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PM invites opposition to hold dialogue for country's betterment

Says let us sit together to take the country ahead. Let us talk for the betterment of the country. There is no other way forward; Dialogue with govt possible only after release of PTI founder: Omar Ayub

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday invited the opposition political parties to join heads for a dialogue to discuss the ways for taking the country ahead.

"Let us sit together to take the country ahead. Let us talk for the betterment of the country. There is no other way forward," the prime minister said addressing the National Assembly, while responding to a point of order by Sunni Ittehad Council Ali Muhammad Khan.

He recalled that in the past too, he had invited the

political parties to evolve a consensus on a Charter of Economy but that idea was ridiculed just for political point-scoring.

He said the way the sloganeering was done on the offer, was the darkest chapter in the country's history.

Prime Minister Shehbaz said that the House should also fix the responsibility on those who contributed to such a bitterness in the society.

The prime minister also recounted his ordeal of facing victimization and that he was in jail when his mother passed

away. Despite request to the jail superintendent, he was not given exemption from court appearance, he added.

He said that despite being a cancer survivor and with a backbone ailment, he used to be driven to courts on the ordinary prison van just to exacerbate the condition, but he never complained.

Prime Minister Shehbaz said that other PML-N leaders like Khawaja Muhammad Asif and Rana Sanaulallah also faced humiliating treatment despite being the under-trial prisoners.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif interacting with leaders of SIC Asad Qaiser, Umar Ayub and JUI Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman during National Assembly session.

Security forces bust terrorist network in Balochistan, arrests TTP's commanders

Mir Zia Ullah Langau says militant Nasrullah was taken into custody after a "difficult operation" by LEAs; Commander Nasrullah says banned outfit is funded by India's RAW

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan Minister for Home and Tribal Affairs Mir Ziaullah Langau on Wednesday revealed that the security forces had busted an important network of terrorists in the province, arrested the head of the banned TTP's defense council, Nasrullah alias Maulvi Mansoor and commander, Idris. He felicitated the security forces for foiling the plan to create a base for operating terrorist activities in Balochistan and the arrest of two commanders of terrorist organization.

The minister, who was flanked by spokesperson of Balochistan government, Shahid Rind, DIG Police Quetta, Aitzaz Goraya, said, "These terrorists have nothing to do with the rights of Balochistan. It is rather a nefarious attempt to spread terrorism

and their nefarious designs. He added that innocent people were being misled and taken to the mountains and being engaged in terrorist activities. The minister said that "my message to the people of Balochistan is that the youth who have gone to the mountains have been misled and misguided by anti-state elements."

He said that Pakistan was our homeland and we should support the security forces to maintain law and order in the country. The ambitions of the enemy were to push our country into terrorism and all of the security forces of the country jointly thwarted the plans of the terrorists financed by RAW, he said, adding the Indian intelligence agency's agents were misleading the innocent people to kill the local people and sabotage the peace of the country.

In recent days, there has been a great success regarding eliminating terrorism as the law enforcement and intelligence agencies have conducted a complicated operation and the main terrorist commanders Nasrullah and Idris were arrested in the operation.

Mir Ziaullah urged the people of Balochistan to recognize such elements

President Zardari calls for unity against drug abuse on international day

ISLAMABAD (INP): On the occasion of the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, President Asif Ali Zardari issued a powerful message emphasizing the critical need for prevention and collective action to combat drug abuse and trafficking in Pakistan.

President Zardari also underscored the need for creating awareness, strengthening anti-narcotics laws, and investing in prevention and treatment programs. He emphasized the role of community engagement and education in safeguarding the youth from the harmful impacts of drug abuse. "We should divert the energies of our youth into healthy and productive activities," he added.

Calling upon every citizen to support the government's efforts, President Zardari urged the public to raise awareness about the detrimental effects of drug abuse at the individual, family, and community levels.



ISLAMABAD: Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori meeting with Turkish Ambassador Mehmet Pacaci.

MQM delegation calls on PM, demands for reducing sales tax on retailers

ISLAMABAD (Online): A delegation of MQM called on Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif Wednesday and demanded for raising funds for many projects and reducing sales tax on retailers below 18 percent.

The delegation was led by minister for Science, Education and Technology Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui.

As per MQM sources MQM demanded for reducing the sales tax on retailers below 18 percent. MQM also demanded for raising funds for Karachi package and K-4 projects.

The PM assured the delegation for enhancing funds in respect of both of the projects.



SUKKUR: Provincial Minister, Jam Khan Shoro is addressing a press conference regarding the Sukkur Barrage, in Sukkur.

Governor Sindh meets Turkish Ambassador

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori met Turkish Ambassador Mehmet Pacaci in Islamabad.

In the meeting, bilateral relations, increase in trade, investment and other matters of interest were discussed, said a spokesperson of Sindh Governor's House here on Wednesday.

The matters related to investments under SIFC were also discussed in the meeting. The Governor Sindh said that various sectors in the province are very attractive for investment and Turkish investors should invest in the province, in this regard the government will provide them with all possible support.

The Turkish Ambassador said that Turkish investors are very keen in various sectors of the province.

Sindh Chief Secretary takes proactive measures against impending heat-wave

Sindh Government establishes heat-wave camps and centres in anticipation of severe weather

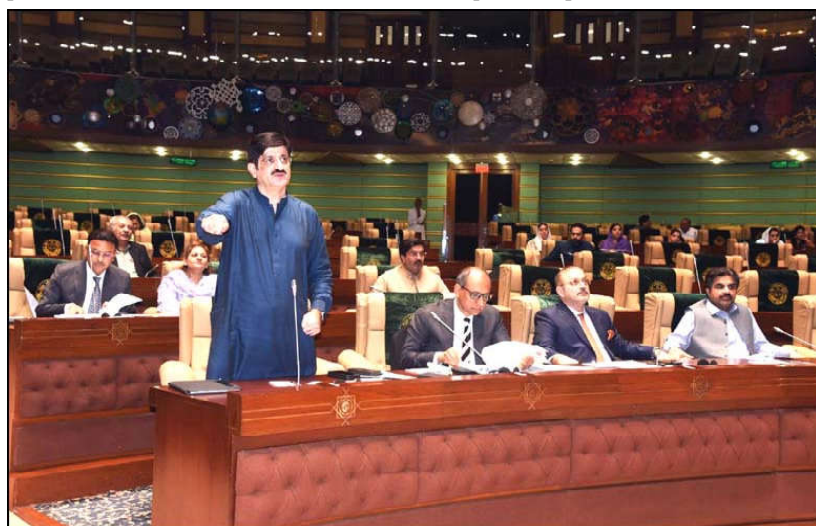
Independent Report
KARACHI: Sindh Chief Secretary Syed Asif Hyder Shah presided over a meeting on Wednesday to assess and strategize comprehensive measures to address the impending heat wave. The meeting was attended by the secretaries of energy and rehabilitation, Karachi commissioner and director general of the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA). During the meeting, the PDMA DG briefed the participants on the alert issued to all relevant organizations regarding the anticipated heatwave. The session involved discussions on various preventive measures and plans implemented by the commissioners to mitigate heat stroke risks.

All divisional commissioners briefed the meet-

ing regarding the steps they have taken, including the establishment of heatwave centres in their respective areas, ensuring the availability of necessary resources, and coordinating with local authorities to provide immediate assistance during the heatwave. Commissioners briefed that in Karachi alone, 124 heatwave camps and first aid centres have been set up to address the urgent needs of residents, 200 heatwave camps and first aid centres in Hyderabad division, in Sukkur Division 228, Larkana 60, 85 in Mirpurkhas, and 48 in Shaheed Benazirabad have been established to provide immediate relief and medical aid. These camps are equipped with essential medical supplies, hydration stations, and cooling areas

to support those affected by the extreme temperatures, ensuring comprehensive coverage and access to necessary care across the province.

Syed Asif Hyder Shah emphasized the importance of creating a robust and responsive infrastructure to mitigate the effects of the heat wave. He issued directives for the establishment of heatwave prevention centers in all hospitals across the province to provide immediate assistance and relief. He also stressed that commissioners and deputy commissioners must establish heatwave camps in their respective jurisdictions, which will provide essential services such as hydration stations, shaded areas, and medical support to those affected by the extreme temperatures.



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Murad Ali Shah speaks on the floor of the assembly about the gate collapse at Sukkur Barrage and its rehabilitation, at Sindh Assembly in Karachi.

Linjar vows action of SHO suspension over citizen's death in robbery

KARACHI (INP): Sindh's Home Minister Zia-ul-Hasan Linjar has announced the suspension of a Station House Officer (SHO) following the tragic death of a citizen during a robbery in Karachi.

Addressing the Sindh Assembly, Minister Linjar underscored the need for 42,000 police constables, emphasizing ongoing recruitment based on rigorous third-party exams to ensure merit-based selections.

Highlighting the crucial role of Rangers, Linjar noted their collaboration with the police across various targets in Sindh, supported by a budget of 6 billion rupees. He pointed out significant achievements in reducing mobile snatching incidents and dismantling

auto-parts theft networks, resulting in over 300 arrests.

"We are accountable to the assembly and the public," Minister Linjar affirmed, pledging swift action whenever citizens lose their lives during criminal acts. He urged the Chief Minister to announce compensation for victims and emphasized the government's role as servants of the people.

The minister also addressed concerns over rural security and improvements in motorway operations, stressing targeted police actions despite resource limitations. He mourned recent police casualties and called for enhanced security measures in Kashmore and Karachi.



KARACHI: View of destroying liquor bottles and burning pile of confiscated drugs during Drug Destruction ceremony organized by Pakistan Coast Guards in connection of International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking held in Karachi.

Heat wave kills 10 in Karachi

KARACHI (APP): The Commissioner Karachi Syed Hasan Naqvi, on Wednesday confirmed that ten persons lost their lives in two days due to severe heat wave conditions in Karachi division.

The commissioner, while briefing the media persons here at his office, refuted the reports regarding number of reported deaths due to severe heat in the metropolis and said that data collected from different sources confirmed demise of ten individuals due to heat wave conditions.

He said that administration collected data re-

garding deaths occurred in Karachi division from different sources which included patient information from hospitals, data of graveyard burials from Karachi Municipal Corporation and information from mortuaries.

The reported number of deaths in the city is not correct as those figures have not been confirmed by any source, the commissioner categorically stated adding that 1700 patients of heat stroke were brought to all the hospitals of Karachi division and heat stroke was found as cause of death in ten cases.

Qadir Patel elected Chairman Standing Committee on Maritime Affairs

ISLAMABAD (APP): Member National Assembly (MNA) Abdul Qadir Patel was elected unanimously on Wednesday as Chairman of the Standing Committee on Maritime Affairs.

According to the notification issued by National Assembly Secretariat, Abdul Qadir Patel thanked the committee members for electing him unanimously as Chairman of Standing committee.

Abdul Qadir Patel was elected in a meeting of the Standing Committee on Maritime Affairs. MNA Khurram Manwar Manj proposed Abdul Qadir Patel while Aoun Chaudhry and Agha Rafaulah seconded.

The committee members congratulated Abdul Qadir Patel for his election as Chairman.

AGP prays SC to dismiss SIC's appeal for reserved seats

ISLAMABAD (APP): Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan on Wednesday submitted written arguments to the Supreme Court of Pakistan in the case of Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) regarding reserved seats.

The AGP requested the top court to dismiss the SIC's appeal and uphold the verdict of Peshawar High Court (PHC) in the matter.

He said, "A political party that participates in elections and wins at least one seat can get reserved seats. According to the law, a list has to be provided for certain seats to the ECP (Election Commission of Pakistan)."

The SIC neither participated in the elections nor submitted the list for the specific seats, "which are only reserved for minorities and women", he added.

The AGP said, "Independent candidates can join the political parties that have representation in the Parliament."



PESHAWAR: Pashtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PKMAP) Chairman, Mahmud Khan Achakzai addressing during Tribal Aman Jirga arranged by Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) in Peshawar.

Azm-e-Istehkam: Achakzai threatens to take issue to International Court of Justice

Emphasises necessity for decisions in country to reflect clear majority of people's will

Monitoring Desk

PESHAWAR: Mahmud Khan Achakzai, leader of the Pashtunkhwa Milli Awami Party and the opposition alliance Tahreek-e-Tahafuz Aain Pakistan, has issued a stark warning against being compelled to take their grievances against Operation Azm-e-Istehkam to the International Court of Justice.

Speaking at a jirga organised by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) in Peshawar on Wednesday, Achakzai emphasised the necessity for the decisions in the country to reflect the clear majority of the people's will, which is currently not the case.

Achakzai recalled that when the constitu-

tional amendment to merge FATA with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) was presented in Parliament, it was not included in the official agenda.

He argued that with peace, the region could attract tourists from around the world, noting that K-P is a significant center for Buddhism. He stated that the people of K-P are hospitable, which would further boost tourism.

He pointed out the exploitation since Pakistan's formation, mentioning the thousands of miles of railway lines consumed, marble from Mohmand, and the gold-filled lands of Waziristan. He urged President Zardari to ensure that the natural resources benefits go to the local people.



KARACHI: Patient attendants, who were came from shade of tree of Sindh province, rest under the shade of tree during the hot weather, at civil hospital premises in Karachi.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Extremist threat

As the state continues to explain to the nation what exactly the Azm-i-Istehkam campaign will entail, particularly in the realm of counterterrorism measures, there is also a need to discuss steps to counter violent extremism in the country.

While the military and civil law-enforcement agencies battle militants in the field, a similar campaign should be waged to deradicalise society, as both terrorism and extremism are joined at the hip, and feed off each other. Just over the past few months, we have witnessed lynchings based on doubtful allegations of blasphemy, as well as the persecution of minority communities for practising their faith even within the privacy of their homes.

Thus, while the state takes on what it calls the 'remnants' of terrorist outfits, it should not ignore the extremism threat. There may be some realisation of this at the top, as a recent statement from the PM Office, while discussing Azm-i-Istehkam, specifically mentions the need to implement the revised National Action Plan.

Indeed, a blueprint for the deradicalisation of society exists in the shape of the updated NAP. But until NAP's goals are implemented to the letter, deradicalisation will simply remain a theory, as extremists continue to further their toxic narratives in society. Point number three of the updated NAP mentions "taking effective measures against religious/sectarian persecution & terrorism".

As noted, there has been no shortage of incidents of religious and sectarian persecution in Pakistan. The question is: do those who control the levers of state intend to confront the extremist elements that are fanning the flames of hatred in society? Will those who encourage lynch mobs and the persecution of religious minorities be brought to justice?

Unless these bold steps are taken, it is difficult to see Azm-i-Istehkam succeed, and a few years down the line we may witness the launch of a new CT operation.

The key to successfully implementing a CT plan, along with kinetic measures, lies in a practical scheme to counter violent extremism. NAP contains most of these elements, and experts in the field can be consulted to fine-tune the plan. But perhaps the single biggest step that needs to be taken to counter extremism is to bring to heel the groups that are promoting murderous vigilantism in society. Moreover, some political parties have said 70 'banned' organisations have resurfaced with new names. While there could be a difference of opinion over the actual figure, there is little argument with the fact that 'banned' groups are back in business not long after their supposed proscription. This cat-and-mouse game has been continuing since the Musharraf era. Proscription of violent groups must mean that they are unable to access funds or organise at any level. Anything less would be inadequate.

Assange is free

Mahir Ali

Julian Assange was already on a flight to Australia by the time the news broke early yesterday of a plea deal with the US, whereby he would plead guilty on a single count of violating the Espionage Act in exchange for being liberated.

This isn't an ideal outcome — he ought never have to be incarcerated in the first place, and cannot conceivably be compensated for the seven years he spent holed up in the Ecuadorian embassy in London, let alone the nearly five years he endured in a tiny cell in Britain's high-security Belmarsh prison.

Nonetheless, it's a delightful alternative to what might have unfolded: extradition to the US; facing a court that may well have concluded that punishing those who expose crimes was more in keeping with the ideals of "the land of the free" than pursuing the actual criminals; and a prison term effectively tantamount to a death sentence. What hopefully turns out to be the final scene in the last act of a sordid drama should be over by the time you read this. It was scheduled to unfold this morning in a courtroom on Saipan in the Northern Mariana Islands, an American Pacific territory closer to Australia than to the continental US. A federal judge is expected to sign off on the deal, whereafter Assange will return home as a free man. No one can guarantee that nothing will go wrong, but the chances are small.

In recent years, there has been a bipartisan Australian push to secure Assange's freedom — combined with a bipartisan consensus on geo-strategically subordinating Australia to the very same empire whose depredations WikiLeaks helped to lay bare —

which may have played a role in influencing the Biden administration's decision-making. The primary consideration, though, is likely to have been that pursuing Assange's prosecution could compromise what had already been achieved by persecuting him: to deter anyone contemplating the idea of following in WikiLeaks' footsteps.

Throughout its existence, the American empire's primal urge has been driven by the fear of any individual or nation setting an anti-imperial example that others might seek to emulate: from Iran and Guatemala in the 1950s, to Cuba, Vietnam, Chile and innumerable others. Among whistleblowers, Daniel Ellsberg — who exposed the deep state's actual thinking on Vietnam — stands out as a worthy exemplar who escaped extended incarceration only because the Nixon administration slipped up.

WikiLeaks' key collaborator, Chelsea Manning, a soldier during the US deployment in Iraq, was sentenced to 35 years in prison after a court martial. She served seven years before being reprieved by Barack Obama in one of his few acts of decency shortly before he handed over to Donald Trump. The Obama administration also decided against pursuing Assange on the sensible grounds that the logical consequence of targeting him would entail similar proceedings against The New York Times and other outlets that had republished selections from WikiLeaks' trove of documents.

It would be difficult to argue that the 'Iraq War Logs', the 'Afghan War Diary' and the more than two million diplomatic cables (which helped to trigger the short-lived Arab Spring) did not serve the public

interest. The main US argument has been that the unredacted names of operatives and collaborators exposed them to retaliation, but there has never been any corroborating evidence of dire consequences. The main consequence for the empire was embarrassment, as its routine war crimes and frequently indefensible diplomatic machinations were publicised.

The US Democratic National Committee leaks on the eve of the 2016 polls particularly incensed the losing party, but suggestions that he should be assassinated had been made even before that. When Assange faced extradition to Sweden over allegations of sexual misdemeanours, he claimed it was part of a ploy to extradite him to the US. Many of us were sceptical, but subsequent events bore out his suspicion.

His refuge at the Ecuadorian embassy became more uncomfortable after a change of government in Quito, and he was spied upon and maligned before the UK authorities were invited to cart him away to Belmarsh. Whatever his flaws as a human being, the WikiLeaks founder and editor has done the world a great service by ripping off the empire's last shreds of self-ordained respectability. Amid the American war-mongering in Europe and the Middle East — with Biden's ill-disguised backing for the genocidal Zionist project — the world needs more revelations and clarifications of the WikiLeaks variety, and far greater freedom for journalists from Palestine to Pakistan, India and far beyond. Fresh revelations are unlikely to come from Assange — and Julian undoubtedly deserves to be left in peace. But, hopefully, the seeds he has sowed will bear fruit time and again. -- Courtesy Dawn

Eradicating torture

Rabiya Javeri Agha

It is often said that no one truly knows a nation until one has been inside its jails. This statement was starkly illustrated in October 2022, when the National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) conducted an inquiry based on a complaint of custodial torture in Adiala Jail Rawalpindi, filed before the Islamabad High Court.

The NCHR report uncovered numerous complaints of torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment suffered at the hands of jail authorities. Out of 35 inmates who recorded their statements, 26 prisoners (74 per cent) alleged various forms of torture and inhumane treatment. Every single inmate (100pc) spoke about financial extortion for accessing genuine facilities available at the jail. There was little to no oversight by the then Oversight Committee, and over the past five years, only one prison official had been dismissed for violating human rights — a mere dispenser at the jail. At that point, Pakistan had no substantive law criminalising torture.

Today, in compliance with its domestic and international commitments, and due to strong lobbying by civil society and NCHR, Pakistan has a stand-alone law on torture: the Torture and Custodial Death (Prevention and Punishment) Act, 2022.

Torture is an act of physical or psychological violence committed by, or at the behest of, a public official for the purpose of coercion, confession, or any other specific objective. These elements must exist for an act of torture to be proven, and the penalty must be commensurate with the gravity of the crime. As

such, the passage of the Act in November 2022 was an important step towards justice and accountability that specifically defined and criminalised torture. Sadly, however, nearly two years have passed, and the law remains non-operational.

For the government and relevant actors to commit effectively to the eradication of torture in Pakistan, two crucial components must be implemented. The first is the passage of operational rules under the Act, which clearly define the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder. These rules are necessary to establish a procedural framework for complaint redressal, investigation, prosecution, and compensation under the law. To date, no one has yet been convicted under the new law. While the Federal Investigation Agency holds exclusive jurisdiction to investigate complaints against public officials, the nature of this supervision is unclear. No functional wing dedicated to investigating custodial torture has been established at the FIA, and there is no complaint mechanism for such cases on the FIA's official website, unlike for all other federal offences falling under its ambit.

Delay in the passage of such rules and procedures with regard to complaints of torture has prevented the citizens of Pakistan from utilising this vital legislation for their protection and the realisation of their rights. It is imperative that these rules be passed immediately.

The second, and perhaps more complex, aspect of this issue is the matter of resources. The country faces numerous pressing challenges, each demanding its own focus and funding. The eradication of

torture and the realisation of human rights are, however, matters of absolute urgency. Robust legal resources, including a dedicated team of legal advisers, are crucial to ensuring compliance with international standards on investigating and documenting torture, particularly the Istanbul Protocol. Financial resources are critical for supporting investigative procedures, including independent forensic examinations and medical assessments. Equally crucial are technological resources, such as secure databases for case management and digital tools for evidence collection and analysis.

Additionally, public awareness and education campaigns are necessary to inform citizens of their rights, particularly those deprived of their liberty and at most risk of torture or ill-treatment, and encourage the reporting of torture. Partnerships with civil society organisations and international human rights bodies can also provide support and advocacy, and contribute to an effective system of checks and balances. Finally, all personnel involved in the arrest, interrogation and detention of persons should receive training on human rights and, in particular, on the absolute prohibition of torture. The people of Pakistan deserve freedom from torture and cruel treatment. There is a trust deficit in our system that must be bridged to restore confidence in the state's ability to protect its citizens. Today, on the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, the NCHR stands ready to champion accountability, justice, and human rights in Pakistan. However, the government must also take a proactive and swift role in this crucial endeavour. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

PM calls for a special focus on promotion of alternative energy

Says promotion of investment Govt's top priority

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday called for a special focus on the promotion of alternative energy, particularly solar energy, besides directing the authorities concerned to formulate a strategy for Thar coal gasification.

He, chairing a meeting to discuss the matters related to the Petroleum Division, said Thar coal

was significant to cope with Pakistan's energy needs and instructed taking measures to transport Thar coal to other parts of the country through rail network.

During the briefing, it was highlighted that despite minimal carbon footprints, Pakistan was among the top five vulnerable countries and that measures were being

taken to mitigate the climate change impacts by promoting products based on alternative energy.

It was told that a strategy would be formulated to enhance production of tight gas and smart meters would be installed to curb gas and oil theft.

The meeting was told that a policy was being formulated to promote

electric bikes and vehicles, and domestic electric appliances. Moreover, the proposals for deregulating the petroleum sector would be worked out besides digitizing the petrol and gas exploration.

The Petroleum Division authorities said that steps were being taken to enhance competitiveness in the petroleum sector, promotion of bio-fuels.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting on matters related to Petroleum Division.



Chairman Senate, Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani addressing the all Pakistan Chambers Presidents Conference "Performing Pakistan's Economy for Inclusive and Sustainable Development" organized by Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Islamabad.

Engineers must be part of campaign for 'Made in Pak' products: PEC chairman

FAISALABAD (APP): Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) Chairman Engr. Muhammad Najeeb Haroon said on Wednesday that engineers must be included in the decision-making process at the highest level for establishment of the import substitution industry and promotion of 'Made in Pakistan' products.

Addressing the business and industrial community during a meeting in Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI), he stressed the need to enhance quality and employability of the registered engineers and said that in this connection

the PEC had launched a six-month internship course for the young engineers.

He urged the industrialists to avail from this project as PEC would pay the stipend while their placement in industries would help engineers to understand the engineering related intricacies and present their workable and cost effective solutions.

He said that PEC was also funding innovative projects. "Last year, it had undertaken 250 research projects while this year it was funding 600 tasks," he said and added that next year approximately 1,000 projects would be launched in collaboration with the registered engineers and said that in this connection

WB team reviews progress on KP tourism project

PESHAWAR (APP): A high-level delegation from the World Bank's Implementation Support Mission visited the Planning and Development Department, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to review the progress of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Integrated Tourism Development Project (KITE).

The meeting, chaired by Secretary Planning and Development Department, Shahidullah Khan, discussed the project's milestones and timelines.

The Secretary emphasized the need for expediting project activities to ensure timely completion and optimal impact. The KITE project aims to enhance tourism infrastructure.

Governor reaffirms to encourage women entrepreneurs of KP

PESHAWAR (APP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor, Faisal Karim Kundi here Wednesday reaffirmed his strong commitment to encourage educated and vocationally trained women entrepreneurs of the province to achieve heights of economic prosperity.

Talking with a representative delegation of Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry (WCCI) here at Governor House, the KP Governor underlined the need of providing business opportunities to educated

and vocationally skillful women of KP imperative for their financial autonomy and economic empowerment. Appreciating the role of Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry in bringing women folk forward in business, trade and vocational entrepreneurship in KP, the Governor said that advancement of women of the province in business and trade sectors besides proving their mettle in different fields including entrepreneurship was highly encouraging and positive advancement.

PSX turns bullish, gains 335 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) turned around to bullish trend, on Wednesday, gaining 335.07 points, a positive change of 0.43 percent, closing at 78,275.65 points against 77,940.58 points on the last working day.

A total of 469,756,007 shares were traded during the day as compared to 292,186,284 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 19,777 billion against Rs 11,414 billion on the last trading day.

Around 454

Gilani calls for united effort to improve economy

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani Wednesday called for a united effort to improve the economy, stimulate business activities, and attract investment.

Addressing the concluding session of a conference organised by the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce titled "Improvement of Pakistan's Economy for Inclusive and Sustainable Development", he highlighted the significance of such events in ad-

ressing contemporary economic challenges, stating, "Our economy stands on cross roads and the decisions we make now will have long-lasting implications." He expressed his gratitude to the President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce, and the distinguished guests, acknowledging their pivotal roles in making this significant event possible.

Chairman Senate identified several key factors contributing to the current economic difficulties.

He referred to inflation adversely affecting the welfare of low income groups. He said, the decade-long economic stagnation that has impeded national progress. However, he recognized the recent positive trend in the stock market's performance and expressed optimism that this will continue and stabilize.

Regarding energy crisis, particularly the surge in electricity and gas prices, Chairman Senate called for an effective strategy to manage these issues.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Three ships namely, Atlantic Ibis, Maersk Kinloss and Serenity carrying Containers and LPG, berthed at Qasim International Container Terminal and Engro Vopak Terminal respectively on Tuesday. Meanwhile another LPG carrier 'Bateleur' also arrived at outer anchorage of the port on Wednesday morning. Eight ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them four ships, Atlantic Ibis, Gaslog Geneva, Sinar Mendawai and Baustella left the port on Wednesday morning and three more ships, Chemtranslonian, Serenity and Maersk Kinloss are expected to sail on today afternoon.

SBP to observe UN MSMEs Day today

KARACHI (APP): The United Nations' Day on Micro, Small, and Medium-sized Enterprises (The UN MSMEs Day) will be observed on Thursday, to highlight their valuable contributions towards achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The United Nations General Assembly, recognizing the important role of MSMEs in SDGs particularly in promotion of innovation, creativity and decent work for all, designated 27 June as "Micro-, Small, and Medium-sized Enterprises Day" by a resolution on April 06, 2017.

On the occasion of the UN MSMEs Day, the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) will

organize an MSMEs seminar. The seminar to be held under the theme "MSME Finance: Catalyst for Inclusive Growth" is aimed to acknowledge the vital role of MSMEs in inclusive economic growth, employment generation and poverty reduction. During the ceremony, the SBP and the financial institutions will reiterate their commitment to support and catalyze the MSMEs' growth through innovation, creativity and decent work for all, adding that special events will be organized across the country in 16 field offices of SBP-Banking Services Corporation to provide a platform to prominent MSMEs, banks.

Political stability vital for boosting economy of the country: Governor

Independent Report
LAHORE: Senior leader of Pakistan People's Party, Qamar Zaman Kaira, met Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan here today at Governor House Lahore. In the meeting, issues of mutual interest and the overall situation of the country was discussed in detail.

Speaking on the occasion, Governor Punjab, Sardar Saleem Haider Khan said that stability in the country is related to democracy. He said that political stability is vital for boosting the economy of the country. Governor Punjab further said that promotion of higher education in remote areas of the country is his priority.

Senior leader of PPP Qamar Zaman Kaira congratulated the Punjab Governor on assuming the office. He said that Pakistan People's Party has strived for the stability and development of country and welfare of the people. He said that every one should play positive role for political stability in the larger interest of the country. Meanwhile, Director SOS Children Village Lahore, Almas Butt and Assistant Director Munazza Sheikh called on Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan at Governor House Lahore. Governor Punjab gave a check of 01 million rupees to the resident children of

SOS Children's Village Lahore. It is pertinent to mention here that the Governor Punjab had announced a donation of one million rupees during his visit to SOS Children's Village Lahore on the day of Eid-ul-Azha.

Speaking on the occasion, Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan said that it is our national duty to serve the destitute and orphan children. Governor Punjab said that Islam also teaches us to treat helpless children with compassion and love. He said that we should collectively contribute to make such children responsible citizens of the society.



LAHORE: Senior leader of Pakistan People's Party, Qamar Zaman Kaira, called on Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan at Governor House.

Punjab health ministers laud improvements in govt hospitals OPDs

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Health Ministers Khawaja Salman Rafique and Khawaja Imran Nazir highlighted the improving conditions of Outpatient Departments (OPDs) in government hospitals during a joint meeting on Wednesday.

The meeting, held at the Department of Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education, focused on the performance of these hospitals.

Salman Rafique, minister for Specialised

Healthcare and Medical Education, emphasised the commitment to maintaining the honor of vice chancellors, principals, and medical superintendents (MSs).

He stressed that patients should not face difficulties in government hospitals and announced measures against staff absenteeism starting Thursday. Reflecting on recent efforts, he noted significant improvements in hospital conditions over the past three months.

One killed, three injured in firing incident

SARGODHA (APP): A man was killed while three others sustained bullet injuries in a firing incident in Salum area, in the jurisdiction of Phularwan police station on Wednesday.

Police said that Sarfraz (50), Azz (44), Ali (40) and Afzal (39) were going to Sargodha by a vehicle when their rivals opened fire at them in Salum area. Resultantly, Muhammad Sarfraz died on the spot while three others sustained bullet injuries.

Hearing of May 9 cases against PTI leaders others adjourned

LAHORE (Online): Anti Terrorism Court (ATC) Lahore has adjourned till July 5 hearing of May 9 cases against PTI leaders Dr Yasmin Rashid, Umar Sarfraz Cheema and others.

Judge Arshid Javed of ATC Lahore heard 6 cases including torching PML-N office, containers in Kalma chowk.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi addressing a representative delegation of Bajaur District at Governor House.

Meeting discusses progress on targets assigned to TEVTA

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: A meeting to review progress on targets assigned to the Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority (TEVTA) for bringing improvement in its performance was held in the Committee Room of the Department of Industries with Special Assistant to KP Chief Minister on Industries, Commerce and Technical Education, Abdul Karim Tordhir in the chair here on Wednesday.

Besides, the Additional Secretary

Industries Shama Nimat, Chief Planning Officer (CPO) Basit Khalil and Directors TEVTA Munir Gul, Khalid Usman, Haider Ali and Syed Sajjad Ali Shah, others also attended the meeting.

The CM aide was briefed about progress on the achievement of the targets of digitization, sustainability, human resource, financial affairs, procurement, technical and vocational training, business and education and training, business production and other issues.

Protection of minorities' rights top priority of PML-N: Azma Bukhari

LAHORE (APP): Minister for Information and Culture Punjab Azma Bukhari said on Wednesday that religious minorities' had always been very important for the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N).

While talking to the media persons at DGPR, she said Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz considered religious minorities as her priority, adding Pakistan was being praised all over the world for this act. She said that many important decisions had been taken in the

yesterday provincial cabinet meeting added that 400 billion rupees of Kisan card had also been approved.

She said the CM was working on projects that were not even promised in the election campaign adding 100,000 houses would be built in all the districts of Punjab and the CM would inaugurate this project on August 14.

The information minister said that the previous government had taken billions of rupees in loan but did not build a single house.

Governor KP emphasizes commitment to get rights of merged districts

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Wednesday emphasized his commitment to representing the interests of merged districts and acting as an advocate to get their rights.

He said this while addressing a Bajaur Jirga, led by central leader of PPP Akhunzada Chatan. Former Provincial President PPP Engineer Humayun Khan, Secretary Coordination Farzand Ali Khan, and Peoples Party Bajaur President Haji Sher Bahadur, among others participated.

Governor Faisal Kundi stressed the importance of maintaining

peace for the province's development. He criticized the provincial government for worsening conditions in education and healthcare, noting that even university vice chancellors remain unappointed.

He expressed disappointment that despite a significant Pashtun presence in Pakistan's cricket team, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has not hosted a first-class match in the past 15 years.

Regarding development funds allocated after the 18th Amendment, Governor Kundi highlighted that special provisions were made for tribal areas, but these were mismanaged, exacerbating local issues.



LAHORE: Provincial Minister for Information Azma Bukhari and Provincial Minister for Minority Affairs Sardar Ramesh Singh Arora addressing a Press conference at DGPR office.

LHC announces Sweeping reforms to enhance public service delivery, judicial efficiency

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore High Court (LHC) has unveiled a comprehensive package of reforms aimed at revolutionising public service delivery, enhancing judicial efficiency, and implementing IT-based initiatives.

The reforms, announced on June 26, 2024, during a meeting, chaired by the Acting LHC Chief Justice, Justice Shujaat Ali Khan, says an LHC press release issued here. The

meeting was attended by all the District & Sessions Judges of Punjab via video link, while Registrar LHC, Ch. Abdul Rashid Abid, Director General District Judiciary Abhar Gul Khan, Sessions Judge Human Resource Sajid Ali Awan, Director General Judicial & Case Management Tanvir Akbar, District & Sessions Judge Lahore Syed Ali Imran, District & Sessions Judge Bahawalnagar Shazib Saeed, and others.

International News

US warns Israel over Lebanon as UN sounds alarm on Gaza

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: The United States warned Israel on Tuesday that a conflict with Hezbollah could spark a regional war, as UN agencies said 10 children a day are losing one or both legs and half a million Palestinians suffer "catastrophic" hunger in Gaza.

US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin met his Israeli counterpart Yoav Gallant at the Pentagon, saying diplomacy is the best option as fears of a major war against Iran-backed Hezbollah in Lebanon have grown after months of cross-border fire.

"Another war between Israel and Hezbollah could easily become a regional war, with terrible consequences for the Middle East," Austin said. "Diplomacy is by far the best way to prevent more escalation."

Gallant, speaking at the opening of the meeting with Austin, said: "we are working closely together to

achieve an agreement but we must also discuss readiness on every possible scenario."

Israel's military said last week that plans for an offensive in Lebanon were "approved and validated" amid escalating cross-border clashes, but Washington is seeking to lower the temperature and head off another major Middle East conflict. In Beirut, German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock warned that "miscalculation" could trigger an all-out war between Israel and Hezbollah, and urged "extreme restraint."

Canada's Foreign Minister Melanie Joly urged her Israeli counterparts to leave "while they can." Philippe Lazzarini, head of the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, warned of the war's dire impact on children in Gaza in a briefing in Geneva. "Basically we have every day 10 children who are losing one leg or two legs on average," Lazzarini told reporters.

Citing figures from UN children's agency Unicef, he said that figure "does not even include the arms and the hands, and we have many more" of these. "Ten per day, that means around 2,000 children after the more than 260 days of this brutal war," Lazzarini said.

He said amputation often takes place "in quite horrible conditions", sometimes without anaesthesia. The UN's Rome-based World Food Programme, meanwhile, said a new report "paints a stark picture of ongoing hunger."

The latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) partnership said its March warning of imminent famine in north Gaza had not materialised. "However, the situation in Gaza remains catastrophic and there is a high and sustained risk of famine across the whole Gaza Strip," the report said, warning against complacency.



German Chancellor Olaf Scholz delivers a government declaration in parliament on the upcoming EU and NATO summits in Berlin, Germany.

Israeli airstrikes kill at least 24 in Gaza City, health officials say

Monitoring Desk
CAIRO: Israeli forces killed at least 24 Palestinians in three separate airstrikes on Gaza City early on Tuesday and the death included a sister of Ismail Haniyeh, the chief of militant Islamist group Hamas, Gaza health officials and medics said.

Israeli tanks also pressed deeper overnight into western areas of Rafah in the enclave's south, blowing up homes, residents said.

Two of the Israeli airstrikes hit two schools in Gaza City, killing at least 14 people, medics said.

Another strike on a house in the Shati (Beach) camp, one of the Gaza Strip's eight historic refugee camps, killed 10 others.

The house in Shati belonged to the extended family of Hamas political chief Haniyeh, who is based in Qatar. One of his sisters was killed along with other relatives, family members and medics said.

Hassan Kaskin, a neighbour, said the Haniyeh family house was hit without advance warning before dawn on Tuesday. Footage obtained by Reuters showed the multi-floor building reduced to rubble.

Gaza Project exposes Israel's systemic killing of journalists

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: In what has become the deadliest period for journalists since records began in 1992, the UN and independent observers are reporting a "systemic pattern" of targeting journalists and media workers in the Israeli-occupied territories. A major global cross-newsroom collaboration produced a series of reports this week on the systematic targeting of journalists by Israel. The reports also highlight how journalists in Gaza are defying death threats to perform their duty. According to the reports, surviving Gaza journalists have long known that their "press vests do not protect them. Worse, the protective gear might further expose them". Local reporters know, too, that "they are on their own, with the Israeli authorities banning foreign journalists from entering the Gaza Strip", the report adds.

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: Russia said on Wednesday that it had ordered the Moscow correspondent for Austrian state broadcaster ORF to leave the country after Vienna revoked the accreditation of TASS's chief correspondent in Austria. Russia's foreign ministry said it had summoned ORF's chief Moscow correspondent, Carola Schneider.

A Palestinian was shot, beaten and tied to an Israeli army jeep

Monitoring Desk
JENIN: When Mujahid Abadi stepped outside to see if Israeli forces had entered his uncle's neighborhood, he was shot in the arm and the foot. That was only the start of his ordeal. Hours later, beaten and bloodied, he found himself strapped to the searing hood of an Israeli military jeep driving down a road.

The army initially said Abadi was a suspected militant, but later acknowledged he had not posed a threat to Israeli forces and was caught in crossfire with militants. Video showing the 24-year-old strapped to the jeep circulated on social media.

Russia orders Austrian ORF journalist to leave

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: Russia said on Wednesday that it had ordered the Moscow correspondent for Austrian state broadcaster ORF to leave the country after Vienna revoked the accreditation of TASS's chief correspondent in Austria. Russia's foreign ministry said it had summoned ORF's chief Moscow correspondent, Carola Schneider.

US, Russia defense chiefs speak as tensions rise over Crimea attack

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: The US and Russian defense chiefs spoke by telephone on Tuesday in rare communication between the two powers and with tensions rising after Moscow blamed Washington for a deadly Ukraine attack over the weekend on the Russian-annexed Crimea.

The two sides gave widely divergent accounts of the conversation – the first one between US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and Russia's new Defense Minister Andrei Belousov, who replaced Sergei Shoigu in May. The Pentagon said Austin and Belousov discussed the importance of open lines of communication.

Austin initiated the conversation and it was the first such call since March 2023, Pentagon spokesperson Air Force Major General Patrick Ryder told reporters. Russia's Defense Ministry, however, said

that Belousov warned Austin of the dangers of continued US arms supplies to Ukraine in the 28-month-old war. "A.R. Belousov pointed to the danger of further escalating the situation through continued supplies of American weapons to the Ukrainian armed forces," the ministry statement said on the Telegram messaging app after the call. Relations between Moscow and Washington have plunged to their lowest level since the 1962 Cuban missile crisis following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Diplomatic contacts between President Vladimir Putin's government and President Joe Biden's administration are now at "an absolute minimum," Moscow said last week.

Over the weekend, Russia said the United States was directly responsible for a Ukrainian attack on the Crimean peninsula with five US-supplied missiles that killed four people.

North Korea fires ballistic missile into sea: South Korean military

Monitoring Desk
SEOUL: North Korea fired a ballistic missile toward the sea on Wednesday (Jun 26), the South Korean military said, according to the Yonhap news agency.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said it detected the launch but gave no details, saying an analysis is underway.

The office of Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida confirmed on social media platform X that North Korea launched a suspected ballistic missile.

"The suspected ballistic missile from North Korea is not expected to reach Japan," it said of the projectile filed toward the East Sea, also known as the Sea of Japan.

This launch comes amid increased cross-border tension as the reclusive communist state has been

sending balloons carrying garbage into South Korea.

North Korea's last missile launch prior to this one came on May 30, when Seoul accused Pyongyang of firing a volley of around 10 short-range ballistic missiles.

One day later, North Korean state media released images of leader Kim Jong Un supervising tests of a multiple rocket launcher system.

Analysts have suggested the nuclear-armed North could be testing and ramping up production of artillery and cruise missiles before sending them to Russia for use in Ukraine.

In a report last month, the Pentagon said it had confirmed this behaviour. North Korea has sent more trash-filled balloons southward this week, Seoul's military said on Tuesday.

South Korean authorities order battery maker to halt operations over deadly blaze

Monitoring Desk
SEOUL: South Korean authorities on Wednesday ordered a lithium battery maker to halt factory operations indefinitely after a fire killed 23 people and said three company officials were under investigation on suspicion of having violated industrial safety laws.

The fire at unlisted battery maker Aricell on Monday was one of the deadliest industrial accidents in recent years. Each year dozens of workers in South Korea lose their lives on the job despite tougher laws and other efforts to improve safety. The company, located in Hwaseong, an industrial hub southwest of Seoul, was ordered to shut

down its only factory for inspections, labour ministry official Min Gil-soo told a briefing. The names and titles of the Aricell officials under investigation were not disclosed. Violations of the 2022 industrial safety code can result in jail terms for fatal accidents.

Aricell Chief Executive Park Soon-kwan apologised on Tuesday for the fire but said the company had complied with all safety regulations and training requirements. The factory which had 35,000 lithium batteries stored at the time of the fire was quickly engulfed and the spread of toxic smoke likely left workers unconscious within seconds, fire officials have said.

Gun violence a 'public health crisis': US surgeon

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: The US surgeon general on Tuesday issued a landmark advisory declaring gun violence a "public health crisis" and calling for wide-ranging firearm controls that have historically met stiff political opposition. The advisory by Vivek Murthy, who was nominated by President Joe Biden, is the first such major report on gun violence from a surgeon general, whose office has limited authority but plays a significant role in public health issues.

A similar report on tobacco in the 1960s is viewed as a key first step to altering the perception of the substance's danger, ultimately leading to new regulations and a steep decline in consumption.

Govt presented balanced budget aimed at steering economy towards development: Ahsan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Professor Ahsan Iqbal, said on Wednesday that under the prevailing circumstances, the government has presented a balanced budget aimed at steering the economy towards development and social prosperity.

Addressing the concluding session of the All Pakistan Chambers Presidents Conference, organized by the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the minister emphasized that overcoming the prevailing economic challenges hinges on effective resource mobilization, budget balancing, and reducing non-developmental expenditures.

Ahsan Iqbal noted that Pakistan faces external challenges, highlighting a historical failure to cultivate export-led industries, resulting in increased imports and pressure on foreign exchange reserves over the

past 75 years. The minister underscored the necessity of fostering export-led industrial growth to compress imports and alleviate strain on foreign exchange reserves, thereby fostering sustainable economic growth and equitable development.

He elaborated on the government's 5Es framework designed to navigate the country out of its current crisis, stressing the imperative of concerted efforts by all stakeholders to implement the framework and propel the economy towards development and prosperity.

Ahsan Iqbal also stressed the importance of ensuring political stability and policy continuity for at least five years to achieve economic growth and progress. He emphasized that political stability and consistent economic policies are prerequisites for sustainable economic growth, development, and for attracting both foreign

and local investment. Reflecting on past challenges, the minister highlighted the steep costs incurred due to political and policy instability over the past 75 years. He urged both the public and private sectors to collaborate in overcoming these challenges and achieving sustained growth and development.

Regarding resource constraints, he indicated that the government would encourage public-private investments in development projects to bridge funding gaps and meet development needs, underscoring the difficulty in earmarking sufficient funds for development alone.

Ahsan Iqbal also said that Pakistan-China Economic Corridors Project entered in second-phase. He said that commencing an upgraded version of CPEC Phase-2 with five corridors focusing on growth, livelihood, information technology, green economy, and regional development.



KARACHI: Sindh Local Government Minister, Saeed Ghani speaks on the floor of the assembly, at Sindh Assembly in Karachi.

Developing nations hosting most refugees as principle of burden-sharing absent: Pakistan

UNITED NATIONS (APP): A senior Pakistani diplomat has brought into the sharp focus of the world community the absence of the principle of burden-sharing as developing countries have been hosting the majority of refugees and displaced persons, with over a million Afghan refugees still in Pakistan.

"Pakistan has hosted over 5 million Afghan refugees over 40 years," Ambassador Munir Akram told a session of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) on humanitarian affairs on Tuesday.

"Even today, we have over 1.4 million registered refugees, another 1 million unregistered and thousands who are entirely un-documented, the Pakistani en-

voys said. At the same time, he made it clear that Pakistan will apply its laws regarding all aliens who are illegally in the country.

"We also hope that now that conflict has ended in Afghanistan, the 1.4 million registered Afghan refugees will be repatriated soon under a fully-funded UN Plan, as promised years ago," Ambassador Akram added.

The world's humanitarian crisis, he said, is caused by the growing impacts of climate change, proliferating conflicts, and the accompanying violations of international humanitarian law.

In this regard, he underscored the importance of early warning systems to

mitigate the impact of climate disasters.

"Following the 2022 floods, Pakistan has developed capabilities to predict disasters up to 10 months in advance, with projections across all domains.

"We have launched a specific National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) app for public guidance and are prepared to share our low-cost models for global application," he said.

The Pakistan envoy called for increased humanitarian and climate finance, citing the Loss and Damage Fund, for which \$800 million were initially pledged, but which he said requires significantly more funding.



HYDERABAD: Divisional Commissioner Hyderabad, Ahsan Qureshi presides over a meeting held in Hyderabad.

Gilani calls for united effort to improve economy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani Wednesday called for a united effort to improve the economy, stimulate business activities, and attract investment.

Addressing the concluding session of a conference organized by the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce titled "Improvement of Pakistan's Economy for Inclusive and Sustainable Development", he highlighted the significance of such events in addressing contemporary economic challenges, stat-

ing, "Our economy stands on cross roads and the decisions we make now will have long-lasting implications."

He expressed his gratitude to the President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce, the organizers, and the distinguished guests, acknowledging their pivotal roles in making this significant event possible.

Chairman Senate identified several key factors contributing to the current economic difficulties. He referred to inflation adversely affecting the welfare of low income groups.

Fazal decries burden of taxes in budget 2024-25

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazalur Rehman said that the burden of taxes has been imposed on salaried persons as well as businessmen in the budget.

Speaking on the National Assembly floor during the budget debate, Maulana Fazalur Rehman said that the government demands taxes from the citizens but is not ready to give their rights.

He said that everything would be fine when the 'interference' in politics ends. Maulana Fazalur Rehman said that the country is currently being ruled by a minority as the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) led federal governments 'lacks' a majority in the parliament. "Pakistan People's Party (PPP) is not part of the coalition government hence the PML-N lacks the majority," the JUI-F chief added.

Sattar urges govt slash consumer tax, defer internal debt repayments to revive economy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) Senior Deputy Convener Dr Farooq Sattar on Wednesday said that the government should slash the increased consumer tax and defer its internal debt repayments to revive the economy.

"The MQM-P is the only political party that gives shadow budget every year which includes alternate proposals to the government's proposed budget for welfare of the poor and deprived factions of the society," he said while talking to the media outside the Parliament House.

He was by MQM-P's Members of the National Assembly Syed Mustafa Kamal, Khawaja Izhar-ul-

Hassan, Aasia Ishaque Siddiqui, Arshad Abdullah Vohra, Syed Waseem Hussain, Mikhat Shakeel, Sabheen Ghoury and others.

Dr Farooq Sattar said the government should reduce tax ratio that would help increase growth rate.

He mentioned that growth rate was 7-8% amid low tax regimes in the past whereas more taxes to meet temporary revenue targets were diminishing the growth rate.

He claimed that there was capital flight from the country as the local investors were setting up industries abroad. There was also brain drain in the country, he added.

Dr Sattar said that the consumer tax ratio should not be beyond 2.5 percent.

Governors of Sindh, Balochistan discuss overall situation of the country

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori and Balochistan Governor Sheikh Jafar Khan Mandokhail discussed the overall situation of the country and other matters of vital importance.

The Balochistan Governor contacted his counterpart in Sindh through telephone, said a statement on Wednesday. The Governor of Balochistan also visited the Sindh Governor to visit Balochistan.

EU envoy calls on law minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Dr. Rina Kionka, Ambassador of the European Union (EU) to Pakistan on Wednesday called on the Federal Minister for Law and Justice and Human Rights Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar.

In the meeting, relations between Pakistan and European Union and issues of mutual interest were discussed, said a press release.

Telemedicine Center inaugurated at district hospital Matiari

HYDERABAD (APP): The District and Sessions Judge Matiari Abdul Karim Ansari inaugurated the telemedicine center at district headquarters hospital Matiari which will not only save time but also enable online check-ups and treatment of patients in the hospital by expert doctors.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Muhammad Yousuf Shaikh, DHO Dr. Pir Ghulam Hussain, MS Dr. Abdul Salam Memon and others attended the inauguration.

Interfaith leadership show unanimity against drug abuse at ANF conference

KARACHI (APP): The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) Sindh on the occasion of the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, here on Wednesday organized an impactful Inter-Faith Conference. This unique event brought together religious leaders from a diverse range of faiths, including Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, Hinduism, and Zoroastrianism, to address the pressing issue of drug abuse.

The conference, held at the Arts Council saw a united front from religious leadership, as speakers from each faith denounced drug abuse. They emphasized that drug abuse was strictly prohibited in their respective religions, reinforcing the universal message that substance abuse undermines the moral and ethical fabric of society.

In his welcome ad-

Minister Naqvi urges national unity to eradicate drug menace

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Interior and Narcotics Control Mohsin Naqvi on Wednesday stated that the fight against drug abuse and trafficking cannot be fruitful unless we all as a nation put our combined efforts behind this noble cause to make Pakistan a healthy society, free of drugs.

"I must acknowledge that the fight against drug abuse and trafficking cannot be fruitful unless we all as a nation put our combined efforts behind this noble cause to make Pakistan a healthy society, free of drugs", he said.

Naqvi expressed these words in his message issued on the occasion of International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking day being observed.

Given the devastating effects of drug abuse on our

society, it is imperative to make this fight against drugs a national priority, he said.

This year's theme for the day is "The Evidence is Clear: Invest in Prevention."

Narcotics Minister said, "I urge all citizens to join hands with us in this critical mission. Prevention lies at the heart of our strategy, and we must prioritize preventive education, community engagement, and robust law enforcement to stem the tide of drug abuse.

Mohsin Naqvi said "Let us reaffirm our resolve to build a healthier, drug-free Pakistan. Together, we can make significant strides in safeguarding the well-being of our nation and future generations. As we observe the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking today.



President Global Development, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), Mr. Chris Elias calling on Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar in Islamabad.

PM greenlights Pakistan-China JV project for industry relocation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday gave the green light to the joint ventures between Chinese and Pakistani companies for relocating the Chinese industries to Pakistan.

Chairing a meeting to discuss the matters of the Board of Investment (BoI), he said that promoting both local and foreign investment in Pakistan was among the government's priorities.

He said the government was taking all possible steps to create a business-friendly environment for traders and investors.

The prime minister directed the concerned to submit a comprehensive report on the follow up of

Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) signed between Pakistani and Chinese companies in Shenzhen during his recent visit to China.

He also instructed a review of the draft law for the Special Economic Zones One Stop Shop in light of the developments following his China visit.

Prime Minister, Shehbaz said there was significant potential for relocating China's textile, leather, footwear, and other industries to Pakistan.

Meanwhile, during the briefing, the BoI Secretary said that the steps were being taken to relocate Chinese industry to Pakistan.

DC Mirpurkhas stresses full coverage on Anti-Polio campaign

MIRPURKHAS (APP): Deputy Commissioner Dr Rasheed Masood Khan emphasized on Wednesday that the need for effective measures during the upcoming anti-polio campaign scheduled from July 1st to July 5th. As per details, he directed health department officers to ensure that no child between 5 years of age is missed for polio drops. Additionally, Dr. Masood Khan gave these instructions while presiding over a meeting in the commissioner's office hall dedicated to planning the

polio campaign.

He underscored the importance of immunizing every child, stating, "Children are our future, and we must ensure every child receives polio drops." According to a handout issued on Tuesday, District Health Officer Dr. Jai Ramdas and Focal Person for the Polio Program Dr. Narayandas Jagani highlighted challenges faced in previous campaigns, mentioning that 4,280 children across the district, who were away for school holidays in other cities, were vaccinated against polio.



KARACHI: Activates of jamat e islami hold protest at Shar e Faisal.

Those leading PTI don't want Imran Khan comes out of jail: Fawad Chaudhry

ISLAMABAD (Online): Former federal minister Fawad Chaudhry has said those who are leading PTI don't want Imran Khan comes out of jail because the day he comes out then their protocol and interference in party will end.

"The present leadership fears that lest Asad Umar, Fawad Chaudhry, Ali Zaidi and Imran Ismail should return to party, he said this in an interview with foreign news agency here Wednesday.

He held the present leadership did not bother to even ask what happened with Shireen Mazari, Musarrat Jamshed Cheema, Usman Dar and Malaika Bokhari.

He added " he was

subjected to worst torture during his detention. Islamabad Police handed over him to another institution. The personnel of this institution made videos of the violence and sent these videos to the higher authorities. I was subjected to electric shocks.

He went on to say it was the biggest mistake of Imran Khan to sever connections with army.

This led to increase misconceptions which prevailed between government and establishment.

Had central leadership of PTI and Imran Khan remained in contact with army then the misconceptions perhaps would not have reached this stage.

Fire at Shikarpur's Civil Hospital destroys medicines in storeroom

SHIKARPUR (INP): A sudden fire broke out at the PPHI Center of Civil Hospital in Shikarpur, reducing the medicines stored in the storeroom to ashes on Wednesday.

Fire brigade trucks arrived promptly and managed to control the blaze after an hour-long effort.

The District Health Officer (DHO) stated that the fire started from nearby bushes and spread to the storeroom, causing extensive damage to the one-story building and completely destroying the stored medicines.

Two-day free eye camp to be organised on June 29-30 in Sanghar

HYDERABAD (APP): A two-day free eye treatment camp will be organised by Hashmanis Hospital Karachi on June 29 and 30 at civil hospital Sanghar with the support of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) MNA Shazia Atta Mari.

The camp will provide free eye treatment, including surgeries and lens implantation by expert ophthalmologists. In addition, free medicines and computerized lab tests will be offered to the patients.

Deputy Commissioner Sanghar Dr Imran ul Hassan Khawaja informed on Wednesday that all arrangements for the camp have been finalised and due to the high temperatures, a heat wave ward has been activated.



LARKANA: Municipal Corporation Larkana, Mayor, Anwar Ali Lohar presides over the meeting regarding Budget 2024-2025 held at his office in Larkana.

DC raises concern over rising illegal drug trade

HYDERABAD (APP): The Deputy Commissioner Hyderabad Zainul Abideen Memon has expressed concern over the increasing illegal drug trade, stating that "unfortunately, the illegal drug business is flourishing".

He made these remarks while talking to the media after a rally against drugs at the Deputy Commissioner's office in Shabbaz Building.

He said that senior provincial minister Sharjeel Inam Memon has issued clear directives to eradicate drugs, and accordingly, relevant agencies are taking effective action against drug peddlers. Many drug dealers have been arrested and strict le-

gal action has been taken against them, he added.

The deputy commissioner said that due to increasing unemployment and economic challenges, drug peddlers were exploiting the youth, making them addicts. However, he warned drug peddlers that a noose was tightening around them, and without any discrimination, action was being taken to eradicate drugs.

He expressed hope that drugs will be completely eradicated from the country soon.

A large number of officials from various departments and social workers participated in the rally.



KARACHI: Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Sindh President, Haleem Adil Shaikh along with others distributing chilled drinking water among commuters to beat the heat of sun during the hot day of summer season, at a relief camp of heat stroke, at M.A Jinnah road in Karachi.



HYDERABAD: Passengers with their bags gather at platform as trains are late from their original schedules at Railway Station in Hyderabad.

Deputy Director Livestock Tharparkar advises close coordination with livestock owners ahead of expected rains

HYDERABAD (APP): Deputy Director livestock department Tharparkar Hakim Ali Jalbani has directed veterinary doctors and staff to maintain close contact with livestock farmers in anticipation of potential rains and to guide them on keeping their livestock safe.

He issued these directives on Wednesday during his visit to various veterinary centers in district Tharparkar.

He emphasized that the possibility of various epidemics spreading among

livestock during the rainy season cannot be ruled out. Therefore, an emergency plan should be formulated, and livestock should be vaccinated against various seasonal diseases by visiting the villages, he instructed. He added that veterinary centers should ensure the availability of necessary medicines and maintain accurate records. Jalbani advised that livestock owners be given useful advice and that relevant officers and staff perform their duties with integrity.