



**Govt, allies demand ECP's verdict on PTI's foreign funding case: Kaira**

Adviser on Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Qamar Zaman Kaira says the coalition parties of the government are demanding that the pending decision on the foreign funding case be announced soon. Imran Khan is criticizing the Chief Election Commissioner in order to pressurize the Election Commission of Pakistan. If Imran Khan is 'sadiq and amin' and his hands are clean, then why is he using delaying tactics on foreign funding case?



**Climate change is SDGs' integral part: Marriyum**

Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb says climate change is an integral part of these goals and Pakistan being adversely affected by it, should upgrade its water structures in the wake of intense floods and rains. All stakeholders including parliamentarians, local government representatives, media, civil society and youth should work together to achieve the targets set under Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

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**Govt hikes power tariff again**

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Already overburdened by inflation, increased oil prices, food items, Pakistanis were in for a shock when the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) on Thursday decided to increase the power tariff by Rs9.89 per unit. According to the regulatory authority, the hike in tariff has been made under fuel adjustment for the month of June. This decision has placed an additional burden of billions of the rupees on the power consumers. The hike will not be applicable on life-line consumers.

The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority has raised power tariff for K-Electric consumers by Rs11.37, an Rs0.01 less than demanded by the power utility. The approval was given in terms of fuel adjustment charges for June 2022 and the increase will not be applicable for life-line consumers. The K-Electric has demanded a hike in power tariff by Rs11.38 and while justifying it one of its spokesperson said that it was for a month in terms of FAC and was as per the NEPRA rules. The power utility blamed hike in prices of furnace oil in international markets by 42 percent from March to June 2022 behind the increase.

"The RLNG prices also rose by 50 from March to June," a spokesman for the K-Electric said.

It is pertinent to mention here that on June 04, the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra) raised the power tariff for K-Electric consumers by Rs9.66 per unit after the power utility sought an increase in power tariff by Rs11.34 per unit. The demand came during the NEPRA hearing for fuel adjustment charges for May.

**Reaction**

ISLAMABAD: President of Pakistan Democratic Movement Maulana Fazlur Rehman addressing a press conference along with PML N vice president Maryam Nawaz Sharif and others PDM members after the PDM meeting in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

**Top brass meets**

**PDM rejects SC verdict over Mazari's ruling**

*Mulls running public campaign against Supreme Court's ruling*

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) on Thursday rejected the Supreme Court's verdict to nullify 10 votes of the Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q) in the Deputy Speaker's ruling case. PDM meeting was held at Muslim League House in Chak Shahzad. PML-N Vice President Maryam Nawaz, PML-N Spokesperson and Federal Information Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb, former prime minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman, Aftab Sherpao and others were present at the meeting.

During the meeting Maulana Fazlur Rehman invited Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and Awami

National Party (ANP) to join the PDM. According to sources, the resolution passed by the National Party.

**Fazl suggests 'long march' to protest SC judgment in Punjab CM election case**

al Assembly regarding judicial reforms was welcomed. During the meeting, PML-N supremo and former premier Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif said that we have been burdened with the 'apple of the eye' (Imran Khan)

for four years. "We accepted to join the government only to save the country", said the former prime minister.

PML-N vice president Maryam Nawaz said, "Our legitimate demand for full court to meet the demand of justice was not accepted, now we have to go for review or remain silent, we have to decide." Sources privy to the matter said, PDM chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman said, "Now we have to set a clear direction and we also have to know about all the characters involved in the game."

Shahid Khaqan Abbasi said, "The policy of reconciliation has hurt us from the beginning."

Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) has mulled over

running a public campaign against the verdict of the Supreme Court resulting in the ouster of Hamza Shahbaz as the chief minister of Punjab. PDM Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman headed the meeting of the coalition on Thursday to devise the future strategy and counter opponent Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI).

The participants of the meeting expressed grave concerns about the Supreme Court's verdict throwing away the ruling of Punjab Assembly Deputy Speaker Dost Muhammad Mazari. It was recommended to run a public campaign against the top court's decision. He also invited the parties—that are part of the incumbent government in the center—to join the PDM.

**JCP rejects CJ's nominees for SC elevation**

ISLAMABAD: The Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP) on Thursday rejected Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial's five nominated judges for their appointment to the Supreme Court. Sources privy to the matter said that CJP Umar Ata Bandial presided over the judicial commission's session, where a total of five judges, two from the Sindh High Court and three from the Lahore High Court (LHC), were considered. There was a difference of opinion among the members of the Judicial Commission on the 5 judges nominated by the Chief Justice for the Supreme Court, after which voting was conducted among the members of the Judicial Commission, sources added.

The chief justice, Justice Aijazul Ahsan, and Justice Sajjad Ali Shah voted in favour of the nominees, while Justice (ret'd) Sarmad Jalal Usmani voted in favour of three judges from LHC and voted against the SHC nominees, sources said. However, their votes were

less as Justice Qazi Faez Isa, Justice Tariq Masood, Attorney-General Ashtar Ausaf Ali, and Law Minister Azam Nazer Tarar voted against all the five nominees, sources added. Upon receiving five votes against the nominees, the chief justice ended the session without reaching a decision.

Had they been approved, then in line with Article 175-A of the Constitution of Pakistan, the JCP would have forwarded the list to the parliamentary committees for the appointment of judges to the Supreme Court. Just two days before the JCP session, senior puisne judge Justice Isa had written a letter to the commission, seeking postponement of today's meeting, stating that the matter "requires utmost care and due deliberation as it is a matter of extreme delicacy". The justice has severely criticised CJP Bandial for scheduling the meeting at such a time when he (Isa) is not able to physically attend the meeting as he is currently on leave abroad.

**Pakistan, Poland to enhance defence ties**

*Polish ambassador calls on COAS Bajwa*

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan and Poland have agreed to enhance bilateral relations in diverse fields, especially defence and security relations, the military's media wing said on Thursday. According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the understanding came during a meeting between Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa Polish Ambassador Mr Piotr A Opalinski at General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi.

During the meeting, matters of mutual interest, regional security and enhanced bilateral and defence cooperation between both countries came

under discussion. "Pakistan values its relations with Poland which are anchored by mutual trust and profound historic foundations," emphasising the need for strengthening bilateral relations with Poland.

COAS Bajwa further said that both countries have convergence of strategic interests on a range of security issues including fight against terrorism. The ISPR added that both the countries agreed to further expand defence and security relations. The visiting dignitary appreciated Pakistan's efforts for bringing peace and stability in the region, especially the Afghan Peace Process.

**Crushing opponents**

**Zardari, Sharif mafia's thinking is unacceptable: Imran**

*Directs Punjab govt to restore PTI's welfare projects*

ISLAMABAD: Former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan said on Thursday that the thinking of Zardari and Sharif mafia to eliminate opponents is unacceptable. The former prime minister in his latest Tweet strongly condemned persecution and arrest of Sindh Opposition leader Haleem Adil Sheikh by Sindh govt. He said that this is pure fascism, reflecting the Zardari-Sharif mafia's approach of eliminating those they cannot purchase and it is absolutely unacceptable in any democracy.

The PTI chairman went on to say that he has called on government of Punjab to immediately provide flood assistance to people in the devastated areas of South Punjab and in the affected areas of Mianwali district. "I have also asked the Kyber Pakhtunkhwa government to immediately provide flood relief to the people in affected areas of Balochistan," Khan added. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) supremo



and former Prime Minister Imran Khan has directed the newly elected Punjab government to restore PTI prominent programs including Ehsaas, health cards and other welfare projects.

The PTI chairman held a virtual meeting with Punjab Chief Minister Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi and former Federal Minister Moonis Elahi through video link and discussed political and administrative issues while the welfare and development projects in Punjab were also discussed. During

the meeting, Imran Khan instructed to start the Ehsaas, Sehat Insaf card and other welfare projects in Punjab immediately. "The previous government ignored our welfare programs but the time has come to speed up these initiatives without delay so that the people can get relief," Imran said. On this Punjab CM assured that the aforementioned programs will be started immediately and all possible steps will be taken to provide relief to the masses. Agencies

**PML-Q removes Ch Shujaat as party chief**

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q) on Thursday announced to remove Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain from the post of party president. While briefing media regarding decisions taken in PML-Q's Central Executive Committee, PML-Q senior leader Kamil Ali Agha said the meeting has decided to remove Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain as party chief owing to his deteriorating health.

The party also decided to remove Tariq Bashir Cheema from the post of general secretary, he said.

Kamil Agha further said that the meeting has decided to hold new Intra-party elections within ten days. "For inter-party elections, a five-member Election Commission has been established," he said.

The decision to remove Shujaat as party chief comes days after the latter decided to support PML-N's Hamza Shahbaz against Parvez Elahi in the election for Punjab chief minister's office.

**Connectivity**

**Govt to unlock CPEC's full economic potential: PM**

*Says foreign funding case shows how Imran Khan being protected*

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif Thursday underlined the government's commitment to unlock the full economic and connectivity potential of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) through expedited and high-quality development of CPEC projects. He emphasized the importance of key projects like Main Line One (ML-1) and Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) in Pakistan's development plans and expressed desire to move towards finalization of these projects in the upcoming 11th meeting of the CPEC Joint Cooperation Committee.

The Prime Minister expressed these views as he received Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Nong Rong here at the PM House, a press release issued here by the PM Media Office said.

Expressing satisfaction on the upward trajectory of high-level exchanges between Pakistan and China, the Prime Minister recalled his comprehensive and wide-ranging discussions with Premier Li Keqiang in a telephone call on 16 May 2022, and their consensus to further deepen and strengthen Pakistan-China All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership. He underscored that Pakistan and China were best friends, staunchest partners and



Iron brothers, adding the two nations had always stood by each other through fair weather and times of challenges, and extended support on key issues of core interest. The Prime Minister appreciated China's support to Pakistan's sovereignty, territorial integrity and development, including in dealing with the emerging economic challenges and volatility in global supply chains and commodities.

Sharing Pakistan's focus on early development of CPEC Special Economic Zones (SEZs), he welcomed the increased investments of Chinese enterprises especially in the country's industrial development. Referring to the increasing bilateral trade volumes

and Pakistan's record exports of US \$ 3.6 billion in 2021, the Prime Minister emphasized that enhanced market access for Pakistani exports to China would help realize the full potential of Pakistan-China Free Trade Agreement. The Prime Minister was accompanied by Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal, Finance Minister Miftah Ismail, Minister of State Foreign Affairs Hina Rabbani Khar and Special Assistants to PM Tariq Fatemi, Zafarullah Mahmood and Jehanzab Khan.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said that the eight years-long delay in the decision of foreign funding case against Imran Khan evidenced how "Ladla" was being protected.



## Forex

H.E Mr. Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki, Ambassador of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia called on the Federal Minister for Finance & Revenue, Miftah Ismail at Finance Division in Islamabad on Thursday.



Photo: PID

## Rs 239.94

Rupee nosedives against dollar

## Bureau Report

KARACHI: The Pakistani rupee plunged to a new low on Thursday while continuing its downward spiral against US dollar in the interbank market despite Finance Minister Miftah Ismail assuring investors that the pressure on local currency will soon "vanish". Data released by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) showed that the local unit closed at a historic low of 239.94 against the US dollar — surpassing its last day low of 236.02 after depreciating by Rs3.92, or Rs1.63% today.

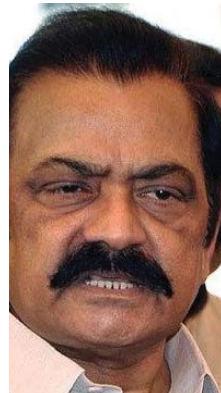
The currency pressure continued today as well, amid higher dollar demand and outflows — mainly oil-related payments tagged with lower inflows. Fears have risen about Pakistan's stuttering economy as its currency fell nearly 8% against the US dollar in the last trading week, while the country's forex reserves stood below \$10 billion with inflation at the highest in more than a decade.

## Dissolve assemblies if you want polls: Rana Sana tells Imran

Asks ECP to announce verdict in PTI's foreign funding case

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Interior Rana Sanaullah on Thursday while calling out Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan said that the former prime minister should dissolve assemblies of both the provinces if he wants election to be held. Addressing a press conference in here he said that the PTI lawyers postponed the foreign funding case for over 50 times, while 8 years have passed and now the verdict is reserved.

The minister demanded the ECP to announce foreign funding case verdict, adding that four employees of the PTI received money in their accounts. Launching a tirade against Imran Khan, the minister said that the PTI obtained nearly 150 million votes while the allied parties secured 250 million votes and asked if the majority would be thrown out. Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah has asked the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to announce a verdict in the foreign funding case against Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI).



"The Interior Minister criticised the electoral watchdog over the delay in announcing the judgment in PTI foreign funding case. "Why election commission is not announcing the reserved verdict if the hearings have been completed," he said, adding that PTI was trying to avoid the case by creating obstacles and filing nine writ petitions. Rana Sanaullah said that the government and allied parties have expressed concern over the delay in announcement of the judgments.

He alleged that around 350 companies and people, who according to him belong to India and Israel, illegally funded Imran Khan. The minister reiterated the demand for an early verdict in the case, saying that

action would be taken as per the judgment. Meanwhile, the federal minister also said if Imran Khan should dissolve the assemblies in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) if he truly wants elections in the country.

Speaking about the Chief Election Commissioner, he said that Imran Khan appointed the CEC Sultan Sikandar Raja himself. He advised the former premier to approach the Supreme Judicial Council if he has solid evidence against the CEC. The Election Commission of Pakistan reserved its verdict after the conclusion of arguments from both sides of the case on June 21.

"The case has concluded, the cases of other parties would also come to an end soon," CEC Sikandar Sultan Raja said while thanking the parties. "Seasoned jurists appeared in the case and several sensitive matters came to surface," he said. "Democracy is very important for the country. We are not anxious about what is being said outside, the matter will be decided with justice," CEC had said.

## Fuel prices to go up

## Govt bows to Petro dealers' demands

## Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The prices of petroleum products are likely to go up as Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) on Thursday approved increase in sales and distribution margins of oil marketing companies (OMCs) and petroleum dealers. A well-placed source in the finance ministry said that ECC meeting presided over by Finance Minister Miftah Ismail here in Islamabad has accepted the demands of petroleum dealers OMCs by raising their sales margin by Rs7 per litre.

The OMCs and petroleum dealers have been seeking an increase in their sales and distribution margins

by around 6 per cent to the premise of increase in the costs of doing business and inflation. The increase in dealer's margin will come into effect from August, 1 after approval from federal cabinet, they said.

Sources in the oil sector said with the government accepting the demands of the dealers' margin and also agreed to enhance the margin of OMCs, the total increase would be part of the prices of petrol and diesel, which meant these products would become costlier for the end consumers. It is pertinent to mention here that the incumbent govt. on July 14 announced a reduction of Rs18.50 per litre of petrol and diesel by Rs40.54 per litre.

## Disputed water projects

Pakistan seeks schedule for inspection from India

## Bureau Report

LAHORE: Pakistan has demanded inspection schedule of contentious river water projects from India. Pakistan's Indus Water Commissioner in a telephonic conversation with his Indian counterpart AK Pal has demanded inspection schedule of the disputed Indian water projects. According to sources, Indus water commissioner has demanded inspection of under construction Kiru and Ratle Hydroelectric Power projects. Pakistan had earlier expressed reservations over the designs of Kiru and Ratle power projects on Chenab.

Pakistan's water official has also demanded inspection of the dams being built over the eastern rivers — Sutlej, Beas and Ravi, sources said. The water commissioner has urged for a schedule of inspection of Bhakra Dam on Sutlej and Pong Dam on Beas. Pakistani water officials also want to visit Theen Dam and Ferozpur Headworks on Ravi river, according to sources.

Under the Indus water treaty of 1960, waters of three eastern rivers — Sutlej, Beas and Ravi — are allocated to India for unrestricted use while the waters of three western rivers — Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab — go to Pakistan. New Delhi has the right to generate hydroelectricity through the run of the river projects on the three western rivers, subject to specific criteria for design. Pakistan can under the treaty raise objections over the design of Indian hydroelectric projects on western rivers.

## Govt accepts 11 PTI MNAs' resignations

## Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The coalition government has accepted the resignations of 11 Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Members of the National Assembly. The government accepted the resignations of 11 PTI MNAs including Shireen Mazari, Ali Muhammad Khan, Ijaz Shah, Farrukh Habib, Shandana Gulzar, Fazal Muhammad, Fakhar Zaman, Abdul Shakoor Shad, Jameel Ahmed and Akram Cheema.

NA spokesperson said notification has also been issued in this regard. The announcement was made on the official Twitter handle of the National Assembly. The PTI lawmakers had tendered their resignations en masse after Imran Khan's government was ousted through a no-confidence motion in April. Later, the then deputy speaker Qasim Suri accepted the resignations and issued a notification in this regard. However, the resignations of PTI members were de-sealed and Raja said he would decide their fate according to the Constitution, law and rules. According to the notification, the NA speaker has accepted the resignations of the following PTI members:

As per sources the NA Speaker held consultations with Khurshheed Shah, Ayaz Sadiq and Khawaja Saad Rafique before accepting the resignations. The NA speaker will send a letter to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to denotify the PTI lawmakers. Earlier in the day, it was learnt that the federal government has decided to accept the resignations of some PTI MNAs.

## PTI's rule in Punjab victory of Imran narrative: CM

Elahi presented guard of honor on arrival at CM House

## Bureau Report

LAHORE: The Chief Minister of Punjab Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi on Thursday said that the people of Punjab stand with Imran Khan. PTI establishing rule in Punjab again is a victory of Imran Khan's narrative. Former Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser met Pervaiz Elahi at the Chief Minister's House. Ayub Afridi was also present on the occasion. In the meeting, matters of mutual interest and political situation were discussed. While, Asad Qaiser and Ayub Afridi also congratulated Pervaiz Elahi on assuming the post of



Chief Minister.

The Punjab CM said that Imran Khan's narrative is based on the love of country and supremacy of institutions. "Imran Khan gave every Pakistani the consciousness of an independ-

ent nation," he added. Pervaiz Elahi said that PTI government will once again serve the people in Punjab. Health card, Ehsaas program and other public projects will move forward rapidly.

Furthermore, Asad Qaiser added that public issues will be solved with Pervaiz Elahi's excellent governance. The Chief Minister of Punjab Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi on Thursday was presented a guard of honor on his arrival at the Chief Minister's House. The armed forces of the police saluted the Punjab CM. Later, Pervaiz Elahi met the staff of the CM's Office and directed them to perform their official duties diligently.

## Mazari out

## PA passes no-trust motion against deputy speaker

Punjab Assembly to elect speaker today

## Bureau Report

LAHORE: The Punjab Assembly passed a no-confidence motion against deputy speaker Dost Muhammad Mazari after his ties deteriorated with the ruling PTI. PTI Chairman Imran Khan and other party leaders severely criticised the deputy speaker for his ruling, which deprived Pervaiz Elahi of becoming the chief minister after he rejected 10 votes from the PML-Q — enabling Hamza Shah-

baz to retain the top office.

But the setback was short-lived as the Supreme Court annulled Mazari's ruling and instated the Khan-backed candidate, Elahi, as the chief minister. In today's assembly session, Parliamentary Leader in the Provincial Assembly Raja Bisharat submitted a motion of no-confidence against Mazari, which was passed by the house's majority. Following this, Waseem Khan, a member Panel of Chair who was presiding over the session,

adjourned it till tomorrow.

As Elahi has now become the chief minister, the speaker's slot has become effectively vacant and the election for the high-ranking office will take place tomorrow at 5pm. PTI has nominated Sibtain Khan for the speaker's slot and Wasiq Qayyum as the deputy speaker. The election for the new speaker of the Punjab Assembly will be held today (Friday) whereas, the scrutiny process of the candidates was also completed.

## SCO-CFM meeting

## Bilawal, Wang Yi discuss Pak-China ties

## Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari met State Councilor and Foreign Minister of China Wang Yi on the sidelines of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) here on Thursday. The Foreign Ministers reviewed the progress in bilateral relations and discussed regional and international issues of mutual interest.

Referring to his meeting with the Secretary General of the SCO in Islamabad, the Foreign Minister reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to the purposes and principles of the SCO and the 'Shanghai Spirit'. He added that Pakistan and China had complete convergence on fully leveraging SCO as an important regional platform for development and connectivity. Both sides

reaffirmed their strong support for each other's core interests and major concerns, and commitment to deepening strategic communication including at the highest political level and practical cooperation.

The Foreign Minister expressed satisfaction at the frequent high-level interactions between the two sides which was a hallmark of the bilateral relations. He underscored that his third meeting with State Councilor Wang Yi in as many months reflected the importance attached by both sides to maintain strategic communication, further deepen the Pakistan-China All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership and advance economic engagement for mutual benefit.

Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari underscored that CPEC's development had reached a new

phase, with increasing emphasis on high-quality development of industry, agriculture, IT, and science and technology, while ensuring tangible socio-economic benefits for the people.

The two sides discussed the latest developments in Afghanistan. The two sides agreed that peace and stability in Afghanistan was vital for regional development and prosperity. Both sides agreed that only a peaceful, stable and connected Afghanistan could act as a fulcrum for enhanced regional trade and connectivity. The two foreign ministers agreed to maintain close coordination.

: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari is leading the Pakistan delegation to the SCO Council of Foreign Ministers (SCO-CFM) meeting in Tashkent. The invitation to attend the SCO-CFM was extended by the



Acting Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan, Vladimir Norov. In the CFM meeting, the SCO Foreign Ministers would deliberate upon important regional and international issues as well as approve the decisions and documents

to be presented to the Heads of State at the SCO Summit in Samarkand in September 2022.

The Foreign Minister will also hold bilateral meetings with a number of his counterparts from SCO member states

on the sidelines. SCO's major objectives include promoting mutual confidence and good-neighborly relations among member states; strengthening regional peace, security and stability; and creating a framework for effective cooperation in the political sphere, trade and economy, culture, science and technology, education, energy, transportation and connectivity, tourism, and environmental protection.

Pakistan views SCO as an important trans-regional multilateral forum for further enhancement of our deep-rooted historical and cultural links with member states, providing these ties a sound economic foundation, and promoting Pakistan as a regional trade and transit corridor. Besides Pakistan, SCO member states include China, India, Kazakhstan, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.



**Digital Pakistan**

# Ahsan lauds PBS for developing dashboards by using data

*The Minister says this intervention of PBS is actually a start of open data revolution*

**Staff Reporter**

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal, Thursday, appreciated the PBS for developing the dashboards by using the data as an important currency of this digital age. This intervention of PBS is actually a start of open data revolution in the country which gauge up the economic growth, provide avenues to the researchers and plays pivotal role for job creation in the country.

Ahsan Iqbal expressed these after inaugurating the Data Dissemination KIOSK dashboard at Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) to enable Policy Planners to have instant and updated information on data through customized dashboards for decision regarding development programs. He



said by adopting the open data policy by facilitating the data users through such dashboards, businessmen can devise their business plans in the light of timely and credible data, researchers can explore different dimensions of the economy and Government functionaries may devise the transparent policy and plans to enhance the performance of government.

Ahsan highlighted that in past time

lag of data was the main problem for evidence based policy making and also the data was remained stored in libraries, publications and reports without easy access of the data users. Pakistan can engage the best national and international researchers to explore the different avenues of the economy through which the growth of potential areas may be increased.

The Minister further directed that

PBS must organize the workshops for the awareness and better utilization of data by having access through PBS KIOSK dashboards. For this purpose, separate workshops may be arranged with Media, Academia and Federal Ministries to promote research and evidence based decision making. He also emphasized that data PBS must produce timely, reliable and credible data.

The Minister also highlighted that PBS is going to conduct the 7th Population & Housing census- 2022 digitally by adopting the best technologies of international standards and the data collected will be more credible and timely. He congratulated the Chief Statistician and whole PBS team for putting best efforts to develop dashboards with open data dissemination policy.

# NHA closely monitoring road networks in monsoon rains

**Staff Reporter**

ISLAMABAD: National Highway Authority is taking effective measures to maintain traffic flow on its network in the face of heavy rains and floods in the recent monsoon season. According to the details received by NHA, Mansehra-Naran-Jalkhad road has been blocked due to the fall of large rocks. 3 Excavators have been rushed to the site to reopen the road. Similarly, in Balochistan, the Hub-Uthal section has been opened for traffic and the steps are underway to open remaining sections up to Bela for traffic.

Karakoram Highway (KKH) was closed for all traffic due to mud flow near Dasu. However traffic at this point has now been restored. Landslides at Wango Hills in Balochistan are being controlled by 2 excavators, 2 tractors and 2 tractor-trolleys. According to Iftikhar Sajid, General Manager (Punjab-South) NHA Multan, the cut on Indus Highway near Taunsa due to flood has been filled and the road has been opened to traffic.

Federal Minister for Communications and Postal Services Mr. Asad Mahmood has directed the National Highway Authority that in the recent rainy season,

the Authority should take immediate practical steps to continue the traffic on its network so that the people may have the facility of transportation. On special instructions of the Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Shehbaz Sharif and Federal Minister of Communications and Postal Services Mr. Asad Mahmood, Federal Secretary Communications/Chairman National Highway Authority Captain (R) Muhammad Khurram Agha visited the site of Hub Bridge on Karachi-Quetta National Highway (N-25). Due to heavy rain and flood on July 25, 2 spans of Hub Bridge were collapsed, while this bridge was closed to traffic on July 22 due to erosion in the pillars and traffic was diverted to the hub bypass.

The Hub Bridge was constructed by the Communication and Works Department in 1962. The Hub Bridge had 24 spans and each span was 25 meters. The width of the bridge was 8.50 meters and was not capable of bearing the load of heavy traffic of present days. Moreover, during the recent heavy monsoon rains, the condition of the bridge deteriorated further and it could have caused an untoward incident like the Sher Shah Bridge. So the bridge was closed with the support

of the district administration and the traffic movement was suspended.

In view of the current condition of the remaining spans of the hub bridge, the Federal Minister of Communications and Postal Service Asad Mahmood has directed the construction of a new hub bridge, as a result of which the NHA Executive Board has also formally approved the construction of the new bridge yesterday. He also directed to fill all the cracks appearing on the Bela-Uthal-Hub National Highway. He said, these matters need to be implemented on priority basis to facilitate the road users, local population and industrial sectors.

He directed to ensure safety measures in view of monsoon rains in the coming days so that any untoward situation can be dealt with in time. He further said, Federal Secretary Communications/Chairman National Highway Authority Captain (R) Muhammad Khurram Agha alongwith a team of experts is examining the damage caused to the highways of Sindh and Balochistan due to floods, and in the light of their consultation, a comprehensive plan will be chalked out for the complete rehabilitation of the roads.

# Six free medical camps held

**Adam Khan Wazir**

WANA: District Health Officer South Waziristan Dr. Inayat Ur Rehman, with the cooperation of Pakistan Army, FC and district administration, free medical camps were organized in different areas of Waziristan through Mobile Hospital Wana.

According to the details, in which more than two thousand six hundred and fifty five 2655 patients were examined free of charge and medicine was given as per the need.

The Free Medical Camps include Mughal Khel and Gazey Piza of Wana Tehsil, Kaza Panga area of Birmal Tehsil, Zarmilan area of Toi Khulla Tehsil, and Makin Tehsil of Mehsud Belt, where doctors conducted free medical camps.

In which free checkup of thousands of patients was done.

The patients who came for check-up from different areas of South Waziristan included men, women, old people and small children.

On this occasion, South Waziristan District Health Officer Dr.



Inayat-ur-Rehman told the media that it is our duty to provide all possible facilities to the patients and to ensure the provision of free medicine to them as required. He said that this series of service will continue where our needs concerned, then we will continue to conduct free medical camps for the facilities of these people.

On the other hand, the patients visiting the free medical camps appreciated the efforts of the health department, Pakistan Army, FC and the district administration and described the free

medical camps as satisfactory.

Meanwhile, due to torrential rains in various areas of Wana South Waziristan tribal District, rivers flooded, due to which Iqbal and Atlas Wazir were swept away and their bodies were removed from the storm drains. However, at the same time, two vehicles were also washed away in the flood.

It should be noted that like other parts of the country, South Waziristan has also been receiving rain for the past one week, Roads and communication systems are disrupted.

# WKAFF reaffirms Yasin Malik's commitment to Kashmiris' self-determination, liberation

*Hospitalization of Yasin Malik from Tihar Jail Solitary Confinement: Inhumane Treatment of Kashmiri Prisoners Must End in Indian Jails*

**Spokesman Report**

WASHINGTON/ISLAM-ABAD: The World Kashmir Awareness Forum issued the following statement in response to the hospitalization of the revered Kashmiri political leader and Chairman of the Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front Muhammad Yasin Malik.

"The news of Yasin Malik's admission to Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital has set alarm bells ringing among millions of his followers in Jammu and Kashmir and around the world. Mr. Malik has been incarcerated in the Tihar jail number 7 in

solitary confinement serving life sentence on trumped up charges without a fair trial and proper legal representation. He has been defiant throughout his kangaroo court trial and decide to go on a hunger strike four days ago despite his chronic ill health and physical and psychological torture inflicted by the authorities in the jail. His frail health from decades of turmoil, torture and poor healthcare has taken a huge toll on Mr. Malik.

Kashmiris around the world deeply fear that Indian authorities plan to seek the demise of all political and human rights activists and leaders resisting illegal



Indian occupation. They have a proven track record of causing death of Kashmiri leaders by any means, including life in pris-

on just as is being contemplated in the case of Muhammad Yasin Malik. Millions of his followers and people of conscience around

the world are deeply concerned about Mr. Malik's critical health status.

Kashmiris at home and the global Kashmiri diaspora community appeal Ms. Michelle Bachelet, UN High Commissioner on Human Rights; and Mr. Antonio Guterres, the Secretary General of the United Nations to persuade Government of India to end the solitary confinement, inhumane and cruel treatment, including physical and psychological torture of Mr. Malik, which is share violation of the Article 5, 7 and 10 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

# PM AfK urges people to take precautionary measures during monsoon

**Abdul Majeed Tahir**

MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister Azad Jammu and Kashmir Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan has appealed the masses to take precautionary measures to avoid potential damage during the ongoing monsoon rains in Azad Kashmir.

While directing the state administration to remain on high alert to deal with any emergency situation, the PM said that any kind of negligence in this regard won't be tolerated.

The Prime Minister directed the district administration, State Disaster Management Authority and other relevant institutions to inspect the landslide sites and keep the Prime Minister's Office abreast of the situation in the region. "Along with main highways link roads should be restored as soon as possible and people should be kept updated about the road situation", the PM said, adding that availability of machinery should be ensured in landslide prone areas.

The Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir said in case of loss of life and property, provision of relief and other materials should be provided to the victims immediately without any delay. He said that the authorities at the helm of affairs must personally inspect the dangerous places to avoid any untoward incident.

# CPWB, Police working together for prevention of child abuse



**Staff Reporter**

RAWALPINDI: As per the initiative taken by the Chairperson Child Protection & Welfare Bureau (CPWB) Punjab, Sarah Ahmad to provide training workshops to Punjab Police for the prevention of Child Abuse, a training workshop was conducted in Rawalpindi in collaboration with NGO Islamic Relief Pakistan.

Sarah Ahmad, Chairperson, Child Protection & Welfare Bureau, Raza Narejo (CEO Islamic Relief NGO) & SSP Headquarters Rawalpindi Police Tariq Mehboob concluded the last day of the training workshop by distributing certificates among the master trainers and trainees. The main purpose of this training was to sensitize police officers on child abuse laws and for creating awareness among the masses for prevention of violence against children.

Sarah Ahmad, Chairperson while addressing to the participants said "Child Protection Bureau & Punjab Police are working together for prevention of child abuse in Punjab and we will make Punjab free from child abuse according to the vision of the Chief Minister, Punjab. Child Protection Bureau had already conducted training of Lahore police in which SHO's of all police Station in Lahore were trained. I want to create awareness about our child rescue helpline number 1121 to help the victims. I am thankful to all police officers who enthusiastically participated in the training workshop and do hope they will use skills learned during this workshop for betterment of people in their respective police stations and I am also thankful to SSP Headquarters Rawalpindi Police who hosted this workshop."

# PCJCCI keen to export dairy products to China

**Staff Reporter**

ISLAMABAD: The cooperation between China and Pakistan on dairy industry and multifarious demands for high-quality dairy products in China will provide a contemporary path of development for Pakistan's dairy industry stated by Wang Zihai, President Pakistan China Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCJCCI) during a think tank session held yesterday at PCJCCI Secretariat.

He said that we've learned that Pakistan is the most important exporter and producer of dairy products in South Asia; whereas Chinese technologies are low-priced if we adopt the techniques and technology used by China, Pakistan could advance in this industry.

President PCJCCI added that we are willing to explore more about Pakistani dairy industry to see if we have the opportunity to be part of it. From 2011 to 2022, China's dairy imports rose at a compound annual growth of 12.3%, and the demand is still expanding. Milk powder, liquid milk, high value-added dairy products such as whey, cheese, butter and cream are also in high demand in the Chinese market.

Mr. Ehsan Choudhry, Senior Vice President PCJCCI said that currently, China's dairy imports mainly come from New Zealand (40.44%), the Netherlands (17.15%) and Australia (7.38%). Our government should support this industry to boost export and domestic production, especially to control the adulteration of loose milk.

# KATI thanks CM Murad for approving new Korangi Causeway Bridge

**Our Correspondent**

KARACHI: Korangi Association of Trade and Industry (KATI) Patron-in-Chief SM Muneer, KATI President Salman Aslam and KITE Limited CEO Zubair Chhaya expressed gratitude for the orders to construct



the new Korangi Causeway Bridge by Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah. SM Muneer said that Sindh Chief Minister gave orders to prepare a 6-lane bridge, which was a long-standing problem in the industrial area. The existing causeway gets flooded during the rainy season, due to which the flow of traffic from Korangi Industrial Area is badly affected and the citizens suffer from traffic jams for many hours. He said that the bridge being constructed at a cost of 5 billion will increase the economic activity of the Korangi industrial area, which is needed desperately.

President KATI Salman Aslam said that after the rains, the delivery of export goods from the Korangi industrial area through the existing causeway used to be disrupted, due to

which the industrialists had to bear heavy losses. He said that KATI had been demanding an alternative route for a long time, which was resolved by the Sindh government. He appreciated the orders given by the Sindh Chief Minister to complete the bridge soon and said that it is good that the Sindh government to prioritize the problems of the industrialists. President KATI said that this decision will not only benefit the Korangi Industrial Area but also the economy immensely.

KITE Limited CEO Zubair Chhaya expressed hope that the new Korangi Causeway Bridge would be completed in time so that the problem of traffic jams like in the past would end forever and the problem of commuting from the country's largest industrial area would end. He said that the construction of this new bridge will reduce the traffic load on Qayyumabad Bridge and other alternative routes. This will enable employees to commute to perform their duties and transportation of goods in the industrial area to reach their destination on time.





Islamabad  
23° - 38° Clear

**SERVICES**

**Namaz Timings**

Fajr ..... 3:40 am  
Zohr ..... 12:14 pm  
Asr ..... 5:08 pm  
Maghrib ..... 7:11 pm  
Isha ..... 8:48 pm

**EMERGENCY**

Rescue (Police) ..... 15  
Bomb Disposal ..... 15  
Fire Services Rawalpindi/  
Islamabad ..... 1122 & 116  
Emergency Ambulance ..... 1122 &  
& Rescue Services ..... 4451122  
Motorway Police ..... 9266044  
Motorway Police ..... 9270601-20

**Women Police Stations**

Islamabad ..... 9222596  
Rawalpindi ..... 9270601-20

**ENQUIRY**



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

**HOSPITALS**

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

**DEPARTMENTS**

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

**COMPLAINTS**

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

# Pakistan, Indonesia vow to promote academic cooperation

*Indonesian Ambassador says exchange of academic and culture can lead to further strengthening people-to-people contact*

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia, Adam M. Tugio met the Federal Secretary of the Ministry of Science and Technology, Ghulam Muhammad Memon, who is also the incumbent Chairperson of COMSATS Consultative Committee to promote and strengthen academic cooperation between Indonesia and Pakistan. Deputy Director Programs of COMSATS, Irfan Hayee also joined the meeting.

During the meeting, various aspects related to education, research, science, and technology were discussed. Ambassador Adam Tugio said, "Exchange of academic and culture can lead to further strengthening people-to-peo-



ple contact and shared prosperity among Muslim brotherly countries." The efforts of Higher Education Commission (HEC) in promoting education and facilitating local and International students was also appreciated in the meeting.

The number of applicants from Pakistan that are applying for the Indonesian Schol-

arship is rising every year. Last year in 2021, there were more than 70 scholarships awarded to Pakistani students which includes Government and Private scholarships. Ambassador Tugio emphasized the importance of collaboration between various faculties and departments at Indonesian and Pakistani universities. Federal Secretary of the

Ministry of Science and Technology, Ghulam Muhammad Memon extended the invitation for the Government of Indonesia to join COMSATS.

Deputy Director programs, Irfan Hayee also gave an overview of various programs and faculties of COMSATS headquarter and University, with discussions focusing on identifying specific fields of mutual interest for future partnership and collaboration.

The meeting between the Indonesian Ambassador, Federal Secretary, and Deputy Director of programs was very fruitful. Many potential avenues for strengthening academic ties were explored, such as an online internship program, scholarship program, faculty exchange program, and joint research program.

# Govt paying special attention to vocational education: Tanveer

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Education Rana Tanveer Hussain, in his speech at the International Islamic University (IIUI) Admission Expo on Thursday, said that the industry and universities should work together to solve the country's problems through research and cooperation.

Addressing an admissions expo at IIUI on the theme "Lifelong Learning Opportunities" at the Activity Center at the university's New Campus, he said that people with technical education and technical experience are in demand all over the world. He said that the government is paying special attention to vocational education. The Minister also



emphasized that universities should start vocational education programs.

Rana Tanveer Hussain said that during the visit to Saudi Arabia, he held discussion on the promotion of mutual educational cooperation. He added that ongoing cooperation between the International Islamic University and the Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud University of Saudi Arabia was also discussed. He told that the Saudi government is

keen to build a grand mosque at IIUI. He added that the authorities of Saudi Arabia have assured cooperation in providing scholarships for Pakistani students. The Federal Minister said that the role of International Islamic University in promoting peace and tolerance is commendable.

Speaking on this occasion, Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haidari said that success lies in the respect of teachers. He said that students are the architects

of the future. Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haidari congratulated the administration for the successful organization of the event. He said that the role of the International Islamic University in the promotion of Islam is exemplary. He opined that the role of universities is pivotal in disseminating Islam's message of peace.

Speaking on the occasion, Rector International Islamic University Dr. Masoom Yasinzai said that this expo is a general invitation to the architects of the future (students) to acquire knowledge. He said that, in the expo, students and parents are being guided about the vision of the university. He also highlighted the university's recent achievements and role in promoting peace.

# Air University holds Pakistan's premier cybersecurity challenge

**Amjad Mehmood**

ISLAMABAD: National Centre for Cyber Security (NCCS), Air University has organized a mega event of Pakistan Cybersecurity Challenge (PCC). The event comprised on series of challenges including Capture-The-Flag Competition, Start-up Ideas and Crypto Challenges.

The PCC event offers a platform to identify and develop talented pool of students and cybersecurity enthusiasts for a secure resilient, robust, and cyber secure Pakistan. It will give participants a unique opportunity to team up and compete in various cybersecurity challenges and show their mettle.

The closing ceremony of PCC event shall be held today at 1530 Hrs in Air University main auditorium. Dr. Shaista Sohail, Acting Chairperson / Executive Director, HEC will preside the closing ceremony. The closing ceremony will attract a



diverse range of participants including industry executives, cybersecurity consultants, CISOs, academics, government officials, and delegates from security organizations, who share a common interest to strengthen the national cybersecurity ecosystem.

Over 600 participants from 50+ Universities/Educational Institutions in Pakistan have registered for the PCC Event. Out of total, around 60 students have qualified for the first round of CTF while the first round of Pak-Crypt and Ideas Cup Challenges are still ongoing. The final rounds of all PCC will be held today at Air University main campus in Islamabad.

# PAC organizes Stars Karaoke Night



**Staff Reporter**

RAWALPINDI: In connection with Pakistan's Diamond Jubilee, Stars Karaoke Night was organized in collaboration with Cultural Theatre at Punjab Arts Council.

Naheed Manzoor and Director of Arts Council Waqar Ahmed were the chief guests of the karaoke night, while Manver Khan Afridi and Shama Adil performed the duties of host. Tariq Waraich, Kharo Azeem, Malik Arshad, Basharat Jafri, Azhar Kamil, Ali Zeib, Shahid Khan, Azeem Khan, Arshad and other singers performed in the karaoke night and get huge rounds of applause from the audience.

The chief guest of the event, Naheed Manzoor, said on this occasion that our culture is our identity. History forgets the peoples who have

no identity. We are fortunate that our culture has you as its example, which is admired all over the world. A glimpse of Pothohari culture was seen in the karaoke Night, where Saraiki and Punjabi culture were prominent.

Finally, he congratulated all the singers for their beautiful songs. Director Arts Council Waqar Ahmed said that today we are proud of the blessing of freedom; behind it are the sacrifices of millions of martyrs. We should cherish this blessing; only our unrelenting dedication and hard work can bring us to a higher place in the world. The Arts Council will continue to serve for the welfare of artists, musicians and arts personalities and to advance the art of artists. A large number of people from the root cities participated in the Karaoke Night.

# Chomsky warns South Asians about their future in PIDE Debate

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: For Pakistan to start a new journey on the right track, first of all, it has to get itself free from the clutches of colonial legacy and institutions, said Professor Noam Chomsky—an American linguist, philosopher, cognitive scientist, social critic, political activist and also known as "the father of modern linguistics." Chomsky was in the 'PIDE Debate' conversation with Dr. Abdul Jalil, Professor of Economics at the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), Islamabad.

When asked about his views on the reasons behind Pakistan's sad state of affairs; on the economic front in particular, and where should be the

starting point for Pakistan to reset with the current circumstances.

Chomsky started by mentioning multiple factors: country-specific, impeding growth, pluralism, openness within the society, and of course, development. Pakistan, over the decades, has been pushed towards a certain type of religious orthodoxy that limits the growth of culture and rationality. In parallel, it is in constant conflict with India. So, these are the biggest roadblocks for Pakistan on the road to development. Nonetheless, these things are not only Pakistan-specific. The United States is also feeling the heat of religious extremism in recent years – very unusual for a western country. This phenomenon is also gradually squeezing the

space for cultural and intellectual development in the US.

According to the Press Release issued by the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), Noam Chomsky mentioned that Pakistan is in a complicated position, as it has one foot in China and the other in America/West. Still, it can move with a degree of independence. However, Pakistani and India have to move towards a point of accommodation and constructive cooperation, and there is no other way. This may sound utopian now, but it may happen. It has happened in the past. Take, for instance, the case of France and Germany. Both, for centuries, massacred each other. Now both are cooperating.

The conversation between

Professor Noam Chomsky and Dr. Jalil is part of the series of podcasts that PIDE regularly generates, with experts from around the world on various economic, governance, and public policy issues.

Chomsky believed that there is an inherent ambiguity when talking about intellectual honesty and responsibility. First of all, we should know what our moral responsibility as human beings is. Secondly, what service is expected of them within the existing power systems? I would mention Henry Kissinger here. He clearly identified that a polity intellectual's role is to formulate the ideas of the powerful in a clear and applicable form. In simple words, it means to be a stenographer for power.

# COMSTECH organizes awards investiture ceremony in Tehran

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: COMSTECH organized the awards investiture ceremony in collaboration with Mustafa (PBUH) Science and Technology Foundation (MSTF) to honor the award winners of COMSTECH Award 2021 from Islamic Republic of Iran. The ceremony was held at the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology (MSRT), Tehran.

The Acting Minister for International Cooperation, Dr. Wahid Haddadi Asl, the Vice Minister for Research, Prof. Dr. Peyman Salehi, and the Deputy Minister for Technology and Innovation, Prof. A. Kheroddin, of MSRT attended the ceremony. The CEO of MSTF, Mr. Mehdi Saffarinia, and the heads of three COMSTECH Networks hosted by Islamic Republic of Iran attended the ceremony. The repre-



sentative of the Ambassador of Pakistan in Iran, Ms. Ambreen Gul Shahid, Press and Cultural Attache joined the event.

Two Iranian scientists, Prof. Ali A. Mosavi-Movahadi and Dr. Esmael Ghavanloo won the COMSTECH awards 2021 in the fields of Chemistry and Best Scientific Book respectively, were honored in the

ceremony. The COMSTECH award comprises upon a shield of honor, certificate of award and cash prize.

A two-member delegation of COMSTECH comprising upon Senior Director HR and Administration, Syed Aftab Hussain Zaidi and the Executive Secretary, Mr. Mohammad Ameen Kalroo, participated in the ceremony.

# Saudi Arabia to provide educational equipment worth Rs3b to UAJK

*Saudi Ambassador says developmental projects would further strengthen bilateral relations*

**Naveed Ahmad Khan**

ISLAMABAD: The government of Saudi Arabia has announced to provide the latest educational equipment worth Rs 3 billion to the University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (UAJK) to further equip the recently completed state of the art King Abdullah campus of the institution.

Saudi Ambassador to Pakistan, Nawaf bin Saeed Al-Maliki, announced this, while addressing an agreement signing ceremony held at Kashmir House here on Thursday.

Under the agreement, Saudi Fund for Development (SFD) would provide modern educational instructional kits for the science and IT labs of the King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Campus of the university.

Addressing the occasion, Ambassador Maliki said that the important project in education would directly help achieve the sustainable development goals (SDGs)

of the United Nations.

He added that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, through the SFD, provided more than 333 million dollars to implement 23 projects in various parts of Pakistan.

"Through these grants, quality projects are being completed in the sectors of education, health and infrastructure development besides cooperating with several international organizations, such as United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Food Program, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, and the United Nations Office for Project Services", he disclosed.

Highlighting the brotherly relations between the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the ambassador said that developmental projects being implemented would further strengthen these relations between the two countries.

He assured that the government



of KSA will continue to help Pakistan achieve its development targets in various sectors through the SFD.

Speaking at the ceremony, former Federal Minister for Science and Technology Senator Shibli Faraz thanked the Saudi government for its consistent cooperation in the fields of education and health in Pakistan and Azad Kashmir. "The government and people of Saudi

Arabia have always extended invaluable cooperation to Pakistan for which we are indebted to them", he said.

The PTI leader said that the revolutionary steps taken by his party government to provide quality healthcare facilities to the people on their doorsteps in KPK province needs to be extended to other provinces of the country and AJK. In their speeches, AJK Ministers for

Health Nisar Ansar Abdali and Finance Minister Abdul Majid Khan expressed their profound gratitude to the government of Saudi Arabia for their unforgettable contribution during relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction of the quake hit areas of the state.

They on behalf of the government of Azad Kashmir thanked Ambassador Nawaf bin Saeed Al-Maliki for taking keen interest in the field of education in the liberated territory.

The state ministers also congratulated the Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Muhammad Kaleem Abbasi and his team for their consistent efforts to get Saudi funding for the development of the state's premier institution of higher learning.

Earlier, in his welcome address, the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Kaleem Abbasi thanked Kingdome of Saudi Arabia, especially the Saudi Fund for Development for providing generous funding to construct King Abdul-

lah Campus, one of the most beautiful educational facility in the country.

The Vice Chancellor added that the state-of-the-art King Abdullah Campus would not only provide the best educational facility to the thousands of male and female students of AJK but will also significantly help the promotion of quality education and research activities.

Highlighting the facilities being provided in the King Abdullah Campus of the university, Dr. Abbasi said that the generous support extended by the SFD would benefit more than 7,000 students of 14 academic departments and institutes to carry out their educational and research ventures.

Meanwhile, the officials of Saudi Fund for Development and representatives of UAJK and Health Department of KPK signed an agreement in presence of the Saudi Ambassador, officials of Economic Affairs Division and Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Kaleem Abbasi.



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# EU's fate matters to Middle East & North Africa

**Afshin Molavi**

The EU is facing a rough winter. Overdependence on Russia for its energy needs has left many countries across the continent vulnerable to cuts in natural gas flows and price spikes in fossil fuels. There is talk of energy rationing at a time of sluggish growth and rising inflation. The dreaded "s" word — stagflation — is on many lips, and the ensuing political turbulence will rattle several governments. The fate of Europe matters a great deal to the Middle East and North Africa region. After all, the EU's \$18 trillion economy makes it a key piece of the triumvirate of key nodes that are critical to the global economy — the other two being the US and China. It also matters a great deal to North Africa given the robust trade ties across the Mediterranean, the 5.5 million North Africans living in Europe, the supply chain links to European industry, and the flow of remittances from Europe headed mainly to Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria.

The recently concluded Jeddah Security and Development Summit declared a "joint vision toward a peaceful and

prosperous region," as noted by the assembled leaders from the Gulf Cooperation Council and the US, as well as Iraq, Jordan and Egypt. As always, prosperity begins with sound policies at home, but can also be rocked and buffeted by rough winds from abroad. There are numerous rough external winds facing many Middle East and North Africa states today: Rising food and energy prices, a slowdown in China (a major energy buyer), global sluggishness, rising debt loads across emerging markets, supply chain disruptions and geopolitical uncertainty. Among these, however, a key factor will be the fate of Europe.

That is why the recent announcement by the European Central Bank that it will raise rates by half a percentage point as part of its inflation battle is not just a story for the financial pages, but will have real consequences for the MENA region as well.

The ECB, like the US Federal Reserve, is aiming to cool inflation without tanking the economy. Given the rising debt load in several countries — notably Italy's 150 percent public debt to gross domestic product — the danger of successive rate rises would be a rapid rise in borrowing costs. So, the ECB laid down a marker, with the formidable

Christine Lagarde, its president, pushing through a proposal that will allow the central bank to buy bonds and even private securities of EU countries in danger. This was a powerful warning to speculators: Do not take large positions against European markets; you will lose in a battle with the central bank. The ECB move could help stabilize many European economies, though the region still faces many headwinds. Russia's war in Ukraine will continue to cast a shadow over the region, and inflation will sap the consumer.

When it comes to energy, North African gas producers can help make up for some of the shortfall of Russian gas. Algeria is already a major natural gas supplier to Europe — the third largest after Russia and Norway. Algerian state energy firm Sonatrach has been doubling down on new exploration spending. The future looks bright for Algerian gas to Europe.

Meanwhile, in a remarkable deal that reflects the new temper of our times, Egypt is set to export Israeli liquefied natural gas to Europe via two Egyptian LNG plants. The memorandum of understanding was signed this month at the East Mediterranean Gas Forum in Cairo. Another major new development took place this week during the visit

of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to Greece. Both sides signed an agreement to develop green hydrogen and clean energy initiatives jointly.

The crown prince noted that Saudi Arabia would like to help "turn Greece as a hub for hydrogen to Europe," describing it as "a game changer for both of us." Qatar, one of the world's largest liquefied natural gas exporters, is also well positioned to boost its European market share. Right now, the bulk of Qatari LNG heads to Asia. But with billions in new investments and an ambitious production expansion schedule, more can be expected to flow to Europe over the next decade. As for oil, Saudi Arabia and Iraq are reportedly diverting more of their oil flows to European refiners to help make up for the shortfalls from Russia.

Europe will need a more diversified and stable energy supply to maintain its status as a key pole of the global economy. Key poles, such as Europe, are both supply and demand engines for the world, creating multiplier effects among their main partners. North Africa's trade profile is heavily European, and its tourist flows are the same.

A sluggish Europe will add to the challenges already faced across North Africa, most notably

food price inflation and slowing growth. As for the Levant and the GCC states, they also have deep commercial and political ties across Europe and benefit when the continent thrives.

Further, as economies deteriorate, societies fray and become more susceptible to populist nationalist movements. In Europe, those movements tend to be skeptical of migrants and, more broadly, of Muslim migrants. The rise of a new wave of populist nationalists could pose new challenges for MENA governments more accustomed to dealing with centrist parties.

It should come as no surprise in our globalized economy that the fate of Europe matters to the fate of the world. For its neighbors across the Mediterranean in North Africa or the Levant that are highly correlated to European markets, or its allies in the GCC states, the fate of Europe will help determine their own fate in a precarious moment. Ramping up energy supplies to Europe will have a virtuous cycle effect: It will boost Europe at a critical time, supporting a continent that is vital to the economic future of the region.

The writer is a senior fellow at Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies. Courtesy Arab News

## Myanmar genocide

A case over Myanmar's treatment of its Muslim Rohingya minority has been lodged since 2018 with the International Court of Justice in The Hague. Last Friday, the court rejected Myanmar's objections, paving the way for the case to be heard in full. Presiding judge Joan Donoghue asserted that all states that had signed the 1948 Genocide Convention could and must act to prevent genocide. In a 13-page ruling, the court established the legal justifications for its jurisdiction to try the case.

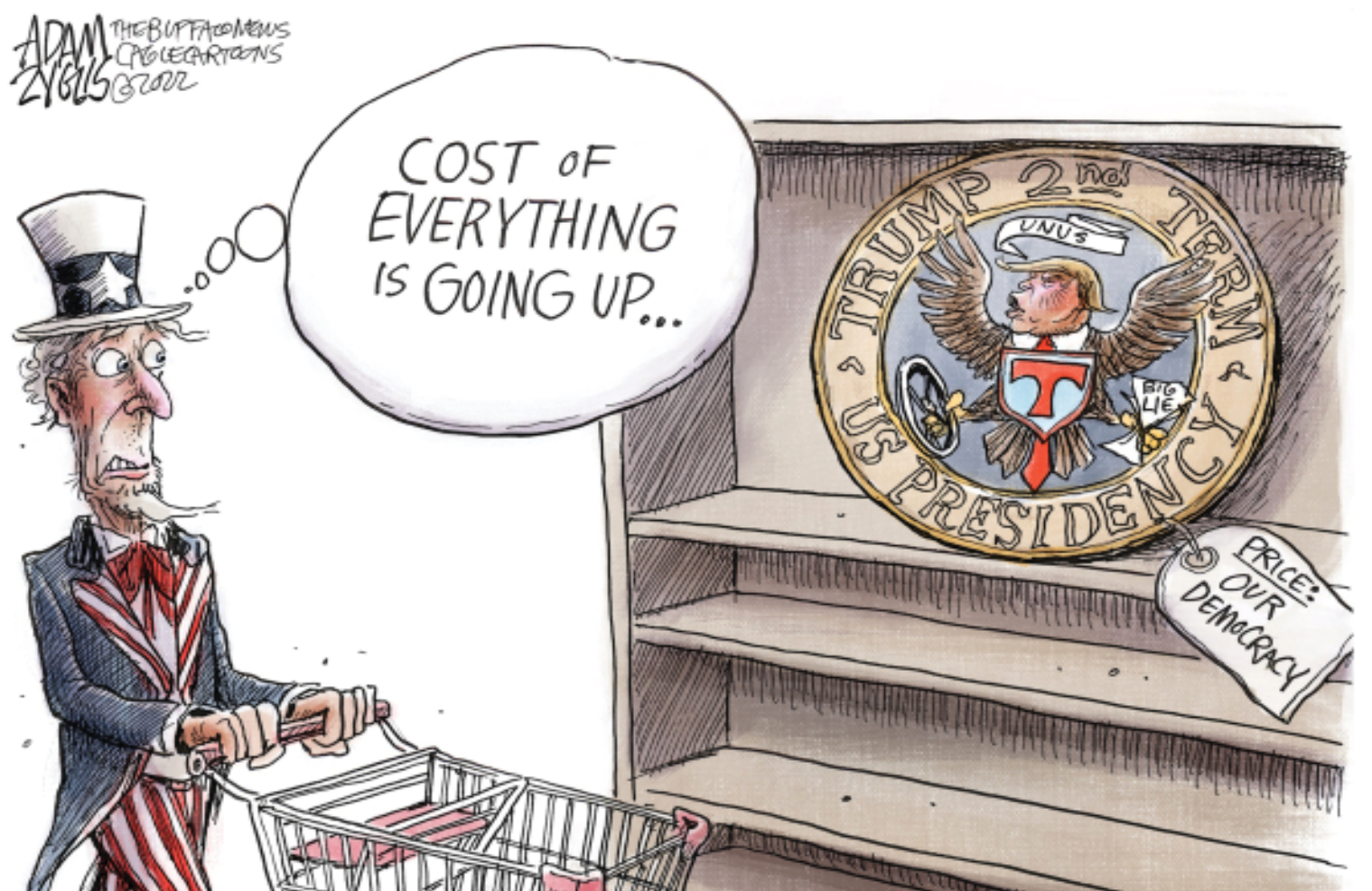
In 2020, the court issued a provisional decision ordering Myanmar to protect the Rohingya from harm a legal victory that established their right under international law as a protected minority. But while the Hague court's decisions are binding and countries generally follow them, it has no way of enforcing its rulings. Rohingya groups and rights activists have said that there have been no meaningful efforts by the military to end their persecution.

A UN mission concluded that the 2017 military campaign against the Rohingya, which drove 730,000 of them into neighboring Bangladesh, included genocidal acts. They are still denied citizenship and freedom of movement in Myanmar. The refugees have not been allowed to go back to their homes and those who have stayed are subjected to widespread abuse. There have been vocal international condemnations for Myanmar's treatment of the Rohingya, but little action to restore their rights. Part of the reason is that the military managed in the past to isolate the country's dozen ethnic communities from the mainstream. It also put pressure on politicians, including those from the majority ethnic and religious group, to side with the military against those minorities.

There has been worldwide condemnation of Myanmar's de facto government following its announcement on Monday that it had executed four political activists. The killings follow secret proceedings earlier this year, which were criticized at the time by the UN and human rights organizations as lacking due process and falling short of internationally accepted standards of justice. The executions are only the latest in a long list of atrocities committed, encouraged or condoned by the military, which has governed Myanmar since its independence from Britain in 1948. Those crimes include genocide, wholesale denationalization of minorities, slavery, human trafficking, and recruitment of child soldiers, torture and the use of excessive force against civilians. The most serious of those atrocities is obviously the crime of genocide.

The executions are believed to be the first carried out of 117 death sentences issued by military tribunals since the coup, according to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, a human rights monitoring group. The military has ruled Myanmar for most of the country's postcolonial history following its independence from Britain in 1948. After an experiment with democracy between 1948 and 1962, the army seized power and has remained in control, directly or indirectly, ever since.

Return to direct military rule has reignited or added fuel to Myanmar's civil wars involving about a dozen ethnic groups, leading to new charges of gross violations of human rights committed by security forces. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has strongly condemned the executions, and called again for the release of all arbitrarily detained prisoners, including Suu Kyi. In a joint statement, the EU, Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, South Korea, Britain and the US have also condemned the killings.



## World Nature Conservation Day 2022

# How to save the planet

**Pascal Grante**

Of the eight million known animal and plant species on planet Earth, as many as one million could soon be under threat for extinction without concerted action. Let that sobering thought from the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services sink in as we observe yet another World Nature Conservation Day — the global movement that acknowledges that a healthy and diverse environment is the foundation for a stable and healthy society. The United Nations estimated years ago that more than 60% of the resources nature provides us — such as resources and raw materials, fuels and biochemical balance — are being consistently degraded, thereby weakening biodiversity and putting our future at risk.

With myriad examples of the effects of that change visible around us the world over, never have the consequences of environmental concerns been so real for our societies. Extreme weather conditions such as cyclones, flooding, droughts and wildfires, as well as rising ocean temperatures and the destruction of habitats, today threaten the biodiversity of the natural world. That premise might appear to be far removed from the world of corporate targets and company results, but as several surveys and reports have repeatedly shown us, it is in the intrinsic interest of companies and commercial organisations to be increasingly concerned about biodiversity and forge the right partnerships to protect it.

The disappearance of biodiversity can not only harm the long-term sustainability of industrial activities and seal the fate

of several sectors, but also cripple consumer choices, drive down economic growth and decimate corporate competition. Without abundant and diverse flora and fauna, neither business nor commerce can flourish. The UAE was one of the earliest countries to seize the initiative, pioneering proactive strategies for an ecological transformation that rejuvenates and reinforces regional biodiversity. From expanding the scope of the Ministry of Environment to include climate change, and establishing and expanding protected areas, to reintroducing endangered species into their natural habitats, and enacting new legislations to halt biodiversity loss, the issue of biodiversity has received considerable and early attention in the UAE, reflected in the significant achievements in this area.

The country has taken an integrated approach to tackling the issue of biodiversity: its National Biodiversity Strategy includes 5 strategic guidelines and 21 national targets, formulated in line with the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. For instance, in order to protect and restore the natural habitats of its local plants, the UAE has created a database of local plant species and made it available to the public through a dedicated app. The Ministry of Climate Change and Environment has completed a unique date palm tree identification project through DNA profiling to preserve, identify and classify all genetic assets of date palm trees in the country. Similarly, the UAE continues to strengthen biodiversity through plans and initiatives in the framework of the National Strategy for Combat Desertification and the Strategy for Sustainability of the Marine and Coastal Environment, among others.

This wide gamut of projects and initiatives offers the perfect platform for companies in the country and region to take decisive action to protect the region's wealth of biodiversity.

Whether it's calculating the cost of ecological management, restoring natural environments, or building artificial reefs, there is no dearth of options and solutions for companies and organisations to engage in to preserve the wealth and diversity of our ecosystems. But to truly ensure biodiversity for our future generations, we must embrace an ecological transformation: structuring choices that address the co-related pillars of climate change, biodiversity collapse, pollution and resource depletion.

These include setting up high-tech monitoring systems to check the health of local ecosystems, repopulating artificial reefs, incorporating initiatives designed to protect ecosystems as part of site design and management of large projects, and a wide variety of options in the water, energy and waste businesses. Governments and the private sector need to work closely in providing these solutions with a positive impact for all stakeholders: consumers, partners, commercial enterprises and society as a whole. The ambitious idea of resourcing the region and the world requires the support and collaboration of every stakeholder — but the good news is that with increasing investments in conservation and biodiversity, we could save one in three species from becoming threatened or extinct by 2100. On this World Nature Conservation Day, let us pledge to work together to make that happen.

The writer is the Chief Executive Officer, Veolia Near and Middle East

## Sri Lankan politics & economic crisis

**Kaushik Basu**

As Sri Lanka's economy unravels before our eyes, one must ask how this could happen in a country that is historically known for its high standard of living and stable economy. Sri Lanka's achievements go back decades, giving it a per capita GDP that is 70% higher than India's, and a life expectancy at birth of 77 years, compared to 73, 70, and 67, in Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan, respectively. But now, Sri Lanka's economy is in free fall. The proximate causes of the crisis are clear enough. Problems stemming from international factors such as COVID-19 and Russia's war in Ukraine were exacerbated by Sri Lanka's own policy mistakes. In 2019, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa (who has now fled the country) announced a round of mindless tax cuts, depriving the state of sorely needed revenue.

Sri Lanka defaulted on its foreign debt in May. We now know that, rather than turning to the International Monetary Fund, whose rescue programs are conditional on tough policy reforms, it approached China for a fresh loan when its coffers were approaching empty. But this merely increased its debt by another \$3 billion and ensured that its inevitable crisis would be even bigger when it eventually arrived. China's strategy vis-à-vis Sri Lanka (and other developing countries, like Ethiopia) echoes the approach taken both by earlier colonial powers and by rural moneylenders in developing countries.

Consider Hambantota Port, the pet project of Mahinda Rajapaksa, Sri Lanka's president between 2005 and 2015 (and Gotabaya Rajapaksa's brother). Funded largely with Chinese money, the port opened in 2010 on Mahinda's birthday. But when Sri Lanka later failed to repay the debt, this "gift" became collateral to be confiscated. China now has a 99-year lease on the port. How did a country with a longstanding reputation for maturity make so many mistakes? The short answer is that Sri Lanka's politics sowed the

seeds for today's economic crisis. The Rajapaksa-led government became increasingly authoritarian after defeating the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and ending Sri Lanka's decades-long civil war in 2009. It eroded the country's democratic institutions, persecuted minorities, and waved away accusations of war crimes.

Although authoritarianism typically ends up destroying an economy, some authoritarian governments have managed to deliver economic growth and stability. For a short while, it seemed possible that the Rajapaksa government could fall into this category. But as it embraced populism, it soon became clear that crony capitalism would be Sri Lanka's fate.

When the Rajapaksa government returned to power in 2019, it was riding a wave of support that it sought to sustain with ill-advised economic handouts. But the public's patience can be bought for only so long. Eventually, unsustainable policies run into a wall.

If not for its hubris, the latest Rajapaksa government could have corrected course. When it came to power and immediately announced big tax cuts, it met with strong, sensible criticism. On October 30, 2019, for example, former Finance Minister Mangala Samaraweera warned, on Twitter, that "Gota's tax plan wants to set Sri Lanka on an express train to bankruptcy." But Rajapaksa doubled down. When the government suddenly banned chemical-fertilizer imports, the implications of the policy were all too predictable.

Where it will end is unclear. Even if the Rajapaksas do not regain control by proxy, there are other risks. The IMF cannot offer a rescue program until there is a viable government with which to negotiate. But both the Fund and the Paris Club of sovereign creditors also will need to be proactive, suspending some of their bureaucratic rules to help Sri Lanka through this acute phase of the crisis. Failing that, a spiraling humanitarian disaster is the likeliest outcome.

The writer is a former chief economist of the World Bank. Courtesy Khaleej Times



## Agreement to offer Shariah-compliant trading platform to RDA Clients signed

The agreement would facilitate investors who are focused on investing in Shariah approved securities

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) and Meezan Bank Limited signed an agreement to provide a dedicated Shariah-compliant trading platform for Roshan Digital Account (RDA) clients.

The agreement would facilitate investors who are focused on investing in Shariah approved securities, according to press statement received here from PSX.

The Agreement was signed by the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer PSX, Farrukh H. Khan and the Founding President and Chief Executive Officer, Meezan Bank, Irfan Siddiqui. The signing ceremony was witnessed by Chairperson PSX, Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, and senior management of both the organisations.

The trading platform would be available through, KiTS (Karachi Internet Trading System), the online trading system provided by PSX.

Any RDA client of an Islamic bank can now avail this platform for investing in PSX through the services offered by more than a 100 securities brokers using KiTS as an Order Management System (OMS).

The purpose of this platform is to enable Non-Resident Pakistanis (NRPs) to securely invest in their homeland's capital market in a Shariah-compliant manner, the statement said.

Moreover, with this development in KiTS, Shariah-compliant investing capability could be offered virtually



by many TREC-Holders to their RDA customers. Hence, providing clients a broader suite of securities brokers to select from for their Shariah-compliant investment needs.

The criteria for investing on Shariah-compliant platform has been developed by Meezan Bank and vetted by the PSX Shariah Advisor.

The specifications of the Shariah-compliant trading platform include investing in KMI-All Share securities, Shariah-compliant IPOs and shariah-compliant ETFs. Trading option is available only for Ready and Odd Lot

markets. The recently bought shares can be sold on T+2 basis, i.e., when shares purchased are available in CDS account.

Speaking on the occasion, MD PSX, Farrukh Khan said that Pakistan Stock Exchange was at the forefront of using technology to enhance the experience of market participants including investors.

He said, the demand for Shariah-compliant offerings is consistently rising and PSX has continued to grow its suite of Islamic capital market products.

With this development in KiTS, all TREC-Holders can now offer shari-

ah-compliant products to RDA clients, creating new business opportunities for them."

Speaking on the occasion, Irfan Siddiqui said, the Meezan Bank was already offering a shariah-compliant Trading Platform for Non Resident Pakistanis through 22 brokers which are on-boarded through their own systems.

With the launch of this shariah-compliant Trading Platform, brokers who are using KiTS will also be on-boarded with Meezan Bank to further extend these services to RDA customers.

*SBP playing active role in promotion of Islamic Banking; NA told*



ISLAMABAD: National Assembly was informed on Wednesday that State Bank of Pakistan is playing an active role in promotion of Islamic Banking globally at international level.

Responding to a question during the Question Hour in the House on Wednesday, Minister of State for Finance Aisha Ghaus Pasha said that the government is committed to fulfil its constitutional obligation regarding Riba.

She said the Advisory Council of Islamic Ideology has recommended that there should be gradual change in the system to bring it in conformity with the injunctions of Islam. She said any abrupt or sudden change would create numerous difficulties for the country.

The Minister of State said the government has taken concrete steps to encourage and facilitate Islamic Banking system in the country. She said Islamic banking has been witnessing robust growth of around 24 to 30 percent annually.

Responding to another question, Dr. Aisha Ghaus Pasha said the withholding tax deducted on mobile recharge is refundable and can be claimed through filing simple returns.

To a question, the Minister of State said at present, there is no economic value or benefit to the country for allowing crypto currency business in Pakistan. Agencies

## Sharjah Islamic Bank records 25% higher profits in H1-22

ABU DHABI: Sharjah Islamic Bank (SIB) recorded a 25% year-on-year (YoY) rise in its net profits attributable to the shareholders to AED 361.87 million in the first half (H1) of 2022 from AED 289.49 million, according to the bank's consolidated interim financials for the six-month period ended on 30 June 2022.

The bank's net income from financing and investment products reached AED 587.30 million in H1-22, up from AED 538.01 million in the year-ago period. The bank's assets reached AED 56.06 billion as of 30 June 2022, up from AED 54.95 billion as of 31 December 2021. The basic and diluted earnings per share (EPS) stood at AED 0.12 in the January-June period of 2022, against AED 0.09 in the same period of 2021. During the second quarter (Q2) of 2022, the bank's net profits amounted to AED 174.85 million in the first six months (6M) of 2022, higher than AED 125.31 million in the year-ago period. Zawya

## Adib's digital banking platform for corporates sees growth

DUBAI: Abu Dhabi Islamic Bank (Adib), a leading Islamic financial institution, has seen double-digit growth in the adoption of its digital banking platform for businesses over the past three years.

Aimed at corporations of all sizes, Adib Direct is a secure and centralised platform that integrates a suite of banking solutions into a single, streamlined interface. Businesses do not need to visit a branch to use the service.

The platform is available on the web, mobile and smart watch devices. Adib Direct automates many services, delivering significant cost and time efficiencies.

Adib Direct has hit many milestones since its introduction in 2019. The service has benefited 22,588 MSMEs (micro, small and medium enterprises), bringing the number of customers using this service to 23,789. The adoption of the platform has been growing massively year-on-year with 88% growth in number of transactions on Adib Direct. Additionally,



the number of branch transactions fell from 33% in 2019 to 14% in 2022.

Adib is committed to delivering digital banking innovations that offer convenience and ease. Businesses can access the service without having to visit a branch and can rest assured that they can make payments safely with two-factor authentication and virtual tokens for approval. 700,000 Adib customers are now digitally enabled across Adib's online banking platforms.

Business banking customers using Adib Direct can benefit from one central view of Adib's wide range of new banking features and improved functionality to manage their finances local-

ly and internationally. These features include customisable dashboards, a working capital view, cashflow forecasting, and trade finance management, which are accessible across all devices including a mobile app.

The bank has rolled out a number of digital initiatives over the past year, including providing customers with convenient remote account opening services through a government-linked facial recognition system, the launch of Adib Chat Banking, the UAE's first Emirati customer care chatbot and "Amwali", the world's first Islamic digital proposition targeting youth between the age of 8 to 18.

In addition, the bank has introduced new integrated digital kiosks - branded "Smart Tellers" by Adib - across key UAE branches and its first Application Programming Interface (API) developer portal, allowing fintech developers to use Adib APIs for the purpose of developing their own applications.

## Gulf Islamic Investments acquires majority stake in UK's OFFA

DUBAI: Gulf Islamic Investments, a leading Shariah compliant global investment company based in the UAE, with assets under management in real estate, private equity and venture capital sectors, has announced a majority investment in OFFA, the UK's first Shariah-compliant bridge financing provider for the real estate market.

The investment will further expand OFFA's real estate financing proposition through the development of short-term and longer-term real estate financing products, a statement said.

Pankaj Gupta, Co-CEO of Gulf Islamic Investments, said: "OFFA is a highly attractive bridge-financing house that benefits from strong net profit margins and operates in a rapidly growing market that is currently worth £5.1 billion."

"The company is based in the Birmingham area of England, which has the largest Muslim population in the UK, and is the only Shariah-compliant bridge financier in the UK. The value of bridge financing in the UK grew 8.5% in the first three months of 2022, and we believe the combination of property prices, demographics and OFFA's unique market position



makes this a compelling investment opportunity."

Mohamed Al Hassan, Co-CEO of Gulf Islamic Investments, said: "This key investment in a high potential market reflects our commitment to identifying attractive opportunities across the globe. Further to our recent acquisition of the digital bank, we are in the process of continuing to seek out attractive opportunities in the same space and in the direct credit sector to grow sustainable investor and stakeholder value."

Bilal Ahmed, CEO of OFFA, said: "This significant investment by Gulf

Islamic Investments will provide us with the capital to expand our asset book and product range. We carefully evaluated potential investors and selected GII for its commitment to genuine partnership, true understanding of Shariah investment, proven international track record and strength of their fundamental experience."

The transaction is the latest in a series of GII investments in alternative assets such as direct credit, which offer distinct risk-reward characteristics and attractive diversification from traditional fixed income and equity asset classes. TradeArabia

## Africa is emerging market for Islamic Banking & Finance: Zubair Mughal

African Islamic Banking and Takaful Summit Inaugurated in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

**Spokesman Report**

DUBAI: Africa is emerging for Islamic Finance and a new destination for Islamic Financial Institutions which will open new avenue for the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the region, it was stated by Muhammad Zubair Mughal, Chief Executive Officer of Al Huda Centre of Islamic Banking and Economics (CIBE) during the inaugural ceremony of African Islamic Banking and Takaful Summit was held in association with Centre for Islamic Finance, Compliance and Advice and sponsored by Imaan Finance, CRDB Bank Plc, PBZ Bank LTD, Craft Silicon, Technology Associates - Tanzania, Zanzibar Insurance Corporation, Invoice Mate, BSV-Blockchain, Association of Tanzania Insurers (ATI) - Tanzania, National Insurance Authority, Somaliland, NBC, Imaan Newspaper, Imaan Radio, Imaan TV and IFING-MEDIA.

He said that, Tanzanian Islamic Banking and Takaful market is very imminent and seems promising.

The summit was inaugurated by Muhammad Zubair, Chief Executive Officer, AlHuda CIBE FZ LLE, Dubai-U.A.E. He welcomed all the guests of honors, speakers and participants for attending this emerging phenomenon conference, one of new of its kind in the region. He said that Islamic banking and finance is the ultimate financial solution due to its viability and

sustainability. This system has multi-fold benefits which concentrate on the balanced wealth distribution. He also threw light on the need of Islamic banking and financial services.

He further said that several new Islamic financial institutions are ready to start their operations in the market. Various Islamic window operations are also going to start their operations for the development of the economy to strengthen the growth of the market and to uplift the living standards of the public in the region. A few of the banks are also coming into the markets with stand-alone branches for Islamic banking operation. Insurance industry is also participating with zeal and zest and Takaful operations are also going to be operated in the insurance market.

The Guest of Honors includes Mohamed Himid Mbaye Former Deputy Governor, Bank of Tanzania, Immediate Past Chairman CIFCA, Prof. Florens D. A. M. Luoga Governor, Bank of Tanzania, Mrs. Khadija. I. Said Deputy Commissioner of Insurance, Insurance Regulatory Authority (TIRA), Tanzania, Dr. Ally Hussein Laay Chairman of the Board of Directors, CRDB Bank Plc, Tanzania, Khamis Suleiman Chairman, Association of Tanzania Insurers, Tanzania were with Muhammad Zubair at inaugural ceremony and appreciated AlHuda CIBE FZ LLE, Dubai- U.A.E. activities for the development of Islamic banking and finance in Africa and



9th AFRICAN ISLAMIC BANKING AND TAKAFUL SUMMIT 2022

especially in Tanzania.

They mentioned that Tanzania and Africa have enriched the future for Islamic banking and finance and many banks are dealing with Islamic banking products in the country and the region. They pertinently mentioned that AlHuda CIBE is playing its role for the promotion of a globally accepted alternative financial solution which is the only hope of financial stability. They also mentioned that there is absence of

a specific legal and regulatory framework to govern the Islamic finance industry which should be addressed timely. It not only will promote the Islamic banking and financial services but also enhance the economic growth of the region.

Other speakers and distinguished guests include Issa Mohammad Sheikh- CIFCA- Coordinator, AlHuda CIBE Shariah Advisor, Tanzania, Mohamed Shakeel Salyani (PhD)-

Head of Islamic Banking Division, Craft Silicon, Kenya, Rashid Rashid- Head of Islamic Banking, CRDB Bank PLC, Tanzania, Mr. Asim Hameed- Shariah Board Member, IMAAN Finance Ltd. Tanzania, Mr. Muhammad Salman Anjum- Head of BSV Hub & CEO, Invoice Mate, UAE, and Prof. Dr. Mohammed Hafidh Khalafan addressed the session on Islamic Banking, Finance, FinTech & Sukuk. Dr. Ndikumana Sudi- Chief Execu-

tive Officer/Chairman, Health Maintenance Organization (HMO-Africa), Burundi, Muhammad Zubair- Managing Director, AlHuda CIBE FZ LLE - U.A.E, Dr. Huda A. Yussuf- Chairman Board of Trustees, Zanzibar Social Security Fund, Tanzania, Dr. Juma Shaban Chibololo- Lecturer, Faculty of Islamic Studies-MUM and Sunusi Saleh Dan-Alhaji addressed the session on Takaful (Islamic Insurance) and Islamic Capital Market.

Furthermore, Dr. Abdalla Y. Tego- Lecturer Muslim University of Morogoro, Dr. Kassim Nurdin Hussein- Chairman, Awqaf Tanzania, Salum Awadh- CEO, SSC Capital, Founder, Shirhak Invest, Tanzania and Prof. Mussa Assad have spoken to the Development of Islamic Finance in East Africa session.

Finally, Mtemi. Dr. Salum Ahmed Kihemba, PhD- Chief Executive Officer, Legal Finance and Administrative Affairs, NA Prints Plc, Tanzania, Dr. Abdalla Ussi Hamad- Director, Institute of Islamic banking and Finance, Zanzibar University, Zanzibar, Abdurrahman Mohamed Anas- Head of Internal Audit, Premier Bank, Somalia and Yassir Masoud Salim- Secretary General, Hay'atul Ulamaa, Tanzania, concluded the session on Waqf, Zakka & Islamic Microfinance.

Two days' post event specialized training workshops on "Practical and Operational Aspects of Takaful" held on 27th - 28th July, 2022 at Johari Rotana, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.



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

**Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index**

Current	Prev. Close
40,276.64	39,972.64
Day's High	Day's Low:
40,623.60	39,972.64
Index Value	Change
7,409,278,484	+304.00
Percentage	Time
+0.76%	28 Jul, 2022 5:00 pm

**Europe: FTSE 100 Index**

Index Value	Change
7,345.25	-2.98
Percentage	Time
-0.041%	28 Jul, 4:35 pm GMT+1

**USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average**

Index Value	Change
32,379.49	+181.90
Percentage	Time
+0.56%	28 Jul, 12:08 pm GMT-4

**Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average**

Index Value	Change
27,815.48	+99.73
Percentage	Time
+0.36%	28 Jul, 3:15 pm GMT+9

**Open Market Forex Rates**

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	163.43	164.68
Bahrain Dinar	627.98	632.48
Canadian Dollar	183.29	184.64
China Yuan	34.93	35.18
Danish Krone	32.07	32.42
Euro	239	243
Hong Kong Dollar	30.08	30.43
Indian Rupee	2.95	3.0
Japanese Yen	2.05	2.12
Kuwaiti Dinar	768.14	773.14
Malaysian Ringgit	52.95	53.4
New Zealand \$	146.38	147.58
Norwegians Krone	23.97	24.27
Omani Riyal	614.1	618.6
Qatari Riyal	64.87	65.37
Saudi Riyal	61.7	62.5
Singapore Dollar	170.08	171.38
Swedish Korona	22.83	23.13
Swiss Franc	244.67	246.42
Thai Bhat	5.94	6.04
U.A.E Dirham	63.5	65
UK Pound Sterling	288	292
US Dollar	243	246

**Facilitating corporate sector**

# SECP proposes to reduce statutory Forms from 75 to 27

*It is a consolidated version of 9 separate regulations, earlier framed under section 512 of Companies Act, 2017*

**Staff Reporter**

ISLAMABAD: In order to facilitate the corporate sector in complying with the applicable regulatory requirements, the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has issued draft Companies Regulations, 2022. It is a consolidated version of nine separate regulations, earlier framed under section 512 of the

Companies Act, 2017.

The consolidated regulations aim to standardize forms/applications filed by companies and make the regulatory regime easier to understand and comply with. The draft regulations have been placed on



SECP's website for soliciting public comments before final publication.

The proposed draft covers regulatory requirements applicable on company incorporation, post-incorporation compliance and reporting, issuance of

license under section 42 of the Companies Act, 2017, further issue of share capital, group registration, easy exit of companies, and registration of intermediaries.

After extensive review of the existing regulations, several procedures have been simplified. To facilitate end users, several forms have been merged resulting in a substantial reduction of existing forms from 75 to only 27.

## PTCL, Ufone swiftly restore network disrupted by rains

**Staff Reporter**

ISLAMABAD: PTCL and Ufone have swiftly restored their network disrupted by heavy rains and flooding in parts of Balochistan and Sindh in a record time through rapid mobilization of their on-ground resources. The torrential rains also caused major damage to road and bridge infrastructure in the region, further intensifying the challenge of timely restoration of the network, however, PTCL and Ufone field teams were able to live up to their commitment to keeping their customers connected at all times.

Sindh, especially Karachi and the coastal belt of Balochistan received one of the heaviest monsoon spells in the recent past, which resulted in urban flooding, severe damage to roads and bridges infrastructure, and massive commercial power breakdown. PTCL's Optical Fiber cable deployed alongside roads and bridges also got swept away at multiple locations.

The Northern and Central Zones of the country were no different where exchanges and network nodes got flooded leading to network outages. Baluchistan's Makran division was the worst hit, resulting in major damage to road infrastructure, electricity transmission lines, and the PTCL OFC network. The cumulative situation resulted in a huge challenge before the PTCL and Ufone field teams to uphold their commitment to keeping their customers seamlessly connected.

As the National Carrier and Backbone of Country's Connectivity, the company quickly responded to the situation by deploying teams in the affected area to restore the Optical Fiber Cable through a workaround in order to maintain the best possible business continuity. Despite the inclement weather, difficult terrain, and enormity of the challenge, the teams conducted a 24/7 operation with a high level of commitment to best facilitate the customers.

The company tackled the network disruption across the Southern, North, and Central region caused by commercial power breakdown through the deployment of portable generators until the issue was fixed. The field teams worked tirelessly for days to completely restore connectivity to Turbat, Ormara, Pasni, and Gwadar areas of the worst hit Makran Division in Balochistan and the affected regions of Sindh.

PTCL Group's effective and timely response to the massive challenge in the face of countless hardships is evidence of its efficiency, resiliency, and readiness to maintain seamless connectivity at all times. The successful restoration of the network amidst a major calamity speaks volumes of the remarkable commitment and resilience of the on-ground teams whose efforts facilitated the smooth conducting of emergency and relief activities and continuity of life and business activities.

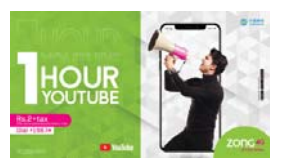
**Let's Get Digital**

## Zong 4G building foundation of digital future in Pakistan

**Staff Reporter**

ISLAMABAD: Continuing to live up to its 'Let's Get Digital' motto, Pakistan's digital services leader, Zong 4G, partners again with the Leading Strategic OTT Player and brings out an exciting Offer for its subscriber Base. Zong prepaid users will be able to enjoy 1 hour of YouTube streaming daily for just PKR 2 + taxes. The industry-first offer can be subscribed twice daily by dialing \*1987#, or through My Zong App or the online store.

Since its inception, Zong has emerged as the Pakistani youth's favorite connectivity partner. The company is living the promise of 'Let's Get Digital' by empowering the youth to experience the



digital lifestyle to the fullest with this partnership adding to its efforts.

"Zong 4G is building the foundation of a digital future in Pakistan. We are offering the widest connectivity to enable millions of Pakistani to remain connected" shared Zong's official spokesperson.

The spokesperson added, "This new YouTube offer is in line with our ambition of digitalization in Pakistan, and the continuation of partnerships that we forge to give our users the best user experience possible and proactively meet their connectivity needs."



ISLAMABAD: Sajid Hussain Toori Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis with Khalid Iqbal Malik Chairman Founder Group ICCI, Zafar Bakhtawari Chairman Pakistan Cultural Forum and Basharat Hussain pose for a group photo after a meeting.

## Nestlé reports H1 sales for 2022

**Staff Reporter**

LAHORE: Nestlé Pakistan reported its financial results for the first half of the year, posting a revenue of PKR 80.4 billion, an increase of 22.2% compared to same period of last year.

The results were announced during a board meeting at the Company's Head Office.

The growth was broad based, driven by normalization of economic activities coupled with incremental sales volume supported by strong demand generation

activities and portfolio and pricing management. The healthy sales growth, favorable product mix and tighter control on fixed costs resulted in an operating and net profit improvement compared to the same period last year.

The company maintains a cautiously optimistic outlook for the future in view of the pressure on the disposable income of the consumers due to high inflationary environment caused by high energy and commodity prices and steep depreciation of the currency.

**Stabilizing economy**

## Huge potential exists in hydel, tourism sectors, says CS AJK

*Muhammad Usman Chachar stresses the need for a well-coordinated system*

**Abdul Majeed Tahir**

MUZAFFARABAD: Chief Secretary Azad Jammu and Kashmir Muhammad Usman Chachar has said that the massive potential in the fields of information, hydel, minerals and tourism could be greatly helpful in stabilizing the state's economy.

During meeting with journalists here on Thursday, Chachar said that to ensure full implementation of law in the state was our collective responsibility. Stressing the need for a well-coordinated system, he said that for a quality and rapid service delivery there was dire need to have a proper system within the depart-

ments so that the issues could be addressed effectively in a befitting manner. "Once you have a system in place, you get things done properly", he said adding the existence of a proper system also helps to improve service delivery.

Underlining the role of media in the society, the Chief Secretary said that it was imperative that the media organisations should promote positive journalism and guide masses in the right direction. Referring to the rules of procedure and conduct of business in the state the CS said that so far as the govt's job was concerned there were three important phases that included policy making, strategy and action for which



MUZAFFARABAD: AJK chief secretary Usman Chachar talking to senior journalists here on Thursday. Secretary Information and DGPR AJK Raja Azhar Iqbal were also present on the occasion.

electd representatives and the bureaucracy work together. He said that government employees' sole responsibility was to ensure full implementation of rules and regulations. He said that the CS' role was not to dictate anything but ensure the implementation of rules. "I am working along with

my team and I try my best to contribute to make the system stronger", he said adding that reforms would be brought in key departments to ensure good governance in the state.

Replying to a query, the chief secretary said, "The impression being created with regard to reversal of 13th amendment is

wrong". He said that no amendment in the constitution was possible against the will of the elected representatives of Azad Kashmir and Pakistan. Referring to a letter from the federal government, he said that a sub-committee has been constituted to look into the matters regarding the 15th amend-

ment. The 15th amendment does not mean that the financial and administrative powers of the Kashmir government are taken back", he said adding that there could be no amendment in the constitution without the will of the elected representatives of Azad Kashmir.

He made it clear that the amendment was neither brought to cut off the political or administrative powers of Azad Kashmir nor was it being introduced to convert AJK into a province. Regarding Tourism Authority, he said that establishment of Tourism Development Authority won't reduce the powers of the Azad Kashmir government.

## ACCA Pakistan organizes Virtual Careers Fair

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: ACCA (The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants) organized the 3rd Edition of its Virtual Careers Fair. It has featured around 200+ top organizations, 600+ jobs along with 4 Power Packed Exclusive Sessions by Industry Experts to enhance the employability Skills of participants.

The participating employers came from a variety of industries such as Shared Services / BPO and Consultancy, Accounting & Public Practice including Big 6 and SMPs, Manufacturing including Textile, Cement and Automotive, BFSI, FMCG/ Retail, Property & Construction, Telecom and Health / Pharma - reflecting a growing demand of the accountancy and finance professionals.

ACCA continues to create inclusive opportunities for Pakistan's youth (our members and future members) and supports their employability by unlocking the power of digital and employing innovative solutions. The event was attended by thousands of participants who were able to interact with leading employers and recruiters, learn from experts, seek new opportunities and build valuable connections with other participants and speakers.

## Huawei releases new lineup of flagship products

*During Summer Launch Event in the Middle East and Africa*

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: Huawei Consumer BG held a Flagship Products Summer Launch Event in Dubai; showcasing a new lineup of flagship devices including the ideal flagship foldable phone HUAWEI Mate Xs 2, a flagship laptop HUAWEI MateBook X Pro, a flagship tablet HUAWEI MatePad Pro, HUAWEI FreeBuds Pro 2 as well as HUAWEI MateBook 16s and HUAWEI MateBook D16. Come endowed with technological innovations in aesthetics, display, performance, connectivity, and interaction, these products are designed for maximum creativity and easy communications.

"In many domains, Huawei has been work-

ing to make people's dream come true. We are always working to bring the ultimate experience to consumers," said Richard Yu, Huawei's Executive Director, CEO of the Consumer BG. Since 2018, Huawei has also worked to build an all-encompassing smart office framework based around two core capabilities: cross-device collaboration and ecosystem integration. This latest release extends Super Device capabilities to more devices, thanks to the easy-to-use Drag-to-Connect feature, which streamlines cross-device connections and interactions.

Pablo Ning, President of Huawei Consumer BG in the Middle East and Africa said: "The cutting edge products announced today highlight our continuous dedication to our users

in the Middle East and Africa region. We will continue working hard to implement our Seamless AI Life Strategy and bring the most compelling and innovative technology experiences to our consumers in order to optimize their user experience as well as to ultimately to fulfil our vision of an All-Scenario Seamless AI Life".

Introducing the HUAWEI Mate Xs 2, HUAWEI's brand-new flagship foldable smartphone. To achieve an ultra-flat surface which is minimalist and natural, the phone uses the Falcon Wing Design. Through that, the movement of the hinge and screen is precisely synchronized via the fixed-length linkage control. For the phone's screen, the use of HUAWEI's self-developed innovative industry-first composite

screen to absorb all shock and buffer makes the HUAWEI Mate Xs 2 ultra-reliable.

The True-Chroma Camera System of HUAWEI Mate Xs 2 includes a 50MP True-Chroma Camera for capturing true-to-life colours.

Blue and White, standing out from the crowd of drab laptop exteriors, while the classic Space Grey is also available. HUAWEI MateBook X Pro takes multi-device collaboration to a whole new level, thanks to the Super Device features.

This is a tablet designed to cover all aspects of entertainment with immersive visuals and sound. It is Huawei's first tablet to feature a 120Hz high refresh rate screen. The 11-inch OLED HUAWEI Real Colour FullView Display

has an incredible screen-to-body ratio of 92% and supports the P3 colour gamut for authentically displaying over a billion colours. For the ultimate sound experience, the tablet features HUAWEI SOUND\* that uses an array of six speakers to bring out high-fidelity sound and ensure a wider playback bandwidth with rich details.

HUAWEI FreeBuds Pro 2 earbuds incorporate cutting-edge TWS capabilities, taking acoustics to new heights. It's portable listening as you've never heard it before. It comes with the Ultra-hearing dual-driver true sound system and digital cross-over technology, delivering a better surging bass and good sound quality with rich details.



## World Test Championship

## Sri Lanka beat Pakistan in second Test, series ends 1-1

Big movement in World Test Championship standings after Sri Lanka's victory

## Spokesman Report

GALLE: Left-arm-spinner Prabath Jayasuriya (player of the series) continued his dream start to Test cricket (29 wickets in three Tests) as his five-wicket haul earned Sri Lanka a comprehensive 246-run win in the second match of the ICC World Test Championship series against Pakistan at the Galle International Stadium on Thursday.

Sri Lanka's win tied the two-match series 1-1. The Babar Azam-led Pakistan had won the first Test by four wickets last week.

The defeat has sent Pakistan to the number five spot in the ICC World Test Championship 2021-23 rankings while Sri Lanka have moved up to number three.

On Thursday – day-five of the Test, Pakistan resumed their second innings in pursuit of the 508-run record target at 89 for one and had to endure a big blow on the 13th ball of the day.

Opener Imam-ul-Haq fell one short of his half-century with Ramesh Mendis inducing an edge that was neatly held by wicketkeeper Niroshan Dickwella. Imam's 49 was compiled off 90 balls and includ-



ed four fours.

Mohammad Rizwan joined Babar and ensured that Pakistan continue to keep the scoreboard moving with an enterprising approach of strike rotation and the odd boundary whenever an opportunity appeared.

The pair added 79 runs for the third-wicket while weathering some anxious moments before Rizwan was

bowled by Jayasuriya while offering no-shot to a ball that straightened after pitching.

Rizwan scored 37 off 69 balls (six fours), his dismissal triggered a middle-order collapse as Pakistan lost Fawad Alam (1) and Salman Ali Agha (4) by lunch. Fawad was run out while attempting a quick single while Salman was brilliantly caught at short-leg by Kusal Mendis off

Jayasuriya. Pakistan took lunch at 188 for five, 320 runs short of the target.

Once play resumed, Jayasuriya delivered a series of probing overs and was eventually rewarded with the prized wicket of Babar who fell lbw for 81 in the 66th over of the innings, prior to the dismissal, Babar was dropped in the slips in Jayasuriya's previous over. Babar's typically elegant innings included six fours and one six, he faced 146 balls.

Mohammad Nawaz (12) was caught in the covers while attempting a big hit off Ramesh Mendis. Yasir Shah scored a quickfire 27 (25 balls, six fours) before falling to Jayasuriya with Kusal Mendis taking a sharp catch.

Hasan Ali (11) was bowled by Ramesh Mendis in the next over. The match ended when Naseem Shah was caught at the mid-wicket boundary off Ramesh Mendis for 18 off 21 balls. Pakistan were bowled out for 261 in 77 overs. Jayasuriya bowled 32 overs and conceded 117 runs for his five-fer. Ramesh Mendis took four for 101 in 30 overs. Dhananjaya de Silva who scored a century in the second innings and led Sri Lanka on the field in the absence of the injured Dimuth Karunaratne was named player of the match.

## Pakistan to begin Commonwealth Games campaign against Barbados

## Spokesman Report

BIRMINGHAM: Despite the rain affected tri-series in Ireland which hampered the team preparations, the Bismah Maroof-led Pakistan are confident of a good show in the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham.

The green shirts, placed in Group A, open their campaign against Barbados with a day-night match at Birmingham's famous Edgbaston Stadium.

After the Barbados clash, Pakistan play arch-rivals India on Sunday, 31 July followed by a match against T20 world champions Australia on Wednesday, 3 August. The top two sides from each of the two pools (four teams in each pool) will progress to the semi-finals that will be played on 6 August with the third position playoff and final sched-



uled to take place on 7 August.

All 16 event matches will be staged at the Edgbaston Stadium. In the Ireland tri-series, only one out of Pakistan's four matches were completed. Nida Dar's all-round performance which won her the player of the match award, guided the team to a 13-run win over the hosts courtesy the DLS method.

The two matches against Australia had to be called-

off midway while the other group match against Ireland was abandoned without a ball bowled.

Rain interruptions also hampered the pre-tour camp in Islamabad earlier this month. David Hemp, the team's head coach though believes that Pakistan will stay competitive in the Commonwealth Games as the squad aspires to impress and show their mettle regardless of the

challenge of three formidable sides in Group A.

Head Coach David Hemp: "Unfortunately the matches in Ireland got curtailed due to the weather but we did manage to complete all practice sessions. The players experiencing different conditions in the UK was a very valuable exercise. We were looked after very well in Ireland and want to thank the organisers for making the tour an enjoyable one.

"Since arriving in Birmingham we have completed one practice session which was last night at Edgbaston and the players are really excited about the event. The game on Friday is what we have our eyes as we played two practice matches against MCC yesterday, the idea was to utilise all players in the squad in the two games and give them match exposure before the formal start of the event.

## Ireland unveil tour dates and squad for Netherlands ODIs

DUBLIN: Ireland are set to tour the Netherlands for a three-match ODI series, commencing 22 August.

The first two ODIs will be played in VRA Amstelveen on 22 and 24 August while the final ODI will take place in VCC Voorburg on 26 August.

Cricket Ireland have also named a 14-member squad for the upcoming assignment, which will be led by their regular skipper Laura Delany.

Right-arm bowler Ava Canning could be in line to make her ODI debut for Ireland, having featured in 12 T20Is for the side so far. While Amy Hunter, who became the youngest batter to make an international century, and all-rounder Orla Prendergast return to the side after featuring in ODIs in November last year.

"It's not only important for the Ireland Women's squad to play more fixtures, but also to play in different conditions," said Carrie Archer, the Chair of National Women's Selectors. "So, we are pleased with the opportunity to play a three-match ODI series in Holland and provide – particularly the younger players – another experience for their development as well-rounded cricketers.

## Swiatek returns with one-sided win in Warsaw

WARSAW: World number one Iga Swiatek eased into the second round of the Poland Open with a straight-sets thrashing of fellow home player Magdalena Frech.

The French Open champion romped to a 6-1, 6-2 victory at the Warsaw clay-court event in her first match since suffering a shock third-round defeat by Alize Cornet in the Wimbledon third round. "For sure playing in your hometown with all that crowd is pretty extraordinary," Swiatek said.

"I didn't get a chance to play many tournaments in Poland so for sure I needed extra focus and determination to come here and stay in the zone and not let my head think about other stuff."

She added: "I'm happy that I was solid today because Magda is not an easy opponent. From the beginning I wanted to put pressure on her and I did that pretty well."

Swiatek had been on a remarkable 37-match winning streak before her early exit at Wimbledon, taking six successive titles along the way.

## Vettel to retire from Formula One

LONDON: Four-time Formula One world champion Sebastian Vettel will retire at the end of the 2022 season, he announced.

"The decision to retire has been a difficult one for me to take, and I have spent a lot of time thinking about it," Vettel, 35, said in an Aston Martin team statement. "At the end of the year I want to take some more time to reflect on what I will focus on next; it is very clear to me that, being a father, I want to spend more time with my family. But today is not about saying goodbye.

"Rather, it is about saying thank you—to everyone—not least to the fans, without whose passionate support Formula One could not exist." Vettel won four successive champion-



ships with Red Bull from 2010 to 2013, but struggled to reproduce his best results after moving to Ferrari before joining Aston Martin last year. His 53 Grand Prix victories place him third on the all-time list behind Lewis Hamilton (103) and Michael Schumacher (91). Vettel last won a race in Singapore in 2019. "He is one of the all-time greats of Formula One, and it has been a privilege to have been able to work with him," said Aston Martin executive chairman and Canadian billionaire Lawrence Stroll, whose son

Lance is the team's other driver.

"He will continue to race for us up to and including the 2022 Abu Dhabi Grand Prix, which will be his 300th Grand Prix entry. We will give him a fabulous send-off." The German made his F1 debut with Sauber at the United States Grand Prix in 2007. He joined Toro Rosso that same year and raced the final seven races of the season. Youngest world champion He then spent a full season with Toro Rosso before making the step up to Red Bull in 2009.

Vettel's first title in 2010, aged 23 years and 134 days, saw him become the youngest world champion in history. He moved to Aston Martin last season after six years at Ferrari, with whom

he twice finished runner-up for the world title to Hamilton in 2017 and 2018. Vettel admitted his time with the Italian giants was ultimately a failure, as he left unable to fulfil his target of emulating his idol Schumacher as a Ferrari title-winner.

Vettel trailed in 12th in the 2021 drivers' championship with his new team after achieving just one podium finish. He is 14th in the standings this season with just 15 points and missed the first two races with Covid-19. "Although our results have not been as good as we had hoped, it is very clear to me that everything is being put together that a team needs to race at the very highest level for years to come," said Vettel.

## Hamilton targets ninth Hungarian victory

BUDAPEST: Fresh from his and Mercedes' best result of the year in France last Sunday, Lewis Hamilton will hope to go one better and add to his record eight victories at the Hungarian Grand Prix this weekend.

The seven-time world champion was second behind champion and series leader Max Verstappen of Red Bull at Le Castellet in his 300th Formula One race, one place ahead of team-mate George Russell. It was Mercedes' first double podium this season. Hamilton relishes the sinuous Hungaroring circuit 20km north of Budapest where no other driver can match his record, Michael Schumacher his nearest rival having won there only four times.

But Hamilton knows that even after four consecutive podiums he faces a daunting challenge to maintain his form as he seeks to become the first driver to win nine times at the same event. In France, he was helped by Ferrari's problems—the luckless Charles Leclerc crashing out while leading and the penalised Carlos Sainz starting from the back of the grid—and the continuing travails of Sergio Perez to recover his early season form with Red Bull. He knows, too, that his capricious Mercedes car remains unpredictable and changeable from circuit to circuit.

"That can be a dramatic factor this weekend on the testing,

tight and twisty Hungaroring, a slow track with subtle elevation changes, after the smooth, open and high-speed straights and corners of the Circuit Paul Ricard. "I have no idea what to expect from us in Budapest," said team chief Toto Wolff. "We had expectations of fighting at the front in France, but we didn't. So, I don't know what to expect." Hamilton has won some of his most famous victories in Hungary, but like Wolff cannot predict a repeat on a track he loves and one on which Verstappen has never triumphed. "This year has been so confusing," he said.

"From a driver's perspective, it was so difficult to understand the car, but we are now—at least a

little more—and it is more enjoyable to drive. "We still lack performance in some areas—like qualifying—but we are slowly getting there. It's about constantly chipping away at it. Unfortunately, we can't take big leaps at the moment, but who knows? Maybe one will come and we'll be right there."

At 37, Hamilton has been revitalised by his car's progress after months of painful 'porpoising' and bouncing and such has been his recent zest Wolff believes he can continue for at least two more years. "I want to get back to winning and that's going to take time," he admitted. "But I'm sure we will and then we will talk about the future." Mercedes lack



of qualifying pace could be costly at the Hungaroring where it is notoriously difficult to overtake and Sunday's race will be a test of claims that the new 'ground effect' rules will enable

closer racing and more passing. After their disappointment last Sunday, Ferrari will hope to bounce back and dominate with single-lap speed and then convert that into a one-two to revive their

title challenge. Leclerc is now 63 points adrift of Verstappen after 12 of this year's 22 races, before the August summer break, while Red Bull head Ferrari by 396 to 341 in the constructors' championship.

Mercedes sit third on 270. All the leading teams are expected to bring upgrades to Hungary where Verstappen, in particular, is keen to see Red Bull kick on in their performance after recent outings. "I think we are still chasing, performance-wise, and the car is still overweight so that costs up lap time," he said. "In the past, we have been good at introducing upgrades and we need to do that again now or we will be falling further behind."

## Sri Lanka Cricket to host Asia Cup 2022 in UAE

## Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Asian Cricket Council (ACC) is eagerly looking forward to conducting its much-awaited Asia Cup tournament from August 27th to September 11th, 2022, as scheduled.

However, considering the prevailing situation in Sri Lanka, the ACC after extensive deliberation has unanimously concluded that it would be appropriate to relocate the tournament from Sri Lanka to the UAE.

The ACC is mindful of the passionate Sri Lankan fans, hence the final decision to change the venue has been very difficult, but has been one that was deemed necessary. However, the thoughts of all ACC members remain in solidarity with the cricket-loving nation of Sri Lanka.

The ACC remains committed to supporting the sport and all its fans and is deeply thankful for the unwavering efforts made by SLC in ensuring the tournament continues as scheduled.

Mr Jay Shah, President, ACC said: Every effort was made to host the Asia Cup in Sri Lanka and the decision to shift the venue to the UAE was taken after much deliberation. The UAE will be the new venue while Sri Lanka will continue to retain hosting rights. This edition of the Asia Cup is extremely important as it will help Asian nations prepare for the ICC World Cup, and I thank the SLC and the Emirates Cricket Board for their understanding and cooperation.

Mr Shammi Silva, President, SLC said: We were really looking forward to hosting our Asian neighbours in Sri Lanka for the much-anticipated Asia Cup. While I fully stand by the ACC's decision to shift the Asia Cup to UAE considering the current context and the magnitude of the event, Sri Lanka Cricket will work closely with the ACC and Emirates Cricket Board to ensure that we still have an exciting edition of the Asia Cup.

Mr Khalid Al Zarooni, Vice-Chairman, Emirates Cricket Board: The Emirates Cricket Board takes great pride in UAE being named the new venue for the Asia Cup. The ECB is always ready to help fellow Member Boards and the ACC and Sri Lanka Cricket have our full support. He further said; we have the required infrastructure in place and look forward to welcoming the teams to the UAE.

## Inter-Divisional Throwball Championship begins in Swat

SWAT: The Inter-Divisional Throwball Championship started at Saidu Sharif Complex, Swat on Thursday under the aegis of regional sports officer Malakand Division and with the collaboration of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Throw Ball Association.

Two teams each from Peshawar and Malakand and one each from Bannu, Hazara, Mardan, Kohat and Swat are participating. Deputy Commissioner Swat Junaid Khan has directed to provide all out support for the successful holding of the event.

Regional Sports Officer Swat Kashif Farman said on this occasion that all arrangements have been made for the smooth conduct of the championship, which was officially inaugurated by Professor Wafa Muhammad, principal of Government Jehanzeb College Swat.

Deputy Director Sports Department of Higher education Arshad Hussain, Regional Sports Officer Swat Kashif Farhan, Head of Department of Health and Physical Education Government Jahanzeb College Mohammad Arif, Prof. Adalat Khan, Prof. Akhtar Ali, Prof. Tahirullah, international football player Saifullah, Basit Khan of Kohat, Prof. Bashir Ahmad and officials of the Swat administration were also present during the opening ceremony.

In the opening match, Peshawar Green defeated Swat 25-10, 25-13 while Peshawar White faced tough resistance against Swat White in a 25-13, 25-20 battle. In other matches, Mardan beat Kohat 15-10, Peshawar White beat Malakand 15-7 and 15-10, Bannu beat Hazara 15-8 and 15-10. Semi-final and third place match will be played on Friday.

## Hockey players Ali Shan, Azfar to coach SBP teams

## Our Correspondent

LAHORE: Leading hockey players of the country Ali Shan and Azfar Yaqoob called on Secretary Sports Punjab Asadullah Faiz at Punjab Stadium on Thursday.

Talking on this occasion, Secretary Sports said that Sports Department Punjab would resolve all the problems of national hockey heroes. He said that Sports Board Punjab would accommodate hockey stars Ali Shan and Azfar Yaqoob in the coaching set up. "Both the players will serve as coaches for the training of hockey teams of the province," he added.

Asadullah Faiz further said the doors of his office are open to all players of the province. "Resolving issues of all male and female athletes are our prime obligation".

## Punjab Premier TT League gets underway

## Our Correspondent

LAHORE: Punjab Premier Table Tennis League got underway at Nishtar Park Sports Complex gymnasium hall on Thursday. DG Sports Punjab Tariq Qureshi inaugurated the league where Vice Chairman SBP Rao Zahid Qayyum was also present.

As many as 16 league matches were played on Thursday. In group A, Shah Khan defeated Muneeb 3-0, Shehryar defeated Ubaid 3-2, Irtza defeated Osama 3-1, Shah Khan beat Shehryar 3-0, Ubaid beat Muneeb 3-0, Usama beat Shehryar 3-1, Shah Khan beat Irtza 3-0, Irtza beat Shehryar 3-0.

In Group B, Faizan beat Mohsin 3-0, Taimur beat Anas 3-0, Hafeez beat Usman 3-2, Faizan beat Anas 3-0, Taimur beat Mohsin 3-2, Hafeez beat Anas 3-0, Usman beat Anas 3-0 and Usman beat Mohsin 3-2.