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## **August 22, 2020: National / International [Current Affairs](#)**

### **1. Pakistan, China vow to protect common interests**

- Pakistan and China on August 21, 2020 said they would act `collectively` to protect their mutual interests.
  - The agreement was reached at the second round of China-Pakistan Foreign Ministers` Strategic Dialogue in Hainan, China.
  - A joint statement issued at the conclusion of the meeting said a consensus was reached on `collectively` taking `measures to safeguard their common interests and promote peace, prosperity and development in the region`.
  - Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi and his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi led their respective sides at the dialogue in which bilateral ties, regional situation, international developments and the fight against the Covid19 pandemic were discussed
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### **2. ECC okays import of 200,000 tonnes of wheat**

- The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the cabinet on August 21, 2020 directed the Trading Corporation of Pakistan (TCP) to move swiftly to import 200,000 tonnes of wheat and decided to reduce sales tax and duties on import of sugar to control rising prices in the country.
- Official sources, who attended the meeting, told Dawn that the government appeared to be facing challenges in controlling prices of the two essential commodities, sugar and wheat, in that order through imports.
- The sources said the Ministry of Industries tried to pass on the responsibility for sugar import to the Ministry of National Food Security and Research (MNFSR) after inviting bids

that did not turn out to be encouraging.

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### **3. PM approves specialised education project**

- Prime Minister Imran Khan on August 21, 2020 approved a project to introduce specialised education in 400 higher secondary schools of the country.
  - Presiding over a meeting, the prime minister gave his consent to the launch of Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) project in collaboration with universities in 400 higher secondary schools.
  - The meeting was attended by Minister for Science and Technology Chaudhry Fawad Hussain, Adviser to the Prime Minister on Commerce Abdul Razak Dawood, the finance secretary, the Federal Board of Revenue`s chairman and other senior officials
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### **4. Compliance with UN curbs against Afghan Taliban ordered**

- The government has issued `a statutory notification` ordering full compliance with the United Nations` Security Council sanctions against Afghan Taliban and Haqqani Network, according to the document that got public attention on August 21, 2020.
  - The SRO, as it is called in the official lingo, ordered enforcement of assets freeze, travel ban and arms embargo on the Afghan insurgent group.
  - It was notified by the Foreign Office on Tuesday (Aug 18).
  - Pakistan, which has always denied any links with Taliban, has in the past said that it is in full compliance with UNSC sanctions against the group.
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### **5. All educational institutions will reopen on Sept 15, confirms minister**

- Federal Education Minister Shafqat Mahmood on August 21, 2020 clarified that educational institutions would be reopened on Sept 15.
- Some private school associations have been making announcements about opening of schools causing confusion among parents and students. However, the minister made it clear that all educational institutions will reopen on Sept 15 after reviewing the Covid-19 situation.
- He said a conference of the inter-provincial education ministers will be held on Sept 7 to

discuss Covid-19 standard operating procedures (SOPs) for educational institutions and to further see possibilities of opening the institutions on Sept 15. Addressing a press conference about his ministry's two-year progress, the minister said many initiatives were launched during the period

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## **6. UN to spend \$10m on food security in Balochistan**

- United Nations Resident Coordinator Julien Harneis has said that \$10 million will be spent on nutrition and food security in Balochistan to reduce the impact of drought and Covid-19 on the people of Balochistan. This is a short term strategy meant to support the people for the next one year.
  - The UN resident coordinator visited Chagai, Nushki and Dalbandin on August 20, 2020 and met people of different communities and discussed issues faced by them in remote areas of the province.
  - Under the long-term programme, the European Union and the FAO have also launched a programme to support and promote agriculture and livestock sectors in Balochistan
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## **7. Turkey announces historic gas discovery in Black Sea**

- President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on August 21, 2020 said Turkey had made a historic discovery of gas in the Black Sea, but would still speed up contentious exploration in the Mediterranean that has pitted it against Greece and the EU.
  - Turkey hopes the discovery can help wean it off imported energy, including from Russia, which comes at a high cost at a time when the local currency is weakening and the economy is more fragile because of the coronavirus.
  - Erdogan said the 320-billioncubic-metre deep sea find was made at a site Turkish vessel Fatih began exploring last month
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## **8. Turkey to convert another museum into mosque**

- Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on August 21, 2020 ordered another ancient Orthodox church that became a mosque and then a popular Istanbul museum to be turned back into a place of Muslim worship.

- The decision to transform the Kariye Museum into a mosque came just a month after a similar conversion for the UNESCO World Heritage recognised Hagia Sophia.
  - The moves have added to Turkey`s problems with prelates in both the Orthodox and Catholic worlds.
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## **9. Xi moots idea of community of shared future with Pakistan**

- Chinese President Xi Jinping on August 21, 2020 said his country was ready to work with Pakistan to deepen the building of `China-Pakistan Community of Shared Future` and to jointly promote cooperation among regional countries.
  - President Xi, in a letter to President Dr Arif Alvi, said both Pakistan and China were working to maintain the `momentum of peace and development in the region`.
  - He said that since the outbreak of Covid-19, the global fight against coronavirus had proved that mutual support, solidarity and cooperation were the only way to defeat the pandemic
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## **10. Libya`s warring sides announce truce**

- Libya`s warring and rival administrations announced in separate statements on August 21, 2020 they would cease all hostilities and organise nationwide elections, a move widely welcomed by the UN and several countries.
  - The surprise announcement came after multiple visits by top foreign diplomats to Libya in recent weeks, resulting in the first deal between the rival authorities since a December 2015 UN-backed accord in Morocco that led to an agreement on a unity government.
  - The statements were signed by Fayez al-Sarraj, head of the UN-recognised unity Government of National Accord (GNA), based in the capital Tripoli, and Aguila Saleh, speaker of the eastern-based parliament, backed by military strongman Khalif a Haf tar
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