

# Independent

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## Strongly condemns Israel's brutality PM calls for global intervention to stop Palestinians' bloodshed

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday strongly condemned the recent Israeli attacks on Rafah area of Gaza, urging the international community to intervene to get stopped the worst barbaric inhuman acts. "I, on behalf of the government and the people of Pakistan, demand that the international community should play its due role to ensure that the people of Palestine and Indian Occupied Kashmir are granted their rightful freedoms and basic human rights," the prime minister said in a televised address. He said due to the unprovoked and worst bombardment by the Israeli forces across Gaza, including Rafah, over 36,000 Palestinians, including thousands of children, had been

martyred so far. "After the lapse of eight months, Israel's thirst for blood is still unquenched as it is now bombarding the cramped camps of Palestinians displaced from across Gaza in Rafah (bordering Egypt)," he added. The prime minister said Israel had showed blatant disregard for international law, without caring for the International Court of Justice's ruling and the United Nations Security Council's resolutions. Not a single global power could prevail on Israel to get stopped bloodshed of Palestinians, he regretted. PM Shehbaz said, "I am thankful to the Muslim countries that have raised voices at different international forums including the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the UN Security Council against the Israeli aggression." The Saudi Crown Prince, and the rulers of the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Kuwait and other countries were persistently voicing their support for the hapless Palestinians, he added. The prime minister also expressed gratitude to the European countries including Spain, Norway and Ireland for recognizing the State of Palestine in the wake of Israel's atrocious military aggression. Their bold and principled decision would hopefully encourage other countries to follow suit in recognizing the statehood of Palestine, he added. PM Shehbaz Sharif prayed to Allah Almighty to bring an end to the brutal oppression of the Palestinian people and bless them with an independent State of Palestine where they could live in a free atmosphere.



ISLAMABAD: Minister of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan Jeyhun Bayramov calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

## Pakistan, Azerbaijan resolve to enhance bilateral cooperation including in trade, connectivity

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Azerbaijan on Thursday resolved to enhance cooperation in multiple sectors including trade, investment, energy and connectivity to exploit the huge potential of the friendly relationship between the two countries. The bilateral ties and cooperation were discussed as Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar and Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan Jeyhun Bayramov met here and discussed the multidimensional bilateral and regional agenda encompassing bilateral and international matters. Addressing a joint press stakeout, Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar told the media that both countries would further enhance cooperation in trade, investment connectivity, energy and defence sectors. He said the two countries were taking measures to increase bilateral investment, especially in the energy sector. The joint working group on energy would be critical in promoting cooperation in this sector, he added. He said both countries also desired to promote parliamentary and cultural exchanges to promote business-to-business and academic linkages, besides boosting cooperation in renewable energy. Meanwhile Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday, expressing satisfaction on the positive trajectory of relations between Pakistan and Azerbaijan, stressed the need to further strengthen mutually beneficial bilateral cooperation in trade, investment, energy and security domains. He was talking to Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan Jeyhun Bayramov, who paid a courtesy call on him at the Prime Minister's House. The prime minister expressed appreciation that both sides had always extended their full support to each other on issues of core interest, and reaffirmed that they would continue to do so at every international forum.

## SC rejects request for live streaming of NAB amendments case

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Thursday rejected the request of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government for live broadcasting of proceedings on appeals against termination of NAB amendments. A five-member larger bench headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa and comprising Justice Amin ud Din Khan, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Justice Athar Minallah and Justice Hassan Azhar Rizvi heard the appeals moved by the federation. During the hearing, the founder of Pakistan Tehreek e Insaaf (PTI) appeared before the court through the video link service. The chief justice remarked that this case shouldn't be run through live streaming as it was not a matter of public interest. The court subsequently dismissed the miscellaneous application of the KP government with a majority of four and one. Justice Athar Minallah contradicted the decision.

## Gazette notification of Elections (Amendment) Ordinance, 2024 issued

ISLAMABAD (APP): The government has issued the gazette notification of Elections (Amendment) Ordinance, 2024. An amendment has been made in the Section 140 of the Elections Act, 2017 and the Ordinance shall be called the Elections (Amendment) Ordinance, 2024, the gazette notification said.



KARACHI: The world's largest cargo ship, MSC Anna has made a historic arrival at Karachi Port Trust (KPT) in Karachi. The colossal vessel arrived from India's Port Mundra and anchored at Karachi port, highlighting the port growing importance in international maritime trade. MSC Anna boasts impressive dimensions, measuring 400 meters in length and having a capacity to carry 19,638 containers.



RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Syed Asim Munir presided over the 83rd Formation Commanders Conference held at General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi.

## Formation Commanders resolve to neutralize threats to country's security, stability

Planners, perpetrators, abettors, and facilitators of 9th May needed to be brought to justice for the collective good of the country; Stability to remain hostage to machinations of such elements without swift dispensation of justice, says ISPR

RAWALPINDI (APP): The 83rd Formation Commanders Conference on Thursday affirmed the resolve to neutralize all threats to the security and stability of the country with the full backing of the proud nation. The conference, presided over by Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir, underscored that politically motivated and vested digital terrorism, unleashed by conspirators duly abetted by their foreign cohorts, against the state institutions was clearly meant to try to induce despondency in the Pakistani nation, to sow discord among national institutions, especially the armed forces, and the people of Pakistan by peddling blatant lies, fake news, and propaganda. It, however, noted that the nation was fully cognizant of their ugly and ulterior motives and surely the designs of the nefarious forces would be comprehensively defeated. The forum noted that planners, perpetrators, abettors, and facilitators of 9th May needed to be brought to justice for the collective good of the country, and that without swift and transparent dispensation of justice to the culprits and establishing the rule of law, stability in Pakistan would ever remain hostage to the machinations of such elements. The conference was attended by Corps Commanders, Principal Staff Officers, and all Formation Commanders of Pakistan Army. An Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said. The forum also resolved to continue to fully support the government's initiatives in various domains for sustainable economic growth and curbing illegal activities, including smuggling, hoarding, electricity theft, implementation of One Document Regime, dignified repatriation of illegal foreigners, and safeguarding of the national database, etc. The conference was briefed on the dynamics of the geo-strategic environment, emerging challenges to national security, and the Army's strategy to counter multi-domain threats. The participants were also briefed on technological innovations to modernize the Army and optimize logistic support to field formations, in line with fast-evolving operational environment. The forum expressed serious concerns over continued cross-border viola-

## Acting president for maximum public relief through upcoming budget

ISLAMABAD (APP): Acting President Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani on Thursday stressed the need for extending maximum relief to the masses through the upcoming federal budget, and the formulation of a comprehensive strategy to enhance the revenue. The acting president said in a meeting with Minister of Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb, who called on him here at the Aiwan-e-Sadr. The finance minister briefed the acting president about the ongoing preparations for the upcoming people-friendly budget and the government's measures to reduce inflation. The minister said that a remarkable reduction in the inflation rate manifested the government's constant and undeterred actions by the government.

## Pakistan's multi mission satellite PAKSAT-MM1 launched successfully

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a historic development, Pakistan Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO) has announced the successful launch of Pakistan Multi Mission Communication Satellite PAKSAT-MM1 from XiChang Satellite Launch Center (XSLC), China on Thursday. The satellite PakSat MM1 has been jointly designed and developed by SUPARCO and China Great Wall Industry Corporation (CGWIC).



According to the SUPARCO, this is a Geostationary Satellite based on advanced communication technologies that will greatly enhance the satellite-based communication services of the country and will fulfill the needs of commercial as well as government users. High Throughput System (HTS) technology on board PakSat-MM1 will substantially boost connectivity to the last mile and will reshape the future of satellite communication in Pakistan.

## Two TTP terrorists killed in Lakki Marwat operation

PESHAWAR (APP): The Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) on Thursday killed two terrorists affiliated with the banned outfit Tehreek e Talibani Pakistan (TTP) during an operation in Lakki Marwat district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. According to a CTD spokesperson, the law enforcement personnel conducted an intelligence-based operation in Lakki Marwat during which the terrorists opened fire. In the prompt retaliatory fire, two terrorists were shot dead while others managed to escape. The spokesperson further mentioned that these terrorists were planning to target sensitive institutions and were wanted by the police in several cases, including target killings and bomb blasts. The dead terrorists were affiliated with Tipu Gul group of TTP.



KUWAIT: Federal Minister for Communications, Investment Board and Privatization Abdul Aleem Khan and Kuwait's Minister of Commerce and Industry Omar Al-Omar signing the MoU.

## Pakistan, Kuwait agree for enhancing cooperation in different sectors

ISLAMABAD (APP): Kuwait and Pakistan on Thursday agreed for enhancing mutual cooperation, promotion of bilateral relations and investment. Agreements and memorandums of understanding in the fields of industrial cooperation and engineering were also signed during the meeting of 5th Joint Ministerial Commission, said a press release. Pakistan also offered Kuwait to invest in the fields of pharmaceutical, engineering and automobiles. A high-level delegation of Pakistan, headed by Minister of Investment Board, Privatization and Communications Abdul Aleem Khan represented Pakistan in the Joint Ministerial Commission meeting. Addressing the JMC's concluding session, Abdul Aleem Khan announced to appoint a Commercial Counselor of Pakistan in Kuwait. He said that "Visa on Arrival" facility would be started soon in Pakistan for the Gulf Cooperation Council member countries. The minister said that Kuwait could engage veterinary staff, doctors, nurses and other workforce from Pakistan. He expressed the hope that in future Kuwait would also relax visa conditions for Pakistanis. The minister said, "Pakistan wants a long term economic partnership with Kuwait for which special facilities can be provided under the banner of SIFC for businesses". He said that new investment opportunities were available in tourism, minerals, agriculture, food, textile and energy sectors in Pakistan. Aleem Khan said that the Pakistani delegation also held talks on joint ventures with the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce.

## Roshan Pakistan programme to end energy crisis: Laghari

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Energy "Power Division" Awaiz Ahmad Khan Laghari on Thursday said that the "Roshan Pakistan" programme will eliminate the energy crisis in the country. While holding a press conference with Minister of State Ali Pervaiz Malik in Islamabad, Federal Energy Minister Awaiz Laghari said that the electricity demand was 25,820 megawatts across Pakistan on May 29, of which 21,588 megawatts have been produced and supplied from within our system. However, he said 4,232 MW was the load shedding. He said that this load shedding was done only on those feeders, where losses are occurring. "From 20 per cent to 100 per cent where our losses are occurring, 4,232 megawatts of electricity was not provided there" he added. Awaiz Laghari said that where the losses are less than 20%, unfortunately, the power supply to these feeders also remained off for a few hours. The Federal Minister of Energy said that if they start supplying this elec-



tricity to these areas, the losses will increase to such an extent that the Pakistani economy will be further destroyed. "Until our distribution companies determine their direction and address these losses with the help of provincial governments, this load shedding will continue" he informed with certainty.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Debt trap

Pakistan's debt stock has grown exponentially in recent years. So have debt payments, putting pressure on the budget...

The country is in a debt trap where it must borrow more to pay back its existing debt — domestic and external loans both.

The finance ministry's Mid-Year Budget Review Report for the outgoing year confirms these concerns. The report shows that the nation's debt payments spiralled by more than 64pc to Rs4.2tr during the first six months to December...

In the report, the ministry has blamed elevated domestic interest rates for our growing debt servicing woes. With the government covering nearly 80pc of its fiscal deficit through commercial bank loans amid drying official foreign flows, the interest rates are of primary concern as domestic debt payments accounted for nearly 90pc of the total debt servicing costs during the first half of the fiscal.

The task before the government is to boost its tax-to-GDP ratio to the global average by taxing the economy's untaxed and undertaxed sectors, as well as eliminating wasteful expenditure to cut the fiscal deficit to sustainable levels to minimise its borrowing requirements for financing the budget.

The heat is on

F.S.Aijazuddin

One day it was the cool comfort of spring. The next morning summer arrived with the force of an unwelcome intruder. Until October, life will be hell on earth, especially in hell's scorching suburb called Pakistan.

Yet again, our nation is caught between mismatched policies and their endless impact, between our energy requirements and erratic availability. Over the past 30 years, every government has laid a Humpty Dumpty egg of an energy policy.

In September 1994, the US secretary of energy, Hazel O'Leary (a political version of Tina Turner and later president of an insolvent Fisk University), led a delegation of 90 American business persons to Pakistan. During her visit, 16 agreements were signed envisaging an investment of \$4 billion in Pakistan's energy sector.

Thirty years have passed. According to Nepra's State of Energy Report 2023, Pakistan's installed capacity in June 2023, stood at 45,885

MW, well below the 1994 projections of 54,000 MW. The installed capacity for imported coal-based power projects is 3,960 MW, while local coal, sourced from Block-I and Block-II of the Thar coal mines, contributes 2,640 MW (2.6pc of 1994's ambitions). Feedstock of coal-based plants is imported, like the expensive ore used to bankrupt Pakistan Steel Mills. It comes from South Africa and Indonesia under long-term contracts, their price "unregulated, lacking oversight in terms of price determination".

The 1994 policy introduced an innovative bulk power tariff, comprising an energy price and a capacity price at a notional total of 6.5 cents per kilowatt hour. The energy price covered fuel cost and the variable operating costs of the power plant (2.2 cents). Responsibility for fuel supply lay on the government through Pakistan State Oil or Sui Southern Gas. The capacity price of 4.3 cents was calculated to cover debt repayment obligations, fixed operating and maintenance costs and return on equity (17pc). The private sector plants were protected against Wapda waywardness through 'take or pay' provisions in power purchase agreements. Under the 'take or pay' clauses, Nepra tells us, "payments are made for contracted capacity, regardless of whether it is consumed or not. The unutilised capacity places a financial burden on electricity consumers, who end up paying for unused power. During FY2022-23, the utilisation factor was 34pc [...] and the amounts paid to power plants amounted to Rs46.59bn".

In the 1990s, to improve efficiency in transmission and distribution, the World Bank persuaded the government to unbundle Wapda's

downstream monopoly, creating independent localised distribution companies (Lesco, Pesco, etc.). Today, there are 12, each operating at varying levels of inefficiency. Distribution losses involve a loss of Rs160.5bn. Pesco alone accounts for half the losses — at Rs77.35bn — an unnecessary threat to inter-provincial harmony. Government officials watch mindlessly as the energy sector circular debt "jumped to Rs5.7 trillion as of November 2023". Rs2.7tr is owed in the power sector and Rs3tr in the gas sector.

Yet, the World Bank still advises that "companies specialising in infrastructure development can participate in projects aimed at enhancing the energy distribution network". And the Asian Development Bank has committed \$250 million for "the Power Transmission Strengthening Project, which will help boost national grid stability, energy security, transmission capacity, and effective national transmission system management".

Meanwhile, consumers faced with daily power outages and escalating monthly energy bills wonder whether there is a solution to this power conundrum. Or are we condemned to scavenge for private sector alternatives (like home generators and rooftop solar panels) to compensate for public sector incompetence?

One is reminded of the response given by P. Chidambaram (then India's finance minister) to an inquisitor who asked him how he intended to implement his government's plans. His terse reply was: "By doing it." Pakistanis can do it. They succeed everywhere else. Their flesh is willing; only their governance is weak. -- Courtesy Dawn

Plugging the gap

ArifAzad

The term 'health inequalities' is understood as avoidable, unfair and systemic differences between health outcomes for different groups in a society. Different groups experience health inequalities differently based on their social and economic status, ethnicity, geographical location and marginalisation status.

One measure of health inequality is differences in life expectancy, which is a key indicator of the population's health status. In its broadest sense, health inequality is effectively unequal life expectancy, which is intimately bound with socioeconomic status. The relationship is expressed in terms of the social gradient in health, which is measured by the gap between the least and the most deprived areas in terms of life expectancy.

For example, one UK-based study found that in 2017-2019, women in the least deprived areas could expect to live up to 86.4 years as compared to those in the most deprived areas where they could not hope to live beyond 78 years — an eight-year gap in life expectancy. Other factors influencing the trajectory of health inequalities are: limited or no access to healthcare, poor quality of healthcare and risky behaviour such as smoking.

ity, resulting in shortened lifespans thanks to disease and deprivation.

Prof Michael Marmot has done commendable work on health inequalities in the UK. Though he has been ploughing this lonely academic furrow for a long time, Covid-19 gave new salience to his work as the pandemic exposed health inequalities in a startling new way, showing how the poor, elderly, and ethnic minorities ended up bearing the brunt of Covid-exposed health inequalities. More broadly, the pandemic exposed inequities in the worldwide distribution of vaccines, which exacerbated local health inequalities. His work is of vital importance and has wider application to the issue of health inequalities everywhere.

In Pakistan, health inequalities are visible to the naked eye. A high-level government official, who has a secure lifelong job, decent housing, hefty pension and medical and health cover, tends to live much longer than the ordinary Pakistani. A case in point is that of vintage bureaucrats and military officers often making it into their 90s and even hitting a century.

On the other hand, even among government services, those who are not covered by substantial pension, housing and medical benefits are less likely to make it beyond their 60s and 70s. Those beneath these tiers seem to fare poorly when it comes to life expectancy. At the end of the spectrum are those whose lives, blighted by poverty and structural disadvantage, continue to live shortened lives. It is not rare to see men and women from poorer backgrounds dying in their 30s and 40s, reflecting the health inequalities they face.

Pakistan remains a deeply unequal society as evidenced by the growing wealth, residential and geographical gaps. The sight of glossy housing societies and gated communities sitting side by side with slums is an indicator of the wealth gap mirroring the health gap. These gaps are being widened by policies that favour economic elites, government-linked groups and privileged sections of society, thus worsening poverty. Such policies influence wider aspects of health such as housing, education and health allocations, transport and environmental safeguards, all of which have a bearing on the health outcomes of different groups in social systems.

Other key measures such as reducing the deprivation gap, increasing access to fully funded healthcare and removing social advantages that ameliorate health inequalities to a great extent. The introduction and maintenance of universal health coverage, with a focus on primary healthcare and prevention, can further the project of reducing the rich-poor divide in life expectancy.

Furthermore, improving the quality of care and expanding social safety nets can also play a big part. The restoration of the local government system, which, among other things, keeps a vigilant eye on the status of health inequalities in a particular locality, as evidenced in the work of Prof Marmot, can go a long way in addressing long-term health inequalities. More importantly, more focused research on the patterns of health inequalities in Pakistan is what is immediately needed. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

Rana Tanveer says Government to import 200,000 metric tons of urea fertilizer

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Industries, Production and National Food Security, Rana Tanveer Hussain on Thursday said that the government would import about 200,000 metric tons of urea fertilizer to ensure an uninterrupted supply of the commodity to farmers across the country.

He said this while chairing the second meeting of the high-level committee, which reviewed the measures taken for fertilizer supply chain and pricing, said a press release. Rana Tanveer said that the smooth supply of urea

during Kharif season was priority of incumbent government, adding that all necessary steps were being taken to prevent smuggling of fertilizers.

The minister said that protecting the interests of farmers was top priority of the government and all measures would be taken to ensure availability of agriculture inputs, he added.

The minister expressed the commitment to supply urea at affordable price to the farmers in the country, adding that a comprehensive strategy

had been formulated to control the black marketing and smuggling of the Urea. He called upon the provincial government to implement the initiatives of the federal government and enhance vigilance on distributions, adding that dealers would be strictly monitored for maintaining transparency. The minister said that dealers and distributors involved in black marketing would be dealt with with iron hands, adding that measures would also be taken to ensure merit and transparency in the distribution system and



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb in a meeting with the representatives from Pakistan Association of Large Steel Producers (PALSP), Pakistan Steel Melters Association (PSMA), Pakistan Steel Re-Rolling Mills Association (PSRMA) and Pakistan Steel Pipelines Association (PSPA).



ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication, Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja in a meeting with tech company Lenovo.

New air cargo route to strengthen trade ties between China, Pakistan

BEIJING (APP): A new air cargo route inaugurated on May 28, linking Guizhou, China with Karachi, Pakistan will further strengthen trade ties between China and Pakistan. The route was launched with the departure of an all-cargo plane carrying 6 tonnes of freight, including clothing, electronics, and various commodities, from Guizhou, China Economic Net (CEN) reported.

After nearly six hours of flight time, the plane arrived in Karachi. It will return to Guizhou loaded with blue crabs from

Pakistan, according to Guizhou Customs. The route, jointly opened by Guizhou Civil Aviation Industry Group Co., Ltd and China Logistics Group Co. (China Logistics Group), is planned to be carried out three times a week, carrying goods including hardware accessories, clothing fabrics, electronic accessories and so on. This air route is significant as it marks the first direct connection between Guizhou and Pakistan, as well as the first air freight route linking the province with a Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) country.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Four ships, Maersk Cairo, X-Press Altair, MSC Positano and Milaha Ras Laffan carrying Container and LNG berthed at Container Terminal and Port Gas Terminal respectively on Thursday. Meanwhile three more ships, Maersk Pelepas, Zhida-6 and TRF Kobe scheduled to load/offload Container, Rice and Chemicals also arrived at outer-anchorage of the Port Qasim on during last 24 hours. A total of 10 ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them four ships, Atlantic Ibis, X-Press Altair, MSC Positano.

ICAP hosts conference on 'Driving Economic Change 2024'

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speakers at a conference on Thursday emphasized the critical importance of adopting sustainable economic practices to effectively combat climate change and ensure a greener future for economic development and social prosperity in the country. The conference titled "Driving Economic Change: Working Today for a Greener Tomorrow," was organized by the Economic Advisory Committee of the Institute of Chartered

KPRA surpasses revenue collection target for FY 2023-24

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority (KPRA) has surpassed the revenue collection target for the financial year 2023-24 and has collected Rs.37 billion against the assigned revenue target of Rs.35 billion. This was told during a meeting of the Revenue Policy Board held here with Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan in the chair, said an

official press release issued here on Thursday. Besides, members of the provincial cabinet administrative secretaries and other concerned authorities also attended the meeting. The meeting was briefed in detail regarding the steps, success, and other matters of the revenue authority relating to the increase in the provincial government's income.

Aleem Khan holds meeting with prominent businessmen of Tajikistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Privatisation, Board of Investment and Communication Abdul Aleem Khan held a meeting on Thursday with prominent business figures from Tajikistan to discuss prospects for enhancing bilateral trade and investment cooperation between the two countries. Over ten major business groups from the textile, pharmaceutical, construction, IT, banking, and airline sectors attended the meeting. The investors

expressed keen interest in constructing a goods terminal for import and export near the Pakistan-Tajikistan border, said a press release. The minister assured all possible support and patronage for business-to-business activities, stating that all economic sectors are open to businessmen from Central Asia. He emphasised that Pakistan could be a significant agricultural and trade market. He informed the

businessmen that Pakistan's private sector is ready to engage in trade with other countries. He added that the government would incentivise foreign investors to invest in free economic zones and other areas to promote industrial development in the country. Abdul Aleem Khan expressed hope that the bilateral business volume between Pakistan and Tajikistan would further increase with the frequent exchange of trade and business delegations.

PSX gains 41 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) gained 41.82 points on Thursday, a slight positive change of 0.06 per cent, closing at 74,878.12 points against 74,836.30 points the previous day. A total of 410,575,241 shares valuing Rs 14,922 billion were traded during the day as compared to 408,073,662 shares valuing Rs 16,500 billion the previous day.

CNDS prioritize automation, digitization in institution

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Central Directorate of National Savings (CNDS) is continuously undergoing a process of institutional reforms in which automation and digitization are the main priorities. The CNDS reforms programme was approved by the Cabinet

for structural changes in the prime institute in economic significance to provide better delivery service and equipped with modern tools for shifting from manual to innovative Information Technology (IT) services, the senior official of CNDS told APP here on Thursday.

## Governor Punjab for strengthening Numbardari system in villages

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: A delegation of Pak Numbardar Association Rawalpindi led by Malik Khalid Numbardar met Governor Punjab, Sardar Saleem Haider Khan today at Governor House. The delegation congratulated Sardar Saleem Haider Khan on assuming office as the Governor of Punjab.

Speaking on the occasion, Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider said that the usefulness of Numbardari system cannot be denied. He said that strengthening the Numbardari System could reduce the burden of work on various departments.

He added that the government has also started to realize its significance. Governor Punjab said that the Numbardari system is an effective system in solving the problems of the people related to various departments in the villages. Governor Punjab said that by making the numbering system effective, many issues related to agriculture, land and revenue departments could be solved at the grass root level. He said that an empowered Numbardari System would facilitate the government officials.

On this occasion, the delegation informed the Punjab Governor about the

various problems faced by them. The delegation demanded the Governor Punjab to revive the Numbardari system. Governor Punjab assured the delegation that he will talk to the Chief Minister of Punjab to solve their problems. Meanwhile, Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan met Vice Chairperson Punjab Social Protection Authority (PSPA) here today at Governor House Lahore. During the meeting, Vice Chairperson PSPA briefed Governor Punjab about the ongoing welfare programmes of Punjab Social Protection Authority.



LAHORE: A delegation of Pak Numbardar Association Rawalpindi led by Malik Khalid Numbardar photographed with Governor Punjab, Sardar Saleem Haider Khan at Governor House.



MULTAN: Staffers of Rescue 1122 participating in pre-flood mock exercises at Head Muhammadwala.

## PPP rejects KP budget, says it would multiply public woes

PESHAWAR (APP): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Thursday has rejected the provincial budget of the PTI government for financial year 2024-25 saying it would multiply the financial woes of the people. Addressing a press conference at Peshawar Press Club (PPC), the Deputy Secretary Information PPP Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Gohar Inqilabi said that budget used to be annual economic planning covering financial estimates for the whole year, so it should be based on actual facts and figures and not on

mere assumptions. He said that being a federal parliamentary system, the provincial governments were used to present their annual budgets after its announcement by the federal government. However, this year, he said the PTI government in KP violated this tradition announced it ahead of the federal government.

The PPP leader said that before the budget, the session of the provincial assembly was delayed to prevent the oath taking of the women and minorities legislators.

## One more kidnapped

**Independent Report**  
SHIKARPUR: One Loader Rekshaw driver accompanied with his Loader was Kidnapped from Chak on Thursday.

According to initial reports reached here that some group of 10 armed men intercepted the two loader rekshaws and after looting them took away one of Loader Rekshaw driver forcibly named Arif Ali son of Barkat Ali Soomro including with his Loader Rekshaw on gun point towards katcha area of Chak.

## One more vehicle snatched in Shikarpur

**Independent Report**  
SHIKARPUR: The law and order situation of District Shikarpur could not be improved which caused one more vehicle car was snatched and the travellers were deprived of Mobile Phones, Cash and other valuables on Thursday in the jurisdiction of Dakhan police station.

According to reports, some group of armed men came on roads again and snatched one vehicle car (Alto) on Shikarpur.

## Syed Qasim Ali says: 'Cancer is a serious health problem'

**Independent Report**  
PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Minister, Syed Qasim Ali Shah, announced on Thursday that chemotherapy used in the treatment of breast cancer will be included in the health card very soon.

He made this announcement while speaking at an important function on breast cancer services organized at Khyber Teaching Hospital, according to a press release

## Rs9.66 billion allocated for tourism uplift in KP budget: Advisor Tourism

**Independent Report**  
PESHAWAR (APP): Advisor to the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Tourism, Culture and Archeology, Zahid Chanzab, has said that in the provincial budget of the new financial year, a huge chunk of Rs9.66 billion has been allocated for promotion of tourism industry in the province and this amount is 25 per cent more than the past few years.

This, he said, was

## Pre-flood mock exercise held at river Chenab

MULTAN (APP): Rescue 1122, along with line departments, conducted a pre-flood mock exercise at the Chenab River to avert an expected flood-like situation.

Additional Deputy Commissioner of Revenue, Faizan Ahmad Riaz, inspected the exercises and camps established by district departments.

Emergency Officer Rescue 1122 Engineer Bilal gave a briefing about preparations regarding floods and initiatives.

The drills demonstrated various rescue operations, including shifting flood victims to safer places via boats, providing first aid to the injured, and moving them to field hospitals.

Rescue personnel also showcased their swimming skills to rescue individuals without boats, and divers demonstrated techniques to save drowning individuals.

ADC R Faizan Ahmad, on this occasion, said that the district administration was fully alert regarding the expected flood under the directions of the Punjab government.

## Khawaja Salman regret over Rs. 347bln annual wastage on smoking in Pakistan

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: Punjab Health Ministers Khawaja Salman Rafique and Khawaja Imran Nazir expressed deep regret over the annual wastage of Rs 347 billion on smoking in Pakistan.

The ministers made these remarks while speaking at special guests at an awareness seminar on "World No Tobacco Day", held at the Institute of Public Health on Thursday. The event was organised by the Non-Communicable Disease

## Scholarships awarded to martyrs of Tank police children

**Independent Report**  
DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): District Police Officer (DPO) Tank, Abdul Salam Khalid on Thursday awarded educational scholarships to children of the police martyrs.

According to a police spokesman, the scholarship cheques were handed over at his office where he met with the martyrs' children and heirs.

On this occasion, he addressed the families and children of Shaheed ASI Amir Azam Shah, Shaheed Constable Muhammad Tariq, Shaheed Constable Mohsin Ali, Shaheed Constable Abdul Rashid, Shaheed Constable Samiullah, and Shaheed Constable Suleman.

# International News

## Slovenia recognises Palestinian state following in footsteps of Spain, Ireland, Norway

**Monitoring Desk**  
LJUBLJANA: The Slovenian government on Thursday approved a decision to recognise an independent Palestinian state, Prime Minister Robert Golob said, following in the steps of Spain, Ireland and Norway.

"Today the government has decided to recognise Palestine as an independent and sovereign state," he said at a news conference in Ljubljana.

Parliament speaker Urska Klakocar Zupancic told a press conference in Ljubljana that Slovenian lawmakers are to vote on Tuesday on whether to recognise the Palestinian state. "The session is scheduled for Tuesday from 4pm (1400 GMT)," Zupancic said.

The move is part of a wider effort by countries to coordinate pressure on Israel to end the bombard-

ment in Gaza. Israel has been fighting against Hamas since a cross-border October 7 attack by fighters in which some 1,200 people were killed and over 250 taken hostage, according to Israeli tallies. Nearly 130 hostages are believed to remain captive in Gaza.

Gaza health authorities say more than 36,000 Palestinians have been killed in the Israeli bombardment over the past seven months that has generated global criticism. PM Golob also called for the immediate cessation of hostilities between Israel and Hamas in Gaza and the release of all hostages. "This is the message of peace," he said. The Slovenian government raised a Palestinian flag alongside the flags of Slovenia and the EU in front of its building in downtown Ljubljana.

On May 28, Spain,

Ireland and Norway officially recognised a Palestinian state, prompting an angry reaction from Israel.

Of the 27 members of the European Union, Sweden, Cyprus, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia, Romania and Bulgaria have already recognised a Palestinian state.

Malta has said it could follow soon. Britain and Australia have said they are also considering recognition, but France has said now is not the time.

Germany joined Israel's staunchest ally, the United States, in rejecting a unilateral approach, insisting that a two-state solution can only be achieved through dialogue.

Denmark's parliament on Tuesday voted down a bill to recognise a Palestinian state.



BRUSSELS: Protesters hold smoke bombs as they attend a demonstration in support of the people of Gaza in front of the embassy of Israel.

## Israel undermines goals by harming civilians in Gaza, US tells UN

**Monitoring Desk**  
UNITED NATIONS: Israel must do more to protect Palestinian civilians in Gaza and should "remove all barriers to the flow of aid at scale through all crossings and routes" into the enclave, the United States told the UN Security Council on Wednesday.

"The continued pattern of significant civilian harm resulting from incidents like Sunday's airstrikes undermines Israel's strategic goals in Gaza," deputy US Ambassador to the UN Robert

## UK's first Black woman lawmaker set to be barred from elections

**Monitoring Desk**  
LONDON: Britain's first Black woman lawmaker, Diane Abbott, said on Wednesday she was dismayed the opposition Labour Party looked set to bar her as an election candidate over comments she made over a year ago about Jews and racism.

Abbott, 70, is Britain's longest-serving Black member of parliament.

## France film director recounts ordeal after arrest in India for attending Dalit march

**Monitoring Desk**  
PARIS (INP): French film director Valentin Hénault has spoken out about his harrowing experience of being arrested and jailed in India for attending a Dalit march in Uttar Pradesh last October. Hénault was arrested by police on October 10, 2023, after attending an "Ambedkar's people's march" led by peasant women demanding land rights for Dalits. He was accused of violating visa conditions and was taken to Gorkhpur prison, where he was subjected to harsh conditions.

## Seven political groups fighting in European Parliament election

**Monitoring Desk**  
BRUSSELS: Voters in the 27 countries of the European Union will elect 720 lawmakers to the European Parliament for the next five years on June 6-9 and are expected to deliver a shift to the right.

The parliament has for the past five years been governed by a three-group majority of the centre-right European People's Party, centre-left Socialists and Democrats and liberals of Renew Europe.

Together they have steered EU policy, which has included the Green Deal and the EU response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and divided between them top jobs at EU institutions.

These are the political groups of the outgoing parliament. The groups of the hard and far right have proved the most fluid, regrouping, renaming and relaunching since the last elec-

## 26 extra days of extreme heat in a year due to climate change: report

**Monitoring Desk**  
PARIS: The world experienced an average of 26 more days of extreme heat over the last 12 months that would probably not have occurred without climate change, a report said on Tuesday.

Heat is the leading cause of climate-related death and the report further points to the role of global warming in increasing the frequency and intensity of extreme weather around the world.

For this study, scientists used the years 1991 to 2020 to determine what temperatures counted as within the top 10 per cent for each country over that period.

Next, they looked at the 12 months to May 15, 2024, to establish how many days over that period experienced temperatures within — or beyond — the previous range.

## Indonesia volcano belches ash tower 2 km into the sky

**Monitoring Desk**  
BUKIT TINGGI (INP): A volcano in western Indonesia erupted on Thursday, spewing an ash cloud two kilometres into the sky as authorities warned residents over potential dangers from cold lava flows.

Mount Merapi in West Sumatra province erupted at 1:04 pm (0604 GMT), spewing thick grey clouds of ash two kilometres (1.2 miles) above its peak, the national disaster mitigation agency, or BNPB, said in

## Iran registers presidential candidates for early vote after Raisi's death

**Monitoring Desk**  
TEHRAN: Iran on Thursday began registering candidates for an early election next month following the death of President Ebrahim Raisi in a helicopter crash, Iranian Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi told state TV.

Once seen as a possible successor to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei — Iran's ageing ultimate decision-maker — Raisi's sudden death triggered a race among hardliners to influence the selection of Iran's next leader.

After the five-day registration period, the Guardian Council, which oversees elections and legislation, will vet the candidates running for the presidency. "The vetting process will be eleven days and then qualified candidates will have al-

## Haiti transition council taps former PM Conille to again lead country

**Monitoring Desk**  
PORT-AU-PRINCE: Haiti's transition council tapped former Prime Minister Garry Conille, who briefly led the country over a decade ago, to return to the role as the Caribbean nation works to restore stability and take back control from violent gangs.

The transition council voted 6-1 to install Conille as interim prime minister, a member told Reuters.

Conille's extensive resume in development, working largely with the United Nations, is considered key to shoring up international support as Haiti prepares to launch a UN-backed security mission led by Kenya, though its deployment has faced hurdles.

"I feel very honored that the Presidential Council has chosen me as the new Prime Minister of Haiti," Conille said on X. "Together, we will work for a better tomorrow for all the children of our nation."

The transition council, which holds some presi-

## Most two weeks for the election campaign, Vahidi told state TV

The Guardian Council will publish the list of qualified candidates on June 11. Moderate politicians have accused the 12-member hardline Guardian Council of disqualifying rivals to hardline candidates, who are expected to dominate the upcoming presidential race. Turnout may be hit by restricted choice on the ballot and rising discontent over an array of political, social and economic crises.

Within Iran's complex mix of clerical rulers and elected officials, Khamenei has the final say on all state matters such as nuclear and foreign policies, but the elected president will be in charge of tackling worsening economic hardship.

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## Pakistan, Azerbaijan reiterate commitment to improve bilateral cooperation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Azerbaijan on Thursday reiterated their commitment to further improve bilateral cooperation in the areas of economy, trade, energy, connectivity, and people-to-people contacts.

This was discussed during a meeting between the Acting President Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani and the visiting Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan Jeyhun Bayramov, accompanied by his delegation here at the Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Welcoming the foreign minister, the acting president said that Pakistan and Azerbaijan enjoyed deep-rooted historical relations, based on shared culture and religion.

He added that Multan-Sarai in Baku was a testament to the centuries-old relations between the two brotherly countries. He suggested that Baku and Multan should be declared "sister cities" to bring the two nations further closer.

The acting president highlighted that both countries had great scope for improving trade and business relations.

He expressed satisfaction over the existing level of cooperation between the two brotherly countries, saying that both countries had commonalities of views at various international fora.

Acting President Gillani emphasised the need for educational and parliamentary exchanges as well as improving connectivity to bring the two countries more closer.

He called for boosting people-to-people contacts between the two nations, especially in the areas of tourism, business, and education.

The visiting foreign minister said that cooperation between Pakistan and Azerbaijan was extremely important, which needed to be enhanced in the areas of economy, trade, and business.

He said that increased connectivity and people-to-people contacts would help cement bilateral ties.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of representatives of Chambers of Commerce and Industry and Associations of various industries and businesses from across the country calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.



ISLAMABAD: Acting President Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani welcoming the Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan Jeyhun Bayramov at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

## CDWP recommends two projects worth Rs609.45b to ECNEC for consideration

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Central Development Working Party (CDWP) here on Thursday recommended two projects worth Rs609.45 billion to the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) for consideration.

The CDWP met here with Secretary Ministry of Planning Development and Special Initiatives Awais Manzoor Sumra in chair and it was also attended by the members of the Planning Commission, as well as representatives from federal ministries and provincial governments, said a press release.

The Golden Gol Hydropower Project (108 MW) Chitral, (2nd revised) worth Rs. 42,002 million was recommended to ECNEC for further consideration.

The sources of finance is OPEC Fund for International Development (US \$30 million) Saudi Fund for Development (US\$ 97.8 million) Kuwaiti Fund for Arab Economic Development (US\$ 52.5 million) USAID (US\$ 35.6 million grant).

The main objective of the project was the construction of 108 MW hydro-power project with an annual energy of about 476 GWh. The project was commissioned in 2019 and has generated a total of 730 million units till 28.02.2024.

## Law minister chairs meeting on remission policy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar on Thursday chaired a very significant meeting of the inter-ministerial committee to discuss the Ministry of Interior's Remission Policy of 2002.

The meeting was attended by representatives from the Ministries of Law and Justice, Interior, Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, along with officials from the Home Department Punjab, Home Department Sindh, and Home Department KPK.

During the meeting, the participants presented their legal perspectives and suggestions for improving the remission policy 2002.

Emphasizing the need for a more liberal, reformative approach, the minister encouraged attendees to submit their suggestions in writing and assured them of legal assistance on any queries. The committee also discussed the necessity of prison reforms at the provincial level. It was noted that while the Supreme Court has upheld the classification system within the current policy, it did not restrict the executive from revisiting and amending the policy in order to make it more benevolent and beneficial with the aim to provide an opportunity to those who wanted to repent and reform.

## WB team acknowledges progress on infrastructure activities in flood hit areas

KARACHI (APP): The World Bank Mission, reviewing progress on the activities of Sindh Flood Emergency Rehabilitation Project (SFERP) and its component P&DD, acknowledges the overall progress made so far is quite impressive both from the timeline and the quality of work, point of view.

This was stated by Shoaib Siddiqui, Senior Advisor to the Bank, during a review meeting held here on Thursday.

The meeting was chaired by Senior Disaster Risk Management Specialist, Ahsen Tehsin and also attended by Rehan Hyder and Nihan Rafique from the World Bank while Ghulam Asghar Kanasro and Aslam Leghari represented the Project side, a press release said.

DG Rescue Service Dr Abid, during the review session informed that 16 satellite stations on Indus Highway (N-55), N-5 and M-9 are complete and in the process of being fine-tuned. All these stations will become operational by August as the staff selected for handling these stations is being trained in Rescue 1122 Academy, Lahore.

## PM announces industry status for warehouse, logistics

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday announced to give industry status to warehouse and logistics, directing the concerned authorities to fulfill all necessary legal requirements in that regard.

The announcement was made during a meeting of the representatives of chambers of commerce and associations of various industries and businesses from across the country with the prime minister.

The business community expressed its gratitude to the prime minister for fulfilling their long-standing demand, which was pending at various forums.

The prime minister said that the economy was on the recovery track and the government was working for more economic stability.

He said the economy was being fully digitized and work to digitize the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) had already been started.

The foreign investment would increase only with the increase of local investment in Pakistan, he added.

The prime minister said "during my upcoming visit to China, I will invite the Chinese industry to set up industries in Pakistan."

The government, he said was taking steps to provide a business-friendly environment in the country.

"The inflation has reduced due to the prudent government policies," he added.

The prime minister also expressed the government's commitment to encourage new projects in alternative energy, especially solar energy, to bring down electricity prices in the country.

He informed that work on outsourcing of three major airports had started.

The prime minister said except few strategic state owned enterprises (SOEs), all the enterprises were being privatized to save losses of billions of rupees. He also expressed satisfaction over the better growth rate of IT industry.

Third party validation was being conducted to check the performance of trade and investment officers posted abroad, he added.



LONDON: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi cutting cake during a reception in honor of Pakistan Cricket team.

## Naqvi hopes Pakistani cricket team to bring World Cup with hard work

LONDON (INP): Federal Minister for Interior and Chairman Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), Mohsin Naqvi on Thursday expressed the hope that the Pakistan cricket team through its hard work would bring the World Cup to the country.

While addressing a reception hosted by the Pakistan's High Commissioner in the UK, Dr Mohammad Faisal in honour of the Pakistan Men's Cricket Team and the management at Pakistan House, London, Mohsin Naqvi said that entire cricket team of Pakistan was giving their best to the game. He urged the Pakistan's fans to keep supporting the team on their upcoming tour to the United States of America.

The chairman PCB said that team management was independent in making decisions about players which he added important for delivering good performance.

Speaking on the occasion, Mayor of London Sadiq Khan said that he was very happy to welcome Pakistan Cricket Team at London and wished them best of luck for upcoming matches.



Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa calls on Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi in Islamabad.

## ICT doorstep initiative: Convenient vehicle registration at Trail 3

ISLAMABAD (APP): Excise department is providing civic facilities to residents of the Federal Capital to get their vehicle registration as well as access to various essential services at Trail 3 on Thursday under the ICT doorstep initiative.

According to the Spokesman of ICT, the excise staff would be stationed at the parking lot from 3.00 to 5.00 p.m.

Citizens hailing from nearby areas can get civic facilities through a dedicated van, he said.

The spokesman said that whether you need a fuel permit for domestic or commercial use, or looking to register your motor vehicle seamlessly, the on-ground service would ensure a swift and straightforward process.

This initiative aimed at to streamline processes and provide ease to the public regarding vehicle registration, transfer, and token tax procedures, he added.

In addition to the vehicle registration, transfer, and token tax services, the Facilitation Center Doorstep ICT Vehicle would also be offering the following services: Domicile certificate, Birth certificate, Power of attorney, International Driving permit, Fuel permit (domestic/commercial), and Motor vehicle registration.

## Chairman PMYP emphasizes crucial role of technology for empowering youth

RAWALPINDI (APP): Chairman of Prime Minister Youth Programme (PMYP) Rana Mashood Ahmed Khan on Thursday emphasized the crucial role of technology for empowering youth.

Addressing the event titled "Bridging the Academia-Industry Gap" organized in collaboration with Microsoft and the Higher Education Commission (HEC), the chairman PMYP said that equipping graduates with the latest technological skills is paramount to ensuring their success in the competitive global landscape.

He said that such events pave the way for a more collaborative and future-proof education system. Microsoft Pakistan brought together leading figures from academia and industry focusing on nurturing collaboration and equipping graduates with the skills needed to thrive in the modern workplace.

The event commenced with a welcome address by Dr Zia Ul Qayyum, Executive Director of the Higher Education Commission followed by a Keynote by Microsoft's Director of Education Industry, Central Europe Middle East and Africa Jaye Richards Hill. Highlighting the importance of this collaboration, Jaye Richards Hill stated, "At Microsoft, we believe that technology can be a powerful bridge between academia and industry. By equipping students with the latest tools and technologies, and fostering collaboration with industry leaders, we can prepare them for the jobs of tomorrow."



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme Rana Mashood Ahmed Khan and Chairman HEC Prof. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed inaugurating "Bridging the Academia-Industry Gap" organized by HEC & Microsoft at HEC.

## IGP visits National Police Hospital; directs official to expedite construction work

Independent Report  
ISLAMABAD: According to the details, the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, visited the under-construction Pakistan's Hospital as soon as possible and to ensure it meets international standards. IG Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi said that, several projects have been initiated for the



welfare of Islamabad Police officers. The construction of the National Police Hospital will benefit police officers, their families, and the general public in the future. Maximum relief will be provided to police officers in every sector. Such efforts will not only boost the morale of police officers but also that of their families, he added.

## Riphah University students visit Senate Secretariat at Parl. House

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation of 64 students from Riphah University, along with faculty members, visited the Senate Secretariat at Parliament House on Thursday.

The delegation paid a guided tour of the Senate Museum, during which they watched a documentary outlining the history of the Upper House. Additionally, they were briefed on the electoral and legislative procedures, as well as the overall functioning of the Senate of Pakistan.

The delegation explored the Senate Museum, showing particular interest in the statues and historical photographs depicting prominent politicians of the country.

The delegation proceeded to the Senate Hall, where Senate officials provided a comprehensive briefing on the operational protocols, legislative processes, functions,



WASHINGTON: Grey Andrus, Executive Director, DC Soccer Club meets with Ambassador Masood Khan.

## Sherry calls for urgent climate action at "Road to Climate Resilient Pakistan" conference

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senator Sherry Rehman on Thursday emphasized the need for immediate and genuine action to address climate change.

She was speaking as the chief guest at the "Road to Climate Resilient Pakistan: Reducing Our Carbon Footprint" conference, hosted by Islamic Relief Pakistan and the National Disaster Risk Management Fund (NDRMF).

Sherry Rehman said, "Climate is one conversation that must connect from local to global because climate knows no barriers when it changes. It can impact people and communities anywhere in the world. We have just seen a cyclone hit Bangladesh, and floods in Brazil and Afghanistan. Pakistan, too, is in the middle of a debilitating, scorching heatwave."

She cited that Mohenjo Daro was recorded as the planet's hottest place with 53 degrees centigrade, reminding the world that such temperatures don't support human life.

Speaking about Pakistan's transition to renewable energy, Sherry remarked, "Pakistan's transition from fossil fuels is quite doable. We have a large amount of solar capacity and a huge amount of wind capacity, particularly all the way through the Sindh coastal areas. Part of the problem is our ageing grid, which cannot take on a great deal of renewables anymore because there's no space and also the incentive structures that are in place for solarization."

## Belgium Ambassador calls on PRCS chairman

ISLAMABAD (APP): Charles Delogne, the Belgium Ambassador to Pakistan, visited the National Headquarters of the Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) on Thursday, where the PRCS representatives warmly welcomed him upon arrival.

In his meeting with PRCS Chairman Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari, the two leaders discussed the bilateral relations between Pakistan and Belgium, focusing on humanitarian cooperation and exploring potential joint initiatives to support vulnerable communities in Pakistan.

Chairman Laghari emphasized PRCS's extensive humanitarian services across the country, particularly highlighting the assistance provided to millions affected by the 2022 monsoon floods.

He detailed the various facilities and support mechanisms PRCS has implemented, including ongoing recovery efforts for flood-affected families such as shelter, livelihood support, WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene), cash assistance and others.

Ambassador Charles Delogne on the occasion extended his best wishes and commended the organization's efforts under Chairman Laghari's leadership.

## Wafaqi Mohtasib's vital role highlighted at National Skills University Islamabad

Independent Report  
ISLAMABAD: In an enlightening and highly interactive lecture at the National Skills University (NSU) Islamabad, Mr. Ahmad Farooq, Honorable Senior Advisor at the Wafaqi Mohtasib (Ombudsman)'s Secretariat, captivated his audience with a profound discourse on the institution's pivotal role in addressing issues of remarkable journey, showcasing its contributions to Pakistan's governance landscape.

and its emergence as a leader in administrative accountability.

The term 'ombudsman' encapsulates a system of administrative accountability aimed at addressing maladministration and safeguarding human rights. This concept, deeply rooted in the Islamic governance model, was further institutionalized by the Swedish Parliamentary Ombudsman in 1809. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) underscores the sanctity of these principles globally.

In Pakistan, the Wafaqi Mohtasib was established on January 24, 1983, to diagnose, investigate, and rectify injustices stemming from maladministration, thereby playing a crucial role in upholding human rights, and ensuring good governance.

Mr. Farooq, who also served as Secretary to the President of Pakistan, articulated the foundational principles and enduring significance of the Wafaqi Mohtasib. His lecture was complemented by a documentary that chronicles the institution's maladministration.

This lecture was held in the NSU Main Auditorium, drawing students, faculty, and distinguished guests into a conversation on administrative accountability and governance.

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