

Repairing financial coverage flaws

Afshan Subohi | Published September 9, 2024 | Updated about 2 hours ago

Despite the volatile law and order situation, a higher risk of accidents from subpar infrastructure, dilapidated buildings, workplace safety violations and the impact of climate change that threatens life, property and assets, Pakistanis remain reluctant to use insurance services.

A lack of awareness about actual risk levels and available mitigation options, low service quality, limited market choices and high cost of insurance likely contribute to this reluctance. Less than one per cent of Pakistanis — 0.8pc to be exact — have insurance coverage, compared to 4pc in India.

The role of insurance in developing a market economy is established and documented, becoming even more critical in uncertain times and a relatively riskier environment.

Insurers perform four critical functions. First, they provide protection to producers and consumers from financial loss. For companies, insurance safeguards against risks such as operational disruptions, data breaches, natural disasters, and supply chain issues. For consumers, it covers unforeseen expenses, medical care costs, property damage, car theft, and more.

Amidst limited insurance penetration, biased support to public-owned companies creates an unfair landscape for private companies

Second, they promote economic growth by keeping businesses afloat during emergencies, encouraging innovation and attracting investors. Third, insurers provide direction to the economy by offering coverage in areas such as environmental, social and corporate governance and fostering diversification. Fourth, they help stabilise during crises by providing a safety net, mitigating losses, and facilitating recovery.

In Pakistan, there are 42 insurance companies, of which 38 are members of the Insurance Association of Pakistan, but the market is dominated by four public sector entities: the State Life Insurance Corporation (SLIC), Postal Life Insurance Company, National Insurance Company Ltd. (NICL), and Pakistan Reinsurance Company Limited.

Insurance penetration remains limited, a concern marked by the country's key regulators, including the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) and noted by global development agencies such as the World Bank. Private sector players and their collective platforms have also long advocated for a more conducive business environment, calling for a level playing field and a supportive tax regime to foster growth.

A recent in-depth study of the insurance sector by the CCP has highlighted the complexities of the regulatory environment, identified key challenges and proposed bold reforms to create a more competitive and dynamic insurance industry, according to senior CCP sources.

Sharing the details, they noted competition concerns stemming from the government's preferential treatment of public sector companies, which creates barriers for new entrants and disadvantages private sector players.

"This support to state-owned insurance companies not only places a significant burden on the state treasury but also distorts the competitive landscape. For example, under the Insurance Ordinance of 2000, NICL is granted exclusive rights to insure public property, further restricting opportunities for private insurers.

"Similarly, life insurance policies issued by SLIC are backed by federal government guarantees under the Life Insurance (Nationalisation) Order 1972, giving it an unfair advantage over private competitors," the CCP note stated.

The CCP has therefore recommended amendments to Rule 18 of the Insurance Rules, 2017, to allow insurers the freedom to choose between domestic and foreign reinsurers. This change could promote greater competition, efficiency, and innovation in the market.

Similarly, in bancassurance, banks often impose restrictions on insurance companies, limiting their business activities even when they comply with the regulatory requirements set by the SECP.

It also recommended stronger enforcement of Section 94 of the Motor Vehicles Act of 1939 to improve insurance coverage. Although this law mandates Motor third-party insurance for all vehicles, only 3pc of the vehicles in Pakistan are currently insured.

The CCP suggests that provincial governments consider exempting both the insurance and reinsurance sectors from sales tax on premiums that lead to double taxation and drive up costs. Additionally, the 1pc Federal Insurance Fee on non-life insurance premiums should be used to raise public awareness and dispel misconceptions about insurance.

Commenting on the situation, an expert with experience at a reputable overseas insurance company offered a cautiously critical perspective: "Insurance is an integral part of an economy's financial services sector. For it to offer meaningful products and remain competitive in the region, foreign exchange regulations and local, federal and provincial taxation policies must be supportive. Currently, the SBP does not allow the settlement of claims outside of Pakistan, even when a premium has been received through inward foreign remittance.

"Similarly, settlement of claims outside the country is permitted only on travel insurance related to Schengen countries. Additionally, excise duty on both insurance and reinsurance places our market at a competitive disadvantage globally. Premiums are often shifted to territories with more favourable taxation and foreign exchange regimes.

"Regarding the insurance sector, the government's continued involvement is a minor factor in its overall development. What is needed now is a holistic and pragmatic app-roach to this industry," she concluded.

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https://www.dawn.com/news/1857863/repairing-financial-coverage-flaws

فري مارکيپ اکانو ځ

تح السيعترت جعفري

آج كل فرى ماركيث اكافوى كا دور ب-اس كار يوريث زمات يس حكويتي شركو كاروماركرتي ور اور ته می کاروبار ش وظل اعدازی كر علق الله و بلكه دنيا بحريش اب حكومتي بزي بزي للي یشل کمپنیوں کوائے ملک شمام مارکاری کے لے راف کرنے کے لئے کاروباری آ سانیوں ی فراجی عی معروف ایل- فری مارکیث اكانوى كى بنيادات اصول يرقائم بككاروبارى

Competition Commission of Pakistan

فرى مارىيك اكانوى كى بنياداس اصول پرقائم بكركاروبارى تمينيال حۇمتى عمل دىل سے آزاد ہوكر اسين كارد باركى توجه مركوز كريل ماركيث من شفافيت اورمقا بليكوقائم ركھنے كے لئے باكتان ميں بھي 2007 میں پیٹیش کیش آف پاکتان قائم کیا میا، کیش کے نئے چیئر مین ڈاکٹر کبیرا تمد مدهو، كيئيش قوانين،ماركيك ريگوكليشزين برطانيه على التي دى كتي وت ين مانجم يونورشى میں مارکیٹ ریگولیشنز ،ا جارہ داری بھیٹیش کےمضامین پڑھاتے بھی رہے ہیں

ماركيك على اجاره دارى، كاركى، اور كاردارى اليوى ايش بناكر معضيفن قواخين كي خلاف ورزى 大三子子のひとりのいかとこと بنا بااورا يك ماركيث المنكي جن يبنث قافم كيا- ب مريط كوششى ال ملك ش كارتلول كى موث للسك كے لئے بيت افروري ع - كرائت جا برسول عقوال ادارع في كاروبارى كينول معليض قوائين كى ظاف ورزيول يرجر ماندكى وسولی بلکل عی صفر ہوگئ تھی۔ لیکن تھوڑی ہے محنت اور توجہ عاس ادارے نے اس سال على اب تك تقريبا توانيني كى خلاف ورزى اور امر کو خارج کروا کے جار کروڑ روے کے جرانے ریور کے اور قوی فزاندی تح ہوئے۔ اے کتے ال ری ایکوانفور مدے پروایکو انفور معد كي طرف متلى _ ياكتان كي موجوده پریثان کن معاشی صورتمال می ایک مضوط كيشش كيشن اور ماركث كقواشن كالمخت نفاذاس لي بحى ضرورى بيك ياكتاني صارفين سلے علی منظائی اور افراط ذر کے باتھوں برستان الى، حكومت كى مالى حالت بحى اليي فيين كدانيين ديلف دے محالے ش بادكيث على لخ يعثل اور بری کاروباری کمینیون کی موثر بولیت بب مروري ب تاكريد صارفين كاستحسال نذكري، ماركيث عن مقالي كي فعنا اور ماحول مور اور كينيال صارفين كوبهتر يراؤك اورمرومز اور بہر قبت ک فراجی کے لے آئی عی مقابلہ كريا- برى كينون كوكل جوز شديد ع كاروباراور في برائذ زحوارف بون ماركيث على فقانيت موتاك عفى كرودكى اس ماركيث ی کینیاں آ سائی ہے سرمایے کاری کریں ، تی ياؤكف آكل اوردوزكاركمواقع يدايول_

در الوا عدائي مقدمات كوآك يرحاف اور اع آؤرز کو ح کرے کی جائب توجہ مرکوز کی۔

> كي يرج برهان يرشوكاد كروبا حلس ك صرف این موجودگی کا احساس دلا تاشروع کرویا كيشن كمضافن يزهاتي كى رے الل كيشن كموضوع اورقالون يركرفت ركحة ریسٹورٹ کو بین الاتوای شہرت یافتہ کافی براغد کا فافذ کرنے کے لیے اقدامات کے واور ساتھ میں

کاربوریائزیش کے اس دور میں بڑی نام اور مارک استعال کرنے برسا فدلا کھروے کاروباری کمپنوں اور گربول کو لگام ڈالنے اور جرماند کردیا، سمنٹ کمپنوں کو بینٹ کے تھیلوں ماركيث شين شفافيت اورمقا لي كوقائم ركف ك يرايكسائري كى تاريخ درج كرنے كى بدايت كر لے پاکستان عربی 2007م کمپیش کیشن دی۔ ایک بری پیند مینی پر اشتہارات عی آف یاکتان قائم کیا گیا۔ اپنے قیام کے بعد صارفین کو مل مطوبات نظراہم کرنے پر بھاس ے اب تک بدادارہ کیٹیشن خالف سرگرمیوں لاکوروے جرمات کردیا۔ گذر فرانسور فرز کو اندیور ے خلاف بطورایک مور ریکولیٹرزیادہ کامیاب فیس ہو کا۔ یاس ادارے کی کروری رہی کہ ماتھ ایک خروں نے میری توجہ اس جانب اس ملك شي كاروباري مسابقت اور مقابله كا ميذول كروائي كي ديمون كميشيش كيفن شي باعل بروان تیں ج حا۔ کھ بڑی کمپنوں نے الی کا تبدیل آئی ہے کہ انج اوارے نے نہ ماركيث يرتقر بيااينا كنثرول قائم كرلياه اوراي وجے دنیا ک دیگر بڑی کینیاں اور برایڈ اس ہے بلکہ بڑے بڑے گر چوں کو باتھ ڈال رہا مل سرمار کاری سے کتراتے رہے۔ ای احارہ ہے۔ کمیشن کے عے چیز مین ڈاکٹر کیر احمد داری کے باعث ای مقامی طور پر نے برایڈ زاور سدھو، کمیشیش قوانین، مارکیٹ ریکو کلیشنو میں كاروبار برصنے يہلى عائم موجاتے إلى يا برطانيے في الكي دي كے موت إلى ما فيسر کوئی بڑا کاروباری کروب انہیں خرید لیتا ہے۔ یوٹورٹی ٹی مارکیٹ ریکولیشنو، اجارہ داری، لین چد مادےمشاہدہ ش آیا کہ اجا تک ہی معلیض کیشن کے بڑی کمینوں کے خلاف اے کتے ہیں دائٹ برین فاروا دائٹ ما۔ ایشن کی خبریں آٹا شروع ہو کئیں۔ایک بڑی لین جب آپ نے اس اہم ہوزیش کے لئے منی بیشن کی کو کراہ کن مارکینگ یے جد کروڑ درست اتھا۔ کیاتواں کے شب مانے فوری طور روے برمانہ کر دیاہ کل کی تاریائے والی دو پرمائے آتا شروع ہو گئے۔ واکو سدم عظ المنول كو، ومرى عورد كما تحال كرمارجن فکس کرتے پر شوکان کر دیا، لاہور کے ایک ایس بتوانہوں نے کیشش آوائن کودرست اعماز پر

كينيال حكومتي عمل وقل ع آزاد بوكرايخ كاروباركي توجه مركوز كري ليكن آيس مين ان ش شفاف طرفے سے مقالے کا رجمان ہو۔ مارکٹ میں بہتر برفارم کرنے اور زیادہ ے زیادہ صارفین کواپٹی طرف متوجہ کرنے کے لئے اے صارفین کو دوسرے سے بہتر کوائی ، بہتر قیت، بہترین مسلم کئیراورزیادہ سے زیادہ چانس فراہم کری۔ ای فری مارکیٹ میں اگرشفافیت ہو، اور کمپنول کے مابین مقامے کا رتحان ہوتو سارفیں فائدہ ش رہے ہی اور اليس بهترين يراؤكث اورفير يرائس لمتى ب-دنیا کے رقی بافت ممالک میں تو فری مارکیث ا كانوى كا تصور بهت حديث كامياب بي كونك ان ممالک ش قانون کی عمل درای تی سے قائم ے ، اور خاص طور مارکیٹ میں شفاقیت برقرار رکنے کے لئے کمپنیش کے قوانین کئی سے نافذ ك مات بل لكن الكتان بي تاكتان المعارق بذير ممالک یس می فری مارکیت حکومت اور صارفین کے لئے وبال جان بن حاتی ہے۔ مثی نیختل کمینیاں اور بڑے بڑے کا روباری گروپ این اجاره داری قائم کرے، یا آئی ش کے جوز كرك ماركيث يراينا تبعد قائم ركف اور صارفین کا استحسال کرنے سمیت ، اینا نفع يرهان كالح برحداستعال كرت الى-



Symmetry Group to launch UAE subsidiary, eyes global expansion

New entity to focus on scaling intellectual properties and expanding access to international markets

By News Desk

The Board of Directors of Symmetry Group Limited has approved the formation of a wholly-owned subsidiary in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), according to the company's recent filing at the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Friday.

This subsidiary will pave the way for the global launch and scaling of the intellectual properties (products) developed in-house.

This new entity will enhance Symmetry Group's credibility and provide greater access to business opportunities across the GCC and international markets. It will also offer increased flexibility in forming partnerships, joint ventures, and securing international contracts.

Moreover, this strategic move will enable more efficient financial structuring and operational optimization, while exploring innovative business opportunities and global strategic investments.

Read more: https://profit.pakistantoday.com.pk/2024/09/06/symmetry-group-to-launch-uae-subsidiary-eyes-global-

expansion/#:~:text=The%20Board%20of%20Directors%20of,Exchange%20(PSX)%20on%20Friday.



Settlement of circular debt thru adjustments strong probability

Deputy PM Ishaq Dar directs Petroleum and Power Division to reassess the plan for settlement of circular debt through cash/ non-cash adjustments

Mushtaq Ghumman Published September 9, 2024

ISLAMABAD: A high level Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) on petroleum sector, headed by the Foreign Minister/ Deputy Prime Minister Senator Ishaq Dar has directed Petroleum and Power Division to reassess the plan for settlement of circular debt (CD) through cash/ non-cash adjustments, where possible, for cleansing of balance sheets, sources close to Petroleum Minister told Business Recorder.

A similar plan was prepared by the caretaker Minister for Power and Petroleum, now SAPM on Power, Muhammad Ali, which was turned down by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The Committee which met on August 17, 2024, in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, had also directed the Petroleum Division to ensure RLNG is not diverted to domestic sector and evaluate if some volumes of

RLNG can be packaged with intended 3rd party sales to reduce the financial burden on public sector entities, sources close to Petroleum Minister told Business Recorder.

The meeting was attended by private and public sector members of the committee including Ministers for Petroleum, Finance & Revenue and Power. Heads of various E&P companies and Secretaries of relevant ministries/ divisions also attended the meeting.

Petroleum division gave a briefing on issues like, circular debt, integrated planning, ease of doing business, on-shore and off-shore fiscal regime, implementation of recently introduced amendments in Petroleum Policy 2012 and various aspects of current LNG imports.

The forum after threadbare deliberations took following decisions: (i) Petroleum & Power Division to jointly develop an Integrated Energy Plan with the help of renowned international consultants and complete the exercise by December 2024;

- (ii) Petroleum Division to suggest appropriate amendments in OGRA Ordinance to introduce a mechanism for gas tariff adjustments on a monthly or quarterly basis to mitigate further accumulation of circular debt within the gas sector;
- (iii) Petroleum and Power Division to reassess the plan for settlement of circular debt through cash/ non-cash adjustments, where possible, for cleansing of balance sheets and bring the final position in next meeting of the committee within two weeks;
- (iv) Petroleum and Power Division to jointly evaluate the shared use of gas from dedicated fields to optimize the utilisation;
- (v) Petroleum Division to work the plan for restructuring of both Sui companies to get out of asset-based fixed return regime; (vi) Interior Division to work closely with E & P companies and other stakeholders to put in place best possible security mechanism to facilitate various exploration activities;
- (vii) Interior Division to ensure that dedicated one-window facilitation be introduced at both federal and provincial levels to ensure security for operations in challenging areas.

Associated security costs must also be rationalised in consultation with relevant departments;

- (ix) Petroleum Division to dedicatedly work on digitization of processes in Directorate General of Petroleum Concessions and come up with a detailed plan and strategy in next 45 days;
- (x) Petroleum Division to streamline regulatory approvals and enhance ease of doing business, process automation and digitalization to be implemented at all levels;
- (xi) Petroleum Division to complete consultations with E & P industry on proposed amendments in offshore fiscal regime and bring the final recommendations before committee within 30 days, and further directed to pursue G2G engagement with friendly countries.

Once these improvements are approved, same shall be made part of talking points of Deputy Prime Minister for international interactions to pursue economic diplomacy;

(xii) Petroleum Division to finalize framework, in consultation with industry, for 35% of gas production by E & P companies 3rd parties. Framework to be placed before the committee;

- (xiii) Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Port Qasim Authority to review and rationalize port charges, ensuring they are competitive with international standards and submit the details in next 60 days; and
- (xiv) Petroleum Division to ensure RLNG diversion to domestic sector be avoided and its utilization ensured for intended purposes, which primarily include power sector.

The Committee further directed Petroleum Division to evaluate if some volumes of RLNG can be packaged with intended 3rd party sales to reduce the financial burden on public sector entities.

https://www.brecorder.com/news/40321520/settlement-of-circular-debt-thru-adjustments-strong-probability#:~:text=ISLAMABAD%3A%20A%20high%20level%20Inter,where%20possible%2C%20for%20cleansing%20of