



# Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ ہم سے محمد بن یوسف نے بیان کیا انہیں سفیان نے اعمش سے خبر دی وہ ابو اسحاق سے روایت کرتے ہیں وہ عبد اللہ بن مسعود رضی اللہ عنہ سے کہ رسول اللہ صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے ہمیں نصیحت فرماتے کے لیے کچھ دن مقرر کر دیئے تھے اس بار سے کہ ہمیں ہم کبھی خاطر نہ ہو جائیں۔ (کنز العمال: حدیث نمبر 68)

Barkat Rice Mills (Pvt) Limited

## Pakistan all set to boost its exports: President

President Dr Arif Alvi says Pakistan, being a member of the IAF, is all set to boost its exports by improving the research and technology, and enhancing the quality of its products by conforming with international standards and regulatory requirements. I extend my felicitation as well to the PNAC for joining the IAF to celebrate the World Accreditation Day on the theme 'Sustainability in Economic Growth and the Environment' to create awareness for laboratories and other certification organizations to register with the PNAC.



## Govt taking concrete measures to overcome energy crisis: Dastgir

Minister for Power Engineer Khurram Dastgir says government is taking practical steps to end the energy crisis in the country and the nation will see a significant decrease in the load shedding from next month. Addressing a news conference in Islamabad on Wednesday, he said the country is facing a shortfall of approximately 4000 MW as the generation of electricity is about 22000MW but the demand is about 26000MW.

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## GDP Growth

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairs the meeting of National Economic Council in Islamabad on Wednesday.



Photo: PID

## NEC approves 5% economic growth target for FY 2022-23

Centre, provinces agree to close markets at 8:30PM

ISLAMABAD: National Economic Council (NEC) Wednesday approved the annual targets for the upcoming fiscal year 2022-23 including the economic growth target set at 5%, along with the commitment to make efforts to raise it to 6 percent. The NEC, presided over by Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, also approved various sectors' growth targets for the new fiscal year including agriculture 3.9%, industries 5.9% and services 5.1 percent. The Council also approved the Macro-Economic Framework for Annual Plan 2022-23. The proposed allocation of Rs. 800 billion for Public Sector Development Plan (PSDP) for the next fiscal was also approved by the Council. The Council unanimously decided that 60% of the development budget would be spent on the ongoing projects, while the remaining 40% would be spent on the new development schemes. The NEC, which was presented with a review of development budget 2021-22, was told that only Rs. 550 billion out of the total allocated amount of Rs. 900 billion in the PSDP 2021-22 could be spent during the outgoing fiscal due to less economic and development activities caused by coronavirus pandemic.

Rs24.82 per unit

## NEPRA fixes power tariff for FY22-23

ISLAMABAD: The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) has fixed the electricity tariff at Rs24.82 per unit for the fiscal year of 2022-23 after a massive hike of Rs7.91 per unit. With the new hike, the one-unit price of electricity has gone up from Rs16.91 to Rs24.82. The depreciation of the rupee and rising oil prices in the international market have been cited as reasons for the electricity tariff hike.

According to the statement, Nepra has fixed the national average tariff for the financial year 2022-23 at Rs24.82 per unit, which is Rs7.91 per unit higher than the previous average tariff. The statement further said that the authority determines the new tariff based on the distribution and transmission losses and in terms of revenue of different distribution companies.

## Govt all set to present progressive budget tomorrow

Rs800b to be allocated for development budget for FY23

Our Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: The incumbent coalition government is all set to present its first pro-people, business-friendly and progressive budget for the fiscal year 2022-23 in the Parliament on June 10 (Friday), with special focus on fiscal consolidation to contain budget deficit. The budget would be presented by Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Miftah Ismail.

The coalition government, which came into power just months ago, may unveil over Rs9 trillion budget. Sources privy with the development, said that a major chunk of the new budget will be spent only on debt servicing of Rs3523 billion and Rs1586 billion will be allocated for defense. The finance ministry will have to borrow over Rs4 trillion to run its operations, thanks to the hefty debt servicing cost. The cost of pensions is Rs550

billion and the running of the civil government consumes only Rs550 billion, the sources said.

The coalition government has decided to allocate Rs800 billion for the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) in the next fiscal year. Sources have told ARY News that the development

(NHA), while Rs96 billion has been proposed for water resources. It has been proposed to allocate Rs60 billion to Cabinet Division for development works.

Rs50 billion has been proposed for the development of the merged tribal districts in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, while Rs96.36 billion has been proposed in the development budget for Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan. Sources further said that in the energy sector, a development budget of Rs49 billion has been proposed for Pakistan Electric Power Company (PEPCO) and Rs33 billion for Railways.

Meanwhile, the government has decided to allocate Rs25 billion for Atomic Energy Commission, while Rs41.87 billion will be allocated to Higher Education Commission (HEC) and Rs2.5 billion for Aviation. Moreover, the Ministry of Climate Change will be given Rs9.5 billion, while the Housing

Ministry will get Rs11.60 billion. It has been proposed to allocate Rs10.47 billion for the Ministry of Home Affairs, Rs12 billion for the Ministry of Health, Rs12 billion for the Ministry of Food Security and Rs3.1 billion for Maritime Affairs.

The size of the federal development budget has been set at Rs800 billion for the upcoming fiscal year 2022-23, Rs538 billion has been proposed to allocate for federal ministries and departments while the major chunk of the budget Rs121 billion will be given to National Highway Authority (NHA).

It is also proposed to allocate Rs96 Billion for water Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan's water resources and Rs60 billion for cabinet division, Rs33 billion proposed for railways. On the other hand, Rs50 billion for integrated tribal areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Rs25 billion for Atomic Energy Commission.

Govt likely to present budget with over 9tr outlay

budget of Rs800 billion has been proposed for the next financial year, out of which Rs538 billion will be allocated for federal ministries and departments. According to sources, it has been proposed to allocate Rs121 billion to the National Highway Authority

## Hard decisions taken to stabilise economy: PM

Orders tax abolition for export industry's raw material

Our Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has asserted that the federal government has taken tough decisions to stabilise the country's economy. Talking to Twitter, the prime minister noted that the coalition government has taken some difficult decisions to stabilise the economy. "We didn't care for their impact on our political capital, for doing so is in the best interest of Pakistan," PM Shehbaz added. "For how long will we continue to be consumed by our narrow interests at the cost of national duties?" the premier asked.

In another tweet, the prime minister reiterated that Pakistan's economic security was deeply linked to its political stability. "Time has come for political forces and all stakeholders to rise above their narrow interests and agree on Charter of Economy," he added. "We need to increase our exports and reduce imports to come out of recurrent balance of payment crisis. I proposed the public-private partner-

ship as a way of involving our private sector in the conception and execution of development projects," he wrote.

Referring to the outcomes of the Pre-Budget Business Conference, PM Shehbaz Sharif said that he has decided to form various task forces consisting of experts and professionals belonging to IT, export, agriculture, finance sectors and food security to finalise the proposals for fast-paced implementation. The prime minister further said that what the nation is going through right now is certainly a difficult time. "The hard decisions were necessitated by circumstances. We will sail through these times. The government has introduced austerity measures to share the burden that you are feeling," he added.

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif Wednesday directed the authorities concerned to abolish all taxes on the raw materials of the export industry, as part of his government's vision to develop an export-oriented economy. The prime minister, in

a meeting with a delegation of the American Business Council, also directed the formation of task forces to attract investment in multiple sectors. The task forces would be formed in the fields of tourism, pharmaceuticals, information technology, e-commerce, large-scale manufacturing, and agriculture.

He told the delegation that the government was making efforts to ensure the production of export quality agricultural products. He said it was for the first time that the government was calling for the consistency of the policies as the subjects of the national economy and public welfare were above politics.

The delegation comprised representatives from pharmaceuticals, food processing, IT, e-commerce, retail, textile, sports, and logistics sectors. The prime minister directed the secretary of commerce as well as the secretary of the Board of Investment to ensure immediate resolution of the issues faced by the investors and sought a compliance report within a week.

## Gillani challenges Senate chairman election in SC

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Former Prime Minister and Senator Yousaf Raza Gillani on Wednesday challenged the results of the election of chairman Senate in Supreme Court of Pakistan. Gillani filed the petition in Supreme Court against the ruling of Islamabad High Court (IHC). He pleaded the SC to reject the verdict of IHC. In his petition, the former prime minister claimed that the ruling of IHC is against the law and facts. The petition also added that the ruling of IHC is against the verdict and decided parameters in Deputy Speaker's ruling. As per petition, Gillani won the Senate Election and the presiding officer dishonestly rejected 7 votes in his favour.

"The decision of the single and division bench of the IHC has been against the law and the facts of the matter," Gillani pleaded in his appeal to the supreme court.

## Govt won't do anything sans America's approval: Imran Khan

Announces to unveil date for long march after SC's clearance

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: PTI Chairman Imran Khan on Wednesday vehemently criticised the government and said the incumbent rulers would "not do anything without the approval of the United States". Former prime minister said that he would announce date for the long march after Supreme Court's decision. Addressing PTI's national council on Wednesday, Imran Khan while asking the party workers to be prepared for his call one they get clearance from the apex court said that it will be the biggest protest in Pakistan's history.

The former PM said while lashing out at the government said that they are afraid that if America is disgruntled with them, then they will suffer the same fate as the Russian oligarchs, claiming that from 2008 to 2018, adding that the US carried out 400 drone attacks on Pakistan, a number that had been unprecedented. Khan said the former president Asif Ali Zardari and former prime minister Nawaz Sharif did not condemn when the drone attacks were taking place in Pakistan despite Islamabad being an ally of Washington.

Taking a dig at PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, the PTI chairman said, Bilawal did a long march towards Islamabad when Rs4 per litre was



increased by his government. Where is he now when the fuel prices have been jacked up by Rs60 per litre? In

Imran Khan re-elected as PTI chairman

the ruling tenure of the PTI government, the petrol was increased by Rs55 per litre, but the 'imported government'

has raised its prices by Rs60 in just 15 days, he was quoted.

Former Prime Minister Imran Khan has once again been elected as the chairman unopposed of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) as other candidates had withdrawn in his favour. PTI leaders Umar Farfaraz Cheema and Naik Muhammad were the other two contenders who were running for the top slog of chairman. Besides it, Shah Mahmood Qureshi and Asad Umar were also re-elected as the vice-chairman and the secretary-general of the party, respectively.



## Investment

Islamabad: H.E Mr. Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salim Al-Zaabi, Ambassador of the United Arab Emirate called on the Federal Minister for Finance & Revenue, Miftah Ismail at Finance Division on Wednesday.



Photo: PID

**FY 2021-22**

# Pakistan achieves major economic targets

*Inflation, trade & current account deficits remain out of control*

**Staff Reporter**

ISLAMABAD: The key features of the Economic Survey 2021-22 have been released, according to which Pakistan failed to achieve several important economic targets set for the current financial year. According to the Economic Survey, targets for GDP, agriculture, industry and services were achieved while inflation, trade deficit, imports, current account deficit and investment, national savings, wheat and cotton production targets were not achieved by Pakistan during the fiscal year of 2021-22.

The survey document states that the GDP target for the current financial year was set at 4.8 per cent but it remained 6 per cent higher than its set target. The agricultural sector output was recorded at 4.4%. The performance of the industrial sector has also been significant in the current financial year, surpass-

ing the target of 6.2 per cent, while the output of the industrial sector has been recorded at 7.2 per cent. The export target for the current financial year was

Economic Survey 2021-22 to be unveiled today

set at Rs26.83 billion and in the 11 months from July to May 2022 of the current financial year, the exports remained Rs28.84 billion. During the financial year, the per capita income of ordinary Pakistanis increased from \$1676 to \$1798.

Among the targets that could not be achieved by Pakistan was significant inflation. The target for the current financial year 2021-22 was to keep inflation

at 8% but it is touching 13.3%, while the current account deficit has been raised to Rs13.8 billion from July-April against the set target of Rs2.27 billion. Similarly, the trade deficit target was set at Rs28.43 billion but during the 11 months of the current financial year, the trade deficit stood at a record Rs43.33 billion. The fixed investment rate for the current financial year stood at 13.4 per cent, while National Savings stood at 11.1 per cent against the target of 15.4 per cent, gross investment stood at 15.1 per cent against the target of 16.1 per cent, cotton production at 8.3 million bales and rice production at 9.3 million metric tonnes.

The federal government will launch the pre-budget document, Economic Survey of Pakistan 2021-22 on Thursday showing a robust GDP growth rate of 5.97 percent, with higher Current Account Deficit of over \$13.7 billion, and a mixed trend of performance by the key macro economic indicators during the year.

## No one can harm Pak-Saudi ties: Rana Sanaullah

*Says any conspiracy to spoil relations with Saudi Arabia will be foiled*

**Staff Reporter**

ISLAMABAD: Minister of Interior Rana Sanaullah said on Wednesday that any conspiracy to deteriorate Pakistan-Saudi Arabia ties will be foiled and security cooperation between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia would be further enhanced. Talking to Ambassador of Saudi Arabia Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki who called on him here, the minister said Pakistan and Saudi Arabia would jointly fight internal and regional security challenges, said a press release. He said any conspiracy to mar Pak-Saudi relations would be foiled jointly.

Sanaullah said culprits involved in assassination of Saudi diplomat Hassan al-Qahtani in 2011 would be brought to justice soon. Red notices had been issued by FIA for the culprits involved in the murder, he added. He said all available resources would be utilized



to nab the culprits. The minister also thanked the Saudi government for rolling over \$ 3 billion for Pakistan's economic stability. Roll over of \$ 3 billion by the Saudi government was crucial to stabilizing Pakistan's economy, he added.

He said Pakistan enjoyed cordial and fraternal relations with Saudi Arabia. The people of Pakistan had immense

devotion and love for the custodian of the Holy mosques, he added. The PML-N leader went on to say that Saudi Arabia had always been generous in helping and assisting Pakistan in hour of odd. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's recent visit to Saudi Arabia would be an important milestone in further strengthening Pak-Saudi relations, he added.

## Pakistan, Tajikistan face similar security challenges: Khawaja Asif

**Staff Report**

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Republic of Tajikistan Ismatullo Nasredin called on Defence Minister, Khawaja Muhammad Asif, here in his office at Islamabad today.

He expressed best wishes for the military and civil leadership of Tajikistan, and its people and highlighted that being neighbors of Afghanistan, both Pakistan and Tajikistan are facing similar security challenges and threats.

Pakistan believes in peaceful resolution of all issues and appreciates the efforts of Tajikistan in promoting peace and stability in the region. Minister for Defence proposed friendly sports competitions between the Armed Forces and display of military band on reciprocal basis on special occasions of both countries.

During the meeting, matters related to bilateral defence cooperation,



besides exploring new avenues of enhancement in defence cooperation, were discussed. Tajik Ambassador

assured his government's commitment and pledged to work with Pakistan to strengthen their bilateral ties.

## Supply of flour at cheap prices start in KP: Marriyum

*Says PM fulfills promise of flour at Rs 40/kg with people*

**Staff Reporter**

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb says on the directives of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, supply of flour at rupees 40 per kilogram has been started in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa. In a statement on Wednesday, the Information Minister said that 100 mobile stores were setup to fulfill the promise of providing flour to the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa at affordable price.

Marriyum Aurangzeb said for this purpose, the province has been divided into Abbottabad and Peshawar zones. She said the supply of inexpensive flour will be gradually extended to the whole province. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has fulfilled his promise of providing flour at discounted price to the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with the commodity being supplied at Rs 40 per kg.

Sharing the details of this initiative,

Federal Minister Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb said the provision of flour at discounted price to the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa would be ensured at the PM's signature 'Shehbaz Speed'.

She said the supply of flour at Rs 40 per kg had already started in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. For expedient and effective realization of the PM's initiative for the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 100 Mobile Stores had been launched, she said. The province had been divided into two zones vis-à-vis Abbottabad and Peshawar zone for this purpose. This systematic supply of flour at discounted price would be gradually extended to the entire Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, she assured.

The minister said that so far more than 50,000 bags of flour had been sold in Abbottabad and Peshawar zones in line with PM Shehbaz's initiative. Flour at discounted price was being provided



through separate mobile stores in Abbottabad and Peshawar zones, she added. She said that in Abbottabad alone 22,070 flour bags at the discounted price of Rs

40 per kg were sold over the last two days. Meanwhile, more than 23,400 bags were sold to the people in the Peshawar zone during the same time.

The minister said that the number of mobile stores would be increased to 200 by June 13, so that more people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa could benefit from the Rs 40 per kg flour. In addition to this, temporary flour selling points in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa would also be operational by June 9, and by June 17 they would increase to 500, to further facilitate the process. Marriyum said, in line with the vision and promise by PM Shehbaz, there would more than 2000 selling points in KPK province at 993 locations where people would be able to buy flour at the discounted price.

She said that the prime minister had fulfilled his promise with the brave people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, who had suffered under an incompetent regime for 8 years that had stalled welfare and progress in their province. She pledged that PM Shehbaz would continue to take more of such initiatives for the welfare and betterment for the people of KPK.

## Miftah offers support for new investment from UAE

*UAE envoy expressed interest in boosting and strengthening bilateral ties*

**Staff Report**

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Miftah Ismail on Wednesday assured full support by present government to Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates, Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salim Al-Zaabi and offered him welcoming sentiments for pursuing new investments in Pakistan.

Talking to UAE's Ambassador, who called on him here, the finance minister highlighted the long-standing bilateral ties between both countries in areas of trade, energy, refinery, and petro-

leum, said a statement issued here by Finance Division.

He shared that Pakistan is aiming at taking the existing bilateral relations to next level especially in economic area.

He also shared with the UAE's Ambassador about the potential investment avenues present in Pakistan and shared welcoming sentiments.

The Ambassador of UAE expressed interest in boosting and strengthening bilateral ties between both the countries through investments in various new avenues.

*Govt will provide relief to people in budget: Shazia Marri*

**Staff Report**

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) Shazia Marri has said that the government will provide relief to people in the budget being announced on tomorrow (Friday). Talking to reporters here on Wednesday, she said 28 billion rupees are being provided to people through Benazir Income Support Programme. She said that six million people have recently been included in ambit of the BISP to curtail poverty.

The Minister for Benazir Income Support Programme said two thousand rupees are being given to those whom monthly income is less than forty thousand. She said the Prime Minister has taken inputs from people affiliated with different sectors for betterment of economy. Shazia Marri said Imran Khan after being ousted from power is misguiding people and giving statements against the country. The Minister for BISP said past government also imposed restriction on media. She said the past government of Imran Khan made hollow claims, but did nothing for the welfare of masses.

*Rupee recovers against dollar*

**Bureau Report**

KARACHI: After suffering massive losses this week, the rupee on Wednesday made a recovery of Rs1.31 against the US dollar in the interbank market. According to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), the greenback closed at Rs201.52 after losing Rs2.60 against the previous day's close of Rs202. The US dollar is being sold at between Rs201 to Rs204 in open market against the rupee, said forex dealers.

The Pakistani rupee on Tuesday further weakened in the inter-bank market and closed at 202.83 against the US dollar amid budget uncertainties as matters with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are yet to be finalised. According to experts, the resumption of the IMF programme is a must to stabilize foreign exchange reserves. On May 19, the dollar had reached a record high of Rs200 for the first time in inter-bank market. The respite for the rupee had come only after the government had increased the fuel prices by a whopping Rs30 a litre, paving the way for the release of a \$1 billion tranche from the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

**Rising inflation**

*Court issues notices to PM, others*

**Bureau Report**

GUJRANWALA: A sessions court in Gujranwala on Wednesday issued notices to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, and others on a petition over rising inflation in the country. The petition was filed by advocate Manzoor Qadir in Gujranwala sessions court. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, secretary finance, secretary petroleum and secretary water and power have been made respondents in the plea. The sessions court issued notices to respondents and directed them to submit replies within 20 days.



# Punjab CM inaugurates price dashboard for commodities' online monitoring

*Hamza Shehbaz will personally monitor performance of districts for price control through dashboard daily*

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Hamza Shehbaz Wednesday inaugurated the chief minister's price dashboard for online monitoring of prices of essential commodities and price control activities in each district.



control activities and the relevant secretaries presented their reports.

The online monitoring of performance of price control committees at the district level has also started as the CM will personally monitor the performance of districts for price control through the dashboard daily.

A meeting was held here under the chair of Chief Minister Hamza Shehbaz to review the price control mechanism. The meeting was attended by commissioners and deputy commissioners of all the districts through video-link. The CM gave necessary instructions to the administrative officers for price control and provision of relief to the masses.

The meeting reviewed the price complaints about the prices of essential commodities and directed to launch the facility in the next three days.

The CM directed the ministers, political assistants and political partners to conduct field visits and remarked that districts would be assigned to the ministers and political assistants for field visits. He asked them to work for providing relief by conducting visits at the union council level, he said and maintained that ground realities cannot be understood by sitting in the rooms. The common man was in trouble and need immediate relief by the government. The CM said that the Punjab government would write to the Federal government for not allowing the sugar export.

He maintained that the government would increase the wheat quota of well-functioning mills, adding that the administrative officers have been directed to ensure an uninterrupted supply of subsidized flour. He further directed to make the supply mechanism of urea fertilizer more efficient across the province.

Every possible step will be taken to benefit the masses, he spoke. In view of the shortage of tomatoes and onions in the coming days, a plan should be prepared in advance to deal with the situation, he commented and asked the political allies and administrative officers to go into the field to garner facts.

Sardar Awais Leghari, Ch. Muhammad Iqbal, Bilal Yaseen, Ata Tarar, Muawiyah Azam, Malik Nadeem Kamran, Zeeshan Rafiq, Ramzan Siddiq Bhatti, Saira Afzal, political assistants, chief secretary, IG police, secretaries and senior officials attended the meeting. Agencies

## CS Chachar stresses using modern digital tools

*For timely dissemination of information*



Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: Chief Secretary Government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Muhammad Usman Chachar has said that given the importance of digital media there was dire need that Information Department should use and utilize modern media tools for government publicity and timely dissemination of information to masses.

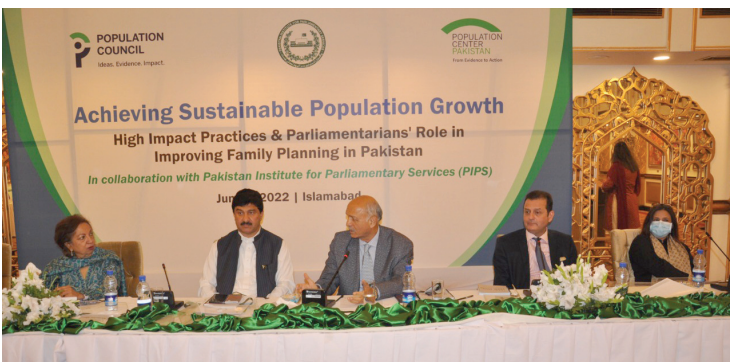
The Chief Secretary Usman Chachar said this while speaking during a briefing session, which was jointly arranged by the Department of Information and Information Technology Board here on Wednesday. The Briefing was attended by Secretary Information Ms. Midhat Shehzad, Director General Information Raja Azhar Iqbal, Director General Information Technology Dr. Khalid Rafique and other officials.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Secretary while highlighting the role of social and digital media said that the Information Department should use modern media tools for the publicity and projection of government policies. Referring to the rapid rise of digital and social media, Chachar said that in wake of the growing influence and scope of the social media the responsibilities of the Information Department have multiplied. He said that all available resources would be utilized to provide manpower and other resources to the department. The Chief Secretary said that he would soon inspect the newly constructed PID complex. Usman Chachar also underlined the importance of the Information Technology Board. "The telehealth project is a good project for the provision of health facilities in remote areas of Azad Kashmir", he said adding that necessary steps would be taken to make the ITB a revenue generating entity, he added.

# Political parties must focus on attaining sustainable population growth: Senator Mushahid

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: If Pakistan is to achieve sustainable population growth rate, it must increase its funding for family planning programs, initiate subsidized and free services through voucher programs to improve access of poor and marginalized populations and harness the private health sector to enhance outreach of population programs. This was discussed amongst legislators representing major political parties in a dialogue held here Wednesday.



The meeting was organized by the Population Center Pakistan with support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and in collaboration with the Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services (PIPS) and Population Council. The seminar was held to facilitate legislators on the multifarious challenges of a rapidly growing population which call for stronger political commitment and investment in family planning and reproductive health programs in the country.

The meeting featured dialogues with subject experts, program managers and health practitioners to focus attention on parliamentarians' role for advocating high impact practices that can be a game changer to promote family planning in Pakistan. Members of the Senate, legislators from the national and provincial assemblies, and regional body of Gilgit-Baltistan representing all major political parties attended the meeting.

In her welcome remarks, Dr. Zeba Sathar, Country Director, Population Council emphasized the role of increased and better resource allocation for family planning services to improve maternal and child health indicators due to decline in unintended pregnancies. She called on the parliamentarians to advocate for allocation

of Rs. 10 billion of the Special Population Fund stipulated by the Council of Common Interests (CCI) in 2018 to ensure CCI targets of reducing population growth are met. Dr. Sathar also stressed on greater equity for poorer women with unmet family planning need through subsidies for travel expenses and provider costs.

In his opening remarks, Mr. Mohammad Anwar, Executive Director, PIPS said parliamentarians' role is pivotal for oversight and accountability to address the population challenge. He stressed for legislators' role to drive political discourse on the population issue in the assembly floors by regularly

dedicating time to discuss its impact on the country's development.

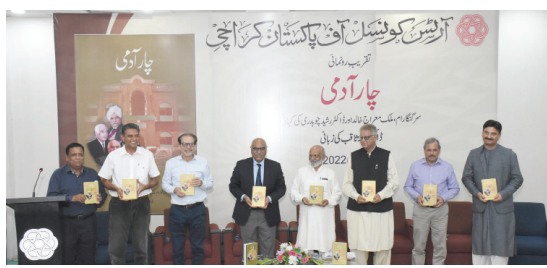
Speaking at the occasion, Senator Mushahid Hussain said political parties must leverage on the existing cross-party consensus on attaining sustainable population growth in Pakistan and advocate for inclusion of critical areas of health and family planning to take center stage in all national development and human security. Present at the occasion, Senator Waleed Iqbal stressed on advocating for reducing the alarming population growth by highlighting its cross-sectoral impact on other areas of life particularly water emergency and food insecurity. He emphasized parliamentarians to promote the new national narrative of 'Tawazuun that promotes maintaining balance between family size and resources.

Mahmood Jan, Deputy Speaker, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly emphasized legislators' role in advocating for sustained population growth through grassroots engagement at the constituency-level, targeted media campaigns and through discourse in the assembly houses and support to enhance budgetary allocation for population planning activities.

# ACP Karachi launches Dr. Amjad Saqib's book '4 Admi'

Our Correspondent

KARACHI: Arts Council of Pakistan Karachi has launched Dr. Amjad Saqib's book "4 Admi" at Haseena Moin Hall. President Arts Council Muhammad Ahmad Shah, Mehmood Sham, Mazhar Abbas, Syed Ayaz Mehmood, Shaheen Aziz, Nazir Tanio, and Dr. Amjad Saqib spoke on the occasion while Shakeel Khan performed the duties of the moderator.



path you have taken in your life is a model for others," he said.

On this occasion, President of Arts Council Muhammad Ahmad Shah said that Dr. Amjad Saqib has done a great job in the form of the book. The Arts Council has been transformed into a family. I am grateful to all the poets, writers, artists, members of the governing body, and to society as a whole, that the

Arts Council Karachi has expanded the scope for financial support of deserving artists through an endowment fund to overcome education, the marriage of girls, treatment of artists, and other issues. Mahmood Sham said that there is such a person among us today. Adopts time so the flowers are falling. His work has helped many people. Mazhar Abbas said that the

work which belonged to the state was done by a few people but his name is reflected in his work. This work was started by the state later. But Dr. Ayaz Saqib did it quietly.

Syed Ayaz Mehmood said that mention of Dr. Amjad Saqib and brotherhood are incomplete without each other. Dr. Sahib studied in the USA and was awarded Nobel Prize. I congratulate him for writing such a wonderful biography, Shaheen Aziz Niazi said that Dr. Sahib put

his heart out in "4 Admi" in which he said that he wanted to work without interest, he did it in good faith in which he succeeded, he said that the government also took part in this work and if a poor person takes a loan, he should take advantage of it himself, and spend all his life in the way of his Lord in which those four men became good people. The author of the book Dr. Amjad Saqib while talking said that the honor bestowed on him in Karachi is a great honor for me.

He said that the story of the book revolves around Dr. Amjad Saqib including Sir Ganga Ram, Malik Meraj Khalid, and Dr. Rashid Chaudhry. It tells how these three people get out of poverty, and becomes good doctor and a politician whose example is rarely found.

## GOAS condemns attack on official

Staff Reporter

SUJAWAL: Gazetted Officers Association Sujawal deplored a brutal attack on one of its officials and Head Master of Government High School Baran Abad. President of the Organisation Ali Mohammad Gurmani called it an onslaught not only on a person but on the noble profession that is meant to foster awareness in the Society.

According to sources Aziz Alladin who is currently serving as Headmaster stopped at a carpenter's shop situated near Begna Mori a settlement of Taluka Jati district Sujawal to whom he had assigned the task of making school furniture and had also paid an amount of 17,000/ from School Management Fund but when he inquired from the owner of the shop about the consignment the shop owner indulged into a heated argument with him and eventually he along with his assistant attacked on the head of the teacher with a blunt object and later on managed to flee from there.

### PUBLIC NOTICE

Whereas, Raja Pervaiz Iqbal s/o Raja Sakhi Muhammad, transferee of plot No. 40-E, Block-B, Area Development Scheme-II, Gujjar Khan have appointed General Power of Attorney to Mr. SM. Nadeem s/o S.M. Waseem vide registered deed at No. 816/4 dated 31-12-2021 from Sub Registrar, Gujjar Khan. The General Power of attorney wish to transfer of the above mentioned plot to Mr. Abdullah Bhatti s/o Mustanir Ahmed Bhatti.

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Deputy Director Punjab Housing & Town Planning Agency Sub Region Rawalpindi

# Pakistan requests Iran to increase electricity exports to Balochistan

*Iran's readiness to supply Pakistan with electricity*

ISLAMABAD: The Minister of Development and Planning of Pakistan, emphasizing the importance of neighborliness with the Islamic Republic of Iran and bilateral cooperation in the field of energy, requested an increase in Iran's electricity exports to the Pakistani province of Balochistan.

On Tuesday evening, Seyed Mohammad Ali Hosseini, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran received the Minister of Development and Planning of Pakistan, Ahsan Iqbal, at Iranian Embassy in Islamabad.

attended by Mohammad Sorkhabi, Deputy Ambassador of Iran, Syed Zafar Ali Shah, Deputy Minister of Development and Planning of Pakistan, Head of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, and some officials of the Pakistani Ministry of Energy and Maritime Affairs.

The two sides reviewed the latest developments related to Iran-Pakistan bilateral relations, economic cooperation, especially in the field of energy, and regional development plans, including the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. The Pakistani Minister of Planning

expressed gratitude to the Islamic Republic of Iran for its cooperation in the energy sector, especially in the export of electricity to the regions of Pakistan's Balochistan province, and stressed the commitment of the Islamabad government to further increase and deepen cooperation between the two neighboring countries.

Pakistan's Minister of Development and Planning said in the meeting: "We are trying to provide electricity to Balochistan province, including Makran coast, with the help of neighboring and brother country of Iran."

Pakistan requests Iran to increase electricity exports to Balochistan. In a meeting, the Minister of Development and Planning of Pakistan requested the Ambassador of Iran to expand economic cooperation, especially to increase the export of electricity by 100 MW in addition to the current 104 MW of electricity to Balochistan from Iran.

Hosseini, Iran's ambassador to Pakistan, while emphasizing the development of cooperation between the two countries, announced the readiness of the Islamic Republic to supply electricity to Balochistan.

# YouTube hosts roundtable with content creators

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Marking a historic first, the popular video-streaming platform, YouTube, hosted a virtual Pakistan creator roundtable. The event was attended by media persons and the brains behind the four renowned Pakistani YouTube channels; Ducky Bhai, Something Haute, Sistrology, and Street Food PK.

The discussion began with the Country Director of Pakistan at Google, Farhan S. Qureshi, sharing valuable insights with content creators and the media.

"Over 55 per cent of the viewership of Pakistani YouTube channels comes

from outside the country. The number indicates that the content created by Pakistani YouTubers is highly popular all across the globe," Farhan S. Qureshi.

He also shared that overall growth of 35pc was recorded on a yearly basis as more than 300 channels now have more than 1 million subscribers. Over 4500 YouTube channels now have more than 100,000 subscribers, registering a growth rate of 45pc, he added.

Qureshi also revealed that popular Pakistani YouTube channels are now making over Rs1 million annually recording a growth rate of more than 140pc year-over-year.

## Wahaj Ali takes on Team Muhafiz

*An animated series by between Geo & ISPR*

Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Wahaj Ali has yet again taken over an endeavoring project called Team Muhafiz. A joint venture between Geo and ISPR, Team Muhafiz is an animated series, adapted from a comic book series with the same title, created by Imran Azhar and published by Az Corp.



This animated series features eight role model, and one of the voice-over is being done by Wahaj Ali. A multi talented actor with versatile acting skills and a strong persona. He is playing the voice of Reza, the son of a foreign office diplomat.

Along with Wahaj Ali, we have Sajal Aly, Dananeer, Ahsan Khan and Nimra Rafiq as voice-over artists behind the characters.

Team Muhafiz is all about building a message of peace, progress and harmony. "This project is extremely magical and meaningful to me as it gives out such a strong narrative to the youth, as it showcases lives of inspiring heroes that attract the youth of Pakistan. In this series through our voices we have touched upon different social issues such as street crime, drug abuse, child labour and a lot more", stated Wahaj Ali.

The team behind this animated series has come together and created a rather powerful message that will surely touch upon the hearts of the younger generation of Pakistan as it is the right blend of positivity and differentiating the good from the evil.





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Fajr ..... 3:14 am  
Zohr ..... 12:07 pm  
Asr ..... 5:06 pm  
Maghrib ..... 7:17 pm  
Isha ..... 9:00 pm

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Bomb Disposal ..... 15  
Fire Services Rawalpindi/  
Islamabad ..... 1122 & 16  
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& Rescue Services ..... 4451122  
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COMPLAINTS

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G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8 9266316  
Wapda Islamabad ..... 9217579-80  
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Wasa Water Tank  
Rawalpindi ..... 0331-5022125

Saad expresses sorrow over Iran train accident



Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Railways Khawaja Saad Rafique has expressed deep sorrow over the loss of precious lives in Iran train accident. The Federal Minister prayed for speedy recovery of the injured.

In the hour of grief, we stand with our Iranian brothers and sisters and pray to Allah that the deceased may be given a place in heaven, Federal Minister

# Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee Week Of Celebrations Begin in Pakistan

It is also year marking 75 years of Pakistan and UK's bilateral relationship

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Her Majesty The Queen's Birthday and Platinum Jubilee celebrations started at the British High Commission in Islamabad on Wednesday. It was the first in a series of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee week which will also see birthday events in Karachi and Lahore—the latter closing with a performance from Qawwali singer Rahat Fateh Ali Khan.

Hosted by British High Commissioner Dr Christian Turner, the event in Islamabad was attended by the Prime Minister of Pakistan Shehbaz Sharif as chief guest along with other senior ministers, foreign dignitaries and celebrities. During his speech the High Commissioner reminded guests of Her Majesty's life dedicated to service.

Events across the world have been marking Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee and her 70 years of service to the people of the UK, the Realms and the Commonwealth. It is also the year marking 75 years of Pakistan and UK's bilateral relationship. As part of the Platinum Jubilee on the weekend of June 4-5, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in collaboration with the British High Commission lit a beacon to celebrate the occasion at the same time as it was done in the Commonwealth capitals.

The Pakistan Monument in Islamabad was lit up on Wednesday in purple, the colour of the Platinum Jubilee celebrations.

The event also underlined Pakistan and the UK's 75-year partnership—at the heart of which is our people to people links, a 1.6 million Pakistani diaspora in the UK, 500,000 approximate annual visits in

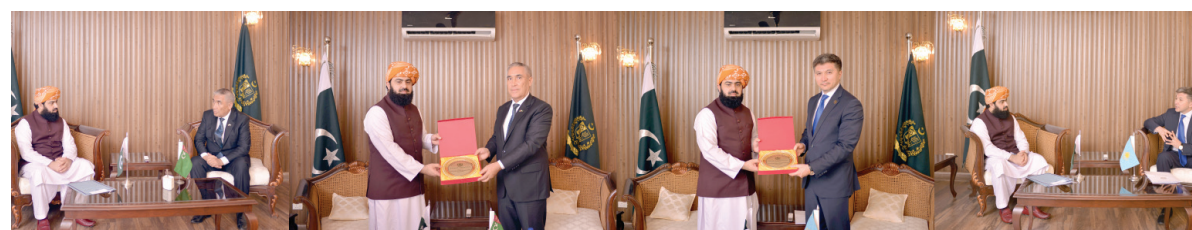


both directions, and around 100,000 British nationals based in Pakistan. Prime Minister Boris Johnson last month spoke to Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on the phone and welcomed the United Kingdom and Pakistan's strong partnership over the past 75 years. They agreed to strengthen those ties further and boost trade and investment.

British High Commissioner to Pakistan Dr Christian Turner CMG said: "Her Majesty The Queen's 70 years of servant leadership show a remarkable record of integrity, hard work and selflessness that are needed more than ever today. We are honoured to celebrate her Birthday, her Platinum Jubilee and also 75 years of deep UK-Pakistan relations."

# Asad Mahmood for enhancing ties with Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan

Ambassadors of Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan hold meetings with Communications Minister



Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Kazakhstan in Pakistan Yerzhan Kistafin called on Federal Minister for Communications and Postal Services Asad Mahmood here on Wednesday. Senior officers from the Ministry of Communications and National Highway Authority were also present.

Talking to the visiting guest, Asad Mahmood said, Pakistan and Kazakhstan are bound in age-old cultural and religious values and the time is to revive this relationship as per requirement of the existing conditions. To this effect, people to people contacts and exchange of delegations may pave the way to bring both the brotherly countries closer. He said, there are vast opportunities of working together in the construction sector. To achieve the targets in the prevailing environment, coordinated planning on bilateral, regional and global level is the dire need of the time. He said, landlocked republics will avail access to rest of the world through development of Gwadar

Port which will bring about socio-economic uplift in the whole region, Asad Mahmood added.

Expressing a deep sense of gratitude, the Ambassador of Kazakhstan Yerzhan Kistafin said, in the recent past an international gathering was arranged in Kazakhstan on philosophy and services of Dr. Muhammad Iqbal, poet of the east. Besides an international trade conference was also arranged participated by more than 120 international traders including Turkey, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan. He said Kazakhstan takes interest in developing close relationships with Pakistan in various economic sectors. The visiting ambassador desired to enhance the trade volume by one billion dollars with Pakistan.

Later, Ambassador of Turkmenistan based in Pakistan Atadjan Movlamov also called on Federal Minister for Communications and Postal Services Asad Mahmood. Welcoming the honourable guest, Asad Mahmood said, great potential exists between Pakistan and Turkmenistan to expand the range of bilat-

eral relations. He termed the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-Iran (TAPI) Gas Pipeline project a big move to overcome the energy crisis. He recalled that fibre optic project is another example of brotherly relationship between the two countries. He said, Pakistan possesses extraordinary ideal location on world map and that all possible measures will be taken to have maximum benefits from this location. Asad Mahmood also desired to nominate focal persons and working groups to explore areas of mutual interests. Speaking about the shared values Asad Mahmood pointed out about 500 joint words which are used in Urdu and Turkmen languages.

On this occasion, Atadjan Movlamov said, work on a Transit Trade Agreement is underway to prepare the ground for extending the range of cooperation between the two countries and that Afghanistan will also be benefitted from this agreement. He said deep rooted shared cultural ties will cement bilateral relationships in the coming years between the two countries, he hoped.

Health Corner

## Patient Antibodies: broad coronavirus vaccines

ISLAMABAD: Scientists at Scripps Research have characterized 30 antibodies that recognize a wide range of coronaviruses — successfully blocking not only all the SARS-CoV-2 variants that were tested, but other, related viruses including SARS-CoV-1, which caused the original SARS outbreak with high mortality in 2003, one found only in bats and another from pangolins. The antibodies were all isolated from people with "hybrid immunity" who had been infected with SARS-CoV-2 and subsequently vaccinated against the virus.

The new details on the antibodies, published today in Nature Immunology, are a step toward the next generation of coronavirus vaccines, which may help ward off a broader swath of viruses than the current vaccines specific to SARS-CoV-2.

"It's very encouraging that despite SARS-CoV-2 mutating, there are still parts of the virus you can target for broad vaccination strategies," says senior author Raiees Andrabi, PhD, an investigator in the Department of Immunology and Microbiology.

At the same time researchers work to develop new treatments and vaccines for the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, many are also hoping to prevent the next pandemic. Coronaviruses — a broad group of viruses which also cause some common colds — have been responsible for COVID-19 as well as previous outbreaks caused by SARS-CoV-1 and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) virus. A vaccine that helps the immune system recognize not only many SARS-CoV-2 variants, but other SARS-causing coronaviruses, could stop these viruses from spreading throughout the population.

In the new study, Andrabi and his colleagues compared antibody responses elicited in 21 people who had recovered from COVID-19, 10 people who had been vaccinated against COVID-19, and 15 with hybrid immunity from both. People with hybrid immunity showed the strongest and broadest spectrum of antibodies, able to neutralize — or block — five variants of SARS-CoV-2 (Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta and Omicron), SARS-CoV-1, as well as a pangolin coronavirus and one from horseshoe bats in China. No antibodies from the vaccination-only or infection-only group could neutralize all the viruses.

The team isolated 107 antibodies from two hybrid immunity donors, screening for molecules that could bind to both SARS-CoV-1 and SARS-CoV-2 spike proteins. Then, they homed in on 30 of those antibodies, many of which also neutralized the bat and pangolin coronaviruses for a closer look.

Most of those 30 antibodies, they found, recognized the same part of the viruses' structures, called the receptor-binding domain on the spike protein. Certain segments of the receptor-binding domain, the finding suggested, were not changing as different coronaviruses evolved. The 30 antibodies also had similarities when it came to how they were produced by the body, an important clue for researchers in how to design vaccines that prompt the immune system to produce the same antibodies.

To show that the antibodies did not just bind to the viruses in the lab, but could actually impact the immune system's ability to fight each pathogen, Andrabi's group, in collaboration with co-senior authors Ralph Baric and Lisa Gralinski at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, observed what happened when mice treated with three of the most potent antibodies — known as CC25.36, CC25.53 and CC25.54 — were exposed to SARS-CoV-2, SARS-CoV-1, or the horseshoe bat virus SHC014-CoV. For all three viruses, the mice that had been treated with the antibodies had significantly lower levels of virus in their lungs compared to control mice. (Courtesy: Science Daily)

## Govt should increase taxes on unnecessary and deadly tobacco: PANAH



Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: A press conference was organized at a local hotel under the auspices of Pakistan National Heart Association Panah which was presided over by Sanaullah Ghuman, General Secretary of Panah. The event was attended by a large number of health professionals and civil society representatives. Panah General Secretary Sanaullah Ghuman said that smoking is not good for human health in any way, smoking is the first step towards addiction. We all have to work hard to save the future of the young generation and take practical steps to eradicate smoking. Smoking is a major cause of deadly diseases, including heart and Cancer disease. According to a global study, tobacco kills 8 million people worldwide every year, while more than 1.5 million people in Pakistan lose their precious lives every year due to smoking. Research from different countries around the world has shown that if the consumption of something is to be reduced, then the tax should be implemented. But the tobacco industry is throwing dust in the eyes of the nation. We are not talking about ourselves but about the public interest, so that our nation can get rid of diseases.

# Speakers emphasize need to strengthen Pakistan, Azerbaijan relations

Seminar on 30th anniversary of diplomatic ties between Pakistan, Azerbaijan held

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: To commemorate the 30-year diplomatic relations between Pakistan and Azerbaijan, a seminar on "Pakistan-Azerbaijan Relations: Educational and Socio-Cultural Perspectives" was organized by the MUSLIM Institute. The seminar marked the 30th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and Azerbaijan.

A special cake was cut to celebrate the 30th anniversary of relations between the two brotherly Islamic countries. Former Prime Minister of Azerbaijan Mr. Novruz Mammadov, Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan H.E. Khazar Farhadov, Brigadier (R) Abdul Rahman Bilal, Member of Parliament of Azerbaijan Ms. Tamam Jafarova, Associate Professor of NUML University Islamabad Dr. Sarwat Rauf, Programme Manager MUSLIM Institute Ahmad Raza and Public Relations Coordinator MUSLIM Institute Advocate Asif Tanvir Awan were speakers on the occasion.

Speakers noted that Pakistan was the second country that recognized the Independence of Azerbaijan back in 1991 and thereafter diplomatic relations were established between both states in 1992. Pakistan was one of the first countries to open its Embassy in Baku. Both the countries



have had strong relations since then.

Azerbaijan supports Pakistan's stand on the Kashmir issue and Pakistan supports Azerbaijan's stance on the Nagorno Karabakh issue. Pakistan has not yet recognized Armenia because of its aggression against the Azerbaijani people.

The similarities and bond between the people of both countries have shaped various levels of cooperation and association at the societal level. The emerging people-to-people contacts have resulted in a unique feature of cooperative bilateralism. The leadership on both sides is fully cognizant



of the importance of these relations with each other. Pakistan and Azerbaijan share common concerns over sectarianism, extremism, and terrorism. Both Pakistan and Azerbaijan have worked together on the issues faced by Muslim Ummah such as Islamophobia.

Speakers emphasized that there is a need to further strengthen the bilateral relations by cooperating at the regional and international levels and promoting bilateral cooperation in other fields including people-to-people contact, tourism, trade, and military and education.



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# Roshan Digital Account; Pakistan going digital

Zainab Ali Khan

The initiative was launched after many Overseas Pakistanis expressed a desire for a way to invest directly without requiring a money transfer. With Roshan Digital Accounts, Overseas Pakistanis will now be able to make direct investments in Pakistan from all over the world. Eight commercial banks are part of the initiative as of now, and offer a completely digital process for account opening, operation, and payments. The facility was developed by the State Bank of Pakistan, Pakistan's central bank, and it is still operated by the central bank. Governor SBP praises the groundbreaking scope of the Roshan Digital Accounts initiative and its phenomenal success. "For the first time in the history of Pakistan, State Bank has made it possible to allow our overseas Pakistanis to open an account in a Pakistani bank completely digitally in a presence-less manner and without needing to visit any bank, any embassy or consulate,"

Here are some of the best Roshan Digital Accounts features. Remote account opening and management, Account

activation within two days, there are no minimum balance requirements, access to traditional banking services, such as money transfers and bill payments, there are both traditional and Sharia-compliant accounts available, provision of a virtual debit card for use both abroad and at home, accounts can be opened in both US dollars (USD) and Pakistani rupees (PKR) (PKR), Currency conversion rates for payments in real time, a net basis account allows funds to be sent back abroad without the need for regulatory approval.

After learning about all of the benefits of a Roshan Digital Account, the question of how to open an RDA Account emerges on how to open a Roshan Digital Account and what documents will be required to open a Roshan Digital Account. All of the banks mentioned above have made an online application form available to their customers which requests some basic information. And the complete, updated and verified process of opening a Roshan Digital Account is available on <https://www.sbp.org.pk/RDA/index.html>. As I previously stated, I believe there are almost limitless possibilities when attempting to determine the grand potential of the digital banking space in Paki-

stan, but I also believe that mobile payments are capable of modifying banks.

The main advantage that mobile payments have over banks is their agility in identifying potential market opportunities. Banks all over the world have already begun to recognize and adapt to the rapid pace at which new technologies are beginning to transform finance. Pakistani banks aren't far behind. I believe there is still much work to be done. In terms of understanding what can be done at the macro level, Pakistan has certainly managed to keep up with the international financial space. While there is a lot of opportunity in the market, implementation leaves a lot of room for improvement. Banks and financial institutions in Pakistan require highly flexible, intelligent system frameworks that reduce costs while improving the customer experience regardless of location.

The level of smartphone consumption in the country is one of the most important indicators of opportunity. More than half of the population is considered young, and the other half is also highly connected, with at least one smartphone per person. Existing systems, such as Easypaisa and digital payments,

are not new and are widely used. The opportunity lies in how this widely available channel is used, and how that channel can then feed back into providing real-time, accurate insights to banks and financial institutions. When these insights are applied to a broader digitization strategy, banks and institutions can improve how customers transfer money in a connected payments ecosystem. When these insights are applied to a broader digitization strategy, banks and institutions can improve how customers transact in a connected payments ecosystem.

When small conveniences are digitized, the digital banking trend grows, paving the way for innovations such as instant credit financing or flexibly transportable microfinance platforms. As the momentum grows and banks and financial institutions see the impact, existing technologies can be implemented, and those that don't can be built specifically for the market. Roshan Digital account is Pakistan's only Roshan Digital offering that is portable, the only product company that has utilized an internationally renowned, digital-only platform capable of integrating across all distribution channels and opening new

accounts in under 7 minutes, providing customers with a seamless, interesting manner to bank overseas End-to-end straight-through processes, instant credit, instant cards, and fully automated processing are all available on our platform. It ensured that customers could access digital account management services, ensuring that their entire Roshan Digital experience was smooth, simple, and reliable.

And by concluding my writing, I must say that I feel really positive of this initiative. SBP and the Pakistani government supervise a regulatory environment that promotes customer empowerment and effective innovation. National and international banks with a presence in Pakistan are well-positioned and capable of identifying potential points of innovation across value chains. The primary challenge is establishing in financial leaders a change mindset that is excited by the potential for transformation across the landscape and motivated to align their business objectives with the value that technology can provide. And it is good to see The Pakistani financial industry in advancing ahead and transforming the digital landscape by bringing international experiences to the home market.

## Blasphemous remarks; Boycott India

The uproar over BJP leaders' blasphemous remarks has put the Narendra Modi regime in a catch-22 situation with its cliché of Hindu supremacy on one side while on the other is the huge economic cost of its straining ties with the Gulf nations. A spokesperson of Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Nupur Sharma made some controversial remarks in a televised debate last month. Naveen Jindal, who was media head of the party's Delhi unit, had also posted a provocative tweet on the issue.

The issue had upset the Muslim world bringing a diplomatic nightmare for India. The Muslim nations including Pakistan, UAE, Oman, Indonesia, Iraq, the Maldives, Jordan, Libya and Bahrain have condemned the remarks. The respective Foreign Offices also summoned the Indian envoys to register their protest besides issuing strongly worded statements. In order to avert a huge dent to its economy, the BJP government is trying to subside the issue but the storm is not yet over as the reactions from across the globe is getting momentum.

Pakistan summoned the Indian diplomat and handed over a strong demarche calling the remarks totally unacceptable which had not only deeply hurt the sentiments of the people of Pakistan but of Muslims across the world. Pakistan also deplored the belated and perfunctory disciplinary actions taken by the BJP government against the said officials, which cannot assuage the pain caused to the Muslims. Allowing such Islamophobic remarks to continue without punishment, constitutes a grave danger to the protection of human rights and may lead to further prejudice and marginalisation, which will create a cycle of violence and hate, Qatar's ministry of foreign affairs said.

Saudi Arabia also used some strong words in its statement. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed its condemnation and denunciation of the statements made by the spokeswoman of the BJP. The Organization of the Islamic Cooperation also issued a strongly worded statement which did not go well with India. In response, the spokesperson of the Indian foreign affairs ministry called the OIC's statement as narrow-minded and unwarranted, adding that the comments denigrating the prophet were made by certain individuals. India receives remittances of \$87 billion per year and half of it of it comes from five Islamic countries: UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, and Oman.

However, the Indian media is still busy appeasing the BJP government. Instead of showing remorse on its own biases or condemning the blasphemous remarks, they are out to criticize the Muslim nations for their unified reaction. The Indian social media is also running a trend of boycotting Qatar Airways, in retaliation to the country's strong reaction over the issue. Those who are trending Boycott Qatar Airways, do they know that the per capita GDP of Qatar is more than 25 times India's per capita GDP? Indian labor force working in Qatar sends \$5Billion home every year, more than double the price of Air India. The sane voices are also questioning the professional conduct of the Indian media as the news anchor of the said TV show never tried to interrupt or condemn Nupur Sharma as she made the objectionable remarks. The Indian media is also blaming the Pakistani social media for highlighting the issue saying that most of the anti-Nupur traffic was coming from Pakistan.



## Armed conflicts & Environment

Ashok Swain

The International Law Commission (ILC) is on the verge of finalising the principles on the "protection of the environment in relation to armed conflicts," on which it has been working since 2013. The Ukraine conflict has brought international concerns about the devastating environmental impacts of war. Though the discussion on the costs of wars has been primarily over the number of death and displacement of human beings and, to some extent, the economic losses, there is no doubt that the armed conflicts cause severe damage to land, air, water, forest, and wildlife in the country. Ukraine might have put the global spotlight on environmental harm, but the war damaging the environment is not limited to that place only.

The age-old codes of martial conduct worldwide were aimed at keeping the war limited and controlled. However, armed conflicts in the recent decades have become universally gripping, affecting the civilian populations and the natural resource supply of the warring countries and groups. Particularly, since World War II, it has become almost impossible to ignore modern war machinery's large-scale environmentally destructive acts. Wars consume a vast amount of fuel and contribute to massive carbon emissions. The use of explosives produces significant quantities of debris, causing severe air and soil pollution. Attacks on industrial complexes or oil facilities are hazardous to air and water quality. The leftover weapons of the war, like landmines, limit the use of agricultural land and pollute soil and water resources.

The conflict in Yemen has, directly and indirectly, destroyed many farming infrastructures, leading to a massive decline in the

country's food production. The farmers in Lao are still suffering from the land contamination of the US bombings of 2 million tons of explosives in the 1960s and 1970s.

Large expanses of fragile land, marine resources, and air space are being bombed or polluted to prepare the armed forces for the war. Military training areas cover 5-6% of the global land surface. Land used for war games invariably suffers severe degradation, and war maneuvers destroy natural vegetation and disturb the wildlife habitat. Bombing ranges transform the land into wasteland. Flying fighter jets at low levels is detrimental to human health and ecology. War preparations can also make large tracts of land dangerous for human use by littering them with unexploded bombs. The US Department of Defence is one of the world's major greenhouse gas emitters. Military toxins contaminate water, deplete fish resources, pollute the air, and destroy agricultural productivity. Among all the military preparedness acts, the adverse effects of nuclear weapon production and testing are the most severe and enduring.

While the direct effects of military toxins on the environment are limited and localised in nature, radiation from nuclear waste is a much more significant and severe problem. Though nearly eight decades have passed, scientists have yet to find a permanent and safe way to dispose of radioactive waste. War leads to massive deforestation. Japan lost most of its forests in World War II. The Indochina conflict of the 1960s and 70s also destroyed large forest areas. Nearly 2 million hectares of Vietnamese forest were destroyed due to bombing and herbicide spraying.

Armed conflict in Nicaragua and El Salvador in the 1970s and 1980s directly resulted in considerable forest destruction. Recently the wars in Afghanistan and Syria have led to deforestation. The ongoing war in Ukraine has reportedly destroyed large areas of forests

as well. Loss of tree cover has a long-term adverse effect on biodiversity and ecosystems.

Wars between countries and even internal civil wars are also significant contributors to global environmental damage. The violence and population displacement during civil wars make it almost impossible to develop sustainable agriculture, leading to massive deforestation and the destruction of wildlife. Conflict-induced human displacement can have significant environmental footprints. The mass movement of people leads to widespread loss of green cover, soil erosion, and hunting of wild animals. The number of wars and civil wars is increasing, becoming more deadly. Countries are also spending more resources on their militaries as the global military expenditure crossed the \$2 trillion mark in 2021. After a gap of almost four decades, the nuclear weapon race is starting again in Europe. There is no doubt that armed conflicts, directly and indirectly, contribute to increased global environmental footprints.

Last week, on June 2-3, 2022, an important international environmental meeting was held in Stockholm to commemorate the 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment and celebrate 50 years of global environmental action. Despite increasing understanding about its environmental footprints in recent decades, armed conflict continues to inflict severe environmental degradation and destroy the ecosystem. While there are some attempts, like by the ILC and the Red Cross, to strengthen and implement the laws protecting the environment concerning armed conflicts, as the environmental damages in the ongoing wars show, the international community still has a long way to go.

The writer is a Professor of Peace and Conflict Research, at Uppsala University, Sweden. Courtesy Gulf News

## Free trade & Food crisis

Jeongyeol Kim, Zainal Arifin Fuat & Morgan Ody

From June 13 to 15, the World Trade Organization (WTO) will hold its 12th Ministerial Conference. The global food crisis will take centre stage in discussions. Once again, G7 political leaders and wealthy nations are cheering for more free trade as a solution to ensure global food security. Small-scale food producers and global peasant movements, however, are warning that it is the wrong recipe. Decades of rampant globalisation and expansion of free trade have decimated local economies, increased rural poverty, generated agrarian conflicts, spurred migration, and worsened hunger and inequality. It is time for a radical shift towards guaranteeing food sovereignty everywhere. Climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the war against Ukraine have created massive disruptions in international agricultural markets and global food systems.

Real solutions were always on the horizon. For nearly a quarter of a century, La Via Campesina, the global peasant movement, has been advocating that national public policies built on the principles of food sovereignty can build stable, re-localised food systems. Such local efforts can weather the storm of massive disruptions that we see today. Instead of globalising food trade through WTO and other free trade agreements, countries should have the right to protect and promote local food production, regulate agricultural markets, and develop public stockpiling.

Yet, since its 2013 Ministerial Conference in Bali, the WTO has been dragging its feet on finding a permanent solution to public stockholding for food security purposes. A proposal tabled by the G-33 grouping of WTO has been in deep freeze since 2013, despite a majority of the developing nations supporting it.

Middle and low-income countries have also been asking for a special safeguard mechanism (SSM) to prevent food dumping, allowing them to raise import tariffs when faced with an import surge. Yet, no solu-

tion seems to be in sight, even as the Agreement on Agriculture by the WTO allows a total of 39 countries (17 developed and just 22 developing countries) to use a special safeguard.

The prevalence of hunger in Latin America and the Caribbean now stands at 9.1 percent, the highest it has been in the last 15 years. The social unrest we witness in Sri Lanka, Lebanon, Egypt and elsewhere demands urgent attention from the global society. All existing WTO rules that prevent countries from developing public food stockholding systems and supporting their local farmers should be immediately suspended. The speculation on agricultural commodities should be forbidden, and exporting-importing countries should conduct transparent negotiations to ensure accessible prices for import-dependent countries. The use of agricultural products to produce agrofuels should be prohibited. The public debt of the most vulnerable countries should be abolished.

In the longer term, stabilising the global food system requires a significant change in food governance and politics. Small-scale food producers should be at the heart of global food governance, not agribusiness corporations. Rights such as those stated in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants should be implemented as a legally binding instrument. Peasant agroecology and agrarian reform must become the essential means of sustainable food production while coping with environmental challenges.

WTO has lost the trust of the people, and all governments must keep agricultural matters off free trade agreements. The time has come to build an alternative international framework for trade and agricultural policies based on the principles of food sovereignty. Several governments, faced with a significant social crisis at home, might be willing to take these radical steps towards food sovereignty. They will face massive resistance from wealthy nations and exporting powers unwilling to lose the golden goose. Given the seriousness of the situation, significant battles are to be witnessed in this WTO ministerial meeting. We remain alert.

The writers are members of the International Coordination Committee of La Via Campesina. Courtesy Al Jazeera



# Ukrainian forces could pull back from embattled eastern city

Norway donates 22 howitzers to Ukraine

BAKHMUT: Ukrainian forces battling Russian troops in a key eastern city appeared on the cusp of retreat Wednesday, though the regional governor insisted they are still fighting “for every centimeter” of the city.

The urban battle for Sievierodonetsk testified to the painstaking, inch-by-inch advance by Russian forces as they close in on control of the entire Luhansk region, one of two that make up the industrial heartland known as the Donbas.

After a bungled attempt to overrun Kyiv in the early days of the war, Russia shifted its focus to the region of coal mines and factories. The Donbas has been partly controlled by Russia-backed separatists since 2014, making supply lines shorter and allowing Moscow to tap those separatist forces in its offensive there.

But Russia also faces Ukraine’s most battle-hardened troops, who have been fighting the separatists for eight years there.

The result is a slow slog in which both sides exchange artillery barrages that seemingly inflict heavy losses,

but neither appears to have the clear momentum.

The grinding war has left thousands dead and driven millions from their homes — and its consequences are felt in many countries where it is driving up the price of food since critical shipments of Ukrainian grain are trapped inside the country.

After meeting with Russia’s foreign minister Wednesday, Turkey’s top diplomat said he thought a plan to create a secure shipping corridor to resume exports of that grain was “feasible.”

Luhansk Gov. Serhiy Haidai acknowledged the difficulties in Sievierodonetsk on Wednesday, telling The Associated Press “maybe we will have to retreat, but right now battles are ongoing in the city.”

Earlier, on the Telegram messaging app, he said Ukrainian forces were fighting “for every centimeter of the city.”

He indicated they could pull back to positions that are easier to defend. The city across the river, Lysychansk, sits on higher ground.

Sieverodonetsk, which had a prewar population of 100,000, became the administrative capital of the region after the city of Luhansk was taken by separatists in 2014.

Both it and Lysychansk are wedged between Russian forces to the east, north and south — in the small portion of the Luhansk region that Russia has not yet claimed control of. Moscow also appears to hold about half of Donetsk region that rounds out the Donbas.

West of those cities, medics worked in the Ukrainian-held town of Bakhmut to care for the wounded, as the fighting threatened to encroach.

“It seems to be getting a bit worse. The number of patients that we’re seeing is getting to be more and more, and it seems that the fighting is getting closer to this area,” said Danial Rebar, a paramedic from Detroit and a former U.S. serviceman who has been volunteering in Ukraine for the past seven weeks as a combat medic.

Meanwhile, to the north, Russian shelling of the northern Kharkiv region killed five people and wounded 12 more over the past 24 hours, regional gover-

nor Oleh Syniehubov said Wednesday.

The Russian military said Wednesday that Moscow used “air-launched, high-precision missiles” to hit an armor repair plant near Kharkiv. There was no confirmation from Ukrainian officials of such a plant being hit.

Before Russia’s invasion, Ukrainian officials said Russia controlled some 7% of the country, including the Crimean Peninsula, which Russia annexed in 2014, and areas held by the separatists in Donetsk and Luhansk. Last week, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Russian forces held 20% of the country.

While Russia has superior firepower, the Ukrainian defenders are entrenched and have shown the ability to counterattack.

“The absolutely heroic defense of the Donbas continues,” Zelenskyy said late Tuesday in his nightly video address.

Speaking earlier to a Financial Times conference, Zelenskyy insisted on Ukraine’s need to defeat Russia on the battlefield but also said he is still open to peace talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

## Akina-Andkhoy railway line construction resumes in Afghanistan



Spokesman Report

AKINA: In accordance with the agreement signed earlier between the Turkmenemirryollary Agency and the Afghan Railway Organization, engineers and railroad specialists from Turkmenistan with all necessary machinery and equipment arrived at the town of Akina to continue the construction of the Akina-Andkhoy railway line on June 5, 2022.

In the town of Akina, railway workers from Turkmenistan were received by the heads of the Railways Organization and other departments of the Balkh province of Afghanistan. As is known, the construction of this railway line with a length of 30 km began on July 25, 2019.

However, for various reasons, including restrictions due to the spread of the pandemic, construction works were stopped when 29 kilometers and 200 meters of railway were built. It is assumed that the remaining 800 meters of the railway track will be laid within one month.

## Hundreds die as Somalia faces famine

MOGADISHU: No mother should have to lose her child. Owliyo Hassan Salaad has watched four die this year. A drought in the Horn of Africa has taken them, one by one.

Now she cradles her frail and squalling 3-year-old, Ali Osman, whom she carried on a 90-kilometer (55-mile) walk from her village to Somalia’s capital, desperate not to lose him too. Sitting on the floor of a malnutrition treatment center filled with anxious mothers, she can barely speak about the small bodies buried back home in soil too dry for planting.

Deaths have begun in the region’s most parched drought in four decades. Previously unreported data shared with The Associated Press show at least 448 deaths this year at malnutrition treatment centers in Somalia alone. Authorities in Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya are now shifting to the grim task of trying to prevent famine.

Many more people are dying beyond the notice of authorities, like Salaad’s four children, all younger than 10. Some die in remote pastoral communities. Some die on treks in search of help. Some die even after reaching displacement camps, malnourished beyond aid.

Salaad left behind another four children with her husband. They were too weak to make the journey to Mogadishu, she said.

Drought comes and goes in the Horn of Africa, but this is one like no other. Humanitarian assistance has been sapped by global crises like the COVID-19 pandemic and now Russia’s war in Ukraine. Prices for staples like wheat and cooking oil are rising quickly, in some places by more than 100%. Millions of the livestock that provide families with milk, meat and wealth have died. Even the therapeutic food to treat hungry people like Salaad’s son is becoming more expensive and, in some places, might run out. And for the first time, a fifth straight rainy season might fail. An “explosion of child deaths” is coming to the Horn of Africa if the world focuses only on the war in Ukraine and doesn’t act now, UNICEF said Tuesday.

## Biden to meet with allies in Germany, Spain

WASHINGTON: President Joe Biden will meet with allies in Germany and Spain in late June as he tries to hold together the fragile coalition opposing Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.



The White House announced Wednesday that Biden will travel to southern Germany on June 25 to attend a Group of Seven summit of leaders of the world’s major industrialized nations. After the meeting in the Bavarian Alps, the president will go to Madrid on June 28 to participate in a gathering of NATO member countries.

The twin summits are being held around the four-month anniversary of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, and as the United States and its allies are being urged to send longer-range and more advanced weaponry to Ukraine as Moscow looks to consolidate its gains in the country’s east.

Biden’s efforts to impose and sustain crippling sanctions on Russia are also facing renewed threat amid rising global inflation and supply shocks to the energy and food markets. The president also wants to secure admission to the NATO alliance for Sweden and Finland, but first must help overcome opposition from NATO member Turkey.

The G-7 members are the United States, Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy and Japan. Leaders will discuss their support for Ukraine, climate change, global health security, and the food and energy crisis worsened by Russia’s aggression toward Ukraine, White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said in a statement.

NATO leaders are set to endorse plans to guide the alliance’s transformation over the next decade, including strengthening deterrence and defense, addressing transnational threats such as cyber and climate, and deepening partnerships with democratic partners in Europe and Asia, she said.

# Head of MFA of Turkmenistan holds bilateral meetings

Spokesman Report

ASHGABAT: On June 7, as part of the participation of the delegation of Turkmenistan in the 3rd meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Central Asian countries and the People’s Republic of China, negotiations were held between the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan Rashid Meredov and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of China Wang Yi. During the conversation, a wide range of issues of bilateral cooperation was discussed, with an emphasis on the implementation of agreements previously reached at the highest state level.

The heads of the foreign ministries of the two countries also touched upon regional and international issues of mutual interest. The interlocutors confirmed the mutual desire to continue cooperation between Turkmenistan and China in major international organizations.

During the discussion of the bilateral trade-economic agenda, special attention



was paid to mutually beneficial cooperation in the gas, transport and communications sectors.

The leaders of Turkmen and Chinese diplomacy paid special attention to the issues of ensuring security and stability on a regional and continental scale. Also, the topic of negotiations was further cooperation in the field of healthcare, education and culture.

On the same day, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan Rashid Meredov met with the Minis-

ter of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan Mukhtar Tleuberdi. During the conversation, the parties discussed issues of regional policy, exchanged views on topical international issues. The most important topic of the talks was the Caspian problem. In particular, issues related to the preparations for the 6th meeting of the Heads of the Caspian states in 2022 were discussed.

The heads of the foreign ministries of Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan highly appreciated the prospects

for using the potential of the two countries in building up bilateral trade and economic cooperation, as well as in the interests of developing regional and international partnerships.

In this context, special attention was paid to the need to maximize the use of modern land and sea transport infrastructure available in Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan. The importance of continuing joint work in such areas as energy, agriculture, and industrial cooperation was also noted.

# Indian police arrest dozens of youth in IIOJK

SRINAGAR/JAMMU: In Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir, Indian police have arrested dozens of youth during house raids in different areas of the territory.

According to Kashmir Media Service, Indian police during raids across occupied Jammu and Kashmir detained several youth for their affiliation with the ongoing struggle for right to self-determination in the occupied territory.

Police have rounded up a number of individuals and initiated legal action against them as they have been found to be involved in the ongoing struggle, the officials claimed. Police have raided the residences and work places of such people and investigations with regard to the level of their involvement

are underway, they said.

Raids have been carried out at several places in Srinagar, Baramulla, Islamabad, Kulgam, Jammu, Ramban, Udhampur and Kathua districts, the officials said. As on today (Wednesday), dozens of suspected have been picked up across the territory, they added.

Pertinently, the BJP-led Hindutva Indian government’s Home Minister Amit Shah, National Security Advisor Ajit Doval, and heads of Indian Army and notorious intelligence agency RAW in meetings on June 2 and June 3 directed the IIOJK authorities to intensify crackdown particularly in Kashmir Valley and Muslim dominated area of Jammu region against the people affiliated with the freedom

movement.

On the other hand, Indian Opposition party Congress says the security scenario in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir has deteriorated since the abrogation of Article 370 by the Bharatiya Janata Party government.

The Congress said the recent spate of targeted attacks have exposed the BJP’s tall claim of normalcy in the occupied territory.

“Why minorities and others, including Kashmiri Pandits, became more vulnerable and unsafe in Kashmir under the BJP regime, especially post August 5, 2019?” Congress’s chief spokesperson in IIOJK Ravinder Sharma asked.

# Turkey struggles to push Russia, Ukraine into grain deal

ANKARA: Russia and Turkey on Wednesday voiced support for the creation of a safe maritime corridor in the Black Sea so Ukraine can export grain to global markets amid an escalating world food crisis. A Turkish minister said the move should also be accompanied by the easing of Western sanctions against Russia for its invasion of Ukraine.

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu hosted his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov in Ankara for discussions focused on a U.N. proposal to free Ukraine’s Black Sea ports and allow some 22 million tons of grain sitting in silos to be shipped out.

Ukraine is one of the world’s largest exporters of wheat, corn and sunflower oil, but the war and a Russian blockade of its ports have halted much of that

flow, endangering food supplies to many developing countries. Many of those ports are now also heavily mined.

Ukraine’s government was not represented at the Ankara meeting but has expressed concerns that removing mines from its ports to facilitate grain exports could allow Russia to attack its southern coast.

Lavrov promised that Russia would not “abuse” its naval advantage if Ukraine’s ports were demined and would “take all necessary steps to ensure that the ships can leave there freely.”

Other Russia and Turkey would also benefit from the export plan. The same corridor would also allow Russia to export food and fertilizer. Turkey would facilitate and protect the transport of the grain in the Black Sea, Turkish officials say.

“As Turkey, we find this plan

reasonable and see it as a feasible one,” Cavusoglu told a joint news conference with Lavrov.

The scheme, however, would require negotiation between Moscow and Kyiv, he added.

The Turkish minister also backed easing Western sanctions against Russia for its invasion of Ukraine if it participates in the U.N. plan, saying that seemed “quite legitimate.”

“If the whole world is in need of the products to be exported by Ukraine and the Russian Federation, then a method needs to be established,” he said, adding that he hoped “technical preparations” could be made “as soon as possible.”

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan discussed the creation of a safe sea corridor last week, the Ukrainian Foreign

Ministry said Tuesday. It also called for security guarantees, such as a supply of weapons to defend against maritime threats and the participation of third-country naval forces.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Tuesday the Russian military would need to check commercial ships taking the grain to make sure they don’t carry weapons. He added that after they are loaded with grain, Russia would help escort the ships to international waters. Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar said Tuesday that technical details were still being worked out.

“Our efforts are continuing concerning the technical planning on such issues as how it will be done, how the mines will be cleared, who will do it, how the corridor will be established and who will escort (ships),” Akar said.



Addressing the possibility of resumed peace talks between Kyiv and Moscow, Cavusoglu said Turkey was “much more optimistic.”

Turkey hosted previous talks between Russian and Ukrainian officials in March but since then little progress has been made.

“We see an optimistic atmos-

phere in terms of going back to the negotiation table,” Cavusoglu said, citing recent comments by Zelenskyy. He reiterated Ankara’s offer to oversee a meeting between Zelenskyy and Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Lavrov said Russia was willing to hold further talks but accused Zelenskyy of “changing his posi-

tion all the time” over conditions for a leaders’ summit.

Lavrov arrived in Turkey days after NATO members Bulgaria, North Macedonia and Montenegro reportedly refused to allow his plane to fly through their airspace to reach Serbia. Lavrov’s plane was able to fly directly to Turkey over the Black Sea.

Lavrov’s discussions in the Turkish capital also focused on Turkey’s plans to launch a new cross-border offensive in northern Syria against Syrian Kurdish militia that Ankara considers to be a security threat. Turkey needs Moscow’s approval to continue its presence in northern Syria, despite the two supporting opposite sides in Syria’s civil war. In 2020, 37 Turkish soldiers were killed in Russia-backed airstrikes against rebels in Syria’s last rebel-held Idlib province.



**Bull & Bears**  
PSX 100-Share  
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
41,553.16	41,568.41
Day's High	Day's Low:
41,620.35	41,391.53
Index Value	Change
3,653,556,324	-15.25
Percentage	Time
-0.04%	8 Jun, 2022 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
7,572.92	-26.01
Percentage	Time
-0.33%	8 Jun, 3:52 pm GMT+1

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
33,058.70	-121.44
Percentage	Time
-0.37%	8 Jun, 10:52 am GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
28,234.29	+290.34
Percentage	Time
+1.04%	8 Jun, 3:15 pm GMT+9

**Open Market Forex Rates**

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	145.58	146.83
Bahrain Dinar	536	540.5
Canadian Dollar	160.89	162.24
China Yuan	29.03	29.28
Danish Krone	26	26.35
Euro	214.5	216.5
Hong Kong Dollar	26.55	26.9
Indian Rupee	2.6	2.68
Japanese Yen	1.55	1.6
Kuwaiti Dinar	655.56	660.56
Malaysian Ringgit	45.94	46.39
NewZealand \$	130.71	131.91
Norwegians Krone	21.31	21.61
Omani Riyal	525.13	529.63
Qatari Riyal	55.47	55.97
Saudi Riyal	53.4	54.1
Singapore Dollar	146.89	148.19
Swedish Korona	20.61	20.91
Swiss Franc	207.48	209.23
Thai Bhat	5.86	5.96
U.A.E Dirham	54.7	55.4
UK Pound Sterling	252	254.5
US Dollar	202.1	204.1

**Supporting Fintech Ecosystem**

**Karandaaz joins hands with Pakistan Fintech Network**



Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Karandaaz Pakistan and Pakistan Fintech Network (PFN) has signed an agreement in Islamabad to undertake joint efforts to support fintech ecosystem of Pakistan. Under this agreement, Karandaaz has committed a grant to PFN for operationalizing and running a fintech development program that shall bolster a more conducive environment for fintech industry. PFN is a network of more than 52 members and this partnership will help to engage more players from the fintech ecosystem, strengthen PFN's capacity as an information and ideas hub, and enable further collaborations between regulators, corporations, consumers, technology vendors, entrepreneurs, academia, donors and investors. Karandaaz Pakistan is a not-for-profit special purpose vehicle set up under Section 42 in August 2014.

Karandaaz is the implementation partner of the Enterprise and Asset Growth Programme (EAGR) and Sustainable Energy and Economic Development (SEED) programme of UK's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO). SEED is grant funded by FCDO whereas EAGR is co-funded by FCDO and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation on grant basis. Karandaaz promotes access to finance for micro, small and medium-sized businesses through a double bottom line investment platform and financial inclusion for individuals by employing technology enabled solutions.

According to an estimate, the digital finance potential of Pakistan stands at about \$36 Billion by 2025, with a potential to provide a 7% boost to GDP, create 4 million new jobs, and result in \$263 billion new deposits.

# FBR has strategic role in providing business-friendly environment: Asim

Chairman FBR says STZA One Window Portal will facilitate local and foreign investors

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Chairman FBR Asim Ahmad said that being the apex revenue collection body of the government, FBR has a strategic role in providing a business-friendly environment.

He addressed the audience on the occasion of the signing ceremony held here on Wednesday, senior representatives from both organizations along with leading professionals from the tech industry, business community, academia, government, and think-tanks were present.

Javaid Iqbal, Chief Commercial Officer, Ijlal Khattak, Member GR and Regulatory Affairs and Abdul Rahim Ahmad, CIO. From STZs and Systems Limited, Adeel Tariq, Systems limited were also present at the signing ceremony and moderated the session and highlighted the strategic importance of this project.

To support ease of doing business and to facilitate licensed domestic and global technology companies in Special Technology Zones (STZs), Systems Limited and Special Technology Zones Authority (STZA) have signed a contract for the development and implementation of the One Window Portal System.

Chairman FBR Asim said "The STZA One



Window Portal will facilitate local and foreign investors. It will also be integrated on a real-time basis with FBR and Customs systems. We are fully committed to provide all requisite support to STZA in this regard. A working group is constituted and work with PRAL and

PSW is already in progress".

While talking at the event, Asif Peer, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) at Systems Limited gave an overview of the scope of work and said that Systems Limited is committed to bring technology-driven innovative solutions to the

public sector in Pakistan.

Chairman STZA Amer Hashmi gave a strategic overview of the global innovation and technology ecosystem. He went on to explain how technology interventions can standardize and optimize the investor journey, including fast-tracking investor facilitation in areas like regulatory approvals and troubleshooting. "STZA is building a world-class technology ecosystem. Special Technology Zones will provide an enabling business environment for local and foreign firms. The One-Window facility will be provided to all Zone Enterprises and Zone Developers" he said.

STZA's One Window Portal will be a digital system to facilitate STZA licensed companies. This facility will enable companies to be digitally on boarded and will connect them with various government and regulatory agencies. This will also help promote transparency, improve ease of doing business and facilitate Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Pakistan. The One-Window Portal is a key component of the STZA's overall vision of developing a scientific and technological ecosystem through development of zones to accelerate technology development in the country.

## Pak-Afghan Ties

ISLAMABAD: Officials of Afghanistan Government posing for a group photo with Additional Secretary Ministry of Commerce, Syed Hamid Ali on the occasion of a closing ceremony of short term training course on international trade dynamics here on Wednesday.



Photo: Spokesman

## WB approves \$258m for NHSP in Pakistan

World Bank supports primary healthcare, Universal Coverage to Strengthen Human Capital in Pakistan

Spokesman Report

WASHINGTON: The World Bank's Board of Executive Directors, Wednesday, approved \$258 million for the National Health Support Program (NHSP) to strengthen primary health care systems and to accelerate national efforts towards universal health coverage in Pakistan.

The program complements ongoing investments in human capital and builds on health reforms that aim to improve quality and equitable access to healthcare services, especially in communities lagging behind national and regional-level health outcomes.

"Pakistan continues to make strides in health reforms toward ensuring access to primary healthcare services, especially for children and women during

pregnancy and childbirth," said Najy Benhassine, World Bank Country Director for Pakistan. "By strengthening provincial health systems, this program is foundational to building the country's human capital and improving health and nutrition outcomes for its citizens."

The program will focus on healthcare reforms across three main areas: Healthcare coverage and quality of essential services to ensure adequate staffing, supplies and medicines, and enhance patient referral systems to expedite emergency and higher-level care.

Governance and accountability to strengthen oversight and management of primary healthcare services through real-time

monitoring of available supplies and essential medicines. This includes a central information platform for provincial authorities to assess gaps in service delivery across public and private healthcare facilities.

Healthcare financing to improve the management of primary health-care centers for better expenditure tracking and budget forecasting to sustain quality healthcare services and delivery.

"NHSP creates a national forum for the federal and provincial governments to exchange lessons and collaborate on achieving sustainable health financing and high quality and coverage of essential services," said Hnin

Hnin Pyne, Task Team Leader for the Program. "It also helps strengthen engagement between public and private facilities and better coordination among development partners on future investments in health."

The program will benefit all communities through improvements to provincial primary health care systems, particularly in approximately 20 districts that suffer from having the least access to health and nutrition services.

The NHSP is co-financed by the International Development Association (\$258 million) and two grants (\$82 million) from the Global Financing Facility for Women, Children and Adolescents (GFF), including a \$40 million grant for protecting essential health services amid multiple global crises.

## DAO PropTech tends to enable fractional ownership in Pakistan

Staff Reporter

KARACHI: Reeling from the impacts of a pandemic, we are on the cusp of another global recession. Stock markets are seeing an unprecedented bear run, the cryptocurrency market has crashed, interest rates are at an 11-year high and the rupee is on a downward trajectory in value. This economic uncertainty influences more on developing countries than the developed world.

While expressing his point of view, Chief Vision Officer, DAO PropTech, Jawad Nayyar, said, "DAO PropTech's vision is to empower the masses to start their journey towards real estate ownership. We believe in creating an ecosystem that is built not only for the select few, but for everyone."

Appreciating SECP's

concept note on asset fractionalization, he said, "By allowing for fractional ownership, you not only eliminate the high cost of entry into the market and increase liquidity in an otherwise illiquid market, but you also enable an industry that further feeds numerous other industries, boosting the economy and eventually finding the way out of economic uncertainty."

DAO PropTech is one such platform hoping to enable fractional ownership in Pakistan and make real estate accessible to the masses. It provides the opportunities of fractional ownership where you can purchase fractions of real estate instead of entire units, that eases the financial barrier to entry and allow investors to diversify their portfolios without shelling out a fortune.

## Stabilizing rupee difficult unless foreign loan arrives: Zahid

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain on Wednesday said those who spread rumours of financial emergency have caused severe damage to the economy and action should be taken against them.

Despite the government's denial of the imposition of a financial emergency, the situation is not returning to normal, which is worrying, he said.

Mian Zahid Hussain said



that the delay in the agreement with the IMF has started draining the rupee as investors are not ready to believe

statements and they want something concrete.

Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that the currency market is in turmoil due to which the falling dollar has started stepping up again and the rupee has started depreciating which is disturbing.

## What is Forex? The answer might surprise you

Spokesman Report

Confusion is education's obvious counterpart. Especially when talking about a very complex sphere—such as Forex, where many questions seem to arise from the general public. So let's start with the most pressing one.

What is Forex?

Forex is a portmanteau of foreign currency and exchange. Foreign exchange is the process of changing one currency into another. The Foreign Exchange market is decentralized by nature. It lives completely online and uses a great variety of different countries, currencies, and commodities.

The Forex sphere—who is it composed of?

The main actors of the Forex industry are far and foremost the broker itself, who provide the trading services, and its clients, who use them and are regular people. Also, Forex services rely on the essential relationship with liquidity providers. They function as

mediators who are highly required to give traders access to the Forex market, offering the most accurate value estimation for the traded currencies.

There are global and local Forex brokers—the bigger the reach and regulatory scope, the bigger the Forex broker.

What is it with the license issue?

Global Forex brokers operate in a multitude of countries. They are often allowed to operate globally through multiple international documents. As international business companies, they are usually equipped with the required set of incorporation documents, allowing to offer global financial services to clients worldwide.

An essential advantage of working as a globally recognised Forex broker is the trading conditions they wish to offer and secure for their clients. Global Forex brokers have a wider variety of instruments on offer with fair and competitive trading and investing conditions that otherwise would simply lack on the Foreign Exchange market. Therefore, opportunities arise that wouldn't be attainable under

other circumstances.

As discussed above, decentralisation for the Forex market is vital. It operates—without exception—online and utilises a wide variety of different regions and even continents, national currencies, and commodities. Even local brokers must use some features and advantages of international partners, such as payment systems and other services. So, it sounds like it can't be limited to one particular country entirely.

Differences between Forex and binary options

The confusion between two particular financial spheres still appears to be running rampant: Binary options and Foreign Exchange. One cannot mention enough that clarification on this matter is in high demand. Let's take a look at some essential differences between the two.

Binary options as financial products have an expiry date (those 'fixed time frames' mentioned above)—Forex does not. But in both instances, you speculate on whether a given asset will go down or up.

Forex grants its traders the application of individual profit targets with the Stop Loss orders mentioned above. Both are unavailable for binary options. In the latter, the trader needs to win the majority of trading bets to have a successful, profitable long-term track record.

There is much confusing information messing up the understanding of what forex and binary options are. So, it is crucial to understand the difference and distinct forex brokers (such as OctaFX, FBS, InstaForex) and binary options companies. They are NOT the same.

So, Forex is not gambling?

No. Gambling is when one is always uncertain of their chances of winning. Also, unless gamblers use foul play, they always believe the odds are stacked against them. Their chances of winning are consistently lower than those of the institution they gamble with. One can't analyse or forecast the next combination of a slot machine or Blackjack card playing position.

However, Forex traders, especially the conscious ones, should

come up with various trading strategies that will shift the odds in their favour. They can use different analysis tools to detect market trends and turn them in their favour, opening a position that is bound to be profitable for them.

Thus, being fully prepared for market behaviour, taking risk management seriously and accumulating relevant knowledge, they can be sure to develop a profitable overall position after some skillful trading patterns.

Let's sum it up

Once again, Foreign Exchange is decentralised but at the same time a globally regulated and deeply established financial market. Moreover, binary options are not Forex, and Forex is not binary options, let alone any kind of gambling as some on the internet are attempting to claim. There is a craft to learn and regular profit to be made, even recurring income. But as with any legitimate endeavours to thrive on the financial market, one has to be ready to train their skills through education and learning.



## PAK vs WI, 1st ODI

## West Indies set 306-run target for Pakistan

The other two matches will be on Friday and Sunday

MULTAN: Opener Shai Hope scored a magnificent ton as West Indies set a fight 306-run target against Pakistan here on Wednesday.

Fans witnessed a mixed battle on a batting-friendly track of the Multan Cricket Stadium.

Despite suffering an early bowl in the shape of Kyle Mayers' wicket after opting to bat, the visitors kept the scoreboard running.

The pair of Hope and Shamarh Brooks was outstanding with the bat, as they safely negotiated the threat of Pakistan spin attack in the middle.

They made a 154-run stand for the second wicket, to bring their team back in the game. Their partnership was broken by Mohammad Nawaz in the 31st over of the innings.

Brook (70) was sent packing by the spinner courtesy of

a breathtaking catch from the Pakistan vice-captain Shadab Khan.

His departure didn't stop the runs flow from the visitors. Skipper Nicholas Pooran, who showed aggressive intent with the bat, hitting three maximums for 21, was removed by Haris Rauf. Hope kept the scoreboard ticking from the other end with Rovman Powell in the middle.

Hope completed his 12th ODI century for the West Indies – his first against Pakistan and seventh in Asia. He departed after scoring 127 – the highest individual score at the Multan Cricket Stadium.

Romario Shepherd (32) and Powell (25) added finishing touches to the innings as the visitors reached 305-8 in their 50 overs.

For the home side, Shadab Khan bowled an economi-



cal spell, where he registered figures of one for 37 in his 10

ets in the game.

Haris Rauf had an expensive outing with the ball as he registered figures of four for 77 in his 10 overs.

The three One-Day Internationals are part of the Super League cycle and both sides are eager to secure crucial points to advance their chances for direct qualification in the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023.

Pakistan: Babar Azam (captain), Shai Hope, Shamarh Brooks, Imam-ul-Haq, Mohammad Haris, Mohammad Rizwan, Khushdil Shah, Mohammad Nawaz, Shadab Khan, Hasan Ali, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Haris Rauf

West Indies: Nicholas Pooran (captain), Shai Hope, Shamarh Brooks, Akeal Hosein, Alzarri Joseph, Brandon King, Kyle Mayers, Rovman Powell, Jayden Seales, Romario Shepherd, Hayden Walsh Junior

## Combaxx Sports Karachi Squash Open 2022 held

Our Correspondent

KARACHI: Zubair Macha, GM, Combaxx Sports, has said that by promoting squash at grass root level can help the country produce world class players once again and regain past glory in squash, where Pakistan ruled for decades and remained unbeatable in the past.

Speaking as chief guest at the concluding ceremony of Combaxx Sports Karachi Squash Open 2022 here at PN Roshan Khan Jahangir Khan Squash Complex Karachi, Macha said that Pakistani youth are extremely talented and what is needed is to unearth this talent by providing ample opportunities and sports infrastructure to them at grass root level so that new



talent can emerge and make to the top.

He said that the event was aimed at exploring new talent. It was an open event where boys and girls could play in various age categories.

Guest of Honour OIC Lt Commander Rehmatullah was all praise for the Combaxx sports for their support to squash events and said that by holding such championships on

regular basis, Pakistan can produce legendary players like Jahangir Khan once again.

"There is no dearth in squash talent in the country, only efforts are needed to find and shine that talent by giving them ample exposure and training to become at par with international players and make to the top of squash world once again.

Media Advisor POA Mr Asif Azeem also spoke on

the occasion and lauded the holding of such an event in a successful manner. He said that the overwhelming participation of boys and girls in the championship is an ample proof of squash inclination among the youth and stressed the need for holding more such for the young lot to attract them to constructive activities.

Earlier, in the U-13 boys' category, Huzafa Shahid beat Abdul Ahad 3-1 while in the Boys Under-15 matches, Abdul Basit outplayed Zohaib 3-1 in a contest that lasted for eighteen minutes.

The Girls Under-19 category was won by Aina Sheikh who outclassed Aina Aziz in three straight sets (3-0) in just 12 minutes.

The Boys Under 19 title winners was young talented Anas beating M Ali 3-1.

## Hazlewood rises to second on T20I bowling rankings



DUBAI: Australia seamer Josh Hazlewood has been rewarded for his recent good form by rising up to second place on the latest ICC T20I bowling rankings.

Former all-rounder Shane Watson recently declared on The ICC review that Hazlewood is currently Australia's best T20 fast bowler and on recent form he may be correct.

Fresh from a consistent performance in the ICC T20 World Cup in Dubai last year and an eye-catching effort at the recent IPL, Hazlewood showed his class with a four-wicket haul for Australia during their dominant 10-wicket victory over Sri Lanka on Tuesday.

That match-winning spell helped Hazlewood overtake England spinner Adil Rashid and claim second place on the latest rankings for bowlers, with South African spinner Tabraiz Shamsi now within striking distance for the Australian right-arter. Shamsi has a total of 784 points, with Hazlewood's rating rising to 778 points and just a total of six points behind the experienced left-arter.

There was also some movement in the T20 batter rankings following Australia's victory in Colombo, with veteran skipper Aaron Finch regaining his position in the top five following his unbeaten knock of 61.

Finch looked to be back somewhere near his best during his 40-ball innings as the right-hander overtook New Zealand's Devon Conway into fifth place on the rankings. Fellow opener David Warner finished with 70 in that match and jumped eight spots to claim 45th place on the rankings in the process, but it wasn't just the Australia players that made some large gains.

Sri Lanka opener Pathum Nissanka looked good for his 36 against Australia and was rewarded as he rose to a career high rating of 689 and seventh place on the rankings for batters.

Veteran right-arter Mohammad Nabi has six wickets to his name during the first two matches of Afghanistan's ODI series against Zimbabwe and his good form has seen him rise eight spots to 11th overall on the bowler rankings.

## Mane snatches dramatic victory for Senegal

JOHANNESBURG: Liverpool star Sadio Mane scored a penalty eight minutes into added time to give Senegal a dramatic 1-0 win over heart-broken Rwanda on Tuesday in 2023 Africa Cup of Nations qualifying.

Forced to play a home match in Senegal because they do not have an international-standard stadium, Rwanda were on the verge of holding a team ranked 116 places higher in the world.

But Mane rescued the Teranga Lions on 98 minutes, with a hard, low penalty that eluded the outstretched hand of goalkeeper Olivier Kwizera.

Mane has starred in the first two matches for the title-holders, scoring four goals, including a matchday

one hat-trick against Benin.

Despite the huge rankings gap, Senegal took no chances against the Rwandan Wasps, who have qualified for the Cup of Nations only once in 13 attempts.

Coach Aliou Cisse chose seven of the team that started the final victory over Egypt in Cameroon four months ago and introduced two more off the bench.

Mozambique, who began their campaign by drawing with Rwanda, could close the gap behind Senegal to two points by winning away to bottom team Benin.

In Group H, Kings Kangwa rifled a free-kick into the net on 88 minutes to give Zambia a vital 2-1 victory over the Comoros in Lusaka. Former African cham-

pions Zambia achieved success the hard way, coming from behind in a fast-tempo, foul-riddled regional showdown.

Serbia-based Ben Nabouhane took advantage of two defensive mix-ups to fire the visitors into a 13th-minute lead at a packed National Heroes Stadium.

Constant Zambian pressure paid off in first half added-time when a corner was partly cleared and Brighton and Hove Albion midfielder Enock Mwepu netted with a low shot through a crowd of players.

Comoros wasted several early second-half chances to get in front again and the misses came back to haunt them as Kangwa snatched a deserved victory.

Zambia needed maximum points after losing away to the Ivory Coast last Friday, the same day the Comoros won at home against Lesotho.

This group is the only one among 12 where the winners and runners-up do not qualify for the 24-nation tournament in June and July 2023.

The Ivory Coast qualify automatically as hosts, but are competing to gain competitive match practice rather than relying on friendly games.

This means only one team from Zambia, the Comoros and Lesotho will also go to the finals, and the Zambians are desperate to avoid failing to qualify for four straight Cup of Nations.

## Golf's divisive LIV series prepares to tee off

LONDON: Phil Mickelson headlines a field of 48 golfers at this week's LIV Golf Invitational London – the inaugural event in a breakaway series threatening to tear the sport apart.

Other big-name players who will tee off at the Centurion Club on Thursday include Dustin Johnson, Martin Kaymer and Sergio Garcia.

There are eight events in the inaugural LIV Golf Invitational Series.

Seven are regular-season events – in North America, Europe, Middle East, and Asia – where players will compete as individuals and in teams for points and prize money.

Those competitions will be played over 54 holes in a traditional strokeplay format, instead of the usual 72, and there will be a "shotgun" start for all groups of play-

ers, who will tee off from different holes at the same time.

At the end of the seven tournaments, an individual champion will be crowned based on points accumulated throughout the season.

The eighth and final tournament will be a season-ending Team Championship matchplay event in Miami played over four days.

Since each event will be made up of a different field, teams will be decided via a draft each time.

The golfers in the LIV series will be playing for the biggest prize pots in history – putting even the rewards on offer at the four majors in the shade.

Each regular season event will have a prize purse of \$25 million, with the winner taking home \$4 million.

Following the first seven events,

an individual champion will be crowned, offering a total purse of \$30 million for the top three individuals of the season.

The season-ending team championship will have a prize fund of \$50 million. The signing of six-time major winner Mickelson is a major coup for LIV Golf chiefs.

Mickelson has not played since the publication of comments in February, in which he criticised the PGA Tour and LIV Golf's Saudi backers.

Other marquee names include major winners Johnson, Kaymer, Garcia, Charl Schwartzel, Louis Oosthuizen and Graeme McDowell.

European Ryder Cup stars Ian Poulter and Lee Westwood are also in the field at St Albans, on the outskirts of London.

The LIV series is controversially bankrolled by the Saudi sover-

eign wealth fund, the chairman of which is Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the de facto ruler of Saudi Arabia.

Amnesty International is adamant that the series is another example of the "sportswashing" of the Gulf state's human rights record.

Human rights issues were raised during a press conference on Tuesday and are likely to keep cropping up.

"I think as golfers, if we tried to cure geopolitical situations in every country in the world that we play golf in, we wouldn't play a lot of golf," said McDowell. "It's a really hard question to answer."

The LIV series is fronted by former world number one Greg Norman, now chief executive of LIV Golf Investments, who has spoken of his vision for a "free and open market" in golf.



Those opting to play have done so despite warnings of disciplinary action from the US PGA Tour.

Two-time major winner Johnson announced on Tuesday he had resigned his membership of the PGA Tour, following the example of compatriot Kevin Na.

The move means they have



SNGLP Annual Sports Gala 2022 held in Lahore. During the three-day sports gala, teams from all the regions actively participated.

## Zverev undergoes ankle surgery

BERLIN: Alexander Zverev has had surgery on torn ligaments in his right ankle following his painful exit from the French Open semi-finals.

The German world number three turned his ankle while trailing eventual champion Rafael Nadal in the last four in Paris last week, screaming in pain before retiring from the match.

The 25-year-old did not say when he will be back on court, but looks certain to miss Wimbledon which begins on June 27. The US Open starts on August 29.

Next week I'll reach a career-high ranking of number two in the world, but this morning I had to undergo surgery.

"After further examination in Germany, we received confirmation that all three of the lateral ligaments in my right ankle were torn.

"To return to competition as quickly as possible, to ensure all the ligaments heal properly, and to reclaim full stability in my ankle, surgery was the best choice."

Zverev is still waiting for a maiden Grand Slam title, despite winning five Masters trophies and the ATP Finals twice.

## Australia coach expects more from team

DOHA: Australia coach Graham Arnold warned his team they must improve to beat Peru and make it to a fifth straight World Cup after Ajdin Hrustic fired a late winner in a nerve-wracking 2-1 play-off victory over United Arab Emirates in Doha.

The Eintracht Frankfurt midfielder's deflected volley in the 84th minute decided the feverish Asian playoff on Tuesday in the Ahmad bin Ali Stadium that will host seven games in the World Cup finals in November.

More than 4,000 UAE fans made up the majority of the crowd in the 40,000 capacity arena in the Doha suburbs, where the players were blasted with air conditioning to keep the evening temperatures down.

Australia will take on a dangerous Peru side in the same stadium in a do-or-die clash on June 13 in their quest to qualify for the finals and Arnold said he expected more from his players.

## Donaire went 'completely blank' against Inoue

SAITAMA: Nonito Donaire said he was felled by "the hardest punch I've ever been hit with" as bantamweight king Naoya Inoue inflicted a sensational second-round stoppage on the Filipino veteran in Saitama.

The unbeaten Japan boxing great known as "Monster" scored his 20th KO victory in 23 fights to add the WBC title to his WBA and IBF belts in a breathless display of power punching.

In the pair's first, classic fight three years ago in the same arena, five-weight world champion Donaire fractured a bone in Inoue's face as the Japanese was pushed all the way before scoring a unanimous points victory.

But in Tuesday's rematch the 39-year-old "Filipino Flash" Donaire was demolished like never before in his storied career.

Just seconds before the end of an even first round, Inoue's lightning quick overhand right to Donaire's temple scrambled the senses of the future Hall-of-Famer and sent him sprawling.

"That was the hardest punch I've ever been hit with. I came up completely blank," Donaire said to fans live on his YouTube channel following the defeat.

## Iran beats China in Volleyball Nations League

BRASILIA: Morteza Sharifi scored a game-high 20 points as Iran defeated China 3-1 in their opening fixture of the 2022 FIVB Volleyball Nations League (VNL).

The outside spiker won 14 attacking points and four points on serve in addition to two blocks at the Nilson Nelson arena in Brazilian capital Brasilia. Captain Milad Ebadipour contributed 15 points and Amir Hossein Toukhteh 12 points for the Asian champions.

China's top scorers were Yu Yuntai and Zhang Jingyin, both of whom finished with 20 points.

Iran took the first set 25-15 before China rebounded to take the second 25-19. Iran recovered to clinch the third set 25-22 and again prevailed 25-15 in the fourth to wrap up the match in one hour and 45 minutes. China were depleted by the absence of captain Jiang Chuan due to an injury.

In Wednesday's other match in Brasilia, the United States beat Slovenia 3-0 (25-19, 25-19, 25-14).

even though officials have held talks on the issue.

Another area of uncertainty is the four major championships, which are separately governed.

They have given different answers on LIV defectors but the United States Golf Association said on Tuesday that the players could play in next week's US Open in Massachusetts.

The situation over the Ryder Cup appears clearer and Johnson has effectively made himself ineligible to play in the team competition again by quitting the PGA Tour.

McDowell, whose Ryder Cup eligibility is tied to membership of the DP World Tour, said he had thought "long and hard" about the issue, adding he hoped his involvement in the LIV series would not prevent him from taking part in future contests.