



Press Release

TECHNOLOGY BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE: SHEHBAZ SHARIF

Lahore, April 26, 2017

The launch of Punjab free Wi-Fi service is a step forward to smart cities to bring revolutionary change in the lives of the masses and to bridge the digital divide. Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif said while inaugurating the free Wi-Fi project of the Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB) here today.

He said this service would benefit the youth for their knowledge based activity while it would give an all-time free connectivity to all in Lahore, Rawalpindi, Multan, Faisalabad and Bhawalpur while it has also been extended to Murree, which would facilitates the tourists and the general public.

Referring to an incident where life of one women was saved in a local hospital by using Punjab Wi-Fi by her husband who ran out of balance and managed blood through this service means a lot in terms of service to humanity and said that PITB started automation activity under the leadership of it's Chairman Dr. Umar Saif during Dengue epidemics, which was an effort to serve the suffering humanity and it was acknowledged by the World at large, he added.

The Chief Minister further said that with the introduction of Land Revenue Management Authority, the land of 56 million of rural land owners of the Punjab have been digitalized, which has been lauded by the World Bank as it has eliminated the corruption and Patwari culture and now anyone could get Fard of his property in 30 minutes without involving any middle man or agent. Similarly digitalization of FIR, automation of 712 police stations of Punjab, establishment of I T labs in high schools, distribution of 5000 tablets for monitoring the presence of teachers and students has accelerated the pace of progress in the province, he said.

He announced that in the upcoming budget 2017-18 sufficient funds would be allocated to fulfill the commitment of construction of Information Technology University's own campus at Baidian Road on the allotted precious land within a period of one year.

Comparing the efforts for power generation, Shehbaz Sharif said that Neelum-Jhelum 985 MW power generation project took 18 years and yet not completed while Bhikki's LNG based 1180 MW power plant completed in 18 months, has started 717 MW production in the first phase with 61.9 % efficient turbines, saving precious public money to the tune of Rs. 50 billion.

Earlier, in his welcome address Dr. Umar Saif Chairman PITB and founding Vice Chancellor of ITU said that PITB's projects were getting huge applause at international level as Nigeria's Hajj arrangements and Dubai police's automation and training was being conducted by PITB on their request while e-Vaccs in KPK, Balochistan and Police automation for Sindh province was also entrusted to PITB by the respective provincial governments. So far 3.5 million citizens have accessed to the Punjab free Wi-Fi service and on daily basis it has the capacity to provide service to 160,000 users. He also informed that PITB's eStamping system has generated Rs. 23 billion, which is higher than the manual system proceeds per year. Provincial Finance Minister Ayesha Ghous Pasha remarked that knowledge based internet was important for economic growth and assured the PITB to make available funds for its projects.