

Daily The Spokesman

RAWALPINDI



Musharraf must not be barred from coming home: Khawaja Asif
Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif says no hurdles should be placed if the former dictator Pervez Musharraf wants to come back to Pakistan. Due to General Musharraf's ill health, no hurdles should be placed for his return to Pakistan. Past events shouldn't be involved in this matter.



PTI not to give walkover to opponents in bye-polls: Qureshi
Vice Chairman PTI Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Hussain Qureshi says PTI will not offer vacate field for opponents in bye-elections. PTI will continue its fights for eradication of outdated system in the country. The government resources are being utilized in the campaign of PML-N candidate. Grand dialogue is not a bad thing but it should be done during the tenure of the government which secured fresh mandate after general elections.

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Budget 2022-23

ISLAMABAD: Minister of Finance Miftah Ismail addressing press conference along with others at Pak Secretariat in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

Post-Budget

Pakistan going through 'difficult phase: Miftah

Says no choice other than going for difficult decisions

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Miftah Ismail said the Budget 2022-23 preparations was the "most difficult" thing to do as the country was going through a very critical phase and the government is targeting "fiscal consolidation" and "provision of relief" to the masses in the next fiscal year. Finance minister said that there is no choice for the government other than going out for difficult decisions. Speaking during the post-budget presser while flanked by State Minister of Finance Aisha Ghous Pasha and Information Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb, the finance minister said that the nation and history would not forgive them if Pakistan faces a Sri Lanka-like situation.

"Next year, the country will face a budget deficit of Rs4598 billion," he

said. Speaking over subsidies, he said that the subsidies on electricity and gas cost the country around Rs1100 billion and Rs1600 billion respectively. "The previous government supplied costly LNG to consumers on subsidized rates," the finance minister said and added that such measures could lead the country towards a default if not halted immediately. He said that the government was taking necessary difficult decisions and asked media to take into account the current situation and avoid unnecessary criticism. "We are not taking this money collected through difficult decisions to our home," he said.

Miftah Ismail said that in the budget, they have proposed the collection of more money from rich segments of the society rather than overburdening the poor and middle classes. "We have introduced

fix taxes and will also add 2.5 million shopkeepers in the tax net to broaden its base," he said. "The prices of palm oil have reached a record high in international markets and the prime minister yesterday spoke to the Indonesian president for restoration of supplies in order to ease pressure on local prices," he said. Speaking on a hike in salaries of employees despite austerity measures, Miftah said that they were able to set aside the money from the amount left in the exchequer.

He further said that the government intends to privatize 14 public institutions and a plan would soon be introduced. "We could soon privatize one or two companies." It is pertinent to mention here that Finance Minister Miftah Ismail presented the budget for the financial year 2022-23 (Budget 2022-23) in the National Assembly on Friday. The federal budget 2022-23

has a total outlay of 9502 billion rupees has been announced, encompassing measures for what the government termed 'sustainable economic growth, industrial and agriculture development and relief for the poor people'.

He maintained they presented the budget when the country was going through a difficult time. He criticized the former government for not taking steps to resolve the issues. The finance minister said they had no other option but to take tough decisions and added, "the target of next year's budget is fiscal consolidation and provision of relief to the masses." During the current fiscal year, the finance minister said the government gave over Rs1100 billion subsidy to the power sector. He maintained that they have to pay Rs500bn for the losses incurred by the power companies.

Fazl, Shujaat discuss political situation

ISLAMABAD: PDM chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman consulted with Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain over political situation in a meeting. Maulana Abdul Ghafoor was also accompanied with Fazlur Rehman during the meeting at PML-Q leader's residence. The two political heavyweights in the meeting also discussed the federal budget for Year 2022-23 presented in the National Assembly on Friday.

They decided to work jointly for the security and the development of the country and agreed to continue consultation in future. They agreed that the national government will utilize all available resources for solution of the people's problems. "Former rulers, while on their way to be removed from the power, have pushed the country into an economic crisis. The national government will guide the country out of this economic crisis," they added.

Fazlur Rehman and Chaudhry Shujaat said that the national government will utilize all resources to resolve all

issues of the masses and consultation will continue to be held in this regard. The two leaders agreed that in the current context, it is a priority to work together to bring the nation out of the economic crisis, keeping all differences at bay.

In recent reports Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q) leaders Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain and Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi decided to part ways over political differences. According to sources, widening cracks in the PML-Q appeared to become more pronounced after two of its key faces were found divided on parallel political lines.

Sources told ARY News that Punjab Assembly Speaker Pervaiz Elahi is a supporter of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan while Chaudhry Shujaat wants to support Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N). Chaudhry Shujaat wants to see his children with PML-N in future, sources added. Meanwhile, Pervaiz Elahi's son Moonis Elahi is eyeing his political future with PTI.

Nawaz directs party workers to prepare for polls

Senator Mir says economic stability to return in four month

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Senator Sajid Mir on Saturday confirmed that party supremo Nawaz Sharif has directed them to prepare for general elections. Sajid Mir said this in an interview with private news channel after he was asked if Nawaz Sharif has directed them to prepare for the elections. "Of course! Nawaz Sharif has asked us to prepare for elections," he said.

He added that they need basic reforms for elections

which are now being carried out. "Certain hurdles with regard to the election commission will also be removed within a few months," he said.

He further pointed out that the second issue faced by the party was economy and after restoring stability they will reach out to the masses for a fresh vote. "The economic stability shall return in four months and then we will announce fresh elections," he said and shared that elections could be possible held by October.

45 days

Govt will be sent packing after budget: Imran Khan

Former premier will address IHCBA on June 16

Staff Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman and former prime minister Imran Khan has said that powerful circles seem to be disturbed by the ongoing political and economic crisis and the government will be sent packing in a month and a half after the budget. During a meeting with anchor persons and senior journalists in Bani Gala, Imran Khan said that strong leadership is needed to face the current situation in the country and the strong leadership can only emerge through transparent elections.

He said that the IMF will not accept the current budget in any case, adding that at present, the IMF and other countries are not providing assistance to Pakistan. "The international organizations are also convinced of the incompetence of the present government," he said and added the IMF and other countries believe that

the people are not with this government. He said that no one should think that the long march is over. "I will visit Islamabad in the coming days, adding that we have brought a large number of people on the streets."

The former PM further main that along with the Election Commission, other important appointments are also being made and large scale transfers are also taking place in the Punjab Police. The sole purpose of key appointments and transfers is to prepare rig election. "We know the issues and are fully prepared to compete." The PTI chairman further added that it seems that the powerful circles have been disturbed by the ongoing political and economic crisis and after the budget, it seems that the government will be sent packing in a month and half. The only way out of the current political turmoil is through general elections, he added.

"Seems like 'powerful circles are also worried due

to ongoing political and economic turmoil in Pakistan," he was quoted as saying. Imran Khan predicted that the government would be sent packing in 30 or 45 days. The former prime minister reiterated that he will hit the streets again after the Supreme Court's decision. The long march date would be announced after SC's verdict. Lashing out at the 'imported government', Khan said the country is being headed toward economic destruction. "How will the poor face the sky-touching inflation in July," he asked.

Replying to a question, Imran Khan after being ousted as prime minister, had only two ways, one to seek pardon from 'powerful circles' or to seek the masses' support. "I chose the second option and contacted the masses." Earlier, former prime minister and the PTI chairman alleged that efforts are underway to ensure the success of the present rulers in the upcoming general elections.

23.98%

Weekly inflation hits all time high

ISLAMABAD: The inflation rate in the country reached an all-time high of 23.98%, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. According to the number provided by the PBS, the inflation rate in the country in the previous week cross an all-time high and reached 23.98%. Prices of at least 33 essential items were increased in the previous week, while petroleum prices also went up by Rs30.

The price of potatoes went up by Rs3.10 per kg, while per kg of tomatoes ascended by Rs4. Price of branded cooking oils spiked by 28/kg while normal cooking oil increased by Rs38 per 5-litre pack.

Similarly, the price for lentils, salt, beef, and mutton, Sugar, Onion and Milk also increased in the previous week. However, the price of five essential items decreased, and 13 items remained unchanged.

Inflation has been on a rise amid economic and political turmoil in the country for the past three months. The inflation rate increased last week too.

Core committee huddle

PPP to reach out to allies on TTP talks

Stresses for taking terrorism-related decisions through Parliament

Our Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) has decided to reach out to its allied parties to build a consensus on way forward amid talks with TTP. According to details, a high-level meeting was held at Zardari House here under the chairmanship party's co-Chairman Asif Ali Zardari and Chairman Bilawal Bhutto, who is also the foreign minister. Senior party leaders — Yousuf Raza Gilani, Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, Murad Ali Shah, Sherry Rehman, Khurshid Shah, Faryal Talpur, Nayyer Bukhari, Qamar Zaman Kaira, Chaudhry Manzoor, Nadeem Afzal Chan, Akhuzada Chhattan, Nisar Khuhro and others — attended the meeting.

In a statement issued after the meeting, the PPP said that the party had reiterated that all decisions must be taken by the parliament, and thus, the parliament must be taken on board. Taking to Twitter, Bilawal Bhutto said that PPP held a high-level meeting to discuss the issue of terrorism, particularly in light of recent developments in Afghanistan, with the TTA (Tehreek-i-Taliban Afghanistan) & TTP.

"PPP believes that all decisions



must be taken by parliament. Will be reaching out to allied parties to create consensus on the way forward," the foreign minister wrote on Twitter. Last month, the government and the TTP had agreed to extend a ceasefire indefinitely and continue negotiations to find an end to the nearly two decades of militancy.

A statement issued by Secretary General Farhatullah Babar said that the meeting reiterated the Party position that all decisions must be taken by the parliament and thus the parliament must be taken on board. The party also decided to reach out to allied parties to create consensus on the way

forward. A senior PPP leader, on the condition of anonymity, told the publication that there appeared to be wheels within wheels in the state apparatus and that it was extremely risky for national security to conduct such a serious exercise without informing the parliament, and political parties, and other stakeholders. Following this, the PPP's high-level huddle decided to reach out to allied parties to create consensus on the way forward — during the "hybrid meeting" chaired by PPP Co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari, with PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari in attendance via video link.

Interfaith harmony

Hafiz Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi, Chairman Mutahida Ulema Board Punjab and Special Representative for PM on Inter Faith Harmony talking to media at Lahore on Saturday.



Photo: Online

Punjab cabinet expansion

20 ministers likely to take oath today

PPP finalises names for minister, adviser slots

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Some twenty ministers are likely to take oath on Sunday in the second phase of Punjab cabinet's expansion. As per sources, Rana Mashhood Ahmed, Mian Mujtaba Shuja Ur Rehman and Khwaja Imran Nazir will likely to be included in the Punjab cabinet. While Colonel (R) Ayyub, Yawar Zamman, Malik Tanvir Aslam, Bilal Yasin, Zakkia Shah Nawaz, Manshaullah Butt, and Jahangir Khanzada will also be taking the oath.

Other names like Colonel (R) Tariq, Azma Bukhari, Kazim Ali Peerzada, Malik Nadeem Kamrana, Tahir Khalil Sindhu and Chaudhry Iqbal Gujjar are also likely to be included in the cabinet. Ministers from Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) will also be included in the cabinet. Three Minister and two Advisors of

PPP can be included in the Punjab cabinet.

Pakistan People's Party (PPP) has finalised names for the minister and adviser slots in the Punjab cabinet, citing sources. Pakistan People's Party (PPP) is expected to forward the names of Mumtaz Chang, Makhdoom Usman Mahmood and Shazia Abid for their inclusion in the Punjab cabinet as ministers. For the positions of advisers to the Punjab chief minister, the political party suggested two names including Rana Farooq Saeed and Shahzad Saeed Cheema.

In May, it was learnt that the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) decided to form a small cabinet in Punjab in two phases besides also likely giving the speaker Punjab Assembly's slot to Jahangir Tareen's group. PML-N had decided to retain provincial ministers who had performed well

during its last tenure in the Punjab cabinet and give them the same portfolios.

Later on May 31, Punjab Chief Minister Hamza Shahbaz's eight-member cabinet had taken oath in a ceremony held at Governor's House. Newly-appointed Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman had administered the oath to provincial ministers. CM Hamza Shahbaz was also present at the oath-taking ceremony. Rana Muhammad Iqbal, Ata Tarar, Ali Haider Gilani and Awais Leghari were among those who were sworn in. Salman Rafique, Malik Ahmad Khan, Hassan Murtaza and Bilal Asghar had also taken the oath. PML leader Hassan Murtaza had become a senior minister while Khawaja Salman Rafique was given the portfolio of Health Minister, and Awais Leghari was given the portfolio of Local Government Minister.

Elahi, Buzdar discuss political scenario

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Former Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar and a delegation of former ministers called on Speaker Punjab Assembly Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi and former Federal Minister Moonis Elahi on Saturday. Other leaders including Farooq Awan, Hasnain Bahadar Dreshak, Ali Abbas Shah and Sibtain Khan were also present in the meeting. The delegation apprised Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi of the actions taken by the government against them.

The Speaker Punjab Assembly condemned the filing of terrorism cases against PTI leaders and workers. Punjab police was unnecessarily harassing members of the Punjab Assembly and staff, he added. Pervaiz Elahi further said that the assembly staff preparing for the budget session is being arrested. How will the budget meeting be when the assembly staff will get arrested? Fake rulers are violating parliamentary traditions by filing terrorist charges against esteemed members of parliament, said Speaker Punjab Assembly.

Daily use items should be subsidized: Hamza

Bureau Report



LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Hamza Shahbaz on Saturday directed to prepare a comprehensive plan to stabilize prices of necessary daily use items in the province. Chairing a meeting in Lahore here, he asked the government officials concerned to become more active to ensure provision of daily use items to the people at reasonable rates. The Chief Minister directed District Administrations to make regularly field visits for controlling prices. He also directed to further improve the supply chain of necessary daily items.

PAT to stage countrywide protest on June 17

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Awami Tehreek (PAT) on Saturday announced a countrywide protest against the non-provision of justice for the victims of Model Town massacre. The nationwide protest was decided in the Pakistan Awami Tehreek's (PAT) Majlis-e-Shura met here. The PAT's shura said that the pending appeals for years in the Model Town incident is ultimately benefiting the accused in the tragedy.

The shura said that the victims of the tragedy are asking who wants to save the killers of Model Town. PAT secretary general Khurram Nawaz Gandapur said that they are looking to the judiciary for justice. On June 17, 2014, Punjab police went to remove the barriers placed outside PAT Chief Dr Tahirul Qadri's residence and Minhajul Quran Secretariat in Model Town of Lahore. The workers resisted the move, which led to a deadly clash leaving 14 people dead and dozens of others injured.

Workers' Remittances in May, 2022

KARACHI:—In May 2022, workers' remittances amounted to \$2.3 billion. Remittance continued to remain above the \$2 billion mark since June 2020. Remittance decreased by 25.4 percent on m/m basis and 6.9 percent on y/y basis. Drop was largely reflecting the usual seasonal post Eid decline and associated long holiday. Cumulatively, at \$ 28.4 billion, remittances have grown by 6.3 percent (y/y) during the first 11 months of FY22.

Vandalism case

Court extends PTI leaders' interim bail

Bureau Report

LAHORE: The Lahore Sessions Court on Saturday extended the interim bail of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders till June 18 in a case of vandalism during long march. According to details, Additional Session Judge Saima Qureshi heard the case on PTI leaders request for interim bail and the court granted extension till June 18 to the PTI leaders including Dr. Yasmin Rashid. During the hearing, the petitioner said that the police had resorted to the worst kind of violence during the long march. The court is requested to accept the bail as the police has filed a baseless and false case. It should be noted that PTI leaders have been charged with invoking chaos, damaging government property and torturing the police during long march.

Budget 2022-23

Sindh to increase govt employees' salaries by 25%

Bureau Report

KARACHI: The Sindh government will present the provincial budget for FY2022-23 on June 14 (Tuesday) with a proposed increase in salaries of government employees. According to the budgetary proposals, the provincial government has proposed increasing the salaries of government employees by 10 to 25 per cent. The government is also mulling over revising the pay scale of employees of Grade 1-5, say sources and added that the Sindh government has decided to merge adhoc allowance with the basic salary as well.

The finance department has forwarded salary increase proposals to Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah. The final decision regarding the increase in salaries of govt employees



would be taken in a cabinet meeting, they added. The provincial government also plans to include Rs32 billion under the district development budget. It has also been mullied over against including new schemes in 18 departments in order to minimize the budget by Rs18 billion. The Sindh govern-

ment has also proposed an allocation of Rs18,509 billion for the health sector and Rs27,449 billion in education, increasing the former's budget by Rs9 million.

The government has proposed no increase in the allocations for IT, transport, and agriculture sectors. It is pertinent to mention here that the federal government announced 15 per cent increase in the salaries of government employees and a 5 per cent hike in pensions. Delivering the budget speech for the year 2022-23, Minister for Finance and Revenue Miftah Ismail also announced merging the previous adhoc relief allowances with the basic pays of the employees.

The increase in salaries would be applicable from the new fiscal year starting from July 1, 2022.

Qureshi's claims rejected

Pakistan will oppose India's UNSC bid: FO

Says Pakistan's position on addition of UNSC members is clear, consistent

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Responding to former foreign minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi's claim that Pakistan has assured its support to India's bid for UNSC membership, the Foreign Office on Friday reaffirmed its opposition to adding new permanent members to the UN Security Council (UNSC).

A day earlier, PTI Vice-Chairman Shah Mehmood Qureshi claimed to have heard that Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari gave assurance to the US that the coalition government would not oppose India's bid to become a permanent member of the UN Security Council.

Reiterating its call to hold India accountable for its gross and systematic violations of human rights in Occupied Kashmir, FO Spokesperson Asim Iftikhar Ahmad said Pakistan's position on the reform of the UN Security Council



was clear, consistent and unambiguous. "Together with its other partners in the United for Consensus (UfC) Group, Pakistan is opposed, in principle, to any expansion in the permanent membership of the Security Council. There is no change whatsoever in that policy," Asim Iftikhar said.

Earlier in the day, PTI leader and former foreign minister said he has heard that FM Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari gave the Americans an understanding that Pakistan would not oppose if India is made a permanent member of the UNSC during his recent visit to

New York. Urging the foreign minister to give clarification, the PTI leader said that it is a major "policy shift" and people are worried about it.

Talking to journalists following his meeting with the chief election commissioner, he maintained that the Economic Survey 2021-22 endorsed their government's economic progress.

"Even our opponents are also acknowledging the performance of the PTI-led government today," he added. He maintained that the government was using development projects as a tool to win by-elections in Punjab's 20 constituencies. He demanded of the ECP to issue the polling scheme one month before the by-elections. Speaking on the occasion, the PTI leader warned the administration against any interference in the election. He said they will not tolerate the Punjab government's rigging in the upcoming by-polls.

'PTI's tenure witnessed record growth in several sectors: Tarin

Says govt will further increase petrol prices

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Former finance minister Senator Shaukat Tarin said Saturday that PTI's tenure witnessed "record growth" in several sectors and the government was misleading the people by claiming they face an uphill task on the economic front. "All the numbers are published and public. Please take the country's economy seriously and stop misleading the people. The numbers don't lie despite your 'spin doctory'," said Senator Tarin in a press conference flanked by PTI leaders. The former finance minister told the journalists that during PTI's tenure, the country's debt did not increase by 80%, it moved up by 76%. He said although the loans were substantial, the country's economy went up by the same

margin.

"When you took over the government after PPP, it was your government that increase the overall loans by 80%, have you forgotten that?" Tarin asked the PML-N — the major player in the coalition government. The former finance minister said PTI created 5.5 million jobs during its tenure, which means that the ousted government was able to create 1.84 million jobs annually, while PML-N created 1.1 million and PPP 1.4 million. "If you look at the data, our remittances, exports, and textile sector witnessed record growth. We did all this, but they included it in their Economic Survey," said the senator.

The former finance minister said it is because of the PTI that the country's gross domestic product (GDP) clocked in at 6%, but the government, in the budget for the fiscal year 2022-23,



has projected it to be 5%. The Shehbaz Sharif-led coalition government yesterday unveiled the "toughest" federal budget for fiscal year 2022-23 with an outlay of Rs9.5 trillion amid strict conditions of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for the revival of the \$6 billion loan programme stalled since months over policy breaches.

Tarin said the coalition government has eyed

3.9% growth in the agriculture sector, which clocked in at 4.4% during PTI's tenure. "And they are talking about such a growth when they have created a water crisis and fertilizers are at record prices — there will not be even 3.9%."

Tarin said as the government, in the new budget, has revoked the concession — provided to the industries by PTI — the country would not witness a growth in the unemployment rate. "You cannot witness a growth of 7.1% in this sector. Your factories will shut down and employment will increase gradually," the former finance minister said. Talking about inflation, Tarin added that the sensitive price index (SPI) has reached 24%, and once there is an increase in petrol, gas, and power prices, the SPI will be 25-30%.

"Once the inflation reaches 25-30%, then

the businesses cannot prosper as discount rates will also go up," he said, adding that there will be another wave of inflation. Regarding the independent power producer, the former finance minister said: "Our capacity payment was Rs850 billion which will increase up to Rs1,450 billion next year. However, the government has allocated Rs550 billion in the budget for the capacity payment. How will the rest of the amount be paid?"

The PTI leader warned that the government will increase the price of petrol and if the price of electricity and gas is increased then inflation will go up by 20-24%. He further added that an increase in diesel prices will also affect transport. Commenting on the proposed allocations of the budget, Tarin said that the government has over-budgeted several things.

CDC meeting

PM AJK approves 33 projects of over Rs16b

The CDC meeting discussed in detail plans for construction of 620km roads under Kashmir Development Package

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: Cabinet Development Committee during an extraordinary meeting held under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan approved 33 projects worth 16 billion 32 crore 74 lakh 75 thousand rupees.

The meeting held at the PM secretariat was attended by Ministers, Government Advisers, Parliamentary Secretaries, Chief Secretary, and Heads of the relevant Departments. The CDC meeting discussed in detail the plans for construction of 620 km roads under Kashmir Development Package. The meeting approved 220 kms of high-



ways for southern districts including Kotli, Bhimber and Mirpur and 400 kms of highways for constituencies falling under the jurisdiction of northern districts Poonch, Bagh, Muzaffarabad, Neelum, Jhelum, Sadhnauti and Haveli.

In addition, the meeting gave

approval for reconditioning of the 18 km road from Chatter Class to Duna College Muzaffarabad. Additional Chief Secretary Development Dr. Sajid Mehmood Chouhan briefed the Cabinet Development Committee regarding the plans.

Speaking on the occasion, the Prime

Minister Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan while stressing the need for timely completion of the projects directed the authorities to make no compromise on standard and quality in the construction of roads.

To avoid landslides the PM said that trees should be planted along the roadsides to prevent landslides. "Roads must be designed in the best possible manner and the tourism department should also be taken on board in this regard so that the construction of new roads would facilitate access to tourist places", he said adding that weighing scales should be installed on all main highways so that overloaded vehicles do not damage the roads.

PPP Senator Dr Sikandar Ali Mandhro passes away

KARACHI: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) senior leader and Senator Dr Sikandar Ali Mandhro passed away on Saturday in United States (US). The family sources said that Dr Mandhro was diagnosed with Kidney cancer and was undergoing treatment in a US hospital.

They confirmed his death and said that his body will be taken back to Pakistan with next three days.

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, Senator Shibli Faraz and other political leaders have expressed deep sorrow and grief over the death of PPP Senator Dr Sikandar.

Born in Badin district, Sikandar Ali Mandhro, 78, was a senior PPP leader, a former provincial minister and Senator since March 2018.

He remained a Member of the Provincial Assembly (MPA) Sindh multiple times from 1993 to 1996, from 1997 to 1999, from 2002 to 2008 and from 2008 to 2013. Agencies

One arrested for illegally cutting trees in Dir Lower

DIR LOWER: The officials of the forest, district administration and Police in a joint action arrested one person involved in illegally cutting trees in the Miskini area of Samarbagh, Dir Lower.

According to detail, on an information Assistant Commissioner Samarbagh along with the officials of the forest department and Police arrested one Noor Ul Islam son Ajad Ali for carrying illegal 17 timber slabs in his Daina Truck.

The security personnel seized 17 timber slabs and registered FIR against him for illegally cutting the trees. When contacted forester Muhammad Rehman he informed about the illegal delivery of timber in Miskini area of Samarbagh.

He said no one would be allowed to illegally cut trees. He said legal action will be taken against the alleged accused involved in such practice. Agencies

Govt initiates measure to stabilize economy: Jaffar Iqbal

ISLAMABAD: Leader of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Chaudhry Jaffar Iqbal said that the coalition government had initiated measures to stabilize national economy besides providing maximum relief to the marginalize class of the country.

Talking to ptv, he said the government had enhanced the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) to Rs 808 billion which would benefit the public directly.

"The government has presented balanced budget in the current circumstances which is positive indicator for the economy," he added.

He said the government had focused on direct taxation, especially taxing the affluent class and avoided taxing sectors or products that could affect poor people.

In the budget 2022-23, the government had lifted tax on agriculture equipments and industrial sector to enhance the production and to boost the export bill, he added.

Iqbal said the government was also working on installing a good energy management system to address the country's power shortage woes. Agencies

World Day against Child Labor to be marked today

ISLAMABAD: World Day Against Child Labor will be marked tomorrow (Sunday) across the globe including Pakistan to raise awareness of the plight of child laborers world-wide which is effecting hundreds of millions of girls and boys around the world.

Child labor is a problem in both developing and industrialized countries.

The 2022 theme of the world day calls for increased investment in social protection systems and schemes to establish solid social protection floors and protect children from child labour.

Every year, numerous events are held around the world to mark the World Day Against Child Labor and call attention to the problem.

Child labor is especially rampant in many developing countries—but even in industrialized nations many children are forced to work. According to UNICEF, children in the United States "are employed in agriculture, a high proportion of them from immigrant or ethnic-minority families." There have also been a number of incidents of westerns companies exploiting child laborers in developing countries to save production costs.

Demonstration

LAHORE: A large number of the workers of Jamat-e-Islami are shouting slogans during protest rally at Mall road against the remarks about the Prophet Mohammed (SAW) made by an official from India's ruling party Bharatiya Janata Party.



Photo: Online

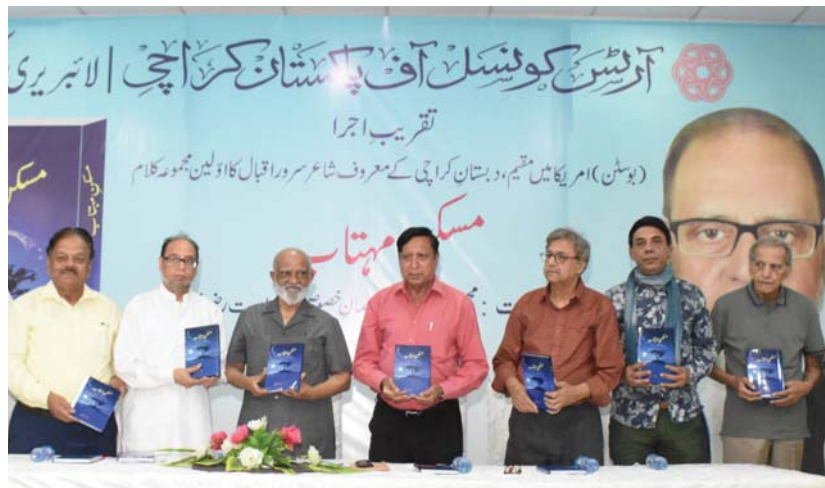
Sarwar Iqbal's collection of poetry "Maskan-e-Mehtab" unveiled

Staff Reporter

KARACHI: Arts Council of Pakistan Karachi Library Committee Organizes The first collection of poetry by Sarwar Iqbal, a well-known poet of Karachi, based in USA (Boston) "Maskan-e-Mehtab" was unveiled at Hasina Moin Hall which was presided over by Mahmood Sham and the special guest was Farasat Rizvi.

Chairman Library Committee Iqbal Latif, Author Sarwar Iqbal, Dr. Salman Sarwat, Aqeel Abbas Jafari, Zeb Azkar, Khalid Moin, Poet Tajdar Adil, Zaheer Khan, Khalid Irfan, and others spoke on the occasion while Rashid Noor performed the duties of the moderator.

In his presidential address, Mahmood Sham said that Sarwar Iqbal's accent still has the same that it had in the 70s. The letters have lost their meaning, the poets are at loggerheads with each other, and literary magazines are going online without paper, Farasat Rizvi said. He said that good creation is never old like truth is never stale. He said that the values of poetry and literature are everlasting if it contains the truth of experience, the sorrow of age, and problems. I am sure that Sarwar Iqbal will find his lost literary personality and destination on the journey he has embarked on again.



Chairman Library Committee Iqbal Latif said that Sarwar is a friend of friends, a sincere and true

man, Arts Council Karachi has always been an effort for those who have settled Urdu settlements abroad and for the Urdu language give respect and acceptance to those who are working, Sarwar Iqbal is also one of them.

Sarwar Iqbal said that Mahmood Sham is an excellent example of truthfulness and dedication in our work. I would like to thank the President of the Arts Council Muhammad Ahmad Shah

and Iqbal Latif for organizing such a wonderful event.

Aqeel Abbas Jafari said that Sarwar Iqbal is a man of love, and he should continue to come and go to Pakistan to maintain the connection with the literary atmosphere, Dr. Salman Sarwat said that I tried to know his personality through the poetry of Sarwar Iqbal. After reading the book, I realized that he is an excellent author and gave an overview. Khalid Moin recited the poetry.

KDA allows catching trout fish through permit

Staff Report

NARAN: Kaghan Development Authority (KDA) Saturday after a ban of two years on the catching of German Trout fish in River Kunhar at the tourist destination Naran Valley granted permission to catch trout through a permit by using a fishing rod. Tourist Sikandar Khan got first permit by paying 10000 rupees.

According to details two years ago, catching the rare German brown trout fish in the Kunhar River was banned for conservation, following the strict measures taken by the KDA and keeping in view of the tourist's interest, a limited number of trout fishing through fishing rod were allowed in River Kunhar under the supervision of River Rangers through a permit.

While addressing the ceremony, Chairman KDA Dr. Aimal Zaman Khan said that Naran Valley has been blessed with beautiful weather and scenic snow-capped mountains.

The rare German brown trout fish in the waters of the river Kunhar is a great gift to the nature and its protection is our prime responsibility, we are taking measures to preserve the rare species and increase its population in the River Kunhar, adding he said.

Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations held



Our Correspondent

KARACHI: The British Deputy High Commission (BDHC) held Her Majesty The Queen's Birthday and Platinum Jubilee celebrations in Karachi.

Hosted by British High Commissioner Dr Christian Turner and Deputy High Commissioner Mike Nithavrianakis, the event was attended by the Chief Minister of Sindh Murad Ali Shah as chief guest along with government officials, foreign dignitaries and celebrities. During his speech the High Commissioner reminded guests of Her Majesty's life dedicated to service. The Cadillac Her Majesty the Queen rode in during her visit to Pakistan in 1961 was also parked at the premises as a symbol of the enduring friendship between the two countries.

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.

The Pakistan Monument in Islamabad was lit up on last Wednesday in purple, the colour of the Platinum Jubilee celebrations, coinciding with the Islamic

bad celebrations at the British High Commission, where the chief guest was Prime Minister of Pakistan Shehbaz Sharif. The final Queen's Birthday Party event will be held in Lahore on Tuesday, and will feature a performance by Qawali singer Rahat Fateh Ali Khan.

The celebrations underline 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."

BWP to help improve Pak's compliance to improve labour welfare

Mian Rashid Asghar

FAISALABAD: The Country Programme Manager BWP Caroline Bates has said that the Better Work Program (BWP) will help improve Pakistan's compliance and exhibit its commitment to improve labour welfare.

Enlightening the core aspects of Better Work Program during a consultative session at Pakistan Textile Exporters Association on Wednesday, she said that BWP is successfully running by ILO and IFC in 8 coun-

tries benefiting 2.5 million workforce as 1700 factories & 150 international brands are linked with this program.

This program includes a comprehensive framework on improving industrial relations through training and compliance with International labour standards including occupational safety and health, nature of employment, discrimination and other forms of labour practices as well as strengthening employers' and workers' organizations in textile industry, she said.

Emphasizing the importance of

ratifying and implementing International Labour Standards for the business community, she elaborated the situation of working conditions in terms of employment, child labour, informality of work and wages. She highlighted the recent interventions carried out by Federal and Provincial Governments to improve working conditions in the country and elaborated various ILO Conventions which are ratified. She identified a number of avenues where the textile industries in Pakistan in collaboration with ILO, can bring improvements in the work

practices thus enabling more exports to Europe.

Earlier, PTEA Vice Chairman Ameer Ahmad welcomed the launch of BWP in Pakistan and said that textile Industry has seen some setbacks in its international exports due to lack of compliance with International Labour Standards which includes the withdrawal of Walt Disney Corporation from Pakistan as it dropped Pakistan from its list of 'Permitted Sourcing Countries' and stopped sourcing on account of low WGI ranking.

Islamabad
23° – 38° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 3:14 am
Zohr 12:07 pm
Asr 5:07 pm
Maghrib 7:18 pm
Isha 9:01 pm

EMERGENCY

Rescue (Police) 15
Bomb Disposal 15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/
Islamabad 1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance 1122 &
& Rescue Services 4451122
Motorway Police 9266044
Motorway Police 9270601-20

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

Edhi Ambulance 115
PIA Flight Info 114
PIA Cargo 9280979
Railway Inquiry 117
Railway Exchange 9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi 5555489
CAA 9281092

HOSPITALS

CMH 561111
MH 561116
MH 561116
Cantt Hospital 9270907-11
DHO 5556311-4
RGH 9290301-7
Holy Family 9290322-7
PIMS 9261170-79
Polyclinic 9218300-09
Shifa International 4603666

DEPARTMENTS

CDA 9221334-43
CDA 9208301-04
Met Office 9250360-6
RDA 5555864
TMA 5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3
Islamabad Metropolitan
Corporation 9209224
Potohar Town 9209224
Rawal Town 5773343

COMPLAINTS

Water Tanker Service
E-7, F-10 & F-11 9204654
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8, 9203883
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8 9266316
Wapda Islamabad 9217579-80
Sui Gas Complaint 119, 9272249
Wasa Water Tank
Rawalpindi 0331-5022125

Bids to smuggle wheat, flour foiled

RAWALPINDI: The Food Department Rawalpindi and district police on Saturday foiled two bids to smuggle wheat and flour besides seizing 1343 flour bags, 1080 wheat bags and 26 tons fine wheat flour (maida).

According to a district administration spokesman, the authorities of the food department along with Naseerabad and Wah Sadder police confiscated six truckloads of wheat, flour and fine wheat flour (maida). Six drivers namely Afaq, Usman, Sajid, Shah Zaib, Zaheer and Imran were also sent behind the bars and police impounded six trucks, he added.

The authorities concerned had been directed to strictly monitor district exit points to control wheat smuggling, he said adding, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Rawalpindi Tahir Farooq had instructed the authorities to strictly monitor the movement of wheat and take strict action in accordance with the law against the rules violators.

The spokesman said that all the exit points of Rawalpindi division were being monitored round the clock to control wheat smuggling as the administration had set up 14 check posts at exit points of the four districts of the division to check wheat smuggling.

Parliamentary body urged to push authorities for rapid climate response

Devcom-Pakistan launched the National Climate Rapid Response Executive Brief

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The National Climate Rapid Response (NCR) Brief have urged the senate, national assembly and joint parliamentary committees on climate change, water, national food security to rapidly expedite the federal, four provincial, Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) to take urgent steps to reduce climate impact without any failure. Damage to climate barriers have gone beyond the red alert. Strangely, it seems the cartels and mafias have surged up over and above the government authority. Urgent steps shall be taken for local corrective measures to stop the local deforestation, water degeneration, over-harvesting of underground water, and change in the land-use of

green and agricultural land. The NCR executive brief has highlighted the human insecurity indicators have gone up the red point but the authorities are playing slow. They shall come up with a rapid response agenda under their jurisdiction areas and take strict action against the cartels and mafia. Only parliamentary committees can push the agenda forward if they are sincere to their core of hearts and duty-bound.

Development Communications Network (Devcom-Pakistan) launched the National Climate Rapid Response Executive Brief on Saturday.

Devcom-Pakistan Executive Director Munir Ahmed said the objective of the executive brief is to urgently highlight the fast rising human security challenges and inaction of government

authorities. Through this brief, the parliamentary committees are urged to push climate action forward more vigorously.

Talking about the environmental degradation and climate change governance in Pakistan, WWF-Pakistan Director General Hammad Naq Khan said: Pakistan is in the midst of a climate crisis. Currently, we are facing an intense heatwave across the country that threatens livelihoods, food security and collective well-being. We are seeing regular occurrences of glacial lake outburst floods. Episodes of riverine flooding, part and parcel of our landscape, are being exacerbated by global warming. Moreover, biodiversity is also at risk as can be seen with the recent fires that devastated parcels of the precious chilghoza forests in Balochistan.

Hammad Naqi has suggested concerted efforts based on already available policies and plans. The Environmental Protection Act of 1997, later adopted by the provinces post the 18th Amendment, needs to be followed in letter and spirit. The Climate Change Policy 2012 (revised 2022), and its associated implementation framework (2014-30), is similarly well placed in terms of addressing the challenges discussed above. For us, climate change is water change and in this regard, the National Water Policy of 2018 offers key avenues for effective policy up-take. In the same vein, effective implementation of the National Flood Protection Plan (IV) will be key to ensure that we are well prepared to address the challenges posed by flood episodes.

Development

ISLAMABAD: Laborers are busy in construction of road during the Rawal Interchange Project in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

U.S. Embassy launches Academy for Women Entrepreneurs

ISLAMABAD: U.S. Embassy Islamabad's Counselor for Commercial Affairs John Coronado congratulated more than 115 Pakistani women entrepreneurs on their selection to the Academy for Women Entrepreneurs (AWE) 2022 in a virtual launch event on June 11. This U.S. training program supports women worldwide in building their own businesses. Its launch in Pakistan is part of the 75th anniversary celebrations of U.S.-Pakistan bilateral relations and an ongoing effort to empower Pakistani women to realize their economic potential and increase prosperity for all

Pakistanis. During his remarks, Mr. Coronado spoke about the need to support women entrepreneurs: "When women are economically empowered, they reinvest in their families and communities, strengthening the social fabric and improving education and skill levels of the workforce. This multiplier effect spurs economic growth and enhances stability."

With mentoring and guidance from established Pakistani entrepreneurs, the AWE participants will undertake a three month, rigorous online training program developed by Arizona State University's

Thunderbird School of Global Management and American natural resource company Freeport McMoran.

Through AWE, participants learn core business skills and will meet weekly to discuss the material with experienced local mentors and U.S. experts. AWE is designed to cultivate entrepreneurial know-how, help women entrepreneurs connect with funding opportunities, enhance opportunities for business expansion, and increase the likelihood of entrepreneurial success.

Four of the U.S. Mission to Pakistan's Lincoln Corners in Multan, Muzaffarabad, Khairpur, and Peshawar will lead

AWE Pakistan 2022, with support from the Pakistan American Cultural Center and the DOVE Foundation. Lincoln Corners in Peshawar, Lahore, Rawalpindi, and Larkana took part in AWE Pakistan 2021. Toward the end of their AWE journey, participants will have the opportunity to compete for seed funding from the U.S. Mission to Pakistan to further grow or establish their enterprises. Upon completion, the participants will join the global AWE network, which offers further growth opportunities, as well as the community of U.S. exchange program alumni. Agencies

NCRC committed to ensure children rights

NCRC Statement on World Day Against Child Labour announced

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: On the World Day Against Child Labour, the National Commission on the Rights of Child (NCRC) is renewing its commitment and mandate to ensure that children across Pakistan are protected from harm and their rights are secured – this also includes reducing cases of the worst forms of child labour. Although no nationwide child labour survey has been conducted since 1996, according to the Pakistan Labour Survey 2020-2021, an estimated 17% of the total working age population is accounted by 10-14-year-old children, making up 26.32 million out of 159.83 million working age population.

Whether employed as a farmhand, a brick kiln worker, or as a domestic help, children who are engaged in child labour often experience extreme emotional, physical abuse and harms to their bodies and their minds. In nearly every case of child labour, children are set up for extreme hardship for the rest of their lives as they are stripped of their right to learn, play and experience a happy childhood. Child labour is a grave violation of children's rights.

Chairperson National Commission on the Rights of Child, Afshan Tehseen Bajwa, expressed her deep concern about the epidemic of child labour in Pakistan, "The NCRC believes that child labour is a violation of every child's right to a safe childhood and their inalienable

rights. Child labour exposes young and vulnerable children directly and indirectly to many harmful effects on their health, cognitive development and wellbeing. In the long run, it can cause them to fall prey to mental health issues, and fall into the trap of generational poverty, violence, and homelessness. There is a need for change – in policy, practice, and mindsets.

The Commission believes that enforcement of education laws is essential, and demands amendment in the Constitution of Pakistan Article 11 (3) and Provincial Labour Laws to raise the minimum age to 16 years in line with international standards and Article 25(A). While Pakistan has made uneven progress, there is a

need for mass awareness campaign for parents, caretakers, and the society at large to monitor and discourage child labour – especially at homes, hotels, and service industries. Only strong prevention strategies can help change the mindsets.

However, legislation alone is not enough to address the systemic and deep-rooted issue of child labour in Pakistan. Along with legal reforms, the NCRC recommends initiatives that increases sensitization towards child labour issues punishment through public education, awareness-raising and social mobilization on the harmful effects of child labour to bring about a behavioral change, promote positive parenting, and discourage children's exploitation."

Health Corner

Targeting mosquito spit to halt Yellow Fever, Dengue and Zika

ISLAMABAD: A molecule in mosquito spit has been identified as a potential new target for vaccination against a range of diseases for which there is no protection or medicine.

University of Leeds Virus Host Interaction Team researchers have discovered that the molecule, called sialokinin, makes it easier for a number of viruses to pass from mosquitoes to human, where they can then take hold – leading to unpleasant and potentially deadly diseases.

These viruses include Yellow Fever, which causes serious illness in around 15% of people infected; dengue, which can develop into the potentially fatal disease dengue fever, and Zika, which caused a global medical emergency in 2016.

Previous research determined that sialokinin was able to alter the function of blood vessel cells grown in a lab, allowing increased blood flow and more effective feeding for the mosquito. But experts did not know what role it played in helping the virus to infect the body.

Inspecting the behaviour of sialokinin on skin cells from mice, the team discovered that the molecule causes blood vessels to become permeable, allowing contents to leak out into the skin – which inadvertently helps viruses to infect the host.

Research supervisor Dr Clive McKimmie, Associate Professor in the University of Leeds' School of Medicine, said: "We have identified sialokinin as a key component within mosquito saliva that worsens infection in the mammalian host.

"Our research suggests that blocking sialokinin, for example through a vaccine or a topical treatment, may be an exciting new approach that prevents severe disease following infection with numerous distinct viruses."

Lead author Dr Daniella Lefteri worked on the study as a PhD researcher in Leeds' School of Medicine. She is now a Postdoctoral Researcher at the University of Glasgow.

She said: "Our findings may also explain why some mosquitoes can spread infection to humans, while some cannot. Anopheles mosquitoes cannot spread most viruses. Crucially, we show that their saliva, which cannot cause leaky blood vessels, and cannot enhance infection of virus in mammalian host, does not contain sialokinin.

"Our work has increased our understanding of the way mosquito-derived factors influence infection in a host's body."

Viruses spread by mosquitoes are known as arboviruses. They can affect humans and other mammals, such as cattle. In humans, symptoms generally occur three to 15 days after exposure, and can last three to four days. The most common symptoms are a debilitating fever and headache, but more serious disease can occur and some infections prove fatal.

The Aedes mosquito, which is found on all continents except Antarctica, spreads arboviruses. Species include the Asian tiger mosquito and the Yellow Fever mosquito.

Yellow Fever infects people living in and visiting parts of South America and Africa. Symptoms include fever, chills, headache, backache, and muscle aches. About 15% of cases develop into serious illness that can be fatal.

Dengue is contracted by people visiting or living in Asia, the Americas or the Caribbean. According to the World Health Organisation, 5.2 million people contracted the disease in 2019. Half of the world's population is now at risk of infection.

Zika virus is found in parts of South and Central America, the Caribbean, the Pacific islands, Africa and Asia. It can harm a developing baby. In 2016, thousands of babies were born brain-damaged after their mothers became infected while pregnant.

There are currently no specific treatments or vaccines for dengue, Zika, and other potentially serious mosquito-borne viruses including Chikungunya, West Nile Virus, Semliki Forest virus and Rift Valley Fever virus.

The research team says future work should focus on identifying the other factors in mosquito saliva that help viruses infect hosts, and developing therapeutics to target and block them.

President expresses grief over Dr Mandhro's death

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi Saturday expressed his deep grief over the death of PPP Senator Dr Sikandar Ali Mandhro.

In his condolence message, the president expressed sympathy with the bereaved family.

He prayed for the high ranks of the departed soul and for the bereaved family to bear the loss with fortitude.

Police arrests notorious gang involved in motorbike theft

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Police on Saturday arrested the notorious Qasim Gang leader and accomplices involved in motorcycle theft in the city.

According to the Police spokesperson, in a major police operation Qasim gang leader, was arrested with two of his accomplices involved in motorcycle theft.

The SHO Police Station Pirwadhli informed that the arrested included Qasim, Sohail and Saud. whereas other accomplices of the gang would also be arrested.

SP Rawal Babar Javed Joya congratulated the police team for their successful operation.

He said that the arrested would be challaned with solid evidence and those who robbed the nation of their valuable assets could not evade from the grip of law. Agencies

RISC Gulzar-e-Quaid Campus recognized achievements of students



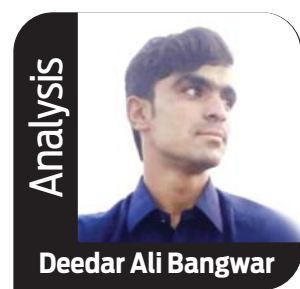
Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Roots International Schools and Colleges Gulzar-e-Quaid Campus recognized the efforts and achievements of its students at a very splendid Annual Parents Day & Graduation Ceremony held at Islamabad Club followed by the theme "Never Give Up".

Chief Guest Kamran Ishtiaq, Branch Head Saira Habib, GM HR Atifa Ahsan, CEO UNITE UK, President British Pakistan Youth Council & Member Overseas Pakistan Foundation, graced the occasion with his presence, and appreciated the spell binding and mesmerizing performances of students, efforts of dedicated staff for inculcating presentation skills and confidence in students. He acknowledged the hard work of Principal ma'am Saira Habib and appreciated the performances of Rootsians and wished them good luck for their future endeavors.

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Pakistan's leadership crisis



Deedar Ali Bangwar

There can be hardly a dispute over the fact that Pakistan is beset with the volume of challenges that prevail to obstruct its prosperity and fortune. The country's road to improvement and sustainability has been embroiled in the confrontational politics and petty political blame games far-flung. Quaid-e-Azam was a democrat, egalitarian and strong believer in the rule of the ordinance, freedom of expression, freedom of the press, and an independent judiciary. He believed in a society free of the misuse of women and minority privileges. All this brought him a leader in a true sense, as he too practised what he believed in. It is Pakistan's bad luck that he died just a year after the Independence, and with his demise, we also covered up his dream.

We, as a nation, have been extremely unfortunate in terms of leadership.

After the death of the found-

ing fathers, the country was left mainly at the mercy of vultures who could think of nobody and nothing but themselves. Our leadership erred to lay the foundation of a dominant economy. Leadership is about performing the right things at the right time. But, in the context of Pakistani leadership, approximately all our 'leaders' have failed to preside over the scheme of things. Our leadership is wounded both ethically and in morale. The nation had paid and is yet paying a huge price for the crisis of leadership. Given the changing global patterns, we are at the centre of so multiple harassing difficulties and the fronts are too several but our political leadership is neither attentive nor conscious of it. The governance is on a fatal decline but the leaders are not content with what they do both in symbolism and substance.

The present system is based on manipulation and it is anything but clean and efficient. A deep sense of insecurity pushes our leaders to grab power. It is also about easy money. There are no excessive uncertainties for the sake of nation and country. The poor influences became endemic in our case. There are no distinguished achievements whereas the misperception is that the crown grows out of their heads. If one sits down in a quiet moment of reflection and strives to hark back, then what one learns is that Pakistan went

through the worst handling that one can visualize. And the idea of graceful entry or exit is not for Pakistani leaders. Of all the traits of character and influence, integrity is the most virtuous. It is the key component and the centre of gravity adjoining everything. It is a scarlet thread integrating the entire being.

Pakistan is impregnated with it. The neurosis is now in the advanced stage of collective psychosis and the casualty of control manifests it. How long will we continue to play the tricks? The problem behind the continuing crises is what sort of a nation and country we want to be? The crisis today is the most severe since 1971 whereas Pakistani undergo from an inadequacy to state their wisdom. It is time for a branch and root examination. Pakistan has several moving ingredients and hardly any stable ones. The system is breaking down for all its intents and goals. The passage of time has become decisive, yet to factor it out is a dilemma. There is not much thought as to how to proceed. The difficulties are complicated and the scenario is transforming with every passing moment.

Everything that matters is against the State. All the daggers are in it. The dissatisfaction is on a vast scale. There is generalized lawlessness in all spheres. The cynicism all around reflects despair. It is a full-blown, contin-

uing and heightening crisis. The unpredictable will emerge out of chaos because the human aspect of leadership is missing. The great escape made by the West was from deductive to the inductive process of reasoning whereas the downfall of Muslims is to systematically apply the scientific knowledge. Compared with consonance, the Muslim mind, in general, suffers from a psycho-social dissonance. The people of Pakistan have been mired in a volume of crises. Still, the facts are not understood whereas one deals with an issue based on facts encircling that issue.

We need to stop lying and accept this country's actual turmoils lie elsewhere- gross economic disparity, victimization of women and children, the failure to institute land reforms and abolish feudalism, failure to deliver quality healthcare and education to all and not only to the privileged, and a high incidence of violence. Today, when our leaders proudly speak of Pakistan having survived for more than seventy years, they fail to speak that Pakistan we have today is not the country that was born in 1947. It is time for political leadership to be humble and handle the deterioration of competence that has condemned the majority of Pakistani to a life of inexpressible agony and degradation. We Pakistani know what havoc the elite at the top

have played with democracy and democratic institutions. As a class, it is "essentially bogus". The slide is much more than this or that. It is simply socio-economic and political chaos, let alone the law and order and scarcity of capacity and competence.

The advocates of democracy should perform in the true spirit, should offer equivalent privileges for all citizens and respect free speech and emphasize the diversified intentions and encourage the free flow of information. This may help the creation of a powerful democratic culture within the country. The civilian rule and authority have been suspended by the successive military takeovers. That's why the quality of democracy and the accomplishment of political parties prevailed impoverished. The democratic culture and the excellence of democracy face tough challenges in Pakistan. The miserable performance of elected leaders and assemblies in federal and provinces makes democracy more complicated. They failed to create oneness over the norms of the political system and rise towards conflict, religious intolerance and extremism and nothing will be resolved until everything is resolved to encompass the shift of focus.

The writer is Kandhkot based freelance columnist and can be reached at deedaralibangwar1@gmail.com

Hindu fanaticism & Muslims

Attempts are being made to desecrate Mughal-era mosques and monuments, including the world heritage Taj Mahal in Agra, on the belief that they were raised on the sites of demolished Hindu temples. Muslims have been lynched or humiliated in the streets for being Muslim or on charges of consuming beef, targeted Muslim homes and shops have been razed with bulldozers, protests are organised against the head-dress of Muslim women and loudspeakers on mosques, the controversial Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) seeks to deport undocumented Muslims and hold them in detention centres until their deportation, and BJP-affiliated political and religious leaders openly call for armed uprisings and genocide against the community, rape of their women, and boycott of Muslim businesses.

Last year had seen savage attacks on Muslims by Hindu mobs that evoked little official condemnation. While Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind petitioned the Supreme Court against assaults and repeated instances of hate speeches against Muslims across the country - especially genocidal calls made at the Dharma Sansad (religious conclave) in Hardwar by Hindu extremists who pledged to eliminate Muslims if necessary to make India a Hindu rashtra - 76 SC lawyers sought immediate judicial intervention, while voicing concern about law enforcement agencies "succumbing to non-state actors" in failing to protect minority rights. The petitioners also alleged that Uttar Pradesh police had arrested over 100 Muslims who were protesting against particularly inflammatory remarks by conclave organiser Yati Narsinghanand Saraswati, while none of the "hate mongers" had been acted against.

Modi has invested much effort in cultivating ties with the Arab world, visiting the UAE four times as Prime Minister, the emirates being India's third-largest trading partner, behind China and the US. Saudi Arabia supplies around 20 per cent of India's crude oil requirements and Qatar, nearly 40 per cent of India's gas imports. Kuwait doubled its bilateral trade over the past two years, and in 2020-21, India's trade with the six GCC nations amounted to nearly \$155 billion, its exports accounting for just \$44 billion of this. These countries also host nearly nine million Indian expatriates, while accounting for nearly 65 per cent of India's annual remittances that totalled \$87 billion in 2021, India being the world's largest recipient of remittances. Washington, in turn, appears to be yet weighing the odds on defining its partnership with India. When he was the Democratic US presidential nominee in 2020, Joe Biden, now President, had expressed disappointment over the CAA as well as over the implementation of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam, and had urged for the restoration of rights of all Kashmiris. His policy paper had noted that these measures were inconsistent with India's long tradition of secularism and sustenance of a multi-ethnic and multi-religious democracy. Also, in her meeting with Modi in Washington last September, Indian-origin Vice President Kamala Harris did not shirk from impressing upon him how imperative it was to defend democratic principles and institutions, and to uphold human rights.

Biden also singled out India from within the Quad, the Indo-Pacific-focussed coalition of the US, India, Australia and Japan, when he called out India as "somewhat shaky" in supporting the US-led condemnation of Russia's war against Ukraine, even as Australia and Japan were unequivocal in their rebuke.



Does apolarity leads to anarchy?

Assoc. Prof. Admir Mulaosmanovic

The world is trembling. Scholars all over the world believe that the long-awaited return to the "old normal" following COVID-19 will be possible, whereas the post-Ukrainian return to the old international order appears to be a fairytale that is hardly reachable. Today's problems are immense while the aims and intentions of world powers continuously conflict with one another. That's why discussions on unipolarity, multipolarity, and generally global politics have infiltrated almost every house in the world; endangering the everyday life of citizens not only from a psychological perspective but also by concrete changes with vicious impact. Food shortages, lack of energy, and questions about the UN's efficiency substantially impact people. Recalling the "war for medical equipment" in 2020 and the "war for vaccines" in 2021, nations, particularly those from the Global South, are concerned about what it will look like when basic foodstuffs become a geopolitical tool. Indeed, food has already become a geopolitical tool.

First, the liberal hegemony crisis (yes, that is right) causes these changes by allowing world powers to shift their positions for the future order and their influence. China was strongly convinced about it in 2016 when Brexit happened and Trump - as a bearer of isolationist policy instead of universalism - became the US president. The pursuit of liberal hegemony, as the main characteristic of US foreign policy during the Cold War period, inevitably began to fade.

Simply because the foundation of that approach is rooted in the aim to protect

life even in the "foreign," "unliberal," and "undemocratic" environment. Over time, it became a battle over values in which liberalism once must prevail. It was more vital to defend liberal diversity (or, to put it another way, the dictatorship of a liberal paradigm) by rejecting traditional virtues than it was to preserve Palestinian lives, for example. The very cause of liberal hegemonic tendencies became weak. So, cultivated diversities under the liberal paradigm, under the umbrella of a liberal "universal" concept, realized that they are the paradigm itself. Moreover, they understand it is time to shift toward their own worldview. Of course, strategic withdrawal under the guise of "imperial overstretch" led to the emergence of the Anglo-Saxon brotherhood and the treatment of the EU as a partner capable of serving as a keeper of US interests toward Eurasian powers, resulting in a new concept in US foreign policy.

The competition is getting bigger, and the stakes are rising. The increased geopolitical game between different integration initiatives will not result in a coherent political unification. At least not in the near future. But surely it is not something that the West and so-called liberal democracies should cheer up. There are no key benefits from it for the liberal order. Instead of political unification, multipolarity emerges as a disharmony period in which new axial poles with their own worldviews and values originate. Two superblocks? Possible in the future, but new global regions are logical consequences. The power, influence, and overall ability to protect the population's well-being in their zones are, in a fog, not evident yet. But does it also imply real multipolarity, in which world powers have the authority to shape global politics and establish Yalta 2.0? It is more appropriate to define this transitional period as polarity, as recently argued among intellectuals.

One of the key grounds for taking that argument seriously is the undeniable rise in prominence of small and medium states. Powers will have to listen to them and also please them. The Hungarian case in the EU and Viktor Orban's "wayward sun policy" are good examples. Mexican rejection to participate in the Summit of Americas, which started on June 6, is another significant case. President Andrés Manuel López Obrador has made it clear that he cannot support President Joe Biden's decision to exclude Nicaragua, Venezuela, and Cuba from the invitation. Both are witnessing a simple fact; the redefinition of powers' position has started, which will last for a certain period.

Within these new realities, diplomacy will be dominant. To reach balance within the region (geopolitical body) and in the second step to establish a balance among regions will create massive space for different types of negotiations and agreements. Anglo-Saxon world initiated these processes by creating AUKUS, Russian Orthodox Pan-Slavism for the 21st century is an ongoing process under the concept of the "Russian World" and its variants, and Chinese positioning in the Eastern Hemisphere as the main power, especially in the Indian Ocean. Others are waiting, not sure how to act and at which principles. It is strange that nations in Muslim Geography cannot define their own interests and frame them within regional cooperation. Where are the values and principles? Unlikely. Impossible. Finally, a specific response to the article's title is that apolarity will not lead to anarchy. A particular disorder will appear but as a phase toward establishing a multipolar world, a disordered phase for the ordered world. A world ordered anew.

The writer is an expert in contemporary world history teaching at the International University of Sarajevo (IUS). Courtesy: AA

Sri Lanka crisis has lessons for everyone

Sajjad Ashraf

President Gotabaya Rajapaksa has made the experienced politician - five-time prime minister (PM) - Ranil Wickremesinghe the island nation's new PM. Being the sole member of his United National Party (UNP), after facing serious difficulties in forming a government, he has stitched a 21-member cabinet mainly from the President's party - Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP). With the country in throes of worsening economic and political crises, it remains to be seen how far a new government can succeed. On the day Wickremesinghe assumed office, he issued a candid assessment of the dire economic situation. The country is short of revenue and has no money for its expenses. In November 2019, he said Sri Lanka had \$7.5 billion in reserves, which have just come down to \$1 million. He is presenting an interim budget within a few weeks and has warned of hardships bigger than what people are experiencing. He has nonetheless, raised hopes of relief after that due to better economic management and international support.

For now, he seems to have calmed public anger at the Rajapaksa family, who are widely blamed for bringing Sri Lanka to the current state of affairs. But more trouble will erupt once the interim budget is announced. "People have been calling for a system change, loudly and clearly. Wickremesinghe's appointment does not address that demand so there is anger among people," says Bhavani Fonseka, senior researcher at the Center for Policy Alternatives in Colombo.

The challenges he faces are immense. If there is no political stability, Sri Lanka cannot begin to tackle economic emergency. The new PM's appointment has not appeased protesters, who have vowed to press on with their campaign for the ouster of President Rajapaksa. The seeds of the economic troubles were actually sown during the presidency of Mahinda Rajapaksa 2005 to 2015. Buoyed by victory over the long running Tamil insurgency, he borrowed heavily to spend on

big infrastructure projects some of which were of little economic value. The economic slide was not corrected during the term of his successor Maithripala Sirisena.

And Gotabaya Rajapaksa made two disastrous decisions on coming to power in 2019. First, he followed through on his elections promise to bring in huge tax cuts, which meant that the government suddenly lost a quarter of its revenue. Publicly incentivising the business and people, in reality it was a ploy to win parliamentary election, which Rajapaksa won handsomely. In another surprise move, the president overnight banned the import of all chemical fertilisers forcing the Sri Lankan farmers to go completely organic. Farm output plummeted. Sri Lanka was left to import rice for the first time. Food prices went up suddenly shocking people who were accustomed to getting their staples cheaply.

Amid economic mismanagement the pandemic hit the economy massively. Tourists disappeared, affecting the foreign exchange earnings. The tourism industry's contribution to GDP fell from 5.6 per cent in 2018 to 0.8 per cent in 2020. But the government still spent heavily, resulting in a currency depreciation. By early 2022, the economy was in free fall. The government then delayed going to the IMF until March this year, hoping that returning tourists and help from China would tide it over. But just as tourism began to recover, conflict in Ukraine pushed up commodity prices yet again, making imported fuel and food dearer.

It is almost impossible for the government to pay back \$7 billion of principal and interests that are due this year. Sri Lanka desperately needs cash. India has offered more money to help fuel imports. China has also put more loans on the table. But the main hope is to secure a bailout from the IMF. The economic and political crises are so intertwined that Sri Lanka needs first to show to the IMF and other major partners that it has a stable government which will be able to honour its commitments. These are testing times for Sri Lanka and a lesson for others.

The writer is former Pakistani diplomat. Courtesy: GulfNews

Ukraine says it will prevail over Russia

Russia targets Sievierodonetsk in eastern advance

KYIV: President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Saturday that Ukraine would prevail in its war with Russia, now focused on an artillery slugging match over an eastern Ukrainian city.



Russian forces have been trying to seize Sievierodonetsk in their advance in the east, turning it into one of the bloodiest battles so far in the four-month-old conflict.

Neither side has secured a knockout blow in weeks of fighting that has pulverised chunks of the city.

Ukraine has appealed for swifter deliveries of heavy weapons from the West to turn the tide of the war with Russian forces—which it says have at least 10 times more artillery pieces than Ukrainian forces. Yet even when outgunned, Ukraine's army has proved more resilient than expected in early phases of fighting.

"We are definitely going to prevail in this war that Russia has started," Zelenskyy told a conference in Singapore via videolink. "It is on the battlefields in Ukraine that the future rules of this world are being decided."

After Russia was forced to scale back its more sweeping campaign goals when it launched the invasion on Feb.

24, Moscow has turned to expanding control in the east, where pro-Russian separatists had already held a swathe of territory since 2014.

The eastern region known as the Donbas includes the provinces of Luhansk, where Sievierodonetsk lies, and Donetsk.

The self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) said a verdict on a captured South Korean "mercenary" was being prepared, Russia's Interfax news agency reported.

The family of one of the two British

fighters sentenced to death in a brief court appearance last week said on Saturday they were "devastated and saddened at the outcome of the illegal show trial" and called for Shaun Pinner to be treated as a prisoner of war and released or exchanged.

The conflict between the neighbours—two of the world's biggest grain exporters—has reverberated well beyond Ukraine.

"If due to Russian blockades, we are unable to export our foodstuffs, which is so sorely missing in global markets,

the world will face an acute and severe food crisis and famine—famine in many countries of Asia and Africa," Zelenskyy told the Shangri-La Dialogue conference in Singapore.

The United Nations said on Friday up to 19 million more people in the world could face chronic hunger in the next year because of reduced wheat and other food exports.

Ukraine's deputy agriculture minister said on Saturday up to 300,000 tonnes of grain may have been stored in warehouses in the Black Sea port of Mykolaiv that Kyiv says were destroyed by Russian shelling last weekend.

Turkey has tried to secure a deal so Ukraine can resume shipments from its Black Sea ports, which accounted for 98% of its cereal and oilseed exports before the war. But Moscow says Kyiv must clear the ports of mines and Ukraine says it needs security guarantees so it is not left exposed.

Ukraine has repeatedly called for more Western arms and closer alignment with the West. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen told Zelenskyy in Kyiv the EU executive's opinion on making Ukraine an EU candidate would be ready next week.

Indian troops martyr Kashmiri youth in Kulgam

SRINAGAR: In Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir, Indian troops in their fresh act of state terrorism martyred one more Kashmiri youth in the wee hours in Kulgam district, on Saturday.

The troops martyred the youth during a violent cordon and search operation in the wee hours, today, in the Khandipora area of the district.

The occupation authorities have suspended the internet service in the area while the operation was going on till last reports came in.

Indian troops launched a cordon and search operation (CASO) Pulwama district on Saturday.

According to Kashmir Media Service, the troops launched the CASO in the Drabgam area of the district.

The operation was going on till last reports came in.

Meanwhile, shutdown was observed in several districts of Jammu region to register protest against the derogatory remarks by Indian ruling Bharatiya Janata Party officials about the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

The Muslims in the Chinab Valley region including Kishtwar, Doda, Rajouri, Poonch and Ramban districts kept their shops and business establishments closed to show their resentment against the BJP leaders' inflammatory assertions.

Meanwhile, the occupation authorities continued to impose curfew in Ramban, Bhandarwah and Kishtwar areas on the second consecutive day, today, to prevent the Muslims from staging demonstrations and the blasphemous acts of the BJP officials.

Internet in many areas of the Jammu region also remains suspended since Thursday night. The authorities have deployed Indian troops and police personnel in strength in these areas in the name of maintaining law and order situation.

North Korean leader reaffirms arms buildup

SEOUL: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un doubled down on his arms buildup in the face of what he described as an aggravating security environment while outside governments monitor signs of a possibly imminent North Korean nuclear test explosion.

Kim's comments during a major three-day political conference that wrapped up Friday didn't include any direct criticism of the United States or rival South Korea amid a prolonged deadlock in nuclear diplomacy.

Kim defended his accelerating weapons development as a rightful exercise of sovereign rights to self-defense and set forth further "militant tasks" to be pursued by his armed forces and military scientists, according to state-run Korean Central News Agency. The report on Saturday didn't mention any specific goals or plans regarding testing activity, including the detonation of a nuclear device.

The plenary meeting of the ruling Workers' Party's Central Committee also reviewed key state affairs, including efforts to slow a COVID-19 outbreak the North first acknowledged last month and progress in economic goals Kim is desperate to keep alive amid strengthened virus restrictions.

Estonia opposition party opts to start coalition talks

HELSINKI: A small conservative opposition party whose support is seen crucial in attempts to form a majority government in Estonia following the breakup of the governing center-right coalition earlier this month said Saturday that it will start power-sharing talks with two other parties.

After several days of speculation, the Isamaa — or "Fatherland" — party said it is would start talks to form a government coalition in the Baltic country with the opposition Social Democratic Party and governing center-right Reform Party led by Prime Minister Kaja Kallas.

On June 3, Estonian President Alar Karis on June 3 dismissed — at the request of Kallas — the ministers of the Center Party from the two-party Cabinet following a dispute over welfare policy amid Estonia's rampant inflation that is currently one of the highest in the eurozone.

The move left Kallas' Reform Party party, which has 34 seats in the 101-seat Parliament, to govern alone in a minority Cabinet. Reform, the Social Democrats and the Isamaa party would together muster a comfortable 56-seat majority at the Riigikogu legislature.

Kallas praised Isamaa's decision and said she hoped the parties would move forward rapidly to form a coalition in the next few weeks. "The three parties have a strong common ground in creating a government that will bring Estonia through crises, strengthen our security and give people a sense of economic security," Kallas said in a Facebook post.

Kallas has led her party since 2018 and became prime minister of Estonia, a nation of 1.3 million, in 2021.

The new government will be short-lived as Estonia is scheduled to hold a general election in March.

Scholz tries to unblock North Macedonia's EU bid

SKOPJE: German Chancellor Olaf Scholz visited North Macedonia and Bulgaria on Saturday in a bid to resolve the dispute between both countries that has seen European Union membership talks with both North Macedonia and Albania blocked.

Bulgaria refuses to approve the EU's membership negotiation framework for North Macedonia, effectively blocking the official start of accession talks with its smaller Balkan neighbor.

Scholz said that "the Western Balkans are of strategic importance" for Germany and that his country is "serious" in supporting European integration of the region.

"North Macedonia and Albania deserve to start the membership talks," Scholz said at joint news conference with North Macedonia Prime Minister Dimitar Kovachevski in the capital, Skopje.

Bulgaria insists North Macedonia must formally recognize that its language has Bulgarian roots, to mention a Bulgarian minority in its constitution and to stamp out allegedly anti-Bulgarian rhetoric. North Macedonia says its identity and language aren't open for discussion and that the solution must be based on European values.

Indian police kill two during protests

PATNA: Indian police shot dead two Muslim protesters and arrested more than 130 others during street rallies sparked by the ruling party official's remarks about Prophet Mohammed (PBUH), authorities told AFP Saturday.

There have been widespread protests in the Muslim world since last week, when a spokeswoman for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) passed blasphemous remarks against the Holy Prophet (PBUH). In India and neighbouring countries, Muslims took to the streets in huge numbers after Friday prayers to condemn the remarks, with police firing on a crowd in the eastern Indian city of Ranchi.

"Police were forced to open fire to disperse protesters... resulting in the death of two," a police officer in Ranchi claimed when talking to AFP.

Officers claimed that the crowd had defied their

orders not to march from a mosque to a market and had thrown broken bottles and stones when police attempted to disperse the rally with a baton charge.

Authorities cut internet connections in the city and imposed a curfew, with local resident Shabnam Ara telling AFP the atmosphere remained tense on Saturday.

"We are praying for peace and harmony," she said.

Police in Uttar Pradesh fired tear gas to disperse at least one rally after several demonstrations were staged across the northern Indian state.

Most protests ended peacefully but "demonstrators in some cities threw stones at police and injured at least one officer," claimed Avnish Awasthi, a senior government secretary in the state.

"We will take strict action against those indulging in stone pelting and violence," Awasthi told reporters.

Prashant Kumar, a senior police officer in the state, told

AFP that up to "136 protesting miscreants" had been arrested from six districts around Uttar Pradesh.

Cities around India saw sizable demonstrations on Friday, with some crowds burning effigies of Nupur Sharma — the BJP spokeswoman whose comments set off the furore.

Authorities also cut internet services for the weekend in several districts near the eastern megacity of Kolkata, after protesters blocked a railway line and mobbed a police station.

Sharma's remarks have embroiled India in a diplomatic storm, with the governments of nearly 20 countries calling in Indian envoys for an explanation.

Since coming to power nationally in 2014, Modi's government and the BJP have been accused of championing discriminatory policies toward Muslims.

His government proposed a controversial law that granted citizenship to refugees in India, but not if they

are Muslim, while state BJP governments have passed laws making it harder for Muslims to marry outside their religion.

The foreign ministry last week rebuked US officials for what India termed "ill-informed" and "biased" comments made during the release of a religious freedom report that accused Indian officials of supporting attacks on minority worshippers.

Sharma's comments sent the BJP into damage control, with the party suspending her from its ranks and issuing a statement saying it respected all religions.

Friday saw the biggest South Asian street rallies yet in response to the remarks, with police estimating more than 100,000 people mobilised across Bangladesh after midday prayers.

Another 5,000 people took to the streets in Lahore, demanding that their government take stronger action against India over the comments.

UN voices concern about clashes in Tripoli

TRIPOLI: The United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) on Saturday expressed concern about clashes that erupted in Libyan capital Tripoli on Friday night between armed groups.

"UNSMIL has received reports of clashes in Tripoli last night between armed groups, which endangered the lives of civilians, and separately of mobilization of armed groups along with heavy weapons from areas surrounding Tripoli," UNSMIL said in a statement.

A local security source told Xinhua that at least 4 people were injured in the clashes. The armed groups were yet to be identified.

UNSMIL is deeply concerned about these developments, during an extremely sensitive period of political polarization which the United Nations, international partners, and concerned Libyans are making efforts to resolve, including through imminent rounds of dialogues in Egypt, the statement said.

The UN mission called on all parties in Libya to exercise maximum restraint and address disputes through dialogue to preserve the country's fragile stability.

Pak, China traditional medicine alliance launched

Spokesman Report

BEIJING: Traditional Medicine Alliance will help build Pak-China Health Corridor, according to Gwadar Pro.

"We hope the Health Corridor could link China with Pakistan, ensure people's health and wellness, and promote the development of TCM," said Dr. Muhammad Shahbaz, President of China Pakistan Medical Association.

Dr. Shahbaz made the remarks at the launching ceremony of the China-Pakistan Traditional Medicine and Infectious Diseases Prevention and Control Alliance (the Alliance) held in Shandong, China, aiming to help the building of the Pak-China Health Corridor.

The Alliance will promote the research on Herbal and Traditional Medicine in both countries, and jointly carry out research and development of new TCM, especially new anti-viral drugs for treatment of COVID-19



patients and others, according to Dr. Shahbaz.

"We want to build institutes and college of pharmacy with TCM characteristics in Pakistan, by the strength of the Alliance. We also plan to provide training for Pakistani medical staff on

traditional medicine and therapies," said Dr. Muhammad Shahbaz.

The traditional Chinese medicine plays an important role in helping the world combat the pandemic. TCM has proved to have a positive effect in coronavirus prevention and treatment.

Amid the global fight against COVID-19, the Alliance will further promote TCM experience on anti-pandemic to countries and regions along the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

"Since the establishment of the Alliance, we hope the Chinese and the Pakistani sides would carry out pragmatic cooperation on the research of traditional medicine's role in epidemic diseases' prevention and controlling, to benefit the two nations," said Yu head of Shandong Academy of Chinese Medicine.

The Alliance is jointly established by the China-Pakistan Medical Association and the China Academy of Chinese Medicine.

Several Pakistani universities, including University of Punjab, Bahauddin Zakaria University and Gomal University, will join in the Alliance.

Haripur University & Apex College of Pharmacy have already joined the Alliance, besides, seven Chinese universities and institutes.

WB approves \$300mln for Pakistan

Spokesman Report

WASHINGTON: The World Bank's Board of Executive Directors has approved \$300 million in financing to support Pakistan in upgrading rural roads to provide safe and reliable access to schools, health facilities and markets in the most vulnerable districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province.

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Rural Accessibility Project (KPRAP) will provide safe and affordable transportation to primary and middle schools, especially for young girls, in remote areas which have the lowest enrollment and attendance rates. The

project will also improve connectivity to markets and provincial centers to support income generation for rural farmers by reducing transportation costs and travel times.

"This project takes a climate-smart approach that builds resilience into the design of transportation infrastructure, which is critical to improving the reliability and connectivity of rural road networks in KP, especially for remote areas most at risk to extreme weather," said Najib Benhassine, World Bank Country Director for Pakistan. "By increasing year-round mobility and access to schools and health facilities,

these investments will directly support human capital development and help farmers better cope with weather-related travel disruptions and economic shocks."

KPRAP's climate resilient design include all-weather roads, that are safer and will help reduce accidents and fatalities. It will also generate savings from reduced maintenance and construction costs when a road fails.

"Access to basic education and health services is a major issue in KP due to travel disruptions and poor connectivity between districts and provincial centers, especially in the northern and southern areas," said Lincoln

Flor, Task Team Leader for the Program. "Providing safe, all-weather roads and reliable transportation services will help increase student attendance in to schools to address/reduce to low school enrollment and early dropouts. It will also address the lack of access to health facilities which is linked to higher mortality rates from preventable or otherwise easily treatable diseases."

KPRAP will benefit 1.7 million people who live in rural areas in KP and will improve income generation for women and men in agriculture, accounting for 20 percent of employment in in the province.

Venezuela, Iran discuss bilateral ties

TEHRAN: Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi said here on Saturday that Tehran and Caracas have good capacities and grounds to enhance relations with each other.

President Raisi met and held talks with Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro on Saturday.

Describing relations with Venezuela in various fields as strategic, President Raisi said that Venezuela, as an independent state, resisted against the threats and sanctions of imperialism in an exemplary manner.

He described the basis of the Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign policy as the development of relations with independent and friendly coun-

tries. Stating that the Iranians have always been under sanctions and pressure for 43 years, he highlighted that Iranians have decided to turn these sanctions into an opportunity for the country's progress.

The Americans have officially admitted that maximum pressure on the Islamic Republic of Iran has failed, which it means the victory of the Iranians and the defeat of the US and the enemies of Iran.

Raisi said the Venezuelan government and nation's resistance to harsh pressures and sanctions, the country's overcoming super-inflation, and the resumption of economic growth in the

country is a good sign that it proves to everyone, that resistance against the enemies can be a good solution.

Describing relations with Venezuela in various fields as strategic, President Raisi underscored that Tehran and Caracas have good capacities and grounds for enhancing relations, noting that today the two countries have constructive cooperation in the field of energy, thermal power plants, repair and overhaul of Venezuelan refineries, export of technical and engineering services, economic, as well as agricultural fields.

Nicolas Maduro, for his part, referred to the signed 20-year cooperation document between the two states and added that it provides a clear perspective of the path forward in relations between Iran and Venezuela.

He highlighted that Venezuela is interested in using Iran's historical experience, as well as its capabilities in various fields to pass through unilateral sanctions times plus increasing cooperation and relations between the two countries.

Pointing to the various fields of cooperation between the two states, including oil, gas, refinery, and petrochemicals, he pointed out that Venezuela calls for expanding cooperation with Iran in the fields of technology for developing agricultural production in Venezuela.

Traders laud Govt's solar decision

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Former President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt on Saturday said traders laud the decision of the government to exempt the import and local supply chain of solar panels.

He termed it a step in the right direction that will promote solar power in the country grappling with power shortages.

Shahid Rasheed Butt said that the former government has slapped taxes on the solar panels, which was an obvious violation of the Alternative and Renewable Energy Policy seeking 20-30 percent of all energy derived from renewable energy sources by 2030.

Imposing a 17 per cent sales tax by the former government increased the cost for consumers and discouraged the use of alternative sources of energy, which was like going in the opposite direction of global trends.

The Alternative and Renewable Energy Policy also envisaged the development of large-scale renewable energy projects in Pakistan, which received a blow when taxes were slapped which damaged the development of this sector and invited criticism from stakeholders, he added.

The business leader said that those who are using solar energy were discouraged in the past, but now they are being encouraged as an investment in solar power amounts to helping the government overcome the power crisis.

He said that Pakistan is blessed with an abundance of solar energy potential, but this potential has not been harnessed except for some projects.

The government should strive to promote renewable energy in the development plans of the country with the help of liberal and attractive incentives to attract investment, which will put Pakistan on the renewable energy map of the world.

FBR clarifies news item published on sales tax expenditure

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) on Friday clarified a news item regarding the sales tax expenditure published by sections of media, quoting the Economic Survey of Pakistan for the year 2021-22.

According to FBR press release, the said news item reported tax expenditure on account of sales tax was as Rs. 1,014.5 billion, with an increase of 75.4% over last year and the overall tax expenditure as Rs. 1,757 billion.

The FBR while clarifying its position stated that after the final revision of 'Tax Expenditure Report', the reconciled sales tax expenditure is reported as Rs. 739.8 billion showing an increase of 27.9% over last year. The overall Tax expenditure after this revision is Rs. 1,482.3 billion showing an increase of 12.8% over the previous year.

PIA flight operations to, from Damascus halted: Spokesman

ISLAMABAD: A spokesman for the Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) on Saturday said the flight operations of the national flag carrier to and from Damascus had been suspended after the Israeli forces resorted to bombardment at the Syrian capital's airport the other day.

"Both runways are inactive due to bombing at the Damascus airport that led to complete suspension of (flight) operations there," Spokesman Abdullah Hafeez Khand said in a news release here.

Following this, he said, the PIA had to cancel the flight PK-135 from Karachi to Damascus that was scheduled to take off on Friday morning carrying 170 passengers.

Similarly, he said, a flight PK-136 was due to bring 169 passengers from Damascus; however, the flights were cancelled due to the runways being completely inactive. APP

Pakistan Economic Survey 2021-22 is encouraging

Political parties should sit together to improve economy, says Mian Zahid Hussain

Tariq Khattak

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 Friday said Pakistan Economic Survey 2021-22 is encouraging.

It accurately identifies the country's economic situation and problems, and avoids slandering political opponents, he said.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that the areas in which the previous government has performed well have been acknowledged, which is a

welcome development.

Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that according to the Economic Survey, the previous government had projected a growth rate of 4.8 percent, which is now higher than the previous estimate.

The growth rate has improved to 5.97 percent due to lower interest rates, fiscal policy, performing manufacturing sector and good performance of the agriculture sector except for the wheat crop.



However, one of the main reasons for the increase in growth rate is the increase in demand due to which the import bill reached \$75 billion and the economy became overheated which had to be cooled down.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that the increase in the growth rate is not sustainable while the subsidy on petrol and electricity has severely damaged the national resources.

During the last year, the investment and

savings ratio remained low due to domestic conditions and inflation as the majority is struggling to bring food to the table.

The report has made it clear that in the current situation no political party will be able to improve the economy singlehandedly and that all political parties will have to work together to improve the falling economy.

Mian Zahid Hussain further said that even at this critical juncture, if the political parties failed to join hands to stabilize the economy they will regret it forever.

He said that the survey shows that the war between Russia and Ukraine has affected our economy very badly.

President FCCI terms budget 2022-23 as balanced

Mian Rashid Asghar

FAISALABAD: Atif Munir Sheikh, President Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) has termed Federal Budget 2022-23 as balanced and comprehensive despite of the critical economic situation and hoped that it would not only stabilize national economy on solid and sustained basis but also provide much-needed relief to the neglected and deprived segments of the society.

After listening to the Finance Minister's budget speech directly from the National Assembly through a projector screen in the boardroom of the FCCI here on Friday, he was giving his immediate reaction to the media persons.

He said that Pakistan is passing through a serious situation and we should not put entire responsibility on the government but support its policies for the much needed economic stability.

He appreciated the trimming of government expenditures voluntarily and said that the business community should also emulate the slogan of "Be Pakistani and Buy Pakistani products" instead of consuming costly imported luxury items.

He said that the government has announced reasonable relief for the poor segments of the society and business community would also play its due role in this noble cause.

He said that load shedding has inflicted severe blows to the economy in addition



to creating problems for the commoners. He said that the government has proposed tangible measures to enhance power generation to eliminate the load shedding.

He particularly mentioned trimming of government expenditures, doling out subsidy on sugar and flour, reserving 25% quota in financing for females, payment of Rs.40 billion refund claims of DLT and sales tax refund to pharmaceutical sector in addition to cutting down withholding

tax at distribution level and hoped that these measures would accelerate the pace of economic development.

He appreciated the announcement of the government to establish 4 Knowledge Parks and urged to set up at least one Knowledge Park in M-III and Allama Iqbal Special Economic Zone.

He also lauded the decision to allocate funds for education, health and youth and hoped that these measures would usher into a new era of progress and prosperity.

State Life achieves 100pc growth in new business sales: Shoaib Javed



LAHORE: State Life Insurance Corporation of Pakistan (SLIC) Chairman Shoaib Javed Hussain said on Saturday that the corporation had experienced another outstanding year (2021) of growth in premiums, core revenue and agent count, besides presenting improved services and products to the SLI policyholders.

He was briefing the media on the sidelines of the SLIC Grand Marketing Convention-2022 to encourage the top performer of the corporation's sales force along with their family from across Pakistan here at a local hotel.

The SLIC having 65 per cent market share is the largest and the only 'AAA' rated insurance company in the country.

The chairman elaborated that SLIC succeeded in attaining highest ever policyholder bonus of Rs. 85.6 billion and also paid highest-ever insurance policy claims to the tune of Rs. 98.3 billion during year 2021.

He mentioned that in 2021, the Corporation achieved 100 per cent growth in new business sales with total volume of Rs 71.78 billion, while total premium sales remained at Rs.161.79 billion in 2021, registering a growth of 36 per cent.

Shoaib Javed Hussain said that the SLIC covering life insurance of 140 million Pakistanis, maintained total assets worth Rs 1.37 trillion in 2021, showing 14 per cent growth.

He continued, "We have more than 130 per cent growth in Health Business and over 230 per cent growth in Group and Pension Business, which is highest growth on these counts since SLIC's inception 50 years ago."

This outstanding performance has been achieved due to dedication and hard

work of the SLIC's entire professional staff and field workers, as they pursued an innovative vision and competitive strategy, he remarked.

"Within one year, we have transformed the SLIC into a rapidly growing organisation driven by product and digital innovation with a focus on further enhancing policyholder care and services.

A technology-driven enterprise, to launch a Digital Product-Line, ensuring unmatched customer-care and convenience," he claimed.

To a question, he said the SLIC initiated 'revival policy' during COVID-19 days to facilitate the policy holders, who could not pay their respective premiums due to financial constraints, and this facility is extended this year also.

To another query, Shoaib Javed Hussain said that SLIC has also introduced a digital portal service on its website that would feature complaints registration, policy claims, online premium payment and other services in phased manner.

He maintained that on the occasion of its Grand Marketing Convention-2022, the SLIC launched 'Golden Endowment Plan' that offers unique incentives including highest surplus distribution at 97.5 per cent to its policyholders, seven years premium payment on competitive rates with coverage term of 20 years for individuals aging between 20 and 55 years.

This new addition in SLIC product line will help ensure coverage to every segment of society as per SLIC vision of providing every Pakistani with solutions that protect their financial future, he concluded. APP

ZEM builders wins 'RCCI Construction Technology Award 2022'

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: ZEM Builders, one of the leading real estate companies in Pakistan was presented the 'Construction Technology Award' by the President of Pakistan, Mr. Arif Alvi at the RCCI Technology Awards organised by the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce & Industry at President House, Islamabad.

The ceremony was attended by key people from business community of twin cities, distinguished members of society, and senior executives of RCCI.

The CEO of ZEM Builders, Mr. Zeeshan Akram Qureshi received the award that recognises ZEM Builders as a forerunner in revolutionising industry practices by putting innovation at the core of everything they do.

Speaking on the occasion, CEO ZEM Builders Zeeshan Qureshi said that with a legacy spanning over 15 years, ZEM Builders has transformed the real estate landscape by employing cutting-edge construction solutions; bringing the best of design, architecture, and material to Pakistan and this award is testament of our commitment to being real innova-



tion through technology in construction sector.

Whether it is a residential building or a commercial space, ZEM Builders promises state-of-the-art architecture and sustainable infrastructure to enable a world-class lifestyle for those who want the very best, he added.

ZEM Builders is one of the leading players in the real estate industry with over 12 projects in the Twin cities. ZEM Builders was also awarded RCCI 'Brand of the Year Award' 2021 for its remarkable endeavours in the real estate industry and for upholding its core brand values of innovation, quality, and delivery.

Tech advancement may lead to efficient healthcare services

Experts urge the authorities to establish a NEHR to provide medical officials access to patients' medical history

Spokesman Report

DAVOS: Pakistan's healthcare system by adopting modern-day techniques and innovative technology, may serve the masses in a much more efficient manner, said healthcare and technology experts while sharing their views during a panel discussion on "Evolution of Healthcare & Education in Pakistan."

Experts at the panel discussion organized by the Karachi Council on Foreign Relations (KCFR) in collaboration with the Swiss Asian Chamber of Commerce (SACC) at Pakistan's Pavilion of World Economic Forum in Davos urged the authorities to establish a National Electronic Health Record (NEHR) to provide medical officials access to patients' medical history whenever they seek medical assistance.

Eminent healthcare and education experts including Dr. Linda Zangwill, Professor at University of California, Ali Shah Asani, CEO iPath, Dr. Huma Baqai, renowned educationist & Senior Vice Chairperson KCFR, along with Marc Siegel, world's leading supply-chain expert

discussed basic facilities in the healthcare and education sectors of Pakistan.

Expressing his views on the use of modern technology in the public health sector, iPath CEO, Ali Shah, said that using innovative information technology could improve the performance of health sector manifold.

He briefed the audience about projects led by his team including the United States. Ali shared some interesting facts and their impact on patients' care by saying that the lack of Healthcare Data Interoperability and Interchange on sharing patients' medical records across other caregivers not only increases costs but prolongs their miseries as well as risks their lives.

He said that it had been very difficult for patients in the United States to get access to their medical records from their doctors, and even healthcare networks lacked sufficient means to share medical records of patients with other healthcare facilities. The problem is amplified if a patient is attended by different healthcare providers across various sites as per speciality.



In such a situation, Ali Shah said that his team launched a Patient Health Record Integration Platform enabling Healthcare Data Inter-

operability and integration of medical records in a centralized view stored across various Healthcare touch points during patients' life-

time. Since the doctor has access to complete medical history of patients, it helps them in accurate diagnosis, saves decision time in critical situations and saves costs. The patient might save money by avoiding the repetition of same tests on instructions of his/her new doctor due to unavailability of previous record, while having a detailed and ready-to-observe medical history also saves time.

Ali Shah urged the authorities in Pakistan to establish a NEHR for efficient healthcare services. He said that such systems can link healthcare records to the CNIC of every citizen and be made accessible to healthcare providers so that every citizen of Pakistan might avail the benefits across the country.

Dr. Linda Zangwill shared her valuable thoughts on this occasion by saying that modern day technologies might become a savior to humanity.

She said that developing countries by using technologies like Artificial Intelligence were improving their healthcare systems and huge investments were being made in such areas.

IS Pak vs WI, Final ODI

Pakistan eye West Indies clean sweep

Three ODIs are part of the Super League cycle

MULTAN: The third and final ODI of the series between Pakistan and West Indies will be played today.

The three ODIs are part of the Super League cycle. An ODI win in the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Super League fixture adds 10 points to a team's tally.

Meanwhile, President Dr Arif Alvi Saturday congratulated Pakistan cricket team for ODI series win against West Indies, clinching its 10th consecutive series triumph over Windies.

The president on his twitter handle also lauded contribution of Babar Azam, Imam ul Haq and Muhammad Nawaz.

"Well played Pakistan. Congratulations for the series win, which is also your 10th consecutive against the West Indies. (Babar Azam and Imam ul Haq) continue their outstanding batting and Mohammad Nawaz gets a good 4/19. Enjoyable game of cricket," the president posted a tweet.

In the second ODI, Pakistan had



defeated West Indies by 120 runs and sealed the three-match one-day international series.

The victory in second day-night match was possible due to the sensational batting from skipper Babar Azam (77) and Imam-ul-Haq (72) and Mohammad Nawaz's exemplary bowling (4-19).

The all-rounder (Nawaz) spun his magic deliveries and grabbed four wick-

ets while Mohammad Wasim Jr bagged three crucial wickets as the visitors were all-out for 155 within 33 overs.

Star batsman and Pakistan captain, Babar Azam, has been on a record-breaking spree as of late and he has broken yet another one.

Babar, after hitting a century in the first ODI, scored 77 off 93 deliveries against the West Indies last night.

The flamboyant number one ranked batter, with the help of those 77 runs, overtook Javed Miandad's world record of scoring most fifties in consecutive innings across all formats.

Babar Azam has 9 consecutive fifties as opposed to Miandad's 8 and Rahul Dravid, Misbah-ul-Haq, and Kumar Sangakkara's 7.

On the other hand, the second ODI between Pakistan and West Indies might have ended in Pakistan's favor but it witnessed an enthralling moment when captain fantastic was found guilty

of wearing a wicket-keeping glove while fielding.

Babar's actions cost Pakistan five penalty runs as the incident occurred in the 29th over when Mohammad Nawaz was bowling to Alzarri Joseph. Babar stopped the ball while wearing a single wicket-keeping glove.

The cricketing law states: "No fielder other than the wicket-keeper shall be permitted to wear gloves or external leg guards. Further, the law mentions that if a fielder illegally fields the ball, umpires shall award five runs to the batting side."

The runs were immediately awarded for the batting side as Babar received the penalty with an apologetic grin on his face.

Despite the hiccup, Pakistan enjoyed a terrific day as they stunned the visitors with a 120-run victory which included another solid performance from Pakistan's captain. Pakistan have taken an unassailable 2-0 lead in the series.

Ricciardo feels full support from McLaren

BAKU: Under-pressure Australian Daniel Ricciardo on Friday said he has spoken to McLaren team boss Zak Brown and felt he had the team's full support amid speculation surrounding his Formula One future with the former champions.

The 32-year-old moved to McLaren from Renault last season with his contract running until the end of 2023.

But his struggles to get to grips with the Woking-based team's car have continued into a second season, raising questions about whether he will see out the length of his deal.

The speculation intensified after Brown confirmed the existence of exit clauses in Ricciardo's contract two weeks ago at the Indy 500,

on the same weekend as the Monaco Grand Prix, while announcing that McLaren's IndyCar team had extended their agreement with F1 aspirant Pato O'Ward.

"Yeah, so, firstly we've spoken, we've had a catch up," Ricciardo told reporters at the Azerbaijan Grand Prix. "The clarity is clear for us moving forward, my contract is clear with the team until the end of next year, I'm fully committed."

"I have the full support of the team and we want to do it together," he added.

Ricciardo, an eight-time grand prix winner who handed McLaren their first victory since the Brazilian Grand Prix in 2012 at Italy's Monza last year, has scored points just twice this season, one of which was in Saturday's

'Sprint' race in Imola.

Teammate Lando Norris, who beat Ricciardo last season and was given a new contract this season stretching to the end of 2025, has scored a podium and six points finishes, including the Imola 'Sprint', from seven races so far.

Ricciardo, who twice finished third in the overall drivers' standings while racing for Red Bull, said he hadn't read too much into Brown's comments adding his self-belief was intact.

"I think stripping it back to the core, I still know what I can do, I still believe I have it," he said.

"It's not a place of like low self-confidence or low self-esteem... I think in this sport that everything operates at such a high level and if some-

thing's a little bit out of tune it can have a carry on effect.

"So it's really just for me to get back in that place where I'm fully in tune with the car and then it'll come."

Seven-times world champion Lewis Hamilton on Friday said he would not appear in a film starring Brad Pitt based on Formula One that the Mercedes racer is co-producing as he does not want it to flop.

Apple TV earlier this week said its studio arm had landed the rights to the feature which will be directed by Joseph Kosinski, director of newly-released blockbuster "Top Gun: Maverick".

It said Kosinski would also produce the movie along with Hamilton, Plan B Entertainment, Jerry Bruckheimer and Chad Oman.

'Embarrassing' to play in nearly-empty stadium: Southgate

WOLVERHAMPTON: Gareth Southgate said that it is an "embarrassment" that his England side have to face Italy in front of a tiny crowd at Molineux this weekend as punishment for fan violence at the Euro 2020 final.

England were given a two-match stadium ban, with one game suspended, after ticketless supporters fought their way into Wembley to witness their defeat to Italy on penalties last year.

As a result of the disorder, there will be only around 3,000 fans in attendance to watch the re-match against Italy in the Nations League on Saturday.

The crowd will largely be made up of children aged under 14 as, under UEFA rules, they are allowed free admission to fixtures played behind closed doors.

"If it is an embarrassment, it is for England as a country," said the England manager.

"A lot of the people that caused the problems I'm not certain were football fans."

We spoke enough about it, we spoke about it after the final and when the punishment was first given. "What I will say is the vast majority of our fans who travelled to Germany (for this week's 1-1 draw) behaved brilliantly."

"A big thank you to them because maybe people were thinking something different but there were a huge majority who were a credit." England are halfway through a series of four Nations League group fixtures at the end of a draining season.

They were beaten 1-0 in Hungary before drawing 1-1 in Germany on Tuesday thanks to Harry Kane's late penalty.

Southgate said all of his players were fit but hinted changes were likely against Roberto Mancini's team.

The Italy manager, whose side failed to qualify for the World Cup, said he was disappointed the teams would not be playing in front of a full house in Wolverhampton. "We would have preferred to play with supporters," he said. "Football without supporters is not football and is not good for an important game like this. I agree with him (Southgate)."

He added: "It's very difficult for me, after one year without supporters (due to the coronavirus), to play again with no supporters, it's very difficult. It's better because football is more beautiful with supporters."

Mbappe salvages draw for France

PARIS: Kylian Mbappe came off the bench to score a late equaliser as France settled for a 1-1 draw with Austria in their Nations League encounter in Vienna on Friday.

Mbappe appeared as a second-half replacement for Antoine Griezman at the Ernst-Happel Stadium and burst through in characteristic fashion to smash in the 83rd-minute leveller, cancelling out Andreas Weimann's opener.

The result leaves France, who won last year's edition of the Nations League, still without a win three games into the new campaign.

They are bottom of League A, Group 1 with two points after losing 2-1 at home to

Denmark last weekend and then drawing 1-1 in Croatia on Monday.

The Danes remain top of the group despite losing 1-0 at home to Croatia in Copenhagen on Friday, with Mario Pasalic scoring the only goal of the game midway through the second half.

France will play their final match of the June international break at home to Croatia on Monday before the group campaign concludes in September.

"There is never any need to worry. We should always be proud and just try to improve," Mbappe told broadcaster TF1 before admitting that he had still not fully recovered from the injury that forced him off

against Denmark.

"No but if the coach needs me I will be there. There is just one game left before the holidays so I can force it a little bit."

The match in Vienna went ahead despite concern about a huge hole that opened up on the same pitch during Austria's 2-1 loss to Denmark on Monday.

Playing their third game under new coach Ralf Rangnick, Austria took the lead eight minutes before half-time when Konrad Laimer's low ball in from the right was converted by the Bristol City forward Weimann.

France coach Didier Deschamps sent on Mbappe for Griezman in the 63rd minute and RB Leipzig's

Christopher Nkunku came on for Kingsley Coman 11 minutes from time as they stepped up their search for the leveller.

Mbappe had not played against Croatia after coming off with a knee knock at half-time against Denmark, and he was fresh enough to make the difference for the visitors.

A quick exchange of passes with Nkunku led to the Paris Saint-Germain star breaking through to fire past goalkeeper Patrick Pentz and score his 10th goal for his country this season.

Mbappe could then have won the game three minutes from the end, but this time his shot from close range was turned onto the crossbar by the goalkeeper.

Doping awareness seminar gets underway

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: The 2-day Doping Awareness Seminar for Pakistan's Commonwealth Games contingent got underway at Nishtar Park Sports Complex E-Library under the auspices of Sports and Youth Affairs Department Punjab and Commonwealth Games Association (CGA) Pakistan on Saturday.

Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Asadullah Faiz was the chief guest on this occasion while Director General Sports Punjab Javed Chohan, Pakistan Olympic Association (POA) Secretary General Khalid Mahmood were the guests of honour on this occasion. Senior POA official Capt (retd) Abid Qadri presented a souvenir to Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Asadullah Faiz on behalf of POA.

Several sports dignitaries such as hockey legend Manzoor ul Hasan Sr, Manager national hockey team Kh Junaid, Captain of national women cricket teams Bisma Maroof, Shafiq Chish-

ti (kabaddi), Arshad Nadeem (javelin throw, athletics), World Champion Beach Wrestling Inam Butt, weightlifter Nooch Dastgir Butt and several top officials from various sports associations and federations also participated in the Doping Awareness Seminar.

Member Medical Committee Olympic Council of Asia and Secretary Medical Commission of CGA Pakistan Dr Asad Abbas, Member Medical Commission POA Maj (retd) Dr Lubna Sibtain and Member Executive Committee POA, Chairman and CEO Pakistan Swimming Federation Maj (retd) Majid Waseem delivered lectures to Pakistan athletes, coaches, managers and other team officials on Doping and Good Conduct and other important issues during the seminar.

Addressing the Doping Awareness Seminar, Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Asadullah Faiz said that the sport has become more competitive in the modern era. "In our time, the 70 percent focus of different national teams were on skill and 30 percent on fitness but now the

scenario has changed altogether and nowadays all the sports teams are focusing equally on skill and fitness of the athletes."

Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Asadullah Faiz further said that this seminar has been arranged to educate the athletes and other officials of Pakistan contingent about the proper usage of diet and medicines. "We are fully emphasizing on developing a clean sports environment and it is for sure that this kind of environment produces true sports heroes."

Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Asadullah Faiz maintained that all sports stakeholders should groom all players from a young age in a healthy atmosphere. "How we can forget the God-gifted fast bowlers Muhammad Asif and Muhammad Amir who both ruined their career due to their involvement in negative activities and we must remember that the pace duo were not groomed properly in the initial stages of their career and reluctantly they got involved in spot-fixing and drugs scandals."

Video message of President Commonwealth Games Federation Dame Louise Martin was also shown at the seminar. She lauded the holding of Doping Awareness Seminar and urged the Pakistani athletes to follow clean sports policy in upcoming Commonwealth Games scheduled to be held in Birmingham, England from July 28 to August 8, 2022.

POA President Lt-Gen (retd) Arif Hasan in his video link address highlighted the importance of doping awareness ahead of an international sports event. He said Pakistan contingent must exhibit good conduct and act upon zero tolerance policy during the mega event of Commonwealth Games.

POA President Lt-Gen (retd) Arif Hasan urged the Pakistan athletes to not only win medals but also emerged as role models through their strong character and good conduct. He also thanked Sports and Youth Affairs Department Punjab and Sports Board Punjab for making excellent arrangements for the hold-



ing of the Doping Awareness Seminar.

In his address, POA Secretary General Khalid Mahmood said POA has been organizing Doping Awareness Seminars ahead of every international sports event during the last six, seven years. "Being parent body, we are performing our duty but at the same time all the sports federations, associations and all athletes individually should take interest in this healthy activity."

POA Secretary General Khalid Mahmood appreciated Sports

Woods joins billionaires club: Forbes

LONDON: Tiger Woods has joined Michael Jordan and LeBron James in a select group of elite athletes with a net worth of at least \$1 billion, business magazine Forbes reported.

The 15-times major winner, who returned to competition at the Masters in April 14 months after nearly losing his right leg in a car crash, has made over \$1.7 billion in prize money, endorsements and other ventures, according to Forbes.

Woods is tied with Sam Snead for the most wins on the PGA Tour with 82, but Forbes said his winnings from golf account for less than 10% of his career earnings, with the bulk of his net worth attributed to endorsements with brands like Nike and Rolex.

The 46-year-old has achieved billionaire status despite not being involved in the Saudi-backed LIV Golf Invitational Series.

Earlier this month, LIV Golf CEO Greg Norman told the Washington Post that Woods had turned down an offer that was "mind-blowingly enormous" in the high nine figures.

Six-times NBA champion Jordan was the first athlete to reach the milestone, and was joined by four-times NBA champion LeBron James just last week, after the magazine estimated the Los Angeles Lakers player's worth at \$1 billion.

Expedition Indus culminates in Arabian Sea



Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Expedition Indus, Pakistan's first ever river-rafting voyage along the entire course of the Indus River in Pakistan, has culminated in the Arabian Sea.

As a part of Serena Hotels' Adventure Diplomacy initiative – thememorable journey along the entire length of the Indus River comes to an end. The Expedition Indus was a 45-day river-rafting journey that commenced from Hamzighond in the Kharang district of Gilgit-Baltistan and ended at the Karachi Port.

Rafting over a distance of 2,300 kilometres in Pakistan out of the 3,180 kilometres of the entire Indus, the team led by Wajahat Malik consisted of ABM Faisal, Farman Ahmed, Sanif Jamal, Atif Amin, Sultan Karim, Afia Salam and Lt Commander Babar Nisar Khan. The team studied the ecological, environmental and socioeconomic impact of urban life on the water body that sustains all the life in Pakistan.

Wajahat Malik, an adventure travel filmmaker and leader of the expedition, documented the harsh realities about the river's health, life around it and the climate-induced damages to the environment.

Serena Hotels Pakistan is committed to protecting the environment, through its numerous efforts towards conserving water, recycling and achieving energy efficiency including ISO certification. We believe in addressing climate change and highlighting the need for better practices to save the planet. This Expedition is yet another declaration of commitment to raising awareness for those hardest hit by climate change and global warming.

"We at Serena Hotels have always been a strong proponent for adventure sport, testing physical strength and passion," remarked Mr. Aziz Boolani, CEO Serena Hotels. "Supporting brave adventurers like Samina Baig, Sirbaz Khan, and now Wajahat Malik inspires and strengthens our Adventure Diplomacy Initiative and raises focus on the environmental crises the world is dealing with."

Bale warns of 'crazy' demands

LONDON: Gareth Bale has warned "crazy" demands will have serious consequences for players as he dismissed talk that he will be joining Spanish club Getafe after leaving Real Madrid.

Bale, a free agent after his nine-year stay at the European champions came to an end, again stressed that he would resolve his future following his summer break.

The Wales captain will come up against Manchester City's Kevin De Bruyne when Belgium visit Cardiff in Nations League clash.

De Bruyne criticised the competition last week, saying that four matches in a week and a half at the end of a long season was "asking for trouble", and complained that he had not had a vacation "for eight or nine years".

"It's crazy," Bale said on Friday. "We were speaking the other day at lunch and someone said De Bruyne could play 79 games next season and have a three-week break."

"It's too much and things obviously need to change. Players will tell you there are way too many games."

He added: "There will be consequences in the long term. People's bodies can't deal with that sort of calendar year after year."

tion can destroy the career of a top athlete. She also discussed the objectives of the Doping Awareness Seminar.

Member Medical Committee Olympic Council of Asia and Secretary Medical Commission of CGA Pakistan Dr Asad Abbas educated the athletes and coaches to avoid the use of performance-enhancing drugs which is unlawful and punishable under World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) laws.

Dr Asad Abbas in his lecture threw light on Doping Test Procedure and its 25 steps approach. He also spoke about Origin of Doping, doping and WADA history, Methods of Doping, Doping Substances, Effects of Doping and Anabolic Steroid etc.

Member Executive Committee POA, Chairman and CEO Pakistan Swimming Federation Maj (retd) Majid Waseem delivered a lecture on Code of Good Conduct. He also praised Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Asadullah Faiz for taking keen interest in the seminar and promotion of clean sports policy.