Daily

THE VOICE OF MILLIONS

ABC Certified

dailyvomqta@gmail.com

Chief Editor: Syed Abdul Wadood Shah

Quetta

Rabi-ul-Awwal 07, 1448 AH | Vol: XX No. 08 Friday August 21, 2026 | Pages 4, Price Rs. 5 | Ph: 2823307

Federal, Provincial cooperation vital for Balochistan's stability: President

ISLAMABAD, (VoM Report): President Asif Ali Zardari has expressed confidence that Balochistan will overcome the security challenges confronting it and continue its journey towards peace, development and prosperity, saying efforts by terrorist elements to disrupt progress in the province would not succeed.

The president made these remarks during a meeting with Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti at Aiwan-e-Sadr, where the two reviewed the province's political and administrative affairs, security situation, development activities and measures aimed at improving public welfare.

Chief Minister Bugti briefed President Zardari on the prevailing law and order situation and apprised him of the provincial government's development agenda and initiatives being undertaken for the welfare of the people.

The meeting also focused on the importance of closer coordination between the federal and provincial governments to address security challenges, expedite development schemes and improve the delivery of essential services.

President Zardari said Balochistan required particular attention and adequate resources in view of its geographical size, natural potential and development needs. He stressed that effective cooperation between the two tiers of government was essential for achieving durable peace and inclusive economic progress.

He appreciated the provincial government's efforts to improve security and advance development and assured Chief Minister Bugti of continued federal support for initiatives aimed at improving conditions for the people of Balochistan.

The president said terrorist elements backed by external forces were seeking to impede the province's development, but their attempts would be defeated through a united national response. He maintained that state institutions and citizens were collectively confronting terrorism and expressed hope that the security challenge would soon be overcome, enabling Balochistan to accelerate its progress towards stability and prosperity.

Chief Minister Bugti thanked the president for the federal government's support and said continued cooperation between Islamabad and the provincial administration was vital for achieving the province's development and security objectives.

He said the Balochistan government had adopted a comprehensive approach focused on strengthening peace, speeding up development, creating opportunities for young people and ensuring better access to basic services.



ISLAMABAD: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti called on President Asif Ali Zardari at Aiwan-e-Sadr



ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister of the Syrian Arab Republic, Asaad Hassan Al-Shaibani called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif

High-quality educational material essential to strengthen Balochistan's education system: Raheela Durrani

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Balochistan Education Minister Raheela Hameed Khan Durrani has emphasized the need for reliable, research-based and student-focused textbooks, saying high-quality educational material is essential for strengthening the province's education system.

She was speaking at the concluding session of a three-day training workshop organized by the Balochistan Textbook Board (BTBB) to enhance the professional expertise of individuals involved in the preparation and publication of textbooks.

Secretary Secondary Education Lal Jan Jaffar, BTBB Chairman Dr Gulab Khan Khilji, BTBB Secretary Dr Niaz Tareen, Deputy Director Bureau of Curriculum Najeebullah Panezai, PITE Director Fatima Mandokhail, academics, researchers, subject specialists and education officials participated in the concluding ceremony. The workshop focused on improving skills in textbook writing, editing, reviewing, research, language correction, composing, page layout, proofreading, printing and publication. Durrani said the preparation of textbooks in Balochistan involved educationists, researchers, subject experts and teachers, adding that continued efforts were required to bring educational content in line with evolving academic needs and contemporary learning standards.

She noted that even after multiple stages of scrutiny, textbooks could contain errors or material requiring refinement. For this reason, she stressed the importance of making review, research and expert consultation a continuous feature of the textbook development process. The minister encouraged teachers, students, parents and other stakeholders to provide constructive feedback on educational material. She said relevant suggestions should be assessed by competent experts and incorporated where necessary to improve the quality of textbooks.



A supermarket and several nearby shops caught fire in Kramatorsk, Ukraine, following a Russian airstrike.

Federal Cabinet approves National Adolescent & Youth Policy aimed to empower youth

ISLAMABAD, (APP): The Federal Cabinet on Thursday approved in principle the National Adolescent and Youth Policy, which Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif termed a significant step toward empowering the country's youth.

The cabinet meeting, presided over by the prime minister here, approved the policy on the recommendation of the Ministry of Inter-Provincial Coordination, describing it as a major development towards creating an integrated national framework for the country's young population, a Prime Minister's Office news release said.

The meeting was informed that the policy aims to mainstream youth at the government level, ensuring equitable and improved economic and social opportunities for young people. The framework rests on four core pillars: education, employment, inclusion and environment.

To implement the policy, the government is establishing the Pakistan Youth Development Council and the Federal Adolescent and Youth Agency.

The cabinet was told that the policy was formulated after conducting 32,145 surveys nationwide, incorporating the opinions of more than 200,000 young people across the country. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif directed that suggestions put forward by cabinet members during the meeting be incorporated into the policy before its final adoption.



QUETTA: Deputy Speaker Balochistan Assembly Ghazala Gola, Provincial Education Minister Raheela Hameed Khan Durrani and women MPAs offering fateha for the departed soul of Acting Governor Balochistan Captain (R) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai.

Gilani for strategic leadership, innovation, strong governance in universities

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani on Thursday emphasised the need for effective leadership, sound governance and strategic planning to strengthen Pakistan's higher education sector and transform universities into centres of excellence, research, innovation and entrepreneurship.

Addressing a gathering on "Strategic Planning and Leadership Excellence" as Chief Guest, organised by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) through the National Academy of Higher Education, the Chairman Senate said that universities today have responsibilities far beyond imparting knowledge.

He said higher education institutions must equip young people with critical thinking, creativity, ethical values, leadership skills and the capacity to respond to a rapidly changing world.

NA passes National Command Authority, Defence Forces of Pakistan bills

ISLAMABAD, (APP): The National Assembly on Thursday passed the National Command Authority Amendment Bill 2026 and the Defence Forces of Pakistan Bill 2026. Federal Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif tabled both bills in the House.

The National Assembly passed the bills clause by clause through majority votes. According to the statement of objects and reasons of the National Command Authority Amendment Bill 2026:- The purpose of the amendments is to make consistent the National Command Authority Act, 2010 (V of 2010) with the Constitutional (27th Amendment) Act, 2025 (XXXII of 2025) and to make consequential amendments in the said law.

The National Command Authority (Amendment) 2026, prepared for the said purpose. This Bill has been designed to achieve the aforesaid objective. According to statement of objects and reasons, Defence Forces of Pakistan Bill 2026:- Pakistan's response to Indian unprovoked aggression was a textbook demonstration of integrated tri-services jointness, enabled by real-time situational awareness.

Several projects underway to strengthen healthcare system in Balochistan: Bakht Kakar

QUETTA, (ANN): Balochistan Health Minister Bakht Muhammad Kakar said that providing quality and timely healthcare facilities to every citizen of the province is the top priority of the Government of Balochistan.

He said the ongoing reforms in the health sector are producing positive results and all available resources are being utilized to provide better medical services to the public. Speaking to various delegations, he said that government hospitals across the province are being equipped with modern medical equipment, medicines, and additional doctors and paramedical staff on a phased basis.

He said special measures are also being taken to make basic health centers in remote areas fully functional so that medical facilities can be made available at people's doorsteps.

Bakht Muhammad Kakar said the government is paying special attention to transparency, accountability, and better administrative management in the health sector.

Ayaz hails security forces for successful operation in Panjgur

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Speaker of National Assemby Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Thursday paid tribute to the security forces for their successful operation in Panjgur, in which five terrorists were killed.

The Speaker lauded the courage and bravery of the security forces in the fight against terrorism, saying the nation was proud of its security forces and their sacrifices for the country's peace and security.

He said the entire nation stood shoulder to shoulder with the security forces in the fight against terrorism and would continue to support efforts aimed at eliminating the menace.

Ayaz Sadiq said the terrorists would never be allowed to succeed in their nefarious designs.

The successful operations against terrorists were a clear message to the enemies of peace that their nefarious plans would be foiled, he added.

The Speaker also appreciated the unwavering resolve of the nation and security institutions to eradicate terrorism from the country, saying their determination was highly commendable.

Pakistan to firmly support Syria's position on Golan Heights: PM

PM reaffirms Pakistan's steadfast support for the sovereignty, unity, territorial integrity of Syria

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday while recalling the historic and multifaceted Pakistan-Syria ties, emphasized the need to translate the longstanding Pakistan-Syria friendship into enhanced cooperation across politics, defence, trade, investment, education, and human resource development.

The prime minister made these remarks during a call on him by Foreign Minister of the Syrian Arab Republic, Asaad Hassan Al-Shaibani here, a Prime Minister's Office news release said.

Welcoming Al-Shaibani and his delegation, the prime minister conveyed his best wishes for President Ahmed al-Sharaa, and recalled his recent interactions with him. He also reaffirmed Pakistan's steadfast support for the sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity of Syria.

He stated that the resumption of direct flights between the two countries would enhance people-to-people exchanges and facilitate a large number of pilgrims who undertake religious visits to Syria from Pakistan. The prime minister reaffirmed Pakistan's support for Syria's unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity and said Pakistan would firmly support Syria's position on the Golan Heights.

The Syrian Foreign Minister conveyed the greetings of Syrian President Ahmad al-Sharaa to the prime minister, and briefed him on Syria's ongoing political transition and reconstruction efforts.

He thanked Pakistan for its consistent support to Syria throughout the past years and expressed his government's keen interest in revitalizing bilateral engagement, including through early institutional mechanisms for cooperation. The prime minister also extended an invitation to President Ahmed al-Sharaa to undertake an official visit to Pakistan at a mutually convenient date.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar, SAPM Syed Tariq Fatemi and Foreign Secretary Amb. Amna Baloch were also present during the meeting.



ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq addressing Parliamentary Seminar on Water Governance "Evidence from Local, Low Cost Solutions for Water Security and Flood Resilience" hosted by SDGs Secretariat at Parliament House

Development planning should be based on prevailing ground realities: Asim Kurd Gello

QUETTA (ANN): Balochistan Revenue Minister Mir Asim Kurd Gello has stressed that development projects across the province must be implemented transparently, completed within stipulated timelines and maintained according to approved quality standards, saying public interest would remain the foremost consideration.

Speaking to different delegations, the minister said the provincial government was pursuing measures to improve the effectiveness of development spending and ensure that projects produced visible benefits for local communities.

Kurd directed that work on ongoing schemes be accelerated to avoid unnecessary delays, while making it clear that speed of execution could not justify any compromise on construction standards, transparency or the proper utilization of public funds.

He said government commitments should be reflected in practical outcomes rather than remaining limited to announcements, adding that development initiatives must ultimately improve living conditions and expand access to essential facilities.

"The government has a responsibility to utilize available resources in the public interest and provide people with better basic facilities and development opportunities," he said.

The minister warned that negligence, avoidable delays and deficiencies in the quality of development work would not be accepted, stressing the need for greater accountability at every stage of project implementation.



QUETTA: CEO Resolve to Save Lives Mr Tom Friden holds a meeting with Balochistan Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan regarding enhancement of province's healthcare sector via video link.

Gwadar Port completes second commercial bunkering operation

GWADAR, (VoM Report): Gwadar Port has successfully completed its second commercial bunkering operation, marking another significant milestone in Pakistan's Blue Economy and in transforming Gwadar into a regional maritime hub.

During the operation, approximately 1,150 metric tons of Low Sulphur Fuel Oil (LSFO) were successfully supplied to the LNG carrier M.V. EXCELERATE SHENANDOAH (IMO No. 9321768) at Gwadar Port. The day-long bunkering operation was carried out in accordance with international safety, environmental, and operational standards.

For the operation, the bunker barge M.T. MARINE ISTA arrived at Gwadar from Karachi and supplied marine fuel to the vessel. The bunkering operation was completed through the coordinated efforts of the Gwadar Port Authority (GPA), Pakistan Customs, and other relevant agencies.

THE VOICE OF MILLIONS

Friday August 21, 2026

Muslim states must take joint steps against Israel's persistent use of violence

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has recently declared that he is determined to establish the greater Israel, which covers not only the whole Palestinian territories, but also a large part of the Arab world, including Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Iraq and Saudi Arabia. With this theo-political statement, Netanyahu has threatened Arab national security, the Middle Eastern regional stability and international peace and security. Netanyahu, who considers himself "on a historic and spiritual mission," has declared that Israel aims to expand at the expense of the regional Arab states.

According to the reports, 31 Arab and Muslim states have "strongly condemned" Netanyahu's "greater Israel" vision and his expansionist policies. These states denounced illegal occupation activities as a breach of international law. This bloc of Arab and Muslim states has warned Israel to end its genocide in Gaza and rejected the Israeli plan for the displacement of the 2 million Palestinians. However, Israel and all its supporters know well that this condemnation, like all the previous statements made by the same group of states, will be thrown into the dustbin of history. Although there are some exceptions, such as King Faisal of Saudi Arabia in the Arab world, who took real measures to prevent Israeli expansionism, Arab leaders and Arab regimes largely remain indifferent to the Israeli atrocities and crimes against humanity in Palestine and the wider region.

When we look at the regional developments and the regional balance of power, it is relatively understandable that the Arab regimes that are largely dependent on Western countries are unable to intervene in the ongoing genocide. However, the position of Arab states seems quite complex. For example, it is not understandable that some Arab actors directly or indirectly support the genocide. Similarly, many Arab states allow Israel to use their airspace or naval routes. Many Arab states provide economic, political and military support for Tel Aviv. Within the context of the "greater Israel" vision, Israeli officials often blatantly claim that they will take over a large part of the Arab states. It is obvious that Israeli expansionism is not and will not be limited to the Gaza Strip. Operation Al-Aqsa Flood is just used as an excuse for the Israeli aggression. As soon as Israel fully controls Gaza, it will return to the West Bank, which is already under heavy and consistent Israeli attacks. Upon closer examination, it becomes apparent that there are at least four phases in the Israeli regional expansionist plan.

In the first phase, the Zionist entity is determined to de-Palestinianize the Palestinian territories. It appears that the large Western countries have already given Israel the green light to proceed. In other words, it is a matter of time to initiate a second front of genocide in the West Bank. In the near future, we may hear news of mass killings, starvation and forced migration in the West Bank as well. The ultimate objective of Israel is not the control of the Gaza Strip or Palestine. In other words, the root cause of the problem is not Hamas, but the apartheid and expansionist regime established in Israel.

In the second phase, Israel will try to occupy the territories of other Arab states. Israeli officials claim that they will expand the territories of their state beyond Palestine. Recently, we have witnessed the new Israeli occupation attempts in Lebanon and Syria. Besides the long-time occupied Golan Heights, Israel now directly controls a large portion of the Syrian state. Furthermore, it tries to create an Israel-controlled political entity in the Druze-majority of the Suwayda region in Syria. Israel has severely curbed the power of the new Syrian government to pave the way for its further occupation and consolidate its occupation of the state. Similarly, Israel has been trying to control the Lebanese national politics after punishing the Hezbollah movement last year. Israel recently killed most of the movement's leadership cadres. Now, together with its Western supporters, it put pressure on the central government to force Hezbollah to disarm itself. Disarming Hezbollah will naturally decrease the Iranian influence in Lebanon, but at the same time, it will lead to an increase in the influence of Israel. In the third phase, Israel will turn to other Arab states after completing its plans in these two Arab states. It seems that Jordan, the majority of whose population is Palestinian, will be the next target of the expansionist Israel. Israel may question the existence of the Palestinians living in the country and use this factor as an excuse for its intervention into the Jordanian domestic political system. In the final phase, other countries such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Iraq will become the next targets of the Israeli expansionism. Israel will try to prevent the establishment of regional peace and stability by any other political actor. Its ultimate goal is to establish the greater Israel and bring the whole region under its control. Tel Aviv's ultimate goal is to establish a regional hegemony by achieving the "greater Israel." In spite of the Israeli illegitimate plans, violations of international law, crimes against humanity in Palestine and attacks against Arab states, the Arab states cannot overcome the Israeli problem and threat simply by condemning Israel for all these atrocities. Arab states must take joint actions and measures against Israel's persistent use of violence and violations of international norms. Arab and non-Arab states of the region must unite their power, persuade the global powers and eventually deter Israel and its supporters. Regional states must meet on a common ground against the main threat of the region, the Israeli problem. They must take measures before it is too late. Otherwise, they have to wait for their tragic end – to be occupied by Israel.

Muslim collectivism

Ghulam Shabbir

Islam was a movement of moral initiative. The Holy Prophet's (PBUH) first address to his people reflected the entirety of the Quranic message as it had descended on his heart in an undifferentiated form, though the various verses 'unfolded' over the next 23 years. The following years of his life depict only differentiation of the nucleus of his message, the dilemmas confronted and the strategies devised to counter his opponents.

The movement was to rehabilitate the socio-economic equilibrium of society as mono-theism and socioeconomic justice were deemed the panacea to the twin malaise of polytheism and socioeconomic disequilibrium in Makkah.

The scale of social reforms required assumption of political power, so a protracted war with the Makkan oligarchy was a foregone conclusion.

The Quran equipped Muslims with positivism and collectivism to see their mission through. Positivism means scientific diagnosis and treatment of social malaises by the moral vectors of the Quran, and collectivism refers to the collective struggle of the community for the execution of the task since there is arguably no 'personal salvation' in Islam. The Quran offers only the idea of success (falah) or failure (khusran) in building a moral social order for which 'the people of the Book' are welcomed to share the burden. So, 'personal piety' oblivious to this obligation and Sufism neutral to social reality have no roots in the Quran.

At Madinah, the Quran established Muslims as a 'median community' against the rigid formalism of Judaism and the liquidity of Christianity. Thus, characterised as the 'best community', it was tasked to build an ethical sociopolitical order. The internal structure of the community was egalitarian and open, smacking of no elitism. Internal life of the community was based on goodwill and cooperation. Decision-making was premised on universal enfranchisement — every voice matters. The Quran tolerates neither elitism nor secret cliques of the influential.

With these arrangements in place, the Quran promulgated their task to establish a moral order in order to secure the socio-economic equilibrium of society, with the assurance that God is going to have mercy on them and help them build such an order (9:71). So bright was the light lit by the Quran that against all odds, the Prophet never lost hope.

To Shah Waliullah, 'The completion of favours', ie, political control of Arabia, was the fulfilment of the same promise.

After the Prophet, collectivism worked both in thought and practice of the early community. To them, Sunnah was an interpretive activity subject to revision and renewal, as was ijma, or consensus of the community. No ijma carried the status of finality; it could be substituted. Hence, Sunnah, ijma-ijtehad's ongoing democratic process worked well for three centuries. Then, the Hadith movement set in, and since then, the static view of Sunnah and the finality of ijma reign supreme.

So embedded in and accustomed to collectivism was the early community that, amidst early religio-political wars, they struggled under the banner of jama'a (community). Then, dictators crushed the practice of jama'a. This resulted in the expulsion of collectivism from the thought and practice of the community. With Ghazali's legitimation of 'personal salvation', religion took leave from public life. Ibn al-Arabi's explanation of the conflict of good and evil in terms of waves which arise from the sea, collide with each other and then fall back into the same sea appeared to render faith redundant.

Ibn Taimiyya's exhortation for Quranic positivism and collectivism fell on deaf ears. Later, Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi stre-ngthened his thesis with mystic-intellectual fervour and deflated Ibn al-Arabi's monism. Shah Waliullah and Moha-mmad bin Abdul Wahab bro-ught fresh blood in the veins of the community. However, encounter with the imperial West stimulated Islamic reformers to judge their tradition by the normativity of the Quran to elevate the moral and intellectual standards of their community. It was a comprehensive venture to think of Islam in terms of the socioeconomic and political life of the community. The development rekindled hopes and led to freedom movements.

The positivistic and collectivistic approach of Indian Muslims established Pakistan to create an egalitarian order with equal participation of all without gender and class bias.

But many in the secular elite, in alliance with orthodoxy, seem to have defeated the purpose Pakistan was created for. To be a silent spectator is not a choice — the sins of omission are as bad as the sins of commission. Nations and civilisations, as per the Quran, are destroyed by natural political process rather than natural disasters. Are our moral and sociopolitical woes not inviting our collective political will for course correction?

Indo-Pak futures

Aasim Sajjad Akhtar

As we approach 80 years since the sun set on the British Raj, leaving the two separate states of India and Pakistan in its wake, the imperative of charting a lasting peace in the world's most populous region is arguably more acute than ever. Yet under the influence of right-wing bigotry and militarism, the majority of people in both countries are instead baying for the proverbial other's blood.

On Aug 14-15 this year, the military exchange which took place in May is still fresh in the memory, as is the banter on both sides about 'winning the war'. There are, of course, many voices that resist the tide, but most young Indians and Pakistanis have little critical awareness about shared colonial legacies, let alone an imagination of a common future.

In the face of a renewed wave of state nationalism, let me suggest some potential futures for the almost 1.7 billion people who inhabit India and Pakistan, a figure which rises to almost 2bn if one includes Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and Nepal.

A race to the bottom: The most likely future is an extension of the present, whereby Hindutva, (militant) Islamism and other variants of xenophobic nationalism take hold of ever greater segments of youth. In India, this equates to the further entrenchment of the BJP, RSS, VHP in society at large and the unchallenged rule of hawkish elements in the permanent state apparatus.

In Pakistan, this means the reinforcement of khaki raj, complete surrender by the mainstream parties to the establishment, and a religious right ready and able to mobilise a critical mass outside the mainstream.

In both countries, anti-state militancy will intensify in brutalised peripheries. The state, in turn, will arrogate more and more power to itself in the name of fighting 'terrorism', and the politics of hate will become established as the only game in town. Respite for the liberal centre: The race to the bottom may be held up by a slightly resuscitated liberal centre. In India, this would see the Congress and small allied parliamentary forces taking governmental power, and pushing back against some aspects of majoritarianism. In Pakistan, this would take the form of a broad anti-establishment mobilisation against the now-ormalised 'hybrid' rule. However, the liberal centre remains unwilling to offer an alternative economic programme to the dominant development regime that is based on dispossession, ecocide and mindless consumption. A centrist pushback, then, will ultimately fail to stem the forces of reaction and create the conditions for militarist and far right ideologies to make deeper dents in the body politic.

Pro-people forces unite within and without: The most unlikely scenario — lasting peace and shared prosperity — can become reality only if pro-people forces, representing the working masses, brutalised peripheries, women and future generations, come together both within and across states. This is not easy, especially given the sorry state of South Asia's left-progressives. But we must engage in an exercise of imagination rather than become resigned to the status quo.

A pro-people programme requires an economic vision that privileges the needs of working masses over the profiteering of speculative investors, multinational capital and entrenched landed/ business interests. As important is ecological regeneration across mountainous areas, plains and coastal deltas. The fact that environmental landscapes across the subcontinent are being ravaged to no end is arguably the most obvious trigger for an alternative politics to transcend the regressive logics of colonial statecraft. Such a politics demands that the traditional forces of the left — that speak the language of class and anti-imperialism — make common cause with the mass movements of the ethnic peripheries, else the critical mass necessary to displace both the far right and liberal centre cannot be generated. In India, this requires a dissolution of the hegemony of the Hindi-speaking belt, an acknowledgement of the historical oppression of Kashmiris, Nagas, tribal populations and many more, and more space for progressive leaders from the south. In Pakistan, this requires that the Baloch, Pakhtun, Gilgit-Baltistani, Kashmiri, Sindhi and Seraiki national questions are articulated alongside a class politics in Punjab and other metropolitan regions. Finally, a regional common sense must be crafted whereby the interests of ordinary people everywhere — including Ladakh and Baltistan, both Kashmirs, Sindh and Rajasthan, both Punjabs, Pakhtuns across both sides of the Durand Line, as well as the most oppressed people like the Baloch and Nagas — are seen as one and the same. Only in such unity can imperialism in all of its guises be confined to the dustbin of history.

Floods and politics

Khurram Husain

There is no room left now to turn rain-related catastrophes into a political whipping spectacle.

This summer, three provinces controlled by the three major political parties have borne the brunt of a major rain-related emergency, and none is in a position to accuse the other of not having done enough to prepare their province for the calamity.

The clear fact is that Pakistan is facing accelerating climate change impacts and needs to think outside of conventional frameworks in order to build resilience and preparedness. The monsoon is intensifying, glaciers are melting, near catastrophic heatwaves are becoming more and more frequent. This is not political theatre. It is a dire and urgent new reality opening up before us with rising ferocity. The first thing to shed is the reflex to politicise these catastrophes, because that literally does nothing to help.

The three governments — in KP, Punjab and Sindh — have just faced unusually strong rain events. But notice how turning these calamities into opportunities for political point-scoring has backfired spectacularly. When Punjab was inundated in July, for instance, the PTI lawmakers in the provincial assembly held what they called a 'people's assembly' outside the building in protest against the suspension of their colleagues. So far so good. Politics and theatre are cousins after all.

But some among them took the opportunity to skewer the provincial government for the rain-related devastation in the province. Three among them were named in a report carried by this newspaper, and their criticism of the government of Maryam Nawaz took aim at the floods caused by the rains. Crops and farmland were destroyed, they shouted, homes caved in, and "development projects" showcased by the Punjab government were "washed away". Yet the government "remains indifferent", according to the report.

The need and desire of the opposition to protest stridently in Punjab is understandable, given the suspensions that their colleagues have been served. Those that kept the focus on the politics of suppression their party is facing had a clear message. But those that veered and tried to use a natural calamity for political point-scoring were in for a nasty surprise only a few days later when the province run by their own party — KP — was hit by an even larger rain-related calamity.

All the criticism they had levelled at the Punjab government was now washed away as the devastation in KP was larger by order of magnitude to what Punjab had seen. If we keep only a political lens when viewing these disasters, who do we blame for the devastation in KP? Pretty soon, officials from both provinces were bickering over the meaning of the word 'cloudburst'. Both provinces had ascribed their devastation to a 'cloudburst'. In Punjab, they pointed to Chakwal, and in KP, they said Buner had seen a 'cloudburst'. Then the Met Office weighed in, reminding both that the word 'cloudburst' refers to a very specific event and no such event had been seen in Chakwal or Buner, and urged them both to refrain from using this word to describe the cause of their respective devastation.

Why this insistence on 'cloudburst'? Because cloudbursts are nearly impossible to forecast, and attributing rain disaster to them gets officialdom off the hook for having been unprepared. This is why it is now almost routine for provincial governments to use this word when explaining rain-related calamities in their province. At the time of writing, Karachi is bracing for a second round of intense rain; the first left the city flooded on Tuesday, following more than 200mm of rain in a 12-hour period. The flooding was bad, but the drainage was better. I'm old enough to remember when smaller rain events in 1991 or 2006 left the city flooded for days on end. This time, as in 2020 or 2022, they cleared it within hours. So far, so good. But the question remains: what prevents faster real-time drainage to keep flooding from become as dire as it does in the first place? The foremost expert on the disaster that is Karachi's urban planning, Arif Hasan, has a good interview with that intrepid podcaster Shehzad Ghias in which he explains how overdevelopment on three main drainage channels is a major contributor to the flooding. There is much that each provincial government needs to do to increase preparedness for these disasters that are hitting the country with growing intensity and frequency. And it all begins with superior weather forecasting capabilities. Without this, we are flying blind into a storm.

A former chief meteorologist of the country has an important contribution here. In a report in this paper, he is quoted as saying that Pakistan has 85 automatic weather stations around the country to cover more than 700,000 square kilometres of its land mass. According to the World Meteorological Organisation guidelines, there should be one for every 100 square kilometres of flat terrain, and 50 sq km of hilly terrain. This means we are short by factors of thousands in terms of our ability to monitor threats emanating from the weather.

With this critical weakness we will forever fumble in the dark as the weather turns increasingly hostile. And the resultant calamities will forever be sublimated only through political blaming and point-scoring, getting us nowhere.

A warning sign came around a decade ago when Pakistan experienced five massive floods in five years. Once more, nature is warning that politics alone will not save us.

Three floods in one summer in three provinces controlled by each major political party is a clear enough sign that scoring political points in the middle of natural calamities is the lowest form of politics in the country today. Those who engage in this behaviour are the same as those who in years past tried to score political points via fuel price hikes or ex--change rate adjustments. It is time to grow up.

Chickens coming home

FAISAL BARI

There have been some recent posts on social media claiming that admission numbers in many colleges and universities across Punjab have gone down by as much as 25-30 per cent this year. This is a large number but not surprising: it is some of the chickens coming home to roost.

Here are some changes that Pakistan has seen in the higher education sector lately. The number of universities has risen significantly. We have 270-odd universities now, with 160 or so in the public sector. There are several foreign and online programmes that have also entered the sector. And the expansion drive continues. Existing universities have been expanding enrolments and programmes as well.

Higher education funding has either remained static or decreased, even in nominal terms. It has definitely gone down in real terms. Inflation has hit every person in recent years, but fee increases have also been going up in the higher education sector.

The regulator's focus has been on expansion, encouraging universities to introduce more Master's and doctoral programmes and faculty to produce more (not necessarily of higher quality) publications.

Some of the consequences, intended and unintended, should have been expected. Generally, the quality of education delivered by most undergraduate programmes across Pakistan has never been very good. Expansion, with little planning for faculty availability, has exacerbated the problem.

The regulators' focus on the Master's and doctoral levels has hurt the quality of undergraduate programmes even more. Undergraduate programmes are seen by many universities and colleges as just a way of earning revenue. The pressure to expand programmes has meant that every university, whether or not it is ready for it, has launched every faculty and programme it could think of. Fewer resources and rising costs have worsened matters.

The pressure to publish and increase the number of publications has also shifted the focus from teaching in general and undergraduate teaching in particular. It has also led to increased gaming, fraud and plagiarism. More significantly for us, it has led to the neglect of undergraduate teaching, with most faculty wanting to teach graduate programmes, supervise theses and publish with their students to make research numbers impressive.

It should not come as a surprise then that parents do not want their children to enrol in programmes where perceived and real rates of return to undergraduate studies are low. The students themselves don't want to enrol. If you were a student, would you do something different? If you were a parent, would you not suggest something different?

Do bear in mind that there is plenty of evidence that universities, private and public, that offer good quality undergraduate education, have not seen any decline in the number of admissions or applications. Similarly, majors that are perceived to be in high demand in the job market have not seen any decline either.

There are issues that should be kept in mind though. There is a massive increase in demand for computer science, IT, data analytics and similar programmes. People feel, and rightly so, that job prospects in these areas are very bright. The buzz around AI makes this perception even stronger. So, it is not surprising that parents are asking students to enter these fields and many students are also shifting their sights to them. Most universities with relevant departments are expanding enrolments. Others are scrambling to start relevant departments and programmes. But there is a limit to how much expansion can take place in these programmes. And there should be too.

Globally, there is a fair bit of conversation going around the four-year undergraduate programmes. Is four years too long? Some argue that if people can do a few six-month or so courses, especially in computer- and IT-related fields, and enter the job market and get decent returns, why should they spend a lot of money on four-year degrees. Others say that with online education becoming more accessible, undergraduate can move online. Others talk of micro-credentialing and argue that selected courses, rather than a four-year degree, which makes the student go through a broader curriculum and more diverse courses, is the need of the day. There is some merit to many of these arguments, though the four-year undergraduate programme has a lot going for it too. Different routes will be better for different people. Education has time and money costs, and quality education tends to be quite expensive.

University education is not recognised as a right anywhere, though states might have functional reasons — human resource development, social and economic mobility, growth — to subsidise undergraduate and graduate education for a part of the population. Students will have to make careful choices about what suits them, what is possible for them and their families, and what is the best way forward. The state has to carefully assess what it has been doing as well.



Saudi Arabian Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan (left), Italian Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani (center), and Palestinian Foreign Minister Varsen Aghabekian (right) attended the Global Alliance for Two-State Solution meeting held at the Italian Foreign Ministry in Rome.

Chairman senate supports US-Pak partnership to end bonded labour through brick kiln modernization

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Senate Senator Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani Tuesday expressed his support for a pioneering US-Pakistan initiative aimed at eradicating bonded labour through the modernization of Pakistan's brick kiln industry.

The commitment came during a meeting with a high-level delegation led by Mike Brickley, Silicon Valley entrepreneur and CEO of Families Set Free (FSF), said a news release.

The delegation included Naveed Aamir Jeeva, MNA; Dr. Rubina Feroze Bhatti; Ashraf J. Mall, CEO of Pakistan Partnership Initiative (PPI); Ryan Andrew Brickley; Mathew Ryan Brickley; Maqsood Ali; Dr. Waheed Yousaf; and Col. Muhammad Akhtar Iqbal.

Brickley briefed the Chairman Senate on the joint efforts of FSF and PPI, in collaboration with the Government of Punjab, to mechanize brick kilns and create sustainable employment opportunities for vulnerable communities.

He noted that the initiative combines business investment with social impact to replace exploitative labour practices with skilled employment and economic empowerment.

Ashraf J. Mall shared that PPI has helped rescue and rehabilitate more than 15,000 families affected by bonded labour through livelihood support, youth skills development, and school enrollment for children. He added that a delegation of 25 American business leaders visited Pakistan earlier this year to explore investments in brick kiln modernization and employment generation.

Naveed Aamir Jeeva highlighted the Pakistan Peoples Party's commitment to the welfare of women, minorities, and marginalized communities. He noted that the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Pakistan's largest social protection initiative offers significant opportunities for collaboration in supporting families transitioning out of bonded labour.

Dr. Rubina Feroze Bhatti informed the Chairman Senate that the initiative has received recognition. She noted that three brick kilns have already been mechanized, while six more are being modernized in Faisalabad, Sargodha, and Sheikhupura.

Pakistan, Uzbekistan reaffirm commitment to Railway cooperation rgional Connectivity

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Uzbekistan have reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening bilateral cooperation in the railway sector and advancing regional connectivity during a meeting between Federal Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi and Uzbekistan's Ambassador to Pakistan, Alisher Tukhtaev.

During the meeting, both sides discussed a range of issues of mutual interest, with particular emphasis on enhancing collaboration in railway infrastructure development, freight



transportation, logistics and the exchange of technical expertise. They also agreed to further strengthen institutional ties between their respective railway authorities to ensure long-term and sustainable cooperation. Speaking on the occasion, Hanif Abbasi said the Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan (UAP) Railway Corridor as a landmark project that would play a pivotal role in promoting regional trade, economic integration and connectivity.

He said the initiative represents a historic step toward linking Central Asian countries with Pakistan's seaports, creating new opportunities for commerce, investment and economic growth across the region. The minister reiterated Pakistan's unwavering commitment to the timely completion of the UAP Railway Corridor, saying that the project would significantly enhance transportation networks and facilitate greater economic cooperation among participating nations.

Dr Kabir unveils ambitious reform agenda to expand investor base, deepen capital markets

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Chairman, Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), Dr. Kabir Ahmed Sidhu unveiled an ambitious reform agenda aimed at expanding Pakistan's investor base, strengthening financial literacy, and accelerating the development of the country's capital markets during his first official visit to the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX).

Addressing the Gong Ceremony after ringing the trading bell to mark the commencement of trading, Dr. Sidhu said SECP is targeting a significant increase in the number of investors, with a long-term objective of expanding the investor base to 2.5 million investors.

He emphasized that broadening investor participation, particularly among young Pakistanis, is essential for promoting savings, wealth creation, and inclusive economic growth.

"Financial literacy is one of the most powerful tools for expanding participation in capital markets. We want to create opportunities for young Pakistanis to learn, invest, and participate in wealth creation through accessible education and simplified investment processes," said Dr. Sidhu.

The SECP Chairman outlined the Commission's reform agenda built around People, Processes and Technology.



In Hardelot-Plage, a coastal area in northern France, irregular migrants attempting to cross the English Channel in an inflatable boat were rescued from the sea as water levels rose. Search and rescue operations were conducted in the area for the migrants.

BIOI Minster calls for investment, innovation, export-led growth at brand of "Year Awards 2026"

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Board of Investment (BOI), Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh has emphasized the need to strengthen Pakistan's economy through enhanced investment, innovation, and export-led growth, urging the business community to play a leading role in driving sustainable development.

Addressing the 17th Edition of the Brand of the Year Awards 2026 as the chief guest, the minister said the event provided an important platform to recognize and encourage the valuable contributions of Pakistan's business sector, said a release issued here on Tuesday.

"Coming from a family with a long history in business, I firmly believe that entrepreneurs are the backbone of economic development. We must promote Pakistan globally as a competitive destination for business and investment," he said.

Highlighting the country's economic challenges, the minister stressed the importance of creating sustainable business opportunities and generating employment to uplift living standards.

"With a significant segment of the population living below the poverty line, our focus should be on expanding economic opportunities, creating jobs, and equipping our youth with quality education, particularly in technology and modern skills," he remarked.

Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh underscored the need to boost exports and improve the ease of doing business, saying the government was undertaking reforms aimed at removing unnecessary barriers and facilitating investment.

He noted that incentives available under Special Economic Zones (SEZs), including tax concessions and industrial facilitation measures, were designed to expand industrial activity and create new avenues for economic growth.

The minister expressed confidence in Pakistan's entrepreneurial talent and workforce, describing them as key drivers of national progress.

"Pakistan possesses a capable business community and a competitive workforce that can make a significant contribution to the country's economic development," he said.

During the ceremony, the minister distributed awards among winning brands in recognition of their excellence and consumer trust.

Founder and Chief Executive Officer of the Brands Foundation Pakistan, Shaikh Rashid Alam, presented a commemorative shield to the chief guest.

Organized annually by the Brands Foundation Pakistan, the Brand of the Year Awards are regarded as one of the country's most prestigious recognitions, honoring leading brands on the basis of consumer preference and expert evaluation.

The Board of Investment remains committed to promoting Pakistan as a preferred destination for local and foreign investment through investor facilitation, policy reforms, and initiatives aimed at achieving sustainable economic growth.



Daily life continues as London experiences warm weather during a heatwave in London, United Kingdom

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Four ships namely, Hansa Europe, MSC Vida X, Meghna Venus and Kouros Diamond carrying Containers and Coal, berthed at Container Terminal, HFP&S Terminal and Bulk Terminal respectively on Monday.

Twelve ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them four ships, Hansa Europe, Lebrethan, Corona and Ginga Courage left the port on Tuesday morning while two more ships, MSC Vida X and Khairpur are expected to sail on Tuesday.

NTC, PSW inks digitalization pact to boost trade facilitation

ISLAMABAD (APP): In pursuant to the Prime Minister's, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif's vision to transform the National Tariff Commission by way of making it a credible robust and responsive organization by way of digitalization, an agreement signing ceremony took place between the National Tariff Commission (NTC) and the Pakistan Single Window (PSW).

This 'Agreement for Automation and Digitization' of NTC's Processes was signed by Dr. Jawwad Uwais Agha, Chairman NTC and Syed Aftab Haider, Chief Executive Officer PSW, said a press release issued here on Tuesday. At the occasion, Jam Kamal Khan, Federal Minister for Commerce, appreciated the recent achievements of the National Tariff Commission in moving speedily towards achieving its transformation. Stressing that Digitalization was a catalyst for the NTC's reform, he emphasized that a robust, digitalized NTC was essential for supporting a high-growth economy and ensuring that Pakistan's trade defense mechanisms were aligned with global best practices.

Telenor Pakistan hosts sustainability Expo 2026 to champion climate action

ISLAMABAD (APP): Against the backdrop of growing climate challenges and the urgent need for collective action, Telenor Pakistan hosted its Sustainability Expo 2026 here on Tuesday at its headquarters.

The event brought together employees, environmental innovators, and solution providers to spotlight practical, climate-conscious solutions that can help reduce everyday environmental impact. By connecting innovation with behaviour change, the Expo aimed to inspire individuals and organisations to play their part in building a more innovative and climate-resilient future, said a news release. The Expo was inaugurated by Abrar Hussain, Director General, Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency (Pak-EPA), alongside Telenor Pakistan's leadership team.

Hussain toured the exhibition floor, engaging with exhibitors and exploring the range of innovative solutions on display. He expressed his admiration for the breadth and practicality of the initiatives showcased, noting the significant role that private sector-led platforms could play in accelerating Pakistan's sustainability.

PPRAs, MDBs join hands to formulate Pakistan National Procurement Strategy 2026-30

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (FPPRA), in collaboration with the World Bank on Tuesday convened a consultative session on the Draft National Procurement Strategy (NPS) 2026–2030 .

The session brought together representatives of the Federal, Provincial and Gilgit-Baltistan Public Procurement Regulatory Authorities (PPRAs), as well as representatives of Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs), including the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), and the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), said a news release.

Addressing the session, Hasnat Ahmed Qureshi, Managing Director, Federal PPRA, emphasized the strategic importance of public procurement as a cornerstone of public financial management and national development, aligned with the Federal Government's reform and governance agenda.

He noted that public procurement accounts for an estimated 19–20 percent of Pakistan's GDP, underscoring the need for a coherent national reform strategy to promote more transparent, accountable, competitive, and efficient public procurement systems across the country.

Hr acknowledged the World Bank's continued technical assistance in the development of the National Procurement Strategy and appreciated the collaborative efforts of the federal and provincial PPRAs through the Advisory Group on Public Procurement.

The formulation of the National Procurement Strategy is an initiative of the Federal Public Procurement Regulatory Authority, which builds upon the achievements of Pakistan's first National Procurement Strategy (2013–2016).



United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres holds a press conference after his meeting with Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) President Tufan Erhurman and Greek Cypriot Leader Nikos Christodoulides at the UN buffer zone compound in Lefkosia, TRNC

Ahsan directs review of degree programmes for Industry 4.0, 5.0 readiness

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Tuesday directed the Higher Education Commission (HEC) to undertake an immediate and comprehensive review of all university degree programmes and curricula across the country to align higher education with the evolving demands of Industrial Revolution 4.0 and the emerging Industrial Revolution 5.0.

In a policy directive, the minister said Pakistan's future competitiveness depends on equipping youth with the knowledge, skills and competencies required in a rapidly technology-driven global economy.

He noted that advances in artificial intelligence, robotics, automation, biotechnology, quantum computing, advanced manufacturing and digital technologies are reshaping global labour markets, rendering several traditional occupations obsolete while creating new ones.

"The world is changing faster than ever before. Universities can no longer prepare students for yesterday's jobs. Our institutions must prepare them for tomorrow," he said, adding that degrees must lead to employability, innovation, entrepreneurship and national competitiveness.

Ahsan Iqbal said Pakistan cannot afford a mismatch between university output and labour market needs, stressing that curricula must be aligned with emerging economic demands.

Under the directive, HEC has been asked to assess degree programmes on employability, industry relevance, national priorities, technological disruption risks and future global demand. Outdated or low-relevance programmes will be identified for restructuring, modernisation, consolidation or phase-out.

He also called for a high-level Future Skills and Curriculum Transformation Task Force comprising academia, industry leaders, technology experts and policymakers to recommend reforms for future readiness.

The review will prioritise emerging fields including artificial intelligence, machine learning, data science, cybersecurity, robotics, automation, quantum computing, bioinformatics, precision agriculture, renewable energy, climate science.

Punjab govt boosting business confidence

LAHORE (APP): SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry former President Iftikhar Ali Malik on Tuesday congratulated Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif on presenting a pro-poor, development-oriented and tax-free budget for the fiscal year 2026-27. Reacting to the Punjab budget, he said its tax-free nature would ease the financial burden on common citizens and strengthen business confidence, particularly among small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

Govt plans to enhance meat exports through transformation strategy

ISLAMABAD (APP): The government has initiated a comprehensive transformation strategy aimed at unlocking the potential of the country's halal meat exports and promoting the development of the local livestock sector, with a target to increase meat exports to $700 million by 2028.

The initiative is designed to enhance Pakistan's presence in international halal meat markets while strengthening the livestock industry through value addition, improved standards and greater export competitiveness, said an official in the Ministry of National Food Security and Research.

Talking to APP here on Tuesday, he said that strategy forms part of the government's broader efforts to expand export earnings and support sustainable growth in the agriculture and livestock sectors. Under the transformation strategy, the meat sector is targeted to grow at around 6 percent annually, while exports are projected to rise from approximately $500 million to nearly $700 million by 2028, he added.

Balochistan govt working to improve health system at every level: Bakht Kakar

QUETTA (ANN): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) central leader and Balochistan Health Minister Bakht Muhammad Kakar has emphasized the need for effective democratic governance, sound policymaking and wider public participation to address the province's longstanding social and economic challenges.

Talking to different delegations, Kakar said sustained and practical measures were required to accelerate development, safeguard the rights of marginalized communities and improve access to essential services throughout Balochistan.

He said the province had continued to face complex challenges over the years and required consistent efforts to strengthen its contribution to the country's economic and social development.

The minister said the PPP was seeking to further integrate Balochistan into the national political and development framework while working to ensure that citizens received their due rights and essential public services.

Kakar said reforms were being pursued in key sectors, particularly health, education and employment. He said the government was focusing on improving public hospitals, ensuring the availability of doctors in distant areas and expanding laboratory services to communities that remained underserved.

Health services, he said, remained among the government's major priorities, with plans to equip hospitals with modern medical technology, improve ambulance facilities and introduce an e-health system at major government healthcare institutions.

He said the proposed measures were aimed at strengthening diagnostic and treatment facilities, improving emergency response and making public healthcare more accessible and efficient.

Acknowledging the difficulties involved in delivering healthcare across Balochistan's vast and sparsely populated areas, Kakar said the government was working to improve the health system at every level, from basic healthcare facilities to major public hospitals.

Responding to criticism from political opponents, the PPP leader said political debate was part of democratic politics, but maintained that his party believed its performance should ultimately be assessed through tangible public service and results.

He said development initiatives would be prioritized on the basis of their direct benefits to citizens, with the objective of creating conditions conducive to long-term growth and prosperity in Balochistan.

Kakar called upon citizens to support efforts aimed at strengthening development, stability and public welfare, saying meaningful participation from the people was necessary to improve governance and collectively address the province's challenges.

Ayaz for closer cooperation between Parliament and legal community

Says lawyer community has made significant contributions to the strengthening of democratic institutions and in upholding the rule of law

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Speaker National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said that the lawyer community has always played a proactive and constructive role in ensuring the supremacy of law and strengthening of the democratic norms and principles.

He said that a Legislative Drafting Council has been established in the National Assembly, in which experienced individuals have been recruited on merit to further strengthen and improve the quality of legislative drafting.

He expressed these views during a meeting with a delegation of the Executive Committee of the High Court Bar Association Hyderabad at the Parliament House, Islamabad, today. Speaker of the Provincial Assembly of Balochistan, Captain (R) Abdul Khaliq Khan Achakzai was also present on the occasion.

During the meeting, the delegation apprised the Speaker National Assembly of the issues and challenges faced by members of the legal fraternity in the discharge of their professional responsibilities. Matters pertaining to the professional development, welfare, and overall interests of the legal community were also discussed.

Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said that lawyers have made significant contributions to the strengthening of democratic institutions and in upholding the rule of law.

He further stressed the need for closer cooperation between Parliament and the legal community.

Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq reiterated that the Legislative Drafting Council of the National Assembly has played an effective role in strengthening the legislative process.

The delegation appreciated the efforts of Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq for strengthening the country's parliamentary institutions and promoting greater engagement with the legal fraternity.

Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq assured the delegation that the issues raised during the meeting would be duly considered and addressed appropriately.

The delegation of the High Court Bar Association Hyderabad comprised Acting President Ms. Rehana Gujar; General Secretary Mr. Syed Shahzad Ali Shah; Finance Secretary Mr. Javed Ali Biriro; Joint Secretary Mr. Asif Ali Abro; Library Secretary Mr. Faizan Ahmed Memon; Members of the Managing Committee (MMC), Mr. Imam Bux Dars and Mr. Qadir Bux Girano; and Coordinator Mr. Sohail Ahmed Memon.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate of Pakistan Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani addressing the closing ceremony of "Strategic Planning and Leadership Excellence Programme" at National Institute of Banking & Finance (NIBAF).



QUETTA: Former Governor of Balochistan Amanullah Khan Yaseenzai and Parliamentary Secretary Haji Muhammad Khan Lehri offering fateha for the departed soul of Sanaullah Khan Achakzai, son of Acting Balochistan Governor Captain (R) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai.

First Lady Asifa Bhutto appreciates doctors for serving public

KARACHI, (APP): First Lady and Member of the National Assembly, Asifa Bhutto Zardari, visited the Spencer Eye Hospital in Lyari, which has recently been renovated and modernized under a public-private partnership by the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation led by Mayor Karachi Murtaza Wahab and the Government of Sindh.

During the visit, she was briefed that the hospital is providing free outpatient (OPD) services to around 4,000 patients daily. Since April 2026, more than 700 laser and other medical procedures have been successfully performed at the facility.

The First Lady reviewed the free and quality healthcare services being provided at the hospital and appreciated the dedication and professional commitment of the doctors, paramedical staff and the entire hospital team for serving the public.

Maulana Hidayat emphasizes importance of expanding access to quality education

GWADAR, (VoM Report): Member of the Balochistan Assembly Maulana Hidayat-ur-Rehman Baloch has said improving academic standards and providing essential facilities to educational institutions in Gwadar will remain a priority, assuring that the requirements of local colleges and the University of Gwadar will be raised with the relevant authorities.

He expressed these views during visits to the University of Gwadar, Government Boys Degree College and Government Girls Degree College, where he reviewed academic activities, attendance and administrative issues confronting the institutions.

At the University of Gwadar, the MPA held discussions with Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Abdul Razzaq Sabir, Professor Manzoor and other officials regarding the institution's academic and administrative requirements.

The vice chancellor apprised him of the university's need for a dedicated bus and other essential facilities. Hidayat-ur-Rehman assured the administration that he would take up the matter with the Governor and Chief Minister of Balochistan to seek necessary support.

The lawmaker subsequently inspected the Government Boys Degree College and Government Girls Degree College, reviewing classrooms as well as the attendance of students, teachers and other staff members.

Balochistan's economic, social difficulties require sustained action, effective leadership: Zarak

QUETTA (ANN): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader and Member of the Balochistan Assembly Sheikh Zarak Mandokhail has called for a shift from political rhetoric to practical policymaking, saying the province's economic, administrative and social difficulties require sustained action and effective leadership.

He made the remarks while meeting delegations from his constituency, during which public grievances, development schemes, budget priorities and employment prospects for young people came under discussion.

Mandokhail said closer coordination between the federal and provincial governments was necessary to overcome longstanding development constraints and ensure that public resources were translated into visible improvements in the lives of citizens.

He identified education, healthcare, road infrastructure and the provision of safe drinking water among the sectors requiring continued attention. He also stressed the need to expand opportunities for young people through technical and vocational training, scholarships and support for small-scale businesses.

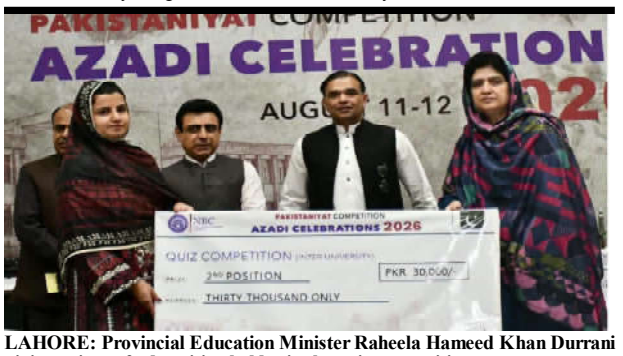
The PML-N lawmaker said improved law and order was equally important for sustainable development and called for stronger coordination among the district administration, police and community elders to help maintain peace and create a secure environment for residents.

He maintained that political differences should not be allowed to overshadow issues of public welfare, adding that governance should remain focused on service delivery, development and transparency.

"Balochistan's development will come through practical measures, not traditional slogans," Mandokhail said, reaffirming his party's stated commitment to improving public services and expanding economic opportunities.

He said he was consistently highlighting the concerns of his constituency in the Balochistan Assembly and before relevant forums, with the aim of securing greater attention to development needs.

Mandokhail assured his constituents that resolving their grievances and improving access to essential facilities would remain among his priorities, adding that available resources should be utilized effectively to ensure development projects produce tangible benefits at the local level.



LAHORE: Provincial Education Minister Raheela Hameed Khan Durrani giving prize to 2nd position holder in the quiz competition.

Health directly linked with national development: Ahsan

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal said the government was intensifying efforts to eliminate hepatitis C through a nationwide collaborative approach, urging all provinces and stakeholders to join the initiative to tackle one of Pakistan's most pressing public health challenges.

"We have launched the pilot hepatitis C elimination programme, and are now expanding it to Islamabad Capital Territory, Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

Our goal of achieving Zero Hepatitis C is attainable if the federal and provincial governments, along with all stakeholders, work together," he said while addressing an event held in connection with World Hepatitis Day.

The minister said Pakistan ranked among the countries with the highest burden of hepatitis C, with more than 10 million people affected, making the disease a major challenge to the country's human development and economic productivity.

He said the government had launched a pilot hepatitis C elimination programme this year, which was now being expanded to the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK).



Head of Asia Pacific, GSMA, Julian Gorman presenting the Digital Pakistan 2030 report

FC Balochistan (North) continues Rescue, Relief Operations amid severe weather

QUETTA, (APP):FC Balochistan (North) continued rescue and relief operations in District Naseerabad amid severe weather conditions. As part of the ongoing relief efforts, FC Balochistan evacuated affected families to safer locations and ensured the timely delivery of assistance to flood-affected communities across the district. During the operation, relief teams distributed food, clean drinking water, medical assistance, and other essential items are distributed among the affected people. Rescue and relief activities are continuing uninterrupted through the coordinated efforts of FC Balochistan (North) and the district administration.

FC Balochistan (North) said it is taking all possible measures to protect the lives and property of residents in the flood-affected areas.

Gulf states back plan to let Iran collect voluntary fees to use Hormuz

DUBAI: Oman has won backing from Gulf states for a plan that would let Tehran collect voluntary fees to use the Strait of Hormuz, a Gulf source told media, a path towards ending the disruption to oil trade caused by the US-Israeli war on Iran. President Donald Trump, who abruptly called off a two-week US bombing campaign over the weekend in his latest strategic U-turn, said there were "good talks" underway with Iran but threatened to restart strikes unless negotiations deliver. Iran denies seeking to resume talks with the United States.

Washington launched its renewed bombing campaign earlier this month to break Iran's grip on the strait, through which about a fifth of global oil and liquefied natural gas flowed before the war. Iran effectively shut the strait to ships other than its own after the United States and Israel attacked on February 28. A deal last month between the United States and Iran partially reopened it, but the agreement collapsed in early July after Iran fired on ships using a channel it does not approve. Iran has said it wants to manage the strait alongside Oman, which controls the opposite shore, and charge service fees to ships that use it. Washington wants to return to the status quo prior to the war, when ships were able to pass freely with no payments.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan Mr. Yerzhan Kistafin called on Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq at Parliament House in the federal capital

Pakistan competing with other ambitious economies in region for int'l investment

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Pakistan has laid stronger foundations for digital transformation through reforms in spectrum policy, progress in women's digital inclusion, and improved digital governance, said Head of Asia Pacific, GSMA, Julian Gorman.

However, he was of the view that sustained investment, trusted digital infrastructure, and coordinated implementation will be essential to achieve the vision of Digital Pakistan 2030.

Presenting the Digital Pakistan 2030 report, Gorman said digital technologies had become key drivers of national productivity and competitiveness.

He added that Pakistan now had an opportunity to convert recent momentum into long-term economic growth through investment certainty, digital trust, future-ready infrastructure, and collaboration among government, industry, and development partners.

Referring to a new GSMA report, Gorman said the study highlighted Pakistan's recent digital progress, outlined what success could look like by 2030, and identified five strategic priorities to transform current momentum into measurable outcomes.

Highlighting the country's recent achievements, he said Pakistan had strengthened its investment environment by completing the 5G spectrum auction with improved terms, more balanced spectrum pricing, flexible payment mechanisms, and payments denominated in Pakistani rupees, creating greater certainty for future investment in digital infrastructure and 5G deployment.

Religious ministry facilitates early passport renewal for Hajj 2027 pilgrims

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Ministry of Religious Affairs has taken significant steps to facilitate the passport renewal process for Hajj 2027 pilgrims.

At the request of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the passport office has issued orders allowing Hajj 2027 pilgrims to renew their passports before the stipulated period.

Passport offices across Pakistan and abroad have been instructed to receive and process early passport renewal applications to facilitate Hajj pilgrims.

Under passport rules 3(c), Hajj 2027 pilgrims will be eligible for early passport renewal.



TEHRAN, IRAN: A view of a giant billboard depicting U.S. President Donald Trump with the words 'Revenge Is Inevitable' displayed at the intersection of Jomhuri Street and Vali-e Asr Street

Women's inclusion in digital economy essential for Pakistan's future: Shaza

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja said the government had accelerated digital transformation through policy reforms, the expansion of fibre infrastructure, spectrum reforms and nationwide collaboration, expressing confidence that these measures would strengthen connectivity, attract investment and contribute billions of dollars to the economy in the coming years.

Speaking at the GSMA Digital Nation Pakistan event, the minister said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had demonstrated a strong commitment to technology even during his tenure as Chief Minister of Punjab by introducing e-facilitation centres, e-libraries, e-employment centres and free public Wi-Fi hotspots.

She said he also used teleconferencing to conduct meetings with officials in South Punjab, reflecting his early focus on technology-driven governance.

Shaza Fatima said that after assuming office, one of the government's first priorities was to accelerate digital transformation and improve nationwide connectivity.

She said the Prime Minister extended full support to the government's fibreisation programme and spectrum reforms, while Pakistan also landed new submarine fibre-optic cables and introduced Sea-WE fibre-related licences to strengthen international connectivity.

Shaza Fatima said the spectrum auction generated $509 million in revenue while securing 480 MHz of spectrum, which she described as the largest spectrum auction in the world.

She said the government's pricing strategy, policy framework and rollout obligations would produce long-term dividends by improving digital connectivity across the country.

The minister said the telecom industry had already begun the rollout following the auction, enabling the introduction of 5G services in Pakistan for the first time.

She said the success of the spectrum auction reflected a whole-of-government approach involving the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), regulators, the Spectrum Auction Committee, the Prime Minister, the Chief of Defence Staff, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, and other stakeholders.

Chief Editor: Syed Abdul Wadood Shah printed at Shah Printing Press, Quetta and Published from Al-Syed Building M.A. Jinnah Road Quetta Ph. 2843190 E.mail: dailyvomqta@gmail.com.