



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ
نبی کریم صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے فرمایا اللہ تعالیٰ اسے نیک علیہ السلام کی والدہ (ہاجرہ علیہا السلام) پر رحم کرے، اگر انہوں نے جلدی نہ کی ہوتی (اور عمر کے پانی کے گرد مہر نہ بنا تیں) تو آج وہ ایک بہت بڑا دانشور ہوتا۔
(صحیح بخاری، حدیث نمبر 3362)

Barkat Rice Mills (Pvt) Limited

PTI govt made fake case against me: Dar

Former federal minister Ishaq Dar says there is only one case against him in Pakistan which is a fake case filed by Imran Niazi; the case was made by making the basis of his tax return. This is the reason that when Imran Khan's government contacted Interpol to bring him to Pakistan, the documents given to Interpol had no evidence, so Interpol gave him a clean chit. I would be sworn in as a senator on his return to Pakistan.



Zardari finishes Nawaz's politics: Sh Rashid

Awami Muslim League chief Sheikh Rashid says Pakistan People's Party (PPP) co-Chairman Asif Ali Zardari has finished the politics of Nawaz Sharif. I want to tell those responsible in Pakistan that the ground conditions are very bad. Allied parties are criticized the ruling government over its incompetence. Immediate elections are the only solution to the current anarchy.

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National strategy

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairs Federal Cabinet Meeting in Islamabad on Tuesday.



Photo: PID

PTI leaders'

Ban on remarks against institutions: plea

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: A petition has been filed on Tuesday in the Supreme Court against Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Imran Khan and other PTI leaders to restrain them from making statements against the institutions. The petition filed by the Advocate Qausain Faisal requested that Imran Khan and other PTI leaders should be restrained from making statements against state institutions and a judicial commission should be set up to investigate the conspiratorial statements of PTI leaders. PTI leaders are blaming the judiciary, army and other institutions including the Election Commission and these statements could damage the country's sovereignty, the plea further stated.

Turn Around Pakistan' Conference

Our ultimate goal is economic self-reliance: PM

Bilawal, ANP delegation discuss political situation

Senior Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday said the current economic scenario of Pakistan required tactical solutions to address economic problems and stressed rising above politics to sort out the financial issues confronting the country. Addressing the "Turn Around Pakistan" conference, he said economic self-reliance was the key to achieving the goals of development and prosperity. The event organized by Ministry of Planning Development and Special Initiatives gathered stakeholders from all walks of life with an objective to finding solutions to the country's current socio-economic issues.

The prime minister said Pakistan was facing many external

and internal challenges which were compounded by the existing commodity super-cycle and geo-political situation. He said as the economic growth did not offer enough opportunities for national progress, short-term

There is no shortage of anything in Pakistan: PM

measures could act as a catalyst for speeding up the growth. He said financial self-reliance was the top most priority of the coalition government. He said focusing on the areas of agriculture, agro-based industry and exports

was vital to strengthen the national economy. He stressed the need for judicious utilization of the \$2 billion tranche from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and pledged that every single penny would be spent prudently.

A delegation of Awami National Party (ANP) led by Aimal Wali Khan called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif here on Tuesday. During the meeting, views were exchanged about the country's political situation. Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Tuesday called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to discuss the issues of the ruling coalition partners. According to sources, Bilawal Bhutto also discussed the funds received from China and the matters pertaining to talks with the

International Monetary Fund (IMF), in his one on one meeting with PM Shehbaz Sharif. The prime minister congratulated Bilawal over People's Party's victory in the recently held first phase of local government elections in Sindh. Bilawal Bhutto had directly reached to the PM House after his arrival in Islamabad.

"We have all accepted this challenge and will InshaAllah fulfil this responsibility," he said. PM Shehbaz said that although he may receive opposition in once again using the word that created much political drama in recent weeks, he will ask whether it is the "choosers" that are now going to receive \$2 billion or "the other word", referring to beggars from the phrase "beggars can't be choosers".

Dar to replace Miftah as finance minister

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Former finance minister and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz Senator Ishaq Dar will likely return to Pakistan in the third week of July. The sources claimed that Dar would likely replace Miftah Ismail as finance minister as Ismail is not a member of parliament, his appointment has been undertaken as per Section nine of Article 91 of the Constitution, which pertains to making any non-elected person a member of the cabinet.

Under the law, if a person not a member of any of the two houses of the parliament is appointed as a minister, he or she has to be elected to the National Assembly within a six months' time. Earlier this year, Dar was re-instated to the Senate by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP). The PML-N stalwart

is eligible to assume responsibilities as finance minister as he is elected to the National Assembly.

Dar will face his court cases and assume his responsibilities as Senator. He will decide on joining the federal cabinet after winning the cases. The PML-N leader, who has served as federal minister for finance four times between 1998 and 2017, has been living in a self-imposed exile in the United Kingdom since November 2017.

There are various cases against the senior PML-N leader, in which he is specifically accused of not submitting details of his assets for 22 years. An accountability court declared him proclaimed offender in assets beyond means case in December 2017. Sources privy to the development said that the lawyers of Ishaq Dar will soon file for his protective bail.

CAD hits \$1.4b in May: SBP

A decline in remittances, exports reasons behind deficit

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Pakistan's current account deficit (CAD) widened to \$1.4 billion in May 2022, according to data released by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) on Tuesday. "The current account deficit (CAD) rose to \$1.4bn in May. While overall imports fell compared to April, a decline in remittances and exports on account of Eid holidays contributed to this rise," the statement read.

"Moreover, excluding in kind imports that are fully financed and thus do not undermine sustainability of the CAD, the deficit was more modest at \$1bn," it added.

Talking to its official Twitter account, the bank noted that the change has taken place largely due to a decline in remittances sent by overseas

Pakistanis despite a reduction in overall imports. "Excluding in-kind imports that are fully financed and thus do not undermine the sustainability of the current account deficit, it was modest at \$1 billion," the SBP wrote.

Meanwhile, cumulatively, during the eleven-month period of the ongoing fiscal year (July-May of FY22), the current account deficit stood at \$15.2 billion compared to a deficit of only \$1.183 billion during the same period of the previous fiscal year (FY21), showed SBP data. With current account balance being an important indicator of Pakistan's economy, a widening deficit leads to an outflow of US dollars, which puts pressure on the currency that has continued to struggle against the greenback.

Pak committed to religious harmony: COAS

British Sikh delegation calls on Army Chief



Staff Report

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa has asserted that Pakistan was committed to promoting religious harmony and freedom, Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said on Tuesday. He was talking to a delegation of 12-member British Sikh soldiers' headed by Deputy Commander Field Army UK, Major General Celia J Harvey, who called on him at the General Headquarters here.

The Army Chief said that Pakistan respects all religions and also recognizes the need for the promo-

tion of religious tourism in the country. "Kartarpur corridor is a practical manifestation of Pakistan's unwavering commitment towards religious freedom and harmony," the Army Chief added. Speaking on the occasion, the delegation appreciated the efforts of Pakistan's armed forces in bringing peace and normalcy to tribal districts of the country.

During their stay in Pakistan, the British Sikh soldiers visited Lahore, where the dignitaries witnessed a flag-lowering ceremony at the Wagha border. They visited Lahore Fort, Allama Iqbal Mausole-

um and Badshahi Mosque. The British Sikh soldiers also visited several religious sites of the country, including Darbar Hazrat Mian Mir, Haveli Naunihal Singh, Gurdwara Janamasthan Guru Ram Das, Samadi Ranjeet Singh, Gudwara Dera Sahib, Kartarpur Corridor, Nankana Sahib and Dera Panja Sahib. The delegation also visited Orakzai District and witnessed Samana Fort, Lockhart Fort and Saragarhi Monument. This was the place where 21 Sikh soldiers laid their lives in 1897 as part of British expedition and has much historical significance for Sikhs.

Rupee strikes back against US dollar

KARACHI: The rupee snapped its losing streak against the US dollar, gaining Rs1.07 in the interbank market as Pakistan receives the draft Memorandum of Economic and Financial Policies (MEFP) from the International Monetary Fund for the combined 7th and 8th reviews. According to details, the dollar closed Rs206.87, against Monday's close of Rs207.94. In open market, local currency also posted gains and was being traded around Rs207 against the greenback.

According to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), the local currency gained Rs1.07, or 0.52%, to close at Rs206.87 against the US dollar in the interbank market. Since the beginning of this fiscal year (July 1, 2021) to date, the rupee has collectively dropped by a massive 31.31% (or Rs49.33) compared to the previous fiscal year's close at Rs157.54. The rupee has maintained a downward trend for the last 13 months. It has lost 35.85% (or Rs54.6) to date, compared to the record high of Rs152.27 recorded in May 2021.

Document received

Pakistan could get \$2 billion from IMF: Miftah

Says IMF combines 7th, 8th tranches for Pakistan through MEFP

Senior Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Tuesday received memorandum of economic and financial policies (MEFP) from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for combined 7th and 8th reviews for Extended Fund Facility (EFF), Finance Minister Miftah Ismail said. He said that the government had received Memorandum of Economic and Financial Policy (MEFP) from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) which would combine the seventh and eighth tranches.

The government would receive from the IMF \$ 900 million as the seventh tranche and \$1 billion as the eighth tranche, the Minister said this while addressing the conference titled "Turn-around Pakistan" here. The Minister said that the Prime Minister Muhammad Shabaz Sharif's dream was to take Pakistan towards self-reliance, sustainable and inclusive growth. "This goal is not difficult.

The government has examples of China, Japan and South Korea, which have grown by 10% annually.

He said: "We intend to provide relief to 6 million people, of which 4 million are already registered. The Prime Minister has provided a scheme



for cheap petrol and food which will benefit 6 million people," he said adding that the government had made difficult decisions to strengthen Pakistan's economy. "When we left the government, country's debt servicing stood at Rs 1,500 billion per year, which currently stands at Rs 4,000 billion and now our debt has doubled. Now Pakistan can't afford any more deficits," he said while explaining anomalies involving tax to GDP ratio which is one of the lowest in the world.

He said that the government made petrol more expensive and the poor people understood the situation and sided with us. Similarly, "we imposed tax on rich people and also imposed super tax on 10 percent of industries. The government is also bringing shopkeepers all over Pakistan into the tax net," the Minister said adding that economic growth in Pakistan required strong fiscal discipline and economic management. He said that our savings and investment ratio was very low which needed more work. The government was budgeting the deficit at the moment and the current deficit was forcing us to take new loans.

He further said that the government was giving subsidies of Rs. 700 billion this year. He said that in order to balance our annual budget, we have to move towards export led growth so that the country's economy can achieve sustainable growth. Speaking on the occasion, Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal said that under the direction of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif the government had launched a project which would provide special package to 25 poor districts of Pakistan in coming 5 years to resolve the issue of these areas.

Official narrative

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb is addressing a news conference flanked by the Minister for Climate Change Sherry Rehman and Adviser to the Prime Minister on Kashmir Affairs Qaamr Zaman Kaira.



Photo: PID

Medical grounds

New visa regime for Afghan citizens approved: Marriyum

Federal cabinet reviews overall political, economic situation

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Tuesday said the federal cabinet had approved a new visa regime for the Afghan citizens including traders and those who sought to visit the country on medical grounds. The visa policy for Afghans was reviewed by the Interior Ministry (Afghan Inter-ministerial cell) during an apex committee meeting which also included representatives of the Foreign Office, NADRA and Board of Investment, Marriyum informed while addressing a news conference, following the federal cabinet meeting chaired by the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

Flanked by the Minister for Climate Change Sherry Rehman and Adviser to the Prime Minister on Kashmir Affairs Qaamr Zaman Kaira, she said under the reviewed policy, the Pakistan missions abroad would process the visa applications of Afghans on the basis of existing passport and nationality instead of their country of origin. In order to further promote bilateral trade with Afghanistan, she said the cabinet had okayed the inclusion of a sub-category in the work

visa category for drivers, transporters and helpers. The approval for introducing the sub-category in the online visa system was also given during the meeting. The information minister further apprised that a multi-entry visa for six months would be issued within 48 hours, while the interior ministry had been authorized to extend the period to one year.

She said the documents required for obtaining the visa would include the applicant's picture, passport, and transport company registration and employment letters, while the entry visa page would need to be submitted for the visa extension. Marriyum said the Afghans who sought visas in driver, transporter and helper categories were exempted from obtaining the BOI's letter of recommendation and registration with the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP).

The said initiative, according to the minister was aimed at ensuring the ease of doing business which would eventually boost the trade between Pakistan and Afghanistan, she added. She said the National

Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) had been directed to bring changes in the online system after approval of the policy. A committee had been set up to ensure the continuity of ease of doing business for traders, she added. The minister said the cabinet approved relaxing the visa policy for those coming from Afghanistan on medical grounds. Meanwhile, the cabinet had also ratified decisions taken by the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) during its meeting held on June 22. The technical supplementary grants approved by the ECC included Rs 125,819,029 for various requirements of 6 Aviation Squadron, Cabinet Division (Customs Duties and Payment of Clearing Agent), Rs 40 Million for the media publicity campaign by the NCO, Rs 1,224.41 million for payment admissible to the families of deceased / shaheed families under Prime Minister's Assistance Package, Rs. 39.363 million for purchase of surveillance cameras with accessories for maintaining law & order situation during upcoming protest / sit-in by a political party and others

Pervaiz our candidate for CM Punjab slot: Ch Shujaat

Denies supporting Hamza for Chief Minister's office

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q) Chief Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain on Tuesday dismissed the claims made by Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) of his support for Hamza Shahbaz for Chief Minister's election in the Punjab Assembly. In a statement, the PML-Q Chief while rejecting the rumors said that, "I want to make it clear that Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi is our candidate for the Chief Minister's post and our members will vote for him."

Chaudhry Shujaat further termed the false rumors as an attempt to mislead the PML-Q assembly members. He added that PML-Q members of Punjab Assembly have always adhered to party discipline and they will support Chaudhry

Pervaiz Elahi. Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain clarified that he has never misrepresented and he is always clear in his statements. "Don't spread such baseless rumors," he said.

Earlier on June 25, the PML-Q President rejected the allegations made by his younger brother Chaudhry Wajahat Hussain against him and his sons, terming them 'repugnant'. Taking to Twitter, the PML-Q president pointed out that his younger brother talking to "some people" in Gujrat, had made allegations against his sons that they had taken dollars from Pakistan People's Party (PPP) co-Chairperson Asif Ali Zardari. "If he had made such allegations then they were repugnant. I have not raised my kids like this, my children are quiet because I told them.

Rs300b extra

FBR beats tax collection target FY 22

Our Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Bureau of Revenue (FBR) collected a tax of Rs 6 trillion in the fiscal year 2021-22, exceeding the target of Rs5.8 trillion. According to details, a total of Rs 6 trillion in tax was collected in the fiscal year 2021-22, an FBR spokesperson said. Rs2.2 trillion was collected in income tax, while an amount of Rs2.7 trillion was collected as sales tax in 2021-22. FBR spokesperson told that a total of Rs1, 007 billion were collected in customs duty in 2021-22; while the FBR issued an amount of Rs 305 billion in refunds.

Former spokesperson of the finance ministry Muzammil Aslam said that the FBR data is a 'shut up call' to all the people who were claiming that the tax collections for the fiscal year 2021-22 would not be met. The PTI leader took to Twitter and said that income tax increased by 31%, while an increase of 28% was witnessed in sales tax. If the PTI has successfully implemented the Petroleum sales tax, the figure had gone up to Rs6.5 trillion.

Cases

Courts extend interim bails of PTI leaders

LAHORE/ISLAMABAD: Anti-terrorism Court heard the case of vandalism by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders in their long march to Islamabad. PTI leaders have been granted interim bail till July 19 by the court on Tuesday. The anti-terrorism court judge Abhar Gull approved the pre-arrest bails of PTI leaders. Earlier, the ATC in Lahore had issued non-bailable arrest warrants for the former ruling party's leaders at the request of Shahdara police station under charges of damaging public property, torturing police officials, and creating chaos during the party's long march to Islamabad on May 25.

Outside the court, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Central Punjab President Dr Yasmin Rashid said that PTI will contest in the by-poll elections in Punjab with zeal while she also said that the party will not let anyone do rigging in the elections. While PTI leader Hammad Azhar said that Chief Minister Punjab Hamza Shahbaz has lost majority in the Punjab Assembly. Other PTI leader Mian Mahmood Ur Rasheed said that PTI will win the by-polls of Punjab with prominent lead.

No isolation

Our foreign policy moving in right direction: Khar

Says Pakistan playing much bigger role on the int'l front

Senior Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Hina Rabbani Khar on Tuesday made it clear that Pakistan was in no isolation as its foreign policy moved in the right direction with all diplomatic missions working complicatedly on all fronts. Winding up the debate on Demands for Grants for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the next fiscal year and responding to criticism by Dr Ramesh Kumar in the National Assembly, she said Pakistan was playing much bigger role on the international front than its size in term of Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

"We are very happy to state that over the years, Pakistani diplomats, Pakistani statesmen and Pakistani politicians have contributed towards [effectiveness of] a policy in the multilateral institutions", she

added. With respect to BRICS, she said there was absolutely no denying of the fact that China was the most effective strategic partner of Pakistan. "China is part of BRICS which means Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, where all the member countries have to work to cooperate each other", she added. If a certain unfriendly country, she said, wanted to block Pakistan and succeeded in doing so, then "how can we doubt China's intention".

Chinese government's statement also came the other day, which said that China wanted Pakistan to be part of this and it also recognized Pakistan's role in global development. She said the foreign policy of a country was useful if it served in the interests of the people of that country. We are making it sure that the government works for Pakistan not for any individual and party,

she added.

She said in BRICS "we don't have a role but we still have core roles in many other international forums such as heart of Asia". With respect to the case of Afa Siddiqui, the foreign affairs' state minister said as far as fighting her case was concerned, Pakistan was doing it at every level and that the country was consistent in its policy across the governments to fight in favor of the case.

But obviously, she said every country had its own laws, rules and regulations besides its sovereign right. "At present, she has the counselor access and her requirements are also being fulfilled", she said adding Afa's case was also being fought at every diplomatic level. Speaking about the case of detained Kashmiri Leader Yaseen Malik, she said Pakistan was raising voice and working on it with effective diplomacy.

Court may hold CM Punjab election again

LHC vows to announce verdict without any pressure

Bureau Report

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Tuesday granted more time to Advocate General of Punjab and adjourned the hearing till Wednesday on plea against Hamza Shahbaz's election as Punjab Chief Minister. During the hearing, Justice Sadaqat Ali Khan remarked that the court will announce its verdict without any pressure and granted one day to AGP to brief Chief Minister of Punjab and tell the court how soon Punjab Assembly session can be summoned.

The court asked how a political crisis would be avoided if matters are taken back to the Punjab Assembly session on April 16 and polls are held again. In this case, the same presiding officer will hold the polls who was on duty during the April 16 polling," the court said. Meanwhile, PTI's counsel maintained that the party has also challenged the election held with Deputy Speaker Dost Muhammad Mazari. However, the court remarked that the

order of the LHC is available and it has not been challenged.

The Lahore High Court (LHC) is considering the polls for the Punjab chief minister's slot again, the court remarked on Tuesday while hearing the case challenging Hamza Shahbaz's election as the Punjab CM. An LHC bench, headed by LHC Chief Justice Ameer Bhatti, resumed hearing on separate pleas — filed by PTI and PML-Q — against Hamza's election as CM. During the hearing, the Punjab advocate-general sought a day's time to brief Punjab CM Hamza Shahbaz about the situation. Meanwhile, PTI's lawyer Barrister Ali Zafar maintained that Hamza will no longer be the chief minister if the votes of 25 PTI dissidents are not counted.

"New elections should be staged after removing Hamza from his post," Barrister Zafar stressed, seeking at least 10 days time to hold polls again. At this, the court remarked that the election of the Punjab chief minister should be held under the voter list as of April 16.

PTI's lawyer objected that the changes made so far cannot be reversed. However, the court remarked that it will give legal cover on this matter. At this, PTI's lawyer sought the inclusion of the five voters on the reserved seats as decided by the LHC in Monday's order. "How could these voters be included when they weren't there on April 16?" Justice Tariq Saleem responded.

Earlier, the court said it wants to wrap up the case today. While hearing the arguments from PTI's counsel, the court asked how a political crisis would be avoided if matters are taken back to the Punjab Assembly session on April 16 and polls are held again. "In this case, the same presiding officer will hold the polls who was on duty during the April 16 polling," the court said. Meanwhile, PTI's counsel maintained that the party has also challenged the election held with Deputy Speaker Dost Muhammad Mazari.

However, the court remarked that the order of the LHC is available and it cannot be challenged.

Govt preparing to rig Punjab by-polls: Imran Khan

Holds ruling coalition responsible for economic turmoil

ISLAMABAD: Former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan on Tuesday alleged that preparations being made to rig by-elections in Punjab. In his televised address on Tuesday, Imran Khan said that the incumbent government came into power through conspiracy. They came to power to reduce inflation but the inflation is increasing for the past two months, while the stock market has crashed and exchange rate of dollar has hit record high.

The former PM said that the International Monetary Fund has also appreciated PTI government's performance. The PTI chairman further said that the nation is staging protest today and the government should resolve issues of the general public instead of baton charging them. "There was no load shedding during the tenure of PTI government," Imran Khans said and asked what has happened in two months that the power outages in the country has increased.

"The nation is paying capacity payments despite the electricity not being generated in the power plants," he added.

The former premier went on to say that the future of the country's economy under "experienced thieves" was going to be dark. The by-elections in Punjab will

Economic future bleak under the 'professional thieves': Imran Khan

take place on July 17 for 20 provincial constituencies after the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) unseated 25 PTI MPAs for voting against party lines. The former prime minister said that Chief Minister Punjab Hamza Shahbaz will "lose his power in Punjab soon" as he was "illegally ruling the province".



Talking about the increase in electricity load shedding across the country, Khan claimed that there were no such issues when he was in power. "The PML-N signed the agreements on power project, yet our party did not increase the prices," the ex-PM highlighted. "The PML-N government had installed power plants on imported fuels, however, no elec-

tricity is being generated and they are paying money for the capacity charges," said Khan.

He urged people to come out on the streets to protest against inflation and the coalition government.

Last week, Khan announced that he will hold a public gathering next week at Islamabad's Parade Ground. He said that

he is gathering people from Islamabad and Rawalpindi to join him. He said that the economic future of Pakistan is bleak under the rule of the current government. While talking in a party meeting, former prime minister said that the group of thieves has come unprepared and tried to cover up their wrongdoings.

He said when PTI came into power, the country was on verge of bankruptcy. While he added that despite the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) pressure and affects of COVID-19, PTI did not let the inflation affect common people. Attacking the current government, he said that after 9 weeks the "imported puppets" have taken revenge from people in form of inflation. Imran said that he had warned that the PTI government strengthened the economy after hard work and political crisis could have damaged it. He said that transparent elections are the need of the hour to protect Pakistan from further harm

JCP defers judges' appointment in SHC

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP) on Tuesday failed to reach consensus on the appointment of seven judges in the Sindh High Court (SHC). The meeting of Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP) was chaired by Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice Umar Ata Bandial has ended. Sources privy to the development said the JCP could not reach any conclusion on the issue of appointment of judges in Sindh High Court (SHC) during the five-hour-long meeting, due to which the issue of appointment of judges has been postponed.

IS Uniform Development

Allocation of equal funds govt's top priority, says PM AJK

The PM directed that all the ministers and MLAs to fully participate in the budget session

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister Sardar Tanveer Ilyas has said that within the resources available in the budget allocation of equal and fair distribution of funds was the government's top priority to ensure uniform development in the region.

The AJK prime minister said this while speaking at a consultation meeting with ministers and members of the legislative assembly at PM secretariat on Tuesday. Speaking on the occasion the PM assured all the ministers and members of the legislative assembly (MLAs) that within the resources available in the budget funds would be allocated equally. He said that discrim-



ination in the allocation of funds won't be tolerated.

The Prime Minister directed that all the ministers and MLAs to fully participate in the budget session and play their positive role in the House in accordance with the democratic norms and traditions. He said that the opposition lawmakers should also attend the budget session and play their constitutional role effectively. "The people of

Azad Kashmir had given a mandate to the members of the Assembly to sit inside the House and defend their rights", the PM said.

Underlining the opposition's role in parliamentary democracy, the PM said, "Opposition and government are essential wheels of democracy". He said, "The government not only holds the opposition in high esteem but also respects their mandate". He said that opposition has been given appropriate rights in development and non-development funds. The Prime Minister, while interacting with the Ministers and Members of the Assembly, said that the despite difficult circumstances the government presented a people friendly budget.

He said that efforts have been made to move the region towards self-reliance within its own resources. Regarding the non-development budget, the PM said that the revenue target has been increased to meet the budget expenditure. He said that the development budget provided by the federal government has been increased by Rs 2 billion.

While reiterating his government's commitment to achieve the revenue targets set for the next financial year, the PM said, "The PTI government will not only achieve the target of local revenue during the next financial year but will also succeed in solving the basic problems of the people through the completion of development projects".

CM Hamza Shahbaz Sharif seeks report from IGP

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Hamza Shahbaz Sharif has sought a report from Inspector General of Police about rape-cum-murder of a child in Mandi Bahauddin.

The chief minister ordered that strict action be taken against the impenitent accused. The hardened criminals deserve severe punishment; he emphasised and extended heartfelt sympathies to the bereaved family while assuring the provision of justice to them. Agencies

Memon says 100 more buses arrived at Karachi Port

KARACHI: Sindh Information Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon who also holds the portfolio of Transport and Mass Transit said that 100 more buses of Sindh People's Intra District Bus Service from China reached Karachi port on Tuesday.

He said that a total of 240 modern buses of People's Bus Service have reached Karachi and red buses will be seen running on Route-2 on July 1- a 32.9 kilometre long route from Nangan Chowrangi to Landhi road in Korangi district

"Buses will run on all seven routes in Karachi within two months," he claimed adding that the Orange Line of BRT will also be launched for the citizens of Orangi soon after the launch of the People's Bus Service. Sharjeel said that Pakistan Peoples Party was materialising the promises made to Karachiites and determined to bring thousands of buses in a year or two to address problems of public transport in the metropolis.

He further informed that Sindh government wanted to set up a bus manufacturing plant in Karachi and progress has been made in discussion with a Chinese and a Turkish company in the regard. Agencies

IUB is emerging university globally: VC Athar Mahboob



Spokesman Report

BAHAWALPUR: Prof. Dr. Athar Mahboob, Vice Chancellor, the Islamia University of Bahawalpur has said that the Islamia University of Bahawalpur is an emerging university globally where thousands of students are improving their skills in the most important disciplines of modern times.

The Vice Chancellor expressed these views during a meeting with Air Marshal Muhammad Mughees Afzal, Chairman Pakistan Aeronautical Complex, Kamra.

Prof. Dr. Athar Mahboob said that for the practical training of teachers and students of the Aviation Sciences department established in the university, links are being developed with great institutions like Pakistan Aeronautical Complex so that the technical skills of the students would be enhanced.

Welcoming the Vice Chancellor, Air Marshal Muhammad Mughees Afzal appreciated the establishment of the Department of Aviation Sciences and Management in the Islamia University of Bahawalpur and assured full cooperation from his institution. It is worth mentioning that Islamia University Bahawalpur started the Department of Aviation Sciences and BS Aviation Management and BS Aircraft Maintenance programs have been launched. The launch of degree programs by Islamia University Bahawalpur in the aviation sector is being hailed as an important step by the public and private sectors. This development will give a new direction and development to the aviation sector in South Punjab.

Efforts for breast cancer awareness have started to yield results: Samina Alvi

KARACHI: First Lady Samina Arif Alvi on Tuesday said she was working on breast cancer awareness for the last three years which had started to yield results.

Addressing a session on breast cancer awareness, she said now hospitals, doctors and healthcare professionals were sharing that the people had started to take the breast cancer seriously and was being reported in large numbers. Samina Arif Alvi said that it was due to the awareness raised during the last three years. The breast cancer was a serious issue as the disease was killing 98% of patients.

"The major reason was unawareness," she held. The first lady said that "differently abled" were also being imparted skills training to incorporate them in the mainstream of the society.

She stressed upon collective efforts for creating awareness regarding breast cancer and its early detection which could help to overcome the mortality rate. Agencies

Protest

KARACHI: Activists of plastic bags manufacturing and dealer Association hold a protest in favour of their demands outside press club in Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

No reduction or cut in AJK development budget: Ahsan Iqbal

Abdul Majeed Tahir

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal has said that despite all the financial difficulties the Federal government would make no reduction in the development budget of Azad Kashmir.

"We will provide full share of the development budget and will also try not to impose cuts on the region's non-development budget", the federal minister said during his meeting with the AJK president Barrister Sultan Mehmood Chaudhary here on Tuesday.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Iqbal assured the president that the central government would continue to provide funds to ensure timely completion of the ongoing development projects in Azad Kashmir besides supporting new projects.

On the occasion, the AJK president invited the Federal Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal to visit Azad Kashmir. Accepting the



invitation, Ahsan Iqbal said that he would soon pay a detailed visit to Azad Kashmir.

Earlier, President Barrister Sultan Mehmood Chaudhry while briefing Federal Minister for Planning and Development about the AJK's financial difficulties said that there was a

dire need that the center should pay special attention towards Azad Kashmir so that ongoing development projects could be completed in time and new projects could be initiated so that the process of construction and development in the region continued unabated.

Rain likely in most parts of KP from today

PESHAWAR: Regional Met Office, Peshawar has predicted moderate to heavy rainfall with windstorm/thunderstorm in most of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa from tomorrow (Wednesday), said a dispatch of Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) here on Tuesday.

It informed that moist monsoon winds from the Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea are likely to enter the region from 29th June, 2022 and may cause moderate to heavy rainfall during the first week of July, 2022 with occasional gaps.

Under the influence of this weather system moderate to heavy rainfall with windstorm/thunderstorm is very likely in Mansehra, Abbottabad, Haripur, Kohistan, Swat, Buner, Shangla, Battagram, Swabi, Peshawar, Nowshera, Mardan, Charsadda, Kohat, Lakki Marwat, Bannu, Dera Ismail Khan, Bajaur, Mohmand, Khyber, Orakzai, Kurram, and Kohat.

Strong surface winds/dust storms are expected over southern districts (Bannu), Kohat, Lakki Marwat, Tank and Dera Ismail Khan) of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. APP

SECP seeks application from audit firms

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has initiated the process of constituting the panel of audit firms to conduct statutory audits of certain entities registered or licensed with SECP.

The SECP, under its Act and administered legislation, is required to maintain and notify a panel of auditors. Audit firms, having satisfactory rating from the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Pakistan (ICAP), under its Quality Control Review (QCR) program can apply for placement on the panel. Interested firms may submit applications on the prescribed form, along with an affidavit to the effect that all information provided in the form is accurate, complete and up-to-date.

NPO, NED University organize poster, debate competition

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: National Productivity Organization (NPO), Ministry of Industries & Production organized a one-day debate competition event on "Enhancing Productivity for Globally Competitive Pakistan" at NED University of Engineering & Technology, Karachi under its Sustainable National Productivity Project (SNP). The purpose of this event was to create awareness among the students and faculty to think about "productivity" and how it can help Pakistan become competitive in global marketplace. The poster and debate competitions were held and prize money was conferred upon the winners in both categories.

Dr. Sarosh Hashmat Lodi, Vice Chancellor, NED University, remarked in the opening ceremony that the students and faculty have a new avenue to think about, and set forth new goals to become more productive in their professional and academic settings. He



appreciated NPO for organizing debate competition on such an important issue which potentially can steer the socio-economic development in Pakistan. Mr. Musa Hassan, DGM NPO informed the audience that productivity is linked with every sector of economy, be it industry, agriculture, education or technology. Improving sustainable productivity is a key to overcome Pakistan's economic challenges and NPO is putting its best efforts to disseminate the information on tools

and techniques of improving productivity in Pakistan. Poster and Debate competitions, productivity walks, seminars and awareness sessions are being conducted all across the country to bring attention to and create awareness among general public, academia and industrial workforce on this issue. He appreciated the NED University for providing a platform to the students to discuss various aspects of importance of productivity for globally competitive Pakistan.

OICCI, ICBC Pakistan successfully held Webinar on RMB

Staff Reporter

KARACHI: To facilitate local markets understanding and utilization of RMB, and further in the light of some interest in a new circular by PBC (People's Bank of China), effective from March 1, 2022, to allow Chinese Commercial banks in China directly lend RMB to overseas entities, ICBC Pakistan and OICCI (Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry) had jointly held webinar on the subject RMB: Development, Infrastructure and Products. Senior management from OICCI members attended this important event.

M Abdul Aleem, CE/ Secretary General OICCI, appreciated the ICBC engagement with leading investors on this important matter which is going to be useful for investors understanding about the RMB development and prospective, opportunity for infrastructure building and new RMB products in Pakistan. ICBC, the largest commercial bank in the world, is providing financial services

in Pakistan for over 10 years. In the light of new developments, the webinar provided OICCI members an opportunity to learn about new opportunity in financing.

Chen Yuncheng, the CEO of ICBC Karachi Branch, speaking on the event, highlighted the efforts made by ICBC Pakistan to create awareness and understanding of RMB among business community in Pakistan and emphasized the necessity of cross-border RMB business promotion and benefits to use RMB as one of the currencies for trade and investment. Speakers for the session from ICBC Pakistan specifically talked about RMB development and perspective, RMB infrastructure building in Pakistan, and RMB business and products in Pakistan. The participants appreciated that increasing use of RMB products will facilitate trade and investment with Chinese counter parties as it is relatively stable in value, convenient in clearing and low in cost. RMB usage can also decrease the exchange rate risk among investment and trade activities.

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Fifteen years of Gaza blockade

Haidar Eid

This month, as the devastating blockade on the Gaza Strip officially entered its 15th year, I re-read David Rose's explosive report, *The Gaza Bombshell*, to remind myself (as if it is possible to forget) how the United States and Israel worked together to transform my homeland into what even the most mainstream NGOs describe as "the world's largest open-air prison". The story, as shocking as it may be, is quite simple. In early 2006, the Bush administration in the US kindly "invited" the people of Gaza to head to the polls to elect their representatives in a legislative council election. While Gazan Palestinians thought, as is customary in democratic elections, they should vote for the candidates they believed would best represent their interests, this was not the case - Washington wanted us to vote according to its, and Israel's, interests instead.

So, Palestinians ended up making the "wrong" choice, at least in the eyes of our colonial oppressors. And we have been severely punished for this "mistake" for the past 15 years.

The deadly blockade imposed on us for electing Hamas turned Gaza not only into an open-air prison, but into a concentration camp: in this once beautiful enclave, two million people, almost half of them children under the age of 15, are now desperately trying to survive without a secure supply of water, food, electricity and medicines, in a clear violation of international humanitarian law embodied in the Geneva Conventions. In the last 15 years, while under this medieval siege that turned us into prisoners in our own homeland, we also endured four genocidal wars. More than 4,000 civilians, including many children, perished under Israeli bombardment, for the sole crime of being born in Gaza.

As we were being systematically brutalised, maimed, imprisoned and killed, the international community did nothing but watch idly by - perhaps because the majority of us do not have what is needed (blue eyes and blonde hair) for them to conclude we are somewhat "civilised" and worthy of human dignity. Of course, life in Gaza was not much better before this blockade. In the year 2000, before the beginning of the Second Intifada, when many believed there was

relative "peace" in Palestine, for example, my dream of starting an academic career at An-Najah University in Nablus in the West Bank was crushed simply because I was a resident of Gaza.

Back then, Israel allowed at least some Palestinians safe passage between Gaza and the West Bank. I applied for a permit, providing the necessary documents from An-Najah. One week later, I was told that my application had been turned down - no reason was given.

I wanted to find out, so I went to the Beit Hanoun (Erez) checkpoint one morning at 6am to try and obtain access to the files Shin Bet, Israel's internal security service, has on me. I was told to join a queue and wait to be interviewed by a Shin Bet officer who may or may not tell me why I was not allowed to pass into the West Bank. I waited all day. At 5pm, someone just asked me to leave without offering any information. To this day, I have no idea why my application was denied. And I have not been able to visit the West Bank since. So the siege of Gaza did not start 15 years ago. It did not even start 22 years ago, in 2000, when I tried to get that job in the West Bank. It started almost 30 years ago, with the signing of the Oslo Accords and perhaps even before that.

Israel, and its powerful allies like the US, always saw us Gazans as an inconvenience, a surplus population they need to get rid of one way or another. The siege we have been under for the past 15 years is just the latest chapter in our oppressors' efforts to be rid of us. Former US President Jimmy Carter was not exaggerating when he said: "[Palestinians in the Gaza Strip] are being treated more like animals than human beings ... [n]ever before in history has a large community like this been savaged by bombs and missiles and then been deprived of the means to repair itself." That rare recognition of our situation by an American leader was of course more than 10 years ago, in 2009. Since then, our situation has become demonstrably worse. And it will continue to worsen.

I know things are going to get worse because Israel is publicly and unashamedly tightening our chains. At the end of last year, it announced the completion of a 65km-long (40 miles) underground barrier around Gaza equipped with hundreds of cameras, radars and other sensors. The project reportedly includes a more than six-metre (20ft) high "smart fence" and its maritime barrier has electronic devices to detect infiltration by sea and a remote-controlled weapons system. Constructed using 140,000 tonnes of iron and steel, it apparently took Israel three and a half years to complete this high-tech addition to our prison. Today, as it has always been, Israel is intent on erasing, destroying, and disappearing Gaza and Gazans. Israelis did not see us as humans with agency who deserve dignity and freedom 15 years ago, and they still do not acknowledge our humanity today. We are nothing but an inconvenience to them.

As the late Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin once openly admitted, we could "sink into the sea" for all they care. They will keep us imprisoned on this strip, and continue to slowly suffocate us for another 15 or even 150 years if the world does not wake up and say "enough". The blockade on Gaza is a stain on human history. On this shameful anniversary, the international community is obligated to take action and start doing what is necessary to finally open the doors of our prison.

The writer is an associate Professor at Al-Aqsa University in Gaza.

Looming water crisis

Pakistan is the country that bears the largest aquifer (groundwater) reservoirs that are also being pulled out at an extreme pace where the water table depletion is spiking up at a dangerous pace. What we need is implementation of national water policy and climate change policy in letter and spirit as well as result oriented interventions to set our direction right.

Pakistan'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 pace, 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. 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. Water metering in urban sector, water pricing policy, groundwater regulatory framework, and crop ecological zones as per the water availability is imperative. 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. In the modern world even water intensive crop could be grown with minimal use of water. Lack of knowledge on irrigation practices also causes lots of water wastage. Therefore, we need to improve governance and promote use of technology and better sowing practices. After Ravi, Satluj, Chenab and Jehlum, the cradle of thousands of centuries old Indus River system is also dying and if timely actions are not ensured, impending water scarcity may lead to food insecurity. In this situation, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has recommended a holistic approach with the involvement of all stakeholders to counter this challenge. Water governance involves all stakeholders for enhancing management and judicious use of water. Pakistan's water resources may decline to a drastic level in near future amid growing environmental crisis, global warming, population and absence of new reservoirs. Water market has vast potential in Pakistan. But, presently, the rich and landlords use major chunk of water resource on nominal charges. Therefore, there is an urgent need to introduce water pricing to ensure water availability for underprivileged class during years ahead.



Focusing long Covid Treatments

Lisa Jarvis

Long Covid is making it hard for millions to return to normal life, pushing some out of the workforce altogether, sometimes permanently. Yet medical efforts to figure out how best to help these patients are proceeding only slowly. Research has zeroed in on a few probable causes of long Covid, perhaps the most intriguing of which is the idea that the coronavirus sometimes lingers in the body undetected for months after an initial infection. The theories should not be difficult to investigate, and the US National Institutes of Health has \$1.2 billion to spend on the work. But it's not moving fast enough.

The slow-footed response to long Covid is often attributed to the nebulous nature of the problem. Symptoms are so numerous as to seem almost random. One large UK study counted as many as 200 distinct health effects across 10 different organs. Duration varies, too; for some patients, the symptoms last only a month or two, while others seem to never fully recover. Even estimates of how many people suffer vary widely. The US Government Accountability Office pegs the long-Covid population at anywhere from 7.7 million to 23 million. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention finds that one in five Americans has experienced post-infection symptoms.

Categorising all these cases based on their underlying biology will take time. And it will remain difficult to distinguish long Covid from other conditions.

But researchers can make progress toward helping patients before they have nailed down a neat and tidy explanation for the condition. Already, scientists have several good hypotheses about how to treat the problem, and ideas for preventing it in the first place. And some of these theo-

ries can be tested, even without inventing new drugs. Consider, for example, the theory that persistent lurking virus poses problems, for example, by prompting the immune system to react. A growing body of research offers support to this theory. In one recent study of blood samples taken from people with long Covid, researchers detected coronavirus spike proteins over the course of several months in 60% of patients. In some of them, the bits of virus could be measured for as far out as a year. Because humans have enzymes that quickly chew up the spike protein in the bloodstream, finding protein pieces over time points to some kind of viral reservoir, says David R. Walt, the Harvard professor who led the research.

This study has yet to undergo peer review, but Walt, who was the scientific founder of the gene-sequencing company Illumina, says it has generated more initial interest than any paper he's put out in his career. The enthusiasm is helping his team access blood samples that have been collected over longer periods of time, with more comprehensive patient data, for further analysis using a highly sensitive test his lab developed. The early findings are consistent with other work that has found the virus in the gut in people with at least one symptom of long Covid. If persistent virus is causing or at least connected with some lingering Covid symptoms, it would make sense to test whether getting rid of that virus helps to relieve symptoms. Existing antivirals make this possible. The Food and Drug Administration has authorised Pfizer's Paxlovid and Merck's molnupiravir, and several other pills to treat acute infections are in clinical trials. Small studies already suggest that treatment with the drugs could be beneficial.

Larger trials are needed, however, to not only sort out whether the drugs work but also assess how long they should be taken and which patients might receive

Ukraine War & Africa

Aichatou Mindaoudou

Until the fourth quarter of 2020, Africa's economic growth - despite imbalances and many systemic challenges, including poverty and youth unemployment - was the second-fastest growing in the world, after Asia. But the COVID-19 pandemic has slowed growth in sub-Saharan Africa and could reverse years of economic and social progress. Making matters worse, just as the pandemic began to wane, enabling the continent to focus on recovering from its first recession in 25 years, the war in Ukraine started. The conflict triggered by Russia's invasion has complicated the challenges and sources of stress already facing Africa. Some are economic, including debt problems for lower-income countries and excessive dependence on raw material exports. Political instability and terrorism remain a threat in several parts of the continent, notably the Sahel, the Lake Chad region, East Africa and, more recently, the West African coastal region. Africa is also struggling to manage the adverse effects of climate change and food insecurity.

Against this background, the Ukraine war has intensified socioeconomic pressures in Africa. Because many African countries depend heavily on food imports, the new spikes in global prices of agricultural commodities and oil caused by the conflict have left the poor increasingly vulnerable, with the sharp decline in Ukrainian grain exports aggravating food insecurity in many regions. This threatens to exacerbate latent conflicts in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel and may further jeopardize Africa's prospects of achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. Another consequence of the war in Ukraine is a paradigm shift in how Africans view the rest of the world.

The African public is becoming increasingly aware of the difference between the resources that traditional international cooperation partners are allocating to fight hunger, security threats and COVID-19 in Africa, and what they are mobilizing to support Ukraine. Today more than ever, therefore, African governments are demonstrating a willingness to work with new partners such as China and are doing so with an even greater concern for their national interests and a desire for more balanced international cooperation.

The current geopolitical crisis is an opportunity for Africa to reduce its dependence on food imports from outside the continent. Policymakers are implementing and strengthening regional responses under the aegis of initiatives and organizations such as the African Continental Free Trade Area, the Economic Community of West African States and the African Development Bank. In addition, several national and regional programs aim to reduce the impact of rising food price inflation and to support local production. African countries are increasingly implementing national development plans and policies through partnerships with the African Development Bank and the UN, among others. Many countries, for example, are focusing on local oil and gas production, renewable energy, local manufacturing capacity and youth employment.

While formidable challenges remain, Africa's people have adopted effective responses to health threats such as COVID-19, Ebola and cholera, as well as to humanitarian crises stemming from natural disasters, violent conflict and famine. Now, it is up to African leaders to improve governance and make bold policy decisions focused on promoting local production and consumption and on strengthening mutually beneficial regional cooperation. Political courage, backed by most of the population, will accelerate the region's recovery from the effects of the war.

More broadly, Africa should seek to manage the impact of climate change by focusing on food security, improved nutrition, social protection, environmental sustainability and resilience to shocks. To that end, the region has made access to sustainable energy for all and the restoration of 1 billion hectares of degraded land by 2030 a top priority. Many Africans are convinced that the war in Ukraine is not their problem to solve. But failure to restore peace and end the disruption to food and energy supplies will likely result in mounting political instability and social tension in the region. That will in turn hurt Africa's chances of charting its own path to a more prosperous and sustainable future.

The writer is a former foreign minister of Niger. Courtesy Arab News

