Barkat Rice Mills

Pakistan facing severe climate challenges: Raja

Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf says Pakistan like other countries of the world is facing severe climate challenges. Water scarcity in the country is getting notensified day by day due to climate change. Pakistan as an agriculture based economy needs policy initiative is facing challenge of acute water shortage. Research based policy initiatives necessary to tackle climate change induced issues.



Expulsion of opposition leader from KP Assembly condemnable: Muqam

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Ziqa'ad 25, Saturday, June 25, 2022







www.dailyspokesman.net 🔰 @daily_spokesman 🚹 Daily Spokesman Vol: 15, Issue: 89 Price Rs. 25.00 Pages 8

plifting Gwadar

GWADAR: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif addressing the interactive session with local fishermen from Gwadar and MoU signing



'Poverty alleviation

Govt to impose 10% Super tax' on industries: PM

Says Gwadar's fishermen to get 2,000 marine engines, 200 acres land for colony

ISLAMABAD/ GWADAR/ QUEATTA: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday announced to impose a 10 percent 'Super Tax' on over 12 large industries and also on affluent persons with more than Rs 150 million annual income with a rate up to four percent. Addressing the members of his economic team, he said the imposed taxes would be the "first step towards the country's financial self-reliance". The prime minister said the 10 percent tax aimed at poverty alleviation would be imposed on industries and sectors including cement, fertilizers, steel, sugar, textile, oil and gas, LNG terminals, banking sector, cigarette, chemicals and beverages.

He said the individuals earning over Rs 150 million a year would

pay one percent tax; those earning Rs 200 million will pay two percent, those over Rs 250 million income to pay three percent and the ones earning above Rs 300 million will pay four percent tax. PM Sharif said he had formed teams to boost tax collection with the help of organs of State institutions and through digital means. He said the step would help the country attain economic stability and push it out of the shakles of loans. He pointed out that every year, an amount of around Rs 2,000 billion in the country

He mentioned that 60 percent of the formal sector was paying taxes, however the rest of 40 percent economy needed to be brought into tax net. He said the

collected tax would be diverted towards the projects of health, education, skilled training and information technology. For the first time in country's history, he said, a budget had been present-

PM, CM Balochistan discuss administrative, political matters

was misappropriated through tax ed to provide relief to common man, orphans, widows and poor. The prime minister hoped that with hard work and faith in Allah Almighty, the things would ease

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif

on Friday announced the provision of 200 acres of land for the establishment of a residential colony for the fishermen of Gwadar besides the distribution of 2,000 motorboat engines to help them earn a livelihood. The prime minister stated this in an interaction with local fishermen at Gwadar Business Centre during his day-long visit to the port city. The measures were announced in view of the problems faced by the fishermen of Gwadar in the shape of displacement and difficulty in access to the sea that was affecting the fishery sector. The prime minister said his second visit during a month aimed at holding direct interaction with the fishermen and get their feedback on issues concerning them.

Chief Minister Balochistan

Abdul Qudoos Bazinjo linked the development of Gwadar with the prosperity of Pakistan. He said the federal government had allocated 1652 million for the development of Balochistan projects including the supply of drinking water, and health and education facilities.

He said the provincial government gave approval to over 200 decisions aimed at the prosperitv of locals.

He mentioned that unnecessary security check-posts were being removed keeping in view the trouble faced by the people, while the establishment of commercial markets in border areas was on the cards. The prime minister also listened to the grievances pointed out by fishermen on the occasion and assured them their redressal on priority.

in 3 months

Govt to hike power tariff by Rs7.91 perunit

ISLAMABAD: People of Pakistan will get another shock as the government of Pakistan has decided to hike the power tariff once again. As per sources, there will be an increase of Rs 7.91 in the prices of power tariff per unit in three months. While the power tariff will be increasing by Rs 3.50 per unit from July 1. From August 1, the price will further be increased by Rs 3.50 per unit in August while in September, it will increase by 91 paisa. The basic power tariff will be sold at Rs 24.82 per unit. As per the sources in NEPRA, the surge in the prices will not be implemented on people who will be consuming less than 200 units.

The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) had already raised the basic power tariff by Rs7.9078/kWh for next fiscal year 2022-23.

Pakistan receives \$2.3b from China: Miftah

Says progressive budgetary measures taken to reduce deficits, ensure sovereignty

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Finance mendations proposed by Senate and light mood, requested the Speaker to Miftah Ismail on Friday announced that the \$2.3 billion has been credited to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) from China. The minister made the announcement on his official twitter handle. He wrote, "I am pleased to loan of RMB 15 billion (roughly \$2.3 billion) has been credited into SBP account today, increasing our foreign exchange reserves." I am pleased to announce that Chinese consortium loan of RMB 15 billion (roughly \$2.3 billion) has been credited into SBP account today, increasing our foreign exchange reserves.

Earlier today, while addressing National Assembly session, he said the country was no longer on the way to default as it was on the path to progress. Miftah Ismail highlighted various progressive budgetary measures, aimed at overcoming huge deficits, putting economy on growth path with an objective to ensure country's sovereignty, which was put on stake by the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf government. Winding up the budget debate in the National Assembly, the federal minister said that most of the recom-

National Assembly Members were incorporated in the finance bill.

Criticizing the PTI government for damaging the economy, the minister said that fiscal year 2021-22 would be remembered as worst year as announce that Chinese consortium the country deviated from all its set targets, accumulating huge deficits upto Rs5310 billion, which is around 9.85 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). He questioned, how come Imran Khan and his team talked about sovereignty when they had taken huge debts in their tenure, leading the country to near default.

However, by taking several decisions, the incumbent government had saved the country from bankruptcy. "This country is not going towards default but is going towards progress now," he remarked. He said, many budgetary measures were taken to tax the rich and provide relief to the poor. He said, the budget was farmer-friendly as many initiatives were taken to promote agriculture sector to make the country self-sufficient in edible oil, whereat and other crop

On the occasion, Miftah Ismail, in a

give him credit for imposing high taxes on the factories of the sons of his own

"My own company will give above Rs200 million in tax. The companies of the prime minister and his sons will also pay high taxes. If we are asking others to pay high taxes, we are doing the same too," he pointed out. The finance minister said that the government tried its best to facilities the people in the budget. "There are as many as nine million retail and wholesale shops in the country. We have devised a strategy to bring at least 2.5 million to 3.5 million of these shops under the tax network," he added.

"Moreover, under a new scheme, their income tax and sales tax have been fixed to their electricity bills. A fixed tax of Rs3,000 from small shops and Rs10,000 from big shops will be received monthly from these shops with their electricity bills. After that, they will owe nothing to the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR)," he stated. He said that there would be a fixed tax on the restaurants too, adding that the government had set a high target for tax collection.

Enough potential

Agri sector may resolve economic crisis: Shah

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Water Resources Syed Khursheed Ahmed Shah on Friday expressed confidence that the agriculture sector had the potential to bring the country out of current economic crisis. Speaking in the National Assembly, he said:"I must appreciate Finance Minister Miftah Ismail for announcing incentives for the agriculture sector, as it is the only sector that can steer the country of the current economic crisis. "If the agriculture sector is ensured such support for next 10 years, the country will be self-reliant and will have no need to get any loan from financial institutions. This is the sector that can resolve all the problems of Pakistan."

The minister also suggested to levy more taxes on the cigarette industry in order to save the people from cancer, tuberculosis, and other chronic diseases, besides millions of rupees spent on their treatment.

Tax evaders won't be spared: Asif

Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif on Friday said there interests. The minister said was dire need to improve the tax culture in the country and evasion should not be spared. Speaking here at the National Assembly, the minister said that tax culture would have to be improved in various industries including tobacco and imported vehicles as well as electronic equipment. He said that two industries in tobacco sectors in Pakistan had a total of 60 percent share in market and these were paying tax amounting to Rs. 151 billion per annum. The remaining tobacco industries with share of 40 percent were paying only Rs. two billion tax because of their involvement in tax-eva-

sion through various means. These tax evaders, he said, had contacts in political circles

ISLAMABAD: Minister for and even reached the parliament to protect their vested that all politicians and those at the helm of affairs should those industrialists involved in help to expose tax evaders. He stressed the need to improve tax culture in the country and to bring all into tax net by ending inequality.

Khawaja Muhammad Asif lauded Minister for Finance Miftah Ismail and his team for hard work in steering out the country from economic crisis. "We would find a way out after crossing the landmines which the previous government left for us in economic sector and the country would be on right track of prosperity and development", he added. He also appreciated Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif who accepted the challenge to take the country out of the economic crisis.

Weekly inflation goes up by 1.01%

Indicator (SPI) based weekly inflation for the week ended on June 24 for the combined consumption group, witnessed an increase of 1.01 percent as compared to the previous week. SPI for the week under review in the above mentioned group was recorded at 190.98 points ing to the latest data of Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) released Friday. As compared to the corresponding week of last vear, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed

an increase of 28.05 percent. The weekly SPI with base year 2015-16=100 is covering 17 urban centers and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups. Sensitive Price Indicator for the lowest consumption group up to Rs 17,732 witnessed 1.35 percent increase and went up from 194.44 points in last week to 197.06 points during the week under review. Meanwhile, the SPI for the consumption groups from Rs 17,732-22,888; Rs22,889-29,517; Rs 29,518-44,175 and above Rs 44,175 increased by 1.30 percent, 1.23 percent, 1.15 percent and 0.82 percent respectively. During the week, out of 51 items, prices of 32 (62.75%) items increased, 04 (7.84%) items decreased and

ISLAMABAD: Sensitive price 15 (29.41%) items remained stable.

The items, which recorded increase in their average prices on WoW basis, included pulse gram (8.02%), onions (5.43%), pulse moong (5.21%), cooking oil 5 litre (4.60%), pulse mash (4.27%), vegetable ghee $2.5 \,\mathrm{kg}$ (3.97%), eggs (3.96%), vegeagainst 189.07 points registered table ghee 1 kg (3.75%), pulse in the previous week, accord-masoor (3.71%), potatoes (2.12%), wheat flour (2.08%). milk fresh (1.78%) and beef (1.48%). The commodities that witnessed decrease on WoW basis included, tomatoes (9.14%), chicken (6.36%), bananas (0.68%) and mustard oil (0.33%).

> On year-on-year basis, the commodities that witnessed increase in prices included diesel (132.61%), onions (128.92%), petrol (110.16%), vegetable ghee 1 kg (85.74%), pulse masoor (81.73%), mustard oil (79.59%), cooking oil 5 litre (76.91%), vegetable ghee 2.5 kg (73.02%), tomatoes (72.33%), garlic (54.03%), washing soap (52.73%), gents sponge chappal (52.21%), LPG (49.65%) and pulse gram (46.46%). The commodities that witnessed decrease in prices included Chillies Powdered (43.42%), Sugar (10.58%), Pulse Moong (10.40%), Electricity charges for Q1 (5.85%) and Gur (1.58%).

PTI slams govt over super tax on industries

Tarin warns of Sri Lanka-like crisis in Pakistan

LAHORE/KARACHI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader and energy minister Hammad Azhar on Friday strongly criticised the coalition government's decision to impose 10% super tax on large-scale industries. Taking to Twitter, Hammad Azhar said, "Super tax will end up further squeezing the formal sector of the economy. This means taxing

the already taxed even more." He went on to say that the country's economy was nose-diving and such a measure at this time will reverse the "industrialisation momentum that PTI generated". "Industry is already facing crippling costs due to rising prices of commodities and energy. This super tax will be priced in their balance sheets and passed on to the customers in many cases. Means even higher prices for

Super Tax to destroy economy, unleash storm of inflation: Tarin

the public," he further wrote. Former finance minister Shaukat Tarin has termed the Federal Budget 2022-23 as 'anti-people' and 'bloody', warning that Pakistan could face Sri Lanka-like crisis if elections are not announced immediately. Addressing a press conference at Karachi Press Club, Shaukat Tarin has urged the incumbent government to stop 'telling lies' about the economy, pointing out that PTI's tenure witnessed "record growth" in all sectors

The Spokesman

Cooperation

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Miftah Ismail held a meeting with delegation of Pakistan Hotel Associations regarding import and liquidity issues faced by this industry at Finance Division on Friday.



Pakistan condemns extra-judicial killings of Kashmiris in HJOK

 $FO\,says\,Pakistan\,among\,other\,countries\,affected\,by\,sanctions\,on\,Russia$

Friday strongly condemned extra-judicial killing of eleven more Kashmiris in fresh acts of state-sponsored terrorism by Indian occupation forces in Pulwama and Baramulla Districts of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

Addressing a weekly press briefing here, the Foreign Office Spokesperson said since India's illegal and unilateral actions of 5 August 2019, more than 636 Kashmiris had embraced martyrdom in fake 'encounters' and so-called 'cordon-and-search operations. This year alone, 113 extra-judicial killings of Kashmiris had been recorded.

India must realize that use of brutal force against the hate speech. Kashmiri people, extra-judicial killings, custodial torture and deaths, forced disappearanc- tive together with like-mindes, incarceration of Kashmiri ed countries that led to the Pakistan and Canada have methods of subjugation had resolution by the UN Gener- wish to deepen the same on had been sent to Afghanistan failed in the past and will not al Assembly on the issue of the basis of mutual respect on the directives of the Prime succeed in the future, he added. countering disinformation and trust. He said such inci- Minister and the govern-He said Pakistan also urged the for promotion and protection dents are not helpful in that ment and people of Pakistan

Pakistan hold India responsible for its mental freedom. brazen suppression of innocent Kashmiris and play its due role in ensuring a just and peaceful resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions and the wishes of the Kashmiri people.

He referred to the recent virtual address of Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari to UN Group of Friends meeting on countering disinformation. Bilawal provided such as creating campaigns for public awareness regarding disinformation and enhancing the capacity of governments,

Pakistan has taken up the matter of a Canadian parliamentarian's remarks about

Canadian MP's remarks about Pak military as baseless: FO spox

some of his own suggestions Pakistani military with the government of Canada, terming them baseless and unsubstantiated. This was stated by Foreign Office Spokesperson particularly in developing Asim Iftikhar Ahmed while countries, to filter through false responding to questions. He information and to limit online said Pakistan takes serious in the earthquake in Paktiexception to the remarks and ka province and its adjoining The spokesperson said Paki- maintains that freedom of areas and the floods in differ-

The Spokesperson said try. international community to of human rights and funda- context. To another question, were ready to extend all possi-

has always stressed on resolution of all outstanding issues through result oriented and meaningful dialogue including the issue of Jammu and Kashmir with India. He said the onus is on India to create an environment conducive for

dialogue.

Foreign Office Spokesperson Asim Iftikhar said that sanctions on Russia have affected many developing countries including Pakistan. He said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif spoke with his Afghan counterpart Mullah Muhammad Hassan Akhund over telephone and offered condolences over the deaths and prayed for speedy recovery of the injured tan last year took an initia- speech entails responsibility ent provinces across the coun-

The spokesperson said that

the spokesperson said Pakistan ble cooperation to alleviate the suffering of their Afghan brothers in this difficult time.

Iftikhar further said that Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, in his virtual address to the first meeting of the Group of Friends over fight against disinformation at the United Nations to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms, said that Pakistan, like many other countries, has also been the target of targeted campaigns in this regard.

The Foreign Minister stressed that this scourge of disinformation should be tackled nationally and internationally, he said. The spokesperson went on to say that Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Hina Rabbani Khar is in Kigali, Rwanda to head Pakistani delegation during the 26th Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting. The leadership and youth and other consensus adoption of a multifaceted ties and we the truck-loads of relief goods Minister of State, who attended the Commonwealth Foreign Ministers Meeting yesterday, will present Pakistan s views at the meeting and in bilater-

PTI, PML-Q liable for Punjab crisis: CM Hamza

Punjab govt warns filling treason cases against Imran Khan, allies



LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister (CM) Hamza Shahbaz on Friday said that the constitutional crisis that was created in the province was unprecedented. Speaking at Aiwan-e-Iqbal in Lahore, he accused Punjab Assembly (PA) Speaker Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi and main opposition party in the assembly Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) of trampling upon the constitution. "The speaker kept convening and kept adjourning assembly sessions; thus wasting public money," he added.

Hamza said that Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) had come to power to serve masses.

He claimed that the PTI government had even snatched from people the provision of medicines for free. "But now people of the province will be able to purchase medicines at all Punjab hospitals free of cost from July 1, 2022," he more facilities would be offered to the people under the health card.

ers had talked of 'bloody march' only

to save their political image. "Despite Supreme Court (SC) orders, PTI workers damaged public properties inside the Red Zone," he said.

The Punjab government on Friday has warned to file treason cases against Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman and former Prime Minister Imran Khan and his allies under Articles 5 and 6 of the constitution.

During a press conference at the Chief Minister's House in Lahore along with other provincial ministers, Provincial Law Minister Malik Ahmad Khan while lashing out at PTI leadership said that Imran Khan and his allies are dragging the institutions into politics and we reserved the right to take action against them under Articles 5 and 6. "Imran Khan had looted the country with both hands," Ata Tarar said at the press conference.

Taking a dig at the PTI chairman, announced. The CM also said that Finance Minister Awais Leghari said that the former PM was only bringing forward the wealthy people He was of the view that PTI lead- and he did nothing for the poor

Bloodbath

PSX plunges 1665 points

ISLAMABAD: The KSE 100-index unchanged. The three top trading of the pakistan stock exchange (psx) companies were K-Electric Ltd with witnessed bearish trend on Friday, 41,051.79 points against 42,716.97 total of 424,229,317 shares were and price per share of Rs 18.10. traded during the day compared to the trade of 349,488,911 shares mum increase of Rs 60.48 per the previous day, whereas the price share, closing at Rs 866.96 whereof shares stood at Rs 12.806 billion as the runner up Philip Morris Pak against Rs 10.136 billion on last trad- the share prices of which climbed

acted shares in the stock market, of Rs200 per share closing at Rs 61 of them recorded gain and 287 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 16 companies remained 162.17 to close at Rs 2,004.66.

a volume of 36,666,500 shares and losing 1,665.18 points, a negative price per share of Rs 2.86, Cnergyico change of 3.90 percent, closing at Pk with volume of 25,853,800 and price per share of Rs 5.35 and Pak points on the last working day. A Refinery with volume of 25,300,378

Mehmood Tex witnessed a maxiup by Rs 23 to Rs 563. Nestle Paki-As many as 364 companies trans- stan witnessed maximum decrease 5,700 followed by Bata (Pak), the share price of which declined by Rs

Rigging PTI won't

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf(PTI)Vice Chairman Shah Mehmood Qureshi has termed the upcoming by-elections in Punjab a 'test' for Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), saying that the party would not accept the results if rigging continues. Addressing a press conference her, Shah Mehmood Qureshi said that the by-elections were a test for the electoral watchdog. "We will not accept the results, if rigging took place in the up-coming elections," he noted.

The former foreign minister noted if Punjab Chief Minister Hamza Shehbaz rigged the elections for few seats then the province would remain politically instable. "The PML-N workers are not satisfied with the party's candidates for the by-elections. The party should be allotted 'lota' symbol," he added. The PTI leader further said that the incumbent govt has no plans to revive the deteriorating economy. "The present rulers wanted the power to get rid of the corruption cases against him. Their agenda is personal not national," he noted. He added that the present

government has completely failed to control inflation. He further criticized the federal government for imposing 'Super Tax' on industries.

PML-N, MQM-P are strong accept by-polls results: Queshi allies: Saad Rafique

Says Centre, Sindh to expedite work on KCR under CPEC

KARACHI: Federal Minister for Railway and Aviation Khawaja Saad Rafique said on Friday that Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) and Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan (MQM-P) are strong allies and they believe in longterm political partnership. While talking to journalists after meeting MQM-P leaders in Karachi, Khawaja Saad Rafique said that the Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) project will be put on a fast-track mode and it will be completed under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). He added that KCR project will be a top priority during Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's upcoming visit to China.

He said that the railway sector should be treated as an independent institution unlike Pakistan where it is being administered by the provincial governments. Orange Line project has no connection with Pakistan Railways, he added. "As a railway minister, I am admitting that we cannot run the railway properly then how can we run Orange Line." "We have to see the Supreme Court (SC) orders as well and we will not violate it. We have 12 months and it would be wrong to say that the railway sector will be revived in this period." "It is necessary to make Hyderabad airport functional and Sukkur airport should be



the status of an international

MQM-P political relations, Rafique said that they believed in long-term partnership and both parties are strong allies. There were some differences emerged between both political parties but it did not affect the political relations. "We have discussed two important topics. First topic is Karachi and the second is an agreement with the Centre. When we were holding negotiations, all stakeholders have attended the process. Many rounds of talks were not covered by the media. MQM-P leaders are very smart, educated and experienced people."

Aviation Khawaja Saad Rafique upgraded to an international also on Friday chaired a meet-chi Circular Railway (KCR) in KCR train.

airport. We will try to upgrade ing here in Karachi to discuss Sukkur airport for giving it the ongoing Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) project. The meeting, which was attended Regarding PML-N and by Sindh Chief Minister Sved Murad Ali and other officials. agreed to expedite the KCR project under CPEC. The railways minister also formed a committee to move KCR project forward.

The matters of depot for BRT red line, Thar Coal connectivity to the main Railways line and other issues were discussed during the meeting. Speaking to CM Murad Ali Shah, Saad Rafique assured the federal government's full support for the early completion of Karachi Circular Railway.

Last month, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif formal-Minister for Railways and ly requested the Chinese government to include Karathe China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects. PM Shehbaz Sharif made these remarks while addressing Islamabad metro bus service inauguration ceremony which was attended by Charge d' Affaires of People's Republic of China Pang Chunxue.

"I request the Chinese government to reconsider Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) project and support the Government of Pakistan in the construction of the project for the benefit of people of the port city," said PM while talking to the Chinese ambassador. Former prime minister Imran Khan performed the groundbreaking of the long-awaited Karachi Circular Railway project last year in September.

The Public-Private Partnership Authority (P3A) earlier this year approved new Karachi Circular Railway project. The new KCR is being built with an estimated cost of Rs220 billion on the basis of a public-private partnership. Karachi Circular Railway envisaged the construction of a 43km-long world-class affordable mass transit system using environment-friendly electric trains. The project envisages the construction of flyovers and underpasses along the route of Karachi Circular Railway for the elimination of 22-level crossings. The project will facilitate the free movement of the

Foreign exchange

SBP reserves fall \$748m to \$8.24b

Pakistan (SBP) foreign exchange to analysts, the country's foreign reserves recorded a declination of exchange reserves are left for less than \$748 million. SBP's foreign exchange reserves fall by \$748 million to \$8.2 billion, while the bank's foreign exchange reserves reached their lowest level since October 25, 2019.

On the other hand, the country's total foreign exchange reserves declined by \$733 million and reached \$14.2 billion. Reserves of commercial banks fell by \$15 million to \$6 billion. Foreign exchange reserves declined due to repayment of foreign loans.

In this regard, the SBP said that increase in a few days after receiv- ment Bank) loan."

KARACHI: The State Bank of ing loan from China. According two months for imports.

According to details shared by the central bank, the overall liquid foreign currency reserves held by the country, including net reserves held by banks other than the SBP, stood at \$14,210.4 million. Net reserves held by banks amounted to \$5,972.7 million. The central bank said the decrease came mainly due to external debt repayments. However, it added that "SBP reserves are expected to increase in coming days on realisation foreign exchange reserves will of proceeds of CDB (China Develop-

S Azadi March

Court grants pre-arrest bail to Imran Khan

sessions court in Islamabad former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan in different cases pertaining to vandalism during the party's May 25 long march toward Islamabad. PTI Chairman appeared before the district and sessions court Subsequently, the Islamabad court granted pre-arrest to former prime minister in 10 FIRs till July 6 and directed police to submit a record of cases in next hearing.

The further hearing of the case

ISLAMABAD: A district and was adjourned until July 6. It is to be noted that several PTI leadgranted Friday pre-arrest bail to ers including former prime minister Imran Khan, Asad Umar, Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Fawad Chaudhry and others had been booked by police in various FIRs related to Azadi March. Earlier, the Peshawar High Court (PHC) granted transit bail to former prime minister of judge Kamran Basharat Mufi. and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan till June 25 in different cases registered against him in connection with May 25 'Azadi March'. The PTI chief filed a plea in PHC through his counsel Advocate Babar Awan.

Published by: Ahmad Waleed Gondal from Yasmin Majeed Printing Press Rawalpindi

AJK President highlights scouts' role in society

Barrister Sultan says volunteers remain at the forefront in providing assistance to people in case of any emergency

MUZAFFARABAD: President Azad Jammu and Kashmir Barrister Sultan Mehmood Chaudhry has said that volunteer movements play an important role in any society because volunteers remain at the forefront in providing assistance to the people in case of any emergency.

He expressed these views while addressing the 3rd Scouts Training and Youth Program Conference here on Friday. The ceremony was attended and addressed by Minister for Elementary and Secondary Education Dewan Ali Khan Chughtai, Principal Pilot High School Muzaffarabad Anwar-ul-Haq, Secretary Elementary and Secondary Education Razzaq Ahmad Nadeem, Chief Scouts Commissioner Sarfraz Qamar Dha, Prof. Tauqeer-ul-Islam Principal Cadet College Batrasi and



president while highlighting the importance of scouting movements said that the scouts play a vital role in the society especially in emergency situations. Referring to severe weather conditions and volatile situation on the LoC, the president said that Scouts movement can play an important role in dealing with the situation arising out of the Line of Control and weather conditions.

Urging scouts to move forward with

others. Speaking on the occasion, the full dedication and passion, he said that the government would provide all possible support to scouts and the scouting organization.

"Azad Kashmir is the base camp of Kashmir's liberation struggle and given the sensitivity of the region we should be ready to deal with any kind of emergency", he said adding that scouts can play a vital role in dealing with such situations.

About the worsening situation in Indian occupied Kashmir, the presi-

dent said, "There is a serious situation in Occupied Kashmir at the moment". Referring to his recently concluded visit to UK and Brussels, the president said that during his visit he exposed India's brutal oppression and atrocities inflicted upon people of Kashmir by the occu-

It is worth mentioning here that President Barrister Sultan Mehmood Chaudhry's recent visit to the United Kingdom has begun to yield positive results as British MPs have raised Kashmiris' right to self-determination, ongoing human rights violations and Hurriyat leader Yasin Malik's unjust sentencing in the British parliament.

Similarly, four British Parliamentarians of Kashmiri descent have asked a written question to Prime Minister Boris Johnson regarding Kashmir and as per the rules the Prime Minister is bound to answer the question.

Polio Free Pakistan

HYDERABAD: Commissioner Nadeem ur Rehman Memon administering polio drops to children along with Deputy Commissioner, DHO and others, on inauguration of Polio drive, at Shah Bhitai Hospital.



PM AJK calls on former PM Imran Khan

They discuss whole gamut of issues including the forthcoming budget, dev process and governance affairs in Azad Kashmir

Majeed Tahir

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Azad called on Former Prime Minister of Pakistan and Chairman Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Imran Khan here on Friday. During the meeting the duo

discussed a whole gamut of issues including the forthcoming budget, development process and governance affairs in Azad Kashmir.

On the occasion, the Prime Minister Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan while briefing the PTI Chairman said the government was all set to present its maiden that selfless service, uplift of weaker budget. The budget, he said, would be progressive and people friendly despite limited resources "Despite limited resources the government is going to present its first progressive and people Green Kashmir Campaign", all the cities

friendly budget", the PM said.

He said that the government was committed to fulfil the promises the Kashmir Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan PTI had made during the pre-election campaigning. He told the PTI chairman

> "Azad Kashmir has a lot of potential for tourism" — PTI chairman Imran Khan

segments of society and uniform development across the state was top most priority of his government, he added.

He said that under the "Clean and

of Azad Kashmir were being cleaned. "A code of conduct has been introduced for government offices to restore the peoples' confidence in government insti-

tutions", the AJK premier remarked.

"Special focus has been laid on tourism to increase the revenue at local level whereas funds have also been allocated in the budget for the promotion of tourism sector", the AJK PM said.

Lauding the former premier's generous financial support to the government of Azad Kashmir, Sardar Tanveer Ilyas lamented that quite contrary the incumbent government in the center has decided to reduce the AJK's development funds. He said that timely intervention and efforts by the government have yielded some relief, however, the federal government has yet not fulfilled our demands regarding the budgetary

Careem partners with TCF, Chughtai Labs

To provide health and education benefits to its Captains

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: On the occasion of UN Public Service Day, Careem, the Super App of the greater Middle East and Pakistan, has partnered with The Citizens Foundation (TCF) and Chughtai Labs to provide subsidized rates for quality education and healthcare to its Captains and their children.

As per the partnership agreement, TCF will provide a subsidized fee to 300 Careem Captains enabling their children to benefit from a rigorous curriculum development, maintaining glob-

Through the collaboration with Labs will also share unique codes on a



Chughtai Labs, Captains belonging to different grades will receive customized discounts for laboratory tests. Captains of platinum, silver and bronze categories will be able to redeem discounts worth 30%, 27% and 24% respectively. Similarly, all other Captains will be entitled to a flat 8% off on medicines. Chughtai monthly basis that will be promoted and disbursed with Captains through the Careem Captain App and other internal channels, as per their grades.

Sharing his thoughts on the occasion Feroz Jaleel, Country Head, Careem Pakistan said, "Careem has always strived to improve the quality of life for its Captains and will continue to look after them and advocate for them as they are the backbone of our services. These partnerships are a testament to our determination of supporting the wellbeing of our Captains and their families, all while incentivizing them by offering a range of discounts on essential products and services".

Pleasant weather sparked activities in Super Highway Cattle Market

😂 Spokesman Report

KARACHI: Rains in the town has sparked the activities of the Super Highway Cattle Market, and a large number of people rushed to the cattle market to enjoy the pleasant weather.

People were of view that the rain has settled down the dust and now people are very comfortable to wander around the market without bothering about dust in the air. Animals have been washed out by rain and appeared more beautiful.

Administrator Cattle Market, Muzaffar Hassan said that sacrificial animals are arriving continuously day and night at the cattle market from all over the country and around 2 lakhs animals have reached the market by Thursday.

He pointed out that the traders from all over the country are bringing animals to the cattle market for sacrifice and so far more than five thousand trucks and trailers have reached the market. However, animals are allowed to enter the market after thorough medical checkup. It is our responsibility to provide healthy animals to the people for the purpose of sacrifice that are free from all diseases and infections.

Moreover, the large screens have been set up at different places of the cattle to keep people abreast of the latest information and development of the market. More than 100 cameras have been installed including 10 dome cameras, to keep market on watch with the support of law enforcement agencies. The cameras have also been installed on 8 entrances and exits.

Meanwhile, the heavily-laden brown bull of the Brahmin breed at Al-Saved Cattle Farm has become a center of attraction at the temporary cattle market on the Super High-

UoK partners with PepsiCo Foundation funded Amal Career-Prep fellowship

KARACHI: University of Karachi, Amal Academy and PepsiCo Pakistan signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) at the University of Karachi to work together on enhancing the professional skills of university graduates. Vice Chancellor University of Karachi, Prof. Dr. Nasira Khatoon, Ali Siddiq, CEO Amal Academy and Hatim Khan, Director Corporate Affairs PepsiCo Pakistan signed the MoU. Through the MoU, Amal Academy will offer the Amal Career-Prep fellowship program to the students at the University of Karachi.

Amal Academy is focused on up skilling youth since 2014 through the Amal Career-Prep Fellowship. Graduates join the fellowship to complement their technical skills with professional skills, so they are better prepared for the job market. 'Our youth has tremendous potential; our Fellowship enables students to become more aware of all that they are capable of. We aim to help them develop self-belief, become lifelong learners, problem solvers, and socially responsible citizens. Employers today are looking for more than just technical skills, and we are proud to be partnering with PepsiCo and Karachi University to empower these leaders of tomorrow! said Ali Siddiq, CEO Amal Academy.

The PepsiCo Foundation, the philanthropic arm of PepsiCo has partnered with Amal Academy to fund the Amal Career-Prep Fellowship. Since 2019, over 6000 graduates have completed the fellowship. The PepsiCo foundation funding has enabled Amal Academy to scale the program at the national level creating opportunities for graduates living in far flung areas to benefit from the program. Over 40% of the program graduates are women. We are completely invested in our PepsiCo Positive vision of driving positive action for the planet and people. We thank the University for hosting us; this partnership helps expand the program coverage in the province of Sindh.' said Mr. Hatim Khan, Director Corporate Affairs PepsiCo Pakistan.

Huawei, ETPB build Data Center Facility in ETPB



Spokesman Report

LAHORE: Huawei and its Tier-1 partner CMC achieved a notable milestone after building a Tier-3 Data Center facility in Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB), Government of Pakistan. This state of the art Data Center has been up and running after the formal inauguration held recently by Mufti Abdul Shakoor, Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony. Chairman Evacuee Trust Board, Mr. Habib ur Rehman Gillani along with other Government dignitaries, Robin, MD Digital Power Huawei Pakistan, along with other members from the Huawei and CMC Team who were also present at the event.

This Data Center will be able to provide automation inside the board and give access to the properties that come under the supervision of the board to help monitor, safeguard, maintain and earn revenue in the times to come.

While talking to the media, the Federal Minister stated, "The newly-established data center will maintain all the ETPB properties and lands, record of leased land, and profits calculations." He further noted that the Ministry for Religious Affairs aims to reduce hardships endured by the minorities through strict monitoring of evacuee lands with digitalization. He held the opinion that in today's world, digitalization is a must for speedy development. He lauded Huawei and the ETPB for establishing the data center, asserting that the entire department is being shifted to modern technology through digitalization.

MPCL holds Corporate **Briefing session**

Company Limited (MPCL) held a Corporate Briefing Session at its Head Office in Islamabad on Friday, in partnership with the Foundation Securities (Pvt) Ltd. A large number of market analysts, members of the brokerage houses, shareholders, and employees attended the session in person as well as virtually on MS Teams.

The Managing Director/CEO MPCL, Mr. Faheem Haider briefed the participants about the Company's business operations including recent achievements, on-going exploration, production and development projects, financial performance and future plans.

A Q&A session followed during its sustainable operations. PR

ISLAMABAD: Mari Petroleum which the Managing Director and other member of the senior management replied to the participants' queries regarding different aspects of the Company's business operations and ongoing projects.

The Managing Director appreciated PSX for introducing the corporate briefing sessions, which provide an excellent platform for communication between the companies and the wider financial community.

He thanked all the stakeholders for their continued support to MPCL and assured that the Company will continue its admirable legacy of ensuring food and energy security of the Country and contribution towards socio-economic development through

Asia Pacific property Awards UK

EIGHTEEN awarded for best sustainable residential development

Spokesman Report

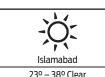
ISLAMABAD: In recognition of splendid efforts to bring a world class state of the art housing project in Islamabad, EIGHTEEN has won award for best sustainable residential development in Asia Pacific property Awards 2022-23 held in the UK. The official presentation of the Awards was held at the Sheraton Grand London Park Lane, United Kingdom.

The objective of these awards is to support and reward the excellence maintained in the property industry

worldwide. The international property awards celebrate the highest levels of achievement by companies operating in all sectors of the property & real estate industry around the globe.

Initially, Eighteen registered huge achievement by winning three prestigious awards in the national level category of these international property awards. Three awards include the best mixed-use development in Pakistan award, the best residential development in Pakistan award, and award for the best sustainable development in Pakistan.





| SERV | ICES |
|---------|----------|
| Namaz 1 | Timings |
| Fajr | 3:15 am |
| Zohr | 12:10 pm |
| Asr | 5:11 pm |
| Maghrib | 7:22 pm |
| Isha | 9:06 pm |

EMEDGENCY

| EMERGENCY |
|----------------------------|
| Rescue (Police) 15 |
| Bomb Disposal 15 |
| Fire Services Rawalpindi/ |
| Islamabad1122 & 16 |
| Emergency Ambulance 1122 8 |
| & Rescue Services 4451122 |
| Motorway Police9266044 |
| Motorway Police9270601-20 |
| |

Women Police

| Statio | 112 |
|------------|------------|
| Islamabad | 922259 |
| Rawalpindi | 9270601-20 |
| | |

| avvatpii iai | ••••• | 2270001 | _ |
|---------------|-------|---------|------|
| ENQ | UIF | 2Y | |
| dhi Ambulance | | | 11 |
| A Flight Info | | | . 11 |
| V Cardo | | ดวยกเ | |

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

HOSPITALS

| 110011 | |
|---------------------|------------|
| CMH | 5611111 |
| MH | 561116 |
| MH | 561116 |
| Cantt Hospital | 9270907-11 |
| DHQ | 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 | d 9270151-3 |
| Islamabad Metrop | olitan |
| Corporation | 9209224 |
| Potohar Town | 9209224 |
| Rawal Town | 5773343 |
| | |

COMPLAINTS

Water Tanker Service E-7, F-10 & F-11 9204654 5, G-6, G-7, G-8, 9203883 G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8 9266316 Wapda Islamabad......9217579-80

Experts urge govt to raise tax on sugary drinks

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: A letter signed by forty top health experts around the world has been sent to Prime Minister urging him to raise federal excise duty on sugary drinks to minimum of 20%. The experts warned in the letter that sugary drinks having liquid sugar are among the major reasons of the growing obesity, type 2 diabetes, heart disease and many types of cancers.

The group represented by Prof. Berry M Popkin based at the University of North Carolina have sent a letter to Pakistani Prime Minister Mian Shahbaz Sharif, in which he warned about the increasing weight and obesity of children in Pakistan. The group warned that if immediate action is not taken to prevent cases of overweight and obesity in Pakistan, their number is likely to double by 2025. The group said that increasing Tax on sugary drinks will help make them harder to buy and will keep children safe.

HEC increased budget reflects govt resolve towards education: Tanveer

The federal minister says distance learning should be embedded in the formal education system

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training Rana Tanveer Hussain on Friday said that increased budgetary allocations for Higher Education Commission (HEC) were evident of the present government's commitment towards education.

The minister was speaking to a delegation of World Bank led by Country Director Mr. Najy Benhassine. Operations Manager Gailius Draugelis, Senior Economist Juan Baron, Ms. Inga Afasanieva, Senior Education Specialist Ms. Izza Farrakh and Operations Officer Ms. Elena Roseo were part of the delegation. The meeting was attended by senior ministry officials as well.

Speaking on the occasion, the federal minister said that Pakistan faces steep challenges such as Out of School Children (OOSC), lack of accurate data and inadequate training of teachers.

He said that critical projects were underway in collaboration with the World Bank that needs to be expedited on an emergen-



cy basis. Rana Tanveer said that the issue of Out of School Children was a top priority that needs urgent focus. He continued and said that the challenge of OOSC could not be efficiently tackled and addressed unless the government did not have the accurate and relevant data. Rana Tanveer said that the government needed in-depth data on OOSC in order to design effective and efficient strategies. He said that Pakistan also needed state of the art training institutes for teachers. He emphasised the role of teachers in imparting

high-quality education to students.

The federal minister said that distance learning should be embedded in the formal education system.

He said that it (distance learning methodology) should not only be considered during the emergency situations, as it was used during the covid times, but rather to be treated as a permanent system to allow students to gain education.

He said that it was a cost-effective way in comparison to the traditional system of schools and thus allowed much great-

Exhibition

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Spain to Pakistan Manuel Duran gestures during painting exhibition of different artists at Gallery -6 in Federal Capital.



For raising voices against Yasin's unfair trial

Mushaal lauds UK MPs, MAPIM

Says fascist govt trampling liberty, human dignity for 70 years in IIO7K

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Mushaal Hussein Mullick, wife of jailed Kashmiri Hurriyat Leader Yasin Malik lauded members of the British parliament and the Malaysian Consultative Council of Islamic Organisations (MAPIM) who demanded immediate intervention to check the travesty of justice and unfair trial against Yasin Malik and condemned Narendra Modi for turning India into a state terrorist.

Mushaal, who is Chairperson of Peace and Culture Organization, said in a statement on Friday that Indian Illegal Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) has been under sieged for the last seven-decade, where all civil liberty and human dignity have been trampled with impunity by fascist Indian forces.

She said that it was encouraging that the world gradually realised the gravity of the situation and voices were being raised from various parts of the world from time to time against the unabated brutality

and state terrorism by Indian occupation authorities in the valley

Mushaal said that the letter by British members of Parliament Tahir Ali, Imran Hussain, Khalid Mahmood and Mohammad Yasin to Prime Minister Boris Johnson and MAPIM's public statement regarding the continued bloodbath in

IIOJK and the unfair and biased trial of Yasin was praiseworthy. She lamented that Kashmir has been

turned into a garrison city and a living hell for the people, as Indian state terrorism has rendered 22,944 Kashmiri women widowed from January 1989 to 31 May

The hurriyat leader stated that the world must not forget the trauma Kashmiri widows and half-widows were enduring.

She said that the fascist government trumpeted the mantra of normalcy in the valley; however, the gravity of the situation could be judged that 11 youth were gunned

down during the last three days. The chairperson said that the blood

of innocent Kashmiris has been flowing continuously for the last over seven-decade but unfortunately, the world at large observed criminal silence in this regard.

It is pertinent to mention here that British MPs in their joint letter demanded that the UK government should use its special relationship with India to ensure a peaceful solution to the Kashmir conflict, besides advocating for fair treatment of Yasin Malik and others' prisoners.

Separately, Mohd Azmi Abdul Hamid. President MAPIM in a public statement demanded the release of Yasin Malik and the imposition of sanctions against India.

Mushaal said that all international agencies should put pressure on India through political and trade sanctions to revoke its draconian laws used to incarcerate and torture Kashmir political dissenters.

The chairperson urged that the UN, EU and OIC should force India to release Yasin Malik and ensure a just solution to the Kashmir dispute as per the UN-agreed

Experts call for making maths accessible to govt schools children

STEAM Pakistan Joins Forces with LUMS to Make Maths Accessible to School Children

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Education experts at a two-day workshop have emphasized the need for providing an opportunity to students in public sector schools to narrow their innate interest in maths and the traditional learning environments as it would help in encouraging their mathematical thinking, mainstreaming mathematics, and collectively creating new knowledge.

The workshop on maths circles was organized at the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) here on Friday.

The event was part of the STEAM Pakistan project led by the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional



Training in partnership with University of Bahrain, and the Malala Fund. This is the first effort of its kind in Pakistan to mainstream maths Imran Anwar. Students and among Pakistani school-going students.

included Founder of Math for Love, Mr. Dan Finkle; Prof. Dr. Mayada Shahada from

Chair of the Maths Depart-

ment at LUMS Prof. Dr. faculty focal persons from STEAM Pakistan's partner Key speakers at the event universities from across Pakistan participated in the work-

In his opening remarks, Dr

Maths Department, LUMS, knowledge. said, "There continues to be a gap between a child's innate interest in maths and the extent to which traditional learning environments provide them with an opportunity to explore this fascinating subject. We hope to bridge this gap by mainstreaming the practice of maths circles in government schools across Pakistan."

Talking about the concept of maths circles, the organizers on the occasion shared that they were essentially learning spaces that engaged participants in mathematical enrichment activities. Such spaces are aimed at encouraging mathematical thinking, mainstreaming mathematics,

Imran Anwar, Chair of the and collectively creating new

In her remarks, Head of Partnerships with the STEAM Pakistan project Sana Kazmi said that Maths Circles are one of the core program activities of STEAM Pakistan through which faculty members and students of our partner universities will visit government schools to attract children towards maths by introducing them to concepts and problems through fun, relatable activities that they will learn as part of this two-day workshop. "We are confident that our efforts will inspire a generation of learners in Pakistan, especially young girls, to approach maths with curiosity and love instead of fear," she

Health

Weather Forecasting Methods: COVID Exposure Risk

ISLAMABAD: Techniques used in weather forecasting can be repurposed to provide individuals with a personalized assessment of their risk of exposure to COVID-19 or other viruses, according to new research published by Caltech scientists.

The technique has the potential to be more effective and less intrusive than blanket lockdowns for combatting the spread of disease, says Tapio Schneider, the Theodore Y. Wu Professor of Environmental Science and Engineering; senior research scientist at JPL, which Caltech manages for NASA; and the lead author of a study on the new research that was published by PLOS Computational Biology on June 23.

'For this pandemic, it may be too late," Schneider says, "but this is not going to be the last epidemic that we will face. This is useful for tracking other infectious diseases, too."

In principle, the idea is simple: Weather forecasting models ingest a lot of data — for example, measurements of wind speed and direction, temperature, and humidity from local weather stations, in addition to satellite data. They use the data to assess what the current state of the

atmosphere is, forecast the weather evolution into the future, and then repeat the cycle by blending the forecast atmospheric state with new data. In the same way, disease risk assessment also harnesses various types of available data to make an assessment about an individual's risk of exposure to or infection with disease, forecasts the spread



of disease across a network of human contacts using an epidemiological model, and then repeats the cycle by blending the forecast with new data. Such assessments might use the results of an institution's surveillance testing, data from wearable sensors, self-reported symptoms and close contacts as recorded by smartphones, and municipalities' disease-reporting dashboards.

The research presented in PLOS Computational Biology is proof of concept. However, its end result would be a smart phone app that would $provide \ an \ individual \ with \ a \ frequently \ updated \ numerical \ assessment$ (i.e., a percentage) that reflects their likelihood of having been exposed to

or infected with a particular infectious disease agent, such as COVID-19. Such an app would be similar to existing COVID-19 exposure notification apps but more sophisticated and effective in its use of data, Schneider and his colleagues say. Those apps provide a binary exposure assessment ("yes, you have been exposed," or, in the case of no exposure, radio silence); the new app described in the study would provide a more nuanced understanding of continually changing risks of exposure and infection as individuals come close to others and as data about infections is propagated across a continually evolving contact network.

The idea was born in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, when colleagues and partners Schneider and Chiara Daraio, the G. Bradford Jones Professor of Mechanical Engineering and Applied Physics and Heritage Medical Research Institute Investigator, abruptly found themselves isolating at home and wondering how to use their scientific and engineering expertise to help the world deal with this new threat.

One pre-pandemic focus of Daraio's research was the development of low-cost body temperature trackers. And that raised the question: Would the widespread use of such trackers allow for better tracking and understanding of COVID-19's spread? (Courtesy: Science Daily)

PM condoles death of Farooq Sattar's mother

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday expressed grief over the death of the mother of Farooq Sattar, leader of Muttada Qaumi Movement.

The prime minister prayed for the departed soul to rest in peace and for grant of patience to the bereaved family.

Residents of H-13, I-13, G-13 hold protest against water shortage



Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The residents of H-13, I-13, G-13 and Shams Colony have staged a protest in the federal capital against severe water shortage, non-availability of drinking water.

Local social activists Ahsan Hamid, Zafar Ali Supra, Salahuddin Khalil, Osama Tahir and Zahid Mughal led the demonstration in H-13. However, the speakers demanded the government that due to depletion of ground water level in the area, tube-wells and water bore drilling works have stopped, the tanker mafia is charging exorbitant rates while blackmailing has taken place.

Healthy future lies in saving environment from pollution

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The International Environmental Day conference was held at the National Skills University Islamabad. At this event, Dr. Muzammil Anjum from PMAS Arid Agriculture University, Rawalpindi, addressed the audience as a specialist in environmental protection and safety. He discussed current risks and threats



to the environment posed by uncontrolled urbanization, industrialization, and poor strategies for managing and safely disposing of hazardous chemicals.

The Deputy Secretary, Water Resources, Dr. Mazhar Hayat, chaired the session as chief guest. He stressed on values of environmental protection by avoiding/doing simple activities at the individual level. He disclosed the fact that if the students at the individual level take a small action on the planting of fruit trees, it would be a considerable impact on environmental restoration.

Vice Chancellor, National Skills University Islamabad, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Mukhtar, encouraged the NSU students to plant flowering plants and fruit trees according to the environmental conditions of Islamabad. He advised every student of NSU to be part of the Green Youth Movement and work for environmental protection.

Group Chairman/Chief Editor: Almas Ayoub Sabir Vice Chairman: Managing Editor: Head Editorial Advisory Board: Amjad Mehmood Bureau Chief Karachi:

Bureau Chief Lahore:

Asim Nazir Ahmad Naveed Ahmad Khan Saleem Zaman Khan. (mszk786@gmail.com Syed Afraz Ali Nazish (afrazalishah@gmail.com)

Islamabad Office: Rose Plaza, I-8 Markaz.

Karachi office: Flat No.C.3.A.One Comfort, Block No 11. Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Main Rashid Minhas Road.

Lahore Office: 7-E.Samanberg, Johar Town. spokesmanislamabad@gmail.com Email:

Whatsapp: 0346-5008408

Afghanistan earthquake

fghans, already reeling from the impact of years of conflict, economic hardship and the Covid-19 pandemic, have been struck with yet another tragedy a powerful earthquake measuring 6.1 on the Richter scale. The quake that hit the Central Region of Afghanistan this week has left widespread death and devastation in its wake. Four districts in Patika province Gayan, Barmala, Naka and Ziruk as well as Spera district in the Khost province, have been badly affected. Rescue operations and humanitarian support are being carried out in the mountainous area amid unfavourable weather conditions, following rain and falling temperatures.

As Afghanistan starts to bury its more than 1,000 dead, there is also an increased realisation that the authorities in Kabul may lack the full resources and medical supplies urgently required by those worst affected. Already the government has made an appeal to the international community for immediate aid. With the country faced with US sanctions, following the Taliban takeover of Kabul in August 2021, nations around the world are treading with caution but can still consider sending urgent relief aid, classified as humanitarian relief.

At the United Nations, Pakistan has underscored the need for addressing Afghanistan's humanitarian and economic crisis. The UN Security Council examined the policies of the Taliban, who took control of that country in August last year. The Pakistani envoy said the primary objective must be to achieve peace and stability in Afghanistan. Pakistan also looks forward to working with United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, which must address the impact of bilateral sanctions and help to unfreeze Afghanistan's assets.

As chairman of the Organization for Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Foreign Ministers Pakistan has circulated to the 15-member council a document outlining a pathway to peace, as envisaged by the 57-member organization at the last two ministerial conferences. OIC members call for sustained engagement, including in recovery, reconstruction, education, financial and material assistance, Afghanistan's access to its financial resources will be pivotal to preventing economic collapse and urging the Council to ensure that targeted sanctions do not impede the provision of humanitarian aid or economic

In addition, Afghanistan's territory must not be used as a safe haven for terrorist groups, recalled their previous statement on Afghan girls' right to education, and reiterated the central role of OIC member States, Islamic scholars and others in exchanging best practices with Afghan authorities on women's rights. OIC called on the Security Council to support all such efforts and trusted that both it and UNAMA (UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan) would consider those elements for normalizing the situation in Afghanistan.

Pakistan remains especially concerned about the terrorist attacks emanating from Afghanistan that are sponsored and financed by our adversary, an obvious reference to India. The expanded United States, China, Russia and Pakistan troika can advance peace in Afghanistan, including in addressing terrorism. Despite frustration over the lack of progress on several issues, he said, the international community's engagement with the authorities has produced progress. There are no longer thousands of civilian casualties, the political and security situation has remained relatively stable, while the threat of reprisal killings and mass exodus of refugees has thus far been avoided.

World braces for a perfect summer storm

Mohammed **Almezel**

ast year, we had quite an upbeat summer as the world began a historic recovery process after 18 months of Covid lockdowns and economic slump. Analysts, perhaps prematurely, predicted an 'unprecedented growth' worldwide. Then 2022 set in and all those optimistic projections weathered away with the first gunshot that crossed the Ukrainian border. Today the signs seem to point to a very long hot summer. The war in Ukraine continues to rage on. It looks like we are going to wait for long before the two sides are ready to stand down, most probably longer than we had thought just a few weeks ago, Nato says. We are talking years, according to Nato Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg.

Higher fuel prices tend to push up almost all other prices due to the increasing cost of transport. There is also the wheat crisis. Ukraine produces 20 per cent of the world's premium grade wheat. Russia too is a top global exporter of wheat.

Today, we are missing out on at recession" but their hands are Saturday. And as the travel will ensure a Ukraine war-style least 25 per cent of the normal wheat supply. Oil and food prices are in turn pushing inflation higher to rates the world hasn't seen in more than 40 years. Our money is worth less as the cost of living worldwide soars. A report in The Guardian published early May quoted a research by the London-based Food Foundation as saying that "millions" of people, "including 2.6 million children," in the UK regularly skip meals altogether or do not eat when they are hungry, because they simply cannot afford them.

This in the UK one of the world's richest countries. Just imagine the situation in poor countries in Asia and Africa. From here, the picture gets even gloomier as the US Federal Reserve takes charge. To slow the inflation, the Fed assumed a more hawkish position raising the interest rate by 75 basis points. It is expected to raise the rate again by the same percentage next month, despite warnings from experts that the policy will certainly slow economic activities and eventually lead to a global recession. On Wednesday, the Fed's chief, Jerome Powell, said the central bank

being forced as they attempt to tame the out-of-control inflation. Higher rates naturally lead to less borrowing and thus fewer dollars in people's pockets. That will of course lead to less spending, henceforth, a slower economic cycle.

The US stock market saw the writing on the wall. Major Wall Street indices sank for two days in a row, wiping out all the 2021 gains. Dow Jones closed Friday below 30,000 after a stark warning from Deutsche Bank that "an earlier and somewhat more severe recession" is upon us.

The bank had earlier said a recession was expected in 2023. But following the Fed's Wednesday decision, the bank said the recession will descend earlier than previously projected and will be a very painful one. The US gross domestic product (GDP) growth will "retract to "sub-1%" in the first half of 2023, followed by a -3.1% contraction in the third quarter of 2023." We are back at pandemic levels. Speaking of pandemic, the numbers of Covid cases are going up lately worldwide. More and more countries are bringing back the

face mask wearing policy again. Germany alone registered was "not trying to induce a more than 80,000 cases on

season kicks in, the numbers will expectedly multiply across the world. The Coronavirus is not going away; a long and hot summer indeed. And that is not it, unfortunately. The Middle East may have its share of this perfect summer storm. It is a little different in nature but not much unrelated. As the world's attention, especially in the West, is squarely on the Ukraine war, Turkey seems to think it can get away with its own offensive in northern Syria to establish its own 'buffer zone', supposedly aimed at alienating what Ankara says a Kurdish threat to its

southern borders. Reports from Turkey and Syria suggest that the attack is imminent. Despite US and Russian warnings — Moscow $\operatorname{told} \operatorname{Turkey} \operatorname{last} \operatorname{week} \operatorname{such} \operatorname{move}$ would be "unwise" — Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan probably thinks the Ukraine war has given him a geostrategic window of opportunity to finish the job he has been planning for years. But as reports from Syria indicate, it is not going to be an easy task. The Syrian Kurds' preparations with the help of government forces, Russian advisers, and probably Iran-sponsored militias,

conflict in the region. If history is our guide, summer is the month when military conflicts rage in the Middle East. So, we could be just weeks away from a bloody Turkey offensive.

Meanwhile, there is an already low-level war taking place in Palestine. Over the weekend, Israel launched air attacks on Gaza after it said Hamas had fired a rocket on the southern coastal city of Ashkelon. Apparently, the rocket was in response to the Israeli forces killing three Palestinians during clashes in the occupied West Bank town of Jenin. Hopefully, the skirmishes, which have been going on for months and intensified following the killing of Palestinian journalist Shereen Abu Aqleh by an Israeli sniper, will not turn into another full-blown war. Is there a chance all of this summer gloomy scenario could subside? Sure, but very little chance. The breathless pace of events points to a perfect storm on several fronts — military conflicts, economic recession, food crisis and a resurgent pandemic. But it is not too late to spare the world another tremor, and quite a painful one.

> The writer is Editor-at-large. Courtesy Gulf News



KSA, Turkiye road map to deeper relations

Sinem Cengiz

he long-awaited visit of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to Turkey on Wednesoutside of the Gulf since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. He also had stops in Egypt and Jordan — two countries that are set to participate in the Jeddah summit next month. The crown prince's visit to Turkey reciprocates President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's fence-mending trip to Saudi Arabia in April, which was the first high-level visit in years and followed intense efforts to repair their tense relations. In Erdogan's words, the visit was "a manifestation of a common will to start a new era of cooperation between two brotherly countries.

Erdogan officially welcomed the crown prince at the presidential complex, with this reception followed by one-on-one and delegation-level meetings. They discussed ways to take their bilateral relations to a much higher level. As a researcher following Turkish-Saudi relations closely, I often describe the complex ties between two of the heavyweights in the region with the metaphor of a roller coaster. Relations between Ankara and Riyadh have seen numerous ups and downs, particularly over the past two decades. In regards to the nature of their relationship, I use the term "occasional partners.

In geopolitical terms, the limitations preventing a solid strategic and institutionalized relationship between Turkey and Saudi Arabia visibly emerged in the last decade. However, now that most of the

issues that led to tensions between Ankara and Riyadh have partially vanished as the two countries move toward a new era in their bilateral ties, there is a need to move beyond the personalized nature of their relationship and institutionalize it for long-term day was part of his first tour mutual benefits. For this, the two countries need to come up with a cooperative road map that can help them address their differences in foreign policy. A solid and institutionalized road map would be more likely to stand firm against future challenges in

Economic tools, cooperation in the realm of security and, most importantly, public diplomacy could be key components in consolidating Saudi-Turkish relations. Cooperation in the social, cultural and media dimensions are also crucial to enhancing the rapprochement process and would bring long-term benefits for both sides. I hope Wednesday's meetings will pave the way for such a long-term, institutional relationship between two important countries in the region.

Erdogan's statement that affirmed Turkey's backing of Saudi Arabia's bid to host the 2030 World Expo in Riyadh was important in this regard, indicating that the two countries seem to be extending their partnership beyond the economic sphere

and into the cultural and social spheres. Although the economic factors in this rapprochement are given much attention, geopolitical and regional security conditions are more likely to be driving forces. These two countries' interest in the security and stability of the region in general and the Gulf in particular is a common ground that can be developed on a win-win basis. If Turkey and Saudi Arabia succeed in devel-

oping realistic understandings and expectations of each other, this will pave the way for the mutual trust needed for further coop-

Meanwhile, the crown prince's regional tour came ahead of US President Joe Biden's visit to Saudi Arabia next month, during which he will aim to mend ties with the Kingdom amid the oil crisis due to the Russo-Ukrainian war. The policies of the US occupy a unique position in Turkish-Saudi relations. Both Turkey and Saudi Arabia no longer trust their Western allies, which have failed to protect their partners

in Afghanistan and Ukraine The countries of the Middle East are facing serious energy and food crises, along with their internal economic problems due to both the post-COVID-19 situation and the war in Ukraine. These crises have made the other contentious issues between the region's countries insignificant. We are in a period now where domestic considerations are given more weight than foreign policy issues.

Over the past year, Ankara has embarked on a diplomatic push to reset relations with regional powers such as Israel, Egypt and the UAE, giving way to a period of greater pragmatism in Middle Eastern relations. Thus, the improving ties between Ankara and Riyadh are likely to focus on maintaining mutual interests. The two countries have complementary economies, as one specializes in the energy sector while the other focuses on the defense industry and food production.

 $The \, writer \, is \, a \, Turkish \, political \, analyst$ who specializes in Turkey's relations with the Middle East. Courtesy Arab News

Kazakhstan, Iran **Economic Coop**

Zaki Shaikh

he visit of Kazakhstan's President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev to Iran is seen as an attempt to explore safer alternatives for grain and energy exports in the current changing geopolitical environment. He arrived in Tehran on Sunday and after meeting Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi pledged to declare a 14-day visa-free regime for Iranians in Kazakhstan and establishment of a free economic zone between the two countries. In the wake of the polarization of international relations due to the conflict in Ukraine, many countries have been looking to expand relations with other regional players. According to Omid Rahimi, an Iranian expert on Central Asian affairs the countries like Iran, which are not directly involved in the conflict serve as a destination under present conditions. Tokayev's visit to Iran came a day after the arrival of the Kazakhstan-Iran-Türkiye container-transit train to Tehran on Saturday. Along with his Iranian counterpart, he took part in an online ceremony to launch this container train.

The envoy said both Iran and Kazakhstan will calibrate their relations driven by what could best serve their mutual interests. Therefore, some countries in the region, including Kazakhstan, may decide to export some of their oil and gas exports through the Persian Gulf and via the Sea of Oman. As a result, the Iranian route will be pursued actively. As both Iran and Kazakhstan are located at the intersection of the North-South and West-East corridors, their role will gain significance in ensuring food and industrial security for the entire Eurasian region.

It is recognized that the southern route via Iran is a viable route that can transport the oil and gas which Europe needs without having to cross the Russian border. It seems the option of transporting energy from the Caspian Sea through Iran may now

be considered more seriously.

Over the years, experts from the two countries pointed out the obstacles impeding the development of economic relations between the two countries. The two sides agreed to increase cooperation, by expanding rail and road transport cooperation. Various strategies to increase the volume of trade in goods and services through Iranian ports, including Bandar Abbas and the expansion of cooperation between the two countries in the Caspian Sea, and especially maritime trade using the ports of the two ountries came under discussion.

Kazakh political scientist Zamir Karazhanov says that Kazakhstan is now discussing the implementation of several joint projects with the participation of Iranian companies, which means an increase in mutual investments. Referring to the key role of Iran and Kazakhstan in the three regions of the Caspian Sea, West Asia, and Central Asia, experts emphasize the cooperation of the two countries in regional and international organizations was necessary to evade possible risks by identifying new opportunities. More so, the energy-rich Kazakhstan is landlocked and needs short and safe routes to reach open waters and world markets.

Elaheh Koulaei, an expert at the Tehran University, believes that Iran's location in the Middle East has the potential to create a wide variety of new capacities for trade, industry, services, increase national income, and consequently the accumulation of capital and development and even security for the country. She adds that Iran enjoys a key geopolitical position in the region, the location near the intersection of Asia and Europe, having the world's second-largest energy resources, mass consumer market, and the growing desire of Central Asian countries for exporting energy.

The writer is a UK-based analyst and has worked with universities in three Central Asian countries. Courtesy AA

Aftershock in Afghanistan, quake toll rises to 1,150

Country lacks the medical supplies to treat those injured

GAYAN: An aftershock took more lives Friday and threatened to pile even more misery on an area of eastern Afghanistan reeling from a powerful earthquake that state media said killed 1,150 people this week.

Among the dead from Wednesday's magnitude 6 quake are 121 children, but that figure is expected to climb, said Mohamed Ayoya, UNICEF's representative in Afghanistan. He said close to 70 children were injured.

That earthquake struck a remote, mountainous region already grappling with staggering poverty at a time when the country as a whole is spiraling deeper into economic crisis after many countries pulled back critical financing and development aid in the wake of the Taliban's takeover. On Friday, Pakistan's Meteorological Department reported a new, 4.2 magnitude quake that staterun Bakhtar News Agency reported took five more lives in hard-hit Gayan District and injured 11 people.

International aid had been keeping the country afloat, and its withdrawal left millions unable to afford food medical facilities. Nearly half the population of 38 million cannot meet their difficult to send cash into the country.



basic food needs, while some civil servants, like doctors, nurses and teachers, weren't paid for months because the Taliban government is unable to access frozen foreign reserves. Salary delays continue throughout the public sector.

Afghanistan's international isolation is also complicating relief efforts since fewer aid organizations have a presand further strained already struggling ence in the country, and international sanctions on Afghan banks make it

Despite waivers from the U.S. Treasury Department that allow money to be sent to aid groups, banks are hesitant to handle such transactions for fear of running afoul of rules anyway.

Aid groups lament that means they have to pay local staff with bags of cash, physically carried into the the country by their staff and then distributed throughout the provinces in person. The process is expensive, incurring fees along the way for transport and

Aid organizations like the local Red Crescent and U.N. agencies like the World Food Program have sent food, tents, sleeping mats and other essentials to families in Paktika province, the epicenter of the earthquake, and neighboring Khost province. Several countries have sent cargo planes of aid.

Still, residents appeared to be largely on their own to deal with the aftermath as their new Taliban-led government and the international aid community struggle to bring in help. The shoddy mountain roads leading to the affected areas were made worse by damage and rain.

Thousands of stone and mud-brick homes crumbled in the quake, which struck at night, often trapping whole families in the rubble. Many of those who survived spent the first night outside in a cold rain. Since then, villagers have been burying their dead and digging through the rubble by hand in search of survivors.

The Taliban director of the Bakhtar News Agency said Friday the death toll from the first quake had risen to 1,150 people. Abdul Wahid Rayan said at least 1,600 people were injured.

Ukraine set to withdraw from Sievierodonetsk

Russia battling for last pieces of eastern region

its troops from the ruined of troops over the border, on Feb. 24, but abandoned city of Sievierodonetsk after weeks of street fighting and killed thousands, uprooted tal Kyiv in the face of fierce bombardment, the region- millions and reduced whole al governor said, in what cities to rubble. would be a significant gain for Russia as it grinds out its offensive in the east.

occupied a town about 10 Moscow's stated war objeckm (6 miles) further south, tives, and set the stage for Ukrainian officials said on Sievierodonetsk's twin city Friday, as Moscow closed in on the last slivers of Ukrain-next main focus of fighting. ian-held territory in the industrial region of Luhansk.

cled about 2,000 Ukrainian already received the order to troops in the area. Reuters move to new positions. could not independently verify any of the battlefield smashed to pieces over many draw and conduct a tactical

Russian President Vladimir Ukrainian television.

Conservatives lost two parlia-

mentary seats on Friday, a

crushing blow to the govern-

ing party that prompted the

resignation of its chairman

and intensified doubts about

the future of Britain's prime

In Rwanda for a meet-

ing of Commonwealth

pledging to listen to voters'

a northern English indus-

minister.

KYIV: Ukraine was set to pull Putin sent tens of thousands unleashing a conflict that has

The latest Russian advances appeared to bring the Kremlin closer to taking full Russian troops also fully control of Luhansk, one of of Lysychansk to become the

Luhansk regional governor Serhiy Gaidai said troops Moscow said it had encir- in Sievierodonetsk had

"Remaining in positions months just for the sake The reports came four of staying there does not essentially nothing left there spokesperson for the regional months to the day since make sense," Gaidai said on to defend. There was no city administration told Reuters

after UK election defeats

nations, Johnson was defiant, trial seat won from Labour at a time when millions are

in the last election-suggest

southern heartlands and in after months of scandal over a vote of confidence by

Boris Johnson under pressure

Russia invaded Ukraine could not allow them to be an early advance on the capiresistance bolstered by West-

Since then Moscow and its proxies have been focused on battles along the front line in Ukraine's south and in Donbas, an eastern territory made up of Luhansk and its neighbour Donetsk.

Úkrainian forces had held out for weeks against an onslaught in Sievierodonetsk, trying to wear down Russian troops through attrition and buy time for the arrival of heavy weapons supplies.

"Our forces had to withretreat because there was left there and, secondly, we by telephone.

encircled," Oleksander Musiyenko, a Kyiv-based military analyst, said.

Ukraine's Defence Ministry said the Russians were trying to surround Lysychansk and mounting assaults on Sievierodonetsk to win full control. But spokesperson Oleksandr Motuzyanyk declined to comment on Gaidai's remarks about a withdrawal.

South of Lysychansk, Russian troops had entered the town of Hirske and fully occupied the district on Friday, municipal head Oleksiy Babchenko said.

"There is a red flag flying over the municipal administration (in Hirske)."

though 41% of his parlia-

mentary colleagues voted to

oust him, and he is under

investigation by a committee

over whether he intentionally

"I think as a government

I've got to listen to what

people are saying," Johnson

told broadcasters in Kigali

after the results. "We've got to

recognise there is more we've

son should take responsibility.

misled parliament.

got to do."

Uzbekistan's economy to grow by 3-4% in 2022: IMF

N. Korea tensions

SEOUL: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un doubled down on his nuclear arms buildup to overwhelm "hostile forces" at a key meeting where military leaders approved unspecified new operational duties for front-line army

Members of the ruling Workers' Party's Central Military Commission decided to supplement an "important military action plan" on the duties of front-line troops and further strengthen the country's nuclear war deterrent, state media said Friday.

North Korea hasn't specified the new operational duties for front-line army units, but analysts say the country could be planning to deploy battlefield nuclear weapons targeting rival South Korea along their tense border.

While North Korea's pursuit of clear-capable ballistic missiles that could reach the U.S. mainland gets much of the international attention, it is also developing a variety of nuclear-capable, short-range missiles that can target South Korea. Experts say its rhetoric around those missiles communicates a threat to proactively use them in warfare to blunt the stronger conventional forces of South Korea and the US. About 28,500 U.S. troops are stationed in the South to deter aggression from the North.

Kim during the military commission's three-day meeting that ended Thursday called for his entire army to "go all out" in carrying out the plans to bolster the nation's military muscle and consolidate "powerful self-defense capabilities for overwhelming any hostile forces and thus reliably protect

The commission's members discussed ways to strengthen the party's leadership over the entire armed forces and ratified plans for unspecified changes in "military organizational formations," N Korea's official Korean

Some analysts say North Korea's may require command-and-control changes as the country's nuclear-capahinted he might believe Johnble weapons have so far been handled

approves new front-line army duties amid

the dignity of the great country."

by the army's strategic force.

the outlook.

Inspire Pakistan condoles loss of lives in Afghanistan

ISLAMABAD: Earthquake struck the Central Region of Afghanistan impacting Paktika and Khost provinces.

The earthquake which was recorded at a depth of 10 km was report-

edly felt in neighboring provinces including Kabul, as well as in Islamabad, Pakistan and India. Affected districts identified to date include Barmal, Ziruk, Nika and Giyan in Paktika province and Spera district

"Inspire Pakistan is very concerned for the most vulnerable people affected by this tragedy. Inspire Pakistan offers its heart - felt condolences to the families of those who have lost their lives and prays for the speedy recovery of the injured."

"My heart goes out to the people of Afghanistan who are already suffering from the impact of years of conflict, economic hardship and hunger. I convey my deep condolences to the families of the victims and wish speedy recovery to the injured. We Inspire Pakistan, stand with the people of Afghanistan" noted Qaiser M. Siddiqui, Co-Founder & CEO of Inspire Pakistan.

Turkmenistan to provide aid to Afghanistan

Spokesman Report

ASHGABAT: Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan Rashid Meredov met with the Charge d'Affaires of Afghanistan in Turkmenistan Mohammad Fazel Saber.

Addressing the Afghan diplomat, the head of the Turkmen Foreign Ministry stressed that Turkmenistan had received the news of the devastating earthquake in the Afghan provinces of Khost and Paktika with deep sorrow and expressed sincere condolences and feelings of empathy to the people of this country.

The head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also announced the readiness of Turkmenistan to provide humanitarian assistance to the population of fraternal Afghanistan at the earliest possible date.

Prince Charles expresses sorrow over slavery

KIGALI: Britain's Prince Charles expressed deep sorrow over slavery in a speech to Commonwealth leaders in Rwanda on Friday and acknowledged that the roots of the organisation lay in a painful period of history.

The Commonwealth, a club of 54 countries that evolved from the British Empire, encompasses about a third of humanity and presents itself as a network of equal partners, but some member states have been calling for a reckoning with the colonial past.
"I want to acknowledge that the roots of our contemporary asso-

ciation run deep into the most painful period of our history," Charles told assembled Commonwealth leaders at the opening ceremony of a two-day summit in Kigali.

"I cannot describe the depths of my personal sorrow at the suffering of so many as I continue to deepen my own understanding of slavery's enduring impact." Britain and other European nations enslaved more than 10 million

Africans between the 15th and 19th centuries and transported them across the Atlantic to toil on plantations in the Caribbean and the Americas. Many died on the way. Commonwealth members include West African nations such as

Nigeria and Ghana, where slaves were captured, and 12 Caribbean nations where they spent the rest of their lives. The Commonwealth has not previously grappled publicly with the

legacy of slavery. Some Caribbean ministers have called for it to be discussed, including the issue of reparations, which Charles did not

"If we are to forge a common future that benefits all our citizens, we too must find new ways to acknowledge our past. Quite simply, this is a conversation whose time has come," Charles said.

UN panel finds journalist was killed by Israeli fire

NEW YORK: The United Nations said Friday that its findings showed that the shot that killed Al Jazeera TV journalist Shireen Abu Akleh on May 11 was fired by Israeli forces.

The Palestinian-American journalist, who was wearing a vest marked "Press" and a helmet, was killed on May 11 while covering an Israeli army operation in Jenin camp in the northern West Bank "We find that the shots that killed Abu Akleh came from Israeli secu-

rity forces," UN Human Rights Office spokesperson Ravina Shamdasani told reporters in Geneva.

"It is deeply disturbing that Israeli authorities have not conducted a criminal investigation." We at the UN Human Rights Office have concluded our independent monitoring into the incident.

"The shots that killed Abu Akleh and injured her colleague Ali Sammoudi came from Israeli security forces and not from indiscriminate firing by armed Palestinians, as initially claimed by Israeli authorities," she said.

She added that the information came from the Israeli military and the Palestinian attorney general.

"We have found no information suggesting that there was activity by armed Palestinians in the immediate vicinity of the journalists,"

In line with its human rights monitoring methodology, the UN rights office inspected photo, video and audio material, visited the scene, consulted experts, reviewed official communications and inter-

The findings showed that seven journalists arrived at the western entrance of the Jenin refugee camp soon after 6:00 am.

At around 6:30 am, as four of the journalists turned into a particular street, "several single, seemingly well-aimed bullets were fired towards them from the direction of the Israeli security forces.

concerns and do more to the broad appeal Johnson and fuel prices. Following the losstackle a cost-of-living crisis presented to win the 2019 Johnson has so far resistes in Tiverton and Honi-Central News Agency said. election may be fracturing. ed pressure to resign after he after what he described as ton in southwest England, "tough" results in the two Fears that Johnson could was fined for breaking lockand Wakefield in the north, possible plans to deploy tactical nuclear weapons to front-line artillery units so-called by-elections. have become an electoral down rules at his Downing Conservative Party Chairman The losses-one in the liability may prompt lawmak-Street office. Oliver Dowden resigned in a Conservatives' traditional ers to move against him again This month, he survived carefully worded letter that

struggling with rising food

Spokesman Report

TASHKENT: The Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) concluded the Article IV consultation with the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Despite shocks from the pandemic and the war in Ukraine, Uzbekistan's economy has shown resilience. The pandemic caused a sharp slowdown in 2020, particularly in trade, tourism, and transportation.

Nonetheless, real growth remained positive at 1.9 percent. Year-end inflation fell to 11 percent. In 2021, helped by government stimulus measures, growth rebounded sharply to 7.4 percent. Despite global price pressures, tight monetary policy helped reduce inflation further to 10 percent by end-2021.

With a recovery in trade

account deficit widened slightly to 7 percent of GDP. Government economic support in the form of social assistance, investment and policy lending widened the overall fiscal deficit by 2 percentage points to 6.2 percent of GDP. Despite these shocks, the

COVID-19 lockdown parties Conservative lawmakers,

authorities continued to make progress on structural reforms. Recent reforms included: liberalizing domestic prices and reducing crop placement requirements for cotton and wheat; making public procurement more transparent through a public portal that also collects information on beneficial owners; doubling the size of the social safety net; improving corporate governance by appointing more independent members of supervisory boards; selling a mid-sized state enterprise and

many smaller assets; and finaliz-

labor market.

Given Uzbekistan's close economic ties with Russia, the outlook for 2022 will depend upon spillovers from the war in Ukraine and sanctions on Russia. Remittances, trade, and financing from Russia are expected to slow, reducing growth in 2022 to 3-4 percent and increasing the current

ccount deficit to $8\frac{1}{2}$ percent. With higher global food and commodity prices, inflation is expected to remain over 10 percent. Uncertainty is high, however. Possible risks could arise from a further escalation of the war and the sanctions regime, a renewed flare-up of the pandemic, slower growth in other trading partners, higher food and energy prices, or lower gold prices. The authorities' macro-eco-

nomic policies in the near term

and remittances, the current ing laws on public debt and the are focused on mitigating the impact of the shock, by supporting the recovery, protecting vulnerable households, containing inflation, and safeguarding financial

At the same time, they intend to accelerate the pace of structural reforms to ensure strong, sustainable, and inclusive longer-term growth, while enhancing resilience. Building on the progress already made, their efforts are focused on reducing the role of the state in the economy and creating an environment conducive to private sector job creation, by further opening up markets and enhancing competition.

Executive Directors commended Uzbekistan's authorities for their decisive policy response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which contributed to a strong economic recovery in 2021. Directors noted,



however, that the spillovers from al reforms, which are critical to the war in Ukraine are slowing ensuring macroeconomic stability growth and, together with a possiand promoting inclusive growth. ble resurgence of the pandemic, Directors commended the create significant uncertainty to

authorities' commitment to fiscal Against this backdrop, they welcomed the authorities' continslowed this year, relative to the ued commitment to sound macroapproved budget, to provide additional, targeted support to vulnereconomic policies and structur-

the low risk of debt distress. Directors welcomed the author-

able households, particularly given

ities' plans for a gradual fiscal consolidation in the coming years, the introduction of medium-term fiscal and revenue frameworks. and the strengthening of the fiscal rules. They emphasized the need to continue enhancing revenue collection and spending efficiency, while addressing potential fiscal risks from state-owned enterprises (SOEs).

Directors welcomed the central bank's prompt monetary policy tightening in early 2022 and its commitment to lower inflation. which are key to anchor expectations and achieve the medisustainability. They agreed that um-term inflation target. They fiscal consolidation could be emphasized the need for continued exchange rate flexibility to mitigate spillovers from external

Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share

| Index Fluctuation | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index | | |
| Current | Prev. Close | |
| 41,051.79 | 42,716.97 | |
| Day's High | Day's Low: | |
| 42,782.34 | 40,555.41 | |
| Index Value | Change | |
| 9,622,845,614 | -1665.18 | |
| Percentage | Time | |
| -3.9% | 24 Jun, 2022 5:00 pm | |
| Europe: FTS | E 100 Index | |
| Index Value | Change | |
| 7,208.81 | +188.36 | |
| Percentage | Time | |
| + 2.68% | 24 Jun, 4:35 pm GMT+1 | |
| USA: Dow Jones I | Industrial Average | |
| Index Value | Change | |
| 31,349.08 | +671.72 | |
| Percentage | Time | |
| + 2.19% | 24 Jun, 11:42 am GMT-4 | |
| Asia Pacific: Nikk | ei Stocks Average | |
| Index Value | Change | |
| 26,491.97 | +320.72 | |
| | Time | |

Open Market Forex Rates

+1.23%

24 Jun. 3:15 pm

GMT+9

| Currency | Buying | Selling |
|-------------------|--------|---------|
| Australian Dollar | 146.69 | 147.94 |
| Bahrain Dinar | 555 | 559.5 |
| Canadian Dollar | 163.59 | 164.94 |
| China Yuan | 31.57 | 31.82 |
| Danish Krone | 30.1 | 30.45 |
| Euro | 217.5 | 220.5 |
| Hong Kong Dollar | 26.95 | 27.3 |
| Indian Rupee | 2.7 | 2.78 |
| Japanese Yen | 1.5 | 1.54 |
| Kuwaiti Dinar | 688.54 | 693.54 |
| Malaysian Ringgit | 48.04 | 48.49 |
| NewZealand \$ | 133.12 | 134.32 |
| Norwegians Krone | 21.4 | 21.7 |
| Omani Riyal | 550.26 | 554.76 |
| Qatari Riyal | 58.12 | 58.62 |
| Saudi Riyal | 55 | 55.9 |
| Singapore Dollar | 152.5 | 153.8 |
| Swedish Korona | 21 | 21.3 |
| Swiss Franc | 220.03 | 221.78 |
| Thai Bhat | 5.99 | 6.09 |
| U.A.E Dirham | 56.5 | 57.4 |
| UK Pound Sterling | 254 | 257 |
| US Dollar | 206.5 | 209.5 |

For public consultation

SECP notifies draft regulatory framework for issuance of CDS

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and **Exchange Commission of Pakistan** (SECP) has notified draft regulatory framework for 'issuance of Convertible Debt Securities (CDS) by way of right offer', for public consultation.

Regulatory framework provides mechanics through which listed companies can raise funds from existing members in the form of convertible debt.

Currently, convertible debt is being issued either by public offerings or by private placements. Under proposed framework, listed companies would be able to raise convertible debt from existing shareholders.

Proposed product would enable companies to finance projects in timely and cost-effective manner through existing members and may reduce reliance on other financial institutions and

For shareholders, it would provide an additional investment avenue and allow them to earn, while retaining the option to convert debt instrument/ sukuk into share capital.

Board of directors would be able to issue CDS among existing members in proportion to number of shares held at specific cutoff date, through a term sheet/letter of offer. For this, SECP's approval would not be required.

In line with disclosure-based regime, letter of offer would be placed on Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) website for seeking comments from the public and the regulators, if any.

Members not interested to subscribe can trade letter of offer at PSX. If 80% of the issue size is not subscribed and issuer does not have any alternate financing arrangement, right offer would be cancelled.

Convertible debt securities through right offer is prevalent in multiple jurisdictions and is considered an effective instrument in terms of time and cost compared to other financing modes.

For making Pakistan Competitive

ICCI asks PM to lead Productivity Movement

Awareness session for the business community on "Productivity & Quality" held

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) in collaboration with National Productivity Organization (NPO) organized an awareness session for the business community on "Productivity & Quality", which was a part of 1st Productivity Movement of Pakistan. The event was attended by a large number of stakeholders. A productivity walk was also organized on the occasion.

In his welcome address, Muhammad Shakeel Munir, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry appealed to the Prime Minister of Pakistan to lead the Productivity Movement in the country in order to make Pakistan a competitive market. He stressed that the business community should focus on productivity and quality to achieve better growth. He said that in this age of competitive business environment, it is very important for businesses to improve productivity of their operations and quality of their products if they have to capture better share in local and international markets.

He said that the government should provide support to the private sector in such initiatives and introduce productivity-based incentives that would make the private sector more competitive. He appreciated the initiatives of



and added that these efforts will play a positive role in spreading better awareness towards these concepts. He stressed that the private sector should fully participate in the productivity movement of NPO to enhance productivity & quality in order to compete in the world market.

Speaking at the occasion, Muhammad Alam-NPO for promoting quality and productivity gir Chaudhry, CEO NPO said that Singapore's major reasons behind Pakistan's slow growth the competitiveness of private sector.

labour productivity was USD 153,000 compared to Pakistan's USD 15000, which showed that Pakistan was way behind in improving its competitiveness. He stressed that there is a need to inculcate the nation about the importance of productivity and quality to make Pakistan a more competitive market. He said that the to organize programs that would help improve

rates of output are lack of innovation, low level of investment, technological inefficiencies and limited R&D resulting in lower productivity and non-competitiveness.

He said that the Government of Pakistan is very much committed towards improving the economic landscape of Pakistan through focusing on sustainable development approaches. This could be achieved by increasing business competitiveness, investment facilitation, value addition, export promotion and import substitution. He said that NPO is going to launch a structured Productivity Movement in Pakistan for positioning it as a competitive market through enhanced productivity.

Dr. Kamran Moosa, Chief Executive, Pakistan Institute of Quality Control (PIQC) gave a presentation to the audience on different dimensions of P&Q and gave an overview of various tools and techniques.

Ismat Gul Khattak, DG, PNAC highlighted the role of accreditations for businesses to remain relevant in the competitive global market.

Jamshaid Akhter Sheikh, Senior Vice President and Muhammad Faheem Khan Vice President ICCI thanked NPO for arranging such a use session on quality and productivity and reiterated that ICCI would work closely with NPO

Pakistan's economic system has completely failed

Industry must be more profitable than property, stock market, says Mian Zahid Hussain

55 Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Chairman country overcome econom- ering as it is very faulty hence 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 the country will be able to get loans from friendly countries and other sources after getting a loan from the IMF. Pakistan would be able to borrow eight to ten billion dollars as the debt servicing requirement for the next year is 21 billion dollars while loan rollover will also help the country avoid a default, he institutions have fed up with

Mian Zahid Hussain said that borrowing will help the ic problems for a few months damaging the economy. and this gap should be used to

completely change the dysfunctional economic system to save the country. Talking to the

business commu-

nity, the veteran business leader said that the current economic system has Rs150 billion should be tackcompletely failed and we need a new economic order based on justice and merit as friendly nations and international

supporting Pakistan.

State-run corporations wasting Rs600 billion per annum should be sold, loss-

economic system is not deliv-

es worth Rs600 billion in the power sector should be controlled, gas sector losses which have jumped to

led while improving the agriculture sector can help the country save almost \$14 billion wasted on imports.

the economic system in prac-

He said that the existing tice does not stop rulers from excessive borrowing, wastage of resources, and initiating projects which are not in the national interests. The wastage is leading to widespread poverty in the country while the faulty tax system is widening the gulf between the rich and the poor leading to restiveness.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that the new economic order must increase the volume of direct taxes, reduce indirect taxes, make the industrial sector more profitable than the property and stock market, sell failed state entities and improve laws to the international standards The business leader said that otherwise the country will have

RCCI for increasing trade volume between Pakistan, Thailand

RCCI President called on Sahebzada A. Khan Ambassador of Pakistan in Thailand



Spokesman Report

di Chamber of Commerce. called on Sahebzada A. Khan Ambassador of Pakistan in Thailand.

Chamber President Nadeem Rauf briefed the Ambassador on the ongoing activities and future programs of the Chamber. He said that the volume of trade between Pakistan and Thailand was increased. He informed that RCCI is planning to hold Conference and Awards Cere-region.

mony in Thailand aiming to promote a positive image of RAWALPINDI: Nadeem Pakistan and explore new Rauf, President, Rawalpin- avenues of trade opportunities in the region

On the occasion, Sahebzada A. Khan, Ambassador of Pakistan in Thailand, welcomed the RCCI delegation. He said that both Pakistan and Thailand have long friendly relations with each other. The Ambassador assured that the Embassy would extend all possible assistance for very low and needed to be the business conference and award ceremony. He lauded RCCI for promoting trade ties a Business Opportunities and business activities in the

Stock Market

KARACHI: Investors monitors Index on the big screen at the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSE), in Provincial Capital. Pakistan's stock market suddenly fell by three percent on Friday, shortly after the government announced the imposition of additional taxes on the corporate and banking sector in an effort aimed at stabilizing the country's fledgling economy.



Amin hails Miftah for abolishing withholding tax on IT Industry

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Amin ul Haque Friday hailed Finance and Revenue Minister Miftah Ismail for abolishing conditions of statement and withholding tax on IT industry.

The investors who wanted to invest in IT industry would get huge benefit from repealing of the capital gain tax, Amin said in a news statement while reacting to the industry.

the incentives announced by the Finance Minister for the sector in the Parliament earlier in the day. He hoped that the government would not only implement the initiatives, but also issue a clear direction to the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) in this regard.

The IT minister said implementation of these decisions in true spirit would yield the positive results and boost

MMBL recognized as Best Retail Bank in Pakistan

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Mobilink Microfinance Bank Limited (MMBL), Pakistan's largest digital bank, has been recognized for its services in offering innovative digital financial solutions at the 13th Annual Retail Banker International (RBI), Asia Trailblazer Awards 2022. MMBL won the prestigious title of 'Best Retail Bank in Pakistan' along with an honorable mention of 'Highly Commended' through its premium digital financial services application-MMBL DOST.

Organized in collaboration with Retail Banker International (RBI), UK, Middle East Economic Digest (MEED), UAE, and GlobalData (Singapore), the 13th annual edition digital financial products and servic-

brated retail banks and leaders in adapting to the modern customer in these unprecedented times. The awards program celebrated the bestin-class retail banking and consumer finance institutions and individuals for their innovative service offerings and commitment to customer excellence. For the 13th edition of the coveted awards this year, MMBL was among 50 winners selected from over 300 entries across the Asia-Pafor Excellence in Client Onboarding cific (APAC) region. The winners were announced in a virtual ceremony given ongoing COVID-19 safety protocols.

The RBI Asia Trailblazer Awards highlighted MMBL's continued efforts to introduce new innovative

of RBI Asia Trailblazers Awards cele- es to help curb the financial gap and promote financial inclusion in the Commenting on the achievement,

President & CEO MMBL, Ghazanfar Azzam said, "We are honoured to be recognized as the Best Retail Bank in



Pakistan for the second year in a row. This prestigious title is a testament to our unwavering efforts in promoting financial inclusion in the country through digitally-led, customer-centric product offerings. MMBL is consistently optimizing products and services to meet the growing financial needs of our customers.

our extensive digital capabilities to continue serving the underserved/ unserved segments of society.

The Bank, through its expanding product portfolio, has been a key enabler for millions of Pakistanis to become financially empowered. Today, a significant ratio of financial transactions is processed digitally, further cementing MMBL's place as a digitally-oriented organization committed to customer facilitation on all tiers. An insatiable drive for innovation coupled with a traditional brick-and-mortar network that expands across Pakistan, even in the most remote and inaccessible regions, has contributed to MMBL's successful journey in the last 10 years.

As Pakistan's leading digital finan-

We remain focussed on leveraging cial institution, MMBL is currently serving over 40 million registered users, including 15 million+ monthly active mobile wallets and has over 100 branches across Pakistan. The Bank strives to facilitate customers by streamlining nationwide access to simplified and convenient financial solutions. MMBL, over the past decade, has introduced multiple innovative and customized digital and financial initiatives, such as digital onboarding of customers, Self-service banking through the DOST App (available on both iOs & Android), Internet Banking, the Women Inspirational Network (WIN) program, and the Humqadam program to provide employment opportunities to the differently-abled and much more.

PCB BoG approves Rs15 bln 2022-23 budget

Enhanced and improved central contracts confirmed

跨 Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: The 69th meeting of the PCB Board of Governors, second of the calendar year, took place at the National High Performance Centre under the chairmanship of Ramiz Raja.

The BoG approved an operational activity-based annual budget for its 2022-23 fiscal year.

The PCB has budgeted a total spend of PKR15billion, with approximately 78 per cent allocated for cricket-related activities. This includes enhanced central contracts for men's and women's cricketers, men's and women's international and domestic cricket events in the 2022-23 cricket season with additional local tournaments and matches, the HBL Pakistan Super League 8 and the inaugural Pakistan Junior League.

In addition to the operational budget, and looking ahead to the ACC 50-over Asia Cup 2023 and the ICC Champions Trophy 2025 that will be held in Pakistan, the BoG approved an allocation of funds for the upgradation of the infrastructure and stadia, which includes floodlights, replay screens, player dressing rooms and new spectator chairs.

The BoG, as part of its duty of care towards its staff, also approved management's recommendation of introducing



schooling allowance for lower staff to support their children's education.

CB Chairman Ramiz Raja: "Since September 2021, the Pakistan men's cricket team has achieved an impressive 75 per cent success-rate across all formats, which is the highest amongst all the Test playing nations. This has contributed in Pakistan improving its rankings, which now stands at fifth in Tests (up by one), third in ODIs (up by three and the highest since January 2017) and third in T20Is (up by one).

With this background, and in line with our philosophy that revolves around acknowledging, appreciating and rewarding high-performing players, I am pleased with the enhancements in the 2022-23 central contracts. I remain committed to looking after our national cricketers who

bring joy to the fans and laurels for the country. These players are our pride, and always need to be well looked after and properly valued so that they can continue to flourish in their field of expertise.

"The thought-process behind splitting red and white-ball contracts is to recognise the importance of white-ball cricket in the growth and development of the game. We have four international events in the next 16 months, including two World Cups. This recognition of offering contracts to white-ball specialists will help us to eventually develop two separate squads, which could simultaneously be engaged in white and red-ball cricket. This will also allow us to have a bigger spread of talent to showcase to

"Further, and to discourage our elite

players from signing up for additional off-season events, we have allocated substantial pool of funds. This amount will be used to compensate them for their potential loss in earnings and will also manage their workload and ensure that they remain fully fit, fresh and ready when required on national duty."

The BoG approved the creation of the Pakistan Cricket Foundation as a charitable trust. This is part of the PCB's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative with an aim to look after the welfare and wellbeing of its retired cricketers, match officials, scorers and ground staff. The eligibility and qualification criteria will be announced in due course.

The BoG approved amendments to the City Cricket Associations' territorial jurisdictions in line with geographical demarcations, and also approved affiliation regulations to be complied with for future City Cricket Associations to be recognised. The documents are available on the PCB corporate website under Documents/PCB Model Constitutions.

According to the approved amendments, Balochistan will have 13 districts, Central Punjab will have 18 districts, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will have 19 districts, Northern will have 11 districts, Sindh will have 17 districts and Southern Punjab will have 14 districts.

Google launches Think Games & Gaming Growth Lab

Solution Our Correspondent

LAHORE: Google on Friday announced it has successfully launched Think Games, Pakistan's first thought leadership and knowledge-sharing event for game developers, which saw over 1,600 attendees. First announced in May 2022, the two-day event aimed to create an environment for Google leaders and local gaming experts to share insights, tools, and best experts from Google and the practices to help developers create, grow and scale worldclass games.

Google today also celebrated the graduation of ation program designed to stan's gaming industry and ings. Participants underwent global gaming powerhouse. global gaming industry.



training workshops and deepdive consultations where they had access to a wide range of gaming industry. A total of 54 mobile gaming studios graduated today after completing the program.

Think Games and GGL

Globally, the gaming industry is expected to reach \$219 billion in 2024. Some of the local game developers such as Hazel Mobile Group, Game District, and GeniTeam have gained recognition on the international stage.

Farhan Qureshi, Google the Gaming Growth Lab marked the latest efforts by Regional Director for Paki-(GGL), an 11-week acceler- Google to help grow Paki- stan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, said, "We're excithelp emerging mobile game put it on the world map. ed to see the progress of our in March 2022, MicZon has studios in Pakistan reach Gaming continues to be key initiatives Think Games seen a 35% increase in app their full potential by address- one of the biggest indus- and Gaming Growth Lab as downloads and revenue, and ing their business challenges tries worldwide and Paki- we strive to support Pakistan is forecasting a 20% year-onand expanding their offer- stan is well-positioned to be a to become a top player in the

On top of a vibrant gaming ecosystem that is supported by companies like Google, the country has all the components it needs, among them a rising community of young, diverse, and entrepreneurial gaming developers who have the ambition and hunger to build great games. Our work is ongoing and through our various efforts, we hope to help Pakistani developers build great games for the world."

Among the GGL graduates is MicZon, a mobile gaming publishing company founded by Nouman Sharif in 2018. The company's key learnings from the GGL include strategies on user acquisition and games monetization. Since joining the program year growth in downloads and

FIFA increases squads to 26 players for World Cup

PARIS: FIFA will allow countries to select up to 26 players for the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, increasing the maximum squad size by three for the November 21-December 18 tour-

"The number of players to be included on the final list has been increased to at least 23 and a maximum of 26," FIFA said in a statement. World football's governing body said the decision to expand squads was made "given the need to retain additional flexibility due to the unique timing" of this year's competition, which will interrupt the European club season. FIFA also took into account the "broader context of the disruptive effects caused by the Covid-19 pandemic on squads before and during tournaments". UEFA adopted similar changes for Euro 2020 last year, meeting demand from coaches who feared they could lose players due to coronavirus. National teams had named squads of 23 players at the World Cup and European Championship ever since the 2002 World Cup in Japan and South Korea. Prior to that only 22 players were allowed in each squad at international tournaments. Last week football's rules body IFAB approved the permanent use of five substitutes for all top-level matches and said teams can now name 15 substitutes on a team sheet instead of 12.

POA EC celebrates World Olympic Day

KARACHI: The Pakistan Olympic Association Environment Commission organized a colorful programme at KMC Sports Complex, in which Hockey Olympian Islahuddin Siddiqui, Olympian Boxer Malang Baloch, KDA Director General Sved Muhammad Ali Shah, South Asian Karate Gold Medalist Kulsoom Hazara, Boxer Razia Bano, POA Vice President Fatima Lakhani, Member POA Women Commission Tehmina Asif, SOA Secretary Ahmed Ali Rajput, KSF Chairman Asif Azeem, President Waseem Hashmi, Fruit Nation's Faisal Khan, KDA Member Finance Shujaat Hussain, Director Sports Ayaz Munshi, Paralympic special athletes participated in overwhelming number with much zeal and fervor to add festive look to the

On the occasion, a specially-prepared cake on the theme of Olympic logo was



cut which added to the festivities.

Later, the Olympians along with other guests planted saplings of trees as part of Green Pakistan Initiative to combat pollution. While special children took part in a festival match.

Speaking on the occasion, Olympian Islahuddin Siddiqui said that Olympics celebrations are an old tradition which originated in Greek and today the objective of Olympics is to bring people from around the globe together

from diverse origins at one platform of Olympics and to highlight the importance of sports in promoting interfaith harmony, peace and prosperity in the society at local and global level through sports.

He congratulated the Environment Commission on holding such a grand programme and said that overwhelming participation by sports persons and representatives of various sports bodies indicate that we want to promote augury.

sports and healthy activities in our city. And that we are keen to contribute their bit to such initiatives

KDA Director Syed Muhammad Ali Shah said that Olympic Day celebrations are to spread the message to seeking togetherness, highlighting the power that sport has to build a better world, by bringing people together in peace and harmony. As part of this, people are encouraged to move together for peace through a range of local and international activities.

He appealed to all countrymen specially sportsperson to take part in the tree plantation drive by POA Environment Commission as part of Green Pakistan initiative to overcome air pollution.

Pakistan Olympic Association Environment Commission (POAEC) Member Tehmina Asif said that patronage by civic bodies like the KDA and KMC for sports is a welcome

German Ambassador meets Olympian Khawaja Junaid



Our Correspondent

LAHORE: German Ambassador Bernhard Schlagheck met with the Olympian Khawaja Junaid CEO SBP Khawaja Junaid Hockey Academy and Junaid Chattha Director SBP Khawaja Junaid Hockey Academy

Germany and Pakistan had a great relationship from last 70 years. If you talk about sports than biggest bond between two countries is hockey. German Ambassador expressed his great support for the hockey revival in Pakistan.

I have witnessed a glorious past of Pakistan Hockey. And i really want Pakistan Hockey on top again. Whatever help is needed from the Germany, Embassy will give its best. Sports is a tool to raise standards and togetherness of the society.

Olympian Khawaja Junaid paid his gratitude to the Ambassador for his two years services in Pakistan. and thanked Embassy for taking interest for the betterment of Pakistan Hockey.

PUBG Mobile strives to promote Pakistan's beautiful landscapes



Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Taking inspiration from the vision of Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) to help mainstream tourism in the country, PUBG MOBILE, Pakistan's No. 1 gaming platform, is working towards bringing attention to Pakistan's stunning scenery and beautiful culture both online as well as offline, which can be further supported with patronage from Pakistan's foremost tourism authority.

From the rivers in Sindh and Punjab to the snow-capped mountains in Gilgit-Baltistan, PUBG MOBILE Pakistan's users will get to travel across the plains and plateaus and numerous national monuments through PUBGM's in-game activity that takes players on a virtual tour of the country from June 13 to July 3.

During the campaign, PUBG MOBILE's users will win exciting rizes upon completing tasks while immersing themselves in the social and cultural experience that the region offers.

Ulan Bator Grand Slam of judo kicks off

ULAN BATOR: The Ulan Bator Grand Slam 2022 kicked off in Mongolia's capital on Friday.

A total of 255 judokas from 30 countries and regions are competing in the tournament which is being co-organized by the Mongolian Judo Association, the International Judo Federation, and the municipal government of Mongolia's capital Ulan Bator.

The tournament is the first qualifying round for the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, and has a total prize fund of 154,000 euros. The event is scheduled to finish on Sunday.

Newcastle sign Pope from Burnley

LONDON: Newcastle signed England goalkeeper Nick Pope from Burnley in a deal worth a reported £10 million (\$12 million) on Thursday. Pope agreed a four-year contract with Eddie Howe's side after passing a medical on Tyneside. The 30-year-old, who has eight England caps, established himself as one of his country's top keepers during 141 league appearances for the Clarets.

Newcastle moved for Pope after Burnley were relegated to the Championship last season. "Now I'm here, I can't wait to get started," Pope said. "The deal has taken a couple of weeks to come to fruition, but it got over the line really quickly and I'm delighted to be here and I'm really looking forward to getting stuck into it." Pope will provide stiff competition for Newcastle's current first choice keeper Martin Dubravka. He kept nine Premier League clean sheets last season but could not prevent Burnley from slipping out of the top-flight.

O'Callaghan wins world 100m freestyle title

BUDAPEST: Australian 18-year- took bronze. old Mollie O'Callaghan overcame "panic" to edge world record holder Sarah Sjostrom and become the youngest women's 100m freestyle world champion in more than 30

years on Thursday. Lilly King added to her collection of gold medals when she won the women's 200m breaststroke while another American veteran Ryan Murphy won the men's 200m backstroke.

Australian Zac Stubblety-Cook took the men's 200m breaststroke.

The American men finished the evening by winning the mens 200m relay.

O'Callaghan, a double Olympic relay gold medallist, edged the 28-year-old Sjostrom of Sweden by 0.13sec. American Torri Huske

At 18 years and 82 days, she became the youngest winner of the 100m freestyle since 1991, when Nicole Haislett of the US won the title at 18 years and 22 days.

O'Callaghan said she had suffered badly from pre-race

"It was bad, the worst ever," she said."I was panicking in my bed, having a little bit of a cramp in my leg, just feeling dizzy, feeling out of it, starting to panic, but I knew I had my teammates there... I guess that kind of uplifted me

It was Sjostrom's 16th World Championship medal but while she has eight golds, she has never won the 100m free. This was her fourth silver.

She also has world-championship and Olympic bronzes in the race. King had dominated the 50m and 100m breaststroke at the last two world championships and also won gold in the 2016 Olympics in the 100m breaststroke.

After she missed a medal in the 100m breast on Tuesday, her college coach, Ray Looze, told American media that she was racing at "80 percent," On Thursday, she came from fifth to grab victory in 2min 22.41sec. Australian Jenna Strauch was second at 0.63 with American Kate Doug-

"It's really nice to be able to complete the set, I guess I'm a distance swimmer now," said King after her first gold at the longest breaststroke distance.

"Anytime I have a bad swim I feel like I have a lot of haters out there, so just to prove them wrong is good," she saidMurphy ended a long streak of duller colored medals when he won the men's 200m backstroke.

Since grabbing two individual Olympic golds in Rio in 2016, the American had collected six silvers and two bronzes in Olympics and worlds, including a silver in the 100m backstroke in Budapest.

The 26-year-old won in 1:54.52, 0.64sec ahead of Briton Luke Greenbank with another American, Shaine Casas third."That ws a far from perfect race but I

managed it," Murphy said. Australian Stubblety-Cook, the Olympic champion, came from



last after the first lap to win the Hanaguruma and Erik Persson,

men's 200m breaststroke. Dutchman Caspar Corbeau started off at world record pace, but faded and Stubblety-Cook, Yu who had conserved energy at the back, came through

The Australian won in 2:07.07, 1.31sec ahead of the Japanese and

the Swede who tied for the silver.

Kristof Milak, the Hungarian who said after winning the 200m butterfly that the Duna "is my pool," strolled out for butterfly 100m semis like a lord strolling his estate.

Milak has struggled to catch American Olympic and world champion Caeleb Dressel in the 100m butterfly. With the American heading home, the Hungarian star justified his aura of confidence by comfortably swimming the fastest time.

He finished in 50.14sec, 0.67sec quicker than Naoki Mizunuma

In the 50m, another event that Dressel has dominated in recent seasons, Briton Benjamin Proud was fastest in the semis.