



# Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ  
نبی کریم صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے فرمایا: شر فی کانہ روپے کا تہرہ، چادر کا تہرہ، مٹل کا تہرہ، بلاک ہو اگر اسے بکھو دے دیا جائے سب تو خوش ہو جاتا ہے اور اگر نہیں دیا جائے تو مارا جاتا ہے۔  
(صحیح بخاری، حدیث نمبر 2886)

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## Days of Punjab gov numbered: Fazl

Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) supremo Maulana Fazlur Rehman says the days of the newly elected Punjab government have been numbered. Imran should worry about his politics and we had ousted him and now the Punjab government will also face trouble because of days of the government have been numbered.



## Political parties must unite to end inflation: Shujaat

Pakistan Muslim League - Quaid (PML-Q) supremo Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain says all the parties should come together and find a solution by forgetting their differences and there should be a working relationship in the current situation so that the affairs of the country can run smoothly. The current situation is linked to political reasons but the common masses are suffering from all the blunders.

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## CAD spikes to \$2.3bn in June



Bureau Report

KARACHI: Pakistan's current account deficit — the gap between the country's higher foreign expenditure and low income — widened to \$2.3 billion in June 2022 despite higher exports and remittances. According to the State Bank of Pakistan, the current account deficit of the country has risen to \$2.3 billion in June 2022 compared to a deficit of \$1.6 billion in the same month of the last year. Cumulatively for fiscal year 2021-22, the current account deficit widened by a whopping 517%, clocking on at \$17.4 billion on a yearly basis when compared with the figure of \$2.82 billion during FY21.

"As foreshadowed by earlier Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) data, a surge in oil imports saw current account deficit rise to \$2.3 billion in June despite higher exports and remittances," the central bank said in its official Twitter handle. The SBP further mentioned that so far in July oil imports are much lower [and] "deficit is expected to resume its moderating trajectory."

It mentioned that 3.3 million metric tons of oil was imported in June, 33% higher than in May.

"Together with higher global prices, this more than doubled the oil import bill from \$1.4 billion to \$2.9 billion," the SBP said, adding that by contrast, non-oil imports ticked down. Details of the balance-of-payments summary revealed that Pakistan recorded exports of goods at \$3.12 billion and another \$646 million as services. However, a massive import bill, which clocked in at \$7.04 billion for goods and another \$1.37 billion as services, in June was the reason behind the current account deficit.

## Legislation

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



Photo: PID

# CPEC playing vital role in Pakistan's development: PM

Vows not to bow before fascism; make Pakistan great

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has said the government is taking serious steps to promote cooperation with the Chinese companies to attract investment. Talking to a Chinese delegation, he said all necessary steps are also being taken for the protection of workers and engineers of the Chinese companies. The Prime Minister noted that China Pakistan Economic Corridor project is playing an important role in the development of Pakistan and welfare of its people.

Expressing his gratitude to the Chinese leadership for extending support to Pakistan in every difficult hour, Shehbaz Sharif said the Chinese cooperation and investment has helped improve infrastructure and public transport system besides addressing the electricity crisis to a great extent.



Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif addressing National Assembly session in Islamabad on Wednesday. Photo: PID

He said the development projects being executed in cooperation with the Chinese cooperation will not be allowed to face any further delays. The Prime Minister appreciated the Chinese companies for ensuring completion of

projects on fast track basis.

Regretting delay in Thar Coal Power Project, he said its completion will help generate 1320 megawatts of electricity from the local coal. The meeting was informed that work has been accelerated on

Thar Power Project by the present government and this will be completed in the first quarter of next year. The project will provide seven thousand jobs to the local population. The meeting was further informed that Shanghai Electric is showing special interest for investment in electricity generation, transmission and distribution.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday said despite prevailing mammoth economic challenges, the government would make Pakistan to emerge as a great country, without bowing before fascism and propaganda by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leadership. The prime minister, in his address at the National Assembly, said the united opposition had accepted the challenge of assuming the government just to save the state as the country was at the verge of default with record inflation and unemployment.

## Suo motu

# Cabinet nods limiting CJP's powers

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Federal cabinet on Wednesday decided to legislate regarding the suo motu authority of the Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) and the authority to form a bench. A meeting of the federal cabinet was held under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in which various issues came under discussion. During the meeting, the federal cabinet removed DG FIA Rai Tahir from the post and appointed him as the National Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, while giving the

post of DG FIA to Mohsin Butt, who is a Grade 22 officer of the police service.

During the meeting, the Federal Cabinet decided to discuss the judicial powers in the National Assembly, while the Prime Minister has directed all the ministers to ensure attendance in the House.

The cabinet also decided to legislate on the Chief Justice of Pakistan suo motu power and power to constitute a bench and has approved the withdrawal of the reference from the Supreme Judicial Council against Justice Qazi Faiz Isa.

# There must be same law for everyone: Bilawal

Says not possible to have one constitution for us, another for blue eyed people

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari while launching a tirade against judiciary without mentioning Imran Khan's name said that it is not possible to have one constitution for us and another for the apple of the eye.

Speaking on the floor of the National Assembly on Wednesday, he said that our job is to legislate and judiciary's job is to interpret and parliament will decide how many judges should sit on the bench. "A joint parliamentary committee should be formed in which we will legislate," he said.

The foreign minister said that the role of establishment and judiciary shouldn't be controversial, adding that all political parties had the same demand. "We were not trying to put pressure on any institution," he said and added we only requested that the full court should sit and give a verdict.

"We said that we would accept whatever decision the full court would announce and this demand was not only on the issue of Chief Minister Punjab but it was our demand for the full court regarding the Deputy Speaker's ruling."

Bilawal said it was high time for effective legislation to safeguard democracy and the constitution, instead of mere chanting slogans. He made a demand for constituting a joint parliamentary committee on the judicial reforms through effective legislation. "Pakistan's journey to democracy will remain incomplete without bringing judicial reforms. . . The PPP is ready for it [judicial reforms] as it is an unfinished agenda of the Charter of Democracy (CoD), signed by Shaheed Mohtama Benazir Bhutto and PML-N Quaid Nawaz Sharif," he said. Bilawal said there were certain issues related to the formation of court benches, taking suo moto notices and appointments of judges in superior courts, which needed to be addressed.

# PTI asks Punjab govt to restore Ehsaas programs

Imran khan decides going aggressive against govt

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Former Prime Minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan has directed the Punjab government to restore Ehsaas programmes in the province. According to details, the former premier has directed the newly elected Punjab Chief Minister Pervaiz Elahi-led provincial government to restore Ehsaas programmes, including health cards and Panahgahs (shelter homes). The PTI Chairman has also directed former special assistant on poverty alleviation Dr Sania Nishtar to help the Punjab government in restoring the welfare programmes.

"Sania Nishtar will soon reach Punjab and monitor the restoration of programmes in the province," Imran Khan said. The former prime minister will also announce the restoration of welfare projects in today's address to the nation. A three-member bench of the Supreme Court declared Depu-



ty Speaker Dost Muhammad Mazari's ruling in the Punjab Chief Minister election "illegal" and ruled that Pervaiz Elahi will be the new CM of the province. Former Prime Minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan has decided to accelerate 'aggressive' strategy against the 'imported' government.

According to details, the decision was taken during a meeting of PTI's political committee under the chairmanship of Imran Khan. The meeting decided to accelerate the 'aggressive' strategy against the federal government. During the meeting, the former premier announced to address the nation and inform the people of Pakistan about his future strategy. Sources told ARY News

that Imran Khan's next target will be the federal government. In this regard, the PTI Chairman issued important instructions to the party leadership while suggestions on various political issues were also taken from the meeting's participants.

Sources further claimed that Imran Khan has also instructed the party leaders to prepare for the general elections and said they will move towards Centre with the mandate of Punjab's people.

Speaking during the meeting, the former prime minister said that the current rulers have destroyed the country. He also praised the Supreme Court's (SC) verdict in Punjab chief minister election, saying that the apex court upheld the Constitution and law. A three-member bench of the Supreme Court declared Deputy Speaker Dost Muhammad Mazari's ruling in the Punjab Chief Minister election "illegal" and ruled that Pervaiz Elahi will be the new CM of the province.

## Fazl to chair key PDM meeting today

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) head and JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman has summoned a key meeting of the alliance today (Thursday). The meeting will be held at the Muslim House in Chak Shahzad on Thursday at 3:00pm which will be presided over by Maulana Fazlur Rehman. All heads of political parties in the PDM will attend the meeting. According to sources, the recent Supreme Court's verdict on Punjab chief minister's election and overall political situation in the country will come under discussion.

In the meantime, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supremo Nawaz Sharif talked to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and the party's vice-president Maryam Nawaz on telephone and held discussions with both of them about the Supreme Court's decision. Nawaz Sharif directed the prime minister to consult with the PDM to decide the future course of action.

# Pakistan may get IMF's funds in 3rd Q: Fitch, Moody's

Senior Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is expected to receive \$1.2 billion from the International Monetary Fund, which may help alleviate strain on the country's currency and bonds, according to Fitch Ratings and Moody's Investor Service. "We assume IMF board approval of Pakistan's new staff-level agreement," said Krisjanis Krustins, a Hong Kong-based Fitch director. "This will unlock significant additional financing from the IMF and other multilateral and bilateral sources, as well as provide a significant boost to market confidence." Pakistan's rupee has fallen more than its peers in frontier markets such as dong and togrog.

Pakistan's currency and bonds have taken a beating this month, as investors are concerned that political turmoil will delay IMF support for the country. The nation is trying hard to prevent fears it will follow Sri Lanka into a default this year, with the government working to secure billions of dollars from the Washington-based lender and countries like China and Saudi Arabia. According to Grace Lim, a sovereign analyst with Moody's in Singapore, the IMF will disburse the funds in the third quarter. Still, the risk that Pakistan will not complete its IMF bailout package is on the downside, as the government may find it difficult to implement revenue-raising measures, she said.

"Pakistan's ability to complete the



current programme and maintain a credible policy path that supports additional financing remains highly uncertain." Lim told Bloomberg, "while elevated inflation and a higher cost of living add to social and political risks." Meanwhile, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's government is dealing with other obstacles. The Supreme Court cancelled an election that would have elected the ruling alliance's candidate as chief minister of the country's largest province, giving reason for Opposition led by former premier Imran Khan to renew calls for early elections.

Dollar bonds due in 2031 were indicated 0.4 cents lower at 50.67 per

dollar, while the rupee fell to a new low, falling 1.5 per cent to 236.34 per dollar. According to people familiar with the situation, the IMF is seeking assurances from Saudi Arabia and other countries that they will follow through on their funding commitments before approving the loan to Pakistan. Fitch Ratings downgraded Pakistan's credit rating outlook to negative last week, and Moody's did the same in June. "The IMF loan is a high probability event," said Carl Wong, head of fixed income at Avenue Asset Management in Hong Kong. "But the odds that Pakistan can get itself out of the trouble is 50:50 as the IMF is just a part of the equation."

## Strategic partnership

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari is holding a meeting with Chinese ambassador Nong Rong her on Wednesday.



Photo: Radio Pakistan

# Summary for Governor's Rule in Punjab in works: Rana Sana

Interior Minister says only parliament can amend Constitution

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Rana Sanaullah has said that summary for imposing Governor's Rule in Punjab is in the works. Addressing a press conference, Rana Sanaullah said if Punjab government imposes ban on his entry in the province, this will provide Centre with a valid argument to impose Governor's Rule.

Criticizing Supreme Court verdict of nullifying PA Deputy Speaker ruling, Interior Minister said that the apex court's verdict has further worsened the political situation of the country. He said that independent and unbiased judiciary is need of every society. Rana Sanaullah said that PML-N wanted to go for early election but coalition partners of the federal government opposed the idea.

Interior Minister also warned that if opposition tries to march towards federal capital they will be dealt with accordingly and events of May 25 will be repeated again.

Rana Sanaullah said negotiations were in process for judicial reforms with regard to "taking suo motu notices and formation of benches by the Supreme Court". The minister, in an informal chat with journalists here at the Parliament House, said the Federal Cabinet discussed different proposals about bringing judicial reforms. Elaborating, Rana Sana Ullah

Consultation afoot for judicial reforms: Sana

said the cabinet meeting deliberated on delegating the powers of taking suo motu notices and benches' formation to three or five senior most judges of the apex court.

He also pointed out certain loopholes in the

process for appointment of Supreme Court judges.

There should be an effective legislation on the appointment or elevation of judges in the superior courts, keeping in view merit and seniority, he added. Giving the example of Mustafa Impex Case, Rana Sanaullah said the government meant the whole Federal Cabinet, not the prime minister alone. To a query, he warned of imposing the governor's rule in Punjab if his entry was banned in the province.

He said no institution shall the parliament had the powers to amend and rewrite the Constitution.

"We will not only fully protect this power of the parliament at all costs but also not allow any other institution to amend or rewrite the Constitution," he said while addressing a press conference. Ruling out the impression of any attempt to curtail the powers of judiciary, the minister said an "independent, impartial and unbiased" judiciary was the basic need of every society and no country could make progress without it. It was also imperative for all citizens to respect the judiciary, he added.

## Mazari to face no trust move

PTI finalises Sibtain for PA speaker's post

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has decided to move no-trust motion against Punjab Assembly's deputy speaker Dost Muhammad Mazari. Sources say that the names of Wasiq Qayyum and Malik Taimur are being considered for the position of PA deputy speaker slot. Meanwhile, several names are also being considered for the position of Punjab Assembly speaker including Mian Mehmoodur Rasheed, Aslam Iqbal, Zain Qureshi and Usman Buzdar.

It should be noted that a three-member bench of the Supreme Court today declared Deputy Speaker Dost Muhammad Mazari's ruling in the Punjab Chief Minister election "illegal" and ruled

that Pervez Elahi will be the new CM of the province. The PTI has finalised the name of the former provincial minister for forestry, wildlife and fisheries Sibtain Khan for the post of speaker of the Punjab Assembly.

The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Tuesday declared the ruling of Punjab Assembly Deputy Speaker Dost Muhammad Mazari in the Punjab chief minister's election "illegal", and ruled that PTI's candidate Pervez Elahi will be the new CM of the province. Following the verdict, PML-N's Hamza Shahbaz was removed from office with immediate effect and the Punjab cabinet was dissolved. The court also declared that all the appointments carried out under Hamza's rule null and void.

## Dollar jumps historic high against rupee

KARACHI: The unabated rise in US dollar against rupee on Wednesday continued as the greenback reached historic high in the interbank. According to forex dealers, the US dollar increased by Rs3.09 against rupee in the interbank and traded at Rs236.02. In open market, the greenback traded between Rs238 and Rs239. The forex dealers said that the banks are selling the greenback at Rs237. On Tuesday, the US dollar reached all-time high against rupee in interbank as Pakistan continues to witness political instability. According to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), the US dollar saw an increase in value by Rs3.05 and closed at Rs232.93.

Previously, the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) attributed the 11-rupee change in the exchange rate in just two days to the "market-determined exchange rate system" under which the current account position, news stories, and domestic uncertainty contribute to the daily currency fluctuations. In an apparent attempt to downplay the depreciation, the SBP said a "better measure" of the rupee's strength is the real effective exchange rate, which takes into account the currencies in which Pakistan trades in inflation-adjusted terms.

## Power shortfall 7,000mw in the country

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The power crisis in Pakistan has deepened as the electricity shortfall has gone up to 7,000 megawatts. According to power division sources, power demand is 29,000 megawatts, while production lags at 22,000mw. The gap between demand and supply of electricity has reached 7,000 megawatts. Meanwhile, the loadshedding of 4 to 6 hours is being carried out across the country, the sources said. On Tuesday, the federal cabinet approved jacking up electricity prices by Rs7.91 per unit.

Addressing a news conference along with Minister of State for Petroleum Musadik Malik in Islamabad on Tuesday, Minister for Power Khurram Dastgir said there will be an increase of 3.50 rupees per unit from 26th of this month. There will be another increase of 3.50 rupees per unit from next month whilst in the month of October; the tariff will be increased by ninety paisa per unit. Dastgir said increase in the electricity tariff will not have an impact on the poorest consumers.

## JCP to discuss judges' appointment today

Our Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: The Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP) to meet today (Thursday) to deliberate over the appointment of five judges in Supreme Court of Pakistan. Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial will preside over the JCP meeting. The JCP will discuss the elevation of judges to the SC from different high courts. Attorney General of Pakistan (AGP) Ashtar Ahsan will attend the meeting via video link.

Four offices of Supreme Court judges fell vacant after the retirement of Justice Mushir Alam, former chief justice Gulzar Ahmed, Justice Maqbool Baqar and Justice Mazhar Alam Khan Miankhal. Justice Sajjad Ali Shah will reach superannuation next August.

Last month, Judicial Commission of Pakistan failed to reach consensus on the appointment of seven judges in the Sindh High Court (SHC), said sources. The meeting of Judicial Commission of Pakistan was chaired by Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice Umar Ata Bandial has ended.

## MQM-P conveys concerns to PM against PPP

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) has conveyed reservations to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif over lack of implementation of an agreement by PPP which was agreed with the party before joining the federal government. According to sources privy to the matter, the MQM-P leaders held two meetings with PM Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad few days back and complained to him that the PPP was not implementing an agreement signed with the party and asked him to play his role as a guarantor.

"Neither an inquiry has been launched against the use of fake domiciles in recruitments nor development funds or administrative role was offered to the party as agreed in the agreement," the sources said. It is pertinent to mention here that a 18-point agreement was reached between the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pa-



kistan (MQM-P) and the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) before the quit the Imran Khan-led coalition government and it was named as the "Charter of Rights".

The agreement was signed by Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and MQM-P's Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, while Shehbaz Sharif, Fazlur Rehman, Akhtar Mengal and Khalid Maghsni have signed the agreement as guarantor.

## PM's package

# USC procures 50,000MT sugar

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has purchased 50,000 metric tons of sugar under Prime Minister's (PM) package, citing sources. The Utility Stores Corporation (USC) purchased 50,000 metric tons of sugar under PM's package at the price of Rs78 per kilogram, sources said. After overall expenditures, the new stock of sugar will cost Rs82 per kilogram to the USC. The USC officials said that the stock of sugar will be sold at Rs70 per kilogram under the PM package. The difference in cost will be borne by the federal government through its planned subsidy on sugar.

It is noteworthy to mention that the price of per kilogram sugar was fixed at Rs70 at the USC under the same relief package. In June, PM Shehbaz Sharif had decided in principle to provide flour, ghee, cooking oil, pulses, rice and sugar at a low price to the poor segment of society in the next finan-



cial year 2022-23. He had approved the expansion of the state-owned Utility Stores Corporation (USC) network in Karachi.

The premier had asked the authorities concerned to present a comprehensive plan to increase the number of utility stores in Karachi within two weeks. PM Sharif had also directed to make the subsidy system transparent and digital.

He ordered to create a comprehensive system by combining various types of subsidies. The meeting was briefed that under the relief package of PM Shehbaz Sharif, 113 million deserving people have benefited so far. They have been given targeted subsidies of 60 rupees per kg on flour, 21 rupees on sugar, 250 rupees on ghee and 15-20 rupees on pulses and rice.

# I will dissolve assembly on Imran's call: Elahi

Punjab CM reshuffles top provincial bureaucracy

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The newly elected Punjab Chief Minister Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi on Wednesday said that he would dissolve the Punjab Assembly immediately on Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chairman (PTI) Imran Khan's call.

Punjab Chief Minister Elahi visited former Prime Minister Imran Khan at his Banigala residence, where the two leaders made important decisions including the election of Sabtain Khan as the new speaker of the province. The meeting, which discussed the political and administrative state of the province, included senior leadership from the PTI as well.

Along with the speaker election, talks also centered over the formation of the Punjab cabinet and the election of a new deputy speaker.

A decision was also taken regarding important appointments in the province. Soon after Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q) leader Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi

was declared Punjab Chief Minister by the Supreme Court (SC) of Pakistan, the newly appointed CM has started to reshuffle bureaucracy of the province. The Punjab government has made important transfers including the CCPO Lahore Bilal Siddique Kamyana, who has been removed from his post.

Bilal Siddique has been advised to report

Punjab govt formation: PTI chief due in Lahore today

in the centre while DG anti-corruption Punjab has also been dismissed from his post. Earlier, notification was issued by the Chief Secretary in which Muhammad Khan Bhatti was appointed as Principal Secretary to Punjab CM. Before this, Muhammad Khan Bhatti was working as Secretary



Punjab Assembly.

Principal Secretary to Punjab CM Nabeel Awan, after being removed from his post was appointed as Principal Secretary to Governor of Punjab. While Inayatullah Lak has been decided to be appointed as Secretary Punjab Assembly. The Supreme Court on Tuesday declared Deputy Speaker Dost Muhammad

Mazari's ruling in the Punjab Chief Minister election "illegal" and ruled that Pervaiz Elahi will be the new Punjab Chief Minister.

The court ordered the Punjab Governor Balighur Rehman to administer the oath to Elahi but he did not follow the orders of SC. Later, Elahi took oath as the new Punjab CM in the wee hours of Wednesday. President Dr Arif Alvi administered the oath of office to Pervaiz Elahi during a ceremony held at the Aivan-e-Sadr in Islamabad.

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan has decided to visit Lahore tomorrow (Thursday) for consultations regarding government formation in Punjab. According to PTI sources, Imran Khan will meet the Punjab Chief Minister Pervaiz Elahi as he reaches Lahore on Thursday.

The PTI Chairman will be briefed on the matter of government formation in Punjab and he will also take important decisions in this regard, said sources. In his meetings with Pervaiz Elahi and other leaders, Imran Khan will also discuss the performance road map of the Punjab government.

## Governor's Rule

Read the constitution first: Moonis asks Rana



Bureau Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q) leader and former federal minister Moonis Elahi on Wednesday lashed at Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah over his recent warning to impose governor's rule in Punjab, saying that he should read the constitution before making illogical statements about the governor's rule.

PML-Q leader took to Twitter and said even though it hasn't been 24 hours since Pervaiz Elahi has sworn in but the interior minister has lost his senses. Taking a dig at the Interior Minister, Rana said, "Now it's time to hold you accountable over the Model Town massacre."

# South Korea can play key role to develop ties between Pakistan, East Asia

Speakers in seminar urge for Pak-East Asia economic integration

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Diplomats, economists and intellectuals on Wednesday agreed that South Korea can play a significant role to develop economic and trade relations between Pakistan and East Asian countries.

Intellectuals emphasized on restoring multilateral sectors and historical links for promoting economic and trade relations between Pakistan and East Asian countries including Korea.

The Institute of Strategic Studies (ISS), in collaboration with the Embassy of the Republic of Korea, organized a policy dialogue on "Comprehensive Economic Partnership: East Asia and Pakistan."

The China-Pakistan Study Centre (CPSC) and Centre for Strategic Perspective (CSP) were organizers of the policy dialogue.

The distinguished speakers of the



dialogue were included, Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, DG ISSI; Suh Sang Pyo, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, Ambassador Mumtaz Zahra Baloch, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Pakistan; Dr. Neelum Nigar, Director CSP; Muhammad Naseer, DG Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP); Kim Sung Jae, DG (Korea Trade and Investment Promotion Agency) KOTRA; Chang Yong Il,

Managing director of Samsung Pakistan; Zhonglei Mou, Chief Operating Officer of Hyundai Nishat Jamil Ahmad Qureshi, DG, Board of Investment, Pakistan; Ms. Huma Fakhar, CEO and Founder of MAP Services Group; Muhammad Zubair, Joint Secretary (Emigration), Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development; Aftab ur Rehman Tarrar, Managing Director of Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation; and Dr. Nadeem Omar Tarar, Gandhara Chair in Cultural Studies, Wah University.

On the occasion, the speakers discussed various fields including mutual trade, investment, religious tourism, relocation of modern industry, development of mutual technology, people to people contact and ancient Buddhist religious heritage for the promotion of economic and trade relations between Pakistan and East Asian countries.

## FIA Cyber Crimes tracks culprit involvement in in-laws' harassment

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: On the operation of Cybercrime Circle Islamabad, the culprit Amjad son of Zameer resident of Kahoti, Kotli Satian involved in sexual harassment, was arrested from I-8 center Islamabad.

The accused has been uploading pictures of complainant Sibtul Hasan's family with obscene statements through fake Facebook account and letters to his in-laws and other relatives for the past seven years.

According to the FIA spokesperson, a case has been registered against the offender under Sections 21, 24 and PPC 419,509 of the PICA Act.

According to the sources, the accused has confessed to all the crimes committed during the investigation. The accused belongs to village Baglian of Tehsil Kotli Satian.

After this arrest, the people of the area are satisfied to get rid of the collective trouble and are thankful to FIA Cybercrime. The people of the area have demanded that the law enforcement agencies and courts take strict action against the elements involved in such heinous crimes.

## Afghan refugees meets AC Wana, informs about their problems

Adam Khan Wazir

WANA: Community Mobilizer Afghan Refugee DI Khan Division Qari Taj Udin along with a delegation of Afghan refugees present in Wana met Assistant Commissioner Wana Basheer Khan in his office.

Apart from Maulana Abdul Basir and Qazi Abdul Hanan, Taj Wazir was also present in the meeting.

The delegation briefed AC Wana about the travel difficulties faced by Afghan citizen card holders not getting permission at various check posts in Tanai Check Post, Gardawi Check post, and Mehsud area different check posts. Assistant Commissioner Wana Basheer Khan assured, that will inform the DC South Waziristan and other higher officials about the problems faced by the people and that the obstacles will be removed as soon as possible, and by talking to the higher authorities in detail to solve the travel problems. The delegation thanked the Assistant Commissioner Wana Basheer Khan and expressed the hope that the local administration will try to solve the problems of Afghans citizens on a priority basis while declaring the meeting as a welcome one.

## Ombudsman Office intervenes to provide Rs52.86m relief to plaintiffs

Staff Reporter

LAHORE: The Office of the Ombudsman Punjab has intervened to provide a cumulative legal relief worth Rs.52.86 million to plaintiffs of different districts seeking redressal of their complaints related to provincial government departments.

In a statement issued on Wednesday, the spokesman explained that the long-awaited educational stipends of the Zaver-e-Taleem Program valued at Rs.1,29,000 have been released to the studying daughters of five Bhakar residents after the involvement of the ombudsman's office.

In response to two separate applications of Muhammad Tayyab Azeem Tariq of Lahore, the health department has released Rs.97,42,500 and Rs.44,12,500 and confirmed to pay Rs.11,02,500 and Rs.2,40,750 in the next quarter budget after the intervention of ombudsman's office, he added.

## Helping hand

QUETTA: Pak Army Solders distributing free food among the affected people of flooded areas of Lasbela District, in Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

# Ahsan Iqbal emphasizes population census is important

2nd meeting of census monitoring committee held

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The 2nd meeting of the Census Monitoring Committee to oversee/ monitor Census activities to ensure an expeditious, transparent and credible census operation was held here under chair of Ahsan Iqbal, Deputy Chairman Planning Commission (DCPC) at Ministry of Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, Pak Secretariat Islamabad. The main objective of the meeting was to review Progress of the Pilot Census. The meeting was attended by Chief Secretaries of all provinces/ regions with relevant Secretaries, Additional Commissioner Islamabad, DG Military Operations Directorate, Chairman NADRA, MD NTC and senior officers from Education, Local Government, Finance, and PBS.

Ahsan Iqbal, Federal Minister/ Deputy Chairman Planning Commission, emphasized that the population census is an important and critical exercise so it should be completed in February 2023 by utilizing all the possi-



ble resources. He directed the Chief Secretaries to assure their full cooperation and give full support to Pakistan Bureau of Statistics in this process to make this census successful. He also directed NADRA that they should expedite the process of procurement of tablets and accessories for conduct of digital census as the exercise of paramount importance due to linkages with resource allocation and delimitation of constituencies. Any delay in the process will create constitutional crises as conduct of next General election of 2023 depends of the census 2022. He appreciated the role of Pak Army in this process and emphasized to provide

fool proof security to the enumerators in this whole census process. He also assured full support of government for successful conduct of this gigantic task.

Dr. Naeem uz Zafar, Chief Statistician sensitized the relevant departments by presenting the progress and issues of PBS related to Pilot Census. He further explained that PBS has started Pilot Census of 7th Population & Housing Census-2022 for testing tools, technology, field operation & security mechanism, communication strategy etc. in 33 selected Administrative Districts (417 Blocks) w.e.f.20th July, 2022 all over Pakistan, including AJK and GB.

## Experts stress on implementation of Article 25A & girls education

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Highlighting the importance of girls education and the role it plays in country's development, experts stressed on the role of academia, civil society and government towards making education compulsory for all and remove the bottlenecks in the implementation of Article 25A of the Constitution of Pakistan. Special emphasis was laid on eliminating discrimination against girls towards provision of their basic right. These thoughts were expressed by experts during National Conference on Girls Right to Education, organized by Awaz CDS Pakistan here. Chairperson National Commission on the Rights of Children (NCRC) Afshan Tahseen, emphasized on the need of developing national and provincial education policies that will benefit the whole country. She highlighted how government can monitor the enforcement and administration of current legislation and assess and solve the bottlenecks concerning equity and quality in imparting educational for all.

# Iran supports COMSTECH activities for dev of OIC states: Ali Hosseni

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: COMSTECH in collaboration with Inter-Islamic Network of Science and Technology Parks in Iran inaugurated two-day International advanced training course on Intellectual property, at COMSTECH on Wednesday.

The inaugural session of the training was presided by the Seyed Mohammad Ali Hosseni, the Ambassador of Islamic Republic of Iran. He said the goal of COMSTECH is to help in promoting of bilateral and multilateral relations of Islamic countries in the development of science and technology and scientific capacity building, the important steps have been taken and there is a long way to go.

Mr. Hosseni said that Islamic world is full of talent and human capital which needs to be tapped for the development of Islamic world. He said that Islamic Republic of Iran always supports COMSTECH activities and hosts COMSTECH Networks in the fields of intellectual property and virtual universities of Islamic world.

Mr. Hosseni said that intellectual property rights preserve and protect the right to benefit from thought

and creativity and transform it into economic value. He said maintaining the ownership and rights are particularly important for the development of regional trade. He suggested that the Islamic countries should consider it as one of the main prerequisites for the development of regional trade.

Mr. Hosseni said that Iran and Pakistan are two brotherly countries and have deep religious, cultural and historical ties and have been living together in peace and friendship for more than 7 decades.

The Coordinator General COMSTECH, Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary said in his welcome speech that I feel proud to welcome the Chief Guest, H. E. Ambassador Hosseini.

He said this advanced course is jointly being organized by COMSTECH and Inter-Islamic Network on Science and Technology Park (INSTP), Iran.

He said INSTP is one the thirteen networks, established by COMSTECH General Assembly. I am pleased to report here that Islamic Republic of Iran hosts three of these networks which are contributing towards the science and technology development of the OIC region.

# Shura Hamdard meeting held

Madr-e-Millat Fatima Jinnah remembered

Our Correspondent

KARACHI: The members of the Shura Hamdard Karachi chapter remembered Madr-e-Millat Fatima Jinnah with reverence and respect in an online Shura meeting, held on the topic of "Social reform of women in the light of Madr-e-Millat's thoughts and national struggle." The meeting was presided over by speaker Shura Hamdard, Justice (r) Haziq-ul-Khairi.

The grandson of Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah's sister Maryam Bai, Liaquat Merchant was invited as a guest speaker. He could not attend the meeting due to illness, as he was in London for treatment. However, his message was read by Commodore (r) Sadeed Anwar Malik.

In his message, Liaquat Merchant said: "She was not only the dotting

sister of Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah but a dental surgeon, one of the most visible female figures of the Independence Movement and a stateswoman. Post-independence, she continued to contribute towards the progress of Pakistan and even entered electoral politics in this pursuit."

He also said: "She became one of the closest associates and adviser to Quaid-e-Azam. She was a strong proponent of the two-nation theory. She accompanied her brother to every public appearance that he made. She is popularly lauded as the Madr-e-Millat, or Mother of the Nation for her role in the freedom struggle."

Justice (r) Haziq-ul-Khairi said that Fatima Jinnah valiantly fought for all Muslim women - for equality, economic independence, liberation, and for their political empowerment. She became a



KARACHI: Justice (r) Haziq-ul-Khairi addressing on "Social reform of women in the light of Madr-e-Millat's thoughts and national struggle" at Shura Hamdard chapter at Corporate Office, Karachi. Mrs. Sadia Rashid, President of Hamdard Foundation Pakistan, Senator Abdul Haseeb Khan, cdre (R) Sadeed Anwar Malik, Dr. Amjad Ali Jafri and others also present on this occasion.

symbol of hope for generations to come. "She will always be remembered in the

golden pages of history. She assumed the role of taking Quaid-e-Azam's

legacy forward and ran for the presidency of Pakistan as a candidate for the Combined Opposition Party of Pakistan (COPP).

"In 1965, she contested elections at the age of 71. She stood against the dictator Ayub Khan—the self-installed president of Pakistan. Her political campaigns attracted massive crowds, swarming all over the country, particularly in Dhaka and Karachi. Mohtarma's defeat left the populace in disbelief. Ayub Khan dabbled in coercive election tactics such as rigging, coercion, and manipulation," he added.

Senator Abdul Haseeb Khan said that Fatima Jinnah's socio-political contributions gave us a unique framework for women's empowerment in the country. "As she actively pursued women's participation in all spheres of life, for that she established institutions to create a stable

and long-lasting impact on society. Therefore, following her ideals, a women federation of chambers of commerce must be established to promote entrepreneurship among women," he said.

Dr. Rizwana Ansari said: "Empowering women is the most enduring way of accelerating social and economic development. Women can be a powerful 'force multiplier' for the overall progress of society, and that notably includes the well-being of the family unit, if they are treated as equals in letter and spirit and are able to make their contribution in all fields of human endeavor."

She also said: "Mohtarma Fatima Jinnah's ideals and visions give us a clear perspective about what is needed legally and administratively to make a real difference. For that, we have to adopt the vision of Fatima Jinnah for our country as a tolerant and progressive society."

Islamabad  
23° - 38° Clear

**SERVICES**

**Namaz Timings**

Fajr	3:39 am
Zohr	12:14 pm
Asr	5:08 pm
Maghrib	7:12 pm
Isha	8:49 pm

**EMERGENCY**

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

**Women Police Stations**

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Rawalpindi	9270601-20

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CAA	9281092

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MH	561116
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RGH	9290301-7
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RDA	5555864
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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

**Govt must ban novel products to save youth from tobacco hazards**

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Novel tobacco products are becoming increasingly popular in Pakistani youth due to the extensive social media marketing and advertisement campaigns by tobacco industry. These so called "less" harmful products pose immense danger to the public health and if the government doesn't ban these products, Pakistan's health system will suffer unprecedented damage.

These thoughts were shared by health experts in a joint press released shared by Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (SPARC) to divert federal cabinets attention towards the alarmingly increase in the use of nicotine pouches, e-cigarettes and vapes, etc. collectively referred as novel or alternative products.

Malik Imran Ahmed, Country head, Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, mentioned that tobacco companies have been freely able to market and sale alternative products because unfortunately in Pakistan tobacco control doesn't go beyond cigarettes and Gutka.

**Skills sector, NAVTTC a high priority of govt for employment**

Education Minister says TVET has globally been recognized as effective tool to bring out of school children into formal regime

City Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Rana Tanveer Hussain said that NAVTTC and Skills TVET Sector are close to the heart of the Government as a national priority. Skills Trainings and Technical Education and Vocational Training (TVET) is the best way to educate and train them so that they get employment and integrated in the job market including abroad. TVET has globally been recognized as the most effective tool to bring out of school children into formal regime of education and training and increasing employment and poverty reduction.

The Minister said that Pakistan requires one million skilled work force every year. The Prime Minister and Minister have directed NAVTTC to provide skills development to 100,000 more young individuals in year 2022-2023 for their career progression and empowerment. In addition, this Government has just approved a new Project for setting up 250 VTIs (Vocational and Technical Training Institutes) all over Pakistan.

The Minister highly appreciated ED NAVTTC Sajid Baloch and his team for an excellent performance, which is acknowledged by everyone including the development partners. He was pleased to note that NAVTTC has taken numerous steps to organize Skills and TVET system of the country on modern lines, and



is delivering high quality training, as per international standards. The huge "Prime Minister Youth Skills Development Programme" is being executed through NAVTTC. The main focus is on Hi Tech skills like Artificial Intelligence, e-commerce, Graphic design, Robotics, Cyber security, Hospitality etc.

The Minister of State / SAPM to the Prime Minister on Youth Affairs, Ms. Shaza Fatima Khwaja reiterated the resolve of the Government for uplift of youth and explained in detail about the steps being taken by the government.

This Prime Minister's Youth Programme is providing Loans to the youth to become entrepreneurs, and instead of becoming job seekers they become job providers. She highlighted the importance of Skills TVET sector and performance of NAVTTC as vital for the progress of youth of Pakistan. SAPM also informed that PM Laptop programme is being implemented, focusing on less developed areas and segments.

The Minister congratulated the successfully internationally accredited TVET Institutes, and awarded certificates to successful Pakistani Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutes, who were facilitated for international accreditation by National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTC) through German Cooperation - GIZ, BAS Build for Skills and TÜV Rheinland.

**Needs authorities attention**

ISLAMABAD: An old man walk past in front of heap of garbage at Bari Imam area, As needs attention for concern authority in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

**PANAH holds session on policy options to reduce consumption of SSBs**

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: A media session on "Policy Options to Reduce Consumption of Sweetened Beverages" was organized by Pakistan National Heart Association (PANAH). PANAH's General Secretary Sana Ullah Ghuman chaired and hosted the event.

On this occasion, Global Health Advocacy Incubator Consultant Munawar Hussain, Dr. Khawaja Masood Ahmed, National Coordinator Nutrition, civil society and media experts were also present.

Mr. Sana mentioned the health services provided by PANAH in Pakistan and said

that PANAH is not only provided awareness related to heart and other fatal diseases on the other side also work in collaboration with law and policy makers to formulate laws and policies for human safety. Heart and other fatal diseases are mostly caused by use of excessive use of sugary drinks which result in causing a lot of health problems and our today session is to talk about options available for reducing use of Sugary drinks. We should drink water instead of sweet drinks, clean and sweet water is best for health because of the PANAH awareness and noble work for society people are getting awareness.

Munawar Hussain, a consultant at Global Health Advocacy Incubators, said there is ample global and local evidence to support increasing taxes on sugary drinks and reducing their consumption. In 2015, the cost of obesity in Pakistan was estimated at 428 billion rupees. We need to introduce a school food policy and ban the marketing of sugary drinks so that children can be protected from their harm and also use taxation as tool. Our policy makers should work on this tools to reduce the consumption of sugar sweeten beverages which will be a Win-Win situation for Pakistan.

Ahmed, National Coordinator Nutrition said that consumption of SSB become a national threat and will cause a public health emergency in Pakistan. Other speakers said that the number of diabetics has increased from 19.4 million in 2019 to 33 million in 2021. Other representatives from different organization also share their opinion on the issue. This will have a serious impact on our economy and no country can treat such a large number of people, the government should take all possible steps to tackle the diabetes emergency in Pakistan, we fully support increasing the tax on all types of sugary drinks.

**Confluence of Civilizations**

**Exhibition 'A Night at Lok Virsa Museum' attracted visitors across Pakistan**

Indonesian Embassy intends to take this exhibition to various cities in Pakistan in near future to promote cultural ties

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in collaboration with Lok Virsa organized a four-day successful photo-exhibition titled "A Night at Lok Virsa Museum: The Confluence of Civilizations between Indonesia and Pakistan," which drew a large number of crowd from all walks of life.

According to Lok Virsa management, around 7,286 people visited the Museum from 21 - 24 July 2022 to enjoy the cultural exhibition with their families and children. The photo exhibition emphasized on historical connections, religious backgrounds, and aimed at strengthening cultural ties between the two Muslim brotherly countries Indonesia and Pakistan.



Visitors were entertained by the live demonstrations at the Batik and Ajrak stalls. Women and children participated in drawing Batik designs on a white piece of cloth with a batik tool called "Canting" and hot wax. Ajrak



stall also received a lot of appreciation from visitors for live stamping and making creative designs of Pakistani traditional art. The exhibition also featured a 3D model of the Borobudur temple. People were eager to learn more about the history of the Borobudur temple, and its reconstructing process that took 75 years to complete.

**Health Corner**

**Smoking, Vaping: COVID-19 Complications**

ISLAMABAD: People who reported smoking or vaping prior to their hospitalization for COVID-19 were more likely than their counterparts who did not smoke or vape to experience severe complications, including death, from the SARS-CoV-2 infection. The findings are from a new study based on data from the American Heart Association's COVID-19 CVD Registry and published in PLOS ONE, a peer-reviewed, open access scientific journal published by the Public Library of Science.

Researchers examined data on people over 18 years of age who were hospitalized with COVID-19 in 107 registry-participating hospitals across the nation between January 2020 to March 2021. Smoking status was self-reported and people were classified as smoking if they reported currently using either traditional, combustible cigarettes or e-cigarette products, with no distinction between the two and no information on duration of smoking or former smoking status. For the final analysis, records were selected for 4,086 people with a 1:2 ratio of people who smoked (1,362) to people who did not smoke (2,724), with the two groups matched for no statistically significant difference in age, sex, race, medical history or medication.

The study findings indicate smoking or vaping are associated with more severe COVID-19 independent of age, sex, race or medical history: People who reported smoking were 45% more likely to die and 39% more likely to receive mechanical ventilation when compared with those who did not smoke.

Although the excessive risk due to smoking was independent of medical history and medication use, smoking was a stronger risk factor for death in people between 18-59 years of age and those who were white or had obesity.

"In general, people who smoke or vape tend to have a higher prevalence of other health conditions and risk factors that could play a role in how they are impacted by COVID-19. However, the robust and significant increase in the risk of severe COVID-19 seen in our study, independent of medical history and medication use and particularly among young individuals, underscores the urgent need for extensive public health interventions such as anti-smoking campaigns and increased access to cessation therapy, especially in the age of COVID," said the study's senior author, Aruni Bhatnagar, Ph.D., FAHA, a professor of medicine, biochemistry and molecular biology at the University of Louisville in Louisville, Kentucky. "These findings provide the clearest evidence to date that people who smoke or vape have a higher risk of developing severe COVID-19 and dying as a result of SARS-CoV-2 infection."

Bhatnagar is co-director of the American Heart Association's Tobacco Center for Regulatory Science which supported the study in part with funding from the U. S. National Institutes of Health and the Food and Drug Administration research grants.

"We established the COVID-19 CVD Registry early on in the pandemic to better understand the link between COVID-19 and cardiovascular disease, specifically, to identify increased risk to help inform the diagnosis and care of people who are at highest risk for complications," said Sandeep R. Das, M.D., M.P.H., M.B.A., FAHA, co-chair of the steering committee for the American Heart Association's COVID-19 CVD Registry Powered by Get With The Guidelines® and director for Quality and Value in the Cardiology Division at UT Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas, Texas. "The findings of this study deliver on that goal and provide invaluable information individuals and their health care teams."

The American Heart Association launched the registry in 2020 to gather data specific to all patients hospitalized with COVID-19 as part of the Get With The Guidelines® quality improvement program. Registry participation was offered at no cost to all U.S. hospitals caring for adults with active COVID-19 and with the infrastructure to support accurate data collection. More than 160 hospitals provided data on more than 79,000 patient records between 2020 and June 2022. (Courtesy: Science Daily)



**Green Pakistan**

**HRDN celebrates 'Arbor Day' at Lalazar**



Staff Reporter

RAWALPINDI: Human Resource Development Network (HRDN) has formally launched its 'Plant for Pakistan' tree plantation campaign 2022 at old Lalazar Rawalpindi under the "Mazhar Qyum Road Improvement Tree Planting Program" by involving the local community in celebrating "Arbor Day" with lots of fun and recreational activities. A variety of fruit and forest tree saplings were contributed by Punjab Forest Department, HRDN member Organizations NRSP and GBTI. Volunteers/activists, residents, and children of Old Lalazar Rawalpindi and staff of HRDN joined hands together to give back to the land by planting tree saplings for "Green Pakistan".

Arbor Day was a community celebration where the children from the community took part in poster competitions, speeches and keynotes on the importance of trees by kids, storytelling by community elders, a magic show and much fun was part of the ceremony. Tree Committee was also formed to take care of the plants and make the area clean and green for future generations.

**World Hepatitis Day brings hepatitis care closer**

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: World Hepatitis Day, commemorated annually on 28 July, reminds us of our commitment to eliminate viral hepatitis as a public health threat by 2030. The strategy is fully aligned with WHO's vision of "Health for All, by All" in the Eastern Mediterranean Region.

Pakistan is facing a considerable high disease burden due to Viral Hepatitis B & C. It has higher prevalence of Hepatitis C (7%) globally and considerable number of people suffering from HCV. Around 15 million people are estimated infected with Viral Hepatitis C and another 5 million are estimated infected with Viral Hepatitis B, in the country.

The theme of world hepatitis day this year is "Bring Hepatitis Care Closer" aims to raise awareness about the need to simplify and bring hepatitis care to primary health care facilities, community-based venues and locations beyond hospital sites, so that health care is closer to communities and people wherever they are.

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# US Rates Hike & Inflation

**Pinelopi Koujianou Goldberg**

**A**s inflation in the United States reaches new heights, economists are debating how high the Federal Reserve will need to hike interest rates to curb demand and rein in price growth. Some commentators believe that the Fed will need to be as aggressive as Fed Chair Paul Volcker in the early 1980s, who ended up raising interest rates to as high as 20%.

Such figures understandably raise concerns that the effort to contain inflation will result in a recession and a sharp increase in unemployment. As a recent Peterson Institute for International Economics policy brief observes, reductions in job vacancies engineered through contractionary policies empirically go hand in hand with increases in unemployment.

Worse, while interest-rate hikes would likely increase unemployment over time, they will be insufficient to rein in inflation in the short run.

Recent price increases may have been triggered by extraordinarily high demand following the pandemic, but supply-side factors – especially labour shortages and the ener-

gy crisis caused by Russia's war in Ukraine – have also played a significant role. Inflation cannot be contained unless these factors are addressed, too. The situation calls for three supplementary initiatives. First, the conflict in Ukraine must be de-escalated. Although the war did not "cause" inflation, it has certainly contributed to rising prices – especially in the food and energy sectors – by exacerbating shortages that were previously expected to recede as Covid-19 restrictions were lifted. As long as the war continues, energy and food prices will remain high, and uncertainty will keep rattling markets. Trade flows may be reoriented to phase out energy imports from "unfriendly" countries (to use the current jargon); but such realignments cannot happen fast enough to ease the current food and energy shortages.

While diplomacy could still de-escalate the conflict (given that all sides have strong incentives to do so), time is running out. With each passing week, a face-saving settlement becomes harder to reach. Second, America needs to move past Covid-19 in order to address labour shortages in specific sectors. Vaccines are widely available and have been shown to prevent serious illness in most cases. It

is past time to abandon rules requiring workers to take multiple days off if they test positive, even when they are asymptomatic. Such policies have resulted in severe bottlenecks in key sectors, with the airline industry being a prominent example. Third, the US urgently needs policies to push its labour force participation rate back up to its pre-Covid level.

Many commentators have drawn parallels between the current economic environment and the stagflationary 1970s. But one feature that is unique to our time is the "Great Resignation." The pandemic has left Americans tired, demoralised, and unwilling to accept work that doesn't meet a higher standard of job satisfaction. People are increasingly demanding "good jobs" with decent pay, benefits, and security (which often means that they are sheltered from unbridled foreign competition). But these are not the kinds of jobs that many firms offer. Plenty of essential jobs are neither particularly lucrative nor satisfying – whether it be loading and unloading trucks or container ships, washing dishes and bussing tables in restaurants, or working in construction or heavy manufacturing. Moreover, even high-paying finance and tech jobs in New York and San Francisco may

fall short of workers' expectations if they require long daily commutes.

In a tight job market, it is not surprising that more Americans are saying "no" to work they perceive as unpleasant. But someone has got to do it, and for every American who upgrades their job or drops out of the labour force, there are several immigrants who would be happy to do the work that has been left behind. These immigrants, by definition, do not take work away from Americans; rather, they provide a net benefit to the economy. And the same goes for international trade, which can ease production bottlenecks and supply-chain shortages – effectively "importing" labour without immigration. Unfortunately, US President Joe Biden's administration has stuck with much of the protectionist rhetoric used by its predecessor. Promising American workers well-paid, secure jobs, the administration has done little to increase immigration or permit more foreign competition, thus contributing to today's labour shortages.

We have been reminded once again that protectionism ultimately harms the very people that it is supposed to help – especially during periods of supply-side shortages. This cool-headed economic logic may sound inconsistent

with progressive ideals and the Biden administration's commitment to empowering American workers. But we need to remind ourselves what is at stake here. High inflation undermines the entire progressive agenda. It makes the average worker worse off, and when it shows up in food and gasoline prices, it is deeply regressive. Because poorer households must spend a larger share of their limited incomes on basic needs, they fall even further behind the well off.

In an era of rapidly rising interest rates, higher debt-servicing costs will inevitably lead to fiscal spending cuts, including to much-needed infrastructure investment. Policies to address climate change and foster green growth are already being abandoned as policymakers focus on alleviating people's short-run pain (through performative gestures like a gasoline tax holiday). The Biden administration and congressional Democrats are right to be worried about this year's midterm elections – which makes it all the more surprising that they haven't embraced supply-side inflation-fighting strategies.

*The writer is a former World Bank Group chief economist and editor-in-chief of the American Economic Review. Courtesy GulfTimes*

## Indian troops & suicide trend

**T**he Indian army is facing an alarming trend of suicide among its soldiers with 819 such incidents happened during the last five years. Apart from the Indian Army, the Indian Air Force reported 148 cases of suicide in five years, while the Indian Navy reported 29 cases, Minister of State for Defence Ajay Bhat said in a reply to a question on the number of servicemen and ex-servicemen who committed suicide in the last five years.

Another Border Security Force (BSF) sub-inspector, who shot himself dead at a post along the India-Pakistan international border here on Monday, has exposed the reasons behind the suicide trend among troops due to deployment in unfavorable conditions, low salaries, and misbehavior of seniors. Ramdev Singh was found lying in a pool of blood and his personal assault weapon was found by his side when a junior rank soldier reached his room around 6.35 am. He belonged to the 12th battalion and was commanding a platoon of the BSF.

The alarmingly high number of serving Indian soldiers committing suicide while on duty calls for an urgent need for structural changes in the armed forces and a greater focus on remedies for those in conflict zones. A report by the security experts said that the realization of fighting a futile war against a hostile public besides workplace ill-treatment and poor services are some causes of increasing suicides among the Indian military.

It said the callous attitude of seniors and denial of leave for long hauls are also cited as reasons for alarming suicidal tendencies among the Indian military personnel. The report pointed out that the Indian military leadership had badly failed to address issues relating to suicides among its officers and soldiers.

According to the human rights data compiled by the Jammu and Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society, the trend of suicides and fratricides among the Indian armed forces stationed in J&K saw an upward trend in 2019. 19 armed forces died by suicide and three CRPF personnel were killed in a fratricidal incident by a CRPF trooper in Udhampur district of Jammu.

Similarly in 2018, the number was comparatively higher than that of 2019 as many as twenty suicide cases were reported among the armed forces stationed in J&K, the annual human rights report compiled by the JKCCS reveal. In 2017, the incidents have lowered to just nine of suicide and one incident of fratricidal killing. In 2016, seven cases of suicide were documented in J&K. Out of the four were from the army including two officers of major ranks, two BSF soldiers and one CRPF trooper.

Similarly, from 2004 to 2009; 157 suicide cases and 55 fratricidal cases were reported among the armed forces in Kashmir and from 2011 to 2019, 116 armed personals committed suicide while 24 armed persons were killed in fratricidal killings.

According to data from the Ministry of Defence, in 2003, 96 army men committed suicide. In 2004 the number went to 100, in 2005 it stood at 92 and in 2006 as many as 131 army personnel committed suicide. In 2007 and 2008, the recorded figures were 142 and 150, respectively. Since then, the numbers have come down but still remain over 100. In 2009 it was 111; in 2010 it was 130, and in 2011 it was 102.

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# The world must move past 'spheres of influence'

**Ding Gang**

**P**rofessor Da Wei, a professor at School of Social Sciences, Tsinghua University, recently published a paper called "Security Concerns are Reasonable, Spheres of Influence are Not (The Washington Quarterly Volume 45, 2022-Issue 2)." The essay provides a Chinese perspective for those willing to understand China's position on great power diplomacy, particularly the conflict between Russia and Ukraine.

In his article, Da emphasizes that security concerns are not exclusive, which is the most fundamental difference from spheres of influence. While Chinese culture emphasizes the lawfulness of an action or policy, it also often emphasizes the need to be sensible and reasonable. Being sensible, reasonable, and lawful constitutes three levels of consideration that Chinese culture often uses when judging an action or policy. Lawfulness is the most important consideration in the political sphere, whilst being sensible and reasonable is also criteria that strategists and decision-makers need to consider.

If one reads this article carefully, he or she should be able to see that the Chinese have their own basic positions and principles on international affairs, especially on what kind of diplomatic strategy a large country like China should have, and that the process of forming them is related to China's history, tradition, and culture. Therefore, this has some

differences with the West.

When I discussed Professor Da's view with Chinese and foreign scholars, some of them thought that it would be better to replace "reasonable" with "legitimate." I asked Da, and he said that he used "reasonable" mainly because it is backed by reason, and that "legitimate" has to do with rules, laws, and natural rights, as can be seen from the root of the word. "I don't think security concerns have anything to do with those. There is often a bit of 'reason' behind a country's security concerns, and this is where reason can be applied," Da said.

If you see China's foreign policy through the binoculars of the basic Western concept of diplomacy, for instance, the logic of sphere of influence, you will of course misjudge it, and even develop extreme perceptions of China as an enemy. Some Westerners who are now playing up the "China threat theory" are by and large following this logic in looking at China, particularly when observing China's attitude toward Russia-Ukraine conflict. The danger is that when this logic is extended to the policy arena, they are intentionally creating China as their own enemy.

The Chinese have an aversion to spheres of influence, as do many once colonized countries in Asia, who have come out of imperial spheres of influence and are therefore very wary of falling into the trap again. Being part of a sphere of influence not only means that they have to follow the leadership of the big power, but also that they have to follow the rules and fight for that specific sphere of influ-

ence, which leads to a world of bloc warfare, where this street is yours and that is another bloc's. Unfortunately, the West tends not to understand the miserable experiences of these former colonies.

Once you join NATO, you have NATO to protect your security, but NATO is a military bloc, and as a result, you run the risk of becoming the enemy of the opposite side of the sphere of influence. And how your opponents see you, of course, will also look through the lens of a sphere of influence. One of the results of the Russia-Ukraine conflict was to redraw a deep divide across spheres of influence, and now we are seeing a rapid development in Russia's relations with Iran, North Korea and others. We might even wonder if there will be the emergence of another new military bloc to rival NATO. The US is following the same path with China containment, and when Washington identifies China as a competitor, the key is that it sees this competitor in terms of the fight for spheres of influence.

Competition does not necessarily lead to war, but if competition is seen as a struggle for spheres of influence, to fight China through alliances, to come up with some five-eyed alliance, CHIP4, AUKUS... the result is toward bloc antagonism, and eventually China will be identified as the enemy. It is probably time for the West to try to walk away a little bit from the old security logic of "sphere of influence" and think more about the concept of security concerns. Secretary-General of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization

(SCO) Zhang Ming said that it has received the official application of Belarus to become a full member, while stressing that the enlargement of the SCO is fundamentally different from NATO expansion.

Receiving the application from Belarus indicated that the values pursued by the organization are in line with Belarus', and the cooperation under the framework of SCO is in the country's interest. Zhang said. The legal process regarding Belarus' application for SCO membership will soon start, and is the same procedure after Iran, Zhang said, noting that the accession of Belarus will require the consensus of all member states.

On the upcoming SCO Summit to be held in Samarkand in September, acting Uzbek Foreign Minister Vladimir Norov previously said that if a joint decision is made, the summit will approve the beginning of a process to admit Belarus to the SCO as a member. Currently, Belarus is an SCO observer state. Regarding Iran, the Secretary-General noted that he expects to see a Memorandum of Obligations of Iran joining the SCO to be passed at the summit.

"Based on the Decision of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the SCO Member States, at the SCO summit in Samarkand on September 15-16, 2022, it will be decided to instruct the Secretary General of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization to sign a Memorandum of Obligations of the Islamic Republic of Iran in order to obtain the status of a member state of the SCO in Uzbekistan, where a first Memorandum of

Obligations will be signed, then in April 2023 it will be finalized," the Iranian Embassy said on Tuesday in an exclusive reply to inquiries from the Global Times on the matter.

When asked if SCO's expansion could be compared to NATO's at the press conference on Friday, Zhang said that NATO is a product of the Cold War, while the SCO is different in that it is not a military alliance, and the two organizations cannot be compared, as the motives, demands and consequences caused by the two are essentially different. Zhang also said that in the three decades since the end of the Cold War, the SCO member states and developing countries have enjoyed the dividends of peace. But NATO continues to create adversaries, stubbornly insists on the concept of camp confrontation, and has tried to replicate this formula in the Asia-Pacific, which can hardly justify NATO calling itself a "defensive organization" and is not constructive for world peace and security.

The SCO member states believe that their own security cannot be guaranteed at the expense of other countries' security. Zhang hopes NATO will seriously reflect on itself fundamentally and fight against terrorism, transnational crime, human trafficking and other issues as its priority. Only when NATO changes course and focuses on addressing these global challenges will the SCO be willing to start a dialogue with it.

*The author is a senior editor with People's Daily. Courtesy Global Times*

## Letter to the Editor

### BRT Smart Ticketing

**W**hile there was a lot of hoopla in the press about Trans-Peshawar winning the Award for "Best Smart Ticketing Programme" (200K+ journeys) for 2022 at the Transport Ticketing Global there was disbelief in the local audience as well. There is a general disbelief in the society about a local system getting international recognition. To those people I want to say come and travel on the BRT network and benefit from the services and judge for you. The smart ticketing system developed by LMKR, Technology partnered of BRT, is one of the most critical steps towards making Peshawar's public transport more efficient, accessible and affordable.

The ticketing system offers a wide range of benefits to its commuters. Faster transactions, efficient payment methods make the overall experience really smooth. This smart ticketing system removes people from the process validation with the help of latest technology as people can use their Zu Cards or Mobile App to pay anywhere, anytime. It collects payments from mobile wallets, ticket vending machines, and point of sales is inserted into turnstile or validators installed on vehicles making the payment process smooth.

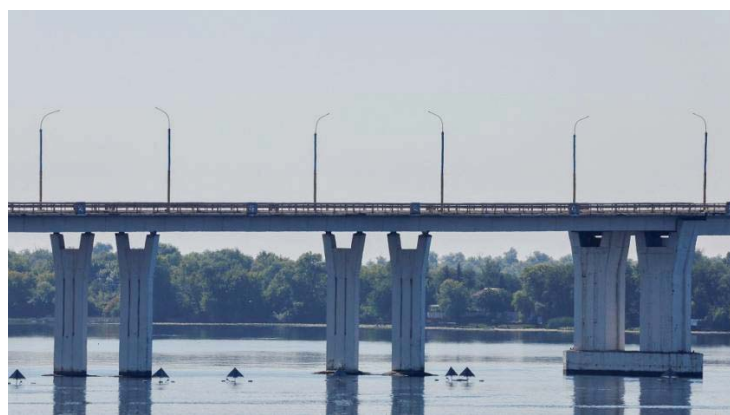
The biggest benefit is that commuter no longer has to be concerned about finding exact change or carry around the BRT travel card – or wait in lines at ticket counters. The system is easily accessible because of mobile wallets and facilitates you even if you forget your wallet at home. All this with reduced fraud and theft makes the process of using public transportation system more user-friendly. This locally produce technology is way advance and user friendly than existing system of Metro Bus and Orange line train developed by our Chinese and Turkish technology partners.

*M.Sagheer Islamabad*

# Ukraine uses new artillery to hit key bridge for Russians

*Ukrainian President claims that Russia has lost nearly 40,000 soldiers during war*

KYIV: Ukrainian troops used American-supplied precision rocket launchers to knock out a vital bridge used by Russia to supply its forces in an occupied region of southern Ukraine, officials said Wednesday.



The Antonivskiy Bridge over the Dnieper River was attacked late Tuesday, according to Kirill Stremousov, deputy head of the Moscow-appointed administration for the Kherson region. The bridge was left standing, but holes in its deck prevented vehicles from crossing the 1.4-kilometer (0.9-mile) span, he said.

After previous Ukrainian attacks damaged the bridge last week, it was closed to trucks, but it had remained open for passenger vehicles until the latest strike.

Russian forces in recent days have intensified their shelling of cities and villages in eastern Ukraine while also stepping up airstrikes in the south, in what may indicate an end to the "operational pause" that Moscow had announced after capturing the eastern region of Luhansk.

At the same time, the Kremlin's troops are facing mounting counterattacks from the Ukrainians in the Kherson region, which was captured by Moscow early in the war.

Ukrainian forces used U.S.-supplied HIMARS multiple rocket launchers to target the bridge, Stremousov said. A Ukrainian military spokesperson, Nataliya Gumenyuk, told Ukrainian TV that "surgical strikes" were carried

out on the bridge.

The HIMARS has longer range, much more precision and a faster rate of fire than the Soviet-designed Smerch, Uragan and Tornado rocket launchers used by both Russia and Ukraine. The weapons were among the billions of dollars in Western military aid that helped Ukraine fight off the Russians since their Feb. 24 invasion.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr

Zelenskyy claimed that Russia has lost nearly 40,000 soldiers during the war and that tens of thousands more were wounded. His claim could not be independently verified. The Russian military last reported its losses in March, when it said 1,351 troops had been killed.

Turkey's defense minister said preparations were underway for the resumption of grain shipments from Ukraine's Black Sea ports. Russia and Ukraine signed agreements last week to free up millions of tons of grain trapped by the fighting, potentially easing the global food crisis.

While halting traffic across the Dnieper River bridge makes only a slight dent in the overall Russian military operation, the attack was a morale-boosting victory for the Ukrainians.

Ukrainian presidential adviser Mykhailo Podolyak said on Twitter that the "occupiers should learn how to swim across" the Dnieper or "leave Kherson while it is still possible." "There may not be a third warning," he tweeted.

# Sri Lanka's Parliament approves state of emergency

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's Parliament on Wednesday approved a state of emergency that had been declared by President Ranil Wickremesinghe as his government cracks down on demonstrators it accuses of violence while trying to find a way out of the country's worst economic crisis.



The vote passed 120-63 in the 225-member Parliament. The other lawmakers abstained. The decree, which gives the president the power to make regulations in the interest of public security and order, has to be approved every month.

Wickremesinghe declared a state of emergency last week as acting president before lawmakers elected him to serve the remainder of Gotabaya Rajapaksa's five-year term until 2024. Rajapaksa fled Sri Lanka after thousands of protesters stormed the president's official residence and other

buildings. He later resigned from Singapore.

Ruling party members who back Wickremesinghe said that while protests were reasonable at the beginning of the crisis, groups that don't believe in parliamentary democracy and want to capture power through unconstitutional means had infiltrated the demonstrators and were creating disturbances.

Opposition parties criticized the emergency as a government move to stifle dissent.

Within a day of Wickremesinghe's election, the military raided and dismantled the camps the protesters had set up for more than 100 days opposite the president's office. Some protesters were beaten up.

Courts issued travel bans against six protest leaders and some were arrested.

On Tuesday, police arrested a man accused of entering the state television station during massive rallies on July 9, ordering employees to air programs supporting the protests and causing a brief disruption in transmission. He was pulled out of a plane while trying to leave for Dubai.

Four other protesters were arrested for trespassing the area of a former prime minister's statue after police had secured a court order prohibiting people from entering the area, fearing the monument may be damaged.

Sri Lankans have been

protesting for months demanding Rajapaksa's resignation and holding him and his powerful family members responsible for the country's economic crisis. Some also oppose Wickremesinghe's election, saying he is too close to Rajapaksa.

Protests have almost dismantled Rajapaksa domination with all six family members who held top government positions since 2019 having been forced to resign.

Sri Lanka is bankrupt and has suspended repayment on its \$51 billion foreign loans, of which \$28 billion must be paid by 2027. The crisis has led to severe shortages of fuel, cooking gas and medicine and long lines for essential supplies.

The government is in the process of preparing a debt restructuring plan, a condition for an agreement with the International Monetary Fund for a bailout loan.

# Four dead as anti-U.N. protests spread in Congo

BUKAVU: Four people protesting against a United Nations peacekeeping mission were killed on Wednesday in the Congolese city of Uvira when troops fired warning shots which hit an electric cable that fell on them, officials said.

Three U.N. peacekeepers and at least 12 civilians were killed on Tuesday in protests against the mission in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, known as MONUSCO, which protesters accuse of failing to protect them from militia violence.

The protests had mostly fizzled out on Wednesday in the cities of Goma and Butembo but had spread to Uvira, in South Kivu province, where crowds threw rocks at a MONUSCO compound.

"There was an isolated demonstration in Uvira. We had a tragedy because of the fall of an electric cable... indirectly related to the protest," South Kivu governor Theo Ngwabidje Kasi told Reuters.

"I have asked for investigations to know if the bullet was fired by MONUSCO or by our forces," he said, adding that preliminary information suggested it had come from within the MONUSCO base.

Calm had been restored by mid-afternoon, he said. U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Tuesday condemned the violence and called on the government to bring the perpetrators to justice. A U.N. spokesman also said the United Nations would investigate reports that peacekeepers had been responsible for civilian deaths. A Reuters reporter saw U.N. peacekeepers shoot dead two protesters in Goma.

The U.N. mission, which has around 12,400 troops in the country and costs more than \$1 billion per year, has been in the process of gradually withdrawing for several years.

The U.N. children's agency said on Wednesday that many children had been manipulated into joining the protests and were exposed to violence.

"UNICEF condemns the instrumentalization of children for political purposes and calls on authorities, members of civil society and parents to keep children away from protests in order to protect them," said Grant Leaty, UNICEF representative in the DRC, in a statement.

# WHO says more than 18,000 cases of monkeypox globally

LONDON: There have been more than 18,000 cases of monkeypox reported globally from 78 countries, with the majority in Europe, the World Health Organization said on Wednesday.

The WHO declared the outbreak a global health emergency on Saturday. So far, 98% of cases outside the countries in Africa where the virus is endemic have been reported in men who have sex with men, the WHO said.

WHO Director-General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus urged that group to consider reducing the numbers of new sexual partners and swapping contact details with any new partners. "This is an outbreak that can be stopped... The best way to do that is to reduce the risk of exposure," Tedros told a news conference from Geneva. "That means making safe choices for yourself and others."

Monkeypox is in the process of being renamed, to avoid the name being "weaponised" or used in a racist way, WHO emergencies director Mike Ryan said.

The U.N. agency is recommending vaccination for high-risk groups, including healthcare workers, and men who have sex with men with multiple sexual partners.

It cautioned that it takes several weeks after getting the second dose of vaccine to be fully protected, so people should take other precautions until that point.

Around 10% of patients have been hospitalized in the current outbreak and five have died, all of them in Africa, the WHO said.

Monkeypox has been a globally neglected public health problem in parts of Africa for decades, but cases began to be reported outside countries where it is endemic in May. It generally causes mild to moderate symptoms, including fever, fatigue and painful skin lesions that resolve within a few weeks.

Tedros said there were about 16 million doses of approved vaccine available, but only in bulk, so it would take several months to get them into vials.

The WHO is urging countries with stockpiles to share vaccine while supply is constrained, he added. It estimates that between 5 million and 10 million doses of vaccine will be needed to protect all high-risk groups.

# Omar, Mehbooba slam IIOJK authorities



SRINAGAR: In Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir, Vice Chairman of National Conference, Omar Abdullah and Peoples Democratic Party President Mehbooba Mufti have slammed the authorities over irregularities in the recruitment process.

The IIOJK authorities on Monday said a committee headed by additional chief secretary (Home) was inquiring into the Finance Accounts Assistant (FAA) selection list to ensure that no irregularities have been committed.

It is very unfortunate that the selected FAA candidates are still struggling to get justice. Hopefully someone in the J&K administration will listen to them & put an end to the uncertainty they face, Omar Abdullah wrote on Twitter.

The PDP president, Mehbooba Mufti in her tweet said every recent recruitment process in Kashmir was blighted by scams. GOI's false claims of providing 30,000 jobs in J&K couldn't be further from the truth. Every recruitment process in J&K is blighted by scams. Instead of naming and punishing the culprits, collective punishment is being meted out to aspirants by scrapping the list, Mufti said in a tweet.

The FAA aspirants have been protesting for the past several days, demanding the selection list be made public.

# Chinese, Indonesian presidents hold 'warm and friendly' talks

BEIJING: China's President Xi Jinping hosted his Indonesian counterpart Joko Widodo, and the two vowed to boost bilateral ties.

The rare meeting was held at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing. COVID-wary China last hosted foreign leaders during the Winter Olympics in February.

"In a warm and friendly atmosphere, the two presidents had a comprehensive and in-depth exchange of views on bilateral relations and international and regional issues of mutual interest, and reached broad (and) important common understanding," a joint statement said.

Xi said Widodo's first trip to China "speaks volumes about the strong commitment of the two sides to growing bilateral ties."

Indonesia, a key member of the ASEAN regional grouping, will host the G-20 summit this November.

"China supports Indonesia in hosting the G-20 summit and will increase coordination and cooperation with Indonesia for a full success of the summit," Xi assured Widodo.

The readout said China-Indonesia relationship not only serves the shared long-term interests of the two countries, but also has "positive, far-reaching impacts regionally and globally."

The two countries have "set an example of major developing countries seeking strength through unity and win-win cooperation," it added.

"Building a China-Indonesia community with a shared future is the common aspiration and expectation of the two peoples," Xi told the visiting president, adding: "China will work with Indonesia to cement strategic mutual trust and firmly support each other in defending sovereignty, security and development interests, in exploring development paths in line with national conditions, and in growing the economy and bettering people's lives."

# Russian FM, on African tour, denies 'so-called food crisis'

ADDIS ABABA: Russia's foreign minister on Wednesday denied his country is responsible for the global surge in food prices following its invasion of Ukraine, dismissing the "so-called food crisis" as he completed a visit to several African nations on a continent hit especially hard.

Addressing reporters and African diplomats in Ethiopia's capital, Addis Ababa, Sergey Lavrov accused the United States and European countries of driving up prices by pursuing "reckless" green policies and even hoarding food during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The situation in Ukraine

did additionally negatively affect food markets, but not due to the Russian special operation, rather due to the absolutely inadequate reaction of the West, which announced sanctions," Lavrov said.

Western countries, for their part, have repeatedly pointed out that food is exempt from their sanctions on Russia and have blamed Moscow for the global crisis.

Lavrov said last week's breakthrough deal to provide safe corridors through the Black Sea for tons of trapped grain out of Ukraine "could have been announced long, long ago if

not for the Western stubbornness in insisting they are always right." He said Russian and Turkish ships will escort ships that have been trapped in Ukrainian ports through the Black Sea once Ukraine demines its coastline.

Many African countries rely heavily on wheat imports from Russia and Ukraine, and African leaders weeks ago visited Moscow to express their food concerns while a looming famine stalks the Horn of Africa, including Ethiopia, during the worst drought in decades.

But many African nations haven't openly crit-

icized Russia over its invasion of Ukraine. Experts have cited Moscow's support for some African nations dating back to the Soviet Union or Russia's role as a major arms supplier to the continent while sending relatively little humanitarian aid.

Ethiopia is Africa's diplomatic hub and second most populous country, and later this year it is expected to host the second Russia-Africa summit. Ukraine's president earlier this year addressed the Addis Ababa-based African Union continental body about Russia's invasion, but few heads of state reportedly tuned in.

# Turkish-US negotiations on F-16 deal 'going well': FM

ANKARA: Despite challenges in ties, Türkiye's top diplomat on Wednesday said that negotiations are "going well" with the US on an F-16 fighter jet deal. "The F-16 negotiations are going well."

The (US) administration's approach on negotiations is very positive," Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said in a televised interview. After its unfair suspension from the F-35 program, Türkiye has sought to broker a deal with the US for the sales of F-16s and upgrade kits for earlier models of the fighter jet. To help address existing issues between the two countries such as US support for the terrorist group YPG/PKK, sanctions, and the extradition of the ringleader of the Fetullah Terrorist Organization (FETO), the group behind a 2016 defeated coup, Cavusoglu said that a "strategic mechanism" has been estab-

lished and that the first meeting at the ministerial level was already held in New York.

Cavusoglu also stressed that the "negative atmosphere" seen at the US Congress in recent years has dissipated. An approximately \$6-billion deal would include the sale of 40 newly built F-16V fighter jets and modernization kits for 80 F-16 C/D models that the Turkish Air Forces has in its inventory. In early May, reports appeared on some US news outlets claiming that several lawmakers favor the deal. Türkiye paid \$1.4 billion for the fighter jets, but Washington took Ankara out of the program in 2019 because Türkiye purchased the Russian S-400 defense system after its efforts to acquire US Patriot missiles were rebuffed.

The US claimed the Russian system was a security risk, but Türkiye maintained that the S-400

would pose no threat to NATO or its armaments because it would not be integrated into the alliance's systems. Ankara also repeatedly proposed setting up a commission to resolve the matter. "This (bilateral) cooperation also has strategic importance for NATO," he said, as both countries have been alliance members for many decades.

"They are also aware of the role Türkiye has taken on recently, and let's hope this awareness is not a temporary one," Cavusoglu added, likely referring to Türkiye's key role in brokering a recent deal on Ukrainian grain shipments.

Asked about a possible new operation against terror groups in northern Syria, Cavusoglu said preparations are continuing and that "a sudden move would come," echoing President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's warning that such an operation will come unexpectedly.

Reminding that the US and Russia the US and Russia failed to keep their promises against terrorist organizations in Syria, Cavusoglu said they are not sincere in their fight against terrorism.

In 2019, Russia expressed its commitment to remove the PKK/YPG terrorist organization from the Tal Rifaat and Manbij areas in northwestern Syria after reaching an agreement with Türkiye during Ankara's Operation Peace Spring. Moscow had also promised that the terrorists would be removed from areas up to 30 kilometers (18.6 miles) from the Turkish border until the M4 road and in the area adjacent to the Operation Peace Spring zone. Likewise, the US then-Vice President Mike Pence had also pledged to Türkiye that the PKK/YPG terrorist group would withdraw from the Operation Peace Spring zone. But



neither Moscow nor Washington kept their promises. Responding to a question on the US Central Command and openly voicing sympathy for PKK/YPG terrorists, Cavusoglu said it is unacceptable and added that "It is an indication of the insincerity of the US in the fight against terrorism."

The US Central Command (CENTCOM) on Sunday praised

three PKK/YPG terrorists that were killed in northern Syria on Friday. CENTCOM also extended condolences to the terrorists' families. Türkiye has long criticized US support for the terrorist YPG/PKK.

While the US claims it fights Daesh/ISIS terrorists with the help of its YPG/PKK allies, Türkiye says using one terror group to

fight another makes no sense. In its more than 35-year terror campaign against Türkiye, the PKK - listed as a terrorist organization by Türkiye, the US, and the EU - has been responsible for the deaths of over 40,000 people, including women, children, and infants. The YPG is PKK's Syrian offshoot.

Regarding the grains corridor issue, Cavusoglu recalled the opening of a new joint coordination center today in Istanbul. "Both the Russian and the Ukrainian parties sent their delegations to Istanbul, and together with this center, the control of the ships and flow will be done from here, via Türkiye," he added. Emphasizing that maintaining the process of this control center is beneficial to all sides, Cavusoglu stressed that it becomes more difficult for parties to come to the negotiation table with the war raging.

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

**Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index**

Current	Prev. Close
39,972.64	39,894.05
Day's High	Day's Low:
40,097.19	39,605.10
Index Value	Change
3,418,557,760	+78.59
Percentage	Time
+0.2%	27 Jul, 2022 5:00 pm

**Europe: FTSE 100 Index**

Index Value	Change
7,348.23	+41.95
Percentage	Time
+0.57%	27 Jul, 4:35 pm GMT+1

**USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average**

Index Value	Change
31,908.49	+146.95
Percentage	Time
+0.46%	27 Jul, 11:46 am GMT-4

**Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average**

Index Value	Change
27,715.75	+60.54
Percentage	Time
+0.22%	27 Jul, 3:15 pm GMT+9

**Open Market Forex Rates**

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	161.5	162.72
Bahrain Dinar	619.06	623.56
Canadian Dollar	180.54	181.89
China Yuan	34.41	34.66
Danish Krone	31.63	31.98
Euro	232	236
Hong Kong Dollar	29.65	30
Indian Rupee	2.92	3
Japanese Yen	1.95	2
Kuwaiti Dinar	757.54	762.54
Malaysian Ringgit	52.24	52.69
New Zealand \$	145.12	146.32
Norwegians Krone	23.5	23.8
Omani Riyal	605.38	609.88
Qatari Riyal	63.95	64.45
Saudi Riyal	60.7	70.3
Singapore Dollar	167.49	168.79
Swedish Korona	22.54	22.84
Swiss Franc	241.63	243.38
Thai Bhat	5.94	6.04
U.A.E Dirham	62.5	64.5
UK Pound Sterling	279	284
US Dollar	236	240

# US-Pakistan vow to strengthen bilateral economic, trade ties

*The recently held Pakistan-U.S. Trade and Investment Framework Agreement Intersessional Meeting was hailed by both sides*

**Staff Reporter**

ISLAMABAD: The United States (US) and Pakistan on Wednesday pledged to strengthen bilateral economic and trade relations and work together for the peace and stability of the region.

The U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Donald Blome called on Minister for Commerce Syed Naveed Qamar, said a press release issued by the Ministry of Commerce here.

Syed Naveed Qamar congratulated the ambassador on assuming his charge in Pakistan and underscored the importance of the decades-long relationship between Pakistan and the U.S.

The role played by Pakistan in averting a humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan and the efforts undertaken by it to ensure stability of the region were also highlighted.

The ambassador appreciated the significant growth seen in exports from Pakistan to the U.S. and expressed the hope for a deeper and wider bilateral relationship in the fields of trade and investment, digital services, science



ISLAMABAD: U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Donald Blome called on the Minister for Commerce Syed Naveed Qamar at the Ministry of Commerce here on Wednesday.

and technology, education, energy and climate.

The recently held Pakistan-U.S. Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) Intersessional Meeting was hailed by both sides as an important development in paving

the way for future engagements.

Federal Secretary for Commerce, Muhammad Sualah Ahmad Faruqi informed that subsequent to the TIFA Intersessional, technical-level discussions have been held by the

Ministry of Commerce on various market access issues between both countries.

The commerce minister also requested for early revival of the U.S. GSP Scheme which will further provide market access to Pakistani exporters.

To the concern expressed by Ambassador Blome regarding difficulties faced by businesses due to the import ban on luxury items recently implemented by the Government of Pakistan, the Minister for Commerce assured that the ban is temporary in nature and a certain relief has already been granted to some of the shipments.

Ambassador Blome was assured that the Ministry of Commerce is working diligently for the resolution of any issues being faced by businesses, including those of U.S.

Regional connectivity also came under discussion as Secretary Commerce highlighted the steps taken by Pakistan to further connectivity within the region, especially with the Central Asian Republics (CARs), most recently with the signing of Transit Trade Agreement between Pakistan and Uzbekistan.

# Political instability pushing Pakistan closer to red line

*Former VP FPCCI Muhammad Ali Sheikh says inflation is highest in Pakistan after Sri Lanka*

**Staff Reporter**

ISLAMABAD: Former Vice President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) Muhammad Ali Sheikh on Wednesday said the IMF bailout package will bring economic stability to Pakistan by mitigating the current financial crisis.

Every government had envisioned short-term plans to suffice their own political agenda and compromised national economic interests resulting in a default-like situation, he said.

Although the IMF has agreed to revive a bailout package of US 6.0 billion, it will provide temporary relief to cash-strapped Pakistan which is on the brink of a payment crisis, he added.

In an interaction with the business community, Muhammad Ali Sheikh said that an



IMF loan is needed in urgent situations but it is considered a solution to the economic challenges in Pakistan which is wrong.

Presently, inflation in Pakistan is the highest in the region after defaulted Sri Lanka which has made life difficult for the man on the street while exchange rate erosion is threatening the entire economic system, he observed.

The rise of the dollar has

added almost Rs7000 billion to the debt and liabilities but politicians seem unconcerned at this critical juncture, he lamented.

He urged the Government to adopt an apolitical approach and revisit policies based on solid economic grounds that could help attain sustainable development rather than short-term measures to safeguard the political agenda.

The business leader expressed apprehensions about the harsh conditions imposed by the IMF, which compelled the Government to revise energy tariffs, introduce super tax and make other tough decisions, which would consequently slow down economic growth.

Muhammad Ali Sheikh said that the government may withdraw rebates and subsidies and could review the fixed energy cost for export-oriented industries under the IMF

conditions, which would not only make export products uncompetitive in the international market but also negatively affect the export targets.

Withdrawals of rebates and subsidies would save almost a billion dollars but it would hit industrial and agricultural production, jobs and revenue, therefore, it will not be a wise decision.

He further added that such initiatives would further widen the trade deficit, compelling the Government to borrow more from international financial institutes.

The Government should boost industry-led growth based on science and technology. If the subsidies and rebates for the Greenfield Industry are withdrawn and the tax on the IT industry continues, there would be scarce chances for achieving the export target, he warned.

# SECP Chairman for expanding penetration of Pension schemes

**Staff Reporter**

ISLAMABAD: The SECP Chairman Aamir Khan has reaffirmed SECP's commitment for increasing penetration of Voluntary Pension System (VPS). Aamir Khan was speaking to a webinar, organized by the SECP to increase awareness about VPS in the corporate sector and among professionals.

Pointing towards the pension situation in Pakistan, the Chairman shared various reforms that the SECP has undertaken to encourage both employers and self-employed professionals to participate in VPS, which include broadening of investment avenues for VPS by allowing them to invest in REITs, private funds, and ETFs, facilitating investors by allowing passive investment strategies, and flexibility in

changing fund and/or fund manager.

The participants discussed the challenges and opportunities in the private pension market and provided suggestions to improve the uptake of VPS. The panelists discussed in detail how VPS was a better alternative to conventional/terminal benefit schemes like provident/gratuity funds, and could provide the basis for a more sustainable pension system. Ms. Khali-da Habib, Executive Director, Specialized Companies Division briefed the participants about recently introduced amendments in the relevant regulations. The regulations were amended to provide ease of doing business by reducing the number of regulatory approvals and removing duplications and eliminating redundancies.

## National Dialogue: Eradicating engineers' unemployment through entrepreneurial setting from today

**Staff Reporter**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) with its mandate of regulating quality of engineering education and practice of engineering, is functioning as a key driving force for achieving rapid and sustainable growth in all national, economic, and social fields. Before entering into policy making and designing activities for concerned audiences, it is always a good idea to seek direction from real stakeholders, listening to affectees of the existing system and policies, thus getting better suggestions and fruitful deliberations on realistic solutions to be implemented.

For the purpose, PEC Innovation & Entrepreneurship Committee (ICE) is holding "National Dialogue-to Eradicate Engineers' Unemployment through Entrepreneurial Settings" on 28-29 July 2022 at Best Western Hotel, Islamabad. It's planned to be an event to provide platform from all sectors of engineering graduates (employed, unemployed, self-employed, employers etc.). The nominations for the event are sought from Vice Chairmen of all provinces (Engr Prof Dr Niaz Akhtar, Engr Mukhtiar Ali Shaikh, Engr Ajaz Hussain Ansari, and Engr Nasir Majeed) including CT, AJK & GB. Each group shall present provincial recommendations for the issue followed by inter-provincial discussions.

The discussions shall be concluded as recommendations to be presented at the Closing Ceremony in front of all PEC Vice Chairmen, Chairman PEC Engr Muhammad Najeeb Haroon, Convener Innovation & Entrepreneurship Committee Engr Prof Dr Samreen Hussain, as well as Convener of relevant Committees of PEC and concerned Ministry(ies). Innovation & Entrepreneurship Committee shall make efforts to design and plan future activities in line with the recommendations received at the end of event thereby making the role of Committee more relevant, effective and owned by all stakeholders.

The event pronouncement would encompass policy recommendations and a way forward to eradicate engineers' unemployment as well as enhancing their skill-set for contribution in the National development as major operators of economic engine of the country.

# Growing political crisis a big threat to economy: Mian Zahid

*Says buying, selling dollars a profitable business for banks*



**Tariq Khattak**

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid

Hussain on Wednesday said the increasing political instability in the country has become a big threat to the economy.

Pakistan has no choice but to adopt the harsh policies of international institutions but despite the full implementation of their policies, loan money is not being released which is damaging our economy, he said.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that the sale and purchase of dollars has become a profitable business for the banks which is like tanking the weak economy.

Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that the dollar has appreciated by Rs25 in eight days while it has jumped

by Rs54 during the tenure of Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif. He warned that the political instability and chaos should be stopped otherwise the IMF loan will not be able to streamline things.

The business leader noted that Russia stopped the flight of capital soon after attacking Ukraine and now its economy is stable while its currency is the strongest in the world.

On the other hand, the rupee has dwindled by ten percent in a week but nothing is being done to arrest the fall.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that banks are selling dollars at inflated prices while importers are not getting dollars in time resulting in heavy demur-

rage and detention charges. He said that the value of the rupee has reduced by 23 percent in the current fiscal and if the central banks and the government failed to take the required steps, the value of rupee to a dollar will fall to 275 by December.

Mian Zahid Hussain noted that production is being reduced, inflation is out of control and political instability continues to damage the economy. IMF has stopped tranche while friendly countries are not giving loans and are not ready to give guarantees, he added.

The political instability has provided a golden opportunity to the profiteers which must be noticed, he demanded.

# Bank Alfalah welcomes 8th Batch of Management Trainee Program



**Staff Reporter**

KARACHI: Bank Alfalah has on-boarded the 8th batch of its prestigious Management Trainee Program after a rigorous recruitment process involving gamified assessment, video interview, virtual assessment centers and panel interviews.

This year, the Bank has welcomed 27 graduates out of 3000 applicants who will go through 3 months of

classroom training on key development aspects before being placed in suitable department based on their individual skillsets. A meet and great session was held on July 18th that was addressed by the President and CEO, Atif Bajwa.

The CEO and Group Head HR welcomed the Management Trainees to the Bank Alfalah family where they wished them luck with their learning career at Bank Alfalah.

# ENSOGOV to focus on simplifying ESG journey for businesses

**Spokesman Report**

KARACHI: ENSOGOV & British Deputy High Commission Karachi arranged an exclusive gathering of corporate leaders to discuss the adoption of the ESG frameworks and sustainability practices in Pakistan.

The event was held at Acton House British Deputy High Commission Karachi. Corporate leadership from the financial sector, banking, textile, FMCG, manufacturing, technology and development sector gathered at the event organised by ENSOGOV, British Deputy High Commission, Karachi, in partnership with ACCA, Nutshell Group, SEED Ventures and Matriarch Ventures under the title "Simplifying the ESG journey for businesses".

The leaders, in general, discussed that the operating context for organisations implementing environmental, social and governance (ESG)

strategies is changing exceptionally fast. There are pressures from investors, customers, employees and regulators to take substantive action and strengthen reporting and disclosures.

Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, Chairperson of Pakistan Stock Exchange, PICG and Former Federal Minister, stressed creating a national-level ESG framework for Pakistan to bring harmony and comparability.

Sadia Sajjad, Country Manager UK, Ireland, Denmark and Malta, IFC, Jonathan Freeman, CEO, Sustainability Director, CareTech plc; Managing Director, Earlsbrook Consulting Limited, Muhammad Azfar Ahsan, Founder, Nutshell Group & Corporate Pakistan Group, Former Minister of State & Chairman, Board of Investment and Maheem Rahman, CEO InfraZamin Pakistan stressed on the urgency climate action and adoption of ESG framework.



Muhammad Ali Tabba, CEO of Lucky Cement Limited and Yunus Textile Mills Limited, part of YBG business conglomerate, Shazad Dada, CEO and President of UBL, Farrukh H. Khan, MD & CEO, Pakistan Stock Exchange, Naz Khan, Chief Strategy Officer, K-Electric, Shaista Ayesha, CEO, SEED Ventures, Assad Hameed, Head of ACCA Pakistan discussed the success and progress

of sustainability and ESG frameworks' adoption in Pakistan.

Corporate leaders and participants appreciated the efforts of ENSOGOV (in simplifying the ESG journey for businesses in Pakistan. ENSOGOV is an ESG tech and data-led startup delivering a bitesize sprint model to accelerate ESG transitions for companies in Pakistan and abroad.

The main aim of the discussion is

to gather companies under one roof and let them discover new sources of competitive advantage by focusing on benefits and embedding sustainability in the business and across the value chain.

Mike Nithavrianakis, British Deputy High Commissioner, Karachi, shared his views at the launch event of ENSOGOV "The environmental, social, and governance challenges the world faces today are complex, alarming and urgent. Businesses must make bold commitments, build robust plans and take tangible actions. Boards have the primary role of simplifying ESG adoption and benchmark the progress against global standards."

"A strong sustainability strategy transforms a company's relationships with its workforce, suppliers and customers, and resources utilisation models and creates long-term value for all its stakeholders". Faraz Khan, Founder and CEO of ENSOGOV.

## Pak vs SL

## Sri Lanka set 508-run target for Pakistan in 2nd Test

Pakistan make solid start to run chase as bad light curtails day-four

## Spokesman Report

GALLE: Pakistan made an impressive start to their 508-run chase on day-four of the second ICC World Test Championship match against Sri Lanka at the Galle International Stadium on Wednesday. Bad light followed by rain curtailed the day as play was called-off with 26 overs left undelivered.

After a promising start, the visitors lost Abdullah Shafique for 16 after a 42-run opening stand. Imam-ul-Haq finished the day at an unbeaten 46 off 80 balls (four fours).

Imam and captain Babar Azam have so far added 47 runs for the second-wicket, Babar was not out on 26 off 38 balls (two fours and one six).

On the fifth and final day, Pakistan need another 419 runs to register a world record chase. If the visitors bat out the remaining overs, the match will end in a draw earning Pakistan a 1-0 series win.



On Wednesday, Dhananjaya de Silva was Sri Lanka's second innings' star performer. The right-hander scored the ninth century of his Test career to spearhead his side's progress to their 500 plus overall lead.

Resuming at 176 for five, de Silva and

captain Dimuth Karunaratne took their sixth-wicket partnership to 126. Nauman Ali provided Pakistan their first breakthrough of the day when he had Karunaratne smartly caught by Abdullah at short-leg. Karunaratne scored 61 off 105 balls with the help of three fours.

Sri Lanka continued to progress at a healthy rate as Pakistan bowlers searched for wickets. Debutant Dunith Wellalage fell for 18 to Mohammad Nawaz, Sri Lanka took lunch at 297 for seven – overall lead of 444.

De Silva completed his century off 159 balls, the seasoned batter found an able ally in Ramesh Mendis who followed his first innings all-round exploits (35 and five wickets) with an unbeaten 45 (54 balls, five fours).

The pair added 82 for the eight-wicket before de Silva was run out via a direct hit by Yasir Shah. Sri Lanka declared their innings at 360 for 8. Naseem Shah and Nawaz took two wickets each for Pakistan.

The West Indies hold the record for the highest-ever successful Test chase of 418 against Australia in 2003 at Antigua. Pakistan's highest chase came in 2015, when they made a target of 377 in Pall-kele. The tourists chased down a Galle record of 342 in the opener of this series.

## Adelaide Oval curator terms Pakistan visit useful

## Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: Adelaide Oval's chief curator Damien Hough has completed his 12-day visit of Pakistan during which he visited four Test centres and worked with the ground staff, curators and coaches on pitch and outfield preparation methods.

Hough, started his visit at the headquarters of Pakistan cricket, Lahore's Gaddafi Stadium. From Lahore, Hough travelled to Pindi Cricket Stadium, Rawalpindi before coming down to spend the last weekend in Karachi. Besides a thorough inspection of the city's Test venue – National Stadium, Hough also made a visit to the Naya Nazimabad Ground.

Hough made a two-day visit to Multan Cricket Stadium early this week and later returned to Lahore for his final assignment. He will depart to Adelaide from Lahore today. Besides inspecting the pitches and the outfield in the four



cities, Hough also delivered lectures on pitch making and outfield inspection which were attended by local coaches, ground staff and curators.

Hough meanwhile, has termed his trip very useful and enjoyable one as besides making the pitch and ground related visits, delivering lectures and presentations, he also got an opportunity to understand and learn about pitch making in Pakistan. The visit according to him was also about exchanging ideas and collaboration.

Hough also lauded the Pakistan Cricket Board's efforts and interest in experimenting with imported Australian soil and called it

a world class approach.

Damien Hough: "There were two parts to the plan of coming over to Pakistan, like it was about providing information and understanding on how we prepare pitches at the Adelaide Oval, the grass we leave on to assist with the pace, bounce and carry which was conveyed through presentations to the coaches and participants of the lectures at the four cities we visited. We also went on the ground and rolled out a pitch to explain how we do things."

"The other part was about a visit to the different venues and to meet the grounds team and the staff and understand how they do things, the outfields, the

machinery and to go home and put together a report about what I have seen. There have been a lot of positives to take away and it has been a really enjoyable tour.

"The engagement from the curators and the coaches was extremely positive. The challenges in Pakistan are different with regards to the environment and busy schedules for the curators but the good thing was that everyone was willing to learn and progress, it was about exchanging ideas and having a collaborative approach as a lot of things are done similarly both here and in Australia.

"There are a lot of things that are being done already and the curators and the ground staff are ready to learn and up skill. The commitment of the staff is exactly the same as Australia which is commendable. The machinery here is good, it is all about how to use it and about providing some advice on how it can be best used to get the results.

## Babar, Abdullah and Shaheen achieve career-high Test rankings

## Spokesman Report

LAHORE: Pakistan captain Babar Azam and opener Abdullah Shafique have been rewarded with career-high Test rankings following last week's superlative performances in the first cricket Test against Sri Lanka.

Pakistan achieved their second highest run-chase when they scored 344 for six with Babar contributing 119 and 55, while Abdullah scoring 13 and a magnificent 160 not out.

In recognition of these performances, Babar has moved up one place to third

in the latest ICC Men's Player Rankings for Test Batters and is now the only player in international cricket to feature in the top-three across all formats, while Abdullah has vaulted 23 places to break into the top-20 for the first time in 16th position.

Babar already heads the ODI and T20I batting charts, while in Tests, he now trails second-ranked Marnus Labuschagne of Australia by 11 points. The list is headed by England's Joe Root.

Abdullah by virtue of his 23-place leap, has now become the third Pakistan batter to feature inside the

top-20. Apart from Babar, Mohammad Rizwan is occupying 20th position, while Azhar Ali has slipped six places to 24th and Imam-ul-Haq has dropped three places to 64th.

Amongst the bowlers, Shaheen Shah Afridi has continued his ascendancy and has gained one place in the latest rankings following his four wickets in the first Test. The left-arm fast bowler has leapfrogged India's Jasprit Bumrah into third position on 836 points.

This is Shaheen's career-high ranking and compliments his No.3 position in

ODIs and 12th ranking in T20Is. Hasan Ali and Yasir Shah are the other Pakistan bowlers to move in the right direction.

Hasan, who took three wickets in the first Test, has gained one place and is now 13th, while Yasir, who claimed five wickets in his comeback Test, is now 32nd after rising one place.

Mohammad Nawaz, who took five for 88 in the second innings, has returned to Test bowlers' rankings in 89th position. Amongst the Test all-rounders, Hasan is 26th, Yasir 31st, Shaheen 51st and Nawaz 87th.

## Titmus, McKeon lead power-packed Australia

SYDNEY: Olympic champions Ariarne Titmus and Emma McKeon return to the pool at the Commonwealth Games with a gold rush and world records on their minds, heading an Australia swimming squad boasting "insane depth".

After a breakout Tokyo Olympics where she dethroned American great Katie Ledecky in the 200m and 400m freestyle, the dominant Titmus carried her form into the Australian championships in May. After narrowly missing the long-standing 200m world record set in 2009, she broke Ledecky's world mark over 400m by 0.06 seconds, touching in 3min 56.40sec. Titmus, 21, then opted out of the world championships in Budapest, saving herself for the Commonwealth Games, where she will be a red-hot favourite. "I am so excited and I think we've got a great team going in.

"It's insane the depth we have," said Titmus, the Commonwealth Games 400m and 800m champion. That depth is illustrated by the inclusion of undisputed Olympic pool queen McKeon, who also missed the worlds. The 28-year-old won a stunning seven medals in Tokyo and also boasts a phenomenal Commonwealth Games record — with eight gold and four bronze medals in two appearances at Glasgow in 2014 and the Gold Coast four years later.

McKeon has her sights set on beating the all-time record of 10 gold medals for an Australian, currently held jointly by fellow swimmers Ian Thorpe, Susie O'Neill and Leisel Jones. She is again set to contest the 50m and 100m freestyle, but has serious competition from teen sensation Mollie O'Callaghan, who stunned Swedish world record holder Sarah Sjöström in Budapest to win the 100m free among her six medals. McKeon said she would need to be at her best given the rapidly improving next generation. "You never want to get too comfortable or complacent otherwise you're not going to keep working hard and keep striving to be better," she said.

The Commonwealth Games hold a special place in McKeon's heart, with her father Ron winning swimming golds in 1978 and 1982. Her mother, Susie Woodhouse, also competed in 1982. Australia also boast Olympic and world backstroke champion Kaylee McKeown, while pop star Cody Simpson made the grade after returning from a decade away focusing on a music career during which he worked with Justin Bieber and Miley Cyrus.

But teenage backstroke hope Isaac Cooper will be missing after he was sent home over "wellbeing challenges, including the use of medication". Australia topped the overall medals table at the 2018 Commonwealth Games, with 80 golds to England's 45 and India's 26.

## Inam, Bismah to be Pakistan's flag-bearers in Commonwealth Games

## Spokesman Report

BIRMINGHAM: Wrestler Inam Butt and women team skipper Bismah Maroof will carry Pakistan's flag at the opening ceremony of the XXII Commonwealth Games.

Pakistan Olympic Association (POA)'s president Lt Gen (R) Syed Arif Hasan has nominated the two athletes for flag bearers ceremony of the games.

Muhammad Inam, national wrestler, has secured medals in Commonwealth Games and made a history by winning the first ever medal and that too Gold for Pakistan at the World Beach Games. He has been bestowed with the Pride of Performance by the Government of Pakistan. He is the Chairman Athletes Commission of Pakistan Olympic Association (CGA Pakistan) and has been instrumental in empowering national athletes in programs designed by Pakistan Olympic Association (CGA Pakistan).

His leadership has gathered together national athletes on various seminars projecting the Athletes' Rights & Responsibilities and he regularly offers insight to elevate national athletes and sports.

Ms. Bismah Maroof, captain of the Pakistan Women Cricket team, is an outstanding motivation for the female athletes of Pakistan. She has played 118 Women One Days and 114 Women T20s for Pakistan. She is a left handed all-rounder and has an impeccable record both as a batsman with leg-break bowler. Commonwealth Games Federation has kindly arranged her facilities to not only play but to look after her daughter, Fatima, during the Games.

## SBP to organise Punjab Premier Table Tennis League

LAHORE: The Sports Board Punjab (SBP) will organise the Punjab Premier Table Tennis League here at Nishtar Park Sports Complex, Gymnasium Hall, on July 28 and 29.

SBP Director General Muhammad Tariq Qureshi will inaugurate the event, while Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Asadullah Faiz will distribute prizes at the concluding ceremony.

Meanwhile, the SBP DG said on Wednesday said that the event was being organised in connection with the diamond jubilee celebrations of Pakistan.

"Top 12 players of Pakistan will participate in Punjab Premier Table Tennis League. These leading players will be divided into two groups".

He said that the qualifying rounds of the league were held at the Nishtar Park Sports Complex, Gymnasium Hall under the supervision of international coach Yasir Bhatti. "We are quite upbeat that Punjab Premier Table Tennis League will play a key role in the promotion of table tennis across the province".

## Juventus, Barcelona draw 2-2 in US friendly

LOS ANGELES: Ousmane Dembele and Moise Kean scored two goals apiece as Barcelona and Juventus fought to an entertaining 2-2 draw in their US pre-season friendly in Dallas on Tuesday.

French winger Dembele fired Barcelona ahead after 34 minutes at the Cotton Bowl, wriggling past Juventus players Juan Cuadrado and Sandro before beating Juve goalkeeper Wojciech Szczesny to make it 1-0. But Juventus hit back five minutes later with Colombian wing-back Cuadrado making amends with a pinpoint low cross that found Kean who tapped in past Barcelona goalkeeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen. Barcelona were soon back in front again, however, and once again the goal came as Dembele punished poor defending.

Cuadrado was again at fault, with Dembele skipping past the South American's covering tackle and then cutting past Manuel Locatelli to shoot past Szczesny for a 2-1 lead. Barcelona coach Xavi Hernandez made a flurry of changes at half-time, with Dembele making way for new Brazilian signing Raphinha. The former Leeds striker made an instant impact, blasting a long-range shot that Szczesny parried over the bar. Despite Barcelona's bright start to the half, it was Juventus who scored next with Kean tucking away a rebound after deft approach play by Denis Zakaria and Locatelli on 52 minutes.

Barcelona came closest to the breakthrough goal, and hit the woodwork twice in a matter of seconds on 68 minutes. Raphina rattled the crossbar with a curling free kick and from the rebound Ansu Fati's curling shot from the edge of the area cannoned back off the post. That was as close as either side came to breaking the deadlock, while Barcelona's new signing Robert Lewandowski struggled to make much of an impression before being substituted midway through the second half.

## Kyrgios withdraws from Atlanta tournament

PARIS: Wimbledon finalist Nick Kyrgios has pulled out of the singles draw at the ATP event in Atlanta due to a knee injury.

The Australian was scheduled to face German Peter Gojowczyk on Tuesday, but withdrew from the tournament following an earlier doubles win alongside compatriot Thanasi Kokkinakis. "I'm shattered that I'm not able to compete tonight," Kyrgios told the crowd.

The hard-court event was due to be Kyrgios' first tournament since his run to the Wimbledon final earlier this month, when he lost to Novak Djokovic in four sets. "I've won this tournament once and I'm probably playing some of the best tennis in my career and all I wanted to do was come out here and give you guys a show," Kyrgios added.

## England thrash Sweden to reach final

SHEFFIELD: England's women will be talked about "all over the world" said coach Sarina Wiegman after thrashing Sweden 4-0 in Sheffield on Tuesday to reach the Euro 2022 final.

After semi-final heartache in the last three major tournaments, it was fourth time lucky for the Lionesses to the delight of the home crowd of 29,000 at Bramall Lane to set up a clash against Germany or France. England have never won a major tournament in the women's game, but on this form will take some stopping in front of a sold out Wembley on Sunday.

Goals either side of half-time from Beth Mead and Lucy Bronze put the hosts well on course to inflict Sweden's first defeat from open play since 2019. But it was substitute Alessia Russo's stunning backheel through the legs

of Sweden goalkeeper Hedvig Lindahl that will live long in the memory. Fran Kirby then added a fourth 14 minutes from time. "Second half, it was such a performance tomorrow they will talk about it all over Europe, all over the world," said Wiegman.

A record crowd for a women's Euro of 87,000 is expected at Wembley for the final, hoping England will end a 56-year wait for a major title in either the men's or women's game. "I am going in my own bunker," added Wiegman on the hype that will follow in the upcoming days. "We noticed that a little bit. We want to inspire the nation, I think that's what we are doing and we hope we make a difference. That the whole country is proud of us and even more girls and boys start playing football."

Sweden's only defeat in the

last 34 matches came in a penalty shootout in the gold medal match at last year's Olympics. The number two ranked side in the world showed why early on as England struggled to contain the Swedish threat on the counter-attack. Mary Earps was forced into a fine save by Sofia Jakobsson inside 20 seconds before Arsenal striker Stina Blackstenius crashed a header off the bar. "The first 25 mins I felt we had enough chances," said Sweden boss Peter Gerhardsson. "When you play this type of opponent you need to be effective with the chances that you get." In keeping with their tournament, England were far more clinical when their chances came. Blackstenius' club teammate Mead extended her lead in the race for the Golden Boot to two with a perfect control and volleyed finish from Bronze's

cross on 34 minutes.

Mead has also now matched the record of six goals in a single women's European Championship held by Germany's Inka Grings at Euro 2009. That was also the last time England reached the final of a major women's tournament and Bronze's header from Mead's corner three minutes after half-time put England well on the way to Wembley. Any Swedish hopes of a fightback were truly extinguished on 68 minutes with a goal that will be replayed the world over. A brilliant England move involving Keira Walsh and Kirby teed up Russo, whose initial finish was straight at Lindahl.

Yet, despite the presence of two Swedish defenders, with her back to goal and the angle narrowing, Russo produced a moment of



magic to backheel the ball with enough power to catch Lindahl napping. The veteran Swedish

goalkeeper is closing in on 200 caps, but will want to forget this one as she then failed to keep

out her former Chelsea teammate Kirby's effort that trickled over the line.