



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ نے فرمایا قیامت کے دن ہر عمارت کے لیے ایک چھنڈا ہو گا، ان میں سے ایک صاحب نے بیان کیا کہ وہ چھنڈا (اس کے پیچھے) گاڑ دیا جائے گا اور دوسرے صاحب نے بیان کیا کہ اسے قیامت کے دن سب دیکھیں گے، اس کے ذریعے اسے پہچانے گا۔ (بخاری، حدیث نمبر 3187)

Barkat Rice Mills (Pvt) Limited

Lawfully no party can receive foreign funding: Musadik

State Minister for Petroleum Musadik Malik says no party can receive foreign funding according to the constitution. Imran Khan is ready to talk to those who killed up our children with bombs and separatists but not with the politicians for the betterment of the country. The British Journal revealed the money laundering of Imran Khan, and black money was provided to PTI in the name of funding. Arif Naqvi of Abraaj Company was the fund manager of Imran Khan.



ECP should decide for funding of all parties: Fawad

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Fawad Chaudhry says the Election Commission of Pakistan should decide on the matter of funding of all parties simultaneously. The funding laws are intended to ensure that the voters are aware that who is funding a political party. PTI has given the details of more than 40,000 donors to the Election Commission. Overseas Pakistanis are funding PTI and they also support PTI, the same way they support the country.

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Employment

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Pak-US Business Forum calls on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday. Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Javaid Abbasi was also present in the meeting.



Photo: PID

Inflation hits 37.6 percent on yearly basis

PBS data shows weekly inflation spikes by 3.68%

ISLAMABAD: The rate of inflation in the country in the last week reached record high of 37.6 percent amid higher food and fuel costs even as the nation closes in on an International Monetary Fund bailout. The Weekly Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI) for the Combined Group increased by 3.68% during the week ended Jul 28, 2022 while the SPI increased by 37.51% compared to the corresponding period from last year.

According to data released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) the Combined Index was at 207.47 compared to 200.1 on Jul 21, 2022 while the index was recorded at 150.88 a year ago, on Aug 05, 2021 Out of the 51 monitored items, the average price of 30 items increased, 7 items decreased whereas 14 items registered no change during the week. The weekly SPI percentage change by income groups showed that SPI increased across all quantiles ranging between 2.55% and 4.44%.

All records available

PTI accepts receiving funds from Naqvi

LAHORE/ISLAMABAD: The PTI Friday accepted that it had received funds from Pakistani businessman Arif Naqvi's Wootton Cricket Ltd — a Cayman Islands-incorporated company — after a foreign publication reported that its donations were of foreign origin. "All the records [related to those transactions] are available," PTI Central Deputy Secretary Information Farrukh Habib told a press conference after a Financial Times report revealed that Naqvi "transferred three installments directly to the PTI in 2013 adding up to a total of \$2.12m" — which were of foreign origin.

The PTI leader said that there was no case against Naqvi or his Abraaj Group in 2012 and that the businessman had given £20 million to PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif and his brother, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, in "bribes." "Naqvi also hosted a dinner for Nawaz, they should respond to these claims as well," he demanded. In his press conference today, Habib said that a "media trial" is conducted against the party every now and then related to foreign funding.

"The case against PTI is not related to foreign funding, rather it is of prohibited funding [...] foreign funds are used for working against an incumbent government; that's not the case here," he said. Habib said that his party laid the foundation of funding in Pakistan. He added that overseas Pakistanis send \$32 billion annually to the country and they also donate them to PTI. He reiterated that the verdicts of PTI, PPP, and PML-N's foreign funding cases be issued on the same date as he demanded that the ECP demonstrate responsible behaviour. The PTI leader claimed that the PML-N hid 112 accounts from the election commission, PPP hid 11 and did not give records of Rs3.6 million to the ECP.

Govt promoting FDI to strengthen economy: PM

Says Financial Times report is 'serious indictment' against Imran Khan

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday said promotion of foreign investment in the country was one of the top priorities of the government. Talking to a delegation of the Pakistan America Business Forum, he said the government was committed to ensuring favourable conditions for foreign investors with the aim to strengthen the national economy. The delegation included Secretary General Pakistan America Business Forum Waqar Khan, President Riaz Hussain and Senior Vice

President Anwar Azam. Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Javed Abbasi and senior officials also participated in the meeting.

PM Sharif said the coalition government came to power during tough times with an objective to uphold the sanctity of State over politics. He mentioned that the government took difficult decisions to revive the economy and save the country from default. He held the previous government responsible for imparting damage to economy, however said, efforts

were afoot to ensure development of the country through hard work. On electricity generation, the prime minister said short-term and long-term plans would be implemented to cut dependence of on imported fuel.

He said a project to generate power up to 7,000 mega watt through renewable sources including solar and wind was in the offing. As part of austerity measures, he mentioned imposition of ban on import of luxury goods as well as reduction of unnecessary government expenditure. The dele-

gation appreciated the measures taken by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for restoration of economy, beside extending facilities to export industry and addressing the problems of overseas Pakistanis.

The delegation apprised the prime minister about their problems and also gave feedback on various related matters. The prime minister instructed the authorities concerned to resolve their problems on priority basis and assured them all possible facilitation from the government. Prime Minister Shehbaz

Sharif while reacting to a recent Financial Times report regarding Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) foreign funding said that report is a serious indictment against Imran Khan.

Talking to Twitter, PM penned that "The investigation report of the reliable international organization Financial Times is a serious indictment against Imran Niazi, and it has exposed PTI's foreign funding." "The concrete facts mentioned in the report are telling that Imran Niazi is a figure of lies, contradictions and hypocrisy," Shehbaz added.

Foerx reserves fall by \$826.9m: SBP

KARACHI: The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) on Friday shared that the liquid foreign reserves in Pakistan have declined by over \$826.9 million during the week ending on July 22. According to details shared by the SBP, the total liquid foreign reserves in the SBP stood at \$8.57 billion on July 22. Sharing a break-up of the foreign reserves position, the central bank said that the reserves held by the State Bank of Pakistan stand at US\$8.57 billion while commercial banks also have reserves of US\$5.83 billion after a decrease of \$730.1 million.

According to the data provided by SBP, the total foreign reserves of the country declined by \$826.9 million in the week ending on July 22. The reserves currently settle at \$14.414 billion. Earlier on July 14, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Pakistan reached a staff-level agreement for the release of US\$1.17 billion under the combined 7th and 8th reviews of Pakistan's Extended Fund Facility (EFF)

Pakistan values China's global, regional role: COAS

Appeals US to help expedite Pakistan-IMF deal

RAWALPINDI: Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Nong Rong on Friday met Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa at GHQ in Rawalpindi. According to a statement issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), matters of mutual interest, defence collaboration, progress on China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and regional security were discussed in detail during the meeting. The COAS said that Pakistan values China's role in global and regional affairs and we look forward to enhancing our strategic partnership.

General Qamar Javed Bajwa reiterated that Pakistan remains committed to cooperate with its international partners for peace and stability in the region. The visiting dignitary thanked the COAS for special measures taken for provision of safe and secure environment for Chinese personnel employed on various projects in Pakistan and efforts towards regional stability. Ambassador Nong Rong also assured to play his role for further improvement in diplomatic cooperation with Pakistan at all levels.

Chief of Army Staff General



Qamar Javed Bajwa has appealed to the United States to help Islamabad secure an early dispersal of \$1.2 billion in funds under an International Monetary Fund loan programme. According to a foreign media outlet report, General Qamar Javed Bajwa telephoned US Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman and appealed to her to expedite the \$1.2bn dispersal by the IMF. It is pertinent to mention that Pakistan and the IMF reached a staff-level agreement over the release of the funds to support the country's fragile economy. The staff-level agreement will pave way for a \$1.2 billion

disbursement, which is expected in August.

The IMF already granted Pakistan "staff-level approval" for the loan in question on July 13. But the transaction — part of the IMF's \$6 billion Extended Fund Facility for Pakistan — will only be processed after the multilateral lender's executive board grants final approval. The IMF is going into recess for the next three weeks and its board will not convene until late August. No firm date has been set for announcing the loan approval for Pakistan, according to an IMF official who also spoke on condition of anonymity.

Call on CEC

PDM demands 'PTI's foreign funding' verdict

ISLAMABAD: A government delegation, consisting of the Pakistan Democratic Alliance (PDM) and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leaders, met with the ECP chief and all four provincial Election Commissioners and demanded the announcement of the reserved verdict of the PTI foreign funding case, PML-N leader Shahid Khaqan Abbasi said.

Talking to the media in Islamabad, former Premier Shahid Khaqan Abbasi said that a government delegation met with the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) Chief and provincial members of the ECP to demand the verdict on the PTI foreign funding case. He added that the case has been prolonged for eight years, and its verdict should be announced as soon as possible. Every political party has to declare funding received by any foreign sources, he added.

SCO-CFM

Pakistan supports regional connectivity: Bilawal

FM interacts with his Uzbek, Tajik and Kyrgyz counterparts

TASHKENT: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Friday underscored close cooperation between Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan at bilateral and multilateral fora including the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). During the bilateral meeting with Foreign Minister of Kyrgyz Republic Jeembek Kulubaev Moldokanovich held on the sidelines of the Council of Foreign Ministers meeting of the SCO (SCO-CFM) here, the foreign minister said the Pak-Kyrgyz ties demonstrated the commonality of views on regional and global issues of mutual interest.

Bilawal Bhutto felicitated his counterpart on the 30th anniversary of the establishment of bilateral diplomatic relations. He underlined the importance of regular convening of formal mechanisms, between the two countries, in particular Bilateral Political Consultations (BPC) and Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC). He also emphasized the importance of renewed focus on the important road and energy connectivity projects such as CASA-1000 and Quadrilateral Agreement on Traffic-in-Transit (QATT). The two ministers agreed to remain in regular contact.

Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari held bilateral meeting with Foreign Minister Norov Vladimir Imamovich of Uzbekistan today, on the sidelines of SCO-CFM being here. The two sides exchanged views on deepening bilateral cooperation in a range of areas including political, trade, economic, security, defence, and connectivity. Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari expressed satisfaction at the level of bilateral contacts in the last few years and stressed the importance of maintaining the momentum through consolidating the strategic partnership between Pakistan and Uzbekistan. He underscored the urgent need to operationalize Transit Trade Agreement (UPTTA) and Preferential Trade Agreement for boosting trade and transit between the two countries.

Security arrangements

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Rana Sana Ullah chairing a meeting on law and order to make security arrangements during Muharram in coordination with provincial governments on Friday.



Photo: PID

Law & order

Govt to deploy civil armed forces during Muharram: Ran Sana

Asks concerned department to give decision on foreign funding case

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has decided to deploy civil armed forces in all the provinces including Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan to ensure law and order during Muharram. The said decision was taken at a high-level meeting held here on Friday with Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah in the chair, said a press release. Other important decisions were also taken related to ensuring peace and tranquillity during Muharram and the security of congregations and processions routes.

The meeting was apprised that a control room would be set up to monitor the security situation during Muharram.

Special teams would also be constituted for ensuring the security of Muharram processions and gatherings. It was also decided to ensure strict monitoring of social media to prevent the spread of hateful content and religious hatred. The meeting also recommended ensuring a smooth and uninterrupted round-the-clock power supply during Majalis timing on 9th and 10th Muharram.

Interior Secretary Yousuf Naseem Khokhar, Special Interior Secretary, Chief Secretary Punjab, Commandant FC, Chief Commissioner Islamabad, DIG Operations Islamabad Police, and representatives

of other law enforcement agencies also attended the meeting. The IGs Police and Home Secretaries of all four provinces including Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan participated in the meeting through video link.

Speaking on the occasion, Interior Minister said peace and order would be ensured at all costs during the Muharram. Foolproof security would be made for Majlis and procession routes, he added.

He directed the ministry to ensure the deployment of civil armed forces on the proposal of all provincial, Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan governments. National Action Plan should also be

strictly implemented to maintain law and order, he added. Sanaullah said guidance would be sought from the Ulemas and Mashaikh for creating harmony. Effective measures would also be taken to prevent hatred content on social media, he said. The minister said religious hatred and incitement would not be accepted. He directed the law enforcement agencies to take strict action against the violators.

Minister for Interior asked the department concerned to announce decision on foreign funding case of Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf (PTI), without delay. "We have been waiting decision in foreign funding

case for the last eight years," he said while talking to a private television channel. PTI leadership had received funds from various resources; he said adding that everything has been declared in this connection.

Commenting on dissolving assemblies in KPK and Punjab, he said, Imran Khan should take initiative for suspending assemblies in KPK and Punjab. He said, the incumbent government is committed to hold general elections in the country. Replying to a question about no-confidence move against Imran Khan, he said that the decision was taken by Nawaz Sharif in London.

Attracting US investment a top priority: Miftah

Pak-US trade witnesses over 44pc growth during FY2022

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Miftah Ismail said here on Friday that attracting the United States foreign investment in different sectors of country's economy was the government's top priority. The minister was talking to Ambassador of the United States of America to Pakistan, Donald Blome who called on him here, according to press statement issued by the finance ministry.

Economic Counselor, Aaron Fishman and Treasury Attaché of US Embassy, Ms. Larita Bolden accompanied the Ambassador while Minister of State for Finance and Revenue Dr. Aisha Ghous Pasha, Special Secretary Finance and senior officers also attended the meeting, the statement added.

Miftah said the incumbent government was focusing on creating a business friendly environment for foreign investors. Miftah Ismail extended warm welcome to the Amba-



sador and congratulated him on assuming the office. He stated that Pakistan and the US enjoy long-term, broad-based and multi-dimensional relationship.

He highlighted the economic agenda and policies of the government with aim to bring about economic and fiscal stability. The minister reiterated the desire of the present government to further deepen bilateral economic, trade and

investment ties with the USA. On the occasion, the Ambassador underscored that both countries enjoy good relations and expressed confidence on the policies and programmes of the government. He extended his support to further promote bilateral economic, investment and trade relations between both the countries.

Pakistan's goods and services trade with the United States of America (USA) witnessed

an increase of 44.91 percent during twelve months of fiscal year (2021-22) as compared to the corresponding period of last year. The overall exports to the USA were recorded at US \$ 6798.982 million during July-June (2021-22) against exports of US \$ 5030.724 million during July-June (2020-21), showing growth of 35.14 percent, SBP data revealed.

Meanwhile, on year-on-year basis, exports to USA during June 2022 also surged by 15.38 percent from US \$ 555.492 million to US \$ 640.935 million. Similarly, month-on-month exports to the USA rose by 18.38 percent during June 2022 as compare with exports of US \$ 541.391 million in May 2022, the SBP data said.

Overall Pakistan's exports to all countries also witnessed an increase of 26.56 percent in twelve months, from US \$ 25638.974 million to US \$ 32450.087 million, the SBP data said. On the other hand,

imports from the US during the period under review were recorded at US \$ 3055.169 million against US \$ 2447.281 million of last year, showing an increase of 24.83 percent in July- June (2021-22).

Meanwhile, year-on-year imports from the US during June 2022 also increased by 36.60 percent from US \$ 247.424 million last year to US \$ 337.985 million. On month-on-month basis, the imports from the US rose by 42.55 percent during June 2022 as compared to the import of US \$ 237.092 million in May 2022, SBP data said. The overall imports increased by 32.75 percent, from US \$ 54272.920 million to US \$ 72.048 million during the period under review. The trade surplus during the period under review was recorded at \$2583.443 million against \$3743.813 million during same period of last year, showing 44.91 percent growth.

Consultations for Punjab cabinet begin

LAHORE: The consultation for the appointment of ministers in the Punjab Assembly has begun.

Sources privy to the development said the names of former governor Punjab Omar Sarfraz Cheema and former federal minister Fawad Chaudhry are being considered for the post of Punjab home minister. Raja Basharat is likely to get the law ministry of Punjab, while the name of Chaudhry Zaheer-ud-din is likely to be made Punjab's prosecution minister.

It is pertinent to mention here that PML-Q leader Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi took oath as new Punjab chief minister in the wee hours of Wednesday after the Supreme Court annulled a ruling from deputy speaker to reject 10 votes of PML-Q polled in favour of the PTI candidate.

Regime change to be reversed after fair elections: Imran

Says funds came through proper banking channels

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman and former prime minister Imran Khan said Friday that the regime change will be reversed after the organisation of free and fair elections in the country. Imran Khan gave an exclusive interview with a news channel here in which he expressed his thoughts about the crucial political developments in the country. Imran Khan said that everything has been disturbed in the country due to political instability. He said that the PTI government had been toppled by an alleged conspiracy at the time of the global crisis which created political instability which later caused economic instability.

He criticised that the country was witnessing economic growth and every sector was entering the stability phase when the PTI government was removed. "Rulers are afraid of fresh elections. When a conspiracy was hatched and the no-trust motion was brought then I had announced fresh elections to let the people of Pakistan decide who should rule the country." "We



could have saved ourselves from disasters if fresh elections were held at that time. The current rulers came into power without a roadmap to end the crisis. If you see the statements of [finance minister] Miftah Ismail, they did not give any policy."

"This solution of the national issues is not only the organisation of just elections but free and fair elections. No one has confidence in the incumbent government including the International Monetary Fund (IMF)." "We have witnessed in the Punjab by-polls that the Election

Commission of Pakistan (ECP) was used and nobody was expecting the defeat of the ruling class and they were defeated despite vote-rigging." "Pakistani nation has rejected the regime change. The regime change will be reversed after the organisation of fair elections in Pakistan."

He said that the current rulers were afraid of the Pakistani nation that has changed, therefore, they were skipping the option of fresh polls. He added that Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) Vice-President Maryam Nawaz had also asked to hold new elections instead of keeping the helpless government. Khan said that he was not expecting the change in the Pakistani nation within just 3.5 months after the ouster of the PTI government as they bravely resisted the current rulers who came into power through a 'conspiracy'.

While reacting to a recent report released by Financial Times regarding PTI foreign funding he said that overseas Pakistanis are the country's asset, and all funds came through proper banking channels.

Yasin Malik's health

Pakistan makes strong demarche to India

ISLAMABAD: The Indian Charge d'Affaires (Cd'A) in Islamabad was called to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs today and a strong demarche was made over the rapidly deteriorating health condition of Hurriyat leader Muhammad Yasin Malik. A letter addressed to the Indian Prime Minister from Ms. Mushaal Hussein Mullick, wife of Yasin Malik, seeking her husband's immediate release from prison in view of his precarious health condition that aggravated after his decision to go on a hunger-strike earlier this month, was also handed over to the Cd'A.

The Indian diplomat was conveyed Pakistan's deep dismay on the Indian authorities' latest move of implicating Yasin Malik in two more bogus cases crafted around incidents that happened at least three decades ago. Despite numerous pleas, Mr. Malik has been denied his lawful right of personal appearance and cross-examination in the on-going trials.

Yasin Malik who is serving-out life-imprisonment in the infamous Delhi's Tihar jail after a sham trial by an Indian court has been deep-

ly dejected at this gross miscarriage of justice. Having no legal recourse at his disposal, Yasin Malik went on a hunger strike unto death on July 22, 2022.

It was noted that long-drawn illegal incarcerations, implication in fictitious cases, inhuman torture at the hands of the Indian occupation forces and worst forms of political victimization, have already had a cumulative grave impact on the physical, mental and emotional well-being of Mr. Yasin Malik. Alarmingly, the ongoing hunger-strike has made the situation so grievous that owing to an acute threat to his life, he has now been put on intravenous fluids.

Given the urgency of the situation and keeping in view Mr. Yasin Malik's sharply deteriorating health indicators, the government of India has been strongly urged to provide him urgent medical care, immediately release him from the prison, cancel his fallacious conviction under fictitious charges and withdraw all other fabricated cases that have been mischievously spun around him.

Insider

Nawaz lambastes Miftah over dollar hike

LONDON: Pakistan Muslim League leader Nawaz Sharif lambastes Finance Minister Miftah Ismail in the PDM meeting due to the ongoing economic turmoil in the country, sources said. The Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) meeting was held on Thursday. According to sources, the PML-N leader Nawaz Sharif took to Miftah Ismail over the Dollar hike since the PML-N-led government took charge. Miftah had claimed that the Dollar would rise only Rs 23, but apparently, Rs 23 and Rs 55 are the same to him, Nawaz Sharif said.

Sources say that the three-time Premier asked Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to summon a meeting of all ally parties on Tuesday and Wednesday. The Finance Minister should take all allies into confidence regarding the deteriorating economic conditions, he added. The PML-N leader said that if they have to govern then they will have to be brave. Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam Chief Fazlur Rehman reportedly said that they were asked



to sacrifice but they are witnessing double standards recently.

Power corridors are confused over Imran Khan, he might be the apple of other's eyes but not ours, said PML-N Vice President Maryam Nawaz. PDM leader Mehmood Achakzai also voiced his concerns and said that they did not join PDM to oust Imran Khan only but to get political freedom.

The PDM leadership agreed to invite other parties including the PPP to join the Pakistan Democratic Movement. Meanwhile, PKR's free-fall continued on Friday against the US dollar as the greenback traded at Rs240 in the interbank at the start of the day amid lack of clarity from the government on the IMF deal and other economic measures.

PM appoints Dr Mukhtar Ahmed as HEC chairman

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Friday appointed Dr Mukhtar Ahmed as the chairman of the Higher Education Commission (HEC). According to the details available, Ahmed has been appointed for two years. He has served as the HEC chairman before while Ahmed also held the office of the HEC executive director previously.

"The prime minister has seen and, while considering the recommendations of the Search Committee, has been pleased to approve the appointment of Prof Dr Mukhtar Ahmed out of the panel proposed," the statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office read.

The notification also mentioned that the terms and conditions of appointment of Dr Ahmed shall be settled separately. Furthermore, the premier directed that necessary action shall be taken accordingly.

Higher Education Commission is the largest and most successful



educational institution of Pakistan and many countries of the world were following the model of HEC in their country. But in the last regime this institution suffered a lot due to degree verification issue of politicians. No country can make progress rapidly without raising the standard of higher education. Now Higher Education Commission should concentrate on its real goal rather than indulging in politics.

Judiciary will continue to work transparently: CJP

Makes audio recording of JCP meeting public

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan Umar Ata Bandial on Friday during the hearing of the petition filed by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan against the NAB amendments remarked that balance can be only maintained in society with the independence of the judiciary, and judges will continue to work transparently under their oath. During the hearing, the Additional Attorney General appeared to support the constitutionality of the court while a notice was issued to the government on the request to condition the relief under the NAB amendments.

PTI's lawyer Khawaja Haris argued that the independence of the judiciary and the accountabil-

ity of public representatives are the basic components of the constitution, adding that the amendments that conflict with the constitution should be declared null and void. CJP remarked that corruption means misuse of powers and damage to the treasury, and accountability is very important for governance and running the government.

"The independence of the judiciary is necessary to maintain balance in the society while the Article 4 of the Constitution has never been mentioned and not discussed in detail but it is very important, fundamental rights can be suspended but not Article 4, the judiciary will continue to act transparently under their oath," CJP added.

First Lady for inclusive education of PWDs

Begum Samina Arif Alvi says Persons with Disabilities should be equipped with latest and in-demand technical and vocational skills

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: First Lady Begum Samina Arif Alvi on Friday emphasized the need to impart inclusive education to Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in mainstream educational institutions and equip them with the latest and in-demand technical and vocational skills.

The first lady, addressing a virtual meeting on disability with members of the civil society organizations working for the welfare of differently-abled people (DAPs) in Balochistan, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, urged the welfare organizations to create awareness among PWDs about the business loans being offered by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) on easy terms and conditions for their financial independence.

Technical Advisor from the World Health Organization (WHO), Maryam Malik, and representatives of the Balochistan Government, NGOs, and welfare foundations attended the



meeting via video link.

Begum Samina Alvi highlighted that a unified platform with representation from government, NGOs and welfare foundations was essential for better coordination among different stakeholders as it would help in exchanging information and best practices and coming up with cost-effective solutions to address the issues of PWDs.

She said that the issuance of disability certificates to PWDs needed to

be made easier through One Window facilities by establishing and operationalizing them through the assistance of provincial social welfare, health departments and NADRA.

The first lady highlighted that PWDs, especially the physically impaired persons, faced hindrances in mobility which should be addressed by providing them with Assistive Technology like wheelchairs, and making marketplaces, public spaces, banks,

and buildings accessible by installing wheelchair-friendly ramps. The participants of the meeting briefed the first lady about the role of their respective organizations towards the welfare of PWDs in Balochistan and the issues being faced by the differently-abled people.

It was highlighted that efforts needed to be accelerated to ensure the implementation of the Balochistan Persons with Disabilities Act, 2017 to ensure that the benefits enshrined in the policy reach PWDs. The participants presented their suggestions to address the issues being faced by PWDs in getting disability certificates, inclusive education in regular schools, and jobs as per the 5% quota for PWDs belonging to Balochistan.

The first lady appreciated that Balochistan was the first province to introduce the Balochistan Persons with Disabilities Act, 2017. She assured the participants of her support and guidance towards the resolution of issues being faced by PWDs.



RAWALPINDI: CPO Rawalpindi chaired a meeting with Ulama and traders regarding preparations for Muharram ul Haram.

Gandhara art exhibition held at PAC



Staff Reporter

RAWALPINDI: Punjab Arts council organized a Gandhara Art exhibition to highlight the uniqueness of the art. Director General Punjab Arts council Saman Rai were the chief guest of the opening ceremony of the exhibition.

While addressing the ceremony Director General Punjab Arts council Saman Rai said Gandhara is a mirror of a complete civilization. Gandhara art is actually the essence of Greek, Saka, Parthian and Kushan civilizations. The art of carving, sculpting, painting and engraving that came into existence was called Gandhara art.

She further said that Gandhara civilization gives the message of peace, love and brotherhood. We need to tell the world that Pakistan has the world's oldest civilizations of Gandhara, Harappa and Mohan Jo Daro, which the government of Pakistan has restored to original condition. Gandhara civilization is one of the oldest in the world and the art recovered from the ruins of the civilization in Taxila has been acknowledged around the world. The art is handed down from one generation to another from thousands of years, she added.

Naheed Manzoor said that people belonging to Gandhara art in Pakistan are leaving this art day by day. The Government of Pakistan should formulate a comprehensive strategy to transfer Gandhara art to new generations. By promoting Gandhara culture and art, we can increase foreign tourism, which will give Pakistan a positive face in front of the world.

Development work in CBD Punjab to be done on full throttle: CM Punjab

Our Correspondent

LAHORE: Chief Executive Officer of Lahore Central Business District Development Authority (LCBDDA), Imran Amin had a meeting with the newly elected Chief Minister Punjab, Chaudhary Pervaiz Elahi to discuss the ongoing development of Central Business District Punjab. Lahore Central Business District Development Authority (LCBDDA), also known as Central Business District Punjab (CBD Punjab) promising to ensure bespoke and innovative real estate supply to contribute to national development.

The CEO-LCBDDA briefed CM Punjab about the development progress in CBD Punjab. During the meeting, he mentioned that "CBD Punjab has its own significance in the development of the province. The mega project has a room full of opportunities and huge investment potential. This project has managed to grab the attention of domestic and international investors. Local and Foreign business councils and delegations have shown their keen interest to invest in CBD Punjab.

Despite rains traffic plying smoothly in Northern areas: NHA

NHA resources being utilized to help the needy in Balochistan

Our Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: A great example of human compassion and feeling-Federal Secretary Communications/Chairman National Highway Authority Capt (R) Muhammad Khurram Agha, in Machh Balochistan carried a seriously injured patient to hospital in his vehicle by helping the ambulance. Federal Minister of Communications and Postal Services Asad Mahmood has paid rich tribute to Federal Secretary Communications/Chairman National Highway Authority Capt (R) Muhammad Khurram Agha.

Capt (R) Muhammad Khurram Agha who is presently present in Balochistan, is personally reviewing all kinds of construction and repair issues. During the surveillance, Capt

(R) Muhammad Khurram Agha saw an ambulance in which an injured patient was being taken to the hospital. The ambulance broke down and Capt (R) Muhammad Khurram Agha immediately took the injured patient to the hospital with the help of his vehicle.

Federal Minister for Communications and Postal Services Mr. Asad Mahmood has commended this compassionate act, while the relatives of the injured patient have also thanked Capt (R) Muhammad Khurram Agha and praised him for his compassion. It should be clear that the engineers, experts and officials of NHA are working actively to ensure movement of traffic at all times.

The Federal Secretary Communications/Chairman National Highway Authority Capt (R) Muhammad

Khurram Agha is reviewing all the issues themselves, so that any emergency can be dealt with immediately. It is worth to mention that the vehicles and other resources of NHA are busy serving the people in the affected areas of Balochistan.

Federal Secretary Communications/Chairman National Highway Authority Capt (R) Muhammad Khurram Agha also paid visit to Sukkur-Sibi-Quetta Road today and inspected the restoration work on the affected parts of the road due to rains and floods.

Apart from this, according to the reports received from the North-Zone Region of NHA, rain is continuing on Hasanabdal-Thakot and Manshera-Gittida Sections, while it is also raining intermittently on the Thakot-Sazin section.

Mohammed Ali Naqvi's Netflix Series gets nominated for an Emmy Award

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Netflix documentary, Turning Point 911, just got nominated for an Emmy Award. Congratulations to Mohammed Ali Naqvi who has produced the series. Last year, Turning Point 911 was amongst the top 10 most viewed on Netflix worldwide. Everyone from Kim Kardashian to Stephen King was a fan of the documentary series.

The National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences (NATAS) announced the nominations for the 43rd Annual News and Documentary Emmy Awards.

Turning Point 911 is a five-part docuseries created for Netflix and documents the attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001 in New York as well as the events that took place both in Afghanistan and United States which led to the attacks.

This unflinching series documents the 9/11 terrorist attacks, from Al Qaeda's roots in the 1980s to America's response, both at home and abroad.

The News & Documentary Emmy Awards will be presented live at the Palladium Times Square in New York City, and will be streamed live on NATAS' dedicated viewing platform powered by Vimeo, available on the web at WatchTheEmmys.TV and via The Emmys' apps for iOS, tvOS, Android, FireTV, and Roku (full list at apps.theemmys.tv).

The 43rd Annual News & Documentary Emmy Awards honour programming content from more than 2500 submissions that originally premiered in calendar-year 2021, judged by a pool of over 800 peer professionals from across the television and streaming/digital media News & Documentary industry.

Maiden meeting of Pak-China JWG on IT held

ISLAMABAD: The maiden meeting of Pakistan-China Joint Working Group (JWG) on the Information Technology Industry was virtually held at the Ministry of IT and Telecommunication here on Friday.

The Pakistani side was led by Ministry of IT and Telecommunication Additional Secretary (Incharge) Mohsin Mushtaq, while Vice Minister of Industry and IT of China, Zhang Yunming from the Chinese side, said a news release.

The meeting discussed avenues for cooperation between the two countries in the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) sector.

Addressing the meeting, Additional Secretary (Incharge), MOITI, Mohsin Mushtaq said that both Pakistan and China would benefit from the Joint Working Group as well as from the initiatives which would be completed under this relationship.

"This new Joint Working Group on IT under the CPEC will open exciting opportunities for Pakistani tech companies, and facilitate launching of 5G technology in Pakistan," he added. APP

British HC launches Climate Finance Accelerator in Pakistan

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The Climate Finance Accelerator (CFA) was launched in Pakistan today at an event organised in the Marriot Hotel, Islamabad. The Federal Minister for Climate Change, Sherry Rehman, attended the event as a chief guest. The technical assistance programme responds directly to the urgency and scale of the climate crisis by supporting highly promising low carbon projects to become more appealing to investors, so that they can secure funding more readily.

The CFA approach addresses the challenges involved in attracting climate finance to the places where it is most needed. By bringing together project developers and financial experts who can develop and finance climate projects at scale, the CFA will support Pakistan's efforts to implement its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) pledge under the Paris Agreement, deliver emissions reductions, and raise its over-



all climate ambition.

The CFA programme is operational in seven other countries globally and is being delivered by an alliance of climate finance experts, led by PwC and Ricardo Energy & Environment. It is funded by the UK Government's Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and is implemented in Pakistan by DAI as the in-country partner.

Pakistan's Federal Minister for Climate Change, Sherry Rehman said: "Climate finance needs to level up the infrastructure, through catastrophe bonds, blue bonds, and other such work-

able initiatives. Recently, at the Petersburg Dialogue, loss and damage were central to the agenda of the entire discourse. At this year's COP 27, as chair of G77+China, Pakistan will ensure that climate financial justice and loss & damage are at the core of all multilateral negotiations. Pakistan emits less than 1% of GHGs but still bears the repercussions of activities carried out by the biggest world polluters. We need to expedite our adaptation efforts and act now, not tomorrow. The Climate Ministry is now moving ahead with creating Pakistan's first National Adaptation Plan."

Development Director, British High Commission, Annabel Gerry said: "The Climate Finance Accelerator will build partnerships between projects, the financial community, and policy-makers to help low carbon projects looking for investment. The launch of CFA Pakistan underlines the UK's firm commitment to supporting the effort to fight climate change in Pakistan. I hope that it will lead to the creation of a sustainable pipeline of low carbon projects that make a real contribution to tackling the climate emergency."

CFA Pakistan Project Director from DAI, Eldana Djumaliev, said: "Pakistan is amongst the top ten countries in the world most affected by climate change. Climate action is a pressing need in Pakistan. The Climate Finance Accelerator represents an initiative that will raise awareness of available financing for projects with a pro-climate approach, linking project developers and financiers.

ered expert economists which is shameful, he added.

He noted that despite a serious crisis, the central bank is without a permanent governor and a junior officer has been temporarily appointed as the governor of the State Bank of Pakistan, which is expected to restore the confidence of the market.

Aslam Khan regretted Pakistan has the potential to collect 12 trillion rupees as revenue, but the target has been set at 7 trillion rupees to please the nobility.

False claims of national dev being made for decades: PEW

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW) on Friday said baseless claims about the country's development have been made for the past thirty-four years. Weak leadership, the endless series of elitism and the blind adoption of the policies of international organizations have left the country's economy dysfunctional, it said.

This time, despite accepting the unbearably strict conditions of the IMF, a loan

is not being provided, which has destroyed the value of the rupee, said Brig. (ret'd) Aslam Khan, Chairman PEW.

He said that transferring the resources of the developing countries to developed countries is the agenda of international organizations, which is being followed by self-interested politicians.

Aslam Khan said that our economists are doing nothing except seeking loans, promoting the elite, issuing comforting statements and fueling the crisis with their



wrong policies due to which the economy is constantly weakening. Those who can plan to pay the old debts by taking new loans are consid-

SECP organizes 'High Power Session on Islamic Finance'

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) organized "High Power Session on Islamic Finance" to discuss potential issues, challenges, and opportunities related to Islamic finance within regulated sectors of SECP.

The Session was led by Chairman Shariah Advisory Committee of SECP and SBP Dr. Mufti Irshad Ahmad Aijaz. He shared insights on the progress made in Islamic Finance sector in the past few years, within Pakistan and across the world, and offered guidance on the ways through which sustainable progress can be achieved in Islamic financing sector.

He said that for Islamic finance to develop, we need to implement Shariah-compliant policies and products alongside the conventional financing systems, and gradually move away from interest-based financing.

Dr. Irshad answered questions posed by SECP officials. He also discussed issues like Pakistan's dependence on international financing, sale receipt discounting, P2P lending and venture capital, and products like Tawarruq and Bai Muajjal of Sukuk.

Officials from multiple departments within SECP attended the session, including Islamic Finance Department, Insurance Department, Securities Market Division and Specialized Companies division

Dr. Ghulam M. Ali takes over charge as Chairman PARC

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Dr. Ghulam Muhammad Ali took over the charge as Chairman of Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC). In his first tenure, PARC being an apex agricultural research organization played a leading role in agriculture R&D initiatives for ensuring food security. Under his leadership, PARC successfully achieved to resolve number of outstanding issues relating to finance and employees.

Earlier as Chairman PARC, Dr. Ghulam Muhammad Ali also distinguished himself as a thorough profes-

sional, a diligent and hardworking agri. scientist, having a firm grip on Agri. Research & administrative affairs. Presently, Dr. Ali's main responsibility lies in the interaction with policy makers, international centers and development partners for planning R&D activities in high priority areas.

PARC once again anticipates that under the leadership / Chairmanship of Dr. Ghulam Muhammad Ali, PARC will play a vital role in National Agri. Research & Development and he will lead Council's scientists / researchers towards achieving goals & targets in Agri. Research System as per the mandate of PARC.





Islamabad
23° - 38° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

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

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

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

COMPLAINTS

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

IIUI extends last date of admission

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI) has extended the last date for submission of online application forms for admission (Fall 2022 semester) till August 05, 2022.

The decision has been taken to facilitate more candidates who intend to apply for admission. IIU has offered admission to BS/MS/PhD programs in 10 faculties including Social Sciences, Basic and Applied Sciences, Management Sciences, International Institute for Islamic Economics, Arabic, Usuluddin, Languages and Literature, Faculty of Computing, Engineering and Technology and Shariah and Law.

Korea supports Pakistan in renewable energy sector: Envoy

Ground breaking ceremony of 'Establishment of Pak-Korea Testing Laboratory' held

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Pakistan Suh Sangpyo has ensured continuous support to Pakistan.

He said this while addressing the audience on the occasion of "Groundbreaking ceremony for 'Establishment of PAK-KOREA Testing Laboratory for PV Modules & Allied Equipment'" held here on Friday. The Country Director Seokwoong Yang from Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), Agha Hassan Baloch Minister of Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST), Ghulam Muhammad Memon, Secretary of Science and Technology (MOST) and Director General Dr. Ata Ur Rehman from Pakistan Council of Renewable Energy Technology (PCRET), large number of experts of renewable energy and media persons attended the event.

The Ambassador further said that in this project Korea is providing a 9.5 million USD grant to ultimately contribute to the achievement of SDG 7 (Ensuring access of Energy). This will be the first PV testing laboratory in Pakistan. This will be the first PV testing laboratory in Pakistan.

The Minister of MOST Agha Hassan Baloch thanked the Republic of Korea and KOICA for initiating the intervention for the PV testing laboratory in Pakistan. Dr. Ata Ur Rehman Director General, PCRET



thanked KOICA for the support and Mr. Seokwoong Yang Director General, KOICA assured continuous support for the renewable energy sector.

The PV testing laboratory will contribute to improve the quality, access to clean energy, climate change response and promote solar energy industry in Pakistan while curtailing the sub-standard imported and locally developed PV modules for the customers who use PV modules. The building will be completed within 12 months. Project scope includes construction of building, provision of equipment and capacity building programs.

The Pakistan Council of Renewable Energy Technology (PCRET) is establishing the subject solar panel testing laboratory under a grant-aid project from Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA). The solar panel testing laboratory is planned to achieve the status of Certification Body Testing Laboratory (CBTL) in collaboration with Pakistan Standards & Quality Control Authority (PSQCA). The testing laboratory after its completion will be the first testing laboratory of the country having CBTL status.

Spokesman Photo by Ghulam Farid

Wake up world before we lose 'most iconic peaceful leader': Mushaal

Says Yasin shifted to Delhi hospital in serious condition

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Mushaal Hussein Mullick Chairperson Peace and Culture Organisation urged that the world powers and human right organisations should shun their duplicity and wake up as time was running short for Yasin Malik who was shifted to Delhi hospital in critical condition.

In a statement on Friday, Mushaal expressed her apprehension that God forbid they could lose the most iconic peaceful leader of Kashmiris freedom struggle if the international community and UN bodies did not timely intervene to ensure his release.

Mushaal, who is wife of Yasin Malik, said that JKLF chief had been on hunger to death strike since July 22 in protest against denial of his fundamental rights by the far-right Indian regime due to which his health condition deteriorated alarmingly.

The chairperson revealed that Yasin Malik was shifted to Delhi hospital; however, he refused to seek medical help from doctors.

"My Husband is losing his life at the hands of Indian tyrant authorities in solitary confinement, as his family members are not being allowed to meet him," she added.

Mushaal went on to say that Yasin Malik



was unjustly made a prisoner because he fearlessly championed the Kashmiris freedom movement and used his voice against oppression, adding his only crime was that he wanted the right to self-determination for the people of Kashmir Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK).

Mushaal lashed out at the fascist Indian government which she said hell-bent to let Yasin Malik die from a fast, or sentencing him to death after flawed trials.

She urged the world to press the fascist and criminal Narendra Modi-led government to

Resolution of Kashmir dispute key to regional peace: Barrister Sultan

Abdul Majeed Tahir.

ISLAMABAD: Terming resolution of Kashmir dispute as a key to regional peace, the president Azad Kashmir Barrister Sultan Mehmood Chaudhry has said that the international community in particular the United States should play their due role to resolve the lingering dispute that has been cause and consequence of tension in the region.

The president said this during his meeting with Andrea Hillyer, in-charge of the Political Section of the American Embassy here on Friday. Speaking on the occasion the president while stressing the need for an early and amicable solution of the Kashmir dispute said, "India and Pakistan are nuclear powers, any accident or misunderstanding between the two neighbours can lead to a nuclear confrontation that will jeopardize peace in the whole world".

He said that given the volatile situation in the region there was a dire need that the United States and international community should play their role to resolve the Kashmir issue.

Health Corner

Face Shields: no high level COVID protection

ISLAMABAD: If you wore a face shield during the pandemic, it probably didn't give you a high level of protection against Covid, according to new research from the University of East Anglia. A study published today compared 13 styles of face shield in controlled laboratory settings.

While all the face shields provided some protection, none gave high levels of protection against external droplets. As well as studying face shields in the lab, the research team surveyed people including health workers in middle income countries (Brazil and Nigeria) about their views on face shields as PPE.

Prof Paul Hunter, from UEA's Norwich Medical School, said: "Face shields have been popular because they don't hinder breathing, they allow more natural communication than face masks and they provide splash protection.

"They were widely used through the Covid pandemic. But until now there hasn't been a great deal of evidence about how protective they really are — particularly taking into account how people use them in the real world, and especially in poorer parts of the world.

"This study is important because acceptability of facial PPE during the pandemic has been mostly studied in richer countries like the UK or USA. The participants in our study were in Nigeria and Brazil and we shouldn't assume that people in all countries view facial PPE in the same way. "It is also important to understand what design features in face shields could be more or less protective, so that people are able to choose the most effective designs.

"Finally, we wanted to know how people cleaned reusable face shields — methylated or surgical spirits were popular, for instance, but so was plain water and soap. Some cleaning chemicals could be incompatible with shield coatings intended to prevent fogging or facilitate quick drying, for instance. Dust outside and fogging inside shields were occasional problems, too," she added.

"A mixed methods study on effectiveness and appropriateness of face shield use as COVID-19 PPE in middle income countries" is published in the journal American Journal of Infection Control on July 28, 2022.

In a related project, the HSE team tested face shields available for use in the UK. The results of this work, together with more details of the cough simulator, are published in the journal Annals of Work Exposures and Health.

Dr Brian Crook, a microbiologist in the HSE team, said: "It is important that people using any type of PPE to protect themselves from infection know how effective it is, but also its limitations. We are working with an international standards committee to write guidance towards a better means of providing that information." (Courtesy: Science Daily)



ISLAMABAD: A group of Central President Private Schools Network Dr. Muhammad Afzal, DG NAVTTC Dr. H.U. Khan and Amaar Jaffery, and members of delegation.

Plantation drive, seminar on climate change held at RWU

Staff Reporter

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Women University endorsing the sustainable development goals of the UN commenced "Plantation Drive along with a Seminar on Climate Change and Environment".

Dr. Shaista Sohail, Chairperson Higher Education Commission (HEC) graced the event as Chief Guest.

Speaking on the Occasion, Dr. Shaista Sohail highlighted the importance of climate change and its link to global survival of mankind. She urged students to become conscious of the positive contribution all of us can impart to the environment and its protection with innovative solutions.

Prof. Dr. Anila Kamal encouraged student endeavours to bring significant benefits to the planet and its beings. Dr. Azeem and Dr. Khadija Javed were the guest speakers at the seminar.

World Hepatitis Day

Awareness, vaccination crucial to prevent Hepatitis related illnesses: Senator Humayun

Maroof Int'l Hospital organizes seminar to raise awareness about Hepatitis

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Senator Mohammad Humayun Mohmand, Chairman of the Standing Committee of National Health Services Regulation & Coordination of Senate said "Many people contract the hepatitis infection unknowingly, because of the reuse of syringes, dental equipment, and barber shop equipment." He added, "highly effective treatments for hepatitis C can cure the infection in over 96% of people, and two lethal forms of viral hepatitis—Hepatitis B & E—can be prevented through vaccination."

He expressed these views while speaking as a chief guest on the occasion of the World Hepatitis Day event organized by Maroof International Hospital. Haroon Naseer, CEO, of Maroof International Hospital, welcomed the guests and audience on the occasion.

The Senator further said "We need to focus on disease prevention through awareness and vaccination, and in the case of Hepatitis C in particular, elimination through treatment and cure."

Speaking on the occasion, Haroon Naseer, CEO, of Maroof International Hospital urged that government and private sector should work together to ensure the hepatitis vaccination process.

Haroon Naseer also informed that Maroof International Hospital was the second hospital in the region among private hospitals which provided free COVID vaccination to thousands of people under the instructions of previous govt of PTL.



The first secretary of UK Health Security Agency, Dr Muhammad Sartaj highlighted the importance of Hepatitis surveillance. He said surveillance is a critical component of a comprehensive strategy to prevent and control infection and further stressed the need working together with different organization.

Sharing the background and history of Hepatitis Day, Dr. Usman Aftab Ahmad, Consultant Gastroenterologists MIH, said there is a need to lay emphasis on hepatitis vaccination programs. Dr. Usman presented

detailed information about Hepatitis. He added World Hepatitis Day creates an opportunity to educate people about the burden of these infections. He appreciated the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention's efforts and actions to combat viral hepatitis around the world.

He said the virus is commonly transmitted from mother to child during birth and delivery, blood transfusion and other body fluids with an infected partner, unsafe injections, and exposure to sharp instruments. Dr. Usman elaborated that Pakistan is a middle-income



"Govt and private sector should work together to ensure the vaccination process" — Haroon Naseer, CEO, of Maroof International Hospital

country and has limited resources. Therefore, it should focus more on devising and implementing effective preventive strategies to reduce the disease burden of hepatitis C.

Dr. Ayesha Waqar Niazi, Consultant Gastroenterologist, MIH highlighted the awareness of hepatitis, while speaking about chronic hepa-

titis B and its complications, said it is a viral infection that attacks the liver and can cause both acute and chronic disease.

Dr. Ayesha stressed that such alarming statistics could be avoided through the timely testing, treatment, and vaccination of infants. The health expert pointed out that these strains of hepatitis can lead to liver cancer, cirrhosis, and other conditions.

Meanwhile, Haroon Naseer, CEO, of Maroof International Hospital exclusively talking to Daily The Spokesman informed that the purpose of this event was to create awareness among health professionals and the community to fight against hepatitis. The organizers agreed on the need to convey the urgency to eliminate hepatitis as a public health threat by 2030.

Spokesman Photos by Ghulam Farid

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Europe & Russian energy threats

Maximilian Hess

Not since World War II has the threat to global energy security been as severe as it is today.

Russia's brutal invasion of Ukraine and the consequent geo-economic war between the Kremlin and the West disrupted global gas markets at a scale unprecedented in recent history. The Kremlin's use of its power over energy markets as leverage – and Europe's efforts to wean itself off of Russian natural gas and avoid a massive shortage this winter – are triggering price hikes and rerouting flows around the world. No one is left unaffected, even those who thought they had prepared for every eventuality. For example, Pakistan, which had secured several long-term natural gas import contracts to increase its energy security in recent years, has seen partners break those deals to send their gas to new clients offering to pay more. The coffers of both the developed and developing world are being drained.

Meanwhile, the Kremlin is using the global energy crisis it created to sustain its economy in the face of severe international sanctions. Moreover, it is weaponising Europe's dependency on Russian natural gas to try and break Western resistance to its

ambitions in Ukraine.

Following Gazprom's latest cuts, analysts already predict the EU will not be able to reach its own target of refilling gas storage to 80 percent capacity by winter. Now that Europe made it clear that it is finally – and perhaps much belatedly – ready to take the steps to cut its need for Russian gas at any cost, the Kremlin will do everything it can to inflict maximum pain on Europe in the short term, while the dependency remains. A recent German poll found that at the moment, 58 percent of the population is supporting sanctions against Russia despite potential negative impacts for Germany. Russian President Vladimir Putin is working to bring that number down – down to the point that it becomes untenable for Germany's leaders to push for policies to support Ukraine and help the West win its confrontation with Russia.

The waning of public support for the sanctions regime in the face of economic difficulties is an equally significant risk for other European governments. Europe's leaders are now facing the herculean task of simultaneously helping their industries survive on a reduced energy supply, supporting Ukraine's war effort and maintaining public support for the sanctions regime amid a cost-of-living crisis largely manufactured by Russia that seems to have no real end in sight. Energy

is perhaps the most consequential front in the ongoing geo-economic battle between Russia and the West, and thus Europe needs to strengthen its hand there first.

After moving to address the demand side of the equation, now it needs to address the supply side of the problem to be able to shore up its economy to the furthest extent possible, and insulate public support for Kyiv and the sanctions regime against Russia. There are some obvious steps that European governments can take – but have been reluctant to in fear of domestic backlash – to resolve the supply issue swiftly. The Netherlands, for example, can pump billions of cubic metres of extra natural gas across Europe by increasing production at the Groningen gas field. Bewilderingly, however, it is still planning to take the entire operation offline next year over the risk of minor earthquakes in the surrounding area and some pushback from environmentalists.

Germany can also increase its future capacity to supply energy simply by extending the lifespan of its nuclear power plants that are meant to come offline at the end of the year. The governing coalition said it is now considering this option, but the Greens – including Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock – continue to resist the move. The party's stance on this issue is somewhat understandable – after all, Germany's Green Party was in

large part borne out of Germany's Cold War-era anti-nuclear movement. Nevertheless, by blocking a relatively straightforward and low-risk solution to a major problem facing the nation, it risks failing the test of being a responsible government partner at a time of war, less than a year after its best-ever election result.

Beyond increasing their own production capacity by any means possible, European nations should of course also work on forming new partnerships with suppliers outside their region. The global gas crisis and its impacts are by no means limited to Europe. It is therefore imperative that Europe seeks to bring together the international community to coordinate global supply. When the world last faced such a major energy crisis, the Allies had significant control over the world's oil supplies. British Petroleum and its predecessors, and the forefathers of the modern United States energy majors, controlled most of the Middle East's petroleum at the dawn of World War II. Britain established the Petroleum Warfare Department and the Petroleum Board – which brought together all allied energy firms, including US ones even before Pearl Harbor brought the US into the conflict directly – to coordinate supplies for the war.

Today, ownership of global energy supplies is far more diversified. And while the US has pledged to use its role as a lique-

fied natural gas (LNG) exporter to support Europe, a fire this June at its flagship liquefaction plant in Freeport, Texas has seen export capacity fall by some 17 percent. Thus addressing global gas shortages will require a coming together of key public and private players from across the world to develop a strategy for this winter. Opportunities have been missed. No significant agreements on gas production were reached at the recent June G7 summit.

And the G20 summit this November is unlikely to deliver any major progress since Russia remains a member. European leaders will have to find other forums to achieve this agenda. The upcoming Gastech conference in Milan at the beginning of September may prove one forum, as it will bring together many of the industry's CEOs and energy ministers from around the world. The United Nations General Assembly summit begins the following week in New York and could prove another opportunity for energy diplomacy, if preparations begin now. But time is running out for Europe and the world to insulate themselves from Putin's weaponisation of gas supplies. The best time to start has clearly passed, but the next best time is now.

The writer is a Fellow at the Foreign Policy Research Institute and a Political Risk consultant based in London. Courtesy Aljazeera

Recession in US

The US gross domestic product declined at an annual rate of 0.9 percent in the second quarter, following a bigger drop in the first three months of the year. While not the official definition, two quarters of negative growth is commonly viewed as a strong signal that a recession is underway, and a downturn in the world's largest economy would have global consequences — as well as domestic political costs.

The US economy contracted for a second straight quarter between April and June, government data showed, adding fuel to recession fears in a headache for President Joe Biden ahead of midterm elections. The ongoing strength in the job market and other signs of growth make it unlikely that this will be categorized as a recession.

After a 1.6 percent decline in the first three months of the year, the report said the slowdown in the latest quarter was largely due to drops in government spending at all levels, in private investment on goods including autos, and on residential buildings, despite an increase in exports. But personal consumption expenditures (PCE) continued to increase, though at a slower rate than the prior quarter, the data shows.

The US economy also continues to battle sky-high inflation, as a result of supply chain snarls due to Covid-19 lockdowns, as well as the fallout from Russia's war in Ukraine which has sent food and fuel prices soaring. Consumer prices topped nine percent in June, the highest in more than four decades, while the GDP data showed another key inflation measure, the PCE price index, rose a still-high 7.1 percent in the latest three months, the same as in the January-March period. The US central bank has been raising interest rates aggressively with the latest big hike to try to cool the economy and tamp down price pressures.

Biden insisted that the US economy is on the right path despite the slowdown, touting the strong labor market. That doesn't sound like a recession to me, he said in remarks at the White House. But his critics are sure to seize on the report as proof of the veteran Democrat's mismanagement. It's no surprise that the economy is slowing down as the Federal Reserve acts to bring down inflation Biden said in a statement shortly after the GDP report was released. But even as we face historic global challenges, we are on the right path and we will come through this transition stronger and more secure.

It would be highly unusual for an economy still adding jobs at a rapid pace, and with near record-low unemployment, to fall into recession. Even so, many economists say the discussion of a downturn is more a matter of when, not if. That poses a major political headache for the president, who has seen his approval ratings plummet in recent months as American families struggle to make ends meet due to surging inflation.

Fed Chair Jerome Powell agreed with Biden and other economists who say the GDP figures are inconsistent with other strong data. Powell on Wednesday said he does not think the country is currently in a recession because there are too many areas of the economy that are performing too well. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen says there is a path to lower inflation without triggering an uptick in joblessness, though she acknowledged numerous risks to the economic outlook.



An Effective Global pandemic response

Mariana Mazzucato & Jayati Ghosh

At their recent meeting in Bali on July 15-16, G20 finance ministers reaffirmed their commitment to coordinated action to get the Covid-19 pandemic under control and better prepare for the next global health emergency. A central topic was the creation of a new financial intermediary fund (FIF) to address pandemic preparedness and response (PPR), under the trusteeship of the World Bank and with the World Health Organisation (WHO) playing a central technical and co-ordinating role. The goal is to close some of the annual PPR financing gap of \$10.5bn and help strengthen capacities that are critical to protecting global health, including genomic sequencing and drug manufacturing.

But while all current FIF stakeholders seem to agree on inclusive governance in principle, design discussions are still happening with only the founding donors in the room. Lower-income countries and civil-society representatives remain outside. The G20 should set a deadline: By August 1, 2022, all stakeholders should be fully included in design conversations via a constituency-based model that gives equal weight to all voices, irrespective of their financial contributions. This includes a voting role for civil society – an increasingly important norm in global health governance. The FIF should mark a long-overdue departure from the current approach, which treats PPR as a favour that rich countries do for poorer countries.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Recall that it was South Africa's novel approach to low-cost, high-impact genomic sequencing that helped the world detect and understand the new Omicron variant last November – a tremendous global public service. But about one-third of all countries currently do not have the resources and capacity to do any genomic sequencing, with huge gaps across Africa and Latin America in particular. These are also regions where vaccine hoarding by the Global North has meant that Covid-19 continues to circulate among largely unvaccinated populations and mutates at rates that have left public health officials and pharmaceutical companies struggling to keep up.

The inclusion of the WHO in the FIF is a central piece of the governance structure. Hardwiring it into the FIF's design should include having the WHO chair the technical advisory group that will assess and weigh the evidence and data required to inform priorities. The WHO is not only the leading hub of scientific expertise and co-ordination for global health; it also represents 194 countries, providing essential legitimacy. While the FIF is meant to augment existing donor and national PPR investment in public health, there are already signs that its fundraising could cannibalise the resources of well-tested complementary mechanisms like the Global Fund and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations. If the FIF ends up undermining resourcing for the rest of the global PPR framework simply to become the shiny new deliverable at this year's G20 summit, it will have done more harm than good for global health security.

The scale of financial need – particularly in low- and middle-income countries confront-

ing a massive debt crisis and soaring inflation – far surpasses what even the most effective FIF will be able to deliver. As part of its commitments to PPR, the G20 should redouble its efforts to bring China and private creditors to the table to renegotiate mounting debt burdens through its Common Framework, or face the risk of many more Sri Lanka-style debt defaults and growing social and political unrest in the coming months and years. To ensure the success of the FIF and global PPR efforts more broadly, the G20 must take all measures within its control to provide debt relief and free up fiscal space in low- and middle-income countries.

This includes extending the Common Framework and the Debt Service Suspension Initiative, and developing effective ways to ensure private-sector participation; eliminating austerity conditions from International Monetary Fund loans that encourage countries to cut public spending in areas like health; increasing liquidity through additional allocations of special drawing rights (the IMF's reserve asset); and exploring more creative financing mechanisms like the "debt for health" swaps used by the Global Fund. The new FIF proposal and broader G20 and World Bank actions on PPR cannot afford to deliver "health for some" – the wealthiest and most privileged. This is a morally bankrupt and woefully ineffective approach. Now is the time to pivot toward a more promising "health for all" approach, starting with an inclusively governed FIF and economic interventions that better enable low- and middle-income countries to invest as required in their own health systems.

The writers hail from World Health Organisation and United Nations respectively. Courtesy GulfTimes

Israeli brutalities against children in Gaza

Ray Hanania

Israel's relentless assault on the citizens of the Gaza Strip began on the very day that it was captured by Israel in June, 1967. But the brutality has risen sharply ever since Israel withdrew its 21 illegal settlements in August, 2005 and relocated its occupation forces to encircle Gaza.

Most often, the public only hears about the Gaza Strip when Palestinians initiate violence in response to Israel's constant attacks and strangling embargo. Gaza is an open-air prison controlled by Israel's government, and often serves as a shooting gallery for Israeli soldiers whenever Palestinians attempt to protest at their confinement.

The brutality rarely gets media coverage unless Palestinians respond with violent acts, such as flying untargeted kites carrying petrol bombs over Gaza's borders toward Israel. The desperation of the oppressed and brutalized Palestinians has only increased as the population has grown by more than 25 percent from 1.5 million in 2006 to more than 2 million today. The Al-Mezan report received no coverage from the mainstream Western news media, which operates with a censorship mandate, only awakening when violence there benefits Israel's self-serving and exaggerated narrative.

Even when Palestinians attempt to leave Gaza for foreign destinations, such as students seeking to attend schools in Europe or the Middle East, Israel's government can incarcerate them without charge, as they do to hundreds of thousands of Palestinians each year in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem. In the past 15 years, 204 Palestinians, including 48 higher education students, have been arrested and imprisoned without formal charge. The Israeli government's system of racist apartheid embraces policies that distinguish between Jews and non-Jews. Jews who are arrested must first be charged and given the right to defend themselves

before any punishment is meted out.

Non-Jews, on the other hand, are arrested and punished first without habeas corpus, a Western law that requires a person who is arrested to be brought before a judge into a public courtroom to petition for release unless lawful evidence and grounds are presented to justify their detention. In many cases, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians are imprisoned under the old British mandate system used by Israel's government without ever being charged or allowed to address a judge, individually or with a lawyer. The denial of that right is a fundamental cornerstone of apartheid racism, which this week was showcased by a representative of South Africa, where the West first defined the term.

On July 26, Naledi Pandor, South Africa's minister of international relations and cooperation, said: "The Palestinian narrative evokes experiences of South Africa's own history of racial segregation and oppression. As oppressed South Africans, we experienced first-hand the effects of racial inequality, discrimination and denial, and we cannot stand by while another generation of Palestinians are left behind." Pandor called on the UN General Assembly to investigate and formally verify that Israel should be classified as an apartheid state. No Western media covered Pandor's speech.

The West led the fight against apartheid South Africa until the system collapsed in the 1990s. Ironically, the apartheid system in South Africa began in parallel with the creation of Israel in 1948, and while apartheid racism was fundamental in the creation of Israel, it was never acknowledged until recently. The Al-Mezan report should be formally introduced to the UN and read by every nation. Its conclusions should be codified internationally as an indictment of Israeli government's racist and discriminatory policies, which violate the fundamentals of international law.

The writer is an award-winning former Chicago City Hall political reporter and columnist. Courtesy Arab News

IS Prisoners' Swap

Russia will propose time for call with US: Larov

Says Moscow ready to listen to Washington's proposals on grain exports

TASHKENT: Russia is currently negotiating the date for a phone call with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Russia's top diplomat told reporters on Friday. Speaking to reporters here in Uzbekistan's capital on the sidelines of a meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Sergey Lavrov said that they only learned about Blinken's wish for a phone call while on a visit to Africa. "We're currently negotiating the time for such contact; it will take place when I'm in my office. Obviously, this could hardly happen today. But, in the coming days, we will offer our US colleagues a convenient date," Lavrov said.



He also stressed that Moscow is ready to listen to Washington's proposals on exchanging prisoners and grain exports, in the wake of a landmark deal

during the meeting in Geneva in June 2021.

During that meeting, they agreed to task competent people to work on these issues. And the Foreign Ministry is not among them. However, we will listen to what he (Blinken) has to say," he said. On Ukrainian grain, Lavrov said it would be interesting to hear how the US side is going to "implement the obligations they took upon themselves" within the context of the UN secretary-general's initiative. US sanctions on Russia are preventing the full implementation of grain export contracts, he added. Lavrov claimed that African countries and Russian partners in the SCO understand that any member of the international community may fall under US sanctions.

Lavrov said that the SCO summit

will pass an agreement to expand the use of national currencies in mutual trade. He underlined that Moscow assumes that "no provocations that could aggravate this situation" will be undertaken on Taiwan. "Our position of having only one China remains unchanged, the same position in words is periodically confirmed by the United States, but in practice, as you yourself understand, actions do not always match their words," he said, perhaps referring to reports US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi might soon visit Taiwan. On French President Emmanuel Macron's recent remarks on Russia, Lavrov said: "Macron's statements about expanding Africa's ties with Russia are offensive." On a visit to Benin on Wednesday, Macron labeled Russia "one of the last imperial colonial powers" for its war on Ukraine.

IS One China policy

Kremlin expresses solidarity with China over Taiwan

MOSCOW: The Kremlin expressed "solidarity" on Friday with China's stance on Taiwan after Chinese President Xi Jinping warned US leader Joe Biden not to "play with fire" over the self-ruled island. "Certainly we are in solidarity," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

"We respect China's sovereignty and territorial integrity and believe that no country in the world should have the right to question this or take any inflammatory or other steps," he added. "We are convinced that such behaviour on the international arena can only cause additional tension."

On Thursday, Xi warned the US president not to "play with fire" over Taiwan during a lengthy telephone call that the White House said aimed to steady the superpowers' rocky relationship.

Beijing has upheld friendly ties with Russia as Western nations have sought to isolate President Vladimir Putin's government from the global financial and diplomatic order over Moscow's military assault on Ukraine.

Democratic Taiwan lives under constant threat of being seized by China, which views the self-ruled island as part of its territory to be taken by force if necessary. Russia's assault on Ukraine has heightened fears that Beijing might similarly follow through on threats to annex its much smaller and outgunned neighbour.

Russia supports Beijing's "one China" policy on the issue of Taiwan, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Friday after Chinese President Xi Jinping warned US President Joe Biden not to play with fire over the island. "Our position on the existence of only one China remains unchanged," Lavrov told reporters. "We have no problem with upholding the principle of China's sovereignty." Beijing has issued escalating warnings about repercussions should US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi visit Taiwan, which says it is facing increasing Chinese military and economic threats.

Explosion rocks Kabul Cricket Stadium

KABUL: An explosion went off inside Kabul's main cricket stadium during a domestic league match on Friday, injuring four people, an official of Afghanistan Cricket Board (ACB) said. "The match was going on between two teams in Shpageza League, and during the match a blast happened; four civilians in the crowd have been injured," the Chief Executive of ACB, Nassib Khan, said in a statement. ACB staff and players were safe, he added.

China will strengthen cooperation with Iran: President Xi

BEIJING: China's President Xi Jinping on Friday said Beijing will strengthen cooperation with Iran. "China is willing to strengthen cooperation with Iran within Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and other frameworks," Xi told his Iranian counterpart Ebrahim Raisi in a phone call, the Chinese daily Global Times reported. The phone call was held while the SCO is holding a summit of its foreign ministers in Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan. Iran is a member of the SCO. Xi said China supports the "independent development paths" of Middle Eastern countries.

China and Iran have raised their bilateral relations to the strategic level and have also signed a deal under which Beijing will invest more than \$400 billion in Iran in the next 25 years. Earlier in the day, Xi also spoke to his Polish counterpart Andrzej Duda. Xi said that China sees Poland as a "preferred partner in Europe and is willing to increase political trust and continue to improve the comprehensive strategic partnership." The duo also discussed the situation in Ukraine.

Israeli forces martyr Palestinian teenager in West Bank

RAMALLAH: A Palestinian teenager was killed on Friday by Israeli soldiers during clashes in a village near the West Bank city of Ramallah, local health authorities said. The 16-year-old boy was hit by live ammunition fired by Israeli soldiers in the Al-Mughayyir village and died of critical wounds in the chest after being sent to hospital, the Palestinian Ministry of Health said in a short press release. Palestinian eyewitnesses said that dozens of Palestinian protesters held a demonstration in the village against the Israeli policy of expanding settlements and confiscating Palestinian land.

Waving Palestinian flags and chanting anti-Israeli slogans, the protesters clashed with the Israeli soldiers who used dispersal measures and even opened live fire. There was no immediate Israeli response to the incident. Palestinians in the West Bank frequently hold protests against the Israeli settlements, which usually lead to violent clashes with Israeli security forces. Since 1967, Israel has constructed dozens of settlements on the occupied Palestinian lands. According to official Palestinian figures, more than 600,000 Israeli settlers now live in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

Zelensky oversees loading of 1st grain export ship

KYIV: President Volodymyr Zelensky has visited a port in southern Ukraine to oversee grain being loaded for export onto a Turkish ship, the presidency said Friday, following a deal with Russia brokered by the United Nations and Turkey. "The first vessel, the first ship, is being loaded since the beginning of the war. This is a Turkish vessel," Mr Zelensky said, according to a statement from the presidency. Video footage from the Chornomorsk port released by the presidency showed him in front of a ship called Polarnet.

The statement said exports could start in "the coming days" under the plan aimed at getting millions of tonnes of Ukrainian grain stranded by Russia's naval blockade to world markets.

"Our side is fully prepared. We sent all the signals to our partners - the UN and Turkey, and our military guarantees the security situation. "The minister of infrastructure is in direct contact with the Turkish side and the UN. We are waiting for a signal from them that we can start," Mr Zelensky was quoted as saying.

IS POWs' killing

Ukraine, Russia trade blame for shelling of prison

KYIV/MOSCOW: Dozens of Ukrainian prisoners of war appear to have been killed in an missile strike on Friday, with Moscow and Kyiv accusing each other of carrying out the attack. The incident overshadowed UN-backed efforts to restart grain shipments from Ukraine and ease a looming global hunger crisis stemming from the war, now in its sixth month. Russia's defense ministry said 40 prisoners were killed and 75 wounded in the attack on the prison in the frontline town of Olenivka, in a part

of Donetsk province held by separatists.

It accused Kyiv of targeting it with US-made HIMARS rockets, Russian news agencies reported.

Ukraine's armed forces denied carrying out strike and blamed it on Russian forces, saying Russian artillery had targeted the prison. "In this way, the Russian occupiers pursued their criminal goals - to accuse Ukraine of committing 'war crimes', as well as to hide the torture of prisoners and executions," the general staff of the Ukrain-

ian Armed Forces said. The Russian defense ministry said the prison housed Ukrainian prisoners of war and that eight prison staff were also wounded.

Russian-backed separatist leader Denis Pushilin was quoted as saying there were no foreigners among 193 people held there. Video released by a Russian war correspondent showed Russian-backed military personnel sifting through the burned-out remains of what he said was the prison. The smashed roof of the building was hanging down and the

charred remains of bodies could be seen. Separately Ukraine said at least five people had been killed and seven wounded in a Russian missile strike on the south-eastern city of Mykolaiv, a river port just off the Black Sea, as Russia fired across frontlines in eastern and southern Ukraine. A missile struck near a public transport stop, regional governor Vitaly Kim said on Telegram. Russia, which denies targeting civilians, did not immediately comment on the situation and Reuters could not verify the battlefield reports.

India, China ministers at summit as Chinese ship heads to Sri Lanka



NEW DELHI: Indian and Chinese foreign ministers attended a regional conference in Uzbekistan on Friday, a day after New Delhi expressed concern over a Chinese military ship's planned visit to a strategic port in India's southern neighbour Sri Lanka. New Delhi worries that the Chinese-built and leased Hambantota port will be used by China as a military base in India's backyard. The US\$1.5 billion (S\$2 billion) port is near the main shipping route from Asia to Europe. Relations between India and China have been strained since armed clashes on their border two years ago killed at least 20 Indian and four Chinese soldiers.

Indian media have said that Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar and Chinese counterpart Wang Yi, who last met in Indonesia earlier this month, could hold a bilateral meeting in the Uzbek capital Tashkent on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) conference. India's foreign ministry said it had no information on that. Shipping data from Refinitiv Eikon showed research and survey vessel Yuan Wang 5 was enroute to Hambantota and was expected to arrive on Aug 11, at a time when Sri Lanka is facing its worst economic crisis in seven decades. India has provided its neighbour nearly US\$4 billion in support this year alone.

China has not officially commented on the ship's visit and the matter has not gained traction in Chinese media. China's foreign ministry did not respond to a request for comment. Foreign security analysts describe the Yuan Wang 5 as one of China's latest generation space-tracking ships, used to monitor satellite, rocket and intercontinental ballistic missile launches.

IS Canadian phase

Khalistan Referendum to start September 18

TORONTO: Pro-Khalistan secessionist group Sikhs For Justice (SFJ) has announced to hold the Khalistan Referendum on September 18 this year in Canada's Toronto, a city known for hosting one of the largest and most diverse Sikh diasporas. While Indian premier Narendra Modi's government expresses concerns over the incumbent Canadian government giving space to pro-Khalistan sovereignists, the advocacy group SFJ announced to kick-start the Canadian phase of Khalistan Referendum on September 18 from Toronto, Ontario. The Canadian Sikhs will vote on the question "Should Indian governed Punjab be an independent country?"



of this century through which we will balkanise India and liberate our beloved Punjab to honour our gurus".

In a press conference heavily attended by journalists and news channels here, the SFJ released the map of the areas earmarked for secession from India through Khalistan. Declaring Shimla as the future Capital of Sikh homeland Khalistan, the SFJ's map encompasses the areas of pre-1966 Punjab which includes Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Sikh majority areas of Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. The referendum will be held in different phases during which the polling will take place across the country, including cities of Ottawa, Montreal, Calgary, Edmonton, Vancouver and Surrey, the SFJ said.

The voting in the global Khalistan Referendum is being held under the supervision of Punjab Referendum Commission (PRC) www.punjabreferendumcommission.org, a panel of world-renowned non-aligned experts on independence referendums and direct democracy. Since the launch of voting on October 31, 2021 from London, despite India's protests, the governments of UK, Switzerland and Italy have allowed the Khalistan Referendum to take place in which 400,000+ Sikhs have so far voted. The referendum events in the various European cities have seen tens of thousands of Sikhs coming out to vote while raising slogans in unison for the creation of an independent state of Khalistan for millions of Sikhs from around the world

Nuclear deterrent is ready: Kim

Addresses the celebration of 69th Anniversary of Great Victory in War

PYONGYANG: North Korean President Kim Jong Un said his country is ready to mobilise its nuclear war deterrent and counter any US military clash, and criticised South Korea's new president for the first time, warning Seoul was pushing towards the brink of war. Kim made the remarks during a speech at an event to mark the 69th anniversary of the July 27 Korean War armistice, which left the two Koreas technically still at war. The confrontation with the United States posed nuclear threats since the 1950-53 war required the North to achieve an "urgent historical task" of beefing up its self defence, Kim said.

"Our armed forces are thoroughly prepared to respond to any crisis, and our nation's nuclear war deterrence is also fully ready to mobilise its absolute strength faithfully, accurately and promptly to its mission," he said. The speech came after Seoul and Washington officials said Pyongyang has completed preparations to conduct its first nuclear test since 2017.

In the speech, Kim said Washington continues "dangerous, illegal hostile acts" with South Korea against the North, and seeks to justify its behaviour by "demonising" the country. The North has long accused the United States of double standards over military

activities and pursuing a hostile policy towards Pyongyang, saying it hampers a restart of talks aimed at dismantling the country's nuclear and missile programmes in return for sanctions relief.

"The duplex act of the United States, which is misleading all the routine actions of our armed forces as 'provocation' and 'threat' while holding large-scale joint military exercises that seriously threaten our security, is literally a robbery," Kim said. "That is driving bilateral relations to the point where it is difficult to turn back, into a state of conflict."

Kim also denounced South Korea's new conservative President

Yoon Suk-yeol by name for the first time, accusing him of threatening the North's security and right to self defence. "Warmongers" and "disgusting thugs" in Mr Yoon's administration are bent on confrontational military activities, Kim said, singling out Seoul's weapons developments and drive to bring back US nuclear strategic assets as well as allied military drills. Their "heinous confrontational policy" toward the North and "toadyish, treacherous acts" are pushing the situation to the brink of war, he said. North Korea in recent months has tested hypersonic missiles and missiles that it says could carry tactical nuclear



weapons, narrowing the time that Seoul would have to respond to a pending attack.

Yoon has vowed to complete the so-called "Kill Chain" system that calls for preemptive strikes against the North's missiles and possibly its

leadership if an imminent attack is detected. But that system would never be able to cover the North's "absolute weapon," Kim said. "If you think you can counter us militarily and preemptively neutralise or destroy part of our military

power," he said. "Such a dangerous attempt will immediately be punished by a powerful force, and Yoon Suk-yeol's government and his army will be annihilated."

Seoul's defence ministry spokesman said it would continue reinforcing its own capabilities and the US extended deterrence including its nuclear umbrella to better respond to Pyongyang's threats. Professor Yang Moo-jin from the University of North Korean Studies in Seoul, said Mr Kim's remarks seem to be intended to highlight the legitimacy for weapons developments and his "eye for eye" approach toward Washington and Seoul.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index

Current	Prev. Close
40,150.36	40,276.64
Day's High	Day's Low:
40,420.57	40,026.86
Index Value	Change
4,823,817,718	-126.28
Percentage	Time
-0.31%	29 Jul, 2022 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index

Index Value	Change
7,438.63	+91.80
Percentage	Time
+1.27%	29 Jul, 3:30 pm GMT+1

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average

Index Value	Change
32,695.62	+165.99
Percentage	Time
+0.51%	29 Jul, 10:30 am GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average

Index Value	Change
27,801.64	+99.73
Percentage	Time
-13.84	29 Jul, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	166.08	167.33
Bahrain Dinar	633.61	638.11
Canadian Dollar	185.59	186.94
China Yuan	35.31	35.56
Danish Krone	32.07	32.42
Euro	242	246
Hong Kong Dollar	30.08	30.43
Indian Rupee	2.99	3.07
Japanese Yen	2.05	2.12
Kuwaiti Dinar	775.78	780.78
Malaysian Ringgit	53.5	53.95
New Zealand \$	149.53	150.73
Norwegians Krone	24.38	24.68
Omani Riyal	619.6	624.1
Qatari Riyal	65.45	65.95
Saudi Riyal	61.7	62.5
Singapore Dollar	172.49	173.79
Swedish Korona	23.24	23.54
Swiss Franc	248.95	250.7
Thai Bhat	6.53	6.63
U.A.E Dirham	63.5	65
UK Pound Sterling	293	300
US Dollar	246	250

ICCI calls for supplementary budget to address tax issues

Govt urged to consult trade bodies to address such tax anomalies

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Muhammad Shakeel Munir, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) said that the traders across the country were up in protest against the levy of fixed sales tax in electricity bills while the business community of other sectors have also shown great concerns over the imposition of many new taxes through the Finance Bill 2022 including deemed rental income, capital gain tax, increase in withholding tax etc. and called upon the government to introduce a supplementary budget in consultation with trade bodies in order to address such tax issues of the business community.

He said this while addressing a meeting of ICCI Tax Committee.

Muhammad Shakeel Munir said that the government has introduced minimum fixed sales tax of Rs.3000 for small traders in the monthly electricity bills even though the amount of bill is less than Rs.1000, which was unjustified. He stressed that the government should introduce



fixed sales tax on the basis of consumption of electricity units to make it affordable for small traders.

He said that the annual income of many small traders was less than the taxable threshold, but they were being forced to pay minimum monthly sales tax of Rs.3000, which is not justified. He urged that the government should consult with the trade bodies to address such tax anomalies and come up with a supplementary budget to

rationalize high taxes.

Jamshaid Akhtar Sheikh, Senior Vice President ICCI said that the government was charging 5% sales tax on the amount of up to Rs.20,000 of electricity bill and 7.5% on the amount exceeding Rs.20,000, which was more affordable for traders while the minimum fixed sales tax of Rs.3000 in monthly electricity bills was not acceptable for them.

Naeem Siddiqui, Convener, ICCI Tax

Committee said that the sales tax should not be collected with electricity bills and urged that FBR should introduce self-assessment scheme for the business community, which would not only address their tax issues, it would also help in enhancing the tax revenue of the country.

Mian Waqas Masud said that PRAL was storing computerized payment receipts (CPRs) for just 3 years in its record due to which CPRs of over 3 years were not available in its system and FBR was issuing notices for CPRs to the business community, which was strange. He stressed that PRAL should keep CPRs at least for 5 years in its system to save the business community from such unnecessary notices.

Tahir Abbasi, Khalid Chaudhry, Mian Muhammad Ramzan, Muhammad Yousaf Khan, Ch. Masood Tabish, Kashif Mahmood, Hasan Iqbal Gardezi, Touseef Zaman, Babar Chaudhry, Hafiz Bilal and others members of Tax Committee also highlighted various tax issues and urged that the introduction of a supplementary budget in consultation with stakeholders was the best solution to address them.

Excessive money printing behind global hyperinflation

Global situation, political conflict and failed govt companies causing inflation in Pakistan, says Mian Zahid Hussain

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain on Friday said the main reason for the high inflation at the global level is excessive currency printing by major economies.

Developed countries printed a lot of money during the 2008 global financial crisis and distributed trillions of dollars to large companies in the name of economic recovery, he said. Mian Zahid Hussain said that trillions were again distributed during the pandemic the result of which is now in front of everyone.

Talking to the business community, the veteran busi-



ness leader said that it is impossible to control inflation without absorbing the excess capital circulating in the international market.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that some Western economists brought to light a modern monetary theory during the crisis according to which economically stable countries should print as much money as they want as it will improve the situation.

Many countries started implementing this theory without thinking and injected trillions of dollars into the system through lavish bailout packages and other measures. The balance of demand and supply was compromised by the injection of more than thirty trillion dollars in the system and the whole world has become a victim of inflation.

Now inflation in the United States has reached 9.16%, which is the highest level in forty years. As long as this excess capital remains in the market, achieving economic equilibrium will be impossible, he observed.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that now the US is raising interest rates to absorb additional capital due to which the purchasing power of Americans has drastically decreased and due to the decrease in demand, the whole

world is plunging in recession because eighty-eight percent of the world's transactions are in US dollars.

The only solution to the problem is to absorb the excess capital available in the global economy to improve the situation, he said, adding that it took fourteen years of mismanagement to create this disorder and it will take at least three years to end it, after which the price of all commodities will be adjusted to their real value.

The inflationary crisis had already started, but the war between Russia and Ukraine and the failed sanctions on Russia has increased its intensity, while the causes of inflation in Pakistan include the global economic situation, losses of failed government institutions and growing political confrontations.

Bank Alfalah releases financial results for HY 2022

Staff Reporter

KARACHI: The Board of Directors of Bank Alfalah Limited (BAFL), in its meeting held on July 28, 2022, approved the bank's financial results for the six months ended June 30, 2022.

The bank announced profit after tax of PKR 8,703 billion, up by 25.5%. EPS stood at Rs. 4.90 (Jun 21: Rs. 3.90). The Board has approved an interim cash dividend of Rs. 2.5 (last year: Rs. 2.0) per share.

The Bank's deposit base stood at Rs. 1.318 trillion at the end of Q2'22, with YoY growth of 28.6%. The Bank continues to outpace the

industry in deposit growth driven by a strong momentum in its current deposits which showed market leading growth of 25.7% YoY. Moreover, BAFL's CA mix at 45.5%, remains one of the strongest in the industry which has been a result of the bank's continued focus on market penetration serving more and more customer segments and effective branch expansion strategy.

Furthermore, despite challenging market fundamentals, the Bank's credit performance was strong in the first half of 2022 with Gross Advances reaching Rs. 755.340 billion, showing a growth of 18.3% YoY.

MMBL relocates Multan branch to promote access to financial solutions



Staff Reporter

MULTAN: Pakistan's largest digital bank, Mobilink Microfinance Bank Limited (MMBL), has expanded its banking operations by relocating its Multan branch to Muslim Gujjar Khadda Road Markaz, to serve its growing customer base and promote access to convenient and customized digital banking and financial solutions to residents and the local business community at one of the busiest trade centers of the metropolitan.

MMBL Multan's new premises was inaugurated in the presence of senior executives, staff members, and the media. Speaking at the opening ceremony, President & CEO, MMBL, Ghazanfar Azzam said, "The city of Multan is a growing business hub in Punjab and is home to various industrial & commerce enterprises. We are thrilled to strengthen our foot-

print in this great locality and excited to continue supporting the community with customized digital financial products and services. The new branch is a full-service banking center designed to enrich our customers' banking experience with us. At MMBL, we believe in investing in communities where we can connect at a more personal level with customers and empower them with tailored digital financial solutions."

With a focus on promoting financial inclusion across the country, MMBL offers an array of customized digital and financial solutions to its growing customer base through its expansive digital and physical touchpoints. MMBL is financially powering over 40 million registered users, including over 15 million monthly active mobile wallets across Pakistan, helping serve the most underserved and marginalized populations across the nation.

Made in Pakistan

PAAPAM opens Pakistan's largest automotive Expo 2022

Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Makhdoom Syed Murtaza Mehmood Federal Minister of Industries & Production inaugurated the Pakistan Auto Show 2022 alongwith Guest of honor Chairman EDB, Almas Haider, President LCCI, Nauman Kabir and Former President FPCCI and LCCI, Anjum Nisar at the Expo Centre in Lahore. The event has been organized by the Pakistan Association of Automotive Parts and Accessories Manufacturers (PAAPAM) and will run from July 29th- 31st 2022. Event features more than 153+ exhibitors comprising of local and international auto-manufacturers and related enterprises. PAAPAM represents over 3000 large, medium and small industries all over Pakistan. This year's show is themed of "MADE IN PAKISTAN".

Renowned companies exhibited their latest parts and technologies, including 150 auto parts manufacturers. Visitors will be able to take test-drive tracks for the latest cars of MG, Toyota, Suzuki and Honda. Also, Motorway Police Kiosk will be there to facilitate the visitors by engaging them on how to improve their driving and offer-



ing Learner's Driving Licenses on the spot.

While addressing the media at the inaugural ceremony, the chief guest Makhdoom Syed Murtaza Mehmood Federal Minister of Industries & Production stated "The government's strong commitment to this industry helps to encourage large-scale investments and creates a business-friendly environment for the automotive and engineering sectors as well. I offer my heartfelt congratulations to our local industrialists and engineers who have achieved remarkable success in establishing a robust engineering sector, which is generating remarkable new opportunities for value-added exports. The automobile industry of Paki-

stan is a cornerstone of the national economy. It not only vitalizes the economy but plays an essential role in elevating Pakistan's image as a progressive country with a thriving industrial base."

Pakistan Auto Show 2020 Chief Organizer and PAAPAM former chairman Syed Nabeel Hashmi said "Pakistan Auto Show 2022 is setting new benchmarks and trends for the automotive industry. Today, this mega event attracts more than 100,000 visitors from all over Pakistan and internationally. Over 200 international buyers and well over 100 international visitors will be attending the largest auto show in Pakistan."

SNGPL's shareholders approves 70% cash dividend for FY 2020-21

Spokesman Report

LAHORE: The 57th Annual General Meeting of shareholders of Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) was held on Friday, July 29 2022 at Pearl Continental Hotel, Lahore. The shareholders of the Company Approved the Annual Accounts for the FY 2020-21 with profit after tax of Rs. 10.99 billion translating into EPS of Rs. 17.32. The shareholders also approved Final Cash Dividend @50% i.e. Rs. 5.00 per share on the recommendations of the Board of Directors of SNGPL in addition to 20% i.e. Rs. 2.00 per share interim cash dividend already paid for the period ended December 31, 2020. Moreo-

ver, the Shareholders of the Company re-appointed M/s. Yousaf Adil, Chartered Accountants as Auditors for FY 2021-22.

The Chairperson, Ms. Roohi Raees Khan informed the shareholders that, SNGPL remained focused and robust despite existing market challenges including economic & financial and delivered positive and growth oriented results. This has been achieved mutually with the able guidance of the Board of directors and the Management alike. She further elaborated the support of the Ministry of Petroleum and other key government stakeholders have contributed to this achievement. She expressed pleasure in announcing that the Company



declared the dividend for the fourth consecutive year.

The Chairperson briefed the shareholders about focus of the Board since

the start of its tenure in July 2020. The top priority remained reduction of UFG losses from 12.32 % to 8.6 % (approximately 15BCF), this reduction

has a manifold effect in terms of loss of precious national resources, adverse environmental effects and a dent to the profitability of the Company. To maintain this trend a 3 years sustainability program has been introduced to maintain this positive trend. She added that Digitization drive combined with Cost controls and customer service are being continuously focused upon. She appreciated the role of the Management under the leadership of the Managing Director who are working continuously to provide best services to the customers. The Chairperson shared the new regulations for SOEs formulated by the Government, which would bring more transparency and efficiency in operations of SOEs.

PepsiCo launches Child Education Program



Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: PepsiCo Pakistan has launched its new 'Child Education Program' in partnership with the Institute of Rural Development (IRM) to educate out-of-school children (OOSC) residing in rural agricultural communities near PepsiCo's operations and prepare them to integrate into the mainstream education system. The program launch was announced during a signing ceremony in the presence of Syed M. Abul Hassan Kazmi, Sr. Director Supply Chain & Office of Sustainability Lead, PepsiCo Pakistan and Aasim Reza, Program Manager IRM.

Under the Child Education Program funded by PepsiCo, IRM will develop five SMART Schools for the rural communities in district Kasur, Punjab. The SMART schools are low-cost educational setups that leverage existing resources to educate out-of-school children in a multi-grade classroom setting. The program will offer free educational programs in compliance with the national curriculum and will be tailored to the needs of children who are unable to access public school systems due to limited access or other common barriers to education.

Additionally, a children's day-care center has also been piloted for mothers engaged as field workers at PepsiCo's potato farms in Fatehpur village in Kasur, supporting them in tackling the usual barriers to continue working in agricultural activities and benefitting from income. PepsiCo's on-farm day-care facility features a playground, learning center, and an outdoor play area.

During the signing ceremony Syed M. Abul Hassan Kazmi, Sr. Director Supply Chain & Office of Sustainability Lead, PepsiCo Pakistan shared his insights, "Far too many children are out-of-school in Pakistan and the country has incurred learning losses particularly since the pandemic.

Andrew optimistic for England cricket team's tour to Pakistan

English cricketers would be very excited to come here, says British Acting High Commissioner

ISLAMABAD: British Acting High Commissioner, Andrew Dalglish was optimistic on the long-awaited tour of the England cricket team to Pakistan and hoped that English cricketers would be very excited to come here.

"I hope they (England cricket team) will come and I'm confident that they will be very excited about going back to Pakistan," he said in an exclusive talk with APP.

Andrew said we have got to sort-out the details about that (tour) but I'm remaining very optimistic. "Will they (England) beat the Pakistani team yes, but I'm not prepared to comment on it," he said.

According to tentative details of the tour, it would be the first visit by England's team here in 17 years. Both countries would likely play seven T20Is and three Test matches.

The T20Is were likely to be played



in two venues Karachi and Lahore. The tentative schedule for two venues T20I series has four matches slated to be played in Karachi on September 20, 22, 23 and 25, while three matches in Lahore on September 28, 30 and October 2.

To a question about the Commonwealth Games 2022 being staged in Birmingham, he said he was delighted that England was hosting the Commonwealth Games 2022.

"I think we've got more than hundred

people coming from Pakistan around 60 athletes competing in 12 different events, so good luck to them. It is great to see the women's cricket for the first time in the Games.

"We know the Pakistan women's team is a force to be reckoned with, so we'll be following the event very closely," he said.

It may be mentioned that held every four years, the Games have grown from featuring 11 countries and 400 athletes, to a global spectacle of 4,600 sports men and women from across 72 nations and territories.

The Commonwealth Games 2022 to run till August 8 features thousands of world-class athletes and a global broadcast audience of over a billion.

Pakistan has competed in 13 of the 21 previous Commonwealth Games, from 1954. Its most successful games have been the 1962 Commonwealth Games in Perth, where it was 4th in the overall

rankings and won 8 Gold Medals. Its most successful event has been wrestling, where it has won 42 medals, 21 of which have been Gold. It ranks 3rd overall in Wrestling at the Commonwealth Games.

However, Pakistan was competing in 12 of the 19 sports being run at the Birmingham Commonwealth Games 2022. These include Swimming, Athletics (including Para Athletics), Cricket, Boxing, Hockey, Judo, Squash, Table Tennis, Weightlifting, Wrestling, Badminton, and Gymnastics.

On Wednesday, Andrew visited the Usman Wazeer Boxing academy here, to meet athletes and coaches ahead of the opening of the Commonwealth Games. The Acting High Commissioner also received boxing tips from the pro-athletes, including Usman Wazeer, the first Pakistani to win the Asian Boxing Federation Welterweight title. APP

Pak hockey team focused to deliver in C'wealth Games: Aikman

BIRMINGHAM: Head coach Siegfried Aikman is optimistic that Pakistan team will make the nation proud by displaying stand-out performance in the Commonwealth Games.

Talking to media here on Friday, he said that Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) was trying to facilitate the players in every possible way.

"The atmosphere here is quite encouraging and stimulating. It is helping our team to grow. Hopefully, the boys will deliver and make the nation proud." According to Aikman Pakistan hockey team wanted to perform in the tournament and was determined to get highest possible results.

"The team is very well



focused. The players know what to do and they are really eager to perform," he added.

Pakistan are placed in group A alongside Australia, New Zealand, Scotland and South Africa. They will start their campaign on Saturday (July 30) against South Africa. They will take on New Zealand on July 31 in their

second match.

Then, they will face Scotland on August 3. In their last group match on August 4, they will face six-time Commonwealth Games hockey champions Australia. The top two teams will move to the semifinals, taking place on August 6. The final will be held on August 8, the last day of the

multi-sports event.

Hockey has been played at the Commonwealth Games since 1998 and in that first year, it was Australia who dominated, winning gold in both the men's and women's competitions. Malaysia men and England women took silver, while England men and New Zealand women won the bronze medals.

The Commonwealth Games has a rich sporting tradition that goes back to 1930. In its earliest iteration, the coveted event featured 11 nations and 400 athletes. Now, in its 22nd edition, over 5000 athletes from 72 nations and territories will be participating in the English city of Birmingham in the event known as the Friendly Games. Agencies

Commonwealth Games 2022 kicks off



BIRMINGHAM: Commonwealth Games 2022 kicked off in a carnival of colour at the Alexander Stadium, Birmingham on Thursday night.

Local musical heroes Duran Duran and Black Sabbath guitarist Tony Iommi guest-starred on a night which celebrated Birmingham's industrial heritage and its multicultural tradition, as competitors from the Commonwealth's 72 nations and territories were cheered into the arena by a 30,000 crowd.

Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall arrived in style, driving into the venue in an Aston Martin as part of a convoy of 72 cars which formed a Union Jack when viewed from above.

Charles later officially declared the 22nd edition of the Games open, with a spectacular fireworks display bringing the ceremony to an end and heralding the start of the world's first major multi-sport event to take place free of Covid-19 restrictions since the pandemic took hold.

Charles delivered The Queen's message to the Commonwealth Games. In it, she said the Games "remind us of our connection with one another, wherever we may be in the world, as part of the Commonwealth family of nations".

The Prince of Wales added: "Tonight, in the words of the founder of the Games, we embark once again on a novel adventure here in Birmingham, a pioneering city which has drawn in and embraced so many throughout its history."

"It is a city symbolic of the rich diversity and unity of the Commonwealth, and one which now welcomes you all in friendship." A stunning spectacle also included a Red Arrows fly-past and an appearance from a 10-metre high 'Raging Bull', in a section of the ceremony which focused on the plight of female chain-makers in the early 20th century.

More than 5,000 athletes will compete in 280 events across 19 sports in the 10 days coming up, with a para sport programme integrated into the Games. Agencies

Imran and Munro confirmed as Pakistan Junior League team mentors

Join Daren Sammy, Shahid Afridi and Shoaib Malik at the event to be played in Lahore during October

Spokesman Report

LAHORE: South Africa's highly-rated wrist spinner Imran Tahir and New Zealand's T20 specialist Colin Munro were today confirmed as team mentors for the first of its kind six-team Pakistan Junior League, which will be played at the Gaddafi Stadium from 4-17 October.

Imran and Munro have joined Daren Sammy, Shahid Afridi and Shoaib Malik who were last month named as mentors. The appointment of the sixth team mentor will be announced in due course. After the team naming rights have been confirmed, these celebrated former international stars will be allocated sides.

Javed Miandad will be involved in the tournament as an overall mentor, assisting the mentors of the six sides and the players during the tournament.

Imran played for Pakistan in the ICC U19 Cricket World Cup 1998 before moving to South Africa in 2005 and making his international debut for the Proteas in 2011. The wrist spinner played in 20 Tests, 107 ODIs and



38 T20Is, taking 57, 173 and 63 wickets, respectively. In the HBL PSL, he has represented Multan Sultans (2018, and 2020 to date).

Munro struck three T20I centuries and 11 half-centuries, including a 14-ball 50 against Sri Lanka, in a 65-match career with New Zealand. The hard-hitting batter also played in 57 ODIs, scoring 1,271 runs. The 35-year-old represented Karachi Kings in the 2019 HBL PSL, while he has been on Islamabad United's roster since 2020.

Imran Tahir: "Returning to Lahore for the Pakistan Junior League in a team mentor's role is one of my most satisfying achievements as I still owe a lot to my country of birth. This is an exciting opportunity to work with

emerging slow bowlers and help them develop and flourish so that they have a chance to emulate the great spinners this country has produced.

"I am fully behind the philosophy of Pakistan Junior League as this creates a tough and challenging environment for the players with high expectations, and only those who will clear this scale will go leaps and bounds in their careers. With the amount of international cricket being played, this event will help Pakistan to amplify their pool of players, which, in turn, will increase playing opportunities and earning the prized national cap."

Colin Munro: "I am excited to be part of the inaugural Pakistan Junior League, which I believe will be a game-changer for Pakistan cricket. Investing in youngsters, securing the future of the game and ensuring the national side continues to move in an upward direction should be the objectives of all administrators and I think the PCB has taken a lead here by launching this tournament, which will expose the young talent to the rigours and demands of top-level cricket and help Pakistan in the longer run.

Hamilton leads tributes to retiring Vettel

Mercedes driver says he is 'honoured' to have raced and befriended four-time F1 champion

HUNGARORING: Lewis Hamilton led the way as colleagues, rivals and friends joined in affectionate tribute to Sebastian Vettel on Thursday after the four-time champion announced he will retire from Formula One at the end of the season.

Seven-time champion Hamilton, who made his debut alongside the 35-year-old German in 2007 and was his greatest rival for many years, said it had been an honour to have raced and befriended him.

"Seb, it's been an honour to call you a competitor and an ever greater honour to call you my friend," said Hamilton in a post on Twitter. "Leaving this sport better than you found it is always the goal.

"Have no doubt that whatever comes next for you will be exciting, meaningful, and rewarding. Love you, man."

Later in a paddock interview, he added: "He is one of the few who stood for much more than himself. He used his voice and helped support.

"He has taken the knee from the start and he takes his own journey and he has fought for the things he believes in and for the greater good.

"And I am delighted to have been here and raced alongside with him and I am sad at today's news, but I know he will do things beyond this."

Vettel's protegee and friend Mick Schumacher, son of seven-time champion Michael, said his compatriot had been an impor-



tant part of his own career.

"I'm so sad that you're leaving, but at the same time excited for you and this new chapter of your life. You've been and still are such an important person to me and I'm thankful for our friendship."

Ferrari's Carlos Sainz told

reporters ahead of this weekend's Hungarian Grand Prix how generous Vettel had been to him when he was the simulator driver at Red Bull during his halcyon days, winning four drivers' championships.

"From the beginning, he's

always been a great role model. When I was his simulator driver, at Red Bull, I could see how professional he was—and he was my role model — and he always had time to give advice.

"He has been a great ambassador for the sport and for the younger generation and everyone in F1 loves him for his personality and his life as a human being. We will miss him, but I hope to see him back in the paddock to help us with the future of the sport."

His Ferrari team-mate Charles Leclerc, who worked with Vettel at the Italian team, said: "He's definitely a legend. I have grown as a driver and as a person with him and through him. I feel that we have a special connection. He has always been super nice, a simple and very nice guy." AFP

Registration process of football clubs under 'FIFA Connect' program to start in August

Spokesman Report

LAHORE: The registration process of football clubs under 'FIFA Connect' program will be started in August as this process will restore the real structure of football in Pakistan and help develop careers of Pakistani footballers.

This was revealed by Haroon Malik, Chairman of FIFA-nominated Normalization Committee in a press release issued here on Friday. "By registering more and more players, the world will get an accurate idea of the popularity of football in Pakistan. The Urdu version of 'FIFA Connect' is also in the final stages of preparation that will surely help football organizers to complete the process of registration with utmost ease."

Haroon Malik further said: "Our first priority is to complete the PFF's clean and transparent election process under the mandate given by the international body and also the registration of clubs under the 'FIFA Connect' program. This is the first step towards revolutionizing football in Pakistan. Through this process, talented footballers will also get ample opportunities and due recognition at national and international level."

The football organizers also expressed their views in this regard saying the clubs are the main stakeholders of Pakistan football and the 'FIFA Connect' program will create a coherent record of these nurseries working at the grassroots level. "The players will get recognition at the global level, due to which it will be easy for them to take part in different international events as well as in renowned football leagues of the world."

Footballer Muhammad Ahmed said that registration on a big platform will awaken the spirit of the players to move forward. "The 'FIFA Connect' program will provide the strong base in organizing the entire football system in Pakistan."

Coach Saifullah said that the entire football fraternity is very glad after listing suspension of Pakistan football and hopefully, under the dynamic leadership of NC Chairman Haroon Malik, football will be back on track soon. "The 'FIFA Connect' program will create a profile of not only players but also clubs and coaches which will be recognized globally. It will enhance the opportunities for our players and officials and hopefully, they will further excel at higher level."

Barcelona sign Koude from Sevilla

BARCELONA: Barcelona have reached an agreement in principle to sign French international defender Jules Koude from Sevilla, both La Liga clubs said on Thursday. Financial details of the deal were not disclosed.

According to media reports, Barcelona will pay 55 million euros (\$55.82 million) for the 23-year-old centre back.

"The official nature of the deal is dependent on the player passing a medical and the signing of contracts," Barca said in a statement.

Chelsea had made several bids for Koude during last year's transfer window and reports suggested he was close to joining the Premier League club this month before Barcelona made a late push.

Barcelona, who also beat Chelsea to the signing of Brazilian winger Raphinha from Leeds United earlier this month, finished second in La Liga last season.

Koude arrives in Catalonia after three years with Sevilla, where he made over 100 appearances in all competitions and won the Europa League title in his first season after joining from Ligue 1 side Bordeaux in 2019.

Barcelona have already strengthened their backline this summer with the addition of centre back Andreas Christensen on a free transfer from Chelsea.

They also signed Polish forward Robert Lewandowski from Bayern Munich and Ivory Coast midfielder Franck Kessie, both on free transfers, in a busy transfer window despite being plagued by major financial problems.

The club's spending has been fuelled by the sale of 25% of their domestic television rights to investment firm Sixth Street for the next 25 years. However, Barcelona need to meet La Liga's salary cap to be able to register their new signings. Xavi Hernandez's side will begin their La Liga campaign at home to Rayo Vallecano on Aug 13. Reuters



Shuhada-e-Police KP Sports Festival from July 31

PESHAWAR: Shuhada-e-Police Khyber Pakhtunkhwa sports Festival with the joint collaboration of District Police Officer (DPO) and District Sports Officer (DSO), Charsadda will commence from July 31 to August 4, 2022 at Abdul Wali Khan Sports Complex.

This was stated by DPO Charsadda, Sohail Khalid while talking to APP here on Friday.

DSO Tehseen Ullah Khan, Administrator Abdul Wali Khan Sports Complex Imran Khan, Secretary KP Badminton Association Haji Muhammad Anjad, badminton coaches Muhammad Nadeem and Hayat Ullah were also present.

He said besides badminton various competitions for both male and female including football, badminton, hockey, athletics will be organized during the five day events in order to pay rich tribute and homage to the Shuhada-e-Police Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

These competitions will be held from July 31 to August 4 wherein players both male and female would participate, DPO Charsadda Sohail Khalid said.

He also thanked Directorate General Sports KP and District Sports Officer Charsadda for extending all out support in holding Shuhada-e-Police Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sports Festival which is aimed at to pay rich tribute to those Policemen who rendered great sacrifices in the war against terror. Agencies

Shah Khan from KP wins Punjab Premier Table Tennis League

LAHORE: Shah Khan from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) defeated Ubaid Shah also from KP by 3-0 with the scores of 11-7, 11-7 and 11-9 in the one-sided final match of Punjab Premier Table Tennis League here at Nishtar Park sports Complex gymnasium hall on Friday.

Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Asadullah Faiz and Director General Sports Punjab Mohammad Tariq Qureshi were the guests of honour at the prize distribution ceremony. Director Sports Nadeem Qaiser, Director Youth Affairs Syed Umair Hasan, Multan Divisional Sports Officer Rana Nadeem Anjum, Administrator NPSC gymnasium hall Mustafa Shah and other officials were also present on this occasion.

Later Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab and Director General Sports Punjab Mohammad Tariq awarded trophies and cash prizes among the top position holders.

Sports board Punjab gave away a cash prize of Rs 50000 to the winner of Punjab Premier Table Tennis League, Rs 30000 to runner up and third position holder was given cash prize of Rs 20000. Sports Board Punjab also gave kits to all participants of the event.