



**PTI govt was itself imported: Gilani**

PPP Parliamentary Leader in the Senate Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani says those who are labeling the coalition partners as an imported government should better sweep before their own doors as they themselves are involved in foreign funding. The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) was itself an imported government as it had committed a crime by taking funding from different countries.



**Govt making bids to help flood victims: Hanif**

Vice-President PML-N Punjab Muhammad Hanif Abbasi says Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif is making all-out efforts to help the flood-affected victims. The coalition government, under the leadership of Shehbaz Sharif, is working day and night for the rehabilitation and relief of the flood victims. To overcome the prevailing economic situation of the country, the federal govt is engaged with donor agencies and friendly countries, including IMF, Asian Development Bank, UAE, Saudia Arabia, China and others, to bring huge investment in Pakistan.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

**Assistance**

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting of select Islamabad-based Ambassadors, High Commissioners and other senior members of the diplomatic corps in Islamabad on Friday.



Photo: PID

**National disaster**

**COAS briefed on flood situation & response**

Staff Reporter

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa on Friday reached Karachi where he was briefed about flood situation in Sindh and Balochistan and response measures to help the flood victims. The COAS would also visit army troops busy in rescue and relief efforts in Sindh and Balochistan, the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) said. The Army Flood Relief centre was established at Headquarters Army Air Defence Command Rawalpindi to oversee, coordinate National Flood Relief efforts across the country in coordina-



tion with Military Operations Directorate. The Flood Relief Centres being established in various parts of the country would assist collection, transportation and distribution of flood relief goods to flood victims in various provinces. The Army troops were shifting people to safer places, providing shelter, meals and busy in medical care to flood affectees.

**Govt to resolve power consumers' issues: Marriyum**

Says statement attributed to Maryam about climate change 'fake'

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb said on Friday that the prime minister has set up a high-level committee to redress the grievances of electricity consumers. In a tweet, she said that instructions have been given to include the announced relief in the bills of electricity consumers up to 200 units within 24 hours. The PM had directed within 24 hours the bills of the consumers under the relief should be reduced.

The minister said that the staff of the DISCOs would work 24 hours to correct the electricity bills and all staff leaves have been canceled for correcting the bills. Banks would remain open on weekend to deposit bills of the consumers, she said. Minister for Information and Broad-

casting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Friday said the statement attributed to Maryam Nawaz regarding climate change in some sections of media was "fake". The minister, in a tweet, said it was "unfortunate" to attribute a twitter handle with Marriyum Nawaz Sharif which was not verified one. Marriyum Aurangzeb urged the media to cite only verified twitter handle while reporting.

She said the members of Parliament, responding to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's call for assistance to flood affected people had announced to give one-month salary in the flood relief fund. She, in a tweet, said the parliamentarians had expressed their solidarity with the flood victims by donating one-month salary and would continue to help the government in carrying out relief and rehabilitation activities.

**Rs 220.6**

**Dollar continues flight against rupee**

KARACHI: The US dollar on Friday continued its winning streak in interbank against the Pakistan Rupee (PKR). The dollar, which is consistently gaining ground, gained Rs1.34 against the rupee and was being traded around Rs220. However, the US dollar is still down by over Rs19 from record high rate of Rs239.94 in interbank on July 28, 2022.

The Pakistani rupee's free fall continued against the US dollar Friday as the local unit remained under pressure in the interbank market due to wide-ranging factors. Following its week-long depreciation trend, the rupee closed at 220.6 against the dollar after losing 1.25 or 0.57%, up from yesterday's close of 219.41. Cumulatively, the local unit lost 6.01 against the greenback during the week ended August 26 as it depreciated in all five trading sessions.

**33m stranded**

**Govt to seek int'l support for flood victims' rehab: PM**

Announces Rs 15 bln grant for Sindh as flood relief

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD/ SUKKUR: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday said considering the urgency of the challenge, the government had decided to reach out to friendly countries and donors as flash floods and the torrential rains had badly hit around 33 million people across the country. The prime minister, who convened a meeting of select Islamabad-based ambassadors, high commissioners and other senior members of the diplomatic corps, to brief them on flood situation, said the ongoing monsoon spell has caused unprecedented damage and devastation in Pakistan.

He said that not just

Balochistan, Sindh and South Punjab, which were badly affected, the current spell of torrential rains had led to flooding in the northern regions of the KPK province. He said that more than

**PM orders power bills' revision within 24 hrs adjusting FAC relief**

900 people including 300 children had lost their lives and 1300 were injured, so far. He said that as per the initial damage assessment, the losses caused by the floods were comparable to those Pakistan suffered during the flash

floods of 2010-11. The meeting was attended by ambassadors and high commissioners of Australia, Canada, China, Japan, Kuwait, UAE, Turkiye, South Korea, USA, Germany and senior diplomats of Bahrain, European Union, France, Oman, Qatar, UK, and Saudi Arabia. The country representative of World Food Programme was also present.

The federal government will provide a grant of Rs 15 billion to the Sindh government to overcome the heavy losses of lives and infrastructure in the wake of the massive destruction caused by flash floods, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif announced on Friday. Talking to reporters flanked by Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah and feder-

al ministers including Bilawal Bhutto and Syed Khurshid Shah here at Sukkur Barrage, the prime minister said the situation demanded rising above politics and helping the flood victims overcome their miseries. PM Sharif, who earlier took an aerial view of the inundated areas of Sukkur, Rohri, Khairpur, Faiz Ganj, Kot Diji, and Thari Mir Wah, expressed serious concern over the loss of lives and infrastructure caused by floods.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday directed the power distribution companies to revise the electricity bills of up to 900 units within 24 hours adjusting the relief under the fuel adjustment charge (FAC) announced by the government.

**Contempt of court**

**IHC bins petition against PDM leaders**

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has rejected a petition seeking contempt of court proceedings against Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) leaders for "threatening judiciary", ARY News reported on Friday. Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani heard the petition - filed by Advocate Ali Ijaz Butt - seeking contempt of court proceedings against Maryam Nawaz, Maulana Fazlur Rehman, Rana Sanaullah, Marriyum Aurangzeb and Atta Tarar.

The petitioner filed the application with the court contending that the registrar's office had raised an objection that a contempt of court petition could not be heard with regard to the judges of the Supreme Court. During the hearing today, the court upheld the registrar's objection of relevant forum. Presenting the arguments, the petitioner told court that the nominated PDM leaders had made anti-judiciary statements on social media.

"Did the PDM leaders mentioned Islamabad High Court?" Justice Kayani asked. To this, the petitioner replied in negative. The judge told Ali Afzal to approach relevant forum - Supreme Court and Lahore High Court. After hearing the arguments, the court rejected the petition against PDM leaders and declared it inadmissible.

It is pertinent to mention here that the petitioner contended that threatening through media fall under the category of Article 204. "Contempt of court proceedings should be taken against PDM leaders for threatening the judges," he pleaded. The petition had named Maryam Nawaz, Rana Sanaullah, Maulana Fazlur Rehman, Attaulah Tarar and Marriyum Aurangzeb as respondents. According to the petitioner, "while watching social media", he came across a number of statements, media talks and videos of the PDM leaders. He said he was "shocked to see that the respondents who represent the ruling elite of Pakistan and are running the affairs of the federal government

unfortunately, don't have respect for the institutions of Pakistan, especially the judiciary, which is the most sacred institution".

The petition said that the respondents have "time and again" used "contemptuous language" against the honourable judges of the Supreme Court, as well as judges of the honourable high courts. "These attitudes, acts, and speeches are not only contemptuous, but have also scandalised the honourable judges of the high court and Supreme Court of Pakistan," read the petition. It added that these acts and statements of the respondents have "shattered" the confidence of the public in the judiciary and the judicial system. With the petition, transcript of media talks, press conferences and speeches by the PDM leaders were attached. It was prayed that the respondents be summoned in person, tried for contempt and punished under the Contempt of Court Ordinance, 2003 read with Article 204 (Contempt of Court) of the Constitution of Pakistan.

**Flood loss estimates rise to Rs900 billion**

Bureau Report

KARACHI: The flood damages in the country are estimated to be more than Rs900 billion.

The country witnessed 'more rain than ever recorded' this season as the delay in wheat sowing, cotton and rice crops have been severely damaged. According to the research of JS Brokerage, the floods that have occurred across the country this season have caused severe damage to life, crops and infrastructure. According to the report, the damages caused by the flood cannot be accurately estimated, but the damages will be more than Rs900 billion, which are more than the flood of 2010-11.

According to the report, exports will be low and imports will be high this season due to floods. It will take two to three months for the land to dry, which will delay sowing of wheat. Due to the delay in sowing of wheat, the wheat harvest will be affected and as a result wheat worth up to \$1.7 billion will have to be imported.

**Averting disaster**

**New dams lone way to tackle floods: Imran Khan**

Visits flood-hit Dera Ismail Khan with KP CM

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: -Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman and former prime minister Imran Khan on Friday said that the only way to avoid the disaster caused by floods is to build dams.

The PTI chairman visited the flood-affected areas of the province along with KP Chief Minister Mahmood Khan, where both Imran and Mahmood inspected the damages and relief activities in the affected districts. While visiting the camp of flood-affected people in Dera Ismail Khan, the former prime minister said that Sindh and Balochistan have faced more destruction due to floods. He said that even in 2010, the country did not suffer from floods as much as it is suffering now.

Emphasizing the importance of construction of dams to prevent floods, the PTI chairman said there were plans to build 10 dams across the country during his tenure. He appealed to the people of the country to extend their support for the relief and rehabilitation of the flood-affected people. The former prime minister said inflation cannot be stopped until economic stability comes to the country. Taking a swipe at the coalition government, Imran said that the country is ruled by criminals and



one of them is abroad. Sharing his views on the upcoming by-elections, Imran added that his party will claim victory.

Imran also shared a post on his Twitter and penned, "Went today with CM KP to see the flood devastated areas of DIKhan & Tank today. "The level of destruction is massive and have discussed with the CM how to improve scale and speed of the assistance to

affectees including preventive measures against spread of disease, especially in children", the former premier added. Former Prime Minister Imran Khan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Chief Minister (CM) Mahmood Khan visited Dera Ismail Khan to review the relief and rehabilitation activities in the flood-hit area.

According to details, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman was given a briefing on the damage caused by the unprecedented rains and floods as well as relief and rehabilitation work in Dera Ismail Khan. Talking to journalists, the former premier noted that the concerned authorities were currently estimating the damage caused by the heavy rains and flash floods in Dera Ismail Khan. Imran Khan also stressed the need to develop dams in a bid to stop floods, saying that the PTI government was planning to build 10 dams across the country. "We can easily store water if we had dams," he added.

Expressing grief over the loss in natural calamities, the PTI Chairman said that besides Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh and Balochistan has also witnessed damages during the floods. He also urged the nation to support the relief and rehabilitation of the people and infrastructure in flood-hit areas.

## Investment

Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey, H.E. Dr. Mehmet Pacaci called on Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Mr. Miftah Ismail at Finance Division, Islamabad on Friday.



Photo: PID

## Rains &amp; floods

## PR suspends passenger operation

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways has suspended its passenger operation at a track of ML-1 from Khanpur to Hyderabad due to flood near Nawabshah. Addressing a press conference on Friday, Minister for Railways and Aviation Khawaja Saad Rafique said that railway track of around 10 kilometer near Nawabshah is under flood and there is around 18 inches water there. He said that Pakistan Railways, divisional headquarters and regional headquarters had decided to close the passenger operation on this particular track of ML-1 while other track of ML-1 from Peshawar to Multan would remain operational.

According to SOPs of Railway, its tracks are closed in case of 6 inches water there and a portion of track near Nawabshah has been flooded with 18 inches water. Only passenger operation is being closed there for safety of the people who would be reimbursed their fare amount, the minister said.

He said that various tracks at ML-2 and ML-3 damaged by flood have been already closed.

## IMF to release tranche after Monday meeting

Miftah says no intention of selling Roosevelt Hotel, PIA to Qatar

## Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Finance and Revenue Miftah Ismail Friday said the International Monetary Fund (IMF) would release the tranche (worth US\$1.17bn) to Pakistan after its board meeting on Monday. Finance Minister Miftah Ismail clarified on Friday that the federal government has no intention of selling the shares of Roosevelt Hotel, New York, and Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) to Qatar.

The finance minister's press conference came after reports suggested that Pakistan was mulling selling shares of both the state assets to acquire loans from the Gulf state. "Coincidentally, we did not speak about Roosevelt Hotel during our meetings," the finance minister said, shedding light on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's two-day visit to Qatar. During the prime minister's visit, Qatar's Emiriri Diwan confirmed that the Qatar Investment Authority (QIA) aims to invest \$3 billion in Pakistan.

Addressing a press conference here, the minister said Pakistan had already fulfilled all the requirements of the IMF and it is very likely that the board would approve the release of tranche on Monday (August 29). He said now the \$4 billion gap had been bridged as Qatar and Saudi Arabia had also assured new investments and

facility of getting oil on deferred payment for Pakistan.

The minister said the visit of PM to Qatar remained successful as Qatar had agreed to make \$3 billion investment in Pakistan's various sectors.

Further he also made it clear that there was not discussion or agreement of selling Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) or Roosevelt Hotel to Qatar saying that Qatar was interested in getting only the management control of Pakistan's big airports. Qatar is also taking interest to invest in Pakistan's sea ports, LNG plants for which the Prime Minister had advised to hire an international advisor to get the actual price estimation, he said adding that Qatar was also interested to invest in large scale solar firms.

"The government is intended to install solar power plants with installed capacity of 8000 MW, as the solar energy would help generating cheaper electricity for the consumers," he added. "They (Qatar) also showed their interest to invest in Pakistan's capital market." The minister informed that Saudi Arabia had announced \$1 billion investment in Pakistan along with providing oil on deferred payment. Similarly, he said UAE had also announced to invest primarily in government's shares worth \$1 billion.

With respect to the public concerns

over extra electricity bills this month, the finance minister said the Prime Minister was very much worried over hike in the electricity bills. On IMF pressure we had to raise the prices of electricity for all kinds of consumers, he said adding that in May, the electricity demand was on peak due to unprecedented hot weather condition and for this reason the government had to run even the most expensive power plants run by the furnace oil which cost around Rs 59 per unit.

He said the impact of that month's fuel price adjustment (FCA) was showed in current month. He said on the PM's advice, he talked to the IMF that Pakistan government would protect those consuming up to 200 units of electricity a month. He said the IMF had agreed to the Pakistan's request in this regard. Miftah Ismail added that 56% or 17.1 million out of around 30 million electricity consumers would be exempted from the fuel adjustment. He said the government would have to bear Rs 20 billion cost in this regard. He asked the such consumers not to pay the current bills as a new bill would be issued soon in which there would be no FCA. He informed that the PM had formed another committee which would deliberate upon giving FCA exemption to those consuming 200 to 300 units of electricity.

## Registration of cases

## PHC defers KP notice against PDM leaders

## Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court (PHC) on Friday suspended the notification of the provincial cabinet of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) regarding registration of cases against the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) leadership for hate speech.

In this regard, PHC issued notices to the KP Chief Minister Mahmood Khan, the provincial government and the cabinet and directed them to respond by September 13. It may be recalled that the KP provincial government's notification for the empowerment of a government official in Dera Ismail Khan district to register cases against the leaders of PDM

on the charge of spreading hate against state institutions was challenged in PHC.

Senior lawyer Shabbir Hussain Gigyani filed the petition on Wednesday requesting the court to declare null and void the Aug 9 notification of the provincial government as it is illegal.

According to the petition, the provincial cabinet misinterpreted Section 196 of the Code of Criminal Procedure and empowered Additional Assistant Commissioner (AAC) Dera Ismail Khan to register cases against the PDM leaders.

The petition sought suspension of the notification and contended that Section 196 does not empower any officer to register an FIR.

## 44.58%

## Inflation breaks another record

## Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The weekly review of the sensitive price index (SPI) on Friday highlighted a record increase in inflation upto 44.58 percent on a year-on-year basis in August, the data shared by Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) said. According to the PBS, the SPI for the week ended on August 25 recorded an increase of 1.83, bring the year-on-year inflation to an all-time high of 44.58 percent. It showed that during the week, out of 51 items, prices of 23 of them increased, seven decreased while 21 remained stable. The items that saw hike in prices included tomatoes 43.09 percent, onions 41.13 percent, potatoes 6.32 percent, eggs 3.43 percent, garlic 2.23 percent, powdered milk 1.53 percent and pulse mash 1.12 percent. The non-food items that saw hike in prices included cigarettes 2.26 percent and LPG 1.95 percent.

On the other hand, a decrease was observed in the prices of pulse masoor 1.18 percent, one kilogram packet of vegetable ghee one percent, bananas 0.61 percent, cooking oil 0.51 percent, sugar 0.28 percent and mustard oil 0.07 percent. The PBS report shared that the year on year trend depicted an increase of 44.58 percent which included a hike in prices of tomatoes by 178.10 percent, onions 155.14 percent, diesel 108.77 percent, petrol 94.53 percent, pulse masoor 90.74 percent, cooking oil 70.61 percent, mustard oil 67.58 percent, vegetable ghee 64.71 percent, washing soap 63.27 percent, electricity for first quarter by 63.03 percent, chicken 55.76 percent and pulse gram 55.07 percent.

## Punjab establishes CM flood relief fund



## Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab government on Friday established a Chief Minister Flood relief fund to assist in the rescue, relief and rehabilitation of flood-affected people of the province, ARY News reported.

CM Punjab Chaudhry Pervaiz Illahi met with PTI leaders Asad Umer, Shafiqat Mehmood, Mehmood-ur-Rasheed, Aslam Iqbal, Yasmin Rashid, Mohsin Laghari and Andleeb Abbas and discussed the flood situation in the southern regions of the province.

The CM announced to the establishment of a flood relief fund and urged philanthropists and financially affluent people to come forward and donate to affected people of the province. The CM told that Tomsa, Dera Ghazi Khan and Rajanpur have been most affected by the floods. People have become homeless and suffered damage to property and crops, the CM told.

The CM had imposed an emergency and declared the district calamity hit after his visit to the areas. The Punjab government is with the people in this hour of need, people need to come forward and help others, the CM added. The CM ordered to fasten the operations in affected areas.

## Contempt case

## IHC issues show-cause notice to Imran

## Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Friday issued a show-cause notice to former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan in the contempt of court case. It was stated in the notice that Imran's threatening remarks against a female judge at a rally in Islamabad's F-9 Park amounted to contempt. "Therefore, you appear before the IHC bench on August 31, 2022 and explain as to why contempt of court proceedings should not be initiated against you," the notice read.

It was further stated in the notice that the reason why the PTI chair-



man made threatening and insulting remarks against the judge because he wanted to get the verdict of his choice in the case which was sub judice at the Islamabad High Court (IHC). It was alleged in the notice that by making the objectionable speech, the former prime minister tried to obstruct justice.

An anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Islamabad on Thursday approved an interim bail of Imran Khan and

directed the authorities not to arrest him until September 1. Imran Khan appeared before the anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Islamabad and filed a petition for pre-arrest bail in a case of hurling threats at police officers and a lady judge.

The former premier adopted in his petition that the police registered an anti-terrorism case against him out of vengeance, demanding that the court accept his request for pre-arrest bail. It is to be noted here that an anti-terrorism case had been registered against Imran Khan at Margalla police station in Islamabad after he threatened the Islamabad police officers and a lady judge at a public rally.

## Imran won't tender apology to IHC: Fawad

Says really sad that full bench is hearing the case

## Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: PTI's senior leader Fawad Chaudhry has said that former prime minister Imran Khan will not tender an apology to the Islamabad High Court (IHC) in a contempt of court case. The former information minister also stated that it is "really sad" that a full bench is hearing this case. In response to a query regarding Khan's remarks about the female judge, Fawad questioned if they [the court] should not feel ashamed of such

an act. A larger bench of the IHC earlier this week Tuesday issued a show-cause notice to Khan after taking up contempt of court proceedings against him for threatening Additional Sessions Judge Zeba Chaudhry during a public rally.

The court summoned Imran Khan in a personal capacity on August 31, and forwarded the case to the Chief Justice of Pakistan Umar Ata Bandial, seeking the inclusion of more judges on the bench.

Talking to a private TV channel

talk show, Fawad said that PTI leader Shahbaz Gill was tortured and the IHC directed the Islamabad inspector-general of police to hold an inquiry. Fawad wonder whether it was a joke that the IHC sought an inquiry despite the medical board confirming that Gill was inflicted custodial torture.

Gill has been sent on judicial remand in cases related to sedition and arms recovery till September 7. The PTI leader was taken into custody on August 9 and his remand has been extended thrice.

## Indian diplomat summoned

## Pakistan condemns killing of a Pak prisoner in IIOJK

## Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Friday summoned the Indian Charge d'Affaires in Islamabad to foreign ministry to lodge a strong protest on the extra-judicial killing of a Pakistani civil prisoner by Indian Occupation Forces in a fake encounter in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

The Indian forces had extra judicially killed Pakistani prisoner, Muhammad Ali Hussain, who had been jailed in Kot Bhalwal Prison in the IIOJK since 2006.

The Indian diplomat was told that Hussain's death under mysterious circumstances at a location away from the prison, had once again substantiated Pakistan's long-standing position that Indian Occupation Forces in the IIOJK are routinely involved in undertaking choreographed attacks and extrajudicial killings of Pakistani and Kashmiri prisoners. He was also reminded of the case of Zia Mustafa, another Pakistani prisoner, who was murdered by Indian authorities in a similar fake encounter last year.



It was underscored that the narrative being spun that Muhammad Ali Hussain had allegedly attacked the security forces and attempted to escape when he was being taken to a suspected

weapons' smuggling site was not only fallacious but deceptive, the Foreign Office spokesperson said. He said the reality was that Hussain's death was nothing but cold-blooded murder. Pakistan's seri-

ous concerns over the safety, security and well-being of other Pakistani prisoners in Indian custody were also raised.

While out rightly rejecting the implausible explanation proffered in the case of Muhammad Ali Hussain, Pakistan has demanded that the Indian government must immediately share the details of this particular incident. Pakistan sought a credible post-mortem report to determine the cause of death and undertake a transparent investigation to bring to account whoever is responsible for the murder of the Pakistani prisoner.

"Government of India has also been called upon to ensure prompt and expeditious repatriation of the mortal remains of the deceased to Pakistan, as per the wishes of his family," the spokesperson added. Pakistan also reiterates its call to the international community to hold India accountable for its gross and systematic violations of international humanitarian law and ensure that Pakistani and Kashmiri prisoners under Indian custody are not expended as cannon fodder in the execution of India's nefarious designs in the IIOJK.

## SBP injects Rs 317.8b into market

## Bureau Report

KARACHI: State Bank of Pakistan on Friday injected Rs 317.8 billion into money market through its Open Market Operation. Rs 241.8 billion were injected as reverse repo purchase — Rs 68.250 billion for seven days and Rs 173.550 billion for 63 days.

Rs 76 billion were pumped into the market through Shariah Compliant Mudaraba based OMO — Rs 69 billion for 7 days (face value of collateral) with 15.14 % cut-off and Rs 7 billion for 63 days (face value of collateral) at 15.20 % cut-off rate.

**IS Millions await relief**

# Catastrophic floods continue to ravage parts of country

*Balochistan, KP, Sindh come under spotlight for sheer scale of devastation witnessed there in a single day*

QUETTA/PESHAWAR/KARACHI: As millions of Pakistanis ravaged by extreme rain-induced flooding awaited relief on Friday, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa came under the spotlight for the sheer scale of devastation witnessed there in a single day.

Balochistan province lost communication with rest of the country after overnight rains. The destruction of infrastructure and breakdown in communication links added to the difficulties faced by the authorities in rescue and relief efforts in the region. The air, road and rail networks in Balochistan were already suspended, cutting it off from rest of the country.

"Due to torrential rains and flash floods in Balochistan optical fiber cable, voice and data services have been

impacted in Quetta and rest of the main cities of the province," Pakistan Telecom Authority (PTA) said on Twitter.

Efforts are being made to resolve this unprecedented situation, it added. Voice and data services were restored later in the afternoon, as announced by the PTA.

A major railway bridge washed away between Kolpur and Mach in Bolan Pass, cutting off Quetta, the capital of Balochistan, from the rest of country for an indefinite period, officials said.

All four highways linking Balochistan with other provinces were blocked because of damaged bridges and landslides. So far, more than 235 people were killed in province and hundreds of thousands lost their homes, the authorities said.

Over in Kalam valley of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Swat district, a major hotel was swept away by flood waters in footage that emerged on Friday.

The hotel was located on the bank of the Swat River. It was evacuated timely, and no casualties were reported, according to Geo News. Other hotels near the river were also cleared out following the incident.

Meanwhile, a National Highway Authority (NHA) alert has been issued for tourists for the towns of Bahrain and Kalam in Swat. The alert said that a flood-like situation has developed in the district due to heavy rain. It said that the Bahrain-Kalam section of the N-95 and N-90 highways have been severely damaged by the downpour.

A spokesperson for the NHA said that flooding has affected the Bahrain bridge

as well as the approach road and that aside from the Bahrain-Kalam road, the surrounding tracks have also been impacted. "Tourists and locals in Swat should avoid unnecessary travel," the spokesperson said.

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has declared an emergency in Swat after the scale of devastation caused by the flooding.

The state of emergency will be in effect until August 30 for relief efforts in flood-affected areas of Swat, a notification by the KP relief department stated.

KP CM Mahmood Khan has directed the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) to expedite relief activities in the area besides timely provision of grocery, cooked food and other items to the affected.

## PMAfK shocked over loss of lives, property in floods

**Abdul Majeed Tahir**

MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan has expressed his grief and sorrow over the loss of life and property caused by incessant rain and flash floods that hit many parts of the country.

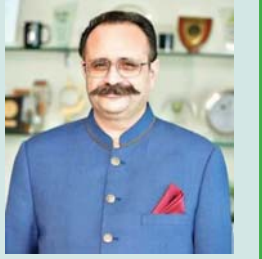
Expressing solidarity with the victims, the PM in a statement issued here on Friday said that victims would not be left alone in this hour of difficulty. He said that the provincial governments of PTI were taking all possible measures to provide instant relief to the victims. "No effort will be spared in the rehabilitation of the flood affected people", he said.

The Prime Minister appreciated State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA) and administration for issuing timely alerts and efforts to minimize losses in Azad Kashmir.

He directed the region's Highways Department to stay alert to ensure free flow of traffic on all main and link roads in Azad Kashmir. Besides climate change and deforestation, the PM pointed out that obstructing flow of water through natural channels by erecting irregular and illegal structures near rivers and canals often lead to flooding.

Expressing sympathy with flood affectees, the PM said that Azad Kashmir government was also contributing to the relief of the victims. "Dozens of NGOs from Azad Kashmir are currently participating in relief operations in flood-affected areas", the PM said.

Pertinently, torrential rains have caused large-scale destruction all across Pakistan including Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan and KPK. Hundreds of people have died and property, infrastructure, livestock worth billions of rupees have been damaged and a large number of people have been displaced.



## A flood of misery

HYDERABAD: Flood affected people used temporary boats to wade through flood water to reach safety at Fatima Jinnah Colony area. As incessant rains in Hyderabad since the past week have made lives miserable in the city, especially for people living in the low-lying areas. The rains and consequent floods have wreaked havoc in several colonies, with water inundating homes up to several feet and washing away valuables.



Photo: Online

## Ombudsman Punjab reviews performance of regional offices

**Staff Reporter**

LAHORE: The Office of the Ombudsman Punjab has completed a detailed review of the performance of advisors and consultants of regional offices in 36 districts.

The meetings, held at the head office under the chair of Ombudsman Punjab Maj. (r) Azam Suleman Khan, evaluated the performance of regional offices regarding redressal of public complaints, elimination of child labour and protection of expatriate Pakistanis and children's rights, safety from online harassment and exploitation.

The Ombudsman Azam Suleman mentioned that 19,149 complainants from inside and outside of the country have filed applications against various provincial government departments till August 18 this year. Meanwhile, the involvement of the ombudsman office has resulted in the retrieval of 8241 Kanal state lands of 7456 million rupees in various parts of the province. Alongside, a financial relief of 1604 million rupees has also been provided to the plaintiffs in 2022, he added.

## District admin should play role to resolve Gorgora land dispute

**Adam Khan Wazir**

WANA: Leaders of all political parties, lawyers and newly elected councilors held an emergency press conference at District Press Club Wana and said that in the ongoing long-standing land dispute in Wana tehsil between the sub-nations of Zai Khel and Khojal Khel, people have been killed in firing earlier in Gorgora and now the said nations have been fighting each other for several days. However, there is a danger of bloody conflict between these nations at any time.

While holding a joint press conference at District Press Club Wana, Noor Hasan Wazir from PTI, Jamaat-e-Islami District President, Nadeem Wazir, ANP-elected VC Chairman Abid Wazir, District President PPP, Amanullah Wazir, Imran Mukhlis, lawyers, Advocate Shafiqullah and Advocate Ajmal Wazir said, That the present DPO and DC of South Waziristan are trying to amicably resolve the current dispute between the Zai Khel and Khojal Khel tribes, but the parties have to take legal action and talk to the elders of the both parties and the people of the nations, should be taken down from the fronts there.

**IS Education Malaysia**

## EMGS to arrange expo for foreign studies aspirants in 4 cities

**Staff Reporter**

KARACHI: The Education Malaysia Global Services (EMGS) is set to arrange education expo in Karachi, Islamabad, Peshawar and Lahore for the benefit of the students who are aspiring for higher studies abroad. As many as 10 leading universities of Malaysia have been invited to participate in the expo.

This is what EMGS CEO Mr. Mohd Radzlan bin Jalaludin disclosed while addressing a press conference on Friday here. The Career Advisory Services will execute the six-day event, which is aimed at bringing together well-known universities and



KARACH: CEO, Education Malaysia Global Service, Mohammad Radzlan Bin Jalaluddin addressing a press conference in a local hotel on opportunities for higher education in Malaysia.

Malaysian government officials. This will be an ideal opportunity for Pakistani students, faculty and counselors to meet the Malaysian govt and universities representatives directly and discuss their study and visa options.

Mr. Mohd Radzlan bin Jalaludin said the students will be able to seek visa guidance directly from the Malaysian government officials. He said that the participating universities are offering generous scholarships up to 50 per

cent and tuition fee waivers to the Pakistani students.

He said that the enrolled students would have an option to get the US, UK and Australia degree at one-third the cost in Malaysia and with the option to transfer to UK or Australia to complete their degree.

Besides, he added that the students could also get a dual degree from leading international universities while completing their studies in Malaysia, where the per month living expense for students is quite similar to what they spend in Pakistan. He said that Malaysia being a Muslim country is especially safe for girls for studies and work alike.

## Dr. Ayesha Sohail off to US to attend Int'l Women Leadership Program

**Our Correspondent**

MUZAFFARABAD: Prominent Kashmiri academician and Registrar University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (UJK) Prof. Dr. Ayesha Sohail left for United States on Friday to attend Michigan State University's Visiting International Professional Program for "Pakistan Women Leadership in Higher Education".

According to details, this program aims to train women leaders in higher education to enhance their administrative capabilities in attaining senior leadership positions such as vice chancellor, pro-vice-chancellor, rector, or pro-rector.

The participants of the training program will get the opportunity to network with women leaders at U.S. universities throughout the duration of the program.

For the program, 25 university women leaders from diverse academic and leadership backgrounds across Pakistan have been selected among 200 applicants following a three-month selection process.

The International Professional Program has been designed in collaboration with the National Academy of Higher Education (NAHE) and being funded by the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad, Pakistan.

It offers a rich professional development and exchange for senior women leaders across Pakistan in higher education. It is worth mentioning here that Dr. Ayesha Sohail is already a recipient of several international and national scholarships and awards. She has represented Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Pakistan at various international forums of higher education.



## DIGINFO highlighted importance of investing in cyber security

**Spokesman Report**

KARACHI: There was a time when cybersecurity was consigned to oblivion but now this particular area of information technology makes headlines with sensational news. For businesses and organizations worldwide, it is a matter of utmost concern: the entire operations depend on smooth functioning of systems and only a strong cybersecurity can ensure that.

Cyber attacks were a rarity some years back, but now they are commonplace. And they have all kinds of exotic names. Every day, someone



somewhere is attacked and loses money, data and peace of mind. Banks are sending out emails to their clients to create awareness about cyber security. Businesses constantly admonish their staff to comply with safety protocols and regulatory principles.

On the occasion of ITCN

Asia Exhibition, Furqan Mirza, the Director Strategy Planning and Chief Operation Officer of DIGINFO highlighted the importance of investing in cyber security. He introduced the products and services his company offers, which can alter the way businesses and organizations operate. For

instance, DIGINFO's DG Academy, DG Magazine and DG Cloud are currently the most talked about products. They are not just ordinary, run-of-the-mill stuff. They are the result of painstaking research and hard work. Anyone subscribing to these would have an experience of using products that are poles apart from the usual.

DIGINFO also markets other products related to IT and cyber security. Businesses and organizations forming a partnership with the company will surely have a plain sailing in matters related to IT and cyber security.

## SNGPL's corporate briefing session held at PSX



**Spokesman Report**

KARACHI: Corporate Briefing session of Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) was held on Friday at Pakistan Stock Exchange, Karachi. Managing Director Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) Ali J. Hamdani briefed the analysts, investors and shareholders about the Company's performance and future prospects of the Company.

While addressing the event, MD SNGPL Ali J. Hamdani said that the Company's profitability has increased from Rs. 5.99 billion in FY 2019-20 to Rs. 10.99 billion in FY 2020-21 demonstrating 83% growth. He cited reduction in UFG and financial charges, operational excellence and technological solutions as the key contributing factors behind it. He also informed that the company's profitability for the first quarter of FY 2021-22 stands at Rs. 3.03 billion.

MD SNGPL Ali J. Hamdani acknowledged the role of the management and Board of Directors in the current turnaround and profitability of the Company. He also said that technology utilization as well as network upgradation initiatives also greatly contributed to the growth of the Company. He briefed the participants on initiatives of SCADA installa-

tion, GIS mapping of network, launch of mobile apps to further improve customer services and establishment of kiosks at public places. MD SNGPL emphasized on human resource capacity building to achieve sustainable success.

Highlighting the energy sector's situation, MD SNGPL said that due to depleting indigenous gas resources, RLNG now has 53% share in gas supplies which will continue to increase. He said that the Company is aware of RLNG short supply owing to various global and regional dynamics and hence it is exploring alternative options to mitigate energy shortfall. MD SNGPL also hinted that the company has been approached for fast track development work on recent gas discoveries in North Waziristan including Bannu in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Sharing future outlook of the company, the Company Management said that the Company is weighing in diversification possibilities in areas like LPG cylinder sale, solar power, bio gas, EPC, and sale and sharing of acquired technical expertise among others.

Islamabad  
23° - 38° Clear

**SERVICES**

**Namaz Timings**  
Fajr ..... 4:09 am  
Zohr ..... 12:10 pm  
Asr ..... 4:49 pm  
Maghrib ..... 6:42 pm  
Isha ..... 8:09 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  
RGH ..... 9290301-7  
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

**Pindi Police arrest 8 drug peddlers**

RAWALPINDI: The police, on the directives of City Police Officer, Rawalpindi conducted raids and arrested eight alleged drug pushers besides recovering over three kg charas from their possession.

A police spokesman informed that during the course of action, Kahuta, Rattaamral, Pirwadhai, Airport, Taxila, Gujjar Khan and Jatli police conducted raids in their jurisdiction and rounded up Abdul Rashid with 1250 grams charas, Abdul Hameed with 150 grams charas, Umair with 200 grams charas, Shakeel for having 500 grams charas and Yasir for carrying 210 grams charas.

Similarly, a drug peddler namely Umar Shehzad was sent behind the bars for having 400 grams charas, while accused Aqib and Nasir Iqbal were also arrested with 240 and 320 grams of charas respectively.

Police have registered separate cases against the accused while further investigations are in progress.

The spokesman informed that over 20 kg narcotics were recovered during the last two days.

Senior Superintendent of Police (Operations), Rawalpindi Waseem Riaz Khan directed the police officers to accelerate operations against drug peddlers. APP

**148 Pakistani students set to leave for study in Hungarian universities**

*Education Minister says it is excellent opportunity for students to enhance their knowledge and skills*

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: As many as 148 Pakistani students are set to leave for study in Hungarian universities, as the Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan held a send-off ceremony on Friday to award certificates to the scholarship winners under the Stipendium Hungaricum Scholarship Programme.

Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training Rana Tanveer Hussain attended the ceremony as chief guest through a video link. Chairman HEC Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, Executive Director HEC Dr. Shaista Sohail, and Charge d'Affaires Embassy of Hungary Tivadar Takacs graced the occasion. A large number of Vice Chancellors, faculty members, alumni, and scholarship awardees along with their parents were present.

Congratulating the scholarship awardees, the Minister said that it is an excellent opportunity for the students to enhance



their knowledge and skills and get international exposure. He advised the students to fully utilise their potential and talent in their respective areas of study as well as under the cultural diversity to play a role in further improving harmony between Pakistan and Hungary. He maintained that the scholarship opportunity puts responsibility upon the students to work hard and learn to better serve Pakistan. He assured that the Government of Pakistan is fully supportive of the programmes like Stipendium Hungaricum Scholarships.

Chairman HEC Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed appreciated the support of Hungarian Government for higher studies of Pakistani students. He said a large number

of Nobel Laureates are the graduates of Hungarian institutions, which is a food for thought for Pakistan to continue the journey of strengthening higher education institutions. He noted that the Hungarian universities welcome Pakistani students as its education policy is very inclusive and open. He urged the Hungarian Government to enhance the number of scholarships for Pakistani students. He advised the students to utilise their energies on showing exemplary academic performance and character and play ambassadors of Pakistan in Hungary.

Shedding light on the background of the scholarship programme, Dr. Shaista Sohail said that these scholarships began in 2015 with award of 80 scholarships, which was increased to 200 every year in 2017. She highlighted that the Government of Hungary has shown interest in continuing the cooperation and renew MoU for 200 scholarships annually for the next three years from 2023-2025.

**Islamabad view**

ISLAMABAD: Motorists back to their destiny after the work in evening hours at Faisal Avenue in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

**Rains cause heaviest floods in Pakistan's history: Sherry**

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change Senator Sherry Rehman on Friday said the abnormal monsoon torrential rains caused the heaviest floods in the country's history that submerged many parts of the southern region.

She was addressing the meeting of the National Assembly Standing Committee on Climate Change held under the chair of MNA Nuzhat Pathan.

Sherry said the situation was bad as rains has not been taking any breaks with up to 1,100 millimeters rains in many flood-hit areas, adding, "30 districts of Sindh have been submerged and this committee should take notice of that."

The minister underlined that it was a natural disaster but the mother nature was brought to this level after unbridled



anthropogenic activities.

She mentioned that the communication link with Balochistan had also ended, adding, "Our helicopters are reaching the affected areas but they are coming back due to unfavourable weather conditions."

There were many people still trapped in the affected areas and the government had

no idea about where to draw the accumulated water, Sherry Rehman said.

Secretary Ministry of Climate Change Asif Haider Shah also briefed the committee on the mandate of the ministry in the prevailing scenario and presented his suggestions to the forum.

MNA Murtaza Javed Abbasi raised the issue of crushing

plants installed at the Margalla Hills National Park and Khanpur Dam areas.

Inspector General of Forest, Ministry of Climate Change Ghulam Qadir Shah told the committee that there were 31 crush plants functional as of now in the region and 11 of them were registered and the rest were illegal.

"We have closed down several crush plants and cases of five crushing plants are also under trial in the Supreme Court."

He underscored that Afghan mafia was behind the ordeal. "We raised our voice at the assembly as young children are suffering 30% hearing loss and the people have been protesting against the plants for the past two years. Due to these rains, the crushing waste is going into Khanpur Dam," he added. APP

**Health Corner**

**Universal flu vaccine protects against variants**

ISLAMABAD: A new universal flu vaccine protects against diverse variants of both influenza A and B viruses in mice, according to a new study by researchers in the Institute for Biomedical Sciences at Georgia State University.

The researchers designed a single, universal influenza vaccine candidate with key cross-protective, less variable parts of the influenza A and B viruses: multi-neuraminidase protein subtypes known to be major antiviral drug targets and the universally conserved M2 ectodomain protein.

The findings, published in the journal PLOS Pathogens, report that mice vaccinated with an immune stimulating virus-like particle displaying multiple neuraminidase subtypes and conserved M2 portions of antigens (foreign proteins that induce immune responses) were protected against influenza A seasonal variants and pandemic potential viruses (H1N1, H5N1, H3N2, H9N2 and H7N9) and influenza B (Yamagata and Victoria lineage) viruses containing substantial antigenic variations.

Viral variants occur when flu pathogens change their major surface hemagglutinin protein that binds to host receptor molecules. Continuous mutational changes in the flu hemagglutinin proteins cause the emergence of variants that have escaped the host immune system, leading to severe flu disease.

Current influenza vaccines are based on strain-specific immunity to hemagglutinin, a highly variable target of immune protection. Annual influenza vaccination is recommended, but the effectiveness of the seasonal vaccine is unpredictable and could be below 20 percent because of continuous changes in hemagglutinin proteins. Therefore, influenza remains a high risk to human health worldwide.

"We developed a single, universal vaccine entity that induced immunity to conserved M2 ectodomain and multi subtype neuraminidase proteins and was found to be effective in conferring broad cross protection against antigenically diverse influenza A and B viruses in young and aged mice," said Dr. Sang-Moo Kang, senior author of the study and a professor in the Institute for Biomedical Sciences at Georgia State. "This study provides impactful insight into developing a universal influenza vaccine inducing broad immunity against both flu A and B variants in young and aged populations."

This study supports a novel strategy for creating a universal vaccine against influenza A and B viruses. A single construct displaying multiple cross protective proteins has the capacity to induce immunity to M2 and multi-subtype neuraminidase proteins of influenza A and B viruses, as well as offer broad cross protection against sickness and mortality under lethal flu virus challenges in mice, according to the study.

Vaccinating mice with this universal vaccine candidate induced broad neuraminidase inhibition, M2 ectodomain specific antibodies and T cell immune responses. Comparable cross protection was induced in aged mice.

The study warrants further testing of this unique, universal vaccine candidate in ferrets, which have similar respiratory tracts to humans. (Courtesy: Science Daily)



ISLAMABAD: Sheikh Amir, MD and Sheikh Babar Atif, ED of Sheikh Enterprises along with other distinguished guests on the pre-launch inauguration of Oxygen Heights, Friday at Bahria Enclave Islamabad.

**Donations collected for flood victims at Federal Urdu University**



**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: The teachers and students of Federal Urdu University, collected the donations in form of edibles and clothes for the flood and rain affectees of Balochistan.

The collected items were sent to Balochistan by a truck from Gulshan-e-Iqbal Campus on Friday with the coordination of Edhi Welfare Organization. The acting registrar of the university, Professor Dr. Zareena Ali was also present there, who encouraged and admired those teachers and students who participated and contributed wholeheartedly in this welfare activity.

Moreover, the focal persons of this welfare campaign, Dr. Saher Afhan and Dr. Mariyam Shafiq, teachers of Department of Microbiology told further that in this campaign, the teachers, specially students contributed and donated with open handedly.

The Vice Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Athar Atta also reinforced and encouraged them for this activity which was organized for the human welfare. It was further stated that the basic aim was to provide edibles to those people especially destitute children who are confronting an adverse situation due to catastrophic and destructive flood. In the collected items, a huge quantity of milk, biscuits, rice, pulses blankets and clothes are included.



ISLAMABAD: Group photo with Additional Chief Secretary (G) Fayyaz Ali Ali Abbasi during the visit of PID newly constructed complex. Secretary Information Ms Midhat Shehad, DG Public Relations Raja Azhar Iqbal and other officers were also seen in picture.

**Overseas ministry to send workers abroad for free: Minister**

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Sajid Hussain Turi has decided to send Pakistani workers and professionals abroad for free.

Chairing a high level meeting here Friday, he directed the digitization of the Protector Office to make the process of Protector faster, transparent and easier. Fees ranging from 50 thousand to 100,000 rupees are being abolished from Pakistani workers and professionals for services, he informed.

During the meeting, the minister was briefed by Federal Secretary, DG Bureau



of Immigration, DG Overseas Employment Corporation and other senior officers.

The minister said that the Ministry will soon send the summary of fee abolition to the Cabinet for approval. Protector offices will be

established soon in Bannu, Abbottabad, Sukkur, Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Kashmir, he said and added that the licenses of overseas promoters pending for three years were also issued.

A summary would be

prepared soon to fill the vacant posts so that the efficiency of the institutions can be improved, he added. He said that strict action would be taken against officials involved in illegal activities and corruption.

The minister stressed the Community Welfare Attachés to improve their performance for the welfare of overseas Pakistanis. However, an online meeting of all community welfare attachés will be held every fortnight to review the performance.

"I will not tolerate any negligence regarding the complaints of overseas Pakistanis, he warned and

urged the Welfare attaché to provide easy access to Pakistanis living abroad for solving their problems and welfare. The Ministry's doors are always open for all kinds of cooperation and problems of overseas Pakistanis", he said.

On the instructions of Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, an online complaint portal is being established for overseas Pakistanis, he added. Opportunities will be found in different countries for the export of OEC Pakistani manpower. He also hinted to initiate training and foreign language classes for OEC manpower export. APP

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# Ukraine war & European unity

**Andrew Hammond**

Since Russia invaded Ukraine, one of the genuine geopolitical surprises to many has been the stronger than expected unity the West has shown against Moscow. Seven economic sanctions packages have been announced by the EU alone. Yet, as Wednesday marked the six-month anniversary of the start of the conflict, greater cracks are beginning to show. Hungary, of course, has been the most outspoken outlier so far. Yet behind the wider European public statements of support for Ukraine there are significant differences of opinion. These include disagreements between key Western European states, such as Germany and France, and nations in the east of the continent, such as the Nordic and Baltic countries and Poland, who want an even tougher response.

The schisms within Europe were highlighted in June by a European Council on Foreign Relations poll. It revealed that while Europeans feel significant solidarity with Ukraine and support sanctions against Russia, opinions are split about longer-term goals. They are primarily divided between a "peace" camp (35 percent and

potentially growing) that simply wants the war to end as quickly as possible, and a "justice" camp that believes the more pressing goal is to punish Russia (22 percent). In all countries except Poland, the peace camp is the larger of the two. In addition, European citizens increasingly worry about the cost of sanctions and the threat of military escalation.

So far, these European differences of opinion have been camouflaged, quite successfully, by the Brussels-based club. However, this might become much harder to achieve as the economic and political pain resulting from the conflict bites harder. Changes of leadership could also make a difference. Italy, which under Prime Minister Mario Draghi has been a strong supporter of Kyiv, could become significantly less so if the nation's right-wing bloc, within which there is significant sympathy for Russia, wins power in next month's general election. Against this backdrop of European unity that will probably become harder to maintain as time goes on, there is significant uncertainty about how much longer the war will continue. However, there are some clues as to likely next steps.

It is unlikely that a decisive victory by either side is imminent, as long as Moscow is prepared to devote huge

amounts of resources to the conflict and Ukraine continues to receive extensive military supplies from the West. The most likely scenario in coming weeks, therefore, is a war of attrition that might result in the conflict stretching into 2023, albeit potentially with a lower tempo of fighting. The level and range of risks in Ukraine remains exceptional-

ly high. This is partly because Moscow's exit strategy is not clear and miscalculation is still a significant possibility. While the Russian military was ineffective to begin with, it now controls 20-25 percent of the country and might hold much of this territory for years. Moreover, it

is now the declared strategy of the Western alliance, led by the US, to try to inflict a defeat on Russia. In the post-war history of NATO this represents a very important difference from past events and raises the stakes in the months ahead. Historically, wars tend to end in one of two ways: One side imposes its will on the other on the battlefield and then at the negotiating table; or both sides embrace a compromise they consider preferable to continued fighting. Unless there is a big change, neither of these outcomes seems imminent in Ukraine, especially while both sides are prepared to continue to devote massive resources to the conflict. Following the Russian territorial gains in recent months, Ukraine is gathering a large fighting force equipped with Western weapons to try to recapture some of its southern and eastern territory. Moscow now controls territories in the nation with the combined size of Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky has ordered his military forces in particular to try to recover areas considered key to the country's economy. Meanwhile, Russia is preparing for the next stage of its offensive, with its forces stepping up military activity in "all operational areas."

The wider economic impact of the war could be further exacerbated by Russia cutting off more gas supplies, at least periodically, to a growing number of EU nations in coming months. With this in mind, European energy ministers have agreed a controversial plan to try to deliver voluntary cuts in gas use of 15 percent from next month until March next year. As pessimistic as this war of attrition scenario might seem — not least the human cost, including millions of refugees — it is far from the worst-case outcome.

That would be most likely to be come about if the conflict escalates beyond Ukraine's borders to involve NATO countries. While this possibility still seems unlikely to many observers, the threat cannot be totally dismissed, such is the volatility of the situation. Such a worst-case escalation would be a genuine catastrophe for many people and the potential use of nuclear or chemical weapons could not be completely ruled out. Moreover, not only would the current regime of sanctions and counter-sanctions grow, there might also be a wider economic collapse, expediting the impulse toward deglobalization.

*The writer is an associate at LSE IDEAS at the London School of Economics. Courtesy Arab News*

## African food crisis

More than 80mn people across Somalia, Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, South Sudan, Uganda and Djibouti are food insecure, and almost half of them have to sell their possessions in order to eat. With forecasters seeing a high risk of rains failing for a fifth consecutive season and aid flows falling short of what's needed, the region is at risk of a famine, which may be worse than the one Ethiopia experienced in the 1980s and claimed an estimated 1mn lives.

For sure, a humanitarian disaster is unfolding in East Africa, which is in the grip of its worst drought in at least four decades. According to the World Health Organisation the coronavirus pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine have compounded the continent's woes, making it more expensive and difficult to obtain supplies of food, fuel and fertiliser. Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic hunger has been increasing in almost every corner of the world with the biggest toll coming in parts of Africa and Asia.

Worsening the crisis, Russia's invasion of Ukraine means the food inflation that's been plaguing global consumers is now tipping into a full-blown crisis, potentially outstripping even the pandemic's blow and pushing millions more into hunger. African food import bills have soared as global prices trade near a record high after Russia's invasion sharply reduced Ukraine's exports of grain. Somalia's worst drought in more than 40 years has internally displaced 1mn people since the dry conditions struck in January 2021, according to the United Nations.

This year alone, an estimated 755,000 people fled their homes in search of water, according to the UN refugee agency, UNHCR. An infestation of locusts, which thrive in hot and dry conditions, have wiped out crops across large parts of eastern Africa. Somalia and Ethiopia have also been contending with internal conflicts and militancy, which have disrupted farming and made it dangerous to distribute aid. The US says it gave more than \$6.6bn in humanitarian and food assistance to Africa in the first seven months of 2022, which would make it the single biggest donor.

The European Union, Canada, Sweden, Germany and the UK were also leading contributors.

The Sahel region is also confronting a hunger crisis of its own, mainly due to ongoing conflict that's decimated food production and exacerbated the impact of higher grain prices and the pandemic.

More than 38mn people in the arid area on the southern fringe of the Sahara are food insecure, a 40% increase from a year ago, according to the Alliance for International Medical Action. Across the world, about 1.2bn people live in extreme poverty, on less than one dollar per day, according to a 2018 WHO report.

On the flip side, the world loses about \$400bn of food before it even gets delivered to stores, according to the UN. With hunger being the most pressing reality of human lives, here is a wider perspective. Some 5bn people would die in a modern nuclear war with the impact of a global famine - triggered by sunlight-blocking soot in the atmosphere - likely to far exceed the casualties caused by lethal blasts, according to scientists at Rutgers University. A full-scale war between the US and Russia, the worst possible case, would wipe out more than half of humanity, they said in the study published in the journal Nature Food.



## Bright memories of General Sarfaraz Ali Shaheed - II

The most important focus was education. Special attention was given to colleges, universities as well as higher education. 12th Corps from a consortium of various institutions arranged it for them and tried to ensure that no one was left behind. Not only education, but accommodation and all other arrangements were made for them. Bhai Dilawar Khan moved to Hyderabad and General Sarfaraz Jannat, but Chashma Faiz continues. This world is a grass and we are all animals Everyone will fly away speaking their own dialects. Is now supervised by Lt. Gen. Asif Ghafoor, who himself is a high intellectual and education-loving person. When he visited UMT for Condolence of Dr. Hasan Sohaib Murad Shaheed in 2018, he announced scholarships for students from remote areas. Last year also we went to Quetta. Then General Sarfaraz discussed educational projects in detail with President of UMT. (Hopefully, General Asif Ghafoor will take them forward).

When I mentioned Brother Major General Dilawar Khan, the General praised him a lot and said that he is a great officer and has worked very well with me. Everyone praises on the face. But. Your real mention and introduction is what someone does in your absence. Bhai Mahmood was the General's staff officer. He was opening the layers of his memories from the General. That under his leadership, everyone used to take fearless actions. This was because they were protecting their juniors and wanted to take full advantage of their abilities. When he was the Corps Commander, he instructed his staff to collect the data of the families of the martyrs and get their new contact numbers so that we could stay in touch with them, and he did the same even when he IGFC South was.

Similarly, he used to go to Dera Ismail Khan Tawatar to meet the parents of Lt. Atif Qayyum who was the first martyr in Swat. He was a true and loving soldier by nature. There was interest. He was too hard for enemies. And too soft for friends. Be gentle like silk. If there is truth or falsehood, steel is a believer Mahmood also testified that he did not see

the general missing the funeral of any martyr. He always led the funeral himself. Similarly, he never missed prayer while traveling. He was always ablution. Indeed, he was a believer. He always tried to attend the weddings of his friends and loved ones. His best habit was that even when he was a young officer, he cared about everyone and was connected to everyone. Mehmood was telling that once his daughter was admitted to CMH, despite his busy schedule, he came to the hospital and visited his daughter. It was a big encouraging step for me. Working with them is a memory for me.

General Sarfaraz loved pets like chickens and birds and took care of them very passionately. No one believed in the martyrdom of such a loving person. Although there was no publicity about the time and place of the funeral, yet when I and Brother Malik Abrar Ahmed reached the race course, there were thousands of people. No, the race course ground was chosen instead. We went ahead and joined the funeral procession. Lt Gen Asif Ghafoor was the first to be followed. We stood there. In the meantime, General Faiz Hameed also arrived. Corps Commander Lahore General Muhammad Abdul Aziz, Corps Commander Rawalpindi General Sahir Shamshad Mirza were already there. General R. Muhammad Afzal came, so I Malik Abrar slipped and made room. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif came. Behind were Khawaja Muhammad Asif and Ziaullah Shah.

Meanwhile, Chief of Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa also arrived. He went to Quetta that morning and attended the funeral of the martyrs there and also met with the heirs of martyrs. The heirs of the martyrs were with them. The first row was complete. In front of us, a cute child who was just stepping on the threshold of youth, stood. General Afzal asked whose son. He was Major General Amjad. He was the son of Hanif. Then we all met him. He comforted us. Meanwhile, a

tall man came out from the line and told the children of the martyrs to stand in my place. This tall man was the Chief of Army Staff. There are many things about the army. But this scene was visible. The funeral prayer was performed and the army chief came and stood near the body of the general.

He was telling people that the coffin was closed, so you should pass by. Chairman Senate Sadiq Sanjrani, Deputy Chairman Senate Mirza Muhammad Afridi, Former Deputy Chairman Senate Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haidari, Senator Shibli Faraz, Senator Sarfaraz Bugti, Asad Umar of Tehreek-e-Insaf, Former Speaker Asad Qaiser, Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mehmoed Khan and countless leaders. And the people were there. After reading the funeral. I and brother Malik Abrar Ahmed ex MNA came out of the race course ground and proceeded towards the army cemetery. We thought that the leaders had all gone. But as soon as we crossed the gate, the army chief was standing in front of him. The commandos were standing in front. So General Sahib called

Malik Abrar and we went forward. We met the Army Chief. Offered our condolences and then stood there and waited for the funerals. Major General Brother Muhammad Irfan was also standing there. The funerals came. So the army chief went ahead and shouldered everyone in turn. We also got this blessing.

In all stages of the burial, the Army Chief stood with his commanders. He gave instructions from time to time. He called the children of the martyrs to him, encouraged them. He consoled everyone. He advised patience. Called one by name. The daughter of Brigadier Khalid Shaheed was crying a lot. He put his hand on her head. The body was lowered into the khaki tomb. There was a ceremony to give the last sign of the martyrs and the national flag to the heirs of the martyrs. There was a lot of rush. The chief himself called all the heirs forward. He made them stand in one place. He

kissed the national flag himself and then handed it over to the heirs of the martyrs in turn. They also kissed the national flag.

They placed it with their eyes. Then the chief placed it on the three graves in turn. Placed flowers and recited Fatiha on each grave. The truth is that the army chief's participation in the complete burial of the martyrs from the accident has impressed me. It goes on from there. Seeing the love and attachment of the army chief to his soldiers and officers in this way, I felt a sense of satisfaction that this is truly a Pak army. It is an army with faith, piety and jihad in the cause of Allah. I will not give any more references in this holy text but this is the spirit of Pakistan Army which makes it unique in the whole world.

After that, Corps Commander Lahore General Muhammad Abdul Aziz and I had the privilege of reciting sermons at the graves of General Sarfaraz Ali Shaheed, Major General Amjad Hanif Shaheed, Brigadier Khalid Shaheed. I was more satisfied to see the white-bearded Lieutenant General Muhammad Abdul Aziz reciting. This is the kingdom of God. And the forces of this country are associated with this soil. They are related to Makkah and Madinah.

Corps Commander Rawalpindi Sahir Shamshad Mirza, who was standing nearby, called Captain Ahmed, son of General Sarfaraz Ali Shaheed, and the sons of the martyrs. Now you are the elder of the house. You have to take care of the whole house and support. Saudi Arabia's military attaché, Major General Awad Abdullah Al-Zharani, was also taking the dead body to the graves. They were also putting soil. The eternal love and friendship of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan was also being expressed that in this hour of grief, the brothers of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan.

There can be mistakes. But there is no crookedness in its foundation. And this kingdom will remain forever. Insha'Allah.

*Concluded  
 The writer is senior media specialist and can be reached at Sajjadmediacentre@gmail.com*

## Letter to the Editor

### The Floods

Ordinarily, more rain is a blessing. We need it to fill lakes and streams, which provide sources of drinking water and crop irrigation. But excessive rainfall especially at fast rates can do more harm than good. But sometimes it will be big disaster for rulers as well as urbanization. Seasonal rain is the mercury of Allah but in the limit, when it will become unlimited then it may be the Doom by Allah in the form of a flood. "According to the science it is the water cycle, the water vapors evaporated in the form of vapors then vapors to form clouds and then condensation of clouds to form precipitation and rain fall".

This is the whole phenomenon of the water cycle, it means, it needs more vapors for the clouds formation than would become precipitation occurs, but vaporization occurs due to high heat intensity, industrialization, homemade cooking, sunlight, and warm air are the main cause of water vapors. As air warms, it can "hold" more water vapor than air at cooler temperatures. Scientists point to a basic meteorological principle: As air warms, it can "hold" more water vapor than air at cooler temperatures. And we know average global temperatures have risen about 1.1°C (1.98°F) from 1900-2020 due to the release of heat-trapping greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.

In the summer of 2010, record monsoon rains and flash flooding in Pakistan affected some 20 million people and left over 1,000 dead. Around 14 million were left without homes, and the destruction of crops and other infrastructure left millions more vulnerable to malnutrition and waterborne illness. The same condition is going on nowadays, more people's effects in undeveloped areas either rural or urban due to heavy rain, the province of Sindh is one of them due to the useless Sindh government, although we have a Provincial disaster management Authority (PDMA) which is the duty, life is threatening for those who under in floods, no one prepared for the help. I strongly condemn, take care of those who extremely need help from you. Support Sindh and Sindh people.

*Ghulam Nabi Dhiloo Graduate from University of Sindh Jamshoro*

# US senator meets Taiwan president amid tensions with China

*Marsha Blackburn, a Republican from Tennessee, reaffirmed shared values between the two governments*

TAIPEI: US senator Marsha Blackburn met with Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen on Friday, in the second visit by members of Congress since House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's trip earlier this month sharply raised tensions with China. In her remarks, Tsai pointed to the large-scale military exercises that China launched in response to Pelosi's visit, as well as Russia's invasion of Ukraine, as posing challenges to democratic governments such as the US and Taiwan. "These developments demonstrate how authoritarian countries are disrupting and threatening the world order," she said. Blackburn, a Republican from Tennessee, reaffirmed shared values between the two governments and said she "looked forward to continuing to support Taiwan as they push forward as an independent nation."



China claims self-ruled Taiwan as its own territory, to be taken by force if necessary, and sees high-level foreign visits to the island as interference in its affairs and de facto recognition of Taiwanese sovereignty. China's recent military drills were seen by some as

a rehearsal of future military action against the island, which US military leaders say could come within the next few years. In their meeting, Tsai and Blackburn also underscored the importance of economic links, especially in the semiconductor sector, where Taiwan is a world leader and the US is seeking greater investment at home. Blackburn arrived in Taipei late Thursday after visiting Fiji, the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea as part of a US push to "expand our diplomatic footprint in

the area," her office said in a statement. "The Indo-Pacific region is the next frontier for the new axis of evil," Blackburn, a staunch supporter of former President Donald Trump, was quoted as saying. "We must stand against the Chinese Communist Party."

China has been making inroads in the western Pacific, signing a broad security agreement with the Solomons that the US and allies such as Australia see as an attempt to overthrow the traditional security order in the region. Pelosi

was the highest-level member of the US government to visit Taiwan in 25 years. China's response was to announce six zones surrounding the island for military exercises that included firing missiles over the island and sending ships across the midline of the Taiwan Strait, seen as a buffer between the two sides. Some of the missiles landed in Japan's exclusive economic zone. Following Pelosi's trip, a delegation of House and Senate members visited. This week, Indiana's governor made a visit focused on business and academic cooperation. US politicians have called their visits a show of support for the island.

"I just landed in Taiwan to send a message to Beijing — we will not be bullied," said Blackburn in a tweet early morning Friday. "The United States remains steadfast in preserving freedom around the globe, and will not tolerate efforts to undermine our nation and our allies." Taiwan also welcomed senior Japanese lawmakers this week. The island's Foreign Minister, Joseph Wu, said Friday he welcomed all such visits by foreign government officials.

## Africa on track for 5th failed rainy season: WMO

BAIDOO: The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) said on Friday that forecasts for October-December show high chances of drier-than-average conditions in the Horn of Africa as the worst drought in more than 40 years looks almost certain to persist. "Sadly, our models show with a high degree of confidence that we are entering the 5th consecutive failed rainy season in the Horn of Africa," said Guleid Artan, Director of the IGAD Climate Prediction and Applications Center (ICPAC), WMO's regional climate center for East Africa. "In Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia, we are on the brink of an unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe" he added.

## UAE, US discuss military & defense ties

DUBAI: Officials from the UAE and the US on Friday met to explore ways to further enhance military ties. Rear Admiral Sheikh Saeed bin Hamdan bin Mohammed Al-Nahyan, commander of the Naval Forces, received Vice Admiral Brad Cooper, commander of the US Naval Forces Central Command, and his delegation as both sides reiterated the friendly relations between both countries. During their meeting, the military officials reviewed UAE-US cooperation to ensure more coordination between the two sides, state news agency WAM reported.

**No substitute**

## Managing Israel-Palestine conflict for meaningful political process: UN



UNITED NATIONS: Managing the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis is no substitute for a real political process, Tor Wennesland, the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, told the Security Council, while urging the 15-member body to turn their attention to the broader strategy of ending the occupation and realizing the long elusive two-State solution. "Such a strategy will require significant steps from all sides," he said. "It must involve strengthening the ability of the Palestinian Authority to engage with Israel on political, economic and security issues, as well as working towards the return of the legitimate Palestinian Government to the Gaza Strip." Wennesland, the special Mideast envoy, called for reducing tensions and violence across the Occupied Palestinian Territory, especially in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

"Unilateral steps that perpetuate negative trends need to stop," he stressed. The space for Palestinian economic activity and further improvements to access and movement in Gaza and the West Bank should also be expanded. Describing gains, he reported that the ceasefire between Israel and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, remains in effect and a "fragile calm" has been restored in Gaza. The Erez and Kerem Shalom crossings have been open since 8 August and the United Nations is working with partners to ensure the urgent delivery of assistance to those most in need. To be sure, the ceasefire prevented the situation from escalating into a full-blown war, he told the delegates. Violence has increased across much of the occupied West Bank. Israel's settlement activity continues, along with demolitions and evictions, while fiscal and political challenges threaten the Palestinian Authority's effectiveness in delivering public services.

The West Bank and Gaza remain politically divided. Gazans suffer under economic and movement restrictions linked with Israel's "closure regime", the nature of Hamas rule and the ever-present threat of violence. "Unless these fundamental issues are addressed the cycle of acute crisis, followed by short-term fixes will persist," he warned. Turning to the Golan, Wennesland said the ceasefire between Israel and Syria was generally maintained, despite several violations of the 1974 Agreement on Disengagement of Forces. In Lebanon, the lack of progress with reforms, deadlock of Government formation and increasing strain on institutions such as the armed and security forces weighs heavily on State authority.

In the south, tensions persisted in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) area of operations, with at least four firing ranges - unknown to Lebanese authorities - observed in regular use south of the Litani River. "This is a blatant violation of resolution 1701 (2006)," he explained, as are Israel's regular and ongoing violations of Lebanon's airspace. "The status quo is not a strategy," he said. He urged Israeli and Palestinian leaders, regional countries and the broader international community to take firm action to enable a return to meaningful negotiations. Reinforcing that point, Philippe Lazzarini, Commissioner-General of the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), said the agency is the lifeline for one of the most underprivileged and desperate communities in the region.

"Going to school, getting health services or receiving a food parcel are, for many Palestinian refugees, their only sources of normality," he said. For these refugees, UNRWA remains the "last standing pillar" of the international community's commitment to their right to a dignified life and a just, lasting solution, he stressed. He appealed to Member States that have reduced their funding to reconsider the impact of that decision on the region's stability.

# Turkey plays down US curbs over Russia ties

ISTANBUL: Turkey's finance minister told businesses on Friday they should not be concerned by the threat of sanctions that Washington warns will follow if they do business with sanctioned Russians. Nureddin Nebati's Twitter comments represent Ankara's first official response to a letter the US Treasury sent to Turkish businesses on Monday. US Deputy Secretary of the Treasury William A. Gaud warned Turkish banks and companies they would face secondary sanctions if they cooperated with Russians sanctioned in response to the Kremlin's invasion of Ukraine. The value of Turkey's trade with Russia shot up by nearly 50 percent between May and July.



is one of the most important political and economic power centers in the world." NATO member Turkey — on good terms with both Moscow and Kyiv — has tried to stay neutral in the conflict and refused to join the international sanctions. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin agreed to step up economic cooperation at

a summit in the Black Sea resort of Sochi earlier this month. US officials worry that sanctioned Russians are setting up Turkish entities to trade with the outside world. They are also concerned that European companies are doing the same to circumnavigate EU sanctions imposed on Russian trade.

Nebati said Turkey was "determined to develop our commercial relations with our neighbors in various sectors — especially tourism — within a framework that is not subject to sanctions." A part of the US concern stems from Turkey's decision to transition to paying rubles for the natural gas it imports from the Kremlin-tied giant Gazprom. Washington is also worried that Russia may be using Turkey to acquire technology whose export has been banned by Washington and the EU. Data reviewed by The Wall Street Journal showed Russians opening more than 500 companies in Turkey since the start of the year — more than double the number started last year. Erdogan has argued that Turkey must remain "neutral" in the conflict because its industries rely heavily on Russian energy imports.

# IAEA seeks to visit Zaporizhzhia plant amid concerns

KYIV: mission from the U.N.'s International Atomic Energy Agency is expected to visit the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant next week after it was temporarily knocked offline and more shelling was reported in the area overnight, Ukrainian officials said Friday. Fire damage to a transmission line at Europe's largest nuclear plant caused a blackout across the region on Thursday and heightened fears of a catastrophe in a country still haunted by the Chernobyl disaster in 1986. Lana Zerkal, an adviser to Ukraine's energy minister, told Ukrainian media on Thursday evening that logistical issues are being worked out for the IAEA team to come to the Zaporizhzhia plant, which has been occupied by Russian forces and run by Ukrainian workers



since the early days of the 6-month-old war. Zerkal accused Russia of trying to sabotage the visit. Ukraine has alleged that Russia is essentially holding the plant hostage, storing weapons there and launching attacks from around it, while Moscow accuses Ukraine of recklessly firing on the facility. "Despite the fact that the Russians agreed for the mission to travel through the territory of Ukraine, they are now artificially creating all the conditions for the mission not to reach the facility, given the situation around it," she said, offering no details. There was no immediate comment from Moscow to the claims. The atomic agency's head, Rafael Mariano Grossi, also said Thursday he hopes to send a team to the plant within days.

Negotiations over how the team would access the plant are complicated but advancing, he said on France-24 television.

Meanwhile, Ukrainian officials said an area close to the plant came under a barrage of shelling overnight, amid mounting concerns that an armed conflict near a working atomic plant could cause more serious damage, even as Zaporizhzhia's reactors are protected by reinforced concrete containment domes. Dnipropetrovsk governor Valentyn Reznichenko said shelling in the city of Nikopol, which is across the Dnieper River from the Zaporizhzhia plant, damaged 10 houses, a school and a sanatorium, causing no casualties. A power line also has been cut, leaving up to 1,000 local residents without electricity, he added.

# SCO outlines steps to enhance defence & security cooperation

BELJING: The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Defence Ministers' Meeting held in Tashkent, Republic of Uzbekistan outlined further steps to enhance defence and security cooperation among the member states, said SCO Secretariat here on Friday. According to a joint communique issued after the meeting, as usual, the ministers came together in a friendly and constructive atmosphere to engage in an exchange of views on the topical international and regional security matters.

The participants noted that attempts to ensure one's own security at the expense of other countries were unacceptable. The developments currently unfolding around the world

demonstrate that the emergence of a just multipolar world order based on the universally recognised principles of international law, multilateralism, as well as equal, shared, indivisible, inclusive and sustainable security cannot be reversed.

The ministers praised the high level of mutual understanding among SCO member states and agreed to continue their cooperation to improve security and stability across the SCO space, including in terms of overcoming the negative consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The defence ministers believe that settling the situation in Afghanistan without delay is one of the key factors in preserving and strengthening security and

stability within the SCO space.

In view of the current socioeconomic and humanitarian situation in Afghanistan, the defence ministers called on the international community and the SCO member states to step up their efforts to help the country overcome the socioeconomic and humanitarian crisis it is facing.

The ministers firmly condemned attempts to revise the causes and outcomes of World War II, and to rehabilitate Nazi criminals and their accomplices, as well as promote neo-Nazi ideas. The ministers decided to hold a joint military counter-terrorist command post exercise Peaceful Mission 2023 in the Russian Federation on responding to new

tactics used by international terrorists. Russia suggested that during this exercise, the interested parties focus on countering unmanned aerial vehicles, ensuring information security, and preventing terrorist attacks involving chemical and biological weapons.

The SCO's ties with other international organisations are becoming instrumental in strengthening regional security. In this connection, Russia suggested considering the possibility of inviting military units from other international organisations, as well as troops and observers from friendly countries to take part in the Peaceful Mission exercise. The ministers agreed to keep up their efforts



to strengthen friendship and neighbourly relations among SCO member states, and to expand security cooperation in order to ensure peace, stability and sustainable development in the region. In this connection, they spoke out in favour of step-

ping up the SCO's practical cooperation with other regional partner organisations.

The defence ministers expressed their commitment to expanding military-to-military cooperation, and welcomed Russia's initiative to invite SCO

member states to take part in the Vostok 2022 strategic command post exercise held by the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation. The defence ministers emphasised the need for the Trumpet of Peace International Military Band Festival to carry on as a major platform for stronger mutual understanding, friendship and promotion of cultural exchanges among the armed forces of the SCO member states. The participants agreed to keep expanding their cooperation in order to ensure regional stability and create favourable conditions for guaranteeing the SCO's steady progress and development. They decided to hold the next SCO Defence Ministers' Meeting in 2023 in India.

**Bull & Bears**  
PSX 100-Share  
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
42,591.51	43,032.57
Day's High	Day's Low:
43,201.21	42,547.72
Index Value	Change
7,523,592,343	-441.06
Percentage	Time
-1.02%	26 Aug, 2022 5:00 pm
Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
7,427.31	-52.43
Percentage	Time
-0.70%	26 Aug, 4:35 pm GMT+1
USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
32,695.81	-595.97
Percentage	Time
-1.79%	26 Aug, 12:10 pm GMT-4
Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
28,641.38	+162.37
Percentage	Time
+0.57%	26 Aug, 3:15 pm GMT+9

**Open Market Forex Rates**

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	151.27	152.52
Bahrain Dinar	578.03	582.53
Canadian Dollar	167.88	169.23
China Yuan	31.72	31.97
Danish Krone	29.41	29.76
Euro	225	227.5
Hong Kong Dollar	27.7	28.05
Indian Rupee	2.72	2.8
Japanese Yen	1.73	1.78
Kuwaiti Dinar	706.2	711.2
Malaysian Ringgit	48.38	48.83
New Zealand \$	135.06	136.26
Norwegians Krone	22.67	22.97
Omani Riyal	564.57	569.07
Qatari Riyal	59.66	60.16
Saudi Riyal	60.4	61
Singapore Dollar	157.29	158.59
Swedish Korona	20.46	20.76
Swiss Franc	225.28	227.03
Thai Bhat	6.65	6.75
U.A.E Dirham	62.5	63
UK Pound Sterling	267.6	270.5
US Dollar	228	230

**With Pakistani reporters**

**META restates commitment to user privacy in virtual sitting**

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: Meta, the parent company of Facebook and Instagram organized a virtual briefing session on its approach to privacy for Pakistani journalists in Islamabad. Arianne Jimenez, Privacy Policy Manager at Meta in the Asia Pacific apprised the reporters about the company's policies to protect user data and information safety on its platforms. The program was part of its endeavour to foster awareness regarding user privacy and tools available to users to exercise greater control over their information on Facebook and Instagram.

The Meta representative said protecting people's information is central to Meta's vision which is why it designs privacy controls into its products with guidance from experts in areas like data protection and privacy law, security, interface design, engineering, product management, and public policy. She said Meta gives people more control over their privacy and security choices through specialized tools and features.

Arianne Jimenez emphasized that Meta doesn't sell user information. Partners and third parties who have access to certain data are required to follow rules about how they can and cannot use and disclose the information. She further said Meta strives to help people understand its data practices by giving them more information and controls on its products, content, and ads. She said Meta's privacy center serves as the educational surface for Facebook, Instagram, and Messenger and provides helpful in-depth information on privacy.

She said Facebook and Instagram show ads so that the platforms are available to everyone free of cost, however, people can take control of their ad preferences by clicking and managing their preferences right on the ad and the same can be done with posts.

She said Meta gives users tools for deleting anything they've posted or even transferring data to other services because Meta believes that part of having a free and open internet means that people should be able to transfer their data to other apps and services they use.

**Tourism economy**

**Joint Working Group formed for tourism promotion in Punjab**

*Mian Aslam Iqbal says promotion of tourism activities is crucial for the stability of economy*

**Staff Reporter**

LAHORE: A joint working group is formed for the tourism promotion in the province. The JWG was formed during a Public-Private Dialogue, which was presided over by the Provincial Minister ICI&SDD, Mian Aslam Iqbal and organized for the promotion of tourism under the auspices of the Punjab Board of Investment and Trade (PBIT).

Chairman PBIT, Fazeel Asif Jah, representatives of the tourism department, government officials and stakeholders related to tourism business participated in the Public Private Dialogue. During the meeting, a joint working group consisting of tour operators, representatives of the hotel industry and government officials was formed for the promotion of tourism in the Province.

Provincial Minister of ICI&SDD, Mian Aslam Iqbal, while addressing the dialogue said that the promotion of tourism activities is crucial for the stability of the economy. There is immense potential for the promotion of tourism in Punjab, but it is need of time to



set up a coherent strategy so that the tourism sector can be truly developed according to global standards. The provincial minister said that different government agencies are working for tourism promotion but they lack continuous coordination and communication for timely exchange of information and formulation of common action plan.

The Provincial Minister directed participants to develop an events calendar for timely

devising of promotional strategies accordingly. He also directed the tourism department to take effective measures for the promotion of tourism activities, while the government and other relevant departments will provide all possible assistance and cooperation in this regard.

He said that there is a need to focus on the promotion of tourism activities at the level of divisional headquarters across the prov-

ince, while a comprehensive Lahore tourism package should be developed keeping in mind the places of touristic, historical and religious importance of the city.

The representatives of the hotel industry also expressed their views and said that the hotel industry can play an important role in the promotion of tourism, but there is a need to review taxes, government policy and industry issues in this regard. Tourism department officials said that Pakistan has more domestic tourists than international tourists, we have to target them. Along with improving the infrastructure, we have to improve the quality of services.

Chairman PBIT, Fazeel Asif Jah said that Punjab has an immense potential to become a centre of religious, health and educational tourism, but for this there is a need to create a targeted strategy.

The participants agreed that for the development of the tourism sector, the stakeholders should meet from time to time so that the problems faced by this industry can be solved in a timely manner.

**Delay in energy reforms could bankrupt country**

*Electricity in Pakistan expensive compared to neighbouring countries, says Atif Ikram Sheikh*

**Staff Reporter**

ISLAMABAD: FPCCT's Presidential candidate Atif Ikram Sheikh on Friday said the country may become bankrupt if there meaningful reforms in the energy sector are delayed further.

Electricity in Pakistan is very expensive compared to the neighbouring countries due to which it has become difficult to compete with the rival countries in the global market, he said.

Pakistani exporters are losing ground to their competitors in the international market due to the increased cost of doing business, he said.



Atif Ikram Sheikh said that despite all the efforts, theft and losses in the electricity sector are increasing which is alarming.

The cost of electricity is continuously increasing but there is no notable reduction in the circular debt which is

surprising, he added.

The business leader said that increasing the tariff of electricity is adding to the difficulties of the people and the business community.

He said that privatization of the power distribution companies has been delayed for years, due to which their losses are continuously increasing.

If LNG is procured in the right way, the income of the gas companies will increase and fertilizers, textiles, CNG and the general industry will get a new lease of life.

He noted that decades of wrong policies have fostered energy inefficiency and favoured imports over the

development of indigenous resources.

Policy failures have created a monster in the form of circular debt which has wasted trillions in budgetary resources and yet there is an outstanding circular debt stock of over Rs3.2 trillion in the power and gas sectors.

National dignity and security are compromised with each economic bailout that we seek from our close friends, international donors, and multilateral lenders. Excessive government involvement is the main cause of the present state of affairs in the energy sector. For the sector to function properly, it must be decentralised and deregulated, he demanded.

**Food security concerns increased, inflation setting world record**

*Low growth rate will further decline: Mian Zahid Hussain*

**Tariq Khattak**

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain on Friday said millions of people have been affected by the devastating rains.

Infrastructure and important crops have been destroyed, farmers are worried, and thousands of households and shops have been destroyed, he added. Mian Zahid Hussain said that the rains have destroyed crops which have increased food

security concerns while the already low GDP has been further affected.

Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that profiteers are reaping undue benefits amid rains and no action is being taken against them. Following the global uncertainty, now local instability is also affecting the situation as inflation in the country is setting a world record, he added.

The business leader observed that globally, interest rates are rising, which stabilizes the US dollar and devalues the currencies of developing countries. Mian Zahid Hussain said that there is no



possibility of reduced inflation in Pakistan this year while foreign exchange reserves are decreasing again.

Exports have been affected by the recession in Pakistan's export markets, which have decreased by 23 percent in July compared to June. An

agreement with the IMF would pave the way for more loans, which would provide temporary support to the economy, but short-term and long-term reforms are needed to improve the economy, which is being ignored.

The central bank has claimed that foreign exchange reserves will increase to 16 billion dollars by the end of this year, but this seems unlikely. Mian Zahid Hussain further said that economic stability bought with borrowed money is of no use. For stability, production, exports and foreign investment have to be increased while investing heavily in the social sector.

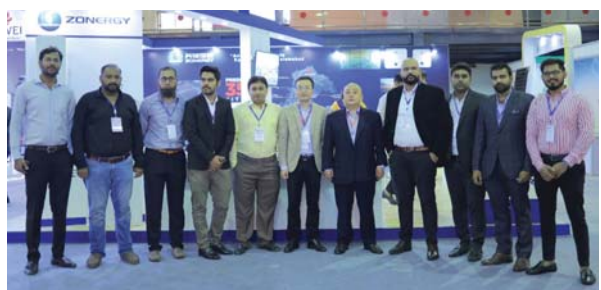
**Zonergy participated in 18th Int'l Trade, Industrial Fair**

*To display wide range of innovative Solar Products*

**Our Correspondent**

KARACHI: Zonergy Solar development Pakistan has participated in 18th International Trade and Industrial Fair of Pakistan. The 3 days exhibition is organized by E-commerce Pvt Ltd which has witness leading traders and manufacturers from the industry who displayed their top-of-the-line products. Zonergy showcased its Portable devices, Panels, On-grid and Hybrid Inverters for visitors to experience the products.

The 18th ITIF Asia & Solar Asia 2022 the Biggest Machinery Show incorporating Electric Vehicle Asia, Auto Transport & Logistic Asia, Power and Alternative Energy Asia, Oil & Gas Asia, Machine Tools & Hardware Asia, Fluid Pump Asia, Engineering Asia, Construction



Machinery Asia & Mines Minerals Metal Asia, to commence from 20th March 2019 at Karachi expo centre. The exhibition inaugurated by Honorable Mr. Nisar Ahmed Khuro, Senator along with Dr. Khurshid Nizam President Ecommerce Gateway. They pay special visit to Zonergy Booth along with others booths to get brief about company products and technology being introduced in Paki-

stan. ITIF Asia & Solar Asia International Exhibition is one such platform for local and international companies to discuss collaborations, joint ventures, investments and other possible avenues. The objective of 18th ITIF Asia 2022 is to develop the Trade industry by introducing world class products, services, machineries and state of the art technology.

**Google for Startups Accelerator launches in Southeast Asia**

**& Pakistan**

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: Google is launching the seventh edition of the Google for Startups Accelerator (GfSA) for Southeast Asia (SEA) and Pakistan, where it will enroll up to 15 seed and series A startups who are focused on solving the region's most important challenges, particularly in Fintech, Healthtech, Retail and e-commerce and SME-focused B2B solutions.

The three-month program will help startups solve their specific challenges by providing the best of Google resources: Google mentors, a network of new contacts to help them on their journeys, and the most cutting-edge technology. Throughout the program,

startups will receive customized mentorship from Google's global mentor network, access to Google's artificial intelligence, machine learning, cloud, Android, and web experts, as well as training in fields such as product design, business strategy, customer acquisition, and leadership development.

Since Google's first GfSA launch in 2016, it has supported over 90 startups, who have then gone on to raise over US\$5.4 billion in funding and created more than 1,600 jobs across Southeast Asia and Pakistan. A notable alumna is DeafTalk from Pakistan, which participated in GfSA 2020 and has provided accessibility solutions for deaf people, including online sign language interpretation.

**FTO addresses over 88% complaints of taxpayers**



**Staff Reporter**

ISLAMABAD: Dr. Asif Mahmood Jah, Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) along with his team visited Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) and gave a presentation to the business community about the 6 months achievements of his organization. Dr. Arslan Subcutagen Advisor (Customs), Ms. Sarwat Tahira Habib Advisor (Media & Awareness) and Almas Ali Jovindah Advisor Legal FTO accompanied him at the occasion.

Addressing the business community, Dr. Asif Mahmood Jah said that FTO received about 3000 complaints from January 2022 to June 2022, out of which 2650 complaints were addressed. He said that the complaints redressal time has been reduced from 68 to 40 days while 75 suo motu cases were taken up during the 6-month period. He said that on the orders of FTO, customs authorities collected over Rs.5 billion by auctioning pending vehicles and goods. Similarly, on the intervention of FTO, FBR cleared refunds of about Rs.8 billion of taxpayers.

He said that FTO has set up 5 new regional offices to expand its network for the facilitation of taxpayers. He assured that FTO would continue to act as an advocate of taxpayers to address their grievances and stressed that the business community should take benefit of its services for redressal of their tax complaints. He also nominated Ms. Naima Ansari, President, Islamabad Women Chamber of Commerce & Industry as Honorary Business Coordinator of FTO and presented a nomination letter to her at the occasion.

Speaking at the occasion, Muhammad Shakeel Munir, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry lauded the 6 month achievements of FTO that showed its good performance and said that FTO was providing speedy justice to the taxpayers by addressing their tax complaints, which deserved great appreciation. He said that FTO's model of public private partnership by nominating Honorary Business Coordinators from the private sector was making a good contribution towards solving the grievances of taxpayers.

## Asia Cup 2022

Ahead of India-Pakistan clash,  
Hasan Ali replaces Wasim Jr

Mohammad Wasim Jr had picked up the injury while bowling in Pakistan's practice session on Wednesday



## Spokesman Report

DUBAI: Fast bowler Mohammad Wasim Jr has been ruled out of the T20 Asia Cup due to a left side strain, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) confirmed.

He had picked up the injury while bowling in Pakistan's practice session on Wednesday. The bowler was assessed by the team medical staff, and MRI scan in Dubai confirmed the diagnosis.

"The findings were discussed with the PCB Medical Advisory Committee, while an independent review by a special-

ist physiotherapist was also sought," the cricket board said in a brief statement.

The medical team will closely monitor Wasim's rehabilitation and his return to competitive cricket will be reassessed before the England tour to Pakistan.

Meanwhile, Hasan Ali has been named as Wasim's replacement, which is subject to the Event Technical Committee's approval. As soon as the ETC approves Hasan as a replacement player, the bowler will depart for the UAE.

Hasan was sought as a replacement player by the team management and the

request was accepted by the chief selector.

He had been working on his bowling in the National High-Performance Centre for the past three weeks and is presently in Rawalpindi, preparing for the National T20, which commences on August 30.

Pakistan squad for Asia Cup  
Babar Azam (captain), Shadab Khan (vice-captain), Asif Ali, Fakhar Zaman, Haider Ali, Haris Rauf, Ifkhar Ahmed, Khushdil Shah, Mohammad Hasnain, Mohammad Nawaz, Mohammad Rizwan, Hassan Ali, Naseem Shah, Shahnawaz Dahani, and Usman Qadir.

## Record holder

LAHORE: A winner of Commonwealth Game-2022 Arshad Nadeem addressing a press conference at a local hotel, in Provincial Capital. As he became the first javelin thrower from the sub-continent to cross the 90 metre mark to win the gold medal at the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Benzema sets sights  
on Ballon d'Or and  
World Cup

France striker bags UEFA men's player of the year prize for his role in Real Madrid's UCL glory



ISTANBUL: For Karim Benzema, the UEFA men's player of the year prize is unlikely to be the last recognition he receives for his role in Real Madrid's memorable run to Champions League glory last season.

The Ballon d'Or will surely follow in October, before he heads to the World Cup in Qatar with France in November and December with the aim of completing a truly remarkable career renaissance.

It is not long ago that Benzema, who will turn 35 the day after the World Cup final in December, was a pariah, frozen out of the France team for five and a half years because of his involvement in a blackmail scandal over a sextape involving his former teammate Mathieu Valbuena.

The Lyon native went on trial late last year and was handed a one-year suspended prison sentence along with a fine of 75,000 euros (\$74,659).

In June he decided not to appeal his conviction, eager to turn the page and keep the focus on football.

Benzema scored an astonishing 44 goals in 46 games for Real last season, including 27 in La Liga as he ended the campaign as the top scorer in Spain's top flight by a distance.

But his very best form came in the Champions League, in which he was also the leading marksman with 15 goals in just 12 appearances.

Wearing the captain's armband, Benzema scored five times in the group stage for Carlo Ancelotti's side, but the best was to come in the knockout rounds.

He scored a stunning hat-trick in 17 second-half minutes in the spectacular last-16 comeback win over Paris Saint-Germain, and another away to Chelsea in the quarter-final first leg.

Audi to make  
Formula One debut  
in 2026

SPA-FRANCORCHAMPS: German car manufacturer Audi will become an engine supplier in Formula One for the first time in the 2026 season, chairman Markus Duesmann announced on Friday.

Audi will announce the team they will supply by the end of the year although it is widely expected to be Sauber, who presently race as Alfa Romeo with a Ferrari engine.

The announcement was made at Spa Francorchamps, the venue for Sunday's Belgian Grand Prix with Formula 1 President and CEO Stefano Domenicali and Mohammed ben Sulayem, President of the International Automobile Federation (FIA), motorsport's governing body present.

"Formula 1 is both a global stage for our brand and a highly challenging development laboratory," Duesmann said in a statement.

The engine will be developed at Audi Sport's facility in Neuburg near Ingolstadt with the company heralding the fact it will be "the first time in more than a decade that a Formula 1 power train will be built in Germany."

Adam Baker - who before joining Audi in 2021 worked for FIA for three years - will take over the management of the company and the Formula 1 project as CEO. Audi added in the statement that Formula One's stated goals to become more sustainable attracted them.

"Globally recognised, highly emotional, and technologically advanced - that's how Formula 1 has met Audi's exact requirements," read the statement.

Maria Khan named as captain of  
Pakistan women's football team

KARACHI: Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) has named Maria Khan as the new captain of the Pakistan women's football team ahead of next month's South Asian Football Federation (SAFF) Championship.

The goalkeeper turned mid-fielder grew up in the United States where she played football for the University of Denver before moving to the United Arab Emirates for higher studies. In the UAE she played for a

local club.

She is one of two overseas players named in Pakistan's squad for the SAFF Championship which is set to be played in Nepal from September 6. UK-based Doncaster Rovers' Nadia Khan is also selected to represent Pakistan in the SAFF Women's Cup.

Hajra Khan, who was the captain of Pakistan's women's side when it played its last international match in 2014, was replaced by

Maria. Hajra is retained in the squad as a player.

Malika-e-Noor is named vice-captain of Maria. She was also a member of the 2014 squad that played Pakistan's last game in senior women's football.

The federation has also confirmed the 23-member squad for the SAFF Women Cup. The list of players was published by Geo on August 24.

Other than Hajra and Malika-e-Noor, Nisha

Ashraf, Roshan Ali, Sahar Zaman, Mahpara Shahid and Zulfia Nazir - named in the 23-member squad for the SAFF Cup 2022 - were also part of the Pakistan women's team in 2014.

Atika Nasir is also from the same batch. She attended the pre-tournament camp but did not play in the tournament that was held in Islamabad.

Pakistan women's football team will leave for Nepal on Sunday. Agencies

Over 140 foreign players register  
for Pak Junior League

## Staff Reporter

LAHORE: The Pakistan Junior League received another shot in the arm as more than 140 players completed their registrations for the tournament through their respective cricket boards as well as clubs and professional representative submissions.

The PCB has received a great response from cricket boards around the world who wholeheartedly appreciated and backed this unique

concept of providing emerging cricket stars a world-class platform for displaying their talent and skills.

South Africa and New Zealand cricket boards while offering their support for the PJJL were not in a position to nominate players for the first season as the event dates clash with the academic examinations of their eligible players.

PCB has received player entries from eight Test playing (ICC full member) boards which include

Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, England, Ireland, Sri Lanka, the West Indies and Zimbabwe.

Besides the Test playing nations, the PCB has also received player nominations from Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Nepal, Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Scotland and the UAE.

Meanwhile, through the PJJL social media campaign more than 2500 videos were submitted by aspiring cricketers from all over Pakistan.

The videos are being assessed by PCB coaches and the final list of players selected from the campaign who would be added to the draft will be shared in due course. Players born or after 1 September 2003 are eligible for the PJJL 2022 edition.

The inaugural edition of the PJJL will be held at the Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore from 6 to 21 October. The final list of players eligible for the draft including foreign nominations will be shared before the draft.

## Unvaccinated Djokovic to miss US Open

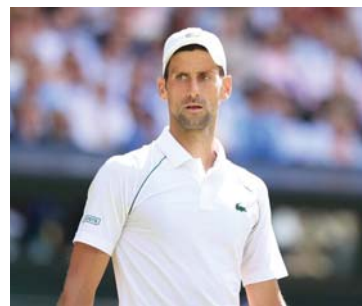
Serbian tennis star gutted after being denied entry into country for year's last Grand Slam

PARIS: Novak Djokovic withdrew from the US Open on Thursday as his refusal to get vaccinated means he cannot travel to the United States in a move which had been widely anticipated.

It is the second Grand Slam the 35-year-old Serb will miss due to not being jabbed after he was deported prior to the Australian Open earlier this year. "Sadly, I will not be able to travel to NY this time for US Open," tweeted Djokovic, a three-time US Open champion.

"Good luck to my fellow players! I'll keep in good shape and positive spirit and wait for an opportunity to compete again. See you soon tennis world."

Djokovic's announcement came just 90 minutes before the draw for the final



Slam of the season was made in New York. Organisers announced he would be replaced in the draw by a lucky loser from qualifying.

Stacey Allaster, US Open Tournament Director, regretted the absence of a player who has won 21 Grand Slams,

just one behind the men's record held by Rafael Nadal.

"Novak is a great champion and it is very unfortunate that he will be unable to compete at the 2022 US Open, as he is unable to enter the country due to the federal government's vaccination policy for non-U.S. citizens," Allaster said in a statement.

"We look forward to welcoming Novak back at the 2023 US Open." Tennis legend John McEnroe had blasted the Djokovic ban as a "joke"

"At this point, in the pandemic, we're two and a half years in, I think people in all parts of the world know more about it, and the idea that he can't travel here to play, to me is a joke," said McEnroe. AFP

Punjab Sports Minister  
distributes cash prizes

LAHORE: Punjab Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs Malik Taimoor Masood distributed cash prizes among medal winning athletes of the Pakistan triathlon team that exhibited excellent performance and won five medals in recently-held International Triathlon Games (ITG) in Thailand.

Director General (DG) Sports Punjab Muhammad Tariq Qureshi, Director Admin Syed Omair Hasan, Deputy Director Tariq Wattoo, Secretary Pakistan Modern Pentathlon Federation (PMPF) Zahoor Ahmed were also present at an impressive prize distribution ceremony held at National Hockey Stadium.

Secretary PMPF Zahoor Ahmed gave thorough briefing to Punjab Sports Minister and DG Sports Punjab about the event and the performance of Pakistan players in International Triathlon Games.

Three national athletes Labib Ahmed, Attaullah and M Afnan were given cash prizes of Rs1 lakh each for winning silver medals while Arslan and Mohsin got Rs75,000 each for winning bronze medals in the event. Head coach and manager of the national triathlon team Tariq Ahmad Rashid was given Rs50,000 for his key role in medal-winning performance in ITG.

Speaking on this occasion, sports minister congratulated Pakistan Modern Pentathlon Federation and national triathlon team on winning five medals in the International Triathlon Games. He said that the national team demonstrated wonderful performance in the running, shooting and swimming events of the International Triathlon Games.

The minister said a medal won in any sport belongs to the country and the nation and the medal winner is the true hero of the nation. "We are fully encouraging and supporting the athletes who are winning medals for the country in any sports discipline," he added. APP

PGA Punjab Inter Club Golf  
to get underway

LAHORE: The Twenty Member Golf Teams of four leading golf clubs of Punjab, Lahore Gymkhana, Lahore Garrison Greens Golf Club, Defence Raya Golf Club and Rawalpindi Golf Club, will oppose each other on the 27th and 28th August 2022 in a golfing contest to be battled here at the historic par 72 Lahore Gymkhana Golf Course.



This is a team event and members of each team comprises four most capable amateur golf players, four senior amateurs (above 55 years age ) but in prime playing form, three lady amateurs, three boys falling in age bracket 15-18 years, three boys below 15 years and three girls falling in age group below 21 years.

The Secretary of Punjab Golf Association, Brig (r) Sajid Akram stated that this is the 5th PGA Punjab Inter Club Golf Championship and its outstanding feature is that it engages a mix of top notch golf playing amateurs, highly experienced senior amateurs, competent ladies and dexterous girls and boys in a highly competitive golfing activity. Winning Club Team will reap prize money of Rs 500,000 and a champions trophy while team members will feel graced with gold medals. APP

Herrada escapes to razor-  
edge Vuelta triumph

CISTIENNA: Jesus Herrada of Cofidis won stage seven of the Vuelta a Espana on Friday when an escape group beat the chasing pack over the 190km from Camargo to Cistierna in Castilla and Leon.

The race ended in a razor-edge, five-way dash for the line with Samuele Battistella of Astana coming second and Britain's Fred Wright of Bahrain Victorious in third.

Remco Evenepoel maintained the overall lead as the main contenders took it easy with two major mountain stages coming up over the weekend.

Friday's main challenge was the Puerto de San Glorio climb with 22.4km at 5.5% incline to an altitude of 1600m where some of the sprinters were dropped, allowing the escape to make it home before the pack. The 32-year-old Herrada claimed a second win for Spain on this Vuelta after UAE's Marc Soler won stage five. APP

## U20 men's volleyball c'ship

Pakistan qualifies for knock-  
out stage

KARACHI: Pakistan has qualified for the knock-out stage of Asian U20 men's volleyball championship being played in Riffa, Bahrain.

Pakistan made it to the next stage after winning one out of two games in first round which featured 18 teams, divided in six groups of three each.

The Pakistani side went down 1-3 against China in opening game of the tournament with scores of 25-23, 20-25, 25-16, and 25-17.

But Pakistan made a strong comeback in 2nd match against Taiwan. They fought back from deficit of 0-2 to win the encounter 3-2 with the scores of 20-25, 17-25, 25-19, 25-17 and 15-11.

With win against Taiwan, Pakistan confirmed berth in top 12 which will now play the knock-out phase of the tournament.

Four out of top 12 teams have directly qualified for the quarter final on basis of group stage performance while 8 - including Pakistan - will play play-offs ahead of the quarter final.

Pakistan is slated to play its play-off match against 2nd seeded South Korea on Friday evening in the play-offs. Agencies

Bayern to play Barca in  
UCL group stage

ISTANBUL: Bayern Munich were placed in the same section as Robert Lewandowski's Barcelona in Thursday's draw for the UEFA Champions League group stage in Istanbul, while Erling Haaland will face his former club as Manchester City were paired with Borussia Dortmund.

Bayern and Barcelona will also come up against Inter Milan in Group C, which is completed by the Czech champions Viktoria Plzen.

Bayern beat Barcelona 8-2 in a one-off quarter-final in Lisbon in 2020, while the Catalans also lost 3-0 twice to the Germans last season as they were eliminated in the group stage.

Lewandowski, 34, signed for Barcelona during the close season for a fee that could reach 50 million euros (\$49.9m) after scoring 344 goals in eight years at Bayern. "Only football writes such stories," said Bayern sporting director Hasan.Salihamidzic.

"Barcelona have got stronger. 'Lewy' is there. They've done a thing or two in the transfer market. There will be some exciting games."

Haaland left Dortmund for Premier League champions City in the close season. Those sides will also face Sevilla and Danish champions FC Copenhagen in Group G.

City and Dortmund last met in the Champions League quarter-finals in 2021, with Pep Guardiola's side advancing 4-2 on aggregate. City also beat Sevilla twice in the group stage in 2015/16.