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## **August 20, 2020: National / International [Current Affairs](#)**

### **1. Senate majority passes two more FATF-related bills**

- The Senate on August 19, 2020 passed another two FATF-related bills with a sizeable majority amid opposition from Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) and Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), with the treasury and the major opposition parties developing a consensus in the “national interest.”
  - However, this consensus proved to be short lived, ending in a verbal spat between the government and the opposition, both holding each other responsible for increased money laundering and extremism in the country in the past.
  - The house passed the Limited Liability Partnership (Amendment) Bill 2020 and the Companies (Amendment) Bill 2020, with amendments, as a pre-condition to get Pakistan’s name off the grey list of Financial Action Task Force, the global anti-money laundering and anti-terror financing watchdog.
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### **2. Pakistan got \$2.66b foreign support to handle Covid-19**

- Pakistan had received financial assistance worth of \$2.66 billion from number of countries and international organizations in the wake of the pandemic of coronavirus.
- Fifteen countries and international organizations had committed to provide an amount of \$3.302 billion to Pakistan as loans, grants and technical assistance in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic. Out of the total committed amount, \$2.660 billion had been disbursed so far, reveals the data of Economic Affairs Division.
- Pakistan had received \$2.386 billion as budgetary support from different international financial institutions (IFIs). International Monetary Fund (IMF) had released \$1.386 billion,

Asian Development Bank (ADB) \$500 million and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) \$500 million. However, OFID had not released the pledged amount worth of \$50 million. Meanwhile, the country had received \$240 million as project financing out of committed \$767 million from IFIs and France. Pakistan had received \$129 million from ADB out of the committed \$350 million and \$111 million from World Bank out of \$300 million. Similarly, Pakistan had received \$34.35 million as grants from different countries out of committed \$99.06 million. United States had released \$20.87 million, as it committed to give \$31.87 million. Japan had disbursed \$2.87 million out of committed \$28.33 million. The ADB had released \$0.5 million, China \$4 million, UK \$2.31 million, Canada \$2.39 million, South Korea \$0.8 million, IsBD \$0.21 million and UN \$0.4 million

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### **3. Coordination body formed for Karachi betterment**

- Leaders of the Pakistan Peoples Party, Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf and Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan on August 19, 2020 met for the third time in a short span of one week and decided to form a coordination committee for collaboration between the federal and Sindh governments in six areas for the betterment of Karachi.
  - However, the PPP-led Sindh government claimed that the coordination committee was for the entire province and not for Karachi alone.
  - First two meetings between the three parties were held in Islamabad and Karachi, respectively, in the presence of a senior member of the security establishment, which is very much concerned over the state of affairs in the provincial metropolis and wanted all stakeholders to find out a solution to the problems of Pakistan's commercial hub.
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### **4. Covid-19 left children at greater risk of abuse: UNICEF**

- Key findings from a rapid assessment of the impact of confinement on children in Pakistan indicate that changes in their home life are linked to increased stress in them and reduced patience in care-givers.
- A new UNICEF report released on August 19, 2020 says more than 2,600 social service professionals have received virtual or face-to-face training in psychosocial support and stigma prevention based on a standard training package developed with UNICEF support in response to coronavirus.
- Integration of mental health and psychosocial support services in health and education is also under way to ensure sustainable access to these services over the longer term, including when schools reopen, the report says

## **5. S. Arabia says no Israel deal before Palestinian accord**

- Saudi Arabia said on August 19, 2020 it will not follow the United Arab Emirates in establishing diplomatic ties with Israel until the Jewish state has signed an internationally recognised peace accord with the Palestinians.
  - The UAE last week became the first Gulf state to normalize relations with Israel, in a US-brokered accord that raised the prospect of similar deals with other Arab states including Saudi Arabia.
  - But after days of conspicuous silence and in the face of US pressure to announce a similar deal, Saudi Arabia`s Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan ruled out the possibility until the Palestinian issue is resolved
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## **6. EU rejects Belarus vote result as Lukashenko orders clampdown**

- The European Union on August 19, 2020 rejected the result of Belarus`s disputed presidential election as strongman leader Alexander Lukashenko ordered his security forces to prevent any further unrest.
  - Following an emergency video conference on the elections, European Council chief Charles Michel said the EU would soon levy sanctions against a `substantial number` of people responsible for vote rigging and the violent suppression of protests in the ex-Soviet country.
  - Protesters have flooded the streets of Belarusian cities in the wake of the August 9 election, waving the red-and-white flags of the opposition and calling on Lukashenko to step down after he claimed a sixth term with some 80 percent of the ballot.
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## **7. US, China agree to double flights**

- The United States and China have agreed to double the number of airline flights that each other`s airlines can operate between the countries, from four to eight per week.
- The deal marks a further easing of a standoff between the world`s two biggest economies over travel restrictions imposed during the pandemic.
- The US Transportation Department announced the increase Tuesday, saying that China`s aviation authority decided this week to permit expanded flights by United and Delta. Shortly after the announcement, Chicago based United Airlines said it will go from two to four

flights per week between San Francisco and Shanghai via Seoul, starting Sept 4.

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## **8. Israel bombs Gaza after warning Hamas it risks war**

- Israeli warplanes bombed the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip overnight after Palestinians fired a rocket into southern Israel, the army said.
  - The latest exchange came as Israel warned Hamas it was risking “war” by failing to stop fire balloons being launched across the border. Egyptian security officials shuttled between the two sides in a bid to end the flare-up which has seen more than a week of rocket and fire balloon attacks from Gaza and nightly Israeli reprisals.
  - “Earlier tonight, a rocket was fired and during the day, explosive and arson balloons were launched from the Gaza Strip into Israeli territory,” said a military statement released shortly before midnight (2100 GMT). In response, “fighter jets and (other) aircraft struck additional Hamas military targets in the Gaza Strip.
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## **9. UAE connects first Arab nuclear plant to power grid**

- The oil-rich United Arab Emirates announced Wednesday that it has connected its Barakah nuclear power plant to the national grid in a new first for the Arab world.
  - The milestone follows the successful start-up of the plant’s first reactor at the end of last month and launches the UAE on the road to meeting 25 percent of its electricity needs from nuclear power.
  - “The safe and successful connection of Unit 1 to the UAE grid marks the key moment when we begin to deliver on our mission to power the growth of the nation by supplying clean electricity, around the clock,” said Emirates Nuclear Energy Corporation CEO Mohamed Ibrahim al-Hammadi.
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## **10. Biden formally nominated as Democratic candidate to challenge Trump**

- US Democrats on August 19, 2020 nominated Joe Biden as their 2020 presidential candidate, formally designating the Washington veteran as the party’s challenger to incumbent President Donald Trump in the November election.

- In an unprecedented roll call vote that took place entirely online due to the coronavirus pandemic, all 50 states and seven territories announced their vote tallies that cemented Biden's role as the party flag bearer.
  - "Well thank you very, very much, from the bottom of my heart," a beaming Biden said in a live video link as he celebrated the nomination. "It means the world to me and my family," he added, reminding viewers he will deliver a formal acceptance speech on Thursday at the conclusion of the four-day jamboree. The nomination was a formality as he had already won the majority of the more than 3,900 delegates back in June
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