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Endorses austerity, energy conservation campaign:

Rise in petroleum prices in int'l market triggers inflationary pressures in world: PM Shehbaz

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday approved a nationwide austerity and energy conservation campaign in view of rising global petroleum prices amid tensions in the Middle East.

The decision was taken at a high-level meeting chaired by the prime minister to review austerity and energy conservation measures, a Prime Minister's Office news release said.

The prime minister said the rise in petroleum prices in the international market had triggered inflationary pressures across the world, stressing that sacrifices should first be made by the government and the elite.

He said a fuel subsidy had already been initiated for economically vulnerable and middle-income segments, under which motorcycles, rickshaws and vehicles up to 800cc were being provided a subsidy of Rs100 per litre.

The prime minister directed the authorities to ensure immediate and effective implementation of measures aimed at reducing unnecessary government expenditure and ensuring prudent use of national resources.

The meeting approved a 50 percent reduction in fuel allocations for government vehicles for three months. However, ambulances, fire brigades, law enforcement agencies, and essential service vehicles are exempt from this measure, while administrative and non-operational vehicles will receive no exemption.

The meeting also approved a five per cent cut in the non-ERE budget for the fiscal year 2026-27 and imposed a complete ban on the purchase of new vehicles at the government level.

A ban was also imposed on the procurement of all durable goods, except IT-related equipment. Government visits and overseas travel will remain suspended for three months; however, in unavoidable cases, ministers, advisers, ministers of state, special assistants and government officials must travel in economy class.

The meeting also approved maximum use of video and teleconferencing for official business and a ban on official dinners.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairs a high-level meeting to review austerity and energy conservation measures



QUETTA: Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Aurangzeb Khan Khichi addresses a ceremony marking an interactive dialogue on peace, pluralism and interfaith harmony, organized at the Methodist Church in provincial capital.

Patient safety core component of effective healthcare system: CM Sarfraz Bugti

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti has reiterated his government's commitment to ensuring safe, quality and timely healthcare for every patient, describing access to reliable medical treatment as a fundamental responsibility of the government.

In his message on World Patient Safety Day, the Chief Minister said the provincial government was pursuing practical reforms in the health sector aimed at improving the standard and safety of healthcare services throughout Balochistan.

He said efforts were focused on upgrading hospital facilities, enhancing the professional capacity of healthcare workers and introducing modern systems to improve the quality and reliability of medical services.

Mir Sarfraz Bugti emphasized that patient safety was a core component of an effective healthcare system and said the government was working to further improve treatment standards, facilities and service delivery at public health institutions.

He noted that patients suffering from heart disease, diabetes, cancer and other non-communicable diseases required consistent access to safe and quality medical care. Timely diagnosis, appropriate treatment and continuity of care, he added, could play an important role in improving health outcomes.

The Chief Minister reaffirmed that health-sector reforms would remain focused on strengthening patient safety and raising the quality of healthcare services. He said the ultimate objective of the government's efforts was to ensure that people across Balochistan could access safer, better and more dependable medical facilities.



QUETTA: Vice Chancellor SBK Women University Professor Dr Rubina Mushtaq presenting shield to Balochistan Governor Jaffar Khan Mandokhail

Maintaining professional standard; dignity collective responsibility: Law Minister

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Federal Minister for Law and Justice, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar on Thursday said the powers and jurisdiction of the Federal Constitutional Court (FCC) and the Supreme Court were clearly defined in the Constitution and there should be no ambiguity regarding their respective jurisdictions.

Addressing a ceremony at the Lahore High Court (LHC) Bar Association, Rawalpindi Bench, the minister said establishment of the Federal Constitutional Court under the



27th Constitutional Amendment was aimed at concentrating constitutional interpretation before a dedicated forum and ensuring uniformity in judicial interpretation.

He said the constitutional framework concerning the establishment and jurisdiction of the Federal Constitutional Court had been clearly laid down.

Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar said the principle of equal representation of provinces had been adopted in the Federal Constitutional Court, while the constitutional framework also clearly defined constitutional cases falling within its jurisdiction and their interpretation.

Democratic institutions must remain transparent, accountable to maintain public trust: Ayaz Sadiq

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Speaker National Assembly (NA), Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Thursday said that Commonwealth Parliaments need to play an effective and proactive role in strengthening democracy and upholding international law.

"Democratic institutions must remain transparent, accountable, inclusive and effective to maintain public trust and withstand emerging challenges," he expressed these views while addressing the General Debate of the 69th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC) in Cape Town on the theme "New Leadership Opportunities for Commonwealth Parliamentary Action to Strengthen Democracy and International Law."

NA Speaker paid tribute to the democratic journey of South Africa, observing that the conference coincides with three significant democratic milestones: the 50th anniversary of the 1976 Soweto Uprising, the 30th anniversary of the adoption of South Africa's Constitution in 1996, and the International Day of Democracy, observed on September 15. He said these milestones remind the Commonwealth parliamentary family that democracy is built through sacrifice, strengthened through constitutional institutions and sustained through meaningful participation of citizens.

Three terrorists killed in Awaran operation

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Balochistan Home Department Aide Babar Khan Yousafzai has commended security forces for eliminating three suspected Fitna al-Hindustan terrorists during Operation Radd-ul-Fitna-3 in Awaran, describing the operation as a demonstration of their preparedness and professional response.

In a statement, Yousafzai said security and law-enforcement agencies were maintaining sustained operations against terrorist elements seeking to undermine peace and stability in Balochistan.

He said the successful action in Awaran reflected the continued readiness of state institutions to counter terrorist threats and prevent attempts to destabilize the province.

The Home Department aide paid tribute to personnel who had lost their lives while performing their duties, saying their sacrifices in the interest of peace and security were a matter of pride for the nation and would not be forgotten.

He maintained that relevant state institutions remained united in confronting terrorism and that action against terrorists and those facilitating their activities would continue.

Yousafzai said attempts to create fear among citizens or hinder Balochistan's development process through violence would not be allowed to derail the province's efforts towards peace and stability.

CM Bugti takes notice of alleged child marriage in Kuchlak

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti has taken notice of an alleged child marriage involving a minor girl and an elderly man in Kuchlak and ordered a comprehensive investigation, directing authorities to take legal action against anyone found responsible.

Deputy Commissioner Chaman Habib Bangulzai said the girl's father, Abdul Bari, had been arrested in Chaman. He said coordination was in progress with Quetta Police for his transfer and registration of an FIR.

The Deputy Commissioner said initial information indicated a possible connection between the case and the killing of a 15-year-old girl in Kuchlak. He stressed, however, that the alleged link was still under investigation and the facts would be established through further inquiry.

Balochistan Chief Minister's Aide on Information and Political Affairs Shahid Rind said the investigation was being conducted from all possible angles on the Chief Minister's instructions.

Commissioner for technology based reforms in Quetta's waste management system

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Commissioner Quetta Division Zeeshan Lashari has called for further improvements in the city's solid waste and sanitation arrangements, directing authorities to introduce digital billing for door-to-door waste collection and strengthen the mechanism for resolving public complaints. He issued the instructions while presiding over a meeting that reviewed the overall sanitation situation and performance of the solid waste management system in Quetta. Metropolitan Corporation Administrator Bashir Ahmed Barech, Safa Quetta CEO Dil Nawaz Shah, Deputy Commissioner Quetta West Munir Ahmed Durrani and Deputy Commissioner Quetta Mehrullah Badini were among the officials attending the meeting.

Pakistan remains committed to Makkah accord; operational details can't be disclosed: FO

ISLAMABAD, (Monitoring Desk): The Foreign Office (FO) on Thursday said Pakistan remained committed to the Makkah accord but declined to disclose operational details, saying "operational confidentiality" required discretion over when and how any response would be carried out.

"Pakistan is committed to the intent and spirit of implementing the Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement (SMDA) and the Makkah accord. However, details regarding when and how, where, what force would be used, against which objectives, and through which means cannot be disclosed at this stage. Operational confidentiality requires some discretion at this time," said FO spokesperson Sajjad Haider Khan during a weekly press briefing while responding to questions about how Pakistan would ensure that Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia were thwarted and the kingdom's territorial integrity remained intact.

The statement came amid a widening Middle East crisis, as Yemen's Houthi group began targeting Saudi Arabia and its energy facilities. A day earlier, Saudi air defences intercepted and destroyed a drone near Makkah. The Houthis, however, denied responsibility for the attack, rejecting Saudi Arabia's accusation that they had launched the drone. The incident drew condemnation around the world. Responding to questions about diplomatic efforts to de-escalate the situation, Khan said Pakistan had long advocated peace and stability in the region.

"The situation in Bab al-Mandeb is exceptional; we can say that it's a serious matter of concern. We need to bring peace in the entire region, and Houthis must stop their activities also," Khan said.

He added that Pakistan's discussions were focused on "bringing peace and stability through dialogue and diplomacy and not through coercive measures".



LONDON: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb delivers the keynote address at the Pakistan Investment Roundtable, hosted by the Pakistan High Commission in London.

Khichi inaugurates Balochistan's first Deaf Reach Centre of Excellence in Quetta

QUETTA, (VoM Report): In a landmark step toward advancing inclusive education and equal opportunities for children and youth with disabilities, Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Muhammad Aurangzeb Khichi inaugurated Balochistan's first Deaf Reach Centre of Excellence in Quetta on Thursday.

Addressing the ceremony, Minister Aurangzeb Khichi lauded the collaborative efforts behind the project, calling it a timely and commendable initiative.

He emphasized that inclusive education and skill development are vital for empowering marginalized groups and reducing poverty, adding that employment opportunities must accompany education to ensure sustainable development. He assured full federal support for Balochistan's welfare programs and development initiatives.

Aurangzeb Khan Khichi, Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture, emphasized the importance of strengthening inclusive education and ensuring that children and youth with disabilities have access to quality education, skills development, and opportunities to participate meaningfully in society. He appreciated the collaborative efforts of Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF), Family Educational Services Foundation (FESF) and the Social Welfare Department in establishing the Centre and underscored the need for continued partnerships to expand inclusive education and support services across Balochistan.

He highlighted the importance of creating an enabling environment where children with disabilities can develop their abilities, confidence, and skills to contribute positively to society.

He also visited the facility, reviewed the learning environment, and interacted with students, appreciating the efforts to provide a supportive, accessible, and inclusive educational environment.

Aurangzaib Khichi assured full support from the federal government for Balochistan's welfare programs and development initiatives.



ISLAMABAD: Dr. Shafqat Munir, Deputy Executive Director (Research), SDPI, and Fatima Bajwa, CEO, Verdantia Global, on behalf of their respective organizations signs a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

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Momentary relief

The IMF's approval of the latest review of Pakistan's ongoing Fund programme comes at a moment of growing global economic volatility. With the Middle East crisis disrupting energy markets, its timing is particularly significant for a country whose external position remains vulnerable to imported energy shocks.For Pakistan, whose balance-of-payments position depends heavily on external financing and remittance stability, the new tranche offers some respite. The approval of the review was not in doubt. It was just a matter of time, as Islamabad remains broadly on track under the programme. However, it did not come automatically. The government reportedly accepted a dozen new conditions, pledging adherence to pre-war targets to keep economic stabilisation efforts on track.A most consequential condition was evident in the decision to maintain a tight monetary stance despite mounting pressure for rate cuts. The IMF's emphasis on guarding against inflation reflects concern that higher global energy prices could spill over into the larger economy. This means Islamabad is being asked to prioritise macroeconomic stability over growth impulse. Equally significant is the politically tough commitment to continue dismantling untargeted energy subsidies for lower-middle-income consumers. More importantly, the government has agreed to deliver a primary budget surplus equal to 2pc of GDP.

The IMF's praise for programme implementation should therefore not be taken as a victory. The current stability remains externally financed and is not rooted in durable productivity gains or export competitiveness. Hence, macroeconomic gains have remained fragile, making it all the more necessary to follow the Fund's advice and stay the course.Our past engagements with the lender have followed a familiar pattern: initial compliance under pressure, temporary stabilisation and eventual policy reversals once immediate financing needs ease. The current external environment leaves little room for such slippages, especially with the conflict overwhelming global markets. Rising oil prices alone have the potential to widen the import bill sharply, strain reserves and reignite inflationary pressures. Any premature easing of fiscal or monetary discipline could quickly erode the stability achieved so far.However, the deeper challenge lies beyond reviews and tranches. Pakistan's economy cannot forever rely on lenders to finance weaknesses that remain politically inconvenient to address. Broadening the tax base, reforming SOEs, improving energy efficiencies and enhancing export competitiveness are measures that can no longer be deferred.

The global economy is entering a period of heightened uncertainty in which external financing conditions may become tighter and geopolitical disruptions more frequent.

In such conditions, economic stability will depend less on emergency inflows and more on whether Pakistan can undertake reforms that reduce its dependence on them.

Prospects for peace?

M. Amir Rana

It is one of the enduring ironies in South Asia that even after stepping back from the brink of a potentially disastrous confrontation in May last year, India and Pakistan have been unable to move towards a meaningful dialogue.

When announcing the ceasefire on May 10, US President Donald Trump congratulated both countries for showing "common sense and great intelligence". Soon afterward, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio stated that Islamabad and New Delhi had agreed to begin talks on a broad set of issues at a neutral site. Yet, one year later, those promised talks remain elusive. The brief triumph of pragmatism quickly gave way to familiar mistrust, hardened political positions, and strategic posturing. More strikingly, the international actors who had facilitated the ceasefire, including the US itself, showed little interest in converting crisis management into a structured peace process. The outcome is that, on the anniversary of last year's stand-off, defence superiority is being projected by both countries through a verbal war.

Though India rejected any prospects of talks with Pakistan after Rubio's statement, a few attempts were still made to consolidate the ceasefire between the two nuclear-armed neighbours. This raised hopes that both might still be able to sit across the table from each other, even in the midst of the worst crisis. Similar optimism prevailed when the directors general of military operations of both sides effectively used the hotline, which has remained functional since 1971 and was established to help de-escalate crises.

There is also some hope in India's recent decision to let Pakistani sportsmen participate in international events on its soil, although bilateral sporting ties haven't been restored. However, a more optimistic aspect is that both countries still interact, albeit in limited ways and mainly through informal diplomatic channels. After the crisis, at least four reported Track 1.5 and Track 2 meetings were held at different locations between 2025 and February 2026, involving strategists, parliamentarians, former diplomats, and some security representatives. These reported talks were deliberately kept discreet and produced no public readouts, which is itself revealing: communication existed, but only under political cover.

Apparently, these dialogues remained largely focused on military and strategic issues. Yet the real irony is that a public voice for peace from civil society in both countries has remained absent. Whatever limited and half-hearted attempts were made remained largely confined to Zoom chat rooms and failed to create any meaningful impact.

The media is not interested in peace; it sells hatred and turns leaders into slaves of their own rhetoric.

In India's case, hatred against Pakistan has been politicised by the ruling party and used for electoral gains. This has also become a hurdle to dialogue. A more critical development is that, in the ongoing strategic and defence doctrine review in India, Pakistan remains at the core of New Delhi's threat perception. As this threat perception narrows, it may leave even less space for political engagement in the future. In fact, India is trying to weaponise every available leverage against Pakistan, including water.

Pakistan's case is not very different from India's, but its major apprehension is that India is exploiting its internal conflicts, mainly in Balochistan and along the Afghan border, to destabilise the country. Despite these concerns, Pakistan has an edge over India: the ability to engage in dialogue with India at any time, as the civil-military leadership is on the same page and no mainstream political party in Pakistan openly opposes dialogue with India. Moreover, for all its anti-Indian rhetoric, the Pakistani media is less toxic than the Indian media, which feeds hatred against Pakistan to its audience round the clock.

Few might have noticed that during the last few decades, the core issues between the two countries, once part of the composite dialogue framework, have gradually moved to the back-burner, while the issue of terrorism has taken centre stage in the conflict between them. As mentioned earlier, Pakistan holds India responsible for many of its internal security crises and acts of terrorism, while India makes similar accusations against Pakistan.

India once used the terrorism narrative to diplomatically isolate Pakistan at the global level, but over time, Pakistan has removed that stigma.

The May stand-off last year also appears to have reduced the international appeal of India's position on terrorism. Pakistan's successes against the Islamic State-Khorasan improved its standing with the US and parts of the wider international community. Over the past year, Pakistan has gained diplomatic and geopolitical space, which helped create a more balanced environment during the crisis. The rest was shaped by Trump, who publicly took credit for the ceasefire between India and Pakistan and repeatedly referred to Indian jet losses.

One must give credit to Pakistan that, over the last two and a half decades, it has fought a war against terrorism on its own soil and has abandoned or suspended support for groups that were once allegedly used as proxies. What greater evidence could there be than Pakistan's strained relationship with the Afghan Taliban in Kabul, who were once widely regarded as Pakistan's proxy? Ironically, India is now engaging with them.

The point is that, despite terrorism remaining at the core of the conflict and continuing to shape the two adversaries' strategic thinking, this is perhaps the first moment in decades that Pakistan has openly talked to India about the issue of terrorism and sought similar acknowledgement and reciprocity from New Delhi.

Although the space for a broad-based peace process between the two countries has shrunk, optimism is the only way forward for peace-loving citizens in both nations. Keeping that optimism alive, however, requires consistent effort. The seeds of hope still exist in the form of limited informal diplomatic contacts and weak but surviving civil society channels between the two sides. After all, even miracles need a starting hand.

Pakistan: The heart of Asia's destiny

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal

In the divine act of creation, the Almighty fashioned the human form with organs so perfectly attuned to one another that health and vigour depend upon their unbroken harmony. No faculty may falter without imperilling the rest. Foremost among them is the heart, which tirelessly propels the life-blood from the seat of intellect in the brain to the remotest vein in the toes. Through carelessness or affliction, however, obstructions arise; vessels constrict, clots form, and the vital current slows. Medicine is first employed to restore flow; when remedies prove inadequate, a stent may reopen the passage; and in the gravest peril, the surgeon must perform a bypass to safeguard existence itself.

Such, in many respects, is the condition of Pakistan today. Like the heart within the body of nations, Pakistan occupies a position of singular importance—geographically, politically, commercially, and strategically. It stands at the crossroads of civilisations, bearing responsibilities far beyond its borders. Pakistan has consistently extended every form of cooperation and assistance to address regional challenges, yet it has been afflicted by a persistent malady; terrorism nurtured from Afghan soil and abetted by Indian design. This external interference has disrupted the nation's stability and hindered its natural rhythms.

With exemplary patience, Pakistan pursued negotiations to resolve these tensions. When dialogue bore no lasting fruit, military operations were undertaken, not out of choice but necessity, to protect the country's integrity and the welfare of its people. Even now, despite these efforts, acts of terrorism continue, guided from across the border. In these difficult times, brotherly nations have extended valuable support for mediation. Qatar and Türkiye, along with other friendly countries, have offered their good offices to facilitate dialogue between Pakistan and Afghanistan, demonstrating a shared commitment to regional peace and stability. Such mediations reflected the hope that wisdom and mutual understanding could prevail over hostility, but all efforts went in vain due to Afghanistan's obstinacy in stopping hostile activities from their side.

The deeper tragedy lies in opportunities forfeited by continued strife. Central Asia—encompassing Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan—holds some of the world's most abundant reserves of natural gas, oil, uranium, and rare earth minerals. These landlocked states remain largely cut off from global markets. To their south lie Pakistan and Afghanistan, positioned by geography as the most direct overland bridge connecting this resource wealth with the energy-hungry economies of South and East Asia, particularly China and India. China, the planet's largest energy consumer, and India, its fastest-growing major economy, both grapple with structural deficits that could be eased through reliable northern corridors.

Pipelines for gas and oil, efficient road freight networks, and modern rail links traversing Pakistan and Afghanistan could generate billions of dollars annually in transit revenues. Such corridors would ignite industrial activity, multiply employment, develop infrastructure, and enable both nations to evolve from aid-dependent economies into thriving hubs of regional commerce. Ports such as Gwadar and Karachi could serve as vital gateways, while existing roads and proposed railways would knit together markets stretching from the steppes of Central Asia to the bustling ports of the Arabian Sea and beyond. This vision, however, remains locked behind a single critical barrier; the absence of enduring stability and cooperative governance in Afghanistan.

Pakistan and Afghanistan together constitute the natural link between supply and demand in this vast region. Transforming the corridor from a theatre of conflict into an artery of commerce is achievable, yet it requires genuine political will and responsible conduct from Kabul. A landlocked Afghanistan cannot forge a stable and self-reliant future without dependable transit partnerships with its neighbours. It faces a clear choice; become a corridor of commerce that benefits its people or remain trapped as a corridor of conflict that perpetuates isolation and dependence on international charity.

The potential rewards are substantial and mutual. Peaceful connectivity would bring transit fees, vibrant border trade, fresh investment, and thousands of jobs for Afghans and Pakistanis alike. Pakistan, in turn, would secure enhanced access to Central Asian resources and fuller utilisation of its strategic ports and highways. Ordinary citizens on both sides of the Durand Line stand to gain from shared prosperity. Yet no economic endeavour of this magnitude can succeed while terrorism, militant sanctuaries, and cross-border attacks persist. Afghan soil must no longer serve as a base for groups operating against Pakistan. The region's transit promise is therefore inseparable from a firm recalibration of policy in Kabul.

The current Afghan dispensation's tolerance—and in some instances apparent facilitation—of anti-Pakistan terrorist activity remains the foremost obstacle to integration. Kabul must review its posture, cease support for elements hostile to Pakistan, and take credible, verifiable action against networks destabilising Balochistan and the border regions. The Afghan people, who ultimately bear the heaviest cost of their leadership's decisions, would do well to ask themselves whether they desire a future marred by proxy conflict and seclusion, or one illuminated by connectivity, commerce, and collective advancement.

The strategic implications extend beyond immediate neighbours. Balochistan possesses considerable deposits of minerals and rare earth elements essential to modern technology. This wealth cannot be fully realised while terrorism, sustained through Afghan sanctuaries, continues to unsettle the province. Peace in Balochistan therefore serves not only Pakistani interests but aligns with the broader aims of the United States and other stakeholders who seek secure trade routes and diversified supply chains of critical materials. Washington and the international community have every reason to encourage Kabul to act responsibly, deny safe havens to terrorists, and support regional connectivity rather than permit instability to fester.

Central Asia offers the resources, South and East Asia the demand, and Pakistan and Afghanistan the vital corridor between them. Security and mutual trust remain the only missing elements—qualities that depend largely upon a change of approach in Kabul. The Almighty has endowed this region with extraordinary gifts of geography and potential. It falls to its leaders and peoples, guided by foresight and statesmanship, to remove obstructions so that these blessings may flow freely, nourishing prosperity and harmony much as a healthy heart sustains the entire body in balanced and enduring life.

Critical thinking: the missing half

Farid Panjwani

Towards the end of the final year class that I was observing, the teacher showed the students an advertisement for an internship programme. It offered new graduates three months of exposure to corporate work. Open to applicants from across the country, the internship was full-time, unpaid and free of cost — there was not even an application fee. The role held prestige that could significantly enhance future prospects.

The students were excited at this meritocratic opportunity — open to all regardless of region, religion or ethnicity. "It's free," said a student in the middle row, "but it still costs. I'll need to pay for food, travel and accommodation. I must earn immediately after graduation. It is not for me". The classroom fell silent.

The student's last sentence still haunts me. It transformed how everyone in the class saw the 'free' internship. What appeared as equal opportunity now seemed conditioned by prior privilege. No-fee-no-pay became a filtering process, favouring those who can absorb risk and forego income. The student's intuition is backed by research which shows that unpaid internships reinforce social and economic inequality.

The student's response was an exercise in critical thinking — but not of the kind commonly taught these days in schools and universities or invoked in international agencies' reports or government policies. There critical thinking is typically understood as the ability to analyse arguments, assess sources, weigh evidence, detect fallacies and check the validity of conclusions. This is how Unesco's working paper (2015) on the 'Futures of learning' defines critical thinking: "accessing, analysing and synthesising information, and can be taught, practised and mastered". At its best, it enables students to identify what is called fake news and to avoid falling prey to misinformation.

These are valuable skills but insufficient; the conception is narrow. They teach only half of what students need. They focus on the internal coherence of texts and reliability of evidence but can leave unexamined questions regarding the interrelationship of self and society and the larger issues of justice, equality, freedom and other human values. This is exactly what the student mentioned above did. She didn't question the internship's claims or verify its credentials. She questioned the world that made it inaccessible to her.

This form of critical thinking is closer to another concept related to critical thinking, and is often associated with Critical Social Theory (CST), with its roots in the Frankfurt School. It is a way of looking at the world as already being shaped by power and privilege, resulting in inequities, silencing and exploitation. This observation is not to create despair but to guide the action needed to redress the situation. The theory doesn't negate the current dominant conception of critical thinking, focused on logical analysis and evidentiary scrutiny; it extends the scope of critique by focusing on the human condition with a critical and transformative lens.

As evidence of its reading of the world, the proponents of CST would point to, among other things, the huge concentration of wealth (the richest one per cent now control 45pc of global resources), which gives disproportionate social and political power to a few. Even the damage done is disproportionate, with the richest 1pc producing more carbon emissions than the poorest 66pc. Continued neocolonial relationships through cultural and economic imperialism, gender inequities, wars and unbridled invasion of technologies without any democratic oversight are some of the other concerns. Critical thinking without probing how the world is constructed is limited at best. The difference becomes concrete in classrooms. Take, for example, history that is taught through the dominant approach to critical thinking. The aim would be to equip students with skills to verify the sources, check for bias, avoid anachronisms, compare conflicting accounts and construct narratives based on evidence. These skills are indispensable but aren't enough. With CST, new questions can be asked: whose accounts were preserved and whose were missing? In the sources we have. , what happened to the experiences of women, workers and minorities? How are events labelled (mutiny or freedom struggle, for example), and by whom? To answer such questions, students are encouraged to go beyond official and easily available accounts and read narratives of oral histories, diaries and sources in minority languages. The concern is not only veracity but also selection, organisation and framing. It is this type of approach to our knowledge of the past that can move us away from 'Columbus discovered America' to what Howard Zinn calls the 'people's history of America'.

The distinction can be applied to life as well. For instance, the dominant approach to AI literacy focuses on using it without compromising one's cognitive skills and following some ethical norms such as declaring its use.

Colombia's new president orders extradition of 5 former peace negotiators to US

Monitoring Desk

BOGOTA, (Agencies): Colombia's new president on Thursday ordered the extradition to the US of five criminal figures who took part as representatives or negotiators in peace processes with armed groups during the administration of former President Gustavo Petro.

US authorities are seeking the five over alleged involvement in drug trafficking, illegal weapons trafficking or possession, and narco-terrorism, according to Colombian media reports.

President Abelardo De la Espriella, who took office on Aug. 5, said the extraditions had already been authorized last year by the previous government but procedures had been suspended because the individuals were taking part in different dialogue processes under the Petro administration.

Among the figures slated for extradition are Geovany Andres Rojas, alias Arana, the alleged leader of the Comandos de Frontera criminal organization, who was arrested on Feb. 14, 2025 while participating in peace negotiations with the government, according to local media.

The extradition order also covers Willington Henao Gutierrez, alias Mocho Olmedo, described as a leader of FARC dissidents, and Carmen Evelio Castillo Carrillo, alias Muneca, a former leader of the Autodefensas Conquistadores de la Sierra Nevada, also known as Los Pachenca. Gabriel Yepes Mejia, alias HH, and Fredy Castillo Carrillo, alias Pinocho, are also slated for extradition but remain fugitives, local media reported.

Mocho Olmedo surrendered to authorities in February 2025 amid fighting between FARC dissidents and the National Liberation Army, or ELN, in the Catatumbo region, while Muneca was arrested in June 2024 during a police operation.

De la Espriella said his administration reviewed the cases and found no "verifiable contributions" or concrete results toward peace that would justify continuing suspending the extraditions.

"Peace negotiations cannot become shelters from justice," he said, adding that those seeking to move toward legality must demonstrate it through "concrete and verifiable facts."



Protesters try to remove a barricade as police hold it during clashes at an anti-government rally in Tirana, Albania.



BUCHAREST, ROMANIA: Leader of party of Young People (POT) Ana Maria Gavrila arrives to meet Romanian President Nicusor Dan (not seen) after his invitation to members of the POT party for consultations regarding the appointment of the Prime Minister of Romania, at Cotroceni Palace

More than 400 dead in DR Congo's spreading Ebola outbreak

Monitoring Desk

CONGO: An Ebola outbreak in the DR Congo has killed more than 400 people and is still spreading, with a first case reported in the major city of Kisangani nearly 600 kilometres (370 miles) from its epicentre.

The highly infectious disease has claimed 438 lives among the 1,406 people confirmed infected—a fatality rate of just over 31 percent—since the outbreak was declared on May 15, the National Institute of Public Health (INSP) said in its latest report published on Thursday.

The centre of the outbreak—whose true scale remains difficult to assess—was in the northeastern Ituri province, where more than 83 percent of the deaths have occurred.

The province borders South Sudan and Uganda, which has reported 20 cases including two deaths.

The virus has also spread to the nearby provinces of North Kivu and South Kivu.

A case has also recently been reported in Kisangani, a northeastern city of 1.5 million residents and the capital of Tshopo province. A test on the body of a 24-year-old pregnant woman was positive for Ebola, the INSP said.

"The deceased's body was secretly transported by motorcycle to Kisangani" from the health zone of Nia Nia in Ituri, the health authorities said.

The body of a deceased Ebola victim remains highly infectious and in many cases the virus has been transmitted during burial rites. South African President Cyril Ramaphosa and the head of the African Union's health agency, Africa CDC, Jean Kaseya, were visiting the capital, Kinshasa, on Thursday.

In Haut-Uele province, which is next door to Ituri, a death and a case of infection were also reported at the start of the week. Health authorities said the infected person was "on the run" from the Nia Nia health zone. Nevertheless, health authorities continue to say that only three provinces in total are affected by the virus, as they say that the cases in Tshopo and Haut-Uele were "imported" from Ituri.

Gaza war's 1,000 days:

90% of strip 'destroyed', 80% 'seized' by Israel

Monitoring Desk

GAZA: More than 90 percent of the Gaza Strip has been destroyed, and Israeli forces are in control of 80 percent of the besieged territory, authorities in the enclave say, as the world marks 1,000 days since Israel's genocidal war on Gaza began.

Tallying up the extent of the damage since Israel launched its war on October 7, 2023, Gaza's Government Media Office said in a statement on Thursday that at least 73,066 Palestinians have been killed in the enclave.

More than 21,500 of those killed in Gaza were children, including 1,022 babies, it added. A further 9,500 people are missing, many believed to be buried under rubble, while 173,514 have been wounded. It added that about 223,000 tonnes of explosives have been dropped by Israel on Gaza during the war – 16 times more than what the United States dropped on Hiroshima, Japan, in 1945 with the atomic bomb.

With most of Gaza in ruins, the "ceasefire" framework meant to end the conflict is also faltering six months after its centrepiece body was established. The US-created Board of Peace, established in January to oversee the "ceasefire" and steer reconstruction under a three-phase plan endorsed by the United Nations Security Council, has failed to secure Israeli compliance, analysts said. Instead of a gradual withdrawal that the plan envisions, Israel has expanded its control of Gaza, and only a third of the aid trucks it committed to allow into the enclave daily are entering. Israeli forces have also killed more than 1,000 Palestinians since the October.



The highly infectious disease has claimed 438 lives among the 1,406 people confirmed infected since May 15, the National Institute of Public Health said.

Beijing says

China-EU trade talks set in the fall, to be held regularly each year

Monitoring Desk

HONG KONG: China and the European Union will hold ministerial-level trade talks once or twice a year, China's Commerce Ministry said Thursday, as the two sides work to increase and rebalance trade. The EU faces growing pressure to reduce its trade deficit with China, which widened to about 360 billion euros ($410 billion) last year, nearly 1 billion euros a day. Chinese cars and batteries are among items increasingly exported to Europe.

Under the newly agreed upon China-EU trade and investment consultation mechanism, Beijing has also invited the EU's trade commissioner, Maroš Šefčovič, to visit China this autumn, ministry spokesperson He Yadong told reporters.

He said the two sides intend to boost their collaboration in areas like artificial intelligence and the transition to renewable energy.

Beijing's remarks followed a meeting between Šefčovič and Wang Wentao, China's commerce minister, on Monday in Brussels. Šefčovič said after the meeting he would be travelling to Beijing in the fall. As the trade gap between China and the EU widens, Europe needs to "defend our industrial base and keep pushing for a level playing field globally," Šefčovič said.

Thailand denies viral claim Macron knelt before king

Monitoring Desk

FRANCE: Thailand's foreign ministry denied Thursday that French President Emmanuel Macron knelt before the country's king during his state visit to Paris this week, after an AI-generated picture circulated online. King Maha Vajiralongkorn and Queen Suthida's trip was the first official visit by a Thai monarch to France since 1960, marking the 170th anniversary of formal diplomatic relations between the two nations.

During a state dinner at the presidential palace, Macron presented the 73-year-old king with the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour—France's highest award—and Queen Suthida with the Grand Cross of the National Order of Merit.



A Palestinian child stands on the rubble of a destroyed building near the Shati refugee camp in western Gaza City.

'Most massive' Russian attack on Kyiv kills at least 20

Monitoring Desk

KYIV: Russian forces launched a major drone and missile attack on Kyiv overnight, killing 20 people, in what the city's mayor has described as the "most massive attack" on the Ukrainian capital.

Vitaly Klitschko said around 90 people were injured. He said an ambulance station was among the places hit in the strikes and declared Friday a day of mourning.

Although previous attacks have killed more people, this latest barrage deployed the largest number of weapons on the capital and hit locations over a very wide area of Kyiv. Several neighbourhoods were evacuated as strikes rocked buildings throughout the city, hours after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky warned Russia was preparing an attack.

Contains some scenes which some viewers may find upsetting. - Verified videos show large-scale Russian strikes on Kyiv

Moscow said its forces hit what it called military plants in retaliation against attacks on Russian civilian infrastructure.

South Africa and Ghana in diplomatic row over alleged killing of migrant

Monitoring Desk

GHANA: A diplomatic row has erupted between South Africa and Ghana, over claims that a Ghanaian man was killed during anti-migrant protests, which South African officials deny. Ghana's Foreign Affairs ministry said it had received with "profound shock" reports that Bashiru Isak, 40, had been shot dead on Tuesday in Cape Town's Khayelitsha's township. It said it had sent a formal protest note and filed a complaint with the police. South Africa's justice minister responded by expressing concern "that Ghanaian authorities continue to communicate false information about South Africa regarding developments on irregular migration". The police said they had "no record of the Khayelitsha murder".

They did say they were investigating the killing, a day earlier, of 35-year-old Ghanaian Kwabena Boagen allegedly in extortion-linked crime in a different Cape Town township, Nyanga.

South African police said Boagen lived in Khayelitsha area but worked in Nyanga, where the crime occurred. It said a post-mortem was being done in line with its protocols. The police had earlier told the BBC that suspects allegedly entered the barbershop where Boagen was working and demanded money from him before he was shot.

Climate change destabilizing factor in deadly Nepal-China flood disaster, say researchers

KATHMANDU, (Agencies): A group of expert academics said Thursday that climate change was "a destabilizing factor acting on a pre-existing geological predisposition" behind last month's deadly flash floods and mudslides along the Nepal-China border.

In a report, World Weather Attribution, including researchers from Nepal, Pakistan, the UK, Ireland, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, the US, New Zealand and the Netherlands, including experts in glaciology, climate science, humanitarian aid, seismology, and social science, examined the range of factors that contributed to the disaster, which killed over 1,400 people, with over 6,000 still missing, according to the latest figures.

"Climate change is thus best understood as a destabilising factor acting on a pre-existing geological predisposition, rather than the fundamental cause of the failure," the report said.

Although Nepal had early warning systems and adaptation measures, the incident "was beyond the design and predictive limits of existing risk reduction measures, and no existing early warning system could have provided sufficient lead time or prevented the scale of impacts observed in the worst-affected areas, highlighting the limits of adaptation," it said.

The disaster struck on Aug. 26 when a glacier on Nepal's Mount Langtang Lirung fractured at an altitude of 5,200 meters (17,060 feet).

The fracture triggered an ice-rock avalanche that turned into a massive debris flow and swept through valleys along the border.

Floodwaters and mudslides devastated Nepal's Rasuwa, Nuwakot, Dhading and Kavre districts, as well as the Kathmandu Valley.

The disaster also buried the Gyirong border crossing in Xizang.

At least six killed in explosion inside central Damascus cafe

Monitoring Desk

DAMASCUS: An explosion at a cafe in central Damascus has killed at least six people and injured 22, according to Syria's Ministry of Health. The explosion was reported at around 3:24pm local time (12:24 GMT) inside a cafe on al-Nasser Street in the al-Marjah district, close to the Palace of Justice, according to Syrian state media.

Syrian state television said the blast was caused by an explosive device.

Footage from the site showed severe damage to the cafe with blood smeared on the floor.

An investigation into the cause of the explosion has been launched with a number of government and private surveillance cameras in the area., said Milad Fadl, Al Jazeera's Syria correspondent.

"Traces of blood are all over the ground; the Interior Ministry is trying to gather evidence to see who is responsible," Fadl said. "Residents in the area gave first aid to the injured until the ambulances arrived."

Security guard rescued from rubble 8 days after Venezuela earthquakes

Monitoring Desk

CATIA LA MAR: Hundreds of rescuers in Venezuela cheered and embraced Thursday after pulling a man alive from the ruins of a collapsed building eight days after deadly twin earthquakes, AFP journalists witnessed.

With the official death toll nearing 2,300 and huge numbers of people still missing, the rescue of security guard Hernan Gil after so long under the rubble was greeted as a miracle.

Gil was brought out on a stretcher after a painstaking operation to extract him from the collapsed seven-story building where he worked in Catia La Mar, a coastal area almost entirely razed to the ground in the June 24 catastrophe.

"This is truly a miracle," Gil's wife Gusbimar Gonzalez told AFP before his rescue.

"I'm completely amazed because it's the first time I've seen so many countries come together like this to save a single person," she said.

Rescue teams from seven countries—Venezuela, Chile, the United States, Portugal, Costa Rica, El Salvador, and Mexico—worked around the clock over the past three days to reach him.

Canadian court publication ban in Quebec militia case raises press-freedom concerns

Monitoring Desk

OTTAWA: A Canadian court has banned publication of facts related to an alleged plot to seize land for an anti-government militia, drawing criticism from press-freedom advocates and legal experts concerned the move could compromise citizens' understanding of threats to public safety.

The Quebec Superior Court ordered the ban in February, according to a copy of the order seen by Reuters. It came days after a lower-level court released more than a thousand pages of documents related to a police investigation of four men, including two active-duty soldiers, who were arrested last summer. Three of them were accused of taking "concrete actions to facilitate terrorist activity" and a fourth with weapons charges.

One legal expert said such bans commonly seek to restrict access to sensitive details that could jeopardize ongoing investigations or identify vulnerable victims. But he called the broad ban on information in this case unusual.

"Rights, including freedom of the press, are not absolute. But restrictions need to be reasonable," said Wayne MacKay, emeritus professor of law at Dalhousie University. "The broader the ban and the more sweeping it is, the harder it is to justify."

The judge's order gave no rationale for the ban, and a spokeswoman for Quebec Superior Court said the institution and its judges are prohibited from on any decision.

Thousands of Indians face severe hardship due to consular services closure in UAE

ABU DHABI (INP): Indian nationals in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) are facing difficulties in obtaining passports, visas, document attestation and other consular services, making it difficult for Indians living abroad to carry out basic travel and legal matters.

The system of providing Indian consular services in the UAE has been affected due to a legal dispute. As a result of the court order, the new company has yet to formally take over the services, which has led to the suspension of passport renewals, visas, document verification and other consular services.

According to reports, Indian consular services in the UAE were previously being provided by BLS International and SGIVS, but the contracts of these companies expired on June 30, 2026. Under the new tender, Al Hind Tours and Travel was selected as the new service provider for the Indian Consular Application Centres and was to take over the services from July 1, but the transfer was stopped due to legal proceedings.

Two companies have challenged the technical review and scoring procedure of the tender in India's Delhi High Court.

Europeans fill most gaps left by US in NATO defence plans, top commander says

Monitoring Desk

BERLIN: European NATO allies have largely filled the gaps left by the United States in the alliance's defence plans, NATO's top commander said on Thursday, adding the bloc was looking at workarounds to address the remaining shortfalls in a few areas.

"In a matter weeks, European allies have largely filled the gaps left by U.S. reductions to the NATO Force Model," NATO's top commander, U.S. Air Force General Alexus Grynkewich, said in information provided to Reuters when asked for comment on the topic.

"And in those few areas where they haven't, where they do not currently have a like capability to replace, we are looking at alternate capabilities with matching effect."

The U.S. told its allies in May that it had decided to shrink the pool of capabilities committed to the transatlantic alliance in a crisis, raising urgent questions as leaders prepare for a NATO summit in Ankara on July 7-8.

The move is meant to gradually end an "unhealthy co-dependence" on U.S. forces as Washington faces the potential of simultaneous conflicts in multiple theatres, according to Grynkewich.

In mid-June, NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte said other allies were increasing their contributions and would fill "a lot" of the gaps but did not give any details.

Citing a NATO source, Reuters reported on Wednesday that NATO would announce at next week's Ankara summit that its European members have filled almost all the gaps left by the United States in the alliance's defence plans.

The main gap NATO is still struggling to plug is in strategic bombers, where the U.S. has said it will make only one aircraft available instead of two, said the source, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The U.S. did not publicly disclose details of its reductions, but they range from refuelling aircraft to fighter jets, drones and , according to figures provided to Reuters by a military source.

The number of U.S. F-15 and F-15E fighter jets available to NATO will fall by a third to 99 and the number of MQ-4 and MQ-9 Reaper drones by half to 12, according to source.

The number of KC-135 and KC-46 refuelling aircraft falls to 63 from 79.

Firefighters battle blazes in southern France after European heatwave

Monitoring Desk

LANCON: Firefighters were battling several wildfires fanned by strong winds in southern France on Thursday, as the country grappled with parched conditions Europe's recent heatwave.

Interior Minister Laurent Nunez said three blazes, two of which broke on the western edge of the Mediterranean port city of Marseille, had scorched a combined area of 1,210 hectares (2,990 acres).

As Prime Minister Sebastien Lecornu arrived on Thursday afternoon in Marseille to hold a new crisis meeting on the heatwave and the wildfires, a new blaze had just started near the city of Roquemaure in the Gard area, firefighters told Lecornu.

Lecornu, whose minority government faces a no-confidence vote in parliament on Monday that was put forward by Green Party lawmakers over its handling of the heatwave crisis, said on Thursday that 8,700 hectares had burned in France so far this season, including 1,200 on Wednesday alone, and that 2,000 firefighters had been mobilised. The World Meteorological Organization last week warned that the record temperatures that baked Western Europe for over a week in late June.

Terrorism can only be defeated through comprehensive, coordinated international response: Pakistan

UNITED NATIONS, (APP): Pakistan told the UN Security Council Wednesday that India's annexation of occupied Jammu and Kashmir seven years ago using 90,000 Indian troops was a "worst example of state terrorism".

"Today, 5 August marks a grim occasion – it is the seventh anniversary of the unlawful and unilateral measures imposed in Indian-illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir," Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, said in a debate on 'Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts', while underscoring the need for intensive international cooperation and practical action to fight the menace.

"On this day … the Kashmiri people, enduring over seven decades of injustice, indignity, unfulfilled promises and denial of their Security Council-guaranteed fundamental right to self-determination were subjected to a new wave of repression," the Pakistani envoy said.

Pakistan, he said, stands for zero-tolerance for such blatant perpetration of state terrorism – in occupied Jammu and Kashmir, and in other situations of foreign occupation. "Also, the international community must not allow counter-terrorism to be misused and abused as a pretext to suppress the internationally-recognized and legitimate struggles of peoples against foreign occupation and for their inalienable right to self-determination."

On Afghanistan, Ambassador Asim Ahmad said that since the Taliban's takeover of the country in 2021, an ever-more permissive environment has allowed terror groups to carry out attacks in Pakistan, "with active external support" from a neighboring State.

"Safe havens are available inside Afghanistan to terrorist groups such as TTP, BLA and its Majeed Brigade, ISIL-K and their affiliates, ETIM, and Al Qaeda affiliates," he said.

"We must effectively address this increasingly dangerous terrorist threat emanating from Afghanistan," the Pakistani envoy said, stressing that the Taliban must be held accountable to the obligation to ensure that Afghan territory is not used by any terrorist group to threaten or attack other States, including Pakistan. "External sponsors of terrorism must also be held to account for supporting, financing and arming these proxies – these terrorist groups in Afghanistan." He also agreed that the threat posed by Da'esh — while different from past decades — remains serious. "Acting alone, no State can effectively confront the transnational threat of terrorism," he stressed, calling for stronger border management and better efforts to disrupt terrorist financing.



QUETTA: Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Aurangzeb Khan Khichi, Parliamentary Secretary for Social Welfare Wali Muhammad Noorzai and Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) CEO Nadir Gul Barech jointly cut the ribbon to inaugurate Balochistan's first Centre of Excellence – Deaf Reach Centre in Quetta.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar addresses the launch ceremony of FOSPAH's Complaint Management System, mobile app and revamped website at the FOSPAH headquarters

President, DPM extend condolences to China and Nepal over flood losses

ISLAMABAD, (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari and Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister (DPM/FM), Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Thursday extended their deepest condolences to the leadership and people of China and Nepal over the tragic loss of lives and destruction due to flash floods and landslides that struck their border region.

In a condolence message on the official X wall of the President of Pakistan, the president said the immense loss of precious lives and the many still missing were a tragedy of profound magnitude. "Pakistan shares the grief of its Chinese and Nepali brothers and sisters during this hour of sorrow," he said. He saluted the bravery and dedication of search and rescue teams operating under extreme conditions and said Pakistan stands ready to extend every possible support to assist the relief efforts. The president said his thoughts and prayers are with all those who have lost loved ones, and he prayed for the safe return of the missing.

Pakistan more important; sacred than personal interests: Aleem

ISLAMABAD, (APP): President of the Istihkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP), Abdul Aleem Khan, on Thursday reiterated the party's strong support for the creation of new provinces, stressing that Pakistan's national interests must take precedence over personal and political considerations.

"Pakistan is more important and sacred than personal interests and politics. The creation of new provinces has become indispensable to move the country forward," he said this while presiding over a party meeting, said a press release. He said that providing effective relief to the people would not be possible without the creation of new provinces and smaller administrative units. "Whether anyone likes it or not, whether it is politically convenient or not, new provinces will have to be created," he stated. The meeting was attended by IPP Secretary General Mian Khalid Mahmood, Provincial President Rana Nazir Ahmed Khan, Gilgit-Baltistan Provincial Minister Haji Anwar Ali and GB Assembly Member Imam Maalik.

The participants reaffirmed the IPP's commitment to supporting the creation of new provinces and agreed on the need for a concrete party-level strategy to advance the issue.

Abdul Aleem Khan said that no government, office, power or position could be more important than the integrity and national interests of Pakistan. He emphasized that personal or political interests could never be placed above the country's interests.

Pakistan's energy policies, regulatory frameworks must reflect rapid growth of solar power

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Barrister Danyal Chaudhry, Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Broadcasting and Secretary of the Parliamentary Forum on Energy and Economy, on Thursday called for a rethink of Pakistan's long term energy contracts, saying the country must integrate solar power, LNG, the national grid and emerging technologies to ensure affordable, reliable and secure energy.

Speaking at a dialogue titled "The Sun and the Pipeline: Energy Contracts in an Era of Solar Disruption in Pakistan", organised by the Parliamentary Forum on Energy and Economy at Islamabad, he said the debate should move beyond treating solar and gas as competing alternatives.

"We should not ask whether Pakistan chooses the sun or the pipeline. We should ask how the sun, the pipeline, the grid and emerging technologies can work together to provide Pakistan with affordable, reliable and secure energy," he said. The dialogue brought together parliamentarians and energy experts to discuss Pakistan's changing RLNG requirements, geopolitical risks, global market volatility and policy options for protecting consumers while maintaining energy security.

Speakers called for greater flexibility in LNG and fuel imports, warning that rigid long term take or pay contracts could burden consumers with costly energy commitments and contribute to circular debt.

Pakistan has deployed an estimated 50 GW of solar capacity across utility scale, net metered, agricultural, off grid and behind the meter systems in just a few years, largely without public subsidy.

The capacity is estimated to generate around 54.75 TWh annually, equivalent on a gross energy basis to nearly 1,279 MMCFD of gas fired generation. Dr Nafisa Shah, Convener of the Parliamentary Forum on Energy and Economy and Member of the National Assembly, said Pakistan's energy policies and regulatory frameworks must reflect the rapid growth of solar power. Muhammad Arif, former Member Gas at OGRA and petroleum law, policy and regulatory adviser, called for integrated energy governance and mechanisms to monetise surplus solar generation during periods of high output. Asim Riaz, Energy Adviser at the All Pakistan Textile Mills Association, said Pakistan's LNG challenge is increasingly about demand, flexibility, affordability and market design rather than simply securing supplies.

Energy journalist and Energy Flux founder Seb Kennedy said Pakistan is experiencing a consumer led energy transition faster than the state's planning system could adapt, driven by high tariffs, unreliable supply and falling solar costs.



KARACHI: Free food are being distributing among the people participating in main procession of Eid Milad-un-Nabi, the birth anniversary of Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) at M.A Jinnah Road near Numaish Chowrangi

Authorities urged to ensure immediate assistance, safe shelter for AJK's rain affected people

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Chairman Tehreek-e-Jawanan Pakistan (TJP) Muhammad Abdullah Hamid Gul has expressed deep grief over the loss of lives and property caused by torrential rains in various parts of Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

In a statement, he offered condolences to the families of those who lost their lives in rain-related incidents and prayed for the departed souls. He also expressed solidarity with the affected families.

Muhammad Abdullah Hamid Gul urged the authorities to speed up relief and rescue operations and ensure immediate assistance, safe shelter and medical facilities for affected people.

He called on the relevant departments to remain alert in view of possible further rainfall and take all necessary emergency measures to prevent further loss of life and property. The Chairman also directed the office-bearers and workers of Tehreek-e-Jawanan Pakistan to fully cooperate with relief activities and help the affected people.



KARACHI: Senator Rana Mahmood-ul-Hassan presides over a meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Cabinet Secretariat at the Sindh Secretariat.

Pakistan to launch China-Style law enforcement investigation centre

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Pakistan is set to embark on a major transformation of its policing system, with Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi announcing a series of reforms inspired by successful international law enforcement models, including the establishment of a China-style Law Enforcement Investigation Centre in Islamabad. The announcement came during a meeting with Assistant Superintendents of Police (ASPs) who recently returned after completing specialized training courses in China and Türkiye. The officers described the overseas programmes as an invaluable experience that significantly enhanced their professional capabilities and exposed them to modern policing practices, surveillance technologies, and contemporary approaches to maintaining law and order. Acknowledging the importance of international exposure, Naqvi declared that foreign training programmes would become a permanent component of the professional development of Pakistani police officers. He emphasized that the government was committed to equipping the country's law enforcement agencies with the skills and technologies required to address emerging security challenges. As part of the reform package, the Interior Minister announced the launch of a pilot project to establish a China-style Law Enforcement Investigation Centre in Islamabad.

The centre will integrate detention, investigation, and summary trial facilities under one roof, enabling the swift and efficient disposal of cases involving minor offences.

Government spends Rs163bn on Balochistan CPEC roads

ISLAMABAD, (APP): The government has allocated more than Rs310 billion for nine under-construction China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) road projects in Balochistan's western zone since the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) 2022-23, with releases and expenditures reaching over Rs163 billion so far.

According to official data available with Wealth Pakistan, the projects received a combined allocation of Rs310.30 billion between PSDP 2022-23 and 2026-27, while releases and expenditures stood at Rs163.17 billion.

The single largest allocation of Rs82.6 billion was made for the 330-kilometre Khuzdar-Kuchlak section of National Highway N-25. Releases and expenditures on the project amounted to Rs40.67 billion.

Another Rs81 billion was allocated for the 187-kilometre Kararo-Wadh and Kuchlak-Chaman sections of N-25, with releases and expenditures of Rs25.29 billion.

The 273-kilometre Karachi-Kararo and Wadh-Khuzdar sections of N-25 received an allocation of Rs63 billion, of which Rs33.54 billion has been released and spent.

Among the M-8 motorway schemes, the 168-kilometre Awaran-Naal section received Rs26.03 billion, with releases and expenditures reaching Rs20.02 billion, while the 146-kilometre Hoshab-Awaran section was allocated Rs14.79 billion, with releases and expenditures of Rs9.40 billion.

The remaining projects include the 103-kilometre Nokundi-Mashkel Road, which received Rs7.84 billion and recorded releases and expenditures of Rs6.90 billion; the 22.7-kilometre Quetta Western Bypass on N-25, with an allocation of Rs6.91 billion and releases and expenditures of Rs5.95 billion.

The 106-kilometre Basima-Khuzdar section of N-30, with an allocation of Rs13.55 billion and releases and expenditures of Rs12.97 billion.

IHC moved for judicial commission to probe PIMS tragedy

ISLAMABAD, (APP): A petition has been filed before the Islamabad High Court (IHC) seeking an inquiry into the PIMS tragedy through a judicial commission headed by a high court judge.

The petition, filed by Advocate Qasim Iqbal Jalali. The petitioner stated that a tragic incident occurred at the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) on August 26, and sought orders for a forensic investigation into the incident. He also requested the court to direct a comprehensive audit of the fire alarm system at PIMS and constitute a judicial commission comprising an IHC judge or the Sessions Judge (West) to investigate the incident. The petitioner contended that it was a fundamental principle of justice and law that no person could act as investigator and judge in his own matter. The Federation, Secretary Interior, Secretary Health, Chief Commissioner and Inspector General of Islamabad Police have been made respondents in the petition.



DHAKA: The fight against dengue fever continues in Bangladesh.

Rana Mashhood chairs first meeting on youth employment policy

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan on Thursday chaired the first meeting of the National Coordination Committee on National Youth Employment Policy (NYEP) at the Prime Minister's Office. During the meeting, senior federal and provincial officials, public sector



institutions, academia and development partners reviewed the policy's implementation plan and coordination mechanism to expand employment and economic opportunities for Pakistan's youth. The meeting focused on defining responsibilities, strengthening inter provincial coordination and establishing an effective monitoring framework to ensure timely and result oriented implementation of the policy. The NYEP is aimed at creating sustainable employment opportunities by aligning youth skills with market demand and high growth sectors. The policy targets 100 per cent absorption of new labour force entrants by 2030, an increase in female labour force participation to 35 per cent, and addresses the challenge of 32.4 million young people not in employment, education or training (NEET). It identifies 10 priority sectors, including information technology, e commerce, agriculture, construction, health, logistics and overseas employment, as key areas for generating jobs and improving youth participation in the economy.



The draw for the 2026-2027 UEFA Champions League league stage was held at the Grimaldi Forum in the Principality of Monaco.

NHA wins landmark court case, saves national exchequer trillions

ISLAMABAD, (APP): The National Highway Authority (NHA) has secured a major legal victory in the Federal Constitutional Court of Pakistan, saving the national treasury trillions of rupees. The court ruled in favor of NHA in a long-standing land compensation case (Civil Review No. 95 & 96/2010: Chairman NHA vs. Amir Khan Afridi etc.). The judgment clarifies that landowners who did not go to court cannot claim the higher compensation rates awarded to those who did, said a press release issued on Thursday

This decision changes a 2010 ruling. The issue began in 2007 when a landowner from Nowshera, Amir Afridi, successfully asked the court for higher land payment rates that had been given to other landowners in separate court cases.

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