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Emphasises economic stability for country's prosperity

COAS expresses resolve to protect Pakistan's digital borders

Says no matter how difficult the situation may be, if we all stand together, nothing can harm us; we must always prioritize the country over personal interests as nothing, including politics, is above Pakistan

KARACHI (APP): Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir says protection of Pakistan's digital borders and the digital security of the people is the responsibility of the state. Addressing the business community in Karachi today, he said that terrorism is backed by those who do illegal businesses, with certain elements behind them. The Army Chief emphasized that we must always prioritize the country over personal interests as nothing, including politics, is above Pakistan. Describing the state as

a motherly figure, he said the value of the state should be understood by looking at the people of Libya, Iraq, and Palestine. He reminded the audience, "Remember, we have no identity other than Pakistan."

Talking about challenges facing the nation, General Syed Asim Munir said no matter how difficult the situation may be, if we all stand together, nothing can harm us.

Encouraging Pakistani expatriates to bring their investments back home, he said through this move, the

people will prosper, and the country will develop.

The Army Chief expressed his unwavering confidence in Pakistan's bright and stable future, and said that the clouds of despair that loomed over the country one year ago, have now cleared.

General Asim Munir reaffirmed his belief that "despair is forbidden for Muslims," and highlighted that all of Pakistan's economic indicators are now positive. He expressed optimism that these indicators will further improve in the coming year.



KARACHI: General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M) Chief of Army Staff (COAS), visiting the International Defence Exhibition and Seminar (IDEAS-2024) at the Karachi Expo Centre.

CM directs CS to take action against non-performing DCs, SSPs, DHOs during anti polio campaign

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah presiding over a meeting regarding the eradication of polio, directed Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah to remove any deputy commissioners, senior superintendents of police (SSPs), and district health officers who are not actively contributing to the polio campaign.

"I am working tirelessly to eliminate polio, but I am facing three challenges: refusal cases, reluctance from officers concerned and migration, which introduces the polio virus into the province," he stated.

The meeting was held at the CM House on Wednesday and attended by Minister Health Dr. Azra Fazal, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, Public Sector Communication Management (PSCM) Agha Wasif, Secretary of Health Rehan

Baloch, Incharge of the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) Irshad Sodhar, and others.

During the meeting, Minister of Health Dr. Azra Fazal and Incharge EOC Irshad Sodhar gave a detailed briefing to the chief minister.

CM Shah was informed that there have been 50 polio cases reported nationwide, with Sindh accounting for 13 cases, followed by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with 11, Punjab with one, and Balochistan with 24.

In Sindh, there are two cases each in Hyderabad, Jacobabad and Keamari, along with one case each in Shikarpur, East (Gujro), Sujawal, Malir, Mirpurkhas, Sanghar, and Ghotki.

Regarding the demographics and the polio/EPI situation, the chief minister was informed that there are 10.6 million children

under the age of five in the province. Additionally, 321,323 children have been recorded as migrating with their parents.

Currently, 69 per cent of children are fully immunised.

In 2024, reports indicated that 66 per cent of samples collected from 20 districts across Sindh tested positive for environmental samples of the virus.

When asked about the situation, the CM was informed that there were 43,227 refusal cases identified in various districts in October.

In response, Murad Shah said, "The time for refusals is over; we cannot afford them," and directed the deputy commissioners and SSPs, through the chief secretary, to ensure the administration of polio drops, warning that failure to do so would result in action against them.

PM Shehbaz reaffirms commitment to eradicate polio from Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday reiterated the resolve of the government to make Pakistan a polio-free country and said that the federation along with all the provinces were taking steps at polio eradication. He said all the provinces had been taken into confidence over the polio eradication measure and together they would eradicate the disease.

A delegation of Polio Oversight Board comprising Christopher Elias, Representative of Bill and Malinda Gates Foundation, Dr Hanan Balkhy, Regional Director World Health Organization, UNICEF Regional Director Sanjay Wijesekera, Deputy Director Center for Disease Control and Prevention Andrea Frisstedt, Rotary Foundation Trustee and National Chair Dr Aziz Memon, Dr. Ziyad bin Ahmed Meemish

of King Salman Humanitarian and Relief Center and Health and Environmental Advisor K Srelief Dr. Abdullah bin Saleh called on the prime minister, PM Office Media Wing in a press release said.

The prime minister thanked the delegation for their visit and support to government's efforts to end polio.

He also expressed his gratitude to King Salman Foundation, Bill and Malinda Gates Foundation, Rotary Foundation, UNICEF and CDC that are partners to government in its anti-polio measures.

The prime minister observed that the part played by these organizations showed global efforts in the polio eradication drive and expressed the confidence that they would overcome the challenge of polio and would not rest till it was banished forever.

Murad assures CM GB of increasing seats of GB students in Sindh's universities

KARACHI (INP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah met with Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Minister Haji Gulbar Khan at the Chief Minister's House. The meeting was attended by Gilgit-Baltistan's Minister for Excise Haji Rehmat Khaliq and CM's Special Assistant Hussain Shah.

During the meeting, CM Gulbar Khan requested an increase in the number of seats allocated for students from Gilgit-Baltistan in Sindh's medical and engineering colleges, highlighting that over 10,000 students from

Gilgit-Baltistan are currently studying in Karachi. At this, CM Murad Shah assured that he would personally review the matter of increasing seats for Gilgit-Baltistan students in Sindh's universities, particularly the Medical ones.

CM GB Gulbar Khan said that the students of his province were facing accommodation issues in the hostels of the universities of the province. At this, CM Murad Shah promised that the PPP government would identify land and ensure the completion of the hostel project.



KARACHI: Iranian Ambassador Reza Amiri Moghaddam meeting with Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori. Consul General of Iran Hassan Nourian is also present.

Indus eagle squad launched

SUKKUR (APP): The Sukkur Police and Sukkur Municipal Corporation (SMC) have joined hands all to make Sukkur city more safer and eliminate narcotics and other forms of social evils as well as encroachment in the city.

The Indus Eagle Squad launched under a joint venture between Sukkur Municipal Corporation and Sukkur Police.

The Indus Eagle Squad Sukkur's launching ceremony took place at Police Madagar 15 here on Wednesday.

MNA's Syed Khurshid Ahmed Shah and Numan Islam Sheikh attended the launching ceremony as chief guests.

Deputy Commissioner Sukkur Dr. MB Raja Dahrejo and others were also present in the ceremony.

Sukkur Municipal Corporation's Mayor, Barrister Arslan Islam Sheikh, and Sukkur Police Chief SSP Amjad Sheikh, have signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) of a joint venture. Later, MNAs Syed Khurshid Ahmed Shah and Numan Islam Sheikh, alongside Sukkur Mayor Barrister Arslan Islam Sheikh and Sukkur SSP Amjad Sheikh, formally launched the Indus Eagle Squad by cutting the ribbon.

On this occasion, Syed Khurshid Ahmed Shah, MNA Numan Islam Sheikh, and Sukkur Mayor Barrister Arslan Islam Sheikh handed over motorcycle key to Sukkur SSP Amjad Sheikh for the Indus Eagle Squad, symbolizing the commencement of their joint operations.

MNA Syed Khurshid Ahmed Shah emphasized that peace and security are of utmost importance for any country or city, while addressing the ceremony.

He highlighted that maintaining law and order is crucial for the well-being and prosperity of citizens.



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Murad Ali Shah presides over a meeting regarding polio eradication, held at CM House in Karachi.

Sharjeel inaugurates newly constructed faculty of civil engineering at Isra University

HYDERABAD (APP): Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon inaugurated newly constructed faculty of civil engineering at Isra University on Wednesday.

He emphasised that the younger generation worldwide is introducing new ideas and innovative solutions. "We must encourage our youth so they can advance and bring pride to our country and nation," he said.

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony for the newly constructed Faculty of Civil Engineering at Isra University Hyderabad, Sindh Senior Minister and Provincial Minister for Information, Transport, and

Mass Transit, Sharjeel Inam Memon, praised the university's contributions to Hyderabad. "Isra University is doing commendable work for the city. Just look at the student stalls; our students are doing excellent work and introducing new ideas. We must encourage our youth," he said.

He stated that the Sindh government is the first in Pakistan to generate electricity from wind energy. He highlighted that the PPP was also the pioneer in generating electricity from Thar coal.

"Shaheed Bibi initiated the Thar Coal Project, but after her government's fall, the subsequent administration shut it down.

When President Asif Ali Zardari took office in 2008, he revived the project. Today, thousands of megawatts of electricity are being generated from Thar parkar coal. Economic experts now agree that coal is the most cost-effective source of electricity," he said adding, "The Sindh government has given this gift to all of Pakistan, ensuring affordable electricity from Thar coal."

The minister stated that Pakistan is full of opportunities, and youth are highly talented.

"As a nation, we must stand on our own feet so that we do not have to rely on others for assistance," he said.



HYDERABAD: Sindh Minister for Information, Transport and Mass Transit, Excise Taxation and Narcotics Control, Sharjeel Inam Memon addresses during a ceremony on the eve of World Sustainable Transport Day, at Isra University in Hyderabad.

Mayor Karachi presents iPhone, laptops to outstanding students

KARACHI (APP): Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab on Wednesday presented iPhone and laptops to those students who secured top positions in the matriculation exams.

The successful students and their parents met the Mayor at his office where members of the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation Council were also present.

The Mayor Karachi fulfilled his promise made to the students of government schools who achieved top positions in

the matriculation exams by handing over iPhone and laptops to them.

Barrister Murtaza Wahab presented an iPhone to Hafiz Abdul Rafey, who secured the first position in the matriculation exam, and a laptop to Romaisa, who secured the second position.

On this occasion, the Mayor Karachi said that it is a matter of pride for us that children from government schools in Karachi have achieved positions in the matriculation exams.

Sindh to 'hold' MDCAT 2024 retake on Dec 8

KARACHI (INP): The expected date for Medical and Dental College Admission Test (MDCAT) 2024 retake in Sindh has been revealed. As per details, the Institute of Business Administration (IBA) Sukkur will "conduct" the MDCAT 2024 retake on December 8 (Sunday).

Preparations for the test have been completed by IBA Sukkur. In order for smooth conduct of the MDCAT, three centres will be set up in Karachi, while test centres will be also constituted in Hyderabad, Mirpurkhas, Sukkur, Larkana and Nawabshah.

On October 26, the Sindh High Court (SHC) set aside the Medical and Dental College Admission Test (MDCAT) 2024 and ordered it to be reconducted within a month.

"The investigative committee admitted that the entire test system is compromised," the SHC ruled in its written order.

The court ruled that there is no other option but to take the test again, adding that the representatives of the Sindh government, Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC), and Dow University agreed on re-testing.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Polio Oversight Board meeting with Prime Minister Muhammad Shabbaz Sharif.

Turkish Ambassador calls on Speaker PA Sindh

By Nazir Siyal
KARACHI: Turkish Ambassador to Pakistan, Irfan Neziroglu, called on Speaker Provincial Assembly of Sindh, Syed Awais Qadir

processes, and inter-parliamentary cooperation.

Speaker Syed Awais Qadir highlighted plans for training young parliamentarians and en-



Shah on Wednesday. Irfan Neziroglu was accompanied by H.E. Cemal Sangu, Turkish Consul General in Karachi.

Discussions focused on strengthening bilateral relations between Türkiye and Pakistan. Key topics included trade and investment in Sindh, legislative

hancing legislative skills.

Syed Awais Qadir emphasized the importance of Artificial Intelligence for the e-parliament program. Ambassador Irfan Neziroglu discussed Türkiye's commitment to strengthening ties and supporting Sindh Assembly's Strategic Plan.



SUKKUR: Peoples Party (PPP) Senior Leader and Member of National Assembly (MNA), Khurshid Shah addresses during the inauguration ceremony of newly established Indus Eagle Squad to facilitate the resident of Sukkur, in Sukkur.

Bilawal constitutes committee to raise different issues with federal government

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has formed a committee to raise the different issues with the Federal government.

The committee will comprise Raja Pervez Shraf, Naveed Qamar, Sherry Rehman, Chief Minister Sindh Murad Ali Shah, Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfaraz Bugti, Makhdoom Ahmed Mahmood, Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Hyder, Governor Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi and Haider Gilani.

The committee will interact with the Federal government to raise the different issues and will submit its report to the meeting of Central Executive Committee (CEC) to be held next month.

Joint military exercise between Pakistan, China begins in Pabbi

PABBI (Online): Opening Ceremony of Pak-China Joint Exercise Warrior-VIII between Pakistan Army and Peoples' Liberation Army of China was conducted at National Counter Terrorism Center Pabbi, today.

Three weeks long Exercise in Counter Terrorism domain is 8th in the series of bilateral exercise being conducted annually.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Islamabad protest

From the scale of preparations, one wonders if the Islamabad Police is preparing for war.

According to recent news reports, thousands of security personnel, 1,200 containers, large quantities of anti-riot gear, thousands of rubber bullets and thousands of teargas guns and shells have been requisitioned by the capital's police in anticipation of the protest announced for this Sunday by the PTI.

Reinforcements in the tens of thousands have also been requested from the FC, Rangers, Sindh and Punjab police, and the authorities have been told that millions of rupees will be required to feed and transport law-enforcement personnel while they are deployed in the city. At the same time, Section 144 has been extended for two more months in the city, and it appears from the security plans that Islamabad will once again be turned into what locals pejoratively describe as 'Containeristan'. Is all of this really necessary? It must be asked.

The city administration may have intended to demonstrate strength by sharing the plans it has made, but instead, it looks like it is panicking. Large protests and sit-ins are part and parcel of Pakistan's political process, and the PTI's announcement of a march on Islamabad is nothing out of the ordinary if past precedents are considered.

It may be true that the party's decision to frame this protest as a 'do or die' moment has raised the stakes, but if the predictions and analyses shared by TV commentators are to be believed, it seems that the security personnel requisitioned for the event will outnumber the protesters many times to one. Instead of broadcasting its preparedness for a 'war' with protesting citizens, perhaps Islamabad Police should direct its energies towards coming up with a plan on how their right to protest will be accommodated while respecting security concerns.

On its part, the PTI leadership needs to tone down the rhetoric and reconsider the pressure it is placing on its cadres to ensure turnout. Demanding that each lawmaker turn up with a prescribed number of supporters or forego their party ticket reflects a lack of confidence in the party's position. Requiring its leaders to prove their 'loyalty' could also push some diehards to take more extreme measures to please their leaders. This could prove counterproductive.

The protesters should not be led to believe they are marching to 'conquer' Islamabad.

The party is within its rights to organise and protest, but at the same time, it must demonstrate that it is conscious of its responsibility to ensure that its activities remain peaceful. As Nov 24 draws nearer, both the PTI and the Islamabad administration must remain wary of how their posturing will be interpreted and keep within the limits of reason and the law.

Past and future

Mahir Ali

This week's column was intended to be a diatribe against the circumstances that are choking the denizens of Delhi and Lahore, and a reflection on the absurdity of the inevitably doomed Conference of the Parties (COP29) in a country determined to thrive on its oil exports.

But then, a sorrowful memory intervened. I was still a relative novice in the newsroom of this paper 40 years ago today when Ghazi Salahuddin, Dawn's energetic news editor, informed me that the nation's foremost poet was on his deathbed in a Lahore hospital.

Shortly afterwards, Ghazi confirmed the inevitable — and persuaded me to write a tribute. I was out of my depth, given my perfunctory knowledge of Urdu literature. I had known him as 'Faiz chacha' since my childhood as a friend of my parents, although I was better acquainted with his warm-hearted partner, Auntie Alys. It wasn't until my mid-teens that I began to appreciate Faiz as an exquisite poet.

My only one-to-one with him occurred in an antechamber at Moscow's Metropol hotel in 1977. I was at the cusp of a fruitless journey to earn a medical degree at the People's Friendship University, and only vaguely aware of the disaster that was unfolding in Pakistan. I can't recall the month, but it was after the March elections and before the July coup. Faiz summoned me out of his crowded living-room salon into a dining room where he offered me one of his Kent cigarettes (and was mildly surprised when I gratefully accepted) before launching into a broad overview of what was transpiring in our homeland.

I was mildly bewildered to begin with, but the primary purpose of the poet's narrative was to as-

suage any concerns I might have about the safety of my parents. Blissfully unaware at the time of their ultimately unsuccessful endeavours to effect a rapprochement between prime minister Z.A. Bhutto and the Baloch leaders he had stupidly incarcerated — amid death threats that persuaded my father to carry his World War II service revolver on train journeys to Hyderabad, where the National Awami Party stalwarts were imprisoned — I wasn't particularly worried. Until that conversation.

Not long afterwards, a fellow student informed me that Pakistan, like Bangladesh, had a Zia at the helm, and reminded me of the inimitable Punjabi poet Ustad Daman's sadly evergreen couplet: 'Pakistan diyaan majan ee majan/ Jithay waikho faujan ee faujan' (a loose translation: 'There is no end to Pakistan's joy/ Wherever you look, the military is deployed'). A distraught Daman left his own deathbed to attend Faiz's funeral, where he reputedly wailed, "Don't leave me behind!" Neither of them lived to witness the unexpected demise of Pakistan's most toxic tyrant, or the hybrid horrors that followed.

The aftermath might have reinforced their despair. And both the Lahoris (sure, Faiz was a Sialkoti who also lived in Karachi and Beirut, and spent time elsewhere, while Daman never budged from his inner-city bolt-hole) would have been appalled by their hometown's profoundly depressing contest with Delhi as the most polluted city in the world. They would have been familiar with the delightfully crisp air, crunchy frost and morning mist of the Lahore winters that enthralled me as a child, walking or cycling to school.

Faiz might also have

been alarmed by the venue of COP29. I'm not sure if Baku ever figured in his verse, possibly because even during its Soviet phase Azerbaijan's capital tended to be viewed as an oily city. Several of his 1970s poems are datelined Moscow, Tashkent, Samarkand and so on — but never, as far as I can tell, Baku. Luckily for him, Faiz passed away well before the USSR ceased to exist, a mock democracy resurfaced in his beloved Pakistan, and an India where he was widely adored — a sentiment he heartily reciprocated — lapsed into Hindutva.

Faiz would have been disappointed but perhaps not surprised by what has occurred in the past 40 years. I don't have a copy of the tribute I speedily churned out in 1984 — just three weeks after an unexpected morning phone call from Ghazi at my YMCA lodgings, minutes away from the coalface, had alerted me to Indira Gandhi's assassination — but I do recall focusing in part on Faiz's consistent internationalism, and notably the drumbeat of rebellion that echoed throughout Aajao Afreeka (Come Back, Africa).

A couple of years later, his poem Hum Dekhain Geentereed the stratosphere courtesy of Iqbal Bano's brilliant rendition. It envisaged a future that remains suspended between now and a possible tomorrow. His record as a journalist, literary critic and trade unionist testifies to the fact that Faiz was always more than just a poet. Yet it is primarily his verse that will forever remain a guiding torchlight towards a brighter tomorrow in which today's younger generations might revel across the subcontinent. -- Courtesy Dawn

Self-radicalisation

Mohammad Ali Babakhel

Radicalisation is a human tendency that is as old as humanity itself. However, in the modern age, instant connectivity has increased the possibility of self-radicalisation. Technology, particularly the internet and social media, has enabled individuals to connect globally, share their ideologies, recruit and train others, make appeals for funding, and propagate, communicate, and coordinate their activities. The anonymity of the internet aids these activities and allows individuals to self-radicalise without active and face-to-face support.

The radicalisation process can vary, but generally involves four stages: pre-radicalisation (the lifestyle of an individual prior to radicalisation), self-identification, indoctrination, and acceptance of a role as a warrior. During radicalisation, an individual adopts extreme political, social, or religious thoughts, rejects the status quo, or undermines contemporary values. Extreme websites, direct interactions with violent extremists, community support for violence, and anger against certain political decisions regarding foreign and internal policies may provide 'justification' for radicalisation.

Historical factors, such as the involvement of family or friends in violence, an individual's previous criminal record and previous exposure to violence, history of training imparted by militant groups, and foreign travel, particularly to a conflict area, are important factors that may lead to radicalisation. Radicalisation can also be inspired by experiences while travelling abroad, research, or human rights violations, particularly in areas occupied by foreign forces.

Home-grown terrorist cells are generally semi-autonomous or consist of isolated individuals. These individuals may be 'self-starters' and may not have a criminal record. There is an impression that home-grown recruits are usually second-generation immigrants facing an identity crisis. Narratives of unresolved conflicts in history may provide them motive for action and lead to self-radicalisation. Personal experiences of victimisation, political grievances, and feelings of exclusion are also instrumental in self-radicalisation.

During the self-radicalisation process, the person may experience a crisis caused by personal or social disruption. Relationships, rituals, and roles may change during the radicalisation period. In this time, individuals may be on a slippery slope where they engage with a radical group or individuals propagating a radical ideology. External factors like polarisation within society and social isolation faced by an individual may contribute to self-radicalisation, as isolation reinforces radicalism. Poverty is also often seen as one of the prime reasons for radicalisation, but it seems to be a myth as many militants come from middle-class backgrounds and have a university education.

Self-radicalisation can be tackled through partnerships between law-enforcement agencies and citizens.

To address the menace of radicalisation, LEAs have implemented various programmes, including 'neighbourhood policing', which seeks to establish trust within a community by establishing an information exchange mechanism. The Turkish police have developed a 'community partnership' program — to gather information from community members about suspicious activities. Similarly, in 2010, the US Department of Homeland Security announced the 'See Something, Say Something' programme. Disengagement and de-radicalisation are well-thought-out psychological and social processes. Disengagement involves behavioural changes in the affected person, including leaving a radicalised group or limiting one's role within the group. De-radicalisation involves cognitive change, such as relinquishing an ideology. Deradicalisation programmes can be evaluated and monitored to understand the economic, psychological, and social motivations for joining an extremist group.

What financial incentives did the radicalised person or their family derive from engagement in violence? How can family members be engaged in the deradicalisation process?

Governments and LEAs must adopt measures to address terrorists' use of the internet. This includes removing radical content from the web, filtering and restricting users' access, controlling the exchange of information, and investing in countering extremism in cyberspace. Blocking certain websites may seem like the easiest solution, but simply blocking them may only be a technical fix. An alternative, more effective option is to counter extremist narratives.

There is a dire need to shift the focus from the 'war on terrorism' to the battle of ideas. Killing terrorists may be easy, but defeating ideology can prove rather difficult. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News



ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja in a meeting with TikTok delegation.

Ahsan proposes GSP-Plus, 5Es framework alignment to get export-led economic growth

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Wednesday proposed a multi-pronged strategy, aligning the GSP-Plus programme with the 5Es framework to get export-led economic growth secure a prosperous future for Pakistan. "The GSP-plus programme represents more than just trade preferences. It is a roadmap for sustainable development and good governance. By aligning it with the 5Es framework,

we can unlock the true potential of export-led growth, empower our citizens and secure a prosperous future for Pakistan," he said. The minister was speaking as the guest speaker at a conference titled "Promoting Good Governance through Trade - Leveraging through GSP+," organized by Fredrick Naumann Foundation. Addressing the gathering, Ahsan Iqbal called for seizing the opportunity to strengthen governance and build resilience and position

Pakistan as a globally competitive economy. "Together we can ensure that trade becomes not only a driver of economic prosperity but also a catalyst for equity, transparency and sustainability," he added. Despite the successes, he said challenges remained, adding weak enforcement of laws, low diversification of exports and environmental vulnerabilities needed immediate attention to maximize the benefits of GSP-Plus and align with 5Es framework - Exports.

E-Pakistan, Environment and Climate Change, Energy and Infrastructure, Equity and Empowerment. Elaborating his proposed strategy, the minister suggested establishing export diversification centers with incentives for green technologies and high-value products. He asked for setting up a National Compliance Task Force to oversee GSP-plus implementation and address gaps in governance on permanent/quarterly basis.

Rana unveils plan to shift 30% of transport to EVs by 2030

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain unveiled the government's ambitious plan here on Wednesday, aiming at shifting 30 percent of transportation to electric vehicles (EVs) by 2030 to promote an environmentally friendly transport system.

Addressing a press conference, the minister said that the plan includes shifting of two-wheelers, three-wheelers and four-wheelers to electric vehicles, adding the plan was aimed at reducing the environmental impact of

transportation and alleviating the financial burden of import bills associated with traditional fuel costs.

The minister said that many countries are currently using electric vehicles, and the demand is increasing due to new technology, which offers manifold advantages and benefits. Rana Tanveer highlighted the commitment and hard work of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to launch a new electric vehicle policy (2025-30) to control air pollution and reduce oil imports. He said, PM has

directed that the policy focus must be on incentives and affordable prices for consumers.

The minister highlighted that currently, two licenses have been issued for the manufacturing of electric vehicles, and around 31 people have applied for licenses.

The government has given many incentives to foreign companies to build their plants in Pakistan. Currently, Dewan, an electric vehicle company, is operating in the country and launched a car this year.

Commerce Minister chairs high-level meeting on OIC trade fair

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan on Wednesday chaired high-level meeting on Wexnet and OIC Trade Fair Progress.

The Minister of Commerce today visited the National Insurance Corporation Limited (NICL) to preside over a meeting on the progress of the highly anticipated Wexnet 2024 and the 18th OIC Trade Fair, scheduled to be held from November 29 to December 1, 2024, at the Expo Centre Lahore, said a press release issued here. The meeting was

attended by Secretary TDAP Sheryar Taj, Chief Executive TDAP Zubair Motiwala, and senior officials from the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP). During the session, TDAP officials provided the Minister with a comprehensive briefing on the planning and execution of the upcoming events. The Minister emphasized the significance of Wexnet 2024 as a platform to promote women entrepreneurs and directed TDAP to intensify efforts in showcasing their achievements.

Railways CEO holds public e-court

LAHORE (APP): The Pakistan Railways is committed to providing facilities to passengers while ensuring their safety, utilising all available resources to the best of its capacity. This was stated by Pakistan Railways CEO Amir Ali Baloch during an e-Kutchehry on Wednesday, where he addressed public queries. He said that while trains were currently facing delays due to smog and adverse weather conditions, Pakistan Railways continues its operations

even when airports and motorways are closed. "Our priority is the safety of passengers over addressing delays," he stated.

The CEO further assured that he is personally overseeing train schedules and that efforts are being made to resolve issues impacting punctuality. To enhance convenience, the names and phone numbers of train managers will soon be prominently displayed in all trains.



ISLAMABAD: A Delegation from China Geological Survey (CGS) Calls on Secretary Petroleum to Bolster Geoscientific Collaboration.

DISCOs suffers Rs 591 bln loss in FY 2023-24

ISLAMABAD (APP): Power Distribution Companies (DISCOs) suffered a loss of Rs 591 billion on accounts of line losses and less recovery during last fiscal year 2023-24.

However, the losses stood at Rs 239 billion in first quarter of the current fiscal year 2024-24 as compared to Rs 308 billion during the corresponding period of last year, showing an improvement of Rs 69 billion, said a statement issued by Ministry of Power Division here Wednesday.

The recovery of DISCOs also witnessed a visible upward trend and it was recorded as 91 per cent as compared to 84 per cent during the said periods.

Shaza urges TikTok to use its platform for educational purposes

ISLAMABAD (APP): Secretary of State for Information Technology and Telecommunications Shaza Fatima Khawaja on Wednesday urged TikTok to use its platform for educational purposes.

"Various skills and basic education can be imparted through TikTok, and the Ministry of IT will fully support TikTok in achieving this objective," she said during a meeting with a TikTok delegation led by its Director of Public Policy, Mr. Emir Gelen.

According to a news release, the meeting focused on matters of mutual interest, including the availability of quality and productive content on social media platforms.

Secretary IT, Zarrar Hasham Khan, was also present during the discussion. The TikTok delegation briefed the Minister on the platform's initiatives in Pakistan and outlined upcoming programmes.

Shaza Fatima emphasized the importance of ensuring that quality content is accessible, noting that TikTok has a vast user base in Pakistan.

The delegation assured the Minister that TikTok would prioritize meaningful and educational content. They also expressed the platform's willingness to collaborate with the Ministry of IT & Telecom and its associated departments to achieve these goals.

CDNS achieves Rs 550b mark in annual savings target

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) has achieved a target of Rs 550 billion in fresh bonds and achieved 15 percent of the annual target for the current fiscal year, from July 1 to November 15th.

The CDNS has set an annual target of Rs 1650 billion for the current fiscal year, 2024-25, which will promote the saving culture in the country, the senior official of CDNS told APP on

Wednesday. Similarly, the CDNS has set a target of Rs 170 billion in investment in Islamic finance for the Current Fiscal Year, which will lead to the growth of the Islamic economy in the country. Replying to a question, he said that the CDNS has realized a target of Rs1.742 trillion in fresh bonds and exceeded 100 percent of the annual target in the last fiscal year 2023-24, from July 1 to June 30.

Shenzhen to reduce tax on larger house transactions

SHENZHEN 20 (Xinhua/APP): Shenzhen in south China's Guangdong Province on Tuesday became the latest major Chinese city to reduce taxes for transactions involving larger houses.

The city said in a notice that it will scrap the distinction between ordinary and non-ordinary housing starting on Dec. 1, which will unify favorable tax policies for the two categories.

CM Punjab message on World Children's Day

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has said that it is foremost responsibility for everyone to ensure the provision of education, health, and protection to innocent children for their bright and excellent future. In her message on World Children's Day, the CM said, "Children are a special gift of Allah Almighty, there is nothing more beautiful in the world than their smile." The CM added that the state is like a mother, and there can be no compromise on the health,

education, protection, and development of children. She mentioned that the Punjab government has launched the 'School Nutrition Program' to protect children from stunted growth and malnutrition. The 'Early Childhood School System' will focus on the mental and intellectual development of children. Additionally, the 'Virtual Centre for Child Safety' has been launched for their protection, she added. She further stated that children with diabetes will receive free insulin at home through the Chief

Minister Insulin Program, and children will be safeguarded from fatal diseases through the vaccination program. Pakistan's first government autism school is being built to cater to the special needs of differently-abled children. She emphasized that a zero-tolerance policy is in place regarding any form of cruelty, abuse, or child labor. She pledged that every child should remain safe, healthy, and educated, and that the Punjab government would ensure the protection of children's rights at any cost.

Punjab govt accelerates efforts to make Nawaz Cancer Institute operational

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Health Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique has directed the Infrastructure Development Authority Punjab (IDAP) to expedite the completion of the Nawaz Sharif Institute of Cancer Treatment and Research project to make it functional as soon as possible.

Chairing a meeting at King Edward Medical University on Wednesday, the minister reviewed progress on the project and set a target of twelve months for the completion of the first phase. He reiterated that initiatives

improving public health are a top priority for the Punjab government. The hospital will be expanded in phases and equipped with modern, state-of-the-art facilities. The meeting discussed various aspects, including the construction progress, modifications to the master plan, procurement of advanced medical equipment, and other operational arrangements. It also emphasized the importance of establishing a premier bone marrow transplant facility and suggested increasing the number of beds.

Kundicondemns attack on Mali Khel check post Bannu

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, on Wednesday strongly condemned tragic suicide attack on Mali Khel security forces check post in Bannu district, resulting in the martyrdom of 12 security personnel.

The governor expressed heartfelt condolences to the families of the martyred heroes. In a statement, the governor paid tribute to the brave security forces, saying, "The sacrifices of these martyrs will never be forgotten."



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Murad Ali Shah exchanges views with Special Assistant to Public Private Partnership and Investment, Qasim Naveed Qamarduring meeting, held at CM House in Karachi.

Policy Dialogue on "Energy Crisis: Problem, Impact & Solutions" concludes

LAHORE (APP): The two-day Policy Dialogue on "Energy Crisis: Problem, Impact & Solutions" jointly organized by Executive Development Institute (EDI) of the National School of Public Policy (NSPP) concluded here Wednesday.

The Executive Development Institute (EDI) is working for the continuous professional development of officers and executives of the public and private sectors

by organizing multiple activities such as trainings, policy dialogues and webinars etc.

On behalf of Dr. Ijaz Munir, Rector, National School of Public Policy, Ahmad Nazir Warraich, Dean EDI, officially inaugurated the session and provided an overview of NSPP and EDI. He emphasized Pakistan's energy sector challenges, such as debt, high energy imports, power shortages affecting the economy, and reliance on fossil fuels.

Marriyum Aurangzeb says: Anti smog drive to be continued in Punjab

LAHORE (APP): Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb has stated that despite an improvement in the smog situation, the anti-smog campaign will continue with full vigor. She commended the efforts of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Punjab government institutions, and the police, emphasizing that public cooperation is key to improving environment and eradicating smog.

She further mentioned that while schools have reopened, strict adherence to

precautionary measures has been instructed. Teachers and students must ensure use of masks, while parents and students are encouraged to adopt carpooling to reduce traffic congestion. Additionally, 15 brick-kilns operating without zigzag technology have been dismantled, and three industrial units in Gujranwala, Rahim Yar Khan, and Sheikhpura have been sealed. Crackdowns on vehicles, trucks, and buses with faulty engines or excessive smoke emissions are ongoing.

Nine dead, 1,424 injured in Punjab road accidents

LAHORE (APP): At least nine people were killed and 1,424 others injured in 1,375 road accidents in Punjab during the last 24 hours. As many as 626 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 798 with minor injuries were treated at the incident site by the rescue medical teams.

The data analysis showed that 806 drivers, 55 underage drivers, 183 pedestrians, and 444 passengers were among the victims of road crashes.

26 children fall victim to diphtheria in KP: Health Dept

PESHAWAR (APP): The diphtheria infection among children in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has turned into a dangerous epidemic, wherein at least 26 children have died during the current year, reported the provincial health department here on Wednesday. It said that 380 children in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have been reported infected with Diphtheria. Among the most affected districts, Peshawar remained at the top where the most 12 children lost their lives to the disease.

Kundi lauds Bilawal to form committee to tackle issues

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi on Wednesday lauded Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari to form a committee to raise issues with the federal government.

The nine-member committee includes prominent figures such as Raja Pervez Ashraf, Naveed Qamar, Sherry Rehman, Chief Minister Sindh Murad Ali Shah, Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Safaraz Bugti, Makhdoom Ahmad Mahmood,

Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi, and Haider Gillani. The committee will maintain communication with the federal government and highlight key concerns.

A report will be presented at the upcoming Central Executive Committee (CEC) meeting next month.

A notification regarding the formation of the committee was issued by PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's political secretary, Jameel Ahmad Soomro.



PESHAWAR: Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Central Information Secretary and Member National Assembly (MNA), Sheikh Waqas Akram along with others addresses to media persons during press conference, at Peshawar press club.

KP judicial academy holds workshop on gender-responsive human resource management

PESHAWAR (APP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Judicial Academy (KPJA), in collaboration with ROZAN Pakistan, organized a two-day training workshop on "Gender-Responsive Human Resource Management" for D&SJs/ Zilla Qazis, Senior Civil Judges/A'ala Ilaqa Qazis.

Twenty-three (23) Judges/Qazis of various districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa participated in the training workshop. The workshop was designed to arm the Judges/Qazis with essential skills and knowledge for

promoting gender-responsive practices. The inaugural ceremony was graced by Barrister Ikhtiar Khan, worthy Registrar, Peshawar High Court, as the chief guest. Mr. Jehanzeb Shinwari, Director General KPJA, Mr. Zia Ur Rahman, Dean Faculty, Dr. Qazi Ataullah, Senior Director Research & Publication, Director Instructions, and other directors and officers of the Academy, and Representatives of ROZAN Pakistan, also attended the ceremony.



KARACHI: Syed Hafezuddin, Chairman National Assembly Standing Committee on Industries & Production, chairing the meeting at Pakistan Steel Mills.

International News

Putin, ascendant in Ukraine, eyes contours of a Trump peace deal

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin is open to discussing a Ukraine ceasefire deal with US President-elect Donald Trump but rules out making any major territorial concessions and insists Kyiv abandon ambitions to join Nato, five sources with knowledge of Kremlin thinking told Reuters.

Trump, who has vowed to swiftly end the conflict, is returning to the White House at a time of Russian ascendancy. Moscow controls a chunk of Ukraine about the size of the American state of Virginia and is advancing at the fastest pace since the early days of the 2022 invasion.

In the first detailed report of what President Putin would accept in any deal brokered by Trump, the five current and former Russian officials said the

Kremlin could broadly agree to freeze the conflict along the front lines.

There may be room for negotiation over the precise carve-up of the four eastern regions of Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson, according to three of the people who all requested anonymity to discuss sensitive matters.

While Moscow claims the four regions as wholly part of Russia, defended by the country's nuclear umbrella, its forces on the ground control 70-80 per cent of the territory with about 26,000 square kilometres still held by Ukrainian troops, open-source data on the front line shows.

Russia may also be open to withdrawing from the relatively small patches of territory it holds in the Kharkiv and Mykolaiv regions, in the north and

south of Ukraine, two of the officials said.

Putin said this month that any ceasefire deal should reflect the "realities" on the ground but that he feared a short-lived truce which would only allow the West to rearm Ukraine.

"If there is no neutrality, it is difficult to imagine the existence of any good-neighbourly relations between Russia and Ukraine," Putin told the Valdai discussion group on November 7.

"Why? Because this would mean that Ukraine will be constantly used as a tool in the wrong hands and to the detriment of the interests of the Russian Federation."

Two of the sources said outgoing US President Joe Biden's decision to allow Ukraine to fire American ATACMS missiles deep into Russia could complicate and delay any settlement.

Bomb cyclone pounds Northwest US, leaving 600,000 without power

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: A powerful storm was clobbering Washington state on Wednesday, knocking out power to hundreds of thousands while wreaking havoc on road travel and causing at least one death and two injuries.

A woman was killed on Tuesday when a tree fell on a homeless encampment in Lynnwood, just north of Seattle, local fire department officials said on social media. Two people were also injured when a tree fell on their trailer in Maple Valley, southeast of Seattle.

Schools across western Washington canceled classes or postponed the start of school on Wednesday.

The storm with tropical storm force winds of 50

miles (80 km) per hour and gusts around 70 mph felled trees and power lines overnight. It knocked out electricity to more than 600,000 homes and businesses in Washington, Southwest Oregon and Northern California, according to the Poweroutage.us.

"The storm is just beginning," said Rich Otto, a meteorologist with the NWS Weather Prediction Center in College Park, Maryland.

"We haven't gotten a ton of rain yet, just 2-3 inches over Southwest Oregon and Northern California," Otto said.

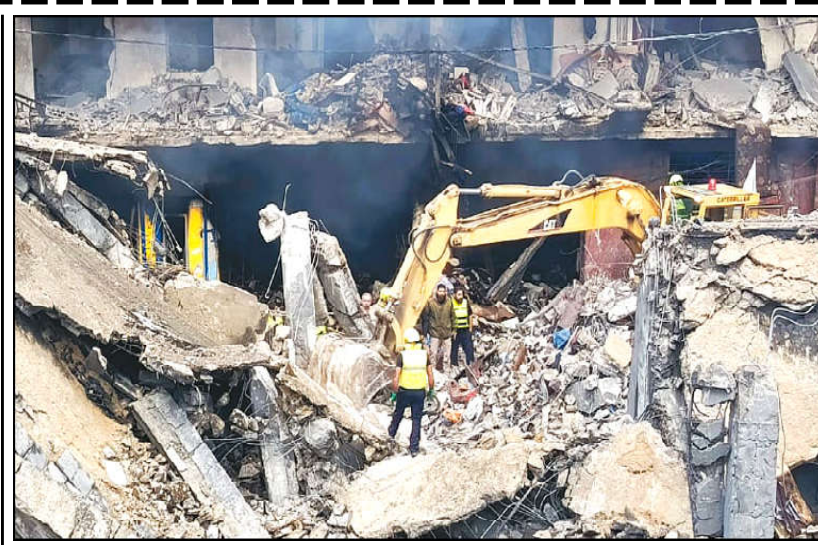
But the storm, called a "bomb cyclone" which happens when the storm rapidly intensifies, is going to stall over Northern California in the next few days, he said.

Senegal's president faces budget challenge after likely parliamentary win

Monitoring Desk
DAKAR: A likely absolute majority for President Bassirou Diomaye Faye's Pastef party in Senegal's legislative election would empower him to pursue his ambitious 25-year agenda, though his first challenge will be coming up with a budget amid a fiscal crisis.

Faye sought a clear parliamentary majority in Sunday's vote to implement the reform agenda that helped sweep him to power in a landslide election victory in March. But analysts say creating a budget catering both to his voters' needs and to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), with which his government is currently in talks, will be challenging.

Former president Macky Sall, who headed an opposition coalition, on Monday congratulated Pastef on its win.



US President Joe Biden delivers remarks during an event launching the Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty at the G20 Summit at the Museum of Modern Art in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Hamas negotiators 'not in Doha', but political office not closed, says Qatar

Monitoring Desk
DOHA: Hamas negotiators are not in Doha but their office has not been permanently closed, Qatar said on Tuesday following speculation that the Palestinian group had been ordered out of the Qatari capital.

"The leaders of Hamas that are within the negotiating team are now not in Doha," foreign ministry spokesperson Majed Al-Ansari said, adding: "The decision to ... close down the office permanently, is a

decision that you will hear about from us directly."

Qatar, along with the United States and Egypt, had led months of fruitless negotiations for a truce in the Gaza conflict, but the Gulf state announced earlier this month it was pausing its mediation efforts.

The announcement followed reports Qatar had warned Hamas that its political bureau, which the Gulf state has hosted since 2012 with the blessing of the United States.

IAEA says Iran has offered to cap stock of sensitive uranium

Monitoring Desk
VIENNA: Iran has offered not to expand its stock of uranium enriched to up to 60 per cent purity, near the roughly 90pc of weapons grade, and made preparations to do that, the UN nuclear watchdog said in confidential reports to member states on Tuesday.

The offer is conditional, however, on Western powers abandoning their push for a resolution against Iran at this week's meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency's

35-nation Board of Governors over its lack of cooperation with the IAEA, diplomats said, adding that the push was continuing.

During IAEA chief Rafael Grossi's trip to Iran last week, "the possibility of Iran not further expanding its stockpile of uranium enriched up to 60pc U-235 was discussed", read one of the two confidential quarterly IAEA reports.

It added that the IAEA had verified that Iran had "begun implementation of preparatory measures".

Israeli strikes kill 15 in Gaza as hospital in north of the region makes distress call

Monitoring Desk
CAIRO: Israeli forces killed at least 15 Palestinians in the Gaza Strip on Wednesday, including a rescue worker, health officials said, as tanks deepened their incursion in the area and blew up homes, according to residents.

Medics said at least 12 people were killed in an Israeli strike on a house in the area of Jabalia, in northern Gaza, earlier on Wednesday. They said at least 10 people remained missing as rescue operations continued. Another man was killed in tank shelling nearby, they said.

In the Sabra suburb of Gaza City, the Palestinian civil emergency said an Israeli air strike targeted one of their teams during a rescue operation, killing one

staff and wounding three others.

The death raised the number of civil emergency service members killed since Oct 7, 2023, to 87, it said.

There was no immediate Israeli comment on the two incidents. Adding to the challenges facing the healthcare system in north Gaza areas, the civil emergency service said their vehicles were hardly operational because of shortages of fuel and equipment, citing Israel's continued refusal to allow them to bring the needed supplies.

In Rafah, in the southern Gaza Strip, medics said one man was killed and others wounded in an Israeli air strike on the eastern territory of the city.

Over 200 kids killed in Lebanon as US envoy sees end to war

Monitoring Desk
GENEVA: Unicef has said more than 200 children have been killed and 1,100 injured in Lebanon in just two months, as US special envoy Amos Hochstein met officials in Beirut on Tuesday to discuss a truce plan with claims that an end to the war is "now within our grasp".

Unicef spokesperson James Elder at a press briefing in Geneva said, "Despite more than 200 children killed in Lebanon in less than two months, a disconcerting pattern has emerged: their deaths are met with inertia from those able to stop this violence."

"For the children of Lebanon, it has become a silent normalisation of horror," he said, while drawing "chilling similarities" between the conflicts in Lebanon and in Gaza, where a significant portion of nearly 44,000 people killed in are reported to be children.

On the other hand, Israel expanded the focus of

its operations to Lebanon from Gaza, where forces stormed Jabal Mukaber area and cordoned off the decades old Al-Shiyah mosque before tearing it down, Al Jazeera reported.

Earlier, State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said that the US had shared ceasefire proposals with both Lebanon and Israel.

During a visit to Beirut on Tuesday, US special envoy Amos Hochstein said an end to the Israel-Hezbollah war was "now within our grasp" as he met with officials to discuss a truce plan largely endorsed by Lebanon.

Following a meeting with Hezbollah-allied parliament speaker Nabih Berri, who has led mediation on behalf of the group, Hochstein told reporters he saw "a real opportunity" to end the fighting. "I'm here in Beirut to facilitate that decision, but it's ultimately the decision of the parties."

Naval Chief inaugurates Pakistan Maritime Science and Technology Park

Independent Report
KARACHI: The groundbreaking ceremony of Pakistan's first Maritime Science and Technology Park (PMSTP) was held at EXPO Centre during IDEAS-2024. Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf, graced the event as the Chief Guest.

While addressing the ceremony, the Naval Chief highlighted historic significance of the project, stating that PMSTP will pave the way for much-needed growth in maritime sciences, technologies, businesses, and industries. He emphasized that this initiative will open new avenues for enhancing Pakistan's GDP and advancing the maritime sector. The Naval Chief further underscored that the success of PMSTP reflects strong partnerships cultivated with visionary individuals and organiza-

tions. PMSTP is the country's first dedicated maritime science park, integrating academia, industry, and government in a unique collaboration to foster growth across Pakistan's maritime sectors. The park's initiatives will target diverse fields, including Naval Technologies, Artificial Intelligence, Cyber Security, Ocean Renewable Energy, Seafood Processing, Shipbuilding, and Coastal Tourism.

PMSTP is envisioned as a transformative hub for innovation and advancement, focusing on maritime science and technology to bolster Pakistan's blue economy. The project represents a significant step toward addressing Pakistan's economic challenges, with plans for expansion beyond Karachi to Islamabad, Lahore, and Gwadar.



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Murad Ali Shah exchanges views with Turkish Ambassador, Irfan Neziroglu during meeting, held at CM House in Karachi.

Standing Committee urges action on minimum wage enforcement, USC restructuring

KARACHI (INP): The Standing Committee on Industries and Production convened today under the Chairmanship of Syed Hafeezuddin, MNA in Conference Room of Pakistan Steel Mills, Karachi.

The Committee addressed the critical issues surrounding the enforcement of the Rs. 37,000 minimum wage and the future of the Utility Stores Corporation (USC).

During the meeting, Rafiqullah, Member of the National Assembly (MNA) and mover of the starred question 51, expressed concern over the non-implementation of the minimum wage across the country, despite existing labor laws. He emphasized that while such laws are in place, they are not being effectively enforced by the Ministry of Industries and Production to take immediate action to ensure compliance.

The Committee also noted that the Finance Minister, during the budget speech, had announced the Rs. 37,000 minimum wage, directing all relevant institutions to issue notifications to ensure its implementation.

The Ministry of Industries and Production, in its response, stated that instructions were sent to industrial units in Sindh, and while some companies had complied, the Committee noted a significant lack of enforcement.

The Committee expressed its dissatisfaction with the Ministry's handling of the matter and called for more decisive actions, including the potential revocation of licenses for non-compliant companies. The Committee reaffirmed its willingness to support the Ministry but emphasized the need for stronger and more proactive measures to enforce the minimum wage policy.



HYDERABAD: Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM-P) Leader and Member of National Assembly (MNA), Abdul Aleem Khanzada addresses during the Mock Entry Test for Government College University organized by All Pakistan Muttahida Students Organization (APMSO) held at Latifabad in Hyderabad.

VPN ban could hike IT sector operational costs by \$150 million annually: P@SHA

KARACHI (INP): The Pakistan Software Houses Association (P@SHA), the country's top representative body for the IT sector, has warned this week Internet slowdowns and the restriction of virtual private network (VPN) services could lead to financial losses and closures and increase operational costs for the industry by up to \$150 million annually.

Pakistan's IT sector has been thriving in recent years, with exports clocking in at \$3.2 billion in FY24.

Internet speeds in Pakistan have dropped by up to 30-40 percent over the past few months, according to the Wireless and Internet Service Providers Association of Pakistan (WISPAP) as the federal government moves to implement a nationwide firewall to block malicious content, protect government networks from attacks, and allow the government to identify IP addresses associated with what it calls "anti-state propaganda" and terror attacks. Authorities have

also announced a ban on the use of VPNs in the country.

Pakistan has already blocked access to social media platform X since the February general elections, with the government saying the blocking was to stop anti-state activities and due to a failure by X to adhere to local Pakistani laws.

Rights activists say all these moves are designed to stifle critical voices and democratic accountability in the country, which the government denies.

"Internet slowdown and blocking of virtual private network (VPN) services will certainly translate into an existential threat as it will result in unrecoverable financial loss, service disruptions, and reputational loss in the export of IT and IT-enabled Services (ITeS)," P@SHA Chairman Sajjad Mustafa Syed said in a statement, putting "cautious estimates" of the increase in operational costs of the IT industry from VPN blockages at between \$100-150 million each year.



KARACHI: Murad Ali Shah addressing students of IT Marquee. Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori is also present.

Murad to develop a dedicated park for children with disabilities at Clifton

KARACHI (INP): On the eve of World Children's Day, Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah visited the UJALA Centre, a facility dedicated to children with autism and disabilities, and announced the development of UJALA-II with the partnership between Department of Persons with Disabilities (DEPD) Ujala Centre in Defence Phase-8.

Shah reaffirmed his government's commitment to addressing the needs of all children, including those with disabilities and fostering a more inclusive society. "An inclusive Sindh is a prosperous Sindh," emphasized Murad Shah, highlighting that every child deserves equal opportunities to thrive," he said.

The chief minister was accompanied by the Secretary of the Department of Persons with Disabilities (DEPD), Taha Farooqi. Chairman UJALA Centre Zakria Godal and CEO Hamad Aslam received the chief minister.

At UJALA Centre Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah visited Ujala Centre, Announces Park for Children with Disabilities.

On Wednesday, Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah visited the Ujala Centre, touring the facility and engaging with stakeholders to better understand the challenges faced by children with disabilities, particularly those with autism.

During his visit, the

Chief Minister received a comprehensive briefing on the UJALA -II C-ARTS DEPDP project. "This initiative aims to support children with autism and related conditions by providing specialised educational and therapeutic services," the CM said.

The Ujala -II project would be established over an area of 400 Square Yards in Defence Phase-8 in partnership with UJALA, headed by Mr Yakoob Zakria and the provincial government's DEPDP. The CM praised the efforts of Mr Zakria in creating a nurturing environment for children and emphasised the importance of expanding such initiatives to promote inclusive education across Sindh.

The CM directed the Consultant of the UJALA-II to complete the project within two years instead of three years.

CM Murad Ali Shah also met with the parents of children with autism to gain insight into the challenges they encounter in their daily lives. Parents shared concerns about the lack of inclusive recreational spaces, societal stigma, and limited resources for therapy and education.

The CM expressed empathy for their concerns and directed Mayor Karachi Muratza Wahab to dedicate a separate park for the children with disabilities at Clifton Block-5.

SLADP project a transformative opportunity to modernize: Malkani

KARACHI (INP): In a significant stride towards strengthening livestock and fisheries department, in collaboration with the World Bank, introduced the Sindh Livestock and Aquaculture Development Project (SLADP).

The initiative was discussed at length in a high-level meeting chaired by Honourable Minister for Livestock and Fisheries, Muhammad Ali Malkani.

The meeting was attended by the Secretary Livestock and Fisheries Dr. Kazim Hussain Jatoi, Additional Secretary Dr. Ali Akhtar Shahani, Director General of the Sindh Institute of Animal Health (SIAH) Dr. Nazeer Ahmed Kalhoro, DG Livestock Dr. Hizbullah Bhatti, Director Fisheries Dr. Zulfiqar Ali Larik, Javed Memon and other relevant officers of the department.

Briefing about the project, Dr. Nazeer Kalhoro informed the meeting that the SLADP is designed to ensure competitive, inclusive, and climate-smart growth in Sindh's livestock and aquaculture sectors.

By leveraging the insights gained from the successful Sindh Agricultural Growth Project (SAGP), the SLADP builds upon earlier interventions to address productivity, income, and environmental challenges. The ambitious project targets include a 30% increase in productivity, a corresponding 30% boost in farmers' income, and a 16% reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister Malkani lauded the project as a transformative opportunity to modernize Sindh's agricultural landscape.

"Livestock and aquaculture are lifelines for millions in Sindh. This project exemplifies our commitment to innovation, equity, and environmental stewardship. With World Bank support, we aim to ensure prosperity for smallholders and women farmers, who are vital to this sector," he remarked.

Dr. Nazeer Ahmed Kalhoro elaborated on the project's comprehensive strategy. He explained that SLADP consists of multiple components, each addressing key facets of the livestock and aquaculture value chains. Component-1 focuses on institutional strengthening to enhance the capacity of stakeholders, while Component-2 is dedicated to establishing robust value chains for dairy, meat, aquaculture, and women-led enterprises.



Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf laid foundation of Pakistan Maritime Science and Technology Park (PMSTP) during IDEAS 2024.

Hari Welfare Association organizes seminar to mark Universal Children's day

NAWABSHAH (APP): The Hari Welfare Association (HWA) organized a seminar to mark Universal Children's day on Wednesday.

According to a press release, children from different schools in Benazirabad urged the district and provincial governments to invest funds and take extraordinary steps to protect their rights.

They sought survival, health, and education in the province especially in tribal areas where schools and health facilities and services do not exist thus, children become part and parcel of tribal gangs, which has fueled the tribal warfare.

President of Alkhidmat Foundation Women Wing Hyderabad, Ms. Farah Naz, also met

Alkhidmat Foundation organize Book Competition on Seerat-un-Nabi (SAW)

HYDERABAD (APP): The registered Shining Stars and their resilient mothers during the event, encouraging them for their efforts.

Students from ZABIST University presented a special presentation for the children and distributed gifts among them at the end of the program.

During the ceremony, the General Secretary of Alkhidmat Foundation Hyderabad, Mr. Saleem Khan, presented a commemorative shield to Principal Muhammad Hanif. The event was also graced by the presence of Jinnah Higher Secondary School's Principal, Hafiz Irfan Qaimkhani.



HYDERABAD: Ambassador of Indonesia Arie Poluzzi addressing to members of SITE Association of Trade & Industry, while President Abdul Rehman Rajput sits beside him.

Sindh gov't. to review early childhood education policy

Independent Report
KARACHI: The Sindh government has decided to review its Early Childhood Education (ECE) policy and incorporate the Foundation Learning Mechanism into its framework. A meeting chaired by Sindh Minister for Education and Mineral Development, Syed Sardar Ali Shah, focused on enhancing the ECE program and including Foundation Learning and Numeracy in the policy draft. Participants included School Education Secretary Zahid Ali Abbasi, Chief Program Manager RSU Dr. Junaid Samo, Zindagi Trust's Shehzad Roy, CEO Durbeen Salma, Chief Curriculum Advisor Dr. Fauzia, STEDA Executive Director Syed Rasool Bux Shah, Development Consultant Prem Sagar, and education researcher Dr. Fatima Dar.

The meeting highlighted that the ECE policy was implemented in Sindh in 2015. Currently, 6,000 ECE classes are operational; educating over 800,000 children aged 3 to 8. Teachers have been recruited and trained, with learning materials and workbooks in English, Urdu, and Sindhi already developed to support the

program. Minister Sardar Ali Shah emphasized the need to strengthen activity-based learning and incorporate the Foundation Learning and Numeracy mechanism into the policy. He underlined the importance of nurturing children's physical, mental, emotional, and social development during the transition from early education to primary classes. The minister also stressed focusing on psychological development and modern learning methods, such as picture books, educational games, and creative tools, to achieve ECE goals. He noted that the Foundation Learning Mechanism would enhance teacher-parent coordination, aid in addressing psychological challenges, and build foundational literacy and numeracy skills essential for future learning.

Additionally, Shah directed private schools to hire trained ECE teachers and urged universities to develop ECE programs and diploma courses. Salma, CEO of Durbeen, suggested prioritizing early education in the mother tongue, allowing children to build connections and learn effectively before transitioning to other languages.



KARACHI: Sindh Minister for Education and Mineral Development, Syed Sardar Ali Shah chaired meeting focused on enhancing the ECE program and including Foundation Learning and Numeracy in the policy draft.

Karachi residents to join massive Islamabad protest: Mansoor

KARACHI (INP): Senior Vice President of PTI Karachi Division and Chairman of Saddar Town, Mansoor Ahmed Sheikh, announced that a large number of Karachi residents will head to Islamabad on November 24 in response to Imran Khan's call. He declared November 24 as a day of true freedom and liberation from corrupt rulers.

Mansoor Ahmed Sheikh emphasized that the nation will rise across the country on this day to show solidarity with Imran Khan. "Through peaceful protests, we will bring an end to the incompetent regime," he stated, adding that PTI has never indulged in violent politics.

He further remarked that the public has grown weary of the current rulers, and governments formed through stolen mandates have been consistently rejected by the people. Protests for Imran Khan's release are being held worldwide, demonstrating the people's unwavering loyalty to their leader.

"The nation will come out on November 24 to prove their allegiance to Imran Khan. This movement will ensure his release, the end of the fascist government, the 26th Constitutional Amendment, the return of the stolen mandate, and the restoration of judicial independence and the rule of law," he concluded.

Efforts underway to blackmail masses on Nov 24: Sharjeel

KARACHI (INP): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) stalwart Sharjeel Inam Memon on Wednesday flayed Radio Pakistan in the guise of the protest," she stated.

Taking an indirect jibe at the PTI founder, Memon said, "One person has rolled out the culture of using the foul language, which had triggered the mindset of the country's youth. He taught the country's youth the way to troll the people on the social media."

PPP has been given fake mandate in municipal by election: JI Karachi

KARACHI (INP): Jamaat Islami Karachi has demanded resignation from the election commission official alleging that the People's Party has been provided fake victory in the city's local council by elections.

Ameer JI Karachi Munim Zafar Khan has claimed that 9,727 voters have been registered in



HYDERABAD: Private Sector employees are registered themselves into Sindh Employees Social Security Institution (SESSI) Scheme, at the membership camp arranged by SESSI, at Latifabad area in Hyderabad.

Italy-based World Academy of Sciences elected ICCBS Professor as a Fellow

KARACHI (INP): Prof. Dr. M. Raza Shah, a senior professor at the International Center for Chemical and Biological Sciences (ICCBS), University of Karachi, has been elected as a fellow of The World Academy of Sciences (TWAS), based in Trieste, Italy.

A spokesperson for the ICCBS, University of Karachi, announced that Prof. Shah has been honored with this fellowship in recognition of his outstanding contributions to Nanomedicine and Su-

pramolecular Chemistry. The spokesperson stated, "The World Academy of Sciences (TWAS) is a merit-based academy established in 1983, comprising 1,400 scientists from more than 100 countries. Several Nobel Laureates are fellows and actively participate in TWAS activities."

It is noteworthy that Prof. Shah was recently appointed as a member of the Expert Advisory Committee of the WHO International Traditional Medicine Clinical Trial Registry.