



# Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



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انس رضی اللہ عنہ نے بیان کیا کہ نبی کریم ﷺ نے دو چیزیں میں لوگوں کی قربانی کی ہیں۔ دیکھا کہ نبی کریم ﷺ اپنے پاؤں جانور کے اوپر رکھے ہوئے ہیں اور ہم اللہ والہا کیم پڑھ رہے ہیں۔ اس طرح آپ نے دونوں میں لوگوں کو اپنے ہاتھ سے ذبح کیا۔  
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## National interests more important than politics: Asif

Minister of Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif said that irrespective of political interests, national issues should look in the prism of national dignity and respect. He said Imran Khan's words are for local political consumption, there is no substance in them. Responding on US president recent statement defense minister said, Pakistan nuclear capability was the guarantor for peace in the region.



## Economic stability must for international recognition: Punjab Governor

Punjab Governor and Chancellor Engr. Muhammad Baligh ur Rahman has said that economic stability is necessary to give the country a dignified place in the ranks of nations. In this era of globalization, the role of higher education institutions is of utmost importance for the development of knowledge-based economy.  
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## Election Preparations

KARACHI: Polling agents collect electoral material ahead of a by-election of two National Assembly seats NA-237 (Malir-II) and NA-239 (Korangi-I).



Photo: Online

## COAS briefed on latest operational situation along LoC



Staff Reporter

RAWALPINDI: Army Chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa visited front line troops deployed at Nauseri Sector along the Line of Control on Saturday.

According to the Inter-Services Public Relations, the COAS was briefed on the latest operational situation along the Line of Control, and opera-

tional readiness of the formation.

While interacting with officers and men, the Army Chief appreciated them for continued vigil and operational preparedness.

Earlier, on arrival at the Line of Control, General Qamar Javed Bajwa was received by Commander Rawalpindi Corps Lieutenant General Sahir Shamshad Mirza.

## 'Factually incorrect, misleading'

# PM rejects President Biden's statement

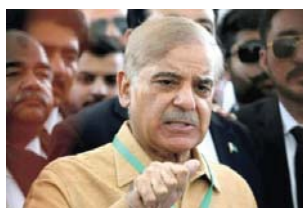
Shehbaz Sharif says over the past decades, Pakistan has proven be a most responsible nuclear state

### Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday said that Pakistan rejected the remarks reportedly made by US President Joe Biden which 'are factually incorrect and misleading'.

"Over the past decades, Pakistan has proven be a most responsible nuclear state, wherein its nuclear programme is managed through a technically sound and foolproof command and control system," a press statement of the PM Office Media Wing quoted the prime minister as saying.

Pakistan had also consistently



demonstrated responsible stewardship of its nuclear-weapons capability, marked by a very strong commitment to global standards, including those of IAEA on non-proliferation, safety, and security, the statement said.

In a separate tweet, the prime minister unequivocally reiterated that Pakistan 'is a responsible nuclear state' and no one should

## PM holds PTI responsible for economic difficulties of people

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Saturday held the previous government of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) responsible for the economic difficulties of the common man and expressed determination to take Pakistan out of economic hardship. Addressing Mufti Mehmood conference here, he said the previous government violated the agreement with International Monetary Fund (IMF),

creating difficult economic situation for his incoming government.

The prime minister said when his coalition partners gave him the responsibility to lead the country as prime minister, Pakistan's economy was in dire straits and the country was on the verge of default. Referring to Imran Khan, he said a person wanted Pakistan to default and become another Sri Lanka.

have any doubts in this regard. The prime minister said that

they were proud that their nuclear assets had the best safeguards

as per requirements of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). "We take these safety measures with the utmost seriousness. Let no one have any doubts," the prime minister further posted in his tweet.

The real threat to the international peace and security was posed by ultra-nationalism, violation of human rights in the regions that were struggling against illegal occupation, violation of global norms by some states, repeated nuclear security incidents and arms race among leading nuclear weapon states and introduction of new security constructs that disturbed the regional balance.

## Govt reduces electricity price by Rs4.25: Marriyum

### Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Saturday said electricity price had been reduced by Rs 4.25 in October on the directives of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

"The prices have been reduced in terms of fuel charges adjustment," she said in a news statement. The minister said it was a "big relief" for the public from PM Shehbaz Sharif.

She said it had been decided to continue the same quarterly adjustment which was charged in the electricity bills for September. The initiative was taken keeping in view the burden of rising prices of electricity on public, she added.

The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority announced the decision regarding fourth quarterly adjustment for the fiscal year 2021-22 on October 14, 2022.

## Pakistan calls for more equitable int'l security edifice

"The build-up of arms in the strategic realm is on the rise"

NEW YORK: Noting that the global arms control order, particularly in nuclear realm, presents a "precarious picture", Pakistan has called for rebuilding a more enduring and equitable international security architecture, as build-up of strategic arms escalates.

"Nuclear disarmament obligations remain largely unfulfilled as evidenced by constant shifting of goalposts towards additional non-proliferation measures," Ambassador Khalil Hashmi told the UN General Assembly's First Committee, which deals with disarmament and international security matters. The integrity of long-standing rules continues to be eroded by carving out exceptions and pursuit of discriminatory policies, said Ambassador Hashmi, who is Pakistan's permanent representative to UN offices in Geneva.

"The build-up of arms in the strategic realm is on the rise," he said at UN Headquarters in New York, adding, "Military capabilities are assuming a force multiplier character due to growing weaponization and integration across nuclear, outer space, cyber, conventional and AI (Artificial Intelligence) domains."

Nuclear dangers were increasing and the prospects of a nuclear war were "back within the realm of possi-

bility". A handful of states seemed determined to perpetuate the status quo to their continued strategic advantage.

Consequently, the Pakistani envoy said that political and military tensions, strategic asymmetries and nuclear dangers are growing.

"Many of these troubling trends are manifest in South Asia where the largest State continues to be a net beneficiary of nuclear exceptionalism and



discrimination in the application of international norms and legality," Ambassador Hashmi said in an obvious reference to India's arms build up. "It (India) remains a recipient of generous supplies of conventional and non-conventional weaponry, technology and platforms," he added.

The Pakistani envoy said that nuclear weapons and their delivery systems no longer existed in isolation, and the need for rebuilding a more enduring and equitable international security architecture was obvious.

Pakistan, he said, remained

committed to the goal of a world free from nuclear weapons in a universal, verifiable and non-discriminatory manner.

That objective could only be advanced via faithful adherence to and implementation of the cardinal principles enshrined in the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, namely, that it was the primary responsibility of militarily significant States to pursue disarmament in an equitable and balanced manner and in a way that ensured that no individual State or group of States obtained advantages over others at any stage, and to achieve undiminished security at the lowest possible level of armaments and military forces.

Towards this end, he said, Pakistan also reiterated its call for the immediate commencement of negotiations on a comprehensive Nuclear Weapons Convention.

Proposals for Negative Security Assurances (NSAs) have been on the Conference on Disarmament (CD) agenda for the longest duration, he said. Pakistan believes that the issue is most ripe for treaty negotiations and has the significant potential to create the necessary environment for confidence-building and easing of tensions. APP

## Rupee continues strong recovery against USD

### ISLAMABAD: The Pakistani Rupee continued upward trend against US dollar during the week ending on October 14 as it gained Rs 1.96 or 0.89% to close at Rs 217.96 on Friday compared to the close of Rs 219.92 on the last working day of previous week.

After hitting the all-time high of Rs 239.71 against the greenback on September 22, 2022, the Pak rupee has showed strong recovery of around 9% and has so far gained Rs 21.75.

The analysts say that the robust gain was due to the sentiments ignited by the return of Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Ishaq Dar, who, after taking over the charge of the ministry, had repeatedly expressed the hope that the rupee value against dollar would come down under Rs 200.

The analysts also pointed out that the retreat of dollar index against the major international currencies also contributed to the strength of Pak rupee.

## Pakistan a responsible N state: Nawaz Sharif

Khurram Dastgir calls Biden's allegations baseless

LONDON: Former prime minister and PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif on Saturday said that Pakistan is a responsible nuclear state.

While reacting to a statement of US President Joe Biden about Pakistan's nuclear program, Nawaz Sharif said Pakistan is perfectly capable of safeguarding its national interest whilst respecting international law and practices. Our nuclear program is in no way a threat to any country, he stressed.

"Like all independent states, Pakistan reserves the right to protect its autonomy, sovereign statehood and territorial integrity."

It merits mention that United States President Joe Biden expressed the belief that Pakistan may be one of the "most dangerous nations in the world" during an address in California while speaking about the changing global geopolitical situation. The US president reasoned that he thought so as Pakistan has "nuclear weapons without cohesion".



Meanwhile, Minister for Power Khurram Dastgir Khan — a senior member of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's cabinet — termed the US president's statement about Pakistan's nuclear programme "baseless".

While answering a question about President Joe Biden's comments regarding Pakistan during a press conference, the former defence minister said, "Pakistan's nuclear command and control system is absolutely safe which has been confirmed by international organisations many times".

He said that the US president's doubts about Pakistan's nukes are "completely wrong and the statement is baseless". Agencies

## Pakistan has most secure nuclear command, control systems: Imran



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman and former prime minister Imran Khan on Saturday said that Pakistan has one of the most secure nuclear command and control systems.

While reacting to a statement of US President Joe Biden about Pakistan's nuclear program, Imran Khan asked Biden that on what information he has reached this unwarranted conclusion on Pakistan's nuclear capability.

Unlike the US which has been involved in wars across the world, when has Pakistan

shown aggression especially post-nuclearisation, he asked

Criticizing the coalition government, PTI Chairman said that Biden's statement shows total failure of govt's foreign policy and its claims of resetting ties with the US. This govt has broken all records for incompetence, he added.

"My greatest worry is that apart from leading us to economic ruin and, with NRO2 for themselves, giving a license to white collar criminals to plunder the country, this govt will also end up completely compromising our national security". Agencies

## Security beefed up

ISLAMABAD: A view of containers placed at Srinagar Highway due to PTI long march, in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

# IMF sympathizes with Pakistan on flood-damages, assures support

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has sympathized with Pakistan for the losses caused by the recent floods across the country and assured of fund's support.

The assurance was made by IMF's Director of the Middle East and Central Asia Department Jihad Azour in his meeting with Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Mohammad Ishaq Dar.

They also discussed the implementation of the IMF programme according to press statement received here Saturday.

Meanwhile, the finance minister also met with United Kingdom's Minister of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), Ms. Vicky Ford and thanked

## Pakistan seeks rescheduling of \$27b bilateral debt: Dar

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Mohammad Ishaq Dar said that Pakistan would seek rescheduling of some \$27 billion worth of non-Paris Club debt largely owed to China, but will not pursue haircuts as part of any restructuring. In an interview with British News Agency, Reuters, the minister ruled out the possibility of a default on Pakistan's debt, an extension of the maturity date on bonds due in December or

her government for financial support and assistance to meet the challenges posed by floods. He also appreciated the trade concessions afforded to Pakistan and other developing countries under the Developing Countries Trading Scheme

a renegotiation of Pakistan's current International Monetary Fund (IMF) program. He said multilateral development banks and international donors have been "quite flexible" with ways to meet Pakistan's external financing needs estimated at about \$32 billion after devastating floods. Some of this may come from reallocating funds from previously approved, slower-disbursing development loans, he added.

(DCTS).

Minister Vicky Ford assured of the United Kingdom's continued support for Pakistan during this difficult period. The two sides discussed ways to further deepen bilateral development cooperation.

Dar led Pakistan's delegation to the high level round table on Pakistan's floods - impact and response, cochaired by Vice President World Bank, Martin Raiser and UK Prime Minister's Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, Nigel Casey.

The round table was attended by all major bilateral and multilateral development partners and donors. Initial findings of Pakistan's post-disaster need assessment jointly prepared by the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, UNDP, European Union and the government of Pakistan were presented in the round table.

In his concluding remarks, Finance Minister emphasized the need to provide adequate support to Pakistan to meet the challenges of recovery and rehabilitation.

The minister had another meeting with Chief Executive Officer Saudi Fund for Development (SFD), Sultan Abdul Rehman Al Murshid during which he conveyed Pakistan's deep gratitude for the support provided by Saudi Arab to Pakistan at all times and welcomed the forthcoming visit of SFD team to Pakistan. CEO SFD assured of SFD's continued support to Pakistan, the statement added.

Meanwhile, United States Assistant Secretaries, Ramin Toloui and Donald Lu called on Finance Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar at Pak Embassy to express solidarity with Pakistan over devastating floods and assure continued US support for Pakistan's relief and recovery efforts. Other issues of mutual interest were also, discussed, the statement added.

# Pakistan's nuclear arsenals in safe hands: FM Bilawal

Says we know how to safeguard our nuclear arsenal

KARACHI: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari said Saturday that Pakistan has decided to summon the US ambassador to the Foreign Office to give him a demarche over President Joe Biden's controversial statement regarding the country's nuclear arsenal safety.

Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari says Pakistan is responsible country and its nuclear arsenals are in safe hands under a strong command and control system.

Addressing a news conference in Karachi on Saturday, he said as far as security and safety of our nuclear assets is concerned, Pakistan meets



each and every international standard in accordance with International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). He said if there is any

question about nuclear safety and security it is about India as recently it accidentally fired a missile into Pakistani territory which is

anniversary of bilateral relations between two countries.

The Foreign Minister said the remarks perhaps were issued in an informal manner at a fund raising event, however, Pakistan will ask for explanation and a demarche may be issued in this regard.

Foreign Minister said no such issue was raised in the recent bilateral engagement between him and the US Secretary of State during his visit to the United States. He hoped that these remarks will not negatively affect the relations between two countries and both will continue to engage positively. Agencies

Warns nation against churning out conspiracy theories

not only irresponsible and unsafe, but raises genuine and serious concerns about the safety of a nuclear capable country.

Bilawal Bhutto said he was surprised by President Biden's remarks and viewed it as exactly the sort of misunderstanding that was being created at a time when both countries are engaged bilaterally and have marked 75th

# Pakistan conveys strong demarche to US envoy

Over US President Biden's unwarranted remarks Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has conveyed a strong demarche to the U.S. Ambassador Donald Blome over the recent remarks made by US President Joe Biden during a Congressional Campaign Committee reception.

In a statement, Foreign Office Spokesperson Asim Ifikhar Ahmad said that Acting Foreign Secretary Jauhar Saleem called in US Ambassador Donald Blome in Islamabad on Saturday and delivered a demarche over the statement by US President.

He said that Pakistan's disappointment and concern was conveyed to the US envoy on the unwarranted remarks, which were not based on ground reality or facts. It was made clear that



Pakistan is a responsible nuclear state and its impeccable steward-

ship of the nuclear program and adherence to global standards and

international best practices was well acknowledged, including by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The spokesperson said that the real threat to international peace and security was posed by violation of global norms by some states, repeated nuclear security incidents without any accountability, and arms race between leading nuclear weapon states and introduction of new security constructs that disturb regional balance. Asim Ifikhar Ahmad said it was essential to maintain the positive trajectory of Pakistan-US relations and the close cooperation between the two sides to build regional and global peace. Agencies

IS No progress on agreements

# MQM-P mulls quitting coalition govt

KARACHI: Following no progress on agreements with PPP, Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan (MQM-P) has started mulling to part ways with the coalition government including other options, a private TV channel reported on Saturday.

In August, MQM had also expressed concerns over the prolonged delay in the implementation of the agreement made with the MQM-P and urged Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to play his role in this critical situation.

According to the party's spokesperson, Convener Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui has directed all senators, ministers and MNAs to reach Karachi on an urgent basis. Sources told Geo News that MQM-P and PPP leadership had agreed on amendments to the local body's bill during a meeting held two days before. In addition, a review meeting was held yesterday between the parties regarding the agreement but no further

progress was made.

Amid delay in the implementation of the agreement, MQM-P has expressed concerns over "zero progress", said the sources.

In March after parting ways with the then PTI government, MQM-P and PPP signed the "Charter of Rights for the people of Sindh" to develop a "long-term partnership" in various domains.

The two parties have signed the agreement to develop a "long-term partnership to ensure harmony amongst people; to promote social justice, and to secure the economic well-being of the people of Sindh, especially of those who are left behind for various reasons".

According to the text of the signed document, the Supreme Court's verdict regarding the local government shall be implemented in letter and spirit within one month with the mutual agreement of PPP and MQM-P. Agencies

# PDM's politics is finished: Sh Rashid

RAWALPINDI: Awami Muslim League Pakistan (AMLP) leader Sheikh Rashid on Saturday said that the politics of Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) has finished and whoever will support it will get themselves dirty.

Taking to Twitter, former Interior Minister Rashid said that PDM cannot stop people from coming out. He added that the masses are already crushed by the burden of prices of electricity, flour and petrol and questioned "who are they going to crush now?"

Rashid also said after the arrival of Finance Minister Ishaq Dar, the foreign exchange reserves have decreased by one billion dollars, the



money of the IMF is running out and there is no help from anywhere, the situation is becoming more serious.

He went on to say that the Finance Minister is missing from his own country, no one his buying his proposals. While also claimed that people from PDM are raising questions and everything will be changed by November. Agencies

# CGGC donates RMB 300,000 for flood victims



BELJING: China Gezhouba Group Company (CGGC), a long-standing partner of Pakistan in hydropower generation, has donated RMB 300,000.00 in Prime Minister's Flood Relief Fund for the relief and rehabilitation of flood victims in Pakistan.

President of CGGC International, Zhang Jun presented the donation cheque to Pakistan Ambassador to China, Moin Ul Haque during a ceremony held at the Embassy.

Sharing his grief and condolences with the bereaved families, President Zhang Jun said his company would continue to support the people of Pakistan in this difficult time.

He expressed his good wishes for Pakistan government's efforts for the

post-flood rehabilitation and infrastructure development in the affected areas.

Speaking on the occasion, Ambassador Moin conveyed sincere gratitude of the government and the people of Pakistan to the company's leadership for the generous assistance.

Recalling that the two countries have always stood together in difficult times, "Chinese assistance to Pakistan for flood victims rehabilitation has once again proven the unique nature of fraternal ties between the two countries", he added.

The ambassador also presented a Certificate of Appreciation to Zhang Jun for the CGGC's generous donation. APP

# PM to announce rehab phase of flood victims on Oct 24: Ahsan

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has emphasized the need for continued support from the international community, in the construction and rehabilitation phase which will be announced formally by the Prime Minister on 24th of this month.

This was expressed by the Minister for Planning Development & Special Initiatives, Professor Ahsan Iqbal, while addressing to a roundtable on joint presentation and the key findings on the Post-Disaster Needs Assessment, organized by the World Bank and the United Kingdom on the sidelines of the WB/IMF annual meetings in the United States. The Minister said that

the international community has generously supported the relief and rescue operations in Pakistan and now the government seeks their further support in the reconstruction and rehabilitation for the flood-affected people.

Professor Ahsan Iqbal highlighted the significance of a comprehensive post-damage and need assessment exercise which was completed in collaboration with the WB, the Asian Development Bank, European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN).

While highlighting the key policy imperatives for resilient and recovery plan he said that several initiatives have been taken which includes building back better, participatory and inclusive recovery

plan and implementation and to prioritize people values. It was also highlighted that the focus of the infrastructure will be climate resilience as the calamity is the biggest threat and Pakistan is the victim.

The minister informed participants that the devastating floods have adversely impacted about 33 million people and inundated 15% of the country, causing major hardships in the provinces of Sindh and Balochistan.

The roundtable was attended by the Minister for Planning Development & Special Initiatives, Finance Minister, Minister of Economic Affairs, Chief Economist, Secretary Planning Commission and other key officials.

# Economic stability must for international recognition: Punjab Governor

18th convocation of Islamia University of Bahawalpur held

**Spokesman Report**

BAHAWALPUR: Punjab Governor and Chancellor Engr. Muhammad Baligh ur Rahman has said that economic stability is necessary to give the country a dignified place in the ranks of nations.



In this era of globalization, the role of higher education institutions is of utmost importance for the development of knowledge-based economy. The Governor Punjab expressed these views while addressing the 18th convocation of the Islamia University of Bahawalpur on Saturday. In the convocation, 1857 students of 2016-20 will be awarded degrees and medals, including 8 PhD, 71 MPhil, 67 gold and 54 silver medalists.

They were awarded the degrees of BS, BSc and MS, MSc. Engr. Muhammad Baligh ur Rahman has said that our educational institutions should produce graduates who have full access to their studies and who have high moral values.

The region of Bahawalpur is full of universal message of peace and love to humanity of Hazrat Khwaja Ghulam Farid. The Islamia University of Bahawalpur is a great asset of the region which was established by Nawab of Bahawalpur to continue the knowledge legacy of the region. On this occa-

sion, at the chancellor's request, all the students stood up and paid tribute to their parents and teachers. The role of Nawab of Bahawalpur in the establishment of Pakistan and its contribution to stability will always be remembered. He asked the students to devote their energies and skills to the country and the nation. High character is important for success. Consortium for the Islamia University of Bahawalpur has done significant work in climate change.

In the recently held Vice Chancellor's Conference in Murree, it was decided that this consortium will be headed by the Islamia University of Bahawalpur. It is a matter of satisfaction that the Islamia University of Bahawalpur is making significant progress in all fields under the leadership of Vice Chancellor Engr.

Prof. Dr. Athar Mahboob and has been included in the 801st to 1000th universities in the world in the Times Higher Education 2023 ranking. High quality of research and teaching in the

university, extraordinary increase in the number of male and female students, initiatives for self-sufficiency, establishment of new departments and faculties, promotions and appointments of teachers are commendable initiatives. Initiatives to activate Seerat Chair and Sir Sadiq Muhammad Khan Chair in the University are very welcome.

The provision of bus service of the Islamia University of Bahawalpur within a radius of 100 kilometers is a commendable initiative for the welfare of students. The Islamia University of Bahawalpur has become the first hepatitis free university in the country. The flood relief campaign and donation provided by the Islamia University of Bahawalpur in recent floods is a very commendable initiative.

Addressing the convocation, Vice Chancellor the Islamia University of Bahawalpur Engr. Prof. Dr. Athar Mahboob welcomed Chancellor Engr. Muhammad Baligh ur Rahman, senior officials, members of parliament, digni-

ties from the city and civil society representatives, media, students and their parents in the 18th convocation. He said that the recent achievements of the Islamia University of Bahawalpur have been clearly revealed by international ranking institutions and Jamia Islamia has emerged as a global university.

At present, 20 thousand male and female students are taking scholarships worth one billion ten crores and flood affected students are also benefiting. Earlier, Governor Punjab Engr. Muhammad Baligh ur Rahman presided over a meeting of senior faculty members and teachers at the Vice Chancellor's office where they were briefed by Dr. Ali Raza on intercropping project, new varieties of cotton and research, IT and other projects. Governor Punjab and Chancellor visited the National Institute of Cotton Center and observed the new types of cotton where Professor Dr. Muhammad Iqbal Bandisha gave a detailed briefing.

The Governor of Punjab also appreciated the beauty and freshness of Baghdad ul Jadeed Campus. On this occasion, a briefing was given on development activities, federal development package, public-private partnership and construction of buildings through university sources.

## Traffic plan for Kalma Chowk underpass remodeling issued



**Spokesman Report**

LAHORE: The technical team of Punjab Central Business District Development Authority also known as Central Business District (CBD Punjab) had a meeting with high officials of Lahore Traffic Police to finalize the traffic diversion plan during the construction of CBD Boulevard and remodeling of Kalma Chowk Underpass.

In the meeting Executive Director Technical PCBDDA, Mr. Riaz Hussain, Director Project Management PCBDDA, Mr. Asif Iqbal and from Lahore Traffic Police Mr. Asif Sadiq SP Traffic, Mr. Muneer Hashmi DSP Gulberg, Mr. Rashid Hayat DSP Model Town, Mr. Azam Chohan DSP Ichra and Mr. Akhlaq Ahmed DSP Defence were present.

The technical team of PCBDDA explained the diversion plan during the construction of CBD Boulevard. In the first phase of construction one side of Main Boulevard will be open for traffic coming from Barkat Market and going towards Liberty Market. Service Lane will be operational for traffic coming from Firdaus Market from Ali Zaib Road for Barkat Market and Ferozpur Road. Traffic coming from model town going towards Liberty will be diverted from Gaddafi Stadium. A clean passage is also suggested in the plan for the residents of Falcon Society.

Executive Director Technical CBD Punjab said that "SP traffic has principally agreed with the traffic diversion plan with minor changes. We will keep the people updated with the changes in the plan as there is any development".

This mega project will be an amenity for the residents of Lahore. The authority has ensured the safety, comfort and hassle-free travel for commuters during construction phases.

## CM Punjab praises women's role in national progress

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Chaudhry Parvez Elahi has said that the role of rural women in the agricultural progress is of great importance adding that progress in the agricultural sector without the participation of rural women is impossible.

In his message on the International Day of Rural Women, the CM said that the rural women play the vital role to increase agricultural production, besides ensuring food security. He said that the important role of women cannot be overlooked in strengthening the rural economy.

He lauded that the rural women by working shoulder-to-shoulder with the men in the fields contribute their significant part in strengthening the rural economy adding that time has come that the rural women should be granted their due rights.

He highlighted that his government is actively working for the progress of rural women and protection of their rights. He maintained that taking steps to bring betterment in the state of affairs of the rural women is his responsibility.

The CM emphasised the need to improve rural infrastructure and services so as to simplify the inclusion of women in the social, political and economic activities.

He underscored the need to pay attention to improve the educational institutions and hospitals in the rural areas. The CM stated that inclusion of rural women is essential in the matters of legislation and decision-making at the local and national level.

## Ceremony to mark White Cane Safety Day held

MULTAN: A ceremony was held at Government Institute for Blind to mark the White Cane Safety Day here on Saturday.

Additional Deputy Commissioner General (ADCG) Mian Rizwan Nazir and Divisional Officer Special Education Mian Muhammad Majid said that visually impaired people were important part of our society.

Punjab government gave special attention to these people and they have also specific quota in government jobs. They further said that the Government Institute for the Blind would be upgraded from middle level to secondary level soon so that the blind students could continue their education.

The renovation work of the institution would also be started soon. The visually impaired children of the institution presented tableaux, sketches and speeches at the end of the ceremony. The white sticks and gifts were distributed among the blind students.

## PFA, PU organise seminar on World Food Day

LAHORE: The Punjab Food Authority (PFA), in collaboration with the Food Sciences Department of the Punjab University, organised a seminar at Faisal Auditorium in connection with World Food Day which will be observed on Sunday (tomorrow).

Punjab Minister for Food Sardar Husnain Bahadur Dreshak participated as a chief guest in the event. PFA Chairman Ali Raza Khakwani, PFA Director General Mudassar Riaz Malik, Motivational Speaker Qasim Ali Shah, Dean of the Agricultural Department, students and people from different walks of life attended the seminar.

On this occasion, Minister for Food urged students to use their full potential honestly in the progress of country after completing the education, because they are assets of Pakistan. He said the role of PFA officers was significant and remarkable in order to bring out positive change in the food sector in a short span of time that could not be disregarded.

PFA chairman addressing the participants said PFA was an exemplary department which had been working round-the-clock without any discrimination and political pressure against the food adulteration mafia.

# Naseerullah Wazir's efforts for dev appreciated

**Adam Khan Wazir**

WANA: Tribal elders said, thanks Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mehmood Khan and MPA PK114 Naseer Ullah Wazir for issuing the notification to divide the tribal district of South Waziristan into two districts.



MPA Naseer Ullah Khan and his father, retired ex-customs collector Naseer Ullah Khan fulfilled their pre-election promise to tribal elders in Wana, there was a wave of happiness among the tribal people's.

In this regard, the tribal elders Malik Ali Muhammad Desi Khel, Malik Faizullah Khandey Khel, Malik Rahmat Ullah Ka Ka Khel and Malik Sayed Ullah Dari Khel Wazir told the media.

That the credit for the government notification to divide South Waziristan into two districts goes to MPA Naseer Ullah Khan Wazir and his father Nasr Ullah Khan retired customs intelligence collector.

It should be noted that MP Naseer Ullah Khan had promised the tribal elders while contesting the election

that he would try his best to divide the district into two parts

There will be separate districts for Wazir, Dottani Suleman Khel, and separate districts for Mehsood and Burki, so that the tussle between Mehsood and Wazir tribals over the distribution of privileges ends

Finally, the provincial government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa issued the official notification of the tribal district of South Waziristan and divided the district into Upper and Lower Waziristan

Now the headquarters of the two districts will be at Spinkai Raghzai in Upper Waziristan and Wana in Lower Waziristan.

The tribal elders said that the problems faced by the

people who have to go to other district tank for minor work will still end after the establishment of the headquarters and all public problems will be addressed at the local level.

It should be remembered that people have to go to tank district 120 km away because the head offices of all the departmental departments of south Waziristan are in tank, even the district head DC sits in tank, while the police chief is also in tank.

After the formation of the two districts, the offices of the Judiciary and all departments will be shifted to their respective headquarters.

MPA Naseerullah Khan really deserves praise for this successful journey spanning three years.

# Pre-exposure Prophylaxis Programme launched

LAHORE: The Health Department of Government of Punjab, in partnership with the United Nations in Pakistan, launched the Pre-exposure Prophylaxis Programme (PrEP) in Lahore yesterday.



PrEP is considered a 'game changer' in the prevention of HIV. Even though it has been more than 10 years since the first evidence of the efficacy of daily oral pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) was published, much of the PrEP scale-up is still highly concentrated in a small number of countries. Health Department, Government of Punjab in partnership with the United Nations in Pakistan, set a precedent in the country by launching community-based- PrEP for key populations and sero-discord-

ant couples. PrEP does not replace condoms but offers an additional HIV prevention choice.

Community-based PrEP dispensation is critical because CBOs working in Punjab have outreach programs and can play a pivotal role in creating awareness and ensuring stigma-free access to PrEP programmes.

With support from UNAIDS along with WHO and UNDP, the Govern-

ment of Pakistan developed guidelines and standard operating procedures for community and health facility-based dispensation of PrEP. The launch event was organized under the leadership of the Director General Health Services of the Health Department Punjab in partnership with UNAIDS, UNDP and WHO. Before the launch event, a training was held with ART Centre staff from around the Punjab province on ensuring

effective and evidence-based PrEP services. Dr. Awias Gohar, Project Director PACP shared that between 2010 and 2020, Pakistan has seen an increase of 84% in new HIV infections and unless we take bold steps today, we will not be able to halt further new infections and PrEP is a step in the right direction.

Addressing the participants, he further emphasized that "PrEP offers a significant strategic opportunity to precision target prevention programmes for key populations. For the administering of PrEP to sero-discordant couples and key populations, formal linkages have been established between ART Centres and the outreach component of the current programme.

# AJK PM seeks full implementation of cybercrime laws

**Abdul Majeed Tahir**

MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Sardar Tanvir Ilyas Khan has said directed the law enforcement authorities to ensure full implementation of cybercrimes and social media laws to bring to justice all those involved in insidious character assassination campaign on social media platforms.

Chairing a high-level meeting on cybercrimes and social media laws here on Saturday the PM directed that work should be done in accordance with international standards in this regard. In order to evolve a comprehensive strategy, he said, "service of SSP rank officers, especially those who have served in FIA should be hired to chalk out a legal framework (laws) to tackle this issue effectively at the state level". The Prime Minister said that work should be done in line with international standards. The Additional IG on the occasion assured the Prime Minister that in the light of his instructions, work on cyber crimes and social media laws would be started without any delay.

During the meeting the prime minister was given a detailed briefing on cybercrimes and the implementation of social media laws in Azad Kashmir.

The meeting was attended by the PM's Principal Secre-



tary Ehsan Khalid Kayani, Additional IG Tahir Qureshi, Commissioner Muzaffarabad Masood ur Rahman, DIG Muzaffarabad Irfan Masood Kashfi and others.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Azad Jammu and Kashmir Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan along with Minister of Education and Education Dewan Ali Chaghatai visited the head office of AJK TEVTA. On the occasion, the PM inspected different sections of the institution and interacted with the students receiving training at the institute.

The Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir also inspected a variety of arts and crafts including Namda, Gabba, Shawls at the display center and expressed satisfaction over the quality and standard of the artefacts.

On this occasion, a briefing was also given to the Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir by the officials of TEVTA Depart-

ment. The Prime Minister appreciated the efforts of the Department of Education and gave instructions for further improvement.

While talking to the staff and students, the Prime Minister said that technical education was the best source of employment. He said that the government would utilize all available resources to make Technical Education, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training Authority a modern institution so that it can provide employment opportunities to unemployed youth by providing them with technical education.

In order to promote Kashmiri handicrafts, the PM said that there was a dire need that display centers should be established at different places wherein products manufactured under the auspices of TEVETA could be displayed. "Kashmiri handicrafts such as Namda, Gabba, Wood Carv-

ing and Shawl weaving should be introduced in Pakistan and other parts of the world", the PM said.

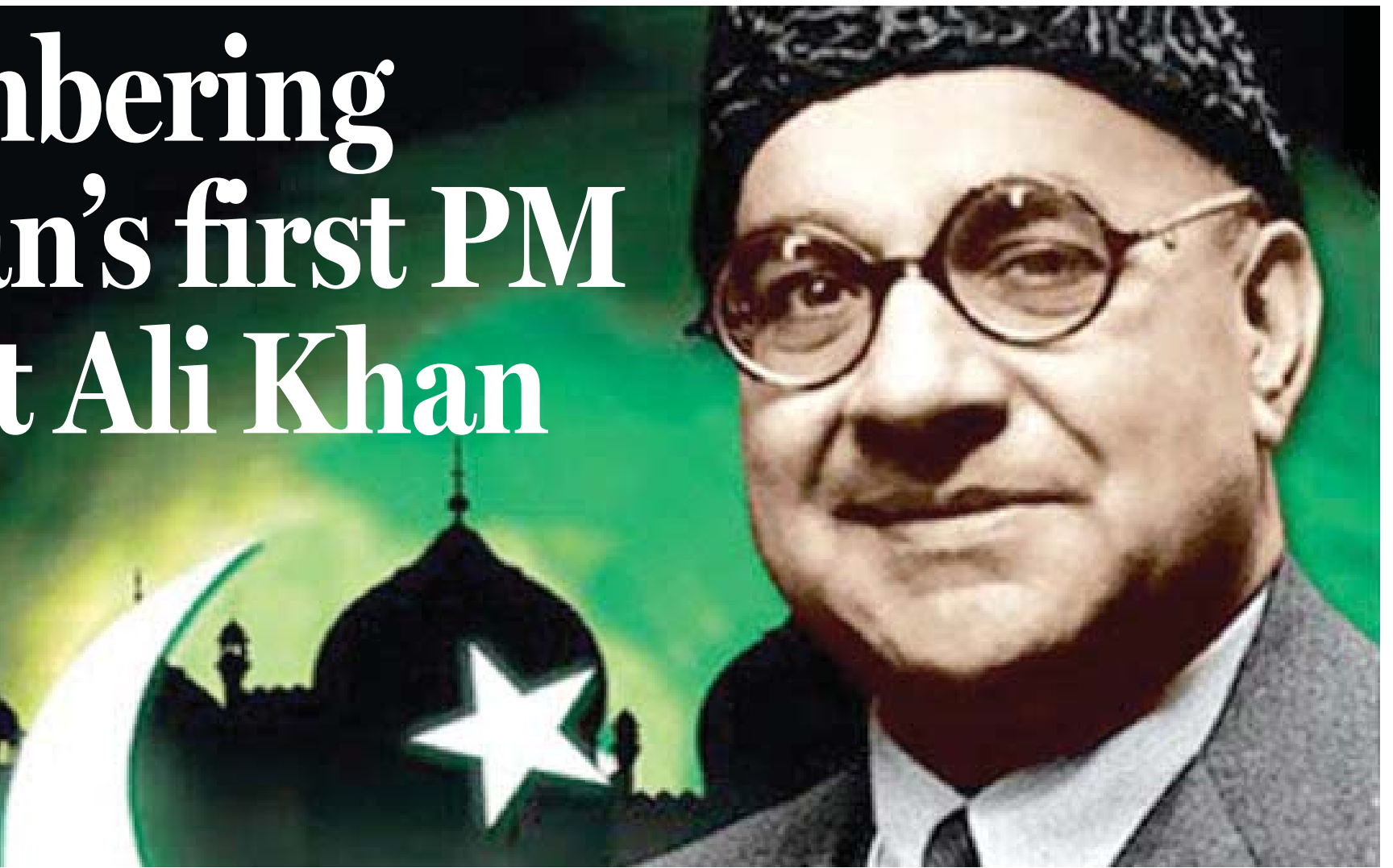
Syed Waris Gilani, Laiba Kausar, Shamaila Haider and others leaders were also present. Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Sardar Tanvir Ilyas Khan has said directed the law enforcement authorities to ensure full implementation of cybercrimes and social media laws to bring to justice all those involved in insidious character assassination campaign on social media platforms.

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# Remembering Pakistan's first PM Liaquat Ali Khan



## The mystery that shrouds Liaquat Ali Khan's murder

**Akhtar Balouch**

On October 16, 1951, Pakistan's first prime minister Liaquat Ali Khan was assassinated in Rawalpindi's Company Bagh (also known as East India Company Garden) during a public meeting of the Muslim City League.

He was a close aide to the founder of Pakistan, Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, and it was during his rule that religious parties begin to take foothold in Pakistan.

To thwart their designs, Liaquat Ali Khan had introduced the Objective Resolution in the Constituent Assembly. Apparently it was aimed at checking the influence of religious groups, but Khan's detractors would say that the resolution, instead of erecting a barrier, provided religious parties with a constitutional base to impose their ideologies on the rest of Pakistan.

The same Objective Resolution was later made part of the country's Constitution by military ruler General Ziaul Haq to enforce his self-conceived version of Islam.

After Liaquat Ali Khan's murder, the Company Bagh was renamed as Liaquat Garden.

Exactly 55 years later, in this very Liaquat Garden, another prime minister, Benazir Bhutto, was to be assassinated.

### Liaquat's 'Afghan' assassin

In his book, "The American Role in Pakistan", M. S. Venkataramani writes that a single bullet from Liaquat Ali Khan's assassin proved to be the catalyst of change. Pakistani officials quickly declared that the assassin Said Akbar was an Afghan national.

An Afghan government spokesman insisted that Akbar had already been stripped of his Afghan citizenship for his anti-national activities and that the British rulers of pre-partitioned India had given him refuge in the North Western Frontier Province (now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa). Soon it was revealed that the Pakistani government continued to pay Said Akbar his welfare allowance as determined by the English masters of the sub-continent.

The New York Times ran an Associated Press story which quoted Pakistani officials as saying that Said Akbar, the Afghan national who had assassinated the prime minister, had been receiving a monthly allowance of Rs450 (USD 155) from the government of Pakistan.

It is an undisputed fact that Liaquat's assassin Said Akbar was sitting in front of the stage in a row of chairs designated for the Crime Investigation Department (CID) police officers. The place he had positioned himself in allowed him to target Liaquat Ali Khan.

### How did he get there?

It is a question that remains unanswered and a subject of speculation even after 55 years. Akbar was shot dead by police at the same spot, minutes after he had assassinated the prime minister; his death deepened the mystery surrounding this high-profile murder.

The New York Times reported that moments after Akbar had fired two shots, people sitting nearby pounced at him and dismembered him; he was also shot at, and at least one bullet was fired by a police officer, who later testified that he was ordered to shoot the assassin by a senior police official.

By killing Said Akbar, instead of arresting him, police officers eliminated a crucial piece of evidence; similarly, when Benazir Bhutto was assassinated in 2007 as she left Liaquat Garden after a public gathering, Rawalpindi's Fire Department was quick to wash the crime scene, depriving investigators of important evidence. It placed another question mark on the country's history

of unsolved assassination cases.

### Recalling Liaquat's Soviet invitation

Liaquat Ali Khan is often accused of initiating the policy of Pakistan's tilt towards the United States by preferring Washington DC over Moscow for his first state visit. He is also accused of rejecting the Soviet invitation. Historical evidence, however, suggests that it was Quaid-i-Azam who had decided that Pakistan would join the American — rather than Russian — block. He had made up his mind even before partition.

Dennis Kux, a former State Department South Asia specialist, writes on pages 12-13 of his book:

"The United States and Pakistan 1997-2000" that US Diplomat Raymond Hare met Jinnah in May 1947 in New Delhi and asked him about Pakistan's future foreign policy.

Responding to Hare's query, writes Kux, Jinnah said that, "Pakistan would be oriented toward Muslim countries of the Middle East. Since they were weak, Muslim countries would stand together against possible Russian aggression and would look to the US for assistance." The Muslim League leader said that although he did not personally share the view, most Indian Muslims thought the United States was unfriendly. They had the impression that the US press and many Americans were against Pakistan.

Jinnah grew more suspicious of the Russians after the Partition; his mistrust of a super power next door would be discussed later, first let's examine the charge against Liaquat Ali Khan — that he had snubbed the Russian invitation.

Contrary to this popular belief, he was, in fact, never invited by the Russians in the first place; instead, the invitation was extracted by Pakistan with some diplomatic manoeuvres.

In 1949, US President Truman had invited Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru on a state visit to Washington DC. It irked the Pakistani prime minister, who was known for his pro-West policies, because instead of inviting a proven ally, Washington had bestowed the honour of state visit on Nehru, who was perceived to be a socialist and communist leader.

To soothe Liaquat Ali Khan's hurt pride, Raja Ghazanfar Khan, a senior Muslim League leader, came up with an alternative.

Raja Ghazanfar was Pakistan's ambassador to Iran, and enjoyed a warm relationship with a Russian diplomat. He threw a dinner party, where the Russian diplomat Ali Alvi and Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan met.

The prime minister expressed his desire to visit Moscow. On 2nd June 1949, Liaquat Ali Khan received an invitation from the Soviet Union which he duly accepted after five days. Now, he was all set to visit Moscow.

But Pakistan's pro-West bureaucracy was unhappy with the proposition.

Americans and British, too, were not pleased. The United States was tolerant enough to not to voice its anger, but the British were unequivocal in their show of displeasure.

The British High Commissioner in Karachi, Sir Laurence Graffey-Smith, warned Pakistani Foreign Minister Sir Zafarullah Khan that the upcoming visit to Moscow would be seen with mistrust by American and British populations.

Finally, the visit was cancelled. The popular belief that Liaquat Ali Khan had received both Soviet and American invitations at the same time, and that he had snubbed the Russians is wrong. Liaquat Ali Khan had extracted the invitation from Moscow, and when the visit was cancelled, it was not solely his decision.

Dennis Kux writes on page 33 in his



book: "After Pakistan initially suggested that Liaquat arrive in Moscow on August 20, 1949, the Soviets proposed that he get there on August 15. Pakistanis countered that this was physically impossible because the prime minister had to be present on Pakistan's Independence Day celebration the day before, on August 14.

The Soviets then suggested a two-month delay and eventually agreed to an early November arrival date. They also insisted on having resident envoys in place before the visit, but delayed giving agrément (sic) for the Pakistani ambassador until October 28 and failed to nominate a Soviet envoy to Pakistan.

By the end of October 1949, a perplexed foreign secretary Ikramullah confided to British high commissioner Graffey-Smith that Moscow was dragging its feet on the trip and had even allowed the prime minister's passport to languish three weeks at the Soviet Embassy in New Delhi."

Kux's account suggest that Liaquat Ali Khan had a genuine desire to visit the Soviet Union, but Soviet officials had set an arrival date that was impossible to follow for the Pakistani prime minister.

After the Partition, Russians had aligned themselves with India and understood that she would be their nature ally. It is also possible that Indian officials were involved in the delay of the visit, which was eventually cancelled.

### Pak-US friendship

Liaquat Ali Khan had inherited a pro-America policy from Jinnah, who never hesitated to reach out to the United States. On 5 October 1947, his personal envoy Laik Ali had presented a communiqué to American officials, requesting a loan for Pakistan.

Liaquat Ali Khan meets US President Harry S. Truman. — Photo courtesy: Wikipedia Commons Liaquat Ali Khan meets US President Harry S. Truman. — Photo courtesy: Wikipedia Commons

M. S. Venkataramani writes in his book, "The American Role in Pakistan, 1947-1958" that Laik Ali presented two other documents to the US Department of State outlining Pakistan's needs.

The documents said Pakistan required USD700 million for industrial development, USD700 million for agricultural development, and USD 510 million to boost its defence. In total, a five-year loan of around 2 billion dollars

Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan expressed his desire to visit Moscow. On 2nd June 1949, Liaquat Ali Khan received an invitation from the Soviet Union which he duly accepted after five days. Now, he was all set to visit Moscow. But Pakistan's pro-West bureaucracy was unhappy with the proposition. Americans and British, too, were not pleased. Finally, the visit was cancelled.

was requested by Pakistan.

It is clear that Liaquat Ali Khan had not laid the foundation stone for the "Pak-US friendship", and that the process had begun before Partition under Quaid-i-Azam, who speeded it up after independence.

In the early months after Pakistan came into being, Liaquat Ali Khan was overshadowed by a very powerful Governor-General Muhammad Ali Jinnah, who would preside over the cabinet meetings and make most of the decisions.

### Liaquat's political insecurity

Pakistan, under Liaquat Ali Khan, failed to draft its Constitution. The first prime minister also experienced political insecurity. He was fully aware that his contemporaries such as Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy enjoyed popular support. He was extremely careful in the selection of his staff, effectively excluding anyone who had both Indian and Pakistani citizenship, though he himself had migrated from India to Pakistan.

In Pakistan Ke Pehle Saat Wuzra-E-Azam (The First Seven Prime Ministers of Pakistan), Naem Ahmed et al. write on pages 39-40:

"The prime minister was extremely careful in the selection of his staff. When the workload increased, he added another member to his staff to work as his deputy private secretary. The officer was selected on the basis of his place of birth. The prime minister was presented with three names, out of which he chose Mian Manzoor Ahmed which he hailed from East Punjab. The other two hailed from UP (in India) and their relatives still lived in UP. The decision did not spring from any regional bias; there was a good justification behind it. Since Pakistan had newly come into being and the prime minister's office contained classified and important

documents, a man with the least possible connection to India was preferred, because officers with relatives in India were deemed as divided Pakistanis, or the ones sailing two boats at the same time. There was a possibility that Indian agents could easily buy their loyalties."

Liaquat Ali Khan is accused of favouring Muhajirs (people who migrated from India to Pakistan) but the above example shows that as prime minister of the country, he was not willing to trust anyone whose relatives still lived in India after the Partition.

Bringing religion into politics As discussed earlier, Liaquat is blamed for introducing religion into politics, but he purged his office from people with links to religious groups.

Naem Ahmed et al. have recounted one such episode on pages 19-20 in their book: "In the Prime Minister Branch, a clerk named Rehmat Elahi was tasked with book-keeping. He was a very serious and tacit man. He had worked for a few months, when an intelligence report revealed his affiliation with Jamat-e-Islami. The man was asked to disown his link with Jamat-e-Islami and assured that by doing so he would be able to keep his job. But he was a very brave man. He countered that a similar report had led to his dismissal from the army which he had joined as commissioned officer. 'I am only a clerk here,' he said. 'I can't tell lies.' Eventually Rehmat Elahi tendered his resignation. It was the same Rehmat Elahi who is now ranked among the top activists of Jamaat-e-Islami. Under General Ziaul Haq's military rule, he briefly served as minister for power and water."

### Unsolved assassination

From Liaquat Ali Khan to Benazir Bhutto, Pakistan has a history of unsolved assassinations. In Liaquat Ali Khan's case, the officer investigating his

murder and vital documentary evidence met their demise in an air crash.

Syed Noor Ahmed in his book, "Martial Law Sey Martial Law Tak (From Martial Law to Martial Law)" details the circumstances of the air crash. He writes on pages 396-7:

"Nawabzada Aitzazuddin, who was travelling to meet Prime Minister Khawaja Nazimuddin having been summoned by him and who was carrying important documents about the investigation of this case, was killed in an air crash. The aeroplane crashed near Jhelum after developing a mechanical fault, which started a fire onboard, and all the passengers, their luggage (including documents on Liaquat Ali Khan's assassination) were burnt. After Liaquat Ali Khan's assassination, when a new cabinet was formed, Nawab Mushtaq Ahmad Gurmani, who was minister for Kashmir affairs in the old cabinet, became the country's new interior minister. When an investigation into the assassination was initiated, Gurmani came under sharp criticism. To ward off the censure, he, after much delay, sought help from the Scotland Yard, hiring an experienced investigator to solve the case. But this was only an attempt to save face. The motives behind Liaquat's murder would never come to light."

Then, a strange revelation was made. In February 1958, a defamation suite Gurmani vs Z.A. Suleri was being heard by a Lahore High Court bench. The court wanted to see an investigation file about Liaquat Ali Khan's assassination. The Attorney General, who was present in the courtroom, was asked if it was possible to present the file in the court; he promised to supply all the necessary information by Feb 25. When the Attorney General failed to live up to his promise, the court sent him a letter, to which he replied that the Chief Secretary West Pakistan was holding the file.

The court issued a summon, and on March 1, 1958, an Additional Advocate General testified that the file had gone missing, and that a search was underway. On March 8, a CID officer informed the court that the government was unable to locate the file and, hence, unable to present it in the court.

Liaquat Ali Khan's assassination was met with a somewhat mute response from the country's other politicians.

Ayub Khan, in his autobiography, "Friends Not Masters" writes on page 41: "When I returned to Pakistan, I met several members of the new Cabinet in Karachi — Prime Minister Khawaja Nazimuddin, Chaudhri Mohammad Ali, Mushtaq Ahmad Gurmani and others. Not one of them mentioned Liaquat Ali Khan's name, nor did I hear a word of sympathy or regret from any one of them. Governor-General Ghulam Mohammad seemed equally unaware of the fact that the country had lost an eminent and capable Prime Minister through the fell act of an assassin. I wondered how callous, cold-blooded, and selfish people could be. It seemed that every one of them had got himself promoted in one way or another. The termination of the Prime Minister's life had come as the beginning of a new career for them. It was disgusting and revolting. It may be a harsh thing to say, but I got the distinct impression that they were all feeling relieved that the only person who might have kept them under control had disappeared from the scene."

Akhtar Balouch was a senior journalist, writer and researcher. He was a council member of the HRCP. Sociology was his primary domain of expertise, on which he had published several books. He died on 13 July 2022 in Karachi.

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# GCC leads the way in Ukraine war mediation efforts

**Dr. Diana Galeeva**

The eight-month-long war in Ukraine has been escalated recently by Russia's annexation of four regions, Ukraine's apparent response of blowing up a key bridge to Crimea as a countermeasure, Russia's missile attacks on Kyiv and other cities. Both sides have closed their doors to negotiations, so the role of mediators is critical.

In these circumstances, the visit of UAE President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan to Russia this week was particularly promising. As professor of political science Abdulkhaleq Abdulla tweeted: "UAE President is the only world leader that can talk to President Putin to stop the drift to nuclear confrontation. He is doing it for peace, for Europe and for all of us. This is why he is (in) Moscow. It is consistent with UAE's role as a peacemaker regionally and globally."

There is substance to the words of Abdulla. Firstly, since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February, the UAE has kept a

balanced stance over the war. Abu Dhabi's election to the UN Security Council for 2022-2023 has been instrumental in this regard, as demonstrated by the UAE's voting record. In March, the UAE abstained on a vote condemning Russia's invasion, but it was one of 10 states on the 15-member UNSC to vote in favor of the text of a US-backed resolution condemning "illegal" Russian referendums conducted in Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia.

Moreover, prior to February, relations between Russia and the UAE were solid. In 2020 alone, the UAE increased its trade with Russia by 78 percent year on year. Arguably, Western sanctions and the insecurity generated by the Ukraine war also boosted relations. For example, Russian property purchases in Dubai surged by 67 percent in the first three months of 2022. The UAE has strengthened its position as the most important Arab destination for Russian investments (involving more than 4,000 companies) and it is the largest Arab investor in Russia.

While Sheikh Mohammed has maintained a dialogue with

Putin, he also discussed peaceful solutions through dialogue and negotiations with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky several times in March.

At the same time as news of the meeting between Putin and Sheikh Mohammed began to circulate on Monday, the media also reported on a phone call between Zelensky and Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani. The president of Ukraine stated that he: "Thanked (Sheikh Tamim) for the resolute support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. Discussed further joint steps within the UN and other international platforms." This represents an attempt by another Gulf leader to complete a peacemaking mission. This niche is not new for Qatar, which mediated in several conflicts between 2000 and 2011, including those in Yemen, Lebanon, Sudan, Palestine, Eritrea and Djibouti, while also being actively involved in the Afghan peace process.

Another member of the GCC family, Saudi Arabia, was last month involved in a successful prisoner exchange deal between Russia and Ukraine, alongside Turkey. This initiative report-

edly came from Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the new prime minister of the Kingdom, and dates back to April. This followed previous peace initiatives in being discreet, but differed to the Kingdom's initiatives in Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine and Afghanistan, which were less personal in nature.

To sum up, mediation attempts have always been an effective tool in international diplomacy, especially by small and middle-sized powers. By acting as effective policy entrepreneurs, small states can emerge as a leader or expert in a particular issue. Norway is a striking example here for adopting conflict mediation as its niche diplomacy. With the Gulf states' experience in previous mediation efforts and their existing constructive relationships with the parties involved, developing such niche mediation diplomacy may assist in finding resolutions to at least some aspects of this devastating war and breaking the cycle of violence.

Furthermore, international relations are in a very chaotic and challenging state. Long-term planning is required, but the circumstances require

international leaders to think deeply while acting quickly. Swift policies, especially those stressing mediation and peace-building, will contribute to the development of Gulf Cooperation Council state branding, while also demonstrating once again that the modern world requires soft power initiatives, rather than hard power. Bringing both parties together to end this war might create new challenges, but the stakes are also high — saving the world from the potential nuclear threat, saving millions of civilians and bringing security, with the role of soft power uniting rather than destroying.

*Dr. Diana Galeeva was an academic visitor to St. Antony's College, Oxford University (2019-2022). She is the author of two books: "Qatar: The Practice of Rented Power" (Routledge, 2022) and "Russia and the GCC: The Case of Tatarstan's Paradiplomacy" (I.B. Tauris/Bloomsbury, 2023). She is also a co-editor of the collection "Post-Brexit Europe and UK: Policy Challenges Towards Iran and the GCC States" (Palgrave Macmillan, 2021). Courtesy: Arab News*

## Roadmap for stabilization of economy

At this point of time, we are out of danger of default. The incumbent government took difficult and unpopular decisions to save the economy from further sinking. We need a long term roadmap for stabilization of economy, which we unfortunately are not seeing at the moment. We need to enhance our productivity in different sectors. The government's focus is on short term measures which are further complicating the situation. All successive governments have been encouraging real estate sector which is not productive for the economy. The government must focus on developing the small, medium and large industries as they are the backbone of any economy. The bureaucratic hurdles in Pakistan are a stumbling block in the way of foreign investment into the country. Things need to be facilitated for investors and businessmen.

The finance minister Ishaq Dar is giving new confidence to the donor agencies. The rupee is gradually gaining strength against the dollar. This is an indicator that the rupee was unduly devalued. It is only happening in Pakistan that the dollar is weakening against our currency. The Finance Minister in his visit to the United States is holding fruitful meetings with international financial institutions, including the IMF, the World Bank and Islamic Development Bank. The friendly countries are also supporting Pakistan. For example, Saudi Arabia rolled over 3 billion dollars two weeks ago, resulting in an increase in the foreign exchange reserves. Another good development is that the government is curtailing imports. The import of luxury items is allowed subject to 30-40% regulatory duty. We are still importing cooking oil, petroleum products and grains. Finance Minister is against the import of furnace oil and is focusing on renewable energy resources, including wind, solar, coal and others for power generation. Our exports are around 30 billion dollars whereas the imports are around 80 billion dollars. That means there is a trade deficit of 50 billion dollars that needs to be brought down.

After assuming the portfolio of Finance Minister by Ishaq Dar, there is visible change in economy. The value of dollar against rupee is on decline as some speculators were trying to hike the US currency artificially. In addition, the Finance Minister has taken steps to provide more relief to the people by reducing the prices of petroleum products. During his current visit to the US, the finance minister is trying to get rescheduling of Pakistan's external debt, as the government is grappling with the aftermath of devastating floods in the country. These positive indicators will help support the economy. The gap between government and public is gradually being bridged. Some elements from the opposition are making speculations regarding the state of economy and are doing disservice to Pakistan. The biggest challenge for the current government is inflation and the impacts of floods.



## The stabilising effect of inflation

**Daniel Gros**

Central banks are busy tightening monetary policy as quickly as they can. Even the usually careful European Central Bank just increased its key interest rate by an unprecedented 75 basis points, matching an earlier move by the US Federal Reserve. Financial markets have reacted to these actions as one would expect, with stock markets and long-term-bond prices both tumbling. But none of this means that a financial crisis is imminent.

One might conclude the opposite, given the cocktail of war in Ukraine, exploding energy prices, and soaring inflation, especially because debt levels are much higher today than they were on the eve of the last financial crisis. In the United States, the total debt of non-financial corporations has doubled over the last decade, reaching \$12tn, and gross national debt has just surpassed \$31tn for the first time.

The US is hardly alone. Because of the Covid-19 recession, public debt has increased almost everywhere, with the advanced-economy average having grown by 20 percentage points, to over 120% of GDP.

The preconditions for a financial crisis are thus fulfilled. Yet, so far, market volatility has been limited. Why is this time different?

In 2007, borrowers were hit by the double whammy of an increase in risk premia (which made it very difficult to re-finance debt) and low inflation (which reduced the income of debtors, impeding debt service and validating creditors' risk aversion). Today, by contrast, inflation has risen rapidly, reducing the real value of debt.

If the price level increases by 15%, the real value of the debt held by a country with a debt-to-GDP ratio of 120% would fall by about 18 percentage points of GDP, offset-

ting nearly all of the 20-point increase caused by the pandemic. This is an entirely plausible scenario: inflation already is running at 10% in the US and the eurozone, and prices are expected to increase by another 5% next year. While the gain for governments is a loss for savers, who bought long-term government bonds at rock-bottom interest rates over the last decade, little can be done to offset this.

It also helps that, despite recent central-bank actions, inflation remains much higher than interest rates. Even after the tightening that markets have already priced in, governments and firms can issue new debt at negative real rates. This makes a new debt crisis, like the one that gripped the eurozone in 2009, unlikely.

The sustainability of public finances depends significantly on the so-called snowball effect: when interest costs exceed nominal GDP growth, the debt ratio rises (and vice versa). For Italy, interest costs exceeded nominal GDP growth by seven percentage points of GDP at the height of the euro crisis in 2012, and by 5.7 points in 2013. This made it almost impossible to reduce the debt-to-GDP ratio.

Today, nominal growth is expected to remain 4.5 percentage points higher than interest costs, thanks to inflation. This will help to reduce the debt ratio. In fact, the difference between nominal growth and interest costs has not been so favourable at any other time in recent memory.

This goes a long way toward explaining why financial markets are not in crisis mode. But that does not mean that they are not nervous. Recent market ructions in the United Kingdom are a case in point.

At first glance, the financial-market turmoil triggered by the UK government's proposal of unfunded tax cuts might be surprising. After all, this is an AA-rated country with a large but manageable public debt that would not be rendered unsustainable by a couple of years of high deficits. But doubts about debt

sustainability were not the problem.

UK pension funds had invested in derivatives, in order to avoid exposure to wild swings in the price of government bonds. But the derivative contracts demand collateral. When asset prices slumped, the amount of collateral pension funds needed to offset their liabilities increased, forcing them to sell off assets (gilts) and raise cash. This drove down prices – and increased the need for collateral – still further.

But UK financial turmoil reflected a temporary liquidity problem, which the Bank of England brought under control with a new bond-buying program. It was not a harbinger of a broader crisis. Its trigger was specific to the British financial market – in particular, pension funds' hedging strategies.

Nonetheless, the upheaval holds important lessons. First, financial markets are complex systems, prone to unpredictable crises. Second, central banks have rendered the market for government debt less resilient by becoming the biggest buyers of government bonds and displacing investors who could help stabilise the system. Still, financial-market instability does not seem to be a serious concern at the moment.

But this does not guarantee smooth sailing ahead. While highly indebted countries like Italy and the US have benefited handsomely from surprise inflation, debt risks have not gone away. These countries should take their inflation windfall as an opportunity to reduce their debts further. Then again, if these countries had political systems that produced that kind of forward-thinking action, debt would not have reached such high levels in the first place. The only way to achieve long-term stability is to ensure that this time is different for policymakers, too. – Project Syndicate

*Daniel Gros is a member of the board and a distinguished fellow at the Centre for European Policy Studies. Courtesy: Gulf Times*

## CPC's 20th Congress-a way forward to achieve new heights

The 20th National Congress of Communist Party of China (CPC) will start their landmark meeting on 16 October at Great Hall of the Peoples in Beijing.

The Eyes of global mass media is on this China's supreme body meeting which will describes & decide the next five year planning of People's Republic of China. The most interesting thing about 20th CPC Congress is the meeting will also decide the 3rd term of the President of China.

According to the Chinese constitution President maximum tenure is consecutively for ten years, which means 2 terms. President Xi Jinping's terms in Office of the President of China is going to completed in March 2023. Now, there is a debate in Chinese Congress members and political leaders, if congress removed the above conditions then, Xi Jinping will be the first President after Chairman Mao who will lead CPC, an China for long a period.

The world media specially Western media observing this situation very closely and also propagating against the China's government system with reference of one party system with reference to their so call theories and overlooking the fruits and benefits of China's system of Government and their success in recent past as compared with their forms of Governments. President Xi Jinping's third term is very important and will able him to play its leading role in further development and strengthening the China's economy and BRI, AIIB, SCO and related very important matters. The speedy economic growth of China and bringing out from poverty during recent decade of President Xi Jinping is not acceptable to western world.

It is quite evident that for the first time in modern history of the world, China is leading at the global stage for sharing the furits of prosperity and working for visionary programmes like BRI, established AIIB, activate SCO form to link the whole world. Now at

least 150, countries and leading organisations already signed BRI initiative of China's millennium goals. There I would like to raise a positive point; if the western world wants stability they should try to engage China in economic partnership rather to oppose that great ability of China. China's these initiative is converting World in to a global Village.

CPC's more than century dedicated and devoted role in China is behind all the massive achievements and developments, it is the communist party that plays a vital role under the visionary leadership of Xi Jinping which took China enlightened in socio-

economic, geo-economics, scientific and space developments, due to these efforts and continuity of the developmental process in China they want President Xi Jinping for third term. But, this all depend on debat and then approval of 20th CPC Congress.

In the 20th congress of CPC, about 2,300 party members form across the country will, gathered. The delegates will elect about 200 full members with voting rights to the party's elite central committee, plus about 170 alternates, drawing form a pre-selected pool.

According to the chimes newspapers, the new central committee's first plenum, held the day after congress ends, will select for its ranks 25 member for the supreme body, politburo that will form the politburo standing committee, the party top echelon seven members. The congress will select top new leadership team and the congress will also reshuffle the top China's power structure, putting in place that will set policy for economic, diplomatic, security and social matters for next five years even targets for ahead. We hope that congress will be successful that would play great role in prosperity, socioeconomic developments of People's Republic of China.

*The writer is Secretary General Pakistan China Friendship Association Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He can be reached at Syeed.gilani@gmail.com*



**Syed ALI Nawaz Gilani**

# Russia hits power site by Kyiv, defends seized land

Ukraine military chief says 'initiative in our hands'

KYIV: A missile strike seriously damaged a key energy facility in Ukraine's capital region, the country's grid operator said Saturday as the Russian military strove to cut power in far-flung populated areas while also defending against Ukrainian counterattacks in occupied regions.



Kyiv region Gov. Oleksiy Kuleba said the strike on the unidentified facility did not kill or wound anyone. Electricity transmission company Ukrenergo said repair crews were working to restore electricity service but warned residents about further possible outages.

After a truck bomb explosion a week ago damaged the bridge that links Russia to the annexed Crimean Peninsula, the Kremlin launched what is believed to be its largest coordinated missile attacks in Ukraine since the initial invasion of the country in late February.

This week's wide-ranging retaliatory attacks, which included the use of self-destructing explosive drones from Iran, killed dozens of people. The strikes hit residential buildings as well as civil infrastructure such as power stations in Kyiv, Lviv in western Ukraine, and other

cities that had seen comparatively few strikes in recent months.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said Friday that Moscow did not see a need for additional massive strikes but his military would continue selective ones. He said that, of 29 targets the Russian military planned to knock out in this week's attacks, seven weren't damaged and would be taken out gradually.

The Institute for the Study of War, a

think tank based in Washington, interpreted Putin's remarks as intended to counter criticism from pro-war Russian bloggers who "largely praised the resumption of strikes against Ukrainian cities but warned that a short campaign would be ineffective."

"Putin knew he would not be able to sustain high-intensity missile strikes for a long time due to a dwindling arsenal of high-precision missiles," the think tank said.

Russian diplomat Konstantin Vorontsov said at Friday's meeting of a United Nations General Assembly committee dealing with arms control that Russia would provide its ally Belarus with Iskander-M short-range missiles that could carry a nuclear or a conventional warhead, and modernize some of Belarus' Su-25 ground attack jets for carrying nuclear weapons.

Vorontsov explained the move by citing Moscow's concern about the possibility of the deployment of U.S. nuclear weapons in Poland near the borders of Belarus and Russia.

He emphasized that in compliance with the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Russia had no intention for now of fitting nuclear warheads to Belarusian weapons systems or transferring nuclear warheads to the territory of Belarus.

Regions of southern Ukraine that Putin illegally designated as Russian territory last month remained a focus of fighting Saturday. Ukrainian forces pressed on with a campaign to recapture the mostly Russian-occupied Kherson region.

## Turkish mine blast death toll rises to 41



BARTIN: The death toll after an explosion in a coal mine in Turkey's northern Bartın province on Friday has reached 41, Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said on Saturday.

Earlier, Interior Minister Süleyman Soylu said 58 of the 110 people working in the mine when the blast occurred were rescued by the teams or got out by themselves.

Soylu also said one miner was discharged from hospital while 10 were still receiving treatment in Bartın and İstanbul.

Authorities said Turkish prosecutors have launched an investigation into the cause of the incident but initial indications were that the blast was caused by fire damp, a term referring to methane in coal mines.

Energy Minister Fatih Donmez said a fire in the mine was largely contained but fire isolation and cooling efforts were continuing after the incident that took place 350 metres (0.2 miles) below ground. In 2014, 301 workers were killed in Turkey's worst ever mining disaster in the western town of Soma, 350 kms (217 miles) south of İstanbul.

## German chancellor calls for EU reforms, military autonomy

BERLIN: German Chancellor Olaf Scholz on Saturday called for reforms of the European Union to make it fit for the admission of new countries as well as more military autonomy of the 27-country bloc.

Speaking at the Congress of the Party of European Socialists in Berlin, Scholz advocated for gradually abolishing the principle of unanimity for decisions in foreign policy, but also in other areas such as tax policy.

"I know that we still have a lot of convincing to do there," the chancellor said. "But I also say clearly: if a geopolitical Europe is our aspiration, then majority decisions are a gain and not a loss of sovereignty."

Currently, many EU decisions can only be made if all countries vote unanimously. Scholz also supports more military autonomy of the EU. He called for coordinated procurement of weapons and equipment, the establishment of an EU rapid reaction force by 2025, and a EU headquarters for European armed forces.

"In Europe, we need better interplay between our defense efforts," he said. "In the future, Europe will need a coordinated increase in capabilities ... we must confidently and jointly advance European defense."

## Israeli troops kill 3 Palestinians



WEST BANK: Israel's military carried out an arrest raid in a refugee camp in the occupied West Bank and killed two Palestinians in gun battles, according to Palestinian reports.

Later Friday, troops killed a Palestinian who carried out a shooting attack near a settlement, wounding an Israeli civilian, the army said. It was the latest bloodshed in what has become the deadliest year in the territory since 2015.

Palestinian groups claimed both slain men in the Jenin refugee camp as members, though there were conflicting statements about the circumstances surrounding the death of one of them, a hospital doctor.

The Palestinian Health Ministry said Dr. Abdullah al-Ahmed was on duty, attending to the wounded outside his hospital when he was shot.

The Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, an armed offshoot of the secular Fatah party, claimed he was a member. In a poster announcing his death, the group said he died "in an armed clash" with Israeli forces "defending the homeland." The poster showed him posing with two assault rifles.

## Türkiye, Qatar reach agreements to promote bilateral ties

ISTANBUL: Türkiye and Qatar signed 11 new agreements during the eighth meeting of their Supreme Strategic Committee in İstanbul, state-run Anadolu Agency reported.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and visiting Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani co-chaired the meeting, where high-level officials held talks on various issues.

The agreements cover areas of shared use of communications infrastructure, food security, intellectual property, disaster and emergency management, as well as cultural exchanges, according to the report.

Türkiye enjoys a deep historical friendship with Qatar. The two countries' partnerships have also strengthened since the Supreme Strategic Committee was established in 2014, during which over 80 bilateral agreements were signed and high-level meetings were frequent.

# Burkina Faso's latest coup leader named transition president

OUAGADOUGOU: Capt. Ibrahim Traore officially became Burkina Faso's transitional president, two weeks after he seized power in the country's second coup this year, but he will be ineligible to run for the office when elections are held.



A national assembly that included army officers, civil society organizations, and traditional and religious leaders approved a new charter for the West African country Friday.

It states that the head of the MPSR, the ruling military junta, is the president and supreme chief of the armed forces. But the charter also stipulates that the president is not eligible to run in elections at the end of the transition period.

Burkina Faso's latest coup,

announced Sept. 30 on state television, has raised fears that the country's political chaos could result in more violence from the region's Islamic extremists. Thousands of people already have been killed by jihadis linked to al-Qaida and the Islamic State group and some 2 million people displaced.

On Friday, thousands of people crowded outside where the assembly was taking place to show their support for Traore, a 34-year-old army captain who was relatively unknown before coming to power.

Many waved Russian flags, saying they wanted Traore to work more with Russia rather

er than France, the former colonial power that has been helping fight jihadis in the region since 2013.

"We want Russia to come because it's been more than 100 years that we were colonized. France has been on the frontline of the security situation and we notice that it's a failure," said Mahamadi Sawadogo from Friendship Between Burkina Faso and Russia, a civil society group.

Despite the support, however, some locals say there will be little grace period for Traore, who must succeed where his predecessors failed.

"All the Burkinabe people are expecting results," said Rasmane Zinba, a coordinator with Balai Citoyen, a civil society group. "If Traore doesn't do that, he may be ousted like Damiba."

# African leaders pledge to support youth projects

KIGALI: African leaders from the public and private sectors have pledged to support Africa's youth innovative projects at the ongoing YouthConnect Africa Summit which kicked off on Thursday in Rwanda's capital Kigali.



"The Africa we want is one led by healthy, ambitious, empowered, creative, innovative, educated youth; so to get to this dream state, we must look at the full developmental picture, leaving no problem unattended," said Rwanda's First Lady Jeannette Kagame Friday while addressing the youth.

She mentioned the need to holistically uplift youth, so that the future is bright for them, so that less of them "identify with anxiety for the future and even depression."

During the three-day summit, leaders from the public, private and civil society organizations participated in plenary and roundtable discussions where they

shared messages of encouragement to the youth.

Tapera Muzira, coordinator of jobs for youth in Africa initiative at the African Development Bank (AfDB) said Friday "There is a problem of getting appropriate financial products. We need institutions delivering for entrepreneurs; we are committed to establish these institutions so that we can move away from the worry about collateral."

Such new institutions will be charged with mobi-

lizing sufficient capital for business expansion for youth entrepreneurs, he said, adding that such institutions would be fully designed to meet specific needs of entrepreneurs not catered for under current funding systems.

"When there's an opportunity, youth needs to strategize without fear. We need to lift the potential of young Africans to ensure that they benefit from the inclusion of youth in the African Continental Free Trade Area

(AfCFTA)," said Jean Chrystostome Ngabitsinze, Rwanda's Minister of Trade and Industry.

Discussions of the participants centered on enabling Africa's youth to be part of an inclusive and resilient Africa by creating an environment that allows them to provide innovative solutions and ideas for the continent's development.

The summit is Africa's largest annual youth summit. It is a continental initiative with the mission to empower young people by enhancing their knowledge, experiences and skills while investing in their ideas, innovations and initiatives to harness Africa's demographic dividend.

The theme of this year's summit is "Accelerating Investments in Youth: Resilient Youth, Resilient Africa." There are more than 226 million people aged from 15 to 24 on the continent, according to the UN.

# Modi regime continues to target Kashmiris for supporting freedom struggle

SRINAGAR: Narendra Modi-led fascist Indian government continuing with its policy of political vengeance in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir sacked, five more government employees for their affiliation with the ongoing freedom movement.

The terminated employees included a police constable, a bank Manager, a plantation supervisor, an orderly in Water and Sanitation Department, and an Assistant Lineman in Public Health Engineering. All the five employees were dismissed from service under Article 311 of the Constitution which allows the Indian government to sack the employees without an inquiry.

It is to mention here that the Modi government has already terminated dozens of government employees in the occupied territory on the charges of supporting the ongoing movement for freedom of Jammu and Kashmir from Indian illegal occupation.

The All Parties Hurriyat Conference leader, Khawaja Firdous, in a statement issued in Srinagar, appreciated the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Shehbaz Sharif, for effectively highlighting the Kashmir dispute in his address at the recent Summit of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia in Astana, Kazakhstan. He said Pakistan's contin-

ued support to the Kashmir cause has always been a source of encouragement for the Kashmiris.

Meanwhile, the spokesman of Peoples Alliance for Gupkar Declaration, Muhammad Yousuf Tarigami, addressing a press conference after a meeting of the amalgam in Srinagar, today, expressed concern over the fast deteriorating situation in IIOJK. He said the Indian government is choking even the breathing space of the people of the territory, leaving them suffer on every front.

A civilian was killed after he was fired upon by unknown gunmen at his home in Choudhary Gund area of Shopi-

an district, today. The civilian identified as Poran Krishan Bhat belongs to Kashmiri Pandit community. Soon after the incident, Indian troops and police cordoned off the area and launched searches to nab the attackers.

On the other hand, Narendra Modi's shinning India further slipped six places on the Global Hunger Index and ranked 107 out of 121 countries, far worse than all countries in South Asia except for war-torn Afghanistan. The GHI score is calculated with consideration of four indicators - undernourishment, child wasting, child stunting and child mortality. Last year, India stood at 101st position.



**TECNO initiates #ColorChangingMobile campaign on Tiktok**



**Spokesman Report**

LAHORE: TECNO, an innovative smart-phone brand, has initiated a fun campaign on Tiktok with the hashtag #ColorChangingMobile. The latest TECNO Camon 19 Pro Mondrian edition features polychromatic isomer technology which changes its colors while exposed to sunlight creating a vivid light-chasing experience.

Many of the famous Tiktok Influencers like Areeka Haq, Haris Ali, Aiman Zaman, and Minahil Malik have taken the challenge and posted interesting videos on their platform. The Influencers are grooving in the chic costumes designed by the famous brand BTW in collaboration with TECNO to show off their transformation in a trendy style.

The widely accepted Camon 19 Pro Mondrian edition became the center of attention upon entering the market as the first color-changing phone in Pakistan. The hashtag #ColorChangingMobile was also rolling over social media since the launch of the phone and made the top trend over Tiktok.

Kelvin Zeng, the CEO of TECNO Mobile Pakistan was overjoyed on this occasion and said:

"TikTok is widely used amongst millennials. However, TECNO with its customized product ideas has always tried to develop a connection with them. This alliance of technology fusion with BTW is yet another effort to engage the youth and provide them with the best quality products."

TECNO has a history of creating trends and collaborating on Tiktok to engage its fans. #ColorChangingMobile has proved, yet again to be a successor of #ShowYourSpark and previous campaigns like #SparkTheSpeed, #TECNOSpark4more, #CamonShow, and more. So, wait no longer, upload your video to be a part of this fancy campaign!

The trendy platform Tiktok has always been a source of great entertainment for youngsters. If you want to have the stylish fusion costume made by the collaboration of TECNO Mobile and BTW, then follow the transformation video and upload it on your Tiktok with #ColorChangingMobile. As the campaign unfolds, incredible surprises await participants and fans.

**Business community of Peshawar assures full support to Imran Khan**

**Spokesman Report**

PESHAWAR: Senior leader of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Ghulam Bilal Javed while addressing the party workers at the residence of former member cant board Ghulam Hussain on Friday night said that Hajji Shaukat has worked hard day and night in his constituency to make this election successful.

Inshallah, PTI will get a large number of votes in all other constituencies along with NA-31. All these 13 parties will be defeated and Khan Sahib will win, Inshallah, all business organizations of Peshawar also have showed full support to Imran Khan. Chairman of All Pakistan Gems and Jewellers, Babai Tajran Amin Hussain Babar said that Peshawar NA 31 is the stronghold of PTI and inshallah victory is our destiny.

On this occasion, Ghulam Hussain Chand, Sarhad Chamber Executive Member Monawar Khurshid, former Vice Chairman Cantt Board Major (R) Arshad Mehmood, National Footballer Shahid Shinwari and other leaders also spoke and prayed for the success of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf.

**Entrepreneurs demand single digit interest rate to promote business activities**

*Ahsan Zafar says best way to bring Pakistan's economy out of trouble is to significantly increase exports*

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) said that the State Bank of Pakistan has made significant hike in the policy interest rate due to which business activities are shrinking and if this situation continues, our economy will weaken more in the coming days while the investment will also be discouraged, so he demanded the government to bring the interest rate into single digit so that business can be promoted with ease and the economy can come out of current difficulties.

He expressed these views while addressing a delegation of Jhelum Chamber of Commerce and Industry, which visited ICCI led by its President Malik Khawar Shehzad to congratulate the new Office Bearers of ICCI.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that currently the interest rate in Thailand is 1%, Taiwan 1.63%, Malaysia 2.5%, South Korea 3%, China 3.65%, Vietnam 5%, Bangladesh 5.75% and



India 5.9%, but the interest rate in Pakistan is 15% which is the highest in the region, which is a major obstacle in the way of promoting business activities.

He said that the best way to bring Pakistan's economy out of trouble is to significantly increase exports, but this is very difficult to do in an environment of high interest rate. Therefore, he strongly demanded that the govern-

ment should bring down the interest rate to single digit which will increase business and investment activities and help improve the economy.

Malik Khawar Shehzad, President, Jhelum Chamber of Commerce and Industry (JCCI) said in his address that due to high interest rate, high prices of POL & utility tariffs and other factors, business and industrial activi-

ties are facing great difficulties due to which about 1600 textile factories have been closed.

Therefore, he demanded the government to take concrete steps to promote ease of doing business and reduce the interest rate significantly, otherwise more businesses would close down. He said that due to the increase in the interest rate, the country's debt also increases many times. He said that Pakistan's debt, which was 48 billion dollars in 2008, has now increased to 116 billion dollars, which is alarming.

ICCI Group Leader Khalid Iqbal Malik, JCCI Group Leader Raja Anwar, FPCCI Vice President Qazi Akbar, Zafar Bakhtawari, Zubair Ahmad Malik, Mohammad Ijaz Abbasi, Malik Sohail Hussain and others also spoke at the occasion. They stressed that the government should make a future strategy in consultation with the business community to promote business and economic activities so that Pakistan can be put on the path of better development and growth.

**Public Private Partnership deemed necessary for sustainable development**

**Spokesman Report**

LAHORE: For sustainable development and achieving SDGs by 2030, experts termed collaboration between Government and non-government stakeholders and effective role of CSOs in advancing localization, implementation and achievement of SDGs as the real game changers towards success.

These thoughts were expressed by development practitioners, civil society members and education champions in a Post HLPF consultation session on Pakistan's VNR Report 2022, presented by the Government in UN's High Level Political Forum in July 2022. The session was organized was Awaz CDS - Pakistan and Education Champions Network.

Awaz CDS-Pakistan engaged with education champions/ECN member organizations and other CSOs of the country to prepare an analysis of Government reporting and CSOs perspective on that and the same was presented in the consultation session.

Highlighting priority SDGs especially SDG 4 and 5 on Gender Equality and Quality Education, Civil society members expressed their dissatisfaction on Government's focus on these SDGs in the VNR report.

Chief Executive, Awaz CDS, Zia ur Rehman briefed the audience on the background and process of development of the Voluntary National Review report. He appreciated the incumbent government's presentation of official VNR at the UN High Level Political Forum (HLPF). He said that several concerns still exist on



critical sustainable development goals (SDG) priorities in the absence of policy coherence, efficient implementation and review mechanisms.

According to him the report failed to capture and highlight the Citizens' Voices on VNR process and progress on SDGs collected through stakeholders' consultations. He stressed on the need of inclusion and participation of civil society representatives in the report making process for depiction of real on ground situation.

The Parliamentarians from Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Saira Raza, Fauzia Abbas and Saira Jabben participated in the event and appreciated the efforts and expressed need to put education and gender equality on priority and their plan to bring about a legislation and its implementation in this regard.

Program Manager-AwazCDS-Pakistan, Mariam Amjad Khan, while sharing the CSOs perspective on official VNR 2022 and findings of the analysis of Government reporting said that Government has shared a number of good progress that has been made in recent times on SDG 4 and 5 but that's not the complete picture. For example, in VNR reporting on SDG 4, Govern-

ment is presenting the enrollment rate as a success while according to the UNICEF's country profile 2022 adjusted net attendance rate for children of primary school age is only 62% whereas, it further drops at middle and secondary level to 33%.

CSOs representatives appreciated that there have been improvements in strategies action plans, policies and legal frameworks. However, the scale of these initiatives as well as monitoring and transparency mechanisms needs strengthening.

As far as SDG 5, Gender Equality, is concerned CSOs shared their perspective that several national and provincial legislations have been made for gender equality and women's inclusion but these are not being practiced.

Civil Society representatives shared that Sustainable Development Ranking Report 2022 is showing that SDGs 4 and 5 are stagnant and not improving compared to last report. This also mirrors the lack of initiatives and financing to improve both sectors. Governments and all stakeholders should invest more in country's 48% of population to minimize disparities to at least achieve near to half of the SDGs targets by 2030.

**Grid Hosting Ltd launches services in Pakistan**

**Spokesman Report**

KARACHI: Grid Hosting Pakistan, a UK-based company (gridhosting.co.uk) has launched its web and cloud hosting services in the country.

Launched as a subsidiary of (gridhosting.co.uk), Grid Hosting Pakistan aims to address the dire need for world-class web and cloud hosting services in Pakistan as e-commerce becomes a booming business. With a thriving community of international clients, Grid Hosting Pakistan backed by 17 years of positive client reviews and industry expertise has made its mark on the local market by partnering with online retailers and marketplaces in order to transform their web-based framework.

After years of successful partnerships, research, and strategizing Grid Hosting Pakistan is offering a secure and cost-effective solution to their clients' hosting needs all over the country. With an impressive suite of services on offer, clients can rest assured that their business is being put first. All products are underscored

with a 45-day money-back guarantee, which sets Grid Hosting apart from other service providers and inspires confidence in their platform.

Grid Hosting Pakistan services include Domain Registration, Website hosting services, Cloud Hosting Services, Virtual Cloud Servers / VPS, Private Email Services, Installed website applications, SSL Certificates & Web-add-on Services, Domain & Website Privacy, Providing full IT support to companies & helping new business setup all IT & IS related work. The entire suite of products comes with in-depth guidance and tutorials.

The Grid Hosting Pakistan customer success teams work with clients around the clock to deliver impeccable service and client satisfaction. With a stellar reputation spanning 17 years, Grid Hosting Pakistan will work to create scalable solutions that evolve according to their clients' growing business needs. All client data is fully secure with on-site and off-site backups which provide a seamless experience.

**Ch. Zulfiqar's message on World Standard Day**

**Spokesman Report**

MULTAN: World Standards Day, celebrated on October 14 every year, raises awareness about the need for the global standardization of products and its importance to the world economy.

On this day, members of the International Electro technical Commission (IEC), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), and the International Standards Organization (ISO) pay tribute to the concerted efforts of thousands of experts around the world, who's formulate the voluntary technical agreement published as the International Standards.

Ch. Zulfiqar Ali Anjum, Group



Chairman, Volka Foods & SM Food Makers in his message said: As per theme of world standard day "Standards for Sustainable development Goals (SDGs)". SM Group of Food Industries is working by following all ISO and IEC Standards. Our vision "To be recognized as a packaged food leader in quality, innovation, integrity, and become a brand admired for

its commitment to people". To serve generations with the highest quality of hygienic food products.

Our esteemed organizations (SM Group) proudly affirmed to be deliver "Best quality with affordable price and sustainable Development". That's why our group has achieved award an emerging brand of the year 2021.

Our Targets are based on the legacy of excellence in CONFECTIONARY, BAKERY and PASTA: SM Foods delivers healthy and appetizing food products globally. Our dedication to succeed compels us to understand the taste preferences of our customers and select the finest recipes and ingredients to create the magic of taste for mouth-watering food products.

The Agenda for sustainable development was launched in 2015 to end poverty till 2025 in all forms; we are biggest organization of our beloved country and providing high-end number of livelihood directly or indirectly.

Further; we are creating more vacancies to reduce the unemployment, ultimately to reduce poverty. We cover 300 Men by annual training calendar to educate the workers and university students focusing social, personnel and professional skills.

Technical sessions for capacity building concerning different ISO standards are also conducted to make sure our purpose to develop them skillful for the organization as well

for themselves and the nation.

By following the theme of SDGs, we participates important role in the economy of the country.

As being a citizen of developing country, our organization is following all ISO and IEC standards in all sections to ensure food safety and security from Farm to Fork.

We are determined to mobilize the means required to implement our agenda for sustainable development through a revitalized confined Partnership for sustainable development.

At last, we admire the untiring efforts of ISO, IEC and ITU for recognizing this day as World Standard Day as well for creating awareness throughout the world for respective standards.

**'Trade and industry should prioritize sustainable development framework'**

KARACHI: The United Nations and Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI) organized 'UN and Private Sector Consultation: Exploring Potential for Sustained Collaboration' at a local hotel in Karachi.

The Head of the UN Resident Coordinator's Office (UNRCO), Shah Nasir Khan, the Senior Vice President FPCCI, Muhammad Suleman Chawla, VP Engineer, M.A. Jabbar, Dr. Jawaid Qureshi, and Dr. Farhan Ahmed, the Convener and Deputy Convener of the UN Committee of FPCCI participated in it.

The UN officials from UNRCO, UNIDO (UN Industrial Development Organization), UNDP (UN Development Program), UNICEF (UN Children's Fund), UN Women, FAO (Food and Agricultural Organization), WFP (World Food Programme), and UN Global Compact Network from Pakistan, and Bangladesh orientated the participants on the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) for Pakistan for

2023-2027, importance of engagement with the private sector, financing for sustaining development and business and human rights.

Officials from public and private sector, academia, NGOs and civil society, women, representatives of youth, and the Turkish Consul General, Cemal Sangu participated in the event.

Keeping in view the sustainable development goals (SDGs), the UN in Pakistan has set five priorities (outcomes) for Pakistan for the next 5 years that include basic social services (health, nutrition, WASH, education, social protection), gender and women empowerment, climate change and environment, sustainable inclusive economic growth and decent work, and governance (rule of law, ethics, transparency, and accountability for the public and private sectors).

The participants of the event provided their valuable input to the UN for consideration of their framework. The draft framework now is being reviewed by the government of Pakistan before its final approval.

Barkaat Ali (Development Coordination Officer-UNRCO) while highlighting the seriousness of engagement with the private sector shared that globally US\$ 5-7 trillion were required per year to achieve SDGs and the annual gap was US\$ 2.5 trillion. Similarly, Pakistan, according to one estimate, required US\$ 31 billion per annum between 2019 and 2030 to achieve its targets. The collaboration between the Government, the private sector and the UN was thus critical. Mr. Shah Nasir Khan informed that UNSDCF would require US\$ 4.7 billion for its implementation out of which US\$ 1.16 billion (24%) were available.

These funds are deployed for development of various sectors under different programs and initiatives including trade, industry, entrepreneurial development, gender equality, women empowerment, youth development, etc. The audience were briefed on various projects of the UN in Pakistan. The UN Secretary-General, António Guterres recently visited Pakistan and sought help from the international commu-

nity for Pakistan to respond to the unprecedented floods which have cost an estimated loss of US\$ 30 billion to the country.

The SVP FPCCI, Muhammad Suleman Chawla, highly appreciated the efforts of the UN agencies and their financial and technical assistance in various sectors. He lauded the efforts of the Central Standing Committee of UN Affairs of FPCCI and its Convener, Dr. Jawaid Qureshi, for holding such productive events.

He informed that FPCCI has various standing committees like health, education, environment, women entrepreneurship and women empowerment, etc., which contribute to social and economic development, including the SDGs.

In the panel discussion, the VP Engineer, M.A. Jabbar, stated that the governance system in Pakistan is very weak. There is a lack of transparency, accountability, participation of all the stakeholders, collaboration, and cooperation. There is a trust deficit between the public and private sectors. Howev-

er, there is a serious need to overcome these gaps. He cited various examples of hazardous effects of industrial waste, pollution, noise pollution, and ignorance by most of the industrialists and private sector. However, there are companies that have high concerns and measures to protect the natural environment.

He advised that the Government of Sindh and the Federal Government should reconsider their agreement on setting up a railway infrastructure to dispatch coal of Thar to the industrial zones of Punjab, etc. for energy production. Rather, they should establish a coal-fired plant in Thar and put the energy into the national grid.

The UN representatives also highlighted various serious issues concerning climate change, global warming, and challenges to the biodiversity and ecosystem caused by environmental degradation and its cost to the society and economy. The developed countries caused the highest degradation to the environment, but now they are considering impactful measures for carbon

neutral or net zero effect. The Indus Basin system of rivers is creating livelihood for millions of people in Pakistan and neighbouring countries.

Ms. Shahnaz Wazir Ali, President SZABIST University, ex-Minister of State for Education and Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Social Sector emphasized on the governance mechanism to bring systematic reforms. She stated that to combat the environmental challenges, there is a serious need that universities should introduce new courses and specialized degree programs on water management, gender studies, violence and justice, etc.

Dr. Jawaid Qureshi added that the environmental changes cause lack of rains and droughts as well as heavy rains and floods, deforestation, sea erosion, etc. The coastal belt of Thatta and Badin has been eroded by the sea, which has engulfed 30 million acres of land, and there is a dire need of planting mangroves there, and reforestation. Many countries have 25% or more of their land covered with forests, while

# 8th ICC T20 Cricket World Cup kicks off in Australia

Opening match will be played between Sri Lanka and Namibia

MELBOURNE: The 8th ICC T20 Cricket World Cup kicks off in Australia from today.

In all, sixteen teams are participating in the event and 45 matches will be played in seven Australian cities. Melbourne Cricket Ground will host the final match.

The opening match will be played between Sri Lanka and Namibia while in the second match West Indies will take on Scotland. Pakistan will play its first match against India on 23rd of this month.

The eighth ICC Men's T20 World Cup is set to be the biggest and the best yet, with 16 teams playing 45 matches in seven Australian cities between 16 October and 13 November.

Seven venues across Australia will be used in total during the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2022, with the Melbourne Cricket Ground hosting the final and the semi-finals set to be played at Adelaide Oval and the Sydney Cricket Ground.

The Gabba in Brisbane, Kardinya Park in Geelong, Bellerive Oval in Hobart and



Perth Stadium are the other host venues. This year's ICC Men's T20 World Cup takes place in three stages. The First Round sees two groups of four teams participating in a round-robin. The top two teams from each group progress to the Super 12 stage. The eight nations competing in the First Round consist of the four lowest-ranked nations to have automatically qualified for the tournament at the cut-off point – Namibia, Scotland, Sri Lanka and West Indies.

They will be joined by two teams from each of the Qualifier tournaments held in 2022. Ireland and UAE progressed in Qualifier A in Oman back in February, with Netherlands and Zimbabwe triumphing in Qualifier B in Zimbabwe in July.

The top team from Group A and the

second team from Group B enter Group 1 of the Super 12s, with the top finishers in Group B and the second-placed side from Group A going into Group 2.

The Super 12 stage sees two groups of six play a round-robin, with the top two teams from each group progressing to the knock-out stage. The knock-out stage consists of two semi-finals and the Final at the MCG on November 13. The prize pot remains the same as at the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2021 and all 16 competing teams will receive part of the \$US5.6m allocated as prize money for the tournament.

The winners will collect \$1.6m, with the runner-up receiving \$800,000. Both losing semi-finalists will receive \$400,000. The eight teams knocked out at the end of the Super 12 stage will get \$70,000 each. Each match a team wins in the Super 12 stage will earn them \$40,000.

The four teams knocked out at the end of the First Round will get \$40,000. Each match a team wins in the First Round will see them collect \$40,000.

## England well prepared but Australia favourite, says Buttler

MELBOURNE: England captain Jos Buttler is happy with his team's preparation but tipped champions Australia as the favourites to win the Twenty20 World Cup on home soil, in comments to the media on Saturday.

England prevailed in a seven-match Twenty20 series in Pakistan before flying to Australia where they beat their hosts and reigning world champions twice but were prevented from posting a 3-0 series sweep by rain. Read full story

Buttler smashed 65 not out in the third match, his second fifty in three innings since returning from a calf injury, before the match got washed out on Friday. "I



think history tells you that generally the host nations are slight favourites in big tournaments," the opener said in a pre-tournament media conference.

"Lots of people have played in Australia in those conditions but of

course no one is going to know the conditions or be as accustomed to them as the Australian team and the reigning champions as well. England topped the Super12 group stage in last year's tournament, ahead of Australia, but were knocked

out by New Zealand in the semi-finals. Buttler said the format was unpredictable and the competition fierce. "In T20 cricket, one person can take the game away from you," said Buttler, a proven match-winner himself.

"We've had good preparation. We look forward to this tournament and don't try and read too much into past tournaments or things. "We try and learn and get better and improve every day, and look forward to starting this competition in the next week." Former champions England begin their bid for a second 20-overs World Cup title with a match against Afghanistan in Perth on Oct. 22.

## Fowler confident of ending title drought

INZAI: Rickie Fowler said he was confident of ending a three-year US PGA Tour title drought as he took a one-shot lead into the final day of the Zozo Championship in Japan on Saturday.

Fowler has not won a tournament since the 2019 Phoenix Open but he rattled off five birdies and a bogey to score a 66 at Narashino Country Club and move to 14 under, one shot ahead of fellow American Keegan Bradley. Fowler, a three-time major runner-up and former world number four, said his self-belief had not wavered despite his poor form, which included missing the cut at last week's Shriners Children's Open in Las Vegas. "I've definitely had some tough times the last few years," said the 33-year-old, who has won five US PGA Tour titles.

"It was always just a fine line, a shot or two here or there, and it's nice to start building momentum and confidence and getting the ball rolling in the right direction." Fowler looked to be in danger of losing his lead when he drove his tee shot into the bunker on the 18th. But he played his way out of trouble and birdied the hole, saying he was "looking forward to the challenge" of going for the title in Sunday's final round. "I believe I can do it but I know it's going to be tough," he said. "I just have to keep doing what I've been doing the last few days." Bradley hit five birdies and a bogey to sit one shot behind Fowler, with Andrew Putnam one further back on 12 under and Norway's Viktor Hovland on 11 under.

Home favourite Hideki Matsuyama admitted his chances of defending his title had all but vanished after his round of 66 left him 10 shots off the lead. Matsuyama gave the thousands of fans following him around the course something to cheer about when he hit back-to-back birdies midway through his round in Chiba, near Tokyo. But his overall tally of five birdies and one bogey left him in a tie for 31st place, and he said he would need a miracle to defend his title.

"I think my score would have to be in the 50s tomorrow," he said. "I don't think I have much of a chance but I want to do my best." Hovland put himself right in contention after making a 45-foot eagle putt on the final hole. "It felt like the round was going downhill a little bit," said the world number 11.

"But after a nice birdie on 15 it kind of revived it a little bit and obviously with the eagle on the last, that's a nice way to end it." The round of the day came from American Sahith Theegala, who shot seven birdies on the front nine before coming home in 63. "I played really well on that front nine," said the 24-year-old, who is nine under overall. "I actually made a six-footer for par on the first par five and that's a hole that a tonne of people are going to have birdie looks at. "So if I'm being really picky I guess I could have got one more there."

## Martin takes pole for Australian MotoGP

PHILLIP ISLAND: Jorge Martin smashed the nine-year-old Phillip Island lap record Saturday to grab pole position for the Australian MotoGP, with world champion Fabio Quartararo coming in fifth.

In dry and partly cloudy conditions, the Spaniard ensured he will start at the front of the grid on Sunday with a blistering lap of one minute and 27.767 seconds. It shattered the 1:27.899 mark held by Jorge Lorenzo since 2013 and, incredibly, came with the Ducati-Pramac rider having never driven the picturesque waterfront circuit before this weekend.

"It's time to beat those records because the bikes are faster now," said Martin. "Yesterday I struggled a bit because I was a bit lost, it is my first time here and I had to take the measurement (of the track). But finally today I had good pace.

"I thought I could be



competitive, but not this competitive. Making 1:27 is amazing. Hopefully we can fight till the end tomorrow," he added.

Six-time world champion Marc Marquez amazingly saved a crash when he lost the front end of his Honda and spun at turn 10 on his first lap, but recovered to take second, 0.013 behind, also under Lorenzo's time. "I'm not a little bit happy, I'm a lot," said Marquez, who is a three-time winner at Phillip

Island and only recently back from yet another bad injury.

"The most important thing is the feeling is coming with the bike, so step by step I am feeling better. And physically feeling better... is a key point for me." World championship leader Quartararo of Yamaha finished fifth but behind fellow title contender Francesco Bagnaia, who will start third on his Ducati.

"It's always very important to be in the front row," said Bagnaia as he eyes a maid-

en world crown. Quartararo holds a slender two-point lead in the standings over the Italian, with three grands prix left in the 20-race season. Just 40 points separate the top five, with all mathematically in the title fight. Among the contenders, Spain's Aleix Espargaro (Aprilia) was fourth fastest and Australian hope Jack Miller (Ducati) eighth.

But Italian Enea Bastianini (Ducati), who is 39 points adrift, could only muster 13th to put a massive dent in his slender hopes. Miller also has work to do, but will leave Phillip Island with a corner officially named after him on Saturday.

Turn 4, the circuit's famous hairpin, will now be known as Miller Corner in his honour. "It's an unreal part of the track, and so many historical moments have happened here. So I feel so fortunate to be able to claim this one," said the Australian.

## Ganna storms to fifth world pursuit gold

SAINT-QUENTIN: Italy's Filippo Ganna set a new world record time on his way to a fifth gold in the men's individual pursuit at the Track World Cycling Championships in France on Friday. Ganna won gold ahead of compatriot Jonathan Milan, to add to the titles he won in 2016 and from 2018 to 2020, after finishing third last year in Roubaix.

The 2020 and 2021 road time-trial world champion crowned his triumph by setting a new world record of 3min 59.636sec at the Saint Quentin en Yvelines velodrome outside Paris. The Olympic team pursuit champion had arrived at these worlds on the back of another world mark, breaking the mythical one-hour record, with 56.792km at the Grenchen track in Switzerland last Saturday. The 26-year-old had bettered the surprise record set by Britain's Daniel Bigham, a performance engineer at Ganna's Ineos Grenadiers team on the same track last August, which he had



attempted in order to collect data for the Italian's quest.

Bigham finished fourth in the pursuit on Friday, beaten by Portuguese Ivo

Oliveira in the race for bronze. The Netherlands took two gold medals with veteran rider Yoeri Havik winning the points race and compatriot Jeffrey Hoogland

successfully defending his 1km time-trial title. Havik, 31, finished ahead of Germany's Roger Kluge and Belgian Fabio van den Bossche over the 160 laps covering 40km, interspersed with 16 sprints. Hoogland, 29, dominated France's Melvin Landereau in the 1km time-trial final, an event he won in 2018 and 2021, with Spaniard Alejandro Martinez taking bronze. Among the women, Mathilde Gros gave hosts France their first title by beating Germany's Lea Sophie Friedrich in the final of the sprint event.

It was the first world gold for the 23-year-old, less than two years before the 2024 Paris Olympics which will be held in the same velodrome. "It's a dream. I gave it everything and the public were incredible," said Gros. "Hearing Mathilde, Mathilde ring out throughout the velodrome was magical." American Jennifer Valente became omnium world champion ahead of Dutchwoman Maïke van der Duin and Portuguese Maria Martins.

## Gujranwala Giants defeated Hyderabad Hunters

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: In Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore Pakistan Junior Cricket League match Gujranwala Giants defeated Hyderabad Hunters by 4 wickets.

Hyderabad won the toss and elected to bat they scored 129 for 8 in 20 overs and gave the target to opponent by 130 runs. Captain Saad Beig 43, Mughees Rana 25, Arbaaz Khan 15, and Ali Naseer 11 were the top scorers for Hyderabad. From Gujranwala Skipper Aziz Mumtaz got 3 while Abtisaam and Mathew Trump picked up two wickets each. Gujranwal Giants achieved the target in 16.2 overs.

Azaan Awais was the top scorer he made 61 runs with the help of 5 fours and two sixes while Skipper Aziz Mumtaz 31 for Gujranwala. From Hyderabad M.Zubair Jr. Captured two wickets while Haseeb-Ur-Rehman and Ibrahim got one wicket each.

From Gujranwala Giants Azaan Awais was named man of the match. Bahawalpur Royals top on the table with 6 points Gawadar Sharks 2nd Mardan Warriors 3rd, Gujranwala Giants 4th while Rawalpindi 5th and Hyderabad on 6th on the points table.

## Hasan Ahmed, young talented cricketer



LAHORE: Hasan Ahmed is a young talented cricketer from Mirpur, Azad Kashmir. He was born and raised in Birmingham, United Kingdom. He is currently studying A levels in a private college, Denstone College, in England where he was awarded a scholarship for cricket.

He is an opening batsman and right-arm leg spinner. He has a dream to represent Pakistan's national team. In pursuit of achieving his goal, he has recently joined the Lahore Qalandars High-Performance Centre under the supervision of former Test cricketer Aqib Javed, who has appreciated his batting and bowling ability.

Hasan currently plays for Staffordshire County. He had represented U18, 21 and 1st XI in all three formats of the game, T20, Odi and 3-day games.

Hasan has won several awards for Staffordshire County U18. Recently, He has received the "Batsman of the year award 2022". He has already won this award in 2019 and 2021 seasons.

Hasan had a successful 2022 season in England, scoring 5 centuries and averaging nearly 41 with his batting. He had played several crucial match-winning innings for Staffordshire County in a 3 days game. In one of the matches, Hasan scored thrilling 136 runs to win a crucial match against Cheshire County to clinch the title for Staffordshire County. Due to a successful season, Hasan made a debut for Staffordshire County 1st team.

Hasan had arrived in Pakistan with his parents earlier this month to pursue his dream that one day he will represent Pakistan's national team.

Hasan is extremely excited that he will be spending most of his time in Pakistan to reinstate his cricket career. He wants to show his performance to Pakistan Cricket Board.

## Barcelona 'spectacular' in La Liga, warns Real Madrid coach Ancelotti

MADRID: Real Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti warned his team that Barcelona have been "spectacular" in La Liga, despite their struggles in the Champions League.

Barcelona are on the verge of Champions League elimination after a 3-3 draw at home against Inter Milan on Wednesday, but come into Sunday's Clasico at the Santiago Bernabeu as leaders, unbeaten in the top flight.

Xavi's side have conceded just one goal all season in La Liga and lead Real Madrid on goal difference, both sides tied on 22 points at the top of the table.

"We're looking at a team that's won all their games in La Liga after drawing their first one, they have very good form in the league," Ancelotti told a press conference on Saturday.

"Since the start of the competition they have done every well. They've had trouble in the Champions League, which usually happens in that competition, but in La Liga they have been spectacular."

The coach remembered last season's 4-0 defeat by Barcelona at the Santiago Bernabeu, where in the absence of striker Karim Benzema, he operated with Luka Modric as a false nine.

"It's true that last year I tried to invent something and I paid the price for it," said Ancelotti.

"The game last year will not affect us, because this is another season, another Clasico. We're looking forward to playing this game, which the whole world will watch."

Ancelotti confirmed that goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois is back training after suffering sciatica but will not feature in the Clasico, while Antonio Rudiger can play, wearing a protective mask.

The German defender suffered a bad facial injury against Shakhtar Donetsk in the Champions League, where he scored a last minute goal but clashed heads with the opposition goalkeeper.

## Murray falls to Korda in Gijon Open quarter-finals

GIJON: Britain's Andy Murray fell to American Sebastian Korda in the Gijon Open quarter-finals.

Korda, ranked 47, won through 6-4, 1-6, 6-1 against former world number one Murray, now ranked 48, in two hours and 27 minutes. Wildcard Murray was playing his first tournament since September's Laver Cup, but after rallying in the second set the 35-year-old was unable to maintain the momentum in the third.

Korda, 22, advances to meet France's Arthur Rinderknech who saved nine match points before ousting second seed Pablo Carrero Busta, the last Spaniard in the tournament, 4-6, 6-3, 7-6 (18/16).

Rinderknech staved off two match points on serve at 4-5 in the third set, and a further seven in the third-set tie-break, before sealing victory on his sixth match point after just over three-hours in northern Spain.

Earlier Austrian Dominic Thiem continued his quest for his first title since the 2020 US Open when he eased past fourth seed Francisco Cerundolo of Argentina 6-4, 6-3.

The 29-year-old next plays top seed Andrey Rublev who dispatched fifth seeded American Tommy Paul 7-5, 6-3 in 87 minutes. Rublev, who triumphed in Marseille, Dubai and Belgrade earlier this season, has boosted his chances of qualifying for the ATP Finals.