



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



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RAWALPINDI

Nation is indebted to martyrs' sacrifices: President

President Dr Arif Alvi says the nation is indebted to the sacrifices of such brave and courageous sons and saluted them for their supreme sacrifices. By sacrificing his life for the country at a tender age, shaheed Minhas had set a great example and foiled the enemy's nefarious designs with his valour. Shaheed Rashid Minhas did not desist from sacrificing his life for the honour and respect of the motherland



Govt destroys the political & economic system: Imran Ismail

Former Governor Sindh Imran Ismail says the imported government has destroyed the political and economic system of the country. Experiments are being carried out instead of reforms in the economic policy. As a result of which the purchasing power of the people has been adversely affected. The ruling coalition has brought record rate of inflation in the country.

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IMF condition

Govt to public MPs, bureaucrats' assets

ISLAMABAD: Government has decided to make asset details of bureaucrats and members of the Parliament public as Pakistan and IMF reach agreement for the release of US\$1.17 billion. According to the LoI returned to the IMF after being signed by Pakistan, an electronic asset declaration system will be introduced by September and the asset details of wife and children of the government official between BPS-17 and BPS-22 will also be published.

The citizens, according to the LoI, will be able to access the asset declaration of the Parliamentarians. "Action will also be taken against bureaucrats hiding abroad assets in their declarations," the sources said. It merits mention that Finance Minister Miftah Ismail has announced that Pakistan has sent back the signed letter of intent (LoI) to the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

A letter of intent (LoI) signed by Pakistan with IMF for the release of US\$1.17 billion has allowed public access to the asset details of bureaucrats and members of Parliament. According to the LoI returned to the IMF after being signed by Finance Minister Miftah Ismail and governor State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), the asset details of the bureaucracy in abroad will also be made public.

It said that an electronic asset declaration system will be evolved for ensuring transparency and accountability. The asset details of wife and children of the government official between BPS-17 and BPS-22 will also be published. The citizens, according to the LoI, will be able to access the asset declaration of the Parliamentarians.

Remittances

Paris: Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervaiz Ashraf met with Pakistani immigrants in Paris on Saturday.



Photo: PID

Govt will protect poor segment from inflation: PM

Suspends fixed sales tax collection via power bills immediately

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday immediately suspended fixed sales tax collection through the electricity bills and directed for formulation of new mechanism in this regard. The prime minister also directed for an inquiry over the levy of increased sales tax ratio on shopkeepers/retailers, in the electricity bills other than the agreed one. The prime minister issued these directives while chairing a meeting to review electricity rates and fixed sales tax collection through electricity bills.

The meeting was attended by Minister for Energy Engineer Khuram Dastagir, Minister for Finance Miftah Ismail, Minister of State for Petroleum Dr Musadik Malik, chairman Federal Bureau

of Revenue, relevant federal secretaries and other senior officials. During the meeting, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif specially asked for the inclusion of repre-

sentatives of traders in the consultation process, prior to taking any decision with regard to the collection of taxes from shopkeepers through the utility bills. While resolving that the government would take all steps for the economic protection of the poor segments of society, the prime minister also directed the relevant authorities and ministries concerned to immediately devise

Rashid Minhas's valour reflects selfless resolve of PAF officers: PM

an effective mechanism for slashing the power rates for the poor. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Pakistan Air Force pilot Rashid Minhas, the youngest recipient

of Nishan-i-Haider, laid down his life in the line of duty this day 51 years ago. In a tweet on social media platform Twitter, he said, "His was an act of valour & courage that symbolises selfless commitment of our Air Force officers to Motherland. He will always live in our nation's heart."

A day earlier, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has said the government is taking measures

to reform the higher education sector and bring it at par with the international standards. He was talking to Vice Chancellor of the Hertfordshire University, England Quintin McKellar in Islamabad.

He said the government's priority is to modernize the Information Technology sector and provide ease to the young generation to get training in IT services.

Shehbaz Sharif said that the government is going to restart the programme of providing laptops to the youth to help them getting IT skills. He further said that the provision of equal opportunities in higher education is also the government's foremost priority. The Prime Minister said that there existed vast opportunities of cooperation between Pakistan and UK in the area of education.

Hard time

Army stands with flood hit people: COAS

Orders troops to undertake all steps to assist Balochistan govt

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa has said Pakistan Army stands with flood affected population in this difficult testing time and shall undertake the assistance effort as a national obligation. He made the remarks when he called Commander Balochistan Corps to get an update on flood situation.

The Army Chief directed the commander to undertake all measures to assist government of Balochistan for rescue, relief and rehabilitation efforts on emergency basis in coordination with civil administration. General Qamar Javed Bajwa said unprecedented rains have caused devastation to human life and communication infrastructure especially in Balochistan. He said Army

resources will be utilized to help affected population and restore critical communication infrastructure as immediate temporary measure.

The province's infrastructure has been badly affected during the ongoing rains and floods have washed away several roads, while more than 200 people have been killed. Balochistan received 371% more rains between July 1 and August 19 this year, Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) data showed. In the month of August alone, Balochistan received 237% more rain in the first 19 days. PMD officials have said that climate change can be attributed to "extraordinarily above normal rains" in Sindh and Balochistan in the current monsoon season.

Anti-army propaganda

FIA identifies social media accounts

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Federal Investigation Agency's (FIA) Cyber Crime Wing have discovered several accounts that were spreading fake news about the Pakistan Army and Chief of Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa. Mohammad Naveed Afzal who is an overseas Pakistani and a resident of the Jhang district claimed that COAS Gen Bajwa attended the August 14 ceremony which was held at the London Embassy.

However, the video played on social media is of the army chief's visit to Ukraine in May 2021, said the investigating authorities. According to the investigating officials, Naveed has been running negative social media campaigns

and is a PTI activist. Sources said that hateful news being spread on social media is a part of a well-thought-out conspiracy. Earlier this month, an ex-officer of the PTI's student branch disclosed that he ran a smear campaign on social media against Pakistan army soldiers.

He stated that he is ashamed and apologetic for what he did and that he did it because of the influence of "certain people". Moreover, another PTI member confessed that he ran a smear campaign on social media against Pakistan Army. He later apologised for his anti-army remarks and stated that he had spread hateful propaganda at the request of his political party.

PTI's Gill s not tortured: Marriyum

Challenges Imran to name agencies, persons who provided report against PML-N, PPP

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Information Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb on Saturday castigated PTI chief Imran Khan and party members for spreading "fake propaganda" on media regarding Shahbaz Gill. Addressing a press conference in the federal capital, the information minister released videos of Gill, who is currently under treatment at PIMS Hospital, showing that the PTI leader is "perfectly fine" and no signs of torture can be seen on Imran Khan's chief of staff.

Marriyum said that for the last three days "false propaganda" is being spread on social media as "fake" videos of Gill are being spread on all media platforms regarding him being tortured during his imprisonment. Reiterating the coalition government's claims, she said Gill gave a beeper to the private news channel on the directions of the party chief and the "script was also given to him by Khan".



"No violence has taken place and the videos being shared on social media are fake," she said, adding that those videos circulating on social media are actually of the man who was accused of rape in Chakwal. The information minister mocked Gill for staging propaganda as soon as he sees the camera. "This video is fake and he wasn't tortured," she said, accusing PTI of making attempts to change the narrative.

She challenged Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chairman Khan to tell the names of agencies which gave him report about Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP). In a tweet, she asked Imran to

also give the names of the persons who gave him the report about the PML-N and the PPP. She also posed a question as to who had given Imran Khan guarantee about the Chief Election Commissioner.

Castigating Imran Khan, she said that instead of staging political dramas and levelling baseless accusations against the opponents, he should disclose the names on whose behest he kept making false accusations against the political adversaries and put them in jails. Instead of taking out the protest rally, Imran should disclose why he used Shahbaz Gill for issuing statement inciting rebellion within the institutions, she maintained.

Govt okays changes to LNG policy 2011

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Cabinet has approved changes to the Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) Policy 2011 ahead of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's visit to Qatar. The federal cabinet has approved the summary through circulation on an emergency basis as Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is scheduled to visit Qatar next week. Sources told that the cabinet approved the changes to exclude new LNG terminals and associated facilities from application of mandatory Third Party Access.

The decision will encourage foreign and private sector investment in LNG, sources said, adding that it would help meet the growing demand for gas in the country. A day earlier, the ECC approved major changes to the LNG Policy 2011 under which it removed a key sticking point of the upcoming private sector LNG terminals on merchant model to facilitate Qatar's investment in Pakistan's LNG supply chain including terminals and LNG supplies.

Very unfortunate

Everything happening over one appointment: Imran Khan

Summons meeting of PTI members tomorrow

Senior Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: PTI chairperson Imran Khan Saturday connected the current situation in Pakistan to the chief of army staff's appointment, terming it "unfortunate" that everything in the country was happening over one appointment. In a conversation with social media influencers in the federal capital, the former prime minister said that the army chief should be appointed on the basis of merit.

"A drama begins on the appointment of army chief which does not happen in any part of the world," said the PTI chief. He said that the army cannot unite a country single-handedly, adding that "if the army could unite the country, Pakistan would not have been divided" in 1971.

He continued to say that the "neutrals" cannot pressurise the PTI in accept the incumbent "mafia government". Rejecting dialogue with the coalition government, Khan said that he will not talk to corrupt people. "To sit and talk with corrupt people is to accept their corruption," he added. He claimed that the PTI is the only national party in the country right now, adding that he will not take any decision that is not in the country's interest. Reiterating that transparent elections are the only way



to stabilise the situation, the ex-premier said that he will give the tickets for the upcoming elections himself.

"We took the Punjab government back so we could remove Hamza Shahbaz as the chief minister," said Khan. The PTI chairperson alleged that a conspiracy is being hatched to pit the party and army against each other, warning that there will be bloodshed in the country in case of any clash. Talking about Shahbaz Gill's alleged torture, Khan called it a "classic example of fascism". He also announced that he would discuss significant matters during the rally today. Charter of econ-

omy is a fraud," said Khan, adding that the coalition leaders should bring back their foreign properties if they want charter of economy.

Imran Khan has summoned an important meeting of party members and leaders on August 22. According to details, the former prime minister has summoned an important meeting of PTI members at his residence Bani Gala, Islamabad on August 22. The meeting will review the country's political and economic situation. The participants of the meeting will be briefed on future political strategy, they added.

Economy

Federal Minister for Planning and Development, Professor Ahsan Iqbal addressing the participants of a seminar at Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry on Saturday.



Photo: PID

Azadi March violence

Punjab govt removes officials who overstepped authority

LAHORE: Punjab Home Minister Muhammad Hashim Dogar has announced that the officials who overstepped their authority during the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) Azadi March have been removed from their positions. Talking to journalists in Lahore, the Punjab Home Minister noted that officials including Capital City Police Officer (CCPO) Lahore, DIG Operations have been removed from their posts for inflicting torture on participants of the PTI's Azadi March.

Hashim Dogar further said that 30 police inspectors were dismissed from their jobs after departmental action, while four Superintendents of Police (SPs) and seven Deputy Superintendents of Police (DSPs) have been suspended and investigation is underway. He also said that action was being carried out as per law against the officials who overstepped their authority. "The sub-inspector who pulled a gun on women in Faisalabad has also been dismissed from his post," he added.

The home minister warned other officials against overstepping authority for the sake of political loyalty. Earlier in August, Punjab government removed two top police officials for their role in directing torture against participants of the PTI's Azadi March.

According to a notification issued by the provincial government, DIG Operations Capt (retd) Sohail Chaudhry was removed from his post and directed to report to the Services and General Administration Department. Moreover, AIG Special Branch Usman Anwar was removed from his post and his services have been handed over to the Centre.

Govt committed to uplift economy: Ahsan

Says efforts on to reshape economy to export-oriented

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Minister for Planning and Development, Ahsan Iqbal says the government, despite having a limited tenure, is doing its best to improve country's economy. Addressing a news conference in Lahore on Saturday, he said Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf ruined the economy before leaving the government, however the present government took the economy out of crisis, which will further improve in the coming six to eight months. Ahsan Iqbal said boosting exports is the only way to take the economy forward in the right direction. He also stressed the need to double the tax to GDP ratio to provide resources for the country's progress.

The Minister said we will have to boost our production capabilities. He said China has offered brotherly assistance to improve Pakistan's economy. Ahsan Iqbal said political stability, continuity in economic policies and social solidarity are needed for a country's progress. He said that the government was working to reshape economy from import substitutions to export

oriented.

In a meeting with the business community here at the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI), he said the only way for development was to enable the private sector and remove all bottlenecks coming in the way, asserting that private sector should take the driving seat to move the economy forward.

Ahsan Iqbal said the private sector should be given opportunities to make Made in Pakistan a standard brand worldwide and increase the national exports. He said that in 1960s, exports of Pakistan were \$ 200 million the combined exports of South Korea, Malaysia and Thailand were the same. "Today exports of South Korea are over \$ 600 billion dollars, Malaysia \$ 300 billion and Thailand's exports are over 267 billion dollars while we have reached only \$ 30 billion during this period", he said and added that the exports of Turkey had increased from \$50 billion in year 2000 to \$ 288 billion today.

The federal minister said that all developed countries had made exports-led growth their first priority. He agreed with LCCI President Mian Nauman

Kabir that political stability was must for economic development. He said that the country got a rare opportunity in the shape of CPEC (China-Pakistan Economic Corridor). At the time, when no one was ready to invest a single dollar in Pakistan, the Chinese president signed the agreements worth 46 billion dollars. The federal minister said: "The development budget in 2018 was Rs 1,000 billion but when we came back to power in April 2022, it was reduced to Rs 550 billion". He said that the local and foreign investors should be encouraged to invest.

He said the country's tax-to-GDP ratio was only 9.5 per cent whereas it needed at least 18-20 per cent to ensure sustainable development. "We also need to develop entrepreneurship in the country", he added. Ahsan Iqbal said: "We need to improve Pakistan's ranking in world EODB Index". He said: "Now Pakistan has 350 universities and more than 3000-km motorways but, unfortunately, our speed of growth is very slow comparatively to the other countries like Vietnam, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore and Bangladesh".

Bilawal starting four-country trip from tomorrow

FM will visit Germany, Denmark, Sweden and Norway

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari will depart on a four country trip on Monday to strengthen Pakistan's engagement with Europe and share its perspective on regional and global issues. The foreign minister will visit Germany, Denmark, Sweden and Norway from August 22 to 26 at the invitation of his counterparts. These countries are part of the foreign minister's first visit to Europe since assuming office.

The visit will consolidate and expand bilateral cooperation with these important partners. In addition to meeting his respective counterparts in Berlin, Copenhagen, Stockholm and Oslo, Foreign Minister Bilawal will hold meetings with other dignitaries

and interact with the media.

The focus of the visits is to further deepen and broaden ties. Bilawal will talk about Pakistan's economic engagement with these key export destinations and identify more opportunities for the nation. He is also scheduled to sign a 'Green Framework Engagement' agreement with Denmark, focusing on climate change cooperation.

Pakistan has long-standing, multi-dimensional relations with Germany, Denmark, Sweden, and Norway. These countries are home to sizeable Pakistani communities, are important destinations for Pakistani students to pursue higher education, and have significant investment ties with Pakistan. FM Bilawal's visits will impart further impetus to Pakistan's multi-faceted engagement with these countries.

Gradually

Goods stuck at ports to be released: Miftah

Imposes penalty to release banned imported items

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Dr Miftah Ismail Saturday said the goods stuck at the ports would be gradually released with penalty surcharge. "To meet with our international obligations, the government has issued an SRO to reverse the ban on imports of luxury items. The goods stuck at the ports will gradually be released with penalty surcharge of up to 100% of assessed value", he said in his tweet.

The minister said Tariff Policy Board would soon come up with new Regulatory Duty rates that would ensure that the country's limited foreign exchange is spent on essential items and not on these items that have been unbanned. "We must live within our means", he added. The federal government has allowed the release of imported items that have reached the ports after 30th June with penalty surcharge of 100 percent of assessed value.

According to details, the federal government has allowed the release of all imported items and slapped up to 100 percent fines on goods that had reached ports by the end of July despite restrictions. A notification in this regard has also been issued by

Ministry of Commerce after federal cabinet's approval. The government has allowed the release of vehicles, mobile phones, home appliances and other items with a penalty surcharge of 100pc.

The notification stated that other imported goods were allowed on payment of surcharge up to 35%. "Items arrived after June 30 and up to July 31 will be released with penalty surcharge of 25%", it added. Earlier on August 18, the federal government lifted the ban on the import of non-essential and luxury items, three months after the restriction was imposed. Addressing a press conference, Finance Minister Miftah Ismail announced that the federal government was lifting the ban, noting that the restrictions were imposed in line with the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) demands. In May, the government unveiled an emergency economic plan and banned the imports of dozens of non-essential luxury items. Information Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb conducted a press conference in Islamabad to announce the economic plan of the PML-N government to cope with the financial challenges.

Powerful forces control over system: Fazl

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazal (JUI-F) supreme and Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman on Saturday said that powerful forces think that the system should remain in their hands. Addressing a meeting, Fazl went on to say that since 1973, not a single Islamic law has been made. Such parties were imposed, which had no interest in Quran and Sunnah, he added.

Maulana Fazl said that there was a time when Pakistan gave loans to China. Expressing concern, he raised the question that where the country stands today. Fazl said that his criticism is based on goodwill. Maulana Fazlur Rehman said that short-term planning should be kept in mind to provide relief to the people. Fazl said JUI-F is ready for peace but also wants its own security. He said, "There can be no debate on our loyalty to the country."

Traffic accident

Pakistan condoles with Turkiye



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Saturday condoled over loss of life in a tragic accident with Turkiye.

In a statement, the Foreign Office Spokesperson said, "We are deeply saddened to learn of the tragic traffic accident in Gaziantep, Turkiye, resulting in the loss of a number of precious lives and injuries to many more. We seek Allah Almighty's blessings for the departed souls and pray for the swift recovery of the injured. We also convey our deepest condolences to the brotherly people and Government of Turkiye in this hour of sorrow."

PML-N to face fascist Punjab govt: Atta

Warns PTI to avoid arresting single PML-N worker

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Narcotics Control Attallah Tarar on Saturday warned the PTI and Punjab government that "all of you" will be arrested if a single PML-N worker is sent behind bars. Tarar alleged that the Punjab government — a coalition of the PML-Q and PTI — has booked PML-N workers and MPAs as retribution for the sedition case filed against PTI Chairman Imran Khan's chief of staff, Shahbaz Gill. The press briefing came after 12 PML-N leaders approached the Islamabad High Court (IHC) seeking protective bail in a case related to ruckus in the Punjab Assembly during the chief minister election. A district court issued their arrest warrants a day prior.

The PML-N leaders include Tarar,

Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan, Awais Leghari, Muhammad Mirza Javed, Malik Saif ul Malook Khokhar, Peer Khizer Hayat Shah Khagga, Raja Sagheer Ahmed, Mian Abdul Rauf, Pir Muhammad Ashraf Rasool, Bilal Farooq Tarar, and Rana Mannan Khan. Tarar said the "actual case" was against Chief Minister Punjab Pervez Elahi alleging that he, his party, and other PTI leaders were involved in the attack on former deputy speaker Punjab Assembly Dost Mazari. "The whole nation watched what happened to Dost Mazari. This was the actual case. But nothing happened to Pervez Elahi," the special assistant to PM said. "They concocted fake cases against us," he said.

The premier's special assistant, addressing the PTI and the Punjab government, said that they would have to pay for their "revenge politics"

that they have resorted to and that their actions "will have repercussions". "Pervez Elahi and his Punjab government are being controlled through remote control from Bani Gala. This is his old habit. For God's sake, stop this, the country has already borne much loss." Tarar vowed that the PML-N would "face this fascist government head on" and not back down.

The federal and Punjab governments are at loggerheads over the entire Gill episode. The PTI leader is currently under treatment at the PIMS hospital in Islamabad after he was transferred there following the reported deterioration of his health at Adiala Jail. Gill will remain at the medical facility till Monday in line with the court's orders. Yesterday, former prime minister Khan went to visit Gill, but the police prohibited access to him.

Govt wants statement against Imran from Gill: Fawad

Proposes committee with PPP, PML-N, PTI leaders to probe Gill's 'torture'

Our Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader and former minister for Information and Broadcasting Fawad Chaudhry on Saturday said that government wants Shahbaz Gill to issue statement against Imran Khan. Talking to media persons, Fawad Chaudhry said that pictures of Gill are a proof that he was tortured and demanded formation of a committee, consisting of Mustafa Nawaz, Saad Rafique and Sheerin Mazari to investigate the issue.

The former minister also demanded to reveal the elements behind torture on the PTI leader.

Earlier, PTI chairman Imran Khan announced nationwide rallies to show solidarity with his chief of staff, Shahbaz Gill, after the Islamabad Police barred him from meeting Gill at PIMS hospital. Talking to the media

outside PIMS Hospital, PTI Chairman said that despite the court order the police blocked their way, adding that the police did not let him meet Shahbaz Gill. There is no rule of law in the country, he said.

"I will lead a rally in Islamabad tomorrow [...] and rallies will be held in all divisional headquarters across the country for Shahbaz Gill tomorrow, I invite the people of Islamabad to participate in the rally, if torture can happen to Gill, it can happen to anyone, the rally will be held tomorrow evening. The media is being controlled by the thieves by closing their mouths, we will never accept the slavery of these thieves," Imran added.

Fawad Chaudhry proposed names from coalition parties as well as his own party for a panel to probe the entire Shahbaz Gill episode that has stirred up a storm in the country since



his arrest last week.

In a statement on Twitter, Fawad proposed that a committee be formed comprising Federal Railways and Aviation Minister Khawaja Saad Rafique, PPP leader Mustafa Nawaz Khokhar, and PTI leader Dr Shireen Mazari — to investigate the "torture" of Gill.

The PTI leader said that in his opinion, these three politicians should head the panel that will investigate the alleged torture of Gill and bring all those involved to justice. "...they will also not be blamed for being pro PTI," Fawad reasoned. The federal and Punjab governments are at loggerheads since Gill, the chief of staff of PTI Chairman Imran Khan, was arrested on August 9. The PTI leader is currently under treatment at the PIMS hospital in Islamabad after he was transferred there following the reported deterioration of his health during his

time in Adiala Jail.

Gill will remain at the medical facility till Monday in line with the court's orders. Yesterday, former prime minister Imran Khan went to visit Gill, but the police prohibited access to him. Subsequently, Khan announced nationwide rallies in support of his chief of staff. The PTI has been repeatedly alleging that Gill was tortured in custody, with Khan going so far as to claim that not only was Gill humiliated, he was sexually abused.

In a press conference prior to his tweet, Fawad said that "no one will have confidence" in the police inquiry into the matter. He said that the PTI did not have any issues with cases, but it would "not allow torture" to take place. Meanwhile, a judicial magistrate has ordered Islamabad police to furnish a report on the alleged torture.

NDMA sends special relief package for flood-hit areas

Balochistan is the most affected province due to heavy monsoon rains

ISLAMABAD: Chairman, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) Lieutenant General Akhtar Nawaz on Saturday said the country received an unprecedented monsoon rainfall and the Authority keeping in view the recent spell in Sindh has sent a special relief package to its flood-affected areas.

Addressing the ceremony for relief assistance being dispatched to flood-hit areas of Sindh, the NDMA Chairman said the monsoon rains this season were 150% above normal than the past 30 years recorded average of the country.

Lt General Satti said Balochistan was the most affected region due to heavy monsoon rains, whereas, now since past 48 hours Sindh was witnessing maximum rainfall that caused heavy life, property and infrastructure losses.

He said in order to ensure rescue

activities, the civil administration, the Armed Forces, all emergency departments including DDMA, PDMA, NDMA and public worked together to evacuate masses to safer places.

He elaborated that in relief efforts, the Authority's priority was shelter then food and health. In order to provide shelter for the flood affectees from Gilgit Baltistan (GB), Balochistan, Sindh, Punjab and others, the Authority had issued tents to accommodate 84,000 people along with one week ration for 172,000 people, tarpaulins, mosquito nets, hygiene kits, generator sets and dewatering pumps were part of the relief items, he added.

Sindh, he said was bearing many damages and losses due to massive monsoon rains and therefore a special package was prepared for it that would be issued today and would continue for the next two to three days.

"It includes one week ration for

80,000 people, shelter for around 12,000 people. Moreover, the federal government also launched a mega relief package of Rs 37 billion to provide Rs 25,000 Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) relief cash transfer." He said the provinces had their own resources for relief and should possess it in excess whereas the federal government assisted them in crises as it did earlier and would continue as per the provinces' requirement.

Commenting on the property damages, he said the infrastructure was of two types namely national and provincial. The National Highway Authority (NHA) looked after national connectivity infrastructure and it worked day and night to restore the affected routes due to heavy rains, floods and landslides, he added.

"NHA is trying to expedite restoration work of national link routes to ensure connectivity which is going at

a faster pace." He added that the rains had inflicted huge life, property and livestock losses amid a heavy rain spell that prevailed in Sindh, Balochistan and Punjab.

In next 24 to 36 hours, he said a new spell forecast to cause further rains in eastern Balochistan, South Punjab and Sindh. According to the NDMA, it continued to provide emergency assistance to the flood victims including relief materials for the affected areas of Sindh.

Some 35 trucks left for Sindh carrying ration bags that would meet the needs of 84,000 for 7 days. Besides this, 24 trucks carrying tents, tarpaulins and mosquito nets were sent to Sindh that would provide shelter to 28,000 victims.

Moreover, the relief equipment included 35 dewatering pumps whereas the other equipment included kitchen sets and life jackets.

Sindh CM directs to assess damages caused by rains



THATTA: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has directed the authorities concerned to collect the data of losses caused by heavy rains to the lives and properties of people, so that they can be compensated accordingly.

He issued the directive while presiding over a meeting in Thatta on Saturday, during his visit to the rain and flood affected areas along with some of his cabinet members.

The Chief Minister also directed officials concerned that people should be informed in advance in case of any expected flow of flood in Malir River in Karachi.

Army troops arrived in flood-affected areas of Karachi and interior Sindh with relief equipment. According to Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR), Army Rescue teams have started dewatering operation and ration distribution in affected areas of district Dadu, Thatta, Badin and Jamshoro.

Rescue teams are on high alert to meet any emergency in the wake of continuous rains and urban flooding in Karachi and interior Sindh.

28 people trapped in flood water rescued in Lasbela

QUETTA: As many as 28 flood affected people were rescued in Lasbela during a successful rescue operation going on under the supervision of the Pakistan Army and district administration with the help of the volunteers of Lasbela Welfare Trust.

The rescue teams are facing severe difficulties due to the loss of mobile network signals and the lack of access to wireless communication system volunteers.

On the special instructions of Major General Inayat Hussain of Special Security Division 44 of Pakistan Army, Brigadier Faisal assisted the operation going on under the supervision of Deputy Commissioner Lasbela Murad Khan Kasi.

The volunteers of Lasbela Welfare Trust also extended their services to rescue people trapped in the flooded area near Chaman Hotel.

Among 28 people rescued mostly were women, children and elderly men.

NH&MP DIG reviews officers' performance

LAHORE: National Highways and Motorway Police (NH&MP) Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Mahboob Aslam visited the M-3 Sector Office Motorway on Saturday and reviewed performance of the officers.

During a meeting with the NH&MP officers, the DIG directed them to improve their capabilities according to the challenges, faced by the department and ordered for effective patrolling to enhance road safety of commuters.

The DIG also emphasised welfare of officers and personnel of NH&MP. He also launched a tree plantation campaign there and planted a sapling under the campaign. Sector Commander SP Atta Chaudhry briefed the DIG about the M3 sector performance.

Zu Peshawar Pabbi route to start soon

PESHAWAR: Advisor to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Excise, Taxation and Narcotics Control Khaliq ur Rehman has said ZU Peshawar was providing best travel facilities to people and new feeder routes include Pabbi would be activated very soon.



In a press release issued here Saturday, he said that inauguration of Pabbi route would also facilitate people residing in surrounding areas of Nowshera.

He said that ZU Peshawar is a flagship project that has drawn international appreciation and addition of new buses in existing fleet would improve transportation facilities and help open new routes.

He said that government was endeavoring to provide best civic amenities to people and to resolve their basic problems.

Sehat Sahulat Card proved a game-changer initiative: Minister



LAHORE: Provincial Minister for Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education Department Dr Yasmin Rashid said on Saturday that Sehat Sahulat Card had been proved a game-changer.

Presiding over a meeting here, she said that more than 1.9 million people had benefited from the programme so far. She said that the best medical treatment was being provided to dengue and coronavirus patients in the government teaching hospitals.

The minister sought suggestions for appointment of new principals to five different teaching institutions in the province.

She also issued directions for release of funds for construction of the University of Child Health Sciences. She ordered for completing the Rawalpindi Institute of Urology, Institute of Cardiology Dera Ghazi Khan and under-construction 600-bed Mother and Child Block at the Gangaram Hospital within the given time-frame.

Provincial Minister for Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department Dr Akhtar Malik, Secretary Health Imran Sikandar Baloch, additional secretaries, special secretaries, chief planning officer and other officers attended the meeting.

Hurdle

LAHORE: Vendors facing difficulties due to accumulated rain water after heavy rain at Landa Bazaar near Railway Station, in Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

Anti-polio drive launched in Abbottabad

ABBOTTABAD: Deputy Commissioner Abbottabad Tariq Salam Marwat on Saturday said that all parents must give polio drops to their 5-year-old children during the 5-day anti-polio campaign starting from August 22.

He expressed these views while speaking on the formal inauguration of the polio campaign which would be launched from 22nd to 26th August 2022, Tariq Salam Marwat administered polio drops to the children and finger marked them.

During the campaign, more than 233,000 children of district Abbottabad under the age of 5 years will be vaccinated against polio. A total of 1,316 teams have been formed for the purpose.

The DC directed to complete the campaign preparations and stressed that all measures should be taken to make the drive a success and provide foolproof security to the polio teams.

He emphasized that all departments and District price Control Magistrates should ensure surveillance and vaccination of teams in their area.

In his message to all the citizens, especially all the parents, adding that



he requested to support administration and vaccination teams for ensuring in giving polio drops to their children up to 5 years of age.

He issued instructions to the Health Department, and Local Government Department to remain in touch with the Ulema to educate people and highlight the importance of polio drops during sermons in the mosques. Apart from this, Health Department also issued instructions to create awareness among

the people through print, social and electronic media.

The campaign will be monitored by the District Polio Control Room to maximize its effectiveness. District Health Officer Abbottabad Dr. Faisal Khanzada, Deputy DHO Dr. Shahzad Iqbal, Health Coordinator Dr. Yasir, Central Member Pakistan Polio Plus Committee Sheikh Nisar Ahmed and other officers of the Health Department were also present on this occasion.

23 new dengue cases reported in Punjab

LAHORE: Twenty-three new dengue cases were reported in Punjab on Saturday, while no death was caused by the virus.

According to the Health Department, a total of 560 cases of dengue virus have been reported so far during the current year, while two people died of the virus and 96 patients are under treatment in different hospitals of the province.

The Punjab Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department (P&SHD) reported seven cases of dengue in Rawalpindi, nine in Lahore, two in Gujranwala, one each in Vehari, Chakwal, Khanewal, Multan and Okara during the last 24 hours.

All suspected patients have been kept under surveillance and their tests are being conducted. The anti-dengue squad killed dengue larvae at 2,420 places in the province during the ongoing daily surveillance. The squad conducted surveillance at 353,385 indoor and 102,762 outdoor places to detect dengue larvae during the last 24 hours.

WEWS organizes seminar on women's rights

Adam Khan Wazir

WANA: Waziristan Educational Welfare Society (WEWS) arranged a seminar on "Da Khor Barkha" ie Shari, Legal and Inheritance Rights of Women in Society at Scouts Camp AC Wana Jirga Hall.

In which police officers, scholars, lawyers, local leaders of political parties and people from different fields participated in large numbers.

DSP Iqbal Baloch was the chief guest of the program, District Youth Officer Sardar Ali Wazir, TMA Officer Hasan Wazir were also present on the occasion.

At the beginning of the program, acting chairman of Waziristan Educational Welfare Society (WEWS), Jamsheed Wazir, highlighted the aims and objectives of the seminar in detail and thanked the guests.

Addressing the seminar, Chief Guest DSP Iqbal Baloch said that it is a fast



that change in the society comes from the members, scholars should continuously discuss the inheritance rights of women with the members.

He said that after the merger new system has come in the tribal districts, due to which some problems have arisen, these will be solved with the passage

of time.

He further said that giving rights or inheritance to women in the society is not the work of a class, it is the collective responsibility of all of us, as lawyers, as journalists and as every school of thought, it is their right to give them full rights.

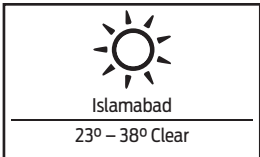
Later, VC Chairman Maulana Naik Muhammad Wazir while speaking regarding the inheritance rights of women said that many rights of women are clear in Shariat.

He said that what a male can do, a female can also do, but the condition is that it should be done.

On behalf of the lawyers, Noor Ali Advocate and PPP President Amanullah Wazir and Social Activist Sadam Wazir while speaking at the seminar said that the seminar organized regarding women's rights is very important and such programs should be at the village level.

So that a passion and feeling about the rights and inheritance of women is created in the people, because women are not less than anyone.

They said that our behavior towards women should be changed in the house which is towards men and the same behavior towards them should be maintained.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 4:04 am
Zohr 12:11 pm
Asr 4:54 pm
Maghrib 6:49 pm
Isha 8:18 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

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

COMPLAINTS

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

13 more diagnosed with coronavirus

RAWALPINDI: As many as 13 more people were diagnosed with fatal coronavirus during the last 24 hours, raising the district's tally of confirmed cases to 47,490.

As per the latest data released by the District Health Authority here Saturday, the infected cases included 43,891 from Rawalpindi and 3,599 from other districts. Among the new cases, seven arrived from Potohar town, five from Rawalpindi Cantonment and one from Taxila.

"Presently, 120 confirmed patients are quarantined at homes while two confirmed patients are admitted to Benazir Bhutto Hospital", the report added. The report further said that 6,998,459 people, including 44,797 health workers, had jabbed themselves against the lethal coronavirus (COVID-19) across the district since the vaccination administering drive launched on March 10, 2021.

TMUC holds University of Hertfordshire graduation ceremony

Parents of students, eminent figures from media, academia and industry attend ceremony

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The Millennium Universal Colleges TMUC, Islamabad organized the Graduation Ceremony of International undergraduate degree for University of Hertfordshire UH to honour the hard work of the graduates, faculty, and staff last day.

The ceremony held in Serena Hotel Islamabad, was an effort to celebrate and acknowledge the diligent efforts of graduating business and computing students from TMUC Islamabad, TMUC Bahria Town Phase 7 Rawalpindi, TMUC DHHA Phase 6 Lahore, TMUC Faisalabad, TMUC Karachi and Gujranwala campuses.

Dr. Musadik Malik Minister of State (Petroleum Division) graced the occasion with his auspicious presence as a Chief Guest in the Ceremony. Delegates from University of Hertfordshire (UH) comprising, Professor Quintin McKellar CBE- Vice Chancellor (UH), James Robert Perrin- Director of International Partnerships University of Hertfordshire, Mr. Sayaz Miah -Director International Recruitment University of Hertfordshire, Timothy Huw Putnam Morgan- Interna-



tional Partnership Manager University of Hertfordshire and Waqar Shah- Pearson also arrived from England to be a part of the ceremony. Parents of the graduating students, eminent figures from media, academia and industry were also amongst the distinguished guests at the ceremony.

Founder & Chief Executive TMUC Pakistan, Dr. Faisal Mushtaq TI, in his opening speech, congratulated the proud parents of the graduating batch while apprising the guests on the significance and opportunities offered by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) recognized international qualifications offered at TMUC. He also applauded the efforts of the TMUC

staff and faculty on the successful execution of another academic year.

Sharing his thoughts at the occasion Dr. Musadik Malik Minister of State (Petroleum Division Ministry of Energy) congratulated Chief Executive TMUC Dr. Faisal Mushtaq on providing excellent quality of transnational education in Pakistan. Further, he stressed upon the importance of Education which plays a pivotal role in all our lives and paves the way for all of us to reach our highest potential. He congratulated the young Millennials by saying, "Education is the key to success, an educated person can strive for the betterment of a country."

Use of pedestrian bridge

ISLAMABAD: Motorcyclists crossing Srinagar Highway through pedestrian bridge in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

PPAF initiates countrywide Flood Emergency Response

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: In the wake of recent flooding, Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) has initiated relief activities across 9 worst hit districts in all four provinces of the country. An estimated 148,000 people in need will benefit from PPAF's humanitarian response. PPAF earlier allocated Rs 250 million for Flood Emergency Relief Programme to provide immediate life-saving assistance in the worst affected districts of

Pakistan.

PPAF, in collaboration with its partner organisations HANDS, and GSF initiated its response by distributing relief packages in 3 districts of Sindh that include Thatta, Shaheed Benazirabad, and Sanghar. The relief package contains a diversity of need-based interventions including temporary shelters, food ration packs, hygiene kits, water purification tablets, medical supplies, livestock vaccination and other items of need for the flood

victims. PPAF will work with its local partners organisations already present in the affected areas to deliver the emergency response.

Nadir Gul Barech, Chief Operating Officer PPAF, while distributing the relief package said that Reconfiguring the immediacy of the challenge of intense floods and staying true to our mission, PPAF is responding to this crisis in worst-hit areas of Sindh, Balochistan, Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa by

releasing immediate assistance through our network of partner organisations in the field.

He said, "I would like to urge the donor community to support us in scaling up the response and reaching more families with immediate life-saving assistance." He added further that working together and playing on our mutual strengths, we have the potential to overcome this difficult situation and restore lives and livelihoods for those most vulnerable."

Health Corner

Potential long-term treatment for asthma found

ISLAMABAD: A possible way to tackle one of the underlying causes of asthma has been developed by researchers from Aston University and Imperial College London.

In tests in mice, the researchers were able to virtually eliminate asthmatic symptoms within two weeks and return their airways to near normal.

Just under 5.5 million people in the UK receive treatment for asthma and around 1,200 people die of the disease each year.

Asthma causes the airways to become thickened and constricted, resulting in symptoms such as wheezing and shortness of breath.

Current treatments, including steroids, provide short term relief from these symptoms, by either relaxing the airways or reducing inflammation. However, no current drugs address the structural changes asthma makes to the airway and lungs, in order to offer a longer-lasting treatment.

Lead researcher, Dr Jill Johnson, from Aston University's School of Biosciences, said: "By targeting the changes in the airway directly, we hope this approach could eventually offer a more permanent and effective treatment than those already available, particularly for severe asthmatics who don't respond to steroids. However, our work is still at an early stage and further research is needed before we can begin to test this in people."



The research focused on a type of stem cell known as a pericyte, which is mainly found in the lining of blood vessels. When asthmatics have an allergic and inflammatory reaction, for example to house dust mites, this causes the pericytes to move to the airway walls. Once there, the pericytes develop into muscle cells and other cells that make the airway thicker and less flexible.

This movement of the pericytes is triggered by a protein known as CXCL12. The researchers used a molecule called LIT-927 to block the signal from this protein, by introducing it into the mice's nasal passages.

Asthmatic mice that were treated with LIT-927 had a reduction in symptoms within one week and their symptoms virtually disappeared within two weeks. The researchers also found that the airway walls in mice treated with LIT-927 were much thinner than those in untreated mice, closer to those of healthy controls.

The team are now applying for further funding to carry out more research into dosage and timing. This would help them to determine when might be the most effective time to administer the treatment during the progress of the disease, how much of LIT-927 is needed, and to better understand its impact on lung function. They believe that, should this research be successful, it will still be several years before the treatment could be tested in people.

The research was funded by the Medical Research Council, part of UK Research and Innovation and is published in Respiratory Medicine. Courtesy Science Daily

Two terrorists killed in North Waziristan IBO: ISPR

Raja Furqan Ahmed

RAWALPINDI: Two terrorists, including a commander of Hafiz Gul Bahadur Group, Khabaib alias Bilal, have been killed in an intelligence-based operation by security forces in the Mir Ali area of North Waziristan district.

According to Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), weapons and ammunition were also recovered from the terrorists. The killed terrorists remained actively involved in terrorist activities against security forces, preparation of IEDs and killing of an innocent citizen.

PAF pays tribute to Rashid Minhas Shaheed

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Air Force (PAF) Directorate General Public Relations on Saturday released a short documentary to pay homage to Pakistan's valiant son and the youngest recipient of Nishan-e-Haider, Pilot Officer Rashid Minhas Shaheed on his 51st martyrdom anniversary. Pilot Officer Rashid Minhas Shaheed was born on February 17, 1951. With a dream to defend the aerial frontiers of the motherland, he got commission in PAF on March 14, 1971 in the 51st GD (P) course, a PAF media release said.

He was later posted to No. 2 Squadron stationed at Maripur (Masroor) for an Operational Conversion Course, where he was destined for sublime heights by Almighty Allah.

On August 20, 1971 an unforgettable saga of bravery was crafted with his ultimate sacrifice. On this fateful day, Rashid vanquished the iniquitous intentions of his instructor pilot Flight Lieutenant Matiur-Rahman, who tried to hijack his training jet T-33 towards India.

Rashid battled to take back the controls of the aircraft and finally preferred to crash the plane before it could cross the border. The brave son of the soil accepted to sacrifice his life but didn't allow the country's dignity to be tarnished.

IRC holds policy dialogue to promote girls' education in Balochistan

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The International Rescue Committee, under the "Teach and Educate Adolescent Girls with Community Help" (TEACH) project funded with UK aid from the British people, organized an event "Educating Girls in Balochistan" at PNCA, Islamabad.

The event hosted a conversation with multiple stakeholders and donors on sustainable actions to combat barriers to girls' education in Balochistan.

Shabnam Baloch - Country Director, International Rescue Committee while speaking at the event mentioned, "In order to eradicate the barrier to girls' education in Balochistan, collaboration of all the stakeholders- policymakers, practitioners, academia, and civil society is the dire need of the hour. In this regard, a coherent gender-sensitive approach to education service delivery is needed that addresses demand- and supply-side barriers to girls' education."

The key barriers that we need to work on include, access to education, provision of female teachers, distance to schools and lack of boundary walls and WASH facilities. We also have to work around the recent challenges owing to climate change escalating the access issues and having multipli-

er effect on other related barriers. The recent floods in Balochistan has affected infrastructure which includes school buildings as well."

Graham Gass, Group Head-Health and Education, British High Commission, Islamabad, expressed during his remarks that, "The UKAID funded Girls Education Challenge TEACH (Teach and Educate Adolescent Girls with Community Help) Programme has supported up to 29,000 out-of-school girls in Balochistan-providing accelerated learning programmes and vocational skills and helping to address the limiting social norms and barriers faced by girls in accessing quality education."

Going forward the UK will continue to champion girls' education, calling on partner governments to provide individual and collective leadership. It is our collective responsibility to do all we can to Educate girls, Empower women and End violence against women and girls."

A theatrical performance by Tekrike-Niswan, led by Sheema Kermani, was performed on barriers that girls in Balochistan have to face on a daily basis just to reach school. The play covered barriers like non-availability of nearby schools in the community, lack of availability of WASH facilities, boundary walls, and female teaching



staff in schools.

The event was a culmination of a theater performance on barriers to girls' education and a panel discussion on the impact of sustainable actions moving forward to combat barriers to girls' education, especially during the flood emergency crisis.

The panel discussion concluded that such discussions are critical for cross organizational learning because there is a lot of commitment and there is a lot of talk about the importance of girls' education. The panel discussion articulated that financing access to education, providing materials for learning, and creating safe spaces to learn with in communities is of utmost importance. Furthermore, our goals are to provide best practices, build resilience into education systems, and support out-of-school girls is how we will assist governments in not only rebuilding

better, but rebuilding smarter, stronger, and fairer systems for Balochistan's marginalized girls.

Anne Flaker - Director, Office of Education, USAID stated, "With an estimated 22.6 million children (aged 5 to 16) out of school, Pakistan is facing an education crisis. This education concern is disproportionately affecting girls, who make up two-thirds of out-of-school children. With so many girls not able to achieve more than an elementary education in Pakistan, USAID has made it a priority to improve girls' education in Pakistan. We want to build on a long history of expanding access to high-quality education, especially for young girls in Balochistan, since we all understand how important it is for economic development, prosperity, and security that girls have access to school."

Sher Zaman- Managing Director, Balochistan Education Foundation

during the panel discussion shared that in order to remove barriers to girls' education in Balochistan, female teachers from the surrounding districts should be incentivized where there is significant shortage of female teachers, hindering basic operations of existing schools. For girls and teachers who are attending school from surrounding villages, should be allowed flexibility in school timing.

Abid Gill, in his remarks shared that the alarming state of the shortage of female teachers in the province can be attributed to several reasons, which include supply-side and policy-induced barriers. We need to create workable partnership system with relevant government departments, donor and civil society to promote, expand and effectively manage the relevant programmes in Balochistan.

Quratulain Bakhteari, CEO, Institute for Development studies and Practices (IDSP) while speaking at the event mentioned the need to focus on adolescent girls' nutrition as well as their psychological wellbeing. She further stated, "Girls are going through various physiological changes at the age of 12 to 15 and it is then when we add pressure of multiple subjects. Moreover, even if families consent to sending girls to school without female teach-

ers, young girls require a mentor and a female figure to sensitize them on the physiological changes that they are going through."

Ian Attfield-Regional Senior Education Adviser, Girls Education Challenge in his closing remarks shared that, Girls' education has a positive multiplier effect, it reduces child marriage, adolescent pregnancy, maternal mortality, and gender-based violence. The UK is supporting a global coalition that tackles the learning crisis by delivering foundational learning for all children. In one month's time, world leaders will gather at the UN Transforming Education Summit. We hope that leaders from Pakistan will attend the Summit and make bold commitments to prioritize foundational learning for all girls and boys.

The event was attended by representatives of USAID, World Bank, Japan International Cooperation Agency, Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, Health Education and Development Society (HEADS), Qatar Charity, Society for the Advancement of Education (SAHE), Institute for Development Studies and Practices (IDSP), Balochistan Education Foundation, academia, students, members of civil society and other notables.

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East vs West

Ukraine War & Political Geography

Ramzy Baroud

The 'West' is not just a term, but also a concept that acquires new meanings with time. To its advocates, it can be analogous to civilisation and benevolent power; to its detractors, mostly in the 'East' and 'South', it is associated with colonialism, unhinged violence, and undeserved wealth. The current, seismic shifts in world affairs, however — namely, the Russia-Ukraine war, and the budding conflict in the Strait of Taiwan — compels us to re-examine the 'West', not only as a historical concept, but also as a current and future idea. Regardless of where the West is heading, there is no question that the East is finally rising, a momentous historical event that could reinforce whole new political geography and likely alliances as well.

The ancient Greek historian and geographer Herodotus is often credited with the coinage of the term 'West' in the 5th Century BC. The root causes of that coinage might have been mostly geographic. However, in the 11th Century, the division

between West and East became decidedly geopolitical, when the centre of power of the Catholic Church began shifting eastward, from Rome to Byzantium. While the Catholic Church represented the West, the Orthodox Church epitomised the East. Of course, historical realities are never so simple, as history and its interpretations are written by individuals, with their own religious, nationalistic, and regional biases.

Those who lived in the 'East' obviously had no choice over the matter, the same way as those living in today's 'Middle East', for example, were hardly consulted before Western colonial powers tailored the world's geography to represent 'regions of influence', and the proximity of these regions from the centres of Western empires — London, Paris, Madrid and so on. In the 'Global South', the West is hardly geography, but an idea and, quite often, a bad one. For the South, the West means economic exploitation, political meddling and, at times, military interventions. Southern intelligentsias are often divided between the need to 'westernise' and their justifiable fear of 'westernisation'. In countries like Nigeria, the 'discussion' often takes violent

turns. The name of the militant group Boko Haram translates to something like 'Western education is forbidden'.

Of course, the West is far more encompassing than geography. At times, the connotation seems purely political. Australia and New Zealand, for example, are 'Western countries', even though they are located in the geographical region of Oceania. In the past, Washington even shifted the very meaning of the West to accommodate its sheer military interests. In January 2003, then-US Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld used the term 'Old Europe' as opposed to 'New Europe', with reference to newly incorporated Nato members of Eastern Europe who conveniently supported his country's invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan.

At times, the US was willing to cancel the very idea of the West and demarcate entirely new geopolitical lines. When, in 2009, US President George W. Bush declared before the Congress, "Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists", he had, though temporarily, walked away from the West to whole new uncharted geopolitical territories. That designation did not last for long, as

the 'war on terror' took a back seat to supposedly more imminent threats, China's economic rise and Russia's growing military might. For Washington, the 'West' now simply means Nato, and nothing else. The eagerness in US President Joe Biden was palpable on August 9 when he ratified the US government's decision to approve the applications of Finland and Sweden to join Nato "Our alliance is closer than ever. It is more united than ever and... we'll be stronger than ever," Biden declared.

Ironically, only four years ago, it was Washington that seemed to be leading a political war on Nato, with then US President Donald Trump warning US allies of "grave consequences" if they did not ramp up their spending, and threatening that the US could "go our own way". Despite the overemphasis on closeness, unity, and strength by the US, not all Western Nato members are participating in the American euphoria. The cracks of disunity among European countries — both western and eastern — continue to make daily news headlines. And while US weapons manufacturers and energy exporters are making outrageous profits as a direct outcome of the

war in Ukraine, other Western economies are suffering.

Germany, for example, is heading for a recession as its economy is forecast to shrink by about 1 per cent in 2023. In Italy, the energy crisis has worsened, with diesel and other fuel prices skyrocketing, affecting important sectors of the Italian economy. Other countries, especially in Eastern and Central Europe, for example Estonia and Lithuania, are to face a worse fate than those of their Western and more affluent counterparts.

It is obvious that not all Western countries are sharing the burden of the war or its astronomical profits, a reality that potentially could redefine the geopolitics of the West altogether. Yet, regardless of where the West is heading, there is no question that the East is finally rising, a momentous historical event that could reinforce whole new political geography, and likely alliances as well. This might also be the South's opportunity to finally escape the West and its unyielding hegemony.

The writer is a journalist, author and the Editor of The Palestine Chronicle. Courtesy GulfNews

Indian sinister design in IIOJK

The fascist regime changed Kashmir's age-old domicile law and issued unlawful domiciles to hundreds of thousands non-Kashmiris. It also redrew electoral maps and increased assembly seats in the Hindu-majority Jammu by six from 37 to 43 and Muslim-majority Kashmir by just one from 46 to 47. The well calculated measure was aimed at tilting balance of power in favour of a particular party. The Modi regime also introduced or modified hundreds of laws to grab land and deprive native people of their basic rights. It is pertinent to mention that IIOJK is without so-called elected government since 2018 and is being ruled directly by New Delhi through a selected administrator. The decision to bring in more voters has shaken the Kashmiris and the next move could be to ask them to leave their homes. It will ensure complete disempowerment of the Muslim community. Already through many laws, they have been turned into a political minority.

These steps of providing voting rights to non-Kashmiris has been rejected by all Kashmiris irrespective of their political affiliation, ethnocentric inclination and regional bonding and have been termed as colonial measures. Pakistan termed the measure as a clear manifestation of the treacherous Indian design to influence the outcome of 'so-called' elections in the IIOJK. Foreign Office spokesman reiterated Pakistan's complete rejection of India's entire litany of steps aimed at turning the Muslim majority in IIOJK into a minority. The matter about permitting temporary residents in the Muslim-majority IIOJK to register as voters would need to be studied. But, the basic principle that we followed is that for any disputes, it's important to make sure that all of the communities feel being fairly treated and fairly represented.

Kashmiris across the political lines have categorically rejected sinister Indian design of giving unlawful voting rights to 2.5 million non-Kashmiris; to change electorate composition, impose fascist Hindu rule and marginalize the Muslim majority. Kashmiris in the Indian occupied valley term the Indian move as yet another onslaught on demography following revocation of article 370 and 35-A of Indian constitution back on August 05, 2019.

Former puppet Chief Minister of IIOJK and head of pro-Indian Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Mehbooba Mufti, termed the move as last nail in the coffin of electoral democracy in the region. They want to fraudulently bring 2.5 million voters and install some fascist rulers. They want to make demographic changes. The PDP also took out a protest march in Srinagar on Friday against the decision. The move was aimed at electoral demographic change being forced by the BJP through inclusion of imported voters.

Is the BJP so insecure about support from genuine voters of (Jammu and Kashmir) that it needs to import temporary voters to win seats? None of these things will help the BJP when the people of J&K are given a chance to exercise their franchise, tweeted another former puppet Chief Minister of IIOJK, Omar Abdullah. APHC termed the measure as yet another attempt for political disempowerment and marginalization of the indigenous Muslim majority of the territory. People of Kashmir should to come forward for a decisive battle against brazenly undemocratic and unconstitutional step as the decision was a mockery of participatory democracy in the territory.



China's 'Debt Trap' Rhetoric

Qian Feng

Recently, Sri Lanka has experienced political turmoil and a change of government due to its domestic economic crisis. The so-called China "debt trap" narrative has emerged once again, becoming the focus of some US and western politicians and media. This is not a new topic. In recent years, they have been maliciously building a discourse system of "China's debt trap theory", which has also become the basis for endlessly slandering China and smearing the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). In fact, these statements are highly politicized and completely untenable, and they also seriously mislead the perception of the international community.

As we all know, the current crisis in Sri Lanka is mainly caused by the global economic and security crisis. It is also closely related to its small-sized economy, insufficient foreign exchange reserves, long-term debt accumulation and unbalanced domestic policies, and it is not directly related to China-funded infrastructure investment. For historical reasons, Sri Lanka has long relied on external borrowing and pursued a "double deficit" model, with a long-standing debt problem.

For Sri Lanka, China is only its fourth-largest creditor. According to the Central Bank of Sri Lanka in 2021, in terms of total external debt, 54 percent of its external loans come from the international capital markets, with China ranking behind the international financial markets, the Asian Development Bank and Japan, and its debt to China accounts for only about 10% of Sri Lanka's total US dollar external debt.

Some Sri Lankan scholars have said, "In the past, even if Sri Lanka sinks into the Indi-

an Ocean, the United States would not care. "But now Sri Lanka is at the focus of Washington's foreign policy because of the BRI. Since the advent of the BRI, some Western politicians and media have accused China of luring poor countries into accepting one loan after another, to build infrastructure they cannot afford and making little profit, falsely claiming that Beijing's ultimate goal is to take control of property from struggling borrowers. By their logic, the BRI is not only pursuing geopolitical influence, but also an invisible weapon. Once a country is crushed by Chinese loans, it becomes a puppet of China.

How absurd! If they wish to incriminate China, they will meet no difficulty in finding a pretext. Take Hambantota Port as example. In 2018, former US Vice President Mike Pence publicly called it evidence of "debt diplomacy." In terms of common sense, the trap means that one side intentionally sets it up for the other side, but in the whole development process of Hambantota Port, China has always upheld the principle of equality and mutual benefit, and the initiative has always been in the hands of Sri Lanka itself.

In 2005, the Sri Lankan government proposed a national development strategy of "two wings and one belt", hoping to build it into another major commercial and shipping center besides the capital Colombo. The Sri Lankan government first approached the United States and India due to the lack of funds, but both countries refused, so it turned to China. For the sake of long term friendship and helping its development, China finally agreed to lend it to help with its construction and development. However, western public opinion deliberately claims that China is "taking the long line and catching the big fish", which is completely ignoring the facts. Over the years, even though the Sri Lankan government, academia and local media have refuted the rumor, anti-China factions in

the US and the West have always pretended not to hear it.

Sri Lanka's debt structure is very fragile. All the time, China has provided mostly preferential loans, with low interest rates and long maturities, which have played a positive role in the improvement of infrastructure and people's livelihood. This year, after the Sri Lankan government announced the suspension of foreign debt repayment, Chinese financial institutions immediately took the initiative to negotiate with Sri Lanka to show a positive attitude on properly handling maturing China-related debt and helping Sri Lanka cope with the current difficulties. China also provided emergency humanitarian assistance in a timely manner, promised to continue to provide support within its capacity to help Sri Lanka achieve economic recovery and improve people's livelihood.

It is widely believed that what is happening in Sri Lanka could be an ominous preview of what is coming in other low-and middle-income countries, as soaring inflation, high debt, excess currency issuance and shrinking currency reserves are the challenges that almost all emerging economies are facing. Debt risks are continuing to rise globally. Faced with crisis and the reality, Washington should ask itself, what exactly has the US done for a developing country like Sri Lanka? How much harm has the unilateral economic and financial policies done to countries around the world? It is hoped that the US can sincerely help Sri Lanka cope with the current difficulties, ease its debt burden and achieve sustainable development, and will not use every opportunity to smear China and engage in geopolitical games without a bottom line.

The writer is director of Research Department, National Strategic Institute, Tsinghua University. Courtesy Global Times

Israel's 'terror' lies backfired

Daoud Kuttab

It did not take long for another foolish and senseless act by the Israeli army to produce the very opposite effect from what they had intended. Violent raids on areas under Palestinian administrative and security control are no longer news, but breaking into the offices of Palestinian rights groups, taking away a truck full of computers and other items, soldering their doors shut and declaring them permanently closed — as Israel did on Thursday — has totally backfired. Security camera footage from inside those offices exposed the 3 a.m. break-in, with soldiers lounging around as if they were on a picnic on the French Riviera.

The soldered doors were quickly reopened by the rights groups, who were not tarnished as "terrorists" but rather saluted for what they are: human rights defenders. A nearby Anglican/Episcopalian church was broken into in the early hours of Thursday, terrorizing those living in the St. Andrews Church compound and causing the usually polite church leadership to issue a scathing statement calling for an independent investigation and accountability for the soldiers (as well as those who ordered them) for violation of religious rights.

Palestinian prime minister Mohammad Shtayeh visited the quickly reopened NGOs and said the decision to open or close Palestinian organizations was not the right of the Israeli occupiers, but that of the Palestinian government. In addition to the church statement and the support from the Palestinian prime minister, 17 diplomatic representatives of European countries visited the briefly closed Al-Haq organization and expressed solidarity and support. European countries, many of whom are major funders of Al-Haq and other civil society groups, had told the Israelis they were not convinced of their fabricated accusation and would continue to fund those organizations.

Of course, the most silent diplomatic mission was that of the US, whose president had vowed to support Palestinian rights to live in freedom, peace, and dignity, all of which were viciously violated by the so-called most "moral army." The accusation of terrorism has

not stuck, nor has it convinced anyone — not even the US, which has demanded evidence from Israel, to no avail. The raids are surely related to the forthcoming Israeli elections, but even that does not explain an attack on human rights defenders who are clearly respected around the world.

A much more likely explanation is that the Israelis are not comfortable with the repeated and documented accusations being made against them. They honestly believe that they are a democracy, that their army is moral, and that their actions in the occupied territories are justified because of terrorists who do not want peace and use every means to deny them their very existence. The gap between this outrageous belief and the reality on the ground can be seen by diplomats, journalists, and human rights defenders.

While racist Israeli supremacy makes them look down on Palestinians (including Arabs who work for international human rights organizations, such as Omar Shakir of Human Rights Watch) they cannot stand the fact that these "annoying" Palestinian human rights defenders are collecting evidence of their war crimes and taking them and their leaders to the International Criminal Court in the Hague. Instead of investigating their own actions, the Israelis have continued on the path of repressing — violently if necessary — everyone who dares question their narrative and poses a danger in their eyes to their existential needs.

The security threat posed by terrorism — whether true or false — had an aura to it, but it has been repeatedly exposed and has lost its power. Israel's false attempts to paint everyone who opposes their narrative as a terrorist has become a joke in many circles. The fiction that Israel is living, with its continued occupation and subjugation of five million Palestinians while professing to be a liberal democracy, is no longer being believed. The sooner Israelis wake up from the nightmare that they caused and begin ending their criminality against a proud and vibrant Palestinian community, the sooner their country can try to repair the damage it has done to its own reputation and narrative.

The writer is an award-winning Palestinian journalist from Jerusalem. Courtesy Arab News

IS **Ukraine war front**

Blasts, fresh drone attacks rock Russian-held areas

Putin allows inspectors to visit nuclear plant via Ukraine

KYIV/MSOCOW: Russia reported fresh Ukrainian drone attacks on Friday evening, a day after explosions erupted near military bases in Russian-held areas of Ukraine and Russia itself, apparent displays of Kyiv's growing ability to pummel Moscow's assets far from front lines. The latest incidents followed huge blasts last week at an air base in Russian-annexed Crimea. In a new assessment, a Western official said that incident had rendered half of Russia's Black Sea naval aviation force useless in a stroke. Russia's RIA and Tass news agencies, citing a local official in Crimea, said it appeared Russian anti-aircraft forces had been in action near the western Crimean port of Yevpatoriya on Friday night. Video posted by a Russian website showed what appeared to be a ground-to-air missile hitting a target. Reuters was unable immediately to confirm the video's veracity.

Tass cited a local official as saying Russian anti-aircraft forces knocked

down six Ukrainian drones sent to attack the town of Nova Kakhovka, east of the city of Kherson. Ukraine says retaking Kherson is one of its main priorities. Separately, an official in Crimea said defences there had downed an unspecified number of drones over the city of Sevastopol. "The Ukrainian armed forces treated the Russians to a magical evening," said Seriy Khlan, a member of Kherson's regional council disbanded by Russian occupation forces. The night before, multiple explosions had been reported in Crimea—which Moscow seized in 2014—including near Sevastopol, headquarters of Russia's Black Sea Fleet, as well as at Kerch near a huge bridge to Russia. Inside Russia, two villages had been evacuated after explosions at an ammunition dump in Belgorod province, more than 100 km (60 miles) from territory controlled by Ukrainian forces.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has agreed for a team of independent inspectors to travel to the Moscow-oc-

cupied Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant via Ukraine, the French presidency said. The apparent resolution of a dispute over whether inspectors travel to the plant via Ukraine or Russia came as a senior US defence official said Ukraine's forces had brought the Russian advance to a halt. "You are seeing a complete and total lack of progress by the Russians on the battlefield," the official said, speaking to reporters on grounds of anonymity. According to French President Emmanuel Macron's office, Putin had "reconsidered the demand" that the International Atomic Energy Agency travel through Russia to the site, after the Russian leader himself warned fighting there could bring about a "catastrophe".

It specified that Putin had dropped his demand that the IAEA team travel to the site via Russia, saying it could arrive via Ukraine. The UN nuclear watchdog's chief, Rafael Grossi, "welcomed recent statements indicating that both Ukraine and Russia

supported the IAEA's aim to send a mission to" the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant. The agency was "in active consultations with all parties" towards sending one as soon as possible, Grossi said. Meanwhile, UN chief Antonio Guterres urged Moscow's forces occupying the Zaporizhzhia plant in south Ukraine not to disconnect the facility from the grid and potentially cut supplies to millions of Ukrainians. A flare-up in fighting around the Russian-controlled nuclear power station — with both sides blaming each other for attacks — has raised the spectre of a disaster worse than in Chernobyl.

The Kremlin said earlier that Putin and Macron agreed that the IAEA should carry out inspections "as soon as possible" to "assess the real situation on the ground". Putin also "stressed that the systematic shelling by the Ukrainian military of the territory of the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant creates the danger of a large-scale catastrophe", the Kremlin added.

US announces new military aid, drones for Ukraine

Says it will give Ukraine Scan Eagle surveillance drones.

WASHINGTON: The U.S. for the first time Friday said it will give Ukraine Scan Eagle surveillance drones, mine-resistant vehicles, anti-armor rounds and howitzer weapons to help Ukrainian forces regain territory and mount a counter-offensive against Russian invaders. A senior defense official told reporters that a new \$775 million aid package will include 15 Scan Eagles, 40 mine-resistant, ambush-protected vehicles known as MRAPs with mine-clearing rollers, and 2,000 anti-armor rounds that can help Ukraine troops move forward in the south and east, where Russian forces have placed mines. The official said the U.S. is looking to help shape and arm the Ukrainian force of the future as the war drags on.

"These capabilities are carefully calibrated to make the most difference on the battlefield and strengthen Ukraine's position at the negotiating table," Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a statement. This latest aid comes as Russia's war on Ukraine is about to reach the six-month mark. It brings the total U.S. military aid to Ukraine to about \$10.6 billion since the beginning of the Biden administration. It is the 19th time the Pentagon has provided equipment from Defense Department stocks



to Ukraine since August 2021. The U.S. has provided howitzer ammunition in the past, but this is the first time it will send 16 of the weapon systems.

The aid package also includes 1,500 anti-tank missiles, 1,000 javelin missiles and an undisclosed number of high-speed, anti-radiation or HARM missiles that target radar systems. The Ukrainian forces have been successfully using various precision artillery systems to try and hold off Russian forces and take back territory Moscow has gained.

The defense official briefed reporters on the new weapons aid on condition of anonymity under ground rules set by the Defense Department. For much of the last four months of the war, Russia has concentrated on capturing the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine, where pro-Moscow separatists have controlled some territory as self-proclaimed republics for eight years.

Russian forces have made some

incremental gains in the east, but they have also been put on the defensive in other regions, as Ukraine ratchets up its attacks in Ukraine's Black Sea peninsula of Crimea. The Russian-occupied territory was seized by Moscow in 2014. Nine Russian warplanes were reported destroyed last week at an airbase on Crimea in strikes that highlighted the Ukrainians' capacity to strike deep behind enemy lines. Russian leaders have warned that striking facilities in Crimea marks an escalation in the conflict fueled by the U.S. and NATO allies and threatens to pull America deeper into the war.

One Western official said Friday that the war is at a "near operational standstill," with neither side able to launch major offensives. The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss military assessments, said the whole tempo of the campaign has slowed, partly because both sides recognize that "this is a marathon not a sprint and that expenditure rates and conserving their munitions is important." But the U.S. and Western officials both said that Ukraine has been able to launch successful attacks deep behind Russian battle lines, which is eroding logistics support and command and control of Moscow's forces, and harming their

EU 'concerned over Israeli raids on Palestinian NGOs



BERLIN, GERMANY: Nine European countries, including France and Germany, said they were "deeply concerned" by the Israeli government's forced closure of several Palestinian NGOs operating in the occupied West Bank. The Israeli military on Thursday said it had conducted overnight raids of seven organisations in Ramallah, the West Bank city where the Palestinian Authority's headquarters are located.

"We are deeply concerned by the raids which took place in the morning of 18 August, as part of a worrying reduction of space for civil society" in the territory, the foreign ministries of the nine countries said. "These actions are not acceptable," Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain and Sweden said in a statement. Six of the Palestinian organisations were labelled last October as terrorist groups by Israel, although Israeli officials have not publicly shared any evidence of the links.

The NGOs have all denied any links to such groups. The seventh organisation raided, the Union of Health Work Committees, was banned by Israel from working in the West Bank in 2020. Israel has occupied the West Bank since the Six-Day War of 1967, when it seized the territory from Jordan. "A free and strong civil society is indispensable for promoting democratic values and for a two-state solution," the European countries said.

They added that "no substantial information was received from Israel that would justify reviewing our policy towards the six Palestinian NGOs on the basis of the Israeli decision to designate these NGOs as 'terrorist organisations.'" But they said: "Should convincing evidence be made available to the contrary, we would act accordingly."



Uzbekistan to host IPU's 4th Summit of Women Heads of Parliaments

TASHKENT: In Uzbekistan in 2022 for the first time will pass the Summit of female heads of parliaments of the countries of the world. On September 8-9, 2022, Tashkent will host the 14th Summit of Women Heads of Parliaments of the countries that are members of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). A corresponding agreement was reached during the 13th summit in Vienna. The Chair of the Uzbek Senate Tanzila Narbayeva, addressing the summit, briefed the participants about the reforms in the field of gender equality in Uzbekistan.

Particular attention is paid to the experience of Uzbekistan in supporting and encouraging the participation of women in the economic sphere, focusing on them economic incentives, grants, credits and loans, as well as education and training of girls and women as one of the priorities of the post-pandemic period. The work on increasing the political activity of women in the republic was noted. An event of this magnitude with



the participation of all women leaders of parliaments of the countries of the world will be organized for the first time in our country and in the region as a whole.

It was noted that the decision to hold the Summit in Uzbekistan is the recognition by the world community of the achievements of Uzbekistan in the development of parliamentarism, significant progress in gender policy, as well as the

success of cardinal reforms on the path of democratization of society. As a result of the summit, it is planned to adopt the Tashkent Declaration. The Inter-Parliamentary Union, established in 1889, is the oldest international parliamentary organization, numbering 178 states. The IPU has become a vivid expression of inter-parliamentary international solidarity.

Kim hails military medics for front-line Covid-19 fight

PYONGYANG: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un held a ceremony to thank and praise military medics for spearheading the country's fight against the coronavirus in the capital Pyongyang, state media said. Thousands of medics of the Korean People's Army, who had been dispatched to the "emergency anti-epidemic front", were discharged after Mr Kim declared victory over Covid-19 and eased restrictions last week.

Kim held the event at the April 25 House of Culture in Pyongyang on Thursday to celebrate the medics' "heroic feats" on the front line of the Covid-19 battle

in the country's most populated city. "Noting that the army medics took the greatest trouble to defuse the anti-epidemic crisis in the capital city, he gave warm thanks... to them who displayed the indefatigable spirit and the invincible combat strength of our army," the official KCNA news agency said.

"He specially called and congratulated medics who performed distinguished feats in the capital's anti-epidemic struggle," KCNA said this week that the medics had returned to their units on Sunday without a sending-off ceremony, but Mr Kim said he had felt "empty

and sorry" that he had not done enough to publicly recognise their sacrifice, the report said. North Korea has never confirmed how many people caught Covid-19, apparently lacking the tools to conduct widespread testing. Infectious disease experts have cast doubts on North Korea's claims of progress, and the World Health Organisation said the Covid-19 situation there could be getting worse, not better, citing an absence of independent data.

Kim Jong Un, general secretary of the Workers' Party of Korea and president of the State Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, on Thursday

met and congratulated medics of the Korean People's Army (KPA) who fulfilled their sacred duty of defending the capital city and the people and performed undying feats in the top-level emergency anti-epidemic campaign. The KPA medics gathered at the April 25 House of Culture on a special order of the respected Comrade Kim Jong Un. The house was overflowing with great emotion and joy of those medics awaiting the time of honor and happiness when they would meet with Kim Jong Un whom they had wanted so eagerly to see only once while conducting the fierce war to exterminate the malignant



virus with readiness to sacrifice themselves.

When Kim Jong Un appeared on the platform of the house, the stormy cheers of "Hurrah!" was raised at the venue. The soldiers discharged their bounden duty as the army of the Party and the people, but Kim Jong Un highly praised their efforts and struggle as heroic feats to be specially recorded on the militant course of the KPA. And to give more love to them, he called them to the significant venue so as to put them forward again before the eyes of the whole country and the whole world and congratulate them again. So, all the participants were replete with boundless gratitude to him.

Russia has no moral right to sit at G20: UK

LONDON: Russia has no moral right to sit at the Group of 20 nations while it presses on with its invasion of Ukraine, a spokesperson for Britain's foreign ministry said. "Russia has no moral right to sit at the G20 while its aggression in Ukraine persists," the spokesperson said. "We welcome Indonesia's efforts to ensure that the impacts of Russia's war are considered in G20 meetings, as well as indications that Ukraine may be represented by President (Volodymyr) Zelenskyy at the G20 Leaders Summit." Indonesia will host the summit in November and has said that Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese leader Xi Jinping will attend.

IS **Aid**

IMF staff to visit Sri Lanka next week

COLOMBO: International Monetary Fund staff will visit Sri Lanka at the end of August with a goal of making progress on a staff-level agreement for an aid package in the near term to help the island nation weather a severe economic crisis.

Staff from the global lender will be in Colombo, the capital, from Aug. 24-31, the IMF said. "Because Sri Lanka's public debt is assessed as unsustainable, approval by the IMF Executive Board of the EFF (Extended Fund Facility) program would require adequate assurances by Sri Lanka's creditors that debt sustainability will be restored," the IMF said.

Putin, Tokayev talks satisfactory: Kazakhstan

NUR-SULTAN: Friday's negotiations between Russian President Vladimir Putin and his Kazakh counterpart Kassym-Jomart Tokayev were held in a friendly atmosphere, the Kazakh leader's spokesman, Ruslan Zheldibay, said on Saturday.

"Following lengthy tete-a-tete talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Sochi, [Kazakh] President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev expressed his satisfaction with their results. According to the [Kazakh] head of state, [the talks] were held in an exclusively friendly atmosphere in the spirit of mutual respect and in a business-like manner, Zheldibay wrote on his Facebook page.

A range of issues spanning bilateral economic, investment and humanitarian cooperation as well as the two countries' contacts on the international arena were discussed at the talks, he quoted the Kazakh president as saying.

IS **Divided**

UN council fails to approve more top Taliban travel



UNITED NATIONS: The divided UN Security Council failed to reach agreement on whether to extend travel exemptions for 13 Taliban officials now ruling Afghanistan so they will expire at midnight Friday. UN diplomats said Russia and China want to allow all 13 to continue to travel while the US and Western nations are determined to cut the number to protest the Taliban's rollback of women's rights and failure to form an inclusive government as it promised. Russia and China asked for more time Friday evening to consider the latest US proposal, the Security Council diplomats said, speaking on condition of anonymity because discussions have been private. So, the travel ban will be restored on all 13 Taliban officials until Monday afternoon at the earliest when Russia and China must now respond to the US proposal. Dozens of Taliban members have been on the UN sanctions blacklist for years, subject to a travel ban, asset freeze and arms embargo. But some Taliban officials were granted waivers so they could travel to participate in talks aimed at restoring peace and stability to Afghanistan.

Since the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan last August 15 as US and NATO forces were in the final stages of their chaotic withdrawal from the country after 20 years, as many as 700 people have been killed and 1,400 wounded even though security on the whole has improved, according to a report last month by the UN political mission in Afghanistan.

It highlighted how women have been stripped of many of their human rights, barred from secondary education and subjected to restrictions on their movements.

In June, the Security Council committee monitoring sanctions against the Taliban banned two Taliban officials from traveling in response to their crackdown on women — Said Ahmad Shaidkhel, the acting deputy education minister, and Abdul Baqi Basir Awal Shah, also known as Abdul Baqi Haqqani, the acting Minister of Higher Education. With the expiration of travel waivers for the remaining 13 Taliban officials looming, the United State on Thursday proposed re-imposing the travel ban on seven of them and keeping the exemption for six others, but limiting their travel only to Qatar, where US-Taliban talks have taken place, council diplomats said.

Russia and China made a rival proposal that all 13 Taliban officials be granted travel exemptions for 90 days, but only to go to Russia, China, Qatar and "regional countries," the diplomats said. Russia and China objected to the US proposal, the diplomats said, and the United Kingdom, France and Ireland opposed the Russia-China proposal, insisting that the exemption can't continue for all 13 officials because of the Taliban's lack of progress on meeting its commitments on women, forming an inclusive government and other issues.

Gold price up by Rs 200 to Rs142,600 per tola

ISLAMABAD: The price of 24 karat per tola gold witnessed an increase of Rs 200 per tola and was sold at Rs142,600 on Saturday against its sale at Rs 142,400, the previous day in the local market.

The price of 10 gram 24-karat fold also increased by Rs.171 and was sold at Rs.122,256 against its sale at Rs. 122,085 whereas the prices of ten gram 22 karat gold also increased to Rs.112,068 against its sale at Rs.111,911, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained stagnant at Rs.1540 and Rs.1320.30 respectively. The price of gold in international market decreased by \$5 and was sold at \$1747 against its sale at \$1752, the association reported.

Greece's exit from enhanced EU scrutiny ends 12 years of pain: PM

ATHENS: Greece's exit on Saturday from the European Union's so-called enhanced surveillance framework for its economy ends 12 years of pain and allows the country greater freedom in policy making, its prime minister said.

Greece's economic performance and policies have been closely monitored under the framework since 2018 to ensure it implemented reforms promised under three international bailouts—totalling more than 260 billion euros (\$261 billion)—from the European Union and the IMF between 2010 and 2015.

"A 12-year cycle that brought pain to citizens now closes," Kyriakos Mitsotakis said in a statement. "Exiting the enhanced surveillance framework means greater national leeway in our economic choices". Greece was hit with waves of pension cuts, spending constraint, tax increases and bank controls after it was forced to seek its first bailout in 2010. The economy shrank 25% during the bailouts.

Since exiting them in 2018, the country has relied solely on the markets for its financing needs. The surveillance framework was intended to ensure the continued adoption of measures to tackle potential sources of economic difficulty and structural reforms to support sustainable economic growth. Greece's emergence from the enhanced surveillance will also bring closer the country's goal of regaining an "investment grade" credit rating, Mitsotakis said.

China's July Russian coal imports hit 5-yr high

SINGAPORE: China's coal imports from Russia jumped 14% in July from a year earlier to their highest in at least five years, as China bought discounted coal while Western countries shunned Russian cargoes over its invasion of Ukraine.

China brought in 7.42 million tonnes of coal from Russia last month, data from the General Administration of Customs showed on Saturday. That was the highest monthly figure since comparable statistics began in 2017, up from 6.12 million tonnes in June and 6.49 million tonnes in July 2021.

Western countries were avoiding cargoes from Russia ahead of a European Union ban on Russian coal that came into force on Aug. 11, aimed at reducing the Kremlin's energy revenue over its February invasion.

The ban has forced Russia to target buyers such as China and India and sell at a steep discount. Russian thermal coal with a heating value of 5,500 kilocalories (kcal) traded around \$150 a tonne on a cost-and-freight basis in late July, while coal of the same quality at Australia's Newcastle port was assessed at more than \$210 a tonne on a free-on-board (FOB) basis.

Some Chinese traders expect more Russian coal to flow into China in the fourth quarter when utilities in northern China build stocks for the winter heating season.

Engineering industry's role vital in economic growth: Baligh

Says government always attached great importance to business community

LAHORE: Governor Punjab Baligh Ur Rehman Saturday said that engineering industry played a key role in economic growth and development besides significantly improving the life of people.

Talking to a delegation of industrialists led by Coordinator to Federal Tax Ombudsman Meher Kashif Younis in Lahore, the governor said that the industry had important link between country's engineering capacity and its economic development, according to a press release issued here.

He said industrial engineering also provided a systematic approach to streamline and improved productivity and efficiency. He said its benefits could be linked directly to the work of industrial engineers which included more profitable business.

Governor Baligh Ur Rehman said engineer-



ing disciplines integrated scientific principles with practically oriented research, providing systems and process that created ways of acquiring new knowledge.

He said this integration made engineering critical to successful industrial innovation. He said government was fully committed to strengthen the engineering base on sound footings to bringing industrial revolution in the country which he added would promise better life style of down trodden strata of the society.

He said government always attached great importance to business community and making sure provision of good healthy environment for ease of doing business.

He assured Meher Kashif for early redressal of genuine grievances of industrialists on top priority as Prime Minister attached great importance to business community.

Sultan Mehmood urges resolution of issues faced by businessmen

LAHORE: Ch Sultan Mehmood, Central Chairman Pakistan Hardware Merchant Association called for resolving the parking and traffic issue faced by businessmen in downtown area.

Ch Sultan said that I would like to thank Chief Minister Punjab Ch Pervaiz Elahi for inviting me and my fellow business leader for brief meeting and its honor for us with you and Asad Omar Secretary General PTI's presence and discussed business community issues.

"First of all I would like to say that downtown area businessmen are facing severe issues regarding parking and traffic all the way from Railway Station to Data Darbar. These markets come under the tag of Asia's biggest markets including the prominent ones like Brandreth road market, Shah Alam market, Hall Road market, Azam Cloth market and many others.

Downtown area connects dozen of Wholesale markets from Railway Station



to Data Darbar businessmen are facing severe issues regarding parking their vehicles and they have addressed this issue several times during our routine

business meetings. I would like to give you the suggestion that three places P.R.T.C Bus Stand, Railway Police Plot and Mochi Gate park that can support and resolve parking issue in this area. These places have already been proved for parking space but the work has not yet started so kindly consider making parking plaza also, and this will be helpful to resolve the issue in highly congested markets.

Ch Sultan described about another issue of traffic he said that progressive trade of these markets traffic is the most highlighted problem. Opening and closing timing come with drastic traffic jam and the businessmen have to wait several hours to reach destination they have raised this issue many times and we have tried resolving it mutually, but nothing worked out well.

Three main intersections Gawalmandi intersection, Mayo Hospital intersection and Food Street intersection are the central points of severe traffic jams.

Balochistan handicrafts need Govt's support for better exports: PBF

QUETTA: Chairman Pakistan Business Forum (PBF) Balochistan Chapter Engineer Daroo Khan Achakzai on Saturday said the neglected sector of handicrafts deserved the government's support.

Talking to a delegation of Chaman Chamber of Commerce and Industry who called on him at his office, he said locally made handicrafts were in great demand in the international market, which could help improve the lives of many rural people.

Engr Daroo Achakzai said since the handicrafts sector was directly linked with the skilled women, its promotion would result

in poverty reduction and women empowerment.

Achakzai said the handicrafts were once a major source of livelihood for millions of people but the rising cost of inputs, difficult access to credit and poor marketing network, had brought the industry to its knees.

"Low prices, lack of proper marketing, want of exhibition centers, discouraging behaviour of the bureaucracy, and the rising costs of business were some reasons behind its decline," he added. He said millions of people were working in the sector but it was not organized and continued to suffer due to

the negligence of the authorities.

Besides, the abusive techniques by the "middlemen" were also discouraging the artisans, he said, adding that promotion of the handicraft sector would not only improve the standard of living of millions but also reduce the pace of migration.

The sector could get a boost if the Chinese were invited to join hands with locals to capture a large share in the international market, he suggested. In this regard the provincial government may facilitate PBF in order to tap the best artwork of the province. APP

Workers at UK's largest container port to join rail strikes

LONDON: Almost 2,000 workers at the U.K.'s biggest container port will launch an eight-day strike Sunday over a pay dispute, the latest industrial action to hit a growing number of sectors of the U.K. economy. Workers including crane drivers and machine operators will walk off their jobs at Felixstowe port on England's east coast, which handles around 4 million containers a year from 2,000 ships.

The strike comes as people across the U.K. faced travel disruptions Saturday for the third day this week as thousands of rail workers continued a summer of strikes to

seek better pay and job security amid soaring food and energy price hikes.

Only around one in five U.K. trains were expected to run on Saturday, with some areas having no services all day. Soccer and cricket fans attending sports games, as well as tourists, were among those affected. On Friday, most of London's underground subway lines did not run due to a separate strike.

The Unite union alleges that Felixstowe port's parent company, CK Hutchison Holding Ltd., prioritized profits instead of paying workers a decent wage. Port authorities, for

their part, said they were "disappointed" that Unite did not "come to the table for constructive discussions to find a resolution."

Felixstowe handles almost half of the container freight entering the country. The strike could mean vessels have to be diverted to ports elsewhere in the U.K. or Europe. Rail workers began a series of large-scale strikes that grounded national train travel in June, demanding better pay and working conditions as authorities try to reform the rail system, which has lost large chunks of its income due to the coronavirus pandemic and shifting commuting patterns.

HostingWalay to exhibit in ITCN Asia 2022 at Expo Center Karachi

Spokesman Report

KARACHI: HostingWalay (Subs. of Khalid Grouping.co), a well-known web hosting provider in Pakistan, will be exhibiting at ITCN Asia with their unique goods and hosting plans that they first debuted in Lahore.

ITCN Asia 2022 will take place in Karachi from August 24 to August 26 at the Expo Center Karachi, much like it did this year in March in Lahore.

Everyday living involves the use of technology, and our Pakistani IT entrepreneurs are using their expertise to make their communities better every day. Its mission is to spread knowledge and educate the general public about the top web hosting plans in Pakistan.

The mission of HostingWalay is to be the most effec-



ent website hosting company and the top web hosting service provider in Pakistan. The goal of HostingWalay is to provide the best and most economical web hosting services to clients. The goal of HostingWalay is to provide consumers with services that are unmatched and offer the greatest value. HostingWalay is responsible for delivering the services in accordance with its promises. HostingWalay aims to offer affordable website services with improved client satisfaction.

Turkey central bank takes steps to address credit availability

ANKARA: Turkey's central bank unveiled new measures on Saturday meant to address credit availability including higher reserve requirement collateral for lenders, days after it shocked markets with a 100 basis-point interest rate cut to 13%.

It said the steps were meant to support financial stability and strengthen the monetary transmission mechanism after citing the need to address the widening gap between its policy rate and lending rates when it cut rates on Thursday.

The central bank replaced an existing 20% reserve requirement ratio for credits with a higher 30% treasury bond collateral requirement.

Turkish authorities including the central bank and BDDK banking regulator have previously taken steps to limit loans to companies except those that are net exporters, as part of an economic plan that seeks to flip the big current account deficit to a surplus.

Last month, business

groups complained over regulations and said manufacturing firms are not able to access financing with low rates.

As part of the central bank's new measures, the banks need to keep 20% in securities for commercial loans extended with an interest rate over 1.4 times the current reference rate of 16.32%. The lenders need to maintain 90% bond collateral if a commercial loan extended will have an interest rate more than 1.8 times the reference rate.

Timothy Ash at Blue Bay Asset Management said the new central bank rules to lower banks' lending rates makes banking very complicated. "(It) will increase overheating concerns, boost inflation and put more downward pressure on the lira," Ash said on Twitter.

The central bank also said that the banks need to maintain, in securities, the amount equal to loans that exceed the 10% loan growth rate level when compared to the end-2022 for a year.

Xiaomi Redmi 10C: A Literal Powerhouse on a Budget

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Xiaomi Redmi devices are popular for their top-notch features at affordable prices. Replete with ultra-wide displays and mainly bezel-less designs, Redmi never fails to entice its loyal clientele by introducing new phones in each category.

With the launch of Redmi 10C, a literal powerhouse on a budget, we couldn't help ourselves and decided to get an analysis of our own. Let's dive into an in-depth review of our first impression of this latest device.

With a familiar polycarbonate body that renders it light and durable, the design has matte diagonal lines. The light weight of the phone makes it easy to carry and hold for longer periods.

The front offers a 6.71-inch HD+ screen with an IPS panel, which is not uncommon in mid-range phones these days. There is a dew drop design housing the front camera and the call speaker resting on top of the camera.

The USB-C port and the mono loudspeak-

er can be found at the bottom with a 3.5mm audio jack on top. The right-side houses power and lock buttons along with the volume keys, while the left side contains the triple-SIM card slot.

The camera protrusion at the back is equipped with dual camera lenses, LED flash, imaging sensors, and a fingerprint reader along with the Redmi logo.

Having a 6.71-inch LCD screen with HD+ display at a resolution of 720x1650, with a pixel density of 268 PPI, and a brightness of up to 400 nits, Redmi 10C exhibits vivid hues, bright contrasts, and better viewing angles.

Protected by Coming Gorilla Glass 3, the screen supports modes like reading mode, sunlight mode, dark mode, etc. While also protecting the eyes from harmful rays.

Overall, for daily usage, the screen is satisfactory as it supports Widevine L1 HD, meaning that it can decrypt and stream HD videos from streaming giants like Netflix or Amazon Prime Video, at the highest resolution, easily. For a budget phone, it offers the best value.



Offering a 50MP primary lens with an F/1.8 lens slot, that can capture 1080 video at 30FPS, supports HDR, night mode, and panorama technology, along with a secondary 2MP OmniVision sensor with an F/2.4 lens slot and a 5MP selfie camera is with an F/2.2 lens slot, Redmi 10C wins the camera game.

Redmi 10C captures mesmerizing views with both indoor and outdoor photos and videos having decent brightness, color adjustment, contrast sharpness, and vibrance. Videos do display noise on 10x zoom and lack OIS

but it is the best that is offered in this budget category. The selfie camera is exceptional with its face recognition technology, which helps unlock the phone with ease, and captures gorgeous portraits.

If watching videos, playing games, and browsing the web are your favorite activities, you have found the best comrade for your Call of Duty. Performance of Qualcomm's Snapdragon 680 octa-core chipset with a 6nm manufacturing process with 4-Kryo 265 Gold clocked at 2.4Ghz, and 4-Kryo 265 Silver at 1.9Ghz, has been terrific for multitasking, even while playing games like Temple Run at Ultra settings, where minimal frame skips or lags were observed, and the device didn't warm up.

Combined with an Adreno 610 GPU, 4GB RAM, 1GB virtual RAM, and 64/128GB UFS 2.2 onboard storage with the ability to expand via microSD card up to 1TB, with MIUI 13, this phone delivers uninterrupted performance without any lags, which means apps install and load faster.

We must mention that on the first boot you may encounter a bug while using the apps, so, to avoid this issue, make sure to update your device to the latest version.

Housing a port accommodating dual 4G nano sims along with a MicroSD card for extendable storage, Redmi 10C supports all 3G and 4G network bandwidths in Pakistan. So the phone catches signals from every carrier easily. As for the WiFi networks, it supports 2.4GHz and 5GHz bandwidths and it also has Bluetooth 5.0.

Redmi 10C comes with a 10W charger but an 18W USB-C fast charger is also available for purchase to rapidly charge a 5000mAh battery in less than 2 hours.

The battery lasts easily for a day even with heavy usage and while running high-performing draining apps. We would suggest that the Xiaomi Redmi 10C smartphone is worth buying, as it is one of the best budget phones currently in the market that offer powerful performance, and has a great battery life with a really good camera and display.

Shaheen Afridi ruled out of Asia Cup, England home series

He suffered right knee ligament injury during first Test against Sri Lanka

Spokesman Report

ROTTERDAM: Shaheen Shah Afridi has been advised 4-6 weeks rest by the PCB Medical Advisory Committee and independent specialists following latest scans and reports.

Shaheen has been ruled out of the ACC T20 Asia Cup and home series against England, but is expected to return to competitive cricket in October with the New Zealand T20I tri-series, which will be followed by the ICC Men's T20 World Cup Australia 2022.

Shaheen had suffered a right knee ligament injury while fielding during the first Test against Sri Lanka in Galle.

PCB Chief Medical Officer, Dr Najeebullah Soomro: "I have spoken with Shaheen and he is understandably upset with the news, but he is brave young man



who has vowed to come back strongly to serve his country and team. Although he has made progress during his rehabilitation in Rotterdam, it is now clear he will

require more time and is likely to return to competitive cricket in October.

"PCB's Sports & Exercise Medicine Department will be working closely

with the player over the coming weeks to ensure his safe return to competitive cricket."

Shaheen will stay with the squad to complete his rehabilitation. Shaheen's replacement for the ACC T20 Asia Cup will be announced shortly. The Pakistan side will arrive in Dubai from Rotterdam on Monday.

Shaheen will remain with the Pakistan squad as he completes his rehabilitation. PCB will announce a replacement for Shaheen for the Asia Cup soon.

Pakistan squad for the Asia Cup: Babar Azam (c), Shadab Khan, Asif Ali, Fakhar Zaman, Haider Ali, Haris Rauf, Iftikhar Ahmed, Khushdil Shah, Mohammad Nawaz, Mohammad Rizwan, Mohammad Wasim Jnr, Naseem Shah, Shah Nawaz Dahani, Usman Qadir.

Warholm storms back to form with Euro gold

MUNICH: Karsten Warholm announced his return to form as he retained his European 400m hurdles title in Munich on Friday while Femke Bol sealed an unlikely double.

Britain's Laura Muir and Zhanel Hughes bagged dominant golds in the women's 1500m and men's 200m respectively, but their teammate Dina Asher-Smith was trumped by Swiss rival Mujinga Kambundji in her bid to defend the 200m title. Warholm's performance was all the more impressive as he makes his way back from injury, a setback that saw him come in seventh in last month's world championships in Oregon.

Warholm, who set a sensational world record of 45.94sec when winning Olympic gold in Tokyo last year, proved to be back on form in Munich, timing a championship record of 47.12 seconds for gold.

He finished well ahead of France's Wilfried Hapio, in 48.56sec, and Cuban-born Turk Yasmani Copello (48.78). Warholm's time smashed the previous European best of 47.48sec – a then-world record – set by West Germany's Harald Schmid in Athens in 1982.

"It's even more special now because I've learned these things don't come so often and you should



appreciate them even more because things turn around very quickly in sport, so I'm very happy to be back," said Warholm. "The injury has healed and I feel much more confident so today was just running and enjoying it."

The indefatigable Bol of the Netherlands followed up on her victory in Wednesday's 400m flat by totally dominating the women's 400m hurdles to seal a memorable European double. Bol, like Warholm, clocked a championship record for victory in 52.67sec ahead of Ukrainians Viktoriya Tkachuk and Anna Ryzhykova.

"Winning this gold medal is a big relief," said Bol. "It was a great race for me. I am very surprised to achieve such a fast time. It was very hard mentally to race the 400m without hurdles. I am so proud to achieve the double."

Muir sealed Britain's first gold of a fantastic night of

track and field as she accelerated away at the bell for a comprehensive victory in the women's 1500m. She retained her title from Berlin in 2018 in 4:01.08, capping a brilliant championship period that has also seen her win Olympic silver, world bronze and Commonwealth gold.

"I knew my speed was the best for the last lap, so I just tried to hold it and to control the race," said Muir.

Defending champion Ramil Guliyev pulled up injured halfway through the men's 200m, Hughes stepping up to better his silver in Tuesday's 100m behind Olympic champion Marcell Jacobs as he streaked to victory in 20.07sec.

There was a second European silver for Nethaneel Mitchell-Blake in 20.17sec, with Italian Filippo Tortu taking bronze (20.27). "I knew that I am faster than other guys on the track

because of my fast 100m," said Hughes, born and raised in the tiny Caribbean island of Anguilla, a British Overseas Territory. "I really did the damage on the bend, I really dominated on it. As soon as I crossed the finish line I knew that I'd won because I didn't see anyone else there."

There was no such luck for Asher-Smith, who was outstripped on the home stretch by Kambundji, who won in 22.32sec to the Briton's 22.43. "I am on cloud nine. I knew this race was going to be tough. I made sure to get a clean race. It is overwhelming to come home with two medals," said Kambundji, who also won 100m silver.

There was a humdinger of a competition in a high-quality men's discus, Lithuanian teenager and world silver medalist Mykolas Alekna throwing a championship record of 69.78m on his fifth attempt for victory.

World champion Kristjan Ceh of Slovakia took silver with 68.28m, with Briton Lawrence Okoye going home with bronze (67.14), as Sweden's Olympic champion Daniel Stahl could only finish fifth. Finland's Topi Raitanen produced an outstanding final kick to win gold in the men's 3,000m steeplechase in 8:21.80 ahead of Italians Ahmed Abdelwahed and Osama Zoghli.

Women's U19

Half-centuries from Shawal, Aroob set Central Punjab-Sindh final

Spokesman Report

MURIDKE: Top performances by captains of Central Punjab and Sindh in their respective semi-finals secure both the sides berths in the final of the inaugural Women U19 T20 Tournament. The two teams will face-off on Monday at the Lahore Country Club in Muridke.

Shawal's unbeaten 86 leads Central Punjab to 102 runs win over Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Central Punjab captain Shawal Zulfiqar continued her impressive form with the bat and smashed a 64-ball 86 – which included 11 fours – as Central Punjab put 170 for three after winning the toss.

She provided a solid 63-run opening stand with Eymen Fatima (30 off 21). Shawal was later awarded player of the match award and she is the leading run-getter in the tournament with 161 runs and has been dismissed only once in the tournament.

Noor Fatima and Laiba Nasir shared six wickets equally between them and Rida Aslam accounted for two batters as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa perished for mere 68 with two balls spare. With 14 off 36, Hansa Zair Gul was the top run getter in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's innings. Aroob shines with 64 not out as Sindh chase 89 with ease.

Sindh captain Aroob Shah made 64 off 39. She first saved her side from a top-order collapse then rebuilt the innings and eventually took Sindh across the line in just 17.3 overs. Aroob smashed seven fours and three sixes in her 39-ball knock and is the second highest run-getter behind her Central Punjab counterpart.

Earlier, Southern Punjab managed only 88 for four in 20 overs with Aqsa Hafeez top-scoring with 58-ball 32 not out.

Man Utd agree to sign Real Madrid's Casemiro

LONDON: Manchester United have agreed to sign Real Madrid midfielder Casemiro in a deal worth up to a reported £60 million (\$70 million).

United manager Erik ten Hag has been desperate to land a defensive midfielder since taking charge at Old Trafford and has finally settled for Casemiro after failing to sign Barcelona's Frenkie de Jong.

Troubled United, who sit bottom of the Premier League after embarrassing defeats against Brighton and Brentford, are set to pay an initial £50 million. The overall fee would rise by another £10 million if certain clauses in the contract are met.

Casemiro has been offered



a four-year contract with the option of a further 12-month extension, with the transfer subject to the agreement of personal terms. The 30-year-old joined Real from Sao Paulo in

2013 and has been a key figure in midfield for the Spanish club, winning five Champions League titles.

"Manchester United is delighted to announce that the

club has reached agreement with Real Madrid for the transfer of Casemiro," a statement from United said on Friday. "The transfer is subject to the agreement of personal terms, UK visa requirements and a medical."

Ten Hag refused to discuss the transfer at his press conference on Friday, but Real boss Carlo Ancelotti was more forthcoming when speaking to the media in Spain. "I've discussed it with him this morning. He wants to try a new challenge, a new opportunity," Ancelotti said. "The club understand it. With all he's done for this club and the person he is, we have to respect it."

"If he doesn't stay, we'll have

an enormous sense of gratitude to him for all he's done. We have replacements within the squad." Casemiro played alongside current United stars Cristiano Ronaldo and Raphael Varane at Real. His arrival will fill a void in Ten Hag's midfield after his prolonged pursuit of De Jong ended in failure.

Casemiro's wealth of experience and success at the highest level will make him a certain starter instead of either Fred or Scott McTominay in central midfield. He is unlikely to be available for United's next match against arch rivals Liverpool at Old Trafford on Monday. Instead, Casemiro's debut could come at Southampton in the Premier League on August 27.

Pakistan to take on Netherlands in third ODI

ROTTERDAM: The third and final One-Day International of three match series between Pakistan and Netherlands will be played at Rotterdam today.

The match will start at 2:00 pm Pakistan Standard Time. Pakistan has already won the series by 2-0.

Young Pakistan pacer Shah Nawaz Dahani is likely to be part of the playing XI. The Men in Green won the first ODI by 16 runs and the second match by seven wickets.

The two wins lifted Pakistan to third in the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Super League. A win for Pakistan in the third ODI will assure them of a place in next year's event proper, irrespective of how their remaining two series against New Zealand and Afghanistan pan out.

Event held to mark Independence Day



Spokesman Report

KARACHI: Olympian Islahuddin and Dr. Muhammad Ali Shah Hockey Academy celebrated Pakistan's 75th Independence Day with national enthusiasm.

Former international hockey player Mubbashir Mukhtar was the chief guest of the event. Interesting match was played between Syeda Shehla Raza and Mrs. Asma Ali Shah XI that tied with 2-2 goals. Syeda Tahrim and Sehrish Sabir scored goals on behalf of Syeda Shehla Raza XI while Mrs. Asma Captain Fatima Zahra and Amina Fatima scored goals for Asma Ali Shah XI, former international player and director of sports Sir Syed University Mubbashir Mukhtar along with academy coach Syed Sagheer Hussain and Muhammad Aslam distributed prizes. On the occasion, the chief guest also highlighted the importance of Independence Day and informed the youth about the sacrifices of their forefathers.

Sri Lanka announce squad for Asia Cup 2022

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka have named a strong squad for the upcoming Asia Cup, commencing 27 August in the UAE.

The squad will be led by their regular skipper Dasun Shanaka with Charith Asalanka as his deputy. Sri Lanka will begin their Asia Cup campaign against Afghanistan on the opening day of the tournament at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium in Dubai.

Binura Fernando and Kasun Rajitha, who were named in the original squad, will not tour owing to injuries sustained during the SLC Invitational T20 League 2022. Asitha Fernando and Pramod Madushan are the proposed replacements for the injured duo.

An uncapped 21-year-old left-arm seamer, Dilshan Madushanka, has found a place in the squad. Another notable inclusion in the squad is Ashen Bandara, who last represented Sri Lanka in July 2021 in a T20I against India.

Also returning to the T20I mix are the experienced duo of Dinesh Chandimal and Dhananjaya de Silva, and Jeffrey Vandersay, all of whom missed Sri Lanka's last T20I series against Australia at home in June which the visitors won by a 2-1 margin.

Sri Lanka squad: Dasun Shanaka (c), Danushka Gunathilaka, Pathum Nissanka, Kusal Mendis, Charith Asalanka, Bhanuka Rajapaksa, Ashen Bandara, Dhananjaya de Silva, Wanindu Hasaranga, Maheesh Theekshana, Jeffrey Vandersay, Praveen Jayawickrama, Chamika Karunaratne, Dilshan Madushanka, Matheesha Pathirana, Nuwanidu Fernando, Dushmantha Chameera, Dinesh Chandimal.

SBP inks MoU with CPCA for promotion of cricket

LAHORE: Taking a major step for the promotion of cricket at grassroots level, Sports Board Punjab (SBP) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Central Punjab Cricket Association (CPCA), a subsidiary department of Pakistan Cricket Board here at National Hockey Stadium on Saturday.

Director General Sports Punjab Muhammad Tariq Qureshi and CEO Central Punjab Cricket Association (CPCA) Abdullah Khurram Niazi signed the MoU documents at the office of Director General Sports Punjab.

Director Sports Nadeem Qaiser, Director Admin Syed Omair Hasan and Deputy Director Tariq Wattoo were also present on this occasion.

Under the MoU, different pitches will be constructed at Sports Board Punjab's Cricket Academy at Nishtar Park Sports Complex and collective efforts will be contributed for the development of cricket at junior level.

However, the operation and management of these cricketing activities will be responsibility of Sports Board Punjab and an official of Sports Board Punjab will look after these affairs.

As per MoU, Central Punjab Cricket Association will be technical partners of Sports Board Punjab and will extend all kinds of support for the promotion of cricket at junior level. Moreover, Sports Board Punjab will hire cricket coaches and trainers after the recommendation of Central Punjab Cricket Association.

SBP cricket team will also participate in cricket leagues of Central Punjab Cricket Association. Speaking on the occasion, Director General Sports Punjab said that the MoU between Central Punjab Cricket Association and Sports Board Punjab would be a great development for the growth of cricket at grassroots level.

Medvedev returns to final four in Cincinnati

CINCINNATI: Daniil Medvedev and Stefanos Tsitsipas advanced to a semi-final showdown after both dismissed American opponents at the ATP and WTA Cincinnati Masters.

Top seed Medvedev fired 18 aces among 30 winners in a 7-6 (7/1), 6-3 defeat of Taylor Fritz in their Friday quarter-final.

Tsitsipas, semi-finalist at the last two editions, weathered a brief first-set rain interruption on the way to his 7-6 (7/5), 5-7, 6-3, defeat of John Isner, playing here for the 15th time at age 37 and the oldest quarter-finalist since 1969.

In the bottom half of the draw, Croat Borna Coric crushed Felix Auger-Aliassime 6-4, 6-4 to set up a semi-final against Britain's

Cameron Norrie, who had to work for more than three hours for a 7-6 (7/4), 6-7 (4/7), 6-4 defeat of Spanish teenager Carlos Alcaraz. The tight battle ended just before midnight as Norrie completed what he called one of his best career wins.

He stumbled leading a set and 4-1 as Alcaraz pushed back, winning the second set to level the match. "I was thinking too much about the finish line," the winner said. "I got tight and he raised his level. I had to take my time or the match could have gotten away from me... I managed to turn it around."

Greek fourth seed Tsitsipas was relieved to have passed his examination by Isner. "It's never easy to play him, due to all his variations

of play," Tsitsipas said. "The most important thing is to stay patient. The match came down to a few points. I was able to hang in there and make one more ball – he didn't give me a lot to work with."

Tsitsipas added: "Against Medvedev, I need to be concentrated and approach my game in a precise manner. I will let my tennis do the talking."

Medvedev, the 2019 tournament winner, strengthened his grip on the world number one ranking at the last major tune-up prior to the US Open, earning his victory over 11th seed Fritz in one hour, 40 minutes. "The second set was much better than the first," Medvedev said.

"Taylor is a great player, from the baseline he didn't give you

much space. He was hitting the ball strong, making a lot of good points.

"But I'm happy with my level. If I can continue to play this way and raise my level during matches I can beat anybody," added Medvedev, who leads semi-final opponent Tsitsipas 7-2 in head-to-head meetings. In the women's quarter-finals, Wimbledon champion Elena Rybakina saved three match points before falling 6-2, 6-4 to Madison Keys.

The Kazakh, who lifted the All England Club trophy last month against the odds, exited the pre-US Open event in 92 minutes as she went down to the American titleholder from 2019. "Elena is a remarkable player who can turn a match around at any



moment," unseeded Keys said. "I needed to stay out front."

"It felt like I needed 12 match points, so I'm very happy to get the win," added Keys who on Thursday ousted world number one Iga Swiatek. Keys next plays Petra Kvitova, a two-time



Wimbledon champion who defeated Australian qualifier Ajla Tomljanovic 6-2, 6-3.

Second seed Aryna Sabalenka ended the dream run of Zhang Shuai with a 6-4, 7-6 (7/1), defeat after the Chinese player had put out Naomi Osaka and second

seed Anett Kontaveit. Sabalenka plays for the final against qualifier Caroline Garcia, who defeated American Jessica Pegula, the winner over US Open champion Emma Raducanu in the previous round, 6-1, 7-5 in 74 minutes.

The French winner leads the Tour with 25 main-draw victories since June; she was the first from her nation to play a Cincinnati quarter-final since Marion Bartoli 12 years ago.

"I had the worst warmup of the week today," Garcia said. "But that doesn't mean you will play badly. I was able to play the aggressive style that I like. I hit very freely against a solid opponent. I had to play my best today to beat Jessica. I did it and I'm very happy I got the win."