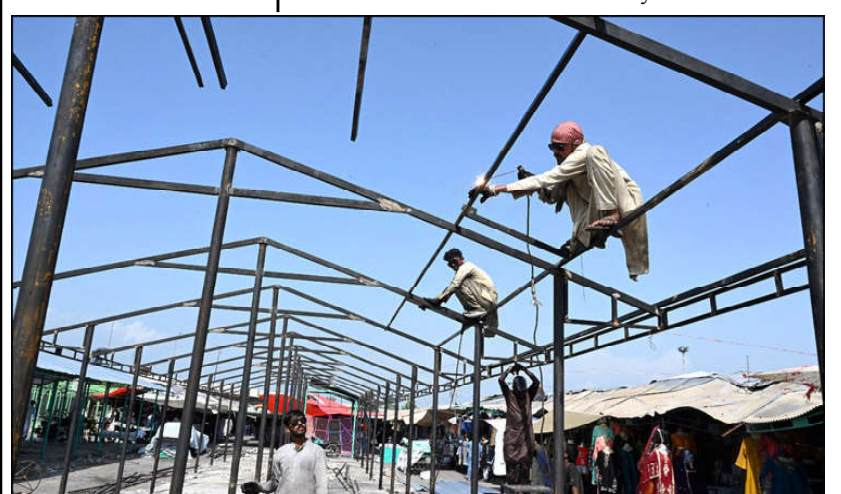
HEC Chairman urges collective push to keep young talent in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman, Higher Education Commission Dr Mukhtar Ahmed Friday called upon for a collective push serves as a timely reminder of the need for a cohesive strategy to stem brain drain and empower young Pakistanis to achieve their dreams within the country. Talking to a Private news channel, Chairman HEC expressed deep concern regarding the prevailing mindset among young people in Pakistan, who prefer to seek job opportunities abroad rather than staying in their home country.

He emphasized the need for a collective effort from society, media, and parents to instill trust and confidence among youngsters about their prospects for a bright future in Pakistan. Chairman HEC, Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, emphasized the crucial role of society, media, and parents in rebuilding the trust of young Pakistanis in their homeland and its future.

He urged these stakeholders to join hands in creating an enabling environment that fosters a sense of belonging, security, and opportunity among the youth. Responding to a question regarding the 97 students who were awarded scholarships and sent abroad but have since disappeared, Dr Mukhtar Ahmed acknowledged that the incident highlighted a deeper issue of trust deficit and lack of continuity in policies. "The brain drain phenomenon is a complex problem that cannot be addressed overnight, and that it requires sustained efforts and consistent policies to rebuild trust among the youth," he emphasized.

"To address this the HEC is taking concrete steps, including introducing scholarships and research opportunities that incentivize students to stay in Pakistan."



ISLAMABAD: Rehabilitation work begins at Peshawar Mor Weekly Bazaar after extensive fire damaged and burned numerous stalls.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent
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Who to believe?

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

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

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

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

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

Zafar Mirza

Health needs to be understood as a holistic and normative concept. 'Holistic' would mean covering the physical, mental and social well-being dimensions, while 'normative' indicates an independent and normal state of well-being, and not just the absence of disease. This is how the World Health Organisation has defined health in its constitution: "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."

A clear understanding of health has important implications for healthcare. The healthcare system should be so organised as to protect, promote and restore physical, mental and social health and well-being.

This was a prelude to making the real point: for such a huge and growing population as we have and with such a health crisis and such low government spending as ours, what can we expect from Pakistan's future healthcare system? Despite a huge government health infrastructure in the

country, its functioning is far below acceptable levels of access and quality vis-à-vis our burden of disease. What little we are spending as a government is not only lopsided — much less on primary healthcare than on big hospitals — but also fraught with huge inefficiencies. The commercial private health sector is into ruthless profit-making and the not-for-profit private health sector is trying to fill the gaps left by the government's inadequate health services primarily for the have-nots and those left out.

The not-for-profit health sector in Pakistan has grown to respond to unmet healthcare needs and is driven by a passion for caring, the spirit of giving back, charity, philanthropy and in-kind support in the form of trust hospitals, telemedicine, mobile clinics, health camps and health relief operations during emergencies, which are exacerbated now due to the frequent and unexpected manifestations of climate change. This sector is huge and growing, unquantified and diverse. It operates at vari-

ous levels and scales.

The quality of care provided by this sector is variable and the bulk of its work falls in the domain of curative care. It is aimed almost entirely at physical health, ignoring mental health and social well-being. It is generally disjointed rather than in the form of systematic integrated care consisting of preventive, promotive, curative, rehabilitative and palliative services. Most of these initiatives are aimed at improving access to care rather than improving access to quality healthcare. A general observation is also that most of these initiatives, even the big ones operating at a national level, do not have a defined package of health services. Sadly, despite the core intention to serve, these organisations and initiatives are not cooperating with each other.

I am deliberately not naming any organisations though I have visited many of them across the length and breadth of the country in the last three years. On the one hand, I have felt inspired by the service they are providing in difficult circumstances, and on

the other, I have always wondered how little they know about each other and how much stronger the sector would be if there was a mechanism for co-operation between them.

I use the word 'cooperation' in a larger sense. Some of them admittedly are better than others and a few of them have seriously invested continuously to improve the quality of their services. But there are hardly any cross-learning. There are best-practice models here and there but they remain isolated. I see this as a huge opportunity loss and an ironic one. Why don't they cooperate with each other and learn? Not only this, some of them I find to be quite territorial and in competitive mode. This is a question which has made me think about a 'Health for All Collective' (HFAC).

How about creating a platform in Pakistan for all healthcare organisations, especially not-for-profits but not necessarily limited to them? A platform where they can share their learnings, best practices, challenges etc. A kind of 'marketplace' for healthcare

where there are opportunities for learning and collaboration. Where every new organisation or a particular project in health doesn't have to start from scratch and where potential partners for particular work in healthcare can be found and where basic definitions, concepts and approaches in healthcare can be standardised. Today, even primary healthcare is understood differently by different players in the field.

The right to health should underscore the HFAC. Organisations, projects and even individuals who subscribe to the importance of the idea of collectively working towards realising the right to health and add their voice to this cause can come together under the umbrella of the HFAC.

A possible vision of the HFAC would be a world where all human beings have an equal opportunity to be healthy and equal access to reliable quality healthcare according to their needs and where appropriate public health measures are in place for effectively addressing the social, economic and political determinants of health, risks to health and prevention of diseases, and a well-prepared and resilient health system to deal with health emergencies.

'Health for All Collective'**Women in leadership****Hadia Majid**

Only 5.7 per cent of managerial positions are occupied by women in Pakistan. A common argument for explaining this low statistic is that there are just not enough qualified women. True, women on average see lower educational achievement than men. Similarly, women also enter and remain in the labour market at much lower rates. But, labour force participation rates for women with tertiary levels of education are about 32pc. Why then do such low numbers make it to managerial (and higher) positions? Is this really a supply-side problem or are there other factors at play?

Conducting in-depth interviews with women in Lahore shows women opting out of high-pressure jobs and roles. Here, most of the higher-income, highly educated women interviewed cited care burdens, mother's guilt and a desire to spend more time with family as some of the primary reasons why they have cut back on working hours or passed up on promotions. This 'motherhood penalty' has been well-documented within

the literature. The high-time poverty faced by such women also means that when given the choice, they would be unwilling to enter and stay in the labour market unless they are well-compensated. Unfortunately, gender wage gaps are pervasive across all labour market sectors.

Using 30 years of the Pakistan Labour Force surveys, we found evidence of wage differences between men and women with similar levels of education who occupy similar positions on the occupation ladder. Can differences in experience help explain these wage gaps? Women on average take more breaks in their career and avail less training opportunities, negatively affecting their on-the-job experience. Besides, higher care work burdens and frequent career breaks translate into less time spent both at work and work-related events. This, in turn, affects the types of social contacts and networks women are able to build. Indeed, women have lower, less diverse networks. This negatively impacts the extent and type of mentoring that they receive as well as the information flows that

they can tap into for career advancement. That these differences would then be penalised in the form of lower lifetime earnings relative to men is unsurprising.

Yet, women may also be purposely locked out of opportunities and networks. This gatekeeping is partly driven by the gender-segregated nature of our society and the separation in social activities and circles that this inevitably leads to. But, also by the high incidence of discrimination against women documented for the Pakistani labour market.

Careful disaggregation performed on labour market outcomes shows that gender gaps cannot be explained by such characteristics as age, education, experience, etc and that there are unobservables such as biases and sociocultural norms at play. Obvious examples of discrimination include harassment, institutionalised lower wages for women, or prejudice against hiring or promoting women because of stereotyping. More covert examples are seemingly well-meaning policies that perpetuate cycles of

disadvantages specific to women and market segmentation where we find women (and men) confined to certain professions based on their gender.

In Pakistan, we typically find women's concentration in careers that are extensions of their caregiving roles such as teaching and nursing. What is telling here is that not only are female-dominated professions systematically lower paid than male-dominated ones, a difference which cannot be entirely explained by considering observable characteristics, but that even in these female-dominated fields we often find men in more senior positions and at higher pay. Thus, there is an additional layer of discrimination embedded within the already segmented market.

That women are locked out of certain professions, and equally qualified women are paid lower wages than men, goes against the pillars of just remuneration: Employment and equal pay for work of equal value are internationally recognised as fundamental human rights. Yet, aside from speaking to questions of

justice, a systemic absence of women at positions of power has wider and deeper consequences.

Women leaders and managers have been shown to have a markedly different set of preferences and behaviours when compared to their male counterparts. Women have been found to have a more transformational leadership style, focusing on motivating their followers, fostering collaboration and emphasising ethical behaviour. In contrast, men have been found to have a more transactional leadership style, which is more task-oriented and based on rewards. This is not to say that one style of leadership is better relative to the other. Rather, the difference means that an organisation can be that much more well-rounded in its approach to various situations when both genders are represented up the ladder.

These differences across men and women continue when we look at responses to crises or even approaches to design because of a higher tendency among women to emphasise communication and empathy. The

gendered variations in approaches, style, and preferences become especially relevant when we look at the case of policymaking. Women have been shown to prioritise separate sets of issues, such as those related to health, education, the environment, peace and security and social welfare, when compared to men. Women also tend to advocate at higher rates for marginalised and vulnerable populations.

Moreover, the inclusion of women in governance and policymaking has not only been associated with better policy outcomes but also with more effective governance as well as lower levels of corruption. A dearth of women in leadership and policymaking roles then means under-representation of not just significant areas of intervention but also of specific populations; leaving all of us worse off when we have fewer women in power. Indeed, if we are to make consistent moves towards a just, peaceful, and sustainable world, we must do better to include and champion our women.

Babies galore**Zubeida Mustafa**

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

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

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

Foundation's Urban Impact Lab and have produced results.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Dropped chances**Shahzad Sharjeel**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

neighbourhood and street. India and Nigeria did it despite poverty, illiteracy, and myriad insurgency movements to match ours, so why can't we?

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

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

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

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

Sindh CM announces compensation for victims of Iran bus crash

KARACHI (INP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has announced financial assistance for the families of the martyrs of the bus incident in Iran. As per the announcement made on Friday, financial assistance of Rs5 million for family of each martyr will be given while Rs1 million each will be given to the injured persons.

In this regard, Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah said that the Sindh government has made complete arrangements to bring back the bodies of martyrs on the instructions of Chairman People's Party Bilawal Bhutto. He said Chairman Bilawal Bhutto has directed that all arrangements and reports on the issuance of compensation should be given.



HYDERABAD: Activists of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) are observe a day of gratitude to celebrate the recent Supreme Court decision in the Mubarak Sani case, at Hyderabad press club.

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

LAHORE (APP): A meeting was held at the Civil Secretariat on Friday to highlight and appreciate the Punjab government plans and efforts to protect rights of religious minorities in Punjab. Provincial Minister for Minorities Affairs Ramesh Singh Arora, presiding over the meeting, said that the Punjab government was taking all possible steps to protect rights of religious minorities to ensure elimination of the sense of deprivation that emerged in the past among the religious minorities.

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

Chief Executive Officer Amathecode Lady Marieme, while sharing her life journey, stated, "My purpose is to promote humanity, starting with the most marginalised women and girls in the world. I know where I come from, how far I have come, where I am going, and where I want to be. We must work together for protection of minorities." She elaborated on "I am the CODE," the first global movement, led by an African woman that mobilises governments, businesses, and investors to support girls and young women in advancing in STEAMD (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics).



PESHAWAR: Passengers are being screened for M-pox at Bacha Khan International Airport in Peshawar.

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

KARACHI (APP): Provincial Minister for Local Government, Saeed Ghani on Friday asked all elected Town chairmen of Karachi division to keep coordination with their Vice Chairmen as well as UC chairmen so that service delivery could be improved. Presiding a meeting of the 13 Town Chairmen belonging to Pakistan People's Party, Saeed Ghani said Town chairmen must take action on the complaints filed by their Vice Chairmen and Union Committee chairmen. He said as per the directives of PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, basic facilities should be provided to people at Town and UC level.

Ghani said all employees and retirees of Town, Municipal and Union Committees/Councils would be ensured to get timely salaries and pension. Speaking on the occasion, Senator Waqar Mehdhi said PPP Sindh president had sought performance report from party's all elected chairmen. He said Bilawal Bhutto had clearly directed that party organization and elected local bodies representatives must be in close coordination to each other for service delivery.

Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab said all 25 Towns if Karachi division are their own and all would be looked after like the one governed by PPP.

Justice Chaudhry Iqbal recuses from hearing case against internet shut down

LAHORE (Online) Justice Chaudhry Muhammad Iqbal of Lahore High Court (LHC) has recused from hearing petition against internet shut down and installation of firewall. The petition against internet shut down and installation of fire wall came up for hearing in LHC Friday. Justice Chaudhry Muhammad Iqbal while recusing from hearing petition filed by Judicial Activism Panel ordered to transfer the case to the court of Justice Shakil Ahmad. The court said Justice Shakil Ahmad is hearing cases similar to this case. The petitioner had taken plea internet and social media apps have been shut down in the country without giving any reason and notice. Every sphere of life and business is being affected due to internet shut down. It was further said in the petition that shutting down internet runs contrary to fundamental human rights. The court was requested to nullify the federal government decision for shutting down internet besides issuing order for complete.



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

Governor Kundi thanks PM in construction of Dera-Rajanpur road

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, on Friday expressed his gratitude to Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Federal Minister for National Highways Abdul Aleem Khan and the officials of the National Highway Authority (NHA) for their support in the construction of 329 kilometers Dera Ismail Khan to Rajanpur road. In a video message, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi said that the construction work on this vital road will begin this year. He said that the road will be upgraded from a two-lane to a four-lane highway with the support of the Asian Development Bank, holds immense importance for both Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab. Tenders for the project have already been issued that would usher new era of development, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi added.

The Governor also highlighted that construction work on the Ramak to Tibba Qaisarani section of the road will start within this year. The project is divided into four phases, with the Dera Ismail Khan to Ramak to Tibba Qaisarani section covering 96 kilometers. Additionally, Kundi mentioned that tenders for the Dera Ismail Khan Chashma Lift Canal project will soon be issued.

The Prime Minister has allocated 19 billion rupees from the federal budget for this project. Kundi thanked Federal Minister Musadique Malik and the Chairman of WAPDA for their roles in this initiative.

The Governor also revealed that the No Objection Certificate (NOC) for the Dera Ismail Khan International Airport has been issued, with construction expected to start next year.

Kundi emphasized that these mega projects will significantly contribute to regional development, highlighting that practical steps are being taken rather than just making promises.

The road and canal projects are set to be inaugurated later this year, while the airport project will commence in the coming year.

Meanwhile, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi has announced the establishment of the province's first Artificial Intelligence (AI) Center aims to advance digital technology in the province and promote modern technological trends.

The announcement was made following a meeting with the world's first digital senator, Senator Mian Atiq, at the Governor House Peshawar. Principal Secretary to the Governor Mazhar Irshad, renowned educationist Professor Mullah Khan Haidri, and IT expert Talha were also present on this occasion.



LAHORE: Acting Governor Punjab Malik Ahmad Khan is praying at the Shrine of Data Darbar after placing the Charad.

Tessori announces results of Hyderabad IT Test

KARACHI (APP): Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori announced the result of the Hyderabad IT test during a press conference here at the Governor House on Friday. The test, conducted under the Governor's Initiative at Niaz Stadium Hyderabad, was participated by 80,000 youth aspiring for free IT courses. Out of these, 54,000 candidates were declared as qualified. The successful candidates will now pursue advanced IT courses in Artificial Intelligence, Metaverse, and Web 3.0 under the Governor's Initiative.

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

Highlighting the economic impact, Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori mentioned that the trainees are currently earning between \$600 to \$800 per month, with some who previously earned \$150 now making \$250. He emphasized that if one million youth start earning \$1,200 monthly, it would significantly boost the country's foreign exchange reserves.

Governor Sindh also acknowledged the inspiring impact of the Army Chief's address to the youth, which has motivated the IT students training at the Governor House. The students have expressed their desire for the Army Chief to visit them as well. He extended his gratitude to philanthropists who have generously supported the IT initiative, including national hero Arshad Nadeem, FPCCI.

Separate cases under Anti-Narcotics Act have been registered against arrested accused and further investigations are under process.

Court sends TLP leader to jail on judicial remand in case for issuing fatwa against CJP

LAHORE (Online): Anti Terrorism Court (ATC) Lahore has sent Tehreek Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) leader Maulana Muhammad Tahir Saifi to jail on 14 days judicial remand in the case of issuing fatwa (decree) against Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP). The court rejected the plea for extension in physical remand of the accused. Judge Irfan Haider of ATC Lahore took up the case for hearing Friday. Police presented the accused in the court. The investigating officer requested the court to grant more physical remand of the accused. The court rejected the plea. The accused is charged with threatening and issuing fatwa against the CJP.

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

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

Punjab Health minister emphasizes commitment to providing best health facilities

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



PESHAWAR: President and Founder of Digital Centre Senator Mian Ateeq Shah meeting with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi.

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

GILGIT (APP): Chief Minister of Gilgit-Baltistan Haji Gulbar Khan while addressing a high-level meeting regarding the implementation of CBMs for the Diامر Bhasha Dam and Dasu Dam said that these dams are of utmost importance for Pakistan's prosperity. CM GB said the people of Diامر Bhasha Dam Engineer Nizakat Hussain presented the revised CBM plan on the directives of the Chairman WAPDA and briefed about it. On this occasion, the Chief Minister formed a special committee comprising elected members of the Assembly from Diامر. He added that in a recent meeting with the Chairman WAPDA, the issue of CBM's was also discussed. In the meeting, Brigadier @ Shoaib Tahir, General Manager of Land Acquisition and Resettlement, and General Manager/Project Director Diامر Bhasha Dam presented the revised CBM plan on the directives of the Chairman WAPDA and briefed about it. On this occasion, the Chief Minister formed a special committee comprising elected members of the Assembly from Diامر. 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Jam chairs Sectoral Council meetings on Pharmaceutical, Chemical Sectors

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

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

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

These sectoral meetings were attended by other senior officers from Commerce Ministry,

DRAP, Pakistan Customs. Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal assured sectoral council members that consultative drive is being implemented under the vision of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif so that policy proposals will be incorporated in the National Export Policy Board. These meetings were concluded with a commitment to address the outlined challenges and pursue actionable strategies to enhance the export potential on different sectors from Pakistan. Broadly, follow up meetings will be organized in Islamabad at Ministry of Commerce to develop Export Policy with recommendations

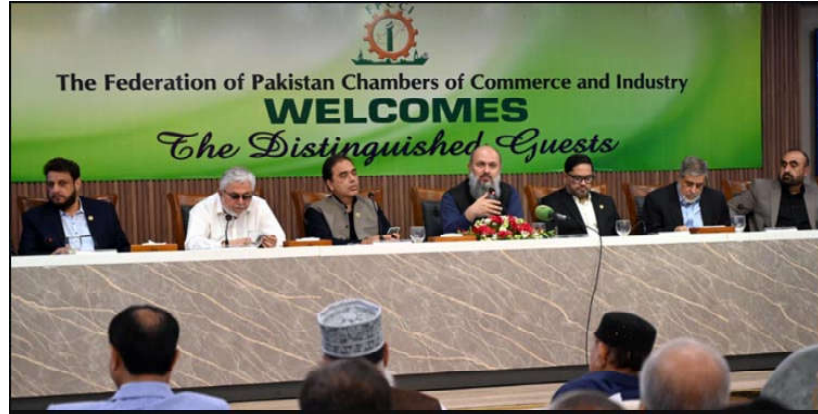
from all sectors in Pakistan. Special Secretary for Commerce, Saeed Mangnejo, TDAP Chief Executive Zubair Motiwala, Executive Director General Ministry of Commerce Muhammad Ashraf, DG Engineering & Minerals Division Azhar Ali Dahar, Zulfiqar Ali Langah Director Engineering & Minerals Division and Muhammad Yousuf, Assistant Manager and Secretary for the Sectoral Council were present on the occasion.

The chairmen and council members on Pharmaceuticals and Cosmetics were invited at TDAP HQ Sectoral Council on Pharmaceuticals to deliberate upon export enhancement strategies and main challenging areas.

which need to be addressed at policy level under federal government. Adnan Hiran representing Pharmaceutical sectors and Osman Waheed and other key speakers attended sectoral meeting with discussed ideas with the Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal with their set of proposals which need to be addressed if exports from this sector is to be enhanced. The Sectoral Council on Chemicals and Paint industry also attended meeting with Minister for Commerce at 12:30 at TDAP HQ, Karachi under the leadership of Mr Zubair Tufail. Mr Jai Ram representing Chemical sector made brief presentations.



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



Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan addressing the business community at FPCCI Karachi.

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

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

Addressing a meeting in the committee room of DC Office here, he said that main objective of PM's Tajir Dost Scheme is to facilitate traders for tax filing. Under this scheme, the traders could get them registered as filer through mobile app without the help of any consultant. This scheme would help the non-filers to file their income tax returns easily.

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

consulting the traders and addressing their apprehensions. He said that the government was suggested to collect tax on biannual basis where the traders could also enjoy refund facility in their tax return file.

He assured the traders that no notice would be issued by the FBR till final amendment in Tajir Dost Scheme. However, he requested the traders to avoid from protest and keep them away from indulging in any kind of negative activities.

He said that no advance tax would be levied through Tajir Dost Scheme. This scheme is totally about registration for income tax which has no connection with sales tax. He said that tax would be levied fairly and those would be exempted from advance tax who would provide services of different kinds.



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

Telenor Velocity, I2I collaborate to transform Pak startup landscape

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a strategic move to bolster Pakistan's growing startup ecosystem, Telenor Velocity, I2I, Pakistan's premier startup accelerator, forged a powerful alliance with Invest2Innovate (i2i).

According to news release by combining Telenor Pakistan's market reach, technological infrastructure, and industry expertise with i2i's proven track record in nurturing entrepreneurs, this partnership aims to empower startups to scale rapidly and compete on a global stage. Pakistan's youthful demographic, with 64% of the population under 30, presents an immense opportunity for innovation. With a population of nearly 240 million and 80% teledensity, the country boasts a vibrant startup

ecosystem. However, despite this potential, 70% of startups face scaling challenges. In 2023, Pakistani startups secured \$81.116 million in venture capital across 39 deals, highlighting a significant funding gap compared to regional counterparts.

Telenor Pakistan and i2i are determined to address these challenges by creating a robust ecosystem that supports entrepreneurship at every stage. Through this collaboration, Telenor Pakistan will offer i2i's portfolio companies an array of invaluable resources. From tapping into Telenor Pakistan's vast customer base of 44 million to gaining access to cutting-edge technology platforms, startups will receive the support needed to transform their ideas into thriving businesses.



ISLAMABAD: Senator Aon Abbas, Chairman Senate Standing Committee on Industries and Production presiding over a meeting of the committee at Parliament House.

Pakistan eyes Turkish expertise to elevate aviation industry

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

Business leader commends govt's decision to reduce its expenditures

KARACHI (INP): Chairman of the FPCCI Advisory Board and National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance and former provincial minister, Mian Zahid Hussain has commended the decision of the government to decrease its expenditures.

Talking to business community on Friday, he termed the cut in government's expenditures vital for economic revival and said that without it economic development of country was not possible. He said that the condition of people was deteriorating due to the continuous increase in taxes, but the government's income was not improving because its expenses were continuously increasing.

Mian Zahid Hussain further stated that the continuous increase in expenditure was not only happening in the current government, but it has been going on for the last several decades, and no government has tried to reduce the expenses. All governments instead have increased their dependence on loans, causing the country to reach the bankruptcy threshold, he added. The business leader said that it was possible to reduce people's problems only by reducing expenses, as it will produce other positive results.

He said that the PM had announced the elimination of one and a half lakh posts, the impending closure of several institutions or their mergers, and the imposition of a ban on new recruitments.

SBP injects Rs966.5b into market

KARACHI (APP): State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) injected Rs966.5 billion in the market on Friday through reverse repo purchase and Shariah Compliant Mudarabah based Open Market Operation (OMO).

According to OMO results issued here, the SBP conducted Open Market Operation, Reverse Repo Purchase (Injection) on August 23, 2024 for 7-day and 28-day tenors and accepted 20 bids cumulatively amounting to Rs816.5 billion.

The central bank received 19 bids for 7-day tenor cumulatively offering an amount of Rs1,119.4 billion at the rate of return ranging between 19.58 to 19.65 percent while 2 bids were received for the 28-day tenor offering an amount of Rs16.5 billion at

the rate of return ranging between 19.61 to 19.62%.

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

Meanwhile, the central bank also conducted Shariah Compliant Mudarabah based Open Market Operation for 7-day and 28-day tenors and injected Rs150 billion in the market. For the 7-day tenor, the SBP received two bids amounting to Rs197 billion at the rate of return ranging between 19.58 to 19.60% while no bid was received for 28-day tenor. The central bank accepted an amount of Rs150 billion offered through both bids for 7-day tenor at 19.58% cut-off rate.

Pak-Afghan liaison body demands extension in TAD implementation

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

The demand was made during a meeting of the Pak-Afghan Liaison Committee held at the Directorate of Transit Trade Model Custom Collectorate with Additional Director Transit Trade, Dr. Tahir Iqbal Khattak.

According to a press release issued here on Friday, the meeting was attended by Coordinator Pak-Afghan Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry

(PAJCCI), Zia-ul-Haq Sarhadi, Former SVP SCCI, Engr Manzoor Elahi, President Khyber Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Syed Jawad Hussain Kazmi, VP Frontier Custom Agents Association, Imtiaz Ahmad Ali, Commercial Attaché Afghan Consulate, Waheedullah Himat, Transport Attaché, Syed Muhammad Faiz, President North Waziristan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Qadirullah, and others.

Responding to demands made in the meeting, Additional Director of Transit Trade, Dr. Tahir Iqbal Khattak, assured the participants of taking action with mutual coordination and consultation with the business community for the resolution of all problems.

Short-term inflation eases by 0.10 percent

ISLAMABAD (APP): The weekly inflation, measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed a decrease of 0.10 percent for the combined consumption groups during the week ended on August 22, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday. According to PBS data, the SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 321.72 points as compared to 322.03 points during the week, out of 51 items, past week. As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 16.69 per cent.

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

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



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

Gold rates up by Rs.200 per tola to Rs.262,000

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs.200 and was sold at Rs.262,000 on Friday compared to its sale at Rs.261,800 on last trading day. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs.172 to Rs.224,623 from Rs.224,451 whereas the price of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs.205,904 from Rs.205,747, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained unchanged at Rs.2,950 and Rs.2,529.14, respectively.

The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$12 to 2,492 from \$2,504, the Association reported.

Pakistani delegation of 23 sesame seeds exporters visits China

BEIJING (INP): A delegation of 23 sesame seeds exporters from Pakistan visited Beijing and Handan city of Hebei Province of China near Beijing this week.

During the visit, they got big orders from Chinese companies and expected to become Pakistan's top exporter of sesame seeds to China this year, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Friday.

On August 19, the delegation attended Pakistan China B2B Sesame Conference at Pakistan Embassy in Beijing.

The b2b conference was arranged by Mission and China National Grains Association (CNAGS). The conference was

inaugurated by Ambassador of Pakistan to China Khalil Hashmi and Vice President of CNAGS, Wang Zhenzhong.

The leader of delegation Hafiz Saad bin Mustafa also spoke at the occasion. Analyst from SCI Group made a presentation at the conference highlighting demand and supply situation in the Chinese market and related price dynamics.

The conference was attended by 19 top Chinese enterprises interested in importing sesame seeds from Pakistan including, inter-alia, COFCO, Beijing Capital Agribusiness & Foods Group, Jingliang Holdings, Hebei Grain Group and Zhuochuang Consulting Co., Ltd.

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

Monitoring Desk

WASHINGTON: Kamala Harris accepted the Democratic presidential nomination in Chicago on Thursday before a rapturous crowd, pledging a "new way forward" if she beats Republican Donald Trump in November's blockbuster election.

The 59-year-old sought to strike a presidential tone as she delivered a message of unity and opportunity for Americans following one of the most extraordinary turnarounds in US political history.

She lashed out at Trump, accusing him of trying to "take our country" backwards and of cosying up to foreign "tyrants" like Russian President Vladimir Putin.

"On behalf of everyone whose story could only be written in the greatest nation on earth, I accept your nomination to be president of the United

States of America," the vice president said to huge cheers. "I will be a president who unites us around our highest aspirations," she vowed.

The convention became a giant party to celebrate Harris's astonishing ascent from something of a political afterthought to Democratic standard bearer upon President Joe Biden's surprise decision to end his reelection bid.

A sea of waving Stars and Stripes flags and chants of "USA" filled the arena as jubilant Democrats anointed Harris.

She was later joined on stage by her running mate Tim Walz and their families, as they held their arms aloft while 100,000 red, white and blue balloons tumbled from the ceiling.

Country act The Chicks sang a version of "The Star-Spangled Banner" while pop star Pink also performed as the Demo-

crats rolled out a list of celebrity backers.

Harris pledged to be a "president for all Americans" in a bid to reach out to undecided voters.

With the November election, Americans have a "fleeting opportunity to move past the bitterness, cynicism and divisive battles of the past — a chance to chart a new way forward," she promised.

Harris then took aim at 78-year-old Trump, whose campaign has been upended by having to face a woman two decades younger, rather than the increasingly frail Biden, 81.

"We know what a second Trump term would look like," she said, referring to a right-wing think tank's blueprint for a future Republican government. "It's all laid out in 'Project 2025,' written by his closest advisors, and its sum total is to pull our country back to the past."



A Palestinian boy stands near a car buried in the rubble of a building shortly after it was levelled by Israeli bombing on the Nuseirat refugee camp, in Gaza Strip.

Taliban codify morality laws requiring Afghan women to cover faces, men to grow beards

Monitoring Desk

KABUL: The Afghan Taliban formally codified a long set of rules governing morality this week, ranging from requiring women to cover their faces and men to grow beards to banning car drivers from playing music, the Justice Ministry said.

The rules, promoted as in line with Islamic Sharia law and to be enforced by the morality ministry, were based on a decree by the Taliban's supreme spiritual leader in 2022 and were now officially published as law, a Justice Ministry spokesman said.

The morality ministry, formally called the Ministry for the Prevention of Vice and Propagation of Virtue, has already enforced similar morality requirements and has detained

thousands of people for violations.

It was not immediately clear whether publication of the rules would lead to stronger enforcement.

The Taliban's restrictions on women and freedom of expression have drawn sharp criticism from rights groups and many foreign governments since the former insurgents resumed control of Afghanistan in 2021.

"Day by day, they are trying to erase women from society," said a 37-year-old housewife in Kabul.

"The silence of the international community regarding the actions of the Taliban is encouraging them to create new laws and restrictions every day," added the woman, identified just by her first name, Halema.

Israeli intelligence chiefs attend talks in Cairo as Gaza bombing continues

Monitoring Desk

CAIRO: The heads of Israel's Mossad spy agency and Shin Bet domestic security service were taking part in talks towards an eventual Gaza hostage agreement in Cairo on Thursday, an Israeli government spokesman said. Meanwhile, the Israeli military continued to bomb several locations in the Gaza Strip, killing at least five people, according to the Gaza civil defence agency.

Israeli negotiators were taking part Thursday in talks on Gaza in Cairo, a government spokesman said, as fighting raged on the ground despite US pressure on Israel and Hamas to reach an agreement.

Hopes for a deal have dwindled though as Israel and Palestinian militant group Hamas have traded blame for failing to reach a deal after more than 10 months of war in the Gaza Strip. A main sticking point

remains Hamas's longstanding demand for a "complete" Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, which Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has opposed.

Netanyahu's spokesman Omer Dozri told AFP that Mossad spy agency chief David Barnea and Ronen Bar, head of Israel's Shin Bet domestic security service, were in the Egyptian capital and "negotiating to advance a hostage (release) agreement".

The war triggered by Hamas's unprecedented October 7 attack on Israel has devastated Gaza, displaced nearly all its population at least once and triggered a humanitarian crisis in the besieged Palestinian territory. Diplomatic efforts have intensified to try to avert a wider war following the high-profile killings of two Iran-backed militants that sparked threats of reprisals from Tehran and its allies, which blamed Israel.



A man moves his cow to a safe place after several districts flooded, at Chhagalnaiya in Feni, Bangladesh.

Bangladesh death toll rises to 13 as flood deluge worsens, affecting millions

Monitoring Desk

DHAKA: Flash floods wrought havoc in Bangladesh on Friday as the country recovers from weeks of political upheaval, with the death toll rising to 13 and millions more caught in the deluge. The South Asian nation of 170 million people, crisscrossed by hundreds of rivers, has seen frequent floods in recent decades.

Monsoon rains cause widespread destruction every year, but climate change is shifting weather patterns and increasing the number of extreme weather events. "It's a catastrophic situation here," rescue volunteer Zayed Hossain Bhuiya, 35, told AFP from the worst-hit city of Feni.

"We are trying to rescue as many people as we can," Nur Islam, a shopkeeper in Feni, said his home had been completely submerged.

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

Monitoring Desk

PORCICELLO: Italian divers have retrieved the body of British tech magnate Mike Lynch's 18-year-old daughter, Hannah, who was the last person still unaccounted for after the family's luxury yacht sank this week, a source with knowledge of the situation said.

The British-flagged Bayesian, a 56-meter-long (184-foot) superyacht carrying 22 passengers and crew, was anchored off the port of Porticello, near Palermo, when it capsized and sank on Monday within minutes of being struck by a pre-dawn storm.

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

India's Modi meets Zelensky on historic Ukraine visit

Monitoring Desk

KYIV: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi met Ukraine's leader Volodymyr Zelensky on a historic visit to Kyiv on Friday, where he is pushing for a solution to end more than two years of war with Russia.

Modi embraced Zelensky — who looked visibly emotional — at the Mariinsky palace in Kyiv, in the first ever visit by an Indian premier to Ukraine.

The Indian leader is casting himself as a possible peacemaker between Moscow and Kyiv.

But his visit comes at a dramatic moment in the two-and-a-half year war, with a diplomatic settlement appearing more elusive than ever.

Kyiv's forces are mounting a major incursion into Russia's Kursk region while Moscow's army is advancing in eastern Ukraine.

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

Monitoring Desk

NEW DELHI: Half of the passengers in a bus carrying 43 Indians died on Friday when the vehicle plunged into a rain-swollen river in neighbouring Nepal, according to a spokesperson for the Himalayan nation's armed police.

A total of 21 people died and 22 were injured, Shaileendra Thapa, a spokesperson for the armed police said, adding that all 41 passengers and two crew were Indian and headed to the capital Kathmandu from the tourist city of Pokhara when the accident

occurred. Roads in the mountainous region can challenge drivers as they are often narrow and treacherous, making it tough to manoeuvre large vehicles around hairpin curves.

Rescuers pulled 22 people from the rain-swollen waters of the Marsyangdi river in the Tanahun district, about 118 kilometres from Kathmandu, of which 12 were seriously injured and airlifted to the capital. Police and army teams climbed down long metal ladders to reach the river, using ropes to pull out the injured and dead.



India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy shake hands before commemorating children killed during Russia's attack on Ukraine, in Kyiv, Ukraine.

UN team in Dhaka to discuss modalities of human rights probe

Monitoring Desk

DHAKA: A United Nations team arrived in Bangladesh on Thursday to discuss with the interim government the process of investigating alleged human rights violations during the recent movement which toppled the government of prime minister Sheikh Hasina earlier this month.

About 300 people, many of them university and college students, were killed during protests that began last month after students agi-

tated against quotas in government jobs. The protests spiralled into demands for ouster of Sheikh Hasina, who was in power since 2009. An interim government, headed by Nobel Peace Prize winner Muhammad Yunus, was sworn in after Hasina fled the country and flew to New Delhi following the student-led uprising. The UN office in Bangladesh said in a media advisory that the team from the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights will be in Dhaka.

Nepal lifts ban on video-sharing platform TikTok

Monitoring Desk

KATHMANDU: Nepal on Thursday lifted its ban on TikTok nine months after suspending the popular video-sharing platform for disturbing "social harmony", the communications minister said.

TikTok, which has around one billion monthly users, has faced restrictions in many countries for allegedly breaking data rules and for its potentially harmful impact on youth.

"A decision to remove the ban on TikTok has been made," Minister for Communications and Information Technology Prithvi Subba Gurung told reporters after a cabinet meeting.

The decision comes over a week after TikTok's South Asia division con-

tacted the minister saying that it would follow Nepal's regulations, and requesting that the ban be lifted, according to ministry spokesman Gajendra Kumar Thakur.

Nepal had suspended TikTok in November last year, days after introducing a directive requiring social media platforms operating in the country to set up offices.

It also followed an anti-government demonstration, whose leader was popular on TikTok.

The ban was condemned not just by free speech advocates but by the owners of popular accounts whose lives were transformed by the platform, which had about 2.2 million users in the country.

World's second largest diamond found in Botswana

Monitoring Desk

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

10 migrants drown as boat sinks on Serbia-Bosnia border

Monitoring Desk

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

27 killed as Israeli tanks push deeper into Gaza

Monitoring Desk

CAIRO: Israeli forces pressed deeper into areas of the central and southern Gaza Strip as they battled Hamas fighters, while Palestinian health officials said on Thursday that Israeli strikes had killed at least 27 people across the enclave.

The new escalation comes hours after US President Joe Biden pressed Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on the urgency of sealing a deal for a truce in Gaza and the release of prisoners, the White House said.

Separately, US and Israeli delegations started a new round of meetings in Cairo on Thursday to secure a ceasefire deal. Months of on-off talks on a ceasefire have circled the same issues, but Israel and Hamas have stuck firmly to

their demands.

In the northern Gaza town of Beit Lahiya, a strike on a house killed 11 people, including children and women, the bodies of some of whom had been burnt, according to the territory's Civil Emergency Service.

Medics said another strike killed six people, including a local journalist, in a house in Al-Maghazi camp in the central Gaza Strip, while five others were killed in separate strikes in the south. Later on Thursday, five Palestinians were killed and several wounded in an Israeli airstrike that hit people near a square in Khan Younis, health officials said.

The Israeli military said its forces had intensified their operations in Deir Al-Balah, in central Gaza.

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

Monitoring Desk

PARIS: After the excitement of the Paris Olympics and a Mediterranean vacation, now French President Emmanuel Macron has to figure out how to make his country governable again.

Faced with a hung parliament, social tensions and ballooning debt, Macron kicked off talks Friday with key political players in a bid to choose a new prime minister who would form a government and end the deadlock created by snap legislative elections last month.

Members of the left-wing New Popular Front coalition that won the most seats pressured Macron for a quick decision.

Their nominee for prime minister, little-known civil servant Lucie

Castets, said after Friday's meetings in the Elysee Palace that she was ready to govern, and ready for compromise to get things done.

But the party only has about a third of the seats in the National Assembly, France's powerful lower house of parliament, and no party has a majority.

Macron's centrist alliance came in second and the far-right National Rally came in third.

There's no rulebook that requires Macron to name a candidate for the party that won the most seats, or lays out a timeline for a decision.

The absence of any dominant political bloc is unprecedented in France's modern Republic.

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

Monitoring Desk

LONDON: UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer told Chinese President Xi Jinping on Friday he hoped they could have "honest" discussions about thorny issues as they held the first call between leaders of the countries in over two years.

The formal conversation was the first between the pair since Starmer won power last month, and was also the first official call between a British leader and Xi since March 2022.

The chat comes amid a period of strained relations between London and Beijing over espionage allegations and Beijing's tightening control over former British colony Hong Kong.

The two remain major trading partners, however, and are both permanent members of the United Nations Security Council.

According to a Downing Street readout of the call, Starmer noted hope that he and Xi "would be able to have open, frank, and honest discussions to address and understand areas of disagreement when necessary".

Such issues include "Hong Kong, Russia's war in Ukraine, and human rights," the readout said.

China was Britain's fifth-largest trading partner as of 2023, according to UK statistics, but diplomatic relations were icy under Starmer's predecessor Rishi Sunak.

Soon after taking office in October 2022, Sunak declared an end to the so-called "golden era" of UK-China relations trumpeted by former prime minister David Cameron.

Sunak characterised China as a "systemic challenge" to UK values.

Espionage allegations have since presented additional hurdles to repairing relations, with Beijing saying in June that MI6 recruited Chinese state employees to spy for the UK. That came after British police in April charged two men under the UK's counter-espionage Official Secrets Act, accusing them of spying for China.

Ukraine says it used US glide bombs in Russia's Kursk region and has retaken some land in Kharkiv

Monitoring Desk

KYIV: Ukraine's military says it used high-precision glide bombs provided by the United States to carry out strikes in Russia's Kursk region while also claiming to have recaptured some territory in the eastern region of Kharkiv, where Russia launched an offensive in the spring.

Ukraine's Air Force Commander Lt. Gen. Mykola Oleschuk issued a video Thursday night purporting to show a Russian platoon base being hit in the Kursk region. He said the attack with GBU-39 bombs resulted in Russian casualties and the destruction of equipment.

The video showed multiple explosions and plumes of smoke rising at the site. Separately, Ukraine's 3rd Separate Assault Brigade said its forces advanced nearly two square kilometers (about three-quarters of a square mile) in the Kharkiv region. Details were not divulged about the timing, scale, and area of the offensive, and it's hard to predict if it will have any more impact on the battlefield.

Ukraine's forces have gained new momentum this

month after delayed deliveries of US weaponry were finally released. Kyiv launched a shock offensive into Russia's western Kursk region on August 6, while simultaneously intensifying a drone war against military and fuel targets that sparked blazing deep in Russia this week. On Friday some new details emerged about damage and injuries caused by some of those attacks.

A Ukrainian drone attack targeting a distant Russian air base in its Volgograd region caused significant damage to an airfield that reportedly housed glide bombs used by Moscow in the war, satellite photos analyzed Friday by The Associated Press showed.

Meanwhile, an attack on a cargo ferry at the port of Kavkaz in Russia's Krasnodar region on Thursday injured 13 people, Russia's state news agency Tass reported Friday. Citing health officials, Tass said that four of the injured have been hospitalized and one other person remained unaccounted for.

Ukraine's gains have reshaped the battlefield and buoyed the morale of Ukrainians 10 years after Russia first invaded their country.

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

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

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

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

Additionally, he called for promoting subcontracting in industries and taking all possible mea-

asures to integrate Pakistani industries into the global supply chain.

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

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

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

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

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

Apart from non-agricultural employment, SME sector provides 72% of employment while some Rs 491 billion have been provided in the form of bank credit for the SME sector so far, but the bank credit for the SME sector needs to be taken up to Rs 800 billion, the meeting was told. The meeting was attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Ahmad Khan Cheema, Federal Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain, PM's Coordinator Rana Ihsaan Afzal, and other relevant high officials.



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

Malik urges PTI to shun hate rhetoric, promote peace

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

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

The Minister's warning comes amidst concerns that the PTI leadership has been engaged in a system-

atic effort to destabilize the country through various means, including the provocative events of May 9.

By perpetuating divisive rhetoric and promoting unrest, the PTI leadership is not only undermining national harmony but also compromising the country's stability and security, he added. Malik's warning serves as a reminder to the PTI leadership to prioritize the nation's interests over political expediency and to refrain from actions that could further weaken the country. Minister for Petroleum revealed that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) Chief Minister had

openly threatened to lead a procession to Islamabad, not for a peaceful protest, but for a "qabza" (occupation). Malik emphasized that such a move would not be tolerated at any cost, as it would pose a direct challenge to the law and order situation in the country. He asserted that the government would not permit anyone to disrupt the peace and stability of Islamabad, and would take all necessary measures to maintain law and order. The Minister's warning comes as a clear message to the PTI leadership that any attempts to incite chaos or occupy public spaces would be met with firm resistance.

NDMA convenes 4th session of Disaster Response Committee

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

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

The session focused on evaluating the progress of directives issued during the third DRC and updates were provided on response undertaken by the provincial departments during rain emergencies. The plans to address potential emergencies that are likely to happen in the next monsoon specifically in South Punjab, Sindh and Balochistan were discussed.

Representatives of Pakistan Railway and Na-

tional Highway Authority apprised the forum about damages of infrastructure and communication lines during localised rain emergencies.

Officials of NDMA provided an overview of the anticipated impacts, situation of water reservoirs and risk calculations prepared by NEOC for the current monsoon along with NDMA's preparedness and plans. NEOC also gave an appraisal of the weather outlook of regional countries and the on-going flood situation in Bangladesh.

Chairman NDMA informed the house about the arrangement and plan for humanitarian relief operations for flood-stricken areas of Bangladesh as and when it is required.

Planning minister appreciated the role of NDMA, Federal and Provincial Authorities to ensure a prompt and effective response to monsoon-related emergencies.



QUETTA: MPADr. Muhammad Nawaz Kibzai meeting with Provincial Minister for Finance Mir Shoaib Nausherwani

PTA intensifies crackdown against illegal issuance of SIMs

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

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

During the raid, the

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

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

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

AC Hub hands over important medicines to MS of JGQH

QUETTA (APP): Assistant Commissioner (AC) Hub Muhammad Ali Durani handed over necessary medicines to Medical Superintendent (MS) of Jam Ghulam Qadir Hospital (JGQH) on Friday.

The medicines, including ringolact drips 1000 ml and 500 ml slime infusion and injection 18 cottons of 500 ml, were provided for JGQH by Otsuka Company.

The Assistant Commissioner Hub visited different wards of the Hos-

pital. The MS briefed the AC about the provision of the health facilities to the patients in the hospital and other issues of it. He informed that the work of restoring the solar system of the hospital has also been started. He said that these medicines would help in timely first medical aid in casualty section of the hospital. The MS thanked the AC and the Otsuka Company for provision of the medicines to the hospital.



PESHAWAR: Jamat-e-Islami (JI) Chief, Hafiz Naeem-ur-Rehman along with others addresses to media persons during press conference, at Markaz-e-Islami in Peshawar.

DC warns of stern action against violators: Quetta district admin issues revised price list of different edibles

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Quetta district administration has issued revised price list of different edibles warning the shopkeepers and vendors to follow the same, otherwise stern action would be taken against them.

The official price list was decided during the meeting chaired by the Deputy Commissioner Quetta, Saad Bin Asad here the other day.

The concerned officials as well as the representatives of different associations and traders were present in the meeting.

The meeting fixed the prices of different edibles after thorough consensus and discussion.

As per the official hand out issued here, the rate of mutton has been

fixed as Rs. 1900 per kilogram with Rs. 1050 per kilogram fixed for the beef.

Similarly, the rate of fine quality rice has been fixed as Rs. 290 per kilogram and rate of tota (pierced) rice was fixed as Rs. 180 per kilogram.

The price of per kilogram sugar was fixed as Rs. 150. Similarly, the per liter milk would be sold at Rs. 190 and per kilogram curd would be sold at Rs. 200.

The rate of tandoori roti (naan) was also fixed. As per the revised list, naan weighing 165 grams would be sold at Rs. 20 while naan of 330 gram would be sold at Rs. 40.

The Deputy Commissioner Quetta said that the implementation on new price list would be made from today.



QUETTA: A delegation led by Chairman Quetta Welfare Council Haji Daud Jamal Bareeh meeting with Governor Balochistan Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail

Standing body for fisheries meets, discusses matters of fisheries department

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Standing Committee for fisheries met with the Chairman of the Committee and Member Provincial Assembly, Maulana Hidayatur Rehman Baloch in the chair on Friday.

The meeting attended by the members of Standing Committee Abdul Majeed Badini, Zaid Ali Reki, Ms. Safia and parliamentary secretary for fisheries, Barkat Ali Rind was briefed about the matters related to the fisheries department.

During the course of meeting, important issues being faced by the department were also discussed.

The committee was informed that the sea area of Balochistan spreads over 17,180 square kilometers.

The committee was also briefed about the dangerous ratio of extreme exploitation of the resources of fisheries sector. The light was shed on the need of effective procedure of improvement and rehabilitation. Speaking on the occasion, chairman of standing committee stressed the need to increase PPS for the effective patrolling.

He also urged the government to allocate budget for maintenance of the boats of the department so as to stop the illegal trawling.

The record-breaking event took place on June 19 in Dera Ismail Khan, Pakistan. Irfan, who hails from the tribal district of South Waziristan, is no stranger to setting Guinness World Records.

1.5 million street kids at risk; MoHR calls for urgent legal reform

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Human Rights called for urgent new laws to protect Pakistan's 1.5 million street children, who face severe abuse and exploitation due to displacement, poverty, and violence, emphasizing that focused attention and education are essential to addressing the crisis. In a conversation with APP, a Ministry of Human Rights official stated that street children are among the world's most overlooked populations, neglected by governments, lawmakers, and society at large.

He also noted that the number is rapidly increasing due to displacement,

migration, extreme poverty, and a rising count of runaway children fleeing homes, workplaces, and schools due to violence.

According to estimates, there are 1.5 million street children in Pakistan. Once on the streets, these children face heightened risks of abuse, including child labor, exploitation, trafficking, and arbitrary arrest, he added.

The time has come to give serious attention to the plight of street children, especially since the Ministry of Human Rights has committed to addressing school dropout issues. He emphasized that only education can make a difference.

Govt appoints Arshad Munir as Addl. Secretary, PMO Public
ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Government on Friday appointed Muhammad Arshad Munir, a BS-21 officer of the Information Group as Additional Secretary, Prime Minister's Office (Public). The Cabinet Secretariat and Establishment Division have issued a notification to this effect, said a news release.

Muhammad Arshad Munir was performing duties as the Executive Director General of the Information Service Academy.

He has also served as Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.



QUETTA: Chairman Standing Committee Maulana Hidayatur Rehman presiding over a meeting regarding Fisheries Department

Pakistan sees annual exodus of 0.8m workers seeking jobs abroad on protected visas

ISLAMABAD (INP): Approximately 0.8 million Pakistanis travel abroad each year to seek and obtain jobs in different countries, using valid protected work visas issued by the Protectorate of Emigrants. According to an official source from the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, Overseas Pakistanis who have traveled abroad after March 23, 1979, on valid protected work visas issued by the Protectorate of Emigrants, Bureau of Emigrations & Overseas Employment (BE&OE), and Overseas Employment Corporation (OEC), are automatically registered with the Overseas Pakistanis Foundation (OPF) and can access its services.

So far, around 13.7 million Pakistanis have

been registered with BE&OE, and 250,000 membership cards have been issued to Overseas Pakistanis.

Overseas Pakistanis who are not registered with OPF can do so voluntarily by paying a one-time fee of Rs. 4,000 and meeting the standard terms and conditions. There are two categories for OPF membership: Compulsory Category I for those registered with the Protectorate of Emigrants and proceeded abroad, and Voluntary Category II for those who have been abroad for at least a year but are not registered with the Protectorate of Emigrants. This category includes indefinite stay abroad, valid work/employment visa holders, students (male/female) aged 18 and above.

LHC abolishes ban on inter-provincial movement of chicken

LAHORE (Online): Lahore High Court (LHC) has abolished the ban on inter-provincial movement of broiler chicken.

Justice Sajid Mehmood Sethi of LHC heard the case against fixation of chicken price and imposition of heavy fine Friday.

Azhar Siddique advocate counsel for the petitioners while giving arguments during the hearing of the case said the court has made it compulsory to make consultation with all respondents for fixing price of chicken. Government is ruining the business by fixing the price on its own illegally. The government official told the court ban has not been imposed on inter-provincial movement of chicken.

Bilawal condoles over martyrdom of police officials in Punjab

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

According to a press release issued here by the party secretariat, he strongly condemned the incident, emphasizing that maintaining law and order was the responsibility of the provincial government.

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

"I hope that those responsible for the martyrdom of these 14 brave Punjab Police officials will

soon be brought to justice," Bilawal Bhutto added.

He paid tribute to the martyred officials, calling them the brave sons of the nation, and vowed that their sacrifices would not go in vain.

Bilawal Bhutto called for an investigation into the incident and ensured that the injured officials received proper medical treatment.

"Praise to the officials and soldiers of the Punjab Police whose sacrifices in the line of duty are unforgettable," he said.

The PPP Chairman also extended his heartfelt condolences and solidarity to the families of the martyred officials.

NP Chief honored with luncheon in Quetta

Independent Report
QUETTA: A luncheon was hosted by Mir Madad Khan Kharani Balochi in honor of National Party's chief and former Chief Minister of Balochistan, Dr. Abdul Malik Baloch.

The event was attended by former Provincial Health Minister Rahmat Saleh Baloch, MPA Madam Kulsom Baloch, Senator Mir Kabir Ahmed Muhammad Shahi, National Party leader Mushkhor Anwar Baloch, Director Schools Balochistan Akhtar Muhammad Khitran, Balochistan Bar Council member Qasim Khan Gajizai, Mir Rahab Balochi Advocate, and other friends of the National Party.



HUB: Chairperson BISP Senator Rubina Khalid and Advisor for Industries Mir Ali Hassan Zehri attending a briefing by Firm supplying nutrition food items for World Food Organization

Fare of Umrah flights decreases by Rs. 20,000: Governor appreciates launch of Quetta-Jeddah Umrah flights & further discount in fares by PIA

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail has appreciated the initiatives of Pakistan International Airlines regarding launch of the special direct Umrah flights from Quetta to Jeddah and reduction in their (flights) fares.

In an official statement issued here on Friday, the Governor said that he is very much pleased with the announcement made

about discount in the fares of special Umrah flights to be operated between Quetta and Jeddah.

He said that further discount in the fares is double advantage for all Pakistanis living in Saudi Arabia and especially for the Umrah pilgrims traveling from Quetta to Jeddah, which offers them an easy access on one hand and important saving on the other hand, he added.

The Governor also

said that we have been successful in launching the direct Umrah flights between Quetta-Jeddah and reducing their fares. He said that it is a big magnificence to make the air journey from Quetta to Jeddah easier and inexpensive for we are thankful to the federal government and PIA high ups.

It may be mentioned here that the fares of Quetta-Jeddah direct Umrah flights have been decreased by Rs. 20,000.

ECP forms inquiry panel to probe Ijaz Chauhan's secret foreign visit

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has formed a five-member inquiry committee to investigate allegations of violation of the code of conduct by Punjab Election Commissioner Ejaz Anwar Chauhan on Friday.

According to media reports, the Provincial Election Commissioner of Punjab, Ejaz Anwar Chauhan, has been directed to submit a written response within 10 days.

According to the order issued by the ECP, Ejaz Anwar Chauhan is accused of concealing foreign travel

to Canada without obtaining a No Objection Certificate (NOC).

As per the ECP order, it is also alleged that Provincial Election Commissioner Ejaz Anwar Chauhan did not show interest in his supervisory role.

Reportedly, on August 5, 2024, Provincial Election Commissioner Punjab Ejaz Chauhan, who is a grade-20 officer, was made Officer on Special Duty (OSD).

Ejaz Anwar Chohan took charge of his responsibilities as Punjab Provincial Election Commissioner on January 18, 2024. Be

Awam Express narrowly avoids accident in Lahore

LAHORE (INP): A bogie of the Awam Express, traveling from Lahore to Karachi, derailed at Lahore Railway Station on Friday, causing damage to the platform but no injuries. According to railway officials, the AC Business Class bogie derailed at platform number 5, resulting in significant damage to the track and platform. While no passengers were hurt, the incident caused a major delay. The derailed bogie was removed and the train was moved to a different platform. However, a replacement AC Business Class bogie was not available.



QUETTA: Director General Public Relations Balochistan Muhammad Noor Khetran distributing certificates among participants of two-days training regarding Public Awareness and Access to Information. Provincial Secretary Information Imran Khan is also present