



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ
نبی کریم صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے فتح مکہ کے دن فرمایا اب ہجرت (مکہ سے مدینہ کے لیے) باقی نہیں رہی، البتہ حسن نیت اور جہاد باقی ہے۔ اس لیے جب تمہیں جہاد کے لیے بلا یا جائے تو فوراً نکل جاؤ۔
(صحیح بخاری، حدیث نمبر 3077)

Barkat Rice Mills (Pvt) Limited

Ayaz Sadiq, Salman to participate in electioneering: Marriyum

Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb says both the PML-N leaders Sardar Ayaz Sadiq and Khawaja Salman Rafique had resigned from their respective ministries to participate in the election campaign. They have resigned in line with the Election Commission of Pakistan's code of conduct, the minister said in a news statement. She said the by-polls were scheduled to be held in their constituencies shortly.



I resign from minister's office on personal reasons: Ayaz Sadiq

Federal Minister Ayaz Sadiq says due to my personal reasons, I am unable to continue holding the office. I would continue to work for the country and the party with the best of my abilities.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

President pays tribute to Madra-e-Millat

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Aif Alvi on Saturday while paying homage to the great contributions of Madra-e-Millat Mohtarma Fatima Jinnah, said that the entire nation saluted her for her remarkable struggle during the Pakistan Movement. In a message on her 55th death anniversary, the president said that Fatima Jinnah's full support to the Founder of Pakistan, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah further intensified Pakistan Movement. Her leadership role in politics also encouraged Pakistani women, he said, adding Fatima Jinnah looked after her ailing brother in the best possible way. The president said Fatima Jinnah's contributions would always be remembered.

Health hazards

LAHORE: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Saturday here chaired a high-level meeting regarding the cleanliness drive on the occasion of Eidul Azha.



Photo: PID

Untraceable numbers People receiving threatening calls: Asad

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) central leader Asad Umar said Friday that people including women having no political background are receiving threats from untraceable phone calls. Asad Umar made the statement while talking to ARY News programme Sawal Yeh Hai. He said that women who have no political background are among those people who received threats from untraceable phone numbers. The PTI central leader was unaware of the mystery of 'unblock phone'. When questioned about it, Umar said that he will ask Imran Khan about the story behind 'unblock phone'. The politician said that the establishment has always played a political role in Pakistan. Regarding Fawad Chaudhry's statement, he said, "Fawad Chaudhry told the reality regarding the Rana Sanaulah case. The case was filed by Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) against Sanaulah. Questions had also been raised in the federal cabinet meeting at that time regarding the case, however, it was not a political case." Asad Umar said that the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) is acting partially. He added that a petition was filed in the Sindh High Court (SHC) against the violations made by the ECP. Earlier in the day, Imran Khan, while addressing a public gathering in Khushab, censured the current rulers for torturing, threatening and jailing senior journalists including Ayaz Amir and Imran Riaz Khan just to spread fear and suppress voices against them. "15 FIRs were lodged against me and terrorism cases were filed against my team. People are being threatened via unknown telephone calls."

Pak-Bahrain close ties lead to deeper coop: PM

Felicitates Turkish President Erdogan on Eidul Azha

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday while reaffirming longstanding fraternal relations between Pakistan and Bahrain, highlighted that close ties provided significant opportunities for deeper bilateral cooperation in diverse areas, in particular promotion of bilateral trade and investment. The prime minister held a telephonic conversation with King Hamad bin Isa Al

Khalifa of the Kingdom of Bahrain and exchanged greetings on the auspicious occasion of Eid-ul-Adha. The prime minister also conveyed his

Nation salutes Fatima Jinnah for her remarkable contributions: PM

best wishes for the continued progress and prosperity of the brotherly people of the Kingdom of Bahrain. Reciprocating the warm eid greetings from the prime minister, King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa extended best wishes to the people of Pakistan on this occasion. He expressed his resolve to broaden mutual cooperation for the benefit of the people of the two countries. Pakistan and Bahrain enjoy long-standing cordial relations, rooted firmly in shared faith, mutual understanding and commonality of interests.

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday held a telephone call with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and on behalf of the government and people of Pakistan, conveyed warm greetings to the government and people of Türkiye on the happy occasion of Eid-ul-Adha. Reciprocating the warm Eid greetings from the Prime Minister, President Erdogan also extended best wishes to the government and people of Pakistan.

No differences within PML-Q: Ch Shujaat

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q) Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain on Saturday dispelled reports of any differences within the party and with Chaudhry Parvez Elahi. Talking to the media along with AJK President, Shujaat said that there could be ideological differences that could also occur between a father and a son, however, denied any split within the party. "Have I ever stated anything against Parvez Elahi or did he speak against me," Chaudhry Shujaat asked and dispelled rumours of any differences between them. He lamented that an unfortunate trend has been witnessed in the country's politics which saw audios being leaked to media on daily basis. "What image we are giving to the international world about our politics," the PML-Q chief said. While talking to media in Islamabad, he said that even a father and a son can have ideological differences. He regretted that in Pakistan "non-issues were made to look like issues". Chaudhry Shujaat asked whether somebody had ever heard him speak against his cousin and Punjab Assembly (PA) Speaker Chaudhry Parvez Elahi. "And neither has he (Parvez) ever uttered a word against me," he said. The PML-Q supremo said that he meets Parvez Elahi daily. While he added that the two will together offer



Eid-ul-Azha prayers. While talking about issues of Kashmir, he said, "we all should work together for Kashmir." According to a recent report, in a last-ditch effort to mend fences among family, PML-Q chief Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain summoned a meeting of members of his family including Chaudhry Parvez Elahi to decide on supporting PTI or PML-N. According to sources, at least five meetings were held to end differences among the family after Parvez Elahi announced support for the PTI and Chaudhry Shujaat extended his backing to PML-N-led federal government. "During the meeting, Parvez Elahi and Chaudhry Wajahat asked Salik Hussain to leave the coalition government so that the party remains intact and pursue the same line," they said, adding that during the first three meetings, Salik Hussain sought time to leave the government. In two later meetings, they said that Salik suggested that

Masood Khan meets Joe Biden



NEW YORK: Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States Masood Khan met President Joe Biden at Oval office, White House in Washington D.C. In a tweet, Masood Khan said Pakistan and the United States express the resolve to strengthen bilateral ties as they celebrate the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations. It was an honour to meet and greet President Joe Biden @POTUS at the Oval Office, White House, Pakistan and the US resolve to strengthen their ties, as they celebrate the 75th Anniversary of their diplomatic relations. #PakUS-At75. Agencies

People to enjoy relief in POL prices soon: Khurshheed

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Water Resources Syed Khurshheed Ahmad Shah says the masses will enjoy relief after stabilization of petroleum prices in the international market. Talking to a private television channel, he said that country is facing a difficult phase in the economic and other sectors.

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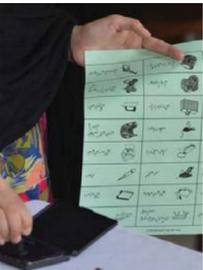
Muslim pilgrims gather atop Mount Arafat, southeast of the holy city of Mecca. This year, participation was capped at almost one million fully vaccinated worshippers. Photo media



Photo: PID

IS LG Polls- phase II

ECP seeks transportation plan from Sindh



Bureau Report

KARACHI: The election commission has demanded the transportation plan for the Sindh government as preparations for phase 2 of the local government elections in the province, has entered in its concluding stage.

The polling for remaining 16 districts of the province has been scheduled for July 24.

The local government elections will be held in Karachi and Hyderabad divisions' 16 districts including Dadu, Jamshoro, Thatta and Sujawal.

The election commission has presented its demand of over 5,000 vehicles for holding elections in the province, in a letter to the Chief Secretary of Sindh.

The electoral body has directed the government to submit its transportation plan for the 2nd phase of the local bodies election by July 14.

The vehicles will be required for sending electoral material and the staff to the polling stations.

The election commission has set up 9,000 polling stations for the second phase of the local elections.

In Karachi's seven districts 5,000 polling stations being established for the concluding phase of the local councils election.

The election commission in a letter to district returning officers (DROs) has directed that the election camps should be allowed at a fixed distance from the polling stations under the rules.

IS Situation to worsen

PTI's politics promoting hatred in society: Ahsan

Stresses on eradicating hate, extremism from society

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Federal Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal on Saturday said it was the need of the hour to end extremism, intolerance and hate from politics and society. Addressing a press conference here, he said the incident happened to him was a reflection of the training of PTI supporters imparted by Imran Niazi. "I am directly victim to hate when a youth had opened fire at me few years ago and the bullet is still in my body," he said.

"I always think to eradicate hate from the society as the seed of hate can not be easily weeded out from the society," he said and added intolerance and hate should be countered right now, otherwise, it would create anarchy. Ahsan Iqbal said that Imran was a player and the nation had expectations of sportsmanship from him, but, unfortunately, Imran's politics based on promoting hate and extremism. If Imran was sincere to his followers, he should not train them for hate or extremism, the

minister added.

"I am not new in politics as I have given three decades to it and people of Narowal elected me five times with a majority," he said and thanked people in and outside the country who supported him after the incident. The minister said people from all walks of life had condemned the incident. The minister said: "I have a right to take legal action against the family but I am not going for any legal action." He added that by following the teachings of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), he would not take any legal action against the family.

He appealed Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf (PTI) workers to recognise the real face of their leader (Imran) who was using their innocent minds, adding they should also observe whether Imran was sincere to them or not. "Track record of Niazi shows that he used people," he said and added Imran started using people from Majid Khan, his cousin, who had introduced him in cricket and later on, Niazi ousted his cousin. Nawaz Sharif allotted a plot for the Shaukat Khanum Hospi-

tal and Shehbaz Sharif gave approval of the University in Mianwali, Ahsan Iqbal said.

The nation knew his services for the country and voters of his constituency (Narowal) had always supported and expressed their confidence over his services, he said and added: "Imran could not prove corruption of a single penny against him in projects during his four years of power. Ahsan Iqbal said that it was his faith that after politics of allegations and lies against his opponents, Imran Niazi would never come to power.

He appealed the PTI workers to get true information before blaming others and urged them to shun the path of hate and intolerance. To a question, the minister said Imran's government badly damaged the national economy, adding that the PML-N had to take difficult decisions to put the country on the way to progress and prosperity. He said several things had been improved and economy was now out of danger. He hoped that soon the country would be out of crisis.

IS Rains

MQM-P expresses outrage over Sindh govt

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan (MQM-P) has slammed the Sindh government over the devastating situation in Karachi post-monsoon rains.

The MQM-P Rabita Committee expressed outrage over the lack of effective measures by the Sindh government to cope with the monsoon rains in the provincial capital Karachi.

The political party said in a statement that the flawed administrative infrastructure of Karachi was exposed after the recent spell of rainfall due to the blockage of sewerage lines which turned roads into swimming pools.

The MQM-P criticised that the highest taxpayers were bearing great loss due to the ineligible Sindh government. The political party expressed sorrow over the loss of precious lives in electrocution and other rain-related incidents.

At least nine people have died in rain-related incidents in Karachi since Friday.

The metropolis has been intermittently receiving light to heavy rainfall since yesterday under the influence of a monsoon system in the region.

At least six people in the city died by electrocution exposing the performance and safety measures of the sole power utility of Karachi.

In Shoe Market a 20-year youth died by electrocution, another young man namely Raqeeb 23 died by electric current in Manghopir area.

A woman Ruqayya Mubeen Shah, 38, was electrocuted to death at Mansehra Colony of Landhi, while working at home.

A child died by electric current Arsalan Homes in North Karachi area and an elderly man died by electrocution at a house in 100-Quarters in Korangi.

Moreover, a boy electrocuted to death near a petrol pump in Muhammad Ali Society.

The dead body of a boy along with father, swept away in floodwater in Gadap, was retrieved from water, while search for the father has been underway.

IS Eid-ul-Azha

CM Hamza for compact cleanliness steps



LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Hamza Shabbaz Sharif has directed for comprehensive arrangements for cleanliness and waste collection on Eid-ul-Azha. He also directed in time disposals of offals and other remaining of sacrificial animals in all big and small cities of the province. The Chief Minister said that he will personally monitor all arrangements to ensure a clean environment.

Govt to strengthen all institutions of country: Saad



LAHORE: Minister for Railways and Aviation Khawaja Saad Rafique says the government is striving hard to strengthen all institutions of the country. Speaking at the occasion of his visit to Multan International Airport, the Minister said that country is facing hardships but government will overcome the issues. He also announced that the domestic and international flights will be increased at Multan International Airport.

Saad Rafique visited different departments of the airport and also presided over a meeting. He expressed satisfaction on the available facilities. Earlier, addressing a meeting at Pakistan Railways Headquarters, Khawaja Saad Rafique said that protection of passengers and provision of best facilities for them is top priority of the government and no negligence will be tolerated in this context.

Punjab by-polls may change the political landscape: Sh Rashid

Says nation not ready to see the faces associated with the incumbent government.

RAWALPINDI: Awami Muslim League (AML) chief Sheikh Rasheed said on Saturday that the by-elections in Punjab can change the landscape of the politics. In his latest Tweet, the former federal minister said that the government was only ending their cases. Rasheed said that the inflation in the country has soared to 34 percent, adding that the poor doesn't want lectures but food.

The AML chief said that the prices of gas and electricity will increase further, adding that by withdrawing security, the government has proved its mental inferiority. Former Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid has intimated that the political landscape will change on July 17 while shedding light on the current political situation in Pakistan.

According to details, Sheikh Rashid said in his statement that anchorperson Imran Riaz will be released and will celebrate Eid at his home adding that whoever is caught by this government will become a leader. He said that this is a government of low capacity and low intellect, it has been suffering from mental inferiority, and the government has made Imran Riaz a leader. He also opined that Imran Riaz is a courageous journalist and the nation stands by him.

Sheikh Rashid also said that the nation is not ready to see their faces. Earlier, he said that 45 days after Eid-ul-Azha are crucial and underscored that the general elections are the only solution for the current crisis in the country. Agencies

IS Mature

PTI's politics saves Pakistan from Sri Lanka-like situation: Fawad

Says PTI's focus is to steer country out of crisis.

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Former federal minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Fawad Chaudhry said on Saturday that the prudent politics of PTI and former PM Imran Khan has saved the country from a Sri Lanka-like situation. The PTI leader took to the Twitter to share a video of agitated mob entering presidential palace in Sri Lanka and prayed that the almighty Allah ease sufferings of the people of Sri Lanka.

The former federal minister also prayed for the safety of Pakistan, claiming if this situation is not here today, then the only reason is the mature politics of PTI and Imran Khan. "Our politics aimed at steering the country out of the crisis," he further added. Old Parliament building amid anger over the economic crisis that has gripped the Island nation. "Lots

of love and prayers for the people of Sri Lanka. May God ease their difficulties," he tweeted.

He also prayed for Pakistan, claiming if this situation is not here today, then the only reason is the responsible and mature politics of PTI and Imran Khan.

"Our politics aimed at steering the country out of the crisis," he further added.

The PTI has been demanding snap elections in the country since Imran Khan was ousted from the PM Office through a no-confidence motion in April.

The party is of the view that fresh polls are the only solution to the economic crisis the country is facing, however, the coalition government has refused to accept the demand.

The Opposition parties have multiple times linked Pakistan's situation to that of Sri Lanka amid sharp polarization in the country.

Climate change threatens well-being of urban residents': SC

Apex court says climate change must form basic determinant of urban planning and design

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Saturday said that urban planning and development authorities in the country must "seriously consider the climate change angle" and that it is an overarching constitutional obligation to consider and support adaptation, climate resiliency and sustainability.

This was included in an order issued by a two-member bench of the Supreme Court, comprising Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah and Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan. The bench gave the order on a civil petition filed by residents and businesspeople of the federal capital over a decision of the Capital Development Authority (CDA) to first allow and then disallow the commercialization of residential properties of the petitioners in front of the Industrial and

Trading Center, in Sector G-9/4, Islamabad. In a note contained within the order, titled, "Urban Planning, Climate Change and the role of the CDA and other Urban Development Authorities," the judges said that the importance of regulating land use for orderly urban development cannot be understated.

The judges stated that public welfare today naturally encompasses the pressing issues of the time, such as climate change; environmental degradation; food and health safety; air pollution; water pollution; noise pollution; soil erosion; natural disasters; desertification and flooding having an appreciable impact on public health, food safety, natural resource conservation, environmental protection, social equity, social choice, etc.

"Any initiative to revise land-use regulations must be based on the aforesaid consid-

erations in order to ensure that urban development standards stay relevant to current issues of the community," they said.

Noting that vulnerabilities caused by climate change necessitated planned urban development, the SC said that climate change posed "a series of interrelated challenges to the country's most densely populated places: its cities."

The apex court further noted how critical infrastructure such as water and sewage systems, roads, bridges, and power plants, was ageing and in dire need of repairs or replacements altogether. Climate change-induced events such as rising sea levels, storm surges, heat waves, and extreme weather events will only serve to compound these issues.

"Climate change and its impacts threaten the well-being of urban residents," the top court said, adding, "The nation's economy, securi-

ty, and culture all depend on the resilience of urban infrastructure systems."

Climate changes affect the built, natural, and social infrastructure of cities, from storm drains to urban waterways to the capacity of emergency responders, the court noted, adding that the vulnerability of urban dwellers multiplies when the effects of climate change interact with pre-existing urban stressors, such as deteriorating infrastructure, areas of intense poverty, and high population density.

The order added that the National Climate Change Policy 2021 focused on adaptation and mitigation with a major emphasis on nature-based solutions including vegetative cover expansion, coastal resource management, and mangrove and natural reef ecosystem protection.

Despite that, the court said that infrastruc-

ture-based solutions for climate-proofing are required including stormwater drainage, water supply and treatment plants, as well as the protection or relocation of energy or solid waste management facilities, while some coastal cities may also need to plan for a rise in sea levels.

"Shutting eyes to the ominous signs of climate change will plunge us into a world that may not be able to sustain fundamental human values," the court stated, adding that it could even affect our basic physical and larger social needs including harnessing and consuming energy, water and food as well as habitation, travelling and communication potentialities.

While town planning in the early days of the country may not have been driven by climate considerations, it must now form a basic determinant of urban planning and design.

Eid-ul-Adha unites Muslim Ummah from Africa to subcontinent: FM

Says during this festive time, we must remember our Kashmiri brothers and sisters

KARACHI: Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party, Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari while congratulating Muslims in Pakistan and across the world on the auspicious occasion of Eid-ul-Adha, said that this festival of happiness unite the Muslim Ummah from Africa to the subcontinent.

In his message issued by the Media Cell Bilawal House here on Saturday, Chairman Bilawal said that Eid-ul-Adha reminds us that determination and sacrifice for the greater good pave the way for success.

He said "No nation and society can achieve moral supremacy without the spirit of sacrifice."

Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari in his message on the occasion of Eid-ul-Adha stressed that in



order to save the country from the problems we were facing, we must work together for the prosperity and development of the nation. He stated that it was crucial for us to put our ego, priorities, personal and group interests behind us.

Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said "During this festive time, we must remember our Kashmiri brothers and sisters who are facing the heights of Indian oppression in their fight for freedom."

He said that Pakistan would continue to provide moral and diplomatic support to Kashmiris. Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has also appealed to the nation to take precautionary measures against COVID-19 on the occasion of Eid. APP

CTD Punjab arrests six alleged terrorists

Raja Furqan Ahmed

LAHORE: The Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) on Saturday arrested six alleged terrorists across Punjab including two from Lahore and recovered ammunition from their possession.

According to the CTD officials, the arrested terrorists were identified as Wahid Bhatti, Jameel Ur Rehman, Mohammad Abdullah, Mohsin Khursheed, Imran Khan and Kashif Ali. The CTD teams arrested four terrorists from five districts of Punjab and two from the metropolis of Lahore.

The counter-terrorism teams also recovered arms, ammunition, and explosive material from their possession. While the investigation is underway with the suspects at an unidentified location.

VCIUB felicitates nation on Eid



Our Correspondent

BAHAWALPUR: Vice Chancellor, the Islamia University Bahawalpur Engr. Prof. Dr. Athar Mahboob in his special message on the occasion of Eid-ul-Adha has congratulated the people of the country, teachers and students.

He said that this Eid is a sacrifice and reminds us of the great sacrifice that Hazrat Ibrahim (AS) made to please Allah Almighty. The purpose of life is not only to live for ourselves but also to bring happiness to all human beings and to alleviate their suffering in order to gain the pleasure of Allah Almighty. The current economic challenges in the world are also facing our country.

The Vice Chancellor appealed to all the people of the country to dedicate themselves on the occasion of Eid with the spirit of sacrifice, selflessness, love and patriotism and work together to face the economic and social challenges facing the country. Allah Almighty will make us prosperous in this world and in the hereafter. May Allah be our supporter and helper.

IUB to conduct training courses



Our Correspondent

BAHAWALPUR: Training courses will be conducted to highlight leadership skills among the students of the Islamia University of Bahawalpur.

In this regard an agreement was signed to train youth leaders. The Memorandum of Understanding was signed by Engr. Prof. Dr. Athar Mahboob, Vice Chancellor, the Islamia University of Bahawalpur and Hassan Bashir, Head, Youth Impact. Director Students Affairs Rizwan Majeed, Faculty Members Irtaza Nawaz, Shaheer Hassan Rizvi, Director IUB Students Societies Dr. Azhar Hussain, Focal Person Shoaib Manzoor were present on the occasion.

According to the agreement, full scholarships will be provided to the high potential students of Islamia University Bahawalpur. Youth Impact will be enhanced in their ability to develop social leadership and peace-building skills of the young students of the Islamia University of Bahawalpur. Youth Impact will connect youth with Youth Impact Mentors and a nationwide network of alumni for their personal and professional development.

FWMC completes cleanliness arrangements on Eid

FAISALABAD: The Faisalabad Waste Management Company (FWMC) has made cleanliness arrangements on Eid.

As many as 40 awareness camps are fully active in different areas of the city while cleanliness teams are also engage in washing of mosques and Eidgahs.

Chief Executive Office Bilal Feroz on Saturday visited awareness camps set up in Clock Tower Chowk, Tariqabad, D-ground, Gulbers and other areas, and distributed bags among people.

He appealed citizens to coordinate with the FWMC staff for disposal of offal of sacrificial animals and keep environment clean.

He said in order to register complaints people could contact helpline 1139.

51 prisoners released from central jail

FAISALABAD: As many as 51 prisoners were released from the Central Jail after 30 days remission on Eid-ul-Azha given by Punjab Chief Minister Hamza Shehbaz.

Jail Superintendent Chaudhry Asghar Ali on Saturday said 43 prisoners were released under the announcement of the Punjab government while eight others involved in minor cases were released by the jail authority.

Eight held with narcotics, weapons

SIALKOT: Police on Saturday claimed to have arrested eight accused and recovered narcotics and weapons.

According to police, officials conducted raids and arrested Yaqoob, Salman, Asad Mehmood, Ahsan, Hassan, Zulfikar Ali, Sikandar Ali and Binyamin besides recovering 2.5-kg hashish, 24 liters of liquor and weapons.

Police had sent the accused behind bars after registering cases.

Monsoon

KARACHI: People struggle to move forward in a flooded street after heavy monsoon rains a road in Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

Bushra, Adnan star in SeePrime's short film "Mujrim"

Our Correspondent

KARACHI: One of Pakistan's fastest growing digital media platforms; SeePrime, will be releasing its latest production 'Mujrim', directed by Seraj Us Salikin on their YouTube channel, on Friday July 8th, 2022.

The new short film written by Hammad Siddiq follows the story of a dacoit who has held an elderly woman hostage in her house. As the burglar begins to rob her of all her valuable items, the woman in return makes him an offer with a potentially deadly outcome.

Mujrim features big names from the Pakistani media industry and their star-studded cast consists of Bushra Ansari and Adnan Shah Tipu as the leading characters of this thriller.

Ms. Seemeen Naveed, the executive producer stated "The idea behind this short film is to bring into life the concept that we never know what cards the person in front of us hold. In a time and era where egos run high and underestimation of one another runs rampant, this film aims to reinvent



the age-old saying 'never judge a book by its cover' through a thrilling and drastic tale. As with all of SeePrime's shorts, we hope to provide content that sparks introspection and a positive change in our society."

"Mujrim" is set to release at 06:00 PM on Friday, July 8, 2022 - and will be available for viewing on SeePrime's official YouTube channel.

Multan Police finalizes security plan for Eid-UL-Azha

MULTAN: City police have finalized security plan for Eid-UL-Adha as more than 2344 police officials would be deployed on security duty to maintain law and order situation across the district.

According to police sources, a total of 1837 police gatherings would be organized in the district out of which 50 have been declared sensitive. The police have decided to make special arrangements at sensitive places in order to prevent in untoward incident.

As per directives of the City Police Officer (CPO) Khurram Shahzad Haider, special pickets have been set up in the city while Dolphin Force, Muhafiz Squad and Elite Force officials would continue patrolling in the city. The police have decided to ensure tight security arrangements at recreational points while the security arrangements would be monitored by the city police officer.

The CPO Khurram Shahzad Haider has urged masses to cooperate with police by informing police in case of any suspicious activity around them.

Ismaili community celebrates 65th anniversary of Aga Khan's Imam

Kamran Khamiso Khowaja

THATTA: Over 3000 Shia Ismaili Muslims, followers of His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan living in different areas of district Thatta and Sujawal are celebrating 65th anniversary of accession to Imam (Spiritual leadership) of the community known for promoting the concept of community development, pluralism and cosmopolitan ethics.

Reliable sources within the community revealed that different events are being held within the community to mark this historic occasion.

The celebrations that have begun from July 1st will continue till July 15 in different villages of Shia Ismaili community in both districts. Jubilant community members from vari-

ous areas shared their feelings about what they called an auspicious occasion of their lives.

Adel a youth from Hussain Abad village of Sujawal belonging to this community while talking to Spokesman said that they were busy cleaning and decorating village ahead of the mega event that would be held across the world where ever their community had been living to pay tribute to their spiritual leader for his relentless services to humanity adding that different communities of the country had sought inspiration from the work of Ismaili community in different sectors.

28 years Old Basit from Muhammad Abad Village of District Thatta said that their leader had always emphasised on unity, interfaith harmony and

living our lives as per the teachings of Islam adding that they were trying to give their complete efforts for the progress of Pakistan even in these hard times.

Prince Karim Aga Khan is grandson of Sir Sultan Muhammad Shah who played a pivotal role in Pakistan's independent movement and went on to become fist President of All-India Muslim League in 1906 and then of leagues of Nation in 1935 by securing majority votes. Besides being a highly influential Muslim leader Sir Sultan Muhammad Shah Aga Khan was 48th spiritual leader of Shia Ismaili Muslims and his grandson Prince Karim Aga Khan succeeded him as 49th spiritual leader of the community on 11th July 1957.

According to a survey conducted

by this correspondent around 4 Aga Khan Schools and 9 health facilities are being managed and administered by this community apart from it Aga Khan Agency for habitat has adamantly assisted district government Thatta in rescue operations during cyclone of 1999, heavy rains of 2003 and flash flood of 2010.

Former District Health Officer Sujawal Dr Shahenaz Hashmani confirmed that volunteers from Shia Ismaili Community rendered their services during COVID-19 Vaccination drive.

An official of the community organisation revealed that Ismaili scouts and girl guide planted around 300 saplings in different areas of District Thatta in coordination with district forest department.

All set for celebrating Eid across Sindh

SUKKUR: All is set for celebrating Eid-ul-Azha in Sukkur, Khairpur, Ghotki, Noshahroferoze, Shikarpur, Jaccababad, Kashmir - Kandhkot, Noshahroferoze and other districts of the northern Sindh on Sunday with religious fervor and enthusiasm.

The day will begin with special prayers in mosques for the peace and progress of Pakistan and the Muslim Ummah. The Sukkur residents have prepared themselves to offer Eid prayers in the morning. There are large congregations to be held in the Sukkur for Eid prayers. After offering the Eid prayers, the faithful will sacrifice animals to mark the 10th of Zilhaj.

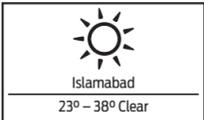
Eid-ul-Azha is the festival of sacrifice to be celebrated at the end of the Hajj pilgrimage to Makkah and it commemorates Prophet Ibrahim's (A.S.) readiness to sacrifice his son

to show obedience to Allah.

There are 1143 Masjid, 63 Imam bargahs, 27 Eid congregations where the Eid prayers would be offered and 36 places where combined sacrifices of the animals would take place as well as 58 camps of hides collection through the Sukkur division. The local administrations have chalked out special security arrangements in their respective districts, especially for Sukkur on the Eid-ul-Azha to avert any untoward incident.

The Municipal administration in different talukas has also made special arrangements for the disposal of offal and other waste generated during the slaughtering of animals.

The Sukkur Municipal Corporation has made final arrangements in all six districts for the lifting of the offal and cleanliness of their respective areas during Eid-ul-Azha.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr	3:23 am
Zohr	12:13 pm
Asr	5:12 pm
Maghrib	7:21 pm
Isha	9:03 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad	9222596
Rawalpindi	9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

CMH	561111
MH	561116
MH	561116
Cantt Hospital	9270907-11
DHO	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

People should dispose of offal to avoid pollution: Sherry

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change Senator Sherry Rehman on Saturday appealed public to make special arrangements for the disposal of their sacrificial animals' offal and hides to avoid waste pollution and blockage of drains as heavy monsoon rains have been predicted.

The minister, in her message on Eid ul Azha said, "We are celebrating Eid this year during the monsoon season and the country will get more rains than usual after the prolonged dry spell".

She requested the people to sacrifice animals at a specific and designated place, adding, slaughtering in the streets will increase garbage and block the drains".

She said people should abstain from throwing animal hides and offal in the open and avoid using plastic bags and bottles. APP

Civic agencies to ensure cleanliness on Eid-Ul-Azha

RWMC finalizes a comprehensive cleanliness plan

Staff Reporter

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Waste Management Company (RWMC) had deployed around 3,663 sanitary workers in different areas to keep the district neat and clean during Eid-ul-Azha.

"The RWMC has finalized a comprehensive cleanliness plan for Eid-ul-Azha to get rid of entrails and offals of animals. All available resources will be utilized to accomplish the task," Managing Director (MD) Owais Manzoor Tarrar said Saturday.

The MD informed that 435 vehicles would be part of the special drive, including 357 in Rawalpindi, 14 Murree and 64 in other tehsils, to remove remains of sacrificial animals from every nook and corner of the district. According to the plan, 3228 workers have been deployed in Rawalpindi, 112 Murree, while 323 workers have been assigned duties in Taxila, Kahuta, Kalar Syedan

and Gujjar Khan. Moreover, he said that 17 permanent and 43 mobile transfer stations had been set up in the district.

RWMC had distributed around 200,000 biodegradable waste bags and 50,000 awareness pamphlets to the citizens, he said and added that a mobile app had also been launched to guide the citizens. "All the staff will work under a control room while the residents have been directed to contact these numbers about any complaints 0315-1039984, 0315-2008323, 051-9291108," the MD said.

He informed that the holidays of sanitary workers and officials of the department had been cancelled to ensure cleanliness during the Eid days.

Owais said 600 banners had been displayed at all main points of the district to create awareness among the masses about the cleanliness campaign. Collection points have also been established for

the convenience of the public at the Union Council level, he informed.

After completing the cleanliness task and removing the offal, he said all collection points and other areas would be adequately cleaned and sprayed.

Meanwhile, Rawalpindi Cantonment board (RCB) has also devised an inclusive cleanliness plan for Eid-ul-Azha to remove the entrails of sacrificial animals.

Cantonment Executive Officer Rawalpindi Imran Gulzar said that 800 sanitary workers, two sanitary inspectors and 22 supervisors would perform duty during the Eid holidays.

He said 11 dumpers, 20 mini dumpers, nine tractors, trolleys, five Suzuki pick-ups, and one excavator would be part of the special drive.

In addition, the Chief Officer informed that eight-ten wheel-

ers, 24 jack trolleys, and three shovels had also been rented to remove the garbage, entrails of animals, and offal from all Cantonment areas.

Imran said that RCB around 15,000 biodegradable waste bags and awareness pamphlets had been distributed to the citizens, while two transfer points had been set up at Government Denny's high school and Old Daewoo bus stand, Chungi no 22, from where waste would be transferred to the dumping stations.

"All the staff will work under a control room while the residents have been directed to contact these numbers about any complaints 051-9274421, 9274422, or UAN no-111-07-07-07".

He urged the citizens to cooperate with the RCB staff and dump entrails of the sacrificial animals and offal at specific collection points where these could be removed properly.

Preparations

ISLAMABAD: People carrying their sacrificial animals on a loading van after purchasing from a cattle market ahead of Eid-ul-Azha, in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Pervaiz, Durani felicitate nation on eve of Hajj, Eid-ul-Adha

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervaiz Ashraf and Deputy Speaker Zahid Akram Durani felicitated the nation and whole Muslim Ummah on the auspicious occasion of Hajj and Eid-ul-Adha.

While congratulating the Muslims who embarked on Hajj journey this year, they said that we must be thankful to Allah for the blessing of Hajj resumption this year after the

Covid-19 Pandemic and travel restrictions, said a press release.

Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf said that Eid-ul-Adha reflects the values of sacrifice, compassion and happiness for us; however the true joy relates with taking care of the needy and to include them in our happiness. He said that our deeds should help smooth the social grievances and promote the spirit of sacrifice, mutual harmony and brotherhood. "We can

provide strong foundation for the establishment of a welfare Islamic society to support our needy segment of society".

Let us renew our pledge and pray for the prosperity and development of entire Muslim Ummah," he said. He prayed to Allah Almighty to strengthen the national leadership to lead the country on the path of progress and development. On this occasion, Deputy Speaker Zahid Akram Durrani stated

that Eid-ul-Adha not only brings joy, happiness in our lives, but also teaches us to remember the true spirit of obligation and selflessness.

He said that today is the day of prostration and thanks to Allah Almighty for this blissful offering. "We need to move forward together for the economic development and prosperity of the country by shunning our mutual differences," he added. Agencies

55th death anniversary of Madar-e-Millat observed

ISLAMABAD: The 55th death anniversary of Madr-e-Millat (mother of the nation) Fatima Jinnah, the younger sister of founding father Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah was observed with reverence and respect across the country on Saturday.

Fatima Jinnah, born on July 30, 1893, was referred to as the Madar-e-Millat due to her dynamic role in the Pakistan Freedom Movement.

Today, 55 years after her tragic death, the iron lady was still remembered for her passionate support for civil rights and devoted struggle towards the Pakistan Movement and supporting the two-nation theory and strongly opposing the British Raj.

After the independence of Pakistan, she co-founded the Pakistan Women's Association which played an integral role in the settlement of the women migrants in the newly formed country.

She returned to political forefront and contested the elections against former President Ayub Khan but was defeated unfortunately. Fatima Jinnah passed away on July 9, 1967 in Karachi.

President Dr. Arif Alvi and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif paid homage to Mother of the Nation, Fatima Jinnah, on her death anniversary.

In his message, the President said Fati-



ma Jinnah's leadership role in politics was a source of encouragement for Pakistani women. Fatima Jinnah's support for Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah strengthened the Tehreek-e-Pakistan. The president said her services for Pakistan would be remembered for a long time.

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in his message said the entire nation salutes Mohtarma Fatima Jinnah for her remarkable services in independence movement for Pakistan along with her brother Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and later on for rehabilitation of the country.

Shehbaz Sharif said Madr-e-Millat after the death of her great brother took forward the mission of Quaid-e-Azam.

Heavy Rains

PR Rwp Division manages to operate trains on time

RAWALPINDI: Despite heavy rains, Pakistan Railways (PR) Rawalpindi Division has succeeded to operate trains on time as all the trains left Rawalpindi Station on Saturday at prescribed time.

According to a PR Rawalpindi Division spokesman, despite heavy rains which had affected the schedule of the passenger trains, earnest efforts were made by the officers and officials concerned of the division to restore normal train operation.

Heavy rainfall was recorded here on Saturday, but, 46dn, Pakistan Express left Rawalpindi Railway Station as per schedule at 6 AM. 102dn was only 15 minute late and left the station at 7.15 AM while 8dn, Tezgam departed at 8.15 AM. Other trains including 40dn, Jaffar Express, 2nd, Khyber Mail, 48nd Rehman Baba, 6dn, Green Line and 104dn, Subak Kharam started their journeys on time.

Special arrangements were made by the Divisional Officers for adjustment of all the passen-

gers and availability of the seats. Efforts were also made to ensure proper announcements on arrival and departure of the trains to facilitate the passengers.

The help desk counter was working round the clock and providing information about arrival and departure of the trains besides apprising the passengers about refund facility, he added.

Rawalpindi Division resolved the refund cases of the passengers on priority basis and during the refund process no case of any kind of overcharging was reported from all the stations badly affected due to heavy rainfall including Rawalpindi, Margalla, Jhelum, Lala Musa, and Sargodha.

Divisional Officers including Divisional Superintendent, Inamullah, Divisional Commercial Officer, Mohsin Ali Sial, Divisional Transport Officer, Waqar Al-Nisa and Assistant Commercial/Transport Officer, Marzia Zahra played a pivotal role to restore normal train operation and for facilitation of the passengers.

Health Corner

Rheumatic fever and household overcrowding

ISLAMABAD: Research led by the University of Otago in New Zealand has uncovered the strongest evidence yet that household overcrowding is a major risk factor for acute rheumatic fever and streptococcal infections of the skin.

Their research is published in two companion articles in the international medical journal The Lancet Regional Health -- Western Pacific. Lead researcher Professor Michael Baker of the University of Otago, Wellington, says it is the first time researchers have investigated risk factors for Group A streptococcal infections of the throat (strep throat) and skin (strep skin) that can cause rheumatic fever.

The studies found that both rheumatic fever and strep skin were linked with barriers to accessing primary health care and a family history of rheumatic fever and rheumatic heart disease, a serious illness which can develop if rheumatic fever is untreated.

Professor Baker says it is a major step forward to have identified a key pathway driving the risk of rheumatic fever. "Finding a strong association between skin infection and rheumatic fever adds to evidence from other research conducted by our group about the importance of strep skin in triggering this disease. These results suggest that treating skin infections in young children may provide a way of preventing them developing rheumatic fever."

"Our findings reinforce the central role that good quality, uncrowded housing has in protecting children during the period when they are vulnerable to rheumatic fever and other infectious diseases. It is also a reminder of the importance of having good access to primary health care."

One unexpected finding of the rheumatic fever risk factors study was that drinking sugar-sweetened drinks was twice as common amongst the rheumatic fever cases compared with healthy controls, even after adjusting for all the other risk factors.

"There are several ways in which sugar-sweetened drinks could increase your risk of rheumatic fever. We are planning further research to test some of these hypotheses. In the meantime, this is another reason for children to switch to healthy alternatives, such as water or plain milk," Professor Baker says.

Associate Professor Jason Gurney (Ng Puh), who had a leading role in the rheumatic fever risk factors study, also emphasised the importance of the research findings.

"Rheumatic fever is an important example of the stark inequities that exist in terms of health outcomes in New Zealand. Rates of rheumatic fever are around 20 times higher for Maori and 44 times higher for Pacific peoples than for non-Maori and non-Pacific peoples."

"It is vital that the new incoming health organisations, notably the Maori Health Authority, Public Health Agency, and Health New Zealand act on these research findings as a high priority. It is also crucial that we look further upstream at the social determinants of this disease and continue to address inequities in access to things like high-quality, healthy housing and primary care."

Dr Julie Bennett, who took a leading role in the strep infection risk factors study, says the research provides a path forward for Aotearoa New Zealand to apply the broad findings, and to test specific interventions that were highlighted in the research.

"The findings from these two studies and other related research suggest that skin infection is a key target for better treatment. It would be useful to conduct suitable trials to see how better access to effective treatment of skin infections could be delivered most effectively and how this could lower the subsequent risk of rheumatic fever. Any interventions will need to be co-designed with Maori and Pacific peoples."

Professor Jonathan Carapetis, Director of the Telethon Kids Institute in Perth, Western Australia and a Professor at the University of Western Australia, is one of the world's leading researchers on rheumatic fever and other streptococcal diseases. He describes the studies as a breakthrough in the global fight against these diseases.

"This is by far the most rigorous study ever conducted to identify risk factors for rheumatic fever. The study of risk factors for strep skin and throat infections is a world first. Collectively these studies provide a very strong base that can help guide our collaborative goal to eliminate rheumatic heart disease as a global health problem."

Rheumatic fever is an inflammatory reaction to group A Streptococcus bacterial infection of the throat and skin. One or more attacks of rheumatic fever can cause permanent damage to heart valves resulting in rheumatic heart disease which may require major surgery, and can result in a lower quality of life and premature death. The indigenous and Pacific populations of New Zealand and Australia have some of the highest rates of rheumatic heart disease in the world. In 2015, there were an estimated 34 million people living with rheumatic heart disease, with about 233,000 deaths annually.

The rheumatic fever risk factors study was funded by the Health Research Council of New Zealand (HRC) Rheumatic Fever Research Partnership (supported by the New Zealand Ministry of Health, Te Puni Kiri, Cure Kids, Heart Foundation, and the HRC itself). The strep infection risk factors study was funded by the HRC. (Courtesy Science Daily)

PM expresses condolence over death of PPP leader

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday expressed his deep grief and sorrow over death of col. retired Tahir Hussain Mashhadi, a PPP leader and former senator.

The prime minister prayed for the departed soul and for the bereaved family to bear the loss with fortitude.

The prime minister said that late Mashhadi's services for the country and nation would be remembered for long. Mashhadi used to speak candidly on various national issues, he added. APP

PM felicitates overseas Pakistanis on Eid-ul-Azha

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday congratulated the overseas Pakistanis and the Muslim Ummah on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha.

On his Twitter handle, the prime minister said the sacred day was reminiscent of the passion of sacrifice and the obedience to Allah Almighty. He further stressed that the Muslims Ummah must play its collective role to assist and support the poor and deserving Muslims. Eid al-Adha is being observed by the Muslims in different parts of the world at the end of this year's Hajj.

People advised to avoid eating excessive meat

RAWALPINDI: Health experts have warned the citizens not to overeat red meat of sacrificial animals on Eid Ul Azha, as excessive consumption of it could cause indigestion, nausea, diarrhea, and high blood pressure, vomiting and increase of uric acid in the body.

Talking to APP, Dr Fazl ur Rehman, a medical specialist at Holy Family Hospital, said that the citizens should use plenty of water during and after Eid holidays, as drinking excessive water helps in better functioning of the digestive system. "Various public and private health centres receive cases of different stomach-related illnesses during Eid days; hence the lovers of red meat are advised to desist from using too much meat to remain healthy," he added.

District Health Officer Dr Waqar Ahmed advised the citizens to eat a balanced diet containing meat and vegetables to reduce the risk of contracting illness. He urged the residents to clean meat with water before use.

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G7 vs BRICS: The economic alliances

Ramzy Baroud

The G7 summit in Elmau, Germany, June 26-28, and the Nato summit in Madrid, Spain, two days later, were practically useless in terms of providing actual solutions to global crises — the war in Ukraine, the looming famines, climate change and more. But the two events were important, nonetheless, as they provide a stark example of the impotence of the West, amid the rapidly changing global dynamics.

As was the case since the start of the Russia-Ukraine war, the West attempted to display unity, though it has become repeatedly obvious that no such unity exists. While France, Germany and Italy are paying a heavy price for the energy crisis resulting from the war, Britain's Boris Johnson is adding fuel to the fire in the hope of making his country relevant on the global stage following the humiliation of Brexit. Meanwhile, the Biden Administration is exploiting the war to restore Washington's credibility and leadership over Nato — especially following the disastrous term of Donald Trump, which nearly broke up the historic alliance.

Even the fact that several African countries are becoming vulnerable to famines — as a result of the disruption of food

supplies originating from the Black Sea and the subsequent rising prices — did not seem to perturb the leaders of some of the richest countries in the world. They still insist on not interfering in the global food market, though the skyrocketing prices have already pushed tens of millions of people below the poverty line.

While Nato will continue to fight for relevance, Russia, China, and others will invest in various economic, political and even military infrastructures, in the hope of creating a permanent and sustainable counterbalance to Western dominance.

Though the West had little reserve of credibility to begin with, Western leaders' current obsession with maintaining thousands of sanctions on Russia, further Nato expansion, dumping yet more 'lethal weapons' in Ukraine and sustaining their global hegemony at any cost, have all pushed their credibility standing to a new low.

From the start of the Ukraine war, the West championed the same 'moral' dilemma as that raised by George W. Bush at the start of his so-called 'war on terror'. 'You are either with us or with the terrorist,' he declared in October 2009. But the ongoing Russia-Nato conflict cannot be reduced to simple and self-serving clichés. One can, indeed, want an end to the war, and still oppose US-western unilateralism.

The reason that American diktats worked in the past, however, is that, unlike the current geopolitical atmosphere, a few dared oppose Washington's policies.

Times have changed. Russia, China, India, along with many other countries in Asia, the Middle East, Africa and South America are navigating all available spaces to counter the suffocating western dominance. These countries have made it clear that they will not take part in isolating Russia in the service of Nato's expansionist agenda.

China and others understand that the current conflict is not about Ukraine vs Russia, but about something far more consequential. If Washington and Europe emerge victorious, and if Moscow is pushed back behind the proverbial 'iron curtain', Beijing would have no other options but to make painful concessions to the re-emerging West. This, in turn, would place a cap on China's global economic growth, and would weaken its case regarding the One China policy.

China is not wrong. Almost immediately following Nato's limitless military support of Ukraine and the subsequent economic war on Russia, Washington and its allies began threatening China over Taiwan. Many provocative statements, along with military manoeuvres and high-level visits by US politi-

cians to Taipei, were meant to underscore US dominance in the Pacific.

Two main reasons drove the West to further invest in the current confrontational approach against China, at a time where, arguably, it would have been more beneficial to exercise a degree of diplomacy and compromise. First, the West's fear that Beijing could misinterpret its action as weakness and a form of appeasement; and, second, because the West's historic relationship with China has always been predicated on intimidation, if not outright humiliation.

This is precisely why Beijing did not join the chorus of western condemnations of Russia. Though the actual war in Ukraine is of no direct benefit to China, the geopolitical outcomes of the war could be critical to the future of China as a global power.

While Nato remains insistent on expansion so as to illustrate its durability and unity, it is the alternative world order led by Russia and China that is worthy of serious attention. According to the German Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Beijing and Moscow are working to further develop the Brics club of major emerging economies to serve as a counterweight to the G7. The German paper is correct. Brics' latest summit on June 23 was designed as a message to the G7 that the West is no longer in the

driving seat, and that Russia, China and the Global South are preparing for a long fight against Western dominance.

In his speech at the Brics summit, Russian President Vladimir Putin proposed the creation of an "international reserve currency based on the basket of currencies of our countries". The fact that the rouble alone has managed to survive, in fact flourish, under recent Western sanctions, gives hope that Brics currencies combined can manage to eventually sideline the US dollar as the world dominant currency.

Indeed, the Brics are beginning to see themselves as a direct competitor to the G7. The fact that Argentina and Iran are applying for Brics membership also illustrates that the economic alliance is morphing into a political, in fact geopolitical, entity.

The global fight ahead is perhaps the most consequential since World War II. While Nato will continue to fight for relevance, Russia, China, and others will invest in various economic, political and even military infrastructures, in the hope of creating a permanent and sustainable counterbalance to Western dominance. The outcome of this conflict is likely to shape the future of humanity.

The writer is a journalist and the Editor of The Palestine Chronicle. Courtesy Gulf News

Russian oil revenue

Four months into the invasion of Ukraine, the Russian army continues to grind its way relentlessly through the Donbas region. Some Western commentators are calling for more weapons to be supplied faster to Ukrainian forces. According to Avril Haines, the US Director of National Intelligence, there is no prospect for the military conflict to end soon. It makes sense, therefore, to target the economics of Putin's regime and his ability to wage a prolonged war — or a repeated series of wars against Ukraine and potentially others. And here, Putin has a major strategic vulnerability: Russia's overdependence on fossil-fuel exports, which generate almost all of its foreign-currency inflows — nearly €100bn (\$104bn) in the first 100 days of the war.

Consider how the world would react if Russia were to use nuclear weapons against civilian populations anywhere. The horror of that atrocity would immediately result in every country with a conscience refusing to buy oil (or anything else) from Russia. Putin's revenue would collapse, the rouble would depreciate rapidly, and inflation likely would rampage across Russia. It is very unlikely the Russian regime would be able to continue fighting on that basis. Without exports, a country has no hard currency — and no way to buy supplies of any kind from abroad.

Why, then, is the world unwilling to take such measures immediately under current conditions, when Putin's forces are targeting and killing unarmed civilians on a massive scale? The list of atrocities is already long and appalling: the dead and tortured in Bucha, the bridge at Irpin, the railway station in Kramatorsk, the maternity hospital and theatre (clearly marked as sheltering children) in Mariupol, and most recently the missile attack on a shopping mall in Kremenchuk?

For some countries at least, enough Ukrainian children have already died. And Putin's aggression must come to an end eventually. So, why not stop buying Russian oil now?

The main reason is that limiting the quantity of Russian oil exports could backfire. The pressing task is to reduce Russian oil revenues, but such a measure, it is feared, could push up the world price of oil (which is priced in dollars) and boost Putin's dollar earnings, even if Russia's export volume falls.

To their credit, G7 leaders took on this issue directly by endorsing, at least in general terms, a potential cap on the price that Russia receives. Russian oil exports can continue but at a lower price than they would otherwise. In effect, the G7 is proposing to create what some are calling an Inverse-Opec — a coalition that would directly target and squeeze Putin's oil revenue. Some experts argue that oil prices will increase anyway or that the cap will lead to unintended side effects.

The price cap is a new idea, and any such policy innovation requires working out many details. There is also an international coalition to be built. But what is being asked of countries like India and China is quite reasonable: Demand a bigger discount on the oil they are already receiving from Russia. If a price cap doesn't work, there are two options. The first is to give up and let Putin win. The second option is what smart policymakers always do when the system is on the line — try again, adjust the approach, and bring more pressure. If you don't like the G7's plan for a price cap, now is a good time to put forward your own recommendations.



Absorbing energy transition shock

Owen Gaffney

Russia's war on Ukraine has sent shockwaves around the world. Oil prices have skyrocketed and food prices have soared, causing political instability. The last time food prices were this volatile, riots erupted across the Arab world and from Burkina Faso to Bangladesh. This time, the energy and food shock is happening against the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic. When will the shocks end?

They won't. So, we can choose either resignation and despair, or a policy agenda to build social and political resilience against future shocks. Those are our options, and we had better start taking them seriously, because the shocks are likely to get worse. On top of geopolitical crises, the climate emergency will bring even greater disruptions, including ferocious floods, mega-droughts, and possibly even a simultaneous crop failure in key grain-producing regions worldwide. It is worth noting that India, the world's second-largest wheat producer, recently banned exports as part of its response to a devastating heatwave this spring.

But here's the thing: reducing vulnerability to shocks, for example, by embarking on energy and food revolutions, will also be disruptive. The energy system is the foundation of industrialised economies, and it needs to be overhauled to phase out fossil fuels within a few decades. Huge industries like coal and oil will have to contract, and then disappear. And agriculture, transportation, and other sectors will need to change radically to become more sustainable and resilient.

The challenge for politicians, then, is clear: to devise fair policies that protect people from the inevitable shocks.

One idea with significant potential is a Citizen's Fund, which would follow a straightfor-

ward fee-and-dividend equation. Companies that emit greenhouse-gas emissions or extract natural resources would pay fees into the fund, which would then distribute equal payments to all citizens, creating an economic cushion during a period of transformation and beyond.

This is not just an idea. In 1976, the Republican governor of Alaska, Jay Hammond, established the Alaska Permanent Fund, which charges companies a fee to extract oil and then disburses the proceeds equally to all the state's citizens. In 2021, each eligible Alaskan received \$1,114 — not as a "welfare payment" but as a dividend from a state commons (in this case, a finite supply of oil). The largest dividend ever paid was during Republican Sarah Palin's governorship in 2008, when every Alaskan enjoyed a windfall of \$3,269.

In 2017, James Baker and George Shultz, two former Republican secretaries of state, proposed a similar plan for the whole United States, estimating that fees on carbon emissions would yield a dividend of \$2,000 per year to every US household. With backing from 3,500 economists, their scheme has broad appeal not just among companies and environmental-advocacy groups but also (and more incredibly) across the political aisle.

The economics is simple. A fee on carbon drives down emissions by driving up the price of polluting. And though companies would pass on these costs to consumers, the wealthiest would be the hardest hit, because they are by far the biggest, fastest-growing source of emissions. The poorest, meanwhile, would gain the most from the dividend, because \$2,000 means a lot more to a low-income household than it does to a high-income household. In the end, most people would come out ahead.

But given that food- and energy-price shocks tend to hit low-income cohorts the hardest, why make the dividend univer-

sal? The reason is that a policy of this scale needs both broad-based and lasting support, and people are far more likely to support a programme or policy if there is at least something in it for them.

Moreover, a Citizen's Fund is not just a way to drive down emissions and provide an economic safety net for the clean-energy transition. It would also foster innovation and creativity, by providing a floor of support for the entrepreneurs and risk-takers we will need to transform our energy and food systems.

A Citizen's Fund could also be expanded to include other global commons, including mining and other extractive industries, plastics, the ocean's resources, and even knowledge, data, and networks. All involve shared commons — owned by all — that are exploited by businesses that should be required to pay for the negative externalities they create.

Of course, a universal basic dividend is not a panacea. It must be part of larger plan to build societies that are more resilient to shocks, including through greater efforts to redistribute wealth by means of progressive taxation and empowerment of workers. To that end, Earth4All, an initiative I co-lead, is developing a suite of novel proposals that we see as the most promising pathways to build cohesive societies that are better able to make long-term decisions for the benefit of the majority.

Our most important finding is perhaps the most obvious, but it is also easy to overlook. Whether we do the bare minimum to address the grand challenges or everything we can to build resilient societies, disruption and shocks are part of our future. Embracing disruption is thus the only option and a Citizen's Fund becomes an obvious shock absorber.

The writer is an analyst at the Stockholm Resilience Centre and the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research. Courtesy Gulf Times

NATO & New Middle East

Luke Coffey

One aspect of the recent NATO summit in Madrid that received less attention than it deserved was the publication of the new Strategic Concept, the policy guide for the Western alliance's leaders into the future. The last one was published in 2010 and was woefully out of date.

With the focus of NATO's leaders and policymakers concentrated on central and eastern Europe, Ukraine, and Russia, there is a risk that other regions of the world that are important to the alliance might be overlooked. One of these regions is the Middle East and North Africa.

Whether it is regional terrorism emanating from extremist groups or the threat of nuclear proliferation in Iran, NATO members share many of the same security concerns as the countries of the MENA region. Furthermore, many of the countries in this region have demonstrated a willingness to cooperate with NATO and have even contributed troops to NATO-led missions in the past. The alliance should be finding ways to build on these relationships.

Regrettably, there was barely any attention given to the MENA region in the newly published Strategic Concept. In fact, in a document that is just over 4,200 words long, only one paragraph of about 80 words was devoted to the MENA region. Furthermore, NATO's two main platforms on which it engages with the MENA region, the Mediterranean Dialogue and the Istanbul cooperation initiative, were not mentioned at all.

The former, launched in 1994, forms the basis of NATO's relations with its Mediterranean partners: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia. Although talks generally take place on a bilateral basis, between NATO and a single Mediterranean partner (NATO+1), on occasion the forum meets as NATO+7, placing Israel at the same table as some of its regional neighbors, where it would otherwise not be.

The Istanbul initiative, launched in 2004, is the basis of NATO's relations with the Gulf states. Although all six members of the GCC were invited to join, only

Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and the UAE have done so.

First, NATO should appoint a special representative for the MENA region, where personal relationships are paramount. It should appoint a highly respected diplomat with knowledge of the region to be an enduring point of contact between the alliance and the region.

Second, NATO should actively push to enlarge the memberships of the Mediterranean Dialogue and the Istanbul initiative. In particular, it should include countries where US and European blood and treasure have been invested, such as Iraq and Libya. The more cooperation, the better. With the success of the Abraham Accords, NATO should also explore ways to bring Israel and Arab states together for more training exercises and security cooperation.

Finally, neither the Mediterranean Dialogue nor the Istanbul initiative has formally met during a NATO summit at the heads of government level. It was announced in Madrid that NATO will hold another summit next year. When this happens, NATO should include high-level meetings for both the Mediterranean Dialogue and the Istanbul initiative. This would send a strong message that NATO appreciates the geopolitical importance of the MENA region.

Even with all the challenges posed by Russia, NATO's lack of focus on the MENA region is puzzling. According to the 1949 North Atlantic Treaty, the alliance's area of focus is "the North Atlantic area, north of the Tropic of Cancer." Every country generally considered to be in the MENA region, minus Yemen, has territory north of the Tropic of Cancer — and therefore is in NATO's area of focus.

Furthermore, history and recent events show that what happens in the region can quickly spill over into Europe. Closer ties between NATO and the MENA region will make everyone safer and more secure. In many ways, the lack of attention paid to the MENA region in the Strategic Concept was a missed opportunity.

As NATO starts preparing for its next summit in 2023, policymakers must take appropriate steps now to get the MENA region on to the agenda.

The writer is a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute. Courtesy Arab News

Muslims worldwide celebrate Eid al-Azha

Muslim leaders felicitate Ummah on Eid al-Azha

ANKARA/JEDDAH/BAGHDAD: An estimated 1.8 billion Muslims worldwide on Saturday flocked to perform prayers on day one of the Eid al-Adha.

Following the prayers, many began to slaughter animals, a ritual honoring the willingness of the Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham to Jews and Christians) to sacrifice his own son on God's behest, before the command was revoked.

The meat of sacrificed animals is shared with the needy. Citizens of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) flocked to mosques for Eid prayers. Hala Sultan Mosque in the capital Lefkosa and other mosques across the country soon filled up before prayers.

Ersin Tatar, the country's president, prayed at the Nurettin Ersin Pasha Mosque in the coastal town of Girne.

In the southern Caucasus nation of Azerbaijan, people flocked to the Turkish Martyrs' Memorial in the capital Baku to perform prayers. They prayed for their country's peace and welfare and commemorated the martyrs of the Nagorno-Karabakh War of fall 2020. President Ilham Aliyev issued



a message celebrating the holiday.

Muslims in the Central Asian nation of Kazakhstan celebrate Eid al-Adha with traditional sports and charity events in the courtyards of mosques. In the capital Nur Sultan, prayers took place at the Hazrat Sultan Mosque.

Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev underlined the special role of Eid al-Adha in strengthening society's

spiritual values, harmony, and stability.

"May all our prayers be accepted on this blessed day," he said in a message.

In Uzbekistan, the public went to the Char Minar Mosque in the capital Tashkent for prayers. Muslims filled the streets and surroundings next to the mosque when there was no place left inside.

Thousands of Muslims in

Kyrgyzstan did prayers in front of government buildings, including the president himself.

"For a long time, our ancestors sacrificed during Eid al-Adha, expressed their good wishes, and recited from the Quran. They distributed sacrificial meat to the needy, which strengthens the sense of kinship and respect," said Sadyr Japarov.

Muslims living in the Balkan countries of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia, North Macedonia, Albania, and Kosovo also welcomed Eid al-Adha with great enthusiasm.

Civilians living in areas cleared of terrorism by Turkish-led operations in northern Syria filled mosques for Eid al-Adha prayers. Thousands of Muslims flocked to mosques in Jarablus, Al-Bab, Azaz, Afrin, Cobanbey, and Mare, which were cleared of terrorism by Türkiye's anti-terror operations.

In Iraq, Turkmen, Kurds, and Arabs gathered for prayers at the Avci Mosque in Mualla in the northern city of Kirkuk.

India inflicting worst atrocities on Kashmiris: Shabir Shah

SRINAGAR: The illegally detained senior vice chairman of the All-Parties Hurriyat Conference Shabir Ahmad Shah has said that India is inflicting the worst atrocities on Kashmiri people in exchange for their genuine demand of internationally-recognized right to self-determination.

Shabir Ahmad Shah in a message from the India's notorious Tihar Jail on the occasion of Eidul Azha, deplored that New Delhi was trying every tactic to suppress the Kashmiris' struggle based on truth. The message was released to the media by his party in Srinagar.

He said that innocent Kashmiris were killed and arrested, and were forced to live in an atmosphere of constant fear and terror with a sole aim to silence them.

Shabir Ahmad Shah said that in spite of all these Indian machinations, the spirit of freedom is strong and Kashmiris are determined to continue their struggle till its goal end.

He urged the Kashmiris to celebrate Eid with simplicity and on this festive occasion never forget their martyrs and prisoners who sacrificed their lives for the cause of truth.

The prisoners, he added, are forced to live in jails away from home. He said Eid-ul-Azha teaches us sacrifice so we should always be ready for the glory of truth.

Shabir Ahmad Shah urged the wealthy people to take care of the needs of the martyrs' families and the families of detained Kashmiris. "As Muslims, we are committed to caring for the needs of orphans, widows and others in need," he said.

APHC Jammu based leader Advocate Divender Singh Behal also felicitated the Kashmiri Muslims who live under Indian occupation for more than the past seven decades and sacrificed their lives for the just cause of freedom. He said that the people of Jammu and Kashmir are going through a difficult phase of history under Modi regime who is pursuing the agenda of Indianization in Kashmir by all means.

Sri Lanka protesters storm president's house

COLOMBO: Thousands of protesters in Sri Lanka's commercial capital Colombo broke through police barricades and stormed the president's official residence on Saturday in one of the largest anti-government marches in the crisis-hit country this year.

Some protesters, holding Sri Lankan flags and helmets, broke into the president's residence, video footage from local TV news NewsFirst channel showed.

Two defence ministry sources said President Gotabaya Rajapaksa was removed from the official premises on Friday for his safety ahead of the planned rally over the weekend.

A Facebook livestream from inside the president's house showed hundreds of protesters, some draped in flags, packing into rooms and corridors, shouting slogans against Rajapaksa.

At least 21 people, including two policemen, were injured and hospitalised in the ongoing protests, hospital sources told Reuters.

The island of 22 million people is struggling under a severe foreign exchange shortage that has limited essential imports of fuel, food and medicine, plunging it into the worst economic crisis since independence in 1948.

Many blame the country's decline on President Gotabaya Rajapaksa. Largely peaceful protests since March have demanded his resignation.

Thousands of people swarmed into Colombo's government district, shouting slogans against the president and dismantling several police barricades to reach Rajapaksa's house, a Reuters witness said.

Police fired shots in the air but were unable to stop the angry crowd from surrounding the presidential residence, the witness said.

Reuters could not immediately confirm the president's whereabouts. Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe summoned an emergency meeting of political party leaders after the president's house was stormed by protesters. He also requested the speaker to summon parliament, a statement from the prime minister's office said.

Tunisia's president amends draft constitution

TUNIS: Tunisian President Kais Saied published an amended version of a draft constitution late Friday in an attempt to ward off criticism after the original was slammed for the nearly unlimited power it gave his office.

The new constitution, which will be put to a referendum this month, is the centrepiece of Saied's plan to remake the North African country's political system.

It was unveiled almost a year after Saied sacked the government, suspended parliament and seized wide-ranging powers in moves opponents have called a coup against the only democratic system to have emerged from the Arab Spring revolts.

The legal expert who oversaw the constitution's drafting has disavowed it, saying it was "completely different" from what his committee had submitted and warning that some articles could "pave the way for a dictatorial regime". The amended draft, published around midnight Friday, makes changes to two articles, though it still retains a broad range of powers for the head of state.

Hours before the new text was released, Saied announced in an official video that "clarifications needed to be added to avoid confusion and interpretation".

Changes have been made to an article that stated Tunisia "is part of the Islamic community" and that "the State must work to achieve the objectives of Islam" — it now adds "within a democratic system".

The clause had been previously criticised for its ambiguity by those who advocated for a completely secular system, and international rights group Amnesty International had warned it could "provide a mandate to discriminate against other religious groups".

The other amendment is to an article about rights and freedoms, which now clarifies that "no restriction may be placed on the rights and freedoms guaranteed in this Constitution except by law and necessity imposed by a democratic order".

The rest of the document remains largely unchanged. Saied wants a presidential system to replace the country's 2014 constitution, which enshrined a mixed presidential-parliamentary system often beset by deadlock and marred by corruption.

Pilgrims stone the devil as almost million-strong Hajj winds down

MINA: Pilgrims cast pebbles in the stoning of the devil ritual on Saturday, as this year's expanded Hajj pilgrimage was winding down.

From first light, small groups of worshippers made their way across the valley of Mina, near Makkah, to throw stones at three concrete walls representing Satan.

In 2019, some 2.5 million pilgrims from around the world took part in the Hajj, usually one of the world's largest annual religious gatherings.

But that figure slumped to only a few thousand in 2020 and 60,000 in 2021, all of them Saudi citizens or residents, as the kingdom tried to mitigate the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.

This year, participation was capped at one million fully vaccinated worshippers.

Authorities said on Friday that almost 900,000 were in attendance, nearly 780,000 of them from abroad.

Barring overseas pilgrims for the past two years had caused deep disappointment among Muslims worldwide, who typically save for years to take part.

The Hajj, which costs at least \$5,000 per person, and Umrah pilgrimages that occur at other times of the year are a major engine of Saudi Arabia's tourism sector. In normal times, they generate about \$12 billion annually, keeping the economy humming in Makkah.

After the stoning ritual, pilgrims return to the Grand Mosque in Makkah to perform a final tawaf, or circling of the Kaaba. Eidul Azha, the feast of the sacrifice that begins on Saturday,

marks the end of Hajj.

On Friday, huge crowds of robed pilgrims prayed on Mount Arafat, the climax of the annual pilgrimage. Groups of worshippers, many holding umbrellas against the fierce sun, recited verses from the Holy Quran on the rocky rise where the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) gave his final sermon.

After sunset, they travelled the short distance to Muzdalifah, where they slept under the stars before performing the stoning ritual.

The large crowds have spurred fears that Covid-19 will spread, especially after many pilgrims remained maskless, despite claims by Saudi authorities that masks would be mandatory.

The Hajj has been taking place against the backdrop

of a resurgence of cases in the region, with some Gulf countries tightening restrictions to keep outbreaks in check.

All participants were required to submit proof of vaccination and negative PCR (polymerase chain reaction) tests.

Since the start of the pandemic, Saudi Arabia has registered more than 795,000 coronavirus cases, over 9,000 of them fatal. Some 67 million vaccine doses have been administered in the country of over 34 million people.

The Hajj, whose timing is determined by the lunar Islamic calendar, can be physically draining even in ideal conditions, but worshippers this year faced an added challenge: scorching sun and temperatures climbing to 44 degrees Celsius.

Syria's Assad makes first visit to Aleppo since recapture

BEIRUT: Syrian President Bashar al-Assad marked the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Adha on Saturday in Aleppo, his first visit to the northern city since his forces recaptured it in 2016 with help from Russia and other allied forces.

A statement by Syrian state news agency SANA said Assad performed Eid al-Adha prayers at the Ibn Abbas mosque alongside other top government officials.

In his remarks, Assad said he visited historic marketplaces and inaugurated a thermal power plant that is expected to generate 200 megawatts of electricity, according to SANA. The city produced 1,000 megawatts of power before the fighting erupted there in 2012, one year into the uprising against Assad.

His forces recaptured the city in late 2016 with help from Russian warplanes and Iran-backed armed groups. Tehran then signed a deal to rehabilitate five power plants in Aleppo.

US, Chinese FMs hold first talks since October

NUSA DUA: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi met on Saturday for the first in-person talks since October after attending a G20 summit where the top US diplomat led efforts to pressure Russia over its war in Ukraine.

US officials say Blinken's meeting with Wang in Bali, Indonesia, including a morning session of talks and a working lunch, is aimed at keeping the difficult US relationship with China stable and preventing it from veering inadvertently into conflict.

"There is no substitute for face to face ... diplomacy, and in a relationship as complex and consequential as the one between the United States and China there is a lot to talk about," Blinken told reporters at the beginning of the meeting.

"We very much look forward to a productive and constructive conversation," he said.

Blinken is expected to repeat warnings to China not to support Russia's war in Ukraine and the two sides will address contentious issues that include Taiwan, China's extensive South China Sea claims, its expansion of influence in the Pacific, human rights, and trade tariffs.

However, both sides share an interest in keeping the relationship stable and Blinken and US officials say President Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping are expected to speak again in coming weeks, something Saturday's meeting is likely to address.

"China and the United States are two major countries, so it is necessary for the two countries to maintain normal exchanges," Wang told reporters. "At the same time, we



do need to talk together to ensure that this relationship will continue to move forward along the right track," Wang said.

Daniel Russel, a top US diplomat for East Asia under former President Barack Obama who has close contact with Biden administration officials, said he believed a key aim for the meeting would be to explore the possibility of an in-person meeting between Biden and Xi, their first as

opportunity "to convey our expectations about what we would expect China to do and not to do in the context of Ukraine."

Shortly before Russia's Feb. 24 Ukraine invasion, Beijing and Moscow announced a "no limits" partnership. But US officials have said they have not seen China evade tough US-led sanctions on Russia or provide it with military equipment.

However, China has declined to condemn Russia's actions and it has criticized the sweeping sanctions.

US officials have warned of consequences, including sanctions, should China start offering material support for Russia's war effort, which it calls a "special military operation" to degrade the Ukrainian military though Kyiv counters that it is an imperial-style land grab.

Ukraine pleads for more weapons as defiant Russia warns West

US urges Russia to unblock grain exports; Putin warns of 'catastrophic' energy price spikes

KYIV/MOSCOW: Ukraine urged its allies on Friday to send more weapons as its forces dug in to slow Russia's military advance through the eastern Donbas region, while a belligerent Moscow warned Western nations of consequences for their reprisals over its invasion.

Signalling that the Kremlin was in no mood for compromise, President Vladimir Putin said continued use of sanctions against Russia risked causing "catastrophic" energy price rises.

Putin's top diplomat Sergei Lavrov clashed with his Western counterparts at a Group of 20 meeting, where they urged Russia to allow Kyiv to ship blockaded Ukrainian grain out to an increasingly hungry world. Meanwhile, Moscow's envoy to

London offered little prospect of a pull-back from parts of Ukraine under Russian control.

Ambassador Andrei Kelin told Reuters that Russian troops would capture the rest of Donbas and were unlikely to withdraw from land across the southern coast.

Ukraine would eventually have to strike a peace deal or "continue slipping down this hill" to ruin, he said. On the Donbas frontlines, Ukrainian officials reported Russian shelling of towns and villages ahead of an anticipated push for more territory.

A Ukrainian infantry unit on the road to the town of Siversk, whose members spoke to Reuters, had set up positions on the edge of a deep earth bunker covered with logs and sandbags

and defended by machine guns.

On Thursday, Putin had indicated that current prospects of finding a solution to the conflict were dim, saying Russia's campaign in Ukraine had barely started.

Ambassador Kelin's remarks gave an insight into Russia's potential endgame — a forced partition that would leave its former Soviet neighbor shorn of more than a fifth of its post-Soviet territory.

"We are going to liberate all of the Donbas," Kelin said. "Of course it is difficult to predict the withdrawal of our forces from the southern part of Ukraine because we have already experience that after withdrawal, provocations start."

An escalation of the war was

possible, he added. Ukrainian officials, echoing comments by the deputy commander of the infantry unit outside Siversk, said they needed more high-grade Western weapons to shore up their defenses.

Oleksiy Danilov, secretary of the National Security and Defense Council, said Ukraine still did not have enough Western weapons and soldiers needed time to adapt to using them.

Kyiv has attributed battlefield successes to last month's arrival of US-made High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS).

"When they came in, the Russian war machine could instantly feel its effect," Danilov told Reuters. But more Western military aid was vital.

President Volodymyr Zelen-



sky's chief of staff also urged the West to send more heavy weapons to counter what he called Russia's "scorched earth tactics."

"With a sufficient number of howitzers, SPG and HIMARS, our soldiers are able to stop and drive the invaders from our land,"

blocked by Russia's presence in the Black Sea and naval mines. Ukraine is a leading exporter and aid agencies have warned that many developing countries face devastating food shortages if supplies fail to reach them.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken urged Moscow to let Ukrainian grain out, a Western official said. "He addressed Russia directly, saying: 'To our Russian colleagues: Ukraine is not your country. Its grain is not your grain. Why are you blocking the ports? You should let the grain out,'" the official said.

A US State Department official later said Blinken had told the meeting that, if the G20 was to remain relevant, it must hold Russia accountable for its actions in Ukraine.

Gold price remains unchanged

KARACHI: Gold price remains unchanged in Pakistan amid volatility in the international market and rupee appreciation against the US dollar.

According to rates issued by the All Sindh Sarafa Association, gold prices remained stable at Rs142,200 per tola and Rs121,914 per 10 grams on Saturday.

Cumulatively, the precious metal gained Rs500 per tola during the week ended July 9.

The association determines local prices based on rupee-dollar parity and international rates. According to market practice, local prices of gold usually go down on the rupee's appreciation against the US dollar and rising prices of commodities in the international market.

A firmer tone to economic data and strengthening currency would undermine support for gold, which has benefited in recent times from the plunge in local currency.

In the international market, the price of yellow metal recorded a meagre gain of \$1 per ounce to settle at \$1,743.

Meanwhile, silver prices in the domestic market remained unchanged at Rs1,520 per tola and Rs1,303.15 per 10 grams today.

Asian markets end higher on easing recession fears

HONG KONG: Asian markets rose yesterday on easing recession fears with optimism boosted by hopes that Joe Biden will remove some Trump-era tariffs from Chinese goods, while the euro extended losses and headed close to parity with the dollar.

The safe-haven yen also picked up following news of Japan's former prime minister Shinzo Abe being shot during a campaign rally.

Equities were also boosted by reports that Beijing was considering a huge stimulus push to the struggling economy by allowing local governments to raise billions of dollars through bond issuance for infrastructure projects.

But surging inflation, rising interest rates and a fresh flare-up of Covid infections in Shanghai continued to keep investor sentiment grounded.

Traders were handed a strong lead from Wall Street, where all three main indexes climbed for a fourth straight day, helped by two top Federal Reserve officials who said the economy could withstand sharper rate hikes and maintain growth.

There has been growing talk that the fast pace of monetary tightening by the bank will tip the world's top economy into recession.

But Christopher Waller, a member of the board of governors, said worries were overblown and that a strong jobs market would provide a buffer, adding that rates needed to go up sharply and quickly.

St Louis Fed president James Bullard also said there was "a good chance of a soft landing". Asian equities advanced with Hong Kong, Shanghai, Sydney, Seoul, Singapore, Wellington, Mumbai, Taipei, Manila and Jakarta all in the green.

Shanghai closed slightly down. Tokyo's Nikkei 225 ended up but saw its early big gains wiped out after news filtered through of Abe's shooting.

Some observers said that because he still held sway over his ruling LDP party, it continued to stick with his ultra-loose monetary policy known as Abenomics.

The yen briefly strengthened to 135.34 per dollar, compared with 136.08 in the morning, as analysts speculated on how the possible loss of Abe's still-strong influence in Japan could see changes in policy.

Masahiro Yamaguchi, of SMBC Trust Bank, said: "It could be negative for markets if the government's policy, including its stance on monetary easing, is affected as it was evident that he was pulling the strings behind the scenes in many ways."

"If it becomes possible for (current Prime Minister Fumio) Kishida to carry out policies he wanted to, such as financial tax and regulations on share buy-back, that would be negative for markets."

The Fed's policy plans will be in focus later Friday when US employment data is released, with a strong reading providing the central bank with evidence to stick to its hawkish line.

Pak furniture has great potential to capture world market: Mian Ashfaq

ISLAMABAD: Chief Executive Officer Pakistan Furniture Council Saturday said Pakistan's furniture industry has a big potential to dominate global markets with innovative designs and can significantly contribute to exports; however, it direly needs a package of incentives and facilitation for boosting exports.

Talking to a delegation of foreign and local investors led by Honorary Investment Consular Milan and Tourism Ambassador to Italy Muhammad Sheryar Khan in Lahore Mian Kashif said unfortunately, the furniture sector remained badly neglected. It needs special attention of the federal and provincial governments for the training of woodworkers on modern lines, he added.

He said there is an urgent need to explore the international market for boosting our exports as there is a lot of potential in Pakistani products, adding he said the value of furniture export was very nominal but the beginning had been made, and



with aggressive marketing strategy the value of exports could be doubled in a short span.

He said if the government extends its support to furniture companies, the volume of export could touch the

figure of \$ 5 billion for the next five years.

He urged the businessmen to work extensively to promote local industry in Pakistan. "Pakistan is blessed with abundant resources and our people

are equipped with the best of skills that can help develop the country on modern lines," he added.

He also lauded the amazing work of younger designers and architects displaying in the exhibition along with other national and international leading furniture manufacturing companies.

PFC Chief Mian Kashif Ashfaq said the PFC was committed to supporting Pakistan's young entrepreneurs associated with the furniture and interior designing sector whose innovative thinking had the potential to unlock great economic prosperity.

He said exhibitions provide the younger designers and architects to assess market trends and display their own work alongside that of more established professionals. He said Interior's Pakistan was a step towards initiating international trade exhibitions and also to enhance possibility to participate in international exhibitions as a collaborative industry from

Pakistan.

Chairman Pakistan Leather Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (PLGMEA) Hassan Ali Bhatti on this occasion said the leather industry is also associated with furniture and he assured that furniture producers would be provided the world class leather being used in furniture making.

He urged the businessmen to work extensively to promote local industry in Pakistan. "Pakistan is blessed with abundant resources and our people are equipped with the best of skills that can help develop the country on modern lines," he added.

Sheheryar extended the invitation to Mian Kashif Ashfaq to visit Italy explore hidden export markets and have one on one interaction with their counterparts for the promotion of best quality hand carved wooden furniture. He said he will help facilitate PFC delegation for b2b meeting with Italian manufacturers and investors for joint ventures he concluded.

\$44b

Twitter vows legal fight after Musk pulls out deal

CALIFORNIA: Elon Musk, the CEO of Tesla and the world's richest person, said on Friday he was terminating his \$44 billion deal to buy Twitter because the social media company had breached multiple provisions of the merger agreement.

Twitter's chairman, Bret Taylor, said on the micro-blogging platform that the board planned to pursue legal action to enforce the merger agreement.

"The Twitter Board is committed to closing the transaction on the price and terms agreed upon with Mr. Musk...," he wrote.

In a filing, Musk's lawyers said Twitter had failed or refused to respond to multiple requests for information on fake or spam accounts on the platform, which is fundamental to the company's business performance.

"Twitter is in material breach of multiple provisions of that Agreement, appears to have made false and misleading representations upon which Mr. Musk relied when entering into the Merger Agreement," the filing said.

Musk also said he was walking away because Twitter fired high-ranking executives and one-third of the talent acquisition team, breaching Twitter's obligation to "preserve substantially intact the material

components of its current business organization."

Musk's decision is likely to result in a protracted legal tussle between the billionaire and the 16-year-old San Francisco-based company.

Disputed mergers and acquisitions that land in Delaware courts more often than not end up with the companies re-negotiating deals or the acquirer paying the target a settlement to walk away, rather than a judge ordering that a transaction be completed. That is because target companies are often keen to resolve the uncertainty around their future and move on.

Twitter, however, is hoping that court proceedings will start in a few weeks and be resolved in a few months, according to a person familiar with the matter.

There is plenty of precedent for a deal renegotiation.

Several companies repriced agreed acquisitions when the pandemic broke out in 2020 and delivered a global economic shock. In one instance, French retailer LVMH threatened to walk away from a deal with Tiffany & Co. The US jewelry retailer agreed to lower the acquisition price by \$425 million to \$15.8 billion.

"I'd say Twitter is well-positioned legally

to argue that it provided him with all the necessary information and this is a pretext to looking for any excuse to get out of the deal," said Ann Lipton, associate dean for faculty research at Tulane Law School.

Shares of Twitter were down 6 per cent at \$34.58 in extended trading. That is 36 per cent below the \$54.20 per share Musk agreed to buy Twitter for in April.

Twitter's shares surged after Musk took a stake in the company in early April, shielding it from a deep stock market sell-off that slammed other social media platforms. But after he agreed on April 25 to buy Twitter, the stock within a matter of days began to fall as investors speculated Musk might walk away from the deal. With its tumble after the bell on Friday, Twitter was trading at its lowest since March.

Musk's effort to terminate the deal that he inked in April sets the stage for an epic court battle over a billion-dollar breakup fee and more.

The announcement is another twist in a will-he-won't-he saga after Musk clinched the deal to purchase Twitter in April but then put the buyout on hold until the social media company proved that spam bots account for less than 5 per cent of its total users.

\$ 6,300MW shortfall

Country faces up to 12 hours power load shedding



ISLAMABAD: The electricity shortfall in the country has reached up to 6,300 MW with total power generation hovers around 21,700 MW, and total demand stands at 28,000 MW — necessitating prolonged power outages across the country.

According to the power division, at least 5,900 MW of electricity is being generated from water, whereas, the government's thermal plants are generating 1,300 MW of electricity.

The total electricity generation by the private sector

power plants is 11,000 MW, whereas, at least 998 MW of electricity is being generated from wind power plants and 111 MW from solar plants.

The bagasse-based power plants are generating 123 MW of electricity while the nuclear fuel-based power plants are generating 2,278 MW of electricity.

Meanwhile, up to 12 hours of electricity loadshedding is being carried out in different parts of the country. Whereas, the duration of load shedding is longer in areas with high losses.

US-China talks over delisting stocks hinge on redacted audits

NEW YORK/BEIJING: US and Chinese officials have held calls in the past week to further negotiations aimed at keeping about 200 Chinese stocks from losing their listings on New York exchanges, and redactions in auditors' documents are a key barrier.

Talks are reaching a critical point as a deadline to resolve the matter closes in. While regulators from the two countries and their staff are continuing to refine a draft agreement—between the US Public Company Accounting Oversight Board and the China Securities Regulatory Commission and Ministry of Finance—sticking points remain, according to people familiar with the matter.

The Securities and Exchange Commission, also involved in the negotiations, has long been eyeing some New York-traded firms with parent companies based in China and Hong Kong because the jurisdictions refuse to allow audit inspections by American officials.

A deadline of 2024 looms for kicking businesses off the New York Stock Exchange and Nasdaq Stock Market unless China acquiesces, but it could be moved up if US lawmakers pass legislation before the end of the year.

Progress hinges in part over the scope of redactions in audit work papers of Chinese companies, according to the people familiar. The Holding Foreign Companies Accountable Act requires US officials to be able to have complete access to audit papers in order for companies to avoid being delisted from domestic exchanges.

"PCAOB continues to hold regular conversations with the PRC authorities about multiple outstanding issues as we work to protect investors and meet our mandate under US law," said Kent Bonham, a spokesperson for the agency. "Any speculation about a final agreement remains premature, and as Chair Erica Williams has said, 'Time is of the essence.'"



A spokesman for the SEC declined to comment. China's Ministry of Finance didn't respond to a request seeking comment.

"The media should report objectively and base on the information officially released by the regulatory authorities of both parties, and avoid hearsay," the China Securities

Regulatory Commission said in an e-mailed response to requests for comment, without addressing specific questions about this story.

Hanging over the negotiations is the prospect that marquee Chinese companies like JD.com Inc, Jinko Solar Holding Co or Pinduoduo Inc could be delisted even sooner.

US lawmakers have been seeking to expedite the timeline and delist companies that aren't in compliance starting in 2023. Separate bills to do so have passed the House and Senate, and are now being negotiated as part of broad China competition legislation.

The bill hit a roadblock after Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell last week announced he would hold up the talks for a bipartisan China bill as long as Democrats are working on a party-line tax and spending package. Some lawmakers have signalled a willingness to pursue other avenues to move up the timeline if needed.

The US and China have been at odds for two decades over the mandate that all companies that trade publicly in America grant access to audit work papers. Since Congress passed a new law in 2020, the PCAOB, which oversees auditors, and the SEC have been laying the groundwork for identifying companies that don't comply.

Fed, ECB under pressure to deliver lower inflation: QNB

NEW YORK/BRUSSELS: The US Federal Reserve (Fed) and the European Central Bank (ECB) are under pressure to deliver "lower inflation" as part of their mandates, QNB said and noted this requires more aggressive policy actions.

Global bond and equity markets have been particularly volatile in recent weeks as the general sell-off that started early this year deepened with the deterioration of the macro outlook, QNB said in an economic commentary.

The main reason for such moves was the multitude of negative prints coming from inflation figures in key advanced economies. In fact, the headline consumer price index (CPI) for the US and the Euro area accelerated further in May.

At 8.6% for the US and 8.1% for the Euro area, the CPI prints came well above the 2% target of their respective monetary authorities.

Importantly, the inflation figures

for May were significantly higher than what was expected by both policymakers and investors. This was particularly relevant in the US, where a debate about "peak inflation" was gaining ground before new figures were released.

Higher than expected inflation led to even more pressure on the Fed and the ECB to pivot away from an excessively accommodative stance and accelerate the pace of monetary policy normalisation.

In the US, the Fed is "behind the curve," having to tighten policy rates more rapidly to contain inflation. Last time US inflation reached the May 2022 highs was in early 1982, when the Fed policy rate was 15%, versus the current level of 1.75%.

In the past, every time US inflation breached the 5% mark, the price spiral problem was not contained before policy rates were aggressively hiked to a level that was at least as high as peak

inflation. Every single time that this happened, the monetary tightening contributed to a recession, QNB noted.

This time, however, it seems extremely unlikely that US policy rates would move above existing inflation rates. The level of overall indebtedness in the US public and private sector, at around USD 85 trillion or 350% of GDP, would make it very difficult for the Fed to sustain policy rates much above 3.5% to 4%.

Doing so, QNB said "would increase the debt burden too much too quickly, increasing the risk of a financial crisis or a sudden stop in consumption and investment."

Thus, if inflation does not moderate over the next few months, the Fed will have to face some difficult choices in terms of what aspect of its mandate it should prioritise – price stability, full employment or financial stability. This could be one of the most difficult trade-offs of the history of the Fed,

QNB noted.

In the Euro area, policy choices for the ECB are equally difficult. After several quarters in the doldrums with the deflationary effect from the pandemic, prices spiked sharply in the second half of 2021, surprising most analysts and investors. In fact, at this became the most severe inflationary shock the Euro area has ever experienced in its more than twenty three years of history.

Taking Germany as a proxy for inflation for the region during the pre-Euro era, last time inflation reached the May 2022 highs was in mid-1973, when the Bundesbank policy rate was 7%, versus the current ECB policy rate of -0.5%. The negative gap between inflation and policy rates is multiple times anything seen over the last two generations.

This suggests that the ECB has a lot of "catch up" to do in terms of rate hikes, particularly as a widening interest rate differential against the US would

place more pressure on the EUR. In the absence of a meaningful cycle of ECB rate hikes, the EUR could depreciate further against the USD, adding to inflation pressures as the cost of imported goods increase.

However, QNB noted monetary tightening in the Euro area could be "costly". The macro situation differs across countries within the Euro area, particularly when it comes to employment rates, fiscal needs and debt levels.

Mediterranean countries of the South or the "periphery" of the Euro area, such as Greece, Spain and Italy, have higher unemployment rates, fiscal deficits and debt levels than the stronger economies of the North (Germany, Austria, Belgium and the Netherlands).

Hence, QNB noted Southern European economies are more vulnerable to a "hawkish" pivot from the ECB. This is already starting to transpire as intra-EUR bond spreads widen, making it more expensive to fund Southern econ-

omies.

If this continues, higher rates could cause another regional debt crisis in the "periphery" of the Euro area. This problem could be amplified by the escalation of the conflict with Russia, which could develop into an acute energy scarcity in some Western European countries, causing a sudden stop in manufacturing activity.

"All in all, both the Fed and the ECB are under pressure to deliver lower inflation as part of their mandates. However, this requires more aggressive policy actions that could lead to severe unintended consequences, such as deep recessions and more financial instability.

"If inflation does not moderate significantly over the coming months, this is likely to become to reality and could create the most difficult environment for monetary policymaking since the "stagflationary" period of the 1970s," QNB added.

Bismah confident of good show in tri-series, Commonwealth Games

Says tri-series provides good opportunity of acclimatizing to conditions

Our Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan women's national cricket team's training camp for the tri-series in Ireland and the Commonwealth Games finished on Saturday in Islamabad.

The Bismah Maroof-led team will fly out for Belfast via Dubai in the wee hours of 12 July (Tuesday). The team will take a two-day Eid-ul-Adha break Sunday and Monday while preparing for their journey for the two events. The squad trained and practiced in Rawalpindi and Islamabad at the Pindi Cricket Stadium and House of Northern for the last nine days and despite rain interrupted preparation sessions, the squad endeavoured to make most of the available time by working on various aspects of T20 cricket including improvised drills, nets sessions and scenario-based matches. Indoor training sessions were also arranged for the team at the Shahbaz Sharif Sports Complex.

Besides bowling and batting drills and practice, the squad also worked hard on fielding and physical fitness under the supervision of the support staff led by



head coach David Hemp. Bismah, meanwhile is looking forward to the two challenging events against formidable opponents. Captain Bismah Maroof: "Our preparations have suffered a bit due to the persistent rains as we could not play practice matches, we had to hence shift our focus to fitness more. We tried to make most of the indoor facility we were provided and that did come as a good help to the side amid the weather challenges.

"The tri-series in Ireland provides us a good opportunity of acclimatizing to the conditions ahead of the Commonwealth Games. We have a good team combination with youngsters like Tuba Hassan, Ayesha Naseem and Fatima Sana providing real energy, skill and talent, they are the ones for the future and this tour is a real opportunity for them to make a big impression. "At the Commonwealth Games, we would take on the challenge

of playing formidable opponents as to succeed there we need to beat the big teams, our aim would be to target a victory." Pakistan will play their opening match of the Tri-Nation Women's T20I Series against Australia at the Bready Cricket Club on 16 July.

Pakistan will play both Australia and Ireland twice, the top two sides will progress to compete in the final. All seven tournament matches will be staged at the Bready Cricket Club. After the completion of the tri-series, Pakistan will travel to Birmingham to take part in the Commonwealth Games. The green shirts are placed in Pool A alongside T20 world champions Australia, India and Barbados.

Pakistan play Barbados in their opening match on Friday, 29 July. Cricket matches during the Games will be staged at the Edgbaston Stadium, Birmingham. Squad: Bismah Maroof (captain), Aimen Anwar, Aliya Riaz, Anam Amin, Ayesha Naseem, Diana Baig, Fatima Sana, Gul Feroza (wicketkeeper), Iram Javed, Kainat Intiaz, Muneeba Ali Siddiqui (wicket-keeper), Nida Dar, Omaima Sohail, Sadia Iqbal and Tuba Hassan.



ISLAMABAD: Abu Zafar Sadiq, President Alpine Club of Pakistan presenting ACP flag to the climbing team from Punjab Alpine Association. The team includes kid climber Eliazar Wise and it will climb 5,200-M peak Brouhi Peak in Kaghan valley.

Kurram wins City Cricket Association Tournament



Our Correspondent

LAHORE: Kurram won the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa-leg of the two-day City Cricket Association 2022-23 on first innings lead basis after their final against Nowshera ended in a draw at the Sardheri Ground, Charsadda on Friday.

Kurram successfully defended their first innings score of 260 to dismiss Nowshera for 201. When the match ended, Kurram were 176 for six in their second innings from 59 overs.

The stars of Kurram's win were opening-batter Imran and wicketkeeper-batter Abdul Aziz as both struck half-centuries in their side's modest 260 all out in 69 overs. In return, Kurram's Mohammad Naem and Mohammad Ashraf bagged three wickets apiece to bowled out Nowshera for 201 in the 48th over.

In the four-group 19-team Khyber Pakhtunkhwa-leg, Kurram topped Pool D with 13 points, while Nowshera topped Pool C with 16 points to qualify for the semi-finals. The other two teams to qualify for the semi-finals were Mardan from Pool A and Mansehra from Pool B.

The first semi-final was played between Mardan and Nowshera at the Sardheri Ground, Charsadda from 4 to 5 July. On first innings lead, Nowshera was declared the winners and hence made it to the final. In the second semi-final being staged at the Ameen Cricket Ground Shah Alam in Peshawar on same dates, Mohammad Naem's century and three wickets apiece by Abdul Rauf and Shahid Aziz led Kurram to first innings lead over Mansehra and helped the side to qualify for the final. The two-day match ended in a draw.

Nowshera's Gohar Ali topped the batting charts with 513 runs from six outings in the tournament. The right-handed batter struck one century and four half-centuries. Second on the batting chart was D.I Khan's Mohammad Usman who scored 466 from four matches at 93.20. The right-handed batter struck two centuries and three half-centuries.

In the bowling charts, Nowshera's Usman Tariq topped the table with 34 wickets from six matches with two five-for in an innings. Mansehra's Sher Badshah bagged 21 wickets from five outings in the tournament.

The winners from other five City Cricket Associations will be announced later this month.

Morkel wants to see Faf du Plessis at T20 World Cup

JOHANNESBURG: Former South Africa quick Morne Morkel wants selectors to take a chance and include star batter Faf du Plessis in the Proteas' squad for this year's ICC T20 World Cup.

While du Plessis no longer holds a playing contract with Cricket South Africa, the 37-year-old showed he still has what it takes to perform well at the top level by making 468 runs during the recent IPL tournament for Royal Challengers Bangalore.

Selectors overlooked du Plessis for last year's T20 World Cup in Dubai and now face a similar dilemma as to whether they include the veteran right-hander in their squad for this year's edition of the 20-over showcase. Former South Africa skipper Graeme Smith recently suggested du Plessis should be considered for the four-week long tournament and Morkel agrees.

"You want all your big-name players to play and Faf is still playing well at the age of 37," Morkel told ICC Digital at an event in Melbourne to celebrate 100 days until the start of the T20 World Cup in Australia.

"He is still playing well, moving well in the field and he has done exceptionally well for RCB (in the IPL). "I would like to see those experienced players in the side. "That is up to them (Cricket South Africa) to work out, but I am definitely a big fan of it."

Whether du Plessis wins a spot in South Africa's squad remains to be seen, but Morkel is still confident his former side can be competitive at the T20 World Cup this year regardless of whether he is included.

Dutch depend on Miedema at Euro 2022

SHEFFIELD: Vivianne Miedema's modesty belies the nature of a penalty box "killer" aiming to maintain the Netherlands' status as European champions at Euro 2022.

The Arsenal striker was one of the stars of the tournament five years ago when the Dutch dominated on home soil - scoring twice in the 4-2 win over Denmark in the final. Since then Miedema's status has only grown, becoming one of the best players in the women's game and smashing goalscoring milestones along the way.

"She's unique in women's football," said Netherlands midfielder Jill Roord, who also played alongside Miedema for two years at Arsenal. "She's one of a kind, an absolute killer. "You see it in men's football-players who are so cool in front of the goal-but I don't think anybody else in women's football has that to her extent." A goalscoring phenomenon since her teenage years, Miedema



admits to nearly quitting the game in the wake of the 2015 World Cup where she struggled to live up to the pressure heaped upon her as an 18-year-old.

"I was really close to retiring," Miedema told the BBC earlier this year. "I couldn't deal with the pressure, I didn't like football and I told my mum 'this is me done'. I was going to play for fun back in Holland." Even after winning Euro 2017 she suffered from panic attacks due to the stress of becoming a recognisable face. She credits a change of mindset to helping her untap

her potential but still tries to shun the spotlight where possible, most notably in her low key goal celebrations. "I don't like to be the person everyone watches," she told The Guardian.

"It's my job. I'm happy if someone else scores. I celebrate more." Euro 2017 was just the beginning of her rise on the international stage. Miedema also helped the Netherlands to the 2019 World Cup final and set an Olympic record last year by scoring 10 goals in four games. On both occasions the Dutch fell just short against the USA, but they

will not stand in the way of Mark Parsons' squad over the next month as they look to retain their European crown. A 5-1 thrashing at the hands of England in a pre-tournament friendly exposed cracks in the Dutch defence that will heap even more responsibility on Miedema and Paris Saint-Germain's Lieke Martens in attack.

A tough opening game against Olympic silver medallists Sweden also lies in wait in Sheffield on Saturday. But the Netherlands have made a habit of saving their best form for the big occasion in recent years and will expect to come through a group also containing Portugal and Switzerland. Those final two group games could also be key to Miedema's chances of adding a Golden Boot to her collection of individual accolades. A century of international goals is also in sight after Miedema moved onto 94 with a double in the Netherlands' final warm-up friendly against Finland.

Spain, Germany start Euro 2022 in style

LONDON: Spain rebounded from the loss of star midfielder Alexia Putellas by beating Finland 4-1, as Germany also got their Euro 2022 campaign off to a flying start with a 4-0 win over Denmark on Friday.

La Roja had been pre-tournament favourites until the cruciate ligament injury to reigning female Ballon d'Or winner Putellas in training on Tuesday. However, Jorge Vilda's side showed why they are still contenders to win a first major women's tournament despite falling behind inside a minute to Linda Sallstrom's strike. Goals from Irene Paredes, Aitana Bonmati, Lucia Garcia and Mariona Caldentey extended Spain's unbeaten run stretching back to March 2020.

Walking with crutches and decked out in a Spain shirt, Putellas was in attendance to offer encouragement to her teammates. But the shock of losing their star woman rolled over into the slow start. Anna Westerlund's long ball forward played Sallstrom clean through and the Paris FC striker produced a cool finish in off the far post. Spain settled



into their passing rhythm as they enjoyed 70 percent of the possession.

But with all-time top goalscorer Jennifer Hermoso also out of the tournament through injury, they had to rely on the unusual route of crosses into the box to turn the game around. Captain Paredes started the comeback when she bulleted home a header from Caldentey's corner. The diminutive Bonmati then produced a stunning header into the top corner and celebrated by going over to salute her Barcelona teammate Putellas. "I knew if I had the chance to score a goal in the game, the nicest thing would be to celebrate it with and dedicate it to her," said Bonmati.

"It says a lot about our team. We have overcome adversities and bad news. We know how to pick ourselves up." Garcia made sure of the points 15 minutes from time when she nodded Maria Leon's free-kick into the bottom corner before Caldentey slotted home a penalty with the last kick of the game. Germany produced a stunning display to dismantle Euro 2017 finalists Denmark in London. The eight-time winners were dominant from the start and could have been out of sight before half-time as Felicitas Rauch twice hit the crossbar. Lina Magull finally made the Germans' pressure count.

Warholm 'not 100% sure' of worlds

PARIS: Karsten Warholm, the Olympic champion and world-record holder in the 400m hurdles, said Friday he was not 100 percent certain of competing at the world championships in Oregon that start on July 15. Warholm pulled up injured on his return to competition at the Diamond League meet in Rabat in early June with a "muscle fibre tear" in a hamstring.

"It takes time to be able to recover from that," the 26-year-old Norwegian star told a press conference. "It has been tough of course because it wasn't good timing at all. "But I'm starting to feel better every day, I've been able to push it a little bit and haven't had any major setbacks so it's looking better and better. "I'm



starting to feel ready and starting to see some hope."

Warholm has been receiving treatment in Germany, combining work in the swimming pool with physiotherapy in his hope of being fit for Eugene. "I've been doing everything in my power to be able to be ready, but in life you have no guarantees I guess," he said. "I don't feel like I can say that

I will run 100 percent yet. That's because I need to feel 100 percent.

"It's not the ideal situation but I've been working all the way since Tokyo to be able to be in a great shape. It's not like everything goes away because I've been injured for five weeks. "The most important thing is that the hamstring can handle the pressure and I

don't go out there and get an injury that's even more serious.

"I'm very eager to be on the starting line in Eugene to defend my title. "I'm not going to go just to take part. I'm going to have goals if I go there. I'm not going to jog around. That's not my style I guess. "It's going to be the biggest challenge of my career because I've never been in this situation before. "Nobody knows what I'm capable of doing, not even myself, so it's going to be a mystery box this time." After the worlds, where he would face fierce competition from the American Rai Benjamin and Brazilian Alison dos Santos, Warholm hopes to shine at the European championships in Munich from August 15-21.

LA felt like home straight away: Bale

LOS ANGELES: Wales captain Gareth Bale said Friday the chance to bring his expertise and skills to a young Los Angeles FC squad prompted his jump to Major League Soccer.

"It just felt really like the right thing to do," Bale said. "It felt like home straight away." The five-time UEFA Champions League winner arrived by plane in southern California and hours later saw his new club defeat the visiting Los Angeles Galaxy 3-2 in his first taste of the "El Trafico" derby. "Seeing the fans live for the first time has more than kept me awake," Bale told match broadcaster ESPN. "What an incredible reception I had when I came in.

Just excited to get started and play in front of these incredible

fans." The 32-year-old former Real Madrid and Tottenham forward was eligible to play but had barely met his teammates. Supporters settled for watching Bale smile and wave to them, the crowd chanting his name before the match. In June, Bale helped Wales reach the World Cup for the first time in 64 years. Bale said he is ready for the mix of his US adventure and preparing for the Qatar World Cup later this year. "The best prep is to play games," Bale said. "I want to come here.

I want to play games and make my stamp and do as best I can to try and help LAFC win a trophy." Bale signed a one-year deal through 2023 after a pitch from LAFC bosses. "It was many things. It wasn't just one



thing in particular," Bale said. "We had a chat on Zoom about multiple things I could come

in and offer - what I can do in football." The Welsh player said he could "help with the youngsters because it's a very young team here, give them advice, seeing what I do in terms of professional standard and try to help them." Bale joined a club in only its fifth season on the field but one that hopes to match the sparkle that rival Galaxy once enjoyed with David Beckham.

"Just the project they have here is really amazing," Bale said. "They have a lot of great young players trying to develop. The club is really on the rise. "It's very new but it's something that's really glamorous. It's just a very attractive club." LAFC, the overall MLS leader, visit Nashville and Kansas City over the next two weeks

before next playing at home on July 29 against Seattle. LAFC improved to 4-7 with five drawn in the all-time rivalry, the Black and Gold snapping a five-match winless streak against the Galaxy.

LAFC led 1-0 at half-time with a 17th-minute header by Ecuadorian midfielder Jose Cifuentes, but the Galaxy equalized in the 55th minute after a goal by French forward Samuel Grandis. Cifuentes headed in a centering pass from Mexican striker Carlos Vela in the 70th minute and Cristian Arango blasted in a right-footed shot in the 72nd to give LAFC a 3-1 edge. Galaxy midfielder Rayan Raveloson of Madagascar scored from a header in the 81st minute.