

Independent

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Punjab's electricity relief not funded by Centre, clarifies PM Shehbaz

Instead of politicking, provinces should copy Punjab's electricity bills' relief, says PM Shehbaz

Federal Cabinet greenlights skills development initiative for enhanced training

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday said that instead of politicking, the provincial governments should follow the Punjab government's course of providing relief to electricity consumers, scraping a chunk from the trillions of rupees transferred to them under the National Finance Commission. The prime minister, chairing the meeting of the federal cabinet, said that the Punjab government had spared Rs 45 billion out of its own development budget to provide Rs 14 per unit relief to the electricity consumers utilising 200 to 500 units for a two-month period. "This is the right of the people. The federal government has zero contribution to this relief package... Other provinces should also do the same. If the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government wants to give such relief to the people, we will be happy. But politicking should be avoided and facts should not be distorted," the prime minister commented. Rubbing the criticism by a KP government representative alleging any discrimination by the federal government, he explained that the federal government had nothing to do with that package. He told the cabinet members that almost 60% of the NFC funds went to the provinces. The federal government had to face immense challenges in the form of the payment of loans and interests on foreign-funded projects that benefited the whole of the country. He told the meeting that the federal government had also allocated Rs50 billion to provide a three-month relief to domestic consumers using up to 200 units of electricity which constituted around 86% of the total domestic consumers. Besides, he said, in partnership with the Balochistan government, 28,000 tube wells would be solarised in the province costing Rs 70 billion, out of which Rs55 billion would be borne by the federal government.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting of the Federal Cabinet.

Security institutions endeavours commendable: CM satisfied with successful IBO in Mastung; describes important breakthrough

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Bugti has expressed satisfaction over the successful intelligence-based operation conducted against terrorists in Mastung. In an official statement issued here on Tuesday, the Chief Minister said that an important breakthrough was achieved in the operation conducted against the elements involved in killing of Deputy Commissioner Panjgur, Zakir Baloch. He said that the state is always stood by the oppressed. He also said that the endeavours made for establishing peace by the security institutions are commendable. He said that our security jawans are ready for protection of every single inch land of the homeland. The Chief Minister also said that all resources are being mobilized for protection of the life and property of the people. It may be mentioned here that three terrorists were killed and even number injured in an intelligence based operation conducted in Mastung, stated in a press release of ISPR. According to the press release, terrorists killed in operation were involved in the martyrdom of Deputy Commissioner Panjgur, Zakir Baloch.

Three BLA terrorists involved in killing of DC Panjgur killed in Mastung IBO

President, PM laud security forces for eliminating killers
RAWALPINDI (APP): The security forces on Tuesday killed three Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) terrorists and killed as many during an intelligence-based operation (IBO) conducted on the night of August 18th and 19th in Mastung District. During conduct of the operation, after an intense fire exchange, the three BLA terrorists were killed while three of them got injured, an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said. The president appreciated the professional expertise of the Pakistan Army for carrying out an effective anti-terror operation. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday lauded the security forces for eliminating the terrorists involved in the martyrdom of Deputy Commissioner of Panjgur Zakir Ali. "The elements involved in spreading terrorism in the country should learn a lesson from the fate of the killers of Panjgur DC. Terrorism will be given no chance to flourish in the country," the prime minister said. sioner of Panjgur Zakir Ali. The president appreciated the professional expertise of the Pakistan Army for carrying out an effective anti-terror operation. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday lauded the security forces for eliminating the terrorists involved in the martyrdom of Deputy Commissioner of Panjgur Zakir Ali. "The elements involved in spreading terrorism in the country should learn a lesson from the fate of the killers of Panjgur DC. Terrorism will be given no chance to flourish in the country," the prime minister said.



QUETTA: Provincial Ministers Mir Asim Kurd Gailo, Mir Shoaib Naushwari and Parliamentary Secretary Barkat Ali Rind meeting with Governor Balochistan Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail

Taallem Foundation delegation calls on him Education key to bright future and provides strong base to every kind of development, states Governor

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail has stated that education is not only the key to our bright future but it also provides strong base to every kind of development. The Governor said that time arises to bring revolution in getting access to the education in our perspective and move towards the scientific thinking and approach from existing education and make it compatible with the modern professional training and digital technology. The Governor was speaking to the delegation of Taaleem Foundation who called on him under leadership of its Chief Executive, Ms Shagufta Noreen here at the Governor House on Tuesday. The Governor said that we appreciate the endeavours of whole team of Taaleem Foundation for decorating new generation with the ornament of education in different districts of the province. He said that it is his personal desire and endeavour that our all public sector universities do work for imparting education and modern skills to the women in the orphanages and darul amaans besides the universities. By doing so, we can break the chains of severe poverty, major crimes and inequality, and can make a more prosperous future for all, he added. He urged the media persons to join hands for promotion of modern skills, education and consciousness among the otherwise neglected sectors and aspects of the society. He said that we are determined to promote education and make the communities economically empowered.

Pakistan conducts training launch of ballistic missile Shaheen-II: ISPR

Independent Report
RAWALPINDI (APP): Pakistan on Tuesday conducted successful training launch of surface-to-surface ballistic missile Shaheen-II. The training launch was aimed at training of troops, validating various technical parameters and performance evaluation of different sub-systems incorporated for improved accuracy and enhanced survivability, an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said. "Today's training launch was witnessed by senior officers from Strategic Plans Division, Army Strategic Forces Command, scientists and engineers of strategic organizations," it said.



Director General Strategic Plans Division appreciated the technical prowess, dedication and commitment of scientists who contributed towards this landmark achievement. President, Prime Minister of Pakistan, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee and Services Chiefs congratulated the scientists and engineers on this achievement.

NAB files new toshakhana reference against PTI founder, Bushra Bibi

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) on Tuesday filed another toshakhana reference to accountability court against Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder and Bushra Bibi. The NAB has conducted a series of investigation after arrested PTI founder and Bushra Bibi. The bureau has given questionnaire to the accused who submitted the answers. After completion of the investigation, the trial court approved the judicial custody of the two accused. The registrar office would scrutinize the new reference and it would be sent to the administrative judge to decide the court for hearing the reference.

Gold medalist Arshad Nadeem calls on CJCS

Independent Report
RAWALPINDI: Arshad Nadeem, record-holder Olympian, called on Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee



(CJCS), General Sahir Shamshad Mirza here on Tuesday at Joint Staff Headquarters. The Chairman JCSC lauded Arshad Nadeem's efforts for securing Pakistan's first-ever Gold Medal in a singles' event and setting up of a new Olympic record, an Inter Services Public Relations news release said. General Sahir Shamshad Mirza also appreciated the diligence and devotion of Arshad Nadeem in achieving a momentous milestone in Pakistan's sport history and wished him the very best for his future endeavours.

DG GDA visits ABAD Headquarters

Independent Report
KARACHI/GWADAR: Director General Gwadar Development Authority, Shafiqat Anwar Shahwani, Special Economic District and Central Business District are the backbone of Gwadar's economic development, and these projects



visited the Association of Builders and Developers (ABAD) headquarters in Karachi and held a meeting with ABAD Chairman Asif Sumsum and other members to discuss residential projects in Gwadar. During the meeting, the Director General emphasized the need to accelerate development work on residential projects in Gwadar and assured that GDA would take all possible measures to facilitate investors. He mentioned that the

Three terrorists killed in exchange of fire with security forces

Independent Report
DERA ISMAIL KHAN (INP): Three terrorists were killed in an exchange of fire between security forces and militants here at Saggi Bridge in the limits of Daraban Tehsil, who were looting the citizens. According to police, the CTD along with other law enforcement agencies received information about the presence of some terrorists at Saggi Bridge in Daraban Tehsil, who were looting the citizens. The teams of CTD and other law enforcement agencies immediately reached the spot where an exchange of fire was held between the security forces and the terrorists. Resultantly, three terrorists were killed. The identity of the terrorists could not be ascertained yet.



QUETTA: Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan, Hafiz Naemur Rehman addressing a press conference.

Ameer JJ announces to launch "Give rights to people, give rights to Balochistan" Tehreek from Sept. 1

Independent Report
28. He said that we would run our movement at our own, and would not provide base to anyone. He demanded of the government to reign in the IPPs and give relief to the general public. He said that the government people have also been included in the agreements made with the IPPs. He said that there should be supremacy of constitution in the country. The issue of missing persons is one of the biggest issue of Balochistan, as such it must be resolved.

There should be supremacy of constitution in country. **Ameer JJ announces to launch "Give rights to people, give rights to Balochistan" Tehreek from Sept. 1** Hafiz Naemur Rehman reiterates call for country-wide strike against increase in electricity tariffs

New Gwadar International Airport to be completed by end of this year, states Shhahwani

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Director General of Gwadar Development Authority (GDA) Shafiqat Anwar Shahwani has stated that the new Gwadar International Airport would be completed by end of this year. He said that Gwadar is going to become biggest economic zone because of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects, establishment of central business desk and special economic district. He said that the industrial activities have already been started in the free zone. Besides, the government is taking practical steps for launch of the trade activities at Gwadar port. The Director General of GDA was speaking in the programme of state-run TV "baat karobar ki" on Tuesday. He mentioned that in first phase of the CPEC, social and economic projects were included. Of them, most of the projects have almost been completed, which are included: new Gwadar International airport, GDA Pak-China Friendship Hospital, Pak-China Technical and Vocational Institute, East by Expressway, Gwadar University, water desalination plant and free zone's first phase projects. In second phase, attention would be given towards establishment of industrial zones, he announced.



QUETTA: Chief Secretary Balochistan Shakeel Qadir Khan presiding over a meeting regarding Google Tech Valley

Provincial Minister Home seeks report of terrorism & other crimes in Balochistan

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Provincial Minister for Home, Mir Ziaullah Langove has sought report of terrorism and other crimes in the province. In this regard, an official letter has been written to the Additional Chief Secretary Home for seeking report from the Inspector General of Police Balochistan. In the letter, it was directed to present report of the heinous crimes including killings and terrorism occurred during August 10-15, 2024.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Digital doublespeak

The state minister for IT continues to waffle. On Sunday, Shaza Fatima Khawaja was back on TV screens, categorically denying her government's responsibility for the anaemic internet speeds being experienced by millions of users across the country.

The frequent, unannounced degradations in internet connectivity, widely suspected to be a consequence of the opaque firewall technology being secretly implemented by the state, was, in fact, due to more people using VPNs to access the internet, the minister claimed.

"I can say under oath that the government neither shut down nor slowed down the internet," Ms Khawaja insisted. Claiming that the issue has now been resolved, the minister then said a meeting had been set up with the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority this week to "ensure that users in the country do not face similar problems again". But if the issue was simply more people using VPNs, why was there a need to get the PTA involved?

It is precisely because of this opacity around the new system that is being rolled out that the masses have remained deeply suspicious of the government's words and actions. Despite the significant disruptions that have already been caused, there is still very little that is known about what exactly the authorities are hoping to achieve, what the timeline for its rollout will be, and what ordinary users can expect once the new 'web management' system has been implemented in full.

Consider X, which has remained inaccessible in Pakistan for the better part of this year despite no good reason being provided by the authorities. In fact, the government itself does not seem to believe in the ban on X, as everyone from the prime minister to state ministries has apparently been using VPNs to continue to access and post on the platform. When the state itself has double standards about these restrictions, how does it expect the people to respect them?

This is the main reason why VPNs have suddenly become so mainstream. Once the purview of those attempting to bypass censorship or access morally repugnant services, they are now being adopted by ordinary users as well. Now, even those who simply want to share a multimedia message on WhatsApp or would like to find out what the world is talking about on popular social media platforms must use a VPN to tunnel through to the global internet. Therefore, while the government may blame VPNs for slowing down the internet, it should acknowledge that its own policies have pushed people down this path. The people deserve more than clueless representatives gaslighting them for suffering poor internet connectivity. At the very least, there needs to be much greater transparency about what is being done to the internet, especially since it is being done without the public's input.

Street protests

Dr Niaz Murtaza

The amazing ease with which street protests in Bangladesh and earlier Sri Lanka toppled hated regimes has left many Pakistanis envious as to why we can't do the same. But we were perhaps the first regional state to do so twice — angry protests in 1969, oddly most intense in the very cities that gained most from his elitist progress, toppled Ayub Khan's regime and in 1977 Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's. Protests weakened Ziaul Haq and Pervez Musharraf to cause their fall later.

The Carnegie Global Protest Tracker lists over 700 street protests in 147 states since 2017. Street protests now rival armed struggles as the main way of opposing and toppling regimes. These global and our own events raise the issue of what street protests achieve. Nearly two-thirds of the 700-plus protests led to no policy or regime change; about half lasted a week or less and attracted less than 10,000 people. Those that led to some policy changes were usually spearheaded by organised entities with a clear agenda. Spontaneous protests led by unorganised groups fizzle out, without lasting change.

Less than 10 toppled regimes — and the media labels them as revolutions. But the iconic revolutions in Russia, France and China had three outcomes: people's power (armed or street) toppled long-ruling, autocratic regimes; more crucially there was a change in the political or economic ideological system from an elitist to a pro-masses one, for example, from capitalism to communism or monarchy to one-party rule/ democracy; the old order of the army underpinning autocracy

to collapsed. However, even those street protests that topple regimes usually don't lead to the other two outcomes. Iran's revolution didn't lead to a pro-masses system. Some states, such as those that witnessed the Arab Spring, fell into chaos (Libya and Yemen) while Egypt soon reverted to autocracy. Thus, street protests can at best topple autocrats but don't ensure good governance. That only emerges if those leading the protests can convert themselves into sustainable social or political movements with strong egalitarian agendas and management capacities. Revolutions or protests may act as the sledgehammer that breaks the mighty rock of autocracy. But to craft the rock pieces into refined good governance structures, societies need the chisels of social movements.

This will also be the challenge for students in Bangladesh, which had sustained economic stability and growth but not equity under Hasina Wajed. Do they have a clear agenda to do better than her? It is instructive to note that they initially started with the single-point agenda of job quotas, which Hasina had scrapped but the courts reinstated. So, in starting to protest, they oddly had little focus on her autocratic actions, including rigging in polls and a crackdown on the media and opposition. Gradually, they expanded their agenda but their future vision is still unclear.

So, while Hasina met her rightful end, the country faces future risks. The Awami League was the centre-left grassroots party, which became autocratic over time while Khaleda Zia's party is a right-wing entity sans a grassroots presence and was cre-

ated by an army general. With the Awami League in disarray, more right-wing politics could surge, unless the students quickly provide a liberal alternative, which is a tough ask.

Why do street protests no longer emerge to topple our inept regimes even though they are worse than the Bangladeshi and Sri Lankan ones? There are many reasons. The earlier toppling of multiple autocrats via protests didn't deliver able rule. So, there is fatigue and dejection. Also, the state crushes pro-r-essive social movements and encourages reactionary ideas and groups that divert focus from egalitarian ideas. Finally, there is the veiled and evolving nature of our autocracy which doesn't let anger build against one regime or face. Our civilians last four to five years; even the real establishment autocrats retire after three to six years at the top. This allows them to pin blame on past villains. So, the case against retired Lt-Gen Faiz Hameed is being depicted as a one-off, while the reality is that he had the backing of top individuals.

Such autocracy is the root cause of our key problems. But one-off street protests will not help demolish such shadowy, shifting autocracy. We need strong and sustained social movements that use protests as just one tool. The rise of the Baloch Yakjehti Committee under the brave lead of Mahrang Baloch is progress in this regard as it has emerged from and addresses the survival issues of most marginalised groups. Similar grassroots groups in other regions coordinating with each other are our best hope for egalitarian rule. -- Courtesy Dawn

The Taliban concern

Touqir Hussain

Regardless of who has ruled Afghanistan, it has always been a problem neighbour. The Pakistani establishment may have thought the problem would be solved with the Afghan Taliban's return to power but it has worsened. Afghanistan has become both a critical foreign policy challenge and a serious domestic policy concern.

There are many issues between the Taliban's Afghanistan and Pakistan but the main point of contention is Kabul's harbouring of the TTP, whose acts of terrorism against Chinese nationals and projects are hurting Pakistan's most important relationship. Their alleged nexus with Baloch insurgents and extremist groups in former Fata threaten Pakistan's internal security and its already fragile development prospects.

Diplomacy, economic pressure, military action, and threats of isolation have not moved the Taliban to act against Pakistan to talk to the TTP. Their advice to Pakistan to talk to the TTP is an attempt to deflect pressure from themselves. They know from their own experience that such groups do not believe in talks, unless held on their terms.

There are complex reasons for their lack of action. There are ideological links between the Taliban and TTP as well as historical reasons. Even during the Raj, Afghanistan offered protection to any Pakhtun fleeing Pakhtun-majority areas in the subcontinent.

The Taliban lack both the political will and capacity to act against the TTP. They are worried about domestic threats and fissures within their own ranks. The TTP reportedly enjoy strategic affinity with the Islamic State-Khorasan and could merge with it if threatened

by the Taliban, taking disaffected Taliban members with them.

The Taliban may even benefit from the TTP's presence in Afghanistan. They treat them and other militant groups operating from the Afghan soil as allies to meet potential external aggression and obtain concessions — recognition, commercial ties, etc — from regional countries. The group is the Taliban's leverage against Pakistan and Washington.

Did our security establishment miss something? They failed to see how much Afghanistan, and indeed Pakistan, changed — following the overthrow of the monarchy in 1973 — because of the Soviet invasion, America's two Afghan wars and the war on terrorism, and Pakistan's strategic ambitions. And how Pakistan's jihadist currents mingled with the militant groups and transnational terrorist networks produced by these wars and the global Islamist revival. All this led to the creation of the Taliban who, in time, became the flagship of the extremist network in the region.

As an insurgent group, the Taliban's dependency on Pakistan gave Islamabad false hope that they would remain compliant even as a government. It may have worked the first time but Pakistan incurred reputational and diplomatic damage for questionable benefits. Much has changed since.

The Afghanistan of 2021 was not the same as when the Taliban first came to power. The Taliban have greater internal challenges now and more international acceptance, and thus different priorities. Nor is it the same Pakistan, which is struggling on multiple fronts. This has necessitated a different approach by the Taliban

towards Pakistan and the region. Thanks to their shrewd diplomacy, countries, including India and Iran who opposed the Taliban the first time, have been anxious to connect with them this time. The Taliban have been successfully cultivating a network of allies including China.

The Taliban won't act against the TTP. Pakistan itself will have to do it. Kinetic measures are necessary but not enough. They should be an adjunct to political action that must be taken to address the grievance of disaffected groups among the Pakhtun and Baloch communities. The TTP needs to be politically isolated from these communities, which can only be done by addressing their grievances via increased socioeconomic opportunities, reduced political marginalisation, and better governance.

Pakistan's body politic has been hollowed out by decades of authoritarian rule and deformed democracy, leading to a weakened institutional architecture. With institutions crumbling, the rule of law and social stability have been degraded and are preyed upon by extremist forces. But the state is lacking in political will, moral authority, and effective instruments of law and order, resulting in the strengthening of the extremist infrastructure.

A weakened Pakistan will enhance the Taliban's leverage by exposing the country to instability and extremist influences. Pakistan's struggle with the Taliban's Afghanistan must begin at home. Pakistan has been fighting terrorism but not the groups or extremist societal attitudes that inspire it. That must change. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

IFAD strengthens partnership with Pakistan for food security

ISLAMABAD (APP): The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) is reaffirming its commitment to collaborate with Pakistan in reducing rural poverty and improving food security.

This comes as the country faces ongoing challenges from climate change, impacting its agricultural sector, said in IFAD press release issued here.

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) is determined to continue its partnership with Pakistan, focusing on reducing rural poverty and enhancing food security.

Fernanda Thomaz Da Rocha, IFAD's new country director for Pakistan, highlighted this commitment during her recent introduction to Pakistan's Foreign Secretary, Ambassador Muhammad Syrus Sajjad Qazi.

Da Rocha emphasized that the collaboration between IFAD and Pakistan has been strong for over 40 years, with both parties working together on inclusive rural development.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan meets with the Sectoral Council, urging comprehensive reforms to boost Pakistan's Gems and Jewelry industry.

Commerce minister emphasizes reform, growth in Pakistan's gems, Jewelry Sector

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan on Tuesday emphasized on reform and growth in Pakistan's gems and jewelry Sector for sustainable growth in country's economy.

Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan reaffirmed the government's commitment to revitalizing Pakistan's gems and jewelry industry during a key meeting with the Sectoral Council for gems and Jewelry, said a press release issued here.

The meeting, which gathered virtually, senior officials from the public and private sectors, focused on enhancing the sector's export potential and aligning with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's vision to make this billion-dollar industry a cornerstone of Pakistan's economy. Minister Jam Kamal

highlighted the Prime Minister's active engagement with the sector, noting that PM Shehbaz Sharif has personally convened three to four meetings over the past few months to address the industry's challenges and opportunities.

The Minister underscored the government's dedication to this sector, emphasizing that the policy-making process must be driven by input from private sector stakeholders to ensure its success.

During the meeting, the Chairman of the Council, Salman Hanif, pinpointed regulatory barriers, particularly amendments to SRO 760, as critical hurdles impeding the industry's growth.

Hanif argued for the regularization of the sector to unlock its full potential. He stressed that without addressing these regulatory challenges,

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HYDERABAD: Members of Anjuman-e-Tajran Chicken Market are holding protest demonstration for acceptance of their demands, at Tower Market in Hyderabad.

LCCI, UPTIB sign MoU to boost economic cooperation

LAHORE (INP): The Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry and the UK-Pakistan Trade & Investment Board (UPTIB) have officially signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen economic ties between the business communities of Pakistan and the United Kingdom. The agreement marks a significant step towards enhancing trade, investment, and economic collaboration between the two countries.

The MoU was signed by LCCI President Kashif Anwar and CEO-Pakistan of UPTIB Tajammal Hussain at the LCCI premises in Lahore.

In his address, Kashif Anwar expressed his optimism about the partnership,

stating, "This MoU is a significant milestone in our efforts to enhance bilateral trade relations with the United Kingdom. By facilitating mutual economic cooperation, we are opening doors for business communities to explore new opportunities and strengthen existing ties. The Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry is committed to support our members in every possible way to achieve sustainable economic growth."

The partnership aims to foster mutual economic cooperation, promote business opportunities and facilitate trade in goods and services among the members of both organizations. Under the terms of the agreement,

ICCI President presents Rs1 m cheque to Arshad Nadeem

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari on Tuesday presented a cheque of Rs1 million to Arshad Nadeem, Pakistan's javelin superstar.

Addressing the ceremony held at ICCI on Tuesday, Arshad Nadeem attributed his success to hard work and dedication, stating that there was a long journey behind his achievement.

He vowed to maintain his performance in upcoming events.

SCCI chief inaugurates Facilitation Desk for provision of grant to SMEs

PESHAWAR (APP):Fuad Ishaq, president of the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry on Tuesday inaugurated a Facilitation Desk for provision of a grant to small and medium scale businesses and industries announced by International Organization of Migration.

The initiative aims to facilitate business community regarding availing of a cash grant of International Organization of Migration (IOM) for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), said in a statement here.

It is mentioned here

Ignite – NICAT Pakistan hosts Asia-Pacific's first Meta Llama Pitchathon

ISLAMABAD (APP):The National Incubation Center for Aerospace Technologies (NICAT), in partnership with Meta, the Ministry of IT & Telecommunication, and Ignite National Technology Fund, hosted the first-ever Meta Llama Pitchathon in the Asia-Pacific region.

This groundbreaking event highlighted the tremendous potential of artificial intelligence (AI) by applying Meta's cutting-edge Llama 2 and Llama 3 models, said a news release.

On the occasion, Minister of State for IT & Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja said, "This Pitchathon is a testament to Pakistan's growing capabilities in AI and technological innovation. The government is dedicated to creating an environment that nurtures talent and encourages the development of cutting-edge solutions that address both local and global challenges. Events like these are crucial in our journey to position Pakistan as a leader in the global digital economy."



RAWALPINDI: Workers busy in making wooden items on their workplace at Banni chowk area in the city.

PR to outsource more trains through transparent bidding process

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Railways has planned to outsource the commercial management of additional trains to private entities under a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model through a transparent and competitive bidding process.

"The basic purpose of outsourcing the trains is to provide better facilities to the passengers and generate more revenue for the department, official sources in the Ministry of Railways told APP.

The department initially invited tenders for this outsourcing initiative, but only three companies participated, offering bids below the benchmarked amount, they added.

As a result, they said Pakistan Railways deemed it unfeasible to proceed with these firms under the rules and regulations set by the Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA). Consequently, the department plans to re-advertise the tenders soon.

KP gets first practicing specialists in diagnosis of Autism

PESHAWAR (APP): In a commendable development, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa got first practicing specialists in diagnosis of Autism, a complex neuro-developmental disorder among children, registering constant surge in the province during the last few years. Ms. Rutaba Arif and M. Kashif Khan both serving as Speech Language Pathologist and Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) Therapist, respectively at Center for Excellence for Special Children with Autism in Peshawar have qualified as 'Practicing ADOS-2 Specialists'.

"The Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule-Second Edition (ADOS-2) is a standardized assessment tool that helps in diagnoses of autism spectrum disorders (ASD) in children and adults," apprises Rutaba Arif. Talking with APP, Rutaba informed that Ados-2 is designed to obtain information in the areas of communication, reciprocal social interactions, restricted and repetitive behaviors associated with a diagnosis of ASD. "It can only be used by ados-2 certified clinicians," she added.

Due to lack of ADOS-2 Specialists in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, parents had to take their children to Islamabad, Rawalpindi and Lahore for diagnosis of autism that was very difficult exercise due to physical stress and financial burden as well.

After qualifying as ADOS-2 Specialists, both Rutaba and Kashif can provide diagnosis services to the autism patients in Peshawar. It merits an insertion that Autism is an overlooked neuro developmental disorder among children and is on rise in the country with very scanty cure options.

According to rough estimates by experts in curing autism, there are around 500,000 number of autistic children in Pakistan and 150,000 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In most parts of the country, autism patients are in dire need of treatment from qualified therapists in diagnosis and treatment. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, there is an institute in the name of Center for Excellence for Special Children with Autism in Peshawar having the capacity of providing rehabilitation.

Isolation Ward and PCR Lab established at PHQ Hospital Gilgit to tackle Monkeypox

GILGIT (APP): On the orders of Secretary Health Gilgit-Baltistan, Dildar Malik, an isolation ward and PCR lab have been established at PHQ Hospital Gilgit to tackle the expected cases of monkeypox.

According to a statement released by the spokesperson of the Health Department Gilgit-Baltistan, Secretary Health GB visited PHQ Hospital Gilgit on Tuesday. On this occasion, Secretary Health

said that such "monkeypox isolation wards" are being established in all RHQ hospitals, Shaheed Syed Rahman Hospital and DHQ hospitals. The task will be completed by tomorrow evening.

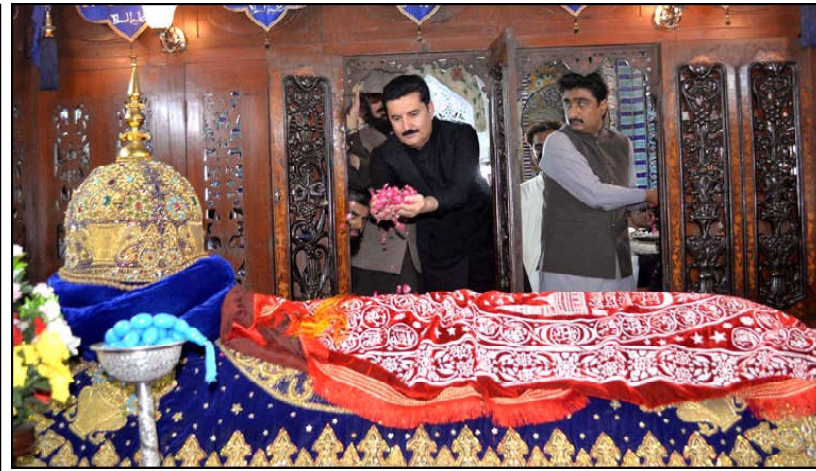
Secretary Health said that no stone will be left unturned to prevent the spread of monkeypox in Gilgit-Baltistan.

Screening centers will also be established at airports and bus stands in Gilgit-Baltistan.

ANF seizes over 10 kg drugs; arrests a drug dealer

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting an operation in Sialkot managed to recover over 10 kg drugs, weapons and arrested a drug dealer, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Tuesday.

He informed that in a joint operation conducted in Tehsil Daska, Sialkot by ANF and Punjab Police, 10.2 kg drugs, two motorcycles and weapons were recovered.



HYDERABAD: Governor KPK Faisal Karim Kundi lays floral wreath on the shrine of Hazrat Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai on the concluding day of 281th urs celebrations.

Hearing of money laundering case against Pervaiz Elahi others adjourned till Sep 19

LAHORE (Online): Special Central Court (SCC) Lahore has adjourned till September 19 hearing of money laundering case against Former Chief Minister (CM) Punjab Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi and others.

Money laundering case against Pervaiz Elahi and others came up for hearing in SCC Lahore Tuesday. FIA filed challan in the court against Pervaiz Elahi, Moonis Elahi, Zara Elahi and others. Under this challan other 8 accused including Moonis Elahi have been declared proclaimed offenders.

Pervaiz Elahi, Zara Elahi and other accused appeared in the court and signed the rolls.

Aamir Saeed Ran advocate appeared on behalf of PTI leader in the court. During the hearing of the case, Pervaiz Elahi while moving to the judge said he is indisposed.

The court directed him to sit in court room. Counsel for former CM Punjab said Zara Elahi is burqa clad (veiled) lady. Application for her permanent exemption from attendance has been filed. She will come when indictment is framed against her.

The court summoned arguments from the respondents on exemption plea of Zara Elahi.

07 dead, 1397 injured in 1292 road traffic crashes in Punjab

LAHORE: The Emergency Services Department (ESD) responded to 1292 Road Traffic Crashes (RTCs) in all 37 districts of Punjab during the last 24 hours. In these RTCs, 07 people died, whereas 1397 were injured. Out of these, 585 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 812 victims with minor injuries were treated at the incident site by Rescue Medical Teams thus reducing the burden of Hospitals.

The majority (76%) involved Motorbikes, therefore effective enforcement of traffic laws and lane discipline are essential to reduce the increasing number of road traffic crashes.

Furthermore, the analysis showed those 764 drivers, 50 underage drivers, 154 pedestrians, and 486 passengers were among the victims of road traffic crashes. The statistics show that 261 RTCs were reported in Lahore which affected 282 persons placing the Provincial Capital at the top of the list followed by Faisalabad 99 in with 104 victims and at third Multan with 80 RTCs and 79 victims.

The details further reveal that 1404 victims were affected by road traffic crashes including 1152 males & 252 females.

PFA unearths counterfeit ghee unit, discards 4,800kg hazardous ghee.

LAHORE: The Punjab Food Authority (PFA) has unearthed a counterfeit ghee manufacturing unit on Jaranwala Road and discarded a huge quantity of unwholesome food including 4,800kg hazardous ghee, 375kg caustic soda, 150 litre loose cooking oil and 125kg bleaching powder.

Meanwhile, the PFA enforcement team also seized 1,700 counterfeit cartons of famous edible oil brands, 775kg packing material, four storage tanks and a packing machine during a raid.

This was informed by PFA Director General Muhammad Asim Javaid while talking to the media at PFA Headquarters. He said that acting on the tip-off, the PFA raided a unit

and caught the adulteration mafia red-handed while an FIR has been registered against the culprits in the respective police station, leading to the arrest of people from the spot.

He said that ghee was extracted from the filth and fat of animals. He said that germs-infested ghee was stored in rusty tanks and packed in the counterfeit packaging of popular brands to deceive customers.

He further said that FBO had mentioned the wrong addresses on the labelling of ghee packaging.

The food business operator also failed to present the necessary records to the raiding team, such as an agreement with a bio-diesel or soap manufacturing company, he said.



PESHAWAR: Members of Women Teachers Welfare Association Hayatabad are holding protest demonstration for their rights, outside KPK Assembly in Peshawar.

Photo exhibition on independence movement organized at DPS

RAWALPINDI (INP): A photo exhibition, book stall and documentary show on independence movement was organized by Punjab Arts Council in collaboration with Nazariya Pakistan Trust Lahore at Divisional Public School Rawalpindi on Tuesday.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Headquarters Rawalpindi, Ms. Zonaira Aftab along with

Deputy Director Muhammad Shakoor was the Chief Guest of the inaugural ceremony.

Addressing the participants of exhibition, Ms. Zonaira Aftab said that it was extremely important for the younger generation to thoroughly study the history of Pakistan so that they can understand how this country was established and who played a key role in its creation.

Federal govt dividing people instead of uniting them: Saif

PESHAWAR (INP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Advisor Barrister Saif on Tuesday blamed the federal government for dividing people instead of uniting them.

He stated that KP was producing the cheapest electricity in Pakistan which was being sold at exorbitant prices from the federal government, adding that people of KP were being deprived of any relief in power bills despite producing maximum electricity.

He blamed the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz president Nawaz Sharif for announcing reduction in power bills by saying that an MNA elected on Form-47 can't announce lowering in rates of electricity.

He criticised the government for selective development in Punjab, imploring that small provinces needed the most share of all development as they had been left behind by large spending in Punjab.

International News

Egypt's Sisi, Blinken discuss ways to move forward in Gaza ceasefire negotiations

CAIRO: Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi and U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken met in Cairo on Tuesday to discuss ways to move forward in negotiations on a ceasefire in Gaza, the Egyptian presidency said.

Sisi warned of the risk of the Gaza war expanding regionally in a way "difficult to imagine".

"The ceasefire in Gaza must be the beginning of broader international recognition of the Palestinian state and the implementation of the two-state solution, as this is the basic guarantor of stability in the region," he added.

Blinken was in Cairo pushing for areas of possible progress on a Gaza ceasefire and hostage release deal in talks planned for later this week, with major areas of dispute left unresolved.

With the unabated strikes by Israeli military killing at least 40 more Palestinians across the Gaza Strip taking the death toll to at least 40,139 and a Palestinian group announcing the resumption of bombings inside Israel after many years, there are few signs of conciliation on the ground.

"In a very constructive meeting with Prime Minister Netanyahu today, he confirmed to me that Israel accepts the bridging proposal — that he supports it," Blinken told reporters in Tel Aviv.

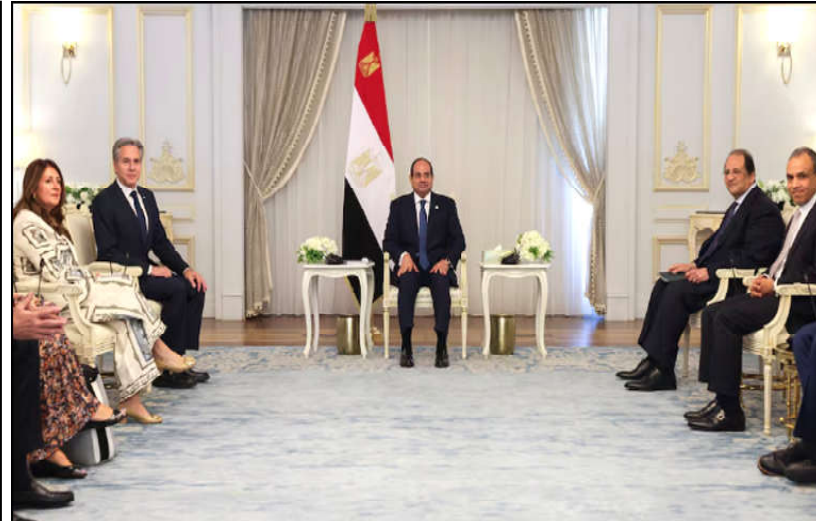
"It's now incumbent on Hamas to do the same, and then the parties, with the help of the mediators — the United States, Egypt and Qatar — have to come together and complete the process of reaching clear understandings about how they'll implement the commitments that they've

made under this agreement."

Despite US expressions of optimism and Netanyahu's office describing the meeting as positive, both Israel and Hamas have signalled that any deal will be difficult.

Hamas accused Netanyahu of "thwarting the mediators' efforts" and Turkiye said Hamas envoys had told it that US officials were "painting an overly optimistic picture" despite their clear stance of abiding by the earlier understanding and rejection of the new conditions being set by the US.

Ahead of talks in Qatar last week, Hamas had called on mediators, rather than holding more negotiations, to implement a framework outlined in late May by US President Joe Biden. After the Doha meeting, the US submitted what mediators called a "bridging proposal".



U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken meets with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi and Egypt's Foreign Minister Badr Abdelaty, in EL-Alamein, Egypt.

India, Japan agree to bolster defence and security ties

NEW DELHI: India and Japan agreed on Tuesday to bolster defence and security ties and backed a "common strategic vision" of a free and open Indo-Pacific - a region where both countries have troubled relations with China.

Foreign and defence ministers of both countries held talks under the so-called 'India-Japan 2+2' dialogue in New Delhi, the third such bilateral engagement in five years.

The ministers discussed progress on the transfer of battleship communication antennas and related technology from Japan to India, according to a joint statement.

The move would mark Japan's first export of defence equipment and technology transfer to New Delhi under a 2015 pact, as Tokyo seeks to strengthen its defence industry.

Saudi King Salman chaired cabinet meeting, state news agency says

DUBAI: Saudi Arabia's King Salman bin Abdulaziz chaired a cabinet meeting on Tuesday, state media said, for the first time since a royal decree issued by him on Aug. 8 allowing the cabinet to convene in the absence of the king, crown prince or both.

Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman chaired the Aug. 13 cabinet session. The 88-year-old king of the world's biggest oil exporter, a major US ally in the Middle East, received medical care for lung inflammation in May.

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Fears for children's health as polio re-emerges in Gaza

DEIR EL BALAH: In Gaza, a mother worries that her month-old son, Mohammed, could be infected with polio after the Palestinian health ministry confirmed the first case in the enclave on Friday, ending a 25-year period in which the strip was polio-free. Just three days after his birth, Ghada al Ghandour's son Mohammed started developing skin rashes. "He had skin rashes as if he was burnt," she said. A doctor told her there were no

creams to treat her child. She later brought him to Al Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir el Balah in central Gaza to seek a diagnosis and treatment. The rash fueled his mother's fears that other symptoms and diseases could follow due to a lack of hygiene and medical supplies in Gaza after more than 10 months of conflict.

In a statement, the Palestinian health ministry confirmed the first case of polio in the city of Deir el Balah had been detected in a 10-month-old baby who had not been vaccinated.

Russia's FSB detains scientist on suspicion of treason

MOSCOW: Russia's FSB security service has detained a scientist in Moscow on suspicion of state treason, the Interfax news agency reported on Tuesday.

The scientist allegedly carried out distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attacks on critical infrastructure on behalf of Ukrainian security services, it quoted the FSB as saying.

Biden says 'I gave my best' as he passes torch to Harris

WASHINGTON: An emotional US President Joe Biden passed the torch to Democratic nominee Kamala Harris with a hug on Monday, saying he gave everything for his country in a bittersweet farewell speech at the party's convention in Chicago.

"America, America, I gave my best to you," the 81-year-old Biden said, quoting a patriotic hymn during a nearly hour-long address that ran through his achievements while urging voters to back his vice president against Donald Trump in November.

Harris joined him on stage after the speech and the pair embraced, as the crowd gave Biden a rapturous reception following his stunning decision less than a month ago to drop out of the

2024 White House race. In a remarkable turnaround, Harris has reemerged the party and wiped out Republican rival Trump's lead in the polls, but Biden insisted that he was not bitter about stepping aside. Instead, as he contemplates the imminent end of a five-decade political career, he said that he had done what he thought best to ensure that his nemesis Trump does not return to the Oval Office.

"I love the job, but I love my country more," Biden said. "And all this talk about how I'm angry at all those people who said I should step down — that's not true." Both Biden and Harris appeared to wipe away a tear as the US leader won a huge four-minute ovation when he first took to the stage.

Philippines to host a US visa processing center for up to 300 Afghans resettling in America

MANILA: The Philippines has agreed to a request by the United States to temporarily host a U.S. immigrant visa processing center for a limited number of Afghan nationals aspiring to resettle in America, the treaty allies announced Tuesday. The Philippine government's approval of the request, which initially faced local concerns over potential security and legal issues, reflects how relations between Manila and Washington have deepened under President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., who took office in 2022. The Department of Foreign Affairs in Manila said the agreement was undergoing final domestic procedures and needs to be finally ratified by Marcos before it takes effect. It did not provide other details, including how many Afghans would be allowed to temporarily stay in the Philippines at any time while their special immigrant visas for resettlement to the U.S. are being completed.

A senior Philippine official, however, told The Associated Press that only 150 to 300 applicants would be accommodated in the Philippines under the "one-time" deal. The official who had knowledge of the negotiations agreed to speak on condition of anonymity because of a lack of authority to speak publicly. Department of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Assistant Secretary Teresita Daza said Afghan nationals should secure a visa to enter the Philippines and would be subjected to "full security vetting." Each visa applicant can stay not more than 59 days. The U.S. government will shoulder the costs for the stay of the Afghan nationals, including food, housing, security and medical and transportation expenses, Daza said. She added that the U.S. government and the International Organization for Migration as manager of the unspecified facility where the Afghan visa applicants would be billeted.

India's top court orders medical safety task force after doctor rape protests

NEW DELHI: India's Supreme Court on Tuesday ordered a national task force to examine how to bolster security for healthcare workers after the "horrific" rape and murder of a doctor sparked medical strikes and furious protests.

The discovery of the 31-year-old doctor's bloodied body at a state-run hospital in the eastern city of Kolkata on August 9 has stoked nationwide anger at the chronic issue of violence against women.

Doctors' associations from government-run hospitals in many cities across India have launched multiple strikes that cut non-essential services, with protests in

their second week. Demonstrators marched through Kolkata on Tuesday, holding up signs demanding "justice", while the country's top court issued orders in the capital New Delhi.

"The brutality of the sexual assault and the nature of the crime have shocked the conscience of the nation," the three-judge bench said in its order, calling the details "horrific".

Chief Justice D. Y. Chandrachud read out the order, which called for the formation of a "national task force" of top doctors to prepare a plan to prevent violence in healthcare facilities and draw up an "enforceable national protocol" for safe working conditions.

Iran closes centres linked to Germany, which summons ambassador

DUBAI: Iran's judiciary has closed two branches of organisations linked to Germany due to "illegal activities and financial fraud", the judiciary's Mizan news agency said, in a move protested by Berlin with the summoning of the Iranian ambassador.

Mizan published pictures on Tuesday of security forces removing the banner of the German Language Institute of Tehran, which is linked to the German embassy.

"Additionally, there have been reports of violations by other German-affiliated centres and investigations in this matter are ongoing," Mizan added.

PM to give 'good news' on IPPs within month or two: Awais

ISLAMABAD (INP): Federal Minister Awais Leghari has said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will give good news to people over IPPs within a month or two.

"We silenced worked over the issue of the IPPs but all and sundry joined the bandwagon," energy

minister said. "It became good for us as it brings pressure over the IPPs," he said.

"We convinced the IPPs within the limits of international contracts," minister said. "We did the work in three-and-half months, which didn't happen in Pakistan's history," Leghari said.

"Within a month or two Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will give a good news to the public and industries," energy minister said. "Everyone will be benefited from it".

He said the task force has been constituted, in which the agencies' people have also been included.

Addressing youth convention in Islamabad energy minister said that the steps being taken to address energy crisis in the country. "Reforms are inevitable in energy sector," he said.

He said the energy billing has been 1100 billion with 400 billion losses in it.

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ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Privatization, Board of Investment and Communications, Abdul Aleem Khan while speaking at the meeting of the National Assembly's Standing Committee on Communications.

Pakistan Education Endowment Fund to support higher education of underprivileged students: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday said that the government had established the Pakistan Education Endowment Fund to support children from low-income families to obtain higher education.

Shehbaz warmly welcomed Israr Kakar at the PM House, appreciated him for bringing fame to Pakistan, and viewed that talented youth like him could guarantee a bright future for Pakistan.

He lauded Kakar for contesting the Oxford Union election as a manifestation of his steadfastness and firm resolve. He expressed the hope that Pakistani youth like Israr Kakar would continue to bring laurels to Pakistan.

Inviting him to address the Oxford Union, Israr Kakar appreciated Prime Minister Shehbaz for his government's measures for youth empowerment and providing them equal opportunities.

"All of the youth like me, are resolved to offer all-out services for Pakistan's progress and prosperity," Kakar remarked.

As president of a great body like Oxford Union by a youngster coming from a backward area of Balochistan is a matter of pride," the prime minister remarked.

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Ahsan urges swift completion of CPEC Phase-II corridor concept papers

ISLAMABAD (INP): Federal Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal Tuesday chaired a review meeting on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects, stressing the urgency of preparing concept papers for five new corridors proposed by Chinese President Xi Jinping in August 2023.

"The concept papers for all CPEC Phase-II projects should be completed as soon as possible, aligning with these five new corridors," he said while chairing a review meeting on CPEC projects in Islamabad on Tuesday.

The meeting was attended by Secretary Planning Ahsan Manzoor Sumra, secretaries of relevant ministries, heads of institutions, and senior officials.

Ahsan Iqbal reiterated that all Working Groups (WGs) have been directed to expedite the preparation of these concept papers.

Ahsan Iqbal expressed confidence that comprehensive documents on these five corridors would be finalized by the end of August and presented during the visit of China's Prime Minister to Pakistan.

He instructed relevant stakeholders and ministry officials to collaboratively develop joint plans for these corridors and prepare five-year strategic plans under the CPEC portfolio for submission to the Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC).

The Planning minister also directed the ministries concerned to prepare five-year plans under the CPEC portfolio for submission in the Joint Cooperation Committee, stressing to hold regular meetings of joint working groups in September so that the next five-year CPEC strategy could be evolved.

"Our aim should be industrial and commercial development and increase in foreign investment," he said adding long-term projects be included in the working group with sector-wise breakup.

Ahsan Iqbal gave a 15-day timeline to all the ministries concerned to submit their CPEC-related projects.

Corridors, which were aligned with Pakistan's 5Es framework (Export, Energy, Equity, E-Pakistan and Environment) for its economic development. Elaborating the five new initiatives, he said that under the Livelihood Corridor provision of the best amenities to the people and creating employment opportunities were included.

Under the Innovation Corridor, the minister said new projects would be initiated through modern technology and imparting information technology skills to the youth. "While the CPEC would be used to promote connectivity and establish more friendly relations with Central Asian states under the Open Regional Cooperation."

The Regional Connectivity Corridor will utilize CPEC to foster relations and promote connectivity with Central Asian states under the Open Regional Cooperation framework.

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ISLAMABAD: Pakistani student at Oxford University, Israr Khan Kakar, who was recently elected as President of Oxford Union calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Interior minister lauds security forces for killing BLA terrorists in Mastung

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi on Tuesday commended the security forces for killing 3 terrorists of the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) in an intelligence-based operation in Mastung.

The minister in a news release, praised the professional capabilities of the security forces for conducting a successful operation against the terrorists responsible for the martyrdom of Deputy Commissioner Panjgur, Zakir Ali.

Mohsin Naqvi said that the security forces have brought the perpetrators of Zakir Ali's martyrdom to a dreadful end through a successful operation.

He added that Pakistan's security forces are capable and professional, and the nation is proud of them. He further said that the security forces are performing their duties with dedication to establish peace in Balochistan, and they will foil every conspiracy to create instability in the province.

The Municipal Committee and Revenue Department staff are actively participating in relief efforts. The Irrigation Department's machinery is stationed in various areas, including Chhab Saleh Goth, to assist in relief operations.

The district administration, along with provincial departments, is working to restore connectivity on affected roads. Efforts to repair the link road in Tehsil Lakhar are ongoing under the supervision of the district administration.

The administration is working tirelessly to provide relief to the affected families and restore normalcy in the area.

Assistant Commissioner Killa, Habib-ur-Rehman, is overseeing the distribution of relief goods and tents among the affected families.

De-watering efforts have begun in schools and surrounding areas of Gadur Goth and other villages.

Relief efforts intensify in Lasbela district after floods

Independent Report LASBELA: Following the directives of Federal Minister Jam Kamal and MPA Zarin Magsi, the district administration of Lasbela has intensified relief efforts in the flood-affected areas of Tehsil Bela.

Over 85,000 patients treated in last 9 months under Health Card Program in Balochistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Tuesday felicitated the scientists and engineers on the successful test of the Shaheen-II ballistic missile.

According to a press release issued here by the party secretariat, Bilawal Bhutto said "Our missile technology reflects the expertise and dedication of our scientists and engineers."

Chief PPP said that the successful test of Shaheen-II is a message of pride that is a matter of pride that this missile technology is a gift to the homeland from my mother," Bilawal Bhutto added.

Independent Report BAKHT KAKAR AND DISTRICT SUPPORT MANAGERS, Deputy district officers, PPHI officers and officers of Benazir Income Support Programme participated in the workshop.

Addressing the workshop, CEO Health Card Programme informed that the provincial government had introduced the programme nine months ago.

During this period, more than 85,000 patients have so far been provided free of cost treatment. He said that it is completely digitalized system in which there is no need of safarish.

Gas tariff to remain unchanged until December-January: Malik

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Petroleum, Dr. Musadik Masood Malik Tuesday said that the current gas tariff would remain unchanged until the winter months of December and January.

Addressing a press conference, he said that the gas tariff has not been increased, and the government is striving to avoid placing any additional burden on the people.

"If the need arises to provide relief, we will make decisions in consultation with all provinces and move forward together. However, our aim is to avoid increasing gas prices," he said.

The minister said that 98% of domestic electricity consumers, who use up to 500 units, have been provided relief by the Punjab government.

Senate Body criticizes NHA for poor road conditions, mismanagement in Balochistan

ISLAMABAD (INP): The meeting of Senate Standing Committee on Communications held with Senator Pervaiz Rashid in chair on Tuesday criticized the National Highway Authority (NHA) over poor road conditions and heavy traffic.

Senator Mumtaz highlighted the poor state of key roads including Uthal (N-25), Kalat (N-25), Gwadar (N-10), and Killa Saifullah (N-50), covering a total of 620 kilometers. She emphasized that despite government al-

locations, the crucial N-25 remains undeveloped. Both the NHA and the Ministry of Communications failed to provide satisfactory answers regarding the utilization of funds since a decade.

Senators criticized the NHA for poor road maintenance and questioned the establishment of toll plazas that do not benefit local communities. The committee also discussed the role of over-speeding, overloading, and inadequate driver ethics.

Chairman PAC, DG NADRA visit Registration Office Pishin

Independent Report QUETTA: The Member Provincial Assembly and Chairman Public Accounts Committee (PAC) Asghar Tareen visited the NADRA Registration Office in Pishin on Tuesday.

Also accompanied with him was Director General NADRA Balochistan, Kashif Iqbal.

During the visit, the Chairman PAC along with DG NADRA reviewed the women center for Women in the NADRA Registration center.

ECP fixes Aug 26 for postal ballots in bye-election in NA 171

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission (ECP) has fixed August 26 last date for receipt of applications for postal ballot papers for Bye-Election in NA-171 R.Y. Khan-III.

This facility, under the law, has been extended to the persons in Government service, members of Armed Forces, their wives and such of their children as are registered voters and ordinarily reside with them provided they are stationed at a place other than the place in which their constituency is situated.

Governor assigns look-after charge of VC of SBKWU to Prof. Dr. Naheed Haq

Independent Report QUETTA: The Pro-Vice Chancellor or Sardar Bahadur Khan Women University (SBKWU), Professor Dr. Naheed Haq has been assigned the look-after charge of vacant position of Vice Chancellor of the University with immediate effect.

This was announced in an official notification issued here by the Governor's secretariat the other day.

According to the notification, the Governor, who also happens to be the

Naseem emphasizes importance of education for Pakistan's progress

Independent Report QUETTA: Provincial Advisor for Environment and Climate Change, Naseem ur Rahman Khan Mulla Khail, stressed that Pakistan's independence was a result of educated, aware, and enlightened thinking. He emphasized that the power of knowledge can elevate Pakistan among the top nations globally.

Speaking as a special guest at the 33rd anniversary of Islamic Girls College Quetta and Pakistan's 77th independence day celebrations, he said that education should be the top priority, as it not only safe-



KARACHI: Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari chairs a video link meeting of the irrigation departments of Sindh and Balochistan, held at Bilawal House in Karachi.

Commendation certificate & cash prize given: Killa Abdullah's excavator driver who rescued family from flood officially honored by DC

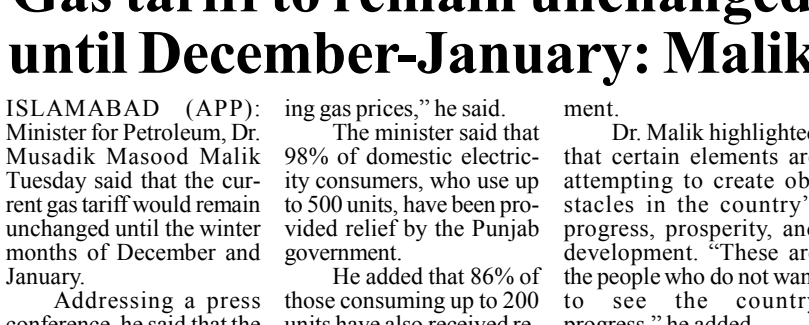
Independent Report QUETTA: The excavator driver, Mohibullah, who saved a family stuck in the flashflood in Toba Achakzai area of Killa Abdullah, was officially honoured by the Deputy Commissioner, on Tuesday morning.

The Deputy Commissioner Killa Abdullah, Dr. Farooq Abdullah invited the excavator driver, Mohibullah and his relatives in his office, Killa Abdullah to express gratitude on behalf of the Chief Minister, Mir Sarfraz Bugti.

It may be mentioned here that Mohibullah had rescued a family of five persons who was stuck in the flood water the other day.

The Deputy Commissioner highly appreciated Mohibullah on behalf of the Chief Minister and presented him the commendation certificate and cash reward.

Speaking to the gallant



QUETTA: Fouzia Shaheen and others meeting with Deputy Speaker Balochistan Assembly Ghazala Gola

BFA cracks down on fake beverage factory in Quetta

Independent Report QUETTA: The Balochistan Food Authority and Quetta Police conducted a joint operation against a fake beverage factory on Sabzal Road, Quetta.

The factory was producing counterfeit "Sting" beverages and other multinational brands. The authorities seized 2400 fake cold drinks, filling machinery, and labeling materials from the factory.

The factory was producing beverages for local and multinational companies, including Fanta, Coca-Cola, Sting, and Redish Anar. The joint operation resulted in the immediate sealing of the factory, and further legal action was taken against the owners.

Parliamentary Committee pledges to highlight Kashmir issue at regional, world forums

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Special Committee of the National Assembly on Kashmir unanimously decided to highlight the Kashmir issue vigorously at every regional and international forum.



QUETTA: National Party Head & MPA Dr. Abdul Malik Baloch addressing on condolence reference of founder of National Party Mir Hasil Khan Bizenjo.