

Independent

dailyindish@gmail.com Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah www.dailyindependent.com.pk Islamabad

Vol. XIV No. 146 Reg. mails-B/ID-445 Wednesday June 26, 2024, Zil Hajj 19, 1445 A.H. Ph: 2158688, 2158997 Pages 4: Rs. 12

Cabinet approves Operation Azam-e-Istehkam Azm-e-Istehkam to energize IBOs sans any population displacement: PM tells cabinet

No new duty will be slapped on solar panels for common man

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, ruling out any large-scale military operation, on Tuesday said that Azm-e-Istehkam was a multi-domain, multi-agency and whole of system national vision, aimed at decisively rooting out the nebulous and shadowy presence of remnants of terrorists, and violent extremism.

The prime minister, chairing a meeting of the Federal Cabinet, took the members into confidence about the prevailing misunderstanding and speculations about the Azm-e-Istehkam, saying that instead of any large-scale operation, the already ongoing intelligence-based kinetic operations, would be energized and expedited.

In his remarks, he informed the Cabinet members that no additional duty

would be imposed on the solar panels to ensure the accessibility of low-cost energy to every citizen.

He said the government was planning to put the national economy on a positive trajectory and expressed satisfaction over the country heading towards economic stability.

The prime minister reiterated the resolve to boost the country's exports by promoting Small and Medium Enterprises and withdrawing privileges from the elite class and those exploiting the national resources.

The economic protection of the common man and providing them equal opportunities were among the government's priorities, he added.

Discussing the annual budget 2024-25, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif instructed the cabinet members to ensure their pres-

ence in the ongoing budget debate in the Parliament.

During the briefing, the cabinet members were informed that the privatisation of the PIA was moving ahead swiftly as companies showing interest in the pre-bidding process, were visiting different PIA sites and bidding of the PIA will be held in the first week of August.

The prime minister instructed to accelerate the PIA privatisation while ensuring transparency in the process.

On the Commerce Ministry's recommendation and request from the World Food Programme of Afghanistan, the federal cabinet approved transit of a truck from Karachi to Kabul carrying the spare-parts of the trucks, just for once on humanitarian grounds.

The body gave the go-

President underlines efforts to create awareness about drug abuse, strengthen laws, engage communities

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari has stressed that eliminating the scourge of drug abuse required creation of awareness, strengthening of anti-narcotics laws, investing in prevention and treatment and engaging communities.

"We also need to educate our youth about the harmful impacts of drug abuse to save them from this menace. Additionally, we should divert the energies of our youth into healthy and productive activities. The future of our young generation lies in our hands," the president said in a message on the occasion of 'International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking' being observed on June 26.

Today, the president said they commemorated the international day against drug abuse and illicit trafficking under the theme "The evidence is



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs Federal Cabinet Meeting.

Pakistan committed to peaceful international relations despite challenges: DPM Ishaq Dar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Monday emphasized Pakistan's commitment to maintaining peaceful, cooperative and good neighborly relations, with all countries despite facing challenges and setbacks in certain instances.

Speaking at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad's (ISSI) 51st Foundation Day, he highlighted the importance of dialogue, the avoidance of bloc politics, and adherence to the UN Charter.

Dar stressed Pakistan's focus on economic development and regional peace, particularly with Afghanistan and India, advocating for stability in South Asia.

He also underscored Pakistan's strong strategic partnership with China, its desire for deeper ties with

neighboring and major powers, and its commitment to multilateralism.

The overarching goal was to enhance regional connectivity and economic security through a pivot to geo-economics, he added.

Dar stated that despite challenges, Pakistan remained steadfast.

He stressed the importance of communication, dialogue, and negotiations to mitigate risks, advocating for a collaborative approach that respected all nations' interests and aspirations. The DPM reiterated Pakistan's opposition to bloc politics, endorsing cooperation over confrontation and commitment to the UN Charter and international law.

He noted the profound global transformation highlighted by leaders like Xi

Jinping and Olaf Scholz, marking the shift towards a multipolar world order.

"We are living in an increasingly tumultuous and dangerous world, with traditional and new security threats," he said, adding that Pakistan's approach focused on a peaceful neighborhood policy and sustainable economic development, emphasizing the link between peace and development.

A peaceful, stable, united, and prosperous Afghanistan was in Pakistan's interest due to shared history, geography, culture, and music, he added.

The deputy prime minister said that since the Taliban takeover in August 2021, Pakistan had cooperated with Afghanistan to avert a humanitarian crisis and support the Afghan people.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari stressed the importance of taking political input in the formation of federal budget 2024-25.

Bilawal announces to provide constitutional protection to BISP

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Tuesday appreciated the government's proposal to increase the allocation for Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) by 27% and announced plans to provide constitutional cover to it.

Participating in the budget debate, he said the objective behind this constitutional cover was to ensure that no future government could reverse the program, following the example of other countries that wanted to provide relief to their masses.

"This program should be provided with constitutional cover so that nobody can reverse it," the

PPP chairman said.

The proposed increase in BISP allocation underscores the government's focus on social welfare and poverty alleviation, reaffirming its dedication to the welfare of the most vulnerable segments of society, he added.

He regretted that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government tried to end this program, which provided support to thousands of families in the country.

The chairman noted that data gathered for the BISP was being used during floods and other climate disasters to provide relief to the people.

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that the main issues facing common

people were inflation and unemployment and urged all political parties to sit together and come up with suggestions to overcome these problems.

He believed that it would have been much better if the government had consulted with allied and opposition parties before preparing the budget.

"We know the difficulties of the government; if the consultation had been held, the outcome would have been much better," he added.

The chairman said that the people of the country were not concerned with the problems of political parties adding they wanted solutions to their own problems.

Govt to develop consensus on 'Azm-e-Istehkam': Asif

LAHORE (APP): Defence Minister Khawaja Asif said on Tuesday the government would develop a consensus on the anti-terrorism operation "Azm-e-Istehkam" to eliminate militants from the country, assuring the opposition that its reservations over the matter would be addressed. Legal and constitutional process would be adopted to allay the reservations of all political parties including Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-F (JUI-F) and Awami

National Party (ANP), he said and added that parties were taking such type of stand only to capture vote bank, but their stand should be for the state only, and not for votes. Militants are being backed by the people abroad who want Pakistan to become "no go area".

Addressing a press conference here at Model Town, the defence minister said that operation Azm-e-Istehkam was a continuation of the National Action Plan, which had no political objectives.

Gilani for enhancing inter-Parl. coop. between Pak, Australia

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani on Tuesday stressed for increased exchange of parliamentary delegation to enhance the inter-parliamentary cooperation between Pakistan and Australia.

During meeting with High Commissioner of Australia to Pakistan, Neil Hakins who called him here, Gilani said that Pakistan accorded high value to its relations with Australia and wanted to further strengthen the ties between the two countries.

He also highlighted Pakistan's significant sacrifices in the war against terror and its humanitarian efforts, including the support extended to hundred thousands of Afghan refugees.

Yousaf Raza also emphasized Pakistan's proactive role in combating cli-

mate change, underscoring the country's ongoing initiatives and achievements in this critical area.

The High Commissioner commended Pakistan for its unwavering commitment and efforts in the fight against terrorism. He particularly praised Pakistan's humanitarian assistance to Afghan refugees and acknowledged the country's constructive contributions to global climate initiatives.

Furthermore, the envoy conveyed that they had accommodated 3,500 Afghan Refugees from Pakistan in Australia as gesture of solidarity and support.

He also apprised that they plan to accommodate another 6,000 Afghan Refugees in one phase and that 8,000 in the other phase which will greatly lessen the load on the economy, health and education system.

Eight of a family shot dead over property dispute

PESHAWAR (INP): Eight members of a family including women and children were shot dead and two injured over property dispute here on Tuesday.

Police said that armed men barged into house of rival in Badaber area of Peshawar and opened indiscriminate fire at the residents.

As a result of firing,

eight family members including four women and four children were killed while two others sustained bullet wounds.

The culprits fled the scene after committing the crime.

The bodies and injured were shifted to hospital and police after registering a case against culprits started raids for their arrest.

SC's three new judges take oath

ISLAMABAD (APP): The three new judges of Supreme Court of Pakistan on Tuesday took oath of their offices in a ceremony at apex court Islamabad.

Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa administered the oath to Justice Malik Shahzad Ahmad Khan, Justice Aqeel Ahmed Abbasi, and Justice Shahid Bilal Hassan as top court's judges in a ceremony.

The oath taking ceremony was attended by judges of SC, attorney general of Pakistan and senior lawyers.

The law ministry has issued the notification on Monday, which stated that under Article 177 of the Constitution, the president pleased to appoint Sindh High Court (SHC) Chief Justice Aqeel Ahmed Abbasi, Lahore High Court (LHC) Chief Justice Malik Shahzad Ahmad Khan and LHC's Justice Shahid Bilal Hassan as judges of the Supreme Court.



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar delivers remarks at 51st Anniversary of Institute of Strategic Studies.

There is no law of phone tapping in place, what is being done its illegal: IHC

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) has remarked in audio leaks case no law regarding phone tapping is in place and what is going on is illegal.

Adjourning the hearing of the case for indefinite period Justice Babar Sattar remarked this is not matter of national security. I reject your plea for in chamber hearing of the case.

Additional Attorney General (AAG) requested repeatedly for in-chamber hearing of the case.

Justice Babar Sattar remarked I am not asking national security secret from you. We will not start joke of chamber hearing.

He further remarked people should know why are you intruding in the privacy of the people. Here courts don't know you are doing what. This is not national security. You cannot say law has been enacted or otherwise.

Justice Babar Sattar heard petitions of Bushra Bibi and Najam ul Saqib against audio leaks.

Additional Attorney General (AAG) Munawwar Iqbal Dogal

told the court interior ministry issued one SOP. ISI and IB can obtain data from service providers directly. The other law enforcement agencies can obtain data from these agencies when need arises.

Justice Babar Sattar remarked this SOP has been issued by a section officer. No mention is made about the respective authority. How this power lies with the interior ministry. This SOP was issued under what law. How live location can be shared without warrant. Government decided under what law that you can obtain this data. You did not tell about phone tapping.

AAG told Sindh High Court had directed to provide data to secret agencies in missing persons case.

The counsel for PTA said we have not allowed any one for phone tapping. PTA is conducting surveillance. It is regulator.

Counsel for Islamabad Police told the court to our view there is no ban on obtaining this material.

Justice Babar Sattar inquired can you enter into home of any one without warrants.

Govt decides to cut PSDP budget by Rs250bto 'overcome' shortfall

ISLAMABAD (INP): Federal Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal said that the government would cut Rs 250 billion from the proposed budget for the fiscal year 2024-25.

Speaking to the media, Ahsan Iqbal said that confirmed that a cut of Rs 250 billion would be made in the federal development program.

He said that the cut was essential to overcome the revenue shortfall and that the development budget had to bear the brunt of it.



ISLAMABAD: Parliamentary Delegation of Istihkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) headed by Federal Minister for Privatization, Board of Investment and Communications Abdul Aleem Khan called on Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq.

New FY budget aimed at deficit reduction: Aurangzeb

ISLAMABAD (Online): Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb has said the budget for the next fiscal year is aimed at reducing fiscal deficit by focusing on measures that enhance the government's revenues and reduce unnecessary expenditures.

Winding up discussion on the budget 2024-25 in the National Assembly Tuesday, he said on the directions of the Prime Minister, the process of simplicity and austerity will be continued in the next fiscal year. He said a committee headed by him has been constituted which will present recommendations in this regard including closing down the

ministries or their merger and devolution to the provinces. The Finance Minister announced that the pension expenditures will be brought down through pension reforms in future. Muhammad Aurangzeb pointed out that the home-grown reforms program is the basis of the next year's fiscal budget in order to steer the country out of a difficult economic situation.

He said the reforms include enhancing tax to GDP ratio to thirteen percent, SOE reforms, public private partnership and energy sector reforms.

The Minister said the government is seriously committed to this plan and

started its implementation. He assured that all the stakeholders will be taken on board about the implementation of this plan. He said the digitization process of FBR is being accelerated. He said legislation is being introduced in the parliament to bring changes in the boards of the power sector. The privatization of the PIA has been taken forward.

Highlighting other points of the home-grown reforms plan, the Finance Minister said these include targeted social protection, broad based fair taxation system and initiatives for the health and education sectors.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani in a meeting with Australian High Commissioner Mr. Neil Hawkins at Parliament House.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Wednesday June 26, 2024

A new operation

Serious concerns had been raised by opposition political parties — particularly those with presence in KP — after Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif announced the launch of Operation Azm-i-Istehkam on Saturday. Considering that KP has been hit the hardest by terrorism, the concerns raised by these parties were understandable, as local communities were worried about fresh violence and displacement, similar to what was witnessed during earlier military campaigns.

Reacting to these concerns, the administration clarified matters on Monday when, in a statement released by the PM Office, it was pointed out that no large-scale displacement will take place, and the envisaged operation will largely be a 'mopping up' exercise to clear out the "remnants" of militant groups. There can be little doubt about the need to crush the terrorist threat before it gains further strength. It is a fact that militant actors have regrouped after nearly every previous military operation. Thus, to make Azm-i-Istehkam a success, the lacunae of past operations must be studied minutely.

The new operation also seems to be partly influenced by vocal Chinese concerns about the need for security in Pakistan. Whatever the triggers, clear deterrent action is needed against terrorist groups, but without upending the lives of people in the affected areas, and causing mass displacement. The state seems to have realised the need for this balance, as reflected in Monday's PMO statement. The government should continue to take all stakeholders on board, as without feedback from all political forces, it will be difficult to convince the affected populations of the operation's necessity. True, operational details cannot be divulged; but, if need be, sensitive information can be shared with lawmakers in camera. Moreover, Pakistan has been losing an unacceptably high number of security men to terrorist attacks over the past few years. The latest attack came last week in Kurram, in which five troops were martyred. This is not a conventional war, and the military needs to consider forming specialised units trained to counter the asymmetric measures employed by militant groups. In the cities, it is the police, through the CT departments, that should be leading the fight against terrorist groups. The state must also continue to communicate to the Afghan Taliban the need to prevent their soil from being used against Pakistan, and to rein in the TTP. This pressure needs to continue along with CT operations on Pakistani soil. And, as the military takes on the militants on the battlefield, a complementary effort against extremism will also be required. As witnessed in the aftermath of earlier military campaigns, unless the support structure of terrorist groups in the country is completely dismantled, these entities can spring up with new names. The twin battles against militancy and extremism will not be easy to fight, but are essential for Pakistan.

Arifa Noor

In the midst of a budget debate, the government also held a meeting on security and made some big decisions — decisions perhaps far weightier than taxing the salaried class, which comes as easy to all governments as claiming their success in fixing Pakistan's economy. But to return to the weighty matter of security, the government called an apex committee meeting on Saturday and announced a new 'operation' against terrorism. The prime minister approved a "reinvigorated and re-energised national counterterrorism [CT] campaign through the launching of Operation Azm-i-Istehkam, with the consensus of all stakeholders including the provinces, Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kas-hmir, symbolising the national resolve to eradicate—te extremism and terrorism from the country".

It seems extremism and terrorism are now being seen as twin problems. The press release mentioned a reinvigorated CT strategy, the use of kinetic force, effective legislation

and socioeconomic measures. The National Action Plan was also brought in.

It is worth pointing out that this announcement comes a little over a year after a similar announcement. In April 2023, the PDM government called a National Security Committee meeting, after which it was reported that "The meeting approved launching of an all-out comprehensive operation with the [help] of the entire nation and the government".

One news story added that the government had formed a committee to prepare a report within weeks about the "limitations and implementation" of the operation. It seems this committee proved as effective as the many committees formed to suggest "austerity measures", because little is known about the fate of the report. Perhaps one can venture to say it didn't prove all that successful because the government has now announced another operation. And this time around, the resolve is stronger — the new operation has been given a name, unlike the un-christened one announced in 2023.

Or perhaps it should

be taken more seriously because of the public request made by the Chinese for better security.

But even if the government resolve and seriousness is accepted as gospel truth, it is hard to quell questions. The problem with pesky souls is that, despite being told about the utmost importance of security, they grapple with doubts, which lead to questions, especially as the press release, while lengthy, appeared short on detail.

It is hard to tell if this new operation will focus on intelligence-based operations (as in the recent past) rather than full-scale operations, as we saw in the noughties. The government has not clarified this. While the press release speaks of a CT campaign, the government did not respond to the uproar created by the PTI in parliament by simply saying that there would not be full-scale military operations as in the past. Instead, the focus was on criticising the PTI for its lack of support.

This does indicate, circumstantially, that large-scale operations are part of the plan.

However, this raises

more questions than it answers. The environment in 2008 was very different when large-scale operations were launched. Back then, the TTP was in control of territory and the operations were launched, along with mass displacement of people, to dislodge the militants and impose the 'will of the state'. So far, from the little that appears in the press, the TTP is not controlling territory in the same way.

Second, the last time around, it appeared the operations were partly based on assumptions that once the TTP fighters tried to escape the military operations by crossing the border, they would be confronted by Afghan and Nato forces. In fact, in those days, there was constant communication between the two sides and efforts at cooperation as well as complaints about the lack of assistance. However, this time around, the border and Afghanistan will make operations more difficult, as the regime in Kabul is already providing havens to the TTP.

Third, the large-scale operations earlier enjoyed widespread public support;

the latter didn't just come from the urban centres and the mainstream areas of the country but also political parties based in KP. This included the ANP and PPP which dominated the province, headed the government and were present in the legislatures.

However, this time around, this support will not be easy to ensure because the people are openly hostile to operations.

The mass-scale displacement of people due to the operations, the challenges of living in refugee camps, and then their return to homes and livelihoods destroyed by war and delayed compensations, has made the Pakhtun population wary. This has been brought home by the mass protests that were held in many areas when the TTP reappeared in 2022. The large gatherings in a number of areas, including Swat, were not simply against the TTP but also against military action; such is the public mood that all parties took a stand against them.

It is noteworthy that the PTM, which enjoys widespread support, is also

critical of military operations; in fact, its emergence and street politics was aimed at raising awareness about the sufferings of the Pakhtun population due to militancy and the state's actions to eradicate it.

This distrust of the state and its institutions will not make it easy to create public support for wide-spread use of state force, as in the past.

Last, but not least, there is also the issue of expense. The extensive military operations in the past took place at a time when aid from the US in the form of coalition support funds was still making its way to Pakistan. At present, with no such aid and the cash crunch the country is dealing with, any planning for military operations will also have to consider how they will be financed. So far, there have been few answers to these concerns in the press release or the debate in parliament. Perhaps once the government is free from budget worries, some of the details will be thrashed out and made public, ensuring that we don't need another such meeting and announcement a year on. -- Courtesy Dawn

Critical days for Modi and rivals

Jawed Naqvi

The underplayed defeat for his government by 32 seats in the parliamentary elections, with a whopping loss of 63 BJP MPs from the previous tally, may have reined in Prime Minister Modi's self-obsessed march on Indian democracy for now. His new and untested experiment with a coalition government has just begun, with the opening of the 18th Lok Sabha on Monday.

Modi must cling to power not only for himself and his hatchet man, the home minister, but also for his corporate friends who have backed him from his days as Gujarat chief minister, benefiting both sides in assorted ways.

Hindutva was a lubricant in the enterprise but by no means incidental to the project. A slip-up in the new House could be politically fatal and, of course, hugely embarrassing, too. Without Modi at the helm, skeletons are primed to tumble out of the cupboards at the home ministry and the Prime Minister's Office, which jointly and exclusively

ruled the country during the last 10 years.

The days ahead, therefore, could go anywhere, which way. There's always a chance of seeing a resolute opposition carry the day for democracy. Or we could see a lurch towards greater authoritarianism, which is Modi's natural stance to rule. In which case, the requirement would be challenging on three counts. He would need to effectively smother the assault from a rejuvenated opposition. He must also keep intact his benign hold on critical allies lest they become vulnerable to the siren calls of opposition. Above all, Modi would need to vacate the challenge from within the Hindutva fold, primarily from the RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat, with whom he has had strained relations.

An old story from the Caravan magazine is self-explanatory. It quotes former BJP minister Arun Shourie as indicating a Modi-Bhagwat stand-off. It seems Bhagwat sent an emissary to Shourie to prod Modi to chalk out an election strategy with the RSS chief for the 2014 polls. Modi, we are told,

ignored Bhagwat, but grudgingly agreed to meet him not in the RSS headquarters of Nagpur, as asked, but at a place of his choice in Ahmedabad. The strain burst into the open with the 2024 poll verdict. The BJP's rout prompted Bhagwat to mock the "arrogance" of power, while the RSS mouthpiece, Organiser, slammed the BJP for undermining the parent body's advice in critical ways.

Also, within the Hindutva fold, the saffron-clad chief minister of Uttar Pradesh is said to be in the crosshairs of the Amit Shah-Narendra Modi duo. He is accused of subverting the elections in the state, where the BJP campaign ran aground before the secular forces of Rahul Gandhi and former state chief minister Akhilesh Yadav. Yogi Adityanath does not belong to the RSS stable, and has signalled the revival of his own Hindutva militant brigade, which he had abandoned over the years in office. A potentially rebellious Uttar Pradesh could leave Modi further isolated within the BJP, particularly when by-elections are due for state leg-

islature seats vacated by Lok Sabha winners, with candidates chosen by New Delhi.

An imperative for Modi to effectively fend off the three challenges — from the opposition, the allies, and within the Hindutva fold — to keep his grip on power, lies in the election of the Speaker of the Lok Sabha. After the 2019 victory, Modi hand-picked a trusted man for the job, Om Birla. With the Speaker of his choice, he could evict the entire opposition when that was needed to pass crucial bills. He could single out MPs for special treatment, as he did with Rahul Gan-dhi and Mahua Moitra in the previous Lok Sabha.

The Speaker of the House is crucial in a parliamentary democracy. But for the Nazi Speaker in the Reichstag, Hitler would have struggled to become Fuhrer. William Shirer records as American correspondent in Nazi Berlin how Frantz von Papen, a Hitler ally-turned-critic, came running with the decree in hand from president Hindenburg to dissolve parliament. This was their

attempt to stop Hitler from accumulating invincible powers.

The Reichstag president (Speaker), Hermann Goering, deliberately ignored Papen till the Nazi hold on the House was sealed with a vote. Only after this he signalled to Papen to come forward with his papers, just to quickly inform him that he was late as the Reichstag had already voted to preclude its dissolution.

It was, of course, a coincidence that in 1934, when Goering became the Reichstag chief, Kesarinath Tripathi was born in Uttar Pradesh. As a BJP apparatchik, Tripathi rose to become Speaker of the House in the Uttar Pradesh assembly and became noted for arbitrarily breaking up Mayawati's party to enable the BJP to consolidate power. This BJP trick was used elsewhere, including Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra, to dismantle opposition governments and instal their own.

If Modi gets the Speaker of his choice, the opposition could soon find itself fighting him on

the streets instead of parliament. Besides, it could signal trouble for Modi's allies. Three members of the Telugu Desam Party defected to join the BJP in the Rajya Sabha not long ago. Such threats could become ominous should the Speaker be from the Modi team.

Unsurprisingly, the first day of the Lok Sabha began with a violation of the convention according to which the most seasoned veteran MP becomes the protem Speaker. Convention says the most senior member is chosen for the job. The BJP chose its own, a seven-term member over the Congress's eight-term veteran.

Worrying scenarios are already circulating of mid-term polls or worse should Modi feel he is losing the grip on power. Such a crisis could erupt should the BJP be trounced in the Maharashtra and Maharashtra state polls due in November. To set up a stronger show, Modi may yield to the RSS, possibly surrendering the post of the BJP president to someone handpicked from Nagpur.

Hundred days on

Dr Niaz Murtaza

Lurching from one controversy to another, the PML-N has marked 100 days in power. To ensure accountability and public welfare, one must regularly review the outcomes of all regimes via a sound framework.

The one I use says that the quality of outcomes of a regime depends on the quality of its strategies which, in turn, depend on the quality of its team. Outcomes occur in five domains (economic, political, social, security and external) and functions (legislation, policy, projects, services and institutional reform). This comprehensive framework allows analysis, while its cause and effect links give it predictive powers: if a set-up can't present a quality team or sound strategies, its outcomes will be poor. In fact, by looking at the team, one can predict accurately, even within months, how it will do in five years.

Seeing its weak team, I had predicted in 2018 that the PTI wouldn't deliver. My following reviews using this lens confirmed the accuracy of the prediction. Unluckily, the same is true for the PML-N. No set-up can show major outcomes in just 100 days. But by then, it must at least present a compelling vision, policies and a competent team, especially given the nature of crises we face. That this hasn't happened in three months is cause for alarm. And if it doesn't happen in six months, it may be cause to start writing its obituary predictively.

The cabinet, even in critical areas like the economy, interior, law, foreign affairs and social sectors, largely has inept persons, reflecting the demands of powerful

forces like the establishment, various Noonie factions, and allies. One struggles to find persons with serious expertise in the ministries assigned to them. The finance minister is the new kid on the block. But though better than Ishaq Dar, he lacks the serious macroeconomic, IMF and public finance credentials needed to deal with our economic crisis. Also, the finance minister largely deals with fiscal matters. To upgrade the economy, one needs competent persons in investment, commerce, IT and industry posts, which are largely filled with inept political appointees. The icing on the cake, the prime minister, shows no ability to graduate beyond his federally irrelevant projects skills.

The team's gaps show in the lack of sound vision and strategy in all five domains and functions. Reflecting its lack of a sound economic vision, the recent budget does badly on key criteria, such as cutting wasteful outlays and subsidies, identifying new and equitable sources of direct taxes, encouraging durable growth in productive sectors and exports, and ensuring equity. It may deliver temporary stability and an IMF deal. But by perpetuating the root causes of our economic ills, it is laying the ground for future economic crises.

Politically, we need civilian sway, political legitimacy and civil rights. The PML-N lacks control over key federal areas such as economy, defence, interior and foreign affairs, having meekly given them to the establishment. Its mandate is rigged, apparently even more than the PTI's. Under the establishment's push, it is taking harsh steps to curtail civil rights, such as cracking

down on media, X, the opposition and dissidents, even more so than the PTI. One sees no legislative agenda to deal with our constitutional and political challenges.

The security situation is precarious, with militant groups in KP and Balochistan and criminal gangs in Sindh and Punjab. Socially, extremism is rampant, resulting in a horrendous situation for women, children and religious minorities. Yet, beyond empty stern warnings from both Pindi and Islamabad after every incident, one sees little vision or capacity to address the root causes of insecurity or extremism in any region.

Externally, ties with major powers like China, the West and Gulf states have improved a bit, but without creating major opportunities to help us economically. Both China and the Gulf states seem reluctant to invest heavily in Pakistan, given the state's lack of vision and the failure to inspire confidence, as was true for the PTI.

Unless the PML-N co-opts able hands, there is little chance of it giving major positive outcomes in five years even if it lasts that long. So, as with the PTI, the establishment's new hybrid experiment may fail.

The 2008-18 era, when it had withdrawn partially from politics, had yielded some political evolution, which may have improved governance too had it been allowed to flourish. But its post-2017 forays have wiped off all those gains and pushed us back by decades. Civilian sway and political legitimacy remain our only way forward, and even that is a long route to progress. But the establishment shows no signs of accepting that. -- Courtesy Dawn

'Global boiling'

Masood Lohar

This year's Haj turned tragic as over 1,300 pilgrims succumbed to soaring temperatures, which reached a blistering 51.8 degrees Celsius. This calamity marks a new chapter in the saga of extreme weather events gripping the planet, a phenomenon UN Secretary General António Guterres dubbed "global boiling".

The deadly heatwave in Saudi Arabia is part of a broader trend of unprecedented heat affecting regions worldwide. Earlier this month, Pakistan and India faced similar extreme conditions. In Sindh, temperatures skyrocketed to over 52°C, with Mohenjodaro experiencing 52.2°C, nearly matching the country's record high of 54°C.

Across the border, the situation is equally dire. The Indian Meteorological Department has issued a red alert for the country's longest-ever heatwave. Over 100 deaths and 44,000 cases of heatstroke have been reported, with Delhi's temperatures surpassing 44°C, severely affecting the quality of life and economic activities.

In July 2023, Secretary General Guterres introduced the term 'global boiling' to describe the escalating impacts of climate change, indicating that the planet was transitioning from 'global warming' to a more extreme and perilous state. Initially met with scepticism, this term has since gained alarming validation as unusual weather patterns, including extreme heatwaves and unprecedented rainfall, have been observed globally.

One of the most alarming aspects of climate change is its unpredictability. Events that defy historical patterns have become the new norm, catching com-

munities off guard. This climate ping-pong of drought to flooding and extreme heat to cold is quite intriguing. For instance, only weeks ago near Makkah, where extreme heat has killed hundreds, there were unprecedented flash floods. Videos circulating on social media show powerful floods sweeping across the Fatma Wadi in Al Jumum Governorate. According to witnesses, for the first time in recorded history, the local wadi overflowed.

In April this year, Dubai experienced record-breaking rainfall, the heaviest in over 75 years. Social media and TV screens were flooded with images of luxury cars, including Rolls Royces, Porsches and Lamborghinis, floating through Dubai's waterlogged streets.

The floods wreaked havoc, resulting in deaths in the UAE and Oman, where 10 children died when their school bus was swept away. Over 1,000 flights at Dubai's airport, one of the world's busiest, were cancelled, causing significant travel disruptions.

Such severe storms and heavy rainfalls in April also led to flooding and fatalities in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Pakistan and Afghanistan reported several deaths caused by heavy rains and snowfall.

Southern China faced severe flooding in Guangdong province, displacing over 100,000 people. Meanwhile, northern China battled prolonged droughts and heatwaves, highlighting the varied and devastating impacts of climate change across the country.

These extreme weather events are becoming more frequent and severely impacting human health, agriculture, and ecosystems. Extreme

temperatures and changing precipitation patterns reduce crop yields, increasing the risk of droughts and floods, thereby disrupting food production and supply chains. Accelerated melting of polar ice caps and glaciers contributes to rising sea levels, while thawing permafrost releases large quantities of greenhouse gases like methane, exacerbating global warming. Drastic changes in habitats lead to the extinction of species unable to adapt, with coral reefs facing widespread bleaching and die-offs due to temperature sensitivity.

The term 'global boiling' underscores the urgency and severity of the climate crisis. The unprecedented heatwaves, torrential rains, and their devastating impacts are a stark reminder of the need for immediate and robust climate action. As nations grapple with these extreme events, the global community must prioritise sustainable practices and policies to mitigate the escalating impacts of climate change and safeguard the planet for future generations.

The idea of 'global boiling' ironically aligns with the 'boiling frog syndrome'. This metaphor illustrates the dangers of complacency and gradual change. According to the story, if a frog is put in boiling water, it will try to save itself by quickly jumping out. However, if it is placed in cold water that is slowly warmed, it will not be able to see the danger and will die as the water heats up. This metaphor aptly captures human complacency towards climate action. Nature, it seems, has escalated from 'warming' to 'boiling' to deliver a massive jolt from the climate cauldron. -- Courtesy Dawn

AJK Govt presents Rs 264 bln budget with development outlay of Rs 44 bln

MUZAFFARABAD (APP): The Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK) Government on Tuesday presented the budget for the fiscal year 2024-25 of over Rs 264 billion with a development outlay of Rs 44 billion.

As the total income from revenue sources has been estimated Rs 201.17 billion, the deficit is expected to be met with the grants provided by the Federal Government.

Following the footsteps of Federal Government, the AJK Government announced 25 & 20 percent raise in the salaries of its employees and 15 percent in pension in the next fiscal year.

Presenting the budget in the AJK Legislative Assembly, Minister for Finance Abdul Majid Khan highlighted the estimates of income and expenditures, and also elaborated salient features of the budget and successes of his

government to cut size the non-developmental expenditures by austerity measures and strict financial discipline.

The minister said the Inland Revenue would collect Rs 75 billion during the coming fiscal year in the head of income tax while the government would receive Rs 105 billion from the Federal Variable Grants (share from the divisible pool), besides Rs 1 billion as water use charges from the Federal Government and other revenue and non-revenue collections of the government departments.

He said in the recurring expenditures, the biggest amount of Rs 43.14 billion had been allocated in the head of pension which was almost equal to the total development budget while Rs 43.68 billion earmarked for non-development expenditures of the education department, and Rs 7 billion for the services and

general administration department, besides allocation of Rs. 9.84 billion for police.

He said Rs 41.62 billion had been allocated in the new head "state trading", without elaborating the type of trade carried out by the state. The minister said Rs 14.95 billion had been earmarked for the health department and Rs 10.81 billion for the energy and water resources department for their non-development expenditures.

In the Annual Development Programme, the minister said, priority had been given to the communication and works department with an allocation of Rs. 14.9 billion followed by education department Rs. 4.8 billion and health department Rs. 3 billion, local government schemes Rs. 3.7 billion, and physical planning and housing schemes Rs. 2.46 billion.



ISLAMABAD: In a major breakthrough, NRTC Pakistan, Allied Australian, and Tech Valley Pakistan signed a letter of understanding (LoU) at the Ministry of Federal Education, paving the way for a groundbreaking joint venture to establish a state-of-the-art Chromebook assembly line in Pakistan.

MNAs take up issues of economic development, tax reforms, infrastructure projects

ISLAMABAD (APP): Members of the National Assembly on both sides of the aisle Tuesday raised pressing issues regarding economic development, tax reforms and infrastructure projects.

Speaking on the Senate recommendations related to the Budget 2024-25 in the National Assembly, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's (PML-N) Muhammad Ilyas Choudhary said foreign remittances could be increased by providing maximum facilities and incentives to the overseas Pakistanis, which would ultimately steer the country out of economic crisis. Sunni Ittehad

Council's (SIC) Ali Khan Jadoon asked the government to decrease taxes on the business community as the industrial sector was already passing through critical conditions.

He pointed out that there were no taxes on imports across the world while China was giving a rebate to importers. He further said taxing the agricultural machinery and other items would have negative impact on the crops production.

SIC's Rana Muhammad Faraz Noon supported the Sukkur-Hyderabad Motorway and a recycling plant for sacred papers, besides seeking tax

exemption on the children's milk. Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Pakistan's (JUI-P) Muhammad Usman Badini regretted that construction of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) plants in Balochistan had not completed. He urged the government to take measures to further improve the coalmine sector in the region.

SIC's Dawar Khan Kundi said South Waziristan had been affected due to the war on terror. A number of locals had been physically impaired due to landmines, and the government should give them financial support, he added.

PSX stays bearish, loses 291 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bearish trend on Tuesday, losing 291.52 points, a negative change of 0.37 percent, closing at 77,940.58 points against 78,232.10 points on the last working day.

A total of 292,186,284 shares were traded during the day as compared to 385,176,598 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 11,414 billion against Rs 15,450 billion on

the last trading day. Around 433 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 144 of them recorded gains and 219 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 70 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were Pervez Ahmed Company with 26,808,974 shares at Rs 2.29 per share, K-Electric Limited with 17,900,691 shares at Rs 4.43 per share, and WorldCall Telecom with 16,871,942 shares at Rs 1.28 per share.

Gold rates dip by Rs 500 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The price of per tola of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs 500 and was sold at Rs 241,500 on Tuesday against its sale at Rs 242,000 on last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs 429 to Rs 207,047 from Rs 207,476 whereas that of 10 gram 22 karat gold went down to Rs 189,793 from Rs 190,186, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported. The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs 2,850.

Atif Ikram says: Increase in MDI will destroy industries, should be withdrawn immediately

Independent Report ISLAMABAD: President Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Atif Ikram Shaikh has rejected the increase in MDI saying that such measures will destroy industrialization.

In these circumstances, when the wheel of the industry is at a standstill, the government should bring such policies to enable the industry to run. We demand that this initiative be withdrawn immediately.

Federation President Atif Ikram said that according to the new table, industrial consumers whose category is B1 will have fixed charges of Rs 1,000 per month.

The monthly charges of B2 category industrial consumers have increased by three hundred percent, they will pay two thousand rupees monthly fixed charges, B3 category industrial consumers will

pay two thousand rupees monthly fixed charges with an increase of three hundred and thirty five percent.

While the monthly charges of B4 category industrial consumers will be 2000 rupees per month with an increase of 355%. After these fixed charges, the entire industry will be closed, more than half of the industry has been closed so far. And will further destroy the industries.

Atif Ikram said that we welcome the decrease of ten rupees per unit for the industries, as a result of which the electricity has decreased from sixteen cents to twelve and a half cents, while the electricity in the region is given to the industrialists and exporters from six to eight cents. Try to reduce this rate further so that we can compete with the region and this move will also lead to increase in employment.



ISLAMABAD: A vendor arranging and displaying tomatoes on handcart to attract the customers at Fruit & Vegetable Market in Federal Capital.

POL import bill decreases by 0.28%

ISLAMABAD (APP): The imports of the overall petroleum group decreased by 0.28 percent during the first eleven months of the current fiscal year (2023-24) as compared to the corresponding period of the last year, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported.

The total imports of the petroleum group during July-May (2023-24) stood at \$ 15,338.947 million, as against the imports of \$ 15,382.307 million during the same period of last year, according to PBS data. Among petroleum commodities, the import of petroleum products declined by 11.69 percent, from \$ 6,748.197 million last year to \$ 5,959.417 million during the time period under review.

However, the imports of petroleum crude increased by 12.06 percent, from \$ 4,522.559 million to \$ 5,067.850; natural gas liquefied by 3.04 percent, from \$ 3,471.608 to \$ 3,577.164 whereas the imports of petroleum gas liquefied

went up by 14.80 percent and reached to \$ 639.625 million as compared to \$ 734.305 last year.

The imports of all other petroleum group products decreased by 33.37 percent and went down to \$ 0.212 million from \$ 0.318 million.

Meanwhile, on a year-on-year basis, the petroleum group imports witnessed an increase of 12.09 percent during the month of May 2024 as compared to the same month of last year. The petroleum imports during May 2024 were recorded as \$ 1,577.878 million against the imports of \$ 1,407.698 million during May 2023. However, on a month-on-month basis, the petroleum imports into the country decreased by 5.90 percent during May 2024, as compared to the imports of \$ 1,676.753 million in April 2024, according to the data. It is pertinent to mention here that the trade deficit contracted by 15.25 percent during the first 11 months of the current financial year (2023-24).



LONDON: High Commissioner of Pakistan to UK Dr Muhammad Faisal addressing a webinar titled "Doing Security Business with Pakistan & Establishing UK pavilion at IDEAS 2024" at Pakistan High Commission.

Pak needs American investment in IT, energy, agriculture and mineral extraction: Masood

WASHINGTON (APP): Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States, Masood Khan, invited American entrepreneurs and corporate leaders to invest in IT, energy, agriculture, and mineral extraction when he met them in Washington on Monday, according to a Pakistani embassy's press release.

The ambassador told the business leaders that the US International Trade Administration had identified several advantages for American investors in Pakistan, including the absence of shareholding restrictions, simple work permit regulations, no technology transfer requirements, and a large and sophisticated entrepreneurial community. "A new entity - Special Investment Facilitation Council - has been created to facilitate foreign inflows into these areas," he told the gathering. Pointing out that Pakistan was the world's

fourth largest freelance provider with over 20,000 ICT registered companies, the ambassador noted that the IT sector, especially tech startups were fast becoming a growth industry in Pakistan.

He also projected that power sector was another priority area as the country wanted to double its energy production from the current level of 45,000MW in a decade and make a fast transition to renewables.

The Pakistani envoy also invited the attention of US entrepreneurs to the treasure trove of minerals in Pakistan that included copper, gold, lead, zinc, iron ore, coal, lithium, rare earth, cobalt, aluminum, chromite and nickel. "Pakistan is developing the human capital and expertise for manufacturing semiconductor chips for application in various electronic and Generative AI supported devices."

Minister for Privatization calls on Ayaz

ISLAMABAD (APP): Parliamentary delegation of Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party, led by Minister for Privatization, Board of Investment and Communications Abdul Aleem Khan on Tuesday met with Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq and Deputy Speaker Syed Mustafa Shah.

Members of the National Assembly, Aown Chaudhry, Gul Ashgar Bhagour and Munaza Hasan were also present in the meeting, which discussed matters relating to the current budget session of the National Assembly, said a press release.

Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq and Deputy Speaker Syed Mustafa Shah appreciated the role of Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party, especially during the current budget session.

President Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party and Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan assured all possible cooperation from his party for democratic and parliamentary affairs of National Assembly.

Rupee gains 12 paise against Dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Rupee on Tuesday gained 12 paise against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 278.50 against the previous day's closing at Rs 278.62.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market, however, were Rs 277.75 and Rs 280.6 respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by 30 paise to close at Rs 298.74 against the last day's closing of Rs 298.44, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese Yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs 1.74, whereas an increase of 92 paise was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs 353.51 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs 352.59.



LAHORE: Activists of Jamat-e-Islami (JI) are holding protest demonstration against prolong electricity load shedding and high inflated electricity bills, at Thokar Niaz Baig Chowk in Lahore.

PCMEA for excluding export sector from normal tax regime

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Carpet Manufacturers and Exporters Association (PCMEA) has demanded that export sector should not be included in the normal tax regime, as it would hit the businesses hard.

PCMEA delegation stated this in a meeting with Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) President Kashif Anwar here at LCCI on Tuesday. The delegation was led by former LCCI president Shahid Hassan Sheikh. The Association's Executive Committee members Mian Atique Rehman, Raja Hassan Akhtar, Abdul Latif Malik, Former chairman PCMEA, Usman Ashraf, Senior vice Chairman, Ijazur Rehman, Major Akhtar Nazir, Tahir Aslam, Ifikhar Tahir, and Faisal Saad were part of the delegation.

The delegation added that government should provide facilities to the export sector. Bringing the export sector into the normal tax regime will reduce revenues and decrease dollar inflow into the country, which will further increase inflation, they argued.

They said that exporters might relocate to countries like the UAE in special economic zones. They demanded the formation of export-friendly policies and the announcement of at least a five-year policy for exports, which should not be affected by future budgets. The government facilities for exporters, such as financing, moved from three to 19 percent, which is not viable. Additionally, all the facilities like DLT and incremental DLT were withdrawn.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Four ships namely, TSS Amber, SinarMendawai, Horizon I and Gaslog Geneva carrying Containers, Palm oil, LPG and LNG, berthed at Container Terminal, Liquid Terminal, Engro Terminal and Gasport Terminal respectively on.

Meanwhile three more ships, Hanfnia Turquoise, Gaschem Fuji and Serenity Gas carrying Mogas, Chemicals and LPG also arrived at outer anchorage of the port during the same day.

A total of nine ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them gas carrier Al-Jassasiya is expected to sail on today afternoon, and three more ships, TSS Amber, Horizon-1 and Chem Trans Ionian is expected sail on same day afternoon.

Cargo volume of 161,353 tonnes, comprising 128,100 tonnes imports cargo.



QUETTA: Vendor sells toys to earn his livelihood for support his family, at a roadside stall located on Zarghoon road in Quetta.

3 Nigerian governors visit LCCI, discuss enhanced trade ties with Pakistan

LAHORE (APP): Three governors from Nigeria's northern states visited the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) and met with LCCI Senior Vice President Zafar Mahmood Chaudhry.

The delegation included World Bank Coordinator for North East Nigeria, Ms. Serena Cavicchi, Adamawa State Governor Ahmedu Umaru Fintiri, Yobe State Governor Mai Mala Buni, Borno State Governor Babagana Umara Zulum, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Wealth Dr. Mustafa Abba Gidam, Coordinator Halilu Malabu, Chairman Millat Tractors Sikandar Mustafa Khan, and others.

The delegation stated that Nigeria, in terms of area and population, is a large country in Africa and a rapidly developing commercial market. Pakistan and Nigeria have

a history of economic, political, and fraternal relations, with many areas of mutual understanding between the two countries.

They mentioned that Pakistan and Nigeria could increase trade volume by enhancing cooperation in various sectors including agriculture and pharmaceuticals. The delegation also visited factories in Pakistan that manufacture tractors and agricultural equipment, expressing that the agricultural machinery made in Pakistan is impressive. They emphasized the urgent need for both countries to increase cooperation in all sectors.

LCCI Senior Vice President Zafar Mahmood Chaudhry emphasized Pakistan's interest in exploring agricultural cooperation opportunities with Nigeria and highlighted the strong.



FAISALABAD: Students of GC University Faisalabad Fashion Designing are exhibiting their designed dresses.

China's premier slams trade tensions as EV exports are hit by tariffs

Monitoring Desk TAIPEI: Open markets and green technologies are vital for stabilizing global growth, China's premier said Tuesday, while criticizing trade tensions as he opened a conference in northeastern China.

Premier Li Qiang told political and business leaders attending the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting of the New Champions, also known as the "Summer Davos," that China is on track to attain Beijing's growth target this year of 5%.

Countries should "work closely together, reject bloc confrontation, oppose decoupling and disconnection, maintain the stability and smoothness of industrial and supply chains, and promote trade and investment liberalization and facilitation," Li said in a speech to the conference.

"We cannot slow down our pace in green transition in exchange for short-term economic growth nor practice protectionism in the name of green development or environmental protection," he said. China is facing pushback over its electric vehicle exports, which some governments fear will flood markets and hurt domestic producers. The European Union and Canada among others are mulling surtaxes on Chinese EVs. China and the E.U. said over the weekend they are open to talks over the tentative tariffs after Beijing last week announced an anti-dumping probe into European pork, largely seen as retaliation for the EV duties. Polish President Andrzej Duda and Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh joined the business leaders.



MUZAFFARABAD: Minister for Finance Abdul Majid Khan presenting the budget in the AJK Legislative Assembly.

Young business people, entrepreneurs builders of country's economy: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday said that the young businessmen were the builders of country's future and economy.

He said that the government would provide all possible facilities to the business community for promotion of economic activities. The provision of conducive environment and formation of business friendly policies were among the top priorities of the incumbent government, he added.

The prime minister expressed these views during a meeting with a delegation of young entrepreneurs that called on him.

The meeting was attended by Minister for Commerce Jama Kamal, Minister for Information and Broadcasting Ataulah Tarar, Minister for Energy Sardar Awaiz Ahmed Khan Leghari, Minister for

Privatization Abdul Aleem Khan, Chairman PM's Youth Programme Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan, relevant secretaries of the ministries and senior officials, the PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The prime minister underlined that the promotion of Pakistan's exports at the international level was critical for giving a spur to economic activities in the country in which the young entrepreneurs could play a significant role.

He said that the economic and trade deficits could be plugged with the cooperation of government and the business community, adding that a large number of youth could be transformed into talented manpower that would further bolster the country's economy.

The prime minister said the government was committed to end gender based discrimination in

provision of economic opportunities.

He also noted that the usage of latest technology for increasing agriculture yield could further boost the exports.

The prime minister informed the delegation that they were also reducing the size of the government's structure and resolved to make the state-owned entities more efficient.

During the meeting, the prime minister directed for the constitution of a youth entrepreneurs advisory committee comprising the youth business people on the pattern of Economic Coordination Committee.

The prime minister said the promotion of bilateral business cooperation between Pakistan and China was their top priority, adding with the second phase of China Pakistan Economic Corridor, the industrial development would be accelerated.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of young entrepreneurs calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Rubina Khalid advocates for economic empowerment through imparting technical training skills

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Senator Rubina Khalid Tuesday emphasized the critical importance of economic empowerment as the foundation for all forms of empowerment.

She highlighted BISP's initiative to provide technical skills to its beneficiaries, aiming to lift them out of poverty.

Senator Rubina Khalid was speaking during a meeting with Amjad Zafar, Team Lead at the World Bank, and Gul Najam Jamy, held today at BISP headquarters.

The Chairperson BISP pointed out the global demand for human resource development,

stressing the need to implement a Poverty Graduation Programme focused on women empowerment.

She noted BISP's strong working relationship with the World Bank and underscored the necessity of further strengthening this collaboration.

In addition, Senator Rubina Khalid highlighted the importance of adopting a new payment mechanism with the support of the World Bank to ensure transparency.

She also emphasized the need to improve financial literacy among women beneficiaries. She reaffirmed the political leadership's directive that every BISP beneficiary must receive their full stipend amount

without any deductions, in a dignified manner.

The World Bank team assured their complete technical support in these initiatives and confirmed their availability for a follow-up meeting within the week to present their proposed payment model system for BISP beneficiaries.

Earlier in the day, Vice Chairperson of Punjab Social Protection (PSP), Jahan Ara Watto, also met Senator Rubina Khalid. Ms. Jahan Ara Watto expressed her appreciation for the BISP database, which PSP has been utilizing for its education and health related projects. She highlighted the value of the BISP database in effectively reaching the targeted beneficiaries.



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Director General Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) Ambassador Sohail Mahmood and others cutting the cake at Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) on the occasion of a ceremony commemorating ISSI's 51 Anniversary at Federal Capital.

Rana meets with HEC Chairman; discusses strategies for youth

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman of the Prime Minister Youth Programme (PMYP) Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan has said that empowering youth with required resources and development opportunities is the need of the hour as today's youth, are leaders of tomorrow.

He said this during a meeting with the Chairman of the Higher Education Commission (HEC) Dr Mukhtar Ahmed here on Tuesday.

The meeting discussed various ways to promote positive engagement and development opportunities for the country's youth.

During the meeting, Chairman Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan and Dr Mukhtar Ahmed both emphasized the importance of collective efforts for skills,

education and overall empowerment of the youth population across the country. They discussed various initiatives and programs namely the Prime Minister's National Innovation Award, Prime Minister's Youth Laptop Scheme, National Volunteer Corps and several other schemes that could be implemented to effectively engage and empower the youth. They said that the joint efforts of the Prime Minister Youth Program and HEC will enable to utilize resources and expertise to effectively maximize the impact on youth development. The Chairman PMYP and HEC expressed optimism about the future of youth development in Pakistan and reiterated their commitment to work together towards the common goal.

ICT admin cracks down on overpricing; arrests vendors

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon, has directed the Assistant Commissioners and Magistrates for intensifying their efforts to control overpricing of vegetables, fruits, and bread in the Federal Capital.

During the inspection, the Islamabad Capital Territory Administration teams found several shopkeepers and vendors violating government-set rates. Immediate legal action was taken against those not adhering to the official prices, said the ICT Administration's spokesman. In an action, a vegetable vendor was arrested for selling products at sub-standard and inflated prices, sending a strong message to others in the market.

Randhawa announces establishment of DMA in federal capital

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) Muhammad Ali Randhawa has announced the establishment of a Disaster Management Authority (DMA) in the federal capital. The authority will be headed by the Deputy Commissioner of Islamabad and the Director General of Capital Emergency Services will also report directly to him, he said in a press release. The chairman said the primary goal for establish-

ing this authority was to effectively handle any unforeseen situations that might arise in the city.

Muhammad Ali said the new DMA would be integrated with the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and all emergency service departments also fall under the jurisdiction of the new authority. He also assured that the employment benefits and career progression of the employees in these departments would remain unaffected.

PPAF disburses 274,730 interest-free loans worth Rs 12.20 billion

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Programme (PPAF) disbursed 274,730 interest-free loans (65% loans to women) amounting to Rs 12.20 billion (including reflows) to borrowers from July 2023 to March 2024.

From July 2019 to March 2024, 2,677,227 loans (53% loans to women) with a value of Rs 101.71 billion (including reflows) have been disbursed.

Muqam underscores necessity of consistent, non-political approach to combating terrorism

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan, Engineer Amir Muqam, on Tuesday called for consistent and non-political approach to combating terrorism in the country.

Speaking in the National Assembly, he expressed the gratitude to Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Minister of Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, and Advisor to the Prime Minister on Political and Public Affairs Rana Sanullah for extending the tax exemption in the former FATA and PATA regions.

He said that the tax exemptions, originally granted in 2018, had been extended until 2023.

Despite external pressures from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and industrialists, the Prime Minister, considering the

current situation, extended the tax exemption period to June 2024. "This is not a personal issue; we are grateful to the Prime Minister and Finance Minister for making this wise decision under these circumstances," he added. He said that Minister for Defense Khawaja Muhammad Asif also discussed Operation Azm-e-Istikhram in the National Assembly, highlighting that all actions are taken collectively in the national interest.

Muqam noted that the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was present at the apex committee meeting, where all decisions were made with the national interest in mind and said it would continue to be so.

He called for an end to double standards and political maneuvering regarding terrorism, sharing his own experiences to stress the importance of a unified approach.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan in a meeting with Chairman HEC Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed.

Sherry for convening body of Whole on Senate's powers to approve budget

ISLAMABAD (APP): Parliamentary Leader of Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPPP) Sherry Rehman on Tuesday demanded the Senate chairman to convene the Committee of the Whole to deliberate over the powers of Upper House of the Parliament to approve the Federal Budget 2024-25.

Speaking in the Senate, the PPPP leader said though the Senate was the Upper House of the Parliament but its role in the approval of budget was limited.

Senator Rehman underscored that with equal representation of all the provinces, the Senate was the symbol of Federation.

She said it was cited that the senators were not directly elected representa-

tives. For that, she added, "the system of electing Senate members should be changed so that they can be directly elected."

The PPPP leader said the senators painstakingly prepared recommendations on the budget, but the National Assembly had the power to approve or reject them.

She pointed out that the Senate's Standing Committee on Finance, had representation from both treasury and opposition bench, which worked round the clock to prepare the recommendations for the Money Bill. "It is appreciable that Leader of the House in the Senate Ishaq Dar spoke about the powers of the Senate on the floor of the National Assembly," she added.

Holds Khuli Katchery at CPO Resolving public issues purely on merit is our foremost priority; IGP

Independent Report ISLAMABAD: According to the details, the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, held a Khuli

citizens' issues on merit is our top priority. Negligence and carelessness in duties will not be tolerated. Any citizen facing any issue related to the police can come

Katchery at the Central Police Office Islamabad, a public relations officer said.

During the katchery, he listened to the issues of citizens and police officers and issued directives on the spot for their resolution.

He said that, resolving

Excise deptt continues crackdown against illegal car modifications

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Excise and Taxation (E&T) Department has continued its crackdown against illegal car modifications, targeting vehicles with tinted glasses and unauthorized number plates.

On the directive of the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon, the Excise Department has intensified its efforts to enforce the law, said the spokesman of Islamabad Capital Territory Administration here on Tuesday. During recent checks, a total of above 300 vehicles were inspected, leading to the removal of

about 150 tinted windows and 100 unauthorized number plates. Additionally, 10 vehicles had their registrations suspended, while five received warnings.

The crackdown, led by Assistant Commissioners alongside Assistant Excise & Taxation Officers (AETOs) and Traffic Police, focused on areas including Faizabad bus stand, Zero Point, 9th Avenue near IGP, and Marriott Hotel checkpoint. Vehicles found in violation had their registrations suspended until the illegal modifications were rectified.



ISLAMABAD: Chairperson BISP, Senator Rubina Khalid, meets with World Bank's Mr. Amjad Zafar and Gul Najam Jamy today to discuss initiatives for economic empowerment and technical skills training for BISP beneficiaries.

USAT optional for university admissions, clarifies HEC

ISLAMABAD (APP): Higher Education Commission of Pakistan (HEC) Education Testing Council (ETC) has introduced the Undergraduate Studies Admissions Test (USAT) as a standardized tool for assessing student admissions to universities.

According to HEC, USAT is designed to ensure quality in the admissions process by evaluating academic aptitude.

It has been noticed

that there is misinformation circulating regarding the USAT. It is clarified that while HEC recommends USAT to universities, it is not mandatory for institutions to accept USAT scores. Each university retains the autonomy to decide whether to adopt USAT or conduct its own admission tests.

HEC encourages universities to consider USAT as a valuable option for admissions assessment.

International day of Seafarer observed

ISLAMABAD (APP): International Day of the Seafarer was observed across the globe on Tuesday.

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) designated 25 June as the International Day of the Seafarer in 2010.

The day also aimed to support and promote seafarers and sailors who are essential to the global trade and transport industry.



Katchery at the Central Police Office Islamabad, a public relations officer said.

Wafaqi Mohtasib directs PIMS admin to take immediate steps to fill vacant posts

Independent Report ISLAMABAD: Wafaqi Mohtasib Ejaz Ahmad

He stated that there is no justification to stop the salaries of Emergency

on receiving a report from the Inspection team which visited PIMS Hospital, said a press release issued here.

Taking notice of specific complaints received against the hospital, Wafaqi Mohtasib sent an inspection team headed by Senior Advisor, Ahmad Farooq alongwith Registrar Saqib Khan and Consultant (Media) Khalid Sial, who submitted a preliminary report after visiting various departments of the Hospital. When the team reached there, it found rush of patients and lack of facilities for patients. The inspection team was informed that 396 doctors are working in the hospital, whereas 415 posts of doctors and 283 posts of Nurses are lying vacant. A total of 1265 vacancies are available including paramedical staff.

doctors and their pending salaries may be paid immediately. He also directed the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) administration to increase the number of beds in emergency and install fans in all the wards. He gave these directions



ISLAMABAD: Charge d'Affaires of the Indonesian Embassy, Rahmat Hindarta Kasuma, COMSTech Advisor for Science and Technology Prof. Dr. Khurshid Hasnain pose for a group photo with the with participants of a seminar titled "International Seminar on Sustainable Palm Oil" at COMSTech.

Nikah during iddat case Counsel for Bushra Bibi raises question on power of jurisdiction of trial court

ISLAMABAD (Online): Suleman Safdar counsel for Bushra Bibi has raised question on power of jurisdiction of trial court in Nikah during iddat case.

The counsel Suleman Safdar argued it was said one part of offence has been committed in Lahore and other part has been committed in Islamabad.

Judge Afzal Majoka inquired why indictment was not framed in this case. This is written in the decision.

The counsel said punishment was awarded in the case which could not be made here.

The petition for early hearing of central appeals and plea seeking suspension of sentences awarded

to Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi in nikah during iddat case came up for hearing in district and sessions court Islamabad Tuesday.

Additional district and sessions judge Muhammad Afzal Majoka heard the petitions.

Barrister Suleman Safdar, Khalid Yousuf Chaudhry counsels for Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi and Zahid Asif counsel for Khawar Manika appeared in the case.

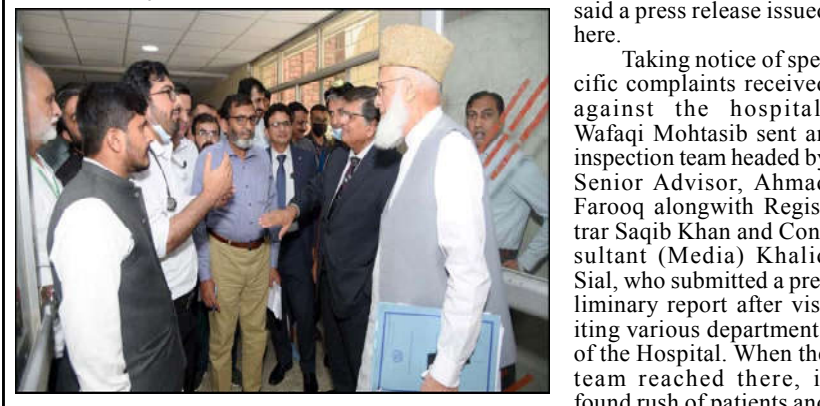
While offering arguments Suleman Safdar raised question on power of jurisdiction of trial court.

Suleman Safdar said while giving arguments said he has been contesting criminal cases since several years.

3 members of car lifter's gang killed in 'friendly fire'

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Inspector General (DIG), Syed Ali Raza on Tuesday said that capital police killed three car thieves in early morning raid, dealing a significant blow to the inter-provincial gang's operations.

He said that three car lifters were killed by their own accomplices in "friendly fire", not by police, after a two-month investigation and trap set along their predicted route from Murree to Islamabad, he said in an interview with PTV news channel. The DIG said that the suspects fired at police from two cars, but their own gunfire from one car killed three of their gang members.



Qureshi on Tuesday directed the PIMS administration to take immediate steps to fill the vacant posts of Doctors, Nurses and Paramedical staff and make new MRI machine functional by November to provide better facilities to the patients.