



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ
ابوہریرہ رضی اللہ عنہ نے کہتے ہیں رسول اللہ صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے فرمایا: وہو نصاریٰ (فارسی و غیرہ) میں بھڑبھڑ نہیں لگاتے، تم لوگ اس کے خلاف طریقہ اختیار کرو (یعنی بھڑبھڑ لگایا کرو) (صحیح بخاری، حدیث نمبر 3462)

Barkat Rice Mills (Pvt) Limited

Rigging is in PTI's DNA: Maryam Nawaz

Pakistan Muslim League- Nawaz Vice President Maryam Nawaz says the rigging is in the DNA of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and now they can't run away by stealing bags and Election Commission staff. PTI leadership are aware that they could not win the election. Imran Khan will emerge as MRXYZ.



PTI will win by-polls with huge margin: Asad Umar

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leader Asad Umar says PTI will win the by-elections in Punjab with a huge majority despite the use of state machinery by the government. The administration is trying to influence the by-election but PTI will nevertheless win with a huge margin of majority of the seats. All independent surveys suggest that PTI will win tomorrow's elections with a huge margin.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Zilhaj 17, Sunday, July 17, 2022

www.dailyspokesman.net

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Daily Spokesman Vol: 15, Issue: 108

Price Rs. 25.00 Pages 8

Establishment should 'stay away' from by-polls: Sh Rashid

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Former interior minister Sheikh Rasheed on Saturday warned the establishment to "stay away" from the by-polls in Punjab tomorrow. In a video message on Twitter, the Awami Muslim League leader said: "Today I want to say something very important to the establishment. Tomorrow is a very important day. I have never witnessed such an election ever in Pakistan's history."

"I wish to request them to stay away from the election. The nation will not tolerate any kind of rigging or bullying. You have to prove in tomorrow's election you are impartial," he continued.

Rasheed went on to censure the "foolish" government for deliberating on whether it should initiate legal proceedings against PTI leaders under Article 6.

"This is an additional note by the Supreme Court. Not a judgment. These people lack wisdom, these [people] who have been foisted on to this nation with a vote or two extra," the former minister said.

Continuing his warning, the AML leader said that if the nation votes for PTI Chairman Imran Khan, then "no obstacles must be created" in the party's path and the result "must be accepted."

"If its path is blocked, this country will witness an inferno which will engulf everyone. This is why tomorrow is a test for Pakistan's political stability," Rasheed said.

"The people must be granted the right to [elect their own leaders] and no one must interfere," he added.

Less than 24 hours are left for the crucial by-polls in 20 Punjab Assembly constituencies.

Healthcare

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairing a meeting to review the outbreak of Dengue in Lahore on Saturday.



Photo: PID

Minorities protection, welfare govt's top priority: PM

Directs for preventive measures to stop spread of dengue

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif Saturday reiterated that the protection of minorities and their welfare were among the top priorities of the government. The prime minister was talking to Ramesh Singh Arora, a member of Punjab provincial assembly, who called on him.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has directed for special preventive measures to stop the spread of dengue virus in the country.

He was chairing a review meeting here on the situation regarding dengue virus.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairing a meeting regarding dengue, in Lahore.

The PM asked the Chief Secretary Punjab to form a special committee to undertake monitoring in detail about the arrangements made by the administration



Ramesh Singh Arora calls on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in Lahore on Saturday. Photo: PID

in 36 districts for eradication of the dengue virus.

He stressed that the district administration had a vital role

in taking steps in phases in the campaign against dengue and the staff working under it should be trained so it could adopt modern

technical ways to take effective steps against dengue on war footing.

Shehbaz Sharif said in the past when dengue epidemic started, Pakistan successfully tackled the disease and was recognized for its efforts at the international level and this performance needed to be repeated.

The prime minister ordered for all possible steps to make people aware about the disease and ensure their protection at public places against the deadly virus.

Chief Secretary Punjab, Punjab's Secretary Board of Investment, Secretary Agriculture, Secretary Irrigation, Secretary Local Government, Commissioner Lahore Division, Deputy Commissioner Lahore and high level officials attended the meeting. Commissioner Rawalpindi Division and Deputy Commissioner Islamabad participated in the meeting through video link.

Punjab by-polls

Nobody allowed to sabotage writ of state: Rana Sanullah

Warns Imran Khan, PTI against inciting riots today

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Interior Rana Sanullah Khan on Saturday warned the PTI leadership to exercise restraint and avoid disrupting peaceful proceedings of tomorrow's by-elections in Punjab. "The law will take its due course if anyone tries to sabotage the writ of the state by indulging in unlawful activities," he said. The interior minister's warning was also addressed in particular to PTI Chairman Imran Khan.

"Imran Khan Niazi and PTI must restrain from disrupting the peaceful proceedings of tomorrow's by-election by inciting riots or violence," he said in a news statement.

He issued a clear warning that nobody would be allowed to sabotage the writ of the state.

He believed that Imran Khan would resort to anarchy as the defeat of PTI candidates in the by-polls seemed imminent and inevitable.

Any incident like Daska by-poll would be dealt strictly, said Sanaullah who advised Imran's supporters to abstain from taking the law into hands.

The minister said there were reports that the PTI had brought more than 500 armed persons to Punjab to create a law and order situation on the occasion of by-election.

He alleged that the rioters were given shelter by the senior PTI leaders including Parvez Khattak, Asad Qaiser Ali Mohammad Khan, and Murad Saeed.

Sanaullah termed the PTI's request to appoint polling agents outside the constituency a conspiracy which was aimed at disrupting the electoral.

He said that the government would not allow those, who looted the people during the last four years, to steal the mandate of the people from 20 constituencies in the by-polls.

Pakistan committed to achieve SDGs: Ahsan

Says we are first country which declared sustainable development goals as national goals

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Minister for planning and development Ahsan Iqbal has expressed Pakistan's commitment to achieving sustainable development goals that are aimed at dealing with challenges of poverty, global food insecurity, and water scarcity.

In his video message after concluding the meeting of the High-Level Political Forum at the United Nations in New York, he urged the leaders of

world nations to adopt the same spirit for implementing SDGs.

The Minister said Pakistan is the first country that announced sustainable development goals as its national goals. Similarly, our vision 2025 also included the SDGs in its agenda.

He said the conference has revitalized our commitment to the implementation of SDGs in Pakistan. We have also suggested that Pakistan wants to hold a review meeting of G77 this year.

Country can't afford weak army: Imran Khan

Terms 'U-turns' crucial for political leaders, generals

Our Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman and former Prime Minister Imran Khan on Saturday said that we cannot afford a weak army in the country.

Addressing a seminar in Islamabad, he said "We have never seen democracy, if the courts will give justice then we will never be destroyed."

Imran added, "I went to Britain at the age of 18 and saw democracy there and democracy is stable in western countries."

The former PM further said the only difference between a prosperous and a poor society is the law and society in which there is justice is a successful society.

Taking a swipe at dictators he said all the dictators placed themselves above the law and weakened the institutions.

"A strong army is crucial for the country and we cannot afford a weak army in our country because everyone have witnessed the situation of the countries which had a weak army," Imran

said. "No one else was criticized as much as I was as the Prime Minister. As PM, I did not get relief from the court for three years and I had never tried to feed money to the media," he added.

The former prime minister said that both the bigwigs of PML-N and PPP have been involved in corruption. He also said that people were happy when Pervez Musharraf took power. Imran also posed the question that why did the rule of law not come during the tenure of the two ruling families.

"When I became the Prime Minister, I was not under any threat from the media. Fake news of tax evasion was launched against my ministers and I instructed to not arrest any journalist," he added.

The PTI chairman alleged that both these families have controlled the media. He said, "No one else has been criticized as much as I was as the Prime Minister. When I became the Prime Minister, I had no threat from the media."

Imran Khan termed

"U-turns" crucial for political leaders and generals and insisted the country could not afford a "weak" army.

The ex-premier said the country could not afford a "weak army" as it is the nation's asset.

"Increasing distances between the army and the nation would be a loss for Pakistan and its armed force both," said Khan.

The PTI leader reiterated that his struggle was to get rid of the Sharif and Zardari families from the political front "who have been taking turns to rule the country for the past 30 years."

"Pakistan has been ruled half the time by these two families and half the time by the dictators," said Khan, claiming that all the dictators in the past weakened the country's institutions and put fear above the law.

The former PM said freedom of expression was crucial for any nation, and no society can thrive without it.

Khan asserted the media was never a threat to him, nor he took any action against it during his tenure.

Politicians, establishment improve ties a lot: Zardari

KARACHI: Pakistan People's Party Co-Chairman and former President Asif Ali Zardari said that the relationship between political parties and the establishment has improved a lot over time and will continue to improve over time. He said the aforementioned statement during a meeting with the Sindh Governor here.

"I wish Imran Khan would have thought about the rights of journalists even during his regime, and journalists have always got freedom during the regime of People's Party and will continue to get it," Zardari said.

Taking a swipe at the PTI chairman, he added that the era of Imran Khan has been a dark era in terms of press freedom.

The former President said that the relationship between the political parties and the establishment has improved a lot with time and will continue to improve over the time because the goal of all is the development of the country and the strengthening of democracy.

Reserves

Pakistan to get \$4b from friendly countries: Miftah

Says coalition govt saves Pakistan from bankruptcy

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is likely to get \$4 billion from friendly countries this month to bridge a gap in foreign reserves highlighted by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Finance Minister Miftah Ismail said, two days after sealing a deal with the lender.

The IMF has reached a staff-level agreement with Pakistan that would pave the way for a disbursement of \$1.17 billion. The board is also considering adding \$1 billion to a \$6 billion programme agreed in 2019.

"As per the IMF, there is a \$4 billion gap," the minister, Miftah Ismail, told a news conference in Islamabad, referring to the shortfall in foreign reserves.

"We will, God willing, fill this gap in the month of July," he said. "We think that we will get \$1.2 billion in deferred oil payment from a friendly country."

"We think that a foreign country will invest between \$1.5 to \$2 billion in stocks on a G2G (government-to-government) basis, and another friendly country will perhaps give us gas on deferred payment and another friendly country will make some deposits."

Depleting reserves, a widening current account deficit and the depreciation of the Pakistani rupee against the U.S. dollar have left the South Asian nation facing a balance of payment



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Miftah Ismail addressing a press conference at P-Block in Federal Capital. ONLINE PHOTO by Sultan Bashir

crisis. Without the IMF deal, which should open up other avenues for external finance, Ismail said the country could have headed towards default.

He said the country will also get around \$6 billion from the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank in FY2022-2023.

Pakistan secured a \$6 billion IMF programme in 2019, but less than half of that amount has been disbursed to

date. Pakistan's central bank has hiked its key interest rate to 15% to curb inflation, which hit 21.3% in June.

Miftah Ismail said that the incumbent coalition government has saved Pakistan from bankruptcy.

Addressing a press conference, Finance Minister said that irresponsible policies of past four years destroyed the economy but now country is heading towards economic stability.

Assertion

Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb addressing a press conference in Islamabad on Saturday.



Photo: ISPR

Today's Punjab by-polls to bury PTI narrative, politics: Marriyum

Says Imran Khan admitted his defeat in his speech

Our Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Saturday said that Sunday's by-elections in Punjab would bury the narrative and politics of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI).

"Today, Imran Khan admitted his defeat in his speech, the way Imran Khan was talking, it seemed that his language and mind were not under his control, and this only happens when a person is scared, defeated, rejected and failed," she said while addressing a press conference here.

Taking a dig at the PTI chairman, she said Imran Khan was fully aware that these four things were in him, he had been rejected and failed, he had already lost the crucial bye-election.

"The people of Punjab have declared war against the unemployment, inflation and economic destruction caused by Imran Khan who has given nothing but pain to the people in the country during four

years", she maintained.

She said that Imran Khan made all out efforts to push the country into a Sri Lanka like economic crisis.

In the by-elections, the party will emerge victorious which always brought Pakistan out of economic

Imran Khan tried his best to push country into a Sri Lanka like crisis: Info minister

crises and led it towards economic stability, she said.

The PML-N took steps to reduce inflation by taking people out of record inflation, and it was the only party that could overcome loadshedding and it feed the country from the scourge of terrorism, broke

the back of the terrorists and restored the peace.

She said the PML-N brought the country's growth rate to 6%, revived the ailing economy, and introduced the game-changing China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

The minister said Imran Khan knew that his government failed to produce even one megawatt electricity during four years, and could not build even one kilometer of road, and only made false promises of ten million jobs and five million houses.

He did not even build a university or a hospital during his tenure, which was the reason today he could not even mention a single achievement in his speeches.

Terming Imran Khan a habitual liar and a failed politician, she said he only knew the art of lying and misleading the masses. She said PML-N leaders Nawaz Sharif and Shehbaz Sharif entrusted the responsibility of election campaign for Punjab by-elections to Maryam Nawaz who fulfilled the responsibility in an exemplary manner.

'Politics of service' will win in by-polls: Hamza

Says people will reject false slogan of Imran Niazi

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Hamza Shahbaz Saturday said that the one doing politics of service will win in the by-elections in Punjab scheduled on today (Sunday).

CM Hamza, whose fate hangs in balance and depends upon the outcome of the by-polls, said the people will reject the fraud narrative and false slogan of Imran Niazi with the power of their vote.

The chief minister, in a statement, also directed the administration and the police to ensure the security of the voters and maintain a peaceful environment. Warning that no miscreant will be allowed to spoil the environment during the polling process, he said that the Punjab government will guard the respect of the vote.

CM underscored that the motive of our politics is doing public service adding that Imran Niazi is doing politics of falsehood and deception.

The Punjab CM slammed PTI Chairman Imran Khan, saying that Imran Niazi has adopted the narrative to humiliate the institutions for the sake of his political motive.

He hoped that the people will reject the leader attacking the institutions along with his party with the power of their vote.

Amid allegations of pre-poll rigging from the PTI, the CM directed the police and the administration to remain completely impartial and neutral during the by-elections.

Directing the officials to strictly implement the election code, the CM maintained that we accept the power of the vote.

LHC nullifies ECP's notification

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) Saturday nullified the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) notification — which stated that the polling agents should belong to the same voter constituency for the upcoming Punjab by-elections scheduled to take place on July 17.

The PTI filed a petition at the ECP to appoint polling agents from outside the constituencies.

However, the commission mentioned appointing the agent from outside the constituency would create hurdles in the identification process.

LHC's Justice Shahid Jameel suspended the commissioner's notification on PTI leader Dr Yasmin Rashid's request till July 17.

The court stated that the ECP can amend the rules and ask polling agents to be appointed from the respective constituencies after the by-elections.

During the hearing, the commission's lawyer said that bringing the polling agents from outside of the constituencies might evoke violence and disrupt the election process.

To this, the judge remarked that "aliens" will not come from outside. Meanwhile, Justice Jameel said that the commission should carry out transparent elections.

Ashiana Housing case

Court exempts PM from appearance

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Accountability Court on Saturday granted exemption to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif from personal appearance in Ashiana Housing Scheme case hearing while Punjab Chief Minister Hamza Shahbaz has been granted exemption for Ramzan Sugar Mills case for one day.

The Father-son duo did not appear in the two different references as they submitted the plea, requesting the court to allow them exemption from appearing in the hearing.

In Ramzan Sugar Mills reference, Hamza prayed that he has been busy in the meetings regarding the after effects of monsoon.

While PM Shehbaz has already been given exemption from appearing in the hearings of Ramzan Sugar Mills case. After the hearing, the court adjourned the case till August 13.

PTI will win by-polls despite govt's strategy: Fawad

Accuses ECP of 'rigging' in Punjab by-elections

LAHORE: Former federal information minister Fawad Chaudhry on Saturday said that whatever strategy the imported government adopts, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) will achieve great success in the Punjab by-elections.

While holding a press conference here, Fawad said that it is expected that PTI will win 16 seats.

He claimed the by-elections in Punjab have started with rigging and the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) itself is rigging.

The former federal minister took a jibe at ECP and said, "ECP says that there is no need for rigging when we are present."

Fawad said every decision of the ECP was overturned in the courts.

The court also suspended the decision not to recruit polling agents from other places, adding Fawad.

PTI leader said that yesterday's decision of the ECP was also rejected by

the court.

He said that no budget meeting has been held in Punjab at present and whatever expenditure is being incurred is illegal. Fawad also said that in Punjab, planes have been converted into rickshaws.

PTI leader alleged that government machinery is being used to block PTI candidates, adding that illegal arrests are being made in Punjab.

He further claimed that anyone who supports PTI is arrested and the people active in the election campaign are also being implicated in fake cases.

Fawad said that in a democracy one has to show a majority, but if Hamza Shahbaz is fond of dictatorship then it is a different matter.

Former Information Minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Fawad Chaudhry has accused the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) of rigging in Punjab by-elections. "The

Courts have rejected every decision of the electoral watchdog. Today, the Lahore High Court (LHC) suspended the Election Commission's notification to appoint polling agents from the respective constituencies," he added.

The PTI leader claimed that the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) threatened a factory owner — Malik Zulfiqar — to increase people's strength in Maryam Nawaz's Multan rally.

"The Punjab government is registering fake cases and using state machinery against PTI candidates," he said, adding that anyone who joins PTI in Punjab is being considered a 'criminal'.

Fawad Chaudhry further said that the Budget session didn't take place in Punjab and whatever is being spent is illegal. "The provincial government are arresting people who are supporting and campaigning for PTI in Punjab by-polls," he added.

We are working with complete impartiality: Punjab EC

Sets up special control rooms to monitor by-polls in Punjab

Bureau Report

LAHORE/ISLAMABAD: Provincial election commissioner Punjab has said that presiding officers will take the election material from camp offices of Returning Officers.

Talking to media on by-elections arrangements Punjab election commissioner Saeed Gul said, "We have to work as per the law and the constitution and we are working with complete impartiality." "There is nothing a grain of truth in allegations being levelled against us," he said.

The election commissioner Saeed Gul said that separate vehicles will be available for security of transportation of electoral material to all polling stations.

"Police has been deployed, while the Rangers will act as the Quick Response Force," he said.

The election commissioner said that

a large screen has been installed for results at Lahore's camp office. "The presiding officers will dispatch form 45 to ROs on Whatsapp," he further elaborated.

"Punjab is a plain area, maximum distance of polling stations is covered in one hour," election commissioner said. "The election results will not be delayed, which presiding officers will send on the Whatsapp," he further said.

"If a presiding officer could not send result on Whatsapp, he will reach to the ROs office," election commissioner said. "As per the law a presiding officer could deliver the result by 2:00 in the midnight," he added.

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has set up special control rooms at central and provincial levels to monitor the by-polls in 20 constituencies of the Punjab Assembly on Sunday.

According to the Election Commis-

sion, the control rooms will continue working till compilation of polling results.

Returning Officers, relevant Deputy Commissioners, representatives of police, Rangers and Pakistan Army will be present in the control rooms to deal with any emergency.

The Control Rooms will promptly resolve election-related complaints which could be registered in central control room in Islamabad through helpline numbers: 051-9210837; 051-9204403; 051-9204402; and 051-9210838.

"The complaint can also be communicated through fax number 051-9204404 and email; ddmonitoringsb@gmail.com," the ECP shared.

Provincial control room, Lahore could be contacted at landline telephone 042-99212620; 042-99212209 and email pcpunjabcontrolroom@gmail.com.

Tense political activity

All eyes on today's make-or-break Punjab by-polls

20 Punjab Assembly seats are up for grabs in by-elections

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab will witness intense political activity today (Sunday) as the make-or-break by-elections on 20 hotly-contested provincial constituencies will take place — that will decide who will become the next chief minister of the province.

The 20 seats fell vacant after the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) de-seated 25 PTI dissident lawmakers on May 23 — which included five lawmakers elected on reserved seats for women and minorities — for voting against PML-N's Hamza Shehbaz in the Punjab chief minister's election.

Political pundits are expecting a tough contest between PML-N and PTI in the by-polls as a majority of the 20 defecting PTI MPAs have hitched their wagons to the PML-N.

The PTI and the PML-N have around

the same number of seats in the Punjab Assembly, but if either of the parties takes a major lead in the by-polls, it can form the next government easily as the elections for the chief minister are also slated for July 22. Related items

Preparations have been completed for the crucial make-or-break by-elections in 20 Punjab Assembly constituencies to be held on July 17 Sunday as the polling material has been distributed and the authorities have decided to deploy Rangers and FC personnel in these constituencies in order to maintain law and order situation. While the Pakistan Army personnel will perform duty at sensitive polling stations, returning and presiding officers have been assigned the powers of magistrates. It is pertinent to mention that the 20 seats fell vacant after the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) "de-seated" 25 PTI dissident lawmakers on May 23 for voting against PML-N's Hamza

Shahbaz in the Punjab chief minister's election. Which included five lawmakers elected on reserved seats for women and minorities.

The election campaign ended at 12am Saturday in line with the polling rules, with PML-N Vice-President Maryam Nawaz and PTI Chairman Imran Khan campaigning vigorously for their parties. Canvassing for the by-polls ended on Friday midnight with both the PML-N and PTI urging their workers to put their energies into bringing out voters from their homes on the polling day on Sunday. But while the senior leadership of both rival parties held huge public rallies in pretty much all 20 constituencies, conventional door-to-door campaigns and corner meetings of workers, especially of the PML-N, to engage voters were conspicuous by their absence in the four constituencies of the capital of Punjab. During the campaign, Khan reiterated his claims of a foreign conspiracy that led to his govern-

ment's ouster and asked his supporters to ensure that in the by-polls, the "thieves and corrupt" do not win. On the other hand PML-N circles defended the party's new narrative, saying the previous slogan was aimed at the powers that be. "Since the establishment is on good terms with us again, we no longer need this narrative and have replaced it with 'Khidmat ko vote do', which has a political appeal, considering our past record of serving people."

By-elections will be held in 20 constituencies of Punjab Assembly including PP-7 Rawalpindi, PP-83 Khushab, PP-90 Bhakkar, PP-97 Faisalabad; PP-125, PP-127 Jhang, PP-140 Sheikhpura, PP-158, 167,168,170 Lahore; PP-167, Lahore, PP-202 Sahiwa; PP-217 Multan, PP-224 Lodhran, PP-228 Lodhran, PP-237 Bahawalnagar, PP-272,273 Muzaffargarh, PP-282 Layyah and PP-288 Dera Ghazi Khan.

Pak Army to act as QRF during Punjab by-polls

ISPR says Pak Army concludes inspection of highly sensitive sites



RAWALPINDI: The Pakistan Army troops will perform only "Quick Reaction Force" duties in case of any law and order situation arising during polling today (Sunday), the military's media wing said Saturday. The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), in a statement today, said that troops carried out reconnaissance at the most sensitive locations in respective areas as third-tier responders to any law and order situation in the province. The ISPR said the reconnaissance was carried out in line with the directions of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP).

Govt creating ample education opportunities: Minister

Says more than 250 vocational training institutes would be established

MURIDKE: Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Rana Tanveer Hussain said on Saturday that the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) led government was creating ample skill-based education opportunities for the youth to meet the needs of local as well international job market.

He was addressing a ceremony after inaugurating National Skills University's campus in Muridke. He said that the first-ever campus of the university had been established in Punjab where six-month courses in various disciplines would be offered initially to male and female students.

Rana Tanveer Hussain said that more than 250 vocational training institutes would be established in one year as future of the country was linked with skill-based education.

The minister said that free-of-cost education would be imparted to students for promoting education in the area, adding that the campus had been established in a short span of two months. He said that the campus was a gift from Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to the residents of the area as the PML-N



had always made efforts to facilitate people through various initiatives.

The prime minister had a vision of creating employment opportunities for the people, he said adding the university campus would create employment for the youth. He said that the government was also ensuring provision of scholarships and laptops to students.

To a question, the federal minister said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's corrupt and incompetent government played havoc with the national economy and other institutions during the past four years as no development work was done by it except for raising hollow slogans.

However, the coalition government, led by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, had taken difficult decisions for revival of the economy, he said adding that soon after the petroleum prices slashed in the international market, the relief was passed on to masses immediately.

The minister said that the PML-N would continue the journey of real development and prosperity after winning the by-elections in the province as people wanted their problems to be solved.

PNC delegation visits University College of Nursing



BAHAWALPUR: Pakistan Nursing Council delegation visited University College of Nursing, the Islamia University of Bahawalpur.

The purpose of this visit was related to the initiation of the second two-year degree program (The Post-RN) Bachelor of Science in Nursing in the college. The delegation appreciated the establishment of nursing college equipped with modern facilities for academic and practical training.

On this occasion, Principal University College of Nursing Farhan Mukhtar apprised about the ongoing teaching, curricular and co-curricular activities in the college. The delegation also met with the Vice Chancellor of the Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Engr. Prof. Dr. Athar Mahboob and Pro-Chancellor Prof. Dr. Naveed Akhtar.

IGP Prisons visits central jail Mardan

PESHAWAR: Inspector General Prisons (IGP) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sadaat Hussain on Saturday visited Central Jail Mardan and inspected facilities being provided to inmates.

During visit, IGP was briefed about operational matters and performance of various sections.

The IGP expressed satisfaction over the status of facilities including food, medical care and accommodation.

He said that efforts are underway to improve facilities in prisons and added that resources were being utilized to achieve the objective. He also appreciated the performance of Jail Superintendent, Arif Khan and his team.

Classical Music Festival opens at Alhamra

LAHORE: A two-day classical music festival, Yaad-e-Salamat, started at Alhamra Arts Centre, The Mall, here on Saturday.

The festival is a special presentation by Alhamra Arts Council and the 'Shaam Chaurasi Music Circle'.

On the first day, Alhamra Executive Director Farhat Jabeen welcomed all the guests, praised the services of classical artists and said that the art was alive because of the interest of classical music listeners and attendees from all-over the world. She said the festival would be a memorable event for classical music-lovers. Alhamra Deputy Director Naveed-ul-Hasan Bukhari said that Alhamra salutes all its legends, including classical singers.

Those who performed on Saturday were Ejaz Ali Khan, Arsh Khan, Muzammil, Anil Sunny Jimmy, Nader Ali Khan, Faizan Ali Khan, Sher Miandad, Ali Raza, Nadeem Salamat Khan, Ghulam Abbas, Javed Niazi, Babar Niazi, and Ustad Shafiqat Ali Khan. Agencies

Justice (R) Mohammad Ali Sayeed passes away

KARACHI: Justice (R) Mohammad Ali Sayeed passed away on Friday at the age of 96.

One of the youngest ever judges of the High Court of Sindh, Justice (R) Mohammad Ali Sayeed was a record 7 time President of the High Court Bar Association. A preeminent lawyer with a long and consistent record of juridical brilliance, intellectual, moral, and ethical rectitude, he was recognized as possessing a most remarkable mind, which combined clarity of thought and a relentless work ethic. His career spanned decades supported by an equally brilliant and successful wife, Shamim Sayeed.

His Sojem/Dua will be held on Sunday 17th July between Asar and Maghreb at 17 D Mohammad Ali Society. His family including Shais-ta Shafiqat, Sadeq Sayeed, Imran Sayeed will miss their beacon of light followed relentlessly over decades

Deutsch Pakistan Forum condoles death of Michael Jansen



BAHAWALPUR: The Deutsch Pakistan Forum has expressed condolences on the sudden death of president of the forum, Prof. Dr. Michael Jansen, a few days ago. Since 1994, Prof. Dr. Michael Jansen had been working as Professor for the History of Urban Development at Aachen University.

From 1994 to 1996, Prof. Dr. Michael Jansen was Dean of the Faculty of Architecture at RWTH Aachen. His research interests included Indus Culture (Mohenjo Daro), colonial architecture in South Asia, early modern cities, and Carolingian architecture.

He had been a friend and active member of the German Pakistan Forum for decades. He was serving as the President of the Forum since 2019. Vice President Imran Mehr and members of the forum prayed to grant patience to the bereaved.

Rally calls for completion of uplift projects

Staff Reporter

KHARIAN: A rally by Tehreek-e-Kharian titled "come out for the sake of your city" was held in which people of Kharian participated and raised their voice for their rights.

The peaceful protest rally started in front of the main Eidgah GT Road Kharian and ended at Azadi Chowk. The participants demanded the early construction of Kharian service roads, overhead bridge and the end of unannounced load-shedding and inflation.

The protest rally was organized by Tehreek-e-Kharian President Dr Umar Bhatti, Chairman Waqar Ahmed Dar, Yamin Siddiqui, Amir Mushtaq Shani, Junaid Dar and others. Prominent participants included Chaudhry Ali Farrukh, Chaudhry Basharat Ahmad Advocate, Tariq Imam Kokh, Syed Zainul Abidin Shah, Qari Liaqat Ali Jalali, Hafiz Asghar Tawhidi, Chaudhry Asim Bashir Kaki, Mirza Zubair Raza, Chaudhry Fawad Nazir, Captain (Rtd) Jahangir Ghani, Chaudhry Hamza Aftab, Lala Mushtaq Hussain, Aamir Nadeem Wasan, Raja Usman Advocate, Manwar Iqbal Tarr, Chaudhry Naveed Mushtaq, Imran Dar, Irfan Butt, Sajid Raza Chishti, Sajid Hussain, ex-president Kharian Press Club Zaman Ahsan and others included.

Two policemen martyred in Khyber attack

KHYBER: Two policemen were martyred when some unknown assailants opened fire at a check-post in Bara tehsil of Khyber district on Saturday.

According to Police, the dead bodies have been shifted to the hospital. Chief Minister Mahmood Khan has strongly condemned the attack on police personnel and condoled the martyrdom of the policemen. He lauded the sacrifices of the martyrs for restoration of peace.

Pleasant Weather

LAHORE: Visitors are enjoying at Grater Iqbal Park after the heavy monsoon rains during pleasant weather, in Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

AJK PM pays rich tribute to Sardar Abdul Qayyum

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan has paid eulogizing tributes to renowned Kashmiri leader and former Prime Minister Sardar Abdul Qayyum Khan on his seventh death anniversary.

Addressing a commemoration ceremony held on Thursday to mark seventh death anniversary of Mujahid-e-Awal, the AJK premier said that the former premier would be always remembered in the annals of Kashmir history for his unprecedented services for the people of Azad Kashmir and the historic role he had played in the liberation struggle. "The teachings and services of Mujahid Awal will continue to inspire incoming generations", he said adding that Sardar Sahib had left behind a rich legacy that would serve as a beacon of light for all.

Regarding the purported reports about rolling back of 13th amendment, the PM made it clear that he cannot even imagine abolishing the thirteenth amendment. The PM said that his stand on the issues was clear and known to all. Regarding Gilgit-Baltistan, Sard-



ar Tanveer Ilyas said, "my position regarding the GB is clear and I have repeatedly said it at different forums that I shall not bear any stain on my-self in the case of Kashmir". Praising

former AJK premier Raja Muhammad Farooq Hyder Khan's role in the successful passage of 13th amendment in the AJK's Act 74, he said that the commendable move has led to financial and administrative autonomy in the state. The PM, however, lamented that the employees of Kashmir Council were still drawing lakhs of salary per year but none of them was performing his/her duty. He said that the government has decided to bring them (KC employees) under the roles that have been set for other employees in the state.

Regarding Kashmir, he said, "Kashmiris on this side of line of control stand shoulder to shoulder with their Kashmiri brethren in Occupied Kashmir in their just struggle for right to

self-determination". The PM said that he would take all political stakeholders of the state on board on the issue of Kashmir and turn Azad Kashmir into a base camp in true sense wherefrom a strong and effective campaign would be launched to promote Kashmiri cause both at national and international level. "Kashmiris living on both sides of the LoC are moving forward with this vision that we are Pakistanis and Pakistan is ours".

Reiterating Kashmiris' commitment towards Pakistan, the PM said, "We strongly believe in the philosophy of Kashmir Banega Pakistan and my stand stand on the issue is very clear".

Pakistan, he said, has always helped and stood with the oppressed Muslims all over the world through every thick and thin. He said that he will move forward with the entire state leadership on the Kashmir issue and make the base camp a fortress of real freedom.

Denouncing Indian government's Machiavellian machinations, the PM said that India was issuing fake domiciles to Hindus in Kashmir to turn Muslim majority of the state into a minority.

Religious scholars call for unity

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Religious scholars role in maintaining peaceful environment during Muharram-ul-Haram is of utmost importance. Attock is a peaceful district related to religious harmony and it is hoped that this will be maintained during the Muharam. SDPO Saddar Circle Muhammad Afzal Lodhi said this while chairing a meeting of Tehsil Peace Committee. The meeting was attended by Maulana Ghulam Muhammad Siddiqui, Maulana Sher Zaman, Mufti Muhammad Yasir, President Imam Bargah Punjantani Syed Raza Haidar Naqvi. SDPO Lodhi said that during Muharram-ul-Haram all religious scholars and volunteers to play their positive role in ensuring peace, religious harmony and brotherhood. He said, body search of those entering Imam Bargahs and processions will be mandatory and no compromise must be adequate in this context. Lodhi said cooperation with police and other law enforcement agencies is very important during Muharram. Religious scholars from all sects ensured that they were united and were having complete harmony and unity.

CAP calls for repair, reconstruction of roads

Staff Reporter

KARACHI: After the rains, large potholes have formed on the roads of every area including the main cities of Karachi.

Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah should issue immediate instructions to all Deputy Commissioners and Municipal Commissioners to cover potholes on the roads for rain emergency so that the flow of traffic continues and people can be protected from getting injured by falling into the potholes.

According to the announcement of the traffic police, 145 places and 97 roads of Karachi are suffering from damage due to recent rains, due to which the flow of traffic is being disturbed. In this regard, the DIG Traffic Police has also sent a letter to the Additional IG.

This was said by Kaukab Iqbal Chairman Consumers Association of Pakistan while addressing a review meeting at CAP's head office. He said that the rains are the mercy of Allah. Because if there were no rains, the water supply would have been left for a few days. We should be thankful that Allah sent rains all over Pakistan. This is a great blessing of nature to Pakistan.

According to the forecast of rains, the government cleaned the drains of the city of Karachi, but the ignorant people not only filled them with garbage on Eid al-Adha, but also put sacrificial items in them. Kaukab Iqbal said that the government should impose a ban on rearing and slaughtering animals in the entire city on Eid-ul-Azha like other developed countries.

A place should be reserved for this in every district of Karachi so that garbage cannot be piled up all over the city, due

to which diseases increase. He said that Public-Private Partnership should be established to get rid of the monsoon rains.

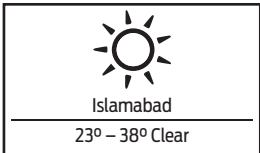
Due to which, on Eid al-Adha, the butchers do not think when skinning the animals and the skin from which the leather is exported to the world market and earns foreign exchange. Kaukab Iqbal praised Karachi Police Chief Javed Alam Ohodo and said that the traffic police in various areas of the city, including Korangi Causeway, not only tried to fill the potholes with their own resources. Rather, hundreds of damaged vehicles stuck in the rains were also pushed to the side and motorbikes including motorcycles were also started.

He said that on behalf of the people of Karachi, I pay special tribute to the traffic police officials for these commendable steps. It is hoped that

they will continue the same efforts which will restore the confidence of the people in the police.

Kaukab Iqbal further asked the chairman of the Consumer Association of Pakistan that the government should call a meeting of the market associations and assess their losses in the rains and make immediate payments. He said that there should be a complete ban on the use and manufacture of plastic bags as it has worsened the condition of the entire city.

He emphasized that despite the fact that the contract has been given to pick up garbage from house to house, there are huge illegal garbage dumps on the roadsides of every area, which are destroying the beauty of the city of Karachi. Therefore, the government should take action against those who throw garbage on the streets by imposing Section 144.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 3:18 am
Zohr 12:12 pm
Asr 5:12 pm
Maghrib 7:22 pm
Isha 9:05 pm

EMERGENCY

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

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

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

COMPLAINTS

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

KPL gives peace message to whole world: Mushaal

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Mushaal Hussein Mullick said that Kashmir Premier League gives the peace message to the whole world. Mushaal, who is the wife of jailed JKLP leader Yasin Malik, on the opening ceremony of second season of Kashmir Premier league said that Kashmir Premier League gives the peace message to the whole world. "Kashmiris are peaceful and freedom seekers", she added.

She also appreciated the organizers for having a catchy logo "play with freedom" as this also relates with the Kashmiri movement "Live freely".

The organizers have given soft as well as diplomatic message through this logo to the whole World.

She also suggested to include divided families' youth of IIOJK residing in Azad Kashmir and Pakistan from Srinagar, Sopore, Shopian, Jammu and Pulwama in this league as this will further increase the importance of this league because Kashmiri have their own identity.

There should be participation of international players as this will give soft message that people are secure not only in scenic valley but in Azad Kashmir also, she said.

President for ensuring inclusion of women in businesses

Says women should be given all property rights admissible to them

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi Saturday called for creating enabling environment to ensure women's participation and inclusion in economic, business, trade, and industrial sectors on a fast-track basis.

The President expressed these views while talking to a delegation of the Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Peshawar (WCC&IP), led by its President Mrs Shahida Parveen, that called on him, at the Aiwan-e-Sadr. Director General (Trade Policy), Ministry of Commerce and senior government officials also attended the meeting.

The president said that women made up almost 50% of the country's population and the provision of enabling conditions such as ensuring their safety and security at the workplace and providing quality education and skills to women should be the priority of the Government and society.

"Local traditions and practices regarding women's property and inheritance rights need to be changed and women should be given all the property rights admissible to them as per our religion and the Constitution", he stressed.

He said recently, steps had been taken for their financial empowerment, further

adding that legislation had been passed to give women their due share in inherited property.

He said that the law provided that if the property of a woman had been encroached upon, it would be vacated by the government.

The president also highlighted that commercial banks were providing business loans to women under favourable and easy terms and conditions and called upon the chambers of commerce around the country to help women entrepreneurs secure these loans to start their own businesses and improve upon the existing businesses.

He also urged WCC&IP to create linkages with other chambers of commerce for greater participation of women in other chambers of commerce and industry and businesses under their purview.

The president also expressed his concerns that Pakistan had one of the lowest workforce participation rates for women in the world, which was sad and extremely alarming. While quoting the example of Hazrat Khadeeja (RA), he said, that there was no bar in Islam for women to participate in business, trade or other economic activities.

He said that Hazrat Khadeeja (RA)'s example should be used to overcome social resistance against women empowerment.

The president further said that the Federal Ombudsman Secretariat for Protection Against Harassment at Workplace (FOSPAP) had also been empowered to hear the cases of grievances of women even if such cases were already being heard by the Courts of Pakistan. He added that FOSPAP had been further authorized to send its reports and findings for the perusal of the Courts.

He urged the WCC&IP to motivate businesswomen to benefit from the programme launched by Facebook with the help of TEVTA Punjab for imparting training to the women and marketing their products.

He said that Amazon was another very effective platform which can be used by businesswomen to market their products.

The president appreciated the Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Peshawar for providing an effective and vibrant platform to help women enter business, trade and industry and for providing assistance to existing businesswomen to improve their businesses.

All set to hold PP-7, Kahuta, Kallar Syedan by-polls

Staff Report

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi district administration and police have finalized all the arrangements including security to maintain peace during by-elections in PP-7, Kahuta and Kallar Syedan.

According to a district administration spokesman, display of weapons, aerial firing and use of loudspeakers were prohibited and strict legal action would be taken against any violation.

The spokesman informed that ECP had directed the political parties and candidates of PP-7 to stop the election campaign after midnight on July 15, as polling would be held for the by-elections on July 17.

In a letter, the district monitoring officer warned that strict action would be taken against any candidate or political party found to be continuing the campaign after the specified time.

He said that no rally, public meeting and door-to-door campaign would be allowed after ending of the campaign period.

Foolproof security arrangements have been finalized for the constituency as over 4,000 police officers and personnel including over 600 women police personnel would be deployed for 266 polling stations.

According to the security plan finalized for by-polls, City Police Officer, Rawalpindi, Syed Shehzad Nadeem

Bukhari, Senior Superintendent of Police Investigation, Ghazanfar Ali Shah, SSP Operations Waseem Riaz Khan and senior officers would remain present in the field to check duties of police personnel.

Male and female Police personnel would be deployed at 36 male, 35 female and 195 polling stations which would be common for both male and female voters.

The spokesman informed that 102 officers and personnel of City Traffic Police would also be deployed to regulate traffic in the constituency. 37 quick response teams of Elite Commandos would perform duty to maintain law and order and deal with any untoward incident.

12 criminals held in capital

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory police have arrested 10 outlaws involved in drugs peddling and possessing illegal weapons, a police public relations officer said.

He said that DIG Operations Sohail Zafar Chatha had categorically ordered all zonal officers to curb the crime in their respective areas and arrest those involved in any criminal activity.

Following these directives, a team of Secretariat Police Station conducted a crackdown against drug peddlers and arrested two accused namely M. Yousuf and Shakoor Ahmed, and recovered 1235 grams of hashish and 20 grams of ice from their possession.

Likewise, Tarnol and Nilore police teams arrested two accused namely Usman and Atif involved in possessing illegal weapons and recovered three 30-bore pistols with ammunition from their possession.

Health Corner

Genetic discovery to improve lung cancer treatment



ISLAMABAD: Lung cancer is the deadliest form of cancer, accounting for an estimated 1.8 million deaths worldwide.

Treatment for the condition has improved in recent years — and a new Edith Cowan University study has found how to make it even more effective. Immunotherapy has emerged as a major weapon in the battle against non-small cell lung cancer, which makes up 80-85 per cent of all lung cancer diagnoses.

Unfortunately, immunotherapy can also result in severe side effects for patients: at least 74 per cent of those treated will experience immune-related adverse reactions.

Up to 21 per cent will develop grade three or four toxicity, which can lead to lifelong complications affecting the skin, gut, liver or endocrine system. These adverse reactions can result in cancer treatment having to be discontinued, which risks allowing the disease to progress further.

But, somewhat contradictorily, people who experience these immunotherapy side effects tend to have more positive results with their cancer progression than those who don't.

Study supervisor Associate Professor Elin Gray, from ECU's Centre for Precision Health, described immunotherapy as something of a "double-edged sword" — but researchers have made a critical breakthrough.

"Immunotherapies unleash the immune system to recognise and kill cancer cells," she said.

"But they can also unleash the immune cells to attack the body, causing toxicities. Our research shows for the first time that certain genetic features predispose cancer patients to develop side effects or toxicities to anti-cancer therapy.

"Knowing this will allow doctors to improve the treatment given to patients." The key to the research are human leukocyte antigens, or HLAs, which are markers found in most cells in the body.

The immune system uses HLAs to determine which cells do and don't belong in your body and are part of the alarm system which detects viruses, infections — and cancer. The research team examined the HLAs of 179 non-small cell lung cancer patients and found a strong link between the genetic makeup of the HLAs and whether the person was likely to develop side effects from immunotherapy.

Study lead Dr Afaf Abed said this discovery would benefit all non-small cell lung cancer patients, regardless of whether they were genetically predisposed to adverse reactions to immunotherapy or not. "If someone is found to not be at risk of side effects, doctors can ramp up the treatment and be more aggressive in fighting the disease," she said.

"If they are found to be at a higher risk, doctors can take it easier with the treatment, monitor it and intervene before patients develop grade 3 or 4 toxicity.

"Either way, biomarkers that predict the risk of these immune-mediated adverse events among patients may reduce the risks associated with these treatments." (Courtesy: Science Daily)

Attracting Customers

ISLAMABAD: A worker cleaning marble planters attraction for costumers at his workplace alongside road at sector H-9 in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Bid to smuggle wheat foiled

RAWALPINDI: The Food Department Rawalpindi and district police on Saturday foiled a bid to smuggle wheat and seized 400 wheat bags. According to a district administration spokesman, the authorities of the food department along with Taxila police confiscated a vehicle loaded with 400 wheat bags. The driver of the vehicle Nasar Hayat was also sent behind the bars, he added. The authorities concerned had been directed to strictly monitor district exit points to control wheat smuggling, he said adding, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Rawalpindi Tahir Farooq had instructed the authorities to strictly monitor the movement of wheat and take strict action in accordance with the law against the rules violators. Agencies

Govt slashes PIA, Pakistan Railways' fares

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Railways and Aviation Khawaja Saad Rafique on Saturday announced 10 per cent cut in fares for the passengers travelling in the economy class of main express trains, as well as both the economy and business classes of the Pakistan International Airline (PIA), domestically. "Following the footsteps of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the Pakistan Railways and PIA have decided to pass on the benefit of the fuel prices drop to its passengers," said the minister in a video message. He said the reduction in fares would remain in effect for the next 30 days and a notification in this regard would be issued on Sunday [tomorrow]. Saad noted that the economy class of railways and PIA accommodated 94 per cent and 90 per cent of passengers, respectively. The minister said the Civil Aviation Authority would also ask the private airlines to slash their airfares.

He hoped that the provincial governments would also make efforts to bring down the fares of local transport by reaching out to the transporters.

Transporters asked to cut fares by 20pc

RAWALPINDI: Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) General Rawalpindi, Qasim Ijaz here on Saturday met with the delegation of D-Class Bus Stand Association and the transporters were asked to cut 20 percent fares to provide relief to the people.

The representatives of D-Class Bus Stand Association including Kianat, Safeway, New Shaheen, Darbar, Kohistan, Ghosia and others attended the meeting.

The ADC asked the transporters that in view of the reduction in fuel prices, the fares should be reduced by 20 percent. The government was taking all possible measures to provide relief to the people, he added.

The association gave full assurance of 20% reduction in fares. In this regard, he directed the transporters to display fare reduction banners at their respective bus stands on which previous and current fares should be displayed prominently. He also asked the Transport Association to get published advertisements in newspapers in this regard.

According to a spokesman, the Commissioner Rawalpindi Noor ul Amin Mengal had also instructed the transporters to keep their waiting areas and washrooms neat and clean so that the people could be facilitated.

The Commissioner had directed the administration of the bus stands that tuff tiles should also be installed in the waiting areas besides ensuring proper cleanliness arrangements at all the city bus stands.

The spokesman informed that DC Rawalpindi, Tahir Farooq had also directed the authorities concerned to provide more facilities to the passengers at Pirwahai Bus Stand.

He also instructed the authorities concerned to ensure separate waiting areas for male and female with washroom facilities. He had also instructed the administration not to allow entry of vehicles in the bus stand without checking fitness certificates. Agencies

Youth future holds in acquiring digital skills: Speakers

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: As a member of the UNESCO/UNEVOC, the National Skills University Islamabad, with partner institutions SZABIST Islamabad, Technology Times, and Pakistan Institute of Fashion and Design (PIFD), celebrated WYSD2022.

In this regard, an international hybrid event was organized on July 15, in which students, technologists, scholars, industrialists, and youth, in general, participated from across the country.

The United Nations General Assembly approved the celebration of this day in 2014. The primary reason for observing this day is to create awareness, celebrate ongoing successes, and highlight the ever-increasing strategic importance of providing youth with necessary skills aligning with contemporary technological advancements.



Keynote Speakers of the World Youth Skills Day 2022 at National Skills University Islamabad

Moreover, educational institutions and other organizations must show their readiness to equip youth with workplace skills and inculcate professional work ethics, the most critical characteristics sought by employers.

This day also highlights the importance of preparing youth with entrepreneurial skills to be job providers rather than job seekers.

The WYSD2022 theme is "Transforming Youth Skills for the Future." The keynote speakers of this event were Prof. Dr. Hwya Arafat, from Drexel University College of Medicine, USA; Prof. Dr. Javed Iqbal, Laparoscopic Surgeon, Scholar, and motivational

speaker; Muhammad Arshad, President Bay, and River College, Calgary, Canada, Ms. Khadija Hassan, Pakistan Institute of Fashion and Design, Dr. Wajid Zulqarnain, Associate Professor, SZABIST, and Sayyed Paras Ali, Technology Times.

The speakers talked about trends in digital skills, facts about soft skills, and the importance of youth involvement in skill education. Further, they encouraged the youth to get involved in technical education. At this event, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Mukhtar, Vice Chancellor NSU, stressed that the future belongs to technical and vocational skills.

However, one should be well versed in digital, generic, and soft skills. He advised the students to get ready to unlearn the obsolete and relearn the new technologies. He also thanked the participants and speakers for joining the event and making it successful.

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Sardar Qayyum—An icon of ideology, commitment

Hameed Shaheen Alvi

On July 16th 2022 the 7th anniversary of veteran Kashmir leader Sardar Mohammad Abdul Qayyum Khan, the practical field founder of Kashmir freedom movement, is being observed by the people of Jammu and Kashmir within and outside of the state. He earned the title of Mujahid-e-Awwal of Kashmir movement in 1949 when the then government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir issued a notification of acknowledgement. Copy of the gazette notification was shown to me by the Kashmiri historian Dr Sarwar Abbasi, who in later years had retired as Vice-Chancellor of AJK University.

Sardar Abdul Qayyum Khan was an icon of ideology of Jammu and Kashmir's accession to Pakistan, a course chartered out by All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference on July 19, 1947 which is still an anchor sheet of political advancement pursued by this premier platform of Kashmiris founded back in the turbulent times of 1932 when Dogra autocratic might was roaring in

Kashmir at its height unchallengeable. Elsewhere Nature was rearing the practical challenger—Sardar Mohammad Abdul Qayyum Khan then a youth of 22 years who rises to the occasion treading the sharper edges of field war for liberation of Jammu and Kashmir.

On August 23, 1947 this young warrior rallied the first batch of pro-freedom fighters at the historic height of Neela Butt atop his village home Ghaziabad. Since then Neela Butt top is treated as the starting point of the practical phase of Kashmir freedom movement. From Daily Statesman of Calcutta to historians Joseph Korbel to Lord Birdwood to Prof Alastair Lamb confirm this fact of history in their respective books; Korbel was an active member of UNCIP in Kashmir. Dogra regime had set Rs. Five lakhs as head money of young rebel Sardar Qayyum Khan. But he least wavered in his mission.

Lasting for 15 continuous months the Kashmir fighting halted with the promulgation of UN enforced ceasefire on January 1st, 1949. Guns had gone silent; but Sardar Qayyum Khan did not rest; in his peace time he formed a political apparatus—Azad Kashmir Political Party to advance the cause of Kashmir via the platform



Ex Aik Premier n supreme head AJK Muslim Conference late Sardar Muhammad Abdul Qayyum Khan

of the masses. In 1951 he joined All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference under the leadership of Chowdhary Ghulam Abbas, founding General Secretary of his party. To the stunning success of Sardar Sahib goes the credit that for fourteen times he was elected as president of the party, three times president of Azad Kashmir government in 1956, 1971 and 1985, and one time prime minister, 1991-1996.

He sensitized the issue of Kashmir at regional and international levels reaffirming the UN Kashmir dispute solution formula; he was ardent struggler for opening all traditional access roads and routes between the two parts of divided Jammu and Kashmir state; in 1973 for the first time

as Kashmiri ruling politician he wrote to the Srinagar chief minister to visit Azad Kashmir; the invitation was an ideological initiative for facilitation of opening of routes for intra-state travels by the people on both sides; till 1959 traditional routes were open and Kashmiris from both sides could travel on a district magistrate issued identity permit. In 1975 his resolution for inter and intra-state travels facilitation to Kashmir was unanimously approved by the Rabita Al Alam Al Islami/World Muslim League in its 3-day session at Makkah.

Sardar Sahib, keeping the centrality of Kashmir dispute actively progressive, devoted his guiding statesmanship for the uplift of the downtrodden people of Azad Kashmir when in 1971 he opened virtually a flood-gate of educational and economic development for Azad region, established the Development Commissioner office, opening inlets for international aid for like Asian Development Bank, World Food Programme for the first time in AJK; alongside dozens of male/female colleges, hundreds of primary, middle and high schools, he started a symbolic initiative for the AJK University appointing Sahibzada Hassan Shah, a famous educationist,

as its first registrar in 1971 who later served as Peshawar University registrar.

On the constitutional side it was under his activation that right of writ was accorded to the people Azad Kashmir for the first time. For ideological intellectual input AJK govt. started a well organized daily Dars-e-Quran for civil employees of the state at the start of their official working hours. In those days of peace-surety the gates of his Presidency remained open for general public till late night to meet, talk, discuss, monitor, assess the public demands of the visitors. This public gesture gave rise to his leadership popularity.

In the context of Kashmir's accession to Pakistan movement he successfully maintained good working relationship with the leaderships of Pakistan—from President General Mohammad Ayyub Khan to Prime Minister Z.A. Bhutto (except a short spell of strain) to President General Ziaul Haq to Prime Minister Mian Nawaz Sharif to President General Pervez Musharraf. He also remained Chairman of the Kashmir Committee of Govt of Pakistan.

The writer is senior analyst and columnist.

Indian bulldozer justice

It also appears that the Hindutva-influenced policies followed by Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) are bent upon crushing the minority communities, particularly Muslims, through application of the coercive powers of the state and as is reported lately that the state apparatus has been instructed to do the needful. It is evident from the fact that Hindutva is reigning supreme in India and is spreading its tentacles far and wide. It is more than obvious that the increasing writ of Hindutva is almost becoming unchallengeable for the primary reason that it performs under the aegis of state machinery.

The recent development has taken place in respect of the fresh arrests regarding killing of a Hindu tailor in Rajasthan who was known for injuring the religious sentiments of Muslims by casting aspersions on the revered personalities of Islam. This development is the latest in a series of state coercion perpetrated by the Indian Muslims as they are also subjected to bulldozer justice whereby scores of dwellings and businesses have been flattened by wrecking crews in a campaign authorities have promoted by turns as a battle against illegal construction and a firm response to criminal activity.

However, rights groups have condemned this despicable bulldozer justice as an unlawful exercise in collective punishment by India's Hindu nationalist government and many of the campaign's victims have one thing in common that they are invariably Muslims. Since then bulldozer politics have spread elsewhere in the country and demolition campaigns have begun quickly following on the heels of outbreaks of religious unrest.

After a violent confrontation in April between Hindus trailing a religious procession and Muslims holding Ramzan prayers, authorities in Delhi knocked down nearly two dozen Muslim shopfronts and the facade of a mosque, defying a court order to stop. Officials simply

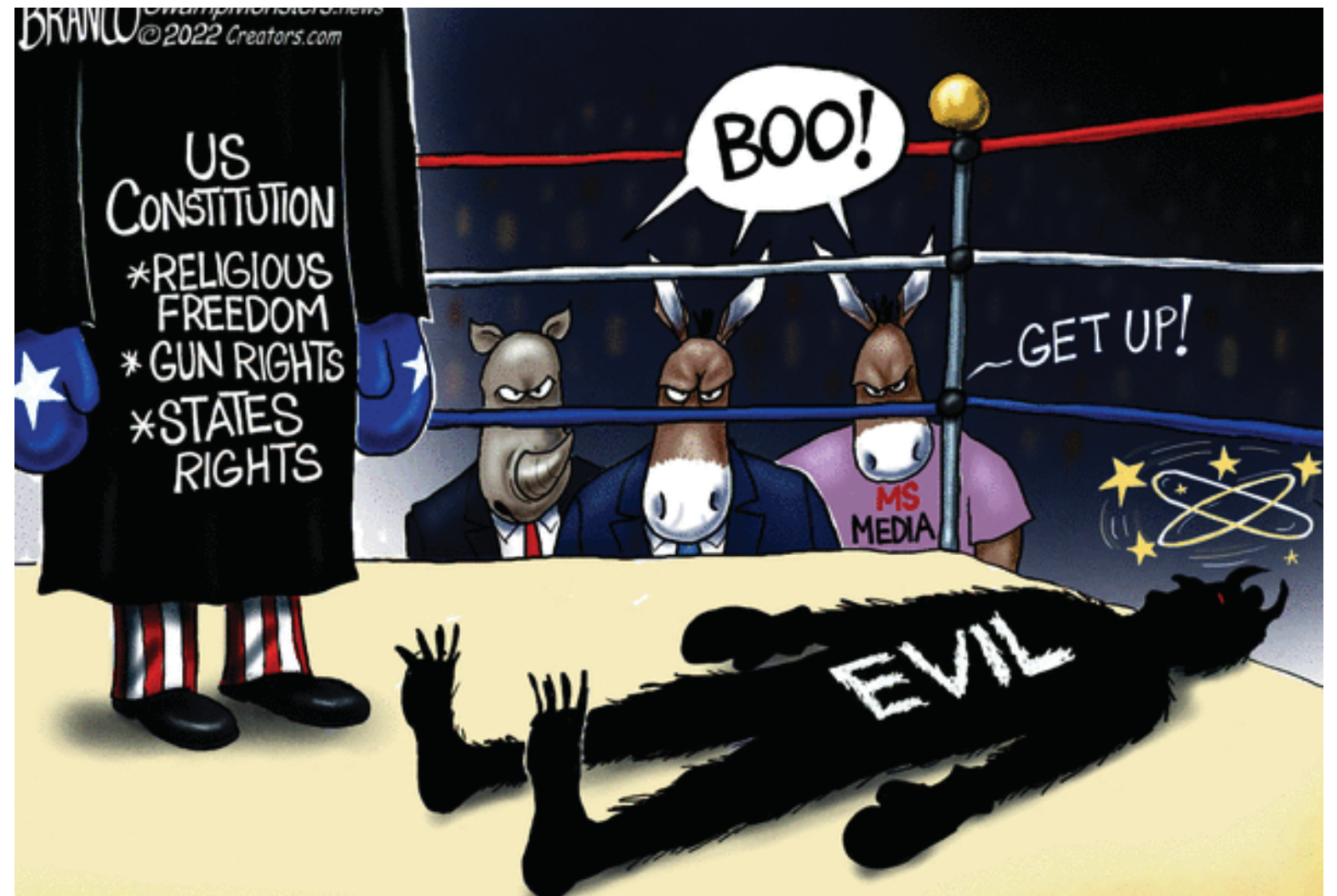
toed the official line and stated that the spate of demolitions is lawful as they only target buildings constructed without legal approval.

But victims of the campaign deny that their dwellings are illegal and say they are not given the legally required notice period to dispute demolition orders. The houses were demolished in the presence of hundreds of police and hundreds of cameras with no empathy indicating that such actions have no comparison for this ruthlessness. It is pointed out by many observers that the government's campaign is the latest manifestation of the BJP's discriminatory policies towards India's 200 million-strong Muslim minority community.

It is added that they have an ideological commitment that in India they have to make Muslims a second-class citizen, socially humiliate them and destroy their property. This observation is echoed by the Amnesty International that stated that the demolitions were part of a selective and vicious crackdown on Indian Muslims who dared to speak up against the discrimination they faced. Many Muslims living in Uttar Pradesh now fear their own homes are being earmarked for destruction after their family members participated in last month's protests.

Muslims now are subjected to sleepless nights and restless days and many are fearful as

they have received orders to vacate their houses as they were found participating in a demonstration. Residents of many residential areas lie under constant fears as bulldozers remain parked outside the police stations near their homes.



Palestinian universities under Israeli attack

Neve Gordon

Later this month, the Israeli authorities are expected to put into effect a 97-page ordinance, called Procedure for Entry and Residence for Foreigners in Judea and Samaria Area (PDF), which would grant the Israeli Ministry of Defence and thus, the military, absolute power to determine how many and which foreign academics and students can visit, study or work at all 15 Palestinian universities and colleges in the West Bank.

The "procedure" limits the number of staff allowed to work for any of these 15 universities and colleges to no more than 100 "distinguished lecturers and researchers," noting that "applications for a permit under this section will be approved if it is demonstrated, to the satisfaction of the authorised [military] official, that the lecturer contributes significantly to academic learning, to the area's economy, or to advancing regional cooperation and peace".

Moreover, under the new ordinance, the Israeli authorities will not only determine who can or cannot teach in Palestinian universities but will also restrict the time foreign academics can reside in the West Bank to one semester, which ensures that foreign professors will no longer be able to become permanent members of the academic staff at any of West Bank's institutions of higher education.

Finally, the procedure will only allow up to 150 foreign students to study in the West Bank at any given moment, while restricting their stay to one semester as well.

Israel's attempt to exert total control over Palestinian universities is, of course, nothing new. But its approach to Palestinian higher education was once significantly different. Back in the early 1970s, when Israel's

occupation of the West Bank was in its early years, the Israeli authorities provided Palestinians with permits to establish universities in the occupied territories. Security officials were under the impression that the establishment of universities could help Israel normalise the occupation and thus foster Palestinian support for Israeli rule.

This policy backfired. The universities established under occupation rapidly became sites for political organising and mobilisation for Palestinian liberation.

Furthermore, within a relatively short period, these universities produced a fairly large Palestinian professional class. The labour market in the occupied territories did not have much to offer these young graduates – Israel was almost exclusively hiring unskilled manual labourers for its construction and agricultural industries, and military authorities were blocking almost all attempts by Palestinians to establish independent industries or develop the service sector.

Not surprisingly, the lack of jobs created bitterness among unemployed and underemployed graduates. Alongside thousands of university students – who were equally concerned about their future prospects – these graduates eventually served as a primary force in bringing about the first wave of mass resistance to Israeli rule: the Intifada of 1987.

Bottom of Form Seeing the prominent role students and graduates took on during the first Intifada, Israel swiftly learned its lesson and began imposing severe restrictions on Palestinian universities. Birzeit University, for instance, was practically closed year round from 1988 to 1992. All of the other universities also faced long-term closures.

In the decades that followed, numerous procedures have been introduced to restrict Palestinian higher education. The primary

aim of these policies, ranging from limiting the movement of lecturers and students to putting restrictions on subjects that can be taught, was to undermine Palestinian economic development and the circulation of knowledge that can be used to mobilise younger generations against colonial rule.

Given this half-century-long history of academic restrictions, obstructions and repression, it is difficult to find anything new in the restrictions to academic freedom that Israel is due to introduce in the West Bank later this month. The "procedure" is, after all, just one more draconian policy in a long line of draconian policies targeting Palestinian higher education. And yet, there has been an interesting development since the announcement of the procedure in February.

In addition to Palestinian universities themselves, international human rights organisations, and professional associations such as the Middle East Studies Association and the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies (in which I serve as chair of the Committee on Academic Freedom), an Israeli university publicly voiced concern in an official capacity over an Israeli policy that would undermine the academic freedom of Palestinians.

In an arguably unprecedented move, the General Assembly of the Hebrew University sent an official letter to the Israeli military commander of the West Bank, emphasising the problematic restrictions set out in the procedure.

At first glance, the penning of this letter appears to be a step in the right direction – until now, the only support Palestinian higher education institutions received from Israeli academia came from Israeli academics organising, protesting and at times, issuing open letters criticising the state's attacks on Palestinian academic freedom in their personal capacity.

The future of food security is in plants

Dr. Theodore Karasik

The concept of plant-based food as a substitute for meat is gaining steam. The reason is not because vegans are taking over your menu, but because of the need to find new methods to improve food security and reduce its impact on climate change. Naturally, there are issues with such an industrial move. According to research, in the past, plant-based meat alternatives were relatively straightforward. Most were made from whole ingredients like beans or grains and did not taste anything like actual meat. However, the new generation of these products includes meat substitutes, made to look and taste like the real thing. Now one can find plant-based burgers, ground "beef", deli slices, meatballs, sausages, seafood and more at the grocery store.

However, there needs to be more choice beyond plant-based burgers, sausages and mince, so there are efforts afoot for additional food products, especially the need for variety in meat-free steaks and chicken breasts. The COVID-19 pandemic has been a driver in pushing for greater food security through plant-based substitutes. As people commit to a healthier lifestyle, they are changing their diets to include plant-based options. Thus, some are asserting that these are more than a paradigm shift. Plant-based food production is moving beyond the fad stage to become a part of dietary choices in Western countries. The US and Europe are seeing a surge in this market. The geostrategic implications are important as the West transforms the way it addresses the key threats to societal security. It is important to remember that livestock is the third-biggest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions and water use, so reducing its impact on the climate is key. Investment in plant-based alternatives to meat lead to far greater cuts in climate-heating emissions than other green investments, according to a report published by Boston Consulting Group last week. That is an important

finding that needs to be put into policy practice.

The report found that, for each dollar, investment in improving and scaling up the production of meat and dairy alternatives resulted in three times more greenhouse gas reductions compared with investment in green cement technology, seven times more than green buildings and 11 times more than zero-emission cars. Interestingly, meat and dairy production uses 83 percent of farmland and causes 60 percent of agriculture's greenhouse gas emissions, but provides only 18 percent of calories and 37 percent of protein in a daily diet. Moving human diets from meat to plants means less forest is destroyed for pasture and fodder growing, plus fewer emissions of the potent greenhouse gas methane that is produced by cattle and sheep.

Scientists are finding that shifting away from meat and dairy products is the single biggest way to reduce the industry's environmental impact. Food security concerns will rise in both the short and long term, meaning an increasing reliance on plant-based options. As already mentioned, only 18 percent of calories come from livestock, but 80 percent of agricultural land is used for farm animals. In some markets, 80 percent of grain is fed to livestock. These resources can be diverted away from livestock farming if consumption patterns change. Europe and North America are expected to reach "peak meat" by 2025, at which point the consumption of conventional meat will start to fall. By 2040, most food will not come from slaughtered animals.

Politically, the introduction of more plant-based food products has its detractors. These individuals are increasingly feeling that their freedoms – and their lifestyles and businesses – are being trampled on. In the UK at the beginning of the year, a butcher shop put up a sign ridiculing vegans, saying "Every day, thousands of innocent plants are killed." This was in response to the increasingly popular "Veganuary," the 31-day pledge people are taking to go vegan every January. The tensions between these two communities have already brought about scuffling and arson.

US 'will not walk away' from Middle East: Biden

Saudi crown prince says unrealistic energy policies will lead to inflation

JEDDAH: President Joe Biden, speaking at a summit of Arab Gulf leaders, said on Saturday that the United States "will not walk away" from the Middle East as he tries to ensure stability in a volatile corner of the globe and boost the worldwide flow of oil to reverse rising gas prices.

His remarks were delivered at the Gulf Cooperation Council as he closes out the final leg of a four-day trip.

"We will not walk away and leave a vacuum...," Biden said. "We will seek to build on this moment with active, principled, American leadership."

Although US forces continue to target terrorists in the region and remain deployed at bases throughout the Middle East, Biden suggested that he was turning the page after the country's invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan.

"Today, I'm proud to be able to say that the eras of land wars in the region, wars that involved huge numbers of American forces, is not under way," he said.

Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman, addressing a US-Arab summit, said that unified efforts were required to support the global economy and that unrealistic policies regarding energy sources would only lead to inflation.

"Adopting unrealistic policies to reduce emissions by excluding main sources of energy will lead in coming years to unprecedented inflation and an increase in energy prices and rising unemployment and a worsening of serious social and security problems,"



he said.

He said COVID-19 and the geopolitical situation necessitated more joint efforts to support the global economy and that environmental challenges required a "realistic and responsible" approach to gradually transition to sustainable energy sources.

Biden also pressed his counterparts

to ensure human rights, including women's rights, and allow their citizens to speak openly.

"The future will be won by the countries that unleash the full potential of their populations," he said.

Biden said the United States would commit \$1 billion in food aid to the Middle East and North Africa amid

rising food insecurity induced by the war in Ukraine.

Saudi Prince Mohammed said he hoped it would "establish a new era of joint cooperation to deepen the strategic partnership between our countries and the United States of America, to serve our common interests and enhance security and development in this vital region for the whole world."

Biden meets Arab leaders as he pushes for Israeli integration

Biden earlier held a swift series of meetings with the leaders of the UAE, Iraq and Egypt as he sought to forge regional missile and defence capabilities at a wider Arab summit in Saudi Arabia.

"We believe there's great value in including as many of the capabilities in this region as possible and certainly Israel has significant air and missile defence capabilities, as they need to. But we're having these discussions bilaterally with these nations," a senior administration official told reporters.

In his meeting with Biden, Egyptian President Abdul Fattah Al Sissi discussed food security and disruptions to energy supplies, the Egyptian presidency said.

Israel, which shares their concerns over Iran, encouraged Biden's trip to the kingdom, hoping it would foster a warming between Saudi Arabia and Israel as part of a wider Arab rapprochement after the UAE and Bahrain forged ties with Israel in US-brokered pacts that received Riyadh's blessings.

China sympathies with Pakistan over floods' losses



BEIJING: China's State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi sent a message of sympathy to Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on the ongoing floods in Pakistan.

In his message, Wang Yi expressed deep grief and sorrow over the loss of life and property in several areas of Pakistan due to floods, CRI reported.

He expressed deep sympathy with the families of those who died in the flood, the injured and the affected people in the disaster areas.

Wang Yi said that the Chinese government and people are always with the Pakistani government and the fraternal Pakistani people.

We are sure that under the leadership of the Pakistani government, the people of Pakistan will definitely overcome the calamities and restore normal life soon, he added.

Israeli air strikes accompany Biden's ME visit

GAZA: Israeli fighter jets struck Gaza following rocket launches from the Palestinian territory on Saturday, hours after U.S. President Joe Biden flew from Israel to Saudi Arabia on a Middle East trip aimed at deepening Israel's integration into the region.

The Israeli military said it hit two facilities belonging to Hamas, the Islamist militant group that governs the blockaded strip. One of the targets was an underground rocket-manufacturing plant, the military said. Gaza witnesses described the two sites struck as Hamas training camps. No injuries were reported. Hamas has condemned Biden's visit, and group spokesperson Fawzi Barhoum said the Israeli bombing "reflected U.S. support and encouragement of the Zionist entity had received to pursue its aggression and crimes".

Gunmen had fired at the Israeli planes, Barhoum said. Sirens sounded in southern Israel on two occasions early on Saturday, warning of incoming rocket fire. One rocket was intercepted and three projectiles landed in open spaces, the military said. No group claimed responsibility for the launches.

SCO SG due in Pakistan on Thursday

BEIJING: Secretary General of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Zhang Ming will pay a two-day visit of Pakistan on July 21-22.

I plan to visit Pakistan and India before going to Tashkent, capital of Uzbekistan, for foreign ministers meeting by end of this month, the secretary general told media after a visit of five member-states of the SCO.

He said the relevant arrangements for his meetings with the Pakistani leadership are underway.

Zhang Ming shared the outcome of his visits to SCO member states and said that he hoped to listen to views of all members states on current international situation on how to promote regional and international peace and development and how to advance SCO development.

To a question about the SCO summit likely to be held in Samarkand in Uzbekistan on September 15-16 this year, he said, the eight member-states have confirmed that their leaders will take part in the summit.

He said that it is yet to decide the format of the meetings as the Covid-19 pandemic has not finished and is still spreading in different countries.



The secretary general however said that all the member-states are in favour of traditional format.

He said, at a summit in Dushanbe last September the SCO members signed a document on cooperation envisaging the launch of the procedure for granting SCO membership to Iran.

He confirmed that Belarus has officially applied to enter the organization as a full-fledged member and added,

all the necessary procedures for this will begin soon.

Belarus still has observer status in this international organization, enabling the country to take part in meetings of the SCO Council of Heads of Government, as well as ministerial meetings on foreign economic and foreign trade activities.

He informed that the SCO member states are considering several initiatives to promote tourism to enhance

people to people contacts once the Covid travel restriction eases.

The SCO members have rich resources with respect to tourism which should be explored, he added.

Established in Shanghai in June 2001, the SCO is a permanent intergovernmental international organization. It now comprises Russia, India, Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

Sri Lanka starts process to choose new president

MOSCOW: The Sri Lankan parliament met on Saturday to begin choosing a new leader to serve the rest of the current term after the president fled abroad and resigned following mass protests over the country's economic collapse.

Parliament Speaker Mahinda Yapa Abeywardena promised a swift and transparent political process that should be completed within a week.

Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe was sworn in on Friday as interim president until parliament elects a successor to Gotabaya Rajapaksa, whose term ends in 2024.

Protesters in the crisis-hit island nation, however, insist the six-time prime minister too should step aside. The new president could appoint a legislator to replace Wickremesinghe.

Nominations for the presidential post will be heard on Tuesday, the parliament's secretary general Dhammika Dasanayake said during a brief session. If there is more than one candidate for the president, the legislators will vote on Wednesday.

Rajapaksa, 73, fled to the Maldives and then to Singapore this week to escape a popular uprising against his government. During the proceedings, Dasanayake also formally read out Rajapaksa's resignation letter, the contents of which have not previously been made public.

G20 agrees on majority of issues: Indonesia

TOKYO: Participants in the G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors meeting in Indonesia reached an agreement on the majority of issues and the chair's summary will be issued, Finance Minister of Indonesia Sri Mulyani Indrawati said on Saturday.

"We are going to issue the chair's summary that is describing what we have already achieved," the Minister said. "The communication that we are going to issue is going to have fourteen paragraphs. That is the result of this two-day meeting. Most of the paragraphs are actually supported by all members," she said. Differences will be described in two paragraphs, Sri Mulyani Indrawati said. Participants agreed to preserve "the spirit of cooperation and multilateralism," she added.

Pak HC meets Moroccan Ambassador in Canada



OTTAWA: Pakistan High Commissioner to Canada Zaheer A. Janjua Friday met Ambassador of Morocco to Canada Soraya Othmani and discussed with her matters of mutual interest.

During the meeting held at the Moroccan Embassy in the capital Ottawa, Ambassador Soraya Othmani welcomed Zaheer A. Janjua on his assumption of diplomatic responsibilities as Pakistan's High Commissioner to Canada.

In a statement shared on the social media following the meeting, the Moroccan Ambassador called the meeting "a good opportunity to underline the close ties that unite our brotherly countries".

Warning sirens

Russia resumes long-range bombardment of Ukrainian cities

Kyiv says strike killed at least 23 people and wounded dozens

KYIV: Russian forces shelled the southern Ukrainian city of Nikopol on Saturday, the latest in a series of bombardments of urban areas that has killed at least 37 people in the last three days and wounded scores.

Ukrainian emergency services said two people were wounded and another two were trapped under rubble in Nikopol, which is on the Dnipro River.

Late on Friday, Russian missiles hit the city of Dnipro, about 120 km (75 miles) north of Nikopol, killing three people and wounding 15, regional Governor Valentyn Reznichenko said on Telegram.

A Russian strike hit the north-east Ukrainian town of Chuhuv in Kharkiv region overnight, killing three people including a woman of 70, and wounding three more, the regional govern-

nor said. The strike damaged a residential block, a school and a shop, and rescuers were going through the rubble, Governor Oleh Synchubov said on Telegram.

The attacks were the latest in a series of Russian hits in recent weeks using long-range missiles on crowded buildings in cities.

Eight people were killed and 13 injured in a string of shellings in 10 locations in the eastern region of Donetsk, Governor Pavlo Kyrylenko said in a television interview on Friday.

On Thursday, Kalibr cruise missiles launched from a Russian submarine in the Black Sea hit an office building in Vinnytsia, a city of 370,000 people about 200 km (125 miles) southwest of Kyiv.

Kyiv said the strike killed at least 23 people and wounded dozens.

On Friday, Russian missiles hit the central city of Dnipro, killing three people and wounding 15, regional Governor Valentyn Reznichenko said on

Telegram. Rockets hit an industrial plant and a street next to it, he said. Footage on social media showed thick black smoke rising from the buildings and burning cars.

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Kyiv said the strike killed at least 23 people and wounded dozens.

On Saturday, missile strikes were reported in the north-eastern city of Chuhuv in the Kharkiv region, and the south-central city of Nikopol, killing at least five more.

The attacks were the latest in a series of Russian hits in recent weeks using long-range missiles



on crowded buildings in cities far from the front, each killing dozens of people.

In Vinnytsia, residents placed teddy bears and flowers at a makeshift memorial to those killed.

Among the dead was Liza, a 4-year-old girl with Down's Syndrome, found in the debris next to a pram. Images of her pushing the same pram, post-

ed by her mother on a blog less than two hours before the attack, quickly went viral.

Her severely injured mother, Iryna Dmitrieva, was being kept in an information blackout at a hospital for fear that finding out about her daughter would kill her, doctors said.

"She is suffering from burns, chest injuries, abdominal injuries, liver and spleen injuries. We

have stitched the organs together, the bones were crushed as if she went through a meat grinder," said Oleksandr Fomin, chief doctor at the Vinnytsia Emergency Hospital. Were she told of her daughter's death, "we would lose her".

Despite the mounting casualties, Russia's Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu ordered military units operating in all areas of Ukraine to step up their operations.

The Defence Ministry said Mr Shoigu "gave the necessary instructions to further increase the actions of groups in all operational areas in order to exclude the possibility of the Kyiv regime launching massive rocket and artillery strikes on civilian infrastructure and residents of settlements in Donbas and other regions".

Russia has repeatedly denied targeting civilian areas, despite mounting evidence that its missiles have hit residential areas across the country. The United

Nations says thousands of civilians have been killed since Russia invaded Ukraine on Feb 24. Tens of thousands of combatants have also been killed.

Despite the bloodshed, both sides have described progress towards an agreement to lift a blockade restricting the export of Ukrainian grain. Mediator Turkey has said a deal could be signed next week.

Asked if that timeline was realistic, a senior Ukrainian official told Reuters: "We really hope so. We're hurrying as fast as we can." The official asked not to be identified.

Russia's defence ministry said an agreement was close, but Moscow's negotiator cautioned that a grain deal would not lead to a resumption of peace talks.

A deal would probably involve inspections of vessels to ensure Ukraine was not bringing in arms and guarantees from Western countries that Russia's own food exports are exempt from sanctions.

APTMA expects over 20% growth in Pakistan's textile exports

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Patron in Chief of the All Pakistan Textile Mills Association (APTMA) Dr Gohar Ejaz on Saturday indicated that the textile industry is expecting over 20% growth in exports this fiscal year, cautiously adding that this is possible if the government continues with the policy of 'Regionally Competitive Energy Tariffs'.

APTMA, a trade organisation representing the largest industrial sector of Pakistan, said that the textile industry posted record export growth in FY22 with its expansion and investment plans under the State Bank of Pakistan's (SBP) Long Term Financing Facility (LTF) and Temporary Economic Refinance Facility (TERF).

"In addition, the country's textile industry plans to import 6 million bales of cotton this year from the US and Brazil," said Gohar.

The textile sector makes up a lion's share of Pakistani exports. In the first eleven months of FY22, the exports of textile commodities surged to \$17.62 billion against exports of \$13.74 billion in the same period of the previous year, according to latest data published by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) on Friday.

Earlier this month, the textile industry sought the prime minister's help for the restoration of gas to the sector, stressing that a loss of almost \$1 billion in exports would take place due to energy suspension and long holidays.

President rejects review representation by FBR

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi has rejected a review representation made to him by the Federal Board of Revenue against a landmark judgment of the Hon'ble President dated 10.03.2022, wherein the Recommendations of Federal Tax Ombudsmen in 24 complaints were upheld and FBR's Representation regarding order of refund of excess amount of 4.5% of sales tax in favour of the taxpayers was made, who were charged 17% sales tax as against 12.5% on purchase of new Suzuki motor cars of upto 1000cc.

Instead of implementing the FTO's Recommendations, upheld by the President of Pakistan for providing relief to the aggrieved taxpayers who were over charged by illegally collecting excess sales tax, FBR without any legal authority, again filed a review representation which has been rejected by the President on the grounds that "there is no provision under the Federal Ombudsmen Institutional Reforms Act, 2013, for filing a review against orders of the President of Pakistan passed on any representation."

Talks between Petroleum Ministry, dealers fail

ISLAMABAD: The first phase of negotiations between the Ministry of Petroleum and petrol dealers has ended without any progress on Saturday. The deadlock persisted between the Petroleum Minister and Pakistan Petroleum Dealers Association (PPDA) over demand of hike in the dealers' commission.

The petroleum association has threatened to observe a nationwide strike on July 18 if the government fails to fulfill its demand of fixing the dealer margin at 6 per cent. "Petrol pumps across the country will be shut down on July 18," it maintained. In a statement, PPDA Chairman Abdul Sami Khan said that the Ministry of Petroleum has summoned the petrol dealers on Sunday again. Giving details of the meeting, Sami Khan said that the Petroleum Minister, Chairman OGRA, and former prime minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi were present in the talks.

On the other hand, Aamir Khan, Petroleum Ministry official, said that the petrol dealers have submitted their expenditure and income statement. "The dealers have demanded a six per cent hike in the commission," he added. He hoped that the legitimate demands of petroleum dealers will be accepted.

WB approves \$200M to support agriculture sector in Punjab

Agricultural sector in Punjab is central to Pakistan's economy

Spokesman Report

WASHINGTON: The World Bank's Board of Executive Directors approved \$200 million in financing to support Pakistan in transforming the agricultural sector by adopting climate-smart technologies to improve water-use efficiency, build resilience to extreme weather events and increase incomes of small farmers.

The agricultural sector in Punjab is central to the Pakistan's economy and food security as it accounts for 73 percent of the country's total food production. The Punjab Resilient and Inclusive Agriculture Transformation Project (PRIAT) will increase agricultural productivity through efficient and equitable access to

water for small farms. It will support farmers at the community and household levels to adopt climate-smart farming practices and technologies that improve crop yields and conserve water resources in Punjab.

"In recent years Pakistan's agriculture sector has suffered from losses in crop yields and livestock, damage to irrigation infrastructure, and food shortages due to climate change, particularly severe droughts in the Punjab province," said Najy Benhassine, World Bank Country Director for Pakistan.

"This project aligns with the Punjab Agriculture Policy 2018, which promotes massive expansion of water conservation efforts, enhancing sustainability and resilience in the

wake of climate change, and private sector participation to help boost the productivity of the sector."

PRIAT will support farmers implement innovative, climate-smart technologies to help the Punjab government achieve economies of scale to transform the agricultural sector. The project will engage the private sector in sourcing appropriate technologies and providing training tailored for water user associations and individual households to improve water conservation practices and agriculture productivity.

"The agriculture sector has a huge opportunity to both build climate resilience and improve economic conditions by generating access to

domestic and international markets," said Guo Li, Task Team Leader for the project. "PRIAT will help accelerate the government's efforts to transform the agri-food system through market-oriented production activities that add value, increase competitiveness and generate higher incomes for farmers."

The project will benefit about 190,000 small, family-owned farms and 1.4 million acres of irrigated land in rural communities in the province. It will also provide training to small- and medium-sized farm owners on water conservation and more sustainable, climate-resilient agricultural practices, including for women. About 74 percent of women in the province rely on agriculture as a source of livelihood.

Russia-Ukraine war to hit Pakistani exports: PEW

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW) on Saturday said Pakistani exports are set to get a hit as western economies which are the main export destinations for Pakistan and badly hit by the war between Russia and Ukraine.

The government should find ways and means to tackle the problem, otherwise, it will have to borrow more to keep the economy afloat, it said. All tactics against Russia, including economic sanctions, have failed, and the economy of America and Europe has fallen into a crisis, said Dr. Murtaza Mughal, President PEW. He said that rising inflation in America and Europe is turning into a recession

due to which the demand is decreasing. This will affect Pakistani exports because of a reduction in the purchasing power of the people in the west. In case of a serious recession in the west, Pakistan will have to manage over forty-one billion dollars this year, for which more than expected loans will have to be taken.

Dr. Mughal said that because of the wrong policies and irresponsible actions of the United States and Europe, the economic situation is deteriorating all over the world, while the budgets of the United States and Europe have also been badly affected. Military spending, inflation, uncertainty, and public unrest are on the rise in these countries, while their



currencies continue to depreciate.

The currencies of dozens of other countries which are not involved in the issue are also weakening. However, he said, contrary to the expectations, the Russian currency has become the best-performing currency in the world. The day Russia

attacked Ukraine, the value of one US dollar was equal to 85 rubles and since then the value of the ruble has increased by thirty-five percent and now the value of one dollar is equal to fifty-three rubles, he informed.

Russia's annual income from the energy sector was 250 billion dollars before the war, which has now increased to over 300 billion dollars. Similarly, Russia is getting a lot from other exports and because of its economic strength, the interest rate has also been reduced. He said that the Western bloc should not continue the lost war and find a solution to the conflict as the economy of most countries in the world is going down, which will have a greater impact on the poor countries.

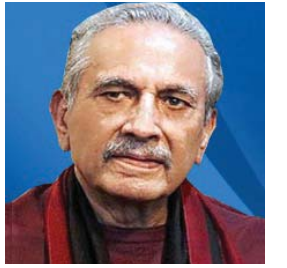
Economy faces challenges despite IMF support: Shahid Rasheed

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Former President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt on Saturday said despite the agreement with the IMF, there are still serious threats to the economy.

Loans of a few billion dollars cannot make a significant impact on the situation, as the government needs to start reforms, he said. Shahid Rasheed Butt said that improving the economic conditions of the country is not the responsibility of the IMF, but the obligation of the government. Tackling the threats to the economy, stopping the fall of the rupee and finding a lasting solution to the rising inflation is also for the government to deal with, he added. The business leader regretted that the monthly deficit is around four billion dollars and no progress is being made towards reforms to deal with the current challenges. Instead, dictation is being taken from international institutions. He said that Pakistan needs at least forty-one billion dollars this year, while the current account deficit may reach 17 billion dollars.

Despite the critical situation, Pakistani elites have maintained the record of paying the lowest taxes in the world, while the public is being burdened more than they can bear. The govern-



ment and FBR are celebrating the achievement of the tax target, but the public is not being told that the high revenue results from endless imports and inflation, which is a source of regret rather than happiness. No country can run on loans and aid forever, so if fundamental changes are not made in the economic structure, Pakistan will go bankrupt sooner than expected, he warned.

Because of the decrease in the prices of palm oil in the global market, the prices of ghee and cooking oil are decreasing all over the world, so instead of making statements, relief should be given to the people, he demanded.

He said that the shops should be closed by evening and the incidents of Neelum Jhelum Power Project and Guddu Thermal Power Plant should be investigated. People should be given complete relief because of the reduction in oil prices in the international market as they have been braving an additional burden of approximately one trillion rupees through power tariff hikes and fuel price adjustments.

Acknowledgment

President Dr. Arif Alvi in a group photo with a delegation of Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Peshawar, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad on Saturday.



Photo: PID

SAFCO Microfinance gets SECP nod to operate for profit

Spokesman Report

ISLAMADAD: Securities & Exchange Commission of Pakistan ("SECP") has issued Microfinance License to newly established "Non-Banking Microfinance Company" namely SAFCO Microfinance Company (Private) Limited ("SMC"). SMC is a wholly owned subsidiary of SAFCO Support Foundation ("SSF"), one of the leading Microfinance Institution engaged in providing microfinance services to the low-income marginalized segment of the society.

This transformation is first move of its kind by the management and board of SSF and is result of ("Securities & Exchange Commis-

sion of Pakistan-SECP's") concerted efforts to encourage the companies engaged in microfinance business under section 42 of the Companies Act, 2017, operating as "not for profit" structure to transform into "for profit" structure under linear regulatory structure facilitating the entities to take potential benefits of large capital base, expand financial services, improve efficiency through improved governance and economy of scales.

After license, SMCL will work as entity for benefits of its shareholders along with its clients, it will be able to pay dividends to its shareholders, opening multiple avenues for new local and foreign investments and leverage the competitive interest rates from lenders

to expand its operating and financial outreach. SAFCO has been operating since 2009 having footprint across the whole of Sindh Province with a network of 57 branches providing microfinance services to more than 700,000 unbanked and low-income entrepreneurs, out of them 59% are women entrepreneurs and 80% of them are rural small holder farmers.

The subsidiary has been formed with the vision to seek multiple avenues of like-minded and well reputed mission driven equity investors from both local and international markets. This will allow SMCL to further strengthen its balance sheet and leverage it for massive growth, doubling the outreach in the next five

years which reinforces SAFCO group's towards the National Financial Inclusion Strategy and Sustainable Development goals of improving the lives of unbanked and low-income businesses in Pakistan.

Company management renew the commitment towards the national objectives set out in NFIS and global SDGs along with a commitment that we have made with PMN in documenting this transformation so that we can support such transformations going forward. This initiative is expected to encourage other market players to consider transforming entities (by establish for-profit wholly owned subsidiaries) and take potential benefits of extending outreach through financial inclusion.

Modern technology being used to curb smuggling: Wajid Ali

Spokesman Report

KARACHI: Chief Collector Customs South Wajid Ali said that we are bringing innovation in customs in Pakistan, for the first time collected a historic tax and using state-of-the-art technology to prevent smuggling.

He expressed these views during his visit to Korangi Association of Trade and Industry (KATI). KATI President Salman Aslam, Senior Vice President Maheen Salman, Standing Committee Chairman Faraz-ur-Rehman, former President Danish Khan, and other officers and members were also present on the occasion.

Chief Collector Customs South Wajid Ali added that the officers of customs have always stopped illegal activities without caring for their lives. Many officers were martyred to end smuggling. He said that the customs department is of utmost importance in the country. Steps are being taken

to facilitate the business community in exports and imports.

Wajid Ali said that the customs department prevents billions of rupees worth of drugs from entering the country every year and it is destroyed in the presence of media on which the staff of the department is commendable. Chief Collector Customs South added that help desks would be set up in key industrial areas like KATI to provide better facilities to the business community.

Earlier, KATI President Salman Aslam said that Chief Collector Customs South Wajid Ali had also served as the Director of the Directorate of Reforms and Automation Customs. He said that effective measures should be taken to curb smuggling to discourage smuggling in the country and eliminate the damage done to the national exchequer. Steps should be taken to allocate National Bank branches in all industrial areas for submission of duties. A special coordination desk

should also be set up for the convenience of exporters and importers and industrialists. Establish branches in trading centers and industrial areas where duty-related facilities are available.

President KATI said that issues related to the delivery of goods at the port should be resolved immediately. Delivery points should be set up in industrial areas and more licenses should be issued to facilitate and expedite the delivery of imported goods. Salman Aslam said that maximum facilities should be provided to the exporters and industrialists for the submission of duty. This is not only necessary for the promotion of economic activities in the country but it will also increase the duty collection itself.

On the occasion, Faraz-ur-Rehman, Chairman, Standing Committee, said that an online complaint mechanism should be set up to address all the issues, concerns, and grievances



of the business community related to customs. Absence of container terminals regulation body, misuse of tax and duty exemptions given to former FATA and PATA areas, delay in refunds, unfair demurrage charges, digitization

and inadequate investment in container scanners, HS and PCT code Inadequate diversification, neglect of the principle of cascading on industrial raw materials and inadequate consultation process with the stakeholders of the

business community are major obstacles to the smooth running of customs operations.

He said that Karachi gives 70% of the revenue of the country and its 70% of revenue comes from Korangi Industrial Area, therefore the problems of Korangi Industrial Area should be solved on a priority basis.

Faraz-ur-Rehman further said that regulatory authority should be set up for container terminals to improve the working procedures between traders and container terminals. The process of revision must continue to adapt to the ever-changing commercial and industrial environment of tariff rationalization. He said that the monopoly of shipping companies that demand an exorbitant price from exporters should be abolished which would increase the cost of exporters. There should be a continuous consultation process between industrialists and FBR members and policymakers.

Pak vs SL

Shaheen shines as Sri Lanka collapse to 222 in 1st innings

Bowlers dominate in Galle to leave contest hanging in the balance

GALLE: Pakistan fast bowler Shaheen Shah Afridi claimed four wickets as Pakistan bowled out Sri Lanka for 222 in the opening Test on Saturday.

Dinesh Chandimal stood out with an attacking 76 in a disappointing Sri Lankan show after they elected to bat first at the start of the two-match series in Galle.

Number 10 Maheesh Theekshana played a useful cameo of 38 as the hosts added 89 runs for the final two wickets before he fell to Shaheen — who returned figures of 4-58 — to wrap up the innings in the final session.

Shaheen struck in the third over of the day to send back skipper Dimuth Karunaratne for one, and leg-spinner Yasir Shah soon combined with the quicks to rattle the opposition batting.

Oshada Fernando and Kusal Mendis attempted to rebuild the innings in a 49-run partnership but Yasir, who is making a comeback to the team after a thumb injury that kept him out since August last year, broke through.

Yasir got Kusal caught behind for 21 and Oshada soon followed his partner back to the pavilion in the next over when pace bowler Hasan Ali cut short the opener's stay on 35. Angelo Mathews then fell for a 15-ball duck as Yasir got the former captain caught at mid-on.

Shaheen struck twice after lunch and fellow quick Naseem Shah and left-arm spinner Mohammad Nawaz took a wicket each.



Chandimal smashed 19-year-old Naseem for three straight boundaries to bring up his fifty and offer some cheer to the weekend crowd. Chandimal, who made an unbeaten 206 in Sri Lanka's series-levelling Test win over

Australia earlier this week, finally fell to a good catch by Yasir at cover with Ali taking his second wicket.

But Theekshana played a defiant knock in just his second Test and put on 45 runs for the last wicket with Kasun

Rajitha, unbeaten on 12.

After an under-par total on the board, early wickets were the need of the hour for the hosts. Rajitha delivered just that. He struck Imam-ul-Haq on the pads, trapping him lbw for 2. Imam immediately reviewed the call and ball tracking showed that the delivery was clipping the stumps.

It was an early jitter for Pakistan, who now had to see through an awkward final 45 minutes of the day. Abdullah Shafique and the experienced Azhar Ali adopted a defence-first approach, trying to see through the remainder of the day. They failed to do that as Prabath Jayasuriya got Shafique lbw for 13 with an arm ball.

Pakistan ended the day on 24/2, trailing the hosts by 198 runs, with Ali (3*) and skipper Babar Azam (1*) at the crease.

Sri Lanka, who beat Australia in a series-levelling Test win in Galle earlier this week, are hosting Pakistan for the first time in seven years.

Playing XI: Pakistan: Babar Azam (c), Mohammad Rizwan (vc, wk), Abdullah Shafique, Azhar Ali, Hasan Ali, Imam-ul-Haq, Mohammad Nawaz, Naseem Shah, Salman Ali Agha, Shaheen Afridi and Yasir Shah

Sri Lanka: Dimuth Karunaratne (c) Oshada Fernando, Angelo Mathews, Kusal Mendis, Dhananjaya de Silva, Dinesh Chandimal, Niroshan Dickwella (wk), Ramesh Mendis, Maheesh Theekshana, Kasun Rajitha, Prabath Jayasuriya

Norway crash to shock exit from Euro 2022

LONDON: Norway suffered a shock exit from Euro 2022 as the pre-tournament title contenders crashed to a 1-0 defeat against Austria.

Despite the presence of Lyon star Ada Hegerberg in their line-up, former European champions Norway paid the price for another lacklustre display in Brighton. Norway failed to advance from Group A after a second successive loss, while Austria progressed to the quarter-finals as runners-up behind England. England, already assured of topping the group, crushed Northern Ireland 5-0 in their last game to move into the last eight with three successive wins and without conceding a single goal.

Needing a victory to move

above Austria in their final group match, Norway were pushed towards elimination after 37 minutes when Nicole Billa headed in Verena Hanshaw's cross. The Norwegians were unable to muster a comeback and it was Austria who could have won by a bigger margin with more clinical finishing. Norway goalkeeper Guro Pettersen made several fine saves to give her side a chance, but Austria's Manuela Zinsberger thwarted Celin Bizet and Hegerberg in the closing stages. Thrashed 8-0 by England in their previous game, Norway's tournament had quickly turned sour after the initial optimism fuelled by a 4-1 victory over Northern Ireland in their first group match. "We

had higher belief in ourselves than to be out of the tournament this soon. So of course, I feel totally empty," Norway manager Martin Sjogren said. Former Women's Ballon d'Or winner Hegerberg added: "Everyone has a responsibility in this, myself included. "There has to be a brutal honesty in evaluating everything that's happened in the last few weeks in order to actually bounce back from this.

"It's almost that I want to apologise because of all the support we've got." As Norway head home, Austria can look forward to playing eight-time European champions Germany in the quarter-finals at Brentford on Thursday. Alessia Russo struck twice as England

maintained their flawless run against hapless Northern Ireland in Southampton. England were without boss Sarina Wiegman after she tested positive for the coronavirus on Friday.

But Wiegman's absence couldn't halt in-form England's momentum as Fran Kirby's curler put the hosts ahead in the 40th minute. Beth Mead doubled England's advantage with her fourth goal of the tournament just before half-time. Russo, having replaced Ellen White at half-time, found the net twice in quick succession soon after the restart. England's fifth goal came when Northern Ireland's Kelsie Burrows sliced the ball over goalkeeper Jacqueline Burns into her own net.

Murray ousted by Bublik at ATP Hall of Fame Open

NEWPORT: Britain's former world number one Andy Murray was knocked out of the ATP Hall of Fame Open, falling to Kazakhstan's Alexander Bublik 7-5, 6-4 in quarter-final. World number 42 Bublik fired 12 aces against five double faults and won 80% of his first serve points to eliminate the 35-year-old Scotsman in the grass-court event and line up a semi-final clash with Australian Jason Kubler. "It's great to be in the semi-finals again," Bublik said. "I don't have any tournaments the next two or three weeks so I'm engaged. I want to get as many matches as I can." Kubler, ranked 102nd in the world, beat fellow Australian James Duckworth 7-5, 7-6 (7/3) to reach his first ATP semi-final. The victory ended Kubler's four-match losing streak to Duckworth, a day after Kubler notched his first win over a top-10 player with an upset of top-seeded Canadian Felix Auger-Aliassime. Americans John Isner and Maxime Cressy meet in Saturday's other semi-final.

Rashford, Martial star as United win in Melbourne

MELBOURNE: Anthony Martial and Marcus Rashford got on the scoresheet as Manchester United rallied from a goal down to beat Melbourne Victory 4-1 and hand manager Erik ten Hag his second win since taking over.

It followed their 4-0 thumping of Liverpool in Bangkok on Tuesday when Jadon Sancho, Fred, Martial and Facundo Pellistri were on target. A well-organised Victory were no walkover and shocked the English giants in front of 74,000 fans at the Melbourne Cricket Ground with a goal on the break in the fifth minute. United clawed back with goals on the cusp of half-time from Scott McTominay and Martial before Rashford made it 3-1 with 12 minutes left and a Victory own goal capped the deserved win.

"It was good that we were able to recover," said Ten Hag. "It's pre-season and we wanted to see how the

team reacts. "We went 1-0 behind but we stayed composed and finally just before half-time we scored twice.

"Their defence was really compact and it was difficult to create chances," he added. "But a couple of times we got behind the defensive line and it was justified that we scored." United used 22 players against Liverpool and while Ten Hag largely stuck with the same starting line-up he switched it up at the break with 10 changes. Captain and centre-back Harry Maguire started for the first time under the Dutchman after missing the Liverpool clash, slotting in alongside Victor Lindelof with Raphael Varane absent from the matchday squad.

David de Gea was also missing after picking up what appeared to be a muscle strain in Bangkok. With Dean Henderson on loan, it was left to back-up keeper Tom Heaton to play

the full 90 minutes. In the absence of Cristiano Ronaldo, Martial again led the line flanked by Jadon Sancho and Antony Elanga. But they were stunned by a quick counter-attack when Victory broke from their own penalty area with a pass down the right flank behind Luke Shaw finding Ben Folami.

With United wide open in defence, Folami squared the ball to Chris Ikonomidis who calmly tucked the ball past Heaton. United slowed the pace and began to find rhythm with McTominay going close and Bruno Fernandes only denied by a great save from Melbourne keeper Paul Izzo. They kept pressing but it took a stroke of luck to level the scores in the 43rd minute with McTominay's shot taking a massive deflection.

A rattled Victory conceded another two minutes later with the lively Martial having a simple tap in

after Elanga flicked on Diego Dalot's cross. Ten Hag shuffled his pack for the second half with Heaton the only survivor and Rashford taking the captain's armband. Fleet-footed Zidane Iqbal looked sharp and dangerous as United starved Victory of the ball and their fresher legs caused problems.

But the chances were few until Rashford stepped up in the 78th minute with a lovely finish after a penetrating ball through from Eric Bailly before the own goal sealed Victory's misery. Local fans did have something to cheer about when former Manchester United star Nani made his debut with three minutes left after being signed by the Australian side this week. United also face Crystal Palace and Aston Villa in Australia before their Premier League campaign begins on August 7.

Kohli gives response to Babar Azam's backing

ISLAMABAD: The former Indian skipper has thanked the Pakistan captain for his support. The Pakistan skipper had backed Virat Kohli to come good, in the form of a tweet. When asked to elaborate upon his tweet, Babar stated in his press conference ahead of the first Test against Sri Lanka, "I just feel that in the present situation Kohli needs support and to be backed. I tweeted wishing him the best because I know how a player feels when he is going through this period and he needs the support of everyone." Now, the former Indian skipper has thanked the top-ranked ODI and T20I batter in ICC Player Rankings for his support. In a classy gesture, Kohli replied, "Thank you. Keep shining and rising. Wish you all the best." Kohli has recently struggled for form, leading to criticism in sections of the media surrounding his place in the Indian setup. Former Indian skipper Kapil Dev also suggested that India should pick players on form, and not their reputation. Missing the first ODI against England with a groin injury, Kohli made just 16 in the second match, which India lost by 100 runs at Lord's. It means the right-hander has now gone 77 consecutive international innings without reaching three figures, after scores of 1 and 11 in the T20I series and failures in the rescheduled fifth Test.

Ireland series defeat heaps pressure on All Blacks coach Foster

WELLINGTON: New Zealand's first home series defeat for 28 years piles the pressure on All Blacks head coach Ian Foster after his side were again outplayed by Ireland in Saturday's third test.

Despite a three-try fightback by the All Blacks after half-time, a 32-22 victory in Wellington for the Irish meant the visitors took the series 2-1 after bouncing back from a comprehensive first Test defeat in Auckland a fortnight ago with a 23-12 win in Dunedin last weekend.

That result had been Ireland's first win over the All Blacks on New Zealand soil. Saturday's second in Wellington inflicted a first home Test series defeat since 1994, when France won 2-0. Asked if he was still the right man to take New Zealand forward, Foster replied: "I'm only here to talk about the game."

"We have to analyse this series, we had a number of disruptions to our original plans," the All Blacks coach said, having been sidelined with several players and staff by Covid in the build-up to the first Test. "We weren't getting enough big moments and we certainly didn't get the starts we wanted," Foster added. Less than 14 months from the start of the Rugby World Cup in France, this was Foster's seventh defeat in 24 internationals since taking charge in 2020.

Previous losses to Ireland and France on their European tour last autumn, mean the All Blacks have won just one of their last five games, leaving pundits in New Zealand questioning whether Foster can hang on to his job ahead of two Tests in South Africa next month.

"New Zealanders have to realise this is a very good Irish team and give them some credit," Foster said, when asked about the expected backlash from All Blacks fans.

For us, we will keep working on solutions and executing them better. "We'll go away and look at things, we had a number of new people who were exposed to what I think was a very intense Test series for us, which we haven't had for a while. No doubts we will have to roll our sleeves up."

England announce squad for South Africa T20Is

LONDON: England have announced a 15-member squad for the upcoming T20Is against South Africa as well as the Commonwealth Games 2022 in Birmingham.

Heather Knight is set to lead the young England side in the Commonwealth Games at home in Birmingham. Before that, the same squad is set to face South Africa in a three-match T20I series starting 21 July.

Teenage sensations Alice Capsey and Freya Kemp have received their maiden international call-up while 20-year-old Issy Wong, who recently made her Test and ODI debut, is in line for her first T20I cap. The cricket in Commonwealth Games is set to commence on 28 July, with England playing their first game against Sri Lanka two days later. England will then take on South Africa and New Zealand. The semi-final is set to be played on 6 August while the gold and bronze medal matches will happen on 7 August.

Before that, England will take on the Proteas Women in three T20Is on 21, 23 and 25 July. Speaking on the squad selection, England captain Heather Knight said, "It is such a massive opportunity for us and for the game to compete in the Commonwealth Games, especially on home soil.

Felix wins 19th world medal

OREGON: American veteran Allyson Felix will hang up her spikes having sealed a remarkable 19th world medal on Friday, while Fred Kerley laid down an impressive marker in the heats for the 100m in Oregon. Was it the perfect swansong for Felix? Not quite, as she and Kennedy Simon were both reeled in on their respective legs, leaving the Dominican Republic to take victory in the 4x400m mixed relay, the Dutch quartet edging the US for silver. Her bronze is Felix's 19th at world champs in a career that started almost two decades ago and also included 11 Olympic medals. "It was very special to be able to run in front of a home crowd for my last race," said Felix. "It was so cool. My daughter was in the stands. It was a night I will cherish." Felix added: "I've had such good memories. I know it is time and these guys will carry it on into the future. "I am at peace stepping into this next stage and have tremendous gratitude for this sport." Two-time Olympic shot put champion Ryan Crouser had high praise for his US team co-captain. "She's done so much for the sport and especially for women athletes, attracting attention to some really important issues we have in the sport," Crouser said of Felix.

"She's a fantastic athlete, but also a fantastic person. She does stuff the right way, she is just a class act, and kind of the definition of integrity." In-form Kerley ran a sensational heat-winning 9.79 seconds in a warning to potential rivals for the 100m crown. He advanced to Saturday's semi-finals along with teammates Marvin Bracey, Trayvon Bromell and defending champion Christian Coleman, who missed the Tokyo Olympics after missing three doping tests.

At ICC Annual Conference

PCB to raise proliferation of franchise leagues

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: The finalisation of the Future Tours Programme (FTP) and a concrete strategy on the proliferation of T20 franchise competitions are some of the salient topics which the Pakistan Cricket Board Chairman Ramiz Raja and Chief Executive Faisal Hasnain will raise at next week's ICC Annual Conference in Birmingham.

The confirmation of the FTP for the 2024-2031 cycle is the foremost priority for the cricket boards in order to develop clarity regarding the schedule of inter-

national teams and accordingly prepare for the assignments.

PCB Chief Executive Faisal Hasnain: "Finalising the Future Tours Programme (FTP) is very important for us. This will give us certainty about which teams will be visiting us and which countries we will be touring, 80 per cent of the FTP has already been agreed upon and the remaining 20 per cent will be completed in the upcoming meeting.

"Secondly, the growth of franchise cricket is impacting the already crammed international cricket calendar. The PCB is concerned about this devel-

opment and wants the ICC to formulate a strategy on this issue.

"We have sent a proposal to the ICC, which they have added to their meeting agenda. Two other boards have also conveyed their apprehensions to the ICC on this matter and urged the ICC to create a working group to debate on the expansion of franchise-based T20 leagues.

"The annual conference presents a unique opportunity for networking with representatives of the world cricket. We are planning several initiatives that involve fellow members and

meetings have already been set up on the sidelines with other boards to collectively enhance our common interest."

The recent political unrest in Sri Lanka has cast doubts over the island nation's viability as the venue for the six-team Asia Cup next month. The final decision on any last-minute changes to the venue rests with the Asian Cricket Council (ACC).

Speaking on this matter, Faisal Hasnain said: "Our first preference is to support Sri Lanka and play the Asia Cup there. If this tournament does not take place in Sri Lanka, it will be a huge



cricketing and financial loss for them. Australia's recent tour of Sri Lanka went off without any problems. Similarly, there have

been no issues with the ongoing Pakistan tour of Sri Lanka as we are constantly in touch with Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) and our

embassy in the country.

"Our discussions with the ACC representatives have suggested that the tournament is on track at the moment as they are monitoring the situation very carefully and we will support their decision."

"The 50-over Asia Cup next year will be quite significant for us as it will be in preparation of our facilities and venues for the ICC Champions Trophy in 2025. Moreover, the Asia Cup will serve as a warm-up for the participating teams for the ICC Cricket World Cup later that year in India."