

**‘Fighting climate change most crucial war right now’**

Fighting climate change is the most important war that we need to fight right now, said Sindh Governor Imran Ismail on Monday while addressing a seminar as its chief guest.

‘Climate Change, Summer & Monsoon Safety Awareness Seminar’ was organised in collaboration with the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD), the Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre (JPMC) and the K-Electric.

The governor said that the focus needs to be on precaution and prevention as peak summer approaches. He lauded the initiative by KE to partner with key stakeholders for summer preparedness and appreciated the fact that the awareness drive is on an even bigger scale this time round.

He said that the Green Pakistan initiative is a part of the government’s efforts to limit the impact of climate change in the country and especially in Karachi. He appealed to the civil society to come forward and become a partner in this initiative by adopting a tree.

The seminar brought together participants from the NDMA, the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), the PMD, the JPMC, KE as well as members of the civil society who engaged in a series of panel discussions to highlight the issues facing the country and its economic hub, and also tried to come up with possible solutions.

The guest of honour at the seminar, NDMA Chairman Lt Gen Omar Hayat said that Pakistan is one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world.

“From 1947 to 2010 we lost \$19 billion to floods. From 2010 to 2019 we have lost \$19.5 billion to floods alone. We have faced all kinds of disasters, both natural and man-made, and will most likely face them again.

“Our preparedness is better but nowhere close to where we need it to be, and our urban centres are particularly at risk because of unplanned growth. There can never be too much awareness about disasters, and we must make Karachi resilient to make Pakistan resilient.”

The PMD has always been at the forefront on any initiative related to climate change, and Abdur Rasheed, chief meteorologist for Karachi, highlighted the imminent threat to Pakistan with regard to global warming. He said that Pakistan ranks 135th in the list of countries that generate greenhouse gases, but eighth in the list of countries that are at risk from climate change.

“This basically means that the people of Pakistan in general and the citizens of Karachi in particular will have to be more prepared than ever to minimise the impact of environmental degradation on the quality of life and economic growth.

“Among the most severe threats we face is water shortage. According to the United Nations Development Programme, we can save only nine per cent of our floodwater and the impact of this will continue to become worse until 2025. Rise in temperature, air pollution and water shortage are the three key issues we will face because of climate change.

KE Chairman Ikram Sehgal welcomed the collaboration towards increased and improved summer and monsoon preparedness. He said KE would extend full support to the PDMA, the Rangers and different NGOs who will be setting up heat protection camps across the city.

He added that KE would also act as facilitator in first-aid capacity-building workshops in Karachi for around 1,000 volunteers in collaboration with the Youth Parliament. Earlier, KE Chief Marketing and Communication Officer Fakhar Ahmed spoke about the power utility’s summer preparedness through the strengthening of its network and system and by beefing up the on-ground workforce through capacity-building and technological advancement.

He expressed the hope that the presence of key stakeholders under one roof would result in better inter-agency coordination and help in providing effective support to combat the impact of climate change.

Karachi Commissioner Iftikhar Shalwani; JPMC Executive Director Dr Seemin Jamali; KE Health, Safety, Environment & Quality Chief Amir Zafar and PMD Additional Director General Azmat Hayat also spoke on the occasion and briefed the participants about the threats from climate change and preventive and protective measures to take in the peak summer months.

The speakers also stressed the collective role of civic and government bodies as well as the citizens of Karachi to not just highlight and report cases of power theft but to also conserve electricity during peak hours.

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