



"We are taking action what we deem necessary for our security. We will work to resolve issues with the Afghan government. Geography is not going to change"

Pakistan's permanent representative in the UN
Munir Akram

EDF Board approves 20 proposals of worth Rs 8.5 bn for textile, Agri, global branding

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: In a significant move to bolster Pakistan's export sector, the Export Development Fund (EDF) has approved 20 proposals of worth Rs 8.5 billion for initiatives targeting textiles, agriculture, gems and jewelry, defense, and global branding.

This was approved during the 85th meeting of the Export Development Fund (EDF) Board under the chairmanship of Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan, said a news release here on Sunday. The Board approved 20 out of the 29 financial proposals by participating in Expo 2025 in Osaka Japan. The minister highlighted the potential available in the reformed EDF for boosting the Pakistan exports by channelizing the money into various activities as per needs of the exporters and creating facilitative mode at the national level for value addition, research & development, increasing compliance as per global requirement, upgradation of the export infrastructure and marketing/branding of the country's potential in the international arena.

The Board was apprised that EDF has made drastic reforms during the recent times which include notification of EDF as autonomous body, amendment in the EDF Act for direct transfer of Export Development Surcharge to EDF Public Account, digitalization of revenue collection system with the help of State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) and Pakistan Single Window (PSW).

The board was informed that a detailed activity has been initiated with the help of FCDO Remit Project for development of Vision, Mission and Future Strategy of EDF while a Chartered Accountancy Firm has also been hired to restructure EDF as an organization for efficient, effective and transparent utilization of the fund and its impact assessment. Chairman EDF Board directed to form various committees from amongst the EDF Board members to overlook research & development, training, technology enhancement, international outreach for assisting the Board to adopt forward-looking proactive approach. The EDF Board also directed to share details of proposed EDF-PSW MoU in the next meeting for proper analysis of the Board.

The intent of the MoU is to create two-way direct communication between EDF and exporters using PSW platform for need analysis, impact assessment, market intelligence and sectoral/regional/geographic tagging of exporters for targeted information sharing.

The projects included various marketing interventions such as holding of international level exhibitions inside Pakistan such as Texpo 2025 by TDAP, IDEAS by DEPO, Gems & Jewelry Show by FPCCI, OIC-Conference and WEXNET targeting Women empowerment by Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP). These exhibitions will not only support Pakistani exporters to exhibit their products but will be used as branding activities for Pakistan across the globe. The project funding includes facilitation to international buyers through provision of best hospitality and arrangement of B2B meetings for best match-making. The Board also approved projects linked to research & development and technology acquisition which included opening of UNIDO assisted International Technology Promotion Offices at TUSDEC, Disease Diagnostic Research Centre for Mango at Sindh Agriculture University, Tando Jam, Design Centre at Pakistan Institute of Fashion Design, Lahore as well as establishment of Solar Tunnel Dryer for Exportable Dried Chillies at Umer Kot, Mirpur Khas and Badin.



ISLAMABAD: Commerce Minister Jam Kamal Khan chairs the 85th EDF Board meeting, approving Rs. 8.5 billion for initiatives aimed at boosting Pakistan's textile, agriculture, and global branding efforts.

Public rejects politics of chaos, endorses government's sound economic policies: PM

PM Shehbaz strongly condemns terrorist attack on police mobile near Mallam Jabba

LONDON: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday said that the public had rejected the politics of chaos and instead prioritized the need for sound economic policies that directly address inflation and improve the living standard of the people.

"The people want a reduction in inflation, solutions to their problems, and economic betterment," the prime minister said in a statement issued by the PM Office.

The prime minister, stressing the urgency of addressing the public's economic concerns, called for a shift in political priorities, arguing that instead of focusing on rallies and political gatherings, the immediate need was to improve the economic condition of the masses. "We will hold rallies in 2028; but right now, it is time to work hard to fulfill the pledges made to the people."

He linked the success of the country's economic recovery directly to political stability, warning that political chaos would disrupt efforts to provide relief to the public. "Economic recovery is tied to political stability; political chaos means affecting the process of providing relief to the people," he said.

He praised the people for their role in supporting economic growth by promoting political stability and emphasized that national unity



was crucial for sustaining this progress.

"National unity for political stability will prove to be the guarantee of Pakistan's bright economic future and relief from inflation," he remarked.

To address the country's ongoing economic and security challenges, the prime minister called for collaboration between political parties, institutions, and provinces. "To tackle economic challenges and terrorism, the nation, political parties, institutions, and provinces must work together," he urged.

Recalling the past political instability, PM Shehbaz Sharif lamented that a lot of time had been wasted in political chaos therefore wasting more time was not in the interest of the country and the nation.

On the economic front, the prime minister was

optimistic about the country's progress, noting that inflation had returned to single digits and that Pakistan's overall economic situation was improving. "Thank God, inflation has returned to single digits, and the economic situation is improving," he said, highlighting key indicators such as rising exports, the stability of the rupee, increasing remittances, and declining interest rates.

Looking forward, the prime minister underscored that the current International Monetary Fund (IMF) program should be the last one for Pakistan, saying "if it is so, it will be a true success". He warned that abusive language, violence, and chaos would not lead to progress, urging every province and institution to play its role in solving the public's problems.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday strongly condemned the terrorist attack on a police mobile near Mallam Jabba, district Swat. The prime minister prayed for the elevation of ranks of the martyred policeman in Jannah and offered his heartfelt condolence to the bereaved family members.

He also prayed for the swift recovery of those injured in the incident. The prime minister directed the relevant authorities to provide all possible medical assistance to the injured. APP

Enemies of Pakistan want to destabilize the country politically, economically & socially: Ahsan Iqbal

Says Pakistan's military & political leadership will not allow anyone to play with the future of the country

NAROWAL: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal Chaudhry says political and military leadership will resist any conspiracy to destabilize the country.

Speaking at a ceremony in Zafarwal area of Narowal Sunday, Ahsan Iqbal said enemies of Pakistan want to destabilize the country politically, economically and socially.

He raised concerns about an ongoing international media campaign supporting PTI founder. The Minister said a prominent Israeli journal, the Jerusalem Post, has published the third article favoring PTI founder. He said this series of articles was part of a larger campaign orchestrated by pro-Israel and Zionist lobbies to promote PTI founder.

Ahsan Iqbal said PTI had previously staged a sit-in to sabotage visit of the Chinese President to Pakistan and now PTI is organizing protests again forthcoming Shanghai Cooperation Organization conference.

Ahsan Iqbal said that Pakistan is weakened by carrying out worst kind of propaganda against the institutions. He said that Imran Khan's public gatherings and sit-ins are an effort to sabotage the CPEC. He said that Pakistan's military and political leadership will not allow anyone to play with the future of the country.

Ahsan Iqbal paid tribute to the people of Punjab and Pakistan for not participating in the public gathering of PTI. He said that Pakistan is in the safe hands, adding that Pakistan's military and political leadership will not allow playing with the future of the country. SABAH

Tarar grieved over death of brother of PTV's DAP Farhat Janjua

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister of Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar on Sunday expressed deep grief and sorrow over the death of the elder brother of PTV Director Admin and Personnel Farhat Abbas Janjua. The minister for information expressed his heartfelt condolences and sympathy to the bereaved family. Tarar said that he was deeply saddened to hear the news of the death of Farhat Abbas Janjua's elder brother and shared the grief of the bereaved family. He prayed to Allah Almighty to rest the departed soul in eternal peace and grant courage to the bereaved family to bear this loss with fortitude. APP

President, PM felicitate President-elect of Sri Lanka

President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif have extended heartfelt felicitations to Anura Kumara Dissanayake on his victory in the presidential elections of Sri Lanka.

In his congratulatory message, the President said that Pakistan greatly values its ties with the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka as both countries enjoy excellent cooperation in various areas of mutual interest. The President expressed the hope that bilateral

relations between the two countries would further strengthen under leadership of Sri Lankan President-elect.

President Zardari also wished good health and continued prosperity for the leadership and people of Sri Lanka.

In a statement posted on social media platform X, the Prime Minister wished the President-elect every success, and said he looks forward to working with him for further strengthening of Pakistan-Sri Lanka relations.

Rana Tanveer initiates process to enhance provincial coordination for SMEs development



LAHORE: Federal Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain has initiated a process to enhance coordination

with provincial governments for equitable development of the SMEs across the country as per advice of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. In this regard, he held a meeting with Punjab government's Industries department at PCOM, according to a SMEDA spokesman here Saturday. The meeting was also attended by Ehsan Bhutta, Secretary Industries Punjab, and Ms. Saira Umar, Managing Director PSIC, from the Punjab government. The minister was accompanied by Saif Anjum, Federal Secretary Industries and Production and Socrat Aman Rana, Chief Executive Officer of SMEDA. A number of the other senior officers including GM SMEDA Ms. Saleha Saeed and Ms. Nadia Jehangir Seth.

Addressing the meeting, the federal minister said that Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) plays a crucial role in the economy of any country, contributing significantly to employment generation, economic growth, innovation, and social stability. SMEs are essential drivers of economic

development, job creation, innovation, and social progress. The Small Medium Enterprises have momentous role in economic development of the country. Small businesses can play a key role in shaping the national growth strategy, he said, adding the development and progress of Small Medium Enterprises are top priority of the current government. The government is determined to maintain equitable development of SMEs in all provinces of the country that is why a coordination process has been initiated with provinces on direction of the PM, he said and assured that the government will facilitate and incentivize SMEs to achieve optimal economic growth in the country. He said that such coordination meetings would also be held with other province on regular basis to maintain a conducive support mechanism for SMEs across the country. The federal minister further said that improving small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Pakistan require a comprehensive approach addressing various aspects ranging from regulatory frameworks to access to finance and technology. The federal government will immediately take all necessary steps to facilitate SMEs for economic uplift of the people. We shall implement structural reforms such as streamlining regulations and taxes for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to promote growth and job creation, he added.

Embassy facilitating repatriation of deceased Pakistani student's body: FO

ISLAMABAD: The Foreign Office on Sunday said that the Embassy of Pakistan in Beijing was facilitating the process of the repatriation of the dead body of a Pakistani student who passed away in China and was in contact with the university and her family members.

Foreign Office spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch, responding to the social media reports on the delay in repatriation of the mortal remains of a Pakistani student, said in a statement, "The Embassy of Pakistan in Beijing is facilitating the process. It is working towards completion of the legal procedures and to facilitate repatriation with the next available Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) flight." She said that legal procedures and regulations needed to be fulfilled in the repatriation of dead bodies from China.

Furthermore, she said that the transportation through commercial flights involved special arrangements including embalming of the body and transportation of the remains in a specialized vehicle with cold storage. The dead body can be sent after the completion of these arrangements. APP

Abdul Aleem launches major development projects in NA-117

LAHORE: Social and political figures from the constituency, including former councillors, municipal representatives, and local leaders, met with Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan to discuss a special development package for the area.

The meeting focused on major infrastructure projects aimed at addressing long-standing issues in NA-117.

Minister Abdul Aleem Khan announced the commencement of several development schemes, including the construction of water supply systems, sewerage infrastructure, road carpeting, and the building of new link and service roads.

As part of the initiative, 21 new tubewells and one disposal station will be installed, which the minister emphasized will resolve the decades-old water supply problems in the constituency. The package, valued at billions of rupees, also includes the construction of four connecting

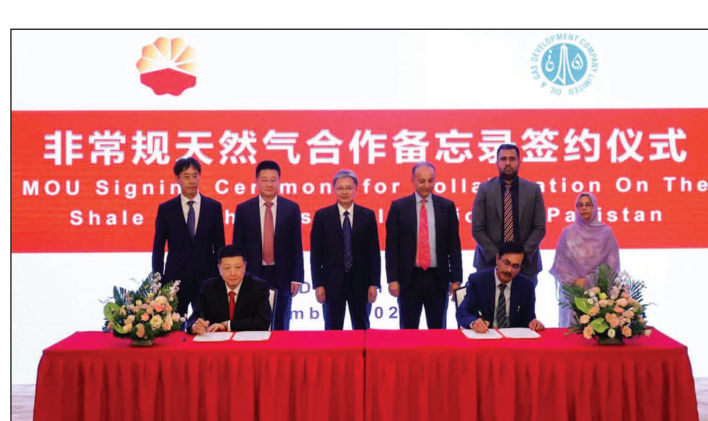
Minister Aleem announced the commencement of several development schemes, including the construction of water supply systems, sewerage infrastructure, road carpeting, and the building of new link and service roads

roads and a new U-turn, with a budget of Rs900 million. Khan assured that these projects are being carried out to meet the public's demands and resolve issues that have remained unsolved for 30 years. "We are committed to addressing the concerns of NA-117 on a priority basis," Khan said, reaffirming his dedication to the development of the region. INP

OGDCL signs MoU with Chinese CCDC for shale, tight gas development in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed on Sunday between Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL), Pakistan's leading Exploration & Production company, and CCDC, the major player in Drilling and upstream Oil field Services for the development of shale and tight gas potential of Pakistan.

Federal Minister for Petroleum, Dr. Musadik Malik witnessed the MoU signing ceremony in Xi'an, Shaanxi Province, China, during the ongoing 8th Silk Road International Expo for Investment and Trade, according to a news release received here. The agreement highlights the commitment of both countries to developing Pakistan's shale and tight gas



potential, aiming to address the country's energy needs through indigenous resources.

Executive Director (Production) of OGDCL, Mumtaz Ali Soomro and Vice President of CNPC Chuanqing

Drilling Engineering Company Ltd., Mr. Zhang Zhidong signed the MoU on behalf of their respective organizations.

Ambassador of Pakistan to China, Khalil Hashmi also attended the event.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Musadik Malik expressed hope that cooperation in the energy sector between both nations will continue to strengthen in the future, benefiting both countries mutually. He highlighted the collaboration between Oil & Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) and CCDC on shale and tight gas, stating that this partnership will open a new chapter in the exploration of Pakistan's untapped energy resources. APP

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Power-sector realities

DR RAASHID WALI JANJUA

Let us proceed step by step in identifying the realities of the power sector that have led to the current crisis and explore remedies in the form of sustainable solutions. The first issue is our skewed power generation mix, where thermal generation, mostly dependent on costly imported fuel, has outpaced the hydel and renewable components. According to energy experts, for power generation to be economical in Pakistan, hydel generation should account for a minimum of 50 per cent. Currently, it stands at only 28.3 per cent. For an oil-importing country with inadequate and dwindling gas reserves, increasing the share of renewables and hydel in the national power generation mix is a strategic necessity. The second issue is flawed planning and execution on the supply side. Over time, we have based our capacity enhancement on overly optimistic assumptions of economic growth through the Indicative Generation Capacity Expansion Plan (IGCEP). Our power sector's problems stem from poor capacity utilization and inadequate demand, especially in the industrial sector. The IGCEP was based on a 6.0 per cent growth projection, while the IMF now projects just 2.8 per cent. Since the industry has not grown as expected, the installed electricity capacity has not been fully utilized, leading to higher capacity charges. Another issue recently raised by APTMA is the high industrial tariff and the impact of cross-subsidies. The matter of subsidies and cross-subsidies must be viewed holistically. There are direct subsidies provided by the government to poor consumers, as well as subsidies from some consumers to others. Additionally, there are intra-disco subsidies, such as those from LESCO to HESCO and SEPCO. The industrial tariff was reduced by Rs8 in January 2024 by removing a cross-subsidy of Rs7-8 to stimulate demand. To lessen the burden of capacity payments, industrial demand needs to be further increased. Another pressing issue is the high-capacity charges of IPPs, which were established during a time of acute power shortages when no investor was willing to invest in Pakistan. The 'Take or Pay' contracts should not have been agreed upon, but they were introduced under circumstances where Pakistan's single-buyer market compelled Independent Power Producers (IPPs) to maintain the ability to supply power at all times, as directed by the National Power Control Center (NPCC) and Nepra, following the Merit Order Dispatch system. In Pakistan's power sector, there is a single transmission grid that does not accommodate a multi-buyer market. Some countries, like China, operate a single-buyer market efficiently, while others, such as the UK and US, run equally efficient multi-buyer market models. In Pakistan, however, the power sector faces significant distribution challenges. The country suffers from 16 per cent annual T&D (Transmission and Distribution) losses and 11 per cent collection losses, resulting in a combined loss of 27 per cent of the electricity generated. In contrast, the global average for T&D losses is only 10 per cent. To improve performance, Pakistan's DISCOs should be privatized, and a competitive multi-buyer market should be established under the Competitive Trade Bilateral Contract Model (CTBCM). Pakistan's installed generation capacity stands at 42,131MW, whereas the transmission grid can only handle 29,000MW, currently running at 22,000MW due to technical issues within the grid. The transmission system, particularly the north-south transmission line, faces serious challenges, especially during the winter months. During this time, cheaper power generated in the south cannot be transferred to the north. Additionally, the cheaper power in the south cannot be used as an incentive for the industry in the south because it would disrupt industrial competitiveness between the north and south. Therefore, the problems related to the north-south transmission grid must be resolved. The government should also encourage bilateral Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs) and wheeling agreements in a business-to-business (B2B) model. Developing a north-south gas pipeline should be prioritized to make gas more readily and economically available to IPPs. Now, turning to the issue of capacity payments, it is important to note that no IPP can operate without capacity payments. This is because IPPs must cover their debts, and fixed maintenance costs to ensure the readiness of their plants and provide returns to investors. The average capacity tariff for imported, Thar coal-based, and RLNG plants with an installed capacity of 11,500MW was less than Rs3 per unit when the tariff was determined in 2015-16. Since then, Rs18 per unit has been added due to lower dispatch and macroeconomic factors. Capacity charges account for only 31 per cent of the total consumer tariff. According to Nepra's State of Industry Report 2022-23, government taxes, surcharges, and duties collectively contribute an additional 32 per cent to the consumer tariff, over and above the cost of electricity. The share of CPEC projects, including Thar coal-based IPPs, is disproportionately high in the capacity payment components. Out of Rs2.14 trillion in capacity payments to IPPs, Rs880 billion is allocated to Chinese-owned CPEC IPPs and other coal IPPs, while only Rs130 billion goes to IPPs established under the 1994 and 2002 policies. Therefore, the debt terms with CPEC IPPs need to be renegotiated through government-to-government (G2G) talks, focusing on extending the debt tenor from 10 to 20 years and reducing the debt margin from 4.5 per cent to 2.0 per cent. Government-owned GENCOs make up 52 per cent of the IPPs; they are inefficient and outdated but are not being retired due to issues related to ex-government employees and pensions. These inefficient GENCOs should be shut down after resolving their human resource issues, while the efficient ones should be privatized to promote greater efficiency. The PPAs with privately owned IPPs, however, need to be renegotiated by consensus, particularly regarding changes to the Return on Equity (ROE) and dollar indexation, wherever applicable. A forensic audit by Nepra should be conducted to determine any excess profits earned by IPPs in the past due to efficiency gains and O&M savings, with cases referred to arbitration if the IPPs do not cooperate.

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Amanat Ali Chaudhry

Rethinking the United Nations

While the UN General Assembly sessions, held every year in September, provide world leaders with an opportunity to take stock of the state of the world, articulate their foreign policy priorities and propose solutions, the 79th Session of the UNGA, scheduled to begin on September 24 this year will be preceded by the Summit of the Future (SOTF). Termed as a 'once-in-a-generation' opportunity, the two-day SOTF meeting in New York on September 22-23 will witness national statements from the world leaders followed by their endorsement of the Pact for the Future. The proposal for the Summit of the Future emanated from the UN secretary-general's 'Our Common Agenda' report, which he submitted in response to increasing calls from world leaders for a show of greater human solidarity to build a more peaceful future for the succeeding generations. The 'Our Common Agenda' report identified that multilateralism has weakened considerably with the result that the world faces an urgent choice between 'breakdown and breakthrough'. Global crises such as Covid-19 established that international solidarity was in short supply, as powerful countries took to hoarding vaccines to the detriment of millions of the poor. A combination of recent challenges such as the ongoing Gaza and Ukraine wars, the triple crisis of food, fuel and finance, and the scourge of inequality in terms of access to finance, technology and opportunity has shaken the world order. While the UN was already under critical scrutiny, the above crises have underlined that the multilateral organization is unequal to the challenge of finding solutions to global problems and ensuring the implementation of its charter in its current structural design. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres put it succinctly when he said, "Twenty-first-century challenges require twenty-first-century problem-solving institutions." At another place, he said, "Today's chal-

enges are moving at speeds far too fast for the current tools to solve them due to outdated institutions that are designed for another era and another world." When the UN came into being in 1945, its establishment was in the context of the failure of the League of Nations and an altered geopolitical reality after the Second World War, thus heralding the beginning of the new US-led world order. With 51 countries as its members, the organizational structure of the UN reflected new power centres that dominated the organization's decision-making processes, especially on critical issues such as peace and security. Limping through different stages in the evolution of the international system, the UN today has 193 countries as its members with small and medium powers forming the majority of the organization's membership. These countries, which are at different stages of development, have distinct priorities that may not always align with those of the major powers, as they seek greater access to concessional finance and technology to power their economic journey. Nothing illustrates the inadequacy of the UN in meeting the ever-increasing global challenges more than the dysfunction of the UN Security Council, which has failed miserably in upholding its mandate of maintaining peace and security. As Israel's brutal war continues unabated with more than 42,000 people including children and women dead, the UNSC looks the other way in utter helplessness despite the adoption of two resolutions demanding a ceasefire. While the UNSC periodically debates the Palestinian Question with a special reference to Gaza, Israel continues to render the word 'impunity' into an art form in total and shameless disregard of the UN Charter, the Geneva Convention and the international humanitarian law. What's more, the UN is not the venue of discussions on the peace deals between Hamas and Israel, as they continue to take place outside of the UN system, thus rendering the world body completely irrelevant. It is in this context that the Summit of the Future acquires an added significance in shaping a better, more peaceful and prosperous future, one that inspires hope and rebuilds trust among the member countries and can lay the basis for enhanced global cooperation to address the global challenges. From the issues of peace and security to climate change to addressing development deficits to easing geopolitical tensions between the major powers, every aspect of international relations requires a collaborative approach to problem-solving. With rising inequality, a deepening technological divide, the spread of populism and the confidence in the multilateral system at its lowest, the world stands at an inflection point in history. While the Summit rightly seeks to achieve the overarching objectives of reaffirming the UN Charter as the basis of global cooperation; rethinking multilateralism, boosting implementation of existing commitments and proposing consensual solutions, the details of the pudding lie in the eating. The negotiations around the Pact for the Future, a process facilitated by Germany and Namibia as co-chairs, have faced several problems due to differences in the priorities of the member countries. The foremost area of divergence has been the stark inability of the developed world to agree to the provision of concessional finance required by the developing countries of the Global South to deliver on the challenge of climate mitigation and adaptation. Against the demand of trillions of dollars, the amount made available so far is a paltry \$100 billion, which falls far short of the need. The economically powerful countries have shown no warmth to the idea of rethinking the international financial architecture, as they consider such rearrangement as posing a significant danger to their economic hegemony. The reform of the UN system, the UNSC in particular, is another area where consensus has eluded despite the UNSC reform having been on the agenda for as long as one can remember. There is a widespread realization that the UNSC needs reforms to be able to cope with the challenges to global peace. The differences lie in how to bring about these reforms. The UNSC, in its current format, does not reflect the existing political reality. While the Permanent Five (P5) are not ready to consider regulation on the use of veto much less doing away with its use altogether, especially on questions involving the genocide of civilians, a group of four countries (G4) – India, Germany, Brazil and Japan – are lobbying for permanent seats on the Council. The Uniting for Consensus (UfC) Group, of which Pakistan is a leading member along with fourteen other countries, has resisted the idea of the expansion of the Security Council, stating that the expansion of the permanent membership will further increase the Council's dysfunction. It has proposed the addition of non-permanent but elected members in addition to mooted the idea of regional and cross-regional representation in line with the positions of the African Union and the Arab and OIC Groups. Pakistan has strongly advocated the principle of sovereign equality among the UN member states as the basis of its principled position on the UNSC reform. Another sticking point between the Global North and Global South is the notion that the current system of trade, investment and technology transfer does not serve the interest of the latter. Developed nations prioritize sustainability and market-driven systems. This has led to tensions over how much the 'Pact for the Future' should reform global economic governance. Differences have also arisen around regulating digital space, including issues related to data privacy, artificial intelligence and cyber warfare. How to strike a balance between promoting technological innovation and enforcing regulation that protects public interest and achieves digital equality has also dominated discussions. These challenges notwithstanding, the Summit of the Future represents a serious movement forward in righting the historic wrongs and charting a way forward for the betterment of humanity. As Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif put it in his statement during a virtual event titled 'Global Call Ahead of the Summit', "Effective international cooperation is more urgent today than ever before. The Summit of the Future represents a great opportunity. We must not lose it!"

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Today in History

History of Pakistan



However, the Punjab was won by the Islamic Democratic Alliance (Islami Jamhoori Itihad [IJI]), led by Nawaz Sharif, a Punjabi businessman, who became the province's chief minister. Bhutto and her PPP had failed to win a mandate from the voters; however, the party had more seats in the national assembly than its nearest rival, and Ishaq Khan chose Bhutto to organize Pakistan's first civilian administration since the dissolution of her father's government in 1977. Thus, Ishaq Khan was formally elected president in December, and Benazir Bhutto became Pakistan's first female prime minister. Moreover, she was the first woman to head a Muslim state.

To be continued....

Showbiz

Sophie Turner shares rare details about her 'intense' character from 'Joan'

Sophie Turner's forthcoming mini TV series 'Joan' will air on ITV on October 2 this year



Sophie Turner has recently confessed to feeling emotional after filming intense scenes for her upcoming TV series Joan. According to the Daily Mail, the Game of Thrones star revealed that she has become more sensitive while shooting traumatic scenes for her intense character as a mother. During the press conference, the 28-year-old actress mentioned that she could easily shed tears on set due to being swept away by emotions, adding, "I'm a Pisces, I'm emotional." Reported, Sophie portrayed the character of real-life Joan Hannington 'The Godmother' in her forthcoming drama series. Talking about her character she further explained, "She is so funny but she has gone through so much trauma and is so ambitious." "There really is so much to her – mother, lover, liar, thief. It's just remarkable that it's all a true story," she continued. It is important to note that Sophie's upcoming mini-TV series will be released on October 2, 2024. For the unversed, Sophie recently went Instagram official with her new boyfriend Peregrine Pearson after a messy split from Joe Jonas in September 2023. The now-exes co-parent their two daughters Willa Jonas, four and Delphine Jonas, two.

Tech

Young US entrepreneurs use AI chatbots to predict elections better than human polls

In a groundbreaking development, two 19-year-old college dropouts, Cam Fink and Ned Koh, have successfully predicted the outcome of a closely watched New York Democratic primary using AI chatbots, without surveying a single human. Their company, Aaru, claims to have cracked the code on election polling by replacing traditional methods with thousands of AI agents, a technique they say delivers more accurate results. The poll accurately predicted centrist George Latimer's victory over incumbent Jamaal Bowman by a near-perfect margin of 58.7% to 41.3%. Aaru's approach, which uses census data to simulate voter behaviour, has gained attention from Fortune 500 companies, political campaigns, and think tanks. One campaign in California now relies primarily on Aaru for its polling. Cam and Ned say their AI agents, which are programmed to replicate voters' personalities, consume media and adapt their political preferences in real-time. Aaru's polls, drawing on 5,000 AI respondents, can be conducted within a minute and cost a fraction of

Startup Aaru's AI polling method predicts elections faster and cheaper, claiming more accurate results than humans

traditional human surveys. Aaru leverages census data to recreate voter districts by designing AI agents that are programmed to think like the real voters they represent. These agents are assigned hundreds of personality traits, ranging from their goals to their family dynamics. They continuously browse the internet, collecting information to mimic the media consumption habits of the voters they replicate, which can sometimes lead to shifts in their voting preferences. For example, when Donald Trump was injured in an assassination attempt, many of Aaru's AI agents quickly changed their voting preferences to support him.

Vitamin D Supplementation Boosts Quality of Life in IBS Without Easing Symptoms

Taking oral vitamin D supplementation may improve vitamin D status and quality of life in adults with irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), new moderate-level evidence suggests. Yet, the study did not find vitamin D supplements improved symptom severity. "Our results should come as no surprise to those in the field; IBS is a multifaceted disease and vitamin D, much like other classic nutrients, exhibits innate complexities in its actions and interactions, influencing countless biological mechanisms," wrote investigators, led by Kelly C. Cara, from Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy, Tufts University, in Boston. "It is important to note that international recommendations for adequate serum 25(OH)D status, including those from the Endocrine Society, are based on bone-related outcome measures and not IBS."

Research has revealed 82% of people with IBS are insufficient or deficient in serum 25-hydroxyvitamin D (25(OH)D) levels. Despite the common deficiency, it is not known if increasing vitamin D levels will improve symptom severity and quality of life. Investigators conducted a systematic review and meta-analysis to see if changes in vitamin D levels impact symptom severity and quality of life in adults with IBS. The team leveraged data from MEDLINE, Cochrane Central Register of Controlled Trials, Global Health, EMBASE, and Web-of-Science databases up to August 12, 2024, and ultimately included 12 studies (RCT, n = 7; Single-arm interventions, n = 3; Mendelian randomization, n = 2). Among the 12 studies, 7 study populations had deficient (< 20 ng/mL), and 3 had insufficient (21 – 29 ng/mL) baseline serum 25(OH)D levels. Mean baseline serum 25 (OH) D levels for intervention

study groups ranged from 11.68 to 21.33 ng/mL. The randomized controlled trials (RCTs) and single-arm intervention studies had between 40 – 135 participants, aged 18 – 75 years. The 2 Mendelian randomization studies ranged from 187,028 to 496,946 participants and did not report ages. Studies were conducted in various countries, including Iran (n = 4), Egypt (n = 2), Pakistan (n = 1), China (n = 2), the UK (n = 2), and the US (n = 1). Participants in the randomized controlled trials received 3,000 IU daily to 50,000 IU biweekly vitamin D dosages. The change in vitamin D levels was measured after 6 – 26 weeks. Meta-analyses of these randomized controlled trials showed patients on oral vitamin D had increased 25(OH)D levels compared with placebo (pooled mean difference, 20.33; 95% confidence interval [CI], 12.91 to 27.74 ng/mL).



Health

7th Pharma Summit & Awards-2025 to be held on September 25 in Islamabad

NA Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq will be the chief guest at the inaugural session, Senate Chairman Yousuf Raza Gilani will be the chief guest of the award session of the summit

ISLAMABAD: The 7th Pakistan Pharma Summit and Awards-2025 will be held at a hotel in Islamabad on September 25 (Wednesday) with the participation of pharmaceutical industry experts, researchers, academics, and managers from all over the country and abroad.

The summit is expected to be attended by over 400 senior executives, and experts of the pharma industry from all over the country. The theme of this year's conference is "Digital pharma transformation: enhancing efficiency in uncertain times". National Assembly Speaker, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, will be the chief guest at the inaugural session. Coordinator to Prime Minister on Health, Dr. Malik Mukhtar Ahmad Bharath, will be the guest of honour. The keynote address will be delivered by CEO Hevolution Foundation in Saudi Arabia, Dr. Mehmood Khan, on "Molecules to markets: leveraging global innovation, collaboration, and leadership insights to unlock Pakistan's life sciences potential."

According to the Chairman of the summit's organising committee, Dr. Kaiser Waheed, Federal Commerce Minister Mir Jam Kamal Khan, Energy, CEO of the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan, and senior officials of Health, Commerce ministries, and DRAP will also attend the event.

The international keynote address will be delivered by Advanced Manufacturing Technologies Vice-President, Dennis Hall, on "Innovations in pharmaceutical manufacturing-exploring cutting-edge applications". Another keynote address will be delivered by Dr. Semih Kumluk, AI and Digital Head at PWC Academy in the Middle East, on how AI is reshaping the pharmaceutical landscape.

Pinar Kivilcim, Global Client Officer at Ipsos Healthcare, will give an international keynote presentation on leveraging market research for pharma growth. Other important speakers at the summit will be the Chairman of the Pakistan Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association, Mian Khalid Misbahur Rehman, Osman Khalid Waheed, Dr. Mahwash A Khan, Aamir Altaf Qureshi, Usman Shaukat, Mian Asad Shuja-ur-Rehman, Dr. Adeel Abbas, and Haroon Qasim.

On the occasion, over 50 pharmaceutical companies will be given awards for showing excellence in drug production in Pakistan. Senate Chairman, Makhdoom Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani, will be the chief guest of the award session of the summit. SABAH



ISLAMABAD: CDA worker installs a model of floral butterfly at D Chowk enhancing the beauty of the federal capital.

One police constable martyred, three injured in blast while escorting foreign diplomats in Swat: police

President Zardari condemns the blast near a police van in Swat

VOM Report

SWAT/ISLAMABAD: A policeman was martyred while three were injured on Sunday when their vehicle, part of a convoy escorting dignitaries from 12 countries, was caught in an explosion on Malam Jabba Road in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Swat district, police said.

Swat Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Muhammad Ali Khan told a private TV channel that delegations from Indonesia, Portugal, Kazakhstan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Zimbabwe, Rwanda, Turkmenistan, Vietnam, Iran, Russia, and Tajikistan were a part of the convoy.

"As a result of the blast, Constable Burhan has embraced martyrdom, while three other policemen, including Sub-Inspector Sar Zameen, Constable Amanullah, and Constable Habib Gul, have sustained injuries," Muhammad Ali Khan said.

He added that a heavy contingent of police had reached the incident site and relief work was underway, adding that the affected area had been cordoned off, while the police had started a search operation to look for suspects.

"All the ambassadors remained safe in the attack and had been shifted to a safe place



before their departure to Islamabad," the DIG told a foreign news agency. The wounded officers were transported to the District Headquarters Hospital (DHQ) in Saidu Sharif.

The diplomats were visiting the area at the invitation of a local chamber of commerce. No one has so far claimed responsibility for the attack.

Meanwhile, the Russian Embassy in Islamabad took to the X platform and announced that the vehicle leading the diplomats' convoy "hit a mine" in Mingora. "On September 22, Ambassador Albert P. Khorev, along with several other Ambassadors, took part in the

Swat Tourism Summit organised by the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry," the embassy said.

"On the way to the hotel from the town of Mingora in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, an escort vehicle hit a mine. Several policemen were injured, diplomats were not harmed."

Meanwhile President Asif Ali Zardari has condemned the blast near a police van in Swat. In a statement on Sunday, President Asif Ali Zardari paid tribute to the martyred police officer and expressed condolences to the bereaved families.

The President said terrorist elements are enemies not only of the country and the nation but also of humanity. He expressed the resolve to continue efforts for complete elimination of terrorism from the country. The President also prayed for the speedy recovery of those injured in the explosion. Meanwhile Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi condemned the attack on the convoy and expressed regret and sorrow while calling out the PTI-led provincial government for not being able to curb terrorism.

"The provincial government is not sincere in establishing peace and their behavior is encouraging terrorists," he said. "The attack on the police in Swat is a conspiracy of forces hostile to Islam and Pakistan."

We are dedicated to strengthening our economic relationship with Pakistan: Oliver Christian

UK Trade Commissioner Oliver Christian begins key visit to Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: UK Trade Commissioner for Middle East and Pakistan Oliver Christian has landed in Islamabad on his first visit to Pakistan, kicking off a three-day effort to strengthen the UK's economic and trade links with Pakistan.

During his visit, Christian will announce significant new partnerships, including a strategic Transnational Education agreement between Beconhouse International College and the University of Essex; and collaboration between Imperial Healthcare NHS Trust at the Novacare Hospital in Islamabad. These initiatives are set to deepen the UK's investment in Pakistan's education and healthcare sectors. The University of Essex partnership aims to provide Pakistani students with access to world-class education, while the Novacare project will set a new standard in healthcare facilities and services in the region.

British Deputy High Commissioner, Karachi Sarah Mooney said:

"As Pakistan's third-largest trade partner, the UK is committed to driving economic development and addressing challenges that hold back growth. This visit reinforces our commitment to working together to unlock opportunities to benefit both countries."

Meanwhile Trade Commissioner for the Middle East and Pakistan, Oliver Christian has said that the British firms are not just operating in Pakistan, they are market leaders in their respective fields, trusted by millions of consumers as household names and making a significant contribution to the economy. We are dedicated to strengthening our economic relationship with Pakistan, not just through investments and partnerships but by working together to demonstrate the opportunity here for UK businesses, he said.

It is worth mentioning here that Oliver Christian is His Majesty's Trade Commissioner for the Middle East and Pakistan and serves as Consul General to Dubai, appointed in September 2023. He previously led the Prime Minister's Business Unit at Downing Street, supporting four Prime Ministers from 2019 to 2023, where he facilitated over \$78 billion in investment and export deals, and played a key role in launching the UK Global Investment Summit and the Office of Investment. Before this, he was Principal Private Secretary at the Department for International Trade, helping to establish it in 2016. Oliver brings 13 years of government experience across trade, investment, and regulatory roles. He holds a degree in International Relations and Philosophy from Keele University and studied at the University of Toronto. The UK is Pakistan's third-largest export market, with total trade in goods and services between the UK and Pakistan amounting to \$4.1 billion (UK exports \$1.8 billion / Pak imports \$2.3 billion) in the four quarters leading up to the end of Q1 2024. Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust has partnered with Novacare Hospitals to support the development of a 250-bed hospital in Islamabad, set to open in 2026. The hospital will offer 28 clinical services and aims to meet international standards for sustainability and healthcare quality. APP

Iraq Ambassador Lafta calls on PRCS Chairman Laghari

ISLAMABAD: His Excellency Mr. Hamid Abbas Lafta, Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq to Pakistan, visited the National Headquarters of the Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) on Friday, where he met with PRCS Chairman Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari.

The two leaders engaged in discussions centered around strengthening bilateral ties between Pakistan and Iraq, with a special focus on humanitarian collaboration and exploring potential joint initiatives to assist vulnerable communities in both nations. Chairman Laghari provided an overview of PRCS's wide-ranging humanitarian efforts across Pakistan, notably emphasizing the support extended to millions impacted by the devastating monsoon floods of 2022. He highlighted the organization's ongoing recovery initiatives, including providing shelter, livelihood support, WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) services, and cash assistance for flood-affected families.

Ambassador Lafta expressed his delight in visiting PRCS and praised the organization's impactful work under the leadership of Chairman Laghari, especially during natural disasters and crises. DNA

Power theft: Pakistan recovers over Rs114b from defaulters

ISLAMABAD: The Power Division has recovered over Rs114 billion during a countrywide power theft crackdown. The crackdown launched by the Pakistan government and military leadership's measures to restore the country's economy is now showing positive results. According to the details, over 114 billion rupees have been recovered from individuals involved in power theft while over 84,500 electricity thieves were arrested.

During the month of September, the relevant institutions collected over one billion rupees from electricity thieves in Lahore, Gujranwala, Faisalabad, Multan and Islamabad. On September 6, last year, the then caretaker federal government announced plans to launch a crackdown across the country on electricity theft in a bid to reduce the ballooning circular debt in the power sector. The power minister said that there are 10 distribution companies in Pakistan that are facing a total loss of Rs589 billion annually. He said electricity theft and nonpayment of electricity bills are the major causes of this huge loss. It is to be noted here that the inflated power bills triggered country-wide protests from Karachi to Khyber and protests in some parts of the country turned violent. INP

Pakistan's earns \$286 million from IT services

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan earned US \$286.395 million by exporting different Information Technology (IT) services in various countries during the first month of the current fiscal year 2024-25.

This shows a growth of 33.84 per cent as compared with the US \$ 213.980 million earned through the provision of services during the corresponding period of the last fiscal year 2023-24, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. During the month under review, the computer services grew by 44.14 per cent as it surged from US \$172.680 million last year to US \$248.899 million during July 2024.

Among the computer services, the exports of software consultancy services witnessed an increase of 47.38 per cent, from US \$58.425 million to US \$86.103 million this year while the export of hardware consultancy services, however, decreased by 30.68 per cent, from US \$40.440 million to US \$30.350 million. The export of repair and maintenance services surged by 1302.14 per cent from US \$0.035 million to US \$0.490.75 million whereas the export and imports of computer software services also increased by 1.08 per cent, from \$50.327 million to \$50.868 million. In addition, the exports of other computer services also witnessed a growth of 75.14 per cent from US \$63.453 million to US \$111.131 million. Meanwhile, the export of information services during the month under review also increased by 47.50 per cent growing from US \$0.300 million to US \$0.442 million. DNA

Engagement necessary despite issues with Afghanistan: Munir Akram

NEW YORK: Pakistan's permanent representative in the United Nations (UN) Munir Akram has said Pakistan wants to help the people of Afghanistan and correct the mistakes of their government.

Speaking in an interview with a US broadcaster, Munir Akram said: "Engagement with the Afghan Taliban is necessary despite differences on many issues. We have many issues with the government, but our relation is with the people of Afghanistan."

"We have a comprehensive policy with regard to Afghanistan and we will continue to pursue this policy. We want to help the people of Afghanistan and correct the mistakes of their government."

"We are taking action what we deem necessary for our security. We will work to resolve issues with the Afghan government. Geography is not going to change."

"We have to keep relations with our neighbours. There is no change in relations between the people of Pakistan and Afghanistan," he said.

Munir Akram said no meeting was planned between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and President Joe Biden at the sideline of the UN Session, adding the PM would address UN Gen-

eral Assembly and Security Council and meet the heads of important countries.

He emphasised that terrorist group Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) is rapidly expanding its influence with the support of the Afghan interim government.

Backed by the Taliban, these terrorists are equipped with advanced weaponry and increasingly collaborate with other insurgent factions, including secessionist groups like the Majeed Brigade.

Pakistan fears that the TTP's growing alliance with Al-Qaeda could soon elevate it to a central role in regional and global terrorist activities.

The ambassador also stressed Pakistan's readiness to collaborate with regional and international bodies to curb this growing menace, as Islamabad continues its nationwide crackdown on Fitna al-Khawarij.

Furthermore, the ambassador criticised the Afghan interim government for its ongoing human rights abuses, particularly against women and girls. He condemned Kabul's failure to uphold promises regarding gender equality, highlighting that these regressive policies not only contravene Islamic values but also hinder Afghanistan's potential for international engagement. INP

ISLAMABAD: NAB KP successfully rescued the Government of KP from the contractor's claim of 31.5 billion rupees in the International Court of Arbitration (ICA). According to a press release, in 2018, NAB initiated an inquiry into the allegations of illegal award of contract, misappropriation of government funds and submission of bogus performance guarantees by the contractors in Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Project Peshawar.

Progress in the case remained stationary for few years; however, the investigation was paced up under the command of the present DG and saved Rs168.5 billion through effective and efficient conclusion of investigation into a large scam of corruption.

Sources claim that this huge success could have been possible due to active collaboration of NAB with the Provincial Cabinet, Provincial Administration and the PDA and their positive role throughout the process of settlement agreement. NAB investigation revealed that 6 contracts of civil works were illegally and unlawfully awarded to 04x Joint Ventures (JVs), consisting of 2 Pakistani firms and 3 international firms for 3 contracts of Roads (Reach-I to Reach-III) and 3 contracts of Buildings (Lot 1 to Lot 3).

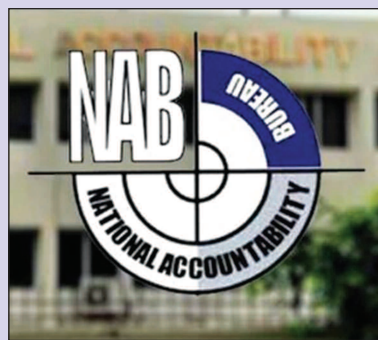
According to the record submitted by contractors to Peshawar Development Authority (PDA), 03x international firms

NAB KP rescues of Rs168.5 bln in BRT project

had 60 to 70 percent shares in the 04x JVs. However, NAB investigation revealed that the JVs between local and international firms were merely on paper, in order to grab the mega contract illegally and fraudulently by the local contractors through leveraging the goodwill and financial capacity of the international firms. After winning these contracts illegally, the local and international firms made supplementary contract agreements, according to which the actual work was carried out by the local firms while the international firms were paid 2% of the total tender value in return for leveraging their names and financial capabilities.

In this way, these 3 foreign firms not only played their part in cheating a government agency (PDA) but also received about one billion rupees without doing any work.

Hence, NAB widened the scope of investigation and thoroughly analyzed more than 400x bank accounts related to the firms wherein it was corroborated that the local firms have transferred the amount to the bank accounts of the international firms on the same dates as mentioned in the supplementary contract agreements.



It is pertinent to mention here that PDA paid a 20 percent premium on the schedule rate to the contractors in order to complete the contract on international standards within a period of 06x months so that the better resources, modern technology and machinery of international firms be utilized in completion of the project.

However, in violation of these agreements, the contractor neither completed the project in 06x months nor the international firms ever visited Pakistan for completion of the project.

The investigation also revealed that the contractor had submitted 02x bogus local

bank guarantees worth Rs2 billion to PDA. In addition to the above, 08x foreign bank guarantees amounting to Rs6.5 billion were also submitted in violation of the agreement.

The local contractors had also submitted audit reports which were proved bogus by NAB through SECP and the Chartered Accountant of these firms.

It was also proved that the staff of the international firms claiming to work on the project, had visited Pakistan for eight to ten days only in the last five years.

The respective Embassies of the international firms fully cooperated with NAB in calling up of these firms. This Bureau in collaboration with their anti-corruption agency enforced the foreign firms to cooperate in the investigation.

As per PDA record, a claim of Rs11.653 billion payable to the contractors on account of retention money, pending IPCs and claims/bills decided by the Dispute Resolution Board in favour of the contractors was pending with the PDA. Additionally, a claim of Rs55 billion on account of cost escalation, variation orders and interest on delayed payments was also submitted by the contractors with PDA. Moreover, the project cost was

also escalated through revised PC-I. However, the effective NAB investigation resulted in the retention of the original project cost and a huge sum of Rs. 9 billion of the exchequer was saved.

Moreover, the contractors had also filed a claim of 31.8 billion rupees (to the extent of Reach-I) before the International Court of Arbitration on account of increase in project cost, change in scope of work and interest on delayed payments.

Apart from this, further claims in respect of the remaining 05x packages was also prepared to be filed with the ICA, thus the total claim of the contractor for all the 6 packages would come to Rs168.5 billion. Moreover, an estimated cost of Rs 2.9 billion was expected to be spent by PDA on these cases in the International Court of Arbitration.

During the investigation, this Bureau made effective efforts by placing all the concerned persons on the Exit Control List and also issued a Red Warrant of owner of one of these firms to bring him back to Pakistan through Interpol.

The tireless efforts and best strategy of investigation team of this Bureau resulted into increase in pressure on contractors, hence they approached the PDA

and requested for an out of court settlement of the matter.

NAB KP not only supported the negotiations between the contractors and PDA but also supervised and facilitated the entire process of negotiation which resulted into a settlement agreement between them.

According to this agreement, the contractors withdrew all their claims including the case filed before the ICA, while PDA paid only Rs2.6 billion rupees to the contractors.

After the settlement agreement, in the first week of September, their representatives recorded statements before the Accountability Court Peshawar and submitted the said agreement. Soon thereafter, the contractor requested to withdraw its claim by e-mailing a copy of this agreement to the International Court of Arbitration, upon which the ICA confirmed disposing of the contractor's claim through e-mail dated September 16, 2024. Similarly, in the third week of September, all the parties submitted this agreement in the Peshawar High Court, where after, the Peshawar High Court disposed of all the related petitions. The best efforts and ideal strategy of NAB Khyber Pakhtunkhwa resulted into saving of the provincial treasury from a loss of Rs168.5 billion which can now be spent on other public welfare projects. APP