



# Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



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ہم سے مسدود بیان کیا، کہا ہم سے بچی  
تفان نے بیان کیا، ان سے شام نے بیان  
کیا، ان سے ان کے والد نے بیان کیا اور ان  
سے عائشہ رضی اللہ عنہا نے بیان کیا کہ نبی  
کریم ﷺ نے ہم پر ہر مہمانپ کو مار ڈالنے  
کا حکم دیا اور فرمایا کہ یہ آنکھوں کو نقصان  
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## SC verdict buries foreign conspiracy's narrative: Law Minister

Law Minister Azam Nazir Tarar says Supreme Court verdict on Deputy Speaker's ruling about no-confidence motion has buried the narrative of foreign conspiracy to oust the government of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). The Supreme Court has declared dissolution of National Assembly by president as unconstitutional and Deputy Speaker of National Assembly gave the ruling with mala fide intent.



## President Erdogan to visit Pakistan this September: Ambassador

Ambassador of the Republic of Türkiye Dr. Mehmet Paçacı says Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan will visit Pakistan this September. The visit will strengthen bilateral trade between the two countries. On July 15, the existence of Türkiye was in danger when FETO terrorist organization's followers attacked but Turkish citizens from all walks of life showed courage and rendered sacrifices to protect their democratic government and institutions.

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## Pakistan to get \$1.17b under IMF deal

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and International Monetary Fund (IMF) have reached an agreement under which Pakistan will soon receive one point one seven billion dollars. In a tweet on Thursday, Minister for Finance and Revenue Miftah Ismail says the agreement has been inked to complete the 7th and 8th reviews of Pakistan's Extended Fund Facility. He thanked Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, his fellow ministers and financial team for their help and efforts in reaching the agreement with IMF.

Islamabad: Finance Minister Miftah Ismail says IMF programme restoration signifies international financial institutions' trust in Pakistan's economy, indicating that the country's economy is heading in the right direction. In an exclusive talk with state Radio channel Thursday, he said we took tough decisions during the last three months to prevent bankruptcy and the Sri Lanka like situation in Pakistan. He said we took these decisions without taking into consideration heavy political cost; and we succeeded in this objective.

Miftah Ismail expressed confidence that credit lines and other loans will also be restored with the revival of the IMF programme. He said the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and other financial institutions stop extending any kind of loan or credit if a country does not have sufficient funds for three-month import.

He hoped that friendly countries, including Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar will come for investment and packages for Pakistan, which will lead to enhance exports.

Replying to a question, the Finance Minister said dollar's flight will also slow down with the improvement in Pakistan's economy.

## Forex matters

Islamabad: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Miftah Ismail in a group photo with delegation of Pakistan Readymade Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association headed by its Chairman Shaikh Luqman Amin on Thursday.



Photo: PID

# IMF deal sets stage for ending economic difficulties: PM

Slashes POL prices by for remaining month of July

### Our Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said that the IMF agreement has set the stage for bringing the country out of economic difficulties. In a tweet on Thursday, he congratulated the Finance and Foreign Office teams led by Ministers Miftah Ismail and Bilawal Bhutto for their efforts in getting the IMF programme revived.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif slashed the price of petrol by Rs18.50 per litre in order to provide maximum relief to the consumers.

Addressing the nation, the premier said that the government had increased the price of petrol after coming into power to meet the conditions laid forth by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which were agreed by the previous PTI-led government.

However, as the prices are declining in the international market now, the government has decided to pass on the relief to people and, therefore, has decided to reduce the price of petrol and diesel by Rs18.50 and Rs40.54 per litre, respectively.

### PM summons federal cabinet meeting today

The new price of petrol will be Rs230.24 per litre while diesel will be available at Rs236 per litre.

At the outset of his speech, PM Shehbaz reiterated that the coalition government had inherited a "troubled economy" from the previous government. "The previous government trampled on the agreement it had struck with the

IMF and laid landmines for us," he said.

The premier further added that the previous PTI government, during its final few weeks, had slashed fuel prices even though the government's coffers were empty. "This was done so our [coalition] government would fall into difficulties."

Acknowledging that the decision to increase the price of petroleum products had burdened the underprivileged segment of society, he said: "We had no other way. We had to take tough measures."

"However, today with God's blessing, oil prices are declining in international markets and it is by His mercy that we have had the chance to reduce the prices today," he added.

Commenting on the staff-level agreement with the IMF, PM Shehbaz appreciated Finance Minister Miftah Ismail and his

team for playing a part in reviving the loan facility with the global lender but hoped that the current deal would be the last one. "After this, we will try to stand on our own feet."

The prime minister said that the path ahead could be "thorny and difficult" but in the end, he said, "I reassure you that good times will come soon."

Following the announcement by the premier, the finance minister said: "PM has just announced a reduction in the prices of petrol of Rs 18.5 per litre [and] in diesel of Rs 40.54 per litre."

"The new price of petrol is Rs 230.24 [and] diesel is Rs 236 per litre from [July 15]. Kerosene is reduced by Rs 33.81 to Rs 196.45 [and] LDO is reduced by Rs 37.71 to Rs 191.44. Alhamdulillah," he wrote on Twitter, sharing a graph of Brent crude oil prices in the international market.

## Parliament Attack Case

# Govt challenges Imran Khan's acquittal

### Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The government on Thursday filed an appeal in the Islamabad High Court (IHC) challenging the acquittal of PTI Chairman Imran Khan and other party leaders in the Parliament attack case.

As per sources, government requested the court to declare the PTI chairman's acquittal decision null and void, asserting that the Anti-Terrorism Court's verdict was against the law. It said that the trial court had decided the case in haste.

The petition stated that there were enough documentary and video evidence avail-

able to prove that PTI Chief Imran Khan had committed a crime by launching an attack on the Parliament.

It further said that the trial court had condoned the evidence of eyewitnesses in this case and acquitted Imran. It alleged that the public prosecutors had favoured Imran's exoneration against the law.

The trial court had given the judgement in favour of Imran Khan even without hearing the affectees of the case, the petition added.

An Anti-Terrorism Court had exonerated former prime minister Imran Khan and others in the Parliament attack case on Oct 29, 2020.

# ECP rejects PTI leaders' allegations

Asks Imran Khan to present evidence of allegations against CEC

### Our Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan on Thursday while rejecting Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) supreme leader Imran Khan and PTI senior leader Shireen Mazari's allegations of being part of a rigging plan in the upcoming Punjab by-polls said that they don't know any "Mr. X,Y" and there is no need to meet Hamza Shahbaz and Maryam Nawaz behind the curtains.

Responding to PTI leaders' allegations, the ECP spokesperson said ECP will continue to play their constitutional role without any fear, adding that if PTI leaders have any evidence they should bring it forward.

In this regard, the spokesperson further said that the Election Commission has directed the DROs, ROS, monitoring teams and the Provincial Election Commissioner Punjab to remain vigi-

lant for the Punjab by-elections.

The spokesperson clarified that they would continue to play their constitutional role without provocation and pressure and would ensure transparent elections in the Punjab by-elections.

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Thursday has asked former prime minister Imran Khan to present evidence supporting his allegations against the CEC Sikandar Sultan Raja.

The ECP spokesperson in a reaction to the allegations raised by Imran Khan against the body's chief said politicians come to meet Sikandar Sultan Raja, he has no need to meet Hamza and Maryam secretly.

The spokesperson said the ECP will continue to perform its duties for fair and transparent elections in the country without coming under anyone's pressure.

# SC verdict exposes Imran's conspiracy narrative: Maryam

Says PML-N remove all landmines laid by PTI chief

KALLAR SYEDAN: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) vice President Maryam Nawaz on Thursday while expressing satisfaction over the Supreme Court verdict on the former deputy speaker Qasim Suri's ruling on the no-confidence motion against former Prime Minister Imran Khan said that the historic decision of the Supreme Court has exposed the false politics and conspiracy narrative of Imran Khan, and the apex court judge said, he had violated the constitution.

Addressing a rally here ahead of July 17 Punjab by-elections campaign, Maryam said that, Fitna Khan had laid landmines, we have removed landmines by taking tough decisions, adding that difficult times are over, good news will come to the people in the coming days.

She further said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will address tonight and will announce the cut in petrol price.

"I urge the government not to end the matter here, Article 6 and treason cases



should be prosecuted against the PTI leaders, they should be punished so that no one can violate the constitution in future," She added.

Taking a swipe at Imran Khan, Maryam said the Supreme court has exposed his false conspiratorial narrative, adding that the judge said Imran Khan did not provide any evidence of conspiracy.

She went on to say that her party will defeat incompetence, inflation and corruption and the PML-N has already won. On July 17, there will be a competition with Punjab's enemy Imran

Khan and "Fitna Khan" is another name of anarchy.

She said the party has removed all landmines laid by the former prime minister "fitna" [Imran] Khan by making tough decisions with a heavy heart.

Addressing a public gathering in Rawalpindi ahead of the by-polls in the 20 constituencies of Punjab, Maryam said that the people of Pakistan are their [PML-N's] responsibility. She announced that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will reduce the price of petroleum products in his address to the nation tonight.

## By \$130.1m

# Forex reserves continue to decline

KARACHI: The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) on Thursday shared that the liquid foreign reserves in Pakistan have declined by over \$130.1 million during the week ended on July 7, ARY News reported.

According to details shared by the SBP, the total liquid foreign reserves held by the country stood at \$15.61 billion on July 7.

Sharing a break-up of the foreign reserves position, the central bank said that the reserves held by the State Bank of Pakistan stand at US\$9.71 billion while commercial banks also have reserves of US\$5.89 billion after a decrease of \$30.3 million. Earlier in the day, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Pakistan have reached a staff-level agreement for the release of US\$1.17 billion under the combined 7th and 8th reviews of Pakistan's Extended Fund Facility (EFF).

A statement issued by the Fund said that the agreement is subject to approval by the IMF's Executive Board.

# IMF agrees to resume Pakistan loan

### Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) said Thursday it had agreed with Pakistan to resume a suspended loan programme that will inject \$1.17 billion into the struggling economy. A statement from the IMF said a "staff level agreement" — which is still subject to board approval — will bring to \$4.2 billion the amount dispersed under an extended fund facility (EFF) that could increase to \$7 billion and stretch until June next year.

An original \$6 billion bailout package was signed by former prime minister Imran Khan in 2019, but repeatedly stalled when his government reneged on subsidy agreements.

The new agreement follows months of deeply unpopular belt-tightening by the government of Shehbaz Sharif, which took power in April and has effectively eliminated fuel subsidies and introduced new measures to broaden the tax base.

"Pakistan is at a challenging economic juncture," Nathan Porter, who headed the IMF team, said in a statement, adding external factors and domestic policies were to blame.

Pakistan needs international support for its economy, which suffers from poor revenue collection and dwindling foreign reserves to pay its crippling debt.



The new government has slashed a raft of subsidies to meet the demands of global financial institutions but risks the wrath of an electorate already struggling under the weight of double-digit inflation.

A new coalition government — which came to power after Khan was ousted by a parliamentary no-confidence vote — has said it will make the tough decisions needed to turn the economy around.

Successive administrations blame their predecessors for the country's economic woes, but analysts say the malaise stems from decades of poor management and a failure to tackle endemic corruption and widespread tax avoidance.

In a bid to secure the IMF loan,

Prime Minister Sharif has imposed three fuel price hikes cumulatively totaling 50 percent to effectively end the subsidies introduced by Khan.

Islamabad has so far received \$3 billion from the programme, but with the facility due to end later this year, officials sought an extension until June 2023.

"It became essential to resume the IMF programme to save the country from default," finance minister Miftah Ismail told the national assembly last month.

"We knew it would damage our political reputation, but still we did it."

The latest budget has earmarked 3.95 trillion rupees (\$18.8 billion) just to service the country's whopping debt of \$128 billion.

## Official narrative

Federal Minister for Law and Justice, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar and Advisor to PM On Kashmir Affairs & Gilgit Baltistan, Qamar Zaman Kaira addressing a press conference in Islamabad on Thursday.



Photo: PID

## Phase 2

## 590 Candidates elected unopposed in Sindh LG polls

KARACHI: As many as 590 candidates have been elected unopposed in the second phase of Local Government (LG) elections in Sindh.

In the second phase of local body elections in Sindh, more than 20,000 candidates are contesting for 3,822 local body seats while 590 candidates have been elected unopposed.

According to the data issued by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), a total of six candidates from seven districts of Karachi were elected unopposed. Four candidates from Malir, one from Korangi and one from Kemari have been elected unopposed.

Meanwhile, as many as 134 candidates in Hyderabad have been election unopposed. 100 candidates from Sujawal, 85 from Thatta and 70 from Dadu were elected unopposed.

Moreover, 60 candidates from Tando Adam Khan and 31 from Jamshoro have been elected unopposed.

It is pertinent to mention here that the polling for remaining 16 districts of the province is scheduled for July 24. The LG polls will be held in Karachi and Hyderabad divisions' 16 districts including Dadu, Jamshoro, Thatta and Sujawal.

Amidst incidents of violence, and clashes, the ruling Pakistan People's Party (PPP) won with a big margin in the first phase of Sindh LG polls in 14 districts of the province, according to the unofficial results.

According to the unofficial and unconfirmed results, Pakistan People's Party grabbed 487 sets of Town Committees during the first phase of LG polls in Sindh.

The Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA) stood second with 78 seats, Inde-

## SC Verdict

## Govt hints at filing references against PTI leaders

## Rana Sana says govt begins working on action under Article 6

## Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has hinted at filing references against the PTI's top brass under Article 6 after a Supreme Court judgment in the National Assembly deputy speaker's ruling case. The Supreme Court issued its detailed judgment in the suo motu case on former NA deputy speaker Qasim Suri's ruling on the no-confidence motion against ex-prime minister Imran Khan and said it was not satisfied with the proof as insufficient evidence was presented to support PTI's claim of foreign interference.

Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah has hailed the Supreme Court's (SC) detailed judgment on the then deputy speaker National Assembly (NA) Qasim Suri's ruling, saying that the government has started working on action under Article 6 of the Constitution.

Addressing a press conference in Islamabad, the Interior Minister said that the Supreme Court had proven once again that it would always uphold the Constitution and protect the people's mandate.

The Constitution of Pakistan is the

sacred trust of the people and all these things have been stated in the detailed judgment of the Supreme Court.

Rana Sanaullah also demanded resignation from President Dr Arif Alvi following the apex court's order, saying that former prime minister Imran Khan's politics has come to an end.

"Imran Khan put the national interest at stake and tried to undermine the Constitution in a bid to save his power," he added. The minister further said that the apex court has left it to the discretion of the government and Parliament to pursue the case under Article 6 — which pertains to treason.

He said the National Assembly speaker is bound to file a reference against the individuals named in the verdict with the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), adding that the electoral watchdog should disqualify them in accordance with the law.

Rana Sanaullah added that he was ready to arrest Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman and an application for registration of a case against the ex-premier was pending with the federal cabinet.

Meanwhile, the federal minister disclosed that he intended to arrest Awami Muslim League (AML) chief Sheikh Rashid during the PTI's long march. "However, Rashid was nowhere to be found," he added.

The Interior Minister told PTI leader Fawad Chaudhry that the SC's decision cannot be abolished. He said that the federal government has started working on action under Article 6 of the Constitution, adding that the Parliament has to block the path of unconstitutional steps after

Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah said: "We have started works to file a reference under Article 6. Only the federal government has the authority to file cases under Articles 5 and 6."

The interior minister said that the top court has given a "historic" verdict on the former deputy speaker's ruling. "This decision has accepted the rule of law and the rule of people."

Sanaullah said that the court used the words "blatant violation" in its judgement which has led to PTI Chairman Imran Khan's "political demise".

## SC judgment is 'full of errors': PTI

## Fawad says history of SC decisions in Pakistan has not been bright

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PTI's claim of foreign interference. Chaudhry claimed that the PTI had urged the apex court to investigate the matter and submitted documents related to the "cipher" to the court, but the SC turned down the request and asked the party to not "speak on the cipher in detail". The PTI leader said the SC judgment states that there wasn't enough material to back the foreign conspiracy theory as "the court did not even bother to look at the evidence".

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Hamza Shahbaz Sharif on Thursday said it is the responsibility of Parliament to take action against Pakistan Tehreek e-Insaf (PTI) leadership under Article 6.

Hamza Shahbaz said that the historic decision of the Supreme Court has once again buried the ideology of necessity, adding that those who misled the nation by lying were exposed.

He went on to say that President Arif Alvi, Imran Khan and former deputy speaker Qasim Suri have violated the constitution.

Reacting to the decision of the Supreme Court, Hamza said that another lie of those who misled the nation by telling lies has surfaced, adding that the decision is historic as

## Parliament should act against PTI leaders under Article 6: Hamza

## Says he won't indulge in revenge politics like Imran Niazi

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it has buried the ideology of necessity once again.

Hamza Shahbaz went on to say those who violate the constitution will have to be brought to justice, in order to avoid violation in the future.

Welcoming the detailed decision of the SC, the Punjab Chief Minister said that the SC had clarified that Article 6 of the Constitution was used for violating the Constitution.

Hamza Shahbaz also asserted that the verdict of the Supreme Court also buried the conspiratorial statement of PTI.

Hamza claimed that the masses of Punjab will reject the group of conspirators, adding that after violating the constitution, they have started to threat

the courts.

Punjab CM went on to say that the judiciary should also take notice of these threats and bring the perpetrators of contempt of institutions to justice.

He said that they have no intentions of practicing revenge politics in the country as done by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan.

Talking about the by-elections in Punjab, the PML-N leader while expressing utmost confidence in his party's victory said that everything will be clear on July 17.

The Punjab CM also mentioned that if he had been permitted by his party, he would have resigned and contested in the by-elections. Agencies

## President should resign after SC verdict: PPP

## Sherry accuses President of protecting interests of PTI

## Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change Sherry Rehman on Thursday said that President Arif Alvi should resign after verdict of Supreme Court of Pakistan on ruling of Deputy Speaker of National Assembly.

Sherry Rehman said that verdict of the apex proved to be the last nail in coffin of regime change conspiracy narrative.

The PPP leader also accused President of protecting interests of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) instead of the constitution of the country.

Earlier, Prime Minister Shehbaz

Sharif said that Supreme Court's detailed judgement on Vote of No Confidence exposes the lies and propaganda indulged in by Imran Khan.

Prime Minister in a tweet, said that it is utterly shameful how Imran Khan tried to undermine the constitution and manufactured the lie of "regime change".

The premier also urged everyone to read the verdict of the apex court.

Meanwhile federal ministers said that Supreme Court verdict on Deputy Speaker's ruling about no-confidence motion has buried the narrative of foreign conspiracy to oust the government of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI).

## Chinese bus company to set up plant in Sindh

## Bureau Report

KARACHI: A Chinese company has agreed to set up a public transport plant in Sindh, with the provincial minister for transport Sharjeel Inam Memon announcing that the plant would either be set up in Karachi or Hyderabad. According to details, a meeting was held between provincial minister for transport Sharjeel Inam Memon and Yutong Bus Country Manager Paul Zhang. The Country Manager was accompanied by Service Head Yutong Wayner Wang.

Secretary Transport Abdul Haleem Sheikh, MD Sindh Mass Transit Authority Captain (ret'd) Altaf Hussain Sario and National Radio and Telecommunication Corporation (NRTC) Project Director Sohaib Shafiq were also present.

The parties agreed to create a 'concrete' proposal regarding the matter by next week. The plant is to apparently be constructed on 15 to 18 acres of land.

"The Department of Transport is making every effort to set up a public transport plant in Sindh," Sharjeel Memon said, adding that this venture would improve the public transport system.

According to the transport minister, the project would bring in foreign investment into Pakistan and create new employment opportunities.

## Punjab by polls

## ECP seeks Army's deployment in five constituencies

## Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Thursday sought deployment of Pakistan Army outside the polling stations in five sensitive constituencies of Lahore and Multan to prevent any untoward incident during the upcoming by-elections.

Army should be deployed outside polling stations in four constituencies in Lahore, one in Multan, the ECP said in a letter written to Interior Ministry.

Earlier, it was agreed to deploy Rangers, but according to recent reports, the threat of unrest and violence has increased, said the letter written by the ECP.

The ECP sought enhancing the deployment of Quick Response Force (QRF) and frequent flag marches to cope with any eventuality. These steps were necessary as the present atmosphere in the 20 Punjab constituencies was politically-charged.

In other constituencies as well, letter said the law enforcement agencies should be instructed to remain vigilant and prevent incidents of violence before or during elections. The letter warns if premature violence was not prevented, the situation could spiral out of control.

## Looters creating rifts between PTI, Pak Army: Imran Khan

## Says greatly hurt by Supreme Court's ruling

D G KHAN: Former Prime Minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chairman Imran Khan has asserted that the 'looters' were creating rifts between PTI and Pakistan Army.

"PTI will never fight with our country's army," the former premier said while addressing a public gathering in Multan in connection with the upcoming Punjab by-elections.

The PTI Chairman slammed the incumbent rulers and saying that these people criticised the Establishment when they are not in power. "Enemies of the country want the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) to be weak," he added.

Imran Khan further said that Muslim countries were saddened over the ouster of PTI government, reiterating that he

will continue to fight against the 'imported' government.

"Traitors are those who looted country's money and put it in offshore accounts," he said, adding: "The money supposed to be spent on infrastructure, hospitals and education was spent on buying properties and luxuries."

"The imported government is trying their level best to initiate proceedings under Article 6 of the Constitution against PTI leaders and break up the only national party of the country," he added.

The former prime minister said that his party leadership across the country was trying to unite the people of Pakistan, claiming that other political parties have lost their control due to PTI's popularity.



Expressing grief over the Supreme Court's (SC) decision in a case pertaining to the rejection of the no-confidence motion against him, Imran Khan has requested the top court to conduct an inquiry into the 'foreign conspiracy'.

The PTI chairman said the nation felt insulted after hearing that the apex court thinks no investigation was carried out to find out the truth about the diplomatic cypher. He highlighted that President Dr Arif Alvi also sent the matter to the top court, but SC refused to investigate.

Imran lamented how the 'imported government' leaders believe that Pakistan is alive because of America. "Only that nation can develop which is free. Nor a slave neither an enslaved nation can develop and progress until it is free."

# Global community, rights bodies must play role to resolve K-dispute: President AJK

Barrister Sultan Mehmood says it is imperative that rights watchdogs should play lead role in exposing Indian brutalities in Kashmir

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: President Azad Kashmir Barrister Sultan Mehmood Chaudhry has said that it was high time that the international community and human rights organisations should come forward in a big way to help resolve the lingering Kashmir dispute that happens to be the main cause and consequence of human rights violations in the region.

The AJK president made these remarks while talking to a delegation comprising President of All Neighbors



International (ANI), Ilyas Masih, Dr. Joe Knight, Mike Crow, Lucas Bontergar and others who called him here on Thursday.

Speaking on the occasion, the president Barrister Sultan Mehmood

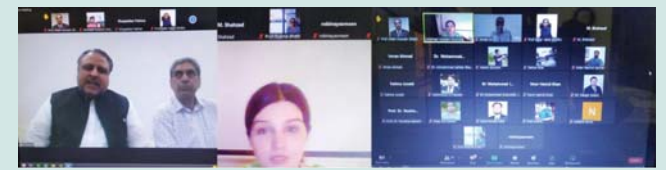
Chaudhary while briefing the delegates about the latest situation in the Indian occupied Kashmir said, "Fast deteriorating political and human rights situation in Kashmir merits urgent attention of the international community as well as the rights organisations that have been working for peace and humanity".

"It is imperative that the rights watchdogs should play a lead role in exposing Indian brutalities in Kashmir", he said adding that there was a dire need that world influential governments should influence India to

allow a fact-finding mission to visit the IOJK to take stock of the situation.

Speaking on the occasion Ilyas Masih the head of the delegation and Dr. Joe Knight assured the president that the ANI would continue to play its role in promoting peace and brotherhood across the globe. They said that mutual respect and tolerance were key to resolving disputes. Dr. Joe Knight also presented his book to the President whereas the members of the delegation were presented memorial shields by the President of Azad Kashmir.

## Webinar on Kashmir Martyrs' Day organized at IUB



Our Correspondent

BAHAWALPUR: A webinar on the occasion of Kashmir Martyrs' Day was organized at the Islamia University of Bahawalpur. Vice Chancellor the Islamia University of Bahawalpur Engr. Prof. Dr. Mahboob presided the webinar and Ms. Mushaal Hussein Mullick, Chairperson Peace and Culture Organization and Leader of Kashmir Freedom Movement was the chief guest. Prof. Dr. Aftab Hussain Gillani, Dean, Faculty of Law and Chairman, Department of Pakistan Studies. Prof. Dr. Rubina Bhatti, Dean Faculty of Social Sciences, Senior Journalist, Zafar Iqbal Sadhu and faculty members were present on the occasion.

Ms. Mushaal Hussein Mullick said that for the right of Kashmiris to self-determination, the entire Pakistani nation stands side by side in every forum of the world. Negative propaganda can be answered with scholarly and legal arguments. Vice Chancellor Islamia University of Bahawalpur Engr. Prof. Dr. Athar Mahboob said that the Islamia University of Bahawalpur as a higher educational institution strives for the independence of Kashmiris and expresses solidarity to raise voice to highlight the oppression on Kashmiris and serious human rights violations at national and international level.

Dr. Noshina Saleem, Director, School of Communication Studies, Punjab University, Lahore, said that teachers and students should present research papers in international journals on Kashmir, especially the freedom movement, and highlight the real issue at home and abroad.

## PM AJK lauds Baba Poonch Col. Khan Muhammad Khan's selfless services

Abdul Majeed Tahir

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Azad Jammu and Kashmir Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan while paying eulogizing tributes to Baba Poonch Colonel Khan Muhammad Khan, has said that the deceased leader would be remembered for a long time in the annals of Kashmir history for his selfless services for the people of the liberated territory.

Prime Minister Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan made these assertions while talking to members of the Supreme Council of Sudhan Education Conference who called on him here on Thursday. Chairman Kashmir Orphan Trust Chaudhry Akhtar was also present on the occasion.

Appreciating Khan Muhammad Khan's Mithi Atta movement, the AJK premier said that the movement started by the deceased leader in 1934 was in tune with the requirements of the time, the fruits of which were reaped for a long time. He said that in view of the fast-changing requirements there was a dire need to bring structural reforms within this important social institution to conform it in line with the requirements of modern times.

He said that General (ret'd) Sardar Mohammad Aziz Khan should be made head of the organization's governing body. Stressing the need for adopting an inclusive approach, the PM said that it was imperative to infuse new blood in the organization and get it freed from all prejudices. "The organization should be free from all prejudices and well reputed individuals should be included in the organization so that the institution can be further expanded", the Prime Minister said.

The PM on the occasion assured his all-possible support to the visiting delegation. The President Sudhan Education Conference (SEC) Major R Sardar Mushtaq Khan gave a detailed briefing to the Prime Minister Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan regarding the SEC. He also invited the PM to attend the Sudhan Educational Conference.

## ADCR forms teams for audit of all stamp paper vendors

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: ADCR (Additional Deputy Commissioner Revenue) Waqar Ali Khan has constituted different teams to carry out audit of all the stamp paper vendors working in kutcheries in Attock, Jandl, Pindigheb, Fatehjang and Hasanabdul.

This step has been taken to control sale of fake Stamp papers. All the assistant commissioners have been directed to pay surprise visits and submit report on daily basis regarding Stamp paper vendors. The audit teams will verify the stamp papers using "Ultra Violet Light" ADCR has also ordered all the stamp paper vendors to ensure endorsing their Stamps and signatures on the stamp papers before issuance.

## Muhammad Saqib of HITEC University to defend dissertation on Aug 3

Staff Reporter

TAXILA: Muhammad Saqib a PhD Scholar of Islamic Studies Department of HITEC University Taxila, will defend his research dissertation on Wednesday August 03, 2022 at 11:00 AM in IQBAL Auditorium of the University. The topic of his research is

The research has been supervised by Dr Rab Nawaz. Defence is open to all interested individuals can attend the open defence and be seated by 10:45 AM.

## Pakistani start-up DeafTawk makes Youth CoLab Summit 2022

ISLAMABAD: A Pakistani start-up called DeafTawk, through provision of sign language and live interpretation services, makes the Youth CoLab Summit 2022 inclusive for the global deaf community.

The presence of as many as 200,000 participants in the summit benefited 11,000 young social entrepreneurs and over 1,240 youth-led social enterprises, who helped address SDG challenges, increasing the event's global reach and influence, a news release said here on Wednesday. Several world leading organizations from all over the world joined the summit as they supported and explored new sustainable ideas and solutions.

## LUMS represents Pakistan at Int'l Staff Week

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: LUMS represented Pakistan at the International Staff Week hosted by the Koç University in Turkey. The programme's focus prepares universities to achieve the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Office of International Affairs (OIA) at LUMS, spearheaded Pakistan's participation. The OIA is responsible for promoting international collaborations between LUMS and its international partners to expand the University's global footprint and recognition. To achieve this, the Office continuously works on establishing new student, faculty, and staff exchange opportunities, having hosted various academic and cultural events on the LUMS campus together with international partners in France, Germany, Japan, and other countries.

## Rains wreak havoc

LAHORE: Labourers riding donkey cart loading with sacks of onions in vegetable market along a flooded street after a heavy rain shower in Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

## NAB EBM to implement new amended NAB act 2022 in letter and spirit

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: A meeting of the Executive Board Meeting of National Accountability Bureau (NAB-EBM) was held which was presided over by acting Chairman Zahir Shah here on Thursday. The meeting was attended by Syed Asghar Haider, Prosecutor General Accountability, Farmanullah Khan, Director General, NAB, Rawalpindi and other senior officers of the bureau.

The EBM decided to implement the new amended NAB act 2022 in letter and spirit. A committee headed by Director General NAB Headquarters has been constituted to review ongoing inquiries, investigations in the light of new amended act 2022. The committee also comprised Director Operation Division, legal consultant of Prosecution Division, and relevant desk officers of Operations Division of NAB Headquarters. The committee will submit a preliminary report about continuing or closing or referring the cases to the relevant department as per law. The report also of the committee will be presented before the Executive Board-being the highest consultative forum of NAB for further review and approval of the recommendations-where law will take its own course of action.

The EBM of NAB authorized filing



reference against Meraj A Syed, former Chief Hydrographer, Gwadar Port Authority and others on the alleged accusations of misuse of authority and embezzlement of state funds around Rs794 million.

The EBM after due diligence decided for closing of various inquiries, investigations due to lack of court worthy and incrementing evidence. The EBM authorized closing inquiries against Administration of Benazir Income Support Programme, officers/officials and others of Karakoram International University, Gilgit-Baltistan, Barrister Sheikh Abid Waheed, former Managing Director Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM) and others, Major (ret'd) Syed Khalid Amin Shah, Chief Security officer, Peshawar Development Authority and others, Saleem Hassan Wattoo, former Director General, Peshawar Development Authority,

Peshawar and others, Amin Vance, former CCPO, Lahore and others, Zulfikar Ghuman, DG, Sports Board Punjab, and others, Muhammad Ramzan Awan, former Secretary Local Government Department, Sindh, and others, Professor (ret'd) Dr Azam Hussain Yousfani, Vice Chancellor, People University of Medical and Health Sciences for Women, Shaheed Benazirabad and others, Akbar Durrani, former Secretary Home Department, Government of Balochistan. The EBM further decided to close inquiries against officers/officials of Peshawar Development Authority, Peshawar and others, officers/officials and contractors of Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority, Shahid Hussain Asad, former Additional Secretary, Ministry of Finance, Economic Affairs, Statistics and Revenue and others due to lack of incriminating evidence.

## Federal Ombudsman ensures payment of death compensation in respect of widow

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Due to intervention of Federal Ombudsman a complainant, Shahid Imran husband of late Rubina Yasmeen who died in Tezgam train accident of Liaquatpur in November, 2019 has received long awaited death compensation of Rs.15 lacks from Pakistan Railways.

Shahid Imran resident of Jhelum filed a complaint against Pakistan Railways for failure to get compensation in respect of his late wife who died in train accident due to eruption of fire in 2019, because of which many people were injured or died. He stated that a sum of Rs.50,000/- was received earlier from Pakistan Railways but the compensation of Rs.15 lacks as announced by the government was not paid to him.

During hearing proceeding, representative of the Agency informed that Pakistan Railways had signed an agreement with Postal Life Insurance (PLI) for payment of death compensations in case of any such train accident.

## IRC ensures healthcare for people of South Waziristan, Orakzai

Staff Reporter

PESHAWAR/ISLAMABAD: To swiftly rise above the challenge left behind by the pandemic, the International Rescue Committee's 14-month intervention "Strengthening Healthcare including Nutrition in Emergencies," (SHiNE) is benefitting men, women and children in Orakzai & South Waziristan districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Through this program, 150,000 men, women and children have so far benefitted from the state-of-the-art health facilities set up in their areas. Among them are 45,000 women and children, who, previously had

to travel long distances to avail of basic health services.

Over 100 deliveries have also been supported by trained, gender-sensitive healthcare providers at the target facilities. Over 12,000 women and children have been screened for malnutrition and 1,390 cases have been enrolled in community-based programs for rehabilitation. It has also proved instrumental in creating awareness about hygiene, healthcare services and increasing their uptake.

The initiative launched with the support of the European Union, and in partnership with the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the



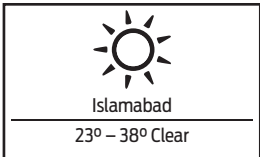
Medical Emergency Resilience Foundation (MERF) focuses on improving access to health facilities by strengthening the system to cater to specific needs under maternal, newborn, and child health care. It also covers integrated Water, Sanitation,

and Hygiene (WASH) activities, in the vicinity of the targeted health facilities coupled with awareness-raising for infection prevention and improved health-seeking behaviours.

The International Rescue Committee has urged the

federal and provincial governments to mainstream integrated health interventions that are tailored to the unique needs of the most vulnerable populations across the country.

The Country Director of the International Rescue Committee, Ms. Shabnam Baloch, said "Our recent experience of working in South Waziristan and Orakzai districts has shown that integrated health interventions targeting the specific needs of vulnerable populations can go a long way in service improvements, community engagement, encouraging long-term public-private partnerships, and systems strengthening.



**SERVICES**

**Namaz Timings**

Fajr ..... 3:27 am  
Zohr ..... 12:14 pm  
Asr ..... 5:12 pm  
Maghrib ..... 7:19 pm  
Isha ..... 9:00 pm

**EMERGENCY**

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

**Women Police Stations**

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

**ENQUIRY**

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

**HOSPITALS**

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

**DEPARTMENTS**

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

**President phones martyred Subedar's family for condolence**

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday telephoned the family of Pakistan Army's Subedar Munir Hussain who embraced martyrdom in North Waziristan on June 26, to convey his condolence.

The president paid tribute to martyred Subedar Munir Hussain for his services to the country and prayed for peace of the departed soul.

He also sympathised with the bereaved family and prayed for strength to them to bear the loss with fortitude.

**President directs SLICP to pay insurance dues**

*Directs to settle the matter and provide relief to the complainant*

**Staff Report**

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has termed the non-payment of a life insurance claim worth Rs 1.7 million by the State Life Insurance Corporation of Pakistan (SLICP) to the claimant on the frivolous ground, maladministration, arbitrary and oppressive.

The president, while rejecting the SLICP's representation against the decision of the Wafaqi Mohtasib, directed the corporation to settle the matter and provide relief to the complainant in accordance with its policy, procedure, rules and regulations within 30 days of the orders.

He observed that the SLICP's point of view that the policyholder did not declare that he was a patient of hypertension before availing the policy as untenable because the patient did not die because of hypertension but from cardiopulmonary arrest.

Moreover, he said, hypertension was a common disease and its patients had the probability to live for decades or longer than people not having such diseases,



therefore, concealment of such diseases could not be termed as done fraudulently.

While endorsing the claimant's point of view, the president observed that according to the death certificate of Dow Medical College Civil Hospital Karachi, the deceased had died of cardiopulmonary arrest and not of hypertension at the age of 63.

He further observed that the SLICP

had all the means available to it to discover the alleged pre-insurance ailment of the deceased through its authorized medical officer but it failed to undertake that simple exercise which was contrary to the relevant provision of the Contract Act.

"The act says that a contract is not voidable if the party whose consent was so caused had the means of discovering the truth with ordinary diligence," he added.

As per details, the deceased Oscar Malik obtained a life insurance policy from the SLICP on 23.01.2020 for the sum assured of Rs 1,700,000. He died on 30.04.2020 and his complainant brother Terrence Malik applied for the death insurance claim.

The SLICP refused to pay the claim on the ground that the deceased policyholder had a pre-insurance ailment and was a patient of hypertension as per the medical record of his employer.

Feeling aggrieved, the complainant approached Wafaqi Mohtasib who passed the order in favour of the complainant. The SLICP, then, filed a representation with the president, which was rejected.

**Capital's air quality moderate for third consecutive day**

ISLAMABAD: The air quality of the federal capital after rain turned moderate as a recent spell of monsoon rainfalls lashed out various parts of the country have helped plummet scorching heat in the metropolis and subsided the pollution.

The air quality of the federal capital on Thursday was reported healthy as suspended particles were recorded below permissible limits in the atmosphere along with the pollutants' ratio due to consistent rainy weather and reduced vehicular traffic on roads.

The air quality data has been collected by the Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency (Pak-EPA) which monitors air pollutants ratio for 24 hours based on three intervals of eight hours of data collection from different locations.

The Pak-EPA data revealed that the air quality throughout the three intervals of data monitoring remained high as the pollutants were below the permissible limits of national



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

environmental quality standards (NEQS).

The hazardous air pollutant particulate matter of 2.5 microns (PM2.5), which was a lethal atmospheric contaminant, remained at 19.33 micrograms per cubic meter on average which is higher than the NEQS of 35 mic-programs per cubic meter and denotes the air quality unhealthy.

The PM2.5 is generated through combustion of an engine, industrial emissions,

burning garbage or inflammable material, and dust blown up by fast-moving cars plying on non-cemented patches of the roads. Moreover, the frequent forest fires in the federal capital also created high suspended particles, dust, and particulate matter in the atmosphere.

However, the capital continued to give a deserted look as many citizens have returned to their hometowns to celebrate Eid which also turned up limited traffic on the roads which also

helped in containing the rising pollution due to vehicular traffic, an official of EPA told APP.

The particulate matter had exceeded the permissible limits beyond 40 microns prior to the onset of rainfall which was mainly due to persistent hot and dry weather. The nitrogen dioxide (NO2) and sulfur dioxide (SO2) were recorded below the permissible ratios as they were recorded at 3.89 and 12.4 micrograms per cubic meter in the past 24 hours in the atmosphere against the NEQS of 80 and 120 micrograms per cubic meter respectively.

These effluents were mainly produced during the operational activities of industrial plants and factories that were already under control, he said.

He urged the masses with respiratory conditions and other critical heart or lungs diseases to avoid prolonged outdoor visits and wear face coverings and goggles when the air quality was unhealthy while venturing outdoors. APP

**Zaheer A Janjua meets US Ambassador**



**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's High Commissioner to Canada Mr. Zaheer A. Janjua met the U.S. Ambassador to Canada Mr. David L. Cohen in the Canadian capital on Thursday.

During the meeting, both the envoys discussed matters of mutual interest. High Commissioner Zaheer A Janjua said "the Pakistan-US partnership remains strong".

US Ambassador Mr. David L. Cohen welcomed Mr. Zaheer A. Janjua on the assumption of his diplomatic responsibilities in Canada. He said both the United States and Pakistan were marking the 75th anniversary of the establishment of their diplomatic relations this year.

**KIIR hosts webinar paying tribute to July 13 martyrs**

ISLAMABAD: Kashmir Institute of International Relations (KIIR) has hosted a webinar titled "Kashmir Martyrs Day: Remember the martyrs of July 13, 1931".

The webinar was attended and addressed by noted human rights activists, academicians, writers and political leaders hailing from both sides of the Line of Control including Shah Ghulam Qadir President Pakistan Muslim League AJK chapter, Ch. Latif Akbar Opposition Leader AJK Assembly, Ab. Rasheed Turabi former Ameer Jammam Islami AJK, Ghulam Muhammad Safi, Muhammad Farooq Rehmani, Sardar Hassan Ibrahim, Syed Ali Raza, Raja Najabat, Zaffar Qureshi, Ershad Mahmud, Syed Arif Bahar, Raja Sajad Latief and others. Whereas the event was moderated by the KIIR Chairman Altaf Hussain Wani.

"The current struggle in Kashmir is an extension of the movement, which was launched against despotic Maharaja. From 1931 till date more than half a million Kashmiris have offered sacrifices to achieve the cherished goal", they said.

Terming right to self-determination as the only acceptable solution the speakers made it clear that no piece of legislation by the Indian parliament can change the disputed status of Jammu and Kashmir.

Rejecting the actions Modi government had taken on Kashmir since 5th August 2019, they said, "Kashmir is an internationally recognised disputed territory that needs to be settled in accordance with the universally accepted principle of right to self-determination". Renewing their pledge to uphold the martyrs' mission they said the struggle for right to self-determination would continue unless and until Kashmiris get their cherished goal. Drawing parallels between the ongoing struggle and the movement against Maharaja's autocratic rule, they said, "Kashmiris were still struggling for their basic rights."

Highlighting the dangerous dimensions of the dispute, they said international community should come forward in a big way to help Kashmiris in shaping up their political destiny through universally accepted principle of right to self-determination.

They urged the United Nations to impress upon India to implement the relevant UN resolutions on Kashmir to settle dispute peacefully.

"The world community must take effective cognizance of the fast deteriorating political and human rights situation in the Indian occupied territory", they said. Voicing their grave concerns over the continued bloodshed and violence in the restive region, the panelists said, "It is high time that the UNSC and OIC must call an emergency session to help stop widespread killings of civilians in Kashmir". APP

**Turkish President Erdogan to visit Pakistan this September: Ambassador Dr. Mehmet Paçacı**

**Says Pakistan-Turkey will sign multiple agreements to boost bilateral cooperation**



His Excellency Recep Tayyip Erdogan, President of Türkiye

**Naveed Ahmad Khan**

ISLAMABAD: Dr. Mehmet Paçacı, Ambassador of the Republic of Türkiye has confirmed the visit of Recep Tayyip Erdogan to Pakistan in September this year and trade agreement between the two brotherly countries will also be inked soon.

Ambassador addressing journalists about the 15th July failed coup attempt by FETO, said that it was the night when Turkish democracy was protected by the Turkish people themselves under the leadership of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

The Turkish embassy in Islamabad on Thursday observed the sixth anniversary of the July 15, 2016, failed coup attempt that claimed 251 lives and wounded thousands. Dr. Mehmet Paçacı said that "Ministers of Paki-

stan and Türkiye will also meet in September," and multiple agreements are being mulled ahead of the Turkish president's visit.

The visit, he said, will strengthen bilateral trade between the two countries.

Ambassador of Türkiye said, "on July 15, the existence of Türkiye was in danger when FETO terrorist organization's followers attacked but Turkish citizens from all walks of life showed courage and rendered sacrifices to protect their democratic government and institutions.

Ambassador said that the followers of FETO tried to assassinate the President of the Republic of Türkiye and attacked the Prime Minister's vehicle. They bombarded the Grand National Assembly. "The Police Special Operations Center, the crucial counter-ter-

rorism operational body, was bombed by fighter jets, killing 55 police officers and injuring hundreds on the spot", he added.

Hundreds of civilians protesting the coup attempt in Ankara and Istanbul were shot dead, he informed. He said that it was Fetullah Gülen's FETO, an organization that secretly worked in Türkiye for 40 years and its main goal was to take control of the state. For 40 years, this organization had brainwashed the country's children, brilliant minds in the name of educational institutions, and turned them against their own country.

At the peak of their power, they controlled thousands of schools in Türkiye and more than eight hundred educational institutes worldwide. As civil servants or military personnel, FETO members' loyalty was not to the nation or to the state they served. They did not care about upholding the country, the Ambassador added. Ambassador Dr. Mehmet Paçacı further stated that July 15th was a desperate final move of Fetullah Gülen and his followers to keep their control and capture the state. After July 15, 2016 coup attempt: The perpetrators of the 15th of July coup attempt have been brought to justice based on rule of law and fundamental rights and freedoms.

A number of judicial processes are still ongoing, he added. The fight against FETO structures abroad is now among the top priorities of our country. Our main objective is to demonstrate and prove the fact that FETO also poses a threat to the security of all countries where it remains active, Ambassador informed the media.

FETO is present in around 160 countries, with thousands of schools, businesses, NGOs, and media houses. Various countries and international organizations have declared FETO as a terrorist organization. Moreover,



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Republic of Türkiye Dr. Mehmet Paçacı addressing a press conference here on Thursday. Photo by Ghulam Farid

Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, the Supreme Court of Pakistan also declared FETO a terrorist organization with the verdict rendered on 28 December 2018, he added. Answering a question about FETO's presence in Pakistan, the ambassador said that two schools of FETO were now being supervised by Turkish NGOs and we appreciate Pakistan for closing down those schools of FETO at the Türkiye government's request.

It is pertinent to mention that, on July 05, Pakistan and Türkiye vowed to further expand military-to-military ties, particularly in training and counter-terrorism domains, Inter-Services Public Relations said. An understanding was reached during a meeting between Army Chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa and Commander Tur-

kish Land Forces General Musa Avsever and in Rawalpindi, according to the military's media wing.

Matters of mutual and professional interest with special focus on defence and security collaboration between the two brotherly countries were discussed during the meeting. Speaking on the occasion, the Army Chief said that Pakistan highly values brotherly relations with Türkiye, which are deeply rooted in history and entrenched in our cultural and religious affinities.

The visiting dignitary acknowledged the professionalism of Pakistan Armed Forces and vowed to enhance cooperation in various fields. Commander Turkish Land Forces also pledged to play his role for further improvements in diplomatic cooperation with Pakistan at all levels.

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# Palestinians should expect no more than lip service from Biden

**Osama Al-Sharif**

**U**S President Joe Biden is no stranger to the Middle East. This week may mark his first tour of the region as president, but the former vice president and long-serving US senator has been a familiar face here for more than two decades. He will only be making two stops during his trip. Arriving in Israel and staying for two days, he will meet top Israeli officials including new Prime Minister Yair Lapid, former premier Naftali Bennett and even Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu. He will then take a short drive to occupied Bethlehem, where he will have a brief, largely symbolic talk with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. After that, he will fly to Jeddah, where he will hold talks with King Salman and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman before attending an extraordinary summit meeting with the leaders of the GCC, in addition to the president of Egypt, the king of Jordan and the Iraqi prime minister. Biden will arrive in a turbulent Middle East. Israel is

preparing to hold a fifth election in four years, signaling the fragility of its political system and the fierce internal struggle between largely right-leaning parties in a deeply polarized society. Biden will be careful not to get entangled in the complex Israeli political scene. Instead, he will focus on the special relationship between the US and Israel, especially in the area of military assistance and cooperation. It would be surprising if he made any public comments while in Israel on the need to halt the building of illegal Israeli settlements or attempts to change the status quo at Al-Aqsa. It would be even more surprising if he called on Israel to resume peace talks with the Palestinians. With midterm congressional elections looming back home, Biden will make sure that his support of Israel appears to be ironclad. He will, however, praise the Abraham Accords and support ongoing efforts to expand the emerging coalition. On Iran, where his administration and Israel differ on some key points, Biden may go as far as sending a warning to Tehran that time is running out to revive the 2015 nuclear deal, opening

the way for other options. He will call on the Lebanese government to rein in Hezbollah and stop its provocations against Israel. In short, Biden will say what Israeli officials would like to hear; focusing on cooperation, the best that Abbas can expect from Biden is a public commitment to back the two-state solution. In contrast, Biden is expected to visit the largest Palestinian hospital in East Jerusalem and announce a \$100 million aid package to support the Palestinian health system in the Arab city. In September 2018, the Trump administration cut \$25 million for the hospitals in East Jerusalem. Israeli media reported that the US has asked Gulf allies to make similar gestures. Biden will then head to Bethlehem, where he will meet

Abbas and where he will listen more than make public statements. Abbas will provide a list of Palestinian demands, which will include the reopening of the PLO's office in Washington and a date for the opening of a US consulate in East Jerusalem — a promise that has so far remained unfulfilled. The best that Abbas can expect from Biden is a public commitment to back the two-state solution. But in reality, the US will do nothing at this stage to facilitate the resumption of the suspended talks. Interestingly, Lapid spoke with Abbas over the weekend in advance of Biden's visit, a day after Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz met with the PA president in Ramallah, the third such meeting between the two men in less than a year. According to Gantz's office, the meeting was held to conduct civil and security coordination ahead of Biden's visit and to discuss security and civil challenges in the region. The meeting was held in "a good spirit and in a positive atmosphere," it said. It is ironic but not surprising that, when the US and its Western allies are sanctioning Russia for breaking internation-

al law and annexing Ukrainian territory, there is calculated and often timid reaction toward Israel's occupation and its piecemeal annexation of Palestinian territory. One such irony, as revealed by an Arab-Israeli nongovernmental organization this week, is that the US is planning to build a huge diplomatic complex as part of its embassy in Jerusalem on privately owned Palestinian land. The plot, which is owned by Palestinian families who were evicted in 1948 — some of whom now have US citizenship — was confiscated by Israel in 1950. While Abbas may see Biden's visit as offering a much-needed boost to his declining popularity among Palestinians, not much is expected to change on the ground. Biden's aides will make sure that he does not go off script on illegal settlements, radical Jewish extremism, the May killing of Palestinian-American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh or Israel's almost daily provocations at Al-Aqsa. As usual, the Palestinians will get lip service, at best.

*The writer is a journalist and political commentator based in Amman. Courtesy Arab News*

## Tech & financial inclusion

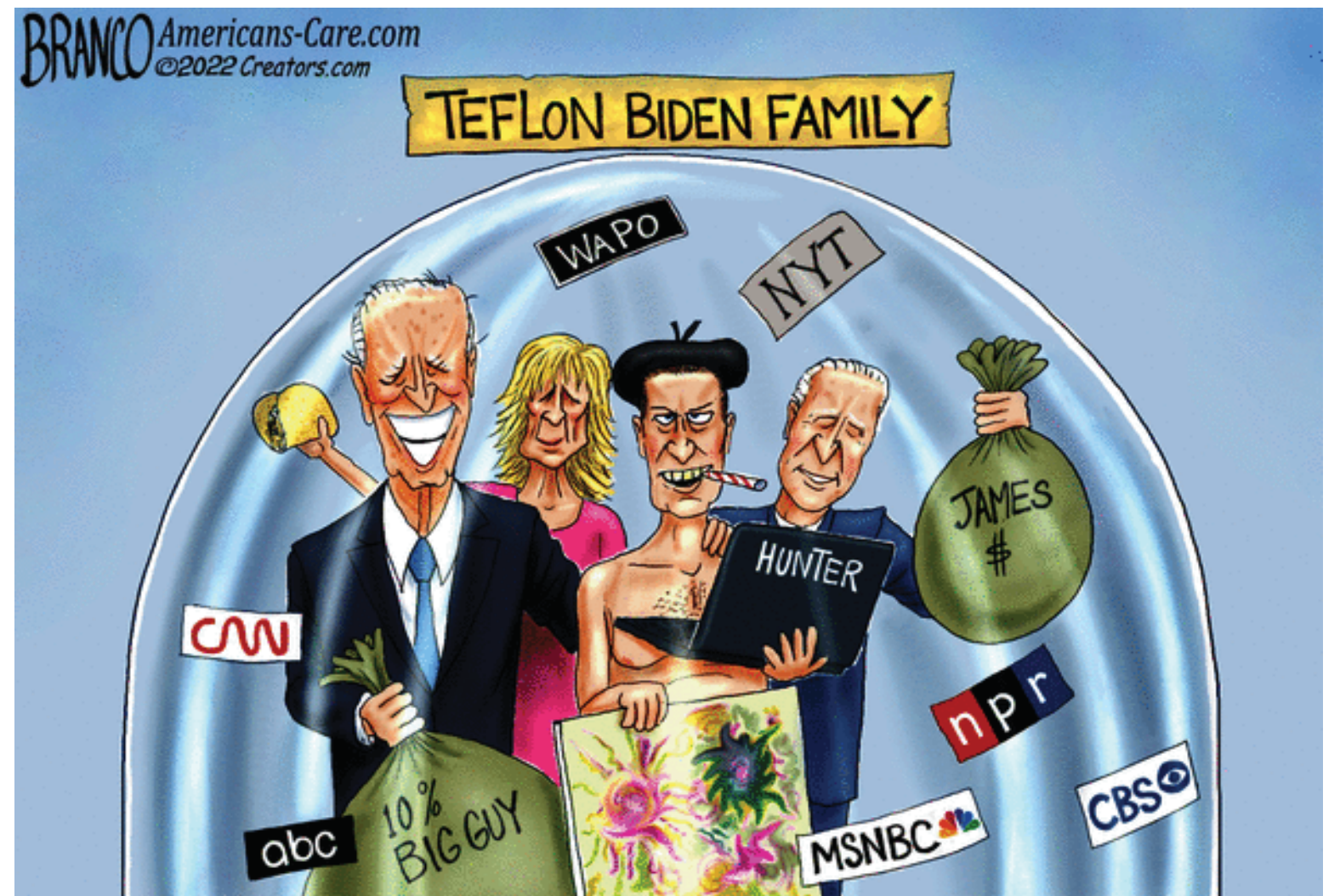
**T**his digital transformation makes it easier, cheaper, and safer for people to receive wages from employers, send remittances to family members, and pay for goods and services. Mobile money accounts can better handle high-volume, small-denomination transactions, which help users to access financial services and save in order to cope better with crises. Individual accounts also give women more privacy, security, and control over their money. The share of adults in developing economies who make or receive digital payments grew from 35% in 2014 to 57% in 2021. In Sub-Saharan Africa, 39% of mobile money account holders now use their accounts to save. And more than one-third of people in low- and middle-income countries who paid a utility bill from an account did so for the first time after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Importantly, the digital revolution also serves as a powerful anti-corruption tool, because it helps to increase transparency as money flows from a government's budget to public agencies to citizens. Government social programs can now reduce delays and leakage by channeling transfers directly to their beneficiaries' mobile phones. Millions of people in developing countries received payments in this way during the pandemic, helping to cushion the impact of COVID-19 on livelihoods. Building on these encouraging trends is crucial, especially given the current economic headwinds. Expanding people's access to finance, reducing the cost of digital transactions, and channeling wage payments and social transfers through financial accounts will be vital to mitigating development setbacks resulting from the ongoing turbulence.

Around the world, high inflation, slow economic growth, and food shortages are hurting the poor the most. Coming on top of the unequal effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, today's multiple crises have already caused dramatic reversals in development and led to a substantial increase in global poverty. On the positive side, the COVID-19 crisis spurred unprecedented change, especially in industries with a large digital component. This digital revolution has catalyzed increases in access to and use of financial services in developing economies, transforming how people make and receive payments, borrow, and save.

These changes are strikingly evident in the latest edition of the Global Findex database, compiled from a survey of more than 125,000 adults in 123 economies, covering use of financial services throughout 2021. The survey found that 71% of adults in developing economies now have a formal financial account — whether with a bank, another regulated institution such as a credit union or microfinance lender, or a mobile money service provider — compared to 42% when the first edition of the database was published a decade ago. In addition, the difference in the share of men and women in developing economies who own an account has fallen for the first time, from nine percentage points to six.

Governments and the private sector can help further this transformation in several critical areas. First, they need to create a favorable operating and policy environment. For example, enabling the interoperability of systems allows for payments across different types of financial institutions and between mobile money service providers.



## Energy crisis will further deepen

**Daniel Yergin**

**I**s today's energy crisis as serious as similar previous ones — particularly the 1970s oil shocks? That question is being asked around the world, with consumers hit by high prices, businesses worried about energy supplies, political leaders and central bankers struggling with inflation, and countries confronting balance-of-payments pressures. So, yes, this energy crisis is as serious. In fact, today's crisis is potentially worse. In the 1970s, only oil was involved, whereas this crisis encompasses natural gas, coal, and even the nuclear-fuel cycle. In addition to stoking inflation, today's crisis is transforming a previously global market into one that is fragmented and more vulnerable to disruption, crimping economic growth. And, together with the geopolitical crisis arising from the war in Ukraine, it is further deepening the world's great-power rivalries.

Today's energy crisis did not begin with Russia's invasion of Ukraine, but rather last year when energy demand surged as the world emerged from the Covid-19 pandemic. That is when China ran short of coal and prices shot up. The global market for liquefied natural gas (LNG) then tightened, with prices skyrocketing, and oil prices rose as well.

Normally, with rising energy prices, a country like Russia would have increased its natural-gas sales to its main customer, Europe, above the minimum contracted volumes. Instead, it stuck to its contracts, even though it could have produced considerably more. At the time, it appeared that Russia was trying to force prices up. But, instead, the Kremlin may well have been preparing for war.

Because Europe depended on Russia for 35-40% of its oil and natural gas, Putin assumed that the Europeans would protest the invasion but ultimately stand aside. Fixated on his self-appointed mission of restoring what he views as Russia's historic empire, he did not anticipate how they would respond to an unprovoked war next door.

Looking ahead, five factors could make today's energy crisis even worse. First, Putin has opened a second

front in the conflict by cutting back on the contracted volumes of natural gas that Russia supplies to Europe. The goal is to prevent Europeans from storing enough supplies for next winter, and to drive prices higher, creating economic hardship and political discord. In his speech in June at the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum, Putin made his reasoning clear: "Social and economic problems worsening in Europe" will "split their societies" and "inevitably lead to populism ... and a change of the elites in the short term."

As it is, Germany is now anticipating the need for gas rationing, and its minister for economic affairs, Robert Habeck, warns of a "Lehman-style contagion" (referring to the 2008 financial crisis) if Europe cannot manage today's energy-induced economic disruptions.

Second, a new or revived nuclear deal with Iran is unlikely. Thus, sanctions on the country will not be lifted — and that means Iranian oil will not be flowing into world markets anytime soon.

Third, although Saudi Arabia may step up its oil production to help "stabilise" oil markets in connection with US President Joe Biden's upcoming visit, no gusher is likely to follow, because there does not appear to be a large amount of extra oil in Saudi Arabia (or in the United Arab Emirates) that can be produced on short notice. Meanwhile, many other oil-exporting countries cannot even return to their previous levels of production, owing to a lack of investment and maintenance since the pandemic. Fourth, China's demand for oil has been significantly reduced by its "zero-Covid" lockdowns, which have sharply curtailed economic activity. But if it lifts many restrictions, a big increase in oil consumption and demand will follow.

Lastly, however tight the market for crude oil, there is even more tightness in the refining sector that produces the gasoline, diesel, and jet fuel that people actually use. This sector has developed into a complex, highly interconnected worldwide system. Russia was refining products that it was shipping to Europe, while Europe was sending gasoline that it did not need to the US East Coast, and so forth.

In some places, the system is going all out, with US refineries already operating at about 95% capacity. But the system overall still cannot keep up with demand.

Russian refineries are functioning only partly, depriving Europe of oil products; and not enough European gasoline is reaching North America. Chinese refineries are operating at less than 70% capacity. Some four million barrels per day of refining capacity have been shut down worldwide, owing to the pandemic, new regulations, and challenging economics. Add in the risk of accidents, poor policy decisions, and a hurricane knocking out refineries on the US Gulf Coast, and the situation could get even worse.

That said, a few countries could still boost production. Canada — the world's fourth-largest oil producer, after the US, Saudi Arabia, and Russia — could provide extra barrels in collaboration with its major market, the US. And US shale oil production is back in gear and could add 800,000 to one million barrels per day of new production this year — far more additional production than the rest of the world combined.

Other factors that could mitigate the crisis include price changes and how consumers respond. In May, US gasoline demand was 7% less than in May 2019, before the pandemic. Some of that, however, may be the result of more people working from home.

An economic slowdown could also dampen prices. S&P's latest global purchasing managers' index points to a weakening of economic growth, with US manufacturing activity "slipping into a decline ... to a degree only exceeded twice" — at the height of the pandemic lockdown and during the 2008 financial crisis. Likewise, European growth has slowed sharply to a 16-month low. Such slowdowns could reduce demand and lower energy prices. But, of course, they also will strain the Western alliance and popular unity.

The next six months will be critical, testing whether Europe can manoeuvre its way through the coming winter. In what Habeck called a "bitter" but "necessary" decision, Europe will need to burn more coal. In the difficult months ahead, there will need to be more informed collaboration between government and the industry that manages the energy flows on which modern economies depend.

*The write is Vice Chairman of S&P Global. Courtesy Gulf Times*

## Lessons from Sri Lanka's economic crisis

**Makarand R. Paranajpe**

**T**he visuals of Sri Lanka's presidential palace being overrun by protesters, like the storming of the Bastille, and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe's private residence being burnt to ashes sent shockwaves across the world. Especially in the Indian subcontinent, where Sri Lanka has been regarded as educationally and socially much more advanced than its neighbour. The instability, now descending into chaos, is a warning sign that our world is in a dire crisis.

In a contrary arena, sports lovers were disappointed on Saturday, which was also Eid Al Adha, that the highly talented and gritty Ons Jabeur did not become the first African, Muslim, as well as Arab-Berber woman to win the Wimbledon ladies championship. Her performance throughout the tournament was superb, amply justifying her ranking in the world's top three. She was outplayed by the much younger Russian-Kazak Elena Rybakina, the new champion. Rybakina, the first Kazak player to win the Wimbledon women's title, brought credit to the small central-Asian nation. The men's final went Novak Djokovic's way. The Serb won his seventh title, defeating the maverick Australian, Nick Kyrgios, in a thrilling final.

In Sri Lanka, the hope is that a multi-party emergency government, with integrity and national interest as its watchwords, can restore order and normalcy. Exports and tourism must be enhanced, along with new avenues to increase the government's income.

The contrast of the stylish and stately Sunday Wimbledon final, despite British Prime Minister Boris Johnson's resignation, with Sri Lanka's misery and disorder could not be more stark. In the United Kingdom, despite political disorder, the elegant ladies and gentlemen watching at the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club, soon to celebrate its 153 anniversary on July 23, presented a picture of affluence, order, stability, and continuing sporting excellence, with spectators from all over the world, some privileged few, no doubt, from Sri Lanka itself.

Back in Sri Lanka, however, petrol is not just over 500 Sri Lankan rupees to a litre, but simply unavailable. Cooking gas for the domestic home and hearth is almost impossible to find; people have resorted to burning twigs and branches to keep their rice pots boiling. Food prices have skyrocketed, rising over 40% in the last few months. There are huge power cuts, with homes and offices deprived of electricity for several hours.

*Courtesy Gulf News*

## Sukuk supply uncertain but long-term demand is intact: Fitch Ratings

Total US dollar-denominated sukuk issuance from the core markets fell by 17.2% qoq in 2Q22

**Spokesman Report**

DUBAI: Total US dollar-denominated sukuk issuance from the core markets of the GCC, Malaysia, Indonesia, Turkey, and Pakistan (including multilaterals) fell by 17.2% qoq in 2Q22, whilst US dollar bond issuance fell by 63.8%, Fitch Ratings says. More than 90% of Fitch-rated sukuk that returned to the market in 2Q22 were investment-grade.

"It remains unclear if sukuk supply will be able to recover in 2H22 because of higher oil prices reducing oil-exporting sovereigns' new funding needs, funding diversification plans not being followed, complexities related to sharia compliance, political risks, interest-rate hikes and lower global investor appetite for emerging-market debt," says Bashir Al-Natour, Global Head of Islamic Finance at Fitch. "However, intact Islamic investor appetite, upcoming debt maturities, Islamic-finance development plans from a number of governments, and funding diversification strategies across the sector will support the market longer-term."

Issuance of US dollar-denominated sukuk has been less affected than bonds amid the volatilities in 1H22. Fitch analysed the pricing of 42 comparable sukuk and bonds issued by the same obligors from the GCC, Malaysia, Indonesia and Turkey. Their yield-to-maturity continued to be strongly correlated in 2Q22 despite macro volatilities, as was the pricing of comparable sukuk and bonds. In 2Q22, 77.8% of sukuk ratings were investment-grade. About 72% of sukuk



issuers have a Stable Outlook and 19.4% have Positive Outlook. Total ESG-linked outstanding sukuk reached USD19.3 billion in 2Q22, up 11.2% qoq.

Fitch has updated its Sukuk Rating Criteria to describe triggers that are increasingly seen in sukuk documentation that could take the form of put options, a

dissolution event, a partial loss event or covenants related to tangibility events, which are specific to sukuk and driven by certain sharia requirements.

### DND Finance launches UK's first Shariah-certified credit card



LONDON: The Score Mastercard enables new-to-UK individuals to transact and build up their credit history without compromising the standards of their Islamic faith.

DND Finance CEO and Score Mastercard founder Bill Dost says: "This product will enable Muslim consumers to create a credit profile, access the Western promise of an improved life for them and their families, while maintaining their faith principles."

The new credit card offering - which has no interest or late payment fees charged on purchases and outstanding balances - has been certified as Shariah-compliant by London-based advisory firm Shariah Experts.

DND Finance cites research conducted by Ipsos MORI that found 63% of Muslims living in the UK have relocated from abroad. The new Score Mastercard will support those with little to no credit history but who still follow the principles of their Islamic faith.

Farrukh Habib, co-founder and director of Shariah Experts, says: "Muslims in the West face the challenge of being either financially excluded or forced to compromise their religious principles, due to the unavailability of suitable and quality financial products."

"Score Mastercard, being a halal credit card, is a huge initiative towards greater financial inclusion and tapping into a niche market." Agencies

### Indonesia raises \$401.93m in Islamic bond auction



JAKARTA: Indonesia raised 6.025 trillion rupiah (\$401.93 million) in an Islamic bonds auction on Tuesday, the finance ministry said, below an indicative target of 7 trillion rupiah.

Total incoming bids were 12.75 trillion rupiah, lower than the 15.77 trillion rupiah of bids in the previous June 28 sukuk auction.

The Islamic bonds sold on Tuesday carried higher yields compared to similar notes in the previous auction. Reuters

## BankIslami becomes ruby sponsor of CBMUN'22

**Staff Reporter**

LAHORE: BankIslami, Pakistan's first Islamic commercial bank, proudly partnered with College of Business Management Model United Nations (CBMUN) event as a Ruby Sponsor. Organised by the Literary and Public Speaking Society at Institute of Business Management, the event took place on July 1st, 2nd and 3rd.

In its sixth instalment, CBMUN opened its doors to a national audience of over 600 delegates with an aim to educate participants on aspects that have an impact on the world such as international relations, world affairs, globalization as well as civic sense. The participants were encouraged to make use of their intellectual abilities and derive solutions to world problems.

Commenting on the event, BankIslami representative said, "We believe in encouraging the youth to develop an understanding of world affairs and want to play our role in helping to produce the leaders of tomorrow. BankIslami shares the vision of promoting authentic and innovative voices in their commitment to excellence. I congratulate the management of CBMUN for ensuring a highly profes-



sional and stimulating experience for the participants from across Pakistan".

Also commenting on this development, Gohar Irfan, Conference Manager, CBMUN shared, "We plan to create awareness of the current world issues by allowing active engagement from

participants of all institutions regardless of their background. We are grateful for the partnership with such a valuable sponsor, BankIslami, in executing a dream conference and, in turn, becoming one of the leading Model United Nation conferences in the country".

## \$55b Global Takaful Insurance Market to grow in 2022-28

WASHINGTON: Vantage Market Research's recent analysis of the Global Takaful Insurance Market finds that Market Penetration among Muslim countries and Lower Chances of Financial Loss in Takaful Insurance Market are some factors that augment the growth of the Takaful Insurance Market in recent years. The Global Takaful Insurance Market revenue is expected to reach a value USD 55.6 Billion in 2028.

The Global Market revenue was valued at USD 25.1 Billion in 2021 and is expected to grow to exhibit a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 14.2% during the forecast period; states Vantage Market Research, in a report, titled "Takaful Insurance Market Size, Share & Trends Analysis Report by Distribution Channel (Agents & Brokers, Banks, Direct Response, Others), by Type (Family Takaful, General Takaful), by Application (Personal, Commercial), by Region (North America, Europe, Asia Pacific, Latin America, Middle East & Africa)-Global Industry Assessment (2016-2021) & Forecast (2022-2028)".

The Takaful Insurance Market has witnessed steady growth over the past few years, driven by market penetration among Muslim majority countries. Many Muslim countries such as the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Malaysia, and others, consider Takaful Insurance Market as a form of ethical insurance under Islamic law. As a result, these countries have higher entry rates for



Takaful Insurance Market compared to conventional insurance, as traditional insurance is considered illegal under Islamic law.

Therefore, it is easy for market players to increase their penetration into the Muslim majority market. In addition, government-sponsored Takaful Insurance Market programs help the market thrive in countries such as Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, and the UAE. For example, in June 2021, the Uganda Insurance Regulatory Authority proposed to expand the old and profitable insurance market. The Authority also committed itself to supporting all efforts to provide better takaful and Takaful Insurance Market in the country. Therefore, these factors are expected to enhance the market's growth in the forecast period. The outbreak of COVID-19 has affected almost all industries globally.

Several manufacturing and devel-

opment facilities across the globe were forced to shut down their operations during the initial stages of the pandemic. State and National Governments globally implemented lockdown measures and ensured social distancing norms to restrict the fast spread of the pandemic. In addition, the financial crisis which followed right after the pandemic led to a significant delay in the commercial roll-out of the pharmaceutical and other industries.

As a result, several small and medium-scale companies witnessed a substantial drop in income. These industries are considered the backbone of various technology providers and are trying to recover since the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. As a result, market players faced numerous challenges in the view of disruptions in the supply chain due to the pandemic.

# Islamic finance industry to witness double-digit growth in 2022-2023

Higher commodity prices are expected to underpin a stronger recovery in many core Islamic finance markets this year

DUBAI: Stronger economic growth in core Islamic finance countries is expected to boost industry assets about 10 per cent from 2022 to 2023.

The global Islamic finance industry continued to expand in 2021, with assets up 10.2 per cent, versus 11.4 per cent in 2020 (excluding Iran), supported by banking asset growth. The increase last year was supported by Islamic banking assets in some GCC countries and Malaysia, sukuk issuances exceeding maturities and the solid performance of the Islamic funds industry.

This year, higher commodity prices are expected to underpin a stronger recovery in many core Islamic finance markets.

Moreover, most of these countries are relatively resilient to macroeconomic shocks resulting from the Russia-Ukraine conflict. This will support the industry's prospects for 2022-2023. However, global headwinds could change the picture by continued stubbornly high inflation, lockdowns related to Covid-19, and the US Federal Reserve and other major central banks ramping up their fight to rein in the inflation. Faster bank growth is also expected to contribute to the industry expansion. With

the more supportive economic outlook for many Islamic finance countries, bank financing growth is expected to accelerate.

In Saudi Arabia, continued mortgage demand and the implementation of Vision 2030 projects will create opportunities for industry expansion. In other GCC countries, more positive economic sentiment, government spending and investments will help accelerate growth.

In South-East Asia, we expect the \$290 billion Islamic banking market to expand at a compound annual growth rate of about 8 per cent over the next three years.

In 2022, we expect a decline in the total sukuk issuance compared with a stabilisation at \$147.4bn in 2021, versus \$148.4bn in 2020, and the 105 per cent increase in foreign-currency-denominated issuance over the same period.

There are several factors at play. Shrinking global liquidity and increasing complexity related to regulatory standards are likely to hold back sukuk issuance in 2022, assuming any adverse Covid-19-related disruption in core Islamic finance countries remains in check. We also expect lower financing needs for some core Islamic finance countries and some



corporates to remain prudent with their growth capital expenditure after slowly recovering from the pandemic.

At the same time, a more supportive economic environment and government spending are likely to create opportunities in commodity exporting countries. Moreover, local currency issuances by some governments are likely to continue as they seek to develop local capital markets and offer alternative financing avenues to their economies.

We note the total volume of issuance was down 23.2 per cent and foreign currency denominated issuance increased 12.3 per cent in the first quarter of 2022, after some issuers frontloaded their plans to benefit from market

conditions prior to interest rate rises.

Many of these issuances were either from low-rated counterparties or in the form of capital-boosting instruments. Despite the decline in volumes, we expect sukuk issuance to still exceed sukuk maturing in 2022, which we estimate at about \$96bn.

Although their contribution to the industry remains small, we also expect the takaful and fund sectors to expand this year. We continue to see the takaful sector expanding at an annual rate of 5 per cent to 10 per cent. Fund growth is less certain due to market dislocations since the beginning of 2022, with one-quarter of the industry equity funds and another 60 per cent money market or sukuk funds that are likely to

suffer from higher global interest rates.

We also see opportunities in the alignment of certain Islamic financial products and environmental, social and governance (ESG) factors. We expect to see a higher volume of green and sustainability sukuk (from a low base) as issuers look to broaden the investor base and include funds aligned with sustainability themes.

Many Islamic finance countries are exposed to climate transition risk, and several are developing or implementing transition strategies, including significant investment in clean energy. These present real opportunities for sustainable sukuk in Islamic finance core countries.

However, the energy transition is expected to take a long time to materialise in the GCC and Malaysia, and as such sporadic recourse to green sukuk.

The social angle of Islamic finance presents another opportunity for sustainable sukuk. As the economic effects of the pandemic continue to surface in the form of higher unemployment rates, especially in fiscally constrained countries, social sukuk can help amortise the shock. These and other Islamic finance instruments could have an even bigger effect if they are leveraged properly. (Courtesy: The National)



# Sri Lanka announce 18-member squad for Pakistan Tests

Series begins with the first Test in Galle on Saturday

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka have included plenty of spinning options in their 18-player squad for the upcoming two-match Test series at home against Pakistan.

All-rounder Dhananjaya de Silva, pacer Asitha Fernando and spinner Jeffrey Vandersay are all named in the squad and are in contention to return to Sri Lanka's XI after the trio missed the second Test against Australia due to Covid.

Key batter Pathum Nissanka—who tested positive to Covid midway through that match—has also a chance to return, while left-arm spinner Prabath Jayasuriya is likely to get the chance to lead Sri Lanka's spin attack after his match-winning efforts against Australia.

Jayasuriya claimed 12 wickets in the match against Pat Cummins' side, which is the best haul for a Sri Lankan on Test debut and the fourth-best for a debutant overall.

The 30-year-old is likely to have Maheesh Theekshana and Ramesh Mendis to share the spinning duties with him against Pakistan, but young-



ster Praveen Jayawickrama and fellow left-armers Lasith Embuldeniya have been left out of the squad.

Experienced left-hander Dimuth Karunaratne will once again captain

a Sri Lankan side that is looking to continue their recent rise up the World Test Championship standings, with Nissanka, Kusal Mendis, Angelo Mathews and the in-form Dinesh

Chandimal to provide the bulk of the batting support.

Sri Lanka moved up to third on the World Test Championship standings on the back of their emphatic victory by an innings and 39 runs over Australia in Galle and will be looking to replicate that performance when they battle Babar Azam's side.

Pakistan are one spot behind Sri Lanka in fourth place on the World Test Championship standings and are still well in contention of reaching next year's final.

The series begins with the first Test in Galle on Saturday, 16 July, with the two teams then moving to Colombo for the second Test at the end of the month.

Sri Lanka Test Squad: Dimuth Karunaratne (c), Pathum Nissanka, Oshada Fernando, Angelo Mathews, Kusal Mendis, Dhananjaya de Silva, Kamindu Mendis, Niroschan Dickwella, Dinesh Chandimal, Ramesh Mendis, Maheesh Theekshana, Kasun Rajitha, Vishwa Fernando, Asitha Fernando, Dilshan Madushanka, Prabath Jayasuriya, Dunith Wellalage, Jeffrey Vandersay.



ISLAMABAD: KPL President Arif Malik and CEO of Mirpur Royals, Abdul Wajid are signing an agreement.

## Australian pitches expert to arrive today

Tahir Amin Malik

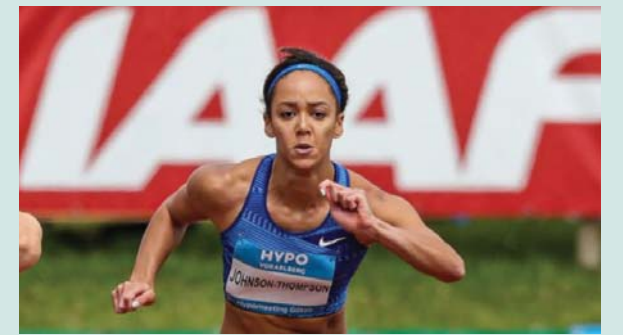
LAHORE: Damien Hough, head curator of Adelaide Oval, will arrive in Lahore today on a two-week tour during which he will also visit Karachi, Multan and Rawalpindi.

Hough is one of the world's best curators with a 26-year experience. During his visit, Hough will also inspect the outfield and pitch squares of the four Test centres.

Prior to his departure on 28 July, Hough will give lectures to the curators and the coaches of cricket and city cricket associations on pitch preparations and the basic methodology of pitch making for all three formats of the game.

He will also provide insights to local curators and coaches on introducing a day/night pitch for Test cricket, which is the most pinnacle format of the game.

## Johnson-Thompson targets podium at worlds



LONDON: Heptathlete Katarina Johnson-Thompson said she is feeling minimal pressure as she eyes a podium finish at the upcoming World Athletics Championships in Eugene, Oregon, despite a patchy build-up to her title defence.

The 29-year-old recovered from a ruptured Achilles to compete at last year's Tokyo Games before a calf injury in the 200m ended her Olympic hopes.

Johnson-Thompson posted her third-lowest score at the Hypo-Meeting in Gotzis, Austria, in May in her first full heptathlon since becoming world champion in Doha in 2019.

"I don't really care about pressure these days," Johnson-Thompson said.

"Knowing that I've done this before and won, I feel like going in, it's just a nice reassurance. If it's been done before, it can be done again. "I don't want to just go out to compete, I want to be in the medal hunt. I've been working so hard, this is the longest run I've had with no injury leading into a championship for as long as I can remember."

Johnson-Thompson added she teamed up with new coach Aston Moore to give her the best chance of success at the 2024 Summer Games in Paris, having split with her previous coach Petros Kyprianou in June after only six months.

The world championships will run from July 15-24, with the heptathlon starting from Sunday.

"Looking ahead to Paris, I wanted to make these decisions sooner rather than later," Johnson-Thompson said. "Ultimately, I have to do what's right for me and I believe this is what it is. "Going into Doha, I felt like I was in the best shape of my life... I did have confidence in my ability to go in there and win but at the same time I was in the mindset of 'what will be, will be'."

"Right now, it's been shifted in the fact I have a new coach. Different points are taking priority right now. I feel like it's definitely a different mindset, but it doesn't mean that I can't get a good score out."

## Bangladesh pacer suspended for doping violation

DHAKA: Bangladesh pacer Shohidul Islam has been suspended for 10 months after pleading guilty to breaching Article 2.1 of the ICC Anti-Doping code. The 27-year-old pacer has represented Bangladesh in one T20I. After admitting the offence, Shohidul has been suspended from all forms of cricket for 10 months.

The 10-month suspension has been backdated to May 28, the day he admitted to the offence, meaning the Bangladesh pacer will be eligible to play on 28 March 2023.

Shohidul has played a solitary T20I for Bangladesh, where he picked up the wicket of Mohammad Rizwan in the third and final match of the series which Pakistan won 3-0.

He has been part of Bangladesh's travelling squads for series against New Zealand and South Africa but did not get any game time. He was also a part of the Bangladesh Test and T20I squad for the ongoing tour of the West Indies but missed out due to a side strain.

Shohidul's urine sample was positive for Clomifene, which is classified as a Specified Substance under WADA's Prohibited List. It is prohibited both in-competition as well as out-of-competition. Shohidul had provided the urine sample as a part of ICC's out-of-competition testing programme.

While handing out the suspension, the ICC confirmed that Shohidul had inadvertently ingested the prohibited substance in the form of a medicine that he had been legitimately prescribed for therapeutic purposes. Shohidul also testified that he had no intention to use the prohibited substance for performance enhancement.

## ICC improving fans digital experience

ISLAMABAD: The International Cricket Council (ICC) ICC was constantly striving to improve the digital experience for all global cricket fans.

According to details, it was now launching a brand new ICC Fan Account that would allow fans to access all key platforms including icc-cricket.com, event websites and ICC.tv.

As an ICC Fan, you can have access to exclusive benefits like first access to tickets for ICC events, unique competitions to win experiences, tickets, merchandise and more. The fans would have their say by voting on ICC Awards and also exclusive access to ICC's premium video archive.

# Ten Hag urges Man Utd to 'use initiative'

MELBOURNE: Manchester United captain Harry Maguire should be available to face Melbourne Victory after missing their 4-0 thumping of Liverpool, manager Erik ten Hag said Thursday while urging his team to use their initiative.

The England defender was a conspicuous absence in the first game of the Red Devils' pre-season tour in Bangkok on Tuesday, watching from the sidelines after a knock in training. In his place, Raphael Varane, Victor Lindelof, Eric Bailly and Alex Telles all got time in central defence instead. But Ten Hag, who took over in May after finishing a successful spell at Ajax, said Maguire should play at least 45 minutes in front of expected bumper crowd at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

"He is tomorrow available," said Ten Hag, whose side also face Crystal Palace and Aston Villa in Australia. "We will see (how long for). I think he can play half a game." United head into Friday's match with no fresh injury concerns



reported.

While victory against Jurgen Klopp's Liverpool got the Dutchman off to a winning start, Ten Hag faces a huge challenge to rebuild the Old Trafford club, who have not won a trophy since 2017. Whether Cristiano Ronaldo will be part of those plans remains to be seen. The Portuguese superstar has skipped the trip to Australia, disappointing fans, with reports that he wants to leave after United's failure to qualify for the Champions League.

Ten Hag insisted this week he was "not for sale" and said on Thursday "nothing has

changed". So far, Feyenoord full-back Tyrell Malacia is his only signing, although United have been heavily linked to former Tottenham midfielder Christian Eriksen, Barcelona's Frenkie de Jong and Ajax defender Lisandro Martinez. Ten Hag had no news on them, but pointed to a crop of youngsters, like Ethan Laird, Hannibal and Alejandro Garnacho, "with huge potential".

"Now it's about getting the potential out of them," he said, with all three no doubt eager to get an opportunity on Friday. Despite missing Ronaldo, United showed

encouraging signs in Thailand, with a positive mentality and clinical finishing. Ten Hag said that's the way he wants his team to play.

"From every area of the team, I want productivity. That's the most important thing, that players take the initiative on and off the ball, in offense and defence," he said. "We want to press, play proactive football, that has to be the intention." (Melbourne Victory) are a different opposition (to Liverpool), so we need a different approach," he added. "I think they play at a good level so we're looking forward to this game. It will be a good test."

His team could come face-to-face with former Portugal and United winger Nani, who signed for Victory this week in one of the A-League's biggest coups in years. The 35-year-old, who spent eight years at Old Trafford, may make his debut against his old club. "I would like to, I don't know," he said. "I just arrived in the country, and it's a long flight, so there are lots of things to do."

# Warholm going into worlds at 100%

EUGENE: Norwegian hurdles king Karsten Warholm insisted Wednesday he was going to bring everything he could to the table as he battles back from injury in his quest for a third world championship gold.

Warholm laid down a performance that is widely considered one of the greatest Olympic track performances of all time when he smashed the 29-year-old world record to win the 400m hurdles at the Tokyo Games in a time of 45.94sec. But the 26-year-old pulled up injured at the Diamond League meet in Rabat in early June with a "muscle fibre tear" in a hamstring, something he dubbed a "personal disaster" when talking to reporters Wednesday ahead of the world championships in Eugene, Oregon. "The last five to six weeks have been close to hell," said Warholm, who



has been receiving treatment in

Germany, combining work in the swimming pool with physiotherapy in his hope of being fit for Eugene. "It's been really challenging, you get this thing and you don't know how each day will go." But his hopes remain high, however, the Norwegian saying: "We did some testing coming into this. "I feel pretty safe to say that now we're going in there, we're going in at 100%."

"There's no such thing as going into a championships and feeling just OK.

I feel good to go and when I say good to go, that always means 100%." A lack of competitive outings was neither here nor there, Warholm said, reiterating that his first competitive outing in 2021 had seen him bag gold in a world record in Tokyo. "Of course, you want to run some races to get some confidence, but on the other hand confidence is not my problem," he said.

"It's going to be challenging in the sense of I don't know what I can bring to the table, but I know for sure that all training until the injury happened was very good. "It's not the ideal way to go into a championships obviously." Warholm added that his event, a lung-busting effort to clear 10 hurdles over one lap that demands technical mastery and physical prowess, was not for the faint-hearted.

# St Andrews hosts 150th British Open

ST ANDREWS: The 150th British Open teed off on the Old Course in St Andrews on Thursday with organisers keen for the focus to remain on a historic championship despite the ongoing fallout caused by the breakaway LIV Golf series.

Former Open champion Phil Mickelson, Brooks Koepka, Dustin Johnson and Sergio Garcia are among the LIV series members who are in St Andrews, and a victory for one of them this weekend might not do much to ease tensions in the sport. "Whoever wins on Sunday is going to have their name carved in history, and I'll welcome them onto the 18th green," insisted Martin Slumbers, chief executive of the R&A. "This is a golf tournament. The Open is about having the best players in the world playing, and I want to see who shoots the lowest score come Sunday night."

Yet Slumbers also attacked the Saudi-backed series, which offers prize money of \$25 million for each 54-hole event, compared to a \$14 million prize pot for

this week's Open. The LIV model, he said, "is not in the best long-term interests of the sport as a whole and is entirely driven by money". "It undermines the merit-based culture and the spirit of open competition that makes golf so special," he added. Rory McIlroy is among the players who have voiced opposition to the new series and the Northern Irishman would prefer not to see one of the rebels triumph in St Andrews. "Selfishly, for me, yes, I think it would be better for the game," he said. Whether affiliated to the new series or not, there is a long list of contenders looking to succeed Collin Morikawa, winner last year at Royal St George's. McIlroy, who won the 2014 Open at Hoylake, appears best-placed among the European candidates during a season in which he has also come second in the Masters and fifth at the US Open, although US Open champion Matt Fitzpatrick of England may disagree.

A long list of American contenders is led by Scottie Scheffler, the Masters

champion and world number one, yet he insists he feels no extra pressure despite his status. "Being the home of golf and the Open Championship definitely amplifies things a bit, but that's across the board," the 26-year-old said on Wednesday.

"I don't think it matters if I'm number one in the world or number 50 in the world, I want to win this tournament as bad or more than anybody out here." Scheffler tees off in a group with Joaquin Niemann and Tyrrell Hatton. McIlroy, meanwhile, plays with Morikawa and Xander Schauffele, the Olympic champion who won last week's Scottish Open. The Open is expecting record attendances for the week of 290,000, meaning galleries will be packed for the first championship since the end of pandemic-related restrictions. The course is hosting the championship for the 30th time, the first since Zach Johnson won here in 2015 after foul weather delayed the finish until the Monday.

There seems little prospect of the

weather causing such havoc this time, with conditions expected to be largely fine, even if winds have picked up over the last two days and rain seemed to appear from nowhere on Wednesday. Stiff breezes may put paid to any prospect of a record low score being posted, with the current best round at a major Branden Grace's 62 at Birkdale in 2017. "Even with the advancements in technology, this golf course still stands the test of time. It's still very difficult, and it's obviously weather dependent," said Tiger Woods, twice an Open champion at St Andrews.

The 46-year-old, who has been recovering from severe leg injuries suffered in a car crash last year and missed the US Open, tees off at 2:59 pm (13:59 GMT) alongside Fitzpatrick and Max Homa. Scotland's Paul Lawrie, Open champion at Carnoustie in 1999, had the honour of playing the first tee shot of the championship in calm but cool weather at 6:35 am on Thursday morning.