



# Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ  
رسول اللہ ﷺ نے فرمایا اچھا خواب اللہ تعالیٰ کی طرف سے ہے اور برا خواب شیطان کی طرف سے ہے۔ اس لیے اگر کوئی برا اور اونا خواب دیکھے تو بائیں طرف تھوٹو کر کے شیطان کے شر سے اللہ کی پناہ مانگے۔ اس عمل سے شیطان اسے کوئی نقصان نہ پہنچا سکے گا۔  
(بخاری، حدیث نمبر 5292)  
Barkat Rice Mills (Pvt) Limited

## Coastline should be developed as per int'l standards: President

President Dr Arif Alvi says Pakistan's coastline should be developed to the fullest potential as it would promote economic activities in the coastal regions, provide jobs to the local population and also help in highlighting the country's unique geo-economic location. There is a need to develop Pakistan's beaches, islands and coastal resorts as per international standards to promote coastal tourism and the blue economy of the country.



## Govt to be ousted in few days: Murad Saeed

PTI leader Murad Saeed says the incumbent government will be sent packing in few days. The government has targeted the journalists who exposed the American conspiracy and raised questions against the imported government. The incumbent rulers are leading Pakistan to a Sri Lanka-like situation. The government has destroyed the country's economy and increased the petrol prices by 100 percent.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Zilhaj 7, Thursday, July 7, 2022

www.dailyspokesman.net

@daily\_spokesman



Daily Spokesman Vol: 15, Issue: 100 Price Rs. 25.00 Pages 8

## CPEC in focus

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairing a review meeting on Balochistan development projects in Islamabad on Wednesday.



Photo: PID

## Secretary Blinken speaks with FM Bilawal

Both reaffirm to further strengthen bilateral ties

ISLAMABAD: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari had a telephonic conversation on Wednesday. In this regard, Bilawal Bhutto confirmed that he received a phone call from Antony Blinken. Taking to Twitter, Bilawal wrote that "I had talked with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken today and we reaffirmed to further strengthen ties marking 75 years of bilateral relations." He further wrote that in order to strengthen bilateral relations, contacts in the fields of trade, energy, public health and security would be expanded, and we should promote our people-to-people and business-to-business contacts.

He said in a statement that Bilawal received a phone call from Blinken today. They reiterated mutual commitment to deepen Pak-US ties marking 75 years and looked forward to frequent exchange of high-level visits.

FM Bilawal requested the state secretary to ease the issuance of visas for Pakistani nationals.

According to MOFA, they appreciated the ongoing visit of Special Rep Dilwar Syed and stressed solidifying trade and commercial ties. Both leaders have also reaffirmed mutual cooperation in energy, health, security and economic development. They also discussed the need for continuous engagement with the interim Afghanistan government to deal with the humanitarian crisis. APP

The spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

## Online system

NBP to ease govt payments

## Staff Report

ISLAMABAD: On the directive of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the National Bank of Pakistan (NBP) will launch online system for citizens to make government payments without additional charges. The system will start working soon after Eid-ul-Azha, Head of PM's Strategic Reforms Salman Sufi said Wednesday.

Sufi said efforts were afoot to transfer all government payments to the online system within six months, for which instruction had been given to the president of NBP. He said an efficient online system, which has no additional charges on consumers, was significant for cashless economy. He said the step would prove a milestone in promoting cashless economy.

## Under PTI govt

# Every energy project suffers costly delays: PM

Orders inquiry into criminal delay over Gwadar breakwater project

## Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif Wednesday said that he had ordered an inquiry into the criminal delay in Gwadar breakwater project as the Pakistan Tahreek-i-Insaf's government had ignored it despite availability of grants. On his Twitter handle, the prime minister said \$445m grant, \$484m soft loan and feasibility were available but it baffled the mind as to how the previous government ignored the project. From energy to infrastructure, every project suffered costly delays under PTI, he added.

While earlier the prime minister chaired a meeting to review different development projects

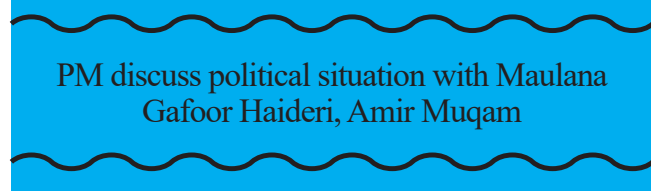
in Balochistan and Gwadar. The prime minister directed the chairman PM's inspection commission to submit a comprehensive report over such criminal negligence within one week.

He further resolved that turning Balochistan's backwardness into prosperity was his mission and their collective responsibility. Briefing the prime minister in the meeting, the secretary minis-

the snags.

The prime minister said that due to its location, the Gwadar port was an important and most suitable hub for the global trade. Through this port, they would have to ensure supply of imported goods from the upper and northern areas of the country. He said for this purpose, there should be best and efficient road and railway infrastructures, adding that through hard work, they would have to move ahead and remove all the deprivation of the province.

The prime minister also directed for taking of all the steps to ensure Chinese investment in Gwadar, so as to promote exports and provide employment opportunities to the people especially to the residents of the area.



In a related tweet, he stressed that time for presentation was over as it was time for action. The prime minister said Gwadar was not just about infrastructure development, being part of CPEC, it had political, economic and strategic value.

try of maritime affairs apprised the prime minister that a breakwater project at the Gwadar port under concession agreement had to be constructed for which \$445 million grant and \$484 million loan was provided by the Chinese government but the project hit

## Thieves can't win even with umpires' support: Imran

Says we will defeat them in Punjab by-polls

SAHIWAL: Former prime minister and PTI chairman Imran Khan on Wednesday said "even with the support of the umpires thieves cannot win Punjab by-polls", scheduled to take place on July 17.

Addressing a public gathering in Sahiwal, Imran Khan thanked participants for coming in large numbers to the public gathering despite heavy rain and accumulated water in the jalsagah.

The former prime minister said the politics of turncoats has been exposed, adding that "looties" have joined Asif Ali Zardari and Sharifs for the lust for power. Lashing out at his political opponents, Khan said Asif Ali Zardari and the Sharif family are only

concerned with their wealth they have no sympathy for the general public. He also reiterated his claim that the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) is trying to ensure the victory of the 'imported govt'.

"Even if empires are with you, we will defeat you," Imran Khan said in his message to the political opponents. Imran Khan asked the masses to check voter lists before Punjab by-polls on 20 seats. He vowed to win all 20 seats on July 17. Paying rich tributes to the journalists for standing with truth, he said the government is pressuring the journalists and those who are raising their voice for the country are being booked in cases. Agencies

## Govt saves country from bankruptcy: Khawaja Saad

Announces 30pc discount in train fares on of Eid ul Adha

## Staff Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Railways Khawaja Saad Rafique on Wednesday said that the coalition government's tough decisions have saved the country from bankruptcy. Addressing a press conference flanked by Advisor to the PM Qamar Zaman Kaira, Khawaja said that the country was on verge of bankruptcy but the coalition government took difficult decisions by putting their politics at stake and saved the country from default.

Taking a dig at PTI chairman, Khawaja said that Imran Khan's purpose behind introducing the Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) was to give him a two-thirds majority in the House, adding that Imran Khan was planning a dictatorial style of government by repealing the 73rd constitution. While speaking about the Eidul Azha relief package to Railways passengers, he said that the fares of all classes of all trains are being reduced by 30% on all three days of Eid.



In order to facilitate masses on the occasion of Eidul Azha, Pakistan Railways has announced a 30 percent discount in fares. According to the railway administration, the reduction in train fares will be applicable to all passenger trains during the three days of Eidul Azha. The notification has been issued on the direction of Minister for Railways Khawaja Saad Rafique. On the other hand, three special trains will be operated on multiple routes before Eidul Azha, while the first special train would depart at 10 am on July 8. It would travel from Quetta to Peshawar via Multan, Sahiwal and Lahore.

Rafique, while commenting on the political developments in the country, said: "We have been carrying the whole burden of former

prime minister Imran Khan's sins although we know we have very less time [to resolve the issues]." The minister said that the coalition government is trying to pull the country out of the mess that the previous PTI-led government plunged the country into. "Khan had wanted a different style of governance in the country under which he staged the drama of the electronic voting machines (EVMs) and planned to get the then-opposition leaders arrested," he said. Rafique accused Khan of seeking the support of the National Accountability Bureau's (NAB) "draconian laws", but thanked Allah for taking Pakistan out of the "era of curse" through Khan's ouster.

## Govt taking steps to improve trade with Iran: Miftah

## Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Miftah Ismail said here Wednesday that Pakistan was committed to take all possible measures for resolving the bottlenecks for significantly augmenting the bilateral trade volume with Iran.

The minister was talking to Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Pakistan, Seyed Mohammad Ali Hosseini who called on him, according to press statement issued by the finance ministry. Miftah said, the current trade volume between the two countries was not at the optimal level, the statement added.

He also highlighted deep rooted cordial and fraternal relations between Pakistan and Iran based on centuries old religious and cultural affinities. Miftah emphasized that Pakistan always highly values its brotherly relations with its neighboring country.

## Talks with TTP in 'pre-dialogue' stage: Rana Sanaullah

Questions is it harassment if Imran questioned over corruption

## Senior Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah said Wednesday that the government's talks with the outlawed Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) were at a "pre-dialogue" after political parties approved negotiations with the militants. In a press conference, the interior minister said the military leadership suggested forming a committee comprising all political parties — a proposal that was accepted by the Parliament as well as the parties. The development comes after the Parliamentary Committee on National Security (PCNS) received a briefing from the military leadership on TTP, where the committee gave formal approval to the government for holding talks with the banned outfit.

The interior minister said the dialogue process with the TTP will be taken forward under the supervision of the Parliament, terming the briefing provided to the committee a "comprehensive one". Sanaullah said that all the negotiations would be conditional upon the Parliament's approval.

Responding to questions, the minister said that former prime minister Imran Khan cannot scare anybody through his threats, blackmailing, and conspiracy narrative. Sanaullah also said that any recording — either audio or video — made to expose a crime is



not a crime unless it is done to blackmail someone.

The interior minister made these remarks when he was asked to comment on the alleged audio of Bushra Bibi in which she could be heard directing the PTI social media head to run trends against party rivals and declare them traitors. The audio has sparked a debate over privacy issues, while the PTI has demanded the top court take notice of the leaked audio. There are reports that alleged audio of former prime minister Imran Khan talking to his principal secretary Azam Khan may also be released. "If a recording is made to expose a criminal offence, it is not a crime and if a recording is done to blackmail, it is a crime," the minister said.

He asked that is it harassment if former prime minister Imran Khan is questioned about his corruption.

Rana Sanaullah, while addressing a press conference, inquired that whether holding PTI Chairman Imran Khan accountable for his looting means that he is being cornered. Interior Minister asked Imran Khan that whether he wants to come in power or just wants an NRO for himself. He said that former Prime Minister Imran Khan cannot scare anybody through his threats, blackmailing and narrative. He said the former Prime Minister should respond to the corruption done in his tenure.

Talking about drug case against him that was registered against him during government of PTI, Rana Sanaullah said that he should be awarded death penalty if he is found guilty in the case.

Earlier, addressing a press conference, Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb said the law will take its course in corruption carried out by former Prime Minister Imran Khan in his four-year tenure.

She said the process of investigation has been started as per the law into the corruption done through Farah Gogi and Bushra Bibi. She said since the taxpayers money was plundered, the former Prime Minister will have to respond. The Information Minister said Imran Khan during his tenure victimized his political opponents through fake cases and allegations but failed to furnish any evidence before the courts.

## 75th birth anniversary

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb and Director General of Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Major General Babar Iftikhar are reviewing the plan to celebrate the diamond jubilee celebrations of Pakistan's creation in a befitting manner here on Wednesday.



Photo: Twitter

# PTI govt liable for price hike, power outages: Marriyum

Reviews arrangements for Pakistan's diamond jubilee celebrations with DG ISPR

## Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Wednesday said that the PTI government is responsible for current price hike, power outages and shortage of gas. She said the government is giving priority to completion of power projects of four thousand megawatts which were delayed by the previous government. Marriyum Aurangzeb has said the law will take its course in corruption carried out by former Prime Minister Imran Khan in his four-year tenure.

Addressing a news conference in Islamabad she said the process of investigation has been started as per the law into the corruption done through Farah Gogi and Bushra Bibi. She said since the taxpayers money was plundered, the former Prime Minister will have to respond. The Information Minister said Imran Khan during his tenure victimized his political opponents through fake cases and allegations

but failed to furnish any evidence before the courts. The Information Minister said the present government will steer the country out of all challenges and stabilize the economy. She said the rupee will also stabilize after agreement with the International

How did you convert Bani Gala into money gala? Marriyum asks Imran

Monetary Fund (IMF). She said difficult decisions have been taken to take the country in the right direction. She lashed out at PTI Chairman Imran Khan and demanded that he answer to the people on how he managed to "convert Bani Gala — his residence — into money gala". The information minister said

the ex-prime minister did not curb corruption and that Khan and his aides' assets increased while the PTI chairman was in power. Aurangzeb claimed that Bushra bibi, the wife of the former prime minister, and her friend Farah Khan — who is a suspect in multiple money laundering cases — conducted business transactions in Bani Gala.

The information further said that although Khan maintains that Bushra bibi is a housewife, it was on her instructions that the diplomatic cypher was touted as a "threat letter". "Bushra bibi runs orders to run trends against institutions; it was on her instructions that the [cable] was used as a threat letter," the information minister said, asking Khan to "have some shame" for calling her a housewife.

The information minister alleged that Bushra bibi asks PTI's social media team to run trends for diverting attention away from Farah's corruption cases in a reference to the recent audio leak of a conversation between Khan's wife and PTI leader Dr Arsalan Khalid.

## US Ambassador calls on Khar

### Our Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: United States Ambassador Donald Bloom on Wednesday called on Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Hina Rabbani Khar. According to the Foreign Office, the state minister congratulated the ambassador on his appointment and assuming duties in Pakistan. Khar reiterated commitment to widen and deepen longstanding Pakistan-US ties. She reaffirmed engagement in trade, investment, energy and health. She also underlined importance of people-to-peoples and congressional engagement.

## Infrastructure

### ECNEC okays various projects

ISLAMABAD: Executive Committee of the ECNEC, Wednesday, approved various infrastructure projects of national significance. The meeting approved project on construction of Hyderabad-Sukkur Motorway on BOT basis with revised cost of 308,194.00 million rupees. The project will be executed by National Highway Authority and envisages construction of 306 kilometer long, 06-lane wide, divided fenced between Hyderabad and Sukkur. The committee also approved construction of Lahore-Sialkot Motorway link Highway connecting the motorway to Narang Mandi and Kartarpur Narawal including Narawal Eastern Bypass at a revised rationalized cost of 17,379.949 million rupees. The revised project envisages rehabilitation, dualization and construction of 73-Kms long 04-lane dual carriage-way, connecting Kartarpur with Lahore-Sialkot Motorway and Nankana. APP

# PTI ready for grand dialogue if election announced: Fawad

Accuses Marriyum of lobbying for her husband

### Our Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: PTI leader Fawad Chaudhry said on Wednesday that his party is ready for a "grand dialogue" but will only come to the table if an election date is announced. Talking to the press in Islamabad, Fawad said that if the government continued making such moves one after the other, it may derail democracy in the country. "Every other day, a new scandal of this government is coming to light. There is a solar scandal which should be investigated," said the PTI leader. The former information minister claimed that not a single corruption case was filed against any of the ministers belonging to the PTI-led government.

"What happened to Captain (ret) Safdar in our tenure was done by the



Sindh government. Two journalists were killed in Sindh and cases are being registered against politicians. They want a solution to political problems but the date of election should be given first," said the PTI leader. Taking a jibe at his predecessor Marriyum Aurangzeb, Fawad said that the incumbent information minister should respond as her husband is an Australian citizen and represents the tobacco industry in Pakistan. Fawad alleged that billions of rupees were given to the

tobacco industry because of what Marriyum's lobby said.

He added that due to her lobbying, foreign companies were given concessions. "Now due to the lobbying of Ali Tareen and Marriyum Aurangzeb, the tobacco industry got billions of rupees as tax concessions," claimed Fawad. On the other hand, Shireen Mazari said that the grand dialogue should be led by those who have people's mandate. There is no Opposition in the Parliament, the largest political party of the country is outside the Parliament," said Mazari as she alleged that lawlessness is at its peak during the incumbent government's tenure. "If you want to impose Martial Law then announce it clearly. Wherever we go, our cars are stopped and people are abducted," said the former human rights minister.

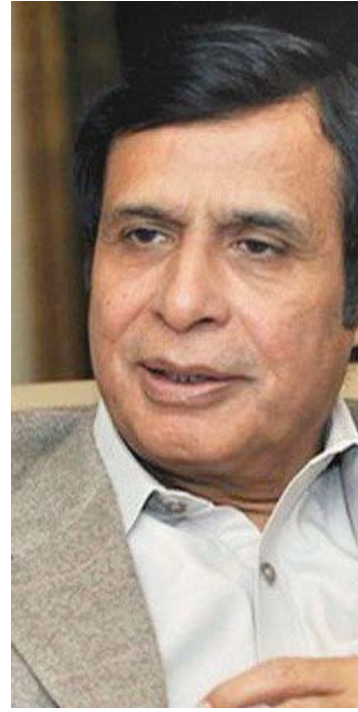
## Looming defeat

# Punjab govt diverts resources to by-polls: Elahi

Says Hamza breaks promise made in Supreme Court

LAHORE: PTI Secretary General Asad Umar called on Speaker Punjab Assembly Chaudhry Parvez Elahi, Members of National Assembly Moonis Elahi and Hussain Elahi at their residence. The delegation included former federal minister Riaz Fatyana, opposition leader Muhammad Sibtain Khan, former provincial minister Mahmood Rasheed and Muhammad Ali Akbar Khan. The political situation in the country, including the by-elections in Punjab and the Chief Minister's election were discussed in detail during the meeting. The meeting expressed concern over the interference of the Punjab government in the by-elections in Punjab.

Speaker Punjab Assembly Ch Parvez Elahi said that Hamza Shahbaz broke his promise which he made before the Supreme Court, the Supreme Court should take notice of the interference in the by-elections of the Punjab government and legal action should be taken against Hamza Shahbaz. He said that sensing the defeat, the Punjab govern-



ment has diverted the government resources to the by-elections' constituencies. On the orders of Hamza Shahbaz, the development departments and the police are interfering in the election process in the worst possible way. Both father and son together want to illegally occupy Punjab, development work and use of government resources in by-election constituencies by violating the code of conduct, the Punjab government is committing the worst fraud.

Ch Parvez Elahi said that the survey of every constituency and the voice of people are in the favor of PTI candidates. PTI Secretary General Asad Umar said that Deputy Speaker Punjab Assembly Sardar Dost Mohammad Mazari is repeatedly crossing the party line and is seen sitting in every party meeting of PML-N. He said that we are constantly informing the ECP about the violations of the Punjab government. The Election Commission is showing prejudice. When will the Election Commission take action against the Punjab government. Agencies

# Load shedding to be reduced during Eid holidays: Khurram

Says cabinet didn't okay Rs7.91 hike in power tariff

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Power Khurram Dastgir said Wednesday that the loadshedding rate will be visibly reduced during Eidul Azha holidays. Khurram Dastgir said in a statement that the recent spell of rainfall increased the water level in dams and Tarbela Dam is generating 3,684 megawatts of electricity. He said that the permanent shortfall of electricity is 6,000 to 7,000 megawatts.

The federal minister said that the electricity generation was increased from Tarbela Dam which will reduce the load shedding rate. He claimed that the

nationals will see a visible reduction in the duration of power outages during Eid festival while the current shortfall is 4,000 to 5,000 MW. He added that the power supply will be improved by the next summer as 5,000 MW of additional electricity will be added to the national grid.

Dastgir said that the government will have to submit its reply to the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) on tariff rebasing. The coalition government wanted to shift the minimum financial burden to the nationals, said the minister. While rejecting the speculations, said



that the cabinet didn't approve recommendation of NEPRA to increase the price of electricity by Rs7.91.

He said that following current rain spell, electricity supply situation has improved as Tarbela dam is at its optimal production of 3,684 megawatts electricity as compared to only 1100 MW on 1st of this month. Dastgir went on to say that refueling of K2 nuclear power plant is underway and will be completed soon adding 1100 MW electricity in the national grid. He said this will further reduce load shedding in the country. The minister refuted the spec-

ulations about increase in price of electricity saying the government has not increased prices so far though there was proposal from NEPRA.

On July 3, Dastgir had announced that loadshedding will not be ended on the occasion of Eidul Azha, however, the duration of power outages will be reduced. He had said that loadshedding could not be ended this Eidul Azha, however, people will witness a reduced duration of power outages. He had detailed that 720 megawatts power plant has been made operational from June 29. APP

## Punjab by-polls

# PPP to support PML-N unconditionally: Kaira

ISLAMABAD: Adviser to the Prime Minister on Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan, Qamar Zaman Kaira announced to extend PPP's unconditional support for Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) in by-elections of the Punjab Assembly. In a joint press conference flanked by Federal Minister for Railways and Aviation Khawaja Saad Rafique, the Prime Minister's aide made announcement of unconditional support of his party.

Kaira said the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leadership, after thorough analysis and discussions within the party, concluded that the PML-N as their ally could end the

evil spread by the previous Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government. He said, "We want to end the scourge of PTI government's vicious propaganda that created unwanted polarisation in the society."

Kaira said that the people completely rejected the policies of PTI and entrusted full confidence in the PPP leadership. Criticising the PTI's previous policies, the Adviser said the PPP and the coalition government did not believe in benefiting through subsidies to elite like PTI government, however, it encouraged to introduce targeted subsidies only for the lowest income class. APP

## PCAA cuts pensioners' perks

### Bureau Report

KARACHI: Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (PCAA) has reduced the perks, medical and other allowances of the retired employees. A notification was issued by the PCAA which stated that the special grant for the retired employees for constructing their houses has been ended. The authority cut pensions of retired additional directors up to Rs30,000. The decision for cutting the perks of the retired workers was taken by the PCAA board in its 192nd session. The medical facility was ended for parents and children of the retired employees.

On June 29, it was learnt that the Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (PCAA) applied a cut on the pension of its retired employees. The retired additional directors of executive group 7 faced a cut in their pensions and the decision was taken by the board of directors of the PCAA. "Director-General CAA Khaqan Murtaza suggested a cut in the pension," they said.

A spokesman for the aviation authority has, however, denied reports of a cut in pension despite sharing documentary proof with him. It is pertinent to mention here that the federal government had approved a 15 per cent increase in the salaries of government employees and a 5 per cent hike in pensions for the next fiscal year 2022-23.

## PAC for slashing POL prices



ISLAMABAD: The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) chairman Noor Alam Khan on Wednesday has recommended the government to reduce the petroleum prices in view of falling prices in the global market. During the PAC meeting, chairman Noor Alam Khan said that the prices of oil in the world market have come down twice while the government has increased the prices instead of reducing them, adding that the Ministry of Finance, Petroleum Division and the government are requested to provide relief to the people by reducing prices in the country. While talking about the NAB, he said that NAB officers would have to give details of their assets. APP

# Mushaal appeals world for safe release of Yasin Malik

IIDA President assures to launch 'Free Yasin Campaign' in Korea, globally

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of International Interchange Development Association (IIDA) led by President Mun, Yong-Jo called on Mushaal Hussein Mullick Chairperson Peace and Culture Organization here on Wednesday and assured they would raise voice the free of incarcerated Hurriyat leader Yasin Malik at every form globally.



Speaking on the occasion, Mushaal, wife of jailed Kashmiri Hurriyat Leader Yasin Malik, thanked the IIDA President for the support and stated that the fascist Narendra Modi Modi regime scared of Yasin's rising popularity; hence they were using all brutal tactics to silence him.

She said that Yasin was the most effective and powerful voice of the Kashmir freedom struggle why was why he was implicated in various

concocted and fabricated cases to dampen his courage.

Mushaal stated that her husband was kept in death cell and neither his family nor his counsel was allowed to meet him, adding that the level of barbarity could be judged from the fact that the occupation authorities even did not allow him much-needed medicines despite his fast deteriorating health.

The chairperson expressed her

apprehension that since dozens of hurriyat leaders were tortured to death; therefore, she worried about her husband because the fascist regime could go to any length to muzzle the voice of lion of Kashmir since he categorically stated that he could not compromise of the birth right of Kashmiris the right to self-determination come what may.

Mushaal informed the delegation that despite using all brutal tactics, the fascist government could not shake his resolve, as he conveyed the Kashmiri people that he would fight for their rights till last drop of his blood.

She told the delegation that they should play their role to ensure his release because his sole crime was to raise peaceful voice for the right of Kashmiri people who have been living under the unconstitutional and unlawful subjugation of Indian government.

The IIDA Pakistan President in Korea Sooba Khan and IIDA Standing Advisor Um, Jung Sup were also present on the occasion.

On the occasion, the IIDA President presented souvenirs to Mushaal and Sabeen Malik Secretary General Peace and Culture Organisation. Razia Sultana also received a token of appreciation and souvenir from the delegation. The delegation extended unconditional support for Kashmir cause and expressed deep concerns over the incarceration of Yasin Malik, his health and security.

They pledged that they would raise voice for him all over the world especially launching a free Yasin Malik campaign in South Korea and all over the world. Moreover, they showed keen interest in Kashmir issue and assured they would stand by the Kashmiri people.

## Eid Preparations

PESHAWAR: People carrying their sacrificial animals ahead of the Eid al-Adha at a road in Gulbarg area in Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

## Police presents anchor Imran Riaz Khan before civil judge

Staff Reporter

ATTOCK: Police presented anchor Imran Riaz Khan before the civil judge Attock. He was arrested on Tuesday night by Attock police for his alleged involvement in defaming and disgracing Pakistan Army.

Police on the complaint of Malik Murid Abbas had lodged an FIR against the anchor under ten different acts. Malik Murid Abbas r/o Mehrpura Attock in his complaint had alleged that a few politicians and electronic media had vowed to give impetus to the agenda of the enemy countries.

He further stated that as per the constitution of the country, propaganda against Pakistan Army was an offence. Murid Abbas further alleged that Imran Riaz Khan had used derogatory language against Pakistan Army which was an offence and was intolerable as Imran Riaz Khan was damaging the reputation of our army and action against him be taken accordingly.

## Poor condition of Lillah-Jhelum dual carriageway irks commuters

Staff Reporter

JHELUM/ISLAMABAD: A pre-monsoon mild rain shower of Tuesday night turned the Lillah-Jhelum dual carriageway into mud when hundreds of vehicles were stuck down, and commuters remained helpless for the whole night. There was no sign of concerned organizations to help the sufferers in need time. The major rain-hit section of Jhelum-Pindadan Khan was initially announced to complete this year in June however, the slow work pace is causing a turbulent situation for inhabitants. There is no alternative route available for commuters to travel between cities and every rain spell emerges a really challenging situation for travelers on this route.

Public raised their voices to reach out to the government, Deputy Commission-



er, Jhelum, and FWO authorities being contractor on-site to release the funds and completion of the road in time as the poor road condition has made the peoples' lives miserable living in the surroundings of Lillah-Jhelum carriageway.

They demanded that government should focus on this serious problem without counting on political preferences. The respectables of rain hit area on dual carriageway while talking to daily The Spokesman said, we tried at our best to knock

every door of the previous and current government to address our grievances as every time when monsoon starts, the life become miserable in these areas. They said the main monsoon spell is yet to start and commuters will face the traumatic situation

again, therefore, they want to ask the concerned authorities of government and FWO to complete the work on the carriageway at earliest to avoid such a pathetic situation in the future.

The design, contract and budget of the Lillah-Jhelum dual carriageway are already approved including timelines for completion of the project. The current government has made significant progress in its last term for such development projects and public has tied high hopes for similar performance in its current tenure. The people have demanded that Primer Minister Mian Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif and Minister for Planning, Development, and Reform, Mr. Ahsan Iqbal should take a keen interest in the completion of Lillah-Jhelum dual carriageway to make the inhabitants' lives easier and more comfortable.

## Beaconhouse School System signs MoU with Pearson-Edexcel

Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Pearson-Edexcel and Beaconhouse School System, Pakistan's largest network of private educational institutions, have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the provision of assessment services and international academic qualifications to support students' learning by offering world class qualifications.

The MoU signing ceremony was held here on Wednesday at a local hotel, and was signed by Kasim Kasuri, Chief Executive (CE) Beaconhouse, and Emma Whale, Vice President, Pearson Schools Qualifications. The



ceremony was attended by the senior leadership team from both organizations, including Premila Paulraj, Director Employability & Qualifications, Pearson South Asia, and Ali Ahmed Khan, Chief Operating Officer Beaconhouse.

Under the MoU, Pearson will facilitate the digital transformation required for the

International GCSE examinations to be conducted onscreen and online, along with mock exams via the Mocks Service, marked by Pearson examiners. Beaconhouse will initially be offering Pearson Edexcel International GCSE qualifications at three branches and will later expand to other branches.

In addition to this, Pearson

will also offer course preparation e-books to students in all available subjects, as well as online teacher training courses to prepare teachers for the relevant Pearson Edexcel exam syllabus.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, CE Beaconhouse, Kasim Kasuri stated, "At Beaconhouse, we have always strived to go the extra mile to bring better academic opportunities for our students. I congratulate my team at Beaconhouse and everyone at Pearson Education for this partnership and am confident that this joint effort will be fruitful for further educational excellence at Beaconhouse."

## Talks b/w union, WSSP admin successfully concludes: Chairman Riaz Khan

Six of the union's eight demands were resolved, and two were promised a week after Eid: Secretary Abid Sohail

PESHAWAR: Coal Municipal Workers Union WSSP Registered CBA Peshawar emergency meeting was held at the Union's Office Wazir Bagh Workshop. Apart from all the union officials, a large number of Municipal Inspectors, Sanitary Supervisors, Water Supply Supervisors, Workshop Incharge, Water Supply Incharge Malir or Branch participated in large numbers.

All Municipal Workers Union WSSP Registered CBA Peshawar Chairman Riaz Khan Shehzad Gul said in a joint statement that the talks with WSSP CEO Ahsan Nasir, GM Riaz Ahmed, Shiraz and Saqib Nawaz and Union General Secretary Abid Sohail, Vice Chairman Siddiquallah Mashwani and Finance Secretary Naseer Khan were successful.

The demands included Union 1), last Eid-ul-Adha food allowance No. 2) Eid-ul-Fitr and time 3) June DRA allowance 4) Normal overtime 5) Second shift overtime of June 6) Weather allowance. Orzone B started petrol and mobile oil. The demands have been accepted and their checks have also been deposited in the bank and for the remaining 2 demands the WSSP administration has promised to pay one week after Eid. No. 1) Washing Allowance of Zone C and D 2) Checks for two months DRA Allowance were also handed over to the Union. We thank him for solving the problems of the employees. Riaz Khan further said that all the employees will continue their work with full enthusiasm.

On this occasion, Chairman Riaz Khan said that this time like last Eid-ul-Adha, Peshawar will once again be number one in terms of cleanliness in all the cities of Pakistan. Government Employees Coordination Council Khyber Pakhtunkhwa All Government Employees Grand Alliance Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Civil Secretariat Coordination Council Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Local Government Employees Federation KPK All Pakistan Class IV Association KPK.

## Residents of Lucknow Society protest against corrupt admin, illegal construction



Our Correspondent

KARACHI: A protest was organized by the members residing in Lucknow Society in which majority of the members of the society participated. According to the members, the society has about 1150 plots. Out of these, about 750 houses have been completed and families has moved in. During the protest, members of the Lucknow Society said that there was no security at all in the Society, and that the watchmen who were posted in the name of security were not fulfilling their responsibilities. The members further said that the occupation mafia has ruled in the society, as LS216 has been seized and other plots are being sold in the market by making forged documents.

While elections have not yet taken place in the society, the corrupt administration has escaped from the elections by making various tricks and excuses and is occupying it with stay orders. Members of the Lucknow Society expressed reservations over the administration and said that it should be rid of this corrupt administration. Illegal constructions are on the rise in the society. Constructions are started overnight by the occupation mafia, while the society lacks basic amenities, with water being the main problem, which has become more serious. The problem of water has increased in Lucknow society. An alternative water connection is very important in society.

Residents of Lucknow Society demanded from the higher authorities that the residents of Lucknow Society should be freed from this corrupt managing committee and management.

## EPCL, UET Lahore partner for industry-academia linkage



Staff Reporter

KARACHI: Engro Polymer & Chemicals (EPCL), a subsidiary of Engro Corporation, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the prestigious University of Engineering & Technology (UET), Lahore, to strengthen industry-academia linkage through cooperation in research and innovation along with professional development opportunities for students.

The MoU was signed by Jahangir Piracha (CEO of EPCL) and Professor Dr. Syed Mansoor Sarwar (Vice Chancellor, UET Lahore), in the presence of officials of both institutions, and Pakistan Chemical Manufacturers Association representatives Haroon Ali Khan (Sr. Vice Chairman) and Abrar Ahmed (Vice President).

Under the agreement, EPCL and UET will jointly undertake research and development initiatives at the well-equipped testing facilities of the institute's Polymer & Process engineering faculty. This partnership will enable quantitative advancements to EPCL's PVC production process and the Quality function. It will also enhance the knowledge base and avail-

ability of technical experts for EPCL's Techno-Commercial functions. Using these facilities, EPCL may also provide technical and management consultancy, and advisory services, to PVC finished goods manufacturers for optimized performance and innovative solutions.

For capability enhancement of UET students and faculty, EPCL will also assist students with pragmatic final year projects, will collaborate with the UET to develop and improve its curriculum, including subject matter specific to polymer industries, to ensure its alignment with the industry needs.

According to Jahangir Piracha, CEO of EPCL, "We are continuously striving to introduce new market development and awareness initiatives that enhance sustainability in the construction sector. This strategic alliance with the UET has been envisioned to promote research and development in Pakistan so that the polymer sector can evolve with innovation. Moreover, we aspire to enhance the skills of our talented youth, support their learning and development, and make them more marketable for the industry."

### Lost and Found

I have lost my car i.e (Suzuki Cultus, Silver Color, Model 2020, Registration No ARV-453, Engine No. 163286, Chasis No 10063267) NOC for transfer from bank to my own name somewhere. Whoever finds it shall inform or send it to my address:

**Sania Rubab,**  
House No 456, St. 68,  
Sector G-11/2  
Islamabad,  
Ph: 0302-5016464

**Islamabad**  
23° - 38° Clear

**SERVICES**  
**Namaz Timings**  
Fajr ..... 3:21 am  
Zohr ..... 12:12 pm  
Asr ..... 5:12 pm  
Maghrib ..... 7:22 pm  
Isha ..... 9:04 pm

**EMERGENCY**  
Rescue (Police) ..... 15  
Bomb Disposal ..... 15  
Fire Services Rawalpindi/  
Islamabad ..... 1122 & 16  
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  
MH ..... 561116  
Cantt Hospital ..... 9270907-11  
DHQ ..... 5556311-4  
RGH ..... 9290301-7  
Holy Family ..... 9290322-7  
PIMS ..... 9261170-79  
Polyclinic ..... 9218300-09  
Shifa International ..... 4603666

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

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

*Risks of nicotine addiction among youth escalating: Sanaullah*

**Staff Reporter**

ISLAMABAD: Sanaullah Ghuman, General Secretary and Director Operations, Pakistan National Heart Association (PANAH), said that the tobacco industry has been using innovative tactics to sell its products everywhere. The government urged to impose an immediate ban on the new nicotine pouches to protect the youth from diseases. Ghuman further said that nicotine pouches are manufactured in Scandinavian countries that are now making their way into countries with large young population like Pakistan. It is pertinent to mention here that nicotine pouches were banned in Russia due to serious health repercussions specially among children and youth.

# University of Tehran ready to make IT park in Islamabad: Iranian envoy

*Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran Seyyed Mohammad Ali Hosseini called on Federal Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training Rana Tanveer Hussain*

**Naveed Ahmad Khan**

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Pakistan Seyyed Mohammad Ali Hosseini called on the Federal Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training Rana Tanveer Hussain here on Wednesday. Senior officials of the ministry including Secretary Education Ms. Naheed S. Durrani also attended the meeting in addition representatives from HEC and NAVTTC.

Rana Tanveer welcomed the Iranian delegation and said that the two countries have cultural, linguistic and people to people love for each other. He said that Persian language is the mother of Urdu and has deep roots in Pakistan. Rana Tanveer discussed exchange of expertise and knowledge regarding Vocational and Technical Training. He said that the two countries can benefit from the experience of each other.

Rana Tanveer welcomed exchange of teachers and students to further mutual cooperation especially for Skilled Vocational Training.



He said that there is significant potential in cooperation between the two countries. He said that Pakistan can learn from the expertise of Iran in Engineering, Nanotechnology and Aerospace technology. Minister said that Pakistan is willing to offer scholarships to Iranian students in order to enhance mutual collaboration. Seyyed Mohammad Ali Hosseini said that People of Iran have deep affiliation with Pakistan. He said that people

have a lot of respect for Allama Iqbal as numerous bridges and roads are named after him. He said that Pakistan is brotherly country for Iran. He said that University to University cooperation and Technical Institution to Technical Institution collaboration is the way forward. He said that the University of Tehran is willing to make a Technology/IT park in Islamabad. He said that MoUs should be expedited between Pakistani and

Iranian Universities to enhance exchanges. H.E. said that Iran and Pakistan have a border of 900 km and both countries should take advantage of that to strengthen each other.

Rana Tanveer Hussain said that the future is in Vocational Training of the population of Pakistan. He said that it provides the best opportunity to the people to find jobs. He said that Pakistan and Iran through NAVTTC should exchange teachers and students to learn from the expertise of each other.

Rana Tanveer praised the current governments efforts in modernising the education system of Pakistan. Federal Minister thanked the Ambassador and highlighted the cordial and friendly relations between the two countries since 1947. Rana Tanveer said that Iran was the first country to recognize the state of Pakistan. Minister said that the two countries have shared history and literature. He said that there is a bonhomie between the two people. He stated that the two countries should enhance and fine tune their mutual relation.

## Self-sufficiency in agriculture foremost goal: Dr. Ghulam

*The Chairman PARC gets farewell on his retirement from PARC service*

**Staff Reporter**

ISLAMABAD: Addressing to a ceremony organized by employees association of PARC (EAPARC) held at NARC Auditorium in the honor of Dr. Ghulam Muhammad Ali Chairman PARC on his retirement from PARC service, he said that owing to the hard-work of these scientists Pakistan is now self-sufficient in major food crops like wheat, rice, sugarcane, maize etc. Our scientists are always ready to take any challenge faced by the agricultural sector in Pakistan. Dy. Director General NARC, Dr. Shahzad Asad, Secretary PARC Muhammad Ishaq

including a large number of PARC's scientists / employees were also present on the occasion.

Speaking in the event, Deputy Director General NARC Dr. Shahzad Asad expressed that under the patronage and leadership of Dr. Ghulam Muhammad Ali, PARC has played its outstanding role in agricultural research and development. Together with the scientists of PARC, we will be engaged in achieving the agricultural goals of the country under modern agricultural research techniques so that the country can achieve the level of R&D at par with international research organizations.

## US provides mobile labs to strengthen Pakistan's COVID-19 Testing

**Staff Reporter**

ISLAMABAD: The US government has donated four mobile laboratories to the National Institute of Health (NIH) in order to diagnose COVID-19 and other communicable diseases, especially in remote locations where access to testing may be limited.

The mobile laboratories, provided through the United State Agency for International Development (USAID) were formally received by the Federal Health Minister Abdul Qadir Patel. The ceremony in this regard was held at NIH attended by U.S Ambassador to Pakistan Donald Blome, Federal Health Minister, Abdul Qadir Patel along with other officials from the federal Ministry of Health and NIH.

The state-of-the-art facilities will improve the accuracy of diagnoses, reduce testing turn-around time, and better protect healthcare workers. It was stated

that USAID funded global health chain supply program and Implementing parameter Chemomics International Inc.

On the occasion, Ambassador Blome commended them for their effective response to the COVID-19 pandemic and highlighted Pakistan's successful vaccination campaigns to quickly inoculate its citizens. He commented on the success of the U.S-Pakistan collaboration to strengthen health care systems as part of the 75 years of bilateral relations between the two countries. Today's donation supports this partnership by providing Pakistan with new tools to respond quickly to future threats.

"These mobile laboratories will strengthen the diagnostic capacity of the provincial health departments," Ambassador Blome said. "They will enable the government to respond quickly and effectively in hard-to-reach remote areas during emergencies, or an outbreak and epidemic."

## Health Corner

### COVID-triggered immune response and brain

ISLAMABAD: A study from the National Institutes of Health describes the immune response triggered by COVID-19 infection that damages the brain's blood vessels and may lead to short- and long-term neurological symptoms. In a study published in Brain, researchers from the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS) examined brain changes in nine people who died suddenly after contracting the virus.

The scientists found evidence that antibodies — proteins produced by the immune system in response to viruses and other invaders — are involved in an attack on the cells lining the brain's blood vessels, leading to inflammation and damage. Consistent with an earlier study from the group, SARS-CoV-2 was not detected in the patients' brains, suggesting the virus was not infecting the brain directly.

Understanding how SARS-CoV-2 can trigger brain damage may help inform development of therapies for COVID-19 patients who have lingering neurological symptoms.

"Patients often develop neurological complications with COVID-19, but the underlying pathophysiological process is not well understood," said Avindra Nath, M.D., clinical director at NINDS and the senior author of the study. "We had previously shown blood vessel damage and inflammation in patients' brains at autopsy, but we didn't understand the cause of the damage. I think in this paper we've gained important insight into the cascade of events."

Dr. Nath and his team found that antibodies produced in response to COVID-19 may mistakenly target cells crucial to the blood-brain barrier. Tightly packed endothelial cells help form the blood-brain barrier, which keeps harmful substances from reaching the brain while allowing necessary substances to pass through. Damage to endothelial cells in blood vessels in the brain can lead to leakage of proteins from the blood. This causes bleeds and clots in some COVID-19 patients and can increase the risk of stroke.

For the first time, researchers observed deposits of immune complexes — molecules formed when antibodies bind antigens (foreign substances) — on the surface of endothelial cells in the brains of COVID-19 patients. Such immune complexes can damage tissue by triggering inflammation.

The study builds on their previous research, which found evidence of brain damage caused by thinning and leaky blood vessels. They suspected that the damage may have been due to the body's natural inflammatory response to the virus.

To further explore this immune response, Dr. Nath and his team examined brain tissue from a subset of patients in the previous study. The nine individuals, age 24 to 73, were chosen because they showed signs of blood vessel damage in the brain based on structural brain scans. The samples were compared to those from 10 controls. The team looked at neuroinflammation and immune responses using immunohistochemistry, a technique that uses antibodies to identify specific marker proteins in the tissues.

As in their earlier study, researchers found signs of leaky blood vessels, based on the presence of blood proteins that normally do not cross the blood brain barrier. This suggests that the tight junctions between the endothelial cells in the blood brain barrier are damaged.

Dr. Nath and his colleagues found evidence that damage to endothelial cells was likely due to an immune response — discovering deposits of immune complexes on the surface of the cells. (Courtesy: Science Daily)

## Tree plantation campaign commences at IIUI

**Staff Reporter**

ISLAMABAD: A tree plantation campaign at the International Islamic University, Islamabad (IIUI) commenced here at the new campus on Wednesday that was inaugurated by Vice President Administration and Finance, Prof. Dr. N.B. Jumani by planting a sapling.

As many as 15000 plant saplings of indigenous fruit trees, flowering trees and other plants of medicinal and economic value will be planted in the new campus. IIU Clean & Green Program was initiated by Ecology & Biodiversity Laboratory of Department of Environmental Science, Faculty of Basic and Applied Sciences (FBAS) along with IIU Horticulture Section in collaboration and sponsorship by Environment and Mangrove Protection "SEMP" and Standard Chartered Bank "SCB".

On the occasion, Dr. N.B Jumani said there is a dire need to address

the environment related issues and we must be among the forward ranks to plant sapling to save nature. He urged the entire team of Department of Environmental Science and IIUI community to be active to plant indigenous fruit trees, flowering trees and other plants of medicinal and economic value. He also appreciated the enthusiasm about the current campaign "IIUI Clean & Green" of the Department of Environmental Science and emphasized that all of us should participate in this mega campaign to make Clean and Green Pakistan.

On the Occasion, Dean Faculty of Basic and Applied sciences and a known expert on Environment and climate, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Irfan said that trees are important as they purify the climate. He said emerging trends of urbanization are contributing to pollution, and we need to revisit our priorities about climate. He said plantation is a sacred cause

# NPO's key initiative is "Improving Competitiveness" through SNP

*1st Productivity Movement of Pakistan: A way to Unlocking Economic Potential through Productivity and Competitiveness*

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: National Productivity Organization (NPO) is working under the Ministry of Industries & Production, Government of Pakistan as Liaison Office of the Asian Productivity Organization (APO), Japan. One of the NPO's key developmental initiative is "Improving Competitiveness through Sustainable National Productivity (SNP)"- launching first productivity movement in Pakistan. It is a PSDP funded project with an objective to achieve competitiveness through sustainable national productivity. Moreover, under Planning Commission's Strategic initiative of "Turn Around Pakistan", Among 7 Pillars of Turn around Pakistan, the pillar VI namely as "Improving National Competitiveness" has been assigned to NPO. It is aimed at "Improving Competitiveness through Enhanced Productivity, Innovation and Quality for Export led Growth".

NPO is also working as the member of Planning Commission's Working Group on "Reforming Policy Incentives for the Industrial Sectors" for preparation of "Three Year Rolling Growth Strategy (3YRGS) Agenda for Economic Diversification, Transformation and jobs-led Growth" comprises of the "Formulation of National Program on Targeted Productivity Enhancement", "Productivity Measurement System", and "Corresponding Productivity Based

Incentives to Various Segments of the Pakistan Economy".

To further elaborate the SNP project, keeping in view the international benchmarks and practices it has following four stages. (i) Awareness stage (ii) product identification, design and development stage (iii) implementation stage (iv) continuous improvement stage. The project is in progress now a days at first stage of awareness phase.

Key activities of awareness phase / stage of Improving Competitiveness through Sustainable National Productivity (SNP)" include activities such as Launch of Productivity Movement, Engagement of National/International Experts through APO Assistance, Productivity Portal, Productivity (Curriculum and Booklets) for Schools & Industry, National/ International Conference, Documentaries, Productivity (News Letter and Journal), Awareness Sessions, Seminars, and Trainings on Productivity Tools & Techniques, Online Courses, Print & Social Media Campaigns, Productivity Competitions (Poster, Article, Debate), Productivity Walk and day/weeks Celebration etc.

In year 2021-2022, In order to increase awareness among all stake holders, among category of general awareness 4021 individuals have been educated and been given awareness about the I concept of productivity. 1284 students of schools and technical institutes have been imparted educa-



tion focusing on productivity concept through various sessions spreading all over the Pakistan with a focused targeted audience of industrial workers, 217 industrial workers have been trained through renowned productivity experts on productivity tools and techniques and good practices. It is aimed at to spread awareness among 10,000 peoples, industrial training to 400 workers and educate 3000 students of technical schools and colleges on productivity concept.

Moreover, various productivity awareness tools are being used to spread awareness to inculcate the culture of productivity. SNP has

developed an online portal which is live now and is a knowledge hub to get awareness and support on the matters of productivity. Under this project, productivity week was celebrated. During this productivity week, walks in major cities (Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi, Quetta, Peshawar, Faisalabad and Multan) were conducted to promote the message, these walks were coupled with awareness sessions by renowned national productivity experts. Different productivity competition (poster, debate and article) was held.

Two booklets on productivity for industry and schools have been developed and are in printing phase where as

two curriculums have been developed / adopted and been reviewed by international productivity experts are also in printing and dissemination phase.

A productivity journal in collaboration with APO is in designing phase and the research work by Pakistani experts in the fields of productivity would be showcased in it

With a year full of productivity awareness activities, it is believed that with same enthusiasm support and synergy the SNP would continue its journey in current years to propel the next stages of the project

In its 2nd phase SNP would be dovetailed with National Productivity Master Plan which is being developed with the help of APO and Korean development institute. In this regards NPO has organized "Press Briefing on the Role / Importance and updates on 1st Productivity Movement of Pakistan (Awareness Phase). A way to Unlocking Economic Potential through Productivity and Competitiveness" in Islamabad Hotel.

CEO NPO, Muhammad Alamgir Chaudhry has briefed the Role and Importance of Productivity Movement of Pakistan. CEO also presents the SNP progress updates and achievements for the financial year 2021-2022 to the journalist and print media professionals.

CEO NPO, Muhammad Alamgir Chaudhry said that in this modern era of globalization, many developed

countries are moving towards Knowledge Based Economies (KBE) taking competitive edge by rapid improving their competitiveness and innovation capabilities through enabling environment for technological investment, human resource development, and business regulations covering good processes, procedures and systems.

The CEO, NPO also said that Pakistan is also recognized globally as a high potential economy but unfortunately in past many years, the country has not been able to utilize its potential and gain competitive advantage in global and regional market. The major reasons behind country's slow growth rates of output are lack of innovation, low level of investment, technological inefficiencies and limited R&D resulting in lower productivity and non-competitiveness. These competitive weaknesses highlighted in Global Competitiveness index 2019-World Economic Forum as Pakistan ranks 110 out of 141 countries due to low labor market efficiency (120), technology adoption (131), and higher education & training (125).

The CEO NPO, also shared that the Government of Pakistan is very much committed towards improving the economic landscape of Pakistan through focusing sustainable development approaches of increasing business competitiveness, investment facilitation, value addition, export promotion and import substitution.

Group Chairman/Chief Editor: **Almas Ayoub Sabir**  
 Vice Chairman: **Asim Nazir Ahmad**  
 Managing Editor: **Naveed Ahmad Khan**  
 Head Editorial Advisory Board: **Amjad Mehmood**  
 Bureau Chief Karachi: **Saleem Zaman Khan.**  
 (mszk786@gmail.com)  
 Bureau Chief Lahore: **Syed Afraz Ali Nazish**  
 (afrazalishah@gmail.com)  
 Islamabad Office: **Rose Plaza, I-8 Markaz.**  
 Karachi office: **Flat No.C.3.A.One Comfort, Block No 11.**  
**Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Main Rashid Minhas Road.**  
 Lahore Office: **7-E,Samanberg, Johar Town.**  
 Email: **spokesmanislamabad@gmail.com**  
 Whatsapp: **0346-5008408**

**IS Americans fret**

**Democracy under attack in the US**

**George Soros**

The United States has been a constantly evolving democracy ever since it was founded in 1776, but its survival as a democracy is now gravely endangered. A set of loosely interconnected developments at home and abroad is responsible for this crisis. From abroad, the US is threatened by regimes led by Xi Jinping in China and Vladimir Putin's Russia who want to impose a self-styled form of government on the world. But the threat to the US from the domestic enemies of democracy is even greater. They include the current Supreme Court, which is dominated by far-right extremists, and Donald Trump's Republican Party, which placed those extremists on the Court.

What qualifies the majority of the Court as extremists? It is not merely their decision to overturn Roe v. Wade, the landmark 1973 case that recognised a woman's right to choose whether to give birth. What qualifies them as extremists is the arguments they used to justify their decision and the indications they gave of how far they might be willing to go in carrying out those arguments.

Justice Samuel Alito, the author of the majority opinion, based his ruling on the assertion that the Fourteenth Amendment protects only those rights that were generally recognised in 1868, when the amendment was ratified. But this argument endangers many other rights that have been recognised since then.

Carried to its logical conclusion, this line of reasoning could even allow states to ban inter-racial marriage, as some did until 1967. It is also clear that this Court intends to mount a frontal attack on the executive branch. One of the most consequential rulings of the Court's just-completed term denied the Environmental Protection Agency the authority to issue regulations needed to combat climate change. It doesn't take long to find the common denominator in the Court's recent decisions: support causes promoted by Trump's Republican Party and weaken or outlaw causes favoured by the Democratic Party. Consider gun laws. The Court's radical wing listens closely to the pro-gun lobby.

So, though a recent epidemic of mass shootings created such a national outcry that even some Republicans supported a new federal gun law, the Court compensated the Nation-

al Rifle Association for the loss by striking down a longstanding New York law that placed strict restrictions on carrying concealed handguns (New York State immediately passed new gun laws, that are likely to end up before the Supreme Court). The Supreme Court used to be among the most highly

respected institutions in the US. Through its recent decisions, the extremist majority has driven its approval rating to a historic low, and disapproval of the Court to new highs.

**There is only one way to rein in the Supreme Court: throw the Republican Party out of office in a landslide.**

The dissenting opinion in the case that overturned Roe flatly stated that the majority decision "undermines the court's legitimacy." Unfortunately, the minority is likely to remain in the minority for a long time, because the extremists are younger and hold a 6-3 majority. There is only one way to rein in the Supreme Court: throw the Republican Party out of office

in a landslide. That would allow Congress to protect through legislation the rights that had been entrusted to the protection of the Supreme Court. It is now clear that doing so was a big mistake. Congress must act, starting with protecting a woman's right to choose. If the filibuster must be amended to achieve that, so be it.

But when it comes to organising a landslide victory against the radicalised Republicans, opponents face almost insuperable obstacles. Republicans have not only stacked the Supreme Court and many lower courts with extremist judges. In states such as Florida, Georgia, and Texas, they have enacted a raft of laws that make voting very difficult. While these laws focus on disenfranchising African Americans, other minorities, and young voters generally, their ultimate goal is to help Republicans win elections. As a Florida federal judge recently wrote in striking down one of these laws, they were enacted "with the intent to restructure Florida's election system in ways that favour the Republican Party over the Democratic Party."

These laws would be bad enough if they only targeted who can vote. But Republicans are now going even further, by attacking the vote-count-

ing and election-certification process. From changing the law to make subversion of the electoral system easier, to recruiting believers in Trump's big lie that the 2020 election was stolen from him to oversee the process, we are watching Republicans attack our system of democracy from every angle. And here, too, the radical Supreme Court has done its part, gutting the federal Voting Rights Act and allowing naked partisan redistricting to weaken minority voting power.

Fortunately, I am not alone in claiming that the survival of democracy in the US is gravely endangered.

The American public has been aroused by the decision overturning Roe. But people need to recognise that decision for what it is: part of a carefully laid plan to turn the US into a repressive regime. We must do everything we can to prevent that. This fight ought to include many people who voted for Trump in the past. I am a supporter of the Democratic Party, but this is not a partisan issue. It is about re-establishing a functioning two-party political system which is at the core of American democracy.

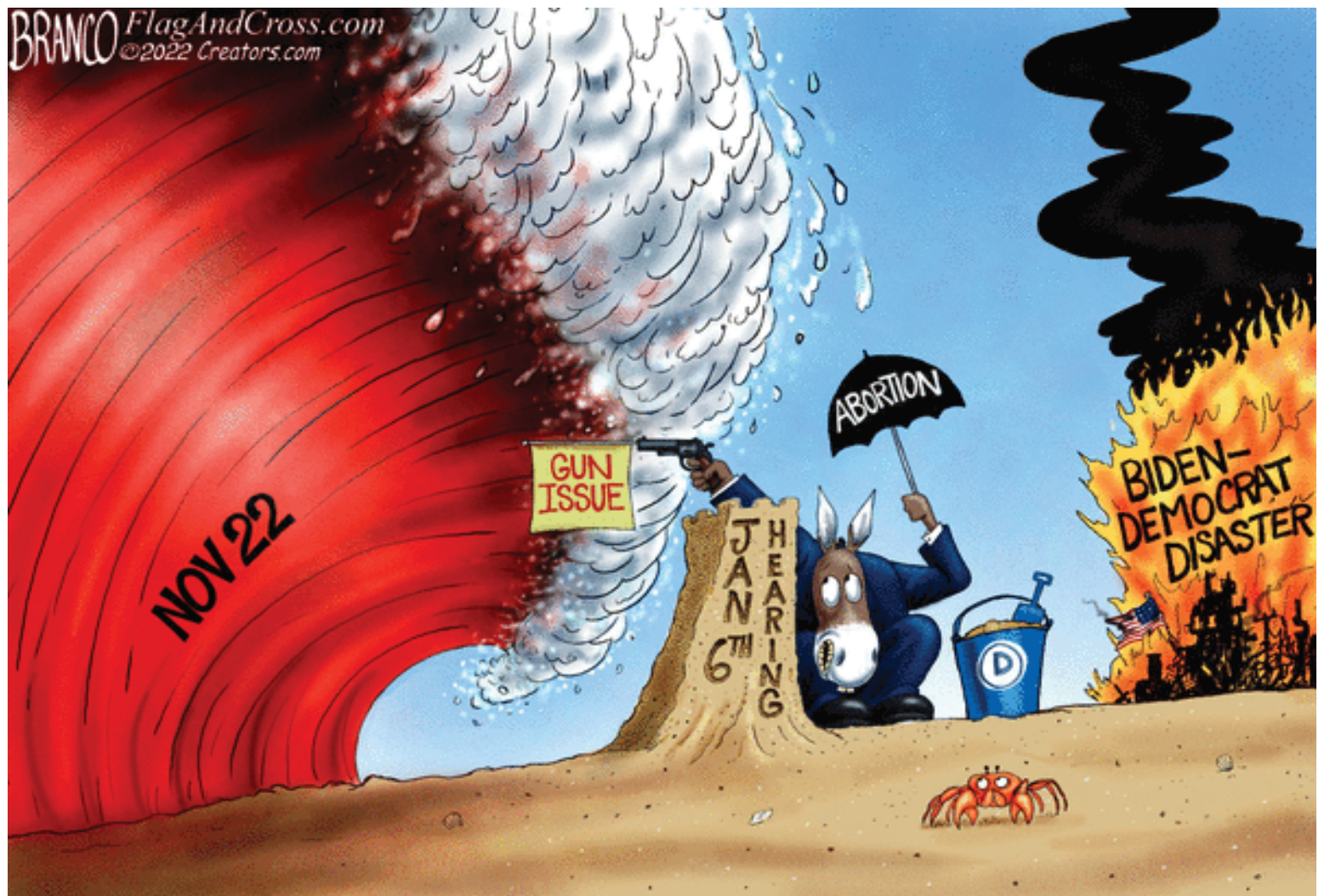
*The writer is Founder and Chair of the Open Society Foundations. Courtesy Gulf Times*

**Cutting edible import bill**

Pakistan's annual requirement of edible oil is about five million tons (MT) with approximately 16kg per capita use and most of its chunk is imported from Malaysia and Indonesia. In 2006 edible oil's import bill was only US\$ 615 million that jumped to US\$ 3.8 billion in 2022 with the country presently producing around six MT. If edible oil prices increase by five percent annually, the country's imports would further jump. In this situation, sunflower, olive, canola and other products would go beyond common man's reach.

Despite ecological diversity, suitable climate and vast fertile land, Pakistan is unfortunately among the lowest edible oil producing countries. Having only 20 percent domestic production of the total requirement, the country spends approximately US\$ 4 billion annually on import of edible oil to meet the pressing demand of its around 220 million population. Respective governments and policy makers could not fully benefit from over 4.4 million hectares fertile land suitable for cultivation of olive, sunflower, soybean, corn, canola and other oils. Spain was producing about 45 percent of world's total edible oil by utilizing 2.6 million hectare land. On the contrary, Pakistan despite having vast tracts of fertile land, was importing around 80 percent of the required commodity. It is welcoming that in recent years, the government realized this challenge and focused to fully utilize olive potential land in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Merged Areas, Balochistan, Punjab, Azad Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan through substantial plantation of edible oil plants and declared several areas as Olive Valleys. About 100,000 and 300,000 hectare land in Azad Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan is now being used for sunflower and canola cultivation respectively. Besides introducing edible oil policy and training of farmers, a five-year mega project 'Enhancement of Productivity of Oil Seeds' was launched in 2019-20 to promote edible oil farming. The first olive promotion project worth Rs 3.82 billion funded by the Government of Italy was launched on June 1, 2012 to cultivate oil seeds on over 1,500 hectare land. The project was handed over to Pakistan Agriculture Research Council (PARC) on February 12, 2012 and completed on June 30, 2015. To capitalize on this project, the Pakistan government launched 'Promotion of Olive Trees Cultivation on Commercial Scale (POTCCS)' project worth Rs 3.2 billion in 2015 for increasing production of edible oil. Thousands of olive grafting trees mostly of Italian variety planted under POTCCS could be seen on the mountains of Talash in Lower Dir, on way to Chitral.

The fertile land is mostly preferred for sunflowers' cultivation as it required less water than others. Sunflower is a cost-efficient crop with three months tenure. Farmers can easily earn Rs 200,000 to Rs 250,000 from one acre sunflower as compared to Rs 130,000 to Rs 150,000 from one acre olive. Progressive farmers had started shifting to commercial cultivation of edible oil crops in Pakistan. At present eight to ten varieties are under cultivation while research on around 50 more varieties are underway to ascertain their weather adaptability and climate change resistance. A four-year 'Edible Oil Seeds' PSDP project has also been launched across the country with 50% shared financing by Federal and Provincial Governments. Around 70 million wild olive plants are discovered in merged tribal districts and in Malakand, Hazara, Peshawar, Kohat, Karak, Nowshera, Hangu and Chitral districts. It means, these areas are suitable for olive cultivation. Over 1.2 million olive plants on 1,300 hectares are planted in KP and each tree produces three kilogram oil and olive tree starts production in five years and continues with it till decades. A farmer can earn Rs 450,000 from 1,500 kg olive.



**Migrants & risks of treacherous journeys**

**Kerry Boyd Anderson**

Recent weeks have highlighted the dangers that migrants face when attempting to travel across borders without legal documentation. In Texas last week, at least 53 people died in a tractor-trailer that lacked a functioning cooling unit the worst known case of deaths from a single human trafficking incident in modern US history. Also last week, at least 30 migrants were left dead or missing after Doctors Without Borders rescued others from a sinking boat in the Mediterranean Sea. Around the same time, Libyan officials found 20 migrants who had died of dehydration in the desert near the border with Chad. The deaths in Texas and the Mediterranean included men, women and children.

Around the world, millions of people migrate within and between countries. Even those who do so with legal documentation face some risks, including potential exploitation. Those who migrate without legal permission face far more risks, but they continue to attempt journeys anyway. Some countries have tried to harden borders and take other measures to stop irregular migration, but many migrants are not deterred. The International Organization for Migration's Missing Migrants Project has recorded 49,353 migrant deaths and disappearances since 2014, though the actual number could be much higher.

The top cause of death is drowning, followed by environmental exposure, violence, sickness and transportation accidents. The central Mediterranean route, moving people from North Africa to Italy or

Malta, is the most dangerous in the world; combined with the eastern and western Mediterranean routes, this sea alone accounts for more than 24,000 deaths and disappearances since 2014. Migration is a global phenomenon. After the Mediterranean, Africa is the second-deadliest region for migration, followed by the Americas, Asia, Western Asia and Europe, according to the Missing Migrants Project.

Traffickers sometimes hold and abuse migrants while demanding more funds from their families and some migrants are forced to work for no pay. Many migrants exhaust all their savings or their families' savings to pay human traffickers to help them reach their destination. Despite these sums, some fail to reach their destination. If they succeed, they face the threat of deportation if discovered. Irregular migration seldom results in a stable and secure life. So why do millions of people still attempt irregular migration, all around the world, despite the costs and risks? Some potential migrants may not be fully aware of the risks.

However, in today's globalized world, with access to information and personal networks that often include people who have migrated before them, many migrants know the risks and choose to continue anyway. Many experts who work with migrants say they are at least generally aware of the risks, and some migrants repeat journeys they have previously undertaken. The reality is that the risks of the journey are often equal to or less than the risks that migrants face at home. For example, many of the migrants attempting to cross from Mexico into the US including some of those who died in the tractor-trailer are from Central American countries with extremely high rates of homicide and violence.

At home, many face death threats, violence, sexual violence, racketeering and being forced to join gangs. For many children and adults, these threats at home are certain risks; in comparison, the risks of migration are no worse, and a new country at least offers some hope.

Many migrants are fleeing war, persecution and extreme violence; therefore, violence on the journey seems comparatively manageable. Many migrants who have attempted dangerous sea crossings say they knew that they might die onboard overly packed, small boats in large seas, but they also knew they might die at home. At least they saw hope for a better life if they reached their destination.

Other migrants travel in search of opportunity more than escape. These economic migrants are likely to have a lower tolerance for potential death and violence. However, many young people around the world see no opportunity to provide for their families or buy a car or house let alone to achieve larger aspirations if they remain at home. Even those who do not face extreme risks at home will often embrace the risks of migration in the hope of a better life for themselves and their families.

Countries that try to put up barriers and raise the risks will mostly fail to deter migrants who are fleeing far worse situations at home. Many people do not want to leave their homes and families but see no other choice. Any effective solution to the problems of migration will have to accept that reality, as well as the global nature of migration. Helping people to find security and opportunity at home should be the ultimate goal.

*The writer is former deputy director for advisory with Oxford Analytica. Courtesy Arab News*

**Meat to feed!**

We are not entitled to the best creation of 'Ashraf-ul-Makhloqat' on the planet earth, if we don't feel the pangs of starvation of destitute. Every year, millions of sacrificial animals are slaughtered on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha, to commemorate the unprecedented and extraordinary sacrifice offered by Syedna Ibrahim (AS) and his son Syedna Ismael (AS). The 10th of Dul-Haj is a red letter day in the history of Islam. The great event is monumentalized to pay obeisance to the magnanimous father-son duo of prophets (AS) and their complete submission to the commandments of Allah (SWT). Syedna Ibrahim (AS) didn't bother to butcher his son, to fulfill the wish of his Lord. Ibrahim (AS) bore the palm in the most difficult trial, and lived greatly up to the expectations of his Creator and Sustainer.

His ritual is indeed very dear to Allah (SWT) because His slave and prophet put his dearest possession at stake, at the beck and call of Allah (SWT). Eid-ul-Azha is a major religious festival that brings unique pleasure to the Muslims and lesson of utmost sacrifice but its divine purpose is not served at all if the poor remain deprived of their share in the sacrificial meat. Every year, the question of how to distribute the meat of sacrificed animals be it from a cow, sheep or goat, for Eid al-Adha or the Feast of Sacrifice, comes to the forefront once again. Every year, we see people making the same mistakes over and over again. We commit the mistakes by forgetting the actual essence of this festival.

We ignore the real cause of slaughtering animals and we rather look at our rights. Our societal customs have often corrupted the noble motives and objectives; much of the sacrificial meat is exchanged between rich relatives and the destitute families remain deprived of their right bestowed upon them by the Divine commandment. Despite skyrocketing prices of the sacrificial animals, millions of Muslims across the globe and two million Hajj pilgrims offer sacrifice on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha every year. The rich and affluent believers are required to sacrifice best possible animals in the way

of Allah so that the poor ones, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, could eat meat to their fill at least once a year. Unfortunately we have virtues at discount and vices at a premium. Our fathers and forefathers used to win the pleasure of Allah (SWT). But, we prefer our bloating bellies and a chunk of favorite friends and relatives over the divine appeasement. Next door neighbors, poor and needy are often ignored when we distribute the sacrificial meat. Savory foods and drinks undoubtedly give some good time to our taste buds, but, an act of sincere charity solaces rusty souls. Unlike our ancestors, we don't let our neighbors to peep into our cold stores via freezers and refrigerators.

Many people preserve meat through some traditional ways which ultimately spoils, but, don't allow starved to have it. It is against the basic spirit and motive of the grand holy sacrifice of Eid-ul-Adha. If I recall some memories of my forefathers they would distribute most of the meat, and would keep a short end of the stick for themselves. But, we don't let our braziers to cool down. We grab the share of our neighbors. We have forgotten the basic tenets of sacrifice. Generally sacrificial meat is divided in three equal shares for self, relatives and the needy. Many people distribute one third of the meat among the needy, but today mostly people distribute what is left after best or the worst part is assigned to the poor especially for those who come at our doors or wait at their homes for meat to eat.

It is not a sin to consume our own legitimate share. We can taste our favorite foods and cuisines, but not at the cost of others rights. Let's prefer divine pleasure over the flavor of mouth. Let's not hem and haw about the distribution of the sacrificial meat. Let's pledge this year to have your animal slaughter and distribute its meat not just to eat but to maximum feed. Allah (SWT) will surely reward us from his treasures here and hereafter, because the essence of Eid-ul-Azha is beyond sacrificing an animal and feasting.

*The writer is senior analyst and columnist and approachable at Marium.mirha@yahoo.com*



**Marium Rauf**



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

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
41,159.79	41,102.57
Day's High	Day's Low:
41,334.90	41,102.57
Index Value	Change
1,970,562,114	+57.22
Percentage	Time
+0.14%	6 Jul, 2022 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
7,134.22	+107.58
Percentage	Time
+1.55%	6 Jul, 3:34 pm GMT+1

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
30,985.44	+11.56
Percentage	Time
+0.037%	6 Jul, 10:35 am GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
26,107.65	-315.82
Percentage	Time
-1.20%	6 Jul, 3:15 pm GMT+9

**Open Market Forex Rates**

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	139.81	141.06
Bahrain Dinar	548.93	553.43
Canadian Dollar	157.99	159.34
China Yuan	30.72	30.97
Danish Krone	28.46	28.81
Euro	213.5	217.5
Hong Kong Dollar	26.08	26.43
Indian Rupee	2.59	2.67
Japanese Yen	1.47	1.51
Kuwaiti Dinar	671.7	676.7
Malaysian Ringgit	46.37	46.82
New Zealand \$	126.79	127.99
Norwegians Krone	20.76	21.06
Omani Riyal	536.79	541.29
Qatari Riyal	56.22	56.72
Saudi Riyal	54.5	55.3
Singapore Dollar	146.76	148.06
Swedish Korona	19.77	20.07
Swiss Franc	213.04	214.79
Thai Bhat	5.94	6.04
U.A.E Dirham	55.7	56.5
UK Pound Sterling	248	251
US Dollar	206	209.5

# UK intends to double bilateral trade up to £ 7b with Pakistan

Commercial Counsellor says UK was uniquely placed to support Pakistan in transforming its economy

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: UK is the third largest global trading partner of Pakistan and is keen to double its bilateral trade up to £ 7 billion with Pakistan in a few years to achieve mutual prosperity for both countries.

This was said by Mahesh Mishra, Counsellor and Group Head (Economic and Trade), British High Commission while addressing the business community during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI).

The Commercial Counsellor said that the UK was uniquely placed to support Pakistan in transforming its economy. He said that the UK is also 3rd largest investor in Pakistan and more investors want to explore Pakistan for JVs and investment. He said that around 1.6 million Pakistanis living in the UK are sending remittances of about USD 4.5 billion and providing important support to Pakistan's economy. He said that the UK has placed Pakistan in the "Enhanced Framework" to provide the same level of market access (preferential tariffs) for exports to the UK as were available to it under the EU's GSP Plus scheme. He



highlighted the UK's development support to Pakistan in cooperation with the World Bank Group and Asian Development Bank for its economic reform programmes. He said that he would love to work with the private sector of Pakistan to further promote bilateral trade ties between the two countries.

Speaking at the occasion, Muhammad

Shakeel Munir, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that given the strength of Pakistan and UK, their bilateral trade is still below their actual potential which can be improved with strong mutual efforts of private sectors of both countries. He said that Pakistan is an attractive market for business & investment and stressed that the

investors of the UK should come to Pakistan with technology transfer to capitalize on these opportunities. He emphasized for frequent exchange of trade delegations and participation in each other's exhibitions to explore new areas of mutual cooperation between Pakistan and UK. He said that both countries are doing trade in limited items and they should focus on diversification of trade to achieve better results. He also highlighted the opportunities of JVs and investment in CPEC projects for UK investors.

Jamshaid Akhtar Sheikh Senior Vice President, Muhammad Faheem Khan Vice President ICCI, Mian Shaukat Masud, Zafar Bakhtawari & Shaban Khalid former Presidents ICCI, Aamir Hussain, Ashraf Farzand, Hamayun Kabir, Sheikh Muhammad Ejaz & Akhtar Hussain, Executive Members ICCI also spoke at the occasion and offered useful suggestions to improve bilateral trade and economic relations between Pakistan and UK. They urged for enhancing cooperation in marble & granite, pharmaceutical, steel, textiles, tourism, aviation and other sectors to further strengthen economic ties between the two countries.

# AgriTech report signifies use of tech to boost 25+ million livelihoods

Telenor Pakistan, Tabadlab and the GSMA jointly unveil the report to carve out the future of agriculture in the country

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Advancing its ambition to further innovation and empower the agriculture sector, Telenor Pakistan, in collaboration with Tabadlab and the GSMA, has unveiled a report, 'AgriTech: Crafting Pakistan's Journey to Impact'. The report identifies existing challenges to the sector and evaluates the impact that AgriTech will have on accelerating growth. The authors find that adopting modern agricultural techniques and targeted AgriTech interventions can boost national outputs and improve socioeconomic outcomes.

The report launch event was held at Telenor Pakistan's 345 Campus in Islamabad. Ahsan Iqbal, Federal Minister for Planning and Development, attended the event as the chief guest, while management and participants from Telenor Pakistan, the GSMA and Tabadlab were also present.

The AgriTech report combines



study and insights from the GSMA and Tabadlab's Centre for Digital Transformation to carve the ideal path forward for Pakistan's agricultural sector. It highlights how technology and digitalisation boost the nation's crop yields. The report highlights the importance of aligning public and private sector approaches towards agritech for increased adoption. In addition, the report shows how agritech operates at the intersection of the technology and agriculture ecosystems, making it essential to understand and analyse drivers and trends of digital technologies as means to unpack agritech in

Pakistan. Delivering his keynote at the launch, Ahsan Iqbal, Federal Minister for Planning and Development, commented, "In this age, technology and innovation are the most significant game-changers that are redefining the dynamics of the agriculture sector. Technology enables farmers to become more knowledgeable and competitive, transforming Pakistan's agricultural landscape. This report will further empower the farmers of Pakistan in breaking barriers and revolutionising the Agri sector. Telenor Pakistan is a critical stakeholder in bringing inno-

vation and learning on digitalisation from Norway, and I look forward to its talented workforce playing a pivotal role in a brighter Pakistan".

Speaking at the report launch, Telenor Pakistan CEO Irfan Wahab Khan stated, "The report presents the blueprint for a better-performing agriculture sector that can result in higher yields for farmers and have an impact of up to USD 10 billion on the nation's GDP. We know there is an eagerness to make the digital shift, thanks to the immense success of Khushaal Zamindaar in guiding farmers with data-driven best practices in farming. There is also an opportunity for agritech services to become entry points for farmers to become financially included, given that currently, they constitute less than 30%. So, the next step should be to further improve Agritech adoption throughout the country and fortify an industry that employs 40% of the nation's labour force."



RCCI President Ch. Nadeem A Rauf presenting chamber memento to Muhammad Naseer Director General TDAP Islamabad during his visit to RCCI.

## Digital Lending SECP cautions Digital Lending NBFCs of regulatory action

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has cautioned digital lending NBFCs of regulatory intervention, if full disclosure and fair business practices are not ensured by the industry as a whole.

SECP called a zoom meeting of the chief executives of NBFCs engaged in digital lending to discuss recent media reports about exorbitant interest rates, inadequate disclosures, and coercive collection practices, purportedly being resorted

to by lending platforms. During the meeting, SECP advised the digital lending NBFCs to adopt best lending practices, ensure full disclosures and fair treatment of borrowers, avoid excessive pricing, deploy a robust complaint resolution mechanism, and ensure privacy protection and data security. The lenders were informed that SECP does not want to stifle this nascent industry with excessive regulatory burden, but would expect the industry to itself practice caution and develop standards that protect borrowers through adequate disclosure.

# Climate change becomes major threat to food security

Getting wheat for rice can save billions of dollars, says Mian Zahid Hussain

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance and Former Provincial Minister Mian Zahid Hussain on Wednesday said climate change has become a major threat to Pakistan's national security and food security.

Despite the severe water shortage in the country, more than half of the water is being wasted which must be stopped, he said. Mian Zahid Hussain said that foreign companies which are interested in supply-

ing wheat to Pakistan are buying rice worth billions from Pakistan and if the barter system is adopted, valuable foreign exchange can be saved.

Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that despite being an agricultural country, Pakistan imported \$12 billion worth of wheat, pulses, cotton, etc. last year, but not enough attention is being paid to increasing local production, which is astonishing.

He said that domestic resources do not allow the repair of the irrigation system

which is in a shambles therefore so foreign investment in this sector is the only option for which incentives, diplomacy, and better security, must be adopted.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that Pakistan is very dependent on the irrigation system but the condition of irrigation infrastructure is pitiful which needs to be improved on a war footing so as to improve agricultural production, ensure food security and prosperity of the farmers.

He noted that the irrigation system provides at least 40 million acres of water but half

of which is wasted which could fill many dams like Tarbela and Mangla. The flow of Indus and its tributaries have been 151,800 cusecs this year as against the last five-year average of 264,000 cusecs; the average storage of water in dams this year has been 148,000 acre-feet as against the average of 2.4 million acre-feet in the last ten years, he informed.

Such a severe shortage of water is a matter of grave concern and a sign of impending famine, he said adding that Pakistan loses 20 billion dollars of water every year and the water situation may worsen in the future therefore, immediate and effective measures are needed to save and store water.

# ACCA's new report highlights lessons learned from pandemic

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The realities of senior public sector finance leaders' management of the COVID-19 pandemic are shared in a new report from ACCA (the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants) and CA ANZ (Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand).

Published in Leading recovery: the evolving role of senior finance leadership in the public sector, attendees at various global roundtables identified three major areas where the public sector faces difficulties in the years ahead: recruiting and retaining finance professionals, preparing for reducing budgets for public services and adapting to wider societal changes.

Looking back, they reveal how

professional accountants led with agility to enable their organisations to support governments' aims of saving lives and protecting livelihoods. Increased spending, streamlined decision-making processes and better integration of the finance function epitomised the work of senior finance leaders and their teams during this time.

Building on the experience of the pandemic, ACCA and CA ANZ say there are six key lessons for public sector finance leaders to focus on. They need to transform systems to build organisational resilience and make better use of data. They must rethink leadership approaches, to empower staff and provide visible leadership. And they need to ensure their organisations adapt to new ways of working to focus on purpose, then place and break

down barriers. ACCA and CA ANZ have also identified an 'ABCD' of skills which public sector finance leaders of the future will need to develop: adaptability, business sense, communication, and determination.

Commenting on the report, ACCA's head of Pakistan, Assad Hameed Khan says: 'It's crucial to reflect on what senior public sector finance leaders, working at different levels in different countries, have learnt from the crisis and how those lessons can be applied in the future. This timely new report looks ahead to the future challenges public sector finance leaders will face and the key future skills required to succeed.'

Public financial management reforms in Pakistan, of which ACCA continues to be part, have

been gaining momentum both in terms of existing and future public financial management systems as well as human capital development and capacity building. This report is definitely a must-read for public sector finance leader and professionals in Pakistan.'

Helen Brand OBE, chief executive of ACCA says: 'It's very heartening to read the recollections of these public sector finance leaders who remained so dedicated to their organisations, their customers and clients during the pandemic's turbulence. They are well prepared for the future, but they are also not complacent and see the clear need to learn continuously.'

Ainslie van Onselen, Chief Executive of CA ANZ adds: 'Our report's ABCD framework can help aspiring finance leaders in the public sector

to ensure they broaden their horizons, from the traditional tasks of a finance professional to a wider organisational perspective. This breadth and depth helped leaders during the pandemic and prepares for future resilience too.'

At the roundtables, members of ACCA and CA ANZ also commented on the value of their professional bodies to help them understand the 'basics' and develop their knowledge in their careers through continuing professional development (CPD).

Helen and Ainslie jointly conclude: 'Professional accountants have a wider set of skills beyond technical knowledge, and bring strong strategic advice to support the organisations they serve; these skills can be developed and refined through experience and reflection.'

## SNGPL declares profit before tax of Rs15.84b for FY 2020-21

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: During the year ended June 30, 2021, SNGPL has earned profit before tax of Rs. 15.84 billion, profit after tax of Rs. 10.99 billion and EPS of Rs. 17.32 as compared to profit before tax of Rs. 8.42 billion, profit after tax of Rs. 5.99 billion and EPS of Rs. 9.46 during the corresponding period of last year. Based on the declared profit, the Company has proposed a final cash dividend of 50% (in addition of interim cash dividend at the rate of Rs. 2.00 per share of Rs. 10/- each i.e. 20% already paid) for FY 2020-21.

Some of the significant factors which helped the Company achieve the results are set out below: Decrease in UFG percentage from 12.32% to 8.60% reducing UFG disallowance from Rs. 11.7 billion in FY 2019-20 to Rs. 3.4 billion during the year ended June 30, 2021. The substantial reduction in UFG was made possible due to concerted efforts of the Board and the Management in setting an ambitious target for UFG reduction and achieving tangible results in respect of them. Re-negotiation of finance costs on the borrowing facilities coupled with reduction in interest rates by SBP helped Company reduce the finance cost by over Rs 8 billion.

Moreover, SNGPL has also declared its quarterly results for the first quarter ended September 30, 2021. During the period under review, the Company has earned profit before tax amounting to Rs 4.27 billion, profit after tax of Rs. 3.03 billion and EPS of Rs. 4.78 against a profit before tax amounting to Rs 4.47 billion, profit after tax of Rs. 3.18 billion and EPS of Rs. 5.01 for the corresponding period.

Despite all the economic challenges and financial constraints, the Company has not only maintained its pace but is accelerating its momentum and is confident of promising results in future. It is considered that the results have been achieved by timely completion of targets of infrastructure development and continuous focus of the Board of Directors on various initiatives taken by the Company. Management and staff of the Company are confident that performance of the Company will further enhance in the years ahead.

