

Sardar Owais Leghari announces Rs 14 per unit relief for electricity consumers across Punjab

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Federal Minister for Energy, Sardar Owais Ahmad Khan Leghari, has said that consumers of electricity distribution companies across Punjab, including Multan, have been given a relief package of Rs 14 per unit. Consumers have been given relief. In the package, consumers have been given relief in August and September bills and this amount will be paid by the Punjab government. Consumers who paid their bills in August will be given 2 reliefs in September. Consumers whose bills have not been issued are being given the same relief in August and September. It will be ensured that the relief will be delivered to the desired consumers in a very transparent manner. In a high-level meeting at MEPCO headquarters, the relief package, automation and action against electricity theft were reviewed. In the meeting, Federal Secretary Energy Dr.



Muhammad Fakhr Alam Irfan and Chairman Mapco Board of Directors Engineer Amir Zia attended. He said that the promotion of automation in electricity companies is the first priority, for which investment is being reviewed. Installation of AMR, Smart Meters is a future need, it will gain the confidence of the consumers. He said that joint operation with rangers and law enforcement agencies in the areas of

high electricity theft and non-payment of dues in MEPCO region. Chairman Mepeco Board of Directors Engineer Amir Zia said that Mepeco will not abuse any customer. Top officers including CEO Mepeco will monitor the relief provided by the Punjab government. In the light of the government directives, Mepeco along with all the institutions involved in the DISCO Support Unit will conduct a vigorous

operation against power thieves and defaulters to reduce their losses. He said that the circular debt will be reduced by receiving the amounts owed by the private insolvent as well as the government institutions. Wasa Multan is the biggest defaulter among Mepeco's insolvent public sector enterprises with billions of rupees in liabilities. Incidents of violence and beatings are taking place with SDOs and

staff in various areas including Multan, Wahari and DG Khan. We are immediately commencing operations with Mepeco Security Force. Chief Executive Officer MEPCO Engineer Nasir Ayaz Garmani said that Measures are being taken in MEPCO to reduce the loss rate in areas with high loss feeders. Day and night operations are being conducted against electricity thieves. In the

meeting, General Manager Technical Engineer Jam Gul Muhammad Zahid gave a complete briefing to the Federal Minister for Energy about the performance of MEPCO. In the briefing, a plan to install modern systems on transformers and install AMR meters was also presented to reduce the loss of the company. In the meeting, Finance Director Mian Ansar Mehmood, Director General HR & Admin Waqas Masood Chaghtai, Chief Engineer Customer. Services Syed Jawad Mansoor, Chief Engineer O&M Shehzad Rai, Chief Engineer Development Saifullah Sarani, Chief Engineer Muhammada Saghar Khan Ghalo, Chief Strategic Planner Malik Ashfaq Awan, Director Public Relations Jamshed Niazi, Director Admin Wajahat Bucha, Project Director Construction Farhan Shabir. Malik and Superintending Engineer DG Khan Circle Malik Khurshid Ahmad were also present.

Protest

LAHORE: WAPDA employees protesting for their demands in front of the press club of the provincial capital.



Photo: Online

Sardar Attique expressed deep grief over the terrorist attacks in Musa Khel

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD/RAWALPINDI: President of All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan expressed deep grief over the terrorist attacks in Musa Khel, Bolan, condemning them in strong words, praying for forgiveness for the martyrs and patience for the bereaved. The president Muslim Conference further said that the terrorists responsible for this incident should be given brutal punishment. The morale of the nation cannot be lowered by such brutal acts of terrorism. Thanks to the security forces, this scourge was uprooted earlier. The war against the terrorists will continue until the complete end of the war. Near Musa Khel, the terrorists showed brutality by targeting the innocent passengers. The terrorists and facilitators involved in these incidents should be brought to a terrible end. The Pakistani nation. United against terrorism. The situation in the country and especially in Balochistan is being worsened due to Indian motives. The killing of innocent and innocent passengers is a barbaric act which cannot be forgiven in any way. Less should be done. He said that targeting 23 homeless people is a very cowardly act. Killing homeless travelers in the wilderness is a barbaric and inhumane act. They do not deserve any concession, they should be dealt with iron hands he urged.



Sheikh Maqsood demands government to take services from local bodies in social protection program

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD:- Muslim Conference City President Councilor Municipality Muzaffarabad Sheikh Maqsood Ahmad has said that the government should hand over the verification to the ward councilor for the registration of deserving people so that the deserving people get their right, know the people better and they can provide accurate data of the beneficiaries to the government so that the effectiveness of the program and their entitlements can be made available to the beneficiaries. Government's social protection program for widows, orphans and disabled persons is a ray of hope. Sheikh Maqsood Ahmed has demanded that the government should register the beneficiaries at the level of the ward councilor and instead of verifying the officers of scale 17, they should get the verification from the ward councilor. can provide. In Azad Kashmir, services should be taken from the local body representatives and in the social protection program, the government should take services from the local body representatives and help the local body representatives to deliver their right to the eligible and deserving people so that their right can reach the deserving people. In view of this, this program of the government is worthy of praise and the government of Azad Kashmir is grateful for this, which has started a social protection program for the financial assistance of the poor and needy people. For transparency in this program, services should be taken from the representatives of the local bodies and the verification of the eligible persons should also be done by the local bodies. It should be done from the representatives so that the deserving people can get their right he emphasised.



Big public march to demand for fundamental rights in Khali Darman

Bureau Report

ABBASPUR: A big public "long march" rally was taken out from Khali Darman for the realization of fundamental rights organized by Union Council Khali Darman's Fundamental Rights Movement and Public Action Committee led by Sardar Junaid Kabeer Khan Chairman Union Council which was held at Khalidarman Maidan, near graveyard. The rally entered Abbaspur city through Namjar, Takjatan, Bela Nakar, Andrinar, Nakar Khawajgan, Murchkot, Mangoda, Chhatial, Kot Kuian and Mangar and after going around the city, staged a dharna in front of the Assistant Commissioner's office. Thousands of people participated in the rally, the participants of the rally chanted Takbeer Alla-



hu Akbar, restore our rights, we do not accept the rules of oppression, the dark knight is about to end, the war will continue until the end of oppression, the war will continue.

During the dharna, Deputy Commissioner Poonch Syed Mumtaz Ali Kazmi and SSP Poonch Riaz Mughal along with other district and Tehsil officers reached the spot and

negotiations were started with the participants of the dharna. From this protest, Chairman Sardar Junaid Kabir Chaghtai, Chaudhry Kamran Aziz, Maulana Tahir Bashir, Maulana Nadeem Khan, Numbardar Seth Jahangir Khan, Sardar Yusuf Chaghtai, Sardar Aungzeb Khan, former assembly candidate Professor Sardar Zulfikar Khan, Syed Babar

Gilani, Syed Majid Gilani, Chinar Press Club Khawaja Riaz Ahmed, Chaudhry Muhammad Shafiq, Chaudhry Muhammad Zubair, Masood Anjum Magre, Taimur Magre, Ahsan Murad, Shahzeb Khan, Ansar Gilani, and many other speakers spoke and expressed their determination to continue fighting until their demands are met he pledged.

Mepco Employees Union protests against the high cost of electricity

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: All Pakistan WAPDA Hydro Electric Workers Union Mepeco Region Organized Protest. Mepeco employees protested against the exorbitant cost of private thermal power houses, IPPs. From the line staff that due to the increase in work day by day, tragic accidents are happening to the employees. Thousands of employees protested in front of the press club in the entire MEPCO region. Regional Chairman MEPCO Multan Chaudhry Ghulam Rasool Gujjar addressed the employees.

It should be terminated immediately, because the long-time employees of Mepeco are retiring very fast, which is increasing the workload day by day. Because of this, tragic accidents are happening day by day. Instead of privatizing MEPCO, its efficiency should be increased. In the past, the experience of privatization in Multan and Rawalpindi has failed.

Handicap International Pakistan to focus on rehabilitation in Pakistan's healthcare system

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Handicap International Pakistan under the Learning, Acting and Building for Rehabilitation in Health Systems (ReLAB-HS) project, successfully convened a two-day policy roundtable focused on scaling and sustaining rehabilitation services within Pakistan's healthcare system. The event brought together the key stakeholders from the government, non-governmental organizations, WHO and the broader health and rehabilitation sector, to discuss strategic approaches for sustainable integration of rehabilitation into the national healthcare framework.



able Development Goals (SDGs), who served as the Chief Guest. In his keynote address, Mr. Kayani reaffirmed the government's commitment to advancing healthcare services across the nation. He stated, "The government is prioritizing health and will do its utmost to provide comprehensive health facilities to the people of Pakistan."

Dr. Rashid Bajwa, the CEO of the National Rural Support Programme

(NRSPP), was also among the key note speakers.

Echoing the theme of collective actions and efforts, Dr. Abdul Ghaffar, Senior Advisor of ReLAB-HS and a faculty at Johns Hopkins University, noted, "Together, we can work towards achieving better health outcomes by making efficient use of resources and ensuring that quality care is accessible even within a constrained budget. He

further deliberated on the

While highlighting the efforts of the federal and provincial government, the advisor to Health, Dr. Safi Malik, mentioned that the government is working on National Health Vision 2030, and rehabilitation has been incorporated into this policy.

While delivering the conclusion remarks at the roundtable, the Health Advisor to Chief Minister Punjab, Dr. Azhar Mahmood Kayani emphasized the importance of integrating rehabilitation services across all levels of the healthcare system and called for stronger policy measures to ensure these services are accessible and equitable.

Dr. Zia Dawar, the Global Coordinator of ReLAB-HS, provided an overview of the ongoing efforts by ReLAB-HS to integrate rehabilitation into the health system.

Quratul Ain Asim



MULTAN: Ameer-e-Jamaat-e-Islami Multan District Dr Safdar Hashmi Said All trade organizations are now on the same page and reject the government's anti-trader policy and electricity prices. Dr. Safdar Hashmi said that Jamaat-e-Islami's sit-in against the increase in electricity prices raised awareness in the nation. We salute the journalistic community who held the Power Minister Awas Laghari accountable in Multan yesterday. Journalists, the public, businessmen, students, and the working salaried class are very worried. The unity of Jamaat-e-Islami is with the people.

Dr. Safdar Hashmi further said that today's strike will be a historic strike, God willing. In which all trade unions are on the same page, all attempts to divide the trade community will be thwarted by a successful strike. Dr. Safdar Hashmi further said that I also appeal to the industrialists of Multan that these problems are the problems of the entire nation, the industrialists are also worried about expensive electricity, cruel tax slabs. Let's unite on this important national problem and unite our industries. Stop your daily activities and be a part of the strike so that these rulers get the message that the whole nation is one. He further said that

Today at 2:30 PM, all business communities, business organizations along with their market unions and Jamaat-e-Islami workers will reach Kachhari Chowk in the form of a procession, where there will be a general protest meeting.



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30° - 38° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 4:11 am
Zohr 12:09 pm
Asr 4:48 pm
Maghrib 6:40 pm
Isha 8:07 pm

EMERGENCY

Rescue (Police) 15
Bomb Disposal 15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/
Islamabad 1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance 1122 &
& Rescue Services 4451122
Motorway Police 9266044
Motorway Police 9270601-20

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

Edhi Ambulance 115
PIA Flight Info 114
PIA Cargo 9280979
Railway Inquiry 117
Railway Exchange 9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi 5555489
CAA 9281092

HOSPITALS

CMH 561111
MH 561116
MH 561116
Cantt Hospital 9270907-11
DHQ 5556311-4
RGH 9290301-7
Holy Family 9290322-7
PIMS 9261170-79
Polyclinic 9218300-09
Shifa International 4603666

DEPARTMENTS

CDA 9221334-43
CDA 9208301-04
Met Office 9250360-6
RDA 5555864
TMA 5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3
Islamabad Metropolitan
Corporation 9209224
Potohar Town 9209224
Rawal Town 5773343

foodpanda announces strategic partnership with Visa to Drive Online Payments

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: foodpanda, Pakistan's leading online delivery platform, is proud to announce a strategic partnership with Visa, a world leader in digital payments. The partnership is designed to accelerate the adoption of online payments in Pakistan by integrating Visa on the leading food and grocery delivery service in Pakistan, offering customers irresistible discounts.

"Our partnership is a major leap towards mutual growth and success for both companies, and it reflects our commitment to providing unparalleled value to users across the country," said Muntaqa Peracha, CEO foodpanda. "We are pleased to bring our customers exceptional savings and convenience through Visa, and we look forward to a fruitful and impactful year ahead."

Umar Khan, Country Manager for Pakistan and Afghanistan at Visa said, "We are delighted to partner with foodpanda, one of the most popular online delivery platforms in Pakistan, to offer our cardholders more value and convenience when they order food or groceries online. According to industry reports, 95% of Pakistan's e-commerce payments are still being done via cash-on-delivery, and this partnership is aligned with our vision of enabling digital payments for everyone, everywhere, and supporting Pakistan's journey towards a cashless economy."

Prime Minister announces steps for state-of-the-art institutions for gemstones

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister's Steering Committee for Gemstones held its important session presided by Chairman/Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan in which steps for recommended for search for precious stones, separate them from rocks, cut and beautify into gems. Various suggestions for the solutions of problems beings faced were discussed which can help their availability in the market. Steering Committee held a detailed session with private institutions of good reputation related to the business of Games Stones and listened their issues. It was agreed that before finalizing the recommendations, the next meeting will be convened on a



larger scale to ensure the participation of all stakeholders. Chairman Steering Committee and

Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan, while assuring the long-term solution of problems related to gemstone cutting, certification, laboratories and export, said that it is clear that the establishment of state-of-the-art institutions for gemstones is very much important. Similarly, the proposal to accord the status of industry to the Gems and Stones sector will also be seriously considered. Federal Minister for Petroleum Musadaq Malik also attended that meeting and said that all related institution should be taken into confidence to make solution of the problems of Gems and Stones sector. Heads and representatives of different organizations related to the Gems and Stones Salman Hanif, Izhar Zuberi, Akhtar Khan Tesuri,

Amina Gilani and Nadia Chahurtani from the private sector participated and expressed their views in the Steering Committee meeting.

Chairman Steering Committee and Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan while talking in the meeting said that we have to make maximum efforts to get benefit from the natural blessings like minerals and Game Stones in Pakistan. He added that institutions with international reputation must be taken onboard and their input will ultimately help to resolve the present issues. He said that the local people and institutions of Gilgit-Baltistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa should also be encouraged for more and more participation in the Gems and Stones.

Fatiha

ISLAMABAD: Member National Assembly Hanif Abbasi, Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed, Zamrud Khan, Zia Ullah Shaha, Raja Abdul Hanif, Fayaz-ul-Hasan Chohan, Zafar Bakhtawari, Sardar Naseem, Rahat Quddusi, Editor-in-chief Online International News Agency, and Daily Jinnah Mohsin Jameel Baig, and others offer Fateha on the occasion of Rasm-e-Qul of late Jameel Baig, brother of Mohsin Jameel Baig, at his residence in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

Terrorist attack in Musa Khel is cowardly and brutal

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: Allama Tahir-ul-Hassan Central Deputy General Secretary Pakistan Ulema Council said this in his special statement and added that the killing of laborers is open terrorism. The state should take effective action against them. External forces do not tolerate the development and prosperity of Pakistan. They conspire to weaken Pakistan, but those who sit in the lap of enemy agencies and plot against Pakistan will fail. The entire nation of Balochistan stands with Pakistan. Our Pakistan Army and security agencies have made many sacrifices. The claimants who take out processions for human rights and make foreign masters happy, why is the state turning a blind eye to this terrorism today? The state should also take effective action against those who defame the country by pretending to have such so-called human rights, India and its lobby and Facilitators should know that the security of Pakistan is in the hands of a strong Pakistan Army and security institutions and the entire nation stands with its institutions and the state, they will thwart every conspiracy of the enemy, adding that there is a need for political stability at this time. Political and religious leaders should send an open message to terrorists from a platform. Incidents have happened in Pakistan before. The only solution to stop these incidents is political stability. The state should take strict action to end terrorism from Pakistan. Standing together.



AIOU Announces Spring 2024 Exam Schedule

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University has issued the final exam schedule for Matric, FA, and ICom programs for the Spring 2024 semester. These exams will take place in examination centers across the country starting from September 2. Roll number slips have been uploaded to students' CMS portals, and the date sheet is available on the university's website at www.aiou.edu.pk. The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood, has directed to ensure basic facilities for students at the examination centers. Following his special instructions, roll number slips have also been uploaded on the AIOU Mobile Application, which is available on the Google Play Store, and this feature will be available for future exams as well.

Additionally, students interested in enrolling in the Matric, FA, and I. Com programs offered in the first phase of the Autumn 2024 semester have been given until September 5 to submit their admission forms along with the required documents and fees.

Admissions for the second phase will begin on September 1. The educational programs offered in this phase include the Associate Degree in Arts (BA General), Associate Degree in Commerce (B. Com), BBA, Associate Degree in Education, BS (ODL) programs, 1.5, 2.5, and 4-year B. Ed programs, Postgraduate Diploma programs, and Certificate courses.

5 died, 3 injured as warehouse roof collapsed in Humak

ISLAMABAD, AUG 27 (APP): In a tragic incident on Tuesday, the roof of an under-construction warehouse in Humak collapsed, resulting in the deaths of five laborers and injuries to three others.

According to an Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration spokesperson, eight workers were on site when the roof suddenly collapsed and they were buried under the debris.

The initial rescue operation led to the recovery of four bodies and three injured individuals, who were transported to a local hospital for medical treatment, he said.

He said rescue teams continued their efforts to locate one more laborer still buried under the rubble.

He said Deputy Commissioner ICT Irfan Nawaz Memon was present throughout the rescue operation, supervising the relief efforts alongside the Assistant Commissioner Rural and other officials.

Rescue officials reached at the scene soon after the incident, successfully pulling two workers out of the rubble in time to save their lives, he added.

PSO continues to dominate the energy market, reports profit PKR 15.9 billion in FY24

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: PSO, the nation's largest energy company, showcased impressive financial performance and strategic progress in a challenging market. At a meeting held in Islamabad on August 27, 2024, the Board of Management reviewed the group's performance for the financial year ended June 30, 2024.

Defying economic headwinds, including slow market growth, currency fluctuations, and geopolitical uncertainty, PSO achieved a profit after tax of PKR 15.9 billion, reinforcing its status as the country's trusted energy partner. The Board of Management has also announced a dividend of PKR 10/- per share, representing a 100% payout for the financial year 2023-24.

Furthermore, PSO's subsidiary, PRL, delivered a robust performance with a profit after tax of PKR 4.1 billion and gross revenue of PKR 403.6 billion. On a consolidated basis, the group achieved a profit after tax



of PKR 18.3 billion, translating to an Earnings Per Share (EPS) of PKR 39.

In the intensely competitive white oil market, the company expanded its market share to 51.6% share, exceeding its previous record and solidifying

its position as the market leader. PSO's success is primarily driven by its exceptional motor gasoline performance, which saw a notable 1.6% increase in market share, strengthening its hold to 45.8%. Despite

adverse challenges, PSO proactively captured a 53.2% market share. The company continued to dominate the aviation fuel industry, achieving a remarkable 99.1% market share. Similarly, in fuel oil, PSO sold 285,000 tons against the industry volume of 1.2 million tons.

expensive and not readily accessible in Pakistan, leaving many families without the support they desperately need. The challenges faced by SMA patients and their families in Pakistan are immense. There is an urgent need for increased awareness, better diagnostic facilities, and access to life-saving treatments. The cost of care, including supportive therapies, respiratory support, and other medical needs, is a significant burden on families. Moreover, the emotional toll on families, who watch their loved ones battle this relentless disease, cannot be overstated.

In the face of these chal-

Unseen Battles: The SMA Struggle in Pakistan

Hiba Zamurrad

August marks Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA) Awareness Month, a critical time to shed light on this rare and debilitating genetic disorder that affects individuals worldwide, including in Pakistan. SMA is a severe, often life-threatening condition that impacts the motor nerve cells in the spinal cord, leading to progressive muscle weakness and atrophy. Despite being relatively rare, the consequences of SMA are profound, particularly for those diagnosed with the most severe form, Type 1.

While exact statistics are hard to come by due to underreporting and lack of widespread awareness, SMA is present in Pakistan, affecting many families across the country. The disorder is inherited in an autosomal recessive pattern, meaning that both parents must carry the gene mutation for their child to be at risk. In Pakistan, where consanguineous marriages are common, the prevalence of such genetic disorders is higher.

SMA is classified into four types, with Type 1 being the most severe. Infants diagnosed with SMA Type 1, also known as Werdnig-Hoffmann disease, often do not survive beyond their second birthday without significant

medical intervention. The rapid progression of muscle weakness severely affects the ability to breathe, swallow, and move, leading to a heartbreaking and often short-lived struggle for affected families.

Early diagnosis of SMA is crucial for improving outcomes, but in Pakistan, there is a significant gap in awareness and access to diagnostic facilities. Many cases remain undiagnosed or are diagnosed late, which diminishes the effectiveness of potential treatments. Effective treatments are available globally which can slow disease progression and improve quality of life. However, these treatments are prohibitively

expensive and not readily accessible in Pakistan, leaving many families without the support they desperately need.

The challenges faced by SMA patients and their families in Pakistan are immense. There is an urgent need for increased awareness, better diagnostic facilities, and access to life-saving treatments. The cost of care, including supportive therapies, respiratory support, and other medical needs, is a significant burden on families. Moreover, the emotional toll on families, who watch their loved ones battle this relentless disease, cannot be overstated.

In the face of these chal-

enges, initiatives like Speak Trust are vital. Speak Trust is actively working to raise awareness, provide support, and advocate for better healthcare services for SMA patients in Pakistan. The stories of SMA warriors registered with Speak Trust, like Rameesha, Jibrin, Miraal, Zil-e-Huma, and many others are testaments to the resilience and strength. These brave individuals and their families face daily challenges with courage and hope for a future where they can access the treatments and support they need to lead fuller lives.

Advocating for the establishment of a dedicated National Pool Fund, alongside proposing

public-private partnerships, legislation, and policy support, as well as tax incentives and donations, offers a comprehensive approach to addressing the financial challenges associated with treating rare diseases like Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA) in Pakistan. Establishing a national pool fund administered by a specialized committee ensures targeted financial support for SMA patients, while public-private partnerships enhance funding sustainability through collaboration with pharmaceutical companies and healthcare providers. Legislation mandating funds allocation within the national healthcare budget prior-

itizes SMA treatment, while tax incentives incentivize private donations, fostering a broader base of financial support. Collectively, these measures aim to create a robust and sustainable funding mechanism, ensuring equitable access to treatment and research resources for SMA patients across Pakistan.

As we observe SMA Awareness Month, it is crucial to amplify the voices of those affected by this devastating condition and to work collectively towards a future where SMA patients in Pakistan can access the care and treatment they deserve. Increased awareness, advocacy, and support are essential to making this a reality.

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Role of Fake News in Shaping Public Opinion

The aggregate attitudes, convictions, and perspectives of the general public about different problems, policies, and leaders are referred to as public opinion. It is influenced by a wide range of things, such as social interactions, media, education, cultural influences, and personal experiences. In democratic societies, public opinion is extremely important because it shapes policy results, influences political decisions, and directs the behaviour of elected officials. It reflects the attitudes that are prevalent in a culture at a certain moment and has a big influence on how society and politics develop.

With the intention of misleading, incorrect or misleading information presented as news has been widely known under the phrase "fake news" in recent years. Since the introduction of the internet, fake news has been more prevalent, and this trend has been further exacerbated by the growth of social media platforms. Fake news may have a significant impact on democracy and society, so it's important to understand how it shapes public opinion.

Numerous well-known case studies demonstrate how fake news affects public perception. A torrent of false information circulated throughout the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election, influencing voters and sowing strife. Similar to this, false claims made by disinformation significantly influenced public opinion during the Brexit referendum. More recently, the COVID-19 epidemic has been beset by false information, which has confused the public and made crisis management efforts less successful. These incidents show how false

information can have a real-world impact on important political choices and public health effects.

Fake news has a significant impact on public opinion. People retreat into ideological silos, which exacerbates societal polarization. People's confidence in traditional media sources diminishes as they grow wary of all sources of information, not just those who propagate false information. Furthermore, false information has the power to directly affect political judgments and voting patterns, eroding the democratic process. For example, misleading information about candidates or programs has the power to distort public opinion and produce election results that don't represent well-informed decisions. Fake news divides people and increases cynicism and apathy, which decreases public participation in politics.

A diversified approach is necessary to address the false news problem. Organizations that verify facts put out great effort to refute untrue statements and present correct data. To encourage people to critically assess the information they consume, media literacy education is crucial. Teachers and legislators must stress the importance of critical thinking abilities and give resources for identifying reliable sources. In order to hold platforms responsible and stop the dissemination of false information, regulations and policies are also required. More stringent laws,

such as open algorithms and better content moderation procedures, can be imposed by governments on social media corporations to make sure they accept accountability for the content uploaded on their networks.

Technological developments also present potential answers to the false news problem in addition to these approaches. It is possible to use machine learning and artificial intelligence (AI) to more successfully identify and report misleading material. AI can assist in spotting bogus news before it becomes widely disseminated by examining patterns and sources. To ensure accuracy and prevent censorship, the use of these technologies must be properly monitored.

Civil society is essential to the fight against false information. Activists at the grassroots level who encourage conversation and community involvement can strengthen resistance to false information. Communities can become more resilient to the impact of fake news by creating spaces where a variety of viewpoints are discussed and critically analysed. A more informed public can also result from public campaigns that emphasize the value of fact-checking information and the negative effects of disseminating erroneous information.

Conclusion: False news poses a serious threat to democratic countries since it significantly shapes public opinion. We can more effectively counteract its influence if we

comprehend how it spreads, the psychological aspects at work, and the effects it has on public opinion. Governments, organizations, and individuals must work together to reduce the impact of false information and protect the integrity of public conversation. As technology advances, so too must our methods for spotting and dispelling false information, guaranteeing that thoughtful discussion stays at the core of our democratic procedures. Maintaining public awareness and taking proactive steps are crucial to maintaining the information landscape's dependability and trustworthiness.

In the end, we must all work together to combat false information. Every person needs to pledge to be a responsible information consumer who checks and double-checks the sources before sharing. Media literacy must be ingrained in educational programs in order to equip the next generation of learners to handle an increasingly complicated information landscape. In order to create policies that safeguard the public while upholding fundamental liberties, policymakers must continue to be alert and flexible. We can only hope to lessen the harmful consequences of fake news and preserve the ideals of truth and integrity in our society by making a thorough and persistent effort. Fighting false information is essential to preserving a strong, functional democracy in a time when knowledge truly is power.

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Analysis

Muhammad Sohail Hassan

Senators demand iron fist for terrorists

The women senators on Tuesday demanded the government to take the terrorists to task with iron hands for unleashing unmatched barbarism in the Balochistan province.

Speaking on the Balochistan carnage during the 342nd session of the Senate, Parliamentary Leader of Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPPP), Senator Sherry Rehman said there was no distinction between terrorists as good or bad as any hostile elements picking up weapons against the state were terrorists and country enemy.

She said the PPPP leadership faced terrorism and violence due to its leadership's strong stance against insurgency in the country. "Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto was the only leader who announced to hoist Pakistani flag in Swat during the terrorists' insurgency and was martyred by the terrorists," she added.

Senator Rehman underlined that some 80,000 to 90,000 civilians and numerous soldiers of the armed forces and law enforcement agencies (LEAs) personnel had embraced martyrdom in the war on terror.

Pakistan, she said was alone in fighting a war against terror, and our society was penetrated through Afghanistan by insurgents and consequently, many terror groups emerged with different names at that time.

"Pakistan Armed Forces did the impossible counter-terrorism operations despite having the least knowledge of asymmetric warfare and learned through its experiences.

The then Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gillani and Gillani and President Asif Ali Zardari took the government seriously on the matter of terrorism and took the opposition and political leadership into confidence. We paid a heavy price in that regard as PPP faced many martyrdoms and Gillani's son was abducted by terrorists," she added.

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Senator, Dr Zarqa Suharwardy Taimur said there was no second thought about taking terrorists to terms with iron hands.

The State and the armed forces of the country, the police force, and LEAs who rendered great sacrifices could easily tackle and were fully capable of controlling and stemming terrorism from the country, he added.

"This is the fifth insurgency in Balochistan and the first had occurred in 1970 and it was 26th August, the death anniversary of Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti. BLA an international insurgent organization had launched attacks on 10 districts for 20 hours and kept the security forces engaged," she said.

She said the Balochistan massacre was deplorable and the demonstration led by tribal women and girls in Gwadar was also regrettable. She queried that despite these crises why the quarters concerned were not paying heed to the pressing issues of the deprived areas of the country.



Cartoon by Amjad Rasmi. (Courtesy of Ashraf Al-Azmat)

Jail Officers Required to Install Electricity Meters and Pay Utility Bills

A news report has emerged in the media that "Jail officers" have been directed to install electricity meters and begin paying their utility bills in response to concerns raised by the Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA). According to WAPDA, the excessive use of air conditioners and heaters by these officers has been contributing to significant financial losses for the treasury. In an effort to curb this wastage, WAPDA has issued a directive that all jail officers should transition from paying fixed charges to using metered electricity. The deadline for compliance with this new requirement has been set for September 9th, emphasizing the urgency of addressing this issue. The move is intended to promote more responsible electricity usage among jail officers and to reduce the financial burden on the public treasury.

It is important to note that for a long time, the electricity bills for the homes of officers and personnel in the prison department were fixed. Under this arrangement, the monthly bill was set at approximately 18,000 rupees for a DIG-ranked officer, 15,000 rupees for a Superintendent of Jail, 12,000 rupees for a Deputy Superintendent, 8,000 rupees for an Assistant Superintendent, 7,000 rupees for a Head Warden, and 5,100 rupees for a Warden. However, WAPDA authorities prepared a report and sent it to the government, highlighting that these fixed charges are extremely low compared to the actual electricity prices and usage.

In response, the government has issued orders to install electricity meters in the homes of jail officers and personnel. The Inspector General (IG) of Prisons Punjab has been directed to

ensure compliance with these orders.

According to the statistics, electricity meters will be installed in 128 homes, including those of the DIG and Superintendent at the New Central Jail Multan, 57 homes at the District Jail, 44 at the Women's Jail, 67 at the District Jail Khanewal, 13 at Shujabad Jail, and other jails with residential housing. Sources have indicated that the IG of Prisons has issued instructions to all jail officers to complete the installation of meters by September 9th. Failure to do so will result in action against the respective jail's Superintendent. The record of officers and personnel residing in the jails has been prepared and sent to WAPDA authorities for this purpose.

According to the law, it is mandatory for every citizen who uses electricity to have an electricity meter installed at their premises. This requirement ensures that electricity consumption is accurately measured, promoting fairness and transparency. The principle behind this law is to uphold the standards of justice by ensuring that each user pays for the exact amount of electricity they consume.

However, a surprising and concerning issue has recently come to light regarding the electricity supply to jails in Punjab. It has been discovered that electricity is being provided to these facilities without the use of meters. Instead of having their electricity usage accurately tracked, many jail officers and employees are benefiting from a system of fixed charges. This fixed billing system allows them to pay a set amount each month, regardless of how much electricity they actually use.

This situation has led to significant misuse of electricity within the homes of jail employees. Reports indicate that these employees are using

air conditioners extensively, particularly during the hot summer months. Moreover, they are relying heavily on electric heaters for cooking food, including bread, tea, and curry. These appliances consume a substantial amount of electricity, far exceeding what would be covered by the fixed charges they are paying.

The absence of electricity meters in these residences means that the true extent of their electricity consumption is not being recorded. As a result, these employees are effectively using much more electricity than they are paying for, which leads to a significant financial loss for the government and, by extension, the public.

This situation is not only a violation of legal requirements but also a gross injustice to ordinary citizens. While regular citizens are required to pay for every unit of electricity they consume, jail employees are enjoying an unfair advantage by consuming electricity far beyond their fixed payments. This discrepancy creates an imbalance in the system, where the burden of these costs ultimately falls on the public treasury.

No doubt, the practice of supplying electricity to jails without meters is a serious issue that undermines the principles of fairness and justice. It not only results in significant financial losses but also perpetuates an unfair system that favors a select group over the general public. There is an urgent need for the authorities to address this issue by ensuring that electricity meters are installed in all jail facilities and that all users pay for their actual consumption, just as the law mandates for every other citizen.

Although WAPDA was slow to realize the need to install meters in jails, it is indeed the right decision. WAPDA should consider adding an electricity allowance to its employees' salaries instead of giving them free units. The provision of free units has not only led to political maneuvering and corruption but also to electricity theft. It is essential to address and eliminate these issues.



Bytes and Rights: Protecting Pakistan's Digital Future

Respected Editor,
 The government, in its attempt to reinforce cybersecurity through a firewall, has ended up creating obstacles for the country's IT sector, restraining its growth and potential, as well as other critical areas such as education, healthcare, finance, and e-commerce. The slow internet speeds resulting from this measure have hindered online learning, telemedicine, digital payments, and online transactions, ultimately affecting the productivity and efficiency of businesses, remote workers, and individuals alike.

The persistent disruptions have bred a growing sense of frustration and distress among industry leaders, as they struggle to mitigate their damaging effects. Citizens have turned to the courts for relief, filing petitions in both the Lahore High Court (LHC) and Islamabad High Court (IHC), challenging the government's internet shutdown as an unlawful infringement on their fundamental rights, including the freedom of expression and trade, the right to information and knowledge as well as the right to privacy. The very rights and liberties granted to citizens by the Constitution are being withdrawn by the government.

I call on the authorities to take immediate and effective action to put an end to

these internet disruptions and guarantee a reliable, secure, and private online environment for all citizens of Pakistan. To strengthen Pakistan's internet infrastructure, it's essential to encourage collaborative policy-making through multi-stakeholder engagement and driving innovation through research and development. Transparency and accountability must be ensured by regularly publishing reports on internet infrastructure, outages, and government actions.

Sincerely,
 Tayyabat, Islamabad
tayyabat2002@gmail.com

Karsaz Accident: A Call for Stricter Drug and Driving Regulations

Dear Editor,
 The recent Karsaz accident, involving Natasha, a young woman reportedly under the influence of drugs, tragically resulted in the deaths of an elderly man and his daughter, Amna.

This incident highlights the urgent need for stricter enforcement of drug and driving regulations.

The loss of life due to reckless behaviour is unacceptable. While the specific circumstances are still under investigation, it is evident that both drug abuse and impaired driving are severe threats to public safety. Data consistently shows that drugged driving significantly increases the risk of fatal accidents.

To prevent such tragedies, we must call for stricter penalties for drug-related offences and improved screening for impaired drivers. Enhanced public awareness campaigns about the dangers of driving under the influence are also crucial. Authorities should act promptly to implement these measures and ensure justice for victims.

Nazish Zahra, Lahore
 Email: nazishzahra2004@gmail.com

8th session of Pakistan-Oman Bilateral Political Consultations (BPC) held in Muscat

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The eighth session of the Pakistan-Oman Bilateral Political Consultations was held today in Muscat, Oman.

Additional Foreign Secretary (Middle East), Ambassador Shehryar Akbar Khan and the Chief of GCC and Regional Neighborhood Department, Ambassador Sheikh Ahmad bin Hashil bin Rashid Al Maskari of Foreign Affairs of the Sultanate of Oman, led their respective sides.

The two sides comprehensively reviewed all aspects of bilateral cooperation between Pakistan and Oman including political relations, trade and investment, security and defence, culture, health and consular matters. Pakistan-Oman cooperation at multilateral fora was also discussed.

Noting the importance of Joint

Ministerial Commission, the two sides agreed to hold the 8th session at an early date in Islamabad. The two sides also agreed to further elevate bilateral trade volume and to enhance investment cooperation.

The Omani side was invited to invest in agriculture, minerals and Information Technology under the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC).

The Omani side expressed support for the First Pakistani Business Expo to be held in Muscat on the 13-14 October 2024. It also welcomed Pakistan's decision to give visas on arrival to Omani nationals.

Regional and global matters of mutual concern were also discussed. Additional Foreign Secretary (Middle East) appreciated the Sultanate of Oman for its persistent and principled support on the Jammu and Kashmir dispute. The two sides also expressed

serious concerns on Israel's war on Gaza and the genocide of the Palestinian people. They stressed the need for an urgent and unconditional ceasefire and reiterated the call for the creation of a viable, sovereign and contiguous State of Palestine.

The Pakistani delegation also called on the Under Secretary for Diplomatic Affairs, Sheikh Khalifa bin Ali bin Issa Al-Harthy. The Under Secretary shared Oman's desire to further strengthen Pakistan-Oman relations and to advance bilateral dialogue and cooperation.

The Bilateral Political Consultations are an important dialogue mechanism between Pakistan and Oman to comprehensively review bilateral relations and to explore new areas of cooperation to further solidify the historic and strategic ties between the two countries.



Tree plantation

A student of Hamdard Public School is seen distributing seeds of various plants among Karachiites during the inaugurating ceremony HFP's inter-provincial plantation campaign. During the campaign HFP will plant thousands of trees across the country.



Photo: Online

Pakistan Delegation engages with Singapore's Ministry of Law during Singapore Convention Week 2024

Spokesman Report

SINGAPORE: A high-level delegation from Pakistan, comprising distinguished members of the judiciary and legal fraternity, is currently in Singapore to participate in the Singapore Convention Week 2024. The delegation includes Chief Justice Sindh High Court Muhammad Shafi Siddiqui, Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir from the Islamabad High Court, Federal Secretary Law and Justice Raja Naem Akbar Justice (retired) Arif Hussain Khilji, former judge of the Supreme Court and Chief Legal Advisor Legal Aid Society and MICADR, Director General Federal Judicial Academy Hayat Ali Shah, and



Shahzad Ilahi from the Legal Aid Society.

During their visit, the delegation engaged in discussions with representatives from the Ministry of Law, Singapore. These discussions focused on Singapore's extensive mediation experience since 1990, sharing best practices for establishing robust domestic and international mediation ecosystems, and exploring the benefits and implementation roadmap of the Singapore

Convention on Mediation for Pakistan. The delegation also emphasized the importance of investor-state mediation in fostering a stable and investor-friendly environment.

The Pakistan delegation also highlighted the success of mediation ecosystems within the country. They presented the Islamabad mediation ecosystem, which boasts 97 internationally accredited mediators, 4 private ADR centers notified by the

Ministry of Law and Justice, and a court-annexed mediation center that has received over 200 cases in the past four months. Additionally, the delegation showcased Sindh's mediation ecosystem, which includes 130 High Court-notified mediators, 3 notified private mediation centers, and several court-annexed mediation centers, underscoring Pakistan's growing commitment to alternative dispute resolution.

The Government of Pakistan is actively considering signing the Singapore Convention on Mediation as part of its broader strategy to enhance the country's legal and dispute resolution frameworks.

Al-Shifa saves 16000 premature babies from lifelong blindness

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Through timely intervention, Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital has prevented sixteen thousand premature babies from developing irreparable damage to their eyes over the past eleven years.

Dr Wajid Ali Khan, the chief of medical services at Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital, said the growing incidence of retinal abnormalities among premature infants in Pakistan calls for urgent attention.

He said that the majority of premature babies who weigh less than 1.5 kilograms at the time of birth have a high risk of developing the disorganized growth of retinal blood vessels, which can cause vision problems, including permanent blindness.

Talking to media, he said that babies born prematurely have many obstacles to overcome in their first weeks, including abnormal eye development, which can be resolved through

screening and surgical procedures to help avoid serious eyesight problems.

He said the retina's blood vessels begin to develop three months after conception and complete their growth at normal birth. However, eye development can be disrupted if an infant is born prematurely.

"Latest studies have shown that keeping the oxygen saturation at a lower level can reduce the rate of advanced retinopathy," he said.

He said one in ten babies worldwide is born early, with a chance of eyesight issues. Therefore, parents must include a vision screening in their list of baby check-ups between six and twelve months of age.

He added that every premature infant deserves the constant attention of an ophthalmologist because they are at increased risk for eye misalignment, amblyopia, and the need for glasses to develop normal vision.

He said that in Pakistan, about 900,000 babies are born annually, out



of which about 100,000 are prematurely born, and eighty percent of them are prone to eye problems.

He added that the Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital Rawalpindi has over 40 highly qualified eye surgeons, and the Pediatric Department has some of the most senior eye specialists. The hospital has expanded, handling over 500 OPD

babies daily.

Dr. Wajid Ali Khan said that we had signed MoUs with the administrations of Fuji Foundation Hospital, Combined Military Hospital, and Benazir Bhutto Hospital, under which the trust will provide all the facilities, from transportation to screening and surgery, for premature babies born in these hospitals.

He informed that Al-Shifa is the only hospital in the SAARC and among the few worldwide with the latest facilities and skills to treat newborns with Retinopathy of Prematurity (ROP).

Al-Shifa started screening and treating newly born babies, especially those under seven months, in March 2013 and has cured around 16,000 babies in the last 11 years. He said the number is bound to increase as awareness grows.

He said we use Teleophtholmolgy to provide free guidance to all state-owned and private health facilities including those located in other countries.

'Alarming' rise in deadly lightning strikes in India: scientists

NEW DELHI: Climate change is fueling an alarming increase in deadly lightning strikes in India, killing nearly 1,900 people a year in the world's most populous country, scientists warn.

Lightning caused a staggering 101,309 deaths between 1967 and 2020, with a sharp increase between 2010 and 2020, a team of researchers led by Fakir Mohan Research in the eastern state of Odisha said.

"The results indicate a steady increase in lightning activity in India, positioning it as a major killer among climate change-induced natural disasters," it said.

While the report looked at data on deaths, not the number of strikes, it said "lightning activity in India is becoming increasingly unpredictable".

Data showed that the average annual fatalities per Indian state rose from 38 in the period 1967 to 2002, to 61 from 2003 to 2020 — a period when the

country's population has also rapidly grown to 1.4 billion people.

Lightning strikes are common in India during the June-September monsoon rains, which is crucial to replenishing regional water supplies.

But scientists say their frequency is increasing due to rising global temperatures, unleashing a cascade of extreme weather events.

Higher air temperatures create more water vapour, which after it cools at altitude, creates electric charges that spark lightning.

The high number of fatalities in India is also due to ineffective early warning systems and a lack of awareness of how to reduce the risk, the report added, published in the international journal of Environment, Development and Sustainability.

Mass fatalities from a single strike are common, such as when farmers shelter in groups from lashing rain under a tree.

Kashmir's Hidden Gem, Muzaffarabad, Beckons For A Trip To Remember

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The hustle and bustle in the urban centres of Pakistan is effectively contrasted by the calmness of its breathtaking northern landscapes in Hunza, Swat, and the majestic Kashmir Valley, the last of which is home to an exceptional resort owned and operated by the country's leading hospitality services provider, Hashoo Group.

Under the luxurious five-star Pearl-Continental brand, this hotel in Muzaffarabad hosts a large number of local and international tourists every year. With boundless natural beauty in the form of Pir Chinasi, Patika Waterfall, and the famed Neelum Valley, Pearl-Continental Hotel, Muzaffarabad offers comfort, opulence, and unparalleled services to visitors from far and wide. Since its inauguration in 2007, the hotel features exciting activities within and around it, presenting guests with the chance to experience the utmost adven-



ture, recreation, and luxury during their visit. One of the most attractive features of Pearl-Continental Hotel, Muzaffarabad, aside from

the 100 luxurious rooms, is its seamless accessibility from urban centres like Islamabad. Located a mere three hours from the capital

city, the road to Muzaffarabad is safe and convenient, offering panoramic views of the surrounding natural sites, making the drive up

there just as enjoyable as the vacation itself.

The resort also hosts culinary enthusiasts, with its exceptional chefs preparing local, traditional Kashmiri cuisine, and continental delicacies with the utmost finesse, offering premium dining experiences for varying palates. For adventurous visitors seeking memorable and adrenaline-fueled experiences, paragliding at Pir Chinasi is a great way to spend the day. The location is easily accessible from the hotel, which offers support to guests in terms of planning and transportation as part of the full-service hospitality and tourism assistance synonymous with the Pearl-Continental name.

For families and tourists looking for the perfect chance to unwind and rejuvenate after a day of full-filled thrills, indoor games like snooker, carrom, and table tennis are also offered in addition to calming walks in the Herb Garden, cultural immersion at the handicrafts shop, and an entertaining



play area for children.

Pearl-Continental Hotel, Muzaffarabad's breathtaking helipad, is the ideal spot for your banquets, celebrations, and destination dining. With panoramic views of Kashmir all around, this unique backdrop is a must-visit for anyone searching for unique tourism experiences in Pakistan.

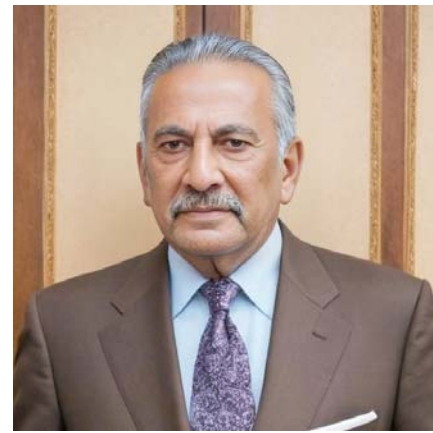
Whether you wish to stay fit and well during your visit at the fully equipped gym, relax with a stroll in the Forest Walkway, or engage in adventurous excursions for the whole family, Pearl-Continental Hotel, Muzaffarabad is the place to be. Unforgettable experiences await you in the famed Kashmir Valley, so don't miss out.

Genuine reforms are Pakistan's only alternative: Dr. Shahid

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt, said on Tuesday that the reluctance of friendly countries to roll over debt for one year is making it difficult for Pakistan to get a loan from the IMF. He added that Pakistan would face problems in getting loans from other sources unless it is under the IMF program. Shahid Rasheed Butt said in a statement issued here today that Pakistan has fulfilled almost all the conditions of the IMF for obtaining the loan, except for debt rollover. However, China, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates have not yet extended the twelve billion dollar repayment period by one year, which is why the IMF is not lending.

A staff-level agreement was reached between the IMF and the government of Pakistan for a loan of seven billion dollars over thirty-seven months, but the international organization's executive board has not yet approved it. Shahid Rashid Butt said that earlier, Pakistan had requested these three countries to increase the loan repayment period from three to five years, which was rejected. After that, there was a request for a one-year extension in the loan repayment period, on which they have been silent. In addition, there is a two-billion-dollar shortfall in external financing, which is not going down well with the lender. In these circumstances, Pakistan has no option but to take more loans to survive, for which efforts are being made. Until the loan is received, even the IMF will not help Paki-



stan, he noted. The business leader noted that Pakistan has

been critical to Western and Arab countries for many decades, so it did not face any problems obtaining loans. However, it is not given importance now, so the lenders' conditions are also getting stricter. In 2020-21, fair living wage was around Rs46,000 for Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad and Rs39,000 for other cities. Currently, it is about Rs60,000. In 2021, an average consumer had 33 percent discretionary income which is the income left after paying for essentials like housing and food. Today, that figure has dropped to just 8-10 percent which must be improved, he said. He warned that the government must implement real reforms, adopt policies based on merit rather than political interests, increase exports, and become self-sufficient; otherwise, the country will go bankrupt.

Protest

RAWALPINDI: Employees of WAPDA Hydro Electric Union are protesting against privatization on Murree Road in the city.



Photo: Online

CCP approves shareholding acquisition in NITL

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has approved the acquisition of 8.33% shareholding in M/s. National Investment Trust Limited (NITL) by two Pakistani residents. Following the transaction, M/s. Adamjee Foundation will cease to be a shareholder in NITL. National Investment Trust Limited, established as a Trust on November 12, 1962, through a strategic agreement between NITL as the Management Company and the National Bank of Pakistan as the Trustee, has played a pivotal role in inaugurating the investment management business in Pakistan. Over the decades, NITL has provided comprehensive investment management services across the country, offering a diverse portfolio of fixed income, equity, and hybrid investment products designed to meet the varied needs of investors. The CCP's analysis has identified the relevant market as 'Asset Management Services' with a geographic scope confined to Pakistan. Notably, the acquisition will not alter the nominal market share of NITL, ensuring that the competitive balance within the asset management sector remains intact. The CCP's approval of this transaction underscores its commitment to upholding competition law, which is vital for maintaining a healthy and dynamic economic environment.

Zimbabwe envoy visits ICCI, urges Pakistani investors to explore investment opportunities in his country

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Zimbabwe's Ambassador Titus M J Abu Basutu has said that Pakistan and Zimbabwe enjoy a strong and friendly bilateral relationship with immense potential for trade ties. The two countries have been cooperating in various fields, including defense, culture, and education, since Zimbabwe's independence in 1980. The Ambassador said this during his conversation at Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry on Tuesday. He said that by strengthening trade ties, both countries can benefit from each other's strengths, leading to increased economic growth, job creation, and improved living standards for their citizens, adding that there has been a growing interest in exploring trade opportunities, with Pakistan exporting goods such as rice, tractors, and cotton to Zimbabwe, and importing raw materials like cotton, tobacco, and minerals. Chairman Pakistan Africa Friendship Association (PAFA) and Secretary General United Business Group Zafar Bakhtawari said that Pakistan is committed to deepening its ties with the African nations and transforming them into meaningful part-



nerships. He underlined the need for air connectivity with African countries for promotion of tourism. He apprised the distinguished guest that ICCI regularly celebrates Africa Day in a befitting manner which is a testament that we hold in high esteem our relationship with the African countries. Senior Vice President ICCI Faad Waheed said that it is the right time to transform the existing friendship between both the countries into economic opportunities. He also talked about the necessity of close cooperation and coordination between the Zimbabwean Chamber of Commerce and the ICCI for the purpose. Those present on the occasion also include Chaudhry Maqsood Tabish, Rizwan Chheena, Malik Mohsin Khalid, Chaduhry Waseem, Nasir Chaudhry and other

BankIslami's Profit Before Tax Surged by 66.2% for The First Half of 2024

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: BankIslami continues its growth trajectory, delivering substantial returns to its shareholders with a remarkable 66.2% increase in profit before tax for the half-year ended 2024. The Bank's profit before tax reached Rs. 13.8 billion, while its post-tax profit surged to Rs. 7.1 billion, reflecting a robust 32.1% growth. Despite challenging market conditions, BankIslami remains steadfast in its commitment to financial excellence. A key highlight of this period was the significant rise in non-fund-based income (NFI), which grew by nearly a billion rupees compared to the same period last year. The NFI ratio to total income also improved, rising to 10.5% from 8.9% in the previous year, underscoring the Bank's strategic focus on diversified revenue streams. Reflecting its solid financial performance, BankIslami's Board of Directors has declared an interim dividend of Rs. 1.5 (15%) for the first half of 2024. This decision emphasizes the Bank's commitment to valuable shareholders and its confidence in continued growth. In response to ongoing economic uncertainty, BankIslami strategically expanded its investment portfolio while thoughtfully optimizing its financing portfolio. The investment portfolio reached Rs. 346.5 billion, while the gross financing portfolio saw a controlled reduction of 12.8%, settling at Rs. 221.5 billion. This strategic adjustment led to an increase in the infection ratio from 9% at the end of 2023 to 10.9% in the current period.

Proparco, Karandaaz, and Parwaaz Financial Services Limited Collaborate to Enhance Gender & Climate Finance

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Proparco, Karandaaz Pakistan and Parwaaz Financial Services Limited (PFSL) have entered into a landmark partnership to support small business finance in Pakistan. This is the first credit risk guarantee offered by Proparco in Pakistan. This collaboration aims to increase access to finance for women-led businesses and green technologies under the Karandaaz's Women Ventures and GreenFin Innovations portfolios. Karandaaz, through these programmes, has allocated

over PKR 1.2 billion in concessional finance to about 90 small and medium enterprises. The partnership with AFD and Proparco will facilitate further expanding access to credit available to small growing businesses under these programmes. "It's one of the priority result areas for KRN to grow financing of women led businesses and help scaling of innovative green technologies. We are thrilled that Proparco will be a partner in our journey. We will keep looking for more opportunities of such partnerships which further our

mission" said Mr. Waqas ul Hasan, CEO Karandaaz. Mr. Guillaume Dabouis, French Deputy Head of Mission, commented on this partnership "The French Embassy in Pakistan is proud to support this partnership between Proparco and Karandaaz, which aligns with our commitment to fostering sustainable economic development and gender equality in Pakistan. Ms Diane Jegam, Regional Director of Proparco South Asia, added, "This partnership is a powerful step towards unlocking the potential of



Pakistan's MSMEs, particularly those led by women and focused on climate action. By bridging the financing gap, we are empowering entrepreneurs to drive sustainable growth and create a more inclusive and resilient future for all." The partnership was announced during a signing ceremony in Islamabad, featuring a panel discussion on "The Role of Finance and Supporting Mechanisms to Strengthen the Market for Gender and Climate Finance." The event brought together key experts and stakeholders to explore challenges and opportunities in financing gender and climate initiatives.

Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
78,084.23	78,571.05
Day's High	Day's Low
78,857.61	78,077.83
Index Value	Change
7,802,687,821	-486.82
Percentage	Time
-0.62%	27 Aug, 2024 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
8,345.46	+17.68
Percentage	Time
+0.21%	27 Aug, 4:35 pm GMT+1

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
41,232.03	-8.49
Percentage	Time
-0.021%	27 Aug, 1:38 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
38,288.62	+178.40
Percentage	Time
+0.47%	27 Aug, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	186.93	189.18
Bahrain Dinar	732.60	740.60
Canadian Dollar	202.65	207.00
China Yuan	38.25	38.65
Danish Krone	40.03	40.43
Euro	309.40	311.89
Hong Kong Dollar	35.68	36.03
Indian Rupee	3.34	3.45
Japanese Yen	1.98	1.99
Kuwaiti Dinar	903.45	908.53
Malaysian Ringgit	59.25	60.25
New Zealand \$	169.34	171.34
Norwegians Krone	26.14	26.44
Omani Riyal	723.13	727.21
Qatari Riyal	76.44	77.14
Saudi Riyal	73.90	74.45
Singapore Dollar	201.75	203.75
Swedish Korona	26.15	26.45
Swiss Franc	324	328.94
Thai Bhat	7.57	7.72
U.A.E Dirham	75.60	76.25
UK Pound Sterling	365.20	368.70
US Dollar	278.50	280.00

Mobilink Bank partners with oladoc bringing premium healthcare to customers' doorstep



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Mobilink Bank, Pakistan's leading digital microfinance bank, has partnered with oladoc, a leading digital healthcare platform, to offer its customers a comprehensive 360-degree healthcare solution. With oladoc serving as a brand ambassador, the Bank strives to democratize healthcare by providing 500,000 Mobilink Bank customers with unparalleled access to free, premium medical services. Through this partnership, Mobilink Bank customers and their families will gain access to a wide range of free healthcare benefits via the oladoc app, by signing up through their registered mobile numbers. Mobilink Bank customers can now tap into oladoc's extensive network of over 25,000 healthcare professionals across Pakistan. This partnership offers complimentary Outpatient Department (OPD) consultations, savings on In-patient Department (IPD) costs, up to 10% off on medicine orders, up to 25% discount on surgical procedures, including aesthetic, dental, and all elective procedures, free unlimited video consultations and up to 20% off on in-clinic appointments. Customers can also enjoy free wellness and lifestyle consultations with nutritionists, psychologists, dieticians, and fitness trainers. To enable seamless access for customers without smartphones, oladoc will also offer a complimentary value-added service (VAS) to Mobilink Bank customers through a dedicated helpline for six months. Atta-ur-Rehman, Chief Business Officer Mobilink Bank, said, "Our customers are at the heart of everything we do and their well-being is our top priority. In response to the challenges posed by rising inflation and escalating healthcare costs, Mobilink Bank is committed to making a positive impact.

Jay Shah elected Independent ICC Chairman

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) Secretary Jay Shah has been elected unopposed as the Independent International Cricket Council (ICC) Chairman, the apex cricketing body confirmed Tuesday.

According to a statement released by the ICC, Shah will assume the role on December 1, 2024.

"Jay Shah has been elected unopposed as the next Independent Chair of the International Cricket Council (ICC). Shah, who has served as the BCCI Honorary Secretary since October 2019 and Chair of the Asian Cricket Council since January 2021, will assume this prestigious role on December 1, 2024," said ICC.

For the unversed, Jay Shah was the sole candidate for the position after Greg Barclay, who hails from New Zealand, declined to seek a third



tenure.

Reacting to his election as Independent ICC Chairman, Jay Shah shared his goals to enhance the popu-

larity of cricket globally. He further asserted that the return of the sport in the Los Angeles Olympics 2028 would play a pivotal role for the growth.

"I am humbled by the nomination as the Chair of the International Cricket Council," Shah stated.

"I am committed to working closely with the ICC team and our member nations to further globalize cricket. We stand at a critical juncture where it is increasingly important to balance the coexistence of multiple formats, promote the adoption of advanced technologies, and introduce our marquee events to new global markets. Our goal is to make cricket more inclusive and popular than ever before."

"While we will build on the valuable lessons learned, we must also embrace fresh thinking and innovation to elevate the love for cricket worldwide. The inclusion of our sport in the Olympics at LA 2028 represents a significant inflection point for the growth of cricket, and I am confident that it will drive the sport forward in unprecedented ways."

PFB Delegation Strategizes with DG Sports Pakistan on Path to Olympic Qualification for Pakistan Baseball

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: A high-level delegation from the Pakistan Federation Baseball (PFB) convened with the Director General of the Pakistan Sports Board (PSB), Mr. Muhammad Yasir Pirzada, to discuss the future of baseball in Pakistan and its roadmap to Olympic qualification. The delegation, led by PFB General Secretary Syed Fakhar Ali Shah, included Executive Director Moazzam Khan Klair, Media Director Sheikh Mazhar, Syed Naveed Bukhari, and Coordinator Amjad Nawaz Khan.

During this pivotal meeting, Syed Fakhar Ali Shah provided a comprehensive briefing on Pakistan's current rankings in both the Asian and global baseball arenas. He underscored the critical importance of Pakistan's participation in the upcoming U-12, U-15, U-18 Asian Championships, as well as the Asian Baseball Championship, all of which serve as qualifiers for the World Cup. The General Secretary highlighted that the ranking points garnered from these events are essential for Pakistan's aspirations to qualify for the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.

The discussion also covered the broader strategies necessary for the development and promotion of baseball nationwide. Syed Fakhar Ali Shah proposed several key initiatives aimed at increasing grassroots participation and enhancing the training



and facilities available to athletes. Additionally, the delegation and Mr. Pirzada explored the pivotal role of the private sector in supporting the growth of baseball and other sports in Pakistan.

Mr. Muhammad Yasir Pirzada expressed his full support for the Federation's efforts and stressed the need for collaboration with

provincial sports boards to secure additional resources, given the current financial constraints. He emphasized the significance of engaging the private sector to ensure the sustainable growth of baseball and the broader sports community in Pakistan.

In closing, the delegation—comprising Executive Director Moazzam Khan Klair,

Secretary General Syed Fakhar Ali Shah, and other key members—extended their sincere gratitude to Mr. Pirzada for his steadfast commitment to advancing baseball in Pakistan. The PFB looks forward to continued cooperation with the PSB to elevate the sport on both national and international stages.

KL Rahul makes shocking admission regarding retirement plans

A Sports

India's right-handed batter KL Rahul made shocking revelations regarding his retirement plans, months after celebrating his 32nd birthday.

The right-handed batter revealed that he suffered from anxiety upon realizing that he did not have much time left to keep on playing international cricket.

He, however, claimed that he was not insecure about bidding adieu to international cricket.

"There is no insecurity, but there is a feeling that all this ends, and for me it ends very quickly. If

you are fit enough, you can play till 40. That is the maximum someone has played. Yes, there is MS Dhoni, who is 43 and is still playing. You can play the IPL and all of that, but not at the international level for too long," said KL Rahul during a podcast with an Indian YouTuber.

"For me, the anxiety was when I hit 30. I could see the end of the tunnel. Till I was 29, I could not see that. Some weird thing happened on my 30th birthday. I could see I have 10 more years to play cricket, and that gave me anxiety, and that is the first time I felt like 'This comes to an end at some point.' All I have done



all my life is 'Cricket, Cricket, Cricket,' without imagining this comes to an end. Now I

can see it. It is not too far away," he added.

KL Rahul then stressed the

shorter shelf life of the cricketers, asserting that they have to make the most out of the opportunities they get in their careers.

"There is a fear and realisation that the shelf life is really small for an athlete, and you need to make the most of it within whatever time you have," said Rahul.

KL Rahul, who made his international debut for India in 2014, has emerged an integral part of his country's ODI and Test sides.

The right-handed batter has scored almost 8,000 runs across formats with the help of 17 centuries and 54 half-centuries in 199 innings.

Pakistan's ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2024 warm-up fixtures revealed

Sports Desk

DUBAI: Pakistan will face Scotland and Bangladesh in the warm-up fixtures of the upcoming Women's T20 World Cup 2024, scheduled to be played in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

The warm-up matches will be played from 28 September to 1 October, serving as an opportunity for the teams to acclimatize to the conditions ahead of the mega-event.

Each team will play two warm-up games and will be allowed to field the complete 15-member squad in those matches.

Pakistan will face Scotland in their first T20 World Cup warm-up match on 28 September, followed by a clash with Bangladesh on 30



September.

For the unversed, the tournament was originally scheduled to be held in Bangladesh however due to the ongoing political turmoil in the country, it was relocated to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) with the

matches staged in Dubai and Sharjah.

The mega event will kick off with hosts Bangladesh taking on Scotland on October 3 in Sharjah before Pakistan open their campaign against Sri Lanka later that day at the same venue.

Schedule of ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2024 warm-up fixtures:

28 September, Saturday, Pakistan v Scotland, Sevens, Dubai, 6 PM

28 September, Saturday, Sri Lanka v Bangladesh, ICCA1, Dubai, 6 PM

29 September, Sunday, New Zealand v South Africa, Sevens, Dubai, 6 PM

29 September, Sunday, India v West Indies, ICCA2, Dubai, 6 PM

29 September, Sunday, Australia v England, ICCA1, Dubai, 6 PM

30 September, Monday, Sri Lanka v Scotland, Sevens, Dubai, 6 PM

30 September, Monday, Bangladesh v Pakistan, ICCA2, Dubai, 6 PM

1 October, Tuesday, West Indies v Australia, Sevens, Dubai, 6 PM

1 October, Tuesday, England v New Zealand, ICCA2, Dubai, 6 PM

1 October, Tuesday, South Africa v India, ICCA1, Dubai, 6 PM

Pakistan squad for ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2024

Fatima Sana (c), Aliya Riaz, Diana Baig, Gull Feroza, Iram Javed, Muneeba Ali (wk), Nashra Sundhu, Nida Dar, Omaira Sohail, Sadaf Shamas, Sadia Iqbal (subject to fitness), Sidra Amin, Syeda Aroob Hassan, Tasmia Rubab and Tuba Shah.

Travelling reserve: Najiha Alvi (wk).

Non-travelling reserves: Rameen Shamim and Umm-e-Hani.

Tamasha Opens New Innings with First International Streaming of Cricket Matches

Sports Desk

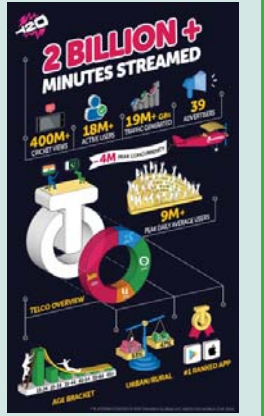
ISLAMABAD: Tamasha, the largest home-grown streaming platform in Pakistan, has secured international streaming rights for Pakistan's test matches against Bangladesh in August and September, and the test match against England in October, through a partnership with the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB).

With 18 million monthly active viewers in June 2024, this marks Tamasha's entry into international streaming, broadening its reach beyond Pakistan's national borders into sub-Saharan Africa and India. This expansion allows cricket fans to access content that fuels their passion for the game.

Launched in October 2021, Tamasha is the largest home-grown video streaming platform in Pakistan and is accessible to customers of all mobile operators in the country, bringing content to users' devices whether they are on the move, in a social setting, or at home. Tamasha has also the exclusive streaming rights to 2024-2025 ICC Men's and Women's tournaments in Pakistan.

"Digital streaming platforms are revolutionizing how fans engage with and consume sports events globally. We are proud to bring some of the world's greatest cricket events to viewers not only in Pakistan, but also to fans in sub-Saharan Africa and India, delivering content in the most accessible way possible," explains Aamer Ejaz, President of Digital Platforms at Jazz. "Under our Digital Operator strategy, we provide services in entertainment, finance, education, healthcare and more; and we are delighted to make each of these experiences as widely accessible as possible."

During the ICC Men's T20 Cricket World Cup 2024 in July 2024, Tamasha recorded over 18 million monthly active users and 70% of all digital views of the tournament, peaking at 9 million daily active users. The app reached the top ranking on both the Apple App Store and Google Play Store. Tamasha has attracted over 50 international and local advertisers in the past year, positioning it as a top choice for brand partnerships in the Pakistan's digital space as audiences increasingly move away from traditional TV and adopt digital streaming.



Saad Alam and Noor Zaman hit Centuries in Master Oil Inter Club Cricket Tournament

Sports Desk

KARACHI: Three More Matches decided in the Master Oil Inter Club Cricket Tournament at various cricket Grounds.

The highlights of the days play was brilliant Centuries by Saad Alam 144 and Noor Zaman 109.

The Tournament is being organized by Regional Cricket Association Karachi with the collaboration of Master Oil Lubricants.

Scores in Brief:

Malir Sports beat Late Ismail Jaffer CC by 4 wickets at KCCA Stadium. Late Ismail Jaffer CC scored 180/6 in 40 overs. Abdullah Danish 72 6x4, Muhammad Rizwan 37, Sajjad Ahmed 36 not out, Muhammad Azaan 20. Abdullah Ghouri 4/26.

Malir Sports 181/6 in 39.4 overs. Amir Idrees 74 5x4 1x6 not out, Danish Rafiq, 29.

In the 2nd Match SMS Gymkhana beat Recreation CC by 139 runs at Eid Gah Ground Nazimabad. SMS Gymkhana 282/6 in 40 overs. Saad Alam 144 18x4 4x6, Akbar Babar 53 4x4 2x6, Shaharyar Ghani 30.

Muhammad Mhawe 2/44.

Recreation CC 144 all out in 19.4 overs. Haris Yaqoob 62 4x4. 5x6, Abu Bakar 28, Qaiser Atiq 22. Shaharyar Ghani 3/15, Syed Ali Ahmed 2/42 Akbar Babar 2/48.

In the 3rd Match Sun CC beat N. K. Rangers CC by 263 runs at Student Ground. Sun CC 316/8 in allotted 40 overs. Noor Zaman 109 12x4 4x6, Talat Mehmood 80 7x4 2x6, Roman Ali 32, Asif Khan 24, Atta Khan 20. Muhammad Qasim 2/36, Muhammad Zohaib 2/39, Raees Ahmed 2/57.

N. K. Rangers CC 53 all out in 14.3 overs. Muhammad Zubair 21. Atta Khan 4/17, Abdullah Salam 2/1, Azeem Afridi 2/12, Zaib Nawaz 2/19.

James Anderson picks Virat Kohli as greatest finisher in white-ball cricket



A Sports

Legendary England pacer James Anderson garnered massive praise on India's batting star Virat Kohli, terming him as the greatest finisher in white-ball cricket.

Anderson, who recently bid adieu to Test cricket, appeared in BBC's Tailenders podcast and talked about his admiration for Kohli's brilliance in run chases.

"I do not know if there is been a better batter in the history of the game batting second and chasing down scores than Virat Kohli," Anderson said. "His record at chasing is absolutely phenomenal. The number of hundreds he has scored in the second innings, chasing down scores is ridiculous."

Virat Kohli's records in run chase in white-ball cricket back James Anderson's remarks as the right-handed batter has scored 7,852 runs at an average of 64.36 with the help of 27 centuries and 40 fifties. "It is no surprise that when he gets in that situation, with his mentality, it is just like it is meant to be. His self-belief is so high," Anderson added.

When asked if James Anderson considers Virat Kohli the greatest white-ball batter of all time, the England legend refrained before mentioning Australia's Michael Bevan.

"I cannot say that. I was thinking more in terms of just chasing. Michael Bevan from Australia comes to my mind, particularly in the late 1990s and early 2000s – he was just phenomenal coming in at number six and doing that job," the England pacer added.

"Kohli batting at number 3 gets those hundreds while Bevan was renowned for getting his 50s, 60s and being at the end, while Kohli gets the big score, to get his teams over the line. I honestly can't think of a better finisher and greater white-ball players than him (Kohli)," he concluded.

Called on

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi, and Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti, called on President Asif Ali Zardari at Aiwan-e-Sadr on Tuesday.



Photo: Online

President stresses upon effective measures to eliminate terrorists in Balochistan

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Tuesday stressed upon taking of all possible steps

to improve security situation in Balochistan and called for effective measures for the complete elimination of terrorists. The president expressed

these views during a meeting with Interior Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi and Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfaraz Bugti who called on him to

discuss security and law and order situation in the province, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release. The meeting was briefed

on the recent incidents of terrorism in Balochistan and discussed proposals for maintaining law and order in the province.

Govt aims to accelerate digitization for socio-economic development: Shaza Fatima

Bureau Report

KARACHI: The government aims to put in place an accelerated digitization ecosystem to enable socio-economic development, expand the knowledge-based economy, and spur economic growth. This was stated by the State Minister for IT and Telecommunication, Shaza Fatima while inaugurating the 2nd edition of ITCN Asia 2024 here on Tuesday.

She pointed out the importance of the rapid adoption of information and communication technology (ICT) for our country's socio-economic advancement and added the importance of creating a conducive environment for the IT industry.

"We are committed to holistically advancing our IT ecosystem, from crafting relevant policies and legislation to nurturing a culture of innovation. These efforts are yielding significant results, as evidenced by the consistent growth of the IT industry in terms of company numbers, revenue, exports, and workforce, especially this year, considering we have experienced 24% growth in IT exports reaching \$3.22bn. This growth reflects the confidence in our local companies' ability to deliver IT solutions and services that meet the expectations of international clients," she added.

Zohaib Khan, Chairman of the Pakistan Software House Association,



appreciated the role of Special Invest-

ment Facilitation Council (SIFC) for its role in boosting Pakistan's economy and investment, particularly in the IT sector.

Secretary General Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Yousef Hasan Khalawi and Other speakers included Project Director ITCN Asia Muhammad Umair Nizam, Past P@SHA President Jahan Ara, and CEO of Pakistan Software Exchange Board Syed Sohail Javaad, who also spoke on occasion.

Organized by E-Commerce Gateway, the event hosted over 300 speakers, 70,000 industry participants, and 350 foreign delegates from 17 countries, underscoring the global interest in Pakistan's IT potential.

Ahsan calls for utilizing China's expertise, technology in agriculture sector

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Tuesday stressed the importance of leveraging China's expertise and technological advancements in Pakistan's agriculture sector, once considered the backbone of the national economy.

He expressed these views while chairing a meeting regarding the recent visit of the Prime Minister to China,



according to a news release.

During the meeting, participants discussed the possibility of sending provincial experts from the agriculture

sector to China for further development and knowledge exchange.

Ahsan Iqbal said the exchange of trade delegations would help build trust between the private sectors of the two countries, adding Pakistan would raise the issue of easing visa procedures for its entrepreneurs with the Chinese embassy.

He also mentioned that Pakistan was utilizing all available resources to ensure the safety of Chinese investors and officials.

The minister reiterated the federal government's commitment to providing all possible facilities to private investors and taking necessary steps to remove obstacles hindering foreign investment, ensuring a conducive environment for trade and investment.

He directed the relevant authorities to complete and submit a framework for the transfer of Chinese industries to Pakistan within a week, outlining the standards and outcomes required for the quality and success of industrial sectors.

PM AJK says funds have been channeled down to the grassroots level to improve service delivery

Bureau Report

NEELUM: Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq, while stressing the need for completion of development projects within the stipulated period, has said that funds have been channeled down to the grassroots level to improve service delivery.

"It is quite unfortunate that only 22 percent of people in Neelum pay electricity bills despite the cheap electricity supply", the PM noted. "Out of 22,000 consumers, only 4,000 consumers are paying



electricity bills", he lamented. He said that people should cooperate with the administration for timely payment of electricity and water bills. "Action should be taken against those

consumers who refuse to pay electricity bills", he said. The PM also directed the administrator buildings to submit a report regarding the repair of PWD guest house and the re-

vision of the Athmuqam water supply scheme within one month. He also directed the Director of Forests, Neelum Circle to compile a report and submit the complete

record of timber in the transit depot. The Prime Minister was given a detailed briefing about the construction work of the project by Managing Director PDO Azad Kashmir Khawaja Masood Qadir. He directed the Inland Revenue Officer to ensure registration of Guest Houses Hotels in the area. Government Ministers including Colonel (Retd) Waqar Ahmed Noor, Mian Abdul Waheed Advocate, Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, Chaudhry Azhar Sadiq, Sardar Javed Ayub, Chaudhry Rashid, Qasim Majeed were also present on this occasion.

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PNS Yarmook Conducts Exercise with Oman Navy Ship in Gulf Of Oman During Regional Maritime Security Patrol



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Navy Ship YARMOOK conducted Passage Exercise with Royal Navy of Oman Vessel (RNOV), AL SEEB during Regional Maritime Security Patrol in Gulf of Oman. The exercise was aimed to develop synergy and mutual understanding between the two navies while demonstrating interoperability to undertake Joint Ops in the region. Earlier, PNS YARMOOK also visited Muscat, Oman, where

Commanding Officer called on military leadership of Oman and discussed matters of mutual interest.

Pakistan Navy regularly operates along with other navies for a common cause of promoting peace and stability in the region.

Cognizant of its national obligation to maintain rule based order at sea, PN regularly deploys its warships on Regional Maritime Security Patrol (RMSPP) and also contributes to collaborative maritime security efforts.

Govt. resolute in countering terrorism: Rana Sana

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Advisor to the Prime Minister on Political Affairs, Rana Sanaullah Khan said on Tuesday that the government was resolutely committed to defeating terrorism and will thwart the nefarious plans of terrorists.

Talking to a private news channel, he said this issue was being taken with the utmost seriousness and that there was no room for leniency.

He said the political dimensions of the issue were important, and both the federal and provincial governments were involved in addressing it.

Advisor said that there was need for a fruitful discussion and comprehensive debate in National assembly on the political dimensions of the matter.

He called for detailed discussions reflecting the views of people from Balochistan and southern Punjab, suggesting that a cohesive strategy should be developed based on these discussions.

"The federal, provincial govern-



ments and all security agencies were united in its approach to resolving the situation," he said.

Regarding political alliances, he confirmed that Maulana Fazl-ur-Rehman has maintained his distinct identity and was not part of any alliance against government.

However, he assured that the government was open to discussions with Maulana Fazlur Rehman or any other political party on both political and constitutional matters.

FBR rebuts rumors of upcoming amnesty scheme for smuggled vehicles

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) on Tuesday denied rumors circulating on social media about an upcoming amnesty scheme to regularize smuggled vehicles.

The board clarified that no such

scheme is under consideration of the federal government at this time, said a news release.

The general public is therefore, advised not to believe any such misinformation circulating in the social media or any other unverified sources.

Women Senators demand iron fist for terrorists

ISLAMABAD, AUG 27 (APP): The women senators on Tuesday demanded the government to take the terrorists to task with iron hands for unleashing unmatched barbarism in the Balochistan province.

Speaking on the Balochistan carnage during the 342nd session of the Senate, Parliamentary Leader of Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPPP), Senator Sherry Rehman said there was no distinction between terrorists as good or bad as any hostile elements picking up weapons against the state were terrorists and country enemy.

She said the PPPP leadership faced terrorism and violence due to its leadership's strong stance against insurgency in the country. "Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto was the only leader who announced to hoist Pakistani flag in Swat during the terrorists' insurgency and was martyred by the terrorists," she added.

Senator Rehman underlined that

some 80,000 to 90,000 civilians and numerous soldiers of the armed forces and law enforcement agencies (LEAs) personnel had embraced martyrdom in the war on terror.

Pakistan, she said was alone in fighting a war against terror, and our society was penetrated through Afghanistan by insurgents and consequently, many terror groups emerged with different names at that time.

"Pakistan Armed Forces did the impossible counter-terrorism operations despite having the least knowledge of asymmetric warfare and learned through its experiences.

The then Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gillani and Gillani and President Asif Ali Zardari took the government seriously on the matter of terrorism and took the opposition and political leadership into confidence. We paid a heavy price in that regard as PPP faced many martyrdoms and Gillani's son was abducted by terrorists," she added.