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Member APNS & CPNE

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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.

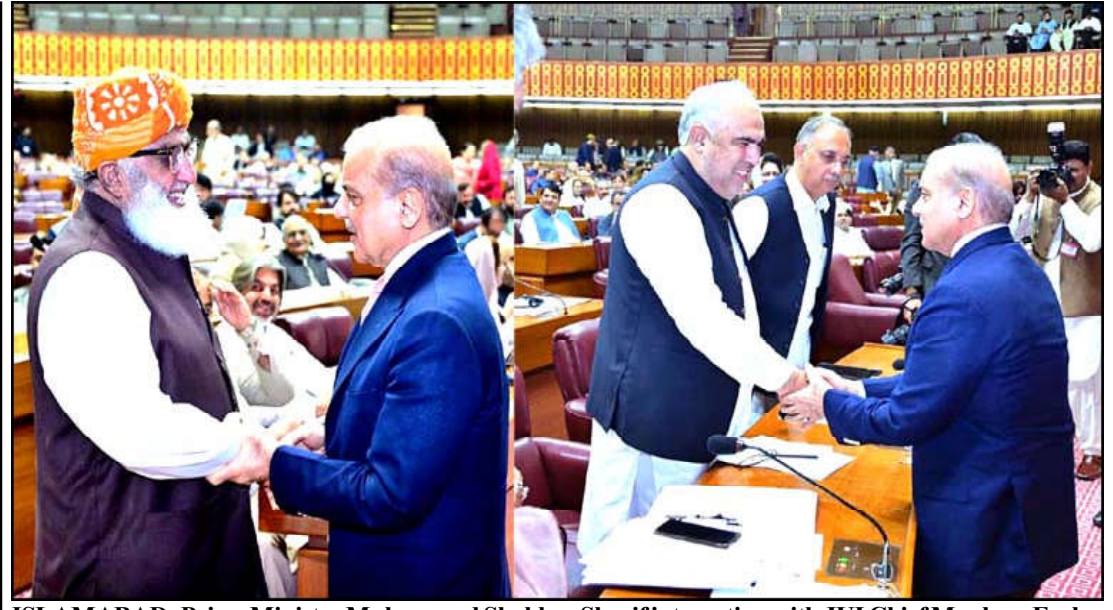
Prime Minister Shehbaz said that the House should also fix the responsibility on those who contributed to such a bitterness in the society.

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 Sanaulah also faced humiliating treatment despite being the under-trial prisoners.

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



QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfaraz Bugti presiding over a review meeting of Department of Labour and Manpower

Briefing on Youth Skills Development Programme:

First batch of skilled youth to be sent abroad from Balochistan in March 2025, CM told

Mir Sarfaraz Bugti directs to expedite implementation on youth skills development Programme; assures to ensure provision of jobs after skills training to youth; directs to collect actual data of labourers in province after special inspection and survey

Independent Report

QUETTA: The first batch of skilled youth would be sent abroad from Balochistan for employments in March next year. In addition to this, the unskilled persons would also be sent in foreign countries from the province from December 2025.

This information was shared during briefing on the development of the Youth Skills Development Programme to the Chief Minister, Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti here on Wednesday.

The Advisor to Chief Minister for Labour and Manpower, Sardar Ghulam Rasool Umrani,

Chief Secretary, Shakeel Qadir Khan, Secretary Labour, Director General B-TEVTA and other concerned high ups were in attendance.

During the briefing, the progress on implementation of the Youth Skills Development Programme was reviewed.

Addressing the meeting, Chief Minister directed to expedite implementation on the youth skills development programme.

He on the occasion assured that the provision of jobs would also ensure after skills training to the youth.

He directed to the concerned authorities to make

the driving school in Kuchlak functional immediately.

He also directed to B-TEVTA to complete training of 100 heavy drivers in the first phase so as to send them Oman.

During the course of briefing, it was also informed that registration of 200 children of labourers has been completed for admission in higher educational institutions after their identification.

Besides, 200 more children are being registered, it was informed adding that 400 children would be sent for admission in different

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Addresses seminar on Environment Day: We have to take concrete measures for environmental protection and biodiversity for next generations

Sheikh Jaffar Mandokhail says depleting underground water table and lack of rains causing harm to greenery as well as to livestock and birds besides human life

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail has stated that protection of nature is actually our own protection, and as such we have to take concrete measures for environmental protection and biodiversity at the individual and collective level in the province and country.

The Governor was addressing the seminar in connection with the World Environment Day on the:

"Our land, our future" organized under the auspices of Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund and CPD here at the local hotel on Wednesday.

Those who participated in the event were included the environmental researchers as well as the representatives of PPAF, CPD, vice chancellors and people from different shades of life.

The Governor pointed out that the depleting under-

Continued on page 2



QUETTA: Governor Balochistan Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail addressing a seminar regarding World Environment Day.

Fazal decries burden of taxes in budget 2024-25

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur 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 Fazlur 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 Fazlur Rehman said that the country is currently being ruled by a minority in 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.

Speaking on the vision Azm-e-Istehkam, Maulana Fazlur Rehman said that it will further destabilise the country. "Azm-e-Istehkam will not bring stability rather instability," he added.

Maulana Fazlur Rehman said that the people were asked to vacate the area for the operation and the tribal women who migrated back to their areas were sent to the deserts.

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 regarding 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.

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.

Independent Report

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



QUETTA: Balochistan Minister for Home and Tribal Affairs Mir Ziaullah Langau flanked by spokesperson of Balochistan government, Shahid Rind, DIG Police Quetta, Aitzaz Goraya addressing a Press conference

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Pak condemns US resolution, cites misunderstanding of political landscape

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan on Wednesday said that the resolution 901 passed by the US House of Representatives was neither constructive nor objective for showing a lack of understanding of its political situation and electoral process.

In response to media queries regarding the passage of the resolution on Tuesday, Foreign Office spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said that Pakistan had taken note of it.

"We believe that the timing and context of this particular resolution does not align well with the positive dynamics of our bilateral ties, and stems from an incomplete understanding of the political situation and electoral process in Pakistan," she remarked.

The spokesperson said that Pakistan, as the world's second-largest parliamentary democracy and fifth-largest democracy overall, was committed to the values of constitutionalism, human rights and rule of law in pursuance of its own national interest.

The spokesperson said that Pakistan believed in constructive dialogue and engagement based on mutual respect and understanding. Such resolutions are therefore neither constructive nor objective. We hope that the U.S Congress will play a supportive role in strengthening Pakistan-U.S ties and focus on avenues of mutual collaboration that benefit both our peoples and countries," she added.



QUETTA: Provincial Ministers Mir Saleem Ahmed Khosa and Mir Sadiq Umrani meeting with Provincial Minister for PHE Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetrani

Governors of Balochistan, Sindh discuss overall situation of country

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

The Balochistan Governor contacted his counterpart in Sindh through telephone.

The Governor of Balochistan also invited the Sindh Governor to visit Balochistan.

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.

Special anti-polio campaign to be launched in sixteen districts of Balochistan

Independent Report

QUETTA: The special anti-polio campaign is scheduled to be launched in 16 districts of the Balochistan province from July 1, 2024.

The Health department sources informed that it has been decided to launch anti-polio campaign in 16 districts of the province after new case of polio was reported from Killa Abdullah district of the province and presence of virus in the environmental samples in dif-

ferent parts of the province including Quetta.

The anti-polio campaign would be run in Loralai, Killa Saifullah, Killa Abdullah, Chaman, Musakhail, Usta Muhammad, Duki, Lasbela, Barkhan, Kalat, Shirani, Naseerabad, Zhob, Sibi, Mastung and Sanjavi Tehsil of Ziarat. The necessary arrangements are being made for the special anti-polio campaign to be launched in the specific districts of the province.



PESHAWAR: Pashtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PKMAP) Chairman, Mahmud Khan Achakzai addresses 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

Monitoring Desk

PESHAWAR: Mahmood 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 constitutional 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.

He further asserted that if given the authority, they could settle the International Monetary Fund (IMF) loans. He expressed readiness to negotiate with Afghanistan for electricity and gas supplies, stating that achieving self-sufficiency in electricity and gas would help clear the IMF debt.

EU envoy calls on law minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Dr. Riina 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.

The law minister assured the EU ambassador that the government was taking all possible measures for the betterment of minorities and protection of their rights, and the Parliament had also passed resolutions in this regard.

He said that provincial governments had also been urged to play an effective role in protecting the rights of minorities.

Issues regarding Pakistan's GSP-plus status were also discussed in the meeting.



QUETTA: Provincial Ministers and MPAs expressing their views on budget 2024-25 during Balochistan Assembly session



QUETTA: A delegation of Dera Bugti meeting with Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfaraz Bugti

NA passes Rs 6,101bln demands for grants for FY 2024-25

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Assembly on Wednesday passed over Rs 6,101 billion for 103 demands for grants relating to various ministries, divisions, and departments for the fiscal year 2024-25.

The Demands for Grants were moved by Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb. No cut motions were moved on these demands for grants.

These demands were related to Aviation Division, Cabinet, Intelligence Bureau, Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Authority, Prime Minister's office (Public), National Disaster Management Authority, Federal Public Service Commission, Civil Services Academy, Council of Common Interest (secretariat), Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Division, Commerce Divi-

sion, Communications Division, expenditure of communication divisions, Pakistan Post Office Department, Defence Division, Defence services, Defence Production division, Economic Affairs Division, miscellaneous expenditure of economic Division, Geological survey of Pakistan, Federal Education and Professional Training division, Higher Education Commission, National Rahmatul-Lil-Allameen Wa Khatamun Nabiyin Authority, National Heritage and Culture Division, other expenditure of finance division, controller general of accounts, superannuation allowance and pension, Housing and works division, Human Rights division, National Commission for Human Rights, National Commission on the right of Child, National Commission on the Status of Women, In-

dustries and Production Division, Information and Broadcasting division, miscellaneous expenditure of Information and Broadcasting Division, Information Technology and Telecommunication Division, Combined Civil Armed Forces, National Counter Terrorism Authority, Inter-provincial Coordination Division, Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Division, Federal Judicial Academy, Federal Shariat Court, District Judiciary, Islamabad Capital Territory, Maritime Affairs, Narcotic Control Division, National Assembly, the Senate, National Health Services Regulations and Coordination Devising, Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Division, Parliamentary Affairs Division, Planning Development and Special initiatives division, Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Division, Benazir Income Support Programme, Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal, Privatization Division, Railways Division, Religious Affairs and Inter-Faith Harmony Division, Science and Technology Division, States and Frontier Regions Division, Water Resources Division, Federal miscellaneous investments and other loans and Advances, Development Expenditure of Aviation Division, Development expenditure of Board of investment.



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

Rain likely at various parts of country: PMD

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has forecast mainly hot and humid weather for most parts of the country during the next 24 hours.

However, rain thundershower associated with windstorm/gusty winds is likely at isolated places in Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan, northeast Punjab, Upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Potohar Region, Islamabad.

Rain thundershower

associated with windstorm/gusty winds is also likely at isolated places in south-east/Lower Sindh, south Punjab, Lower Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and east/south Balochistan during evening/night.

According to the synoptic situation, moist currents from Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal were penetrating southern and eastern parts of the country and likely to enter upper parts from Thursday (evening/night).

We have to take...

Continued from page 1

derground water table and lack of rains are causing harm to the greenery as well as to the livestock and birds besides human life.

He said that he deems it necessary to tell the participants of seminar about the excellent performance of the Governor House about environmental protection.

He said that we have been taking special measures for protection and preservation of the thousands of trees, plants and birds in the Governor House for last 150 years.

He said that if only one tree is planted on behalf of 10 persons of a family then 300,000 to 400,000 saplings can be increased every year in Quetta district.

He stressed that we need to plant maximum tree for the sake of Green and Clean Balochistan.

He also said that it is our responsibility to plant trees besides looking after and protecting those already planted in the past.

The Governor said that the land of Balochistan is suitable for livestock and most population also depends on it for livelihood, but this vital sector has been affected badly due to the least raining and situation of drought in the past.

He urged the religious leaders, scholars, civil society and media persons to play their role for creating awareness among the general public about environmental protection.

In the end, Governor distributed commemorative shields among the environmental experts, speaker and organizers of the event.

First batch of...

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educational institutions by July 15.

The Chief Minister regrettably pointed out that the number of registered labourers is less than actual data in the province.

He directed to the Labour and Manpower department to collect the correct data of the labourers through special inspection and survey and then register them.

He also noted with concern that most of the labourers are not paid the wage duly approved by the government.

He asserted that we would not let anyone exploit the labourers.

Commemorates international day against drug abuse and illicit trafficking ANF reaffirms commitment to fighting drug abuse and trafficking

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: Anti Narcotics Force Pakistan (ANFP) on Wednesday observed the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, a day of profound importance dedicated to raising awareness and strengthening our resolve against drug abuse and illegal drug trade.

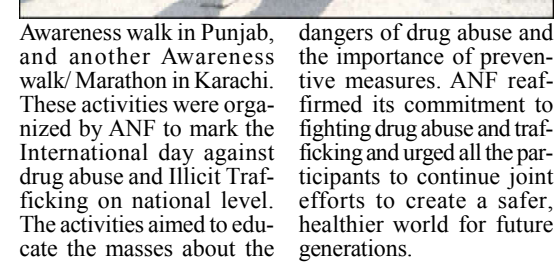
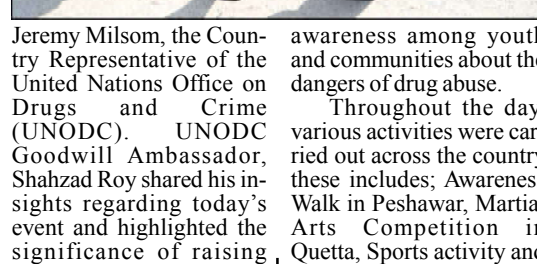
This significant day calls for global solidarity in addressing the challenges of drug addiction and trafficking, striving towards a drug-free society.

The day began with a Wreath Laying Ceremony & heartfelt tribute to the martyrs of the Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF), who sacrificed their lives in the fight against drug trafficking. Their courage and dedication continue to inspire us in our relentless pursuit of a society free from the dangers of drugs. DG ANF Major General, Abdul Moeed (HI M) was present at the ceremony along with families of Shuhada.

During later half of the day a cycle rally and anti-drug awareness walk, were also organized which underscored the collective determination of the community, media representatives, diplomats, DLO's of various countries to combat drug abuse and promote a healthy, drug-free lifestyle. Participants carried banners and posters with messages advocating for a drug-free future, spreading awareness among the public. The event was organized at the F-9 Park, Islamabad.

Director General Anti-Narcotics Force, Major General, Abdul Moeed (HI)M emphasized the critical role of the ANF in combating drug abuse and trafficking. He acknowledged the sacrifices of the ANF martyrs and highlighted the ongoing efforts to create a safer and healthier nation.

The event was graced by the Chief Guest, Captain Muhammad Khurram Agha, Federal Secretary of the Ministry of Narcotics Control. Mr.



Jeremy Milsom, the Country Representative of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). UNODC Goodwill Ambassador, Shahzad Roy shared his insights regarding today's event and highlighted the significance of raising

awareness among youth and communities about the dangers of drug abuse. Throughout the day, various activities were carried out across the country these includes; Awareness Walk in Peshawar, Martial Arts Competition in Quetta, Sports activity and

Awareness walk in Punjab, and another Awareness walk/ Marathon in Karachi. These activities were organized by ANF to mark the International day against drug abuse and Illicit Trafficking on national level. The activities aimed to educate the masses about the

dangers of drug abuse and the importance of preventive measures. ANF reaffirmed its commitment to fighting drug abuse and trafficking and urged all the participants to continue joint efforts to create a safer, healthier world for future generations.

Senator Vawda seeks unconditional apology from SC in contempt case

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senator Faisal Vawda on Wednesday submitted an unconditional apology before the Supreme Court, requesting to withdraw its show-cause notice in the contempt case.

Senator Vawda, in his response submitted with the top court against the show-cause notice served to him on anti-judiciary remarks, stated that he was tendering an apology on his remarks and leaving himself at the mercy of the apex court.

He said that he fully respected the judiciary and the purpose of his press conference was not to malign it. He requested the court to show sympathy and tolerance in his case and withdraw the notice.

Faisal Vawda adopted the stance that after the court proceedings of June 5, he met religious scholars and asked about his role being a senator.

PM invites opposition to hold...

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the environment was improving, to which Ayub responded that he had the right to reply.

He said the House could only function with mutual respect. The Opposition Leader mentioned that while Shehbaz Sharif talked about his mother's funeral, he attended Kulsom Nawaz's funeral but could not attend his own father's funeral. Reconciliation would only be possible if the government make amends for mistreatment of Dr Yasmin Rashid, Mahmoodur Rashid, Hassaan Niazi and others, he added. At this point, the speaker asked Omar to sit down, stating that he had made his point and had been allowed to speak.

However, the opposition leader continued to speak and said his leader was detained in a death cell while others were provided with air-conditioners. He contended that the country's instability was due to a lack of rule of law.



GWADAR: Deputy Director Public Relations Mekan Division Wahab Ishaq Baloch handing over a cheque of Rs. 02 million to President Gwadar Press Club Shrif Ibrahim from Information Department. Assistant Director Information Balach Baloch is also present



HUB: Participants are holding awareness walk against Drugs and demand to make the city drug free in connection of International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, at Lasbela press club in Hub.

Security forces bust terrorist...

Continued from page 1

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 on foreign agenda in the province."

Mir Ziaullah said that there should be cleared that India was behind terrorist activities and which was also involved in such terrorism in Canada and America.

He said India had been spreading terrorism in Pakistan from Afghanistan since 20 years.

The minister urged the United Nations to impose restriction on India to eliminate the terrorist networking across the world for the sake of humanity.

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 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 antistate elements."

Terrorist, Nasrullah said "I am from tribe Mehsud and I want to draw the attention of all the tribes that they should also ask from Mufti Noor Wali why only

children of other tribes are killed, in terrorist operations."

He added that the nefarious purposes of the anti-Pakistan forces were being fulfilled by unjustly killing the children of other tribes.

The terrorist Nasrullah said even today, 70 to 80 percent of Mehsuds were commanders in some capacity in the TTP.

He said that all the leadership of TTP including Mufti Noor Wali were stayed in Afghanistan adding all commanders of TTP were roaming freely in Afghanistan while BLA, Majeed Brigade commander, Bashir Zaib was also in Afghanistan, adding they all were meeting with RAW's agents.

Mufti Noor Wali also met with Bashir Zaib at the Indian Embassy, he added. The arrested terrorist expressed his shame for his past life and asked for forgiveness from Allah and the people and said that the targets of the BLA and TTP coalition was kidnapping for ransom and missing people.

Terrorist Nasrullah Alias Maulvi Mansoor revealed that many "missing" people were in Afghanistan, adding BLA-TTP alliance aimed to create a narrative of missing persons by kidnapping for ransom.

The terrorists group attacked on Chinese nationals to sabotage the Pakistan-China friendship and CPEC project, he added.

Nasrullah said that at the time of his arrest, he was working as the head of the TTP Shura Defense Commission, and was centrally controlling all military, financial and economic affairs.

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"CANCELLATION OF TENDER"

The Tender Notice of two development schemes published in daily newspaper on 30th May, 2024 vide PRQ No. 2669/30-05-2024 as well as uploaded on BPPRA website under TSE-232405438003 (Construction of B/T Road from N-50 to Killi Bhatti to Killi Bahadurwala Cross to Killi Lot & Dawlatzai Killasafullah) and TSE-232405437953 (Construction of B/T Road Killi Nawab Ashraf Jogezeai Killasafullah) whose tender submission and opening date was 24-06-2024 are hereby cancelled due to unavoidable circumstances.

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Muqam meets with Tribal jirga's elders to end sit in

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for States & Frontier Regions (SAFRON), Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan, Engineer Amir Muqam on Wednesday met with the elders of the Tribal Jirga and they ended the ongoing sit-in at Islamabad.

During the meeting, the minister assured the Jirga that he would seriously take up the issue of compensation for damaged houses in the Prime Minister's Steering Committee for the merged districts, said a press release.

The official decision of ending the protest dem-

onstrations was taken in the Tribal Jirga chaired by Javed Mehsud here while PML-N Tank President Samiullah Khan Barki was also accompanied by Jirga members.

Amir Muqam said that the government has no objection regarding any demand of the tribes and the tribes were the protectors of the borders. The minister said that he was personally playing a role in resolving their problems.

The elders thanked the federal minister for the assurance and said that they were confident that their issue will be raised in the relevant committee.



ISLAMABAD: Islamabad: Federal Minister for States & Frontier Regions and Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Engr Amir Muqam and Tribal elders offer 'Dua' after the latter announced to end their sit-in protest.

NCHD, French embassy join hands to combat child labour, abuse, boost school enrollment

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Commission on the Rights of Child (NCRC), in collaboration with the Embassy of France has launched a comprehensive awareness campaign to address critical issues affecting children in Pakistan: child domestic labour, child sexual abuse and the enrollment of out-of-school children. The campaign's primary goal was to raise awareness about the pervasive issue of child domestic labour, targeting the demand side while promoting education as a key factor in eliminating child labour, said a press release issued here on Tuesday.

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), one in four households in Pakistan employed a child for domestic work, often in hazardous conditions. The campaign aims to shed light on these practices, advocating for the protection and rights of these vulnerable children.

Ambassador of France to Pakistan, Nicolas Galey, emphasized the importance of this initiative:

"France is committed to promoting children's rights throughout the world, alongside all our partners. Our collaboration with the NCRC represents a significant step towards addressing the pressing challenges faced by children in Paki-

stan. Our shared vision is to safeguard the rights of children and ensure they grow up in environments free from exploitation and abuse," the ambassador added. Ayesha Raza Farooq, Chairperson NCRC, said "With over 26.2 million out-of-school children, Pakistan confronts a severe challenge. Economic pressures and limited access to quality education drive many children into the workforce, perpetuating a cycle of poverty. This campaign is a call to action for all of us to ensure that every child has access to their fundamental right to education."

The campaign also tackles the distressing rates

of child sexual abuse in Pakistan. According to the "Cruel Numbers Report 2023" by SAHIL, 11 children are sexually abused every day in the country. The NCRC is committed to advocating for stronger legislation and societal awareness to combat this abhorrent crime. In response to the increasing exploitation of children in domestic work, the NCRC has drafted the "Bill on the Prohibition of Child Labour in Domestic Work 2024".

This proposed legislation seeks to explicitly ban the employment of children under 18 as live-in domestic workers and introduce stricter penalties for violators.

Rubina emphasizes lifting beneficiaries out of poverty

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Senator Rubina Khalid on Wednesday emphasized the critical role of skill development in lifting the programme's beneficiaries out of poverty.

She was speaking during a meeting with Co-chair of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Bill Gates. The discussion focused on key initiatives

aimed at alleviating poverty through skill development and economic empowerment of women. She stated, "Economic empowerment is a prerequisite for the overall empowerment of women. Financial independence is the key to their freedom and success. Taking beneficiaries out of poverty is our top priority, and BISP is committed to various projects to achieve this goal."



ISLAMABAD: Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme, Senator Rubina Khalid meets Bill Gates, co-chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to discuss initiatives on skill development, health and economic empowerment.

ICT admin continues crackdown against price hike; arrests five traders

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Administration has launched a strict campaign against traders violating official price of essential commodities in the Federal Capital.

In a recent operation directed by Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon, Magistrate Saddar Zone, Mir Yamin led a price inspection of essential goods in the area covered by Police Station Tarnol for further legal action.

The district administration has made it clear that it will continue its rigorous checks and actions against any vendors found violating the established price norms.

It is pertinent to mention here that operations are going on against price hike, professional beggars, illegal petrol filling agencies, liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) filling stations and others on daily basis.

The magistrate arrested five shopkeepers while heavy fines were also imposed to the violators. These traders were found guilty of not displaying the official prices and were involved in wholesaling without proper authorization. They were handed over to Police Station Tarnol for further legal action.

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IG honors female police athlete; pledges to provide better opportunities

ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, Syed Ali Nasir

other senior police officers were also present. The IG Islamabad appreciated the lady con-



Rizvi, met with the promising athlete of Islamabad Police, Umaira Sherazi, in his office.

On this occasion, DIG Training and Commandant Capital Police College, Shakir Hussain Dawar, and

stable and awarded her with commendation certificates and a cash prize. He said that Constable Umaira Sherazi success highlights her strength of perseverance and dedication to outstanding performance.

Islamabad Police marks "Intl day against drugs abuse"

ISLAMABAD: Following the special directives of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, Islamabad Police's campaign against drugs, raising awareness among the youth, and taking action against drug dealers is ongoing under the banner "Nasha Ab Nahi" movement.

In this regard, IG

Islamabad directed senior police officers to formulate a comprehensive strategy to protect the youth from drugs, ensure prevention, and strengthen ties between educational institutions and law enforcement departments. During the "Nasha Ab Nahi" campaign, police teams arrested 558 drug dealers and registered 540 cases against them. Moreover, police teams seized

AIOU to host Int'l moot on Pak-Iran academic cultural dialogue

ISLAMABAD (APP): Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) will organise the Second International Conference on "Iran-Pakistan Academic-Cultural Dialogue" on the 2nd and 3rd of July in collaboration with Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan.

Vice chancellors of six universities of the Islamic Republic of Iran along with delegations will participate in this conference, a news release said on Wednesday.

Vice chancellors of 20 major universities in Pakistan will also participate in this international conference.

The conference will play an important role in further strengthening Pakistan-Iran academic, research and cultural relations and promoting the relations between the two brotherly countries.

Thousands of kids join summer camp in govt schools

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training announced that thousands of kids have joined its Summer Camps in government schools on Wednesday.

According to the Education Ministry, the excitement is palpable as students from Rawalpindi and beyond have come together to learn, play, and make new friends.

"It's heartwarming to see students from different backgrounds and cities, like Pindi, coming together and enjoying the various activities and workshops. Our Summer Camps are all about fostering unity, inclusion, and a sense of community," the ministry said.

more than 100 kg of hashish, over 161 kg of heroin, over 19 kg of opium, and 3,095 liters of liquor from the possession of the arrested accused.

On the occasion of the International Day against drug abuse, IG Islamabad issued a message stating that our youth often turn to the curse of drugs due to societal pressures and inadequate guidance.

Juvenile accused should undergo rehabilitation programme instead of being punished: SC

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court on Wednesday declared that juvenile accused should not be punished rather they should undergo a rehabilitation programme and given special treatment so that they become responsible citizens in future.

The three-member SC bench headed by Justice Mansoor Ali Shah and comprising Justice Athar Minallah and Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, granted the post-arrest bail of a 14.5 years juvenile accused in a murder case.

The court, in its order, observed that the accused Mehran was 14 years and 5 months old at the time of the incident according to the school certificate.

It further said that according to the first information report, two persons were travelling in the vehicle and during the journey accused Mehran along with one companion tried to stop the vehicle.

As per the case, the accused Mehran opened fire due to the failure of the vehicle to stop, killing one person, it added.

The SC said that the Peshawar High Court (PHC) had rejected the bail application due to the delay in the trial on the heinous charge.

The order said, "There is a law to treat juvenile accused differently from adult accused. According to the law of juvenile accused, they should not be punished but they should undergo a rehabilitation programme and they should be given special treatment so that they become responsible citizen in future."



ISLAMABAD: A large number of people participating in a rally observing the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking organized by Anti Narcotic Force at F-9 Park.

NSU joins global initiative to enhance skills education

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Skills University (NSU) Islamabad, a pioneer in technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in the country, has taken a significant step towards global leadership in skills education.

According to the University, this week, the university proudly announced its participation in the Bridging Innovation and Learning in TVET (BILT) project's self-reflection process, developed by UNESCO/UNEVOC and the German Education Ministry.

The NSU's unique role in this project, setting a precedent for educational innovation on an international scale, is a testament to its leadership in the Pakistani technology university landscape.

The inaugural meeting, held on June 25 and attended by national and international members, including Ms. Alexandra

Filippova of UNESCO-UNEVOC and Professor Yang Wenming of Shenzhen Polytechnic University, marked the commencement of a collaborative effort.

This effort, which includes NSU and a dedicated team of eight members that will be extended to 40, is ready to leverage digitalization and global partnerships to enhance learning outcomes. This collaborative spirit ensures that NSU's educational offerings are refined with a worldwide perspective. Ms. ZHONG Zhuoyu, Programme Officer at UNEVOC Centre, Shenzhen Polytechnic University China, and Ms. Spogmai Shahab, National Skills University team coordinator, will jointly facilitate the program's implementation. "This partnership underscores NSU's commitment to fostering a dynamic learning environment responsive to emerging global competencies," remarked Ms. Filippova, praising NSU's proactive readiness.

Wanted member of lady thief gang arrested; cash & valuables recovered

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Women police team arrested a member of a former jail bird lady thief gang involved in numerous theft activities and recovered cash and valuables from her possession, a public relations officer said.

He said that, following the special directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, the Islamabad Police has intensified crackdown against the criminal elements in order to eliminate the crime from the city.

Following these directions, the Women police station team used technical and human resources and succeeded in apprehending a wanted member of a lady thief gang involved in numerous theft activities. The accused were identified as Bhago Bibi.

Police team also recovered a mobile phone and cash from her possession. Case has been registered against the accused and further investigation is underway.

DIG Islamabad Syed Ali Raza directed all senior officials for effective crackdown against the accused involved in criminal activities and ensured the safety of lives and property of citizens on priority basis.

Citizens are urged to report any suspicious individual or activity through the emergency helpline "Pucar-15" or via "ICT-15" app.

NCSW launches first phase of trans formative consultation

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Commission on Status of Women (NCSW) has launched the first phase of its trans formative consultation conference series, titled 'The Next Horizon', aiming to create a comprehensive National Agenda for Women and Girls in Pakistan.

The series began with a conference on health 'Inclusive Healthcare for Women: Paving the Way Forward', organized in collaboration with United Nations Population (UNFPA) and Pathfinder.

Chairperson of NCSW, Nilofar Bakhtiar, opened the session by highlighting the urgent need to address the pressing health issues, facing women in Pakistan.

Speaking at the conference Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal reiterated the government's dedication to advancing women's health.

He stated, "Our commitment lies in implementing strong policies and in-

vesting in healthcare infrastructure to guarantee that every woman in Pakistan has access to quality healthcare."

On this occasion, Special Secretary, Ministry of National Health Services Regulation and Coordination, Waqar Ul Hassan and Lt. General (Rtd) Nigar Johar, also addressed the participants. Moreover, renowned actress and activist, Nadia Jamil shared her inspiring personal journey through breast cancer.

The conference featured thematic working group sessions that delved into various aspects of women's health.

The sessions included discussions on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), nutritional disparities, common communicable and noncommunicable diseases, and emotional and mental health.

The recommendations include: Advocate for increasing the health budget allocation to at least 10 percent of the development budget.

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He stated, "Our commitment lies in implementing strong policies and in-



ISLAMABAD: Member National Assembly, Raja Usama Sarwar calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Ministry introduces 'Cleaner Future for ICT Schools' initiative

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training has announced to launch an initiative to install wash stations in government schools, starting with 100 schools, aims to promote cleanliness, hygiene, and a healthy environment for the students.

According to the details, under the initiative 'Cleaner Future for Our School' two wash stations per school will be installed, one strategically placed at the school entrance, which will encourage students, teachers, and visitors to clean their hands before entering or leaving the school.

However, the second

wash station will be located next to the sports area, which will promote cleanliness and hygiene among students engaging in physical activities.

Under the plan a cleaner future for all, the ministry planned to expand this initiative to more schools in the future. "Our goal is to create a culture of cleanliness and hygiene, empowering our students to grow and learn in a healthy environment".

The ministry in a message said that "Join us in shaping a cleaner tomorrow. Together, let's clean their hands before entering or leaving the school for our students and our community".

I could not perform Hajj being my name in ECL: Zartaj Gul

ISLAMABAD (Online): PTT parliamentary leader Zartaj Gul has said she could not perform Hajj being her name in Exit Control List (ECL).

"I could not proceed to Saudi Arabia to perform Hajj being my name in ECL. Now I will go to perform Umrah due to removal of my name from ECL under court's order. I am not among those who flee, she said this while talking to media men here in Islamabad High Court (IHC).

Zartaj Gul said she are not among those who flee from country. We have no

properties outside Pakistan nor have we any business. We live and die for Pakistan. We are proud of being Pakistani. My name was placed in ECL without any proof, she said adding court kept on asking them to provide proof repeatedly but neither federal government nor provincial government had any evidence which they could produce in the court.

Every day baseless cases are registered against us. It is their endeavor that we should leave our leader Imran Khan. But it is their misperception and we will support Imran Khan till our last breath.



ISLAMABAD: A youngster jumped into a crowded stream near Chak Shahzad to cool off during a hot spell as temperatures reached 42°C in the federal capital.

Hearing of 6 bail pleas of Imran Khan, one bail plea of Bushra BIBI adjourned

ISLAMABAD (Online): Hearing of 6 bail pleas of Imran Khan and one bail plea of Bushra Bibi has been adjourned till July 16 in District Courts Islamabad.

The counsel requested the hearing in respect of these petitions be fixed for hearing next week.

Judge Muhammad Afzal Majoka said Iddat case has to be decided till July 8.

Additional District and Sessions judge

Muhammad Afzal Majoka heard the case. Khalid Yousof Chaudhry advocate appeared on behalf of Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi in the court.

The jail authorities reply could not be filed on non arranging appearance of Imran Khan through video link.

The court inquired what reply of jail authorities has come on not arranging appearance of Imran Khan through video link.

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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.

Rafia Zakaria

It has been about two weeks since a heartbreaking incident of camel mutilation came to light in Pakistan.

In that case, it was alleged that a landowner, enraged by a camel that had been foraging in his field, cut off the poor animal's leg. The female camel was only eight months old. The camel's poor owner named the landlord as the culprit, but said that the police were trying to protect him. Earlier, the police had arrested six suspects but said they could not find proof of the landlord's involvement in this act of barbarity.

The case only gained prominence when a video of the maimed camel went viral on social media. The Sindh government is said to be working with an NGO to provide an artificial limb to the injured camel.

It is unfortunate that this is only one of several instances pertaining to animal abuse in Pakistan. In fact, this form of bestiality is rampant in the country. Just a little before the

camel incident, an extremely disturbing video emerged of a dog being thrown from a balcony of a high-rise building, while days after it, news emerged about a man cutting off a donkey's ears.

Taken together with the shabby treatment meted out to animals at Pakistan's zoos (the case of the elephant Noor Jehan in Karachi immediately comes to mind), these incidents expose the depth of inhumanity that now exists in society.

Research shows that a proclivity for animal abuse is a primary indication that the perpetrator is a psychopath and likely to act similarly towards human beings. If this is true, Pakistan has no dearth of potential criminals whose complete lack of empathy for the suffering of other living beings is there for all to see.

There is no one in this country who has not been a witness to animal cruelty; but most of us continue to watch and allow it to happen. Dogs, known to be particularly intelligent companions for human beings,

are treated abhorrently in Pakistan. While there may be notions about impurities regarding canines, that does not mean that those who subscribe to this view physically harm them. Harming living things is a sign of a sick and depraved society. All living things are deserving of respect and a peaceful existence, and the idea that an animal is deserving of ill-treatment speaks volumes of the cruelty that abounds in the human race.

It is sickening to see helpless and voiceless creatures such as camels, dogs, cats and donkeys being mistreated — and everyone ignoring their suffering.

Human beings may be the most sentient creatures on the planet, but this does not mean that animals are not sensitive and do not experience emotions. It is not a question of who is more intelligent — human or animals — it's just that there are different kinds of intelligence for man and beast. Studies have revealed self-awareness and emotions in the animal kingdom often through

vocalisations and gestures. Experiments on fish have shown that they express feeling pain through rocking and hyperventilating.

Marc Bekoff, the author of *The Emotional Lives of Animals*, presents the case of prairie dogs, which are a kind of large rodent, like a mongoose. One day while cycling in Colorado, Bekoff saw a telling interaction. A large black-tailed prairie dog was trying to retrieve the carcass of her young one. The baby had just been killed on the road, likely owing to an accident. Bekoff saw the mother try five or six times to drag the carcass off the road, perhaps so that it would not be further crushed by cars.

The example is telling because one may not expect rodents to feel sad or grieve for their young. However, there are many such examples of even smaller animals acting in ways that do not have a simple explanation in terms of the desire to safeguard one's own. If anything, the mother was endangering her own life to retrieve the

body that no longer had any survival value to her. Perhaps a better-known example is of elephants, known to mourn their dead and to bury them.

Even tiny sea creatures have their own kind of emotional interplay. *The Curious World of Sea Horses*, published last year, details how sea horse couples engage in ritual dances to ensure that their reproductive cycles are synced. Other research has provided proof that elephants indeed have an incredible memory, showing that these social beasts can remember their relatives for up to 12 years just through their sense of smell.

All this is to press home the point that animals feel the cruelties that are inflicted upon them.

They are also capable of experiencing fun and joy, as anyone with pets would know.

There are realms that have been written and that will be written on the glories of the natural world. It is useful to remember that there are many countries that do

an excellent job of taking care of animals through stringent laws against any form of animal cruelty and through welfare projects. Take the case of Turkey, where there are no 'stray' animals as such, as the government takes care of all the cats and dogs on the streets and makes sure that they are well fed and not tortured or harassed, and that they have been vaccinated.

In Pakistan, too, awareness of animal rights is on the rise, with NGOs doing good work for animal rescue and rehabilitation. However, cruelty towards animals is still a behavioural trait. It is a sign of a society where nothing and no one is spared abuse.

Being a good human being requires speaking up when helpless and voiceless animals are being abused. The least one can do is to record incidents of animal cruelty and proliferate them on social media so that all criminal abusers are exposed. -- Courtesy Dawn

Fighting terrorism

Zahid Hussain

Yet another counterterrorism (CT) campaign is being launched which promises to eradicate all forms of extremism and violent militancy in the country in a "decisive manner".

Described as an attempt to "reinvigorate and re-energise the ongoing implementation of the Revised National Action Plan", the so-called Operation Azm-i-Istehkam — the prime minister prefers the term "vision" — is the latest in a long list of kinetic actions that Pakistan's security forces have undertaken over the last two decades.

Despite these operations, the menace of terrorism has returned with greater ferocity, presenting an even bigger challenge than before to national security. This raises questions about the state's strategy in dealing with the existentialist threat. Notwithstanding the government's claim of having developed national consensus, greater clarity is required.

It was in 2001 that the military-led government of Gen Pervez Musharraf launched the so-called Op-

eration Enduring Freedom in the former tribal regions in the wake of the American invasion of Afghanistan.

A series of CT campaigns followed: Al-Mizan (2002), Zalzal (2008) Sher Dil, Rah-i-Haq, and Rah-i-Raast (2007-2009), Rah-i-Nijaat (2009), Zarb-i-Azb (2014) and Raddul Fasaad (2017).

Given the questionable success of the previous campaigns, the deep scepticism over more kinetic action is not surprising. The trust deficit has been widening, as the state is seen to be making dubious compromises with militant outfits it claims to be fighting. An example of this was the secret deal with the TTP in 2022, which allowed thousands of armed militants to return home and regroup.

The returning militants, better organised and equipped with sophisticated weaponry, are now involved in attacks that are taking a huge toll, especially on the security forces. As per the annual security report of the Centre for Research and Security Studies, the country "witnessed 1,524 violence-related fatalities and 1,463 injuries

from 789 terror attacks and [CT] operations in 2023 — marking a record six-year high".

Matters turned worse in the first half of 2024 with an exponential rise in militant activities, particularly in KP and Balochistan. The resurgence of militancy underscores serious flaws in our CT strategy. The latest wave of terrorism has exposed the absence of a coherent policy needed to tackle this existential danger.

It is not surprising that there has been an exponential rise in terrorism in Pakistan since the Taliban returned to rule Afghanistan in 2022. There are reports of tacit Afghan Taliban support for the TTP. The fact that the Kabul administration is not taking action against TTP sanctuaries on its soil has meant greater security challenges for Pakistan.

Even more alarming is the increase in targeted attacks against Chinese nationals working on various development projects in the country. The latest attack took place a few months ago, when a suicide bomber rammed his explosives-laden vehicle into a convoy in a remote district

in KP where a key dam is being constructed. As a result, five Chinese workers were killed.

This was the third major attack this year on Chinese interests in the country. The growing number of targeted killings of Chinese nationals also has serious geopolitical implications. Thousands of Chinese workers are engaged in multibillion-dollar infrastructure projects in the country under the CPEC initiative.

The increasing occurrence of targeted killings of Chinese nationals has also raised questions regarding grave security lapses. It is apparent that the launching of a new CT operation has been largely driven by the threat of Chinese companies pulling out their investment from Pakistan.

Meanwhile, the brazenness of the attacks against the security forces has exposed the latter's vulnerability. Increasing political and economic instability in the country, particularly in KP, which has borne the brunt of the terrorist resurgence, appears to have given further impetus to the militants. There is a complete breakdown of

law enforcement in the province as the confrontation between the centre and the provincial government worsens.

While the latest bout of terrorism has led to an intense militaristic response by the state, there are questions regarding the limits of the use of only kinetic force to quell the threat. No doubt, the state must employ force where necessary. But this is not very effective unless accompanied by non-kinetic measures. The threat posed by violent extremism cannot be countered without broad political support.

Our failure to implement the National Action Plan, however flawed, shows a lack of resolve in defeating a grave security challenge. Despite the government's claim of removing the shortcomings in the implementation of NAP, there are no signs that the administration is carrying out long-delayed reforms critical for containing extremism in the country.

Most intriguing is the absence from the scene of the federal interior minister, who should be responsible for NAP's

implementation. He appears to be more interested in running cricket affairs in the country than focusing on the worsening security challenges. The government must put its own house in order before launching a new CT operation.

One cannot agree more with the prime minister that the issue of terrorism is a complicated one, which involves crime, drugs, smuggling, extremism and religiously motivated militancy. But there seems to be no coherent policy in place to deal with the challenge, and thus successfully counter the extremist narrative.

What is most dangerous is the growing concern that the operation will target a particular ethnic group. That has also been one of the reasons for all the major political parties in KP, including the ruling PTI and those supporting the coalition government at the centre, questioning the operation. It also contradicts the prime minister's claim of a consensus among all stakeholders. It seems that the current rulers have not learnt any lessons from past policy failures.

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 argu-

ment 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 Demo-cra-tic National Com-m-ittée 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

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

Eradicating torture

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 eradica-

tion 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 technical 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

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. The Punjab Governor appreciated the administration of SOS Children Village for taking good care of such children.

He also expressed his determination to give scholarships to three children from SOS Children Village Lahore in Aitchison College from next year. He assured Director SOS Children Village Lahore, Almas Butt of his full cooperation for the welfare of the children living in SOS Children's Village Lahore.



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

CM visits PDMA, orders preparations to deal with possible floods

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif visited Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Punjab's head office, here on Wednesday. She directed the authorities concerned that encroachments and obstacles in rivers of Rukhohi should be removed, saying that in view of possible floods, timely evacuation of population should be planned. Inform people of the affected villages about the place of accommodation and food, she instructed.

The CM said that along with human lives, livestock should also be removed in time. She asked with dismay that early

flood warning system was in use all over the world, why is it not known to Pakistan yet?

CM Maryam Nawaz said in case of rains, immediate drainage of water should be ensured in every city. She added that wherever there is a risk of flood, early measures should be taken. She underscored timely and authentic flood information should be delivered. The CM said encroachments should be removed from every flood embankment, and monitoring should continue round the clock.

The CM also visited the central control room of PDMA, and observed Weather Portal, Flood Forecasting Division and

Flood Simulation Model. Earlier, Secretary Irrigation, Chief Meteorologist, and DG PDMA gave a detailed briefing on flood preparedness in the province. They briefed that due to the fear of possible floods, daily reports have been requested from most of the districts. In view of possible flooding, instructions are issued to inform public of the evacuation plan in the affected areas. It was also told in the briefing that normal and more than normal rains are expected in Pakistan in 3 months. A report on the status of all barrages, link canals, main canals and drainage system etc. was presented in the meeting.

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.

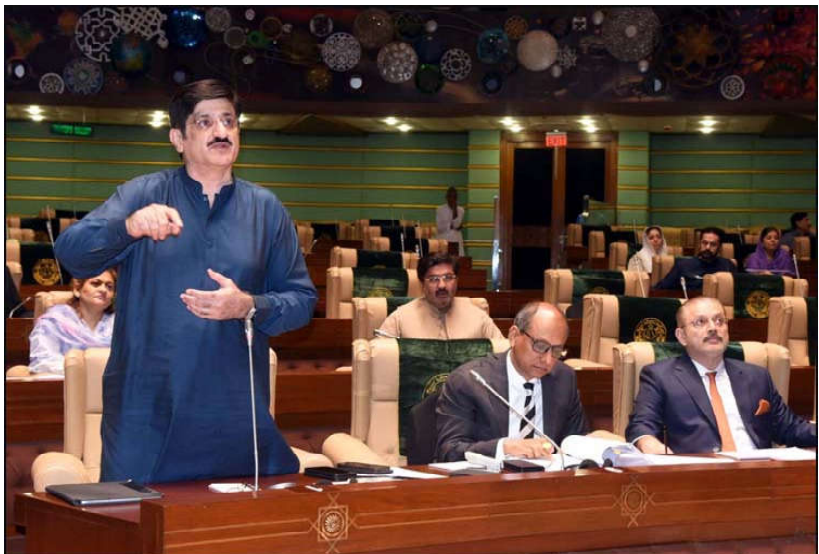
Governor Faisal Kundi stressed the importance of maintaining peace for the province's development.

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.

He reiterated his stance that provincial and federal governments must collaborate to resolve Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's issues through dialogue rather than through confrontational rhetoric, as challenges cannot be addressed through mere verbal exchanges but require substantive action and cooperation among political parties in the province.



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.

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 education and training, business production and other issues.

He was also briefed about various schemes initiated under the Annual Development Programme (ADP) and completed schemes. He was informed that a Student Complaint Cell will be established in TEVTA within 20 days for the convenience of the students.

The Special Assistant directed that all the officials of the authority and the department fulfill their responsibilities within the given time lines and also complete the required matters within the specified time period.

He stressed need for introduction of new trades in the curriculum of the technical and vocational education while keeping in view the supply.

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), Aziz (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.

Police and Rescue 1122 teams reached the spot and shifted the dead and injured to DHQ hospital Sargodha for legal formalities. District Police Officer Sargodha Dr Asad Ejaz Malhi took the notice of incident and ordered police to arrest the culprits at the earliest.

IGP vows to fulfill Punjab CM's vision of 'Drug Free Punjab'

LAHORE (APP): On the occasion of the International Day Against Drug Abuse, IGP Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar reiterated his commitment to fulfilling Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz's vision of a 'Drug-Free Punjab'.

He said that the day was commemorated to renew a pledge to eradicate the scourge of drugs from society and protect the young generation from its

dangers. He said the Punjab Police would leave no stone unturned in uprooting the menace of drugs. The IGP Punjab highlighted that this year, more than 33,000 raids were conducted on drug dealers' hideouts across the province. Over 16,000 suspects involved in the illicit business were arrested, and more than 15,500 cases were registered. He mentioned that more than 9,200-kilogram charas.

Former UC chairman killed in Bhalwal

BHALWAL (APP): Former Union Council (UC) Chairman Sarfaraz was shot dead by firing on his vehicle while three others were injured in the Salem area of Bhalwal, a private news channel and police reported on Wednesday.

According to the details, as soon as the incident was reported, the police reached the incident site and started the investigations.

The police lodged the first information report.



LAHORE: Provincial Ministers Khawaja Salman Rafique and Khawaja Imran Nazeer preside over the special meeting at Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education Department.

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.

Punjab Information Minister Azma Bukhari said that our government was going to give electric bikes to orphan. She said that a sad incident could have happened in Sargodha, but our government prevented the incident from happening. Extremism was a big problem for us, she said and adding, "We have to eliminate extremism from our state." Provincial Minister for Minorities Affairs Ramesh Singh Arora said that the Sikh Marriage Act was introduced as a private bill, the bill was passed, but unfortunately it was not taken serious.

Three killed, nine injured in road accident

RAJANPUR (APP): Three persons including two women were killed while nine others sustained serious injuries in a collision between passenger bus and wagon near Kot Mithan police check post on Wednesday.

According to "Incident Commander Rescue 1122, Dr Muhammad Aslam, a passenger bus was heading towards Rajanpur when a speeding wagon collided with the bus near Kot Mithan Police check post while saving a motorcyclist. As a result of the collision, 38-year old Nazim Hussain and two unknown women were died at the spot while another nine passengers Kahlid, Abida Perven, Abadullah, Mohsin, Sohail, Shehzadi Bibi, Zaffar, Babar and Muhammad Anas sustained serious injuries.

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 Humam 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.

The press release stated that the reforms are designed to improve the overall functioning of the judicial system, provide better facilities to lawyers and litigants, and ensure the welfare of judges, court staff, and the general public.

"To improve public service delivery, QR-coded documents will be generated for easy access to judgments and orders, and an online complaint system will be integrated with the LHC's mobile application, monitored through a dashboard. The 'Adia Sahulat Centre' will be established to provide one-window facilities for lawyers and litigants, including case filing, early hearing applications, copies of MLC & FIR, certified copies of judicial records, case tracking, and attestation of Wakalat-nama forms from jail.

The Adia Sahulat Centre shall be integrated with Khidmat Markaz of Police. The Price Control Magistrates will also be made more active, effective, and efficient," it added.



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

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, insisting on the importance of merit in running institutions.

Punjab Minister for Primary and Secondary Healthcare Khawaja Imran Nazir called for an end to doctor protests, stressing the priority of patient rights and indicating the government's willingness to engage in dialogue. He criticized the disruptive influence of political agendas on hospital.



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



PESHAWAR: Excise and Narcotics Department set on fire contraband items worth 200 million rupees on World Narcotics Day near Motorway toll Plaza.

AJK Govt decides to establish CTD, anti-riots police units

MUZAFFARABAD (APP): The Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) government has decided to establish counter terrorism department (CTD) and anti-riots police units with specialized training and modern equipment to cater the rising need in maintaining law and order, said Inspector General Police (IGP) Rana Abdul Jabbar here Wednesday.

Talking to a group of senior journalists at his office, the IGP said that the anti-riots police unit comprising on 500 personnel were being trained by Punjab anti-riots police trainers who had been trained by Turkish trainers in the past.

Rana said that the AJK police was lacking in this field and need was felt after recent riots happened in May this year in the

region after that government decided to create its own specialized anti-riots unit to tackle such events on professional basis.

He said younger police men of age ranging between 20 to 30 years and physically fit had been selected from all the police ranges for this specialized job and they will be kept for their original task rather indulging them in other policing duties.

"The anti-riots police will be deployed at three divisional headquarters under the administrative control of Deputy Inspector General (DIG) police, he added saying that Superintendents of Police (SPs) were also being trained through short workshops about how to deploy and use these units during the public protests.

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.

Swedish innovations set to revamp Pakistan's Textile Industry

ISLAMABAD (APP): Swedish Embassy and Business Sweden along with key industry players are set to launch the Sustainable Textiles Platform aiming to help Pakistan in the textile sector with Swedish technology and innovation.

"Pakistan's textile industry, a crucial part of its economy, faces mounting pressure to adopt eco-friendly practices," said a Swedish embassy press release on Wednesday.

the nation's GDP. However, this key industry is under pressure to adopt sustainable practices as global markets demand eco-friendly products. To stay competitive, the textile sector must innovate.

It said that the Pakistani textile industry was making strides towards environmental sustainability by focusing on renewable energy, advanced water management, and recycling.

It further said that this initiative will explore how Swedish technology can enhance sustainability and productivity in Pakistan's textile sector, with a focus on circular economy, water treatment, and renewable energy.

The platform will also highlight the involvement of major Swedish textile buyers like IKEA and H&M.

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.

and 248 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 57 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 57,647,948 shares at Rs 1.24 per share, K-Electric Limited with 37,639,343 shares at Rs 4.58 per share, and Pervez Ahmed Company with 31,130,746 shares at Rs 1.79 per share.

Mehmood Textile Mills Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 35.05 per share price, closing at Rs 534.00, whereas the runner-up was Sazgar Engineering Works Limited with a Rs 18.23 rise in its per share price to Rs 838.57.

PCJCCI keen for Digital Pakistan by 2025

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan should take solid steps to bolster reforms related to the market-oriented allocation of data elements and speed up the construction of digital infrastructure, including industrial internet and computing power networks, as part of its broader push to advance the building of a 'Digital Pakistan', just like Digital China.

Pakistan China Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCJCCI) President Moazzam Ghurki stated this in a meeting of the joint chamber here Wednesday.

He added that China rolled out a plan for the overall layout of the country's digital development last year, vowing to make important progress in the construction of a Digital China by 2025.

"We can take help from this model, it has all the information for advancing the development of data-related fundamental institutions, coordinating the integration, sharing, development and application of data resources, and pushing forward the planning and building of a Digital China, which includes a digital economy and society," he maintained.



ISLAMABAD: EU Ambassador in Pakistan, Dr. Riina Kionka calls on Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan to discuss mutual cooperation for promoting trade under GSP Plus.

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.

He maintained to provide complete cooperation to the women investors in trade and business fields to put the province on the road to prosperity.

Governor Faisal Karim Kundi said the abilities, skills and overall capacity of the women of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was known to everyone and providing business opportunities to them would certainly benefit the entire country besides making a positive impact on the national economy.

Vice President, WCCI, Anila Khalid thanked the Governor for his assurance of cooperation to business women entrepreneurs.

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 sustained increase in MSMEs financing, a SBP spokesperson informed 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, and regional trade bodies to participate and develop partnerships to spur the MSMEs growth.

In parallel, financial institutions will highlight the significance of this day through social media campaigns.

Gilani calls for united effort to improve economy

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

He emphasized that these economic challenges have led to limited investment, reduced per capita income, and increased unemployment. There is an urgent need for a comprehensive framework to revitalize the national economy, attract investment, and promote business activities.

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, promote cultural heritage, and support economic development in the province.

The World Bank team appreciated the progress made so far and offered support and guidance to ensure the project's successful completion.

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.

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 universities to promote research culture.

Fish exports earn \$379.2 million

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan earned \$ 379.207 million by exporting 185,000 metric tonnes of fish and fish preparations during the first eleven months of the current fiscal year, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported.

AS compared to the exports of \$ 456.668 million during July-May (2022-23), the fish exports during the July-May (2023-24) witnessed decline of 16.96 percent, according to PBS data.

In terms of quantity, the exports of fish and fish preparations decreased by 5.44 percent during the period under review compared to exports of 195,642 metric tonnes during last fiscal year.

On a month-on-month basis, the seafood exports declined by 14.99 percent when compared to the exports of \$43.586 million in April, according to the PBS data.

LCCI organises 'Drug Prevention Conference'

LAHORE (APP): On the occasion of World Anti-Narcotics Day, the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) organised the Drug Prevention Conference, here on Wednesday.

The conference was chaired by LCCI Senior Vice President Zafar Mahmood Chaudhry, and was addressed by SSP (Operations) Tasawar Iqbal, Assistant Director of Anti-Narcotics Force M. Muqem, Convener of the Standing Committee on Health and Narcotics Control Dr. Zafar Iqbal, and Director of the University of Education Professor Umar Saleem.

US, China, and UAE top destinations for Pak exports during July-May

ISLAMABAD (APP): The United States (US) remained the top export destination of Pakistani products during the first eleven months of the current financial year 2023-24, followed by China and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Total exports to the US during July-May 2023-24 were recorded at US 4,989.140 million against the exports of US \$ 5,484.257 million during July-May 2022-23, showing a decline of 9.02 percent, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

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, Chemtrans onian, Serenity and Maersk Kinloss are expected to sail on today afternoon.

This was followed by China, wherein Pakistan exported goods worth US \$2,553.481 million against the exports of US \$1,889.195 million last year, showing an increase of 35.16 percent.

UAE was the third top export destination, where Pakistan exported products worth US \$1,880.820 million during the months under review against the exports of US \$1,341.804 million, SBP data revealed.

Among other countries, Pakistani exports to United Kingdom (UK) stood at US \$1,861.083 million against US \$1,808.288 million last year while the exports to Germany were recorded at US \$1,381.369 million against US \$1,488.714 million last year, data said.

During July-May, the exports to Holland were recorded at \$1,273.035 million against \$1,323.770 million whereas the exports to Italy stood at \$1,032.475 million against \$1,052.640 million.

Pakistan's exports to Spain were recorded at \$1,333.875 million.

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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.

Rafia Zakaria

It has been about two weeks since a heartbreaking incident of camel mutilation came to light in Pakistan.

In that case, it was alleged that a landowner, enraged by a camel that had been foraging in his field, cut off the poor animal's leg. The female camel was only eight months old. The camel's poor owner named the landlord as the culprit, but said that the police were trying to protect him. Earlier, the police had arrested six suspects but said they could not find proof of the landlord's involvement in this act of barbarity.

The case only gained prominence when a video of the maimed camel went viral on social media. The Sindh government is said to be working with an NGO to provide an artificial limb to the injured camel.

It is unfortunate that this is only one of several instances pertaining to animal abuse in Pakistan. In fact, this form of bestiality is rampant in the country. Just a little before the

camel incident, an extremely disturbing video emerged of a dog being thrown from a balcony of a high-rise building, while days after it, news emerged about a man cutting off a donkey's ears.

Taken together with the shabby treatment meted out to animals at Pakistan's zoos (the case of the elephant Noor Jehan in Karachi immediately comes to mind), these incidents expose the depth of inhumanity that now exists in society.

Research shows that a proclivity for animal abuse is a primary indication that the perpetrator is a psychopath and likely to act similarly towards human beings. If this is true, Pakistan has no dearth of potential criminals whose complete lack of empathy for the suffering of other living beings is there for all to see.

There is no one in this country who has not been a witness to animal cruelty; but most of us continue to watch and allow it to happen. Dogs, known to be particularly intelligent companions for human beings,

are treated abhorrently in Pakistan. While there may be notions about impurities regarding canines, that does not mean that those who subscribe to this view physically harm them. Harming living things is a sign of a sick and depraved society. All living things are deserving of respect and a peaceful existence, and the idea that an animal is deserving of ill-treatment speaks volumes of the cruelty that abounds in the human race.

It is sickening to see helpless and voiceless creatures such as camels, dogs, cats and donkeys being mistreated — and everyone ignoring their suffering.

Human beings may be the most sentient creatures on the planet, but this does not mean that animals are not sensitive and do not experience emotions. It is not a question of who is more intelligent — human or animals — it's just that there are different kinds of intelligence for man and beast. Studies have revealed self-awareness and emotions in the animal kingdom often through

vocalisations and gestures. Experiments on fish have shown that they express feeling pain through rocking and hyperventilating.

Marc Bekoff, the author of *The Emotional Lives of Animals*, presents the case of prairie dogs, which are a kind of large rodent, like a mongoose. One day while cycling in Colorado, Bekoff saw a telling interaction. A large black-tailed prairie dog was trying to retrieve the carcass of her young one. The baby had just been killed on the road, likely owing to an accident. Bekoff saw the mother try five or six times to drag the carcass off the road, perhaps so that it would not be further crushed by cars.

The example is telling because one may not expect rodents to feel sad or grieve for their young. However, there are many such examples of even smaller animals acting in ways that do not have a simple explanation in terms of the desire to safeguard one's own. If anything, the mother was endangering her own life to retrieve the

body that no longer had any survival value to her. Perhaps a better-known example is of elephants, known to mourn their dead and to bury them.

Even tiny sea creatures have their own kind of emotional interplay. The *Curious World of Sea Horses*, published last year, details how sea horse couples engage in ritual dances to ensure that their reproductive cycles are synced. Other research has provided proof that elephants indeed have an incredible memory, showing that these social beasts can remember their relatives for up to 12 years just through their sense of smell.

All this is to press home the point that animals feel the cruelties that are inflicted upon them.

They are also capable of experiencing fun and joy, as anyone with pets would know.

There are realms that have been written and that will be written on the glories of the natural world. It is useful to remember that there are many countries that do

an excellent job of taking care of animals through stringent laws against any form of animal cruelty and through welfare projects. Take the case of Turkey, where there are no 'stray' animals as such, as the government takes care of all the cats and dogs on the streets and makes sure that they are well fed and not tortured or harassed, and that they have been vaccinated.

In Pakistan, too, awareness of animal rights is on the rise, with NGOs doing good work for animal rescue and rehabilitation. However, cruelty towards animals is still a behavioural trait. It is a sign of a society where nothing and no one is spared abuse.

Being a good human being requires speaking up when helpless and voiceless animals are being abused. The least one can do is to record incidents of animal cruelty and proliferate them on social media so that all criminal abusers are exposed. -- Courtesy Dawn

Fighting terrorism

Zahid Hussain

Yet another counterterrorism (CT) campaign is being launched which promises to eradicate all forms of extremism and violent militancy in the country in a "decisive manner".

Described as an attempt to "reinvigorate and re-energise the ongoing implementation of the Revised National Action Plan", the so-called Operation Azm-i-Istehkam — the prime minister prefers the term "vision" — is the latest in a long list of kinetic actions that Pakistan's security forces have undertaken over the last two decades.

Despite these operations, the menace of terrorism has returned with greater ferocity, presenting an even bigger challenge than before to national security. This raises questions about the state's strategy in dealing with the existentialist threat. Notwithstanding the government's claim of having developed national consensus, greater clarity is required.

It was in 2001 that the military-led government of Gen Pervez Musharraf launched the so-called Op-

eration Enduring Freedom in the former tribal regions in the wake of the American invasion of Afghanistan.

A series of CT campaigns followed: Al-Mizan (2002), Zalzal (2008) Sher Dil, Rah-i-Haq, and Rah-i-Raast (2007-2009), Rah-i-Nijat (2009), Zarb-i-Azb (2014) and Raddul Fasaad (2017).

Given the questionable success of the previous campaigns, the deep scepticism over more kinetic action is not surprising. The trust deficit has been widening, as the state is seen to be making dubious compromises with militant outfits it claims to be fighting. An example of this was the secret deal with the TTP in 2022, which allowed thousands of armed militants to return home and regroup.

The returning militants, better organised and equipped with sophisticated weaponry, are now involved in attacks that are taking a huge toll, especially on the security forces. As per the annual security report of the Centre for Research and Security Studies, the country "witnessed 1,524 violence-related fatalities and 1,463 injuries

from 789 terror attacks and [CT] operations in 2023 — marking a record six-year high".

Matters turned worse in the first half of 2024 with an exponential rise in militant activities, particularly in KP and Balochistan. The resurgence of militancy underscores serious flaws in our CT strategy. The latest wave of terrorism has exposed the absence of a coherent policy needed to tackle this existential danger.

It is not surprising that there has been an exponential rise in terrorism in Pakistan since the Taliban returned to rule Afghanistan in 2022. There are reports of tacit Afghan Taliban support for the TTP. The fact that the Kabul administration is not taking action against TTP sanctuaries on its soil has meant greater security challenges for Pakistan.

Even more alarming is the increase in targeted attacks against Chinese nationals working on various development projects in the country. The latest attack took place a few months ago, when a suicide bomber rammed his explosives-laden vehicle into a convoy in a remote district

in KP where a key dam is being constructed. As a result, five Chinese workers were killed.

This was the third major attack this year on Chinese interests in the country. The growing number of targeted killings of Chinese nationals also has serious geopolitical implications. Thousands of Chinese workers are engaged in multimillion-dollar infrastructure projects in the country under the CPEC initiative.

The increasing occurrence of targeted killings of Chinese nationals has also raised questions regarding grave security lapses. It is apparent that the launching of a new CT operation has been largely driven by the threat of Chinese companies pulling out their investment from Pakistan.

Meanwhile, the brazenness of the attacks against the security forces has exposed the latter's vulnerability. Increasing political and economic instability in the country, particularly in KP, which has borne the brunt of the terrorist resurgence, appears to have given further impetus to the militants. There is a complete breakdown of

law enforcement in the province as the confrontation between the centre and the provincial government worsens.

While the latest bout of terrorism has led to an intense militaristic response by the state, there are questions regarding the limits of the use of only kinetic force to quell the threat. No doubt, the state must employ force where necessary. But this is not very effective unless accompanied by non-kinetic measures. The threat posed by violent extremism cannot be countered without broad political support.

Our failure to implement the National Action Plan, however flawed, shows a lack of resolve in defeating a grave security challenge. Despite the government's claim of removing the shortcomings in the implementation of NAP, there are no signs that the administration is carrying out long-delayed reforms critical for containing extremism in the country.

Most intriguing is the absence from the scene of the federal interior minister, who should be responsible for NAP's

implementation. He appears to be more interested in running cricket affairs in the country than focusing on the worsening security challenges. The government must put its own house in order before launching a new CT operation.

One cannot agree more with the prime minister that the issue of terrorism is a complicated one, which involves crime, drugs, smuggling, extremism and religiously motivated militancy. But there seems to be no coherent policy in place to deal with the challenge, and thus successfully counter the extremist narrative.

What is most dangerous is the growing concern that the operation will target a particular ethnic group. That has also been one of the reasons for all the major political parties in KP, including the ruling PTI and those supporting the coalition government at the centre, questioning the operation. It also contradicts the prime minister's claim of a consensus among all stakeholders. It seems that the current rulers have not learnt any lessons from past policy failures.

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 been 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 As---sange'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 esca---ped 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 argu-

ment 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 Demo---cratic National Com---mittee leaks on the eve of the 2016 polls particularly incen---sed 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 eradica-

tion 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 technical 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



QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfaraz Bugti being briefed by MD BTEVTA Tariq Javed Mengal employment in foreign countries

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."

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, it is a staunch reminder of the persistent danger posed by substance abuse within our society adding he said Pakistan has long been exposed to its wide-ranging negative consequences on the overall fabric of the society and the associated array of problems including crime, violence, health deterioration, and productivity loss.

Recognizing the magnitude of this challenge, he said the Government of Pakistan was undertaking comprehensive measures against drug abuse and illicit trafficking in alignment with its National Anti-Narcotics Policy of 2019.

This policy encompasses a holistic approach, incorporating Drug Demand Reduction, Drug Supply Reduction, and International Cooperation, he added.

Governor Balochistan concerned about increase usage of narcotics in society

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail has expressed deep concern over the increasing usage of narcotics in the society. The increased use of narcotics is putting the future of country at stake besides affecting the creative capabilities of youth.

This was stated by the Governor in a message issued on the International Day against drug abuse and illicit trafficking observed on Wednesday.

The Governor said that the basic objective behind observance of the International Day against drug abuse and illicit trafficking is to promote the collective awareness and sense about the ill effects and harms of the use of drugs.

He stressed the need to adopt comprehensive strategy to control the curse of narcotics in the society.

He also emphasized upon paying wholehearted attention on promotion of mutual cooperation for stopping demand and supply of the narcotics.

He believed that the cooperation of educational institutions and media is very important for making the anti-narcotics policy effective and result-oriented, which has been formulated at the national level.



QUETTA: Participants are holding awareness walk against Drugs and demand to make the city drug free in connection of International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking organized by Anti-Narcotics Force Balochistan in Quetta.

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 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 underlined 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.

He also emphasized the importance of the Charter on Finance for Managing Risks, launched at Cop28, and the need for policy coherence between climate adaptation, disaster risk reduction, and humanitarian response frameworks.



QUETTA: Chief Justice of Balochistan High Court, Mr. Justice Muhammad Hashim Kakar offering Fateha on sad demise of Abdul Hakeem Marani, father of Haji Muhammad Ayub Marani

Zafar Bukhari says: Govt striving to save youth from drugs

QUETTA (APP): Secretary Excise and Taxation Syed Zafar Bukhari on Wednesday said that Balochistan Government under the leadership of Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti was ensuring measures on war footing to protect the young generation from drug abuse.

He expressed these views while addressing an awareness walk organized by Excise and Taxation Department on the occasion of World Anti-Drug Day.

A large number of civil society representatives, students, business community and people from different walks of life participated in the awareness walk.

Syed Zafar Bukhari said that it was the mission of the Excise and Taxation Department to protect the people of the province from the ravages of drugs. Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bakti was committed to rehabilitation of drug addicts and rooting out the menace of drug abuse, he said.

He said that the CM announced to establish separate rehabilitation and training centers for male and female drug addicts saying that to keep the young generation away from the scourge of drugs, measures for the promotion of social activities were the need of the hour.

Balochistan to launch intensive Anti-Polio campaign from July 1

QUETTA (INP): In response to a recent polio case and environmental detection of the virus, a special anti-polio campaign will commence on July 1 in 16 districts of Balochistan.

The provincial health department announced the campaign following the discovery of a new polio case. The targeted districts include Loralai, Qila Saifullah, Daki, Awsta Muhammad, Mastung, Sibi, Nasirabad, Kalat, Zhob, Sherani, Chaman, Qila Abdullah, Musa Khel, Lasbela, Barkhan, and Ziarat Tehsil Sanjawi.

Dr Rubaba stresses need to address negative impacts of climate change

QUETTA (APP): Dr Rubaba Khan Buledi, Advisor to the Chief Minister of Balochistan on Women Development, has stressed the need to address the negative impacts of climate change by adopting a comprehensive strategy and measures. Speaking at a conference on climate change organized by PPAF, BRSP, and CPD, she said that Pakistan is among the 40 countries that have prepared a National Adaptation Plan under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Dr Buledi noted that Balochistan and Pakistan are facing severe challenges due to climate change, despite contributing minimally to greenhouse gas emissions. She cited a report stating that over 10,000 people have lost their lives and the country has suffered economic losses of approximately \$380 million in the past two decades due to environmental disasters. The advisor emphasized the crucial role of non-governmental organizations in raising awareness and mitigating the effects of climate change.

She assured that the Balochistan government will fully support organizations working on strategies to combat climate change.

Mazari's arrest by ACE Punjab declared illegal

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Islamabad High Court has declared the arrest of Former Human Rights Minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Shireen Mazari as illegal.

As per details, Justice Mohsin Akhtar of the Islamabad High Court announced the reserved verdict and annulled the report of the commission that had ordered her arrest.

Work organized to mark Intl. drugs Day Noorzai calls for starting jihad to save coming generations from curse of narcotics

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Parliamentary Secretary for Social Welfare Department, Wali Muhammad Noorzai has underlined the need to start jihad to save the coming generations from curse of narcotics in the society.

He stressed that curse of narcotics is poisonous for the whole society, and as such we have to make collective efforts for saving our youth from the devastations caused due to narcotics.

He said that the provincial government is taking steps on an emergent basis for prevention of narcotics under leadership of the Chief Minister, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti.

He said that the separate drug rehabilitation centers would be established for treatment and rehabilitation of the drug addicts in the province.

The Parliamentary Secretary for Social Welfare Department was addressing the walk organized to mark the International Day against drug abuse and illicit trafficking here in the metropolis on Wednesday.

The Director General Anti Narcotics Force, other high ups of the ANF and Social Welfare Department as well as the representatives of civil society participated in the awareness walk.

The Parliamentary Secretary, Director General ANF and other participants stressed the need to make collective efforts for wiping out the curse of narcotics from the society.

Meanwhile, an awareness rally was also taken out by the Excise and Taxation department in the metropolis.

The Secretary Excise and Taxation, Syed Zafar Bokhari as well as other high ups and civil society representatives participated in the rally.

Crackdown continues against power pilfering & defaulters of utility bills & arrears

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Quetta Electric Supply Company (QESCO) continued its campaign against the power pilfering and defaulters of the electricity utility bills and arrears all over the Balochistan province.

According to the spokesman of QESCO, the crackdown was done against the electricity pilferers and defaulters in the Quetta, Pishin, Loralai, Sibi, Khuzdar and Makran operation circles.

He said that the applications were submitted against nine persons accused in the power pilfering in different police stations of the province.

In all 86 domestic and commercial consumers were charged fine on doing their meters shunt and slow in different operation circles of the province during last 24 hours. Around Rs. 1.7 million were collected on account of fine from the power pilferers on account of the detection and fine.

Besides, Rs. 13.6 million were also collected from some 697 defaulting consumers during last 24 hours, the QESCO spokesman mentioned adding that the campaign would remain continued in future as well.



QUETTA: Principal Secretary to Chief Minister Balochistan Imran Zarkoon giving away appreciation certificate on best performance to Project Director Balochistan Human Capital Investment Saqib Kakar from Chief Minister Balochistan

RDMC's new community Health, MCH center starts serving in Nokkundi

QUETTA (APP): Reko Diq Mining Company (RDMC) welcomed a new era in healthcare with the inauguration of the Community Health and MCH (Mother & Child Health) Center at Nokkundi area of District Chagai, with the Indus Health and Hospitals Network (IHNN).

According to press release, this state-of-the-art facility is set to transform healthcare delivery for the residents of Nokkundi and its surrounding areas.

The facility includes three consultation clinics, four wards with a total of 13 beds, a general triage area, an OPD, a 24/7 emergency room, a gynecology section, a pharmacy, a laboratory, a patients' waiting area, an ultrasound and X-ray room, a community health worker room and a meeting room.

With a core focus on maternal and child health, the health center will provide maternal, neonatal, and child health (MNCH) services, including antenatal care, postnatal care, lactational management.

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

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.

There was some one who was telling Imran Khan they will kill you and on the other hand he was telling military leadership Imran Khan would not spare them.

When contact remained no more and leaders like us became disconnected then the misperceptions rose.

IHC orders to remove name of Zartaj from ECL

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) has ordered to remove name of Zartaj Gul, parliamentary leader of Sunni Itehad Council (SIC) from ECL.

The court remarked these are false allegations. All are bailable and they put the name in ECL. Now name is being removed. We will next summon those also who accord approval.

These remarks were given by the court during the hearing of the petition seeking removal of name of SIC parliamentary leader Zartaj Gul from ECL. Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri heard the case Wednesday. Assistant Attorney General (AAG) appeared in the court. The record of FIR was presented. Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri remarked in report name of Zartaj Gul is recorded in 2 FIRs. You don't put the name of terrorists.



QUETTA: Commissioner Quetta Division Hamza Shafiqat briefed representative of Bill Gates Foundation Christopher J Elias and Rehan Hafeez regarding overall situation of polio in Quetta block