



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ

اِسْمٰی مَلِكِ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ نَبِيَّانِ كَبِيْرَيْنِ
كَفَرَاكَ نَبِيَّانِ كَبِيْرَيْنِ
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رَسُوْلِكَ مُحَمَّدٍ
وَعَلٰى اٰلِهِ
وَسَلْمٍ
(جنگلاری، صحت نم، 3868)

Barkat Rice Mills (Pvt) Limited

RAWALPINDI

Strategic healthcare reforms on cards: Sufi

Head of PM's Strategic Reforms Salman Sufi says the government has decided to initiate strategic research and development reforms in specialized healthcare. These reforms would include assisting and enhancing the number of entities for the local development of specialized equipment for cerebral palsy, prosthetics and assistive devices.



'Imported govt loots up to Rs1100b:Qureshi

VP PTI Shah Mehmood Qureshi says the imported government has plundered up to Rs1100 billion from the country. The ruling imported government came into power just to remove and finish all their corruption cases. They have failed to give relief to the citizens of Pakistan. The amendments in the NAB are made just to transfer their cases into other courts," the former foreign minister of Pakistan told the media.

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Govt ends CNIC condition USC



Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The federal government on Sunday announced to abolish the need to submit a copy of your CNIC to shop at a utility store. According to details, the one-time password system has also been discontinued to shop at utility stores. The shoppers do not have to submit a copy of the CNIC to shop at any utility store from now on. The shoppers will only have to show their original CNIC at the counter to buy subsidized items at the utility store. Shoppers will receive a confirmation message on a mobile number registered under their name.

According to the government rate list, the price for sugar at a utility store is Rs70/kg, Ghee 300/kg while a 10 kg flour bag is Rs400. Officials claim that over 1500 items are being sold at subsidized rates at the utility stores. However, the Utility Stores Corporation on Thursday announced to further increase in the prices of pulses and other food items across all utility stores in the country. According to a notification, the price of 'Dal Chana' has been increased by Rs28 to Rs190, while the price of 'Daal Masoor' has been jacked up by Rs55 to Rs270 per kilo. Similarly, prices of 'White Chana' increased by Rs87 per kilogram to Rs 300 per kg, as per the notification. The recent increase in prices of food items comes after the government hiked fuel prices for the second time in one week.

Law & order

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sahrif chairing a meeting on law and order situation of the country in Lahore on Sunday.



Photo: APP

No compromise on national security, defence: PM

Says entire nation united on counter-terrorism narrative

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday said that no compromises can be made when it comes to Pakistan's security and defence. He said that the entire nation is on same page on the narrative against terrorism and stands by its armed forces and law enforcement agencies. He stated this while chairing a meeting on law and order situation of the country in Lahore on Sunday. He said efforts will continue till eradication of terrorism, and no compromise will be made for the defence of the motherland.

He expressed regret over ignoring the role of the provinces in the National Action Plan by previous governments that

increased terrorism and vowed to enhance provincial role in anti-terror combat through NAP. The Prime Minister said that a good law and order in

PM felicitates COAS on conferment of King Abdulaziz Medal

country is prerequisite for restoration of economy of the country and its growth. Prime Minister lauded the performance of law enforcement agencies for fulfilling FATF conditions. Shehbaz Sharif was apprised about the measures for the eradication of terrorism and the threats posed

in this regard.

The premier urged the law enforcement agencies (LEAs) to improve their performance and said that it was the only way to change the perception of the public. During the meeting, which was also attended by Punjab Chief Minister Hamza Shehbaz, Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah, Deputy Speaker of the Punjab Assembly Dost Muhammad Mazari, and other senior officials, the prime minister was apprised of the latest law and order situation in the country, while the situation in Punjab was also discussed.

After being briefed about the eradication of terrorism from the country and the threats posed in this regard, the premier said that the entire nation was on the

same page with the government when it came to fighting terrorism and terrorist elements. "The people of Pakistan stand by their armed forces and law enforcement agencies," PM Shehbaz said, adding that the government will continue its struggle till the complete eradication of terrorism from the country.

The premier then added that when it comes to the security and defence of Pakistan, no compromises can be made. Shedding light on the role of provinces in the National Action Plan, the premier said that the participation of provinces will be restored. "Ignoring the role of provinces in the National Action Plan over the last four years has increased terrorism in the country," he said.

COAS awarded King Abdulaziz Medal of Excellent Class

MBS confers Order of King Abdulaziz on Gen Bajwa

Staff Report

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa has been awarded the King Abdulaziz Medal of Excellent Class, army's media wing said on Sunday. According to Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR), General Qamar Javed Bajwa, who is on an official visit to KSA, met with Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia Muhammad Bin Salman in Jeddah to discuss strengthening bilateral relations between the two countries.

During the meeting, matters related to expanding military cooperation, bilateral relations and steps for uniting Muslim ummah were discussed. COAS said that Saudi Arabia has a special place in Muslim ummah and Pakistan also attaches great importance to



its brotherly ties with the kingdom.

It further stated that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia agreed upon enhancing defence cooperation in the fields of joint training, air defence, counter-terrorism and communication and information domain. They also agreed to further enhance cordial relations and a deep spirit of brotherhood into an enduring strategic partnership, while being vital players in the region with significant responsibility towards the unity of the Muslim Ummah.

Pakistan seeks \$2b increase in IMF programme

Pakistan, IMF deal after budget approval

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is trying to increase the International Monetary Fund (IMF) loan programme by \$2 billion. Sources privy to the development said, Pakistan has been assured by the IMF to provide documents before the staff-level agreement on the resumption of the loan program and the draft Memorandum of Economics and Financial Policy will be provided on Monday. In this regard, the sources further said that Pakistan has requested to increase the size of the loan program from \$6bn to \$8bn and also one-year extension in the duration of the program. While Pakistan has already received \$3bn out of the current \$6bn programme.

The talks between the Pakistani authorities and IMF

staff will now resume after the approval of the budget for incoming fiscal year 2022-23, during which the two parties will strike a deal for a loan facility. It may be recalled that the Fund confirmed major progress in Pakistan-IMF parleys last week. Sources within the Ministry of Finance said that the talks are expected to resume on June 28, and Finance Minister Miftah Ismail and State Bank of Pakistan governor will sign the contract on Pakistan's behalf.

The sources further stated that Pakistan has requested IMF to enhance the programme to \$8 billion instead of \$6 billion and asked for an extension of a year to prolong the programme till 2024.

PML-N deeply attached to Kashmir cause: Marriyum

Says both the leaders discuss Kashmir Freedom Movement at every forum

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Maryam Aurangzeb has said that PML-N leader Nawaz Sharif and Pakistan Prime Minister Mian Shahbaz Sharif are deeply attached to the Kashmir cause. Both the leaders discuss the Kashmir Freedom Movement at every forum. The present government will express solidarity with Kashmiris on August 5 against the Indian move.

She expressed these views while talking to senior Hurriyat leader and Chairman Jammu and Kashmir Salvation Movement President Altaf Ahmed Bhat. She further said that, in this regard, embassies around the world are being instructed to expose the Indian initiative. PML-N has not forgotten the brothers of occupied Kashmir even for a moment. The present government continues to provide moral, political and diplomatic support to Kashmiris in line with Nawaz Sharif's vision.

She added that The steps taken by India on August 5



have not been recognized by the government of Pakistan before or now. Kashmir is a disputed territory whose future remains to be decided. And it can only be solved by giving the Kashmiri people to decide on their future vis-a-vis the referendum. Kashmiris are fighting for their birthright, which has been recognized by the United Nations (UN). The United Nations should implement its resolutions on Kashmir and give Kashmiris their birthright.

Yesterday, Kashmiri Hurriyat Leader and Chairman of Jammu and Kashmir Salvation Movement (J&KSM) Altaf Ahmed

Buha called on the Federal Minister of Information and Broadcasting at her residence and congratulated her on assuming the portfolio of Information Ministry. Former Mayor Rawalpindi Sardar Naseem Khan and Tahira Aurangzeb, mother of the Federal Minister were also present on occasion. Federal Minister for Information Maryam Aurangzeb said that Kashmir and Pakistan are inseparable and cannot be separated from each other. Leaders of Hurriyat and Kashmiri people have made immense sacrifices for their freedom which cannot be ignored.

Serving people is basic goal of politics: NA Speaker

Staff Reporter

GUJAR KHAN: Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf has said that politics is to serve people. He said that resolving challenges and issue of his people in Gujjar Khan has always been his priority. He said that all politicians strive to resolve the issues of common people. He expressed these views while inaugurating the upgraded Gas Safety Management System in Gujjar Khan.

While addressing a large gathering on the occasion, Speaker Raja Pervez Ashraf resolved to continue work for serving people of Gujjar Khan. He also said that provision of basic services at the door step of each citizen is goal of each politician. He also said that all political leaders share the same goal of upgrading the life of their people. Earlier, Speaker Raja Pervez Ashraf was warmly welcomed by people of his constituency.

'PTI will defeat thieves having umpire's support': Imran Khan

Says no one trusts illegitimate government, ECP

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman and former prime minister Imran Khan has said that his political party will defeat the 'thieves' in the Punjab by-polls despite 'they are having the support of the umpire'. Imran Khan was addressing the workers' convention in the PP-158 constituency of Lahore today ahead of by-polls. He said that the turncoats will never get succeeded at any cost in the upcoming by-polls in their constituencies.

"It is not the election of a single constituency but it is the election of Pakistan. Thieves have been imposed on us but the nation is now resisting these thieves. These thieves can only win [the elections] with the support of the umpire." "We have to defeat these thieves despite they are enjoying the support of the umpire. The whole country is watching the fate of the by-elections. The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has lost the nation's confidence and it is no more impartial."

"The by-elections will predict the results of the next general elections. We knew very well who is supporting these thieves. ECP is fully biased." The PTI chairman asked party workers to convey his message through a door-to-door campaign to awaken the nation. He said that the youth will have to keep a close eye on all polling



stations. Khan said that the current rulers are worshippers of the United

Imran Khan urges nation to reject turncoats in Punjab by-elections

States (US) and PTI will defeat the US slaves and dacoits.

He slammed the present government for massively hiking the inflation and petroleum products prices following the directives of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). He vowed that PTI will banish the dacoits from the

country after winning the elections. Earlier, Imran Khan urged the nation to reject turncoats in the upcoming Punjab by-elections. He made the statement while addressing a workers' convention in PP-168 Lahore today. Imran Khan asked the party workers to be ready for defeating the turncoats as they disgrace the people's mandate by selling their conscience.

He said the incumbent government is illegitimate and the Election Commission is also biased, therefore no one has trust in it. Imran Khan said that they have to reach out to people in order to prepare them. It not just the election of one constituency but of Pakistan. "Under no circumstances will the turncoats succeed in their constituencies," he said.

Condolence

LARKANA: Consul General United Arab Emirates Bakhit Atiq Al-Rumiti along with a delegation is offering Fateha for the departed soul of mother of PPP Chairman Asif Ali Zardari here on Sunday.



Photo: PID

Punjab

Experts fear dengue resurgence in Lahore

LAHORE: After an increase in the number of COVID-19 cases, a dengue outbreak has been feared in Punjab's provincial capital, Lahore. According to details, after the coronavirus in Lahore, the threat of dengue also began to loom after heavy rains, and the authorities expressed fears of dengue spreading in the city after the rains. The Punjab chief secretary issued high-risk alerts in 10 towns of Lahore and secretaries were posted in the said areas. The secretaries will send their report to the Secretary, Department of Primary and Secondary Health Punjab.

It may be recalled that the rate of coronavirus cases is also increasing in Punjab province, while the positivity rate has reached 2.82 per cent in Lahore. Dengue is a mosquito-borne viral disease that has rapidly spread in recent years around the world. These mosquitoes are also vectors of chikungunya, yellow fever and Zika viruses. Agencies

Not foreign, but mine conspiracy ousts PTI govt: Fazl

Says JUI-F gathered all political parties against Imran Khan

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman has said that the PTI government came into power with illegitimacy and fraud. It was not foreign but Fazlur Rehman's conspiracy that ousted the former Prime Minister Imran Khan. Addressing the seminar, he said that our elders faced the trials with great bravery and rendered valuable religious services. We must focus on our history. The sacrifices of our forefathers guide us. Our struggle is for the survival of our ideology, beliefs and mission, he said.

The JUI-F Chief explained that the United States and the Western world are using their energies to destroy Islam, adding that our politicians are also have vested interest and the constitution is at the target today. He further said that it will take time to get the nation out of the quagmire in which it sank. Peace and economy are interlinked, without peace there can be no economic development.

Fazlur Rehman said that his party had

gathered all political parties to a platform against the previous government led by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). He said that their elders had performed notable religious services for the nation and it was necessary to pay attention on the history to seek guidance from the sacrifices of the elders. He said that the nation could only be united over the Constitution. "The previous government [of PTI] came into power through vote-rigging and other illegal means. We have gathered all political parties to a platform against the ineligible government."

"It was necessary for the political parties to gather their force on a single platform after 2018 general elections. The PTI government had created the economic crisis in the country under a plan and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project was deliberately pushed back in accordance with a foreign agenda." He alleged that Imran Khan had initiated a false narrative of a threat letter and his assassination plot which was even rejected by the United States (US).

Fazlur Rehman detailed that he tried

to build consensus among the political parties and ran a strong movement against the PTI government. He added that the political parties, however, got partial success as they have to bring the country out of crisis now. The JUI-F chief alleged that the conclusion of the PTI foreign funding case is deliberately being delayed. He said that the national institutions are backing the present government and all political parties will fight the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Financial Action Task Force (FATF).

He said that PTI Chairman Imran Khan was not removed from power through any foreign conspiracy as he claims, but it was him who was responsible for Khan's ouster. Fazl censured the former premier and said that first, he kept waving an alleged threat letter before the masses and then resorted to saying that his life was in danger.

The United States has denied sending any threat letter, then who is supposed to kill you? The security institutions of the country have also ruled out allegations of a conspiracy and have proved that you were lying," Fazl told Khan.

Reunification

Sattar invites all MQM factions to sit together

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Federal Ministers Ayaz Sadiq and Khurram Dastagir on Sunday called on former MQM-P leader Dr. Farooq Sattar and condoled with him over the demise of his mother. "I am here to condole over the death of Farooq Sattar's mother," Sadiq said, adding that he had a 20-year relationship with Sattar, who still addresses him as 'speaker sahib'. He said that they were tough periods during their political journey but they did not discontinue contact with each other.

"The government in Islamabad is a unity government and it will be inappropriate to say that a single party could decide the fate of 220 million people of the country," Economic Affairs Minister Ayaz Sadiq said. He said that parties outside the Parliament should also be considered stakeholders. "At one time, Farooq Sattar



led 25 MNAs in the Parliament," he said.

He reiterated that Nawaz Sharif will return to the country and he will be served justice in a case where he was disqualified only for not receiving a salary from his son. Speaking on the occasion, Farooq Sattar invited all factions of the MQM to unite and said that Khalid Maqbool, Afaq Ahmed, Mustafa Kamal should sit together. "They should sit together for the interest of the urban centers of the province," he said.

ECP fails in holding peaceful Sindh LG polls: JUI-F

Bureau report

LARKANA: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) has said the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) failed in discharging its duties of holding peaceful elections in the first phase of LG polls in Sindh.

JUI-F Sindh secretary general Rashid Mehmood Soomro in his reaction to the first phase of LG polls in Sindh, said the process of election was full of riots and alleged rigging. ECP failed in discharging its duties, he said and added that JUI-F polling agents in Jacobabad, Pano Aqil and Kandhkot were abducted.

The voting process ended for the first phase of the local government elections in 14 districts from four divisions of Sindh being held Sunday and the counting of votes is underway amid reports of violence and clashes in several districts. Some incidents of violence, clashes, and attacks on polling officials were also reported in different areas of the province.

The situation became tense when a group of armed people attacked the social security polling station in Nawabshah and held the polling staff hostage, according to the presiding officer. Later, they fled the polling station along with the election material, he added. Regional Election Commissioner Naveed Aziz informed in writing to the concerned SSP about the incident.

Pak-IMF deal to be sealed today: Govt

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The Pak-IMF deal providing Pakistan with the \$1 billion loans will be sealed by tomorrow as IMF plans to hand over Pakistan the economic and financial policy. According to the finance ministry, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) will hand over the economic and financial policy for the renewed deal providing an economic relief package to Pakistan. Finance Minister Mifta Ismail said in the NA session that although the country is rife with negative sentiments expressed by many financial quarters it looks very likely that the restoration of the IMF programme is in the offing.

Keeping in view the erratic policies followed by successive governments in respect of managing the economy almost all international financial institutions have become wary while dealing with Pakistan. Unfortunately, instead of the tendency to adopt double-dealing as the primary method to tackle financial difficulties, Pakistani financial managers consider it to be an essential part of their negotiation strategy that is deeply resented by donor agencies. Moreover, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had asserted that the terms with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) had been finalised and the deal will close soon, barring any other conditions set by the global lender.

Singh LG polls

MQM-P threatens to quit coalition govt over rigging

KARACHI: MQM-P leader Waseem Akhtar has demanded of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) immediately halt the election process in Sukkur, Mirpurkhas, and Nawabshah pointing out anomalies in the election process. "We do not want fingers to be pointed towards the ECP after the way local government elections are being held," he said while addressing a press conference in Karachi. Waseem Akhtar said that fair and free elections are not possible in the current atmosphere and said

that at some polling stations, there are no ballot papers while voters have also stayed away from the process after violent incidents.

He said that the entire media was running footage of ballot papers being forcefully taken away during the polls, raising questions on the claim of free and fair elections. He lamented that there was no progress on agreement with PPP and the prime minister has formed a committee to look into the matter. "If progress is not being made on the agreement then we will be forced

to decide our future with this government," he warned. He blamed that urban centres are deliberately mixed with rural areas to damage the political stake of MQM-P.

"I want to tell Asif Zardari that this is not democracy. There should not be such delimitations that are aimed at damaging MQM-P," he said and added that Karachi was already counted as half in the population census. He said that the MQM-P finalized agreements in Centre and province before joining the government. Agencies

Shah Zain calls on CM Hamza

Steps against drug abuse & trafficking came under discussion

LAHORE: Minister for Narcotics Control Shahzain Bugti called on Punjab Chief Minister Hamza Shahbaz here on Sunday. During the meeting, measures against drug abuse and trafficking came under discussion. They agreed to increase cooperation against narcotics and to adopt a concrete strategy to save the youth from the scourge of drugs. Inter-provincial coordination, measures against drug abuse and anti-smuggling were discussed. The meeting also discussed the strategy to save youth from narcotics.

On the occasion, the chief minister said that it was a time to take strict action against the narcotic peddlers and smugglers, adding that all provinces have to work together to root out smuggling. He said that Punjab government was taking effective measures to eliminate drug trafficking. He apprised Shah Zain Bugti about the efforts being made to eradicate narcotics from the province and said that surveillance against narcotic peddlers and smugglers had been tightened.



He maintained that the youth was the future of the country and those spreading poison in their veins do not deserve any leniency. Federal Minister Shah Zain Bugti stressed upon enhancing coop-

eration between the provinces for stamping out narcotics. Both the leaders were agreed to formulate a solid mechanism in order to save the young generation from narcotics. Agencies

MoS leads Pak delegation at CHOGM

Khar interacts with Australian, British, UN and other leaders

Staff Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Hina Rabbani Khar has led a delegation of Pakistan at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) held in Kigali, Rwanda on June 24-25. Themed as 'Delivering a common future: connecting, innovating, and Transforming', the summit discussed the issues concerning the Commonwealth, including post-covid economic recovery, disruptions caused by pandemic and conflict, the challenge of climate change and sustainable development, promotion of democratic values and fundamental freedoms and enhancement of trade among other matters.

The summit which was convened after a hiatus of nearly four years, was

one of the largest in-person gatherings of heads of government following the pandemic. It provided a useful opportunity for the member states to take stock and set the organizational agenda for the next two years. As head of the Pakistan delegation, Minister of State Khar represented Pakistan at the CHOGM plenary, the retreat and the intergenerational dialogue. She also participated actively in Commonwealth Foreign Affairs Ministerial Meeting held on June 23 in the run up to the Summit. The minister held productive bilateral meetings with the Deputy Prime Minister of Australia as well as Foreign Ministers of Kenya, Tanzania, Singapore, New Zealand, Sierra Leone, Jamaica and Dominica, and the UK's Minister for South Asia, Commonwealth and the UN.



On the sidelines, she interacted among others with the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall; President Paul Kagame of Rwanda, Prime Minister Boris Johnson of the UK, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau of Canada and President UN General Assembly Abdulla Shahid. At the intergenerational dialogue, Pakistan was showcased as the Commonwealth member

from Asia representing youth potential, along with Canada, Barbados and Samoa from the Americas-Europe, the Caribbean and the Pacific respectively. In a specially recorded and telecast video message Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif announced hosting the 10th Commonwealth Youth Ministerial Meeting in Islamabad in January 2023.

Leadership's role is crucial for Pakistan's progress: Arif Alvi

President says Charter of Economy seems a very promising idea for stability of economy

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD/KARACHI: The role of leadership is very crucial in challenging times; it is about understanding issues and being persistent in the pursuit of solutions. If the leadership is clear-headed, it can lead the nation on the path to progress.

This was stated by Dr. Arif Alvi, President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, in an exclusive interview with Muhammad Azfar Ahsan, CEO and Founder Corporate Pakistan Group and Nutshell Group.

He said that stability in the economy does not happen overnight; it needs sustainable efforts for an elected government based on competent people with the right skill set to address issues of public interest. In Pakistan, unfortunately, public representatives become part of the assemblies on the basis of relationships in different communities.

Dr. Alvi said that the Charter of Economy seems a very promising idea for the stability of the economy, but it is challenging in a country where different political parties have starkly different political ideologies; however, the best course of action for economic progress is a democratic setup which is empowered through votes.

Pakistan has fared far better than world economies during the last few



years, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, the President said. He hoped that Pakistan will soon get out of the ongoing crisis, which has a lot to do with global inflationary trends as well as domestic uncertainties.

"I am optimistic that the situation will get better in Pakistan, which was first the victim of a long wave of terrorism that kept the foreign investors at bay. By the grace of God, we fought well against terrorists and prevailed. Then the COVID-19 pandemic came, and Pakistan fought that battle well too," the President further said.

He emphasized that the adoption of

knowledge and technology in the system is needed to bring change in our society, and this can be pursued better by the private sector than government institutions, but the policies should be consistent, and their implementation should be speedy.

Dr. Alvi said that he is a firm believer that the focus of Parliament and leadership should be on access to education for the masses. "There is a huge gap in education in Pakistan; it is going to be the single biggest issue in the next ten years. Uneducated people should receive suitable skills, and those with a mediocre educational background should

be equipped with a better skill set," he added.

The President praised the overseas Pakistanis for their unwavering support and valuable contribution to the economy, urging them to provide intellectual support for the empowerment of the Pakistani people, mainly through education.

The overseas Pakistani diaspora comprises workers, largely in the Middle Eastern countries, but a significant section, of up to 10%, is well settled in different countries; they can play a significant role for the development of Pakistan, the President said. "I requested them to adopt health and education institutions in Pakistan as the world needs human intellect. For instance, in cyber defense and cyber protection, the world needs 80 million professionals. I told them that every professional they train in this field will get work. There are so many other fields that need human resources," he added.

Speaking about the geopolitical situation, Dr. Alvi opined that Pakistan should follow a smart approach which must be independent, while avoiding a definite tilt towards a specific bloc. To withstand pressures from different sides, he said that the economy needs to stand on its own feet. Plus, we must prefer sovereignty (khuddari) for the nation.

G20 summit in IIOK, a ploy to hoodwink world community: PMAJK



Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: Underling the disputed nature of Indian occupied territory of Jammu and Kashmir (IIOK), the Prime Minister Azad Jammu and Kashmir Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan has said that India's contentious decision to hold the upcoming G20 summit in the IOK was a deliberate attempt on the part of Indian government to hoodwink international community.

"Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir is an internationally recognized disputed territory", the PM said, adding that there was a dire need that the world in particular the G20 countries should come forward in a big way to be held resolve this lingering dispute that has been cause and consequence of the continue unrest and human rights violations in the region.

The Kashmir issue, he said, must be resolved in accordance with the United Nations Security Council resolutions that guarantee the right to self-determination to the people of Kashmir.

Referring to the abysmal situation in the Indian occupied Kashmir, the Prime Minister said that after 5th August 2019, India had virtually turned Kashmir into a military garrison where people have been deprived of their fundamental human rights.

He said that the Indian troops deployed in the length and breadth of Kashmir were killing innocent Kashmiris day in and day out without any inkling of accountability.

The international community, he said, must take notice of Indian state terrorism in occupied Jammu and Kashmir. "India cannot deny the reality of occupied Jammu and Kashmir", he said, adding that the Modi government was using its age-old tactics to hoodwink the world by distorting the historical facts about Kashmir.

"India is the biggest terrorist country in the world which is engaged in genocide in occupied Kashmir", the prime minister said.

"The OIC and international organizations must play their effective role in bringing an end to human rights violations in Kashmir", he said, adding that the India has crossed all limits of barbarism and brutalities in the occupied Kashmir. He said that the Occupied Kashmir was now the world's most militarized zone.

"There are 900,000 Indian troops stationed there, India has committed serious crimes against humanity in occupied Kashmir", he maintained.

He said that India's hands were soaked with the blood of Kashmiris. "More than 6,000 unnamed mass graves have been discovered in occupied Kashmir. Innocent Kashmiri people are martyred every day by Indian occupying forces, women are raped", the PM said.

He said that the Indian government was hell bent on changing the region's demography. "Since August 5, 2019 Indian occupation authorities have issued fake domiciles to more than 4.2 million Hindus to change the demographics of Occupied Kashmir".

The Prime Minister said that the G20 countries should take notice of the worst atrocities in human history and the generation of Kashmiris inflicted on the Kashmiri people by India and play their role in stopping the ongoing massacre in occupied Kashmir.

Punjab Governor lauds efforts of IUB for survival of environment

Our Correspondent

BAHAWALPUR: Governor Punjab and Chancellor Muhammad Baligh-ur-Rehman has said that the efforts made by the Islamia University of Bahawalpur for the survival of environment and protection are commendable. In this regard, a consortium for the protection and survival of the environment with the participation of 57 universities is a welcome step.

He said that the Punjab government taking special interest in the project of the Islamia University of Bahawalpur for resettlement through artificial rains in Cholistan. Establishment of student societies in the Islamia University of Bahawalpur is a good initiative. These student societies will showcase the leadership skills of the students as well as their character building.

Governor Punjab Muhammad Baligh-ur-Rehman expressed these views during a meeting with Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Athar Mahboob on the occasion of his visit of the Islamia



University of Bahawalpur. The Governor Punjab said that the teaching, research and development activities of the university and the steps taken for the welfare of the students and employees are very praiseworthy. On this occasion, the Vice Chancellor gave a detailed briefing to the Governor of Punjab on various university matters.

The meeting was attended by Pro-Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Naveed Akhtar, Registrar Prof. Dr. Moazzam Jamil, Industrialist and political leader Rana Muhammad Tariq and chief of staff Mian Shahid Iqbal. He

praised the architecture of the new building of college of art and design and emphasized on the promotion of arts and crafts. The new building of the Faculty of Management Sciences was constructed as a result of a special development package during the previous tenure of Muhammad Baligh-ur-Rehman as Federal Minister of education.

He also visited the newly built Amphitheater. He was informed on the occasion of his visit to the Solar Park that the University's Solar Park is operating at the highest power generation level with 13,000 units.

Rape accused shot dead

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: The accused who had raped ten-year old girl had been shot dead by his own accomplices during a police encounter in the jurisdiction of Attock Saddar police station.

As per the statement issued by Attock Police Headquarters, the accused was being shifted by police in connection with investigation when near Dhok Jogian, some unknown culprits started firing and got the accused free from the police and escaped. The area was cordoned off and search operation was started. During the search operation the culprits started firing.

During the firing the culprits shot dead the accused Qari Ikram while taking advantage of the darkness the other accused escaped from the crime scene.

Till the filing of this report search operation was in progress. It is worth mentioning that almost two weeks ago in village Faqeerabad, Qari Ikram had raped and killed his ten years old student Hadia Bibi and had escaped.

Minister talks about truth 'Pakistani media style'

Two-day conflict reporting conference concludes with Peace Journalism awards

Spokesman Report

KARACHI: Social media has erased the line between truth and lies, and this is in my view is extreme reporting. Where facts, reality are manufactured but only if you have sufficient manpower and resource, you can alter reality, said Federal Minister of Power Khurram Dastgir Khan at the keynote address on the second day of the two-day conference on 'Extreme Reporting: Conflict and Peace in the Digital Age' held at the Centre of Excellence in Journalism at the Institute of Business Administration (CEJ-IBA) on Sunday.

"Extreme reporting is an

endeavor that requires bravery and strength and courage. If you look at Pakistan's history there have been courageous men and women who have tried to express the truth and they have suffered for it. For example, Journalists have been shot in broad daylight, kidnapped and what not.

"But the media has failed to save the public from lies. It has put us in a difficult position. It might be an exaggeration to say so but this erasure of the line between truth and lies is endangering democracy worldwide. But in this country, where democracy is a one leaf plant, is crushed every so often. The media's challenges are



immense - almost the same as those as elected representatives because there are certain truths that cannot be said in this country and that is a fact. Just look at Balochistan... why are we not allowed to talk about its truth," he added.

The federal minister touched upon the civil military relationship and how

it impacts the economy, the 2018 elections, ownership of media outlets, evolving technology and what is the truth. He also recited a couplet by Allama Iqbal.

As the conference concluded, the CEJ-IBA recognized and awarded journalists with the Peace Journalism awards which were a part of the Peace

Journalism Program held by the CEJ in collaboration with US Consulate Karachi.

Mehreen Burney from Lok Sujag, PTV World reporter Tayyaba Nisar Khan, freelance journalist Afifa Nasarullah (Best Multimedia Story), Lok Sujag's Kaleemullah received awards for their outstanding stories.

At Alliance Française de Karachi

'Mango Festival with Diplomats' held by DBC

Spokesman Report

KARACHI: The Diplomatic Business Club in the wake of its regular events held its latest event entitled "Mango Festival with Diplomats" at the Alliance Française, Karachi. Muhammad Umar Shah, Chairman, DBC received the guests along with his team. The Festival was organized in collaboration with All Pakistan Agriculture & Horticulture Forum and Pakistan Fruits & Vegetables Exporters & Merchants Association and Roshan Enterprises.

The Chief Guests of the event were no other than Pakistani mango species: Chaunsa, Langra, Sindhri, Laal Badshah, Sunehra, Anwar Ratol, Dussehri, Fajri, Neelum, Saroli, Almas and likes. The proceedings started with

the recitation from the Holy Quran. That followed by the opening speech from the Patron in Chief Mr Kaleem Farooqui. After that other entrepreneurs and exporters expressed their views about the export of Pakistani mangoes.

Shaikh Imtiaz Hussain, Chairman, All Pakistan Agriculture and Horticulture Forum informed the audience that in 2021 the total mango harvest of Pakistan was 1.8 million MTs while the exports were meager 7% earning nearly US\$100 million. This year the harvest is feared only 50% due to unexpected high temperatures in April and shortage of water supplies. However, we can still earn good foreign exchange if more growers and exporters move toward global certifica-

tions, processing units and exploring new domestic markets of the West instead of mainly relying on Asian markets

The live speech of Mr Luca Trombella, a European logistics expert from the Netherlands was played on the screen about the strategy of exporting Pakistani mangoes to the EU. Mr. Trombella encouraged the Pakistani Mango exporters to exploit the Netherlands as it serves as the hub of European markets similar to flowers. In 2021 the Netherlands imported about 213 thousand MTs of Mangoes and exported almost similar quantity. The re-export market of Netherlands is Germany, France, Belgium, UK and other EU countries the local supermarkets of Netherlands demand Global GAP and SMETA/SEDEX



certification. Since South American countries fulfill this requirement and manage whole year supplies, therefore, are the major suppliers to the Netherlands. He

ended the speech by amusing the audience with the words of the Ambassador of Netherlands to Pakistan Mr Wouter Plomp, "Pakistani aam dunya may behteen

hay" (Pakistani mangoes are the best in the world)

One of the patrons of the DBC Mr Zeeshan Altaf Lohya also endorsed the presence of the honorable guests and thanked them.

Only selected guests were invited besides diplomats and bonafide members of the Diplomatic Business Club. The CGs and Vice CGs from Germany, Turkey, Japan, Malaysia, Indonesia and Bangladesh were spotted, some with their wives among the gentry at the event.

Holger Ziegler Consul General of Germany who was present with his wife fondly told that this is his 3rd Mango year in Pakistan. Mr. Katsunori Ashida, Deputy Consul General Japan who was also present with his wife

appreciated the event and was all praise for Pakistani mangoes. Mr. S.M. Mahbulul Alam Dy High Commissioner Bangladesh showed great interest and emphasized on importing more Pakistani mangoes. Mr. Oguz Kozanli & Mr. Eyyup Yildirim Turkish Vice Consul Generals enjoyed different varieties of mangoes, shakes and icecream. Mr. Khairul Nazran Abd Rahman Consul General of Malaysia in his traditional Malaysian outfit was approached by several exporters. Mr. Johari Bin Minal, Consul Science, Mr. Arie Vice Consul General of Indonesia hoped to increase the import of Mangoes from Pakistan. They all appreciated the efforts of the Diplomatic Business Club to promote business activities in and outside Pakistan.

ISLAMABAD
23° - 38° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr	3:15 am
Zohr	12:11 pm
Asr	5:11 pm
Maghrib	7:22 pm
Isha	9:06 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad	9222596
Rawalpindi	9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

CMH	561111
MH	561116
MH	561116
Cantt Hospital	9270907-11
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	9270151-3
Islamabad Metropolitan Corporation	9209224
Potohar Town	9209224
Rawal Town	5773343

COMPLAINTS

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

1766 Corona patients died in RWP, 46,777 cases reported

RAWALPINDI: As many as 46,777 coronavirus cases having positive symptoms had been recorded, while 1766 had lost their battle of life since the pandemic from April 2020 to June 26, 2022, in the district. Chief Executive Officer (CEO) District Health Authority Dr Lubna Ishaq told APP that 13 more were diagnosed with the deadly virus during the last 24 hours. Among the new patients, eight arrived from the Potohar town, three from Rawalpindi Cantonment and two from Rawal town, she added. Presently, the number of active cases was 96 and quarantined in home isolation, while no patient was admitted to any health facility in the district. She updated that 45,346 patients had been discharged after recovery. Dr Lubna informed that among people who died from this fatal disease, 1,335 were Rawalpindi's residents, while 431 belonged outside districts.

Possible COVID-19 wave

Pakistan continues to see uptick in fresh cases

Pakistan reports 406 new COVID-19 cases.

ISLAMABAD: Experts say Pakistan may potentially witness another COVID-19 outbreak as the country continues to see an uptick in new cases, pushing the positivity rate further up. The country reported 406 fresh cases of coronavirus in a single day, National Institute of Health, Islamabad (NIH) data showed Sunday morning. The new infections were detected after diagnostic tests on 14,437 samples. This took Pakistan's COVID-19 positivity to 2.81%. Moreover, two people suffering from coronavirus died during the last 24 hours. As per the NIH stats, 94 other patients are undergoing treatment in intensive-care

units countrywide. Former DG Health and currently Lead Strategic Adviser of CDC-USA in Pakistan Rana Muhammad Saifdar said that cases and positivity rates have more than doubled over the previous week, indicating rapid transmission. He said that the rise is more marked in Karachi — with 21.71% COVID-19 positivity, and Islamabad — with 3.45% positivity, due to better testing and reporting but the risk is likely to be widespread. According to Saifdar, the rise in number of hospitalisations and admission of patients in ICUs may become evident from the next week. However, given the high vaccination

rates, the disease load is unlikely to challenge our health system capacity, he added. Health experts stress on: Vigilantly watching through good surveillance and testing. Communication around rising risk especially in urban settings. Advocating mask-wearing indoors in cities reporting cases that constitute over 5% positivity. Vaccination with emphasis on boosters. As per NIH, 85% of Pakistan's population has been fully vaccinated. Among the provinces, Sindh is the most affected while Mardan and Hyderabad are the most affected cities after Karachi, with 8.77% and 8.51% COVID-19 positivity, respectively. Agencies

PAC, ANF organize program on World Drug Day

Staff Reporter

RAWALPINDI: Punjab Arts Council in collaboration with Anti Narcotics Control Force organized a special program to mark world Drug and Illegal Human Trafficking Day. Director General Anti Narcotics Force Major General Ghulam Shabir Narejo (Hilal-e-Intiaz Military) was the chief guest of the ceremony.



The special guest of the function, Major General Ghulam Shabir Narejo, said that on the occasion of International Day, I assure my nation and the international community that the ANF will continue to fight against drug use and trafficking with full dedication and high professionalism. The ANF will spare no effort in carrying out its duties and will spare no effort to protect the Holy Land from the dangers of drugs. We pledge to carry forward our Manifesto with utmost determination, sincerity and devotion, he added. He further said that we also pay tribute to our martyrs who sacrificed their "today" for the better "tomorrow" of our future generations and the sacred duty of drug free world. Director Arts Council Waqar Ahmed said that Anti-Drug Day has been observed every year since 1987 in accordance with a UN resolution. The purpose of the day is to raise awareness about the dangers of drug abuse around the world and the dangers it poses to society, especially young people. The program featured a drug-based drama "Zehr-e-Qatil" written and directed by Imran Roshdi. The versatile group from Lahore performed cultural dances of different regions and won the hearts of the audience. At the end of the program, renowned Sufi singer Sanam Marvi tied the knot by presenting a mystical speech. Dr. Mubashir and Shaan Khan also evoked the magic of sound. The event was attended by a large number of people from the twin cities.

Int'l Day against Drug Abuse

Event to commemorate World Drug Day 2022 held

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking was celebrated on Sunday (June 26 2022) across the globe to raise awareness of the major problems that illicit drugs create in society. The day is supported by individuals, communities and various organizations all over the world. An event to commemorate the World Drug Day 2022 by UNODC, Ministry of Narcotics Control and Anti-Narcotics Force Government of Pakistan, event took place in Islamabad. People from all walks of life international and national counter parts, Civil Society, students, housewives, children and media joined the event there was also an arrangement of walk for people.

Senior Joint Secretary Ministry of Narcotics Control Sabino Sikandar Jalal addressed the event and gave his remarks on the drug abuse and prevention and applauded UNODC, ANF and ministry of narcotics control for their work in controlling drug usage. Representative UNODC Jeremy Milsom also gave his remarks on the occasion.

Earning Livelihood

ISLAMABAD: Rizwan Mahmood 60 years old is selling food on his bicycle alongside a road at sector I-11 in Federal Capital, Rizwan is selling food Tripe (Ojhri) since last 30 years as cooking at home and selling in Islamabad sectors.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Rs100m earmarked for Islamabad Zoo

ISLAMABAD: The Federal government has allocated Rs 100 million under Public Service Development Programme (PSDP) for Climate Change Division' new scheme in the fiscal year 2022-23 to establish a wildlife conservation and information centre at the old Islamabad Zoo. The allocated amount of millions of rupees in the Fiscal Year 2022-23 focused on initiating development work on the only Zoo of the capital that went nonfunctional due to poor care and management of the wildlife. The wildlife conservation centre as

proposed by the ministry would be a modern facility having advanced technological solutions to impart wildlife information to its visitors. The Ministry overall got the allocation of Rs9.6 billion for its new and ongoing projects that would focus on climate change adaptation and mitigation endeavors to purge the country from adverse impacts of environmental degradation and global warming. According to a budgetary document, the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) Planned Activities for Fiscal Year 2022-23 in Climate Change Division focused on Disaster

Risk Management, Early Warning Systems, Availability of clean drinking water in Pakistan, Transition towards environmentally resilient Pakistan through adaptation and mitigation targeting ecological initiatives consistent with the Pakistan's nationally determined contributions (NDCs) objectives, Attaining Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) to generate eco-system services and provide additional support to mitigation of GHG in Pakistan, Promote eco-tourism and improve the carbon sinking capacity and to establish real time monitoring of ambient air quality through establish-

ment of monitoring stations, in periodic manner, throughout Islamabad. The amount of Rs 9.5 billion has been allocated for ongoing schemes while 100 million were earmarked for a new scheme in the PSDP 2022-23. The ongoing schemes include Capacity Building on Water Quality Monitoring and SDG 6 (6.1) Reporting at a cost of Rs 23 million; Climate Resilient Urban Human Settlements at Unit at an amount of Rs 19 million was earmarked. The maximum allocations were earmarked for Upscaling of Green Pakistan Programme (Revised) at a cost of Rs 9.4 billion.

Health Corner

Environmental factors predict risk of death



ISLAMABAD: Along with high blood pressure, diabetes, and smoking, environmental factors such as air pollution are highly predictive of people's chances of dying, especially from heart attack and stroke, a new study shows. Led by researchers at NYU Grossman School of Medicine and the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, the study showed that exposure to above average levels of outdoor air pollution increased risk of death by 20%, and risk of death from cardiovascular disease by 17%. Using wood- or kerosene-burning stoves, not properly ventilated through a chimney, to cook food or heat the home also increased overall risk of death (by 23% and 9%) and cardiovascular death risk (by 36% and 19%). Living far from specialty medical clinics and near busy roads also increased risk of death.

Publishing in the journal PLOS ONE online June 24, the findings come from personal and environmental health data collected from 50,045 mostly poor, rural villagers living in the northeast Golestan region of Iran. All study participants were over age 40 and agreed to have their health monitored during annual visits with researchers dating as far back as 2004.

Researchers say their latest investigation not only identifies environmental factors that pose the greatest risk to heart and overall health, but also adds much-needed scientific evidence from people in low- and middle-income countries. Traditional research on environmental risk factors, the researchers note, has favored urban populations in high-income countries with much greater access to modern health care services. Compared with those who have easier access to specialized medical services, those living farther away from clinics with catheterization labs able to unblock clogged arteries, for example, were at increased risk of death by 1% for every 10 kilometers (6.2 miles) of distance. In Golestan, most people live more than 50 miles (80 kilometers) away from such modern facilities.

Study results also showed that the one-third of study participants who lived within 500 meters (1,640 feet) of a major roadway had a 13% increased risk of death.

"Our study highlights the role that key environmental factors of indoor/outdoor air pollution, access to modern health services, and proximity to noisy, polluted roadways play in all causes of death and deaths from cardiovascular disease in particular," says study senior author and cardiologist Rajesh Vedanthan, MD, MPH.

"Our findings help broaden the disease-risk profile beyond age and traditional personal risk factors," says Vedanthan, an associate professor in the Department of Population Health and the Department of Medicine at NYU Langone Health.

"These results illustrate a new opportunity for health policymakers to reduce the burden of disease in their communities by mitigating the impact of environmental risk factors like air pollution on cardiovascular health," says study lead author Michael Hadley, MD, a fellow in cardiology and incoming assistant professor of medicine at Mount Sinai.

By contrast, the study showed that other environmental factors included in the analysis — low neighborhood income levels, increased population density, and too much nighttime light exposure — were not independent predictors of risk of death, despite previous research in mostly urban settings suggesting otherwise.

For the investigation, researchers analyzed data gathered through December 2018. They then created a predictive model on overall death risk and death risk from cardiovascular disease.

The research team plans to continue its analysis and hopes to apply the predictive model to other countries with the aim of fine-tuning its predictive capacity. They say their new tool could serve as a guide for evaluating the effectiveness of environmental, lifestyle, and personal health changes in reducing mortality rates worldwide.

According to the World Health Organization, one-quarter of all deaths worldwide are now attributable to environmental factors, including poor air and water quality, lack of sanitation, and exposure to toxic chemicals. (Courtesy: Science Daily)

Anti-dengue drive continued in full swing

RAWALPINDI : The anti-dengue awareness campaign launched by Rawalpindi Waste Management Company (RWMC) was in full swing, and all-out efforts were being made to raise awareness about the life-cycle, prevalence, handling, and prevention of dengue. According to RWMC spokesman, as per instructions of the Punjab government, RWMC had cleaned all offices and provided awareness to its staff about foiling the dengue virus. He said the communication teams distributed waste bags and pamphlets in various areas of the city to highlight the importance of cleanliness and dengue prevention. To eradicate dengue larvae, a comprehensive Standing Operating Procedures (SOPs) and an action plan were being followed, and weekly reports were being submitted to the city district government and the government of Punjab. The spokesman called upon the residents to keep an eye on junkyards, schools and under-construction buildings, which lead to the spread of dengue larvae and leave no place wet or stagnant water. He said, "We will continue such activities in the coming days since the issue is severe and linked with public health. Keeping our surroundings clean will only help improve society," he added. APP



Growing water woes demand metering system in all sectors

ISLAMABAD: After surpassing the slot of water stressed country, Pakistan is feared to touch the water scarcity barrier due to fast melting glaciers, drying rivers, depleting groundwater resource and above all the poor water management and pricing.

Massive wastage in agriculture sector, commercial and domestic use as well as lack of storage capacity coupled with impacts of climate change with abnormal weather pattern would further aggravate the situation in coming years. The expert intelligentsia meticulously monitoring the water situation with its jaw dropping researches have rolled

out workable solutions in the limited resources available to cope with this challenge and circumvent a major crisis.

"The situation is worrisome. The time has come for prudent use of water as well as ensuring 100% water metering in the country," remarked Chairman Pakistan Council of Research on Water Resources (PCRWR) Dr Muhammad Ashraf.

Sharing his insights on the water crisis in the country, Dr Ashraf said, "water metering in urban sector, water pricing policy, groundwater regulatory framework, and crop ecological zones as per the water availability is imperative."

He said the country's growing water scarcity and inadequate storage capacity will be pushing Pakistan to touch water scarcity level by 2025. "If the water resources remain the same and population continues to rise at the same place, we will be in trouble within next few years."

The system efficiency of the country's existing water reservoirs is less than 40% against overall available storage capacity. The country dumps almost 100 million acre feet (MAF) floodwater into the Arabian Ocean annually.

"The low water tariff, absence of groundwater regulatory framework and lack of crop zoning left the meager water

resources at the disposal of less informed and imprudent agricultural practices of the farmers," Dr Ashraf said.

He said on the one hand floods of 2010, 2011 and 2014 incurred a loss of 90MAF to the country on the other hand millions of tones sedimentation depositing to Tarbela Dam every year was diminishing its potential to conserve water resource.

Interestingly, the unique terrain of the country unveils matchless opportunities having 18 MAF hill torrent water potential that could be conserved and used for irrigation to household purposes, the PCRWR chairman said. APP

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IPEF vs BRI

Can the US Led Indo-Pacific Economic Framework Dominates Belt Road Initiative

Dr. Malik Hasan

The U.S President virtually launched the 'Indo-Pacific Economic Framework' (IPEF) Initiative in Japan on 23 May 2022. Like QUAD, AUKUS, Build Back Better World (B3W) this one is also a part of series of attempts which US is leading to even influence China in Pacific Region what to talk of dominating it. Contemporarily it appears to be an immediate response to China-Solomon Island Security Pact signed in start of May 2022. The US designed and led IPEF Initiative has been joined by 13 countries, that include Australia, Brunei, India, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam with the purpose 'advance resilience, sustainability, inclusiveness, economic growth, fairness, and competitiveness moreover this initiative, aims at contributing to cooperation, stability, prosperity, development, and peace within the region'.

It is not surprising to note that the emerging global and an existing regional power China was not invited however on the contrary India despite being much away from Pacific Rim. It will be fair to understand that the word 'Indo' was added to the IPEF initiative to allow the India to be a member of this Pacific Alliance. Rightly considering the initiative as an US led anti-China campaign Beijing has also not shown even any intentions in joining this framework. Despite the fact that Taiwan has also shown its eagerness to be part of IPEF, the US would prefer to pursue only a bilateral engagement with it. It is imperative to note that Three ASEAN countries including Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos have rejected to be part of the framework.

IPEF in centrally is meant to serve the U.S geo-political interests and to address the concerns; primarily against Beijing. US termed the framework as a 'turning point' to revive the US global leadership. In economic realm, Indo-Pacific Region alone accounts for more than 60 per cent of the global GDP, and about 50 per cent trade. The region envisages five island chains and four big economies like U.S, China, Japan, and South Korea. With the engine of global economic growth shifting eastwards, the Indo-Pacific Region will emerge to be more vital in times to come. To pursue the vision of America First' vision, the present US

administration has adopted a transactional approach for its trade which necessitated developing a confrontational narrative under Free and Open Indo Pacific.

This approach has received a cautious response from the regional countries against Beijing as even QUAD and AUKUS members are much more economically dependent upon trade with China as compared to China; moreover enhancing BRI developments in Oceania; particularly between second and third island Chains and Caribbean Sea is also challenging the already retracting arms of octopus in FOIP regime. Chinese analysts believe that while India has joined the IPEF in exuberance to advance relations with US, however yet it does not completely understand of the initiative IPEF as it lacks pragmatism of liberalism and ventures in to realism. Although the IPEF strategy emerges out of a validated 80 years old US philosophy of 'Rim Land' yet it lacks prominence of neo-liberalism to follow the suit of BRI. It will be pragmatic to evaluate that IPEF will have to compete with Regional Comprehensive Eco Partnership (RCEP) that already exists in Asia-Pacific.

The composition of IPEF is similar to that of the RCEP,

with the absence of China, Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar, and with the addition of US and India. Keeping in view the trade involvement of all IPEF member countries, advancement of BRI and depleting US economy it will not be possible for all members to remain aloof from Beijing hence seemingly it can be deduced that US has only been able to start an-other competition as lot of IPEF modalities have yet to worked out and finalised as it is not a free trade agreement. For Biden administration, the IPEF is the new tool for economic re-engagement with East and Southeast Asia after former President Donald Trump withdrew from the TPP in 2017. Through the IPEF, the US is attempting to counter China's growing economic heft in the region, particularly at a time when China is already the leading trading partner of all IPEF participating countries.

China is a member of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) trade agreement, which came into force in early 2022. China has also formally requested to join the TPP's successor agreement, the CPTPP. China is further deepening its economic engagements in the region through various initiatives, from building infrastructure under

the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) to joining Digital Economy Partnership Agreement (DEPA) with New Zealand and Singapore. It will be relevant to understand that unlike traditional FTAs, the IPEF does not promise to the one principle, rather its four agenda items have to be negotiated simultaneously, with members who can withdraw and has yet to be evaluated by the US Congress before ratifying it.

A member would be required to sign up for four all components however may not negotiations on various pillars as it will be limited to various procedures and time. The outcome would be a matrix, with some countries making commitments in all areas and others making in only a few. Commitments might also vary, from sharing information to binding obligations.

Considering the pressure on Beijing from US and its allies to vitalise it Blue Diplomacy pragmatically, dwindling economy of Pakistan and CPEC being the most significant segment of BRI Pakistan should make efforts to shift the submarine building facility to Pakistan as part of CPEC plan and should allow Beijing a naval logistic facility on Astola Island so that Gwadar is only seen as a commercial component of BRI.

Drug free world

In December 1987, the United Nations decided to observe 26 June as the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking as an expression of its determination to strengthen action and cooperation to achieve the goal of an international society free of drug abuse. Protecting the youth and the future generations from this menace was inevitable for a safe and prosperous world. On this Day, we reaffirm our commitment to strengthening action and cooperation to achieve a world that is free of drug abuse. Supported each year by individuals, communities, and various organizations all over the world, this global observance aims to raise awareness of the major problem that illicit drugs represent to society.

From warzones to refugee camps to communities torn apart by violence, people in all parts of the world are in dire need. A pandemic, a climate crisis, a food crisis, an energy crisis, and supply chain disruptions have increased suffering and taken us to the brink of global recession. This World Drug Day, UNODC addresses existing and emerging transnational drug challenges stemming from situations of crisis. UNODC continues to advocate to protect the right to health for the most vulnerable, including children and youth, people using drugs, people with drug use disorders and people who need access to controlled medicines.

UNODC is calling on governments, international organizations, civil society, and all stakeholders to take urgent action to protect people, including by strengthening drug use prevention and treatment, and by tackling illicit drug supply. The campaign highlights data drawn from UNODC's yearly World Drug Report. Thus, providing facts and practical solutions to the current world drug problem, to attain a vision of health for all based on science. World Drug Day is a day to share research findings, evidence-based data, and solutions, to continue tapping into a shared spirit of solidarity.

The campaign invites everyone to do their part by caring, even in times of crisis.

On its part, Pakistan also joins the international community to observe the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit trafficking, reiterating steadfast resolve to create a drug free society and the world. The drug abuse undermined public health and the socio-economic development besides challenging the national security and prosperity. He said Pakistan itself was a poppy free country, but its population became a victim of regional opiate production and trade.

The illicit drug production and its trafficking was a major problem in Pakistan's neighbourhood and it had been at the forefront of the efforts to actively support the ongoing global and regional initiatives that aimed at fighting against drug production and trafficking. The observance of this day manifests Pakistan's steadfast resolve in creating a drug free society and world, he added.

Pakistan closely engaged in the Paris Pact Initiative and UNODC's Regional Program for Afghanistan and Neighboring Countries. Under the Triangular Initiative (TI), we are cooperating with Iran and Afghanistan to fight this menace. In addition to international and regional cooperation, a number of counter-narcotics measures have been taken at the national level including the adoption of a National Anti-Narcotics Policy in 2019 and the creation of Inter-Agency Task Force on Counter-Narcotics.



G7 & Ukraine, pandemic crises

Andrew Hammond

The G7 may appear ill-suited to tackling the overlapping challenges facing the world, from the Ukraine war to the pandemic but it has often been at its best in turbulent crises. Many forget the body was founded in the 1970s in the aftermath of geopolitical and economic shocks when Washington pulled out of the Gold Standard during the Vietnam conflict. Back then, Richard Nixon also resigned as US president and there was a clear danger of currency wars and wider turmoil. Yet, the "Western Club" then proved fit for purpose, playing a key role in the management of the most important exchange rates. It also brought Japan into the Western policymaking community, and a similar far-sighted, strategic approach is needed today.

In the aftermath of Russia's latest geopolitical gambit, and after the schisms of Donald Trump's US presidency, the G7 should therefore now take an important step back and try to concentrate again on unity and the big strategic questions facing both the West and the wider world.

The Club of Japan, the US, Canada, Germany, France, the UK and Italy have helped spearhead in recent weeks several vital measures: The massive international package of sanctions against Moscow; a pledge never to recognize any redrawn boundaries for Ukraine; the provision of billions in aid and assistance; considering reconstruction plans for the nation; and attempting to ameliorate a mounting food

and energy security calamity that could make for an exceptionally difficult period to come.

Since the invasion of Ukraine, relations have been so poor between the G7 and Russia that Moscow may never be readmitted to the club, as constituted as the G8, so long as Vladimir Putin remains in power. Russia joined the summits from 1997 to 2013, but following the annexation of Crimea, Moscow was told it could only rejoin if "it changes course and an environment is once again created in which it is possible for the G8 to hold reasonable discussions." While Russia is excluded, leaders from India, Indonesia, Argentina, Senegal and South Africa have been invited to give greater international perspective.

Moreover, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky will either join by video, or in person, and is likely to again prove the star of the show. This year's G7 discussions on Ukraine are only the latest example of the prominence of geopolitical and security issues in the club's meetings. In recent years, the body has played a significant role in the West's policies toward Libya, North Korea and the South China sea too. The Italian G7 presidency in 2017, for instance, placed strong emphasis on the turbulence in North Africa and the Middle East, including Iraq, Libya and Syria. This included a push toward fostering stability in Libya following the collapse of the Muammar Qaddafi regime.

Another example was the discussion on the South China Sea during Japan's presidency in 2016. Then, the G7 warned of "any intimidating coercive or provocative unilateral actions that could alter the status quo and increase tensions" given the territori-

al disputes over several archipelagos there involving countries such as China, Vietnam, Malaysia and the Philippines. This prompted strong objections from Beijing, which claims much of the South China Sea, and it asserted that the G7 should focus its time on its founding mandate of global economic cooperation. As this reaction indicates, the G7's involvement in its geopolitical dialogues has met with significant international criticism from time to time.

Building on this, it is also sometimes asserted, especially by developing countries, that the G7 lacks the legitimacy of the UN to engage in these geopolitical and security issues, and/or is a historical artefact given the rise of new powers, including the BRICS. However, it is not the case that the G7's international security role is new. An early example of the lynxpin function the body has played was in the 1970s and 1980s when it helped coordinate Western strategy toward the Soviet Union. Moreover, following the September 2001 terrorist attacks, the G8 (including Russia) assumed a key role in the US-led "war on terror."

Fast forward to 2022, and it is now the Ukraine crisis gripping the world — so the meeting will be dominated by geopolitics again, despite criticism of the G7's actions in this area. The body's longstanding track record as a security actor, and the continuing uncertainty over Ukraine, underlines the fact that this geopolitical role is not only likely to continue, but could also grow in significance.

The writer is an Associate at LSE IDEAS at the London School of Economics. Courtesy Arab News

Flaws in our education system

Education is the road to national development. It creates sense of responsibility among the people. On the basis of education people not only realize their duties but also know how to achieve their national, societal and individual rights. One of the goals of education is to enable the people by enhancing their general consciousness regarding their national and international position as global citizens. This realization creates an atmosphere of trust and cooperation in the society. Education promotes economic development and consequently people become prosperous and play their respective roles in the overall national development. Pakistan is a developing country. Its economy is weak. There is lack of political stability in the country.

Besides, the country is in the deep grip of increasing political turmoil, expanding terrorism, incessant sectarian violence, social instability, and economic degeneration. All these problems are directly or indirectly the offshoot of a weak, polarized and non-unified education system. A sound education system is essential for every nation of the world. Every nation develops its generation on the basis of vigorous training and education on social, political, economic and ideological grounds. Pakistani education system due being directionless and weak has not been able to develop and guide its people on sound political and social grounds. There is lack of cohesion in the system and it is more prone towards general education which does not bring any skilled manpower to the market.

Resulting there is increasing unemployment. This situation may promote sense of deprivation among the masses due to this there is cultural and political unrest in the society. Besides, there is lack of educational opportunities for science and technology. In this way the development of thinking, reasoning and creativity of students is not being polished. Training is

essential for quality performance. Teaching is a challenging job. There is lack of training opportunities for teachers in Pakistan. Although there various teacher training institutes in the country. These institutes are either not well resourced or being poor run due to lack of fund and trained human resource such trainers and administrators. There are no proper training standards in the available training institutes around the country. Most of the training institutes have been closed down due to lack of funds.

The courses being run in the teacher education intuitions are outdated and very traditional which does not enhance the skills, motivation and quality of teachers. The education system of Pakistan has not been able to play its role effectively in nation building. This factor has contributed towards development of frustration among the Pakistani society. The future generation of Pakistan is directionless due to defective education system which has drastically failed to raise the nation on sound economic, social, political and moral grounds.

The directionless system of education is producing forces of degree holders who are deficient in high order live skills such as reflection, critical thinking, analysis, research and creativity.

The education system instead has focused on feeding the individuals with outdated information and knowledge which is less relevant to the current fast changing world. Students coming out of the Pakistani education system are theoretically sound but have no skills to apply whatever they learn from their institutions due to the traditional methods of teaching and learning. Finally, this study concludes that the there is an urgent need to reform the system of education of Pakistan.

The writer is an educationist based in Kandhkot Sindh

Russia steps up missile strikes on Ukraine

Ukraine loses key city to pro-Russian forces

KYIV/POKROVSK: Russian missiles hit an apartment block and kindergarten in the Ukrainian capital Kyiv on Sunday, in strikes U.S. President Joe Biden condemned as "barbarism" as world leaders gathered in Europe to discuss further sanctions against Moscow.

Up to four explosions shook central Kyiv in the early hours, in the first such attack on the city in weeks. Two more blasts were heard on the southern outskirts of the city later in the day, a Reuters reporter said.

"The Russians hit Kyiv again. Missiles damaged an apartment building and a kindergarten," said Andriy Yermak, head of the president's administration.

A Reuters photographer saw a large blast crater by a playground in a kindergarten that had smashed windows.

Ukraine's police chief, Ihor Klymenko, said on national television that five people had been wounded, and police later said one person was killed.

Russia has stepped up air strikes on Ukraine this weekend, which has also seen the fall of a strategic eastern city



to pro-Russian forces.

"It's more of their barbarism," said Biden, referring to the missile strikes on Kyiv, as leaders from the Group of Seven (G7) rich democracies gathered for a summit in Germany.

Ukraine's Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said G7 countries should respond to the latest missile strikes by imposing further sanctions on Russia and providing more heavy weapons

to Ukraine.

As Europe's biggest land conflict since World War Two entered its fifth month, the Western alliance supporting Kyiv was starting to show signs of strain as leaders fret about the growing economic cost.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said the West needed to maintain a united front against Russian President Vladimir Putin.

"The price of backing down, the price of allowing Putin to succeed, to hack off huge parts of Ukraine, to continue with his programme of conquest, that price will be far, far higher," he told reporters.

Life had been returning to normal in Kyiv after fierce resistance held off Russian advances in the early phase of the war, although air raid sirens regularly sound across the city.

There had been no major strikes on Kyiv since early June.

The city's mayor, Vitali Klitschko, said on the Telegram messaging app that Sunday's strike had partially destroyed a nine-storey apartment building in the historic Shevchenkivskiy district of central Kyiv and caused a fire.

"There are people under the rubble," Klitschko said. "They have pulled out a seven-year-old girl. She is alive. Now they're trying to rescue her mother."

A Ukrainian air force spokesperson said the strike was carried out with between four to six long-range missiles fired from Russian bombers more than 1,000 kilometres away in the southern Russian region of Astrakhan.

Azerbaijan marks Armed Forces Day



Spokesman Report

BAKU: Azerbaijan marked the Armed Forces Day on June 26. Despite the fact that Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (ADR), established on May 28, 1918, existed for only 23 months, it did a lot in a short period of time. The country started the creation of the national army, understanding that its own armed forces were needed to protect the achievements of the young republic.

At the same time, the situation in the region was extremely tense. The Azerbaijan Democratic Republic was on the verge of losing parts of its territory.

Azerbaijan achieved significant results in creating its own armed forces in a short period of time. The Supreme Council of the Republic of Azerbaijan adopted a decision on the establishment of the national army on October 9, 1991.

June 26 was declared the Armed Forces Day in accordance with the Azerbaijani president's decree dated May 22, 1998.

In 2020, the Azerbaijani Army fulfilled its historic mission. The occupied lands of Azerbaijan are already free! The Azerbaijani Army has achieved a historic victory in the 44-day Patriotic War under the leadership of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, President Ilham Aliyev.

Meanwhile, First Vice-President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Mehriban Aliyeva has shared a post on her official Instagram page on the occasion of 26 June—the Armed Forces Day.

The post says: "Dear compatriots! I sincerely congratulate you on the occasion of the Armed Forces Day of the Republic of Azerbaijan! I express my gratitude to our President, our brave soldiers and officers as we celebrate this holiday as a heroic nation with our heads held high! Thank you very much for your courage and endurance! Thank you for restoring the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan!"

May Allah rest the souls of all our martyrs, who died for the Motherland, in peace! I bow my head to mothers and fathers who raised such heroic sons, and wish them patience.

May peace and tranquility always reign in our Motherland!"

Putin to make first foreign trip since launching Ukraine war

LONDON: Vladimir Putin will visit two small former Soviet states in central Asia this week, Russian state television reported on Sunday, in what would be the Russian leader's first known trip abroad since ordering the invasion of Ukraine.

Russia's Feb. 24 invasion has killed thousands of people, displaced millions more and led to severe financial sanctions from the West, which Putin says are a reason to build stronger trade ties with other powers such as China, India and Iran.

Pavel Zarubin, the Kremlin correspondent of the Rossiya 1 state television station, said Putin would visit Tajikistan and Turkmenistan and then meet Indonesian President Joko Widodo for talks in Moscow.

In Dushanbe, Putin will meet Tajik President Imomali Rakhmon, a close Russian ally and the longest-serving ruler of a former Soviet state. In Ashgabat, he will attend a summit of Caspian nations including the leaders of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Iran and Turkmenistan, Zarubin said.

Putin's last known trip outside Russia was a visit to the Beijing in early February, where he and Chinese President Xi Jinping unveiled a "no limits" friendship treaty hours before both attended the opening ceremony of the Olympic Winter Games.

Russia says it sent troops into Ukraine on Feb. 24 to degrade its neighbour's military capabilities, keep it from being used by the West to threaten Russia, root out nationalists and defend Russian-speakers in eastern regions. Ukraine calls the invasion an imperial-style land grab.

Ecuador's government lifts state of emergency

QUITO: Ecuadorian President Guillermo Lasso on Saturday lifted a state of emergency he'd imposed in six provinces amid an Indigenous-led strike, a surprise move that came as lawmakers in the National Assembly heard an opposition petition to remove him from office.

The decision to end the state of emergency followed an initial meeting between government officials and Ecuador's largest Indigenous organization, which began the strike two weeks ago to demand gasoline prices be cut, price controls be imposed on agricultural products and a larger budget be set for education. Lasso had accused the Indigenous leader heading the at-times violent strike of seeking to stage a coup.

After Saturday's meeting, National Assembly President Virgilio Saquicela said a commission would be formed to facilitate dialogue to end the strike.

"The national government ratifies the willingness to guarantee the creation of spaces for peace, in which Ecuadorians can gradually resume their activities," said a statement announcing the decree to end the state of emergency.

The meeting was held in the Basilica church in the colonial center of Quito and was attended by the president of the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador, Leonidas Iza, other social leaders, Government Minister Francisco Jiménez and Foreign Minister Juan Carlos Holguín, among others.

"There has been no commitment, but simply a decision by the (Indigenous confederation) ... to consult its bases on the designation of a commission to start this dialogue," Saquicela said, adding that "the government has made the corresponding opening."

Iza said the strike would not be ended until their demands had been met. "Instead of making us more afraid, they have raised our rebellion, dignity," he said.

Pakistan HC Dhaka holds exhibition

Spokesman Report

DHAKA: High Commission for Pakistan, Dhaka organized an exhibition "Pakistan: The Land of Indus" to showcase art, crafts and cuisines as well as coffee table books on Pakistan at the Pakistan House, Dhaka, Bangladesh on Saturday.

Aimed at displaying the rich and diverse cultural heritage of Pakistan, the event was part of the diamond jubilee celebrations of Pakistan. It was attended by a large number of artists, academics, arts enthusiasts, members of civil society, representatives of diplomatic corps, Pakistani diaspora in Bangladesh and local journalists.

Pakistan's High Commissioner to Bangladesh, Mr. Imran Ahmed Siddiqui inaugurated the exhibition and remarked that Pakistan had a rich and diverse cultural heritage. Young artists of Pakistan are enriching ancient traditions with their innovative art and craft blending ancient with the modern.

The exhibits included 40 pieces of Arabic calligraphy by renowned Pakistani calligraphers including the Chief Calligrapher of the Prophet's Mosque in



Madinah Munawwarah Ustad Shafiq uz Zamman, landscape paintings, replicas of representative sculpture of Indus Valley civilization and Gandhara and over 50 books highlighting the history, cultural heritage, diverse cuisines, tourist attractions, landscape beauty and birds of Pakistan.

The High Commissioner presented Bangla version of calligraphy booklet to all the participants which included

art pieces by renowned calligraphists of Pakistan including the chief calligrapher of Prophet (PBUH)'s Mosque.

The exhibition was followed by traditional Pakistani cuisine. The participants appreciated the event and greatly admired the work of Pakistani artists on display. They urged closer connections between the two states to jointly promote art and crafts of the two countries.

Biden says G7 must stick together

SCHLOSS ELMAU: U.S. President Joe Biden told allies "we have to stay together" against Russia, as world leaders met on Sunday at a G7 summit in the Bavarian Alps that will be dominated by war in Ukraine and its painful impact on food and energy supplies across the globe.

At the start of the meeting, four members of the Group of Seven rich nations moved to ban imports of Russian gold as part of efforts to tighten the sanctions squeeze on Moscow and cut off its means of financing the invasion of Ukraine.

However, it was not immediately clear whether there was consensus on the move, with European Council President Charles Michel saying the issue would need to be handled carefully or risk backfiring.

Western countries rallied around Kyiv when Russia invaded Ukraine in February, but more than four months into the war, that unity is being tested as soaring inflation and energy shortages rebound on their own citizens.

Chided by Ukraine for not going far enough to punish Russia, G7 leaders were also having "really constructive" talks on a possible price cap on Russian oil imports, a German government source said earlier.

At the start of a bilateral meeting, Biden thanked German Chancellor



Olaf Scholz for showing leadership on Ukraine and said Russian President Vladimir Putin had failed to break their unity. Scholz has faced criticism at home and abroad of his handling of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

"We can get through all of this and come out stronger," Biden said. "Because Putin has been counting on it from the beginning that somehow the NATO and the G7 would splinter. But we haven't and we're not going to." Britain said the ban on Russian gold imports was aimed at wealthy Russians who have been buying safe-haven bullion to reduce the financial impact of Western sanctions.

Russian gold exports were worth 12.6 billion pounds (\$15.45 billion) last year. "The measures we have announced

today will directly hit Russian oligarchs and strike at the heart of Putin's war machine," British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said in a statement.

"We need to starve the Putin regime of its funding. The UK and our allies are doing just that." Britain, the United States, Canada and Japan will ban Russian gold imports. France also supported the move. On the oil price cap and on the gold import ban, Michel said the issue would need to be discussed further. "I'm careful and cautious, we are ready to go into the details," he said.

"We are ready to take a decision together with our partners, but we want to make sure that what we decide will have a negative effect (on Russia) and not a negative effect for ourselves."

Afghan health official warns of disease outbreak

KABUL: Thousands affected by a deadly earthquake in eastern Afghanistan are in need of clean water and food and are at risk of disease, an Afghan health ministry official said on Sunday, days after a U.N. agency warned of a cholera outbreak in the region.

At least 1,000 people were killed, 2,000 injured and 10,000 homes destroyed in Wednesday's earthquake, after which the U.N. humanitarian office (OCHA) warned that cholera outbreaks in the aftermath are of particular and serious concern.

"The people are extremely needy for food and clean water," Afghanistan's health ministry spokesperson Sharafat Zaman told Reuters, adding officials had managed medicines for now but handling those who had lost their homes would be a challenge.

"We ask the international community, humanitarian organisations to help us for food and medicine, the survivor might catch diseases because they don't have proper houses and shelters for living," he said.

The disaster is a major test for Afghanistan's hardline Taliban rulers, who have been shunned by many foreign governments due to concerns about human rights since they seized control of the country last year.

Helping thousands of Afghans is also a challenge for countries that had imposed sanctions on Afghan government bodies and banks, cutting off direct assistance, leading to a humanitarian crisis even before the earthquake.

The United Nations and several other countries have rushed aid to the affected areas, with more due to arrive over the coming days.

Afghanistan's Taliban administration called for a rolling back of sanctions and lifting a freeze on billions of dollars in central bank assets stashed in Western financial institutions. In Kabul, hospitals more used to treating victims of war have opened their wards to earthquake victims, but a majority of people remain in the areas destroyed by the earthquake.

"Our houses were destroyed, we have no tent... there are lots of children with us. We have nothing. Our food and clothes... everything is under rubble," Hazrat Ali, 18, told a Reuters team in Wor Kali, a village of the hardest-hit Barmal district.

"I have lost my brothers, my heart is broken. Now we are just two. I loved them a lot," he said.

Indian gimmicks aimed at misleading world about Kashmir dispute: APHC

SRINAGAR: In Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir, the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) has reiterated that Kashmir is a dispute recognized by the United Nations through its Security Council resolutions and it must be resolved as per the aspirations of the Kashmiri people by allowing them to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination.

The APHC at an extraordinary meeting of its members held in Srinagar discussed at length the prevailing critical situation of IIOJK.

The meeting categorically rejected all political gimmicks, including Indian propaganda of so-called peace in IIOJK to hoodwink the international community, on one hand, and to lure its political stooges belonging to the occupied territory, on the other.

The APHC maintained that the Kashmir dispute was not a matter of power-sharing or of any other out of box solution, but an issue of freedom of the Kashmiri people from India. "The people of Kashmir fully support their right to self-determination and demand for which they have rendered

precious sacrifices in terms of blood, honour and material property," it added.

The meeting maintained that the APHC represents the popular voice of the freedom-loving people of Kashmir so it is committed to lead the ongoing freedom movement to its logical conclusion despite the policy of repression and suppression adopted by India.

It strongly condemned the use of brute force and prolonging of the worst military siege imposed since 5th August 2019 by the Indian fascist regime to fulfill its

nefarious designs of changing the Muslim majority character of the occupied territory. It also denounced the genocide, illegal detentions, desecration of the chastity of women, vandalizing of residential homes and gross violation of human rights at the hands of Indian occupational forces in the occupied territory.

The meeting paid rich tributes to all the martyrs of the freedom movement since its inception and particularly the martyrs of the ongoing month of June. It also lauded the valour and steadfastness displayed by the illegal-



Corporate sector urges to revisit super tax

ISLAMABAD: The business community Sunday demanded the government to revisit the imposition of a 10 percent super tax on 13 corporate sector entities to provide oxygen to already fragile Industries in the wake of blistering global inflation.

Talking to the media here today, Honorary Coordinator to Federal Tax Ombudsman and Minister of state Meher Kashif Younis, said the corporate sector is already 29 percent heavily taxed. He said the super tax impact will ultimately be shifted to end users besides impeding the economic growth.

He proposed that government must net the 18.5 million identified untaxed and under-taxed segments of the economy instead of levying super tax besides bringing the agriculture sector under the tax.

He said the government must slash the wasteful expenditures on state-owned enterprises that have been hemorrhaging taxpayers' money for years now and all losses incurring public sector entities must either be disinvested or privatized through a transparent process.

Meher Kashif said the steel industry's significance for our prosperity and welfare can't be emphasized enough.

He said Steel industry products also play a crucial role in the development of a sustainable society. The steel industry is one of the basic industries of the country and plays a vital role in strengthening the economy.

He said in a developing economy like Pakistan, the corporate sector must be fully encouraged by offering lucrative incentives for accelerating the pace of economic growth rather than imposing a super-tax which will not only halt the production but also render millions jobless.

He also demanded to withdraw the super tax on the entire corporate sector, especially the steel industry. APP

Carbonated Beverage Industry highlights discriminatory taxation regime



Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Carbonated Beverage Industry has highlighted the discriminatory taxation regime and harsh narrative against the industry in Pakistan, despite paying 'Health Levy', in the form of high Federal Excise Duty (FED), since years. Carbonated Drinks are the only products within the massive Food and Beverage Industry paying the Health Levy whereas no other sugar-based products have FED applied on them.

The representatives of the industry have said that the federal government has already raised the FED on Carbonated Drinks from 6% to 13% over the last few years.

A source from the industry added, "Carbonated beverage industry only uses 6% of the total sugar production in the country, however the rest of the 94% sugar consumers have no excise duty applied on them, which is quite discriminatory."

Carbonated drinks manufacturers have requested the government to review its consideration of not burdening the industry with more taxes and providing a level playing field in the country.

RDA inflows rise to \$4.356b in May

'Roshan Digital Accounts, a reliable investment platform for diaspora'

ISLAMABAD: Inflow of remittances under Roshan Digital Account (RDA) rose to US \$4.356 billion by the end of May 2022 as compared to US \$4.167 billion till end of April, according to a latest data released by the State Bank of Pakistan.

The data showed that the inflows of remittances during the month of May were recorded at \$189 million as compared to \$245 million in April and \$290 million in March, 2021.

Roshan Digital Account (RDA) was launched by State Bank of Pakistan in collaboration with



commercial banks operating in the country. These accounts provide innovative banking

solutions to millions of Non-Resident Pakistanis (NRPs), including Non-Resident Pakistan Origin Card (POC) holders, seeking to undertake banking, payment and investment activities in Pakistan.

As per data, expatriate Pakistanis from 175 countries had deposited the funds to 416,837 accounts opened through RDA. The number of accounts has also been increased from 403,750 in April to 416,837 in May 2022, which means some 13,087 new accounts were opened in May.

The scheme that started in September 2020 received lukewarm response from the overseas Pakistanis who deposited only \$7 million in the opening month, however with the passage of time the interest kept on increasing as the inflow reached to \$40 million in October 2020 and \$110 million in the subsequent month.

On June 21, the RDA marked a historic day when it received the highest ever daily inflows of \$57 million, taking the accumulated deposits in RDA to over \$4.5 billion. APP

Inauguration

ISLAMABAD: Chaudhry Nazir Hussain Chohan, Raja Aftab, Khawaja Bashir, Syed Aftab Hussain Shah and others inaugurating a commercial centre in PWD Society.



Photo: Spokesman

Rising food costs push inflation in Pakistan: Mirza Abdul Rehman

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Coordination FPCCI Capital Office Mirza Abdul Rehman said that the main cause of the high inflation today is cost push, fueled by rise in prices of food, which accounts for the largest part of poor people's consumption.

He said after the mini-budget that fell on the people of Pakistan is a double-edged sword. First one, the Milkmen increased the prices of dairy products in Federal Capital. The latest increase was made without the approval of the administration. The milk sellers increased the prices twice in two months while the local administration did not have a clue of what to do.

Further, Mirza said that the discontent and misery prevail as the government announced a massive increase in petroleum prices as the oil prices have raised



to the highest since March 2021 while the government has hardly any control over it other than minimizing or removing the tax on oil imports. The price hike has been a real challenge for Pakistani civilians.

Mirza Advised to consumers, the commodities mafia like sugar or milk can only be beaten by masses through consumer activism that includes boycotts, media activism and organizing interest groups. Avoiding the purchase of the milk can scare the mafia through the loss of even one day.

Super tax, market closure decisions lauded

Country at stake but industrialists, traders crying, says Dr. Murtaza Mughal

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW) on Sunday said it supports the decision of the government to impose of super tax on major industries and close markets at 9 pm.

However, these measures could be improved by closing markets at dusk as practised in many developed countries while super tax must be imposed on other sectors, it said.

National security is at stake but industrialists and traders are wailing over taxes which is irresponsibility, said Dr. Murtaza

Mughal, President of PEW.

Dozens of countries had imposed super tax and emergency tax on the affluent class as soon as the outbreak of Coronavirus started which is still being collected but the burden of the epidemic in Pakistan was put on the people instead of the rich, he said.

The industrial elite wants the entire burden of saving the country to be put on the people even at this critical stage, which is the height of indifference and irresponsibility, he added.



In a statement issued here, Dr Murtaza Mughal said that it was impossible to ensure economic self-sufficiency and reduce

poverty and inflation without taxing the nobility.

This tax should also be levied on more sectors and the process of granting exemptions and unnecessary concessions to the agricultural elite, wholesalers and retailers should be stopped.

He said that the super tax would benefit the country and the nation only if the big industries are not allowed to increase the prices of their goods otherwise they will increase the prices of their goods and the entire burden of this tax will fall on the consumers.

The government's plan to close markets at 9 pm was correct but could be improved because in dozens of developed countries where there is no crisis markets are closed by evening and this can happen in Pakistan too.

He said that traders and industrialists have been pressuring the government to reverse the decisions but no compromise should be made on it.

All Pakistan Barter Gems, Jewelers Association rejects sales tax

This is tantamount to gross abuse and economic murder of this sector, says Haji Amin Hussain Babar

PESHAWAR: Haji Amin Hussain Babar, chairman of All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewelers Association, has said that he rejects the sales tax levied by the government as it is a gross abuse of the already devastated sector. Yes, this is tantamount to economic murder of our community.

He expressed these views while talking to the journalists. Sales tax has been imposed on them after discussions with them, although FBR and FATF meetings have emphasized

that jewelers and jewelers do not fall under the category of sales tax and FATF.

In this regard, FBR and FATF Government representatives were repeatedly informed in writing in the meetings of the government but the government has imposed sales tax on the entire sector at the request of unknown people or jewelers' representatives. Gems and Jewelers Association from Khyber to Karachi all small and big jewelers and 98% Representing

the people, therefore, this issue should be resolved through dialogue with us.

He also urged the government to resolve this issue through dialogue with us before the budget is passed, as thousands of people are involved in this business. They are in danger of losing their jobs and leaving the business, and there is a fear of an unending series of strikes, but the government has not listened to our pleas, which are a huge abuse of the sector.

Despite financial constraints

AJK govt presented a people-friendly budget: Majid Khan

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: Finance Minister Government of Azad Kashmir Abdul Majid Khan has said that despite difficult circumstances government presented a balanced and people-friendly budget that will prove to be a milestone towards improvement.

Khan expressed these views while addressing a post-budget press conference along with Member Assembly Chaudhry Muhammad Rafiq Nayyar here on Sunday. Additional Chief Secretary Development Dr. Sajid Mehmood Chauhan, Secretary Finance Ismatullah Shah and Secretary Information and IT Ms. Midhat Shehzad were also present on the occasion. Speaking on the occasion the finance minister lauded the efforts of Prime Minister Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan, Chief Secretary, Additional Chief Secretary Development, Secretary Finance and his team for presenting the best budget. Now that the budget has been presented in the Assembly, Khan said that it was

incumbent on the opposition to play its due role in the House.

"The government will provide Rs 100 million for the earthquake victims in Afghanistan and will try to reach out to the Afghan brothers as per the policy of the government of Pakistan", he said.

Highlighting the salient features of the budget, he said, "Annual grant of Press Foundation has been increased from Rs 3.3 million to Rs 5 million whereas Rs. 85 million has been allocated for advertisements in the current financial year while Rs. 100 million has been allocated for the next financial year". Regarding the reduction of power losses in transmission lines, he said that the government was going to set up a private company (DISCO) to tackle this issue effectively. Keeping in view the sensitivities of Kashmir movement, he said, in order to make Kashmir Liberation Cell more active the government has chalked out a comprehensive plan to further Kashmir cause effectively.

He said that the Rescue 1122 service has been launched in Tehsil head-



quarters adjacent to LOC. "In addition, Bomb Disposal Squad Units and Bike Ambulance Service are being set up in the Sub-Divisions located on the LOC", he added. "Tourism and Archaeology Secretariat has been set up for the promotion of tourism", he added. Moreover, the finance minister said that the directorate of EMIS has been established for monitoring and obtaining data of biometric devices installed in educational institutions. He said that Rs. 418.494 million has been provided to the victims of disaster relief in the current financial year.

"About Rs. 500 million has been

proposed for the procurement of medicines and equipment and repair of ambulances in the health sector in the current financial year and an increase of Rs. 700 million has been proposed in the financial year 2022-23", he said adding that Rs 100 million has been allocated for the prevention of Corona epidemic. He said that a subsidy of Rs. 280 million was given by the government to provide cheap flour to the people during the Holy month of Ramadan. To improve law and order situation and countering the threat of terrorism, he said, "Counter Terrorism Department has been set up in AJK

and the required posts and funds have been provided to the department to counter terrorism effectively".

He said that additional District and Sessions Judge Court in Abbaspour, Additional District and Sessions Judge / Additional District Criminal Court in Samahni District Bhimber and Additional District Qazi Abbaspour Court have been set up to ensure delivery of justice to the people at their doorstep. "Dwarian and Shunter projects have been taken over by the government of Pakistan", Khan said adding that work on Makri Water Treatment Plant was underway while a plan of Rs. 35 crore for sewerage has been included in the budget. He said that funds have also been earmarked for AIIMS Hospital Muzaffarabad, Cardiac Hospital and Tandali Hospital in the budget. He said that in addition to water usage charges other issues were being discussed with the central government.

The finance minister Abdul Majeed Khan said that government of Azad Kashmir has also proposed to increase salaries and pensions of employees in

line with the package announced by the government of Pakistan. The federal government, he said, has assured to provide the required funds. To ensure transparency in the taxation system, Khan said that an agreement was being signed between the AJK Government and the State Bank of Pakistan and 1-Link to implement an automated and online tax payment system. The Bank of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, he said, has earned a profit of Rs 458 million in the year 2021-22, besides deposits of Rs 19.2 billion and the Bank's assets have increased to 25.30 billion rupees.

"Moreover, the process has been started for Private Equity, which will prove to be a milestone in achieving the status of a scheduled bank", he maintained. Praising CBR for working diligently in the financial year 2021-22 to meet its revenue target, he said that the revenue target for the CBR for the next year has been increased by Rs. 5 billion to Rs. 36.500 billion. "The revenue targets of other departments has also been increased by Rs 4 billion", the minister added.

World Test Championship

Magnificent Mayers helps West Indies punish Bangladesh

West Indies currently sit in sixth place on World Test Championship standings

NORTH SOUND: Kyle Mayers' second Test century has helped put West Indies in control after the second day of the second Test in North Sound.

Things were looking somewhat grim for West Indies when they lost three quick wickets just prior to lunch on day two to fall to 132/4, but Kyle Mayers took over with a splendid knock to give the hosts the ascendancy.

Mayers batted sensibly when required and attacked the bad deliveries when they came to score his second Test century and put his side in control at stumps on day two.

The left-hander was particularly savage on anything loose that he could hammer through the point and cover region and this helped him finish the day unbeaten on 126.

While Mayers' 116-run partnership with Jermaine Blackwood (40) did the majority of the damage, it was the unbeaten 92-run stand with Joshua Da Silva (26*) late in the day that really took any glimmer of hope



away from Bangladesh.

With star spinner Shakib Al Hasan going wicketless through 18 overs, it was left to fellow tweaker Mehidy Hasan Miraz to do the majority of the damage for the visitors.

Mehidy picked up the key wicket of West

Indies captain Kraigg Brathwaite (51) early in his spell and then returned later in the day to trap Blackwood plumb in front in what was another excellent piece of off-spin bowling.

While those two scalps were the only wickets Mehidy could snaffle on what

was a frustrating day for Bangladesh, the 24-year-old can at least hold his head high in the knowledge that West Indies' batting line-up failed to pick him at times and found scoring difficult when he had the ball.

Mehidy's 31 overs went for just 68 runs and the slow right-arter was clearly the best of the Bangladesh bowlers.

The Caribbean nation must still fancy their chances in the World Test Championship as a victory in the second Test here will provide them with some valuable ascendancy in the race to qualify for next year's final.

West Indies currently sit in sixth place on the World Test Championship standings, but a series win over Bangladesh will keep them in touch with the teams in front of them.

Bangladesh are ninth on the current standings and would need to find form very quickly if they want to work their way back into contention.

Paralympics athletes are our asset: Jahangir Khan

Our Correspondent

KARACHI: Legendry squash player and former World Champion Jahangir Khan has said that sports has the power to build a better society and the Olympic Moment can bring people and nations from diverse origins, linguistic backgrounds, cultures and faiths together in peace and harmony.

The objective of the Olympic Day celebrations is to spread the message to seeking togetherness, highlighting the power that sport has to build a better world, by uniting people under one roof in sports activities. As part of this, people are encouraged to move together for peace through a range of local and international activities.

He was speaking as a chief guest at a function held in connection with the second phase of World Olympic Day celebrations by Pakistan Olympic Association Environment Commission (POAEC) here the other day.

He said that tree planta-



tion is very much part of the Olympics and UN Charters and the objective is to spread the message of the importance of greenery and plants for the world environment from the platform of sports grounds.

Jahangir Khan said that for regaining past glory in squash, we will have to provide training on modern lines to our players at grass root level to produce world class champions.

Lauding the efforts of POAEC chairman Lt Col ret'd Waseem Janjua and Member Tehmina Asif for

inviting special athletes to Olympic Day celebrations, he said that they are also an importance segment of the society, the only difference is that they are differently-abled. They are very much talented and God-gifted which can be gauged from their superb show at international event where they have grabbed various medals and laurels for the country to make us proud at international events.

Member Environment Commission Tehmina Asif observed that our objective to provide equal sports oppor-

unities to para athletes and the purpose of their participation in today's programme was to also highlight their role in sports. She announced that soon a programme will be held for these special athletes to acknowledge and encourage them in their endeavors in sports.

Later, the squash legend distributed gifts hampers among special athletes and took selfies with them which produced smiles on the faces of the special persons, who enjoyed the company of Squash Great.

Sjostrom, McIntosh complete world doubles

BUDAPEST: Sarah Sjostrom, who has been winning world titles for 13 years, and Summer McIntosh, who has been winning them for four days, both collected their second gold medals of the week in Budapest on Saturday.

Sjostrom, a 28-year-old Swede who won the 50m butterfly less than 24 hours earlier, added the 50m freestyle, her 10th world gold.

McIntosh, a Canadian 15-year-old, held off 16-year-old American Katie Grimes to win the women's 400m medley title.

McIntosh, who won the 200m butterfly gold on Wednesday, claimed her fourth medal in Budapest

in four minutes and 32.04 seconds.

Grimes was 0.63sec back, while another American, Emma Weyant, was a distant third ahead of Hungarian 33-year-old Katinka Hosszu, the defending champion.

"I tried to push my body as much as possible," said McIntosh. "The crowd gave me so much adrenaline."

"I really felt my body in the backstroke."

"Katie is a top competitor. I like racing against her since we are in the same age group."

Sjostrom finished her sprint in 23.98 seconds, 0.20sec ahead of Pole Katarzyna Wasick, with Australian Meg Harris and American Erika

Brown tied for bronze.

The Swede took her first European title at 14 and her first world title a year later in 2009. This was her 20th world championship medal.

"Maybe my mind-set and also a lot of hard work, but also I love what I do," she said of her longevity. Sjostrom narrowly missed another medal when she anchored Sweden to fourth in the women's 100m medley relay that closed the championships.

"It's been a busy four days for me," she said. "I feel like it's business for me too, I just go in and do my job I guess."

The United States won, anchored by 17-year-old Claire Curzan. Australia were second

and Canada, with Penny Oleksiak holding off Sjostrom, third.

The men's 50m backstroke gold medal was presented twice, with the US anthem played twice. In the first race of the evening, Justin Ress was disqualified after video review for finishing entirely under water as he touched the wall first.

His training buddy Hunter Armstrong was awarded gold, winning in 24.14 seconds.

Ksawery Masiuk, a 17-year-old Pole, initially took silver, 0.35sec back, with Italian Thomas Cecon, who set a 100m backstroke world record on Monday, taking the bronze on loan.

Kenya names teams for Commonwealth Games

NAIROBI: Five reigning world champions are among the 45 athletes selected to represent Kenya at the 2022 World Athletics Championships to be held next month in Eugene, Oregon of the United States.

Athletics Kenya (AK) named the team following the conclusion of the two-day joint national trials for Oregon 2022 and Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games in Nairobi, the capital of Kenya.

The World Championships will run from July 15-24 with the Commonwealth Games following shortly afterward from July 28 to August 8.

Women's 5,000m champion Hellen Obiri could attempt the double after winning the women's 10,000m in 31:49.88.

"I don't have another road race until November, so I decided to go for the defence of my title. Our focus will be working with the coaches to rectify our mistakes and work as a team to take on the Ethiopians," the Olympics silver medalist told reporters.

Ruth Chepng'etich (women's marathon), Beatrice Chepkoech (women's 3,000m steeplechase), Conselus Kipruto (men's 3,000m steeplechase), and Timothy Cheruiyot (men's 1,500m) will return to defend their crowns at Hayward Field in Eugene. Olympic champions Emmanuel Korir (men's 800m) and Faith Chepng'etich Kipyegon (women's 1500m) also made the squad.

"I lost my title to Sifan Hassan in 2019 and my aim is to go to Oregon and win it back for my country," two-time Olympic champion Kipyegon said after stepping down the distance and finishing second in the women's 800m 1:58.18.

The two-day selection event was restricted in the number of athletes invited owing to the anti-doping requirements set by World Athletics.

Kenya is listed as a Category-A country due to the spike in doping cases, meaning that runners from the country must have conducted three tests, one out of the competition to be eligible for the World Championships.

The development saw all events contested become straight finals. Sprint sensation and African men's 100m champion Ferdinand Omanyala Omurwa could not equal the 9:85 he ran at the same stadium in May as a -2.3m/s headwind slowed the field on Saturday.

Omanyala won the last event of the trials in 10.03 much to the delight of the sparse crowd led by Kenya's First Lady Margaret Kenyatta.

Having become the first Kenyan to run in the men's 100m Olympics final at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics last year, Omanyala is now keen on making more history in Oregon.

McLaughlin smashes 400m hurdles world record

EUGENE: Sydney McLaughlin punched her ticket to the athletics World Championships with a world record 51.46sec victory in the 400m hurdles at the US trials on Saturday.

McLaughlin shaved five-hundredths of a second off the world record of 51.46 she set in winning Tokyo Olympics gold last August 4, delivering a dominant performance at Eugene's Hayward Field that saw runner-up Britton Wilson cross the line more than a second back in 53.08sec.

Shamier Little was third in 53.92. The trio will represent the United States on the same Hayward Field track in July - when reigning World Champion Dalilah Muhammad also aims to defend her title. With a bye as champion Muhammad -

who beat McLaughlin in Doha in 2019 but took silver behind her in Tokyo - received a waiver to skip the trials to recover from a hamstring injury. McLaughlin showed she didn't need her great rival to push her to new heights in this championship season, and sounded a warning for those coming to challenge her in Eugene, where she broke the world record for the first time last June.

"Anytime I come here I can just feel something amazing's going to happen," McLaughlin said. She said nothing compared the "awe" of breaking the world record for the first time - but that doesn't mean she won't be aiming to do it again next month. "This is just a great indicator of where we are," she said. "Hopefully we're going to

go home and work on a few things and try to come back and improve on it." Her performance capped a day of 11 finals and a farewell to the US championships for Olympic great Allyson Felix - 21 years after she ran in her first.

Felix finished sixth in the 400m, making her almost certain to earn consideration for a relay at the World Championships. "I think I should be in good position for maybe a mixed relay or something like that," Felix said. Felix is calling time on a career that includes 29 world and Olympic medals - including seven Olympic golds. After a gritty semi-final performance to earn a place in the final, Felix - greeted by a massive ovation - clocked 51.27sec.

Talitha Diggs, daughter of four-time Olympian Joetta

Clark-Diggs and the NCAA collegiate champion, used a powerful finishing kick to win the women's 400m in 50.22, overhauling early pace-setter Lynna Irby and Kendall Ellis in the final 20 meters.

World record-holder Keni Harrison won the 100m hurdles in another world-leading time of 12.34sec. Alaysha Johnson was second in 12.35 and Alia Armstrong was third in 12.47. World champion Nia Ali opted out of the final but will complete the formidable US contingent in the event next month. In other events, world 200m champion Noah Lyles clocked 19.95sec to top the first-round times, and revealed he was rebounding from a bout with Covid. "To be honest I'm so in shape I'm not too



worried about it," Lyles said of five days of missed training.

Erriyon Knighton was second-fastest in 20.08 with 100m world champion Christian Coleman and Fred Kerley - who

Nadal pain-free for first time in 18 months

LONDON: Rafael Nadal said Saturday that for the first time in 18 months he has defeated the crippling foot pain which threatened to push him to the brink of retirement.

Nadal captured his 14th French Open and record-extending 22nd major earlier this month to put himself halfway to the first men's calendar Grand Slam since 1969. However, in the aftermath of his Paris victory, he revealed that he had needed to have his left foot anaesthetised to keep competing. He then underwent "pulsed radiofrequency stimulation", a treatment aimed at reducing nerve pain. "I can walk normal most of the days, almost every single day."

"That's for me the main issue," said the 36-year-old Spaniard at Wimbledon on Saturday. "When I wake up, I don't have this pain that I was having for the last year and a half, so quite happy about that. "And second thing, practising. Since the last two weeks, I didn't have one day of these terrible days that I can't move at all. The feeling and overall feelings are positive."

Nadal is a two-time champion at Wimbledon but his last title at the All England Club came 12 years ago. This year he is seeded two which at least gives him the benefit of avoiding old rival and top seed Novak Djokovic until the final. The Spaniard hasn't played a grass-court warm-up event, preferring instead to focus on alleviating his foot pain and then practising on the surface in Mallorca. "In 2003 (his debut year), I never thought that I'd have a chance to win Wimbledon," he said. "Today it's a different story. I had some success here."

Bale confirms MLS move to LAFC

LOS ANGELES: Wales captain Gareth Bale confirmed his move to Major League Soccer's Los Angeles FC on Saturday following his departure from Spanish giants Real Madrid.

Bale confirmed his plans to join LAFC in a post on Twitter following widespread reports earlier Saturday about the move. "See you soon, Los Angeles," the 32-year-old wrote. An accompanying video showed Bale wearing an LAFC shirt and cap. Earlier the Los Angeles Times said Bale will be eligible to play for LAFC from July 1. ESPN reported that Bale will fly to Los Angeles at the end of next week to sign a deal which runs to the end of this season, with an option for an additional year.

Bale was once the world's most expensive player and has spent the last eight seasons with Real Madrid, winning three domestic championships and five Champions League titles. The Welshman has scored 139 league goals in his club career with 39 goals in 106 internationals for Wales.

Bale played a pivotal role in helping Wales qualify for this year's World Cup, where they will face the United States, England and Iran in the group stage in Qatar. It marks the first time Wales have qualified for the tournament since the 1958 finals. Bale's signing comes as LAFC bid to build on a strong start to the MLS season.

The California club lead the Western Conference standings with 30 points from 15 games. Bale will be the second high-profile international signing the club has made in recent weeks. Former Juventus and Italy international Giorgio Chiellini joined the club earlier this month. News of Bale's decision to head to Major League Soccer comes just days after reports in Britain indicated he was in talks with Cardiff over a possible move. His former club Tottenham and Newcastle were also mooted as possible destinations.

COVID-19 rules Foakes out of Headingley Test

LONDON: England wicketkeeper Ben Foakes has been ruled out of the ongoing Test against New Zealand at Headingley after contracting COVID-19.

In his absence, Sam Billings has been drafted into the XI as a COVID replacement. Billings has been part of Kent in the Vitality T20 Blast but will slot straight into the playing XI.

Foakes complained of a stiff back on Saturday and did not take the field on day three of the third Test between England and New Zealand. In his temporary absence, Jonny Bairstow took the gloves.

"The rest of the England party follows health protocols of symptom reporting and subsequent testing if required. There are no other positive cases in the camp," read ECB's statement.

Further medical assessment showed that Foakes was positive for COVID-19 after taking the Lateral Flow Test. Furthermore, his availability for the Test against India is also in doubt.

The rescheduled Test, which is set to begin on 1 July, has already been marred by bad news after India skipper Rohit Sharma tested positive for COVID as per an update by BCCI.

Egypt facing athlete exodus

CAIRO: Egyptian squash player Mohamed el-Shorbagy was called a traitor and a sellout when he announced this month he had joined the English national team.

Yet the athlete is not the first Egyptian to compete under a foreign flag, with experts saying the choice illustrates a pervasive problem of athletes feeling underpaid and under-equipped. "There is only football and a few team sports" that garner support, Hossam Hamed, former wrestler and coach of Egypt's national team, told AFP. Other athletes, particularly those in individual sports, have to deal with "obsolete regulations" and "minimal payments, even after medals and international victories". He says Egyptian athletes joining other national teams are "rebeling against a painful reality".

Explaining his choice, el-Shorbagy said "England gave me all the support I needed", in contrast to his home country, where "no one paid him any mind" for years. Currently world number 3, the Alexandria native is one of Egypt's most decorated squash players, spending 50 months as the world number one in a country that consistently dominates the sport on a global level.

Tokyo Olympics silver medalist Gabby Thomas made it safely into the semis as did Sha'Carri Richardson, who shockingly failed to advance from the 100m heats. Reigning world champion and Tokyo Olympics silver medalist Grant Holloway and Devon Allen stayed on course for a 110m hurdles showdown with the top two times in the heats.

Holloway, whose American record of 12.81 is one one-hundredth off the world record, won his heat in 13.11sec, second-fastest of the round ahead of NCAA champ Trey Cunningham's 13.13. Philadelphia Eagles wide receiver Allen, who stunned Holloway with the third-fastest time in history of 12.84sec in New York two weeks ago, won his heat to qualify third-fastest in 13.27.