



**Govt appreciates dialogues, not dictation: Khawaja Asif**

Federal Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif said on Friday that although ongoing dialogues were the need of the hour, however, the government won't let the PTI leadership to derail the process through dictation. Khawaja Asif said that the PTI chief's recent undemocratic behavior proved that his attempt was malicious in negotiations.



**Govt sets target to enroll all 70,000 out of school children: Rana Tanveer**

Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training Rana Tanveer Hussain on Friday informed the National Assembly that the government had set an ambitious target to bring all 70,000 out of school children in the Islamabad Capital Territory to zero by June 30. Replying to various supplementary questions during the Question Hour, the minister said currently, around 70,000 children were out of school in Islamabad... (Details on Page 3)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

**Sherdils' aerobatics**

RISALPUR: Prime Minister of Pakistan Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force witnessing the stunning aerobatics display performance by Team Sherdils at the Graduation Ceremony held at PAF Academy, Asghar Khan on Friday.



Photo: PID

**Pakistan, EU reiterate resolve to jointly combat terrorism**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and the European Union strongly condemning terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, have reaffirmed their determination to jointly combat terrorism by increasing cooperation on the prevention and countering of violent extremism, offline and online radicalization, and combating terrorism financing.

The matter was discussed during the European Union-Pakistan Counter Terrorism Dialogue held in Brussels Thursday, a Foreign Office statement said.

The Dialogue offered an opportunity to engage in important discussions on counter-terrorism cooperation, as part of a wider engagement on Security matters in the framework of the 2019 Strategic Engagement Plan.

They also discussed counter-terrorism cooperation in

multilateral fora such as the United Nations and the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum, which the EU co-chairs.

The Dialogue provided an opportunity to exchange views on regional and global challenges, including the wider security implications of the situation in Afghanistan.

The meeting offered an opportunity to explore concrete ways of assisting Pakistan's efforts in addressing the growing challenges posed by the evolving threats of terrorism.

The respective delegations were led by Benedikta Von Scherr-Thoss, Managing Director, Common Security and Defence Policy at the European External Action Service and Abdul Hameed, Director General for Counter-Terrorism at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan. APP

**With unity nation to defeat anti-Pakistan elements: PM**

Shehbaz Sharif lauds the PAF leadership to make the Pakistan Air Force a truly professional

**Our Correspondent**

RISALPUR: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday said that the whole nation stood behind its armed forces like a solid rock and it would continue to do so in future to defeat the evil designs of anti-Pakistan forces.

"This mutual bond of love, devotion and abiding reverence has remained unbroken. I have an unwavering belief that our armed forces will always live up to the expectation of the people in future as well," he said in his address at the passing out parade of cadets at the Pakistan Air Force's Asghar Khan Academy here.

ulated the graduating cadets, their parents and the faculty on the most memorable moments of their lives.

PM Shehbaz said over the last two decades the nation had been tested by a combination of challenges such as terrorism, extremism and militancy. "The manner in which our armed forces, including the air force, police and intelligence community have risen to the challenges and neutralized the threats to our national security is simply outstanding."

He lauded the PAF leadership to make the Pakistan Air Force a truly professional, progressive and high-tech organization.

He recalled the recent example

of the PAF's true professionalism when it showed a befitting and determined response to the Indian aggression in February 2019. "The whole world saw how our brave sons humiliated the Indian air force and show of exceptional skill and expertise," he added.

With respect to the economic challenges, the prime minister said that the global economic crisis adversely affected all walks of life in the country. However, he vowed not to let the people be at the mercy of the disruptions in the global markets.

"We need to build resilience and protect our economy from global shocks. This is possible if we think long and hard and introduce structural reforms in

the economy to make it sustainable," he said adding it is for this purpose that he had always been a strong proponent of the Charter of Economy. "Let me assure you that we are making all efforts to bring our economy back on track. Thanks to the tough decisions at the cost of our political assets, we are on the way to overcoming these challenges successfully one day soon."

The prime minister said Pakistan was a peace-loving nation and wished to maintain friendly ties with all countries, especially neighbours, however he said "our desire for peace must not be misunderstood as weakness".

He said there could be no peace in South Asia without a just and

fair settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in line with the UN resolutions and the aspiration of the people of Kashmir.

"We condemn the grave human rights violation in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir and urge the world to take note of the illegal changes by India post August 2019," he added.

Earlier, the PM reviewed the parade and presented awards to cadets. PAF's Sherdil Squadron also displayed a splendid air display on the occasion.

Defense Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Information Minister Maryam Aurangzeb and other civil and military officials were also present on the occasion.

**Tens of thousands fleeing Sudan**

As spectre of ethnic clashes, hunger looms: UN

**Spokesman Report**

NEW YORK: Civilians in Sudan, including scores of internally displaced people and refugees, are scrambling for safety and suffering the disastrous consequences of the violence there, as many aid operations have been forced to pause, UN humanitarian officials said on Friday.

The UN refugee agency (UNHCR) said that tens of thousands of refugees from South Sudan, Ethiopia and Eritrea living in the country have fled the fighting between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in the Khartoum area.

The newly displaced have found shelter in existing refugee camps further east and south, creating new humanitarian challenges, the UN agency said.

UNHCR said it is also particularly concerned about the situation in the Darfur region, where fears are deepening of a revival of ethnic tensions.

The agency's representative in Sudan, Axel Bisschop, told reporters in Geneva that Darfur might present the "biggest challenge" from a humanitarian point of view. "We're concerned that the intercommunal violence is going to increase and that we might have some situations which will

repeat in relation to what we had a couple of years ago," in a region which has already experienced severe conflict and displacement, he said.

UNHCR stressed that Darfur presents "a myriad of pressing protection issues", highlighting that a number of sites hosting internally displaced people have been burned to the ground, while civilian houses and humanitarian premises have been hit by bullets.

Concerns over the region are shared by the UN rights office (OHCHR), which warned on Friday of a "serious risk" of violence escalating in West Darfur as the hostilities between the RSF and SAF have triggered intercommunal violence.

OHCHR spokesperson Ravina Shamdasani said that in El Geneina, West Darfur, "deadly ethnic clashes" have been reported and an estimated 96 people have been killed since 24 April.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres expressed his gratitude to France and other nations who have helped with the relocation and evacuation of UN staff from Khartoum and elsewhere this week.

In a statement issued by his Spokesperson, he highlighted help from France in safely transporting more than 400



UN personnel and dependents out of Sudan.

"The French Navy transported more than 350 of our colleagues and their families from Port Sudan to Jeddah, in Saudi Arabia, on Tuesday night."

On Thursday, more than 70 UN and affiliated personnel, as well as others, were flown on a French Air Force plane from El Fasher, Sudan, to the capital of Chad.

"We also thank the authorities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Chad, Kenya and Uganda for facilitating the arrival of our colleagues and their families."

The Secretary-General is also very thankful to the many other Member States, including the United States, Jordan, Sweden, Germany, the United Kingdom and Canada, who have assisted in ensuring the safe transport of

Ethiopia and Eritrea.

UNHCR said it has received reports of around 33,000 refugees having fled from Khartoum to refugee camps in White Nile State, 2,000 to the camps in Gedaref and 5,000 to Kassala since the start of the crisis two weeks ago.

Thousands of people - Sudanese citizens, including many internally displaced people, and refugees living in Sudan - have also fled the country.

UNHCR spokesperson Matthew Saltmarsh said that in Chad, UNHCR together with the Government has registered around 5,000 arrivals so far, and that at least 20,000 have crossed.

Some 10,000 people have crossed to South Sudan, while in Egypt, Central African Republic and Ethiopia, there have been an unknown number of arrivals, given the speed at which the situation is unfolding and the scale of the country.

Displaced people who arrive at the UNHCR transit centre in Renk, South Sudan, receive relief items.

UNHCR said the security situation has forced it to "temporarily pause" most of its aid operations in Khartoum, the Darfurs and North Kordofan, where it has become "too dangerous to operate".

**Positive progress in talks between govt-PTI, says Dar**

**Staff Reporter**

ISLAMABAD: Federal Finance Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar, a member of the government negotiation team, said that there has been positive progress in the negotiations between the government and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf.

Talking to the media after

the negotiations in Parliament on Friday, he said that there have been suggestions from both sides and things are moving forward.

He said that next Tuesday there will be talks again and the matter will move forward. "There has been progress from both sides."

The proposals presented have been discussed," he added.

**At discounted prices**

**Govt decides to obtain oil from Russia: Musadik**

**Staff Reporter**

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Petroleum Dr Musadik Malik said the government is evolving an energy policy that would focus on creating energy resources from LPG and solar in order to promote energy conservation.

**Pak envoy elected as chair of intellectual property body**

ISLAMABAD: Continuing the drive to enhance Pakistan's intellectual property profile on the global stage, the World Intellectual Property Organisation's Committee on Development and IP (CDIP) elected Ambassador Khalil Hashmi, Pakistan's Permanent Representative to UN in Geneva as Chair during its 30th session on Friday. APP

## Foreign Investment

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of a Chinese Company (Easyway Innovation Technology Company Ltd), led by its CEO, Mr. Joe Hanyu, called on President Dr Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr on Friday.



Photo: PID

## President urges foreign investors to invest in Pakistan

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Friday said as Pakistan offered investment friendly environment, the foreign investors should benefit from its pro-investment policies.

The president, talking to a delegation of the Chinese Company (Easyway Innovation Technology Company Ltd), led by its Chief Executive Officer Joe Hanyu here at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, said the development of the IT (information technology) sector was one of the major priorities of the country.

He said the foreign entrepreneurs needed to invest in the important sector which had immense potential to grow.

The president said the Special Technology Zones Authority offered various incentives, including a 10-year tax exemption for the enterprises, and the Chinese IT companies should capitalize on those opportunities.

The Easyway CEO briefed the president about the role of his company in providing various IT services and industry solutions.

He highlighted that the Easyway provided integrated solutions and professional software development for smart transportation, smart logistics and other fields.

He said his company had developed e-ticking system for Pakistan Railways that would help enhance its efficiency.

## Aircraft carrying 149 Pakistani nationals evacuated from Sudan



KARACHI: The photo shows Pakistanis evacuated from Sudan arriving at an airport in Pakistan's southern port city of Karachi. An aircraft carrying 149 Pakistani nationals evacuated from Sudan arrived in Pakistan's southern port city of Karachi on Friday morning, the Foreign Ministry spokesperson said.

ISLAMABAD: An aircraft carrying 149 Pakistani nationals evacuated from Sudan arrived in Pakistan's southern port city of Karachi on Friday morning, the Foreign Ministry spokesperson said.

Two other flights having around 200 Pakistanis onboard are expected to arrive later on Friday, the spokesperson, Mumtaz Zahra Baloch, said during a weekly media briefing in Islamabad.

One of them originated from Port Sudan and the other from the Saudi Arabian city of Jeddah to bring back Pakistanis who had earlier been evacuated there, she added.

"Our evacuation plan has been implemented in phases. In the first phase of the operation, over 800 Pakistanis were transported from Sudan's capital of Khartoum to Port Sudan, which was relatively safe," Baloch said.

The second phase of the evacuation operation consisted of transporting Pakistani nationals from Port Sudan to Jeddah or directly to Pakistan, she added.

The spokesperson further added that Friday's flights, operating from Port Sudan via Jeddah, mark the first part of this second phase while additional flights are planned. Agencies

## Govt allows up to 20% rise in drug prices

DRAP recommends hike in drug prices in view of rupee's devaluation

ISLAMABAD: The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the federal cabinet on Friday gave its approval for a 20% hike in prices of essential drugs for a second time in less than three months, making them out of the reach of the poor people amid soaring inflation.

The decision was made during the ECC meeting held with Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Ishaq Dar, according to a statement issued by the Finance Division.

The ECC, on February 10, approved an increase in the prices of 20 medicines, including paracetamol.

"To ensure continuous availability of drugs in the market, the ECC allowed as a one-time dispensation, allowed manufacturers and importers to increase their existing MRPs



of essential drugs equal to 70% increase in CPI (with a cap of 14%) and MRPs of all other drugs and lower priced drugs an increase up to 70% on the basis of average CPI for current year i-e 1st July, 2022 to 01st April 2023 with condition that it should be considered as an annual increase for the financial year 2023-24 and no increase under this category will be granted in next financial year," read the statement.

The Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination presented a summary on increase in maximum retail prices of drugs based on the recommendations of the Policy Board of DRAP in the wake of the devaluation of the rupee and inflation.

The ECC further advised the Policy Board to review the situation after three months — in

July 2023 and make its recommendations to the federal govt regarding price decrease if the rupee appreciates its value.

Meanwhile, the ECC considered and approved a summary of Ministry of National Food Security and Research regarding the fixation of wheat procurement targets for the provinces of Sindh, Punjab, and Balochistan for wheat crop 2022-23 along with cash credit limit. Govt

of Sindh assigned a procurement target of 1.400 MMT with a procurement price of Rs 4000/40 Kg. Govt of Punjab assigned procurement target of 3.500 MMT with procurement price Rs 3900/40 Kg. Govt of Balochistan assigned a procurement target of 0.100 MMT with a procurement price of Rs. 3900/40 Kg.

The ECC also considered and approved Rs. 35 million additional funds as a technical supplementary grant in favour of the Ministry of Interior for the establishment of Passport Processing Centers (PPCs) at the Tehsil level in 30 administrative units throughout the country and creation of 30 posts of MRP operational officers in Department of Immigration and Passports, subject to the approval of the Austerity Committee. Agencies

## FO rejects irresponsible remarks by Indian authorities

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has rejected any insinuation that links Islamabad with terrorism anywhere including by Indian authorities.

At her weekly media briefing in Islamabad on Friday, Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said we believe that recent Indian comments in this regard are unwarranted and have no basis.

Replying to a question about Indian spy Commander Kulbhushan Jadhav, the Spokesperson said he was

found involve in terrorist activities in Pakistan and his arrest and presence here is a testimony of India's strong and repeated involvement in terrorism in Pakistan.

She said Pakistan wishes to have peace in the region and with all our neighbours including India. We also expect India to take steps to create an environment which facilitates dialogue between Pakistan and India on all disputes including the core issue of Jammu and Kashmir.

Regarding the upcoming SCO Foreign Ministers Conference in India, Mumtaz



Zahra Baloch said Pakistan has always been committed to regional cooperation and we will also play a role in strengthening and success of the SCO. She said any negative state-

ments and development cannot dissuade Pakistan from playing its part in the organization of which Pakistan is also an equal member.

About evacuation of strand-

ed Pakistanis from Sudan, the Spokesperson said so far we have evacuated 847 Pakistanis from Khartoum to Port Sudan and some of them have already been transported to Jeddah while others are being moved to Jeddah on ferries operated by the Saudi Government.

She said we are engaged with friendly countries in the region and especially grateful to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for facilitating this process by providing transport by ferry from Port Sudan to Jeddah and also hosting Pakistani nationals until their repatriation to Pakistan.

## PDM govt has 'no power to dissolve' Sindh, Balochistan assemblies

Rana Sanaullah hints at general elections in October this year

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah has clarified that the federal government does not have the power to dissolve the provincial assemblies in Sindh and Punjab — a condition for holding early elections simultaneously across the country.

Speaking to a private tv channel on Friday, the interior minister said that the provincial assemblies in Sindh and Punjab would complete their constitutional term on August 13.

His remarks came hours after the second round of talks between the Pakistan Democratic Movement-led government and the PTI held in Senate's Committee Room on the election date. The ruling parties and the PTI are set to hold the "final" round of talks on May 2 (Tuesday) after the former ruled out the possibility of a deadlock between the sides.



Last week, Chief Justice of Pakistan Umar Ata Bandial urged the ruling alliance and the opposition to sit together for talks on elections for the sake of the Constitution.

The apex court had directed the political parties to decide on the election date by April 26, but no progress was made till the deadline. In yesterday's hearing, the top court mentioned that it cannot ask parties to hold negotiations forcefully.

"The court cannot force [parties]

on a dialogue. The court only wants implementation on the Constitution so that the dispute is resolved," CJP Bandial said.

But the PDM and Jamiat Ulema-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman has decided to stay away from the talks as his party believes that the negotiations with the PTI would bear no fruit.

Earlier this month, Federal Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal said that elections should be held on time in October this year.

Reiterating his party's stance, the security czar said that if the interim governments are formed in the provinces in August then the general elections would be possible in October this year.

Responding to a question, Sanaullah said that the PTI made a blunder

by dissolving its assemblies in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab. The Punjab and KP assemblies were dissolved by the Imran Khan-led party on January 14 and 18, respectively.

The deposed premier, who was voted out of office in April last year after a no-confidence motion, on April 24 revealed that he dissolved the provincial assemblies of Punjab and KP after the former army chief General (ret'd) Qamar Javed Bajwa advised him to do.

Meanwhile, his party — however — "backtrack" on the party chief's statement. The party's official Twitter account posted a screenshot of a Geo News' report regarding Khan's statement. It claimed that the report was "fake news".

Responding to a question, the interior minister said that if the negotiation teams reach a positive conclusion, it

## Census 2023: PBS extends date for fifth time

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) extended the date for the ongoing seventh population census for the fifth time on Friday.

The deadline for the enumeration — which was originally scheduled to be completed by April 4 — has been extended for 15 days to May 15. The exercise was initially extended till April 10 and then again till April 15, 20 and 30.

Separately, PBS officials briefed leaders of political parties on the ongoing census — which is being conducted digitally for the first time — including the process and the figures obtained so far.

Talking to the media after the briefing, Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal said his minist-

try wanted to ensure the census was conducted in a way that was "acceptable to all".

He added that some political parties raised objections to the census and added that progress in this regard was shared with them.

"The enumeration process in urban areas has been slow," he acknowledged. "Similarly, counting could not be done in remote areas. Some areas saw an unusual increase in population."

It has been decided to speed up the counting process, the minister shared.

Jamaat-e-Islami's (JI) Karachi Emir Hafiz Naeemur Rehman, who addressed the media alongside Iqbal, said he had apprised the PBS of his concerns. Agencies

## Ahsan for prompt steps to evolve effective cyber-security system

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Friday stressed the need for taking prompt measures to evolve an effective cyber-security system, terming it "the most important" for the country's economic and defence sectors.

Presiding over a meeting on the Cyber Security System in Pakistan, he asked to utilize the skills of cyber security experts in the private sector from within the country and abroad.

He emphasized efficiently tackling the confronted cyber-security-related threats in collaboration with the corporate sector; academia and national-level experts.

## FLA bars PTI leader Farrukh Habib from flying to Dubai

LAHORE: Former state minister and senior leader of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Farrukh Habib has been stopped from flying abroad by the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), sources told Geo News Friday. The sources said that Habib was going to Dubai via a Pakistan International Airlines flight when he was barred by the agency.

"He was stopped because his name was on the stop list," airport sources told the TV channel.

Habib also evaded FIA's attempt to "arrest" him and left the airport.

On Twitter, the PTI leader said that he was going to visit his family member who is undergoing liver transplant surgery abroad. Agencies

# Exuberant, bedazzled Pakistani truck art reaching hearts in China

*These vibrant, bedazzled trucks are an expression of Pakistani people*

ISLAMABAD: To celebrate the National Day of Pakistan and the Year of Tourism Exchanges between Pakistan and China, a Pakistani Truck Art Debut Exhibition themed Phool Patti: Jingle Journey kicked off at Silk Road International Arts Center, Langfang, China on Friday.

The dazzle of truck art from Pakistan won the hearts of Chinese visitors by its beautiful and artsy look and the deeply rooted tradition behind it.

"I like it," a Chinese college student enjoying the art on-site told the reporter. She learned that Pakistani trucks are more than just trucks. "These vibrant, bedazzled trucks are an expression of Pakistani people—they are traveling billboards that convey messages to the world." "Somehow you can sense the drivers and the artists who decorate their vehicles," she added since this colourful tradition celebrates their culture and their way of life. "These



moving, tangible pieces of art featured Pakistan's unique identity did wow me." Addressing the opening ceremony of the exhibition, Pakistan Ambassador to China Moin ul Haque pinpointed that the event is part of the efforts aimed at building a close and culturally rich "China-Pakistan Community of Shared Future" in the new era.

"Termed as 'Art on Wheel' by many, this artistic expression represents cheerfulness, optimism, appreciating the beautiful aspects of nature and seeing life in its brightest and positive way," the ambassador pinpointed, wishing the audience a wonderful experience of a rich cultural medley from Pakistan.

"Truck art has never been shown in China. I think this exhibition will be a rare opportunity to allow more people in China to know and appreciate this art form which is full of national characteristics," said Yang Zhi and Yang Hui, organizers of the exhibition.

Co-organized by the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Beijing, and Silk Road International Arts Center, the exhibition will last to July 24. As part of a cultural exchange project between both countries, the exhibition features a series of commissioned works and large-scale site-specific works, live events, along with

educational programs.

"Our goal is to promote Pakistani Truck Art in China with our local audience, present the values and celebrate the shared human experience through the transformative power of art," a source from Silk Road International Arts Center told China Economic Net, adding that they seek to uncover the full potential of digitizing Pakistani rich cultural heritage and foster a sense of community and connection.

"Truck art is a sort of Pakistani folk art which represents the dreams, inspirations and imagination of the people and the artists. Ornate, colourful and vibrant expressions of 'Truck Art' are more than just a cultural heritage. With time passing by this sort of art is not just restricted to trucks anymore—it is now a popular and unique art of the world and has been used as a theme by many fashion designers for a wide range of products. APP

## Chinese CG calls on Sindh Chief Secretary

KARACHI: Chinese General (CG) of China, Yang Yundong called on Sindh Chief Secretary Dr. Muhammad Sohail Rajput at the Sindh Secretariat here on Thursday.

During the meeting, issues of mutual interest including promoting bilateral relations were discussed, said a statement.

Sindh Chief Secretary assured the Chinese CG of the support of the provincial government and said that the Sindh government and the people of Sindh value brotherly relations with China.

He added that there are very good investment opportunities for Chinese companies and businessmen in the energy and agriculture sectors in Sindh province.

Dr. Mohammad Sohail Rajput said that he appreciates the cooperation of the Chinese government during the floods.

During the meeting, it was agreed to work on the agriculture and technology sectors in Sindh.

At the end, Chinese Consul General Yang Yundong thanked the provincial government for its support and cooperation.

The Chief Secretary Sindh presented Sindhi cap and Ajrak to the Chinese Consul General. APP

## Sanam Marvi shines on Spotify EQUAL's Times Square billboard



ISLAMABAD: Sanam Marvi, a celebrated Sufi and Folk singer in Pakistan, was recently announced as the Ambassador for Spotify's EQUAL Pakistan program for the month of April. Sanam, who has been ruling over the hearts and minds of listeners across the globe for the past 14 years, has recently been featured on Spotify EQUAL's digital billboard in Times Square, NYC, standing tall, as is her stature in the global music landscape.

## DC Quetta reviews anti-polio drive to start on May 15

QUETTA: Deputy Commissioner Quetta Shahak Baloch on Friday said that all possible measures were being taken to eradicate the polio virus with joint strategy in order to ensure easy access to immunization for all children and to identify high-risk areas.

A system is compatible with modern requirements, making all necessary arrangements and a joint action plan for the success of the campaign are also being drawn up so that polio eradication is on the way. Obstacles can be dealt with effectively.

He expressed these views while presiding over the DPEC review meeting regarding the anti-polio campaign arrangements and other issues starting from May 15, 2023.

On this occasion Additional Deputy Commissioner General Quetta Khalil Murad, District Health Officer, DLOHO, National Program and CMOs officers and representatives of other related institutions were present.

Deputy Commissioner Quetta further said that in the current situation, all possible steps were being taken to implement the National Emergency Action Plan to eradicate polio.

However, there is a determination for the measures taken to prevent the polio virus in the district.

He said that the current goals of the polio campaign were to be achieved through the best strategy saying that the virus was detected in any area as soon as possible and every effort was made to eradicate it.

He said that during the anti-polio campaign, the schedule and procedures of the teams should be improved so that the vaccinations could be easily delivered to all the children.

He said that for the success and improvement of the polio campaign, all communication tools should be used for activities to eradicate polio.

In this regard, steps should be taken to educate all stakeholders about the efficacy of vaccines and address concerns and find out the reasons for the non-vaccination of parents and address them promptly, he said.

## People's Party workers ready to carry forward party ideology

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Organizing South Punjab Digital Media Convention on behalf of Pakistan People's Party. Participation of social media team representatives from different areas of South Punjab in Digital Media Convention Addressing the convention, Sindh Provincial Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon said that the People's Party workers are ready to carry forward the party ideology.

Bilawal Bhutto gave me the responsibility of working on social media. Right now there is a war of truth and lies in Pakistan. People's Party has a political history. There is no party in Pakistan that has sacrificed. People's Party gave Shahadas. People's Party has given and saved the constitution.

Former Deputy Speaker National Assembly Faisal Karim Kundi said that Sajjad Hussain's son Shah Mehmood Ayub Khan's son Gohar Ayub and Zia-ul-Haq's son Ijaz-ul-Haq are giving lectures on democracy. We have to strengthen the social media in our capacity.

## Weather Alert

KARACHI: A view of launches and ships at Fish Harbor as fishermen are avoiding to visit deep sea after warning of sea storm from Meteorology Department in Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

# PTI struggling to save country: Zain Qureshi

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Senior vice president of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf South Punjab and former member of National and Provincial Assembly Makhdoomzada Zain Hussain Qureshi has said that achieving real freedom, protection of democratic values, supremacy of constitution and law is the goal of Tehreek-e-Insaf. Under the leadership of Imran Khan, they are struggling to save the country and for the supremacy of the constitution and law. Workers of Tehreek-e-Insaf endured the hardships of coercion, torture, imprisonment and imprisonment to achieve the goal of real freedom.



The destination is near, workers do their part to save the country. Support Imran Khan by making Tehreek-e-Insaf successful like in 2018 elections and 17 July by-elections. He expressed these views yesterday while addressing

corner meetings at various places in Union Council 62. He said that he is contesting the election not for himself but on Imran Khan's ideology on the platform of Tehreek-e-Insaf to save the country.

The parties against us are

doing politics of personal and interests. We are fighting elections to save the country and empower the people for political and economic stability in the country. If the people are empowered, their elected government will take concrete decisions to save the country. He said that the people of Pakistan have decided that the vote belongs only to Imran Khan. And people have decided to bring Imran Khan through the power of vote.

I appeal to Tehreek-e-Insaf workers to come out of their homes to save the country. Deliver Imran Khan's message door to door. In the past, the way you have made great efforts for the success

of Tehreek-e-Insaf, now it is time to make efforts once again for the success of Imran Khan and to strengthen the hands of Imran Khan. Succeed Tehreek-e-Insaf through the power of votes and send the looters home.

He said that thieves, robbers and incompetent people have been imposed on power. These people have put the country and the nation in trouble. By the power of the people's vote, remove the thieves and looters from power. He said Tehreek-e-Insaf is the only party whose workers are ideological. They endured oppression and violence during the last one year. But their morale and intentions did not drop

# Pakistan originated Aga Khan University to build a new campus in Kampala

Spokesman Report

KARACHI: Pakistan's first private university to expand its operations in Africa, the Aga Khan University (AKU) celebrated the start of construction of its new campus in Kampala at a ceremony attended by the First Lady of Uganda, Her Excellency Janet Museveni, and Princess Zahra Aga Khan.

The 60-acre campus located in the Nakawa area, at New Port Bell Road and Jinja Road will feature in its first phase a seven-storey University Centre, a nine-storey student housing building and the Aga Khan University Hospital, Kampala. The hospital will offer care in nearly two dozen specialties, ranging from family medicine to oncology.

The project represents one

of AKU's largest investments in East Africa to date. This will enable a significant expansion of the University's existing School of Nursing and Midwifery in Kampala and will also allow the University to begin training medical specialists in fields such as internal medicine and surgery. Construction of the University Centre and student housing is currently underway. Construction of the hospital will start early next year. A four-storey ambulatory care building will offer outpatient care in a wide range of specialties in advance of the hospital's completion.

"We know that through this facility, a new crop of exceptionally skilled and equipped nurses and midwives will be available to support the health sector all over Uganda in years to come," said

Her Excellency Janet Museveni, Minister of Education and Sports. "We look forward to witnessing this project succeed, as we experience international quality health care and a new generation of phenomenal leaders in this sector!"

"The Aga Khan Development Network's goal in East Africa is to build a network of clinics and hospitals that brings primary care as close to people's homes as possible, while also linking them seamlessly to advanced care," Princess Zahra Aga Khan said. "We aim for these facilities to be staffed by highly trained clinicians, equipped with the latest technologies, and prepared to address the region's changing burden of disease."

The land for the campus and hospital was generously provided

by the Government of Uganda, and speakers expressed their gratitude to His Excellency President Yoweri Museveni for his vision and his strong support of the project. Funding for construction was provided by His Highness the Aga Khan, generous donors and the Government of Germany's BMZ and KfW. Valuable support was also provided by the East African Community.

Designed by the award-winning architecture firm Legorreta, AKU's Kampala campus and hospital will form an important part of the Aga Khan Development Network's extensive health care system in East Africa. AKU and the Aga Khan Health Services operate five hospitals and almost 100 clinics that care for more than 1.5 million patients annually in



Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda.

"We look forward to seeing the University train generations of future leaders in nursing, medicine, and other disciplines on this campus and to seeing the hospital provide international-quality

health care in a wide range of fields," said Ms. Cornelia Penzel, KfW Country Director for Uganda. "We are positive that AKU will continue to grow in scope, in excellence, and in impact."

AKU has been active in Ugan-

da for 23 years. In Kampala, it has graduated 1,300 nurses and midwives who are working in government and private-sector institutions in urban and rural communities across the country. Several hundred Ugandan teachers and journalists have graduated from or are enrolled at AKU and more than 2,000 have completed short courses. The University also operates three medical centres in Kampala. In total, AKU has graduated more than 4,500 nurses, doctors, teachers and journalists across East Africa.

"In the years and decades to come, countless lives will be saved and enriched on this site," said AKU President and Vice Chancellor Sulaiman Shahabuddin. "We can't wait to open our doors and show you the new face of AKU in Uganda."



Islamabad  
15° - 23° Clear

**SERVICES**

**Namaz Timings**

Fajr ..... 3:52 am  
Zohr ..... 12:05 pm  
Asr ..... 4:52 pm  
Maghrib ..... 6:48 pm  
Isha ..... 8:19 pm

**EMERGENCY**

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

**Women Police Stations**

Islamabad ..... 9222596  
Rawalpindi ..... 9270601-20

**ENQUIRY**

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

**HOSPITALS**

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

**DEPARTMENTS**

CDA ..... 9221334-43  
CDA ..... 9208301-04

*Employee Welfare Association elections held in AIOU*

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University's Employees Welfare Association (EWA) elections for the year 2023-25 were held yesterday in the main campus of the university. Ittehad Group and Alfatah Group contested the election. Ittehad group won 7 out of 11 seats while Alfatah group won 4 seats. AIOU administration had formally established the Election Commission Office for this election and the Controller of Examinations, Mian Muhammad Riaz was appointed as the Chief Election Commissioner who conducted the election in a very impartial, transparent, peaceful, and pleasant atmosphere.

According to the results, Yasir Mehmood (President), Sadiq Soomro (Senior Vice President), Faisal Munir (Vice President), Amjad Rehman (General Secretary), Aftab Ahmed (Deputy General Secretary), Mohammad Saeed Khan (Joint Secretary), Mohammad Ayas (Finance Secretary), Imran Ahmed (Information Secretary), Yasir Nabi (Sports Secretary), Haq Nawaz (Culture Secretary) and Mohammad Shafiq (Communication Secretary) have been elected.

After the results, the newly elected president of EWA, Yasir Mehmood, thanked the university administration for conducting the election in a peaceful environment and said that we believe in table talk to solve the problems of the employees. He said that we will stand by the side of the administration for the development of the university.

# Govt sets target to enroll all 70,000 out of school children: Rana Tanveer

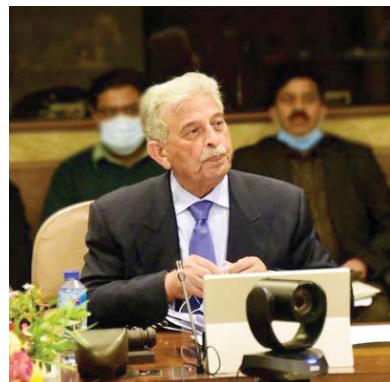
Education Minister says all-out efforts were being made to enroll them in schools by June 30

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training Rana Tanveer Hussain on Friday informed the National Assembly that the government had set an ambitious target to bring all 70,000 out of school children in the Islamabad Capital Territory to zero by June 30.

Replying to various supplementary questions during the Question Hour, the minister said currently, around 70,000 children were out of school in Islamabad and all-out efforts were being made to enroll them in schools by June 30.

Rana Tanveer said the government had also launched the Schools on Wheels initiative in Islamabad to provide education to the children of rural areas. For the purpose, buses were converted into mobile schools having state of the art



facilities, including toilets.

He said on the directives of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the ministry was also planning to provide such mobile buses facility to the children of flood-affected areas of the Balochistan

and Sindh. Even the World Bank (WB) had also appreciated the government's initiative, besides assuring provision of 30 buses for the noble cause, he added.

He said the WB also intended to introduce such system in Africa. The ministry was ready to assist other provinces if the provincial governments provided buses, he said.

He said the government had also started the tele school system, besides focusing on distance learning. It had also undertaken accelerated learning programme with the cooperation of the United Kingdom to enhance literacy rate in the country, he added.

To another question, he said 0.8 per cent increase was recorded in the literacy rate in last nine months.

Later, the chair referred the matter to the standing committee concerned for detailed deliberations. APP

## Tent Pegging Competition

ISLAMABAD: Players are participating in Tent Pegging Competition during "Annual Islamabad Championship 2023" at F-9 Park in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

## Pakistan-Ukraine bilateral relations and regional developments

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Strategic Perspectives (CSP) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) organized an In-House Session with H.E. Markian Chuchuk, Ambassador of Ukraine to Pakistan, on Pakistan-Ukraine bilateral relations and regional developments.

The In-House Session was chaired by Amb. Sohail Mahmood, Director General ISSI. Participants included: Major General (Retd.) Nadir Khan, Ambassador-designate to Ukraine; Former Ambassador Fauzia Nasreen, COMSATS; Ambassador (R) Nadeem Riyaz, President, IRS; Maj. Gen. Athar Abbas (Retd.), Former Ambassador of Pakistan to Ukraine; Dr. Tughrul Yamin, Senior Research Fellow, IPS; Dr. Farah Naz, Assistant Professor, NUST; Dr. Adil Sultan, Air University; Mr. Asadullah Khan, Senior



Research Fellow, CASS; Mr. Joshua Arthur, AD, Europe, MoFA.

Dr. Neelum Nigar, Director CSP, and members of CSP research team were also present.

The deliberations were focused on the state of Pakistan-Ukraine relations, which

were characterized as long-standing, cordial and growing in depth and breadth.

On the evolving situation since 24 February 2022, the security and economic impacts of Russia-Ukraine conflict, the prospects of a political settlement, China's potential role as peace negotiator, and other

related aspects were discussed in the interactive discussion that followed Ambassador Markian Chuchuk's talk. Participants shared their views, assessments and suggestions.

Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman BoG ISSI made the concluding remarks.

### All parties agree on same election date in country: Kundi

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Poverty Alleviation and Social Protection Faisal Karim Kundi Friday said all the political parties, except the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) wanted holding of elections across the country simultaneously.

Negotiations with the PTI were underway and hopefully a consensus would be reached on the elections, which would help end unrest in the country, he said while talking to a private channel.

Kundi said talks was a political process which was pursued by all the political parties. The Pakistan Peoples Party also favoured dialogue in order to promote democracy and bring political stability in the country, he added. APP

### Grand Eid Milan event at RAC on Saturday

RAWALPINDI: A grand Eid Milan event will be organized at the Rawalpindi Arts Council on April 30, Saturday, 5 pm under the management of Dolphin Communication CEO Aasma Ismail Butt, artists and journalists will be invited to the event, Musical night, magic show, dances, skits and other colorful programs will also be presented in the Eid Milan party.

### Taxing sugary drinks

### Civil society rally urges govt to prioritizing public health



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Increasing tax on sugary drinks can help generating significant revenue and reduce the hospital expenditure. The common man is not effected when tax is increased on sugary drinks as these are not necessary items and their consumption only add diseases burden and increase hospital expenditure. Government of Pakistan shall increase Federal Excise Duty (FED) on all sugary drinks to a minimum of 50% in 2023-24 budget. This was said by experts during a civil society rally organized by Pakistan National Heart Association (PANAHA) in front of National Press Club Islamabad. The guests included Maj. Gen. (R) Masud Ur Rehman Kiani, President PANAHA, Munawar Hussain, Consultant Food Policy Program at Global Health Advocacy Incubator, Mr. Afzal Butt, President Pakistan Union of Journalists, Molana Hafiz Muhammad Iqbal Rizvi, District Khateeb & Chairman Aman Committee, Mr. Abdul Hafeez, Ex-Commissioner, representatives of civil society, media students and people from all walks of life. Participants of the rally were holding placards demanding government to prioritize public health instead of the corporate interest and make sugary drinks less affordable by increasing taxes on these drinks which are causing obesity and several chronic diseases.

Gen. Masud ur Rehman Kiani said that consumption of sugary drinks is one of the major reason for alarmingly growing obesity, heart diseases type 2 diabetes, several types of cancer, kidney and liver diseases. He mentioned that Pakistan is ranked number one with highest growth rate of diabetes during the last 10 years. Pakistan is ranked 3rd highest globally with 33 million people living with diabetes in 2021. If no policy action taken immediately, the number of people living with diabetes will increase to 62 million by 2045.

Munawar Hussain while addressing to the rally said that growing consumption of sugary drinks is a serious threat to health and economy in the country. The PIDE estimated Rs. 428 billion as cost of obesity in 2015. Similarly, as per International Diabetes Federation, the annual cost of managing diabetes in Pakistan has been increased to USD 2640 million in 2021. Increasing tax on sugary drinks is a triple win for the government, as the policy intervention does not cost anything to government, help reduce disease burden and hospital expenditure, and increase revenue.

He requested Pakistan's Prime Minister, Finance Minister and Chairman FBR to consider increasing the Federal Excise Duty (FED) on all sugary drinks to a minimum of 50% in 2023-24 budget. He said that water, unsweetened milk and lassi are healthier drinks and should not be taxed for better health outcomes.

While addressing to rally, Sana Ullah Ghumman said that beverage industry is misguiding policy makers at every step and creating barriers to the policy process. Today health professionals, civil society, teachers, students, media are demanding Govt. of Pakistan to give priority to public health over beverage industry's corporate interests. While referring to a national opinion poll conducted by Pakistan Health Research Council in 2021, he said that 78% adult Pakistanis supported increasing tax on sugary drinks.

Other speakers also demanded government to increase taxes on Sugary drinks in 2023-24 budget and use this revenue to subsidize healthy diet.

### Govt committed to provide all possible facilities to Hujjaj: Talha



Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Talha Mehmood has expressed government's commitment to provide all possible facilities to Pakistani pilgrims intending to perform Hajj this year.

In an interview with state-run media, the Minister said he is in contact with Saudi authorities to finalize the arrangements and resolve travel and accommodation related issues of Hujjaj.

Talha Mehmood said well trained and physically fit Moavineen are being finalized in a transparent way. He said a comprehensive training program has also been arranged for the Hujjaj and Moavineen that will start from Monday.

Regarding commencement of the Hajj Flight Operation, he said all the airlines concerned have been directed to provide the best possible facilities to Hujjaj.

The Minister also urged the Hujjaj to undertake necessary trainings suggested by the Ministry and follow the guidelines which are also available on Ministry's social media platforms.

**Behind The Mask**

## Pakistan's first online interactive documentary on Lady Health Workers

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Public Services International (PSI) announces the launch of Pakistan's first online interactive documentary experience, providing critical insight into the lives of lady health workers who continue to stand on the frontlines of Pakistan against all infectious diseases, saving hundreds of lives, every single day.

Lady health workers are part of a government program that was developed in 1994 to provide basic health care services to underprivileged

communities in rural and low-income urban areas. They have played a crucial role in polio vaccine dispensation, pre-and post-natal awareness and healthcare for rural mothers, and health education and promotion, family planning, and most recently, for COVID-19.

Divided into a series of episodes, "Behind the Mask: Pakistan" is a key episode which focuses on the struggles faced by healthcare workers specifically in Pakistan, chronicling their challenges and the impact of COVID-19 on their lives. The Pakistan episode of the documentary highlights the work of

Hassena, a lady health worker [LHW] who, along with her colleagues, formed the All Sindh Lady Health Workers and Employees Union (ASLHWEU) to advocate for better working conditions and wages.

With "Behind the Mask: Pakistan", PSI campaigns for flood relief, the restoration of the health risk allowance for health workers, provision of the service structure for lady health workers, and the cancellation of debt, including Pakistan's sovereign debt as part of climate reparations.

Indeed, despite the critical frontline

role of lady health workers in the fight against diseases such as polio, cholera, and COVID-19, they continue to face harassment, terrible working conditions, low pay, inflation and wage stagnation, lack of new hiring despite increased need, threats as polio workers, vaccines shortages and inequality, and a lack of recognition. To this end the Behind The Mask: Pakistan episode focuses on key issues such as vaccine access, wages and hiring, the service structure, and ILO Convention 190, which seeks to protect people from violence and harassment at work.

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# Setbacks for Rishi Sunak as key UK elections approach

**Andrew Hammond**

**R**ishi Sunak faces his first major electoral challenge as UK prime minister on May 4, yet his government is on the rocks following the resignation last Friday of Deputy Prime Minister Dominic Raab. More than half a year into his term of office, Sunak has had a very mixed start in 10 Downing Street. To be sure, he has not experienced a similar disastrous chain of events to his predecessor Liz Truss, which saw her prime ministership implode within 50 days. However, the premiership of Truss is an exceptionally low baseline from which to judge Sunak's term. In practice, this has had some ups but a lot of downs too, including a significant number of Cabinet resignations for ethics-related reasons, starting with Cabinet Office minister Gavin Williamson last year and culminating (so far) with Raab last week.

To be fair to Sunak, there have been a small number of successes. This includes the negotiation of the Windsor Framework that seeks to resolve the challenges of the originally negotiated Northern Ireland protocol.

It is Raab's resignation, however, that may well be more salient in terms of shaping the May elections. These

ballots include district councils, unitary authorities and directly elected mayors in England, as well as all local councils in Northern Ireland.

A majority of the seats up for grabs were last contested in May 2019. In those ballots, the Conservatives lost more than 1,000 seats and control of several councils, while the Liberal Democrats managed to make the most gains. If the Conservatives lose 500 of the more than 3,300 seats they are defending across England to Labour on May 4, it would be the first time in more than two decades that the Conservatives are not the biggest local party in England.

While it is by no means sure that Labour will win a big majority at the next general election, a significant win for the party on May 4 would fuel the growing perception that the party will emerge with the largest number of MPs in Westminster next time. This is encouraging growing numbers of Conservative MPs to announce that they will stand down rather than defend their seats in the general election.

With the Conservatives almost certain to lose seats on May 4, an important question for the government will be whether it can subsequently regain any political momentum. This is possible, but is made less likely because it lacks energy after almost a decade and a half in power.

This is, in part, because so many ministers in Sunak's Cabinet are holdovers from Johnson's governments from 2019 to 2022 (a significant number of whom were in political exile under Truss), including Michael Gove, Oliver Dowden and Ben Wallace, who occupy the same roles as in Johnson's last Cabinet. Other ministers who served in Johnson's top team who are now in new Cabinet jobs include Sunak himself, James Cleverly, Grant Shapps, Gillian Keegan, Theresa Coffey, Steve Barclay, Penny Mordaunt, Robert Jenrick and Suella Braverman.

However, even if the Conservatives have a very bad night on May 4, Sunak may yet escape a leadership challenge. This is, in part, because of the declining political fortunes of Johnson, whose standing within the party has slipped (perhaps only temporarily) recently.

Firstly, he last month received a grilling from the House of Commons Privileges Committee, where he was flustered by questions posed by a cross-party group of MPs, including Conservatives Bernard Jenkin and Charles Walker, about the so-called partygate scandal during the lockdown era of the pandemic. Added to this, Johnson had hoped to lead a major backbench rebellion against Sunak's Windsor Framework, but this failed to materialize.

So, barring a major calamity in the coming months, Sunak is set to lead

the Conservatives into the next general election, which will most likely be in 2024. But he has a massive political hill to climb.

The task is so difficult for Sunak because public opinion is widely skeptical of his government. He also knows that no party in modern UK political history has won five elections in a row.

So, he has a huge challenge ahead and he faces this in a context where Johnson (and indeed the much wider number of ministers leaving office in recent years, including Truss) could become significant political thorns in his side. In recent weeks, Truss has been renewing her push for a radical low-tax agenda in the face of the threat from non-democratic states. In a recent speech, she argued that a "cartel of complacency" is damaging economic growth in the West and accused key governments of aiding China, Russia and others by refusing to offer tax cuts.

Taken together, this is why Sunak's prime ministership is so perilously positioned. While he is now likely to last in office to fight the next general election, the political winds are blowing against him winning a fifth successive victory for the Conservatives. (Courtesy: Arab News)

*Andrew Hammond is an Associate at LSE IDEAS at the London School of Economics.*

## China's rise and development

**C**hina's rise as a global economic and political power has been a significant development in the international community over the past few decades. The Chinese government has repeatedly emphasized the concept of "peaceful development," which means that China seeks to achieve economic growth and political influence without engaging in military conflicts or aggressive behavior towards other countries.

China's peaceful development strategy is rooted in its historical experience and the principles of its foreign policy. China has a long history of prioritizing peace and stability, and its foreign policy emphasizes non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, respect for sovereignty, and peaceful resolution of disputes.

China's economic growth and development have been remarkable in recent years, with a rapidly growing middle class and the emergence of major Chinese companies such as Huawei and Alibaba. China has also become a major investor in infrastructure projects in developing countries through its Belt and Road Initiative. China's economic rise has been one of the most significant developments in the world in recent decades. Since initiating economic reforms in the late 1970s, China has transformed itself from a centrally planned economy to a market-oriented one and has become the world's second-largest economy after the United States.

The key factors behind China's economic success include its large population, abundant natural resources, and government policies aimed at attracting foreign investment, promoting exports, and developing infrastructure. China has also invested heavily in education and technological innovation, and its emphasis on innovation and entrepreneurship has led to the emergence of many successful companies.

China's economic growth has lifted millions of people out of poverty and has led to significant improvements in the standard of living for its citizens. However, the rapid pace of economic growth has also led to challenges such as income inequality, environmental degradation, and concerns about the sustainability of the growth model.

In recent years, China has shifted its focus towards more sustainable and inclusive growth, with an emphasis on technological innovation, domestic consumption, and environmental protection. The Chinese government has also announced ambitious plans such as the "Made in China 2025" initiative and the Belt and Road Initiative, which aim to boost domestic innovation and promote economic cooperation and connectivity with other countries.

Pakistan and China has a long history of strategic relationship which is always on upwards trajectory based on mutual trust and understanding. China being a time tested friend of Pakistan always stood with us on multiple occasions. The peaceful rise of China that is mainly based on development and cooperation with rest of the world and moving away from hegemonic designs and conflicts will have far reaching consequences on the world. China has played a very constructive role in bridging the differences between Saudi Arabia and Iran. By doing this China has signaled that it is going to play a leading role in international security environment. On the other hand, this rising role of China is being taken as a competition between United States. It is important for Pakistan to balance its relationship with both China and United States.

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## Why de-dollarization is gaining momentum worldwide

**Tom Fowdy**

**S**ince the end of the Second World War, as part of the "Bretton-Woods" economic system created by the United States, the U.S. dollar has been the world's primary and hegemonic currency. The dollar has dominated the global financial and banking system, as well as acting as the primary instrument of trade and valuation for all key commodities, such as crude oil and gold. Through this system, the United States has been afforded extraordinary influence over the global economy through its central bank, the Federal Reserve, as well as the organizations it owns a majority share, including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

In having such privileges, the United States has long been able to weaponize the dollar for political means, using it as a tool to sanction and coerce other countries. The ability to blacklist an individual, an institution, or an entire nation from the usage of the dollar has powerful and immediate consequences, effectively serving to isolate them from the global economy through the "deterrent" effect it creates. If a targeted entity is subject to sanctions, banks cannot lend to them due to the penalties they may face from the U.S. government, nor will large corporations risk doing business with them. This allows the U.S. to apply "extraterritorial jurisdiction" to those outside of its immediate territory.

For a long time, this was the accepted orthodoxy, especially when the United States was the only major power in the world. However, the world is changing, and the last few years have seen a major trend

toward what is described as "de-dollarization": the lessening dependency on the U.S. dollar and its accompanying financial systems as a means of transaction, instead settling trade, investment, and other deals in bilateral currencies. There are many reasons why this shift is taking place.

The first, as noted by the factors above, is political. Countries increasingly feel that over-reliance on the U.S. dollar subjects them to political control by the United States, which can undermine their key enterprises and economy at a whim for geopolitical ends.

After the United States withdrew from 2018's Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), also known as the "Iran deal," a UN-recognized treaty, it then imposed thousands of unilateral sanctions on Iran, contrary to international law, attempting to isolate the country from the global economy. Even though European leaders supported the deal, the U.S. nonetheless was able to use the sanctions to force EU businesses to withdraw from the country, whether they liked it or not. This demonstrated a key problem of "U.S. unilateralism" and forced the European Union to create its own independent mechanism of payment – a move to de-dollarization.

But it has ultimately been the geopolitical changes of the past few years, including the reversion of global affairs to great power politics and, of course, the war in Ukraine, which has deeply accelerated the trend towards de-dollarization. This is largely due to the existing international order having fragmented, with countries becoming much more sensitive about their national sovereignty amidst U.S. pressure. For example, while the U.S. placed thousands of sanctions on Russia, countries have sought to trade

in their own bilateral currencies in order to obtain Russian commodities or services.

China also last week announced a deal with Brazil to settle bilateral trade in their own currencies, motivated by economic and financial incentives. Besides geopolitics, the dominance of the U.S. dollar also allows the U.S. to manipulate the global financial system to its own benefit, often at the expense of others, especially in terms of interest rates. Following disruptions caused to the global economy by COVID-19 and the U.S.'s attempt to force its economy to restart by injecting trillions of dollars into the money supply, leading to an inflation boom, the Federal Reserve responded by repeatedly increasing interest rates.

Because the dollar is the primary medium for the financial markets, these interest rate rises sent many developing countries into economic and debt crises. In other words, the U.S. dollar discriminates against the global south and provides an obstacle to economic development. Therefore, less dependence on the dollar is a necessity for many countries to be able to not only secure their national sovereignty but also improve economic development. The U.S. dollar cements a U.S.-centric world, meaning all other countries are subject to their economic and political preferences. But now, the political world climate is shifting toward multipolarity, and, as such, countries are increasingly conscious of these pitfalls. De-dollarization is therefore gaining momentum worldwide as many countries look for new means to establish trade and investment on their own terms. (Courtesy: china.org.cn)

*Tom Fowdy is a British political and international relations analyst and a graduate of Durham and Oxford universities.*

## Now is not time for world to abandon Khartoum

**Herve De Charette**

**A**fter the war that ruined Yemen and is still ruining it today, after the conflict that has ravaged Ethiopia in recent years, a new humanitarian tragedy is looming in Sudan. These three almost neighboring countries, though very different from each other, have in common that they are deeply divided for historical, ethnic or religious reasons — sometimes all three.

Sudan, which became independent in 1956 after lengthy Egyptian-British rule, has experienced numerous crises: a long and cruel dictatorship under the tyranny of Omar Bashir after a military coup in 1989, an endless civil war in Darfur, the secession of the southern provinces, before the regime collapsed in 2019 under pressure from the army. Since April 15 the country has once again fallen into chaos because rival generals are fighting for power, spreading panic and hardship among the population.

However, the news that first came out of Khartoum, the capital, was the general closure of embassies and the accelerated flight of foreign nationals. The international media were all over it. The images that were broadcast were of lines of vehicles rushing out of the capital toward Egypt. States with the means to do so have organized, with the assistance of the UN, the evacuation of their nationals, negotiating with the military forces on the ground for facilities and security guarantees. This is what the US, UK and Italy, among others, have done.

As for France, it has chartered air assets to organize flights to Djibouti to evacuate its diplomats and nationals, about 400 people. All this is understandable and perfectly legitimate, but one can imagine what the unfortunate Sudanese people, abandoned in the midst of a catastrophe, may think. The flight of these ambassadors is lacking a little grace.

The fact is that this conflict is a matter between the regular army, led by Gen. Abdel Fattah el-Burhan, and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces led by Gen. Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, known as Hemedti. After the fall of Bashir and the failure of attempts to establish

a government that included both civilian and military figures, the two generals joined forces in 2021 to remove civilian notables and take power together, with Hemedti becoming the number two in the regime led by Burhan. So this is an intra-military affair, but as always it is the civilian population who will pay a high price.

This obviously could not last. Hemedti broke the agreement and started hostilities. The confrontation will therefore be violent and will be seen through to the end. We should expect the worst. Already, the damage is considerable and the victims number in the thousands.

Sudan is a poor country where almost a third of the 45 million inhabitants suffer from hunger. It needs international humanitarian aid, not a civil war between armies, Sudanese against Sudanese, which is likely to be cruel and devastating. The flight of foreign residents shows what the international community expects.

It is feared that the conflict will become international. In 2021, Egypt and Russia supported the generals' putsch, while the West condemned it. This time the situation is different. It seems that Russia is behind the Hemedti rebellion. There are even whispers that the Wagner militia, already present in Darfur, could intervene in Khartoum in support of Hemedti. On the contrary, the West should join Egypt in supporting the head of the army, Gen. Burhan, who has a certain legitimacy. What is likely to be decisive is the attitude of the Gulf states, which have some influence in Sudan and could contribute to an armistice.

So this is not the time to leave Khartoum. Neither the US, nor Europe, nor the Arab countries, nor of course the African Union, have any interest in allowing a new devastating war to take hold in the Horn of Africa, one that is likely to turn out as badly as the two previous ones in Yemen and Ethiopia. It is therefore urgent to do everything possible to prevent it from becoming entrenched in this unfortunate country. (Courtesy: Arab News)

*Herve De Charette is a former French Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Housing, mayor of Saint-Florent-le-Vieil and member of parliament for Maine-et-Loire.*

# UNSC Kosovo-Serbia session turns into nearly 4 hours of name calling

*Peace needs trust, says world body's envoy Caroline Ziadeh*

CHICAGO: A United Nations Security Council status update on efforts to achieve a final peace between Serbia and Kosovo turned into nearly four hours of name calling with accusations blaming each side for everything from ethnic cleansing to intentional diplomatic obstruction.

The purpose of the meeting was to review a 26-page "monitoring report" issued by the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, headed by UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General Caroline Ziadeh that spelled actions taken to ease tensions and provide support.

But rather than address the report, representatives for Serbia and Kosovo instead outlined grievances blocking their hopes for peace during the three and one-half hour session that prompted most other participating nations to take rhetorical sides.

UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General head of UN Interim Administration Mission (UNIAM) in Kosovo, Caroline Ziadeh of Lebanon

opened the session with encouraging words summarizing monitoring efforts and acknowledging agreements previously signed by Serbia and Kosovo leaders including those recently in Brussels intended to achieve "normalization."

"Our focus is on the empowerment of communities to flourish in spaces where ethically divided prejudice and political rhetoric are being transcended. Trust building can directly help light the path to political normalization," Ziadeh, who is from Lebanon, told the Security Council members and participants.

"Together these approaches mark a genuine path towards a more sustainable, peaceful and ultimately prosperous future for all."

Ziadeh emphasized that the two sides need to "overcome divisions caused by miscommunication and by frequent political invective, acknowledging "accusative rhetoric," "pitfalls" and "insufficient political will" without naming names.

First Deputy Prime Minister and

Minister of Foreign Affairs for the Republic of Serbia, Ivica Dacic vowed to abide by peaceful negotiations but said the efforts to achieve "normalization" are being sidelined by Kosovo's efforts to win independent statehood and EU membership without addressing the suffering and losses by Serbian citizens of Kosovo who have been forced to leave because of discrimination and tensions since the two territories separated.

"The harsh truth is that Kosovo and Metohija in the past 20 years has turned from a multi-ethnic environment into an almost ethnically pure territory," Dacic said.

"In Krishna, more than 40,000 Serbs used to live while today there are less than 100 of them. In the ancient imperial city of Prizren where I was born and in which today I need permission to visit, there used to be 10,000 Serbs and today there are only 20 left."

Dacic praised Ziadeh's efforts, but stressed that the situation in Kosovo is "complex and disturbing."



"I am convinced the efforts of the Special Representative of the Security Council, Miss Ziadeh, have constructive intentions ... however the fact is the report we are considering today is not and will never be sufficient for a comprehensive and essential understanding of all of the implications of

security and other challenges in Kosovo and Metohija and regional and global flows."

Dacic said noted that the Serbian population of Kosovo has been pushed out and no effort has been made to allow them to return to their homes or properties.

"There is still an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty and pressure towards Serbs and other Albanians on the ground," Dacic said.

"The harsh truth is that Kosovo and Metohija in the past 20 years has turned from a multi-ethnic environment into an almost ethnically pure territory. ... In Krishna, more than 40,000 Serbs used to live while today there are less than 100 of them. In the ancient imperial city or Prism where I was born and in which today I need permission to visit, there used to be 10,000 Serbs and today there are only 20 left."

Claiming that four of Serbia's most important Orthodox Churches in Kosovo built in the 1300s and on UNESCO's World Heritage Endanger list have experienced serious damage.

"There is no way that Kosovo can become a member of the United Nations because they do not have a majority ... we are absolutely devoted to dialogue. ... The other side is only interested in the independence of Kosovo

## Book Reading

BOGOTA: Children read books at an international book fair in Bogota, capital of Colombia, April 27, 2023. The book fair, running from April 18 to May 2, is expected to receive more than 600,000 visitors.



Photo: Xinhua

## 11 dead after Indonesia boat capsizes

PEKANBARU: Eleven people drowned in western Indonesia after a passenger boat carrying dozens overturned, an official said Friday.

Rescuers saved 62 people and found the bodies of mostly women and children after the accident off the coast of western Riau province on Thursday afternoon, local search and rescue agency official Kukuh Widodo said in a statement.

"The capsized boat carried 74 people. Sixty-two survived the incident, 11 are dead, and one other is still being searched for," Pekanbaru national search and rescue agency spokesperson Widodo said Friday.

The speedboat bound for Tanjung Pinang city in the Riau islands capsized shortly after leaving Tembilihan port, located 198 kilometers (123 miles) away in a neighboring province.

The cause of the accident was still being investigated, the official said.

He warned that the number of missing could grow as the precise number of people aboard the Evelyn Calista 01 was not confirmed. AFP

## Japan's PM to visit Egypt, other countries from today

TOKYO: Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida is scheduled to travel overseas from April 29 to May 5 to visit Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique and Singapore.

During his trip, Kishida will hold meetings with the leaders of these countries to discuss a wide range of topics including regional and international issues, Ukraine and bilateral relations.

Kishida will have a summit meeting in Cairo and meet with other dignitaries in Egypt on April 30. He will depart the following day for the Ghanaian capital Accra before flying on the same day to Nairobi in Kenya. He will arrive in Maputo, Mozambique, on May 3 and after a summit meeting there will depart for Singapore on May 4.

According to the Foreign Ministry, Kishida will show Japan's resolve to maintain and strengthen the international rule of law as Japan prepares to host the G7 Hiroshima Summit from May 19 to 21. Kishida also hopes to confirm further cooperation with the countries on his itinerary on various global issues.



## 6.0 magnitude earthquake jolts Indonesia

ANKARA: A 6.0 magnitude earthquake shook Indonesia on Friday, according to the country's Meteorological, Climatological, and Geophysical Agency (BMKG). In a statement, the agency said the earthquake hit off Maluku, an Indonesian province encompassing the central and southern Maluku Islands.

So far, no injuries or property damage have been reported.

The tremors were felt at around 16:19 local time (0919 GMT). The earthquake was measured at a depth of 60 kilometers (37 miles), with the epicenter around 167 kilometers (103 miles) northeast of Tual city, according to BMKG. Anadolu Agency

## France boosts border protection with 150 police amid migrant surge

LONDON: France is boosting its southern border protection with 150 police officers amid a surge in migrants leaving Libya and Tunisia to cross into the country from Italy, The Times reported.

Migrants who cross the Mediterranean are using Italy's border town of Ventimiglia to enter France, traversing mountain passes or swimming the short distance to the French town of Menton.

Almost 40,000 migrants have crossed the Mediterranean into Italy from North Africa this year, up from 9,500 in 2022.

The large majority of arrivals are leaving from Libya and Tunisia, with the latter serving as the exit point for migrants from sub-Saharan Africa.

This year, 661 migrants have drowned while attempting the dangerous journey, often on small metal dinghies.

As economic decline and drought ravage large parts of Africa, Italian authorities fear that migration numbers could climb further, with France preventively boosting its border protection in the south.

On the Italian island of Lampedusa, 2,700 migrants are being held in a center with a capacity of 400. This comes after more than 1,000 people arrived on the island on 20 separate vessels on Wednesday.

Save the Children spokesperson Giovanna Di Benedetto said: "The center is holding 400 unaccompanied minors, many from West Africa, including some under 10 years old."

"Some of them have been in the center for a month because there has been a reduction in spaces for them on the mainland."

"They are the most vulnerable yet here they are the most exposed to risk." Arab News

# UNSC urges 'swift reversal' of curbs on Afghan women's rights

*Resolution unanimously condemns Taliban admin's ban on women working for UN*

UNITED NATIONS: The UN Security Council unanimously condemned on Thursday a Taliban administration ban on Afghan women working for the United Nations in Afghanistan and called on Taliban leaders to "swiftly reverse" a crackdown on the rights of women and girls.

The resolution—drafted by the United Arab Emirates and Japan—describes the ban as "unprecedented in the history of the United Nations," asserts "the indispensable role of women in Afghan society" and says the ban on Afghan women working for the UN "undermines human rights and humanitarian principles."

UAE UN Ambassador Lana Nusseibeh said more than 90 countries co-sponsored the resolution "from Afghanistan's immediate neighborhood, from the Muslim world and from all corners of the earth."

"This ... support makes our fundamental message today even more significant—the world will not sit by silently as women in Afghanistan are erased from society," she told the council.

The Security Council vote came days before a planned international meet-



ing in Doha on May 1-2 on Afghanistan. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres will convene behind closed doors special envoys on Afghanistan from various countries to work on a unified approach to dealing with the Taliban.

"We will not stand for the Taliban's repression of women and girls," Deputy U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Robert Wood, told the council.

"These decisions are indefensible. They are not seen anywhere else in the world."

"The Taliban edicts are causing irreparable damage to Afghanistan."

Earlier this month the Taliban began enforcing the ban on Afghan women working for the UN after stopping most women working for humanitarian aid groups in December. Since toppling the Western-backed government in 2021, they have also tightened controls on

women's access to public life, including barring women from university and closing girls' high schools.

The Taliban says it respects women's rights in accordance with its strict interpretation of Islamic law. Taliban officials said decisions on female aid workers are an "internal issue."

The Security Council resolution also recognizes the need to address substantial challenges facing Afghanistan's economy, including through using assets belonging to Afghanistan's Central Bank for the benefit of the Afghan people.

The United States froze billions of the bank's reserves held in the U.S. and later transferred half of the money to a trust fund in Switzerland overseen by U.S., Swiss and Afghan trustees.

"As of today, what we have seen is only that assets have been transferred from one account to another, but not a single penny returned to the Afghan people," China's Deputy UN Ambassador Geng Shuang told the council.

Russia's UN Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia also called for the return of the Afghan Central Bank assets. Reuters

# Iran seizes oil tanker in Gulf, US Navy says

TEHRAN: Iran seized a Marshall Islands-flagged oil tanker in the Gulf of Oman in international waters on Thursday, the US Navy said, the latest in a series of seizures or attacks on commercial vessels in sensitive Gulf waters since 2019.

Iran's army said it had seized a Marshall Islands-flagged oil tanker in the Gulf of Oman after it collided with an Iranian boat, injuring several crewmen, Iranian state media reported.

"Two members of the boat's crew are missing and several were injured due to the collision of the ship with the boat," an army statement said.

The US Navy identified the vessel as the Advantage Sweet. According to Refinitiv ship tracking data, it is a Suezmax crude tanker that had been chartered by oil major Chevron (CVX.N) and had last docked in Kuwait.

Chevron said it is aware of the situation involving the Advantage Sweet and is "in contact with the vessel operator with the hope of resolving this situation as soon as possible," a spokesperson said.

The vessel's destination was listed as the US Gulf of Mexico port of Houston, ship tracking data showed.

Its manager is listed as Genel

Denizcilik Nakliyatı AS. The Turkey-based company did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The Marshall Islands Maritime Administrator said it was aware of the situation and was in communication with the vessel's owner/operator but declined to comment further.

"Iran's continued harassment of vessels and interference with navigational rights in regional waters are a threat to maritime security and the global economy," the US Navy said, adding Iran has in the past two years unlawfully seized at least five commercial vessels in the Middle East.

The US Navy added that after sending a P-8 Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft to monitor the situation, "we have since been able to determine the IRIN (Iranian navy) conducted the seizure."

Iranian authorities did not immediately respond to a Reuters request for comment.

About a fifth of the world's crude oil and oil products passes through the Strait of Hormuz, a narrow choke point between Iran and Oman which the Advantage Sweet had passed through, according to data from analytics firm Vortexa.

Maritime security company Ambrey said the vessel had been

boarded via helicopter. "The vessel did not show any signs of conducting evasive manoeuvres prior to the incident," it said. Munro Anderson, with maritime security company Dryad, said separately that Iran usually detained vessels for "leverage or signalling."

"The working hypothesis at the moment is that it could either be an arbitrary detention of a vessel by Iran in response to the US sailing its first unmanned vessel through the region last week—as a show of force," he said. "Or, it could be in response to the sanctions on the 24th (of April) by the US against personnel in Iran connected to

the IRGC (elite Revolutionary Guards)." Since 2019 there have been a series of attacks on shipping in the strategic Gulf waters at times of tension between the United States and Iran.

Iran last November released two Greek-flagged tankers it seized in the Gulf in May in response to the confiscation of oil by the United States from an Iranian-flagged tanker off the Greek coast.

Indirect talks between Tehran and Washington to revive Iran's 2015 nuclear pact with world powers have stalled since September over a range of issues, including the Islamic Republic's violent

crackdown on popular protests, Tehran's sale of drones to Russia and acceleration of its nuclear program.

The US Navy, whose Fifth Fleet is based at the Gulf island state of Bahrain, called on Iran to immediately release the tanker.

The ship issued a distress call during the seizure, the US Navy statement said.

According to the International Maritime Organisation shipping database, the Advantage Sweet is owned by a China-registered company called SPDBFL No One Hundred & Eighty-Seven (Tianjin) Ship Leasing Co Ltd. Agencies

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

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index		
Current	Prev. Close	
41,580.85	41,463.91	
Day's High	Day's Low:	
41,790.68	41,463.91	
Index Value	Change	
7,343,867,947	+116.94	
Percentage	Time	
+0.28%	28 Apr, 2023 5:00 pm	
Europe: FTSE 100 Index		
Index Value	Change	
7,870.57	+38.99	
Percentage	Time	
+0.50%	28 Apr, 4:35 pm GMT+1	
USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average		
Index Value	Change	
34,066.24	+240.08	
Percentage	Time	
+0.71%	28 Apr, 1:26 pm GMT-4	
Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average		
Index Value	Change	
28,856.44	+398.76	
Percentage	Time	
+1.40%	28 Apr, 3:15 pm GMT+9	
Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	188	190
Bahrain Dinar	754.93	762.93
Canadian Dollar	212	214.5
China Yuan	41.95	42.35
Danish Krone	41.73	42.13
Euro	316.5	319.5
Hong Kong Dollar	36.16	36.51
Indian Rupee	3.47	3.58
Japanese Yen	2.15	2.2
Kuwaiti Dinar	927.11	936.11
Malaysian Ringgit	63.61	64.21
New Zealand \$	174.05	176.05
Norwegians Krone	26.66	26.96
Omani Riyal	738.17	746.17
Qatari Riyal	77.98	78.68
Saudi Riyal	75.7	76.5
Singapore Dollar	213	215
Swedish Korona	27.53	27.83
Swiss Franc	316.93	319.43
Thai Bhat	8.32	8.47
U.A.E Dirham	78	78.8
UK Pound Sterling	360	363
US Dollar	286.6	289.5

# German companies invited to invest in Pakistan

Current bilateral trade of around \$4b between Pakistan and Germany can be further increased by renewed efforts

**Staff Reporter**

ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) leading a delegation called on Alfred Grannas, Ambassador of Germany and discussed with him matters for further increasing bilateral trade and economic relations between Pakistan and Germany.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that the current bilateral trade of around USD 4 billion between Pakistan and Germany can be further increased by renewed efforts from both sides. He stressed for strong business linkages between the private sectors of Pakistan and Germany to explore all untapped areas of business cooperation. He thanked Germany for cooperating with Pakistan in many areas including energy saving, education and skills development and said that being an advanced country, Germany can help Pakistan to improve its economy.

He said that over 40 German companies are already working in Pakistan in various sectors including chemicals, pharmaceuticals, automobile, wholesale and stressed that more German



companies should take advantage of the investment opportunities in Pakistan, which is a huge market of around 230 million consumers. He also invited the German Ambassador to visit ICCI for an interaction with the business community.

Addressing the delegation, Alfred Grannas, Ambassador of Germany said that his country shares deep ties with Pakistan. He said that he is working to further strengthen the bilateral

relationship between the two countries. He said that Germany can help Pakistan in renewable energy. He said that with the improvement in Pakistan's economy, he would encourage German companies to explore Pakistan for business and investment. He said that he can connect ICCI with the German trade promotion agency in Dubai to enhance business linkages between the private sectors of both countries. He said that Germany can also cooperate with Pakistan in the electric vehicles sector.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI said that Germany should cooperate with Pakistan in solar energy to cope with the energy shortage and provide cheap electricity to the people.

Engr. Muhammad Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI said that Pakistan and Germany should cooperate in the construction sector as due to rising population, Pakistan is an attractive market for construction activities. Khalid Iqbal Malik, Group Leader ICCI said that German automobile companies should consider setting up assembly lines in Pakistan, which is a good market for German automobile brands.

## Inflation, taxable income limit should be increased by 100%

People face whammy with little pay and high taxes: Mian Zahid Hussain

**Our Correspondent**

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain on Friday said the limit of taxable income should be increased by at least one hundred percent.

Inflation is at 35 percent while food inflation has hit the mark of 47 percent therefore taxable income should be increased from one hundred thousand rupees to two hundred thousand rupees, he said.

Expanses of people have increased many folds, inflation and currency erosion has become uncontrollable, therefore limit of taxable income should be increased, he added.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that the salaried class plays a very important role in the country's economy, but now the same class is currently suffering due to inflation, which should be given some relief.

Talking to the business community, the



veteran business leader said that there are lobbies to protect the interests of traders, industrialists, producers and farmers, but there is no voice for the salaried class that pay a lot of direct taxes.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that in a country where no one likes to pay taxes, heavy taxes are being collected from the salaried class, while some salaried people are being taxed up to thirty-five percent.

Professionals are taxed at 25 to 30

percent, while if general sales tax, petroleum levy and other expenses are added, this tax exceeds to over 50 percent, he observed.

He noted that businessmen transfer the burden of increased expenses to the public or fire employees, while salaried employees have no such facility to reduce their expenses.

The business leader said that skilled people and professionals get up to six times more salary than Pakistan in the Arab countries, therefore people are fleeing the country in record numbers.

This is an irreparable loss for the country, but our policymakers are not ready to understand the implications of this matter.

In addition, the exodus can lead to reduced taxes and the problem of non-availability of manpower for industries and other business sectors, which will be a serious blow to the economy.

He said that all the rich countries, including Arab countries, have developed by understanding the importance of developing human resources, while Pakistan does not pay any attention to this important sector.

## Revolt against US dollar gaining momentum

**Staff Reporter**

ISLAMABAD: Former President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt on Friday said revolt against the US dollar, global reserve currency, is gaining momentum.

BRICS, a group of five of the leading economies including Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa are looking to establish their own currency in order to decrease the influence of the US in the global trade market, he added.

Shahid Rasheed Butt said in a statement issued here today that many other countries are already in line to join the organization in a bid to reap benefits which will erode US Dollar's dominance.

Import of Russian oil by Pakistan could be a sign of interest of Islamabad in becoming part of the group, he added.

The business leader said that apart from BRICS, dozens of countries want to escape dollar hegemony, which is considered an impediment in their development.

Trade in non-dollar currencies is considered a good option by many countries, Saudi Arabia is selling oil to China in yuan and now the main currency of trade between China and Russia is also yuan, he continued.

He said that apart from BRICS, central banks of many countries are also leading a revolt against the US dollar and shifting to gold at a record pace.

## District admin conducted grand operation against illegal LPG: DC

**Asim Tanveer**

MULTAN: Under the direction of Deputy Commissioner Umar Jahangir, the district administration conducted a grand operation yesterday against commercial vehicles containing illegal LPG. During the operation led by Secretary RTA Rana Muhammad Mohsin, 10 wagon drivers were arrested.

While cases were also registered against the owners of all the vehicles. During the operation, the task force removed the cylinders from all the vehicles and seized them. Secretary RTA Rana Muhammad Mohsin said that on the instructions of Deputy Commissioner Umar Jahangir, so far 30 Cylinders have been seized by calling more than 100 vehicles. The transporters will not be allowed to play with the lives of citizens in any case.

## SECP okays Centralized Gateway Portal to facilitate digital onboarding of investors

**Staff Reporter**

ISLAMABAD: To facilitate digital onboarding of investors in different asset classes in the regulated sectors and evade repeated KYC processing, the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has approved the development of centralized digital onboarding platform namely Centralized Gateway Portal.

The platform will offer a uniform digital onboarding process and standardized KYC requirements, along with one-time KYC information processing. SECP has tasked the Central Depository Company of Pakistan Limited (CDC) to develop and implement the portal, potentially, within the period of three months. Pursuant to the above, customers who will onboard through the digital portal, will only be required to fill KYC requirements once.

## OGDCL partners with IHHN

To provide health facilities across Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: The Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL), a socially responsible corporate, has partnered with the Indus Hospital and Health Network (IHHN) to provide quality health services at doorsteps in various districts across Pakistan. Under the OGDCL CSR program, the partnership aims to enhance health services in local communities by establishing and operating upgraded health facilities in various forms.

As a socially responsible corporate, OGDCL has been serving communities by providing treatment and medicines through various health facilities. However, with the growing demand for enhanced health services at doorsteps, OGDCL has partnered with IHHN to cater for health facilities at identified OGDCL operational fields.

Under this partnership, IHHN will establish and operate health facilities, and OGDCL will sponsor the establishment and operational expenses of all the facilities. The Managing Director and CEO of OGDCL, on the occasion of the MOU signing, commended the efforts of IHHN and said, "OGDCL believes in equal



opportunities for all, resulting in community well-being and transformation of their lives through quality services."

The founding President of IHHN, on the occasion of the MOU signing, expressed his pleasure and said, "We at IHHN are honored and delighted to partner with OGDCL for well-being of our

communities through access to high-quality, free-of-cost healthcare. Access to healthcare continues to be a huge challenge in Pakistan, and OGDCL's commitment to addressing this emergency is most admirable. I'm sure that this partnership will go on to benefit countless people across Pakistan."

## Economic confidence rebounds as fears fade over 2023 recession

**Staff Reporter**

LAHORE: Economic confidence is rising across the globe as clear signs of business improvement emerge.

While the Q1 2023 Global Economic Conditions Survey (GECS) shows confidence lower than a year ago, it rose for the third consecutive quarter as fears fade over the prospects of a recession in 2023.

This better news is underlined by the two GECS "Fear" indices which reflects respondents concerns that customers and/or suppliers may go out of business. Both these series improved on Q4 2022. Indeed, worries about suppliers have fallen to the lowest

level since 2020. And although new orders have flatlined this quarter, the survey showed improvements in both employment and capital expenditure (capex).

Although with Central Banks still raising interest rates and the delayed effect of monetary policy tightening on the real economy, as well as recent challenges in the banking sector, it may be premature to sound the "all clear."

Jamie Lyon, head of skills, sectors and technology at ACCA, said: "The global economy entered 2023 with more momentum than many had expected. Confidence has risen as business comes to terms with the fallout from the Russian-Ukraine war.

The economic climate has been helped by a faster-than-expected relaxation of China's zero-COVID policies, and more normal energy prices in Europe, that should help to reduce headline inflation and may bring about a pause in Central Banks' tightening of monetary policy, but there are still some downside risks that may prevail."

Loreale Jiles, vice president of research and thought leadership at IMA, said: "Looking at the change in the GECS Confidence Indices over the quarter, what stands out is the 30-point improvement in Confidence in Western Europe. However, this good news was not limited to Europe; Asia-Pacific, North America

and South Asia also registered an improvement. This was a broad-based pick-up, with the exception of Africa and the Middle East."

Although Global New Orders are flat-lining, one factor sustaining the rebound in Confidence may be the decline in the level of concern about "increased costs." Cost pressures look like they may have peaked, although they still remain well above the median recorded over the survey's history. Commodity prices remain subdued, and Europe has benefitted from natural gas prices returning to levels seen before Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Global confidence has edged up for the third consecutive quarter, not only

because cost concerns have eased, but also because worries about accessing finance and securing prompt payment have declined.

Indeed, reports of problems with prompt payment fell to the second lowest level in the survey's history. The improved macro conditions also appear to have encouraged companies to revisit their capex and hiring plans.

When asked how they planned to respond to the changing economic environment, the net balance of companies planning to increase investment in capital and staff rose on the quarter, as did the net balance of companies planning to increase job creation.

## PTCL Group celebrates the #TayyarHo Anthem!



**Staff Reporter**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's largest telecom and integrated ICT services provider, PTCL Group (PTCL and Ufone 4G) has launched its first-ever Group Anthem #TayyarHo showcasing the employees' commitment to serve customers with unparalleled excellence.

The PTCL Group's new anthem is more than just a song. PTCL Group embarked on the #TayyarHo journey about a year

ago. What is TayyarHo? It is a call to action for the employees to build a comprehensive ecosystem at PTCL Group which will enable the company to deliver extraordinary solutions & experiences for its customers.

Speaking on the occasion, Group Chief People Officer, Muhammad Shoab Baig said, "This anthem is a dynamic expression of our passion to deliver the best services & experiences to our customers.

For NZ ODI series

Afridi reveals why Fakhar was initially ignored

Fakhar was later added to the probables, and made the final squad announced for the series

LAHORE: Shahid Afridi has revealed why Fakhar Zaman was not named among the probables initially announced for the three-match ODI series against New Zealand earlier this year.

On 28 December 2022, the men's interim National Selection Committee, led by Afridi, had named 22 probables for the three ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Super League matches against New Zealand, which were played at the National Bank Cricket Arena on 9, 11 and 13 January.

Fakhar was later added to the probables, and made the final squad announced for the series.



"When I became the chief selector, I talked about Fakhar. Fakhar's name was missing from the list which I got from management. Everyone was involved in that decision," Afridi revealed.

"I asked where is Fakhar? They said Fakhar has no performances and there is an issue with his fitness, so that is why they were not interested. After two days, I took his fitness test. I found him to be fit, so I considered him," he added.

It must be noted that Fakhar was the lone century maker from Pakistan in their last ODI series against the Netherlands, which took place before the aforementioned series.

Fakhar Zaman scored 157 runs in the three-match series, which included a century and a fifty. Despite Fakhar's heroics, Pakistan lost the home series against the Kiwis by 2-1. Agencies

Smotherman grabs PGA Mexico lead

MEXICO: Austin Smotherman, chasing his second Mexican Open title and first PGA victory, closed with four consecutive birdies to fire an eight-under par 64 for the first-round clubhouse lead on Thursday.

The 28-year-old American captured his first professional title at the 2018 Mexican Open when the event was part of the PGA Tour Latinoamerica developmental circuit.

The tournament became a main PGA Tour event last year and was won by Spain's Jon Rahm, the world number one and defending champion who captured his second major title three weeks ago at the Masters.

Smotherman, a college teammate of 2020 US Open winner Bryson DeChambeau at Southern Methodist, fired a bogey-free round to seize an early two-stroke lead over Canada's Taylor Pendrith, American Eric Cole and Germany's Stephan Jaeger.

"Nice little finish," Smotherman said. "Just feeling good. I feel like my game's in a good spot."

World number 342 Smotherman, who began on the back nine, unleashed a birdie run with putts from just inside 12 feet at the par-5



12th, nine feet at the par-3 13th and a two-putt birdie from 25 feet at the par-5 14th.

"Just super steady. Then I made a few of those 10-, 12-footers early part of the round," said Smotherman.

At the par-4 third, Smotherman drove into a waste area left of the fairway, then dropped his approach inches from the hole and tapped in for birdie.

"Stole that one on three," he said. "I hit it to a foot out of that left waste area. Had a little full pitching wedge knocked down a little bit and kick-in birdie there was nice."

Smotherman blasted out of a bunker to just outside 13 feet and made the birdie putt at the par-5 sixth then

escaped the greenside sand to five feet to birdie seven. After rolling in a birdie from just outside eight feet at the eighth, he dropped a 37-foot birdie putt at the par-3 ninth to end his day.

Smotherman's only career top-10 PGA finish in 43 events was eighth at last year's Barracuda Championship.

Smotherman's four-stroke victory over Mexico's Juan Pablo Hernandez five years ago was a breakthrough triumph, putting his name among such past winners as Ben Crenshaw, Lee Trevino, David Graham and Roberto De Vicenzo.

"Still get a little bit of some goosebumps thinking about it, for sure," he said.

"Winning an event like that, which has such a deep history. There are names on that trophy that are in the Hall of Fame. A national open anywhere is very special."

Defending champion Rahm shot 67 to stand four back of Smotherman.

"It's a good score, I'm happy with the score," Rahm said. "Those first 13 holes we had virtually no wind, about as easy conditions as it can get. I wish I would have taken advantage of it more."

Rahm closed with a 25-foot birdie putt to finish four-under on the back nine.

"I was rolling it really well all day, so to finish it off that way, obviously it always feels like you're stealing one from the field," Rahm said. AFP

Ex-cricketer leaves Pakistan

KARACHI: Sami Aslam, a Test cricketer from Pakistan, who moved abroad after feeling "ignored" has said that he is satisfied with his decision to pursue a cricket career in the United States.

Sami is not only the cricketer who emigrated to the US for better opportunities. Others include Test cricketer Elshan Adil and international cricketer Hammad Azam.

In a YouTube vlog, Sami shared that he is currently living in San Francisco's Bay Area — one of the most expensive residential areas in the world. As shown and shared in the vlog, Sami is currently living in a luxurious house located in the same area where Tesla and Twitter's owner Elon Musk, as well as some of the world's top businessmen, reside.

"Alhamdulillah, I am satisfied with my life here. I own a house and live with my family here," he shared.

"I am enjoying my cricket here. I always dreamt of playing cricket and I got a good opportunity here. I wanted to play for Pakistan but didn't get much opportunity there," he said.

Sami played 13 Tests and four ODIs before being dropped from the national squad. He went to the USA in 2020 and took a fresh start as a professional cricketer there.

This year, Sami will be playing for Indian Premier League (IPL) franchise Chennai Super Kings' team (Texas Super Kings) in the inaugural edition of the Major League Cricket (MLC).

"I am looking forward to playing Major League this year. I will play for Texas Super Kings. It's a good opportunity for all of us," he shared.

"People think that less cricket is played here. But, here are a lot of opportunities for us. We play a lot of franchise cricket the whole year," he concluded. Agencies

Mayweather to fight John Gotti III in exhibition

MIAMI: Former world boxing champion Floyd Mayweather is to take on John Gotti III, the grandson of the notorious former New York crime boss, in an exhibition bout in South Florida in June.

Mayweather retired from boxing in 2017, unbeaten in 50 bouts, but continues to appear in fights that do not count towards his career record.

The 30-year-old Gotti had a 5-1 record in MMA fights with his most recent appearance a loss to Nick Alley in 2020. After switching to boxing, Gotti has a 2-0 record.

The fighter is the grandson of John Gotti, the head of the Gambino crime family who died in prison in 2002.



Gotti, speaking at a press conference with Mayweather, said he had been a fan of Hall of Famer Mayweather since he was a young child but that he was ready to take him on in the ring in Sunrise.

"Make no mistake, June 11, I'm bringing bad intentions to that man," he said. "And I

don't care if it's an exhibition or not, you started to fight me. It's no quarter. So it's kill or be killed."

Mayweather has previously fought reality television stars and YouTube fighters in some of his exhibitions but Gotti promised he would be a tougher opponent.

"I think I should take the fight to him," he said. "I'm going to show him different looks, something that these past YouTube fighters, whatever you want to call them, didn't do because they all suck."

Mayweather said he had been trying to set up a fight with Gotti for two years and was a friend of his father, John Gotti Jr.

"I'm friends with his dad. That's what people don't know. I've always been friends with the Gotti family. That's what a lot of people don't know," Mayweather said.

"For 27 years, I've been competing at the highest level. And I will continue to have fun, entertain, until I'm ready to say, you know what? Enough is enough." AFP

Slater handed career and Olympic lifeline

AUSTRALIA: The 11-time world champion Kelly Slater has been handed a career lifeline with a wildcard to continue on the World Surf League, keeping his Paris Olympic dream alive.

The 51-year-old American, widely regarded as the greatest professional surfer of all time, was eliminated in the round of 32 at the Margaret River Pro in Australia last weekend.

Often compared to basketball's Michael Jordan in how he has transcended his sport, it meant Slater missed the mid-season cut, a concept introduced last year to slim down the field.

Unless he was offered a wildcard — one for men and one for women — Slater would have been forced to either surf the second-tier challenger series or retire after a career of more



than three decades. But Jessi Miley-Dyer, the WSL chief of sport, said that under its rules Slater and France's Johanne Defay had done well enough in previous competition to earn wildcards.

"We look forward to seeing them complete the season," Miley-Dyer said in a statement late Thursday.

The wildcard allows Slater and Defay entry to the remaining Championship Tour events this year, meaning they can still finish in the

top five to make the finals series and have a crack at the world title.

It also keeps Slater's hopes of making the Paris Olympics next year on track.

The top 10 men and eight women from the WSL's 2023 rankings will qualify.

Surfing made its debut at the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo, with Slater a reserve for the American team.

Known for his prowess and style, he arrived on the scene in 1990, capturing his first world title two years later aged 20 and his last in 2011.

He is both the youngest and oldest world champion and has a record 56 World Surf League career victories.

Slater has appeared in dozens of surfing films and starred in the hit nineties TV show "Baywatch". AFP

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