

Murad says provinces face financial crisis due to poor state of national economy

THE JAMSHORO: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has said that provinces face severe crisis due to poor state of national economy as federal government has thus far failed miserably to improve conditions.

The government should work harder to bolster economy and scale up tax collection instead of launching scathing attacks on others and issuing boastful statements, said Mr Shah while talking to media persons after graduation ceremony at the US-Pakistan Centre for Advanced Studies in Water (USPCAS-W) in Mehran University of Engineering and Technology (MUET) Jamshoro on Friday.

He said that Sindh had received Rs100 billion less funds than it required for development works and cautioned that if tax collection did not rise, development works would definitely get hampered.

He said that federal government must improve its tax collection so that no province suffered as they had 57.5 per cent share in taxes. If the federal government could not do the job, it should hand over the responsibility to provinces, he said.

He said the child aid association which ran oncology ward at the National Institute of Child Health in Karachi with the help of philanthropists was asking the government for help for the first time because of significant rise in US dollar exchange rate and drop in business community's income following recent economic crisis.

He said that he was against corruption but anti-corruption was a provincial subject and Sindh's Anti-Corruption Establishment was busy doing its job.

About Indian aggression against Pakistan, the chief minister said that Pakistan did not want war but if it faced aggression it could defend itself. All parties had supported the prime minister in this regard, he said.

He said that international community was also endorsing Pakistan's stance that there could be no peace in the region without solution of Kashmir issue. The government must take advantage of the situation and present its case forcefully at all available forums, he advised.

He said that he had talked to Pakistan Cricket Board chairman about organising PSL matches in Niaz Stadium, Hyderabad, and other cities of the province and he was hopeful matches could take place there next year.

Earlier, speaking as chief guest at the ceremony the chief minister asked MUET and USPCAS-W to find out solutions to problems of water shortage, clean drinking water, sea intrusion, polluted and poisonous water etc.

US Consul General JoAnne Wagner said to fresh graduates: "With your newly-acquired skills and knowledge, you are ready to make important contributions to enhance access to clean water, sanitation and proper hygiene, protect water-related ecosystems and help Pakistan adapt to the threats posed by water-related challenges".

She said that the 40 graduates were among the students who also participated in exchange visits to the University of Utah in the United States under the programme funded by the US Agency for International Development (USAID).

USPCAS-W project director Prof Dr Steven Burian said that besides general support of USA the collaboration of Sindh government, Higher Education Commission of Pakistan and MUET also helped make the water centre a success.

MUET Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Aslam Uqaili said that 90 per cent graduates of last batch of USPCAS-W landed jobs which was a record and urged USAID, federal and provincial governments to continue financial support to the centre.

Meanwhile, the chief minister inaugurated Mehran University Women Hostel and planted a sapling. A total of 38 students and two scholars were awarded masters and PhD degrees.

Gohar Ali Khan