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No one will be allowed to challenge state's writ

PM approves reinvigorated national counter-terrorism campaign through launching Operation Azm-e-Istehkam

Calls for unified effort across federal, provincial govts to combat terrorism; Operation will integrate and synergise multiple lines of effort to combat extremism, terrorism

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday approved a reinvigorated and re-emergent national counter-terrorism campaign through launching of Operation "Azm-e-Istehkam" with consensus of all stakeholders including provinces, Gilgit Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir, symbolizing the national resolve to eradicate extremism and terrorism from the country.

"Azm-e-Istehkam will integrate and synergize multiple lines of effort to combat the menaces of extremism and terrorism in a comprehensive and decisive manner," said in a press release issued by the PM Office Media Wing.

The meeting was attended by key ministers of the federal cabinet including the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Interior Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb,

Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar and Information Minister Attaullah Tarar. Additionally, the chief ministers of all provinces and Gilgit-Baltistan, Services Chiefs and chief secretaries of the provinces along with other senior civilian, military and Law Enforcement Agencies officers were present.

The forum conducted a comprehensive review of the ongoing counter-terrorism campaign and assessed the internal security situation.

"The forum reiterated that the fight against ex-

trémism and terrorism was Pakistan's war and was absolutely essential for the nation's survival and well-being. The forum resolved that no one would be allowed to challenge the writ of the state without any exception," it was added.

The progress on the

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting of Central Apex Committee of National Action Plan.

Budget prepared in view of improvement of various sectors: Govt. to make utmost efforts to increase provincial receipts in next financial year budget: Nausherwani

Balochistan accommodated all sectors, initiates flagship projects in budget 2024-25, says Finance Minister

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Provincial Minister for Finance, Mir Shoaib Nausherwani has stated that the total provincial receipts have been estimated as Rs. 124.4 billion in the next financial year's budget of the province and it is our utmost effort to increase the provincial receipts in the budget.

The Minister Finance said that we are trying to provide maximum relief to the people in the province.

He said that total volume of the provincial budget for next financial year is estimated at Rs. 955.6 bil-

lion, in which the share of federal receipts are over Rs. 726.6 billion.

He said that total expenditures in the next financial year's budget are proposed as Rs. 930 billion.

He informed that the total volume of the ongoing expenditures are estimated at Rs. 564.8 billion in the next budget.

These details were shared by the Provincial Minister for Finance, Mir Shoaib Nausherwani while addressing post budget conference here at the Sikandar Jamali Auditorium on Saturday.

The Provincial Minister for Planning and Development, Mir Zahoor Ahmed Buledi, spokesman of provincial government, Shahid Rind and other senior high ups of Finance and P&D departments were also present on the occasion.

The Minister Finance said that the total volume of the development budget is estimated as Rs. 321 billion.

He said that the provincial government has been facing certain challenges in different sectors since its formation.

He said that the provin-

cial budget was prepared keeping in view improvement of different sectors.

The Finance Minister said that the schemes, which are in the interest of people were given preference in the budget.

Speaking on the occasion, the spokesman of provincial government said that 1500 public development schemes have been continued in the next financial year's budget.

He said that priority has been given to education and health sectors in the budget while the focus is also on the climate change.

The spokesman said that it is the endeavour of government to start tendering process from July.

The Provincial Minister for Planning and Development, Mir Zahoor Buledi said that the public friendly budget was presented under leadership of the Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti.

The Minister P&D said that all sectors have been covered in the provincial budget.

He said that we have given the surplus budget of Rs. 25 billion while the total

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QUETTA: Provincial Finance Minister Mir Shoaib Nausherwani, Provincial Minister for P&D Mir Zahoor Ahmed Buledi, Spokesman of Government of Balochistan Shahid Rind and Provincial Secretary Finance Babar Khan addressing Post budget press conference

Ahsan for constituting committee to probe burgeoning lynching incidents countrywide

ISLAMABAD, June 22 (APP): Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Saturday proposed to constitute a committee to probe the burgeoning incidents of lynching in the name of desecration and blasphemy across the country.

Speaking at the floor of the National Assembly (NA) on a 'point of order', he strongly condemned the SWAT lynching incident stating that it had brought a bad name to the country in the comity of nations.

Ahsan, expressing his personal experience, informed that a religious extremist made an assassination attempt on him but he was survived by the grace of Allah Almighty. Taking law into own hands, he said, it was against the spirit of Islam and as well as the Constitution and law of the land.

Ahsan said it was high time to control 'street justice' as it was responsibility of the state and judiciary to administer punishment to a suspect of blasphemous actions. Highlighting an incident from the Islamic history, he emphasized that Islam lays great importance to the dead bodies of non-Muslims therefore it was the violation of basic Islamic injunctions immolating any human being on the basis of mere allegation.

Ahsan said, "Due to ongoing trend of individuals acting as judge, jury, and executioner, we are far behind other nations at the global stage".

Responding to Minister Ahsan, NA Deputy Speaker Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah suggested him to take up the issue in the federal cabinet as he was the part and parcel of it. He further asked him to discuss it with his worthy colleague Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi to devise a mechanism in order to cope with this social evil once for all.



QUETTA: Home Minister Mir Ziaullah Lango talking with Senator Nawabzada Umar Farooq after condoling death of his father Arbab Abdul Zahir Kasi

Jl announces countrywide protest against power bills, load shedding

LAHORE (INP): JI leader Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman has announced a countrywide protest tomorrow against power load shedding and heavy electricity bills.

Ameeer Jamaat-e-Islami addressing a press conference called Pakistan's Year 2024-25 budget an utterly anti-people budget. "They are not sending electricity bills, but these are bombs landing at the homes of power consumers," JI leader said.

"It is the first protest of the movement against

electricity bills and load shedding, and it will be continued till approval of demands," Hafiz Naeem said that the root cause of the power load shedding has been the government's policy under which the country paying 2800 billion rupees for that electricity, which is even not being generated.

"They are now talking about imposing tax on solar systems," Hafiz Naeem said. He said, the government has this time announced an anti-people budget in its true sense.

PM grieved over death of Dr Sheikh Saleh

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday expressed his deep grief and condolences on the death of Dr Sheikh Saleh Al-Shaibi, the long-time custodian and key holder of the Holy Ka'aba.

The prime minister prayed for the high ranks of the departed soul, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The prime minister said that late Dr Sheikh Salah Al Shaibi had the unique honour of key holder of the Holy Ka'aba and every Muslims was proud over his fate.

According to the advice of Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) related to holders of the key of Ka'aba, Dr Sheikh Saleh Al-Shaibi was the 109th custodian in this sequence as Al-Shaibi family was entrusted with this honour, he added.

PPP rescinds budget session boycott decision after talks with govt

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) has reversed its decision to boycott the budget session following substantial progress in negotiations with the federal government. Sources indicate that while the PPP has not yet decided on voting for the budget, Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has instructed all National Assembly members to attend the budget meeting.

Under Chairman Bilawal Bhutto's directive, PPP members actively participated in the budget session, marking a shift from their earlier stance.

Negotiation committees from the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and PPP met Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif recently, reaffirming their commitment to uphold agreements made during government formation.

Further talks between the PML-N and PPP negotiation teams are scheduled today, with both parties poised to finalize a comprehensive written agreement covering all pertinent issues. The developments underscore evolving political dynamics as key parties seek consensus on critical budgetary matters.

No laxity in security plan will be tolerated: Naqvi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi on Saturday chaired an important meeting in the Ministry of Interior to review the measures taken to protect foreigners, especially Chinese citizens.

The overall security situation in the country was also reviewed while the minister instructed to implement the SOPs of the security plan.

He said that formulated plan should be regularly monitored at every level and the relevant depart-

ments should keep close contact to destroy the nefarious intentions of anti-national elements.

There is no room for any negligence on the security plan, said the minister.

Meanwhile a briefing was given on the security plan and the overall situation from the relevant institutions including the Ministry of Interior to the minister. In the meeting, Federal Interior Secretary Khurram Ali Agha, Head Necta Muhammad Tahir Rai, Coordinator National Action Plan.

Zia concerned about deteriorating law & order situation in Turbat

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Provincial Minister for Home, Mir Ziaullah Langove has expressed concern over deteriorating law and order situation in Turbat. In this regard, an official memorandum has been issued to the Additional Secretary Home by the Provincial Minister.

According to the letter, the Levies force led by Deputy Commissioner seems failed in performing

its responsibilities.

It has been directed to suspend the levies personnel on committing negligence in duties.

Besides it has also been directed to conduct inquiry and take action against the Deputy Commissioner and Assistant Commissioner.

The Minister Home has also directed to take every possible steps for maintaining law and order in Turbat.

Post-Hajj flight operation of PIA starts; 1st flight reaches Quetta from Saudi Arabia

Independent Report

QUETTA: The post-Hajj flight operation of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) started from Saudi Arabia as first flight reached Quetta on Saturday.

The maiden flight of PIA carried 234 pilgrims to Quetta from the holy land after Hajj.

The General Manager PIA Balochistan, Abdul Ghaffar Miankhail welcomed the pilgrims reaching Quetta International Airport.

The post-Hajj flight operation of the national flag carrier airlines would remain continued till first week of July.



ISLAMABAD: Governor Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi meeting with Federal Minister for Planning & Development Ahsan Iqbal

PTI MPs stage protest rally for release of Imran Khan

ISLAMABAD (Online): PTI members of parliament held protest rally from parliament house to Election Commission (EC) against rigging in polls and for release of Imran Khan.

Women from PTI attended the rally in large number.

Rally was led by opposition leader in NA Umar Ayub Khan. The participants raised slogans against the government.

PTI members of parliament were holding placards inscribed with slogans for release of Imran Khan.

The participants chanted slogans against polls rigging outside the office of EC besides demanding investigation into alleged rigging in polls.

The members of parliament chanted slogans of No to government which is product of forms 45, 47.

PTI chairman Gohar Ali Khan while talking to media men said our voice has been shut in parliament. We want release of women. This is flagrant violation of human rights.

PBC asks CJP to ensure seniority in LHC CJ appointment

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Pakistan Bar Council (PBC) asked Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa to follow seniority while appointing the chief justice of the Lahore High Court (LHC).

In a letter written to the CJP, the PBC's representatives asked the CJP to appoint the most senior judge as the chief justice of the LHC.

The letter, signed by six PBC members read that the principle of seniority should be considered in the appointment of the Chief Justice.

The PBC maintained that the government is "mulling" to appoint a junior judge as the LHC chief justice.

In the letter, the PBC members also argued that deviating from the principle of seniority without solid reasons would be a violation of the established judicial precedent.



RAWALPINDI: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif attends the memorial service of Pakistan Army's sepoy Haroon William in Saint Paul's Church.

Failure of intelligence regarding CPEC Umar demands of army chief to call formation commanders conference

ISLAMABAD (Online): Opposition leader in National Assembly (NA) has demanded of army chief to Gen Asim Munir to call Formation Commanders meeting immediately on failure of intelligence regarding CPEC.

Addressing NA session Saturday Umar Ayub said CPEC project is very important for Pakistan adding during PTI regime recovery of Rs 426.4 billion was made.

He held KP chief minister had said we have completed our provincial surplus. Provincial surplus of Sindh is zero.

Opposition leader said Chinese leader came to Pakistan and what he said and what the news papers reported is this security and stability is must for national development and CPEC. This message given by Chinese leader during visit in Pakistan reflects that the matter of national security is very important.

"I demand of army chief Gen Asim Munir and Formation Commanders to call Corps commanders, formation commanders meeting immediately to ascertain the causes leading to failure of intelligence that why it happened so.

Reserved seats cannot be allotted to SIC: EC replies to SC

ISLAMABAD (Online): Election Commission (EC) has filed reply in Supreme Court (SC) in reserved seats case stating that the reserved seats cannot be allotted to Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC).

Full bench of SC presided over by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa will hear the reserved seats case on June 24.

EC has said in its reply filed in SC that the last date for filing list of reserved seats was January 24. SIC filed no list for reserved seats. The candidates sought certificate for providing election symbol of Tehreek-e-Insaf Nazriati.

Later the candidates withdrew from election symbol

of Tehreek-e-Insaf Nazriati (TIN).

The candidates were declared independent after they withdrew from election symbol of TIN. The independent candidates joined SIC after election. EC gave decision with 4-1 for not providing reserved seats to SIC.

Peshawar High Court (PHC) withheld EC decision on SIC appeal. SIC is not eligible for reserved seats.

EC further said there is no fault in decisions of EC and PHC. EC decision for allotment of reserved seats is as per law and constitution. According to constitution of SIC. A non muslim cannot become its member.



RAWALPINDI: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif attends the memorial service of Pakistan Army's sepoy Haroon William in Saint Paul's Church.

Chase, Hope help West Indies thump USA for NRR boost

BARBADOS (INP): For much of T20 World Cup 2024, USA haven't looked out of place against any side, but West Indies were a class apart against them. A brilliant bowling performance from the spinners spearheaded by Roston Chase was followed up by a chase that was sledgehammer-like in its brutality. Shai Hope crunched an unbeaten 82 off 39 balls, smashing eight sixes along the way as Nicholas Pooran helped him finish the game off with 55 balls and nine wickets to spare. By the end, the contest looked like the first real mismatch USA have been on the wrong side of as they ran out of ideas bowling to Hope, who until now had only played one match all tournament. He would reach his half-century in just 26 balls - the fastest in T20 World Cup history for West Indies - before only speeding up after Jonathan Charles holed out. Pooran and Hope unleashed fire and fury towards the end as the game hurtled to an early finish, plundering the last 53 runs in just 14 deliveries. The game was set up, though, by a disciplined bowling performance led by the wily old hand of Chase. Not by any means West Indies' most glamorous spinner, Chase didn't even get to bat against England in the previous game. He showed his all-round value with a statement performance, though, ripping through the USA's middle order and breaking the back of the innings. Akeal Hosein had played his customary role upfront, squeezing USA in the powerplay, while Andre Russell's three wickets helped the hosts continue to shackle USA whenever they tried to get a partnership going. The extra bounce Alzarri Joseph generated to dismiss Andries Gous just as he was beginning to whir into full gear ended up being the sliding doors moment for USA, who, in truth, were never close to competitive from that moment on. West Indies, meanwhile, are back with a bang. It seems a long time ago, but for a short while in the second half of the powerplay in the first innings, it looked as if Gous - now the second-highest scorer of this tournament - had turned the tide on West Indies. Halfway through, it was West Indies' powerplay, having conceded just 13 in the first three overs. But Gous, who nearly took USA home against South Africa with an unbeaten 80 off 47, stormed to a fiercer one more, punishing the length deliveries of Joseph to help plunder 35 off the final three of the powerplay. It helped USA put on 48 in the first six - their second-highest powerplay score at this World Cup. But with large parts of the

Babar mulls defamation case against unforgiving YouTubers, ex-cricketers

LAHORE (INP) - Pakistan skipper Babar Azam has decided to file a defamation case against YouTubers and former cricketers for accusing him of match-fixing after the T20 World Cup debacle. Team Green has been facing backlash from fans and former players since Pakistan's shocking early elimination from the mega cricket event. Some of them are coining conspiracies, accusing the players of being involved in match-fixing, while others are calling for sweeping changes in the team. A social media campaign is also being run against the national players, including Babar Azam, after their unimpressive performance in the world cup matches. Sources said Babar Azam had started consultation with his legal team and he was expected to send legal notices to the YouTubers and ex-cricketers over the allegations. Meanwhile, the PCB legal department has also started collecting statements of the social media influencers and former players to take an action against them. Earlier, Babar Azam said the team's batting let them down at the Twenty20 World Cup and apologised to fans for failing to reach the Super Eight stage. Pakistan fell to the tournament's biggest upset when the United States, a tier-two member of the game, beat the 2009 champions via Super Over. Defeat by arch-rivals India then left Babar's side with a mountain to climb to advance. India and the US bagged the two Super Eight slots from Group A while Pakistan finished third after laboured three-wicket victory against Ireland. "Thank you so much for supporting us, and sorry for that performance..." Babar said after the match in Florida. "I know the fans and the team are saddened by this. It is not any one player's fault. We all made a mistake."

CTD arrests 22 'terrorists' in several parts of Punjab

LAHORE (APP): The Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) has arrested 22 alleged terrorists in 152 intelligence-based operations (IBOs) in various parts of Punjab. According to the CTD provincial spokesperson, several IBOs were carried out in Lahore, Faisalabad, Multan, Gujranwala, Attock, Chakwal, DG Khan, Lodhran, Sheikhupura, Bahawalpur, Nankana Sahib, Bahawalnagar and Muzaffargarh. The spokesperson said that among the arrested terrorists, two belonged to the banned Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). He revealed that a terrorist arrested in Attock was linked to the proscribed al-Qaeda. Moreover, explosives including three hand-grenades, eight detonators, 32-foot protective fuse wire, one IED bomb, one primacord, mobile phones and cash were also recovered from them. The accused were identified as Abdullah, Hameedullah, Kamal Khan, Allah Ditta, Nadeem, Manzoor, Moazzam, Ramzan, Feroze Khan, Shoaib and Yasir. They were planning to launch attacks at some places, said the spokesperson. He said that 743 bombing operations were conducted in which 104 suspects were taken into custody. As many as 27,062 people were investigated during the operation.

Saudi Arabia's Islamic Affairs Ministry provides over 1.4m religious services to pilgrims during Hajj

ISLAMABAD (APP): Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Dawah and Guidance, represented by the Secretary-General for Islamic Awareness in Hajj, Umrah and Visit, provided 1,485,000 religious services during this year's Hajj season. The General Secretariat also sent more than 80,000,000 educational and guidance text messages (SMS) through all telecommunications providers in the Kingdom to the mobile phones of pilgrims and service providers in various international languages. The messages included a step-by-step explanation of the Hajj rituals, adherence to the regulations and laws set by the Kingdom for the security and safety of pilgrims, and an outline of the stages of Hajj and the necessary religious information for the pilgrims in the daily rituals. To leverage modern technology and utilize it in educating pilgrims, the



QUETTA: Nomads shift their luggage along with their family members dangerously travels on an overloaded vehicle which may cause any incident, passing through road towards their destination

PM approves reinvigorated national...

Continued from page 1 multi-domain tenets of the National Action Plan was scrutinized, with particular emphasis on identifying shortcomings in the implementation for addressing the same on top priority. The necessity for a comprehensive and reinvigorated counter-terrorism strategy, founded on complete national consensus and system-wide synergy, was underscored. In the politico-diplomatic domain, the forum resolved that efforts would be intensified to curtail the operational space for terrorists through regional cooperation. The renewed and full blown kinetic efforts of the armed forces would be augmented by full support from all the law enforcement agencies, empowered by effective legislation to address legal voids that hindered the effective prosecution of terrorism-related cases and award of exemplary punishments to them, the press release said. It said that the campaign would be duly complemented by socio-economic measures aimed at addressing genuine concerns of the people and creating an environment that discouraged extremist tendencies. The information space would be leveraged to promote a unified national narrative in support of the campaign. The forum also reviewed measures to ensure foolproof security for Chinese nationals in Pakistan. Following the prime minister's approval, new standard operating procedures (SOPs) were issued to relevant departments, which would enhance mechanisms for providing comprehensive security to Chinese citizens in Pakistan. Meanwhile Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday emphasised that the responsibility of combating terrorism lies with all federal and provincial governments, as well as institutions, underscoring the need for a collective and coordinated approach to eradicate this menace from the country. "It is a joint responsibility of all of us to enforce the state's accountability fully and without exception," the prime minister said while addressing a meeting of the Apex Committee of the National Action Plan. The meeting was attended by the chief ministers of all the provinces, federal ministers and senior military officers. He said terrorism had plagued Pakistan in various ways for two and a half decades. The problem of terrorism in Pakistan, he said was very complex and there was a deadly relationship between terrorism and crime, drugs, trafficking, extremism and religious hatred. He emphasised that stability and rule of law were essential for sustainable development in Pakistan. "A soft state can never win the confidence of the investors, and a healthy and strong economy cannot be imagined in a country plagued by instability and terrorism," he added. The prime minister said all the institutions and provincial governments were relying solely on the Pakistan Armed Forces to fight against terrorism absolving themselves of any such responsibility. He said it was a dangerous trend that had been developed in the last few years which would not help completely uprooting the menace of terrorism from the country. "Pakistan's Armed Forces have been shedding their blood for decades, offering unmatched and countless sacrifices," he said adding a sustainable stability could not be ensured without a complete system and a whole of the government. He stressed that all the law enforcement agencies, ministries, federal and provincial governments and all the institutions should jointly work to eliminate the menace of terrorism. After the 18th amendment in the constitution, the prime minister pointed out that the provincial governments had a big role in this regard as they now receive all the required resources in this regard. We need harmony among all the stakeholders including the political and religious leaderships to put the country on the path of peace and prosperity, the prime minister added. For the war against terrorism, he said, "the political and religious leadership should be clear in their mind that this was our war to safeguard the future of our generations". "Irrespective of all differences, we should take this responsibility and support our armed forces in this regard," he said adding "putting the responsibility upon solely a single institution will be a blatant mistake". Besides, he stressed that active diplomacy would also be required to take action against the terrorist elements outside Pakistan. The prime minister also emphasised the need for legislative action to empower law enforcement agencies, identifying the existing legal gaps as a major obstacle to effective counter-terrorism operations. He also assured the Pakistan Army and the Ministry of Interior to provide all possible resources and tools to support the war against terrorism. PM Shehbaz dismissed the ongoing campaign against Pak-China relations as a baseless and malicious social media-driven dirty campaign designed to destabilise the country. He said the Chinese leadership had countered this campaign through their statements which showed how they gave importance to their relationship with Pakistan.



KARACHI: Tourists are being stopped by police at the Hawks Bay beach due to flooding in the sea

Govt. to make utmost efforts to increase provincial....

Continued from page 1 tal volume is Rs. 955 billion. He mentioned that Rs. 125 billion have been allocated for the ongoing development schemes in next year's budget so as to execute the good ones. He also said that around 64 percent of the development programme has been allocated for the ongoing development projects. APP adds: Balochistan Minister for Finance Mir Shoaib Noshervani on Saturday said that the provincial government has presented a balanced budget, accommodated all sectors and initiated flagship projects to facilitate the poor masses of the province. Addressing a post-budget press conference here along with Minister for Planning and Development Mir Zahore Buledi, Spokesperson Balochistan Shahid Rind, he said that the government strived hard to satisfy the public and gave top priorities to health, education, climate change, law and order. Shoaib Noshervani said that the government has continued around 1500 pending schemes of public interest and the tendering process would kick off from the first week of the new financial year. He said with efforts of the Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti, the federal government has included 16 schemes of Balochistan in the federal public sector development program 2024-25. He said that a huge part of provincial income consists of federal transfers and provincial receipts are the main part of their economic resources which include distributable pool and direct transfer as formula decided under NFC. He said the total budget for the fiscal year is Rs 955.6 billion, in which the total share of federal transfer is Rs 726.6 billion and the total share of provincial revenues is Rs124.4 billion. The contribution of foreign project assistance is Rs 17.9 billion. The minister said that the total expenditure estimated for the next financial year 2024-25 is Rs 930.2 billion, in which the total volume of current expenditure is Rs 564.8 billion and the capital expenditure is estimated at Rs 22.1 billion, while the total volume of the development budget is Rs 321 billion, in which the total of provincial PSDP is Rs 219.5 billion. He said apart from this, 28.2 billion rupees are expected in the form of Foreign Project Assistance (FPA) in the next financial year, while the share of Federal Development Projects (Outside PSDP) is 73.2 billion rupees. The minister said that when the incumbent provincial government in view of economic challenges and financial difficulties, had reviewed the provincial development programme during the current fiscal year, which included 9788 schemes with a total proposed cost of Rs 229.3 billion, out of which 5068 new schemes and 4720 ongoing schemes were included. He said that for the first time in the history of the province, their government has taken important steps through reforms in which a significant amount of funds has been allocated for the implementation of public services through the provincial non-development budget. He said that due to financial pressure, the cost of the proposed provincial development projects has been reduced to Rs 125.9 billion. However, he said that the schemes which were important from the point of view of public services and public service delivery, continued to be implemented and 2172 important schemes have been completed during the current fiscal year 2023-24. In the next fiscal year 2024-25, the total size of the provincial PSDP will be Rs 219.5 billion, in which the number of ongoing schemes is 3976 and the number of new development schemes is 2704, he added. Provincial Minister Mir Zahore Buledi said that all sectors have been covered and equal projects have been included in the budget 2024-25 in view of the public demands. He said the provincial government has presented Rs25 billion surplus budget prepared a comprehensive, balanced public sector development program and minimized the expenditures. He said in the PSDP 2024-25, 64 per cent amount has been allocated for on-going schemes and the remaining 36 percent allocation has been specified for new projects. He said the government has increased the allocation of the Balochistan Educational Endowment Fund (BEEF) by Rs 2 billion and provided scholarships to 75000 students so far and Rs 2 billion has been allocated for out-of-school children. Buledi said that the government has allocated Rs 2.3 billion for the second phase of the green tractors scheme and Rs 10 billion for the green Balochistan initiative. Secretary Finance Babar Khan said that there are 319000 employees in Balochistan and the increase of salaries in budget 2024-25 would impact the provincial budget from Rs 27 billion to Rs 29 billion annually. He said the government has created around 3000 new posts to minimize the financial impact.



RAWALPINDI: Citizens walking dangerously on the railway track which may cause an accident

Sanaulah, AJK PM discuss region's budget, development

ISLAMABAD (APP): Adviser to the Prime Minister on Political and Public Affairs Rana Sanaulah and Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Chaudhry Anwarul-Haq on Saturday discussed the upcoming budget and development projects in the region.

Anwar-ul-Haq expressed his gratitude to the government of Pakistan for its unwavering support, emphasising the administration's commitment to ensuring good governance and the welfare of the people, said a press release.

However, he highlighted the need for an increase in the budget grant, which has remained stagnant for the past five years. The prime minister stressed that a boost in funding is essential to meet the targets of annual development projects, particularly in light of the current political and security landscape.

Sanaulah, who holds the portfolio of Inter Provincial Coordination (IPC), assured that the proposal to increase the budget grant will be given due consideration.

He reaffirmed the government's dedication to utilising available resources

to drive economic development and social prosperity in Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

He also pledged to provide necessary support to alleviate the difficulties faced by the people of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, underscoring the federal government's unwavering commitment to the region's well-being.

AJK PM Chaudhry Anwar Ul Haq while thanking government of Pakistan for its persistent support said basic aim of the government is to ensure good governance and welfare of the people.

He held no increase has been made in budget grant during the last five years. Budget grant will be increased for Azad Kashmir keeping in view the prevailing political and security situation.

Rana Sana Ullah said proposal for increase in budget grant will be considered positively. All the available sources will be utilized for socio economic development of Azad Kashmir. Necessary cooperation will be extended for providing relief to people of Azad Kashmir. Federal government will continue to extend unconditional support to AJK.



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar Chairs the Second meeting of the Committee on Medical Education at Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Deputy PM chairs second meeting on medical education

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Prime Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Saturday chaired the second meeting on 'Medical Education', emphasising the government's dedication to enhancing healthcare through comprehensive improvements in medical training and education and coming up with concrete recommendations.

The meeting was attended by the National Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Health, Minister for Law and Justice, MNA Dr Nafeesa Shah, Secretary of Health, President PM&DC, Chairman Higher Education Commission,

President CPSP, Additional Foreign Secretary (ME & SIFC) and heads of prominent public and private medical institutions and eminent experts from the medical community.

In his opening address, the deputy prime minister highlighted the essential role of robust medical education in tackling the nation's healthcare challenges. He stated, "Elevating our medical education standards is crucial for the health and well-being of our citizens. Our institutions must be empowered to provide top-tier education and training to our future medical professionals."

He emphasised the importance of nurturing a conducive environment for medical students to excel and contribute meaningfully to the healthcare sector. "Our government is committed to support the next generation of healthcare professionals and ensuring that they receive the best possible education and training," stated the deputy prime minister.

The main agenda aimed to review the progress made since the initial meeting and discuss the recommendations of the sub-committee.

Chair, Sub-committee, Dr Malik Mukhtar Ahmad Bharath, Coordinator to the

Prime Minister on Health presented the recommendation of the sub-committee. The discussion focused on improving the quality of medical education in Pakistan, including but not limited to, bringing education at par with international best practices, measures to streamline admission in foreign medical colleges, improving coordination between public and private sector and regulatory bodies to ensure uniform quality of education.

The next meeting will be held on 29th June after which the report will be submitted to the prime minister.

EU urged to play role in resolving Kashmir dispute

ISLAMABAD (INP): Chairman of Kashmir Council Europe, Ali Raza Syed, highlighted the European Union's influence and commitment to peaceful solutions, emphasizing the significant role the powerful bloc can play in resolving the Kashmir dispute peacefully. Ali Raza Syed was speaking at a reception held in his honor at a hotel in Islamabad. The event was hosted by senior journalist and intellectual Mohsin Raza Khan, with journalist Ali Farqan serving as the moderator. Prominent attendees included Afzal Butt, President of Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists, Prof. Mohammad Saeed, Prof. Tahir Naem Malik, and

various journalists from television channels and newspapers. Ali Raza Syed stated that they made significant efforts to raise awareness about the Kashmir issue, particularly the human rights abuses faced by the oppressed Kashmiris, during the recent European Parliament election campaign. He mentioned meeting leaders of political parties, key European figures, and active election candidates to inform them about the background and current situation in occupied Jammu and Kashmir. He asserted that India cannot suppress the Kashmiris' freedom movement through brute force and expressed confidence that the struggle will eventually succeed.

IGP chairs "Online Complaint Management System" meeting

ISLAMABAD: According to details, Inspector General of Police Islamabad

manage of OCMS so far. They discussed issues related to the registration of various types of com-



(IGP) Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi chaired a meeting regarding the "Online Complaint Management System," a public relations officer said.

He said that the meeting was attended by AIG Investigation and Complaints Syed Inayat Ali Shah, along with other police officers.

During the meeting, AIG Investigation and Complaints briefed IGP Islamabad on the perfor-

mance of OCMS so far. They discussed issues related to the registration of various types of com-

plaints, their follow-up, and facilitating access. IGP Islamabad issued instructions to revamp the complaint management system and provide maximum facilities to the citizens more effectively.

He emphasized that registering citizens' complaints should be made easier and their timely resolution should be ensured. Solving the problems of citizens is the top priority of Islamabad Police, he added.

49th Int'l Nathiagali Summer College to be inaugurated on Monday

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) has announced that 49th International Nathiagali Summer College (INSC) on Physics and Contemporary Needs will be inaugurated on Monday, 24 June here in Islamabad.

According to the Commission, Federal Minister Prof. Ahsan Iqbal is expected to be the chief guest at the inaugural session.

This year after the inauguration of INSC, special session on Pak-CERN collaboration will be held to celebrate 70 years of establishment of the European Organization for Nuclear Research, CERN. Pakistan is an associate member of CERN and has good collaboration with CERN.

The PAEC has been organizing the College every year since 1976. The idea of holding the College came from the distinguished Nobel Laureate, Professor

Dr. Abdus Salam who was the founding Director of the College in 1976. He always emphasized the vital need of communication, as well as for transferring and sharing scientific knowledge among the scientific community. The INSC helps scientists share knowledge and learn from each other's experiences, an opportunity unique in the third world.

Over the years, more than 1,000 eminent scientists and speakers including eight Nobel Laureates from advanced countries have delivered lectures at INSC and shared their knowledge with more than thousand foreign scientists from over 75 developing countries besides over eleven thousand scientists from Pakistani R&D institutes and universities. The scientific activities of INSC aim at the broad coverage of topics at the frontiers of knowledge in Physics and allied sciences.

DIG visits Police Khidmat Markaz; reviews security measures, public facilities

ISLAMABAD: According to the details, the DIG

services offered to citizens and emphasized the Khidmat Markaz commit-



Islamabad Syed Ali Raza, visits Police Khidmat Markaz F-6. SSP Traffic Muhammad Sarfarz Virk was also present on the occasion, a public relations officer said.

During the visit, he reviewed security measures, scrutinized records, and assessed the welfare and public facilities for police officers and the general public.

He said that, during the visit, the DIG Islamabad evaluated the

ment to providing every possible facility to the public. He highlighted the deployment of trained officers within Police Khidmat Markaz, dedicated not only to serving Pakistani citizens but also delivering exceptional services to foreign nationals. He issued directives to senior officers to ensure immediate solutions and the provision of all feasible amenities for their benefit.



ISLAMABAD: The Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Chaudhry Anwarul Haq calls on the Federal Minister for Inter Provincial Coordination, Rana Sanaulah.

Court confirms bail of PTI leader Asad in four cases

ISLAMABAD (Online): Sessions Court Islamabad has confirmed bail of PTI leader Asad Qaisar in four cases.

Bail before arrest pleas of former speaker National Assembly (NA) and PTI leader Asad Qaisar in four cases related to Azadi March came up for hearing before judge Muhammad Azam Khan of district and sessions court Islamabad.

Police filed the record of all cases in the court during the hearing of bail pleas. Counsel for Asad Qaisar presented decisions related to acquittal of other accused persons in the court.

Judge Azam Khan inquired from prosecutor does he want to say something.

Prosecutor replied "No". All the clauses which

have been imposed are bailable.

Upon it the court confirmed the bail of Asad Qaisar in four cases.

It is pertinent to mention here that two cases have been registered in police station Golra, one each in police stations Kohsar and Industrial area against Asad Qaisar.

Talking to media men Asad Qaisar said government is enacting topi drama. It has failed in controlling even its own allies. It does not seem this government will run for long time. Sheer injustice has been done by slapping taxes in budget. MNAs from PML-N and PPP don't want to speak on budget.

He held injustice was done with KP by observing loadshedding and imposing taxes therein.



ISLAMABAD: Motorcyclist passing through a huge portrayal at Rawal Chowk in the Federal Capital.

Devcom-Pakistan launches 'Masoor Rahi Cubism Award' in memory of legendary artist

ISLAMABAD (APP): A celebrated Cubist artist from Pakistan Masoor Rahi whose recent passing left an indelible mark on the global art landscape, was honoured by his disciples of the Generation Rahi at a memorial event held here on Saturday.

To commemorate his legacy and contributions to the world of art, Devcom-Pakistan announced the launch of the Masoor Rahi Cubism Award on the occasion, said a press release.

An open competition would be announced soon in collaboration with the Rahi General and other art galleries and organizations.

Speaking at the reference in memory of Masoor Rahi, Devcom-Pakistan Executive Director Munir Ahmed said, Rahi was the only Pakistani artist widely recognized for his significant work in Cubism, a

genre that he not only mastered but also imparted to countless aspiring artists who became known collectively as the Generation Rahi.

His influence extended far beyond Pakistan, influencing the international art community with his unique artistic vision and technique, he said.

The memorial event, attended by prominent figures from the art world, served as a tribute to Rahi's life and career, highlighting his impact on contemporary art practices.

Devcom-Pakistan, took the opportunity to announce the establishment of the Masoor Rahi Cubism Award. This award aims to recognize and encourage excellence in Cubism in Pakistan, celebrating artists who demonstrate innovation, creativity, and a commitment to pushing

Students of GIFT witness NA proceedings

ISLAMABAD (APP): A group of students and faculty members from Gujranwala Institute of Future Technology (GIFT) witnessed the proceedings of the National Assembly on Saturday.

The Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly, Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah, announced their presence in the guests' gallery, and members of the house welcomed them by applauding and thumping their desks.

One killed, another injured in car accident

ISLAMABAD (APP): A Women was killed while her husband was seriously injured after being hit by a speeding car in Defense Phase 6, Lahore on Saturday. According to a private news channel, the accident took place during a race between two cars.

The rescue team reached the accident site as soon as the incident was reported and shifted the injured husband and wife to the hospital in critical condition. According to General Hospital sources, the injured woman, 45 year old Ifrat, died during treatment, while Imran was in critical condition.

CDA Chairman arranges reception to acknowledge sanitary workers' best performances on Eid-ul-Azha

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman CDA and Chief Commissioner Islamabad Mohammad Ali Randhawa on Saturday arranged a reception in honor of sanitary workers who served on Eid-ul-Azha on the instructions of Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi.

He announced to pay one month basic salary as bonus to CDA workers who performed best sanitation duty during Eid holidays in Islamabad.

On the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha, the sanitary workers who made the Zero Waste City operation a success deserve to be congratulated and encouraged, said Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi in his message.

He said that Islamabad got the honor of being the

cleanest city due to the excellent communication and mutual cooperation of all the departments and the citizens including the employees and officers serving the city will be encouraged at all levels. Chairman CDA Mohammad Ali Randhawa, IG Islamabad Police, Deputy Commissioner Islamabad and other officers attended the reception, a large number of sanitary workers served on Eid-ul-Azha also attended the reception.

CDA sanitary workers are grateful to the Federal Home Minister for encouraging them by sitting with their officers for the first time, the workers expressed their joy.

Addressing the reception, Muhammad Ali Randhawa said that all the



ISLAMABAD: After spending Eid Holidays citizens of twin cities reaching back to homes.

Use of objectionable language Speaker NA suspends membership of Masti for current session

ISLAMABAD (INP): Speaker National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq suspended the membership of Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) MNA Muhammad Sana Ullah Khan Masti Khel for the current session over use of highly objectionable indecent language during the budget speech.

According to details, the House on Saturday adopted a motion introduced by the Speaker regarding the suspension of the member. The motion said, "Muhammad Sana Ullah Khan Masti Khel MNA expressed objectionable and indecent remarks during the budget speech".

The ruling said "Muhammad Sana Ullah Khan Masti Khel in his budget speech expressed

highly objectionable and indecent remarks, thereby eroding and lowering the sanctity of the house in violation of rule of 30 of the Rules Procedure and Conduct of Business in the National Assembly, 2007.

The member shall now forthwith withdraw from the precincts of the Assembly under rule 21 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of the Business in the National Assembly, 2007.

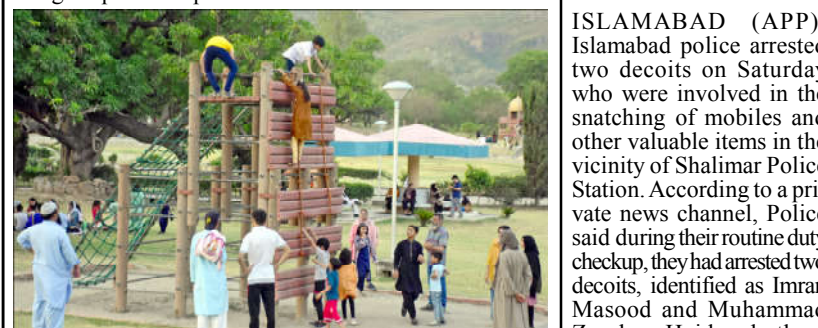
Earlier, Speaker of the National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said that he has been a part of the House since 2002, but he has never heard such words on the mike. "I do not have the words to express or condemn the incident," he added.

2 mobile phone snatchers held with 13 cell phones, arms

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Islamabad Police on Saturday arrested two culprits involved in snatching mobile phones, other valuables, recovered snatched cell phones and arms from their possession. According to details, the police during routine checking in jurisdiction of Shalimar police station arrested two accused including Imran Masood and Zeeshan Haider. The detainees were involved in snatching cell phones, valuables and other crimes. The police recovered 13 snatched precious cell phones, arms and a motorcycle used in crimes from possession of the nabbed culprits.

Islamabad Police arrest decoits

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad police arrested two decoits on Saturday who were involved in the snatching of mobiles and other valuable items in the vicinity of Shalimar Police Station. According to a private news channel, Police said during their routine duty checkup, they had arrested two decoits, identified as Imran Masood and Muhammad Zeeshan Haider, both of whom were involved in several crimes and robberies.



ISLAMABAD: Children enjoying at Japanese Park in the Federal Capital.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Sunday June 23, 2024

Another lynching

The lynch mob has claimed another victim. This time the brutal incident occurred in Swat's Madyan area on Thursday when a man accused of desecration was burnt alive. Even the fact that the victim was in police custody did not deter the mob from delivering 'justice' themselves.

As per reports, the unfortunate individual was visiting the area from Punjab, and was accused of committing an act of desecration. While police had hauled him away, announcements were allegedly made from local mosques urging people to storm the police station where he was being held. The ensuing events are the stuff of pure horror, as the mob torched the police station, burning alive the victim in the process upon the law enforcers' refusal to hand him over.

This sort of ghastly behaviour has become the norm in Pakistan, as such incidents are occurring with frightening frequency. In most cases, individuals are lynched over accusations of blasphemy, while in others, suspected criminals are beaten to death or shot by mobs. Both varieties of 'mob justice' reflect the receding writ of the state.

With regard to the lynching of suspected criminals — these cases are particularly on the rise in Karachi — people take it upon themselves to deliver 'justice' because law enforcers have failed to curb street crime. But in several such instances, innocent people have been killed, as victims have falsely been dubbed criminals to settle scores. The use of dubious blasphemy allegations is a more complex phenomenon, where illiteracy, extremism and the weakness of the state have created an explosive situation.

The hapless individual accused of desecration in Swat was not the first to die a painful death because of unproved allegations. Before him there was Priyantha Kumara, Mashal Khan and many others. More recently, a Christian man accused of blasphemy in Sargodha last month and attacked by a mob succumbed to his wounds. Meanwhile, last year rioters ransacked and desecrated several churches in Jaranwala on communal grounds, again based on rumours of blasphemy.

While immediate measures need to be taken in the form of prosecuting those involved in murdering and attacking individuals based on flimsy allegations, the bad news is that a wider, society-wide counter-extremism project may take years, if not decades, to succeed. The rot is deep and there are no quick fixes.

Some steps seem obvious, such as reining in the powerful hatemongers that have been unleashed upon society. This is the state's primary challenge, should it have any intentions of taking it up. Other measures can include lessons on co-existence and tolerance in schools and seminaries, along with disseminating similar messages from the pulpit.

The chilling alternative to not doing anything — which appears to be the state's preferred option — is the advent of mob rule.

Sajjad Ahmad

The number of tourists has been surging globally. Although there was a pause during the Covid-19 period, the UN Tourism Data Dashboard has shown an exponential rise in global tourism in recent years.

The tourism industry helps both the government and the local population earn decent revenues. However, something out of the ordinary happened this year. The residents of popular destinations in Spain, Italy and Mexico started protesting the increasing numbers of tourists in their areas. The unsustainable influx of tourists had started causing problems.

The residents of Canary Islands, Spain, for instance, protested the construction of two new hotels — said to have violated environmental regulations. Protesters felt that such construction to accommodate a growing number of visitors was increasing their own housing costs. Slogans and graffiti reflected their emotions: 'Tourists go home' and 'my misery, your paradise'.

Similarly, hordes of tourists in the narrow streets of Venice are affecting the lives of the residents during peak season.

The residents of Oaxaca, Mexico, protested against what they call 'Disneylandisation' and criticised the gentrification of their land due to overtourism. Hundreds of protesters in Oaxaca took to the streets against the crisis engendered by the soaring cost of living and displacement, and lack of public resources that overtourism has brought with it. Various states are trying to implement different methods to curb crowds of tourists. The Greek authorities introduced a daily cap of 20,000 tourists in Athens. Italy, as a trial, introduced a five-euro fee for day trips to Venice. Japan had to deter selfie takers at a particular spot by erecting a fence to block a view of Mount Fuji. Austria, also concerned about overtourism, did the same in the town Hallstatt to block lake views. Amsterdam's city council voted to ban cruise ships from docking in the city centre to reduce crowds and environmental damage.

In Pakistan, overtourism has also become a problem. However, we still seem oblivious to the disastrous impact of overtourism in ecologically fragile areas. Extotifying mountainous areas, particularly Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), has intensified in recent years. While there is no harm in promoting the scenic valleys and tourists' spots of the area, the problem lies in the lack of a proper policy and ignorance about the perils of overtourism. Furthermore, the infrastructure required for tourism is substandard. Many of these scenic areas are without electricity for most hours in the day. Even potable water is getting scarce. Has any government sincerely worked for the betterment of these areas before promoting tourism?

Instead of making environment-friendly and sustainable infrastructure, our tourism 'policy' consists of the construction of asphalted roads and hotels, without following regulations, which has a disastrous impact on the environment. As a result, thousands of people flock to the mountains every year. In fact, in areas such as GB,

the number of annual tourists is in the millions now. Though it provides income to a local population struggling to make ends meet, overtourism has been catastrophic for the ecosystem. These resource-starved areas cannot sustain millions of visitors every year.

Overtourism comes at a hefty price. Unfortunately, the already poor local communities are paying that price. The fragile mountainous areas are facing rising temperatures, reduced snowfall, melting glaciers, flash floods, a change in crop patterns, water, etc. The carbon footprint of millions of visitors and thousands of vehicles is massive. Luxury hotels built without any environmental consideration are mushrooming. Sewage and garbage disposal systems are putting enormous pressure on, or depleting, natural resources and destroying scenic views. These hotels are being constructed in areas where there are already power and water shortages. In Hunza, resentment in the local population against the massive concrete infrastructures is brewing.

While this mass tour-

ism in Pakistan can provide monetary benefits in the short term, in the long run, it is proving to be devastating for natural resources and the ecosystem. Overtourism also endangers human lives. With the increasing traffic and lack of road safety and traffic regulations, accidents are happening more frequently particularly on the Karakoram Highway. And the Murree tragedy of 2022 cannot be forgotten. It raised serious questions about Pakistan's state of disaster preparedness in tourist areas. Thousands of vehicles were stuck due to the snowfall and precious lives were lost as vehicles were trapped for many hours. Summer has arrived, and with it this year's tourist season. Do we have any management plans? Are there awareness centres for tourists? Have efficient emergency response teams been equipped with the necessary tools to ensure all goes well?

With many people associated with the tourism industry, which is their bread and butter, curtailing the number of tourists is not the point. The alternative is to promote sustainable tourism, discourage

cars and jeeps, ensure that the hotel industry follows regulations, raise awareness about ecotourism, and implement viable environment-friendly policies. In fact, the best solution is to shift to ecotourism from overtourism. Ecotourism means responsible travel, environmental conservation, and the enhancement of biocultural diversity.

This can also provide economic benefits to local communities through capacity building, and sustain their well-being. Some initiatives have already been taken by these communities, but they are limited. It should be the responsibility of the state to empower local governments and communities and introduce ecotourism practices. The greed to maximise profits must end. It is time to include local stakeholders in policymaking, build their capacity and invest in energy-efficient and environment-friendly infrastructure. It is true that such a change will not come overnight but the authorities concerned need to work towards ecotourism sincerely and efficiently before we lose whatever we are left with. — Courtesy Dawn

Rearranging the deck chairs

Sakib Sherani

Pakistan's public finances are in a Ponzi game, and have been so for several years. No metric captures this fact more starkly than interest payments on public debt as a percentage of net federal revenue. For FY24, this figure provisionally stood at 122 per cent — ie the federal government used up all its retained revenue after transfer to the provinces, and still had to borrow an additional amount to make interest payments.

The fiscal pressure has been mounting over many years without serious attention or corrective action. Ten years ago, for fiscal year 2014-15, interest payments on public debt were 62pc of net federal revenue, an elevated but still barely manageable figure. But it was increasingly clear that the pressure was only set to increase further. With the trajectory of capacity payments to IPPs and public sector pension liabilities rising inexorably well into the future, in addition to mounting losses of state-owned enterprises, it was transparent that the fiscal framework was com-

pletely unsustainable without major surgery. Yet, despite the warning signs, successive governments have dilly-dallied on structural reform and continued to borrow to finance their un-checked spending spree. Key political constituencies such as traders continue to remain un-touched, while the federal government's bloated employee-related expenses continue to soar.

The federal government's employee-related expenses (salaries, allowances and pensions) have increased from Rs752 billion to Rs2.4 trillion over the past 10 years. Including the expenditure incurred on this head by provincial governments, and excluding state-owned enterprises, government employee-related expenses have ballooned over this period to 4.3pc of GDP. With a compound annual growth rate of 13.7pc, this pension liability is set to double in 5.3 years.

On top of this, the two successive PDM governments since 2022 have loaded their budgets with political bribes via freebies for parliamentarians, the military, members of the judiciary, the bureaucracy

and even 'working journalists'. The unconscionable budgeting has been extended to pork-barrel projects in the PSDP and provincial ADPs. Similarly, the allocation for 'loans to government servants has doubled to Rs40bn for FY25.

Provincial budgeting, especially in the case of Punjab, is even more unconscionable where the budget records 70 projects totalling Rs968bn under the heading of 'Chief Minister's Initiatives'. The finance minister's pre-budget talk about sacrificing 'holy cows' appears to have been empty rhetoric.

The overall macro context makes clear Pakistan's fiscal challenges well into the medium term, and the contours of the required policy response. And against the gargantuan task at hand, this government's underwhelming and anaemic response via the federal budget for FY25 can be evaluated.

To restore a semblance of fiscal order, Pakistan needs to make a fiscal adjustment of around 4 to 5pc of GDP. This is not just to change the direction of the public debt dynamic, but to cater for the ballooning pen-

sion liability and making minimal allocations for meeting the SDGs. Even with this substantial adjustment, however, the country will not be building buffers against the effects of climate change or fully catering to the needs of a rapidly growing, and urbanising, population.

As important as the quantum of the fiscal adjustment is the question of how it is achieved. That is, the 'quality' of adjustment: which new non-paying or undertaxed sectors are brought into the tax net, how the fiscal effort of the provinces is improved, and to what extent have non-productive expenditures and political 'pork-barrel' projects been slashed. In short, who bears the burden of adjustment.

On each of these tests, the federal budget falls woefully short. While it aims for an overall fiscal adjustment of around 1.5pc of GDP, by far the largest in Pakistan's history, it does so on heroic assumptions, especially on the revenue side. FBR tax collection is projected to rise 32pc on the back of the increase in government employee-related expenses, stuffing of pork-barrel projects in the PSDP, de-

crease in FBR tax collection of 2.5 times over projected nominal GDP growth, against an increase of 1.2 times recorded in FY24.

New tax measures equalling 1.8pc of GDP, mostly coming from existing taxpayers, are expected to propel the targeted increase in tax revenue. Similarly, an abnormal increase in non-tax revenue and an outsized provincial surplus provides a prop for the fiscal façade. One 'windfall' the federal budget is very likely to reap is on debt servicing costs. With inflation likely to resume its sharp fall after a few months of reversing course due to the inflationary impact of the budgetary measures, the government's interest payments could very likely be significantly lower than budgeted (assuming the volume of borrowing remains constant).

Nonetheless, it is on the expenditure side that the federal budget's absence of a reform vision and intent is woefully apparent. Non-interest federal expenditure is budgeted to rise 32pc on the back of the increase in government employee-related expenses, stuffing of pork-barrel projects in the PSDP, de-

fence and security-related spending, and a substantial allocation for provincial expenditures in the federal budget.

A key element of responsible budgeting is to find offsets for politically motivated initiatives (assuming the finance minister does not have the standing to say no, which sadly appears to be the case). However, this does not appear to have been practised in allowing political constituencies such as traders to remain outside the tax net, or budgeting for political patronage projects and initiatives. In sum, the federal budget for 2024-25 is a collection of misplaced priorities, a mostly missing reform impulse and overambitious targets. But these are the least of its shortcomings when compared to its biggest fatal flaw — the lack of legitimacy. A government presenting a fiscal austerity programme loaded with tax increases, administered price adjustments, and subsidy withdrawals needs to have both political legitimacy as well as credibility. With neither, this budget is destined to be as lame-duck as the government and the finance minister that presented it.

The missing link

Naseer Memon

Communities and the nearest administrative tier are considered the linchpin of any disaster management system. Pakistan's National Disaster Management (NDM) Act, 2010, focuses on the disaster management architecture and delineates the functions and powers of disaster management authorities at the national, provincial and district level. National and provincial authorities have been assigned a macro- and meso-level role, such as policy formulation, coordination, communication, providing technical assistance, and monitoring. The district disaster management authorities (DDMAs) have a pivotal role in grassroots operations.

If disaster strikes, the community is the first victim as well as the first saviour. The next line of defence is the local administration, ie, the DDMA under the law. Under the NDM Act, the DDMA's structure assigns a leadership role to the local council head at the district level. Authority members include the deputy commissioner, district police officer and district officers of health and other departments. In contrast to 2022, when local governments were not in place during the floods, elected local bodies now are functional. It is time that district chairpersons took the lead in developing local-level disaster response plans by involving tehsils and union councils. Crucial functions of the district authority include developing, reviewing and updating district disaster management plans, developing and updating risk maps, coordinating efforts for disaster prevention, and mitigation measures.

The 2010 and 2022 floods show that func-

tional DDMAs are the missing link in the disaster response system. The floods wreaked havoc in all the provinces, especially in the south. Unprepared communities endured nature's wrath. No one except a few NGOs extended some training and aid to a few communities. During the floods, the district administration was unprepared. The NDM and PDMA have a semblance of institutional infrastructure, but for all practical purposes, DDMAs do not exist. When disaster strikes, the deputy commissioner's office acts as the DDMA, in addition to carrying out its routine duties. There is no dedicated secretariat or team with disaster management skills. Local-level coordination starts just ahead of the flood months or after the disaster. DDMAs scramble to mobilise rescue and relief resources that often end up in the warehouses of local landlords. No wonder, rescue and relief operations during the floods were haphazard. In short, the DDMA, though the cornerstone of local response, lacks the commensurate operational capacity and resources.

Ironically, a debilitated authority is tasked with building the capacity of other local actors. The district authority's functions include organising specialised disaster management training programmes for officers, employees, and volunteer rescue workers in the district. It is also responsible for facilitating community training and awareness programmes, and setting up a mechanism for early warning and the dissemination of accurate information to the relevant authorities and the public. These functions require a round-the-year plan with dedicated financial, technical and human resources. Sadly, no dis-

trict authority carries out these functions. Sensing this lack of capacity, NDMA's national monsoon contingency plan this year envisages the need to "enhance the capacity of DDMAs by providing dedicated human resources and sufficient funding [and] promote training and skills development for disaster management personnel at the district level".

District-level disaster management plans require serious attention. Punjab has developed annual plans for various districts. However, the latest one is from 2022. These important plans should be revised every year. Sindh has developed Multi-Hazard Vulnerability Risk Assessment-based disaster management plans for all districts for 2023-32. But, with the rapidly changing climate, 10-yearly plans will become obsolete soon. These plans require critical review and revision. Jamshoro's district plan, for instance, does not factor in the ground realities.

Manchar Lake was a major source of disaster in 2022 but the plan makes no reference to the risk. The district is exposed to floods from the Indus as well as hill torrents from Kirthar. These sources of disaster, preventive measures and the vulnerability of communities, including Manchar fishermen, and risks to their livelihoods are absent in the plan. DDMAs should review and update these plans using the 2022 flood disaster as a benchmark.

With their present capacity, DDMAs cannot manage complex disasters like 2022. There is an urgent need to enhance their capacity and thus enable them to tackle disasters before they unleash havoc. — Courtesy Dawn

Physician, heal thyself

Naem Sadiq

This article is not intended to be sarcastic, impolite, cheeky, critical, disrespectful, or defamatory. It is, in fact, intended to be just the opposite. Although focused on analysing the structure and statistics of one of the most important and prestigious organisations of Pakistan — the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) — this case study is just as valid for any other government department. The study explains how organisations can get bogged down under their own weight and what may be done to turn them around.

According to the data provided under the right to information law, FBR has generously stockpiled 18,332 employees on its payroll — 15,132 of them in Grade 1 to 16 and 3,200 in Grade 17 to 22. While the world pushes for flat hierarchies, FBR moves in the opposite direction — dividing and subdividing employees into 22 layers and 120 unique and questionable job designations.

Even a basic numerical analysis of the 18,332 FBR employees begins to unveil a monumental warehouse of manpower. FBR on its payroll, has 38 persons deployed as 'record sorters', 63 as 'qasid', 273 as 'bailiffs', 517 as 'notice servers', 546 as 'daftari' and 1,592 as 'naib qasids'. Thus FBR employs 2,839 individuals to perform almost identical tasks under different designations created merely to justify more hands. Consider yet another example. On FBR's payroll are 30 'private secretaries', 42 'secretaries', 134 'assistant private secretaries', 135 'assistants', 309 'superintendents', 356 'data entry operators', 434 'steno typists', 655 'supervisors', and 1,430

lower division and 1,751 upper division clerks. Having 5,276 employees performing indistinguishable tasks can give rise to confusion, errors, delays, red tape, and speed money within an organisation.

While FBR ought to review its employment of 177 'chowkidars', 179 'havalidars', 194 'armed guards', and 2,406 'sepoys', it must also question as to how it ended up with three 'camel men', 11 'lady searchers', 13 'water carriers', 18 'telephone operators', 52 'farash', 172 'malis' and 293 sanitary workers. If all this gives you a creepy feeling of disproportionality — in numbers, layers and designations — you have reached the correct diagnosis. Excess, irrelevance and redundancy would cause any organisation to become sluggish and ineffective. Such massive surplus baggage is sufficient to sink any Titanic even when there's no iceberg in sight.

Must we not ask as to which other organisation in the world employs 15,000 workers for tasks such as carrying files, cleaning tables, typing letters, making tea, holding visitors at bay, delivering messages, entering data, sending letters, reminding forgetful bosses, and losing, finding, misplacing or retrieving files and records? The world over, these tasks are routinely performed by managers themselves. Our government departments are loaded with conveniences that only add to red tape, delays, confusion, corruption, and atrophy. The luxury of hundreds of clerks and gofers at your beck and call is a colonial legacy discontinued by sane and progressive nations.

The following real-life example may help to explain how bureaucracy

and overcrowding can create organisational dysfunctionality. A three-room government organisation employs a sweeper, an ayah and a peon for the upkeep of its 180 square yard premises. The sweeper insists that his job is solely to clean the floors of one half, while the ayah must do the same for the other. When asked why the walls and cupboards were covered in grime, the sweeper maintained that his job was only to clean floors and not the walls or furniture. He claimed it was the peon's responsibility to clean the furniture. However, the peon said that his only job was to dust 'sahib's' table and serve tea. As a result, the government office remained filthy while the sweeper watched movies, the ayah slept, and the peon relaxed in the garden.

FBR spends Rs25 billion only on the salaries, allowances and perks of its 18,332 employees every year. Add to this the cost of electricity, buildings, fuel, vehicles, equipment, and numerous operating expenses, and the total may well exceed Rs50bn per year. It operates with an armada of 1,244 government vehicles and an army of 975 drivers — entirely at the taxpayers' expense. Its output could best be measured by the fact that only 1.8 per cent of people file tax returns and only 1pc pay any tax. It is time for FBR and for every government department to undertake massive organisational liposuction, shed two-thirds of the fat, eliminate all redundant designations, adopt technology and compel the managers to exercise their own limbs and neurons. What is holding Pakistan back is not being a physician who is unwilling to heal himself. — Courtesy Dawn

CM reviews performance of govt machinery, administrative issues

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif reviewed the overall performance of the government machinery on Eid-ul-Azha, besides other administrative issues in the province.

Chairing a meeting here on Saturday, she said: "I am happy with the performance of my entire team, and congratulate them from the core of my heart. The journey of serving people should continue with the same spirit." The CM appreciated commissioners, deputy commissioners, assistant commissioners and their teams over excellent performance on Eid, and directed them to dedicate one day in a week to solve public problems. She directed them to regularly visit hospitals and schools to report on building, electrical wiring and other issues. She added that every district should have a permanent control room for monitoring services on special occasions like Eid.

Maryam Nawaz also appreciated the performance of Provincial

Information Minister Azma Zahid Bukhari, Provincial Local Government Minister Zeeshan Rafique, In-charge CM Complaint Cell Shoab Mirza and Special Assistant Zeeshan Malik. She noted the media, public representatives and people in general reacted positively to the Eid cleanup.

PML-N Quaid Mian Nawaz Sharif himself visited various areas to review arrangements, and appreciated the entire team for their hard work, she said and added that appreciation of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was not less than an honour for the Punjab government. She highlighted the standard of cleanliness established on Eid must be maintained in any case.

The CM appreciated the sanitation staff, saying that the sanitation arrangements in cities, towns and villages were not only satisfactory but excellent. She added after removing waste, the roads were washed and sprayed with water mixed with phenyl and rose water. She

acknowledged the management and officials performed their duties diligently and did full justice to their jobs.

Deputy Commissioners and their teams worked well to reduce bus fares, she said and noted that people should have got relief of reduction in fares when the fuel price has come down. She added advance arrangements should be made in view of Muharram, floods and possible rains.

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif directed to create a sustainable mechanism to provide basic food items to the common man at affordable prices. The interest and convenience of people comes first, she said.

Provincial Information Minister Azma Zahid Bukhari, Provincial Local Government Minister Zeeshan Rafique, Special Assistant Zeeshan Malik and MPA Sania Ashiq attended the meeting. Chief Secretary Zahid Akhtar Zaman, Additional IG, Secretaries.



KARACHI: Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui chairs a meeting to discuss establishing campuses of educational institutions in Sindh at HEC Regional office.

Karachi faces turmoil as residents hold protest against power outage, water shortages

KARACHI (INP): Public protests have intensified across Karachi due to severe electricity and water shortages, prompting authorities to issue warnings against continued demonstrations if the issues remain unresolved.

Residents from Gurmard, Liaquatabad, Abul Hassan Isfahani Road, Madras Chowk, Korangi Nasir Jump, Korangi Shah Faisal Bagh, Babar Kanta Korangi, Murtaza Chowrangi, and Korangi Godam Chowrangi took to the streets, disrupting traffic

and causing significant delays. The affected areas experienced severe traffic congestion, leaving many citizens in a distressing situation.

Protesters vocally condemned K-Electric's extensive load-shedding and frequent cable faults, demanding immediate government intervention to restore essential services. They criticized elected representatives for their silence and inaction, accusing them of neglecting public issues post-election. Traffic police were deployed to manage the chaos, diverting

vehicles to alternative routes. However, the heavy traffic volume resulted in long queues and significant jams. Police eventually negotiated with the demonstrators, who dispersed peacefully, allowing traffic to resume.

K-Electric officials refuted claims of unannounced load-shedding, asserting that power cuts are conducted according to the schedule available on their website. Despite these assurances, the public's frustration remains high, with calls for a swift resolution to the ongoing crises.

Efforts underway to counter climate change effects: Minister

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Forests, Fazal Hakim Yousafzai has said that provincial government was making incessant efforts to counter challenges of climate change.

Talking to a delegation here Saturday, he said that our planet was faced with many threats of climate change including constant rise in global temperature.

He said that the government was also

following a result oriented strategy to protect forests and environment.

He said that billion tree tsunami project was also an attempt of the KP government to minimize effects of climate change.

He said that preparations had been finalized to launch billion tree plus project and added that we should also join hands to protect our environment and counter climate change.

Heat wave takes life of policeman

HYDERABAD (APP): A police constable was died reportedly, due to the heat wave on the way from his residence to Bhitai Nagar police station to join his duty here on Saturday.

The police spokesman informed that Abdul Rasool Junejo fell unconscious on the road after which he was rushed to Liaquat University Hospital (LUH) where the doctors declared him dead.

According to him, Junejo was posted at a police check post near Kotri Barrage.

Punjab minister emphasises readiness of PDMA for monsoon challenges

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Health Minister and Chairman of the Cabinet Committee for Disaster Management Khawaja Salman Rafique has announced that the Punjab Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) is on high alert to tackle various challenges, expected during the upcoming monsoon season. It includes preparedness for floods, COVID-19, dengue, drought, smog, and heat waves, he added.

He made this statement while chairing a meeting on Saturday to review PDMA's Monsoon Plan 2024. He emphasised that 24-hour monitoring is being conducted through provincial and district control rooms, citing climate change as a key factor contributing to the anticipated heavy rainfall and potential flooding. The recent weather patterns were analysed during the meeting, leading to the implementation of timely protective measures for safeguarding human lives.

The minister urged all relevant departments, including divisional and district administrations, to maintain close coordination to handle emergency situations effectively. He

also stressed the importance of collaboration with other PDMA institutions and directed that river embankments be reinforced. Immediate approval of schemes to prevent river erosion was discussed. Additionally, mock exercises are underway across various districts to ensure readiness. The PDMA's Monsoon Contingency Plan 2024, presented by DG PDMA Irfan Ali Kathia, outlined key strategies to be submitted to the provincial cabinet for final approval. The Minister's visit to the PDMA control room was part of his efforts to oversee preparations.

The meeting saw participation from Relief Commissioner Punjab Nabil Javed, Secretary Emergency Services Punjab Dr. Rizwan Naseer, and other key officials. Representatives from various departments including Finance, Planning & Development, Communication & Works, Irrigation, Agriculture, Information, Police, Broadcasting, Rescue 1122, and the Meteorological Department were also present.



Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi meets former Governor Iqbal Zafar Jhagra at his residence, Jhagra House, Peshawar. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Azma Bukhari says: New records of services being made in Punjab

LAHORE (APP): Provincial Information and Culture Minister Azma Zahid Bukhari on Saturday said that under the leadership of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif, many new records are being established in the province.

She expressed these views in a joint press conference held at the DGPR with Transport Minister Bilal Akbar Khan.

The information minister said that the chief minister had not taken any leave till now and worked continuously even on Eid. During Eid, transport fares were reduced to a record level and for the first time, excess fares being collected were refunded to passengers. During the cleanliness drive on Eid, more than 55 thousand sanitary workers remained continuously active and performed their duties diligently in the province. Owing to this, services of the sanitary workers were

not only acknowledged but commended as well. The Chief minister met them yesterday and awarded them appreciation certificates, she said.

Azma Bukhari said that medicines and treatment had been provided to more than one million patients in just one month in the field hospitals. Punjab's debt had also decreased by 23 billion rupees in the initial 100-day Punjab government. Thanks to the tireless work and correct decisions of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif that the debt of Punjab had been reduced, she added.

She said that the incident happened in Swat was heartrending. The provincial government should have played its due role to prevent occurrence of such incidents. During the press conference, Transport Minister Bilal Akbar Khan said that on the directions of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz.



LAHORE: Provincial Minister of Information and Broadcasting Syeda Uzma Bukhari and Provincial Minister Transport, Bilal Akbar giving answers to the questions of the media during the press conference in DGPR of the provincial capital.

19 development projects for Sialkot district included in ADP

SIALKOT (APP): The Punjab government has included 19 new development projects in the Annual Development Programme (ADP) for Sialkot district in the current fiscal year's budget.

These projects encompass a variety of initiatives including 16 highway projects, 7 sports projects, and establishment of a general bus stand, along with plans to relocate government offices as part of the annual ADP.

Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Zulqarnain shared these updates during a District Development Committee meeting, where Deputy Director (Development) Muhammad Asif provided a detailed briefing.

Highlighting key road sector projects, Zulqarnain mentioned significant undertakings such as the Old Airport Road costing Rs 1947 million, the Badiana-Chawinda-Zafarwal Road at Rs 1 billion, the Chawinda-Sabzpur Road at Rs 724 million, and several others including the Kalasswala to Qila Kalarwala Road, Badiana-Mirajke Road, and Wazirabad-Daska Road. The cumulative estimated cost for these road projects totals Rs 7445 million.

Furthermore, Zulqarnain disclosed that Rs 1055 million are earmarked for seven sports projects across four cities, namely Sialkot City, Daska, Chawinda, and Pasrur City, as well as for Kotli Syed Ameer, Saranwali, and Sambrial.

Punjab sanitation system to be outsourced: LG minister

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Minister for Local Government and Community Development (LG&CD) Zeeshan Rafique has said the sanitation system in the province is going to be outsourced.

Like the ideal cleaning plan on Eid-ul-Azha days, the outsourcing model under supervision of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif will also be successful, he added.

Presiding over a video-link meeting of the chief executive officers (CEOs) of the waste management companies across the province, held at the Civil Secretariat, here on Saturday, he said after outsourcing of the cleanliness system, the government responsibility will not end but increase on

the contrary. "Outsourcing process at all levels will be strictly monitored," he added.

LG&CD Secretary Shakeel Ahmad Mian, Special Secretary Asia Gul and CEO of Lahore Waste Management Company (LWMC) Babar Sahib Din also attended the meeting.

The minister directed all the CEOs to complete the pre-qualification process for private companies by June 28 and added that the local bodies and all waste management companies have made the impossible work possible by ensuring quality cleanliness on Eid-ul-Azha. "Due to this, people's trust in government institutions increased manifold. Now the same spirit has to be maintained in normal days also," he said.



KARACHI: Waves crashing against the shore at Hawke's Bay during the coastal flooding in the Provincial Capital.

ACS appreciates services of officers for successful "zero waste operation"

MULTAN (APP): Additional Chief Secretary (ACS) South Punjab, Fuad Hashim Rabbani, hosted a grand reception in to honour officers for the successful "Zero Waste Operation" during Eid-ul-Azha in South Punjab here Saturday. The event was attended by Commissioners and all the Deputy Commissioners, Assistant Commissioners from South Punjab and Chief Officers of Waste Management Companies and Municipal Corporations.

Administrative Secretaries of South Punjab also attended the ceremony. Addressing the event, the Additional Chief Secretary praised the workers from all

departments involved for their dedication to the cleaning operation, despite the challenging hot weather. He commended the commissioners, deputy commissioners, assistant commissioners and officers for their continuous 72-hour field presence and effective monitoring throughout Eid, which ensured the operation's success. He highlighted the role of control rooms established by the administration in addressing cleanliness complaints. The ACS acknowledged that the administration's efforts had realized the government's "Suthra Punjab" slogan, earning praise from Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif and

CM takes notice of PML-N leader's killing

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Saturday took a notice of an incident of killing of local PML-N leader Ghulam Rabbani in Chishtian.

The CM directed the inspector general of Police to investigate the incident and presented a report.

The CM offered sincere condolences and expressed her heartfelt sympathies with the bereaved family.

She directed the authorities concerned to provide the best medical treatment facilities to the businessman injured in the incident.

3 days annual Urs of Abdullah Shah Ghazi to begin from June 27

KARACHI (APP): The 129th three-day annual Urs of the great Sufi saint of the subcontinent Syed Abdullah Shah Ghazi will begin from Tuesday (June 27, 2024) here at the shrine. According to a statement issued by the Auqaf Department, the three-day Urs celebrations will continue till Thursday (June 29).

Sindh Governor Muhammad Kamran Khan Tessori and provincial Minister for Auqaf and Religious Affairs Syed Riaz Hussain Shah Sherazi will formally inaugurate the three-day Urs by laying flowers wreath at the shrine of the sufi saint.



PESHAWAR: Residents of Peshawar are holding protest demonstration in favor of National Famous Cricketer Shahid Afridi, at Peshawar press club

PRDS holds workshop for govt school teachers

PESHAWAR (APP): A one-day workshop for government school teachers was held by the Participatory Rural Development Society (PRDS) here on Sunday, aiming to improve teaching methodology and promote a conducive learning environment at school.

Organised with the support of Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO), Education Cannot Wait (ECW) and Multi-Year Resilience (MYR) Programme, the training workshop was attended by education champions and teachers from different schools of district Peshawar, Nowshera and Charsadda.

MYR Program Coordinator, Tariq Hayat Yousafzai and Ayesha Malik trained the teachers on effective teaching skills and techniques to help improve learning conditions at school.

During the awareness session, teachers also shared their experiences and ideas on improving education the standard and the environment at school. Tariq Hayat told the participants that their organisation is active with other partner organisations and the Education Department KP to promote education, especially girls' education in the province.



HYDERABAD: Activists of Peoples Party (PPP) are holding protest demonstration against high handedness of influent land mafia, at Hyderabad press club.

Honour Killing: Couple allegedly shot dead

MUZAFFARGARH (APP): A married couple was allegedly shot dead in a matter pertaining to honour at Sanawan village in Kot Addu.

According to police sources, Shazia Bibi had contracted marriage with a citizen named Tariq one year ago after her own choice. Earlier, she was wife of another citizen named Tanvir however she got divorced through court.

The family of Shazia and her ex husband were not happy over this marriage. The father, brother and ex husband of Shazia entered into her home and allegedly killed the couple.

Police is conducting raids to arrest the alleged outlaw Hashim (father), Dilawar (brother) and Tanvir (ex-husband).

5 dead, 1,353 injured in Punjab road accidents

LAHORE (APP): At least five persons were killed and 1,353 others injured in 1,270 road accidents in Punjab during the last 24 hours.

As many as 607 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 746 with minor injuries were treated at the incident site by the rescue medical teams.

The data analysis showed that 717 drivers, 53 underage drivers, 146 pedestrians,

Parliamentarians emphasize on export-led growth, tax reform in country's economy

ISLAMABAD (APP): The law makers on Saturday emphasized on export-led growth, alternative sources of energy and tax reforms for sustainable growth in the country.

The parliamentarians said that economic discipline and fiscal consolidation is significant for the recovery of external debt, which the government needs to focus on.

They also gave comprehensive proposals for documenting the country's economy.

Participating in the budget debate, Dr Mirza Ikhtiar Baig, MNA, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) said that the industries should be encouraged in the Budget 2024-25, so that industrial growth can take place in the country to provide employment opportunities to the people.

He said that the decision of tax duties on

electronic vehicles should be delayed so that alternative sources of energy and transportation can be promoted in the country.

Senior lawmaker said that the exporters should be given relief so that there can be export-led growth in the country.

He said that the export industry is not going above \$ 30 billion, and the textile exports are also standing at \$16 billion.

The Industrial sector in the merged district of tribal areas should not be tax free, he said.

He said the tax on the salaried class is already high, it should be withdrawn, and they should be incentivized.

He said that agricultural inputs have been taxed, which will increase the cost of production and inflation in the country.

The government has controlled inflation, which

is a commendable and good move, he said.

Syed Mustafa Kamal, MNA, MQM said that now economic emergency is required in the country and at this critical time all the political parties should sit together and resolve the economic problems.

He said that there is a need for economic discipline and fiscal consolidation in the country, which will lead to sustainable growth in the country.

He said that the volume of internal debt is larger than the external debt, at this time the country should make a comprehensive plan to get out of the debt trap.

Mustafa Kamal said that the State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) and independent power producers (IPPs) are currently a burden on the country's economy, and it needs to be resolved through a comprehensive strategy.



PESHAWAR: Convener of Women Empowerment and Personal Development of LCCI meeting with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi.

Balochistan govt allocates Rs 2 bln for Balochistan Enterprise Development Fund

QUETTA (APP): The Balochistan government has allocated Rs 2 billion as seed money for the Balochistan Enterprise Development Fund, which aims to provide interest-free loans to small and medium businesses for expansion of and new start-ups.

The provincial government is also framing the expenditure policy of this fund to achieve its objective and deliver collective beneficial results to the society.

According to budget documents, the incumbent

government has also released Rs 137 million during the current financial year 2023-24 for the necessary reconstruction of the Hub's industrial and commercial estate.

In the upcoming financial year 2024-25, Rs 3.7 billion have been allocated as non-development budget which is an increase of 71.7 percent as compared to the current fiscal year budget 2023-24 allocation of Rs 2.1 billion. During the next financial year 2024-25, Rs 418 million have been allocated under the

development budget for the enhancement of this sector.

The development of industrial sector is a priority for the provincial government after the agricultural sector in the province.

The small and medium business sector related to the industry is the main source of the creation of employment opportunities.

The Balochistan government has included the boost of industrial activities in the province as one of its top priorities.

Senate committee rejects 18% sales tax on baby milk amid economic debate

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Senate Standing Committee on Finance has rejected a proposal to impose an 18 percent sales tax on baby food and fortified child nutrition milk powders, citing concerns over the economic impact on families and child health.

The committee meeting, chaired by Senator Salim Mandviwala, witnessed a heated discussion on various tax proposals. Senator Farooq H. Naik highlighted the challenges of economic documentation, noting that many Pakistanis lack bank accounts, complicating efforts to formalize the economy.

Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) officials presented proposals including a 10 percent sales tax on stationery items and an 18 percent tax on milk and baby formula. They assured that cash assistance would be provided to those in need.

However, Senator Sherry Rehman opposed the tax on milk, pointing to the country's 40 percent child stunting rate and calling the proposal excessive and unconsulted. Senator Anush Rehman labeled the

tax on baby milk as cruel, leading the committee to unanimously reject the proposal.

The debate extended to other tax matters, with Senator Naik advocating for the abolition of the stationery tax and critiquing the extensive taxation, humorously suggesting a tax on graves as even burial costs are high in Karachi. He also questioned whether the International Monetary Fund (IMF) influences tax exemptions, especially for regions like FATA and PATA.

Senator Mandviwala raised concerns about the misuse of tax exemptions in these areas, with Senator Zeeshan Khanzada adding that Azad Kashmir also benefited from similar exemptions. He argued that promoting industry rather than providing government jobs would be more beneficial.

Further discussions revealed disagreements over the tax on raw materials for manufacturers. While manufacturers claimed exemptions were for raw materials, the committee noted these materials were being sold locally.



KARACHI: People busy in purchasing solar system for power generation as demand of solar system and UPS increased in city due to electricity load-shedding in city during summer season, at Saddar Electronic Market.

ECO countries' including Pak carpet design displayed at Tehran carpets exhibition

TEHRAN (APP): ECO member states displayed their carpet arts during Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO) regional exhibition of carpet arts held in Tehran.

Besides the carpet exhibition, a parallel workshop on the art of old carpet restoration was also inaugurated on the occasion, said a press release received here from Tehran on Saturday.

While inaugurating the carpet exhibition, President of Economic Cultural Institute (ECI) Tehran, Saad S Khan emphasized that carpet is the most ancient of regional art that is common across all the regional countries.

Meanwhile, professors and scholars speaking on the occasion talked about the common

heritage of carpet designs in Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan and other regional countries that are members of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) based in Tehran.

Turkmenistan even holds Carpet Day each year as a national state holiday, Dr Saad said.

The scholars highlighted the cultural significance of carpets as a cultural symbol, carpets' role in hospitality in traditional homes and the importance of carpet weaving as a form of livelihood. Experts explained various techniques for restoring old, worn out or torn carpets, up to a century old, which can be restored to appear as good as new.

The ceremony was followed by a widely attended exhibition at the ECI Art Gallery in Tehran

Rs 150 bln allocated for Kissan Card

MULTAN (APP): The Punjab government has allocated Rs 150 billion for the launching of the Kissan Card to facilitate farmers and promote agriculture sector.

Talking to media persons on Saturday, Secretary Agriculture Iftekhar Ali Sahu remarked that five peasants would be offered interest-free loans. So far, 150,000 farmers have undergone the registration process, he added.

He added that a huge package had been introduced for the farmers. He also informed that subsidised tractors would also be offered to the farmers. Similarly, 7000 electricity-run tube-wells would be shifted to solar systems.

Besides this, he said that 1000 agriculture graduates will be recruited to promote the agriculture sector.

Standing committee backs sales tax imposition on welfare hospitals

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Senate Standing Committee on Finance, chaired by Senator Saleem Mandviwala, has endorsed the decision to remove sales tax exemptions from charitable and welfare hospitals. During the meeting, concerns were raised about trust hospitals not settling bills and the financial practices of hospitals benefiting from tax exemptions. Senator Farooq H. Naik highlighted issues regarding high fees charged by doctors and laboratories associated with trust hospitals.

Officials from the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) informed the

committee that while government hospitals pay sales tax, major private hospitals currently enjoy tax exemptions despite their substantial operations. The committee also summoned Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, emphasizing the need for government oversight in this matter.

Senator Naik reiterated the committee's commitment to finalizing recommendations and called for the finance minister's prompt attendance at future meetings to address these critical taxation issues affecting healthcare services in the country.

Gold rates decrease by Rs.1,400 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The price of per tola of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs.1,400 and was sold at Rs.241,500 on Saturday against its sale at Rs.242,900 on last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs. 1,201 to Rs.207,047 from Rs.208,248 whereas that of 10 gram 22 karat gold went down to Rs.189,793 from Rs.190,894, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

Per tola and ten gram silver also went up by Rs.100 and Rs.85.76 and was sold at Rs.2,850 and Rs.2,443.41 respectively.



HYDERABAD: Vendor sells ice to earn his livelihood for support his family, at his stall as the demand of ice increases in city during hot weather of summer season.

CAP urges govt to retain 15% GST rate amidst digitalization push

LAHORE (INP): Chairman of the Chainstore Association of Pakistan (CAP) Rana Tariq Mehboob has called upon the government to preserve the 15% GST rate for Integrated Tier-1 Retailers, as proposed in the Finance Bill 2024. This plea comes amidst concerns that omitting S. No. 66 from the Eight Schedule of the Sales Tax Act 1990 could undermine recent strides in digital tax integration achieved through FBR-POS systems.

In a press release issued today, CAP emphasized the pivotal role of digital tax systems in enhancing transparency and efficiency within Pakistan's retail sector. Mehboob highlighted that the integration of Tier-1 retailers with FBR-POS systems has bolstered tax compliance, benefiting over 2 million direct employees and supporting numerous ancillary sectors.

However, CAP underscored the adverse impact of recent tax reforms, attributing closures of integrated retailers and reductions in physical retail networks to

proposed GST rate hikes. Mehboob stressed that maintaining a competitive tax environment is crucial for sustaining growth and investment in the formal retail sector.

The press release further noted that while GST rates for key sectors like textiles and leather have risen to 15%, ongoing reform proposals threatening an increase to 18% risk eroding gains made in digitalization and compliance.

CAP urged the government to incentivize FBR-POS integration with special concessions and discourage undue regulatory pressures on compliant retailers. The association also highlighted consumer-centric initiatives, like the POS prize scheme, as essential tools for promoting digital invoice verification and tax compliance among consumers.

The outcome of these deliberations will shape the future landscape of retail taxation in Pakistan, influencing economic growth and regulatory dynamics within the sector.

President Diplomat Business Club asks Pak tech businesses to join digital revolution

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Diplomat Business Club and former ambassador Javed Malik on Saturday urged Pakistani tech businesses to become a part of the digital revolution that was transforming the global business landscape.

He was addressing the Global Business Forum 2024, in Dubai, UAE which brought together delegates from over 30 countries under the auspices of Diplomat Business Club to explore business, trade and investment opportunities through global collaboration.

Diplomat Business Club facilitates business leaders to connect, collaborate, and explore new avenues to expand their businesses and also build new alliances to co-create new business ventures, particularly in the digital business landscape.

Javed Malik stressed that digital transformation and innovation were changing the nature of doing business and smart investors and business owners should be willing to embrace this change, a press release said.

The president Diplomat Business Club

further urged them to focus their attention on new and innovative business ideas in the areas of fintech, blockchain, artificial intelligence, robotics, renewable energy, space technology, autonomous vehicles, clean energy, quantum computing and other technology-based businesses ventures that are the future of business.

Javed Malik said that the presence of diplomats, business leaders, investors, entrepreneurs and CEOs from more than 30 countries highlighted the Club's position as a premier global platform for business diplomacy in the



QUETTA: Vendor selling balloons while roaming in provincial capital street.

Cement exports increase 40.46% to \$236.797mln

ISLAMABAD (APP): The exports of cement witnessed an increase of 40.46 per cent during the first eleven months of the financial year 2023-24, as against the exports of the corresponding months of last year.

The cement exports from the country were recorded at US \$236.797 million during July-May (2023-24) against the exports of US \$168.583 million during July-May (2022-23), according to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS).

In terms of quantity,

the exports of cement also surged by 66.78 per cent going up from 3,707,427 metric tons to 6,183,117 metric tons, according to the data.

Meanwhile, year-on-year basis, the exports of cement also witnessed an increase of 78.23 per cent during the month of May 2024 as compared to the same month of last year.

The exports of cement from the country during May 2024 were recorded at US \$32.251 million against the exports of US \$18.095 million in May 2023.

SNGPL punishes eight consumers for illegal use of metres

MULTAN (APP): Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) punished eight citizens during a crackdown during last 24 hours.

The officials of Task Force told on Saturday that the consumers were using gas illegally as they were found making commercial use of gas, offering illegal connections to others and had also shifted metres at different sites by themselves. Gas metres of all the eight consumers were disconnected for violation of the laws.

The SNGPL has urged the citizens to cooperate and informed about illegal use of gas at phone number 0619220085 as secrecy would be maintained.

According to Regional Manager Hussain Zafar, a special cell has been introduced to respond to complaints. Some officers have also been deputed in the cell to ensure timely resolution of complaints.

Current Account Deficit declines to \$464 mln in 11 months: SBP

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Current Account Deficit (CAD) has decreased to \$464 million during the eleven months of the current financial year as compared to the deficit of \$3.765 billion during the same period of last year, State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported.

On year-on-year basis, the CAD witnessed a surplus of \$155 million in May 2023 compared to a deficit of \$270 million in

May 2024. According to the latest SBP figures, the merchandise trade deficit during July-May (2023-24) was recorded at \$19.724 billion as compared to the deficit of \$23.753 billion in July-May (2022-23). Likewise, the services' trade deficit was recorded at \$2,099 million during FY2023-24 compared to the deficit of \$887 million during the corresponding period of last year.



MULTAN: Women farmers plucking okra vegetables in the field.

Israel bombs Gaza as fears grow of wider war

Monitoring Desk

GAZA STRIP: Israel bombed the Gaza Strip where one hospital reported at least 30 dead (Jun 21) and as exchanges of fire and threats over the Lebanon border raised fears of an even wider war.

After further cross-border fire between Israel and Lebanon's powerful Hezbollah movement, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warned the clashes must not turn Lebanon into "another Gaza".

Increased "bellicose rhetoric" from both sides risked triggering a catastrophe "beyond imagination", he said. In Gaza the director of Gaza City's Al-Ahli hospital was quoted by the Hamas-run territory's health ministry as reporting 30 dead on Friday in intensified Israeli bombardment.

"It has been a difficult and brutal day in Gaza City. So far, around 30 martyrs have arrived at the Al-Ahli Arab Hospital," Dr Fadel Naem was quoted as saying.

Civil defence agency spokesman Mahmud Basal said five municipal workers died when a garage in the city was bombed. Israel's military reported military operations on Friday "north and south of the Central Gaza Strip Corridor". AFP-TV captured an overnight strike on Khan Yunis city, showing a ball of fire and sparks erupting in a residential district.

Just before midnight Thursday, Israel's army said it had "successfully intercepted a suspicious aerial target that crossed from Lebanon".

Early Friday, Lebanese official media reported

new Israeli strikes in the south.

They came after Hezbollah said it had fired dozens of rockets at a barracks in northern Israel on Thursday in retaliation for a deadly air strike in south Lebanon.

Israel said a Hezbollah operative was killed in that strike.

It said jets struck Hezbollah sites and used artillery "to remove threats in multiple areas in southern Lebanon".

Hezbollah claimed a number of attacks on Israeli troops and positions near the border on Friday, including two using drones.

Experts are divided on the prospect of a wider war, almost nine months into Israel's campaign to eradicate Iran-backed Hezbollah's ally Hamas, the Palestinian militant group in the Gaza Strip.



Palestinians search for casualties at the site of Israeli strikes on houses, amid Israel-Hamas conflict, in Gaza City.

Russia tells US: we need to talk, but Ukraine must be on agenda

Monitoring Desk

MOSCOW: Russia sees a pressing need for security talks with the United States but they must be "comprehensive" and include the subject of Ukraine, the Kremlin said on Friday.

"It is impossible to rip out any individual segments from the general complex of accumulated problems, and we will not do this," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said when asked if Moscow was ready to talk to Washington about nuclear risks.

"So we are open to dialogue, but to a broad comprehensive dialogue that covers all dimensions, including the current dimension related to the conflict around Ukraine, related to the direct involvement of

the USA in this conflict," Peskov told reporters. The United States rejects Russia's contention that by arming Ukraine it has become a direct protagonist in a war aimed at inflicting a crushing "strategic defeat" on Moscow. The U.S. says any negotiations over the war are a matter for Ukraine. The Russian stance, as outlined by Peskov, is not new. But he told reporters that the list of topics that Russia and the United States needed to discuss was growing.

"Overall, this dialogue is very much required," Peskov said. "It is needed because problems are piling up, and there are a lot of problems associated with the global security architecture."

Europe risks trade war, China warns before talks with Germany

Monitoring Desk

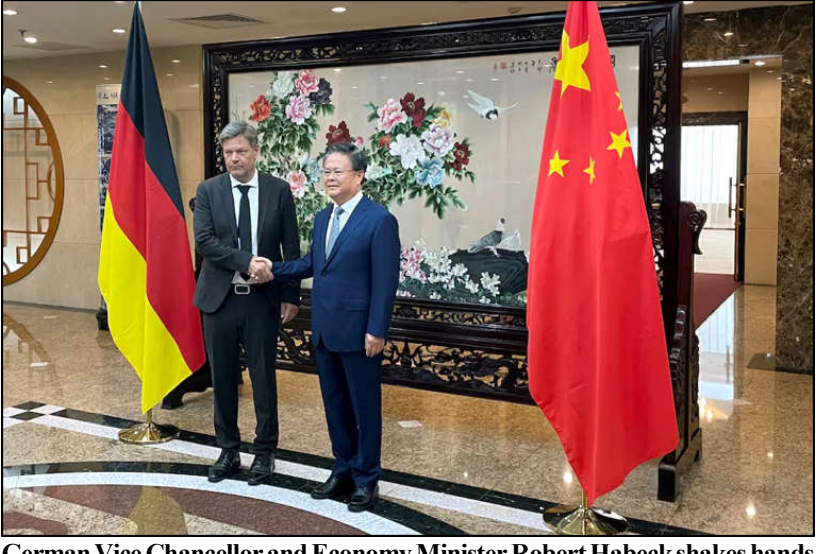
BEIJING: Beijing warned on Friday that escalating friction with the European Union over electric vehicle imports could trigger a trade war, as Germany's economy minister arrived in the Chinese capital with the proposed tariffs high on his agenda. Robert Habeck's three-day trip to China is the first by a senior European official since Brussels proposed hefty duties on imports of Chinese-made electric vehicles to combat alleged excessive subsidies. That has unleashed countermeasures by China and

harsh criticism from Chinese leaders.

In an unexpected twist, Habeck — from the ecologist Greens Party that is a junior partner in Germany's fractious three-way coalition — issued a statement criticising Berlin's 11-month-old China strategy document as already out-of-date and not in sync with the evolving EU position on China. This week alone, Chinese automakers urged Beijing to hike tariffs on imported European petrol-powered cars and the government launched a dumping probe into EU pork imports in retaliation for the EU Commission's move.

"The European side continues to escalate trade frictions and could trigger a 'trade war'," a statement attributed to the Chinese commerce ministry's spokesperson said.

"The responsibility lies entirely with the European side." It said that with its dumping probe, the European side had "intimidated and coerced Chinese enterprises, threatened to apply punitive high tariff rates, and demanded overly broad information".



German Vice Chancellor and Economy Minister Robert Habeck shakes hands with National Development and Reform Commission (NDCRC) Chairman Zheng Shanjie before a meeting in Beijing, China.

UN chief warns Lebanon cannot become another Gaza

Monitoring Desk

UNITED NATIONS: United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said on Friday (Jun 21) that he is profoundly concerned by escalating tensions between Israel and Lebanon's Hezbollah and that UN peacekeepers are working to calm the situation and prevent miscalculation.

"One rash move - one miscalculation - could trigger a catastrophe that goes far beyond the border, and frankly, beyond imagination," he told reporters. "Let's be clear: The people of the region and the people of the world cannot afford Lebanon to become another Gaza."

"Overall, this dialogue is very much required," Peskov said. "It is needed because problems are piling up, and there are a lot of problems associated with the global security architecture."

Iran's mission to the United Nations said on Friday that Hezbollah has the capability to defend itself and Lebanon against Israel, warning that "perhaps the time for the self-annihilation of this illegitimate regime has come."

"Any imprudent decision by the occupying Israeli regime to save itself could plunge the region into a new war," Iran's UN mission posted on X. A UN peacekeeping force UNIFIL, as well as unarmed technical observers known as UNTSO, have long been stationed in southern Lebanon to monitor hostilities along the demarcation line between Lebanon and Israel, known as the Blue Line. "UN peacekeepers are on the ground working to de-escalate tensions and help prevent miscalculation," Guterres said.

"The world must say loudly and clearly: immediate de-escalation is not only possible — it is essential," he said.

Iran-backed Hezbollah has been firing rockets at Israel in solidarity with its Palestinian ally Hamas since the Gaza war erupted in October, forcing tens of thousands to flee homes in Israel, where political pressure is building for tougher action.

Tens of thousands of Lebanese have also fled their homes following Israeli strikes in south Lebanon.

Arab-American mayor says Biden hasn't 'earned my vote'

Monitoring Desk

DEARBORN: Abdullah Hammoud's election as the first Muslim mayor of Dearborn was a watershed moment for this city, an automaking hub home to the highest concentration of Arab-Americans in the United States.

But while his early focus was on upgrading sewer infrastructure and investing in parks, he has now been thrust into the national spotlight for his outspoken criticism of fellow Democrat Joe Biden, over the president's support for Israel's military offensive in Gaza. "I'll be the first to say that we don't want to see (Donald) Trump re-elected to the White House," Hammoud told AFP in an interview. "But people want to be inspired to come out." Dearborn, a suburb of Detroit famous as the birthplace of Henry Ford and home of the Ford Motor Company's headquarters, has a population of around 110,000 residents, of whom 55 per cent claim Middle Eastern or North African heritage.

In 2020, Dearborn voters overwhelmingly supported Biden and their ballots could tip the scales in Michigan — a crucial swing state that may ultimately decide the White House winner in November's election.

Hammoud's profile surged in January after he declined an invitation to meet with Biden campaign officials seeking to shore up the Muslim vote. Since then, he helped galvanize a movement that saw over 100,000 voters mark "uncommitted" in Michigan's Democratic primary in protest against Biden's policy on Israel, and was asked by Green Party presidential candidate Jill Stein if he would be her running mate.

Hammoud, who won't meet the Constitutional requirement of being 35 until next March, was too young to accept the role.

Three people killed, 10 wounded in Arkansas supermarket shooting in US

Monitoring Desk

ARKANSAS: A shooter opened fire at an Arkansas supermarket in the US on Friday (Jun 21), killing three civilians and wounding 10 other people, including two police officers, Arkansas State Police said.

life-threatening to extremely critical, he said.

Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders said on social media platform X that she was briefed on the incident.

"I am thankful to law enforcement and first responders for their quick and heroic action to save lives. My prayers are with the victims and all those impacted by this horrific incident," she said.

Israeli strikes on tent camps near Rafah kill at least 25 and wound 50, Gaza health officials say, DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Israeli forces shelled tent camps for displaced Palestinians north of Rafah on Friday, killing at least 25 people and wounding another 50 according to Gaza's Health Ministry and emergency workers, in the latest deadly attack in the tiny Palestinian territory where hundreds of thousands have fled fighting between Israel and Hamas.

The suspect was also wounded in a shootout with police, Arkansas State Police director Mike Hagar told reporters. The shooting occurred at the Mad Butcher grocery in Fordyce, a town of 3,200 people about 112 km south of Little Rock. "Unfortunately, we can confirm that 11 innocent civilians were shot, and three of those are deceased. Two law enforcement officers were injured in the exchange of gunfire. The suspect was also shot and taken into custody," Hagar said. He did not explain the circumstances of the shooting or take questions. The wounded police officers and the suspect were expected to survive, he said. Civilian injuries ranged from non-

Hong Kong matches record for hottest summer solstice
 HONG KONG: Hong Kong matched on Friday its record for the hottest summer solstice as a subtropical ridge drove temperatures up to 34 degrees Celsius (93.2 degrees Fahrenheit).

"The maximum temperature recorded at the observatory was 34C, the highest so far this year and equalling the record high for summer solstice set in 1980," the city's weather observatory said.

Four members of Hinduja family get jail terms for exploiting staff at Swiss villa

Monitoring Desk

GENEVA: A Swiss court has handed jail sentences to four members of Britain's richest family on Friday, branding them "selfish" for exploiting Indian staff at their Geneva mansion.

The Hinduja were acquitted of human trafficking, but convicted on other charges in a stunning verdict for the family, whose fortune is estimated at £37 billion by The Sunday Times. Prakash Hinduja and his wife Kamal Hinduja each got four years and six months, while their son Ajay and his wife

Namrata received four-year terms, the presiding judge in Geneva ruled. They were found guilty of a charge of "usury" for taking advantage of their "vulnerable" immigrant staff, to pay them a "pittance".

"The employees' inexperience was exploited. They had little education or none at all and had no knowledge of their rights," Sabina Mascotto stated in her judgement.

"The defendants' motives were selfish," she said, adding that the Hinduja was motivated "by the desire for gain".

Wildfire kills 11 in Turkiye's Kurdish region
 CINAR: A huge wildfire has killed 11 people and critically injured five, as it ripped through Turkiye's main region.

Kurdish southeast overnight, the health minister stated on Friday. Hundreds of animals perished or were badly injured in the blaze, which roared across the dry landscape, sending flames into the night sky.

By morning, the fire had left huge areas of charred and blackened land, across the Diyarbakir and Mardin provinces.

"Eleven people lost their lives," Health Minister Fahrettin Koca wrote on X, adding that another 78 people sustained injuries and smoke inhalation. Of that number, five people were being treated in intensive care, he said.

Turkiye's pro-Kurdish DEM party, which won many municipalities in the southeast in the March local elections, criticised the government's intervention as "late and insufficient".



People fall as they run after police use water cannon to disperse protesters during a demonstration against Kenya's proposed finance bill 2024/2025 in Nairobi, Kenya.

Unregistered pilgrims suffer the most during Hajj

Monitoring Desk

RIYADH: After years of failing to secure a visa, Yasser finally concluded he had no choice but to perform Hajj illegally, a move he now regrets.

While he survived the rites in extreme heat, he has not seen his wife since Sunday and fears she is among the more than 1,000 reported fatalities — the majority unregistered Egyptians like himself.

"I have searched every single hospital in Makkah. She's not there," the 60-year-old retired engineer said on Friday by phone from his hotel room, where he is reluctant to pack his wife's suitcase in hopes she will return to do it herself.

France's Muslim voters fear far-right election win

Monitoring Desk

PARIS: Muslim voters are increasingly worried about the prospect of a far-right victory less than two weeks before France's snap parliamentary elections, fearing the possible restrictions that could follow.

For Sarah, there's a "real risk" of seeing the National Rally (RN) win the ballot, called by President Emmanuel Macron after the far-right party trounced his centrists in early June's EU elections. The 23-year-old member of a Muslim women's collective told AFP that would give the party of Marine Le Pen free rein to pass laws restricting her freedoms in matters of dress and worship.

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Tunisian president sacks minister after death of dozens on Hajj pilgrimage

Monitoring Desk

TUNIS: Tunisian President Kais Saied sacked Ibrahim Chaibi, the minister of religious affairs, following widespread criticism after the deaths of dozens of Tunisians taking part in the Hajj pilgrimage, the presidency said on Friday. At least 49 Tunisians have died due to the extreme heat in Saudi Arabia during the past week. Tunisian families are still searching for several missing people.

Earlier, Egypt formed a crisis unit to investigate the deaths of Egyptians taking part in the annual Muslim pilgrimage to

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Modi's remarks on status of Kashmir stir up debate

Monitoring Desk

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi's remarks in Srinagar that early elections were expected in occupied Jammu and Kashmir, and that the Delhi-administered province would get statehood soon, sent opposition parties scrambling on Friday to figure out his real intention. Dr Karan Singh, former Sadre Riyasat of erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir and former union minister, said the key thing is the restoration of statehood, and that should be done ahead of the state election.

"Else, the elected government will only be a glorified municipality," he told NDTV. Preparations are on at the Election Commission for the assembly polls, for which the Supreme Court has given a September 30 deadline. Though no date has been announced yet, Mr Modi, on his first visit to hold Jammu and

Kashmir after the election, said on Thursday that they were "not far off". "I think the government wants to do it after the election," Mr Singh said. But he had some advice. "Having an election for a Union Territory is not the same as having an election for a full-fledged state. If you are giving an election to the people, give them a proper state election," he said.

On the other hand, Ghulam Nabi Azad-led Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), considered close to Mr Modi, and Apni Party welcomed the announcement. The main regional forces — the National Conference (NC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP) — reacted cautiously. The Congress termed the announcement vague. "We welcome PM Modi Ji's statement on conducting elections and restoring statehood in Jammu and Kashmir,"

A guide to French political fashion

Monitoring Desk

PARIS: France is in the midst of two of its favourite pastimes: political turmoil and fashion week — two worlds that increasingly collide.

Fashion writer Marc Beauge, who has advised at least one president, walked AFP through the evolving style rules for French politicians.

For male politicians, he said, a simple uniform has become dominant: a navy-blue suit — fitted and generally a little too slim — with a white shirt and thin tie. "It signals respectability, authority and above all a lack of ostentation. It's middling quality and can't be accused of elegance," said Beauge.

This is particularly popular among centrists

and social democrats, and is the go-to look for President Emmanuel Macron, even though practically no one in France wears such outfits in the street or office anymore — least of all the start-up crowd Macron favours. The president has changed styles since calling the snap election last week, however — to funeral black suits.

"There's no more blue and grey," said Beauge. "It's a way of showing the gravity of the moment." Women politicians have largely abandoned the neat designer outfits of the past in a bid to look less elitist.

"It's always the same trouser-and-jacket combos that ensure no sexist commentary, but which risk making them invisible," said Beauge.

Six feared dead in landslides in China's Fujian province

Monitoring Desk

SHANGHAI: Six people have been found with no signs of life after going missing a week ago during landslides caused by heavy rainfall in China's southeastern province of Fujian, state television CCTV reported on Saturday.

Rescue workers found them after extensive searches since losing contact with the victims on Sunday, CCTV said. Unusually heavy rains have hit southern China after an early start to the annual flooding season.

The death toll reached 38 on Friday in Meizhou city in China's southern Guangdong province.



People attend the annual Pride march in Budapest, Hungary.

Attends funeral of sepoy Haroon William Armed forces striving for defence of motherland: PM

RAWALPINDI (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday attended the funeral of sepoy Haroon William, a brave soldier who made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty.

The funeral service of Sepoy Haroon William, a 29-year-old resident of Islamabad, was held today at Saint Paul's Church, Rawalpindi, a press release issued by the PM Office said. Sepoy William, a devoted Christian soldier, made the ultimate sacrifice in the defense of the motherland and embraced martyrdom in Kurram District yesterday while on duty in counter terrorism operations. The ceremony was attended by the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Defence Minister, Interior Minister, Minister of Information & Broadcasting, Chief of Army Staff, senior civil and military officers, soldiers, citizens, and relatives of the martyr.

The prime minister praised the contributions and sacrifices of the Christian fraternity, lauding their role in the country's progress.

He emphasized that the Armed Forces of Pakistan are a cohesive unit, comprising individuals from diverse backgrounds, striving for the collective defence of the state.

Chief of Army Staff, General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M) honored the sacrifice of Sepoy Haroon William, Sepoy Anosh Rufun, and their comrades, stating that their unity and bravery exemplify the strength of the nation. He reaffirmed that the nation will always be indebted to their services and sacrifices for the honor of the motherland.

Sepoy Haroon William was laid to rest with full military honors in Rawalpindi. Funeral prayers for Havildar Aqeel Ahmed (Okara), Lance Naik Muhammad Tafeer (Poonch), Sepoy Anosh Rufun (Attock), and Sepoy Muhammad Azam Khan (Haripur) were also held in their respective hometowns with full military honours.

The Armed Forces of Pakistan remain resolute and committed to eradicating terrorism from the motherland at all costs, the press release added.

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi chairing an important meeting at the Ministry of Interior.



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KARACHI: Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui talking to media persons after attending meeting to discuss establishing campuses of educational institutions in Sindh at HEC Regional office.

RDMC sets up RO plant in Nok Chah village of Chaghi district

QUETTA (APP): The Reko Diq Mining Company (RDMC) continues to invest in Reverse Osmosis (RO) plants to facilitate the provision of and access to potable water for local communities. An RO plant set up in the Nok Chah village in the Chaghi district was inaugurated in the presence of local community members and representatives from RDMC. This was the third RO plant that RDMC has made functional and established in the district, the first two being at villages Humai and Mashki Chah, said a news release.

All RDMC-installed RO plants run on solar power, making them sustainable amidst the power distribution network challenges prevalent in the area. The plant established at Nok Chah uses state-of-the-art technology and produces 5000 gallons of safe, clean water suitable for drinking. Before installation of the Nok Chah plant, the Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) levels in the local water wells were higher than 5200 rendering the water unsafe for consumption. With the RO plants in operation, TDS levels have been reduced to a safe range of 200 to 230, ensuring that the water meets health standards for human consumption.

Local community members from Nok Chah village and surrounding hamlets faced a daily challenge in sourcing potable water and were compelled to use water with unsafe TDS levels which exposed them to various health risks. This intervention by RDMC has addressed their needs by leveraging advanced technology and renewable energy, enabling a better quality of life.

For RDMC, social investment projects prioritize water security and human development starting from establishing primary schools and building Vocational Training Skills amongst the willing members of the local workforce through the Hunar Foundation and ensuring availability of quality healthcare through a partnership with Indus Hospital and Healthcare Network.

Chaghai: Work on setting up of RO plants from Reko Diq Mining Company in process for provision of clean water for people of Chaghai

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AJK PM terms Modi's visit to IIOJK an abortive attempt to hoodwink Intl community

MIRPUR (APP): Azad Jammu Kashmir Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq has described Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ongoing visit to the illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) state as an abortive attempt to hoodwink the international community, denying the true picture of the IIOJK to the world.

In a statement issued late Friday, the AJK Prime Minister stated that Modi's visit to the restive region was tantamount to rubbing salt on the wounds of Kashmiris who were being killed, maimed, and blinded by the trigger-happy Indian forces day in and day out. He said that the Kashmiri people rejected such visits that were intended to project an all-encompassing portrait of Kashmir.

Referring to Modi and his party's communal politics, the PM criticized that during the recently concluded elections, Modi consistently used anti-Muslim and anti-Pakistani rhetoric. Despite running a hate campaign against Muslims, he remarked that Modi failed to achieve a majority in the Lok Sabha elections. About the fast-deteriorating political and human rights situation in the Indian-occupied territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

He insisted that Nawaz Sharif and Asif Zardari must take the lead to pay debt of Pakistan and rulers must collect one thousand billion.

He suggested Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader to donate Bani Gala and Asif Ali Zardari to donate Bilawal House to Pakistan to pay loans of Pakistan. He demanded all MNAs, MPAs, ministers and senators to donate 25 pc of their properties to Pakistan.

MQM-P demands economic emergency imposition across the country

ISLAMABAD (INP) - Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) leader Mustafa Kamal has demanded economic emergency enforcement across the country. Speaking at the National Assembly session on Saturday, MQM-P leader criticized the federal budget and shared his remarks about it.

He reiterated that the nation was in debt of 78 thousand billion out of which 9,775 billion to be paid in terms of loans and interests.

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Pak urges UN Security Council to push Taliban to halt TTP's deadly cross-border attacks

UNITED NATIONS (APP): A top Pakistani diplomat has told the UN Security Council that, despite promises, the Taliban government has not acted "decisively" to halt the cross-border terrorist attacks by the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) that have resulted in hundreds of civilian and military casualties.

"The highest priority for the international community, for Afghanistan's neighbours and for Afghanistan itself - remains the elimination of terrorism within and from Afghanistan," Ambassador Munir Akram, the permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, said in a debate on the situation in Afghanistan.

Pakistan, he said, has repeatedly conveyed to the Taliban—at very senior levels—to act decisively to end TTP's attacks, disarm its fighters, capture and hand over the terrorist group's fighters to Pakistan.

"Unfortunately, despite promises, no meaningful action has been taken so far. TTP safe havens remain close to Pakistan's borders. Cross-border attacks have continued, including one by a TTP associate that killed several Chinese engineers working on the Dasu hydro power project," the Pakistani envoy told the 15-member Council. "The impunity which some of these terrorist groups seem to enjoy within Afghanistan poses a dire and direct threat to all of Afghanistan's neighbours as well as to the international community."

Ambassador Akram, therefore, urged the Security Council to call on the Taliban government to sever its links with the TTP and its associates; prevent them from carrying out cross-border attacks against Pakistan; disarm the TTP terrorists and capture the TTP's leadership and hand them over to Pakistan.

At the outset, he said Pakistan has consistently advocated for sustained engagement with the Afghan interim authorities to normalize the situation in that country. While welcoming the Taliban's announced decision to participate in the upcoming UN-sponsored meeting in Doha, Ambassador Akram underlined the need for both the international community and the Afghan interim Government to "be clear about the overall objectives they seek".

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Top diplomats, UN officials join in celebrating Pakistan's election to Security Council

NEW YORK (APP): Nearly a hundred ambassadors from all regions of the world and United Nations officials Friday attended a reception hosted by Pakistan's Ambassador to the United Nations, Munir Akram, to celebrate Pakistan's victorious election to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

On June 6, Pakistan was elected, with a massive majority, as a non-permanent member of the 15-member Council, with Ambassador Akram pledging to make a contribution in meeting the grave challenges facing the world. Pakistan, which was unopposed, garnered 182 votes in the 193-member General Assembly, and will begin its two-year term on January 1, 2025.

Ambassadors of the five permanent members of the Security Council—China, United States, Russia, France and Britain—were among those attended.

Also present were members of the Pakistani community in and around New York.

He reiterated that the nation was in debt of 78 thousand billion out of which 9,775 billion to be paid in terms of loans and interests.



CHAGAI: Work on setting up of RO plants from Reko Diq Mining Company in process for provision of clean water for people of Chaghai



LAHORE: Khizer Afzaal, head of the polio programme in Punjab, presents a campaign shirt to cricketer Bismah Maroof during Pakistan Polio eradication initiative.

Geneva seminar highlights plight of women, children afflicted by conflict in Kashmir, Palestine

GENEVA (APP): Speakers at a seminar held here on the sidelines of the 56th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council sought the Council's proactive role in addressing the pressing challenges faced by women and children in areas afflicted by conflict and colonialism.

The seminar titled "Women and children of conflict", was attended and addressed by noted human rights activists, international law experts and academicians from different parts of the world including Shamim Shawl, permanent representative IMWU Carolyn Handschin Moser Women's Federation for World Peace International, Julie Ward Former Member of the European Parliament, Barrister Margaret Owen

Founder of Widows for Peace & Development, Ghazala Habib, Ahmed Bin Qasim, Maria Iqbal, Madiha Khan, Stella Harris Member of Women's Federation. Whereas, the event was moderated by KIIR chairman Altaf Hussain Wani.

The speakers, while highlighting the woeful plight of Kashmiri and Palestinian people, regrettably noted that despite international humanitarian laws and numerous resolutions aimed at safeguarding their rights, these vulnerable populations continue to endure severe hardships.

Terming women and children as the worst victims of the ongoing conflicts in both war-torn territories, they said that women and children constitute a significant portion of civilian casualties in conflict situations.

"Women and children being vulnerable segments of society, their sufferings exacerbate during emergencies and armed conflicts as they become prime targets of inhumane acts, leading to physical, psychological, and socio-economic harm", they said.

Stressing the need for fostering dialogue, enhancing understanding and mobilising action to protect and empower women and children in conflict zones, the speakers called for equal application and implementation of international humanitarian laws including the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols that provide for the protection of civilians.

Repatriation of illegal Afghan nationals from Pak continues

ISLAMABAD (INP): The repatriation of Afghan nationals residing illegally in Pakistan has seen a significant number of departures, with the total reaching 620,981 individuals. The return process remains ongoing. Between June 11 and June 21, a total of 13,815 Afghan nationals have returned to their country. This group included 5,014 men, 4,087 women, and 4,714 children.

The repatriation effort involved 498 families, utilizing 547 vehicles to transport them back to Afghanistan.

"Light up Gwadar" Project in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (INP): Light Up Gwadar" livelihood Project in Pakistan, has been formally launched, Gwadar Pro reported.

It will significantly enhance the nighttime lighting in essential public facilities such as hospitals and schools in the area. The Chinese Consulate General in Karachi recently implemented the project.

The initiative involved the presentation and installation of 73 solar-powered streetlights, which were entrusted to relevant Chinese-funded enterprises for execution.

All streetlights have been fully installed and are now operational, covering five key locations in

Gwadar: the fishing pier, fishing boat berths along the waterfront promenade, the seaward exit of the East Bay Expressway and the local hospital.

This development has brought immense convenience and security to local residents and fishermen, who now enjoy improved nighttime accessibility and workability.

The project received widespread praise from all sectors of Gwadar society, with residents expressing gratitude for the improvement in their daily lives.

The timely completion of the installation just ahead of Eid-ul-Adha celebrations on June 16 added a festive touch to the community.

PTI again demands CEC's resignation

ISLAMABAD (INP): Sticking to its stance, the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) has once again demanded the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja for failing to hold free and fair elections. Speaking to the participants in the PTI rally in Islamabad, Omar Ayub Khan vociferously sought the resignation of CEC Sikandar Sultan Raja who, he said, failed to conduct transparent elections.

"We want immediate resignation of CEC and other ECP members. The ECP only spent Rs16 billion out of its total allocated budget," he said.

PTI chief Barrister Gohar lamented that doors of courts had been closed for the opposition leader. "History will remember our brave women workers

who have been languishing in jail for more than a year in golden words," he said. "Justice delayed is justice denied," he remarked.

Asad Qaiser said the PTI leaders were not heard in parliament, which is tantamount to depriving them of their rights. Earlier, Opposition Leader in National Assembly Omar Ayub Khan lashed out at the government for collapse of the economy. Speaking on the floor of National Assembly, the opposition leader flayed the government for "propagating lies about the economic health of the country". He recalled during his fiery speech that Rs426.4 billion were recovered during the PTI government. He also claimed that the KP government had achieved its provincial surplus.



QUETTA: Governor Balochistan Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail offering Fatcha for sad demise of daughter of Malik Amanullah Khan Mehtarzai

Amir alleges KP gov't neglecting rights of people

ISLAMABAD (INP): Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan, Engr Amir Muqam has alleged the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government of neglecting the rights of the province.

Responding to points raised by Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) member Asad Qaiser in the National Assembly on Saturday, he said that it would have been better if Asad Qaiser had fought for the rights of the province directly to the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder during their four-year tenure.

Engr Amir Muqam said, "I wish the rights of KP had been protected during those four years."

Educated nation can change the country: Dr Khalid Maqbool

KARACHI (APP): Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui on Saturday said that only an educated nation could change the country and put it on the path to development and prosperity.

Talking to media persons after a meeting to discuss establishing campuses of educational institutions in Sindh at the Regional Office of Higher Education Commission (HEC), he said they have to change emergency into an emerging Pakistan and that is only possible through education.

Dr Siddiqui said that they were trying to take Pakistan's every area, village and slum to a prosperous stage. He emphasised the digitisation in the country.

The minister mentioned that it is important to showcase this opportunity to the world and aging nations. He added that crises have already emerged in Japan, Germany, and Russia, where the population is decreasing.

Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui said that the talent of Pakistani youth could be utilised to this effect. He said that an agreement had also been reached with Huawei regarding the education of two lac students.

In response to a question, he stated that the standards of student unions had deteriorated, but in their original form, they could play an important role in these changing times. He said that the purpose of the 18th Amendment was the devolution of power but it proved to be an accumulation of power.

GST issue on education would be raised in the National Assembly, he said replying to a question.

He reiterated that the nation was in debt of 78 thousand billion out of which 9,775 billion to be paid in terms of loans and interests.

PPP MNAs meet NA speaker

ISLAMABAD (Online): PPP Members of National Assembly (MNAs) have met speaker National Assembly (NA) Ayyaz Sadiq and they have agreed on resolving all matters with reconciliation.

According to NA, PPP delegation met NA speaker Ayyaz Sadiq before commencement of session in speaker chamber.

PPP delegation included Khurshid Shah, Navid Qamar, Ijaz Jakhani and deputy speaker Ghulam Mustafa Shah.



QUETTA: A view of overloaded passenger van on the way cause any incident needs attention of concern authorities.

Pak Community organizes Eid Milan Party in Guangzhou

BEIJING (APP): The Consulate General of Pakistan in Guangzhou organized a heartwarming Eid ul Adha get-together event for Pakistani students and researchers in fostering educational and cultural exchanges between the two countries.

During his keynote speech on the occasion, Sardar Muhammad encouraged the Pakistani community studying in various educational institutions across South China to recognize their crucial role as ambassadors of their country.

He urged them to uphold the responsibility of representing Pakistan with integrity and diligence, emphasizing the importance of excelling in their academic

pursuits and fulfilling their assigned tasks to the best of their abilities.

Additionally, the Consul General expressed gratitude towards the Guangdong government and Chinese authorities at different levels for their continued support in providing opportunities for Pakistani students and researchers to advance their careers and academic endeavors in their respective fields.

A highlight of the event was the engaging performance by students hailing from distant universities, showcasing their talents on traditional musical instruments such as Rabab, tabla, and harmonium.

He reiterated that the nation was in debt of 78 thousand billion out of which 9,775 billion to be paid in terms of loans and interests.