



National Assembly that the government would fully implement a minimum wage of Rs 37,000 in private hospitals for nurses and paramedical staff

Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture
Attaullah Tarar

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COAS Syed Asim Munir reiterates the resolve to comprehensively defeat hostile terrorist nexus & eliminate activities in illegal spectrum

Says Pak Army will continue to provide all out support to KPK Police & other LEAs in enabling them to perform their duties in newly merged districts



RAWALPINDI: General Syed Asim Munir, NI(M), Chief of Army Staff (COAS), visited troops in Orakzai District who had participated in the recently conducted counter-terrorism actions in Tirah Valley and surroundings. According to the statement issued by the ISPR, COAS General Syed Asim Munir was given a comprehensive briefing on overall security situation, ongoing Intelligence Based counter-terrorism actions and multi-prong measures being undertaken to ensure stability in Merged Districts.

In his interaction with officers and troops, COAS appreciated their high morale and readiness to give effective response against all types of threat. COAS reiterated the resolve to comprehensively defeat hostile terrorist nexus and eliminate activities in illegal spectrum. Paying rich tribute to Shuhada and Ghazis of Army, and LEAs, COAS said that the hard earned peace achieved with nation's great sacrifice would be maintained at all costs. Sacrifices of our martyrs strengthen our resolve to fight with utmost dedication and spirit of sacrifice.

COAS lauded the contributions being made by Police and LEAs in KPK. "Pak Army will continue to provide all out support to KPK Police and other LEAs in enabling them to perform their duties in newly merged districts". COAS emphasised the need of continued capacity building of LEAs.

COAS also appreciated the support of local population in assisting security forces, noting that their positive role is essential in sustaining peace in the area.

Earlier upon arrival, COAS laid the wreath at Yadgar e Shuhada and was received by Corps Commander Peshawar. PR



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a review meeting regarding Monkey Pox.

PM chairs high-level review meeting on Monkeypox situation

Positive indicators validate govt's right economic direction: PM Shehbaz

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday chaired a high-level review meeting to assess the current situation and precautionary measures being taken to prevent the spread of Monkeypox (Mpx) in the country. The prime minister emphasized the importance of vigilance and preparedness, directing authorities to adopt all necessary measures to prevent the virus from spreading within the country.

"All necessary precautionary measures to prevent Monkeypox should be adopted," the prime minister said directing the officials concerned to raise public awareness about preventive steps. He also instructed that scanning at all airports, seaports, and land entry points must be strictly enforced to detect any potential cases. The prime minister said Pakistan was not currently facing an emergency situation related to Monkeypox. However, he stressed the need for continued preparedness, particularly by the Ministry of Health and the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA). He called for the establishment of quarantine centers across the country to accommodate any affected individuals.

During the briefing, officials informed the prime minister that while the African continent remained the most affected by Monkeypox, Pakistan had so far recorded only five cases, all diagnosed after individuals arrived in the country from abroad. The detected cases were of the Clade-II strain, which was considered relatively less dangerous. It was informed that daily review meetings on the situation were being held at the National

Command and Operation Center (NCO) to ensure real-time monitoring and response.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is also maintaining communication with Pakistani embassies abroad regarding the global Monkeypox situation.

The provinces have been directed to procure and stock testing kits and other equipment, while quarantine centers have been set up in major cities across the country.

The meeting was told that some 600,000 people had been screened so far as a precautionary measure.

It was further informed that public awareness campaigns were being carried out by the National Institute of Health (NIH), the Ministry of Health, and media outlets to educate the public on Monkeypox. The national helpline, 1166, had also been activated to provide guidance on the disease.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif instructed the NDMA and the Ministry of Health to remain on alert and prepared for any potential emergency. The meeting was attended by chief secretaries of Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu & Kashmir, Health Coordinator Mukhtar Ahmad Bharath, NDMA Chairman Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik and senior officials.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday said that the positive indicators including the reduced policy rate and inflation, surged remittances and agricultural exports, and ongoing efforts to boost IT exports evidenced that the government's economic policies were heading in the right direction.

The prime minister, addressing the young parliamentarians of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz, said the two percent policy rate reduction announced on Thursday was a major

relief for the industrialists, investors, agriculturalists, and exporters, and expressed the hope for further decrease. The announcement by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to discuss the \$7 billion Extended Fund Facility (EFF) to Pakistan on September 25 was also equally a good development, he added.

The prime minister said that the inflation had reduced to 9.6% from 32% last year, and remittances by expatriates and agricultural exports had witnessed a surge. The government was also striving to promote IT (Information Technology) exports, he said and appreciated the role of Information Minister Attaullah Tarar in amplifying the government's performance.

But he said many more efforts were yet to be made with unity and a clear mind to regain the lost position. He told the young parliamentarians including senators and members of the National Assembly (MNAs) that the incumbent government had made a pathway for the country to regain its stature in the comity of nations by rectifying past mistakes.

Prime Minister Shehbaz emphasized the role of youth, including parliamentarians, engineers, students, lawyers, bankers and agriculturalists in accomplishing that journey by equipping themselves with modern education and skills, and also assured them of his fullest support in that regard.

He said the IMF programme was also being achieved following the tremendous efforts and tough decisions like putting tax burden on the salaried class, which could be lessened in the future in the form of reduced inflation. Calling the country's five million traders to play their part in taxation, he said the government had brought the agro farms under the tax net.

FIA to probe posts from PTI founder's social media accounts against national security: Tarar

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar on Friday said the Federal Investigation Agency would probe into the handling of the PTI founder's social media accounts which were being used to create chaos and anarchy in the country, and undermining the national security. "He (the PTI founder) should be ashamed of undermining the national security, inciting people for anarchy and committing the sedition," said the minister while talking to the media. Tarar said the FIA had decided to investigate into the handling of the social media accounts of the jailed PTI founder. It would be ascertained that who is the handler of his social media accounts, and whether such posts were being made on his behalf or it was done on directives of someone else, he added.

He said a botch attempt had been made to conspire against the sitting chief justice and heads of other institutions. Through these posts, he tried to mobilize the people against two major state institutions which is highly condemnable.

The minister said this conspiracy is destined to fail as his accusations against the interior minister and others had nothing to do with the reality.

The PTI founder had all the facilities like a presidential suit in the jail, but yet he still resorted to attack the state institutions, he said, adding nobody would be allowed to do so at any cost. He said the FIA would inquire into this issue and the PTI founder would be investigated in this regard. The minister said the message posted on the social media from the account of the PTI founder was tantamount to sedition, and creating an anarchy in the country. He said the PTI founder, in the post, had once again related himself with Sheikh Mujeeb-ur-Rehman, but he seemed to be elusive about the current situation in Bangladesh where the latter's statues were demolished by the people after realizing the truth about history.

The minister said the examples quoted by the PTI founder in his social media posts were condemnable.

"There will be an investigation as to who is running the accounts of the PTI's founder on social media," he noted. The PTI has always targeted journalists, attacked them, launched smear campaigns against them on social media, said the minister, adding this party had completely resisted and discouraged the difference of opinion during their government's tenure. He called the PTI as "Tehreek-e-Intishar" which always encouraged its workers to resort to accusations, attack and abuse if anybody disagreed to them in any case whatsoever. The minister recalled the harassment of a female journalist by the PTI during one of its public gatherings in Lahore. Another journalist Sadaf which was hit by a container and got killed during one of the rallies of the PTI founder. There are multiple instances which reflected their dirty mindset of harassing and assaulting the female journalists, he said, pointing out the most recent badmouthing by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister in a public gathering. "Being the Information Minister, I believe this is very inappropriate and the entire PTI should apologize unconditionally for the slogans raised in the PTI's recent public gathering, as well as the statements made by KPK CM Ali Amin Gandapur against the female journalists. APP

Baku Business Forum to strengthen Pakistan-Azerbaijan trade ties: Abdul Aleem Khan



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Board of Investment, Privatization, and Communications Abdul Aleem Khan on Friday said that the Azerbaijan-Pakistan Business Forum in Baku

Aleem Khan shared these remarks during a meeting with Azerbaijan's Ambassador to Pakistan, H.E. Khazar Farhadov, who met him at the National Assembly Chamber today.

The two discussed the upcoming business forum in Baku scheduled for September 16. Aleem Khan highlighted Pakistan's intention to expand its trade with Azerbaijan and Central Asia, noting Pakistan's strong rice export industry, particularly in Basmati rice. Ambassador Farhadov emphasized the deep bond between the two nations and expressed confidence that the forum would benefit both sides.

During the meeting, Azerbaijani business representatives called Pakistan their second home, praising the business environment. The minister also assured Azerbaijan's business community of full support through the Board of Investment.

is a positive development for enhancing business relations between Pakistan, Azerbaijan, and Central Asian nations. He expressed optimism that the forum would foster closer ties between investors from both countries, strengthen relations, and boost bilateral trade.

Pakistan's inclusion in top tiers of Global Cybersecurity Index good news for IT industry: Shaza Fatima



ISLAMABAD: State Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Shaza Fatima Khawaja said on Friday that Pakistan's inclusion in the top tiers of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) 2024 Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI) report is good news for the country's IT industry.

She said that the report indicated that Pakistan's legal, technical, capacity development, skill development and organizational advancement are role models.

"The Global Cybersecurity Index 2024 shows significant improvements by countries that are implementing essential legal measures, plans, capacity building initiatives, and cooperation frameworks, especially in strengthening incident response capabilities," the report said.

The report placed 46 countries in Tier 1, the highest of the five tiers, reserved for "role modelling" countries that demonstrate a strong commitment in all five cybersecurity pillars. "Pakistan has performed exceptionally well in the latest ranking and has been placed in Tier 1, alongside countries like the United States, Japan, Singapore, Australia, Saudi Arabia, and Malaysia," she said. — VOM Report

Addressing a press conference she said that Pakistan position in ITU-2021 Global Cybersecurity was at 79 while in the current report, Pakistan ranked among the Top-tier 46 countries.

Pakistan committed to strengthen ties with European Union: Ayaz

ISLAMABAD: National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq Friday said that Pakistan highly valued its relationship with the European Union and was committed to strengthening that bond into a robust strategic partnership. "Pakistan is a multi-cultural, multi-religious and multi-national country, where citizens enjoy fundamental rights as guaranteed by the Constitution," he said during a meeting with the EU delegation, led by Frans van Daele, Special Envoy of the European Union, at the Parliament House.

Dr Reena Kavinka, EU's Ambassador to Pakistan was also present in the meeting. The speaker further highlighted that the Parliament had consistently undertaken initiatives to safeguard the rights and welfare of all Pakistanis.

Ayaz Sadiq acknowledged the significant role that minorities play in Pakistan's national development and prosperity. He reiterated that the Parliament was committed to promoting religious harmony and had ensured full representation of minority communities in the legislative body.

Ahsan Iqbal highlights delays and cost escalation in Diamer Basha Dam Project

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal on Friday chaired a review meeting on the progress of the Diamer Basha Dam project.

The meeting was attended by the Secretary of Planning, Chairman WAPDA, and senior officials of other relevant departments, according to a press release.

During the meeting, Ahsan Iqbal said that the Diamer Basha Dam is a crucial project for Pakistan's water and food security and must be completed expeditiously in the national interest. He said that in 2018, the estimated construction cost of the Diamer Basha Dam was Rs. 479 billion, and Rs. 120 billion had already been spent on land acquisition.



However, due to delays and unnecessary postponements during the previous government, the cost of the project has increased significantly. He said that in 2020, construction was hastily started without proper financing, which further compounded the problems. The Planning Minister said that during the tenure of the previous government, the cost of the project was estimated at Rs600 billion and even Rs750 billion in various meetings of the standing committees, while on paper, an estimate of Rs480 billion was being shown till date. APP

CM Murad, Aurangzeb discuss economy, measures to strengthen it further



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah and Federal Minister for Finance Muhammad Aurangzeb in their meeting at the CM House discussed the overall economy and measures being taken to strengthen it. The meeting was attended by

Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, Federal Secretary of Finance Imdadullah Bosal, PSCM Agha Wasif, and Provincial Secretary Finance Fayaz Jatoi. The chief minister told the federal finance minister that the Sindh Revenue

Board has been given a Rs 350 billion collection target during the current financial year. Similarly, the mechanism to collect agricultural tax was being strengthened. The finance minister stated that significant measures were being implemented to strengthen the national economy. The initial results are evident as the inflation rate has dropped to single digits.

Sindh CM took up the issue of federally funded projects (PSDP) in Sindh for which funds were not being released, as a result, even the ongoing project of Jamshoro-Sehwan road to which his government has also contributed Rs 7 billion was going on at a slow pace. He also discussed the dualization of

the Mehran Highway. The federal finance minister assured the CM that the federally funded projects would be looked after properly.

It was agreed that the federal and provincial governments would work together to strengthen the national economy by promoting industrialisation, the agriculture sector and attracting investment.

The projects launched in PPP mode by the Sindh government were lauded in the meeting. The CM said that the Thar Coal Mining project was the largest project launched in PPP mode. Currently, the Malir Expressway and Ghotki-Kandhkot bridge on the River Indus are major projects going in PPP mode, the CM said. APP

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Crisis in Mali

FADUMO ABDULQADIR

“Each year, we witness a further drop in rainfall – which translates to a drop in produce – resulting in us not having enough food to consume, let alone sell,” Debele Coulibaly, deputy chief of the small village of Safekora in central Mali, told me earlier this year. Sitting under a tree to shield himself from the scorching sun, he explained how farming has always been the only source of income in the village with 1,400 inhabitants, and climate change has left him and countless others struggling to provide for their families. Some villagers, he told me, resorted to cutting and selling trees to make money and feed their families – a counterproductive practice that speeds up desertification and ends up amplifying the worst effects of the changing climate. Farmers in Safekora are not alone in their hopeless struggle against climate change. The whole of Mali, a nation of more than 22 million, is suffering immensely as a result of rising temperatures and decreasing rainfall. Between April 1 and April 5, an unprecedented heatwave caused temperatures to climb to more than 45 degrees Celsius (113 degrees Fahrenheit) across the country. During the four-day hot spell, the Gabriel Toure University Hospital in the Malian capital, Bamako, recorded more than 100 deaths. The same hospital had recorded 130 deaths for the entire month of March before the temperatures soared. According to a study by the World Weather Attribution (WWA), the unusually intense and lethal hot spell was caused by ‘human-induced’ climate change and likely caused hundreds, if not thousands, more excess deaths across the region. The record-breaking temperatures devastated Mali so much that ice cubes began costing more than bread and milk in some parts of the country. Sadly in Mali, climate change is just one cause of humanitarian crisis among many. Long-term political instability, protracted armed conflict and seemingly endless economic struggles, combined with the effect of climate change on people’s livelihoods (according to the World Food Programme, agriculture – predominantly subsistence production – represents 80 per cent of employment in Mali), created a perfect storm of vulnerability in the country. Millions are displaced, hungry and fearful for the future. Today, some 7.1 million people, corresponding to one-third of Mali’s population, need urgent humanitarian assistance. According to the World Health Organization, the national rate of severe acute malnutrition, which is the deadliest form of hunger, rose from 4.2 per cent last year to 11 per cent today, the highest level in a decade. Especially in sites for internally displaced people (IDPs) across the country, thousands of them, especially children below five years of age, are in urgent need of nutritional care. Idrissa, one of the 355,000 IDPs, was displaced internally due to increasing violence. He escaped his conflict-affected village, Mopti, earlier this year and made the 600km (373-mile) journey to Bamako with his family to start afresh. I talked to him in his family’s new makeshift home in Commune VI, which is an IDP camp in the compound of a former state school. “As armed conflict and gun violence erupted in my village, I had to make a quick decision to uproot my family,” he told me. “I have already lost two of my relatives, and I could not stand by and watch to lose more of my family members.” His family may now be relatively safe from armed conflict, but their life is not easy. The overcrowded IDP camp is full of large families experiencing extreme poverty. Even the animals in the camp are starving and there is a dangerous lack of sanitation, resulting in a high risk of disease outbreaks. Idrissa currently lives in a one-bedroom sheet tent with his wife, four children and frail elderly mother. He struggles to put food on the table, let alone seek more appropriate accommodation, on the small income he earns from his part-time job as a security guard. He says as well as his children, he is especially worried about his ailing mother, whose many health problems are exacerbated as a result of the horrible conditions in the camp. She, however, does not have easy access to care. The deteriorating security situation, coupled with the devastating effect of climate change on livelihoods and abominable conditions in most IDP camps, has resulted in thousands of people across the country needing urgent treatment for conditions such as respiratory infections, acute malnutrition, malaria, and diarrhoea. Despite the population’s ever-increasing healthcare needs, public health facilities in many regions, especially in the north and the centre, are not fully functional due to insecurity and a lack of staff and supplies. As a result, it is estimated that 3.5 million people across the country, like Idrissa’s elderly mother, are struggling to access healthcare. With no free medical facilities available, the only viable solution for Idrissa is to take his mother to a private clinic. His wages do not cover her medical bills and the basic needs of their household. As a result, he often skips the one meal he allows himself a day to try and pay all his bills and feed his family. With a dejected look on his face, he told me he longs for the life he once had. “The life we held dear was snatched away from us,” he said. “I was a herder; my life was great. I had to leave behind my cherished animals and way of life. My only dream is to return home and work in my field again.” Coulibaly and Idrissa, like millions of others across Mali, are trying to come to terms with their new reality and find a way forward for themselves and their families. Humanitarian organisations like the organisation I work for, Muslim Hands, are partnering with the Malian community to mitigate the devastating effects of climate change. By providing sustainable livelihoods and opportunities for a fresh start, these efforts aim to empower vulnerable families and build long-term resilience.

This article was originally published as: ‘Do not ignore Mali’s multifaceted humanitarian catastrophe’. Courtesy: Aljazeera.com



Salar Rashid

Justice in the trenches

The room is swollen with heat. Clients and lawyers alike wait impatiently. The fortunate sit on creaky wooden chairs; the less fortunate linger near the entrance or press their backs against the walls. Beads of sweat roll down the judge’s face. A fan whirrs noisily overhead – a poor substitute for the broken AC unit, its grill long having vanished. A lawyer gestures animatedly to the empty space beside him. His counterpart is nowhere to be seen. The opposing lawyer finally swaggers in. Two juniors – ties hanging loosely, coats in dire need of dry-cleaning – trail behind. No admonishment or reprimand is issued. Instead, the judge suppresses the rush of irritation, keeps his face carefully blank, and nods in greeting. He cannot afford to earn the ire of the Bar, not with his ACR due soon. The lawyer offers no explanation beyond an insincere, one-word apology. Slowly, he produces a file from his briefcase as he begins. The charade begins. While much ink has been spilled on the matter of the Supreme and high courts, the practical benefits of these analyses are blunted by one simple fact: the vast majority of adjudication takes place not in Courtroom No 1, but on desks overflowing with paper in the lower courts. How can the system function well if seemingly insurmountable issues continue to plague them? Let us first acknowledge that deep mistrust exists between various elements of the judiciary, from the greenest civil judge all the way to the Supreme Court. The higher you are on the totem pole, the more burdened you believe yourself to be with correcting the mistakes of those below. The lower you are on the totem pole, the more convinced you become that those with supervisory authority over you are completely detached from ground realities, unused to ‘hard labour’. Both these perceptions are, naturally, stained with biases accumulated over years of operating in very different physical and mental spaces. But neither perception, respectfully,

is without some merit. Consider the reality of the environment lower courts operate in. Lower courts have consistently struggled to push back against the tide of a truly immense case burden. Despite an increasing number of resources allocated to them and the improved training methods introduced over time, many fundamental problems persist. Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, speaking at a conference at IBA earlier this year, put it quite bleakly: “We have some four thousand judges, whereas we need [five times that] to meet international standards.” In simpler words, we have 60,000 citizens to each judge. Across the border, there’s a judge to each grouping of 48,000. European countries, naturally, operate at much more efficient levels – Greece with 3,500 per judge, Germany with 3,800. While comparisons to them are unmerited for obvious reasons, it’s probably worth mentioning that Ireland, with the worst ratio in the EU, has it twice as better than Pakistan. Think of it this way. Even an exceptional judge, blessed with preternatural mental fortitude and capacity, cannot act as a substitute for four of his/her kind. The system is primed not to produce judgments of quality and depth, but to force judges to dispose of cases as quickly as they can. This inevitably leads to a cycle of appeals and reconsideration at higher levels – the system gets clogged further, and justice hovers out of reach. Unfortunately, many analyses consider this merely a function of inadequate resources. It isn’t. We do lower courts a great disservice in how we refer to them. The term ‘subordinate courts’ not only ignores the immense role they play in deciding the fates of millions of cases, but its use should challenge our conception of judicial independence. Consider the administrative control the high courts have over the lower courts. Is independence merely that of freedom from influence external to the judiciary, or is it also freedom from their own ilk? Or do our sensibilities not prickle when we see a judge deciding cases not according to his conscience but with the consciousness of those that stand above him in the judicial hierarchy? Even if our lower courts operated at an unrealistic level of efficiency, their sheer caseload would invariably lead them to judge wrongly in a

significant number of cases, and thus weaken the legitimacy of their judgments. Is it not a shame that they have become but the first steppingstone to a litigant reaching a judgment of their liking? Yes, the right to appeal goes hand-in-hand with rule of law. It is a necessary element of a system that’s armed its judges with vast discretionary powers, but the reality is that litigants know all too well that whatever the lower courts decide, there is always a judge above them who may be willing to look at things differently, regardless of whether it’s merited or not. The story only gets more tragic when we consider the difference in induction methods for lower courts versus high courts, and the night-unbridgeable differences they breed in mindset, skill, and outlook. The eligibility requirements to become a judge in the lower courts fundamentally differ from those of the high court. Two years of experience and a high court license are all you need to be eligible to sit the Civil Judge exams. Passing the exam itself is not particularly difficult, where aspirants can make do with rote learning and some grasp of language, civil and criminal law, and general knowledge. What they are being tested for is their ability to grasp the routine and reproduce it, not for intellectual rigor or the depth of their understanding. More distressing is that, as late as 2020, a 50 per cent aggregate was considered a qualifying mark by the Lahore High Court. In other words, an aspirant with no understanding of half of what they were being tested on could still don the robe and decide the fates of the thousands that appear before them. Consider the indirect effect of inadequate training and judicial interdependence of the lower courts on the higher judiciary. The high courts and Supreme Court have made it a routine matter to delve into factual disputes that should have been conclusively addressed earlier. The trial cannot be re-conducted, and to correct these factual oversights, the law is twisted into peculiar shapes. To wit, a misapprehension of facts becomes a misinterpretation of the law. The problem, frankly, isn’t merely one of a lack of technical know-how, but a missing appreciation for the systems that yield justice. In conversation with a judge who had recently dispensed with a criminal matter, I

was told that lawyers need to ‘coach their witnesses better.’ There is a fine line between preparation and coaching, and what the judge was referring to belonged almost entirely to the latter. Finally, consider perhaps the most debilitating impediment to the proper functioning of the lower courts – their emasculation at the hands of empowered, entitled bar associations. Lawyers routinely fail to appear before lower courts, plead cases that, on bare reading, are unmain-tainable, and shamelessly flout rules and procedure. Cases that should be thrown out on day one linger till the lawyers’ fees seem justified. Adjudgments are granted without an end in sight. Redundancies are baked into the system to account for lawyers’ ill performance. Reprimands or consequences are not issued out of fear. Where procedure clearly dictates a certain course of action, lenience is granted in the name of restraint. If judges push back, their colleagues convince them otherwise. If they refuse to back down, lawyers cry havoc and let slip the dogs of war – chambers are locked, litigants are pushed away, and strikes continue till the judges relent. By no means are the High Courts immune to the Bar’s influence, but their greater stature and authority shields them from much of the day-to-day entitlements that twist and warp the lower courts. The fact is that high court judges are nominated primarily from the pool of eligible lawyers, not from the ‘subordinate’ judges. Judges in the lower courts have, by and large, spent most of their careers as judges first, and thus look at the world through a judge’s perspective. On the opposite end of the spectrum, high court judges carry with them much of the same biases they had as lawyers. Is it any surprise, then, that lower courts are often found without requisite support from their superiors? If we want our judicial system to perform to our expectations, it is time we start re-evaluating the biases baked into our worldview. The lower judiciary is where justice begins; let’s make sure it doesn’t also end there.

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Disclaimer: Views expressed by writers in this section are their own and do not necessarily reflect The Asian Telegraph’s point-of-view

Today in History

Pakistan

The Muslim League accepted the plan, as a strategic move, expecting to achieve its objective in not-too-distant a future. The All-India Congress also agreed to the Plan, but, soon realising its implications, the Congress leaders began to interpret it in a way not visu-

alized by the authors of the Plan. This provided the All-India Muslim League an excuse to withdraw its acceptance of the Plan and the party observed August 16, as a ‘Direct Action Day’ to show Muslim solidarity in support of the Pakistan demand.

In October 1946, an Interim Government was formed. The Muslim League sent its representative under the leadership of its General Secretary, Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan, with the aim to fight for the party objective from within the Interim Government.

After a short time, the situation inside the Interim Government and outside convinced the Congress leadership to accept Pakistan as the only solution of the communal problem.

To be continued....

Showbiz

Margot Robbie follows in footsteps of Hollywood legends in new role

Margot Robbie honoured to join ranks of talented women in new campaign

Margot Robbie, who is currently pregnant, has announced an exciting new career milestone after serving as an ambassador for Chanel for over six years. The Australian actress has been named the new face of Chanel’s most iconic fragrance, Chanel N°5. The Barbie star has been associated with Chanel since 2018 and was previously the face of Chanel Gabrielle perfume in 2019. Speaking about her new appointment, Robbie said, “I think Chanel N°5 is one of the most iconic fragrances in the world. It’s incredible to be a part of it.” She added, “There’s such an impressive lineage of women who’ve been associated with the fragrance over the



years. I am very honored to be joining that long list of incredible talents.” The actress follows in the footsteps of notable stars like Marilyn Monroe and Brad Pitt, although she is not the first Australian actress to represent the iconic fragrance. Nicole Kidman famously fronted the brand’s perfume in 2004, starring in the advertising film “Le Film,” directed by Baz Luhrmann. In an interview with WWD, the Suicide Squad star shared her long-standing admiration for Chanel, saying, “I’ve just always known about Chanel N°5... It’s iconic and an iconic brand. It’s that thing that you always associate with absolute height of luxury.

Tech

SpaceX carries out historic spacewalk with private crew

WASHINGTON: Two astronauts from a SpaceX capsule in Earth’s orbit carried out the world’s first private spacewalk on Thursday, tethered to the Crew Dragon spacecraft in the vacuum of space while two others watched from inside, hundreds of miles from Earth. Billionaire Jared Isaacman, 41, exited first about 6:52am ET (10:52 GMT), followed by SpaceX engineer Sarah Gillis, 30, becoming the first two non-government individuals to conduct such an excursion in space. All their maneuvers streamed live on the company’s website. The mission appeared to successfully test trailblazing equipment, including slim spacesuits and a process to fully depressurize the Crew Dragon cabin – technology that could be used in future private space missions. It was one of the riskiest treks yet for Elon Musk’s space company, the only private firm capable of routinely sending humans to and from Earth’s orbit. “Back at home we all have a lot of work to

do, but from here, Earth sure looks like a perfect world,” Isaacman said after emerging from the spacecraft, silhouetted with the half-lit planet glittering 700 km (434.9 miles) below him. Before the spacewalk began, the capsule was completely depressurised, with the whole crew relying on their slim, SpaceX-developed spacesuits for oxygen, provided via an umbilical connection to Crew Dragon. The spacewalk was scheduled to last only about 30 minutes, but the procedures to prepare for it and to finish it safely lasted an hour and 46 minutes. It marked a risky test of the new spacesuit designs and procedures for the capsule, among other things, in a mission meant to push the boundaries of what private companies can do in Earth’s orbit. As the two astronauts returned to their cabin seats, SpaceX ground teams at the company’s Hawthorne, California, headquarters watched as the capsule’s hatch door sealed shut and carried out leak checks. Reuters

Residents seek steps to deal with dengue outbreak

MANSEHRA: Residents of Garhi Habibullah on Thursday complained of a shortage of medicines and diagnostic testing facilities to deal with the outbreak of dengue in the city and its suburbs. “Town has experienced a big surge in dengue cases in recent days but only health facilities here could establish an isolation ward but no medicines are provided to patients,” Naseer Anwar, a local, told reporters in Garhi Habibullah. A group of locals led by Anwar said that Garhi

Habibullah central and its suburbs, Dam Kacha, Karnool and Kashtara areas have experienced a sudden surge in dengue cases in recent days and the civil hospital couldn’t effectively deal with the situation. “Our town is situated at Kunhar Riverbank which is also one of the major reasons for the outbreak of dengue virus here but the local health facility is short of medicines and testing facilities to provide healthcare services to patients,” Anwar said.

He said that hospital management established an isolation ward but it was without all the facilities, medicines and testing services needed to counter the surge in cases. “The private diagnostic laboratories are also not equipped with high-tech testing facilities resulting in unreliable results being issued to patients to fleece the money creating panic in families and residents,” Anwar said. He said that most parts of the city and adjoining localities were also still without fumigation spray. Agencies



Health

Iranian ambassador commends Pakistan for hosting 'SCO Trade, Commerce Ministers' meeting



ISLAMABAD: Iranian Ambassador to Pakistan, Reza Amiri Moghadam on Friday extended his heartfelt congratulations to the government of Pakistan for successfully hosting the 23rd Meeting of Ministers of Trade and Commerce of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) member states.

He, in a statement, also expressed deep appreciation for the warm hospitality extended to the delegations. The ambassador highlighted the significance of the SCO, describing it as the largest regional organization in terms of area and population, encompassing 80% of Eurasia's landmass and 40% of the world's population. He emphasized the organization's economic weight, noting that it holds 20% of the world's oil reserves, 44% of global gas reserves, and had a combined GDP of \$24.2 trillion in 2023—representing one-quarter of global GDP.

"The SCO is a vital economic and commercial force on the global stage," Moghadam said, adding that the organization currently has 10 main members, two observer members, and 14 dialogue partners. He expressed optimism that more countries would join the SCO in the near future.

The Iranian envoy stressed the importance of activating the full potential of member countries through cooperation and collective synergy. Focusing on transportation infrastructure and trade corridors, he pointed out that these elements are key to fostering stronger cooperation among member states and beyond.

"We are aware that major powers are currently working to establish corridors that serve their own interests. In this context, it is essential for SCO members to first complete the existing corridors and, in future phases, to work towards creating new ones," he remarked.

Moghadam identified the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the North-South Corridor, and the East-West Corridor as critical routes that can enhance connectivity and cooperation within the SCO and with the wider world.

He underscored Iran's strategic position in connecting these corridors, citing the country's extensive coastline of 5,800 kilometers, which includes 890 kilometers in the north and 4,900 kilometers in the south. Important Iranian ports such as Chabahar, Bandar Abbas, Mahshahr, and Amirabad serve as vital hubs for transportation and logistics, playing a pivotal role in the organization, he added.

Moghadam also highlighted the potential of Iran's railway network, which, with minimal investment, could play a crucial role in linking the North-South and East-West corridors, providing SCO members with enhanced access to global markets. APP



ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq addressing the inauguration ceremony of the Calligraphy Exhibition in-connection to celebrate the Eid Milad-un-Nabi (SAW) at Parliament House.

Juvenile education crucial to expedite climate action for long-term resilience goals: Romina

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister's Coordinator for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Romina Khurshid Alam on Friday emphasized juvenile education crucial to expedite climate action for long-term resilience goals.

She was addressing a seminar on 'Climate-Compatible Education' held at the Institute of Regional Studies, Islamabad (IRS) as guest of honour. The PM's aide underscored the influence even young children could have on their families and communities while citing a four-year-old who vowed to avoid plastic after hearing her speak on World Environment Day. She stressed that early education shapes lifelong habits. Alam discussed the significance of advocacy campaigns, carbon credits, and introducing climate education at the Montessori level. She remarked, "if we sow the right seeds, we will get the right fruit."

The seminar was part of the IRS's pre-COP29 series, brought together important voices from various sectors to discuss the role of education in addressing climate change challenges, highlighting alarming statistics and the actions required for adaptation.

Punjab Nugraha, Director of the D-8 Organisation for Economic Cooperation, acknowledged that COP29, set to bring together policymakers, experts, and stakeholders, is a crucial platform for integrating climate education into the global agenda.

He stated that education is fundamental for understanding and addressing environmental



challenges, noting that globally, 1.2 billion children are expected to be affected by climate change by 2050 if urgent measures are not taken. He called for integrating sustainability practices, climate science, and critical thinking at all educational levels.

Ambassador Khazra Farhadov, Azerbaijan's Ambassador to Pakistan, reiterated his country's commitment, as the host of this year's COP, to global solidarity in combating climate change. He said that Azerbaijan hoped to "lead by example," highlighting the creation of climate-smart cities throughout the country as part of their development strategy. He stressed that educated populations are more resilient and better equipped to face climate challenges.

Dr Abid Qayyum Suleri, Executive Director at the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) and member of the Advisory Body to the COP29 Presidency, proposed a three-pronged approach to climate-compatible education: curriculum reforms, mitigation through renewable technologies, and adaptation strategies.

Sharmeela Rasool, UNICEF Deputy Country

Representative, said that UNICEF's research shows that over 1 billion children globally live in countries at "extremely high risk" from climate-related disasters. Ms Rasool laid out specific action points to address these challenges, focusing on integrating climate resilience into education systems. Shakeel Ahmed Ramay, CEO of the Asian Institute of Eco-civilisation, Research, and Development (AIERD), pointed out that with 60% of Pakistan's population under the age of 30, education must be a key focus in combating climate change.

He shared that, following the infrastructural losses amounting to \$3 billion due to climate-related disasters in recent years, particularly floods, education systems have been devastated in regions like Balochistan and remote areas. He also suggested integrating green schooling into carbon credit markets.

Zahid Latif Khan, Chairman AIERD, thanked the IRS for organising the event and emphasised the need for collaboration between the Ministry of Climate Change and the Ministry of Education to advance climate-compatible education in Pakistan. Ambassador Jauhar Saleem, President IRS, reflected on the stark realities of climate change, citing a World Bank study that showed higher classroom temperatures can lower student learning outcomes by up to 25%, affecting heart and respiratory rates and cognitive responses. Ambassador Saleem emphasised the need to educate Pakistan's youth on how climate change affects them and their future. Talha Tufail Bhatti, who leads the 'Strengthening Regional Climate Resilience' Program at IRS, expressed hope that the seminar had shed light on the importance of climate-compatible education.

President grants relief worth Rs 15.2 m to nine policyholders

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Friday upheld nine decisions of the Federal Insurance Ombudsman (FIO), directing two insurance companies to pay a collective sum of over Rs 15.2 million to insurance policyholders or their family members.

The president gave these directions while rejecting six representations of EFU Life Assurance Ltd and three representations of Pak-Qatar Family Takaful Ltd, filed against FIO's decisions.

As per the details, it was alleged before FIO that the agents of EFU Life Assurance allured Muhammad Shafiq and Adeb Roshan, whereas Muhammad Mumtaz Malik, Muhammad Shabbir, and Abid Hussain Khokhar were enticed by the agents of Pak-Qatar Family Takaful Ltd to invest their monies in profitable schemes, assuring them of monthly returns on their investments.

When they approached the companies concerned for returns or reimbursement of their amounts, the companies rejected their claims.

In other cases, EFU Life Assurance Limited repudiated the death claims filed by the family members of late Ali Haider, Shaikh Ali Hassan, Chand Ali, and Ali Akbar. Feeling aggrieved, the complainants separately approached the FIO for the redressal of their complaints. The Ombudsman, after hearing their cases, directed the companies to pay a total of Rs 15.2 million to the complainants.

Later, the insurance companies filed separate representations against the decisions of FIO before the President of Pakistan.

The hearings of the cases were held at Aiwan-e-Sadr, and since, no legal infirmity was found in the impugned orders of FIO, the representations were rejected.

Consequently, EFU Life Assurance Ltd was directed to pay Rs 3 million to Nazara Bibi, Rs 3.077 million to Noor Hassan, Rs 2.508 million to Naik Muhammad, Rs 796,000 to Kamila Ali, Rs 1.612 million to Muhammad Shafiq, Rs 933,992 to Adeb Roshan. Similarly, Pak-Qatar Family Takaful Ltd has also been directed to pay Rs 636,456 to Muhammad Mumtaz Malik, Rs 1.319 million to Mr Muhammad Shabbir, and the highest cash value of Rs 1.328 million to Mr Abid Hussain Khokhar.



Mohsin Naqvi praises Punjab CTD for foiling terrorist plot in Dera Ghazi Khan



ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has lauded the Punjab Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD)

for its swift and effective action in foiling a terrorist plot in Dera Ghazi Khan.

Minister Naqvi highlighted that the Punjab CTD has consistently played a critical role in disrupting the malicious plans of terrorist groups like Fitna Al Khawarij. "Their proactive and professional approach continues to protect our citizens from harm. We take immense pride in the bravery and expertise demonstrated by the CTD forces," he added.

He further reiterated that the Punjab CTD stands as the vanguard in the nation's fight against terrorism.

"This force is not only our first line of defence but also one of our most valuable assets in the ongoing battle to ensure peace and security," Naqvi stated, acknowledging the critical role the department plays in maintaining national stability. The operation in Dera Ghazi Khan marks another significant success for Punjab CTD in its ongoing campaign against terrorism, reinforcing its reputation as a key player in the country's counter-terrorism efforts. APP

Petroleum Division working out fuel cost equalization mechanism for fertilizer companies: Musadik

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Energy Senator Musadik Masood Malik on Friday said the Petroleum Division was working out the cost equalization mechanism for a fixed gas tariff to be offered to all the fertilizer manufacturing industries with same price for all to enhance competitiveness and benefits for the farmer community. Responding to a query of Senator Dr Zarqa Suhrawardy Taimur during the question hour in the Senate, the minister said all fertilizer companies were not being sold gas at the same prices. The gas prices for the 10 fertilizer companies operating in Pakistan varied from Rs 170, Rs 580 and Rs1,597 per MMBTU but all of them sold fertilizers at the same price and were also making profits, he added. "The difference of tariff goes into their balance sheets and all their profitability is listed in the Exchange Commission because these are all listed companies," he said. The minister said that the difference in gas prices was mainly due to their contracts as after discovery of every gas well a specific tariff set was adopted, whereas the old gas wells discovered prior to the 2012 regime offered cheaper rates whereas after 2012 new discovery of wells were offering \$6 per unit tariff.



KARACHI: Secretary-General of International Maritime Organization Arsenio Antonio Dominguez Velasco, Chief Minister of Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah, Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, cutting a Cake during the International Maritime Sustainability Exhibition and Conference Pakistan IMSEC 2024.

EU Special Envoy on FoRB concludes official visit to Pakistan



ISLAMABAD: Special Envoy for the Promotion of Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) outside the European Union (EU), Ambassador Frans van Daele concluded his week-long visit to Pakistan. FoRB is a key priority for the EU, including in the context of the strategic engagement with Pakistan, said a press release on Friday. During the visit, he met federal and provincial government officials, the Parliament, religious leaders, non-government and civil society organisations, human rights defenders and local communities, to engage and exchange on the state of freedom of religion and belief in Pakistan and to foster the respect for diversity of religions and beliefs.

In his meeting with Senate Chairman Syed Yousef Raza Gillani, National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Minister for Law and Justice, Human Rights and Parliamentary Affairs Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar, Minister for Religious Affairs Chaudhry Salik Hussain, the special envoy enquired about the challenges of freedom of religion or belief in Pakistan and mentioned areas of concern, in line with the last GSP+ monitoring report of November 2023. The special envoy noted that the next GSP+

monitoring mission is expected in early 2025. He encouraged Pakistani authorities to continue implementing the relevant international conventions to facilitate Pakistan's reapplication for the trade scheme once the new regulation on GSP is in force.

In his interactions with interlocutors, Ambassador van Daele underscored the EU's continued support for and interest in enhanced cooperation with Pakistan.

Ambassador van Daele began his visit in Punjab, where he engaged with local communities. In Lahore, he held meetings with Minister for Minorities Affairs Sardar Ramesh Singh Arora and Inspector General of Police Punjab, Dr. Usman Anwar. He also expressed his appreciation for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' facilitation of his visit during a meeting with Pakistan's newly appointed Foreign Secretary, Amna Baloch. The mandate of the special envoy involves raising awareness and engaging with state and non-state actors, civil society, churches, faith-based and religious organisations, as well as non-confessional organisations in the freedom to prevent and address violations of the freedom of religion and belief.

US-Pakistan economic ties strengthen through 'Pakistan Investment Roadshow'

ISLAMABAD: The longstanding partnership between the United States(US) and Pakistan continues to grow stronger, as innovative economic initiatives take center stage in the evolving relationship between the two nations.

The recently concluded Pakistan Investment Roadshow, organized by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under its Investment Promotion Activity, showcased the potential of Pakistani businesses to prominent US investors.

The events, held in New York, San Francisco, and Washington DC, highlighted Pakistan's burgeoning technology and innovation sectors, said a press release on Friday.

As part of USAID's broader mission to promote economic growth in Pakistan, the roadshow aimed to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) and increase bilateral trade. The initiative focused on raising \$15 million in FDI commitments by connecting 27 select Pakistani firms with US investors eager to explore emerging markets. The featured companies represented



sectors such as artificial intelligence, health tech, fintech, ed-tech, agritech, climate-tech, and software as a service, captivating investors with their innovative solutions and global potential. In New York, the Founder's Panel Discussion brought together leading Pakistani CEOs and entrepreneurs to discuss the growth of Pakistan's tech ecosystem, along with trends and investment challenges in the sector.

The San Francisco event, a major hub for technological advancement, saw Pakistani firms present cutting-edge solutions in AI, fin-tech, health tech, and other sectors to Silicon Valley investors. In Washington DC, a symposium placed a special emphasis on women entrepreneurs, highlighting their pivotal role in driving social and economic change in Pakistan. Michael Schiffer, USAID's Assistant Administrator for Asia, said, "We are

cultivating deeper, more lasting relationships with private sector partners, from small businesses to large corporations.

USAID's 'Investment Promotion in Pakistan' activity is a prime example of how we aim to unlock greater resources to address some of the world's greatest challenges."

Afsheneh Shakoor, USAID's Project Management Specialist, emphasized the significance of the roadshow, stating, "These events have spotlighted the remarkable innovation and talent emerging from Pakistan and paved the way for stronger US-Pakistan economic ties. The robust participation from US investors reaffirms the incredible opportunities for collaboration and growth."

As the roadshow concludes, USAID remains committed to building on the momentum generated by these events, fostering sustainable investment flows, and supporting long-term economic growth in Pakistan. This shared vision for driving innovation, job creation, and economic progress continues to reinforce the partnership between the United States and Pakistan. APP