



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



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و دکام کرے جسے اللہ نے حرام کیا ہے۔
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RAWALPINDI

PM focused on economic stability: Ch Shujaat

PML-Q Chief Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain says Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is leading the country in the right direction; he is focused on economic stability rather than carrying out victimizing campaigns. They have to prioritize the economy over politics. The country will progress only when inflation and poverty are controlled.



Govt responsible to negotiate with TTP: Sirajul Haq

Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) chief Sirajul Haq says it is the government's responsibility to negotiate with the proscribed Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). The people are not ready to bear any more terror situations, so now the government will be responsible if any incident happened. A government that cannot protect the people has no right to rule.

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Food security

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting of Task Force on Agriculture in Islamabad on Thursday.



Photo: PID

Disaster management

US announces \$1m aid for Pakistan

WASHINGTON/ISLAM-ABAD: The United States has announced another \$1 million in aid to Pakistan to deal with floods and other natural disasters. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken wrote on the social networking website Twitter that Washington stands with Pakistan in this hour of difficulty and offered help to the flood victims. He said that \$100,000 was provided as immediate aid to Pakistan. Blinken further stated that the US has announced to give another \$1 million to Pakistan to deal with natural disasters. "We will continue to work with Pakistan to mitigate the effects of the climate crisis," he said. The official retweeted an earlier tweet by the US embassy in Islamabad according to which the US will deliver \$100,000 "to support flood relief efforts and humanitarian assistance to vulnerable communities in the worst-affected districts".

Relief ops should be speed up in flood hit areas: PM

Directs immediate formulation of agricultural reforms plan within two days

Our Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday directed the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) to carry out active relief and rehabilitation activities in the flood-affected areas of southern Sindh. The prime minister expressed deep sorrow over the loss of life and property caused by the monsoon rains. He asked the NDMA and PDMA to pace up relief operations in the affected areas at the earliest.

PM Sharif stressed to ensure rescue of the people on priority basis and directed to provide financial assistance of Rs 50,000 to each family. He emphasized immediate supply of food and clean water

to the victims besides ensuring them facilities of accommodation and medicines. The prime minister also instructed the authorities concerned to be vigilant in the wake of potential rain season and flooding besides take necessary measures in this regard. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday directed the ministries concerned to formulate an emergency agricultural reforms plan within two days for the next crop to facilitate the farmers.

The prime minister, who was presented the recommendations of eight sub-committees of different relevant sectors, said the reforms plan should be based on recommendations of the said sub-committees. The prime minister, while chairing a high level meeting, said he would announce a comprehensive agricultural reforms plan very soon to achieve prosperity of the farmers, enhance agricultural production and reduce the input prices. The recommendations presented to the prime minister included both short and long term plans.

The prime minister resolved that the government would provide facilities to the farmers on emergency basis including low-cost seed and fertilizers. The meeting resolved that the companies selling substandard seeds and pesticides would be done away with and that the relevant institutions would be facilitated for introduction of quality seeds. The prime minister said the government would also provide modern equipment and facilitate the process of loans. Moreover, the silos would be constructed to help

the farmers store wheat and agricultural produces.

The prime minister also called for measures to enhance per acre yield before the cotton sowing season and ensure the provision of subsidy to the farmers on the agriculture inputs. He asked the authorities concerned to keep into consideration the impacts of the climate change, during the formulation of agricultural reforms. Moreover, he also called for running an awareness campaign to acquaint the farmers with modern agricultural methods. The sub-committees constituted on the subjects including wheat, cotton, edible oil, fertilizers, agricultural research, usage of water, climate change and agricultural equipment briefed the prime minister.

Pakistan-US discuss defence ties

COAS, US commander exchange views on counter-terrorism efforts



Our Correspondent

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa discussed military-to-military ties with Commander US Centcom General Michael Erik Kurilla, a statement issued by ISPR said Thursday. COAS Gen Bajwa held a meeting with the commander US CENTCOM along with his delegation at General Head Quarters (GHQ). According to the military's media wing, the meeting discussed matters of mutual interest, regional security situation, stability, defence and security cooperation.

The one-on-one call was followed by a delegation-level meeting. The discussion also included the Pakistan Army's counter-terrorism efforts and significant contributions toward regional peace and stability. The Pakistan-US military training exchange programme also came under discussion. The visiting dignitary acknowledged the Pakistan Army's commendable efforts in the fight against terrorism, counter-terrorism experiences and efforts for regional peace and stability.

Prohibited funding

IHC rejects PTI's plea to stay ECP's show-cause

Court issues pre-admission notice to ECP

Our Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Thursday rejected a PTI plea to issue a stay order against a show-cause notice issued from the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) in prohibited funding case. A three-member larger bench of the IHC headed by acting Chief Justice Aamir Kayani along with Justice Mian Gul Hassan Aurangzeb and Justice Babar Sattar announced the short order after reserving the decision earlier in the day, following arguments from both sides. The IHC although did not entertain the PTI plea to issue a stay order against the show-cause notice to the party from the

ECP, but issued notice to the election commission to argue on the maintainability of the PTI plea and adjourned the proceedings until August 24.

In the last hearing, the Islamabad High Court had decided to form a larger bench to hear the PTI's plea against the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) judgement in the prohibited funding case.

PTI's lawyer Anwar Mansoor argued that the accounts' information, which were provided, was not included in the electoral watchdog's verdict. "We had told ECP that some accounts' information was not necessary due to some reasons," he added.

PTI govt's tenure a dark chapter of our media history: Marriyum

Terms Imran Khan's media seminar as hypocrisy

Our Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Terming PTI Chairman Imran Khan's tenure as prime minister as a dark chapter for media in Pakistan, Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb said on Thursday that the media organizations and journalists should recall the anti-media track record of the PTI regime before attending his media seminar. In a statement, she said that the enemy of media (Imran Khan) who was what she called "economic murderer" of the media should feel ashamed on conducting the media seminar. Imran Khan indulged in media enmity while sitting in the Prime Minister's chair.

She said that Imran Khan was a liar, corrupt, foreign agent, media enemy and a hypocrite and the media had to decide whether to attend the seminar of a person who used the National Accountability Bureau as a tool to suppress media freedom. "The media has to decide whether or not to attend the media seminar of the found-



er of Pakistan Media Regulatory Authority, which was established by the previous government to control the media.

She urged Imran to stop the farce of the media seminar as during his four years rule the media's voice was muzzled and Mir Shakeel-ur-Rehman was arrested by NAB to weaken the national media.

"PFUJ, CPNE and PBA will have to decide whether to attend the media weakening seminar", he media has to decide whether to go to the media seminar of the persons who strangled journalism, during whose

tenure firing was done on journalists, the one who imposed unprecedented restrictions on media.

The minister said that the media will have to decide whether to participate in the seminar of the person who had been given the title of "media predator by international organizations". The media will have to decide whether to believe the specter of their freedom and job-snapping seminar or not.

CPNE's 2020 report, International Media Watch and Reporters Without Borders (RSF) 2021 reports were testimony to Imran Khan's media hostility, Maryam Aurangzeb said. She pointed out that International Media Watch had called Imran Khan a fascist and in four years of Imran Khan rule, the ribs of journalists were broken, they were kidnapped, the freedom of the media was crushed and the parliament was locked.

She said that Imran Khan who controlled media through NAB also made media workers jobless.

Exports up by 32.49% in July

ISLAMABAD: The exports from the country in rupee term witnessed an increase of 32.49 per cent during the first month of current fiscal year (2022-23) as compared to the corresponding month of last year, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. The exports during July 2022 were recorded at Rs. 494,720 million as against the exports of Rs. 373,412 million in July 2021, showing an increase of 32.49 per cent, according to provisional data released by PBS. On month-on-month basis, the exports from the country however declined by 17.05 per cent when compared to the exports of Rs. 596,433 million in June, 2022. The main commodities of exports during July, 2022 were knitwear (Rs. 95,439 million), ready-made garments (Rs. 66,835 million), bed wear (Rs. 55,735 million), cotton cloth (Rs. 39,934 million), rice others (Rs. 20,414 million), towels (Rs. 16,450 million), cotton yarn (Rs. 15,660 million), madeup articles, excluding towels & Bedwear (Rs. 12,008 million), rice Basmati (Rs. 9,996 million) and vegetables (Rs. 9,661 million).

Review policies, there is still time: Imran Khan tells 'neutrals'

Says dictators always want to control media, afraid of free speech

Senior Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: PTI chairperson Imran Khan told the "neutrals" to review their policies as there is still time left to make changes and the decisions taken behind closed doors are not in the country's interests. Speaking during a seminar related to freedom of expression, the former prime minister said that the establishment imposed these "thieves" upon Pakistan. "How did the establishment let them [the current government] rule us knowing about the foreign conspiracy? This is because they have the most power right now," said the former premier. "No matter how much you [the establishment] call yourself neutral, the nation will blame you for imposing this government on us," he added.

The former premier said that it [the establishment] is forcing us to accept these thieves and for that, they are spreading fear among the nation. "They are calling our MNAs and pressuring us to accept this government," he revealed. Imran Khan said that the dictators always wanted to control media as they were afraid of the freedom of speech. The PTI chief said that on several occasions across the globe, attempts were made to control the masses as in monarchy and dictatorship, such rulers wanted to even control the thoughts of the humans.



"They want to control the minds of imposing their rules but not improving their societies. It is a historical fact that only those nations became stronger who allowed the freedom of expression," said Khan.

"I always try to get lessons from my mistakes. I have closely observed British and Pakistan societies. In Pakistan, there are different laws for rich and poor people. Only an independent individual can collect big achievements but a slave cannot. Slavery is a kind of mindset." "Whenever I talk about real independence, there is a background of getting freedom for my nation. I have never gotten afraid of independent media. Only dictators want to control

media because they are afraid of free speech." "[Senior journalist] Najam Sethi had been tortured for three days when he launched criticism against [former prime minister and Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) Quaid] Nawaz Sharif. These people are afraid of being exposed for their corruption and they choose to break the law."

"I have fought a character assassination case in the United Kingdom (UK). If the freedom of speech is allowed in the UK, then there are some laws to discourage character assassination. Najam Sethi had also levelled allegations against me when I was the prime minister. Despite being the PM, I did not get justice."

Economic diplomacy

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari is exchanging views with Artykbaev Aibek Muhtarovich, Deputy Foreign Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic here on Thursday.



Photo: MOFA

IS May 25 torture

Probe against police officers completed

Bureau Report

LAHORE: The Punjab government on Thursday completed the investigation against the police officers involved in the violent incidents during the long march of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) on May 25. "The investigation against the police officers who gave orders to torture the innocent workers of Tehreek-e-Insaf has been completed. The proceedings regarding the cases will be revealed today.

If political leaders are also involved in this illegal process, action will be taken against them," Interior Minister Punjab Hashim Dogar told the media. He added that Shahbaz Gul was not tortured in the jail. Islamabad Police tortured Shahbaz Gul while in their custody. When he was brought to jail from the custody of Islamabad Police in the report, the doctors identified one to two places where Shahbaz Gul was tortured.

IS CASA-1000

Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan to further bolster ties

FM Bilawal says 'Vision Central Asia aims at sustainable engagement with CARs'

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Thursday reiterated that the government's "Vision Central Asia" was aimed at building sustainable and result-oriented engagement with the Central Asian Countries (CARs). The vision focused on political, trade and investment, energy and connectivity, security and defence, and people-to-people exchanges, he added. The Foreign Minister expressed these views as he received Artykbaev Aibek Muhtarovich, Deputy Foreign Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic here.

He added that short and easy access to the sea for land-locked Central Asian States through Karachi and Gwadar ports was a key component of that vision. The two sides exchanged greetings on the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and the Kyrgyz Republic, a press release issued here by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said.

The Foreign Minister congratulated

Deputy Foreign Minister Muhtarovich on the successful conclusion of the 2nd Session of Bilateral Political Consultations (BPC) between Pakistan and the Kyrgyz Republic. Expressing satisfaction at the upward trajectory of bilateral relations, he

Pakistan desires enhanced engagement with DCO in digital economy: FM

said that close coordination between the two countries at multilateral fora demonstrated the convergence of views on global and regional issues.

Earlier, Pakistan and the Kyrgyz Republic on Thursday held the second session of Bilateral Political Consultations (BPC) wherein the two sides agreed to further consolidate the bilateral relations in all areas of mutual importance. During

the session, both sides reaffirmed their commitment to the timely completion of the CASA-1000 power transmission project. The two sides exchanged views on bilateral cooperation in areas of trade and investment, connectivity, energy, investment, culture, education, science and technology, security and defence, and parliamentary exchanges.

Pakistan delegation was led by Additional Secretary (Afghanistan and West Asia) Aamar Aftab Qureshi while the Kyrgyz Republic delegation was led by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Artykbaev Aibek Muhtarovich. During the meeting, the entire spectrum of bilateral relations, as well as regional and multilateral issues, were discussed. The additional secretary underscored that Pakistan was committed to further deepening and broadening its ties with the Kyrgyz Republic. He said that Pakistan's "Vision Central Asia" Policy was focused on political and diplomatic, trade and investment, energy and connectivity, security and defence, and people-to-people exchanges.

Punjab nods to change chief secretary

Federal govt refuses to appoint new Punjab CS

LAHORE: In a major decision, Punjab Chief Minister Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi has given his nod to change the provincial chief secretary. According to details, CM Pervaiz Elahi has given his nod to change the provincial chief secretary and proposed three names for the administrative post to the federal government. The names of Ahmed Nawaz, Abdullah Khan Sambal and Babar Hayat Tarar have been proposed in a letter written to Establishment Division.

Earlier in August, Punjab Chief Secretary (CS) Kamran Ali Afzal wrote a letter to the federal government, requesting that his services be withdrawn with immediate effect. The letter was addressed to Establishment Secretary Inamullah Khan. Afzal's appointment was approved in September 2021 when PTI's Usman Buzdar was in charge. He was the fifth Punjab chief secretary during the three years of the previous PTI-led

government.

The federal government on Thursday refused to appoint a new Punjab Chief Secretary (CS), rejecting the three names proposed by Punjab Chief Minister. According to details, CM Elahi proposed three names for the administrative post but it has been discarded by the federal government. The names of Ahmed Nawaz, Abdullah Khan Sambal and Babar Hayat Tarar were proposed in a letter written to Establishment Division.

Earlier in August, Punjab Chief Secretary (CS) Kamran Ali Afzal wrote a letter to the federal government, requesting that his services be withdrawn with immediate effect. The letter was addressed to Establishment Secretary Inamullah Khan. Afzal's appointment was approved in September 2021 when PTI's Usman Buzdar was in charge. He was the fifth Punjab chief secretary during the three years of the previous PTI-led government. APP

IS Sigh of relief

Forex reserves rise by \$67m

KARACHI: The country's foreign exchange reserves held by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reversed the downtrend after it rose by 0.85%. On August 12, the foreign currency reserves held by the SBP were recorded at \$7,897.3 million, up \$67 million compared with \$7,830.3 on August 5, data released by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) on Thursday showed.

Overall liquid foreign currency reserves held by the country, including net reserves held by banks other than the SBP, stood at \$13,613.3 million. Net reserves held by banks amounted to \$5,716 million. Last week, the central bank had predicted the reserves to rise as it said that debt repayments were expected to moderate during the next three weeks of this month. It should be noted that with the current foreign exchange reserves position, Pakistan has an import cover of fewer than 1.13 months.

Mover, it is also worth mentioning that the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI) based weekly inflation for the week ended on August 11 for the combined consumption group, witnessed a decrease of 0.08% as compared to the previous week. SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 209.01 points against 209.17 points registered in the previous week. APP

IS Karachi jalsa postponed

PTI announces schedule for rallies

Bureau Report

KARACHI/ISLAMABAD: The PTI Thursday announced its schedule for rallies across Pakistan after postponing its August 19's Karachi jalsa. Addressing a press conference in the port city, PTI leader Ali Zaidi said that the public gathering that was to be held in Karachi tomorrow (Friday) has been postponed due to torrential rains across the province. "The decision has been taken after consultations with party chairperson Imran Khan," he said, adding that all preparations were complete; however, precautions are being taken keeping in view the weather forecast.

According to the details released by PTI Central Media Department, the former prime minister would address the "grand public meeting" in Rawalpindi on August 21. The PTI would hold another meeting in Hariipur on August 24, which would be addressed by the former premier. Similarly, the PTI chairman will address a rally in Karachi on August 26. According to the schedule, the PTI will hold power shows in Sukkur on August 27, in Peshawar on August 28, in Jhelum and Attock on August 29 and on August 31 respectively. Moreover, PTI will hold massive public meetings in Sargodha and Gujarat on September 1 and September 2, respectively.

Pak-KSA to improve coop against common challenges

Rana Sanaullah, his Saudi counterpart finalize the details

JEDDAH/ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Saudi Arabia on Thursday agreed to further improve the coordination between the interior ministries of both the countries to deal with common challenges. The agreement reached at the meeting held at Jeddah between Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah and his Saudi counterpart, said a statement issued here. Earlier, Saudi Deputy Interior Minister Dr. Nasir bin Abdul Aziz Dawood received Rana Sanaullah upon his arrival at the Ministry, it further said. Pakistani Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Aamir Khurram Rathore and Consul General Khalid Majeed were

also present in the meeting.

Matters of mutual interests including Pak-Saudi bilateral relations came under discussion during the meeting. Interior minister congratulated his counterpart for making the best arrangements for Hajj 2022. The minister congratulated and thanked the Saudi government for the successful implementation of the Road to Makkah project for Pakistani pilgrims. He stressed the need to improve the communication between the Interior Ministries of both the countries. Security cooperation between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia would further

be enhanced, he added.

He said Pakistan and Saudi Arabia would jointly face all internal and regional security challenges. Pak-Saudi relations were historical, long-standing and fraternal, he added. Sanaullah said the Pakistani people have special devotion and love for the custodian of two holy mosques. Saudi Arabia has always provided generous help and assistance to Pakistan in the most difficult situations, he added. He congratulated the Saudi government and the custodian of the mosques for making the best arrangements for the Hajj Agencies

IS Toshakana reference

ECP directs PTI to provide documents

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Thursday directed Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) lawyer to provide the documents in the reference filed for the disqualification of PTI Chairman Imran Khan for hiding Toshakana gifts. The reference was filed under Article 63 by Five government MNAs including Mohsin Shahnawaz Ranjha against the former Prime Minister. Lawyer Khalid Ishaq appeared before the ECP on behalf of the coalition government. Ali Zafar's assistant counsel appeared as representative for PTI, while Barrister Ali Zafar could not come due to his busy

schedule.

Ali Zafar's assistant counsel said that Imran Khan is no longer a member of the assembly and the hearing should be adjourned. On which the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) remarked that the National Assembly Secretariat has not sent the resignation to the commission and therefore, Imran Khan is still MNA to ECP. A member cannot be de-notified unless the resignations are approved and sent by the Speaker, added CEC. After arguments were presented by the lawyers, the ECP adjourned the case till August 22 along with directing PTI's counsel to provide the necessary documents.

PTI Chairman Imran Khan is not a member of the National Assembly, therefore, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) cannot send a notice to him, the former prime minister's lawyer said Thursday. Khan's lawyer, Barrister Gohar, gave the arguments during a hearing of the Toshakana reference filed against the PTI chairman, which was heard by a five-member ECP bench. ECP's full court, presided over by Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja and including Justice (ret'd) Nisar Durrani of Sindh, Justice (ret'd) Ikrumullah of KP, Justice (ret'd) Shah Mohammad Jatoti of Balochistan, and former federal secretary Babar Bhawan, heard the case.

IS IMF condition

Government lifts ban on luxury imports: Miftah Ismail

Says textile sector to be provided with all possible support to boost exports

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Miftah Ismail on Thursday announced the lifting of the ban on the import of non-essential and luxury goods on the demand of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), however, said that the Regulatory Duties (RDs) would be enhanced manifold to discourage import of such products. "The international community requires that there should be no ban so we are lifting the ban on all products. But simultaneously the duties I am going to impose would not let these commodities enter Pakistan as finished goods," the minister said while addressing a press conference.

The minister said RDs would be enhanced three times or to the maximum possible level and can go even up to 400 to 600 per cent or more. He said that Pakistan was not having many dollars to spend on the import of luxury items he said adding that the existing resources would be utilized to provide the people of the country with flour, wheat, cotton, and edible oil instead of I-phones or luxury vehicles. Miftah Ismail said the government would provide all possible support to the textile sector to boost the country's exports. This, he said during a meeting with representatives of All Pakistan Textile Mills Association (APTMA) here.

Patron-In-Chief APTMA Dr. Gohar

Ejaz, Chairman APTMA Abdul Rahim Nasir, Chairman North Zone Punjab, Hamid Zaman, Former Chairman APTMA Aamir Fayyaz, Secretary General APTMA Shahid Sattar, Senior officers from FBR, Commerce and Finance division attended the meeting.

The delegation shared with the minister about the contribution of textile sector in the economic development of the country. It was highlighted that this sector contributed heavily in the exports and was effectively bringing in substantial dollars into the country.

The minister was also apprised about the various issues faced by this sector specially related to sales tax refunds which resulted in liquidity crunch for the suppliers of textile



industry. The minister, after comprehensive deliberation over the issues, assured the delegation that present government's foremost priority was

to promote the export oriented sectors of the country and in that regard, all possible cooperation would be provided by the present government. The

minister further directed the relevant authorities to resolve the issues of export oriented textile sector at the earliest.

IS Ensure food security

Pak, Iran entering new phase of agricultural ties, says Tariq Bashir Cheema

Minister hopes that both countries will work in the future together for betterment of agri sector

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: An Iranian delegation led by Abbas Askarzadeh, Iranian Deputy Minister of Agriculture Jihad, was received by Minister for National Food Security and Research Tariq Bashir Cheema here on Thursday.

While welcoming the delegation, Federal Minister Tariq Bashir Cheema said that Pak-Iran relations are entering a new-phase based on mutually beneficial agriculture ties to ensure food security in both countries.

Federal Minister Tariq Bashir Cheema said that barter trade between Pakistan and Iran will enhance and facilitate both sides soon. Under the barter trade, Pakistan will export oranges in exchanged for Iranian apples. Iranian Deputy Minister of Agriculture Jihad while agreeing, said that barter trade between Pakistan and Iran has very promising prospects.



In coming days under the barter agreement, both countries will share a list of products which they will trade under the said agreement.

Federal Minister Tariq Bashir Cheema hoped that the both countries will work in the future together for the

betterment of agriculture sector and welfare of people of the both countries.

Abbas Askarzadeh, Iranian Deputy Minister of Agriculture Jihad thanked for hosting him at the Ministry of National Food Security and Research. He said that he is delighted to work

with Pakistan and look forward to increase cooperation and partnership in agriculture sector with Pakistan. He added Iran will meet the agricultural needs of Pakistan and will introduce Pakistani agricultural products in Iran.

Iranian Deputy Minister of Agriculture Jihad said that Pakistan and Iran are neighbors which share a special connection of Islam. He said that there is a huge potential of trade between the two countries, unfortunately, which was not capitalized in the past.

He invited Federal Minister Tariq Bashir Cheema to visit Iran and hold a meeting with the Iranian Agricultural Jihad Minister to further promote trade relation in agriculture. Federal Minister underlined that there is vast potential existing in the trade and agriculture cooperation which should be materialized by overcoming the hurdles and venturing into collaborations.

Nazia Hassan shines on Times Square's Billboard as EQUAL Ambassador

The Queen of Pop was honored by Spotify on her 22nd Death Anniversary by being featured as the EQUAL Ambassador for the month of August

Spokesman Report

KARACHI: Remembered as one of the most influential singers in the sub-continent and referred to as "The Queen of South Asian Pop" by her fans, Nazia Hassan lit up Spotify's digital billboard at the iconic Times Square, New York City, as EQUAL Ambassador of the month. Her ambassadorship and feature on the billboard were timed to coincide with her 22nd death anniversary as a tribute paid to the pop icon.

Nazia is revered as a legend not just in Pakistan but across the globe for redefining the genre of pop music at a time when it was relatively unexplored. She is amongst a rare league of artists who have etched an irreplaceable mark on people's hearts. As



her voice and services to society continue to live on, Spotify is celebrating Nazia by featuring her on the cover of Global EQUAL playlist, and highlighting her famous song, Boom Boom, on EQUAL's global and local playlists.

Sharing his thoughts on this special occasion and remembering Nazia as a woman of substance, her

brother Zoheb Hassan said, "My sister always considered herself as a social worker, and not really a musician. She worked with the UN for children and peace in the region, she also did a lot of charitable work as she wanted to help children and young people in need, and she did all of this very quietly. She did not share this side of her life

with anyone, including her own family. We only found out later after she had passed away. It was her greatness that she never spoke about it."

"I would like to take the opportunity to thank Spotify for making my dear sister the ambassador for EQUAL Pakistan and Global, representing the female artists of the region," he commented.

Allanya and Amelia Hassan, nieces of Nazia, also expressed their excitement at this special occasion. "She's always been a huge influence on us growing up, we love her music and she was an amazing person. To add to that, she and her music have been a huge motivation to us when it came to writing and singing ourselves and we are so grateful and proud to be a part of this legacy," they stated.

Office of Ombudsman Punjab continues to resolve public problems

Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Different own-motion notices taken by Ombudsman Punjab Maj. (r) Azam Suleman Khan on the news items and reports aired on media platforms spotlighting public problems in various parts of the province due to the apathy of the public sector departments have resulted in promptly resolving such difficulties.

In a statement issued on Thursday, the spokesman pointed out that the problems of the people are solved timely and free of charge which has made their lives easier.

The own-motion notices of the provincial ombudsman have resulted in the cleaning of the sewerage line of Gurumangot Road in the Gulberg area while roadside fountains at Garhi Shahu have been made functional after necessary repairs, the spokesman added. Similarly, the old problem of roadside garbage before a local girls school has been permanently resolved in Narowal and girl students, their parents and teachers have thanked the ombudsman office for providing a clean environment for them.

The spokesman noted that the intervention of the ombudsman's office has resulted in the resolution of the sewerage problem in the Depalpur tehsil which has also resulted in the resolving problem of drinking water for the locals. In another development, the ombudsman's office negotiated to ensure that the sewerage system is cleaned and garbage is removed in Mirza Virkan, a suburban village in the Sheikhupura district. The entrance road of the vegetable market in Kamalia tehsil has also been cleaned after the involvement of the ombudsman's office, the spokesman mentioned.

Sastaticket.pk celebrates Independence Day

Staff Reporter

KARACHI: Sastaticket.pk has been created to empower the Pakistani traveler with instant bookings and comprehensive choices. It aims to deliver value by offering a range of travel products with the highest standard of service along with cutting edge technology.

Based in Karachi, Pakistan, Sastaticket.pk is a one-stop shop for all travel related services. A leading consolidator of travel products, Sastaticket.pk provides reservation facility for domestic and international flights, domestic and international hotels, and holiday packages.

Sastaticket.pk congratulate the country on the occasion on its 75th independence anniversary. The nation of millions of youngsters and playful people turns 75 on 14th August 2022. The team of Sastaticket.pk celebrated this special occasion on full hues with the members of Dar-ul-Sukun. The joy of this occasion increased ten



times more as the company shared their happiness with the children's at Dar-ul-Sukun. There were different fun activities organized by Sastaticket.pk along with a small lunch gathering.

The COO of Sastaticket.pk Mohib Hassan commented, "Pakistan turns 75 today and it is a day of celebration

for people around the nation. We at Sastaticket.pk wanted to share out happiness with the members and children of Dar-ul-Sukun. We wish for Pakistan to prosper in the upcoming year and pray for the future of Pakistan. We are hoping to play our part in building a better Pakistan."

PTA, A4A1 workshop highlights importance of Gender Inclusion

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) in collaboration with Alliance for Affordable Internet (A4AI) organized a Digital Gender Sensitization Workshop. The event focused on gender inclusion in ICTs and facilitating digital empowerment of women in Pakistan.

Additional Secretary (Incharge) IT&T, Mohsin Mushtaq was the chief guest on this occasion. Chairman PTA, Maj. General Amir Azeem Bajwa (R); Member C&E PTA, Dr. Khawar Siddique Khokhar, senior officers from Frequency Allocation Board (FAB), CEOs of USF, Ignite, Jazz and representatives from mobile oper-



ators & members of international organizations, and civil society attended the event.

Speaking at the event, the chief guest appreciated PTA's proactive and inclusive approach towards digital gender connectivity. He said that Government of Pakistan and MoIT&T are engaging with global and regional organizations for improving digital gender gap in Pakistan.

At the event, Chairman PTA said that PTA is committed to ensure access to all and

improve digital gender inclusion in ICTs in Pakistan. It is striving to develop a digital strategy that brings together key stakeholders of gender mainstreaming in Pakistan.

The highlight of the event was the session on 'Women Leading the Tech' chaired by Chairperson Competition Commission of Pakistan, Ms. Rahat Kunain Hassan and eminent Pakistani female leaders as panelists. The panelists included: Founder & CEO, Katalyst Labs, Ms.

Jehan Ara; Country Head - Code for Pakistan, Ms. Samina Rizwan; Executive Director, Pakistan Alliance for Girls Education (PAGE), Ms. Fajer Rabia Pasha and CEO National Forum of Women with Disabilities in Pakistan (NFWWD), Ms. Abia Akram. The panelists stressed on creating conducive environment that give women the support to excel and consequently propel the growth of the entire technology ecosystem.

Telenor Pakistan completes Taleemabad partnership pilot



Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Living up to its commitment to make education more accessible through technology, Telenor Pakistan has completed the first phase of its flagship sustainability partnership with Orenda's Taleemabad. Telenor Pakistan and Orenda entered a partnership last year to bring education to millions of out-of-school children in Pakistan by 2023.

As part of the pilot project's first phase, five public and one private Model Virtual Schools have been brought within the sphere of Taleemabad in Islamabad in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Education and Professional Training. In addition, six workshops were conducted where more than 100 primary schools were taught basic digital skills and digital tutoring. To enable teachers and students to put their new knowledge to practice, all classrooms were equipped with and connected to basic Information and Communications Technology facilities.

The learning from the pilot phase of the project will pave the way for the schools so that they can enhance their knowledge dissemination skills and bring them at par with some of the best schools in the country. The development aligns with Telenor Pakistan's goal of building skills for a digital future to provide high-quality digital educational services to the less privileged students and schools in Pakistan.

Kamal Ahmed, Chief Corporate Affairs Officer, Telenor Pakistan, said, "In today's accelerated pace of digital adoption, it is our responsibility to ensure that our nation's youth continues its quest for education. Our partnership with Taleemabad is a means towards increasing accessibility to education as we work towards bridging the digital divide and creating sustainable solutions for a brighter future for every Pakistani."

Punjab govt decides to allocate Rs20b for rehabilitation of flood-hit areas

MUZAFFARGARH:

Punjab Minister for Revenue Nawabzada Mansoor Ahmed Khan on Thursday said the provincial government had decided to allocate Rs 20 billion funds for the rehabilitation of flood-affected areas.

The minister, in a statement, said the Punjab government had declared flood affected areas as "calamity hit". Compensatory amount of Rs 800,000 each was being given to the heirs of persons died due to flood, he added.

The minister said the government stood by the affectees and was providing maximum facilities in all the flood-hit areas. Rehabilitation and restoration of normal life in the affected areas was the top priority of the provincial government and all possible resources were being utilized for the purpose, he added.

Nawabzada Mansoor maintained that medical camps had been set up in the inundated areas to provide free treatment, medicines, and vaccinations to the people.

A survey would be completed soon to ascertain loss of crops and houses, after which the Provincial Disaster Management Authority and other departments would devise a comprehensive plan for initiating short and long term rehabilitation projects in the flood-hit areas, he added. APP



Shell Pakistan posts profit for H1 2022

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The Board of Directors of Shell Pakistan Limited (SPL) announced the Company's half year results on August 17th, 2022. The Company posted a profit after tax of PKR 7,469 million compared to the profit of PKR 2,153 million made in the same period last year.

The encouraging turnaround is mainly driven by improved business performance focusing on strategic priorities such as differentiated fuels and lubricants, the positive change in pricing formula to pricing agency S&P Global Platts' indexes by the government, and safe and efficient fuel operations.

During this period, the Mobility business launched 13 new retail sites which will help deliver increased volume. Shell V-Power remains the market leader in the premium fuels

category. Through successful dialogue with the government, we will see expansion of our network in Punjab that will help us grow.

Furthermore, the Company authored a book on Road Safety titled "Once upon a Road" with the aim of driving the behaviours in keeping roads safer in Pakistan. The book will be part of the Care Foundation school curriculum of sixth grade across Pakistan.

The Company also announced its decision to discontinue its aviation operations across Pakistan. Presently, SPL carries out its aviation related operations at four locations. They are Jinnah Airport in Karachi, Quetta International Airport, Begum Nusrat Bhutto Airport in Sukkur and Nawabshah Airport. After due consideration, SPL has decided that it is no longer commercially viable to continue with its aviation business in Pakistan.

SECP introduces digital-only insurers, microinsurers

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has introduced registration regime for digital-only insurers and dedicated microinsurers. This will promote digitalization and improve customer convenience through instant provision of services. In this regard, amendments to the Insurance Rules, 2017 have been notified vide SRO 1513(I)/2022.

The new framework is aimed at

encouraging innovation, expanding product range, and promoting financial inclusion. The registration requirements have been designed to reduce barriers to entry, in terms of minimum paid up capital and solvency requirements. The minimum capital requirements have been set at Rs100 million for non-life digital-only business and Rs250 million for life digital-only business, whereas for non-life and life microinsurers, the capital requirements have been set at Rs80 million and Rs150 million, respectively.



Islamabad

23° - 38° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 4:02 am
Zohr 12:12 pm
Asr 4:56 pm
Maghrib 6:51 pm
Isha 8:21 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

PANAH appeals for ban on Velo

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Who is not aware of the deadly effects of smoking? It is one of the leading causes of cancer. A large number of people in Pakistan are addicted to smoking and their number is more than 20 million. Our youths are also getting addicted to drugs. Around 1200 children start smoking every day. While PANAH, along with the government, was trying to educate people about the dangers of smoking and reduce its use tobacco industry launched a new product Velo.

These are nicotine pouches that are placed in the mouth and dissolve in the mouth and do not require spitting. The tobacco industry is misleading people that these pouches are a safe alternative to cigarettes and are harmless even though they contain nicotine and many other harmful chemicals that can cause heart, cancer, kidney disease, stunted growth, etc. It causes many other diseases including heart.

President stresses extensive plantation in country

Dr Arif Alvi urges every citizen to actively participate in campaign

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday called for concerted efforts by all segments of society to carry out extensive plantation in a bid to save the country from the horrendous effects of climate change.

In his message on the launch of the national monsoon tree plantation drive, he urged every citizen, particularly youth, to actively participate in the campaign by planting trees in residential areas, on roadsides, and near industrial zones. President Alvi said Pakistan was the eighth country most vulnerable to the negative effects of climate change.

He mentioned that rising mercury levels

were resulting in glacier melting and urban flooding. During the last 19 years, he said, Pakistan suffered around 173 incidents related to climate change besides the massive destruction this year as well. The president said as per international standards, a country required 25 percent forest cover; however, pointed out that Pakistan only had 4.8 percent of the green area according to a World Bank report.

He emphasized carrying out plantation at a large scale across the country and mentioned the Ten Billion Tree Tsunami as the largest such plantation project in the country's history. Under the project,

he said, 1.81 billion trees had been planted by June 2022. By 2023, around 3.29 billion trees will be planted. President Alvi said 10,000 saplings were planted in the premises of the Aiwan-e-Sadr in 2021, while a Miyawaki forest was also raised at an area of 1.5 acres under the Green Presidency Initiative.

He expressed confidence that an increase in forest cover would help mitigate the effects of climate change in the country and would also control urban flooding. Also, the extensive plantation would result in the preservation of wildlife and flora and fauna in the country, he added. APP

Media Cooperation

ISLAMABAD: Managing Director Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) Akhtar Munir and Ambassador of Islamic Republic of Iran to Pakistan, H.E. Mohammad Ali Hosseini sign MoU between APP & IRNA here on Thursday.



Photo: Spokesman

Fascist Modi wants to bring IIOJK under Hindu rule: Mushaal

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Mushaal Hussein Mullick, the Chairperson of Peace and Culture Organisation said that after committing the daylight constitutional robbery on August 5 stripping special status of the occupied valley, the fascist Indian government was now granting franchise to the Indian citizens in so-called assembly polls.

In a strong worded-statement issued here on Thursday, Mushaal said that Hindutva regime hell-bent to give voting rights to Indian Hindus in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) under another sinister move against Kashmiris to make Kashmiris alien in their own land.

She said that allowing Indians living in IIOJK to vote in



polls was meant to further disempower the Kashmiris and BJP wanted to install a local fascist in Jammu and Kashmir to advance the interests of the party.

The Hurriyat leader went on to say that importing voters from mainland India, notorious Narendra Modi wanted to bring Muslim-majority IIOJK under Hindu rule in brazen violations of UN resolutions.

She said that installing Hindu

Chief Minister in Muslim majority Jammu and Kashmir has been a long-held ambition of Hindutva forces, which she said would never be materialized.

The chairperson sound alarmed that giving Indians living in the sieged valley to vote in polls was part of series of measures started from August 5, 2019 to marginalize Kashmiris.

"Redrawing electoral boundaries, giving more seats to Hindu-dominated Jammu and importing voters from India were intended to colonize Kashmir," she added.

Mushaal further stated that Modi regime's ultimate aim was to efface Muslim identity and establish Hindu civilization in the region. She revealed that the RSS-backed Indian government was violating all demo-

cratic values to bring Jammu and Kashmir under Hindu rule.

She lamented that the people of Kashmir have been forced to live under a fascist BJP rule, that neither respected the lives of the Kashmiri people, nor their fundamental right to self-determination, adding that despite unprecedented human rights abuses, and instances of state torture, the international community remains largely impotent.

She urged the world, UN bodies and human rights organizations to take notice of Modi's sinister plans in the valley and must step-in and stop fascist Modi from violating the UN's resolutions on Kashmir. Mushaal made it clear that the brave Kashmiris were determined to foil Modi's nefarious game plans in the valley.

US containment policy won't work with China: Experts

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Institute of Conflict Resolution (IICR) organized a Roundtable Discussion titled "US-China Rivalry at the Shores of South China Sea".

The esteemed panelists included Senator Mushaid Hussain Syed; Amb. Naghmana Hashmi; Zamir Assadi; Dr. Zafar Nawaz Jaspal; and Shakeel Ahmed Ramay. The session was moderated by Sabah Aslam, Founder IICR.

The first speaker on the panel was Zamir Assadi. Speaking to the panel he said that the Global politics is shaping in South China Sea specially the recent incident of Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan. Categorizing the visit as politically motivated Assadi said that regardless of concerns by China, United States put global peace at stake.

He further said that US scrapped three joint communiqués which were signed between US and China and it puts pressure on developing countries who have working relations with Beijing. Adding further Zamir said that West's investment in not only South China Sea but across the world are strategically and politically driven. Washington's main focus is on investment in arms harming peace of Taiwan and US China relations.



US is pursuing intentional aggression in the south-China sea mainly Taiwan and it is least concerned about harsh consequences faced by Taiwan like it is least concerned about Ukraine. Apart from international politics there is internal politics at play by US at the expense of Taiwan which is mid-term elections, said Assadi. In his concluding remarks Zamir said that Washington needs introspection rather than putting global peace at stake.

Amb. Hashmi said that Taiwan issue is not about one China policy. The issue of one china is settled it is the issue of sovereignty. Giving historical perspective in depth she said that Taiwan historically is part of China and later it was administered as province and administrative unit of China.

Hashmi said that Japan and other imperial powers occupied Chinese

territories which were liberated later and in Cairo declaration it is stated that all former Chinese islands shall be reverted back to China. She also said that one of the ambitions of China is the reunification of Islands. There were guarantees given to Beijing by Washington that US will not exceed Arms sent to Taiwan and it is strategically not adhering with the pact.

Speaking next Shakeel Ahmad Ramay said that go global policy of china began in 1980s and transformation of China is complete under Xi Jinping. It is the proactive policies of China which were not comprehended by west so they did what they do; rise tensions to escalate conflict. Adding further MR. Ramay said that Beijing is globally helping nations to grow it is ending food insecurity in regions like Africa.

The last speaker on the panel was Dr. Zafar Nawaz Jaspal. Dr Jaspal said that when canons in Ukraine were fired it left a whole mark on world and we in Pakistan also faced it. Similarly if the fire started in South China Sea that it will have direct impact on Pakistan. Adding further he said that November 2022 is a decisive month and it will have a strategic impact. There is mid-term elections in United States because of which speaker Pelosi visit and then congressmen visit to Taiwan. Moreover, President Xi future will be decided in November CPC meeting.

The concluding remarks were delivered by Senator Mushaid Hussain Syed. While speaking to the panel Senator Mushaid said that China has transformed and it is its perpetual transformation that has propelled it to global arena.



ISLAMABAD: Secretary General of Private Schools Association Islamabad Abdul Waheed presenting souvenir to Director Sports and Culture MCI Aamir Shazad. Spokesman photo by Ghulam Farid

Pehchan Pakistan

FGEIs clinch first position in quiz show



Spokesman Report

RAWALPINDI: Federal Government Educational Institutions (Cantonments/ Garrisons) have clinched first position in "Pehchan Pakistan" Quiz Show.

According to the spokesman, a quiz competition titled "Pehchan Pakistan" was organised by ISPR and telecasted by PTV Corporation, Islamabad. Total 10 teams contested for the top position which included board Toppers of all four provinces KPK, Punjab, Sindh & Balochistan, Azad Jammu & Kashmir, Gilgat Bultistan, Federal Board Islamabad and FGEI (Cantts/ Garrisons).

By answering all the questions during rapid fire session FGEIs (C/G) team secured first position with 100 marks, Sindh remained second with 80 marks whereas Punjab, Balochistan and FBlSE team got third position obtaining 70 marks.

SLS celebrates Pakistan's Independence Day



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: SLS College celebrated the 75th anniversary / Diamond Jubilee of Pakistan's Independence Day with great zeal. The national anthem, national songs were also played to mark the day.

In welcome address, the Managing Director SLS College Sarfraz Malik termed the day very significant and said that on such a beautiful occasion, he wanted to tell that there was an important role of institutions in the development of countries, for which the SLS College has been providing quality English Language and IT education to the youth for the prosperity of Pakistan in order to make young generation the best citizens of the country.

While the chief guest of the ceremony, the District Education Officer Madam Kousar Saleem said that only educated youth could take Pakistan forward in the path of development because they were the future of the country. She said that SLS is playing a great role in the field of education. She said every Pakistani should play his part honestly for the development and prosperity of the country and should serve Pakistan in a better way in every capacity.

Mehfil-e-Naat-o-Qiraat held at PAC

Spokesman Report

RAWALPINDI: Punjab Arts Council organized Mehfil-e-Naat-o-Qiraat in collaboration with International Quran Research Academy, which was presided over by prominent educationist Muhammad Fazil Lodhi. Chairman International Quran Research Academy Qari Muham-



mad Zeeshan performed the duties of organizing the event. President Mahfil Muhammad Fazil Lodhi said that there is no count of the blessings of Prophet Muhammad (SAW), wherever the name of the Prophet (SAW) is mentioned, the blessings of Allah will be incalculable. We are fortunate that Allah has created us in the Ummah of His Beloved Prophet. In today's gathering, the lovers of Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) proved that our life is incomplete without love for Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH). Without the love of the Prophet, Muslims are at a loss, and the only way to succeed in this world and the Hereafter is the Sunnah of the Prophet, he added.

Director of Arts Council Waqar Ahmed said in his speech at the event that whoever mentions Allah and Prophet (PBUH) touches the heights and commitment to this art is a sign of happiness that never lets hearts die. Arts Council has always organized religious programs on priority basis. Qari Muhammad Jasim Mustafa, Qari Abu Bakr Safir Lodhi, Qari Waseem Abbas, Qari Muhammad Farooq and Qari Umar Darz Anawt recited Kalam Allah while Naat Sharif was performed by Amir Mushtaq, Qari Inamul Haq, Professor Syed Asad Ali and Rahat Mahmood Qadri. Professor Dr. Abdul Basit, Pir Sarkarji and Pir Azmatullah Sultan also made a special statement in the Naat Waqar event. At the end of the event, prayers were also offered for the protection and exaltation of the country of Pakistan.

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One year after US' withdrawal from Afghanistan

Davood Moradian

August 15, 2021 represents a national tragedy for many Afghans, an inglorious event for the US and its Western allies, a turning point for regional stability and global security. Since its inception as a modern nation-state in the early twentieth century, Afghanistan's stability and prosperity have been held hostage by its internal fissures and global actors. From European colonial powers' competition in the 19th century, the Cold War rivalries of the Eastern and Western blocs, to global Jihad against the secular world, Afghanistan has been dragged into regional and global battles. The US has been a leading actor in Afghanistan's multi-faceted conflict and a contributor to Afghans' miseries. The US was the key supporter of the Mujahideen groups during the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in 1980s, alongside other anti-Soviet allies. The Western-supported war succeeded in toppling Afghanistan's secular and leftist government, accelerating the collapse

of the Soviet Union and its Eastern bloc. The Arab Mujahideen then turned their rage and ambition against the West, which culminated in the September 11 attacks. The terrorist attacks on the US soil brought back the US into Afghanistan. While US' primary objective was Al Qaeda-centric, it initially recognized the importance of building a modern, moderate and democratic Afghan polity, supported by regional and international stakeholders.

Only a functioning, modern, inclusive and moderate government in Afghanistan will end the Afghan peoples decades-old miseries, while protecting its neighbors, advancing global security and empowering nascent secular forces in the Islamic World. Pax Americana could not sustain such a polity. This endeavour urgently requires UN's strong leadership to initiate an inclusive political process to bring together all Afghans including the Taliban, regional and global stakeholders to map a meaningful political process. Instead of its provocative gestures in Taiwan, the US should learn lessons from its costly Afghan intervention and humiliating departure by

supporting a UN-led process of stabilization and development of Afghanistan.

Highly educated women in senior government positions were summarily fired. In sectors such as female health-care and primary teaching, where female employees are essential, the education ban makes the collapse of these sectors in the near future inevitable, especially as all those who can be determined to flee. Sportswomen, musicians, artists, writers, intellectuals — at a stroke Afghanistan has lost an entire generation of talent. Witness Baroness Kennedy's laudable campaign to assist dozens of female Afghan judges and other professionals in resettling overseas.

A book by Chief Justice Mawlawi Haqqani articulating the Taliban's governing ideology declares: "The enemies of Islam — infidels and hypocrites — have realized that corrupting women is one of the most important methods of destroying the family." The book emphasises that women must "stay out of sight" in their homes, and should stay out of politics because they "cannot make big decisions or form coherent opinions." Posters were put up declaring that

uncovered women "look like animals."

With the full spectrum of terrorist groups making Afghanistan their base of operations, the stage is set for the Taliban themselves to be pushed in even more ideologically extreme directions. Afghanistan has fundamentally changed in the two decades since the Taliban were last in power. A population that had grown accustomed to education, global connections and material comforts is for now tolerating the new regime, but this is already changing as illiterate Taliban appointees demonstrate their inability and lack of interest in doing anything to alleviate the universal suffering of the populace.

Meanwhile the increasing assertiveness of armed groups opposed to the Taliban, and growing infighting within Taliban ranks, hint at a relapse back to low-level conflict. The US's use of drones against those who pose a threat, and the readiness of neighboring states to intervene in order to contain the regionalised chaos, undermine the Taliban's pretensions to be protecting national sovereignty. Regular skirmishes on the Iran-Afghan border illustrate Tehran's predic-

ament in dealing with a fellow pariah regime with somewhat different ideological leanings.

The war in Ukraine was a gift to the Taliban, distracting global attention during a critical period. However, the world must not turn its back. Increasingly sophisticated and comprehensive vehicles for delivering aid must be devised, while grappling with the fact that Afghanistan will be a long-standing worldwide exporter of terrorism, narcotics and instability. With 45 percent of Afghans aged fewer than 14, the nation furthermore faces a demographic time bomb. Western powers spent two decades in Afghanistan, claiming that their occupying presence was necessary to protect women's rights, ensure stability and democracy, stimulate economic development, and combat extremism. The past year of Taliban misrule demonstrates the absolute urgency for the international community to discover new methods to demonstrate its continuing commitment to securing these principles.

The writer is the founder and the first director-general of the Afghan Institute for Strategic Studies. Courtesy Global Times

Indian colonialism in IIOJK

Indian occupation authorities' move to grant voting rights to Indian citizens ordinarily residing in the Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) is the beginning of India's settler colonialism in IIOJK with true colours. People in Jammu staged protest demonstrations against the announcement by the Modi regime to include Indian citizens in voter lists of occupied Jammu and Kashmir. The residents took to the streets in Janipur in Jammu and burnt the copies of the latest order of the Indian Election Commissioner IIOJK chapter to include the non-locals in the voter list of Jammu Kashmir.

The people of Jammu oppose the decision of the election commissioner. It is wrong. The decision should be reversed as soon as possible. This is unacceptable to Jammu and Kashmir. Article 370 was removed to disempower the people of Jammu. Now this order will further add to the disempowerment.

Granting voting rights to non-state subjects would drastically change the region's political landscape besides influencing the outcome of election results in the future. This is something the RSS and other right wing warriors had been dreaming for. Anyone from outside who is living ordinarily in J&K, can enlist his or her name in the voting list.

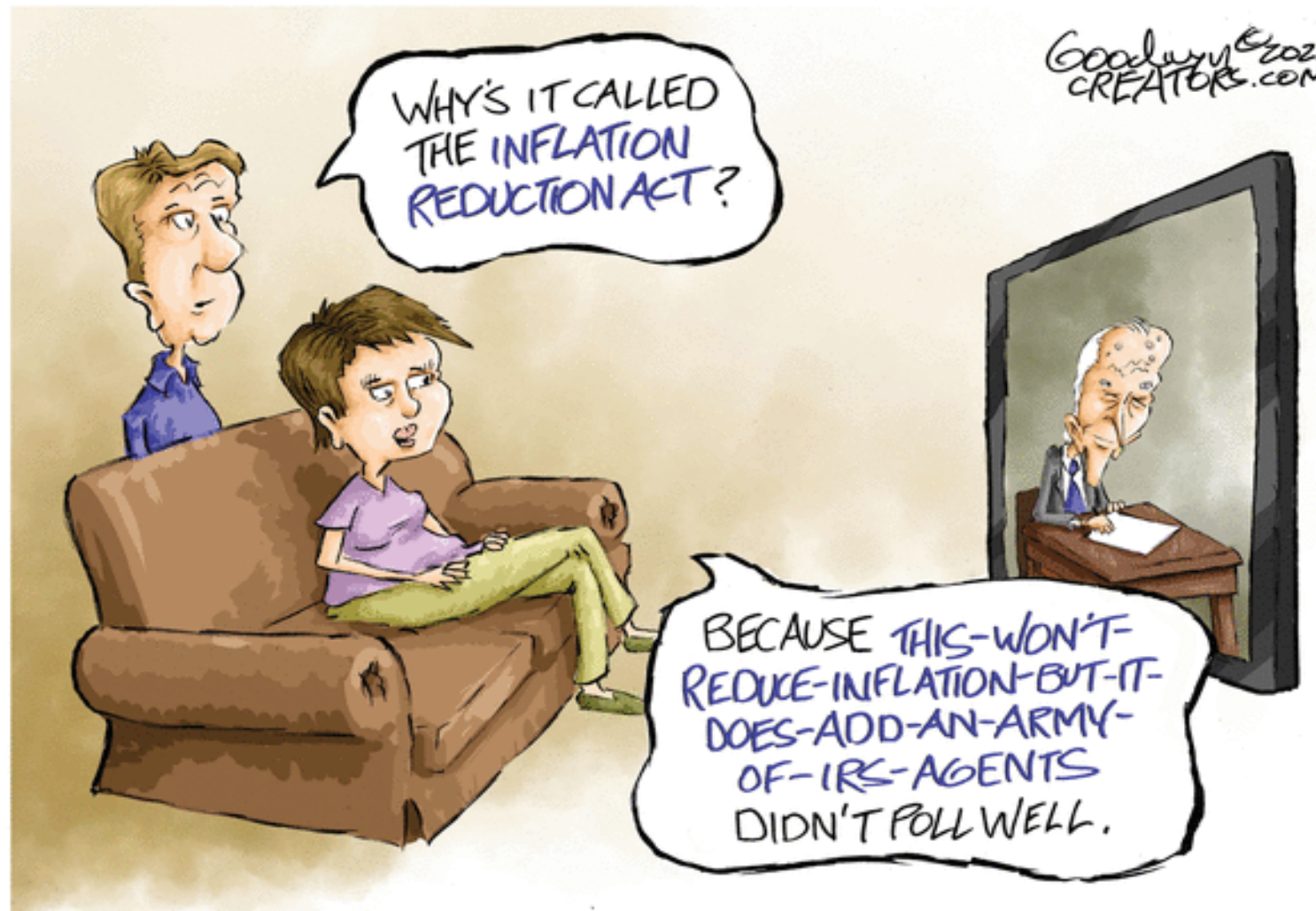
Allowing outsiders subjects to cast vote in a disputed territory and ignoring the region's age-old laws is not only a violation of the UN resolutions but also a violation of Indian law and under Section 17 and 18 of R.P. Act, 1950, a person cannot be enrolled as a voter in more than one place. Rather following rules and procedure the so-called election commission was working on the whims and fantasies of the governor whose status in Kashmir was not more than an agent of the BJP government.

Granting outsiders voting rights on their arrival in Jammu and Kashmir and the right to settle over the lands of the native people are the obvious manifestations of settler colonialism that has been in action since Indian revoked article 370 and 35-A in 2019 and the ultimate goal of Indian settler colonialism was marginalization and elimination of indigenous people.

It is a deep-rooted conspiracy to minimize the Muslim majority community's role and representation in the legislature. The purpose behind this new scheme was to grant political leverage and tilt power of balance in favour of the BJP that has since long been dreaming to install Hindu chief minister in the state thereby changing electoral landscape of the valley.

Kashmiris have time and again raised their concern over India's settler colonialism in the region but it was very unfortunate that their concerns and pleas fell on deaf ears. Instead of watching the situation like a silent spectator, it is high time that the world should hold the Indian government accountable for its crimes in Kashmir and stop the BJP government from changing the region's demography.

People of Kashmir should come forward in a big way to foil India's nefarious designs as it is high time that conscious Kashmiris should pick up the mantle and thwart the apartheid regime's conspiracy aimed at reducing Kashmiris to third-class citizens in their own homeland. The unity within the rank and file of the resistance leadership was also imperative to counter India's anti-Kashmir agenda in the region.



How to save the oceans

Alexander Kozul-Wright

Earlier this summer, the UN convened its Ocean Conference in Lisbon, Portugal. The goal was "to propel much-needed science-based innovative solutions aimed at starting a new chapter of global ocean action." The world needs a "sustainably managed ocean," according to the UN's undersecretary-general for legal affairs, Miguel de Serpa Soares, who hailed the conference as an "enormous success." If only. The ocean's importance cannot be overstated. It is the planet's largest biosphere, hosting up to 80 percent of all life on Earth. It generates 50 percent of the oxygen we breathe and absorbs a quarter of all carbon dioxide emissions, essential for climate and weather regulation. And it is also economically vital, with roughly 120 million people employed in fisheries and related activities, mostly for small-scale enterprises in developing countries.

Yet, over the last four decades, the ocean has come under unprecedented pressure, largely owing to the rapid growth of commercial maritime activity. This growth is particularly significant in exclusive economic zones, known as EEZs, which are contiguous areas of territorial water that stretch some 230 miles from countries' coastlines. The principle of national sovereignty over EEZs was enshrined in the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea in 1982. In the years that followed, governments sold off vast tracts of ocean territory through state licenses and concessions, effectively handing over management of marine ecosystems to the private sector. Policymakers apparently reasoned that corporations would have a financial interest in adopting responsible business practices in order to preserve the resources from which they

were extracting so much value. Instead, widespread oil and gas exploration, industrial fishing and frenetic maritime trade have, as UN Special Envoy for the Ocean Peter Thomson recently put it, caused "the ocean's health" to "spiral into decline."

In fact, beyond Colombia's recently announced plans to create four new marine-protected areas, no binding commitments were made. And, tellingly, the deadlock on deep-sea mining was not broken. Whereas many advanced economies, including Japan and South Korea, support the controversial practice, Pacific Island countries like Palau and Fiji have demanded an industry-wide moratorium, citing the lack of environmental data. The key takeaways from the conference was that the UN remains committed to incremental change, with the private sector firmly in control. This is reflected in an emphasis on "natural capital" solutions, which involve putting a price on nature in order to save it. The neoliberal policymaking that created today's crisis has undergone an ideological makeover.

Where shareholder capitalism failed to ensure self-regulation by private owners, "stakeholder capitalism" supposedly will succeed, because companies will balance the competing interests of investors, workers, communities and the environment. It is not hard to see why stakeholder capitalism is so appealing: It gives the impression that we can have our cake and eat it. But when it comes to the ocean, the cake is already past its expiration date. Given current technological constraints, protecting the ocean from further degradation precludes any additional maritime industrialization. Why does the UN — or anyone, for that matter — believe that private companies will become responsible stewards of the planet? The rapid degradation of marine ecosystems is not exactly new information, yet corporations have only

increased their damaging activities.

Realistically, stakeholder capitalism will merely defer difficult decisions about profit maximization in a climate-constrained world to future generations. Now, the world has an opportunity to embrace a more promising approach to protecting the ocean: The Intergovernmental Conference on Marine Biodiversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction. The meetings, which resumed in New York this week, are expected to produce a legal framework for governing all marine areas beyond coastal countries' EEZs. The high seas comprise 64 percent of the ocean's surface area and host the largest reservoirs of biodiversity on Earth. The number of species they support is enormous, with many more expected to be discovered. And they are getting busier — and becoming more threatened — by the day.

Protection of the high seas has long been overseen by a patchwork of international agencies.

As a result, just 1.2 percent of this fragile ecosystem is currently safeguarded against exploitative commercial activity. As Guy Standing, a professorial research associate at the University of London, recently told me, there is little reason to believe that the conference will do much to "roll back the power of oligopolistic corporations" in nonterritorial waters. Instead, it will turn out to be just another opportunity for the UN to peddle the narrative that the profit motive, which is largely responsible for destroying the ocean, can spur the necessary action to save it. As Standing puts it, if we are going to save our oceans, we must reverse their privatization. That means pushing for binding commitments, effective regulation and reliable enforcement. Above all, it means recognizing that the ocean's true value has no price tag.

The writer is a researcher for the Third World Network. Courtesy Arab News

Ukraine War & left behind disabled people

Joshua Askew

In July, Russian mortars rained down on a psychiatric home in northern Ukraine, while dozens of elderly and disabled residents were sleeping. Flames soon swept through the facility's dining room, and its dormitory and administration buildings were wrecked. Miraculously, only three people were injured. But it marks the latest in a series of deadly attacks in which some of Ukraine's most vulnerable have been caught up in a savage conflict far beyond their control. Before the Russian invasion, there were around 2.7 million people with some form of physical or intellectual disability in Ukraine, according to Inclusion Europe, an EU disability organisation.

The violence and destruction that ensued after Russian tanks rolled across the border have only strained what was described as an already "dire situation" for these men, women and children.

"People with disabilities were under pressure before the war, experiencing prolonged stigma, isolation and barriers to accessing community support," said Inclusion Europe. Although exact statistics are hard to come by, many of Ukraine's disabled — especially those with the most severe disabilities — have not been able to flee the war and are struggling to find safety. According to Karolina Kozik, an assistant researcher at Human Rights Watch, one reason is that many disabled people need special accessibility cars or ambulances, which are not readily available in a war zone, to take them to safety.

"Both national and local authorities did not pay enough attention to the needs of people with disabilities when planning escape routes and evacuation corridors," she told Euronews, adding that her organisation has been helping with evacuations and medical services "without any support". Ukraine's cabinet of ministers says it extended all social benefits, including disability and care allowance for persons with intellectual disabilities, and coordinated the efforts of ministries

to evacuate them, including those placed in boarding schools, psychoneurological and other institutions. Both disabled people and the elderly face serious risks in any armed conflict — and Ukraine is no exception.

When violence does erupt on their doorstep, Kozik says people with physical disabilities, especially those in wheelchairs, may be unable to escape or access bomb shelters, while those with hearing difficulties cannot heed warning sirens when the shooting starts. Even if people with physical or intellectual disabilities are spared the direct brush of conflict, they seldom escape the impacts of war. "The mental health impact of any conflict on anyone is enormous," Kozik told Euronews. "For people with disabilities, it can cause even more trauma and psychological distress." "For example, for some people with intellectual disabilities it might be difficult for them to understand what's happening and any change in their everyday life can have an enormous impact on mental health and well-being."

On 1 March, a shell hit the V. Korolenko boarding school for blind children in Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city in the northeast. "Glass shards flew everywhere, children fell to the floor, they were terrified," said Valentina Butenko, the director of Right to Choose, a group that works with disabled Ukrainians. "One girl was injured, and the director of the school sustained a head wound from a glass shard. All the schools' children have since been evacuated." Owing to their conditions, disabled people struggle to access vital services and humanitarian aid during wartime, though both Ukraine and Russia are obligated under international law to ensure their safety. In this void, care responsibilities fall on their families, especially mothers, according to Inclusion Europe, which said they are mostly "just stay[ing] in their homes hoping for the best."

"Unfortunately, as horrible as it might sound, people with disabilities are often an afterthought in these kinds of situations. They are a marginalised group, even when there is no war going on," said Kozik. "It's a humanitarian crisis within a crisis," she added.

Courtesy Euronews

HBL Islamic Banking continues to scale up its footprint in Pakistan

HBL inaugurated its Islamic Banking Branch in Bahria Town, Lahore

LAHORE: HBL inaugurated its Islamic Banking Branch in Bahria Town, Lahore. The launch is part of HBL's continuous efforts to expand its branch network to better serve Shariah-compliant products and services to its clients.

HBL Islamic offers services to clients in 300 cities across the country, through a network of 273 dedicated branches and 572 windows, with plans to expand its reach in more cities across the country by adding 33 new branches by December 2022.

HBL Islamic Banking also offers a complete product suite for its SME and Commercial Banking clients, ranging from short-term working capital financing to long-term project financing. It has also established 8 trade centers in key markets across the country to provide Shariah-compliant solutions for the domestic and international trade finance requirements of clients.

Shahzad Babar, Head Retail Banking Islamic-HBL, commenting on the Bahria Town Lahore

Branch inauguration said, "HBL Islamic Banking continues to expand its footprint across the country to better serve the Islamic Banking needs of our clients.

The demand for Shariah-compliant banking solutions and services has seen a sharp increase, and this expansion highlights HBL Islamic Banking's commitment to support our clients' strategic needs. With tailor-made financial solutions, we will continue to maintain our lead as the eminent Islamic Banking player in the industry."

Mufti Muhammad Zubair Usmani, Chairman Shariah Board – HBL, commenting on the Bahria Town Lahore Branch inauguration said, "I would like to congratulate the entire HBL Islamic Banking team on the inauguration of the branch. The Bank's fast-paced expansion plan for its Islamic Banking network is quite impressive. HBL's journey toward Islamic Banking began several years ago and it is commendable to see how the bank is working to scale on this front." Agencies



Indonesia raises \$716.35m in Islamic bond auction



JAKARTA : Indonesia raised 10.64 trillion rupiah (\$716.35 million) from an Islamic bonds auction on Tuesday, higher than indicative target of 7 trillion rupiah, its finance ministry said.

Total incoming bids were 30.85 trillion rupiah, much higher than the 10.77 trillion rupiah in bids at the previous July 26 sukuk auction.

Notes sold on Tuesday carried weighted average yields lower than comparable notes sold in the previous auction. Zawya

IsDB Group announces \$10.54b package to global food security crisis

The total IsDB Group's financing support for agriculture and food security currently stands at \$20.6bln, comprising 1,538 operations

JEDDAH: The Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) Group endorsed a USD 10.54 billion comprehensive Food Security Response Program (FSRP) package that will support member countries in addressing the ongoing food crisis and, most importantly, scale up the Group's continued efforts to contribute to strengthening its members' resilience to food security shocks in the future.

The package was approved during an extraordinary joint meeting of the IsDB Board of Executive Directors, the Board of Directors of the Islamic Solidarity Fund for Development (ISFD), and the Board of Directors of the Islamic Corporation for the Insurance of Investment and Export Credit (ICIEC).

As part of the IsDB Group comprehensive package, the IsDB will contribute up to USD 5.7 billion in total financing to member countries, comprising new approvals worth USD 4.0 billion and fast-tracking of disbursements for existing projects worth USD 1.7 billion.

In addition, as part of its "One Group-One Goal" approach, the program involves significant and direct



contributions by IsDB Group entities as follows: (i) International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation (ITFC) : USD 4.5 billion in trade financing; (ii) Islamic Corporation for the Development of the Private Sector (ICD) : USD 269 million in private sector development operations; (iii) ISFD: USD 75 million in loans, grants, and capital resources; and (iv) ICIEC: USD 500 million in

political and credit insurance coverage.

To complement the financial package of the IsDB Group, the Islamic Development Bank Institute (IsDBI) will provide critical data, analytics, and evidence-based support for effective and impactful decision-making.

To jump-start the program, the financing package is expected to provide immediate financing of up

to USD 3.2 billion (over the coming 18-month period) for short-term interventions by providing (i) emergency food and agricultural supply and (ii) social protection and livelihood support to the most vulnerable populations.

The primary focus of the program and the bulk of the financing envelope of the remaining USD 7.3 billion, which will span over the next three years, will be on developing innovative medium- and long-term interventions to address structural weaknesses and root causes of food insecurity in the member states.

These include low productivity, rural poverty, climate change, and weak resilience of regional and national agricultural and food systems through six (6) key initiatives: (i) building agricultural resilience to climate change; (ii) food and input value-chains; (iii) smallholders' productivity and market access; (iv) rural livelihood support; (v) livestock and fisheries development; and (vi) building resilient food supply systems.

The total IsDB Group's financing support for agriculture and food security currently stands at USD 20.6 billion, comprising 1,538 operations. Zawya

Dubai Islamic Insurance accumulated losses reach 59% of capital



ABU DHABI: Dubai Islamic Insurance and Re Insurance Company (Aman) has taken cost-cutting measures to address accumulated losses that have reached more than half of the capital.

As of the end of June 2022, accumulated losses stood at more than AED133 million (\$36.2 million), accounting for 59% of the capital, the takaful insurance provider said in an analysis posted on the Dubai Financial Market (DFM) on Monday.

Losses reached more than AED5 million for the second quarter of the year and AED9.6 million for the first half of 2022.

From January to June, the company recorded more than AED58 million in net earned takaful contributions, up from AED48.4 million a year earlier.

The insurer said it has implemented measures to address the losses. These include cutting general and administrative expenses, increasing sales and concentrating on operational efficiencies. It has also accelerated its digital transformation strategy.

However, the company is positive that finances will improve, as the local economy continues to recover from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We shall continue to focus on improving the profitability of our core business, developing new products and solutions... and creating sustainable value for our shareholders, policyholders and business partners," the company said. Zawya

Bank ABC Islamic posts \$20.7m net profit

BAHRAIN: Bank ABC Islamic closed the half year ending June 30, 2022 with net profit of \$20.7 million, 7.8 per cent higher than the same period last year. Net operating income before credit losses for the six-month period ending June 30, 2022 stood at \$23.1m, also 7.8pc higher on a year-on-year basis.

The growth in income and profitability is at the back of substantial pick up in core customer business as well as a higher profit rate environment. This is despite the headwinds that the bank faces on account of uncertainty on the global geopolitical front as well as high inflationary environment.

Most product areas have performed well during this period except for capital markets business, which remains subdued because of volatility in the market caused by the geopolitical situation. Operating expenses were \$4.2m, 25.8pc higher compared to \$3.3m for last year.

The bank's capital base remains very strong with a capital adequacy ratio of 36.2pc. Commenting, Hammad Hassan, managing director of Bank ABC Islamic, said, "We are very pleased with the growth witnessed in our core banking business during first half of the year, despite markets remaining challenging on account of geopolitical factors and high inflationary environment. The coverage and product teams are focused on new-to-bank customer acquisition as well as on offering innovative solutions to our client base.

"We are particularly delighted to have been recognised for our performance excellence as Mena Islamic Finance Bank of



the year by MEED. We remain on track with our expectations for performance in 2022 at the back of improvement in macro-economic credit environment and the region benefiting from higher oil price."

Net profit for the second quarter was \$11.9m compared to \$8.8m reported in the second quarter of last year. Net operating income before credit losses was \$14m compared to \$9.7m for the same period of last year.

Allowances for credit losses for the period were a write back of \$25,000 compared to \$0.6m reported during the same period last year. Operating expenses were \$2.1m compared to \$1.5m for the same period of last year.

Bank ABC Islamic's total assets stood at \$2.293 billion as of June 30, 2022, compared to \$2.332bn at 2021 year-end. Investments were at \$784m, compared to \$852m at 2021 year-end. Murabaha receivables and Ijarah were at \$1,440m, compared to \$1,420m at 2021 year-end.

Shareholders' equity on June 30, 2022, stood at \$291m, compared to \$297m at 2021 year-end, 2.1pc lower, because of dividend payment offset by profit generated during the period. The bank's capital base remains very strong with a capital adequacy ratio of 36.2pc, predominantly tier 1, which totalled 35.5pc. Gulf Daily News

Bank Nizwa conducts multiple Islamic Finance sessions

MUSCAT: Bank Nizwa, the leading and the most trusted Islamic bank in the Sultanate, organised induction sessions on Islamic Finance, which falls under the umbrella of the bank's renowned "Islamic Finance Knowledge Series (IFKS)" in several governorates of the Sultanate. The sessions witnessed a fruitful engagement amongst attendees. The Bank organised the first session on Islamic Finance for the Ministry of Religious Affairs staff in Salalah, under the patronage of Firas Al-Naqbi, Director General of Endowments and Affairs in the Governorate of Dhofar, in the presence of a

number of officials and employees of the Ministry. Sheikh Dr. Majid Al Kindi, Chairman of the Shari'ah Board at the Bank presented the programme to a large audience, highlighting the benefits of Shari'ah-compliant financial tools and services to the attendees.

The bank held as well two parallel sessions in the governorate of South Al Sharqiyah; at Jalan Bani Bu Ali and Jalan Bani Bu Hasan, which were delivered by Mr. Mustafa Al Naabi, Shari'a Training Assistant Manager at Bank Nizwa.

"The bank has been able to educate communities about the values, options and advan-

tages provided by the financial industry through IFKS, equipping them with the knowledge they need to make wise decisions. Financial inclusion lays the groundwork for a sound financial infrastructure in addition to promoting a nation's economic growth and development," said Khaled Al Kayed, Chief Executive Officer of Bank Nizwa. "As a consequence, these sessions exemplify our persistent commitment to equipping local communities with unrivalled Islamic banking and finance options that comply with today's changing financial demands," he added.

The first Islamic bank in

Oman, Bank Nizwa, has long been committed to spreading awareness of Islamic finance's concepts and tenets as well as its many benefits amongst the people of the Sultanate. Making wise financial decisions is essential as more people join the workforce on a daily. Although many people were unaware of Oman's solid Islamic Finance foundation, the development potential of Islamic finance is still quite significant. Bank Nizwa sought to remedy the underrepresentation of products that adhere to Shari'ah. As a result, Bank Nizwa, the industry pioneer in Islamic banking, devised IFKS.

6th Cambridge Islamic Finance Leadership Programme concluded

Around 30 high-level delegates from global Islamic financial services industry attended this 5-day residential training program

Spokesman Report

CAMBRIDGE, UK: The 6th Cambridge Islamic Finance Leadership Programme (Cambridge-IFLP 2022) was held at the Clare College, a member of the University of Cambridge syndicate, from August 7-12, 2022. Approximately 30 high-level delegates from the global Islamic financial services industry attended this 5-day residential training programme. These delegates and mentors came from the likes of Loothah Capital, Siraj Finance, Bank of Khartoum, ETIQA Insurance & Takaful, Central Bank of Oman, Bank Nizwa, DDCAP Group/TM, CRDB Bank PLC and other institutions from Asia, Africa, Europe and the United Kingdom.

Cambridge-IFLP enjoys the reputation of being the first and only global leadership programme specifically structured for the middle and upper-middle management personnel of Islamic financial institutions. This residential training programme is designed and structured by Cambridge IFA, and is conducted at the Clare College, University of Cambridge. The programme is delivered by some of the most influential leaders in Islamic banking and finance. This year's speakers include Charles

Haresnape (CEO of Gatehouse Bank), Areeb Siddiqui (Founder of KESTRL), Waheed Qaisar (Chairman of Chapterhouse Capital LLP & Pairstech Capital Management LLP), Professor Dr Habib Ahmed (Winner of the IsDB Prize 2022 and Sharjah Chair in Islamic Law & Finance at Durham University), Dr Zeljka Davis-Vorih (Strategist, Sustainability Expert & Consultant, Managing Partner With EMG), Zara Mohammed (Secretary General of The Muslim Council of Britain (MCB)), the first female, youngest and Scottish person to lead the organisation in its history amongst others.

At the core of this unique training is the view that a leadership programme should be delivered by real business life leaders and not only academicians. The programme includes leadership interviews, leadership activities, leadership talks, leadership walks and social activities that are a must when visiting the historic scenic city of Cambridge. These included punting on the River Cam and leadership walk around the campus. The delegates also enjoyed the British summer in the beautiful Orchard Tea Garden while enhancing their leadership skills during the Cambridge-IFLP treasure hunt activity organised on the

grounds of Clare College.

Cambridge Islamic Finance Leadership Programme (Cambridge-IFLP) is fast becoming the most popular leadership programme in the Middle East, Asia and approaching the far corners of the world. With its alumni and mentoring faculty serving as top executives in the global Islamic financial services industry, other halal businesses and multilateral institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the aspiring middle and upper middle management employees of Islamic financial institutions find Cambridge-IFLP as the most cost-effective means to hobnob with the crème-de-la-crème of Islamic banking and finance.

Dr Mohammed Hanis Osman who has been recently appointed as the CEO of Bank Rakyat, Tengku Ahmad Badli Shah Raja Hussin assumed the reins of arguably the most important Islamic financial development institution in Malaysia, Agrobank, Ferdaus Toh Abdullah serving as Acting CEO of Affin Islamic Bank (after the retirement of Nazlee Khalifah), have all been alumni of Cambridge-IFLP.

"Our alumni include the likes of Khalid Alyahmadi, Chairman of Amjaad Holding," said Professor Humayon Dar, Chair-

man of Cambridge IFA and Founder of the Programme. "Mr Alyahmadi returned to the Programme once again this year to share his incredible story of success in a short span of time." Other alumni from Oman included Sulaiman Al Harthi, Executive Director of Meethaq Islamic Banking, an arm of Bank Muscat. This year also, we welcomed a number of delegates from Oman.

"Cambridge-IFLP is fast gaining the reputation of being a rendezvous of the top CEOs in Islamic banking and finance. While we have new mentors such as Saffar Alam, CEO of Maydan Capital; Dr Zahid Parvez, Rector of Markfield Institute of Higher Education Leicester, UK; Muhammad Afaq Khan, President of MCB Islamic Bank, Pakistan, Satyajee Roy, CEO of Habib Bank AG Zurich, UK, seasoned mentors like Iqbal Khan of Fajr Capital, Dr Jamshaid Anwar Chattha, Expert, (Advisor) Supervision & Control of Financial Institutions Sector Qatar Central Bank, Mohd Muazzam Mohamed, CEO of Bank Islam Malaysia Berhad and Adnan Ahmed Yousif, President & CEO of Al Baraka Banking Group continued to inspire and enable this year's delegates with skills to lead the industry in the fourth era of the industrial revolution."

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index

Current	Prev. Close
43,481.50	43,676.56
Day's High	Day's Low:
43,879.23	43,390.33
Index Value	Change
7,174,088,795	-195.06
Percentage	Time
-0.45%	18 Aug, 2022 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index

Index Value	Change
7,541.85	+26.10
Percentage	Time
+0.35%	18 Aug, 4:35 pm GMT+1

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average

Index Value	Change
33,908.15	-72.17
Percentage	Time
-0.21%	18 Aug, 12:23 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average

Index Value	Change
28,942.14	-280.63
Percentage	Time
-0.96%	18 Aug, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	147.86	149.11
Bahrain Dinar	568.75	573.25
Canadian Dollar	165.35	166.7
China Yuan	31.53	31.78
Danish Krone	29.26	29.61
Euro	217	220
Hong Kong Dollar	27.26	27.61
Indian Rupee	2.69	2.77
Japanese Yen	1.55	1.61
Kuwaiti Dinar	695.89	700.89
Malaysian Ringgit	47.97	48.42
New Zealand \$	133.92	135.12
Norwegians Krone	22.09	22.39
Omani Riyal	555.41	559.91
Qatari Riyal	58.77	59.27
Saudi Riyal	57	57.9
Singapore Dollar	154.49	155.79
Swedish Korona	20.75	21.05
Swiss Franc	224.2	225.99
Thai Bhat	6.65	6.75
U.A.E Dirham	57	57.9
UK Pound Sterling	258	263
US Dollar	215	218

Pak-Iran FTA to be finalized in six months

Naveed Qamar says Pakistan is committed to take all possible measures to increase bilateral trade volume to the level of \$5b

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The 21st Session of Pak-Iran Joint Economic Commission was hosted by Pakistan from August 16-18, 2022. During the meetings, Federal Minister for Commerce, Syed Naveed Qamar said that Pakistan and Iran enjoy multi-dimensional relations. Pakistan highly values its friendly and brotherly relationship with neighboring country Iran, which is time tested. The two countries have complete trust, mutual understanding and convergence of views on all bilateral, regional and international issues.

The Federal Minister for Commerce expressed these views while meeting with Iranian Minister for Roads and Urban Development Rostam Ghasemi along with a delegation of 57 dignitaries from Iran during the 21st Session of Pak-Iran Joint Economic Commission. Secretary, Economic Affairs Division, Mohammad Humair Karim and other senior officers of Ministry of Economic Affairs Division were



Secretary, Economic Affairs Division, Mohammad Humair Karim and other senior officers of Ministry of Economic Affairs Division were

also present.

Federal Minister for Commerce, Syed Naveed Qamar said that although current trade volume between the two countries does not commensurate with the true potential of the two countries, yet Pakistan is committed to take all possible measures to increase the bilateral trade volume to the level of \$5 billion. In order to increase bilateral trade both sides expressed their desire to finalize and sign the Free Trade Agreement within the next six months. It was also discussed that the two sides decided to work together to operationalise the Barter Trade as per the Agreement signed between Quetta and Zaidan Chambers. Both sides further agreed to discuss removal of Tariff and Non-Tariff Barriers to enhance bilateral trade. On the sidelines of the JEC, the apex Chambers of Commerce from the two sides decided for more frequent business to business integrations.

Moreover, in order to facilitate trade an additional border crossing point at Gabd (near to Gwadar)-Reemdan has recently been operationalized by Pakistan. In addition, the purpose of agreement on International Transport between Pakistan and Iran aims to facilitate trade traffic from Turkey to Pakistan through Iran, while Iranian goods and passengers can have access to China through Pakistan. Pakistan will have the benefits of access to other Central Asian Republics and Europe through Turkey with operationalization of the decisions taken in the 21st session of JEC.

Syed Naveed Qamar further stated that the Quetta-Taftan Road is trafficable, however for further improvement of road various projects are being undertaken. The Federal Minister Syed Naveed Qamar stressed upon the need of making visa conditions easier to facilitate the Pakistani traders and visitors.



ISLAMABAD: Khalid Iqbal Malik, Shakil Munir, Zubair Ahmed Malik, Khalid Javaid, Abdul Rouf Alam, Mian Akram Farid, Ejaz Abbasi, Tariq Sadiq, Zafar Bakhtawari, Nasir Qureshi, Shaukat Masood, Ch. Waheed Ud Din, Sheikh Amir Waheed, Ahsan Bakhtawari, Ajmal Balouch, Zikria Zia, Iftikhar Anwar Sethi, Khalid Chaudhry, Raj Abbasi, Adil Anees, Ch. Mazhar and others are inaugurating the election Campaign office of Founder Group for Commerce & Industry. Photo by Ghulam Farid

Trade linkages among ASEAN

RCCI to organize BOC in Thailand

Staff Reporter

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) is going to organize a business opportunity conference in Bangkok, Thailand on August 19. The objective of the conference was to enhance trade links between the Association of South East Nations (ASEAN) countries and bring closer the business community and private sector of Pakistan and Thailand. The BOC will also help to improve bilateral trade, connectivity and attract foreign direct investment (FDI) in the country.

Nadeem Rauf, the president of the chamber, has given the details and said that the business conference is being organized on the sidelines of the thirty-fourth achievement awards organ-

ized by the chamber.

About 150 businessmen, institutions and government representatives from Thailand including Pakistan are participating in the conference, he said. B2B meetings on the sidelines of the will also be held and local Chambers have shown great interest in meeting with Pakistani businessmen, he said.

The memorandum of understanding (MoUs) will also be signed between the business community, chambers of commerce and business organizations of the two countries, he added.

He said that the Rawalpindi Chamber has always been pushing for the promotion of regional trade, in this regard the business conference and awards were held in Malaysia in 2019, Malaysia is an important member of ASEAN.

Huawei Cloud signs MoU with ORA Global Development Advisors

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Huawei Cloud Pakistan signed an MOU with ORA Global Development Advisors Pvt. Ltd. at the former's Islamabad Headquarters. Present at the occasion was CEO ORA Global, Ms. Fiza Farhan, Managing Director Huawei, Gao Weijie, CEO Huawei Cloud, Shahzad Rasheed, along with other representatives from both sides. Both companies were eager to pen looking this strategic partnership as a means of growing and further developing the ICT industry in the country.

Ms. Fiza Farhan shared her thoughts, "This partnership promises to establish a long-term strategic cooperation for



digital transformation in public cloud services with Huawei to jointly promote transformation to Cloud and digital solutions for the private sector especially the local enterprise. We hope to create innovative digital offer-

ings ensuring efficiency, affordability & reliability for mutually beneficial partnerships."

In today's age of digital transformation, companies need to collaborate in order to survive and grow — "as part of the

main." Huawei continues to adhere to such an ecosystem strategy — one built on open cooperation and the full sharing of capabilities and benefits. Partners and Huawei share common interests throughout the enterprise project lifecycle, ranging from consulting, planning, design, sales, delivery, operations, and maintenance. Working together to build a diversified and thriving ICT ecosystem.

Shahzad Rasheed stated at the occasion, "We need to increase the ecosystem of the Cloud & Digital Landscape in Pakistan. We have high hopes for this partnership and we expect it will help the SME market to completely transform their IT systems."

KATI expressed concern over finance minister's statement

To further increase the petroleum levy

Our Correspondent

KARACHI: President of Korangi Association of Trade and Industry (KATI) Salman Aslam expressed his concern over Federal Minister of Finance Miftah Ismail's indication of a further increase in the prices of petroleum products. He said that the federal minister

has asked to increase the petrol levy by 10 rupees from September 1 up to 50 rupees per litre, which will be very harmful to the economy. The prices of petrol in the global markets have reached the lowest level in 5 years, while the cost of the dollar has also



decreased by more than 30 rupees in the past few days. In this case, the increase in the prices of petroleum products by justifying the IMF agreement is not acceptable.

Salman Aslam said that his party leadership is also unhappy

with the Finance Minister's decision, while the government's allies are also not supporting this initiative as it will increase inflation instead of being controlled. He said that the finance minister has expressed his commitment to reducing inflation, but that it is not possible unless petroleum products and utility prices are reduced.

Agthia's net profit surges to 74% in H1'22

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Agthia Group PJSC, one of the region's leading food and beverage companies has announced that its first half (H1) of 2022 net revenues grew to United Arab Emirates Dirham (AED) 2 billion that recorded a 51% year-on-year growth in net revenues compared with the same period in 2021.

The group net profit attributable to shareholders grew to AED 118 million for the period, a 74% increase relative to H1 2021 which reflected the impact

of the Group's recent acquisitions as well as its cost optimization efforts as part of its five-year growth strategy, a news release here received said.

In his comments, Chairman of Agthia Group, Khalifa Sultan Al Suwaidi said, "Agthia's first half results demonstrate the increasing benefits of our growth strategy to strengthen our Food and Beverage (F&B) leadership in the Middle East and beyond. The acquisitions we have completed over the past year have not only delivered strong top-line growth but also contributed to enhanced profitability.



Our confidence in Agthia's capability to continue delivering tangible value for shareholders and stakeholders remains steadfast."

Similarly, commenting on the achievement, Chief Executive Officer of Agthia Group, Alan Smith said, "We have made significant progress in H1 2022. In the first quarter, our focus was on the consolidation of acquired entities, and in the second quarter we turned our attention towards accelerating synergy extraction and Group integration, which helped us offset higher direct costs and M&A (mergers and acquisitions) related expenses, while minimizing the impact of supply chain disruption and tackling market volatility and

inflation, all without compromising on the quality of our products."

It added that from a financial perspective, Agthia's Consumer Business Division continued to display substantial growth of 71% compared with the previous year, now accounting for 73% of total group sales at AED 1.5 billion. The Protein and Frozen segment contributed AED 570 million, of which AED 493 million was collectively added to the top line through the strategic acquisition of protein businesses in Jordan and Egypt last year.

Hotel One is latest addition on map of Sargodha



Spokesman Report

SARGODHA: With 23 hotels in 16 locations across Pakistan, Hotel One opened its doors to the beautiful city of Sargodha. Located in the heart of the city, Hotel One Sargodha is surrounded by Airforce Club, Golf course, Mall of Sargodha, Daewoo and Skyway bus terminals.

The hotel will attract both domestic and international guests, offering quality accommodation and services. Home to a total of 48 rooms split between 4th and 5th floor of the Burj Ismail Mall. The shopping mall includes a cinema, food court, playground, gym, pool, and Al-Fatah supermarket. The hotel is designed to help guests feel energised, productive, and at home.

The Hotel opening ceremony was attended by Ft. Lt. (R) Imran Qureshi, Deputy Commissioner Sargodha, Chaudhary Shoaib Ahmed Basra, President of Sargodha Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SCCI), Makhdoom Zafar Iqbal, Senior Vice President SCCI, Muhammad Hassan Yousaf, Vice President SCCI, Haji Muhammad, Chairman Ismail Sons (Pvt) Ltd., along with Ahmed Iqbal Saeed, Vice President Operations Hotel One, Haider Imam, Director Sales Hotel One, Waqar A. Qureshi, Corporate Director Development Hashoo Hotels, and M. Ubaid Abbasi, Resident Manager Hotel One-Sargodha. The event was covered by representatives from Media Channels, including Discovery Pakistan.

Hotel One is known as the best select-service hotel chain, by Hashoo Group—the hospitality conglomerate, and the owners of five-star Pearl-Continental Hotels and Resorts, Marriott Hotels, and PC Legacy Hotels in Pakistan. Since 2006, Hotel One has continued to lead the budget-friendly, limited-service hotel industry by delivering value, convenience, and reliability across Pakistan.

Pak vs Ned

Pakistan clinch series after victory in 2nd ODI

Moves to third in Super League after Babar, Rizwan and Salman half-centuries

Spokesman Report

ROTTERDAM: A signature Babar Azam innings and sixth career half-century by Mohammad Rizwan lifted Pakistan to third in the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Super League with a comfortable seven wickets victory over the Netherlands on Thursday.

Babar scored a strokeful 65-ball 57, while Rizwan completed 1,000 ODI runs in his 49th match on the way to 69 not out as Pakistan achieved the 187-run target in 33.4 overs. The two reliable and dependable batters had joined the act at the score of 11 for two and added 88 runs for the third wicket.

Babar, who reached his 21st career half-century from 52 balls with six fours, struck seven fours, while Rizwan hit six fours and a six in an 82-ball innings. The wicketkeeper-batter had completed his first half-century in four matches from 72 balls with four fours.



The two had paired together after Fakhar Zaman found a leading edge to be caught by Vivian Kingma off his own bowling. Four balls later, Kingma dismissed Imam-ul-Haq, who was caught by Logan van Beek at point.

While Rizwan was innovative and

cheeky, as always, Babar was elegant, graceful and attractive, as ever, hitting almost everything from the sweet-spot of his willow until he perished with a mishit off off-spinner Aryan Dutt. The two batters dominated the proceedings from the very start and immediately

shifted the pressure back on the Netherlands who were aiming for more wickets after quickly removing the two openers.

Following Babar's departure, Salman Ali Agha joined Rizwan and returned unbeaten on 50, his maiden half-century in his second appearance.

Salman showed signs of talent and skills when he played some delightful strokes, including his only six that turned out to be the winning shot that also brought him his 50. He faced 35 balls and hit five fours and two sixes, and added 92 runs for the unbroken fourth wicket.

Earlier, the Netherlands elected to bat first and lost their first three wickets for eight runs and last seven wickets for 178 runs to be bowled out for 186 in 44.1 overs. Haris Rauf and Mohammad Nawaz equally shared six wickets between them conceding 16 and 42 runs, respectively, while Naseem Shah snapped up two for 27.

Sports Board Punjab organizes sports event

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: Sports Board Punjab organized sports event at Lahore regarding the 75th Independence Day. There were many competition of sports were held.

In women hockey match Pakistan Green defeated Pakistan Whites by 2-1, while in Laser competition at Punjab Stadium Punjab Green secured 1st position with 4568 points Punjab Whites got 2nd with 3962 points. In under-12 Subhan Zahoor got 430 point got 1st position Hussain secured 2nd with 340 points while Talha got 312 points with 3rd position.

The Vice Chairman Sports Board Punjab gave away the



medals and 15 thousand cash prizes to the successful players. The Vice Chairman was the Chief Guest Zahid Qayyum was the Chief Guest, Deputy Director PSB Chaand Parveen, Assistant Director Ch. Zahoor Ahmed, Deputy Director Rana Nadeem Anjum, Administrator National Hock-

ey Stadium Nasir Malik, Consultant PSB Hafeez Bhatti and Sehresh Ghuman were present.

The Chief Guest Zahid Qayyum said that the players took part in the sports event with enthusiastically and Sports Board Punjab providing huge platform to the young players to show

their ability in the sports He further said that our international player on the titles in Commonwealth Games and Islamic games which is the great honour for Pakistan and our image in sports better in International level and I hope Pakistan Sports Board will do more progress in sports in future.

England bundled out for 165 as Rabada shines for South Africa

LONDON: South Africa fast bowler Kagiso Rabada completed a five-wicket haul as England were dismissed for just 165 on the second day of the first Test at Lord's on Thursday.

Rabada, who had been doubtful for the opening match of the three-Test series, finished with figures of 5-52 in 19 overs — the 12th time he has taken five wickets in an innings.

Ollie Pope's 73 was the only double-figure score by a specialist batsman, with the next-best contribution coming from England captain and all-rounder Ben Stokes, who made 20. At lunch South Africa were 27-0, with skipper Dean Elgar on 12 and Sarel Erwee on 13. Elgar was given out caught behind off Stuart Broad but his immediate review showed the ball had hit his pad rather than the bat.

The captain was still



on seven when he edged Matthew Potts, only for Zak Crawley to drop a head-high slip catch that burst through his hands. Rabada, 27, had done the early damage on a rain-shortened first day on Wednesday by removing England openers Alex Lees and Crawley. Elgar won the toss on a green-tinged pitch and in overcast conditions that aided his four-man pace attack but his quicks backed up that call with a

skilful display. Anrich Nortje had followed up Rabada's initial good work by taking three wickets, including the prized scalp of in-form Jonny Bairstow for a duck.

England have won all four of their Tests under their new leadership pairing of Stokes and coach Brendon McCullum after switching to a mode of all-out attack. But the policy did not work against a quality attack that has helped South Africa climb

to the top of the World Test Championship table.

Pope, who had reached a 69-ball fifty on the opening day, was quickly into his stride on the second morning, pulling Rabada for four. But he should have been out for 67 when he edged Rabada straight to first slip, only for Erwee to floor a routine chance despite four juggled attempts to keep hold of the ball. Rabada then got the wicket he deserved when Pope chopped on to a full-length ball for 73 to end a 102-ball innings, leaving England 134-7. And he showed there was more to his game than sheer speed when he undid Broad (15) with a clever slower ball that the tailender lobbed to Elgar at point. Rabada ended the innings when he had 40-year-old last man James Anderson lbw for a duck to earn a place on the coveted honours board at Lord's.

Quintana denies use of banned drug



PARIS: Colombian Nairo Quintana on Wednesday denied taking banned pain medication after he was retrospectively disqualified from this year's Tour de France over a positive tramadol test result.

Former two-time runner-up Quintana, 32, finished sixth overall in the race that ended on July 24.

The pain medication has been on a list of International Cycling Union (UCI) prohibited substances since 2019. "I know nothing about the use of this substance and deny ever having used it in my career," Quintana, who is due to take part in the Vuelta a Espana beginning on Friday in the Netherlands, said in a statement published to Twitter.

"With my team of lawyers we are exhausting all avenues to mount my defence." Tramadol is only banned in competition and while Quintana has been disqualified from the Tour after testing positive for the substance on both July 8 and 13, he will not be banned from future races.

The UCI said Quintana "has been sanctioned for an infringement of the in-competition ban on using tramadol... with the aim of protecting the safety and health of riders in light of the side-effects of this substance". The governing body added that "the analyses of two dried blood samples... revealed the presence of tramadol and its two main metabolites". Quintana has 10 days to appeal the decision to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS), the UCI said.

"As this is a first offence, Nairo Alexander Quintana Rojas is not declared ineligible and can therefore participate in competitions," it added. Quintana's Arkea-Samsic team said they were aware of the decision but would "make no further comment".

The team did not say whether Quintana would still take part in the Vuelta but the Grand Tour's race director, Javier Guillen told Spanish news agency EFE that he "can start the race, according to the rules". "The rider and the team will decide what they are going to do," added Guillen.

On Tuesday, the Breton outfit announced Quintana had signed a contract extension until 2025. Quintana was the first Colombian to win a Grand Tour when he claimed Giro d'Italia glory in 2014 before adding a Vuelta triumph two years later.

Central Punjab v Balochistan

Match shifted to Rana Naved-ul-Hasan Academy

Spokesman Report

LAHORE: The 14th match of the Women U19 T20 Tournament 2022 between Central Punjab and Balochistan will be played at Rana Naved-ul-Hasan Academy in Sheikhpura due to unavailability of the Murdike Country Club's ground B because of recent heavy rainfall. The other two matches to be played on 19 August will be held at Muridke Country Club's ground A. These are the last three matches of the group stage. The top four teams will qualify for the 20 August semi-finals.

Central Punjab are at the top of the points table with two wins, and are followed by Sindh who also have the same number of wins. Northern and Balochistan are yet to win a match.

Irfan grabs another Guinness World Record

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's acclaimed martial artist Irfan Mehsood has achieved another feat by bagging his 54th Guinness World Record of doing the most push-ups with one leg raised in one minute, carrying a 100lb pack.

"I broke the record of a Syrian named Muhammad Abdul Kader Feido who did 51 push-ups in one minute while I was able to do 52," he told APP. Irfan, who attempted the record in Dera Ismail Khan in May this year, holds 29 Guinness World Records in the most push-ups category and was also the record holder in Most Jumping Jacks category at the world level.

He said he was also the only athlete to break world records using 80 to 100 Pounds weight. "I'm the only Pakistani athlete to break most of India's world records. I have so far broken records of nine countries including India, USA, UK, France, Philippines, Iraq, Egypt, Italy and Spain," he said.

Irfan, who was inspired by seeing videos of record holders and reading several editions of the Guinness World Record books, said he trained four to five hours daily for every record he attempted until he felt he could break the one he was aiming for. "My aim, through breaking records, is to promote my country while also advocating a healthy lifestyle and staying active," he said. APP

Thiem, Venus, Kenin among US Open wild cards

NEWYORK: Dominic Thiem, the 2020 champion, and Grand Slam title winners Venus Williams and Sofia Kenin were among those named as wild cards for the US Open main draw.

The US Tennis Association announced the recipients ahead of the August 29 start of the year's final Grand Slam tournament at New York. Austrian Thiem, the former world number three now ranked 228th, has returned to competition after a long layoff due to a wrist injury. Williams, 42, has won seven Grand Slam singles titles, including back-to-back US Open titles in 2000 and 2001.

She returned to competition after missing nearly a year due to injury. Her sister Serena, a 23-time Grand Slam singles champion who turns 41 next month, has hinted at retirement after the US Open. Kenin, the 2020 Australian Open champion, has been ranked as high as fourth in the world but is recently back from an injury layoff and now ranks 412th. US women's wild cards along with Kenin and Venus Williams included CoCo Vandeweghe, Elizabeth Mandlik — the daughter of 1985 US Open champion Hana Mandlikova — Peyton Stearns and Eleana Yu.

Ineos billionaire Ratcliffe 'potential buyer' of Man Utd

LONDON: British businessman Jim Ratcliffe is "definitely a potential buyer" of Manchester United if the English football giants go on sale, a spokesman for the Ineos petrochemicals billionaire said Wednesday.

Ineos was responding to reports United's current owners, the US-based Glazer family, are considering selling a minority stake, with the team currently bottom of the Premier League following a woeful start to the season under new manager Erik ten Hag.

The Ineos spokesman told The Times that Ratcliffe, reportedly Britain's richest man, would be prepared to buy such a stake as a prelude to assuming full control at Old Trafford.

"If something like this was possible, we would be interested in talking with a view to long-term ownership," the spokesman added.

Dubai airport gears up for supporters

DUBAI: Dubai International Airport, a major aviation hub, is gearing up to help ease transit travel for World Cup supporters ahead of the tournament starting in November, its director said.

The first World Cup ever held in a Middle Eastern country is set to kick off in Qatar on November 20 and will last until December 18. Gulf states have agreed to ease administrative procedures for fans in transit, in particular through the United Arab Emirates.

"We are actually putting together some immigration procedures which actually should make that transition between the two countries a lot easier," Dubai Airports chief Paul Griffiths told AFP. He said online check-in will mean normal procedures can be bypassed "and then you can get in and out very quickly". Pre-pandemic, Dubai was the world's busiest airport for international passengers.

Without specifying figures, Griffiths said there would be "quite a number of flights every day during the World Cup, ferrying fans to and from Doha", the Qatar capital, following requests by several airlines. He said he also expected many people to "be going back and forth and enjoy their leisure time in Dubai and going back and forth just for the matches".

Pichardo wins Euro triple jump gold

MUNICH: World and Olympic champion Pedro Pichardo added European triple jump gold to his accolades in Munich on Wednesday while Dutchwoman Femke Bol kept her bid for an audacious track double on course.

Cuban-born Pichardo, who has competed for Portugal since 2019, dominated the field with a best of 17.50 metres, Italy's Andrea Dallavalle claiming silver with 17.04m and France's Jean-Marc Pontvianne bronze (16.94). "I am really happy with this gold medal, it looks easy, but it is not. This is the result of a lot of hard work," said Pichardo. "This was a good title to win, and one I was looking forward to achieve, so I am very pleased with it. '17.50 isn't great, I'm

not too happy about it because I was aiming for much better than that.

But overall, I couldn't be happier with a gold medal." Bol, 22, was also in dominant shape in the women's 400m, winning in 49.44 seconds ahead of Polish pair Natalia Kaczmarek and Anna Kielbasinska. A world silver medalist and Olympic bronze medalist in the 400m hurdles, Bol now re-focuses on that race. But there is no respite for the Dutch runner, with her 400m hurdles semi-final scheduled for 1011 GMT on Thursday and the final a day later at 2000. She then faces a quick turnaround for the 4x400m relay at 1945 GMT on Saturday for a realistic tilt at triple gold. "This

race was harder than the 400m hurdles," said Bol. "After the race I realised that it wasn't so close a race. "I felt very confident, as well as very strong.

This is my first gold medal at an outdoor championships," she said, before adding: "I know I won't sleep a lot tonight so tomorrow's 400m hurdles is going to be tough." In a good night for one-lap favourites, world bronze medalist Matthew Hudson-Smith of Britain retained his title in the men's 400m in 44.53sec. Switzerland's Ricky Petrucci claimed silver in 45.03sec, with another Briton, Alex Haydock-Wilson, rounding out the podium (45.17).

But there was not such good news for two other defend-

ing champions, France's Pascal Martinot-Lagarde and Greece's Aikaterina Stefanidi. Martinot-Lagarde was denied gold by the slimmest of margins in the 110m hurdles as Spain's Asier Martinez was handed victory in a photo-finish by just a thousandth of a second, in 13.14sec. Another Frenchman, Just Kwaou-Matheu, took bronze in 13.33sec, with fancied teammate Sasha Zhoya clipping the final hurdle to hit the track and eventually finish last. Stefanidi, meanwhile, was denied a hat-trick of European pole vault titles by Finland's Wilma Murto, who hit a rich vein of confidence to match the championship record of 4.85m.

2016 Olympic champion Stefanidi could only manage 4.75m,



taking silver on comeback from Slovenia's Tina Sutej.

The women's hammer throw was won by Romania's Bianca Ghelber in the absence of

four-time champion Anita Wlodarczyk of Poland. The Polish world record holder has won gold at the last three Olympics as well as four world titles,

but had to sit out Munich and the Eugene worlds after being injured while chasing a man who had tried to steal her car. Ghelber's best of 72.22m came on her first attempt and was enough to see off Poland's Ewa Rozanska (72.12m) and Italy's Sara Fantini (71.58). Reigning champion Nafi Thiam of Belgium was in pole position after the first day of competition in the heptathlon.

She registered 13.34sec in the 100m hurdles, 1.98m in the high jump, 14.95m in the shot put and 24.64sec in the 200m to leave her with 4,063 points. Compatriot Noor Vidts sits second on 3,849pts. Thursday sees the heptathletes competing in the long jump, javelin and 800m.