

30 dead in Chhapra
PATNA (INP): At least 30 people died after consuming toxic liquor in different villages of Chhapra in Bihar's Saran district. One of them died at the district hospital during treatment while some others are believed to be undergoing treatment in private hospitals. The police have taken his body into their custody. An official said his body will be sent for post-mortem to ascertain the cause of his death.

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Sanaullah vows
ISLAMABAD (INP): Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah has vowed to foil any nefarious designs aimed at destabilizing parliamentary democracy in Pakistan. In a statement on Thursday, he said the constitutional foundation of our country is laid on parliamentary system of democracy, National and Provincial Assemblies and 1973 Constitution but unfortunately PTI Chief Imran Khan is trying to sabotage the very system.

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Masses not interested in Imran's narrative of declaring opponent corrupt: Marriyum

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb said on Thursday that the masses had stopped listening to Imran Khan's false narrative of accusing political opponents of corruption.

Talking to the media persons here, she called Imran Khan a mentally disturbed person. "Educational institutions are being turned into political arenas by the Punjab government," she said. The minister said that she was glad to see that youth were moving away from the politics of division and corruption of Imran Khan.

She said they had realised that the country was economically far better before Imran's coming to power. The minister said the process of dragging children into dirty politics should be stopped.

"Pakistan had 6.2 per cent GDP growth rate, inflation was only 3 per cent, over 14000 megawatt power generation had been done, China

Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects were in progress and youth were getting employment opportunities, health card facility was provided to the deserving people, youth programme was launched to provide jobs to the new generation, motorways were being built." She said the youth also knew that due to Imran's inefficiency and incompetence, the country was facing economic crisis. Moreover, she said that Imran accused other of corruption but he himself was involved in corruption and theft of national resources.

To a question, she said that Tosha Khana was an open and shut case and it was not only a case of watches, gifts worth billions of rupees were not declared.

Taking dig at Imran she said the person who demanded others should be held accountable for forty years, now he should be held accountable for his own four years tenure. She said Imran had all the powers during his tenure, and all record was available, if someone had committed corruption they should have been punished.

Pakistan urges G-77's lead role: Bilawar Bhutto

NEW YORK (APP): Pakistan on Thursday said that as the developing countries endeavored to recover from multiple crises, the Group of 77 and China must take the lead in promoting the systemic and structural changes needed to revive sustainable global growth.

Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, also the host of the G-77 and China Ministerial Conference held here, in his opening statement, urged the body to induct equity in international economic relations and restore the developing economies on a path leading to realization of the SDGs and environmental objectives.

The ministerial meeting is being held with an aim to agree on the "urgent and emergency" measures required to enable the developing countries to overcome the immediate challenges of food, fuel and finance which they confront at present; and systemic measures and structural changes needed to accelerate the implementation of the SDGs."

The foreign minister emphasised that the developing countries which continued to suffer from the severe impacts of climate change must be assisted, urgently and generously, to recover from these impacts,

"even as we start work on operationalizing the loss and damage fund agreed at Cop-27."

"Without such emergency and systemic actions, the development divide will grow into an unbridgeable gulf, transforming our world into a nightmare, a world afflicted by massive human suffering, social and political instability, and proliferating conflicts, even as our planet and our species confront the mounting existential threat of a climate catastrophe."

He said as the majority of developing countries faced unprecedented challenges to their economic progress as well as the danger of social and political turmoil, over the past three years, their economies and societies had been ravaged by a series of crises: the Covid-19 pandemic; supply chain disruptions; spiraling prices; depreciating currencies; climate-induced disasters and geopolitical tensions like the Ukraine war.

He told the meeting that the global economic growth next year was predicted to be less than 3% and with the North also walking back from globalization, export-led growth was becoming difficult for most of the developing countries.

He said besides achieving the SDG goals, the develop-

ing world also simultaneously needed to recover from the loss and damage from climate impacts and adapt to avoid future impacts.

"Overcoming the development and climate challenges requires herculean efforts by our governments. And, it requires extensive international solidarity and cooperation. The SDG financing "gap" has enlarged from \$2.5 trillion in 2019 to over \$4 trillion today. If the cost of climate objectives is added, we will need several additional trillions to achieve the SDGs and the climate objectives."

Foreign Minister Bilawal said, "250 million face hunger. Famine haunts millions. 82 of our members are debt vulnerable; 54 are in debt distress. Financial austerity will freeze their growth and entrench and enlarge hunger and poverty. We must chart a path to break out of the poverty trap."

He said the Conference was aimed at initiating actions to respond to the urgent challenges confronting the developing countries and to outline a strategy to secure the reforms to the international financial and economic system required to achieve the SDGs and the Paris objectives.

(Continued on Back Page)

Govt to set new price of petrol at Rs214.80/ltr

ISLAMABAD (APP): The government on Thursday announced to set the new price of petrol at Rs 214.80 per liter with a reduction of Rs10 rupees in the price of petrol. While announcing a significant reduction in the prices of petroleum products in Pakistan Television News today, Federal Finance Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar said that the new price of high speed diesel is Rs 227.80 with a reduction of Rs 7-1/2 per liter, and the new price of kerosene oil is Rs 171.83 with a reduction of Rs 10 per liter.

The Minister announced the price of light diesel has been fixed at Rs169 rupees with a reduction of Rs28.28 rupees per liter.

He said that the application of these prices in petroleum will be from midnight of December 15 to December 31, 2022.

Ishaq Dar said that the decrease in the prices of petroleum products is due to the last quarter of this fiscal year which started on October 1st and continues today on December 15th.

He said that the reduction in petroleum prices is a part of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's campaign to provide relief to the people and in this regard, the government is focusing its attention on providing relief to the people.

President, PM condemn Miranshah suicide blast

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday strongly condemned the suicide blast in Miranshah, North Waziristan that left security personnel and a civilian dead.

In their separate statements, both vowed to eliminate terrorism and extremism from the country.

President Alvi said the entire nation was committed to fighting terrorism.

Prime Minister Sharif said those killing innocent people could not be regarded as Muslims. The terrorists were acting on the will of anti-state elements, he added.

The president and the prime minister prayed for the souls of Havaladar Muhammad Ameer and a civilian who lost their lives in the terror incident.

Both paid tribute to the sacrifices rendered by security personnel for the safety of the homeland.

Marriyum condemns Miranshah suicide blast

Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Thursday strongly condemned the suicide blast in Miranshah area in North Waziristan.

In a statement, the minister expressed deep grief and sorrow over the martyrdom of Havaladar Muhammad Amir and a civilian person in the blast.

"Cowardly acts of terrorism cannot dampen our spirits", Marriyam Aurangzeb said while reiterating the government's commitment to eradicate the scourge of terrorism from the country."

Afghan forces firing at Chaman border kills 1, hurt 15

CHAMAN (INP): Afghan border resorted to unprovoked firing on civilian population at Chaman border on Thursday, second time in a week, killing one person and injuring 15 others, Levies and hospital sources said.

The local administration started evacuation in border area after the clashes and an emergency was declared in DHQ Chaman.

MS DHQ Chaman, Dr Malik Achakzai said that 15 wounded people were shifted to hospital and 12 people with severe injuries were under treatment.

According to Levies officials, the Afghan forces fired multiple artillery rounds on the civilian population around the Boghra Road and Custom House areas. The Pakistani forces have given a befitting response to Afghan shelling, they added.

The deputy commissioner of Chaman shared that an emergency has been declared at the hospital, adding that the citizens have been asked to evacuate from Mall Road, Boghra Road bypass, and Border Road.

Authorities have said that the clashes broke out over the intervention of Afghan forces during the repair of the fence in the Sheikh Lal Muhammad sector of the border.

It is worth mentioning here that this is the second time in five days that the Afghan border forces opened unprovoked and indiscriminate fire, using heavy weapons, at the civilian area in Balochistan's Chaman city.

According to ISPR, six people were martyred and 17 others were injured in firing of Afghan forces last week. The Afghan border forces used artillery and mortar in the attack, the military's media wing said.



QUETTA: Paramedical staff giving treatment to injured person at Trama center after firing incident occurred on Chaman Border.

Imran summoned by court in Toshakhana case

ISLAMABAD (INP): A district and sessions court in Islamabad has admitted the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) plea against former prime minister Imran Khan in the Toshakhana case. The verdict on the admissibility of the plea was reserved on December 12 by the court after hearing arguments from both sides.

The additional session judge in his verdict fixed the plea for hearing on January 9 and issued notice to former prime minister Imran Khan to appear before in person before the court.

In November, a trial court took up the Toshakhana reference filed by Election Commission against Khan for allegedly indulging in corrupt practices, which the former premier denies. The ECP declared Chairman Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) disqualified in its verdict in the Toshakhana reference.

In the written judgment, the ECP said: "As per the statement of Imran Khan he had purchased the gifts from Toshakhana paying 21.564 million rupees while the Cabinet Division said that the gifts had a value of 107.943 million."

"The amount in his bank account was around half of the value of the state gifts. Imran Khan was bound to declare the cash and bank details in his returns but he didn't declare it," Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) decision read.

'NRO-2' great injustice to Pakistan, reiterates Imran Khan

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan said on Thursday giving "NRO-2" to "thieves" was a great "injustice" to the country.

Addressing members of PTI's student wing, Mr Khan came down hard on the ruling coalition's leaders and said "these thieves flee the country whenever they are about to be arrested and now, after reaching a deal with the country's powerful quarters, even PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif is planning his return."

The former prime minister said only justice could liberate a nation and pledged to continue his struggle for 'real independence' till his last breath. He said Allah had made jihad obligatory on all Muslims so that everyone stood against oppression and injustice. "As long as there is lawlessness in society, the strong will continue to oppress the weak," he added.

Mr Khan claimed that tax collection and employment rate were record high during the PTI's government, adding that now a 'cabal of crooks' had been imposed on the masses.

Imran completes legal consultation on dissolution of assemblies

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf chairman and former prime minister Imran Khan on Thursday completed a consultation on the legal aspects for the dissolution of Punjab and KP assemblies.

As per details, the legal experts briefed PTI chairman Imran Khan on the issues related to the dissolution of assemblies. The legal experts in their briefing said the governor cannot halt the advice of the assembly's dissolution. After 48 hours of sending a summary to the governor, the assembly will be considered dissolved.

During the briefing, Imran Khan noted the advice of the legal experts and also asked the questions, said sources. Furthermore, Imran Khan is scheduled to hold a consultation with the party leaders and tomorrow for the final date of the dissolution of the Punjab and KP assemblies.

Former premier and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan has announced to unveil date for the dissolution of the assemblies tomorrow on December 17 in a key gathering on Lahore's Liberty Chowk. Khan has taken a firm stand on the dissolution of provincial assemblies being ruled by his political party in December.

Secretary briefs body

ISLAMABAD (INP): Foreign Secretary Asad Majeed briefed Senate standing committee about attack on Pakistani ambassador in Afghanistan.

"Fire opened at Pakistani ambassador, when he was strolling in open space of the embassy in Kabul," foreign secretary informed a session of the Senate standing committee on foreign affairs. "Eight sniper shots and 100 rounds were fired at him but he remained unharmed," Asad Majeed said.

"Two bullets hit a security guard of the embassy, who was shifted to Peshawar from Kabul," foreign secretary told the Senate body. "Afghan officials have said that a sniper shooter has been caught and being investigated," Majeed said. "The Afghan government has assured that the culprits of the incident will not be spared."

"Managing borders with Afghanistan is a difficult challenge. We want peace in Afghanistan, as tensions in the country have also impact over Pakistan," he added. "We speak for Afghanistan everywhere, but the country mostly opposes Pakistan" Chairman standing committee Senator Farooq Naik said. "India does not speak for Afghanistan only Pakistan back the country," he further said.

"Pakistan stands beside Afghanistan against demand of the West but Afghanistan raises guns at Pakistan," he said. "India is an enemy but don't have more skirmishes with them on borders, while skirmishes with Afghanistan is a norm," chairman of committee said.

Imran yearning for power to enjoy 'helicopter rides' in Margalla hills

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Provincial Ministers Sharjeel Inam Memon and Saeed Ghani, while holding a joint press conference in the Sindh Assembly today, said that Imran Khan is stupid and mentally paralyzed.

They said that the Election Commission has given a right decision regarding Ms. Faryal Talpur and this case was going on for the last four years not during the tenure of our government.

They said that two MPs of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf - PTI filed an asset concealment petition against Ms. Faryal Talpur based on false allegations and did not attend the hearing of the petition, after which the Election Commission of Pakistan rejected their petition.

Later, PTI appealed to the Election Commission to hear the petition again, they said.

The Election Commission has announced the decision that was reserved by it yesterday, they said.

They said that Imran Khan targeted Ms. Faryal Talpur because of political vendetta. Ms. Faryal was sent to jail from the hospital on a false case on the night of Eid festival, they said.

They said that Imran Khan used National Accountability Bureau and Federal Investigation Agency against political opponents.

Information Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon said that women are given great respect in our culture, but Imran Khan has put our culture and traditions on the line and has not spared women either. Ms. Faryal Talpur was arrested from the hospital on the night of Eid festival, which indicates the worst revenge, he added.

He said that Imran Khan made fabricated cases against opponents and their families for four years. The amnesty scheme was termed by Imran Khan as a scheme of dacoits, but his sister Aleema Khan took full advantage of it, he said.



He said that no leader of PPP has benefited from amnesty scheme.

Sharjeel Inam Memon said that the entire focus of the Sindh government is on the rehabilitation of the flood victims, at the time we are holding the press conference, Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah is on a visit to the rain-affected areas.

The Sindh Irrigation Minister and the entire administrative machinery are with him and are monitoring the process of water drainage from the affected areas.

He said that Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari is also talking at every

forum about the disasters of rain and flood and raising voice for helping the victims as well as asking for environmental justice for them at international level.

On the other hand, a fraudulent person took donations in the name of rain victims who did not reach the victims and neither Imran Khan himself reached the victims, he added.

He said that Imran Khan's desire is to harm Pakistan, Shaheed Zulfiakar Ali Bhutto was martyred, Shaheed Ms. Benazir Bhutto's government was terminated twice, but Pakistan People's Party did not conspire against the institutions.

He said that Imran Khan and his incompetent team have a principal role in destroying the economy of the country.

He said that many finance ministers and governors of State Bank were changed during the tenure of PTI-led government.

Sharjeel said that the Chief

Minister of Punjab also understands that Imran Khan is lying and have given false names in the FIR.

Sharjeel said that it is his personal opinion that if Parvez Elahi has any sense, he will not dissolve the assembly.

In response to a question, Sharjeel Inam Memon said that Pakistan People's Party is the creator of the 18th Amendment, we will protect the powers of the provinces.

Saeed Ghani said that the assemblies of Sindh and Balochistan gave the power to the federation to legislate on the issue of Reko Diq according to the constitution, which is a constitutional and legal process. This authority was given to the federal government keeping in mind the foreign investment in Riko Diq, he added.

He said that the Provincial Assembly has the power to end this matter even today by passing legislation, there is no problem with the 18th constitutional amendment.



LAHORE: Former Minister for Interior Sheikh Rasheed Ahmad meet Chairman PTI Imran Khan at his residence. —INP Photo

PTI tries to cover its misdeeds: Kh Saad

LAHORE (INP): Minister Pakistan Railways and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader, Khawaja Saad Rafique has said that earlier election narrative of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) is aimed at covering its misdeeds. Taking to his twitter handle on Thursday, he said that 'Money Gala' was exposed over its offense and using different tactics to flee. Khawaja Saad Rafique said that it was not dispute of sale of few expensive watches but the accused swept away the entire 'Toshkhana'.

CM approves status of district to Taunsa Sharif

LAHORE (INP): Punjab Chief Minister Chaudhry Parvez Elahi gave final approval to give district status to Taunsa while taking another big step regarding South Punjab. The chief minister took immediate action for the status of district to Taunsa on the demand of the members of National and Provincial Assembly of Dera Ghazi Khan.

Khawaja Shiraz Mahmood, Muhammad Khan Leghari, Saifuddin Khosa, Sardar Muhammad Mohiuddin Khosa, Javed Akhtar Lund, Makhdoom Raza, Ali Raza Dareshak and Roy Zahoor were also present. Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi said he had announced the status of district to Taunsa in 2005. "In 2005, the announcement of making Taunsa a district was announced in a big public gathering of MNA Khawaja Shiraz. Now Taunsa had been given

district status", he said. "I thank Allah, The Almighty, for fulfilling the promises made to people of Taunsa and in a short period of a few months, Taunsa is the fifth new district", he added. He said that Murree, Wazirabad, Talagang and Kot Addu had already been given district status. The members of the assembly expressed their gratitude to the chief minister for granting the status of district to Taunsa and said people of Taunsa would always remember the decision.

Question of dissolving assemblies is over now: Sindh CM

SEHWAN (NNI): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah said on Thursday that the question of dissolving the assemblies was over then. While talking to media outside his residence in Sehwan, he said that the chief minister did have the authority to dissolve assemblies, but it must be a thoughtful act. "The assemblies cannot be dissolved to please anyone. A chief minister dissolves the assemblies while admitting his failure. The assemblies will not be dissolved at Imran

Khan's behest. There is no such provision in the Constitution," he stated. "It's not like that a chief minister wakes up from sleep and does not go to the office, saying that I dissolve the assembly," he remarked. "I have already said that it is good if the assemblies do not dissolve. [But] it is even better if they do. We will contest the elections and win," he pointed out. Later, the Sindh chief minister visited Government Boys Secondary School Murad Shah Wahar.

There was eighth grade exam going on in the school. The chief minister talked to the children taking the exam and checked their exam sheets. He also advised the children to work hard and excel. "Your success is important for your parents, for me, for the province, and for the country," he added. The chief minister was recognizing the school-children by their names. His two-day visit to his native constituency was completed.

Fawad seeks time for verification of resignations

LAHORE (NNI): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader and former information minister Chaudhry Fawad Hussain on Thursday dispelled the impression that the PTI lawmakers, who resigned from the National Assembly seats, were receiving salaries and perks.

Taking to Twitter, he said it was remarked in the Supreme Court on Wednesday that the PTI legislators were not joining the NA proceedings, but receiving salaries and perks.

He asked the judges to first get each news aired on news channels verified, saying the present government had told another lie as salaries of MNAs who resigned were suspended.

The minister said a letter was being written to the NA Speaker for asking him to allocate time for confirmation of resignations so that a new electoral process could be initiated.

PTI leader Shireen Mazari also said, in a tweet, that the NA speaker was playing politics on resignations as she checked that not a single PTI MNA who resigned received any pay.

"Speaker NA playing politics on resignations. For the record and info of dispensers of Justice I have checked with a no of PTI MNAs who had resigned and none of them received any pay after mid April. Meanwhile Speaker accepted 11 resignations without reaffirming so de facto validated", she said in the tweet.

The former minister further said: "Dy Speaker Qasim Suri ruling of acceptance of all resignations - esp since pays were not being given either. Therefore, in principle all resignations effectively stand validated. But Imported govt and Speaker delib causing confusion & spreading it to SC also."

Last week, NA Speaker Raja Pervez Ashraf said PTI legislators conveyed him messages to not accept their resignations.

CSO ASF BKIA PESHAWAR PRE-QUALIFICATION TENDER NOTICE

- Tender No.01/CSOASF BKIA/2022-2023/Store
 - ASF CSO BKIA Peshawar is seeking to update list of Pre-qualified contractor, Suppliers service providers, and General Order Suppliers that the ASF CSO BKIA Peshawar may require from time to time according to its needs.
 - Tender documents may be obtained during office hours 0800 hrs to 1600 hrs from Store Office CSO ASF BKIA Peshawar.
- Service/Work**
- General order suppliers may be asked to provide service like Repair & Maintenance work of Office Building, Residential Building, Machinery & Equipment Items (i.e Repair of Air Conditioners, Room Coolers, Water Filter Plant, Water Dispenser, Ceiling Fans, Exhaust Fans, Bracket Fans, Pedestal Fans, Electric Heater, Geeser, Oven Micro, Juicer, Electric items, Refrigerators, Deep Freezer, Electric Water Motors, Photocopier Machines, etc) Furniture & Fixture items (i.e Chairs, Tables, Center Table, Almirah/Cabinet, Sofa Sets, Dining Tables, Dining Chairs, Single/Double Decker Steel Beds & Repair works etc.) & Repair of Computer Hardware, Stationery, ect).
- General Order Supplier**
- General Order Supplier Electric Items Appliances, Sanitary items, Miscellaneous Items. Expendable Items, Coloring Materials (i.e. Oil paint, Distemper. Red Oxide, Mixing Oil, Lime Stone, Different Brushes, Scrapers, ect.), Food Items, Ice, Coal and Computer Accessories).
 - Firms which are registered with FBR, Income Tax Department and KPK Board revenue having financial capability with adequate managerial competence may apply.
 - Tender inquiry form may be obtained from Store Office ASF BKIA Peshawar Airport at the cost of Rs, 500/- cash (Non-Refundable).
 - Following information/Cop of documents must be attached with application:-
 - Copy of CNIC of Firm Company owner.
 - A copy of letter showing firm's financial capability.
 - Copies of FBR and SRB Certificates will be (showing detail of work/services) Attached with tender inquiry.
 - Last date of submission of application is 02nd Jan, 2023 up to 1100 hours.
 - CSO ASF BKIA Peshawar reserves the rights to accept or reject any application without assigning any reason as per PPRA rules 2004.

Chief Security Officer | ASF BKIA Peshawar PID(K)1681/22

WAPDA Decade of Dams

INVITATION FOR PREQUALIFICATION DIAMER BASHA DAM PROJECT (DAM PART) WATER AND POWER DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

- Diamer Basha Dam Project, WAPDA has sufficient funds from its own resources/the Government of Pakistan toward the expenditure of the provision of LPG Cylinders for Office Building and Officer's/Official's Accommodations of Diamer Basha Dam Project and intends to apply part of the proceeds toward payments under the contract or contracts for "Supply of LPG Cylinders for Office Building and Officer's/Official's Accommodations of Diamer Basha Dam Project (Dam Part)".
- Diamer Basha Dam Project, WAPDA intends to prequalify suppliers for Invitation to Bid(s), and sign the framework agreement(s) with the selected bidder(s) subsequent to bidding process in case of Closed Framework Agreement(s).
- The objective of the intended Closed framework agreement(s) is the on-demand supply of LPG Cylinders for Office Building and Officer's/Official's Accommodations of the Project through subsequent Call-off Contract(s) with successful bidders, and the purpose of this Prequalification Notice is to provide the very basic information to enable the potential applicants to decide whether or not to respond to this Prequalification Notice.
- Only the prequalified applicants shall be entitled to participate in the procurement proceedings, and it is expected that the Invitation to Bids will be made to the Prequalified Applicants within a month of conclusion of pre-qualification and Closed Framework Agreement(s) will be signed b/w the Procuring Agency and the successful bidder(s) as Framework Agreement Suppliers after conclusion of bidding process for the period of One Year.
- Prequalification process is open for all National Applicants subject to fulfilling the eligibility requirements mentioned in the respective Prequalification Documents. Interested Applicants may obtain further information from the office of GM/PD, DBDP, WAPDA, Chilas at the address mentioned below during office hours i.e. 0800 to 1600 hours.
- A complete set of Prequalification Documents in English can be obtained from the office of Director (HQ) under General Manager / Project Director Office from the address mentioned below after submission of fee Rs. 1000/- in the shape of Cash Deposit / Pay Order in the name of GM/PD DBDP, WAPDA, Chilas, Gilgit Baltistan.
- Applications for Prequalification should be submitted in clearly marked envelopes and delivered to the address mentioned below latest by 1100 hrs on 05th January, 2023. Late Applications will be rejected.

General Manager / Project Director
Diamer Basha Dam Project, WAPDA
Chilas, District Diamer, Gilgit Baltistan
Tel.: 05812-920209 Email: gmceodbdo@gmail.com

This notice is also available at PPRA Website: www.ppra.org.pk
PID(L)1759 Website: www.wapda.gov.pk PRD(L)/WAPDA/140/(2022-23)
DONATE FOR DIAMER BASHA & MOHMAND DAMS

WAPDA Decade of Dams

PAKISTAN WAPDA FOUNDATION BID NOTICE

1. Pakistan WAPDA Foundation Lahore, invites sealed bids from Genuine Importers / Firms / Manufacturers registered with Income TAX, GST Department, who deal in the relevant category for the supply of following material as per detail narrated below.

Tender #	Description of Material	Improved Quantity to be Procured	Station	Opening Date
Tender-848	Transformer Board Sheet 3200 x 2100 x 8 mm As Per IEC Specification 60641-3-1 type B 3.1.A. Thickness tolerance + 5% Sheet size Tolerance + 50 mm	672 Kg	Lahore	03 Jan 2023
	Insulation Paper Size 0.10 x 16 mm Thickness Tolerance ±10%. As per specification DIN VDE 0311 (IEC 60554-3-5)	1500 Kg		
	Insulation Paper Size 0.05 x 16 mm Thickness Tolerance + 10% As per specification DIN VDE 0311 (IEC 60554-3-5)	1500 Kg		

Tender-849	ANGLE RING SECTORS		Lahore	03 Jan 2023
Tender-850	Type 2, Fig A, E-60°, Di 680, F1 220, H1 150, S 3mm, R20mm, RTOL ± 05, U 110. (Qty. 72 Nos), Type 2, Fig A, E-60°, Di 7100, F1 180, H1 150, S 3mm, R20mm, RTOL ± 05, U 110. (Qty. 72 Nos), Type 2, Fig A, E-60°, Di 760, F1 320, H1 170, S 3mm, R20mm, RTOL ± 05, U 110. (Qty. 72 Nos), Type 2, Fig A, E-60°, Di 960, F1 200, H1 170, S 3mm, R20mm, RTOL ± 05, U 110. (Qty. 72 Nos), Type 2, Fig A, E-60°, Di 976, F1 190, H1 170, S 3mm, R20mm, RTOL ± 05, U 110. (Qty. 144 Nos), Type 2, Fig A, E-60°, Di 992, F1 170, H1 170, S 3mm, R20mm, RTOL ± 05, U 110. (Qty. 144 Nos), Type 2, Fig A, E-60°, Di 1010, F1 170, H1 170, S 3mm, R20mm, RTOL ± 05, U 110. (Qty. 72 Nos), Type 2, Fig A, E-60°, Di 1200, F1 80, H1 170, S 3mm, R20mm, RTOL ± 05, U 110. (Qty. 72 Nos), Type 2, Fig A, E-60°, Di 1220, F1 90, H1 170, S 3mm, R20mm, RTOL ± 05, U 110. (Qty. 144 Nos), Type 2, Fig A, E-60°, Di 1210, F1 80, H1 170, S 3mm, R20mm, RTOL ± 05, U 110. (Qty. 72 Nos) Make Weidmann Switzerland OR Equivalent			
	SPLIT CAPS Fig A, E-60°, Di 940, F1 100, H1 150, S 3, R20, RTOL ± 05, U 110. (Qty. 72 Nos), Fig A, E-60°, Di 1200, F1 150, H1 150, S 3, R20, RTOL ± 05, U 110. (Qty. 72 Nos) Make Weidmann Switzerland OR Equivalent			
	Moisture Analyzer Test Set As per provided specification	01 No	Lahore	03 Jan 2023

- Bidding Documents which are containing detailed terms and conditions, method of procurement, procedure for submission of bids, Bid Money, bid validity and performance guaranty, delivery period etc. are available for interested bidders at Office of Managing Director (PWF), 1st Floor, Haleem Plaza, 10-Temple Road, Lahore. Price of the bidding documents is Rs.1,000/- (Non-refundable). Bidding documents can be purchased through Pay Order of Rs.1,000/- in favour of Pakistan WAPDA Foundation, Haleem Plaza, 10-Temple Road, Lahore.
- Interested firms must enclose Copy of their GST / NTN registration along with the Tender request / application vide their original Letter Head Pad.
- Earnest / Bid Money (Refundable) while participating in Tender will be 2% (of the total quoted price) in shape of Pay Order in the name of Pakistan WAPDA Foundation, Haleem Plaza, 10-Temple Road, Lahore.
- The bids prepared in accordance with the instructions in the bidding documents must reach at Office of Managing Director (PWF), Haleem Plaza, 10-Temple Road, Lahore on due dates at 11:15 AM. Bids will be opened the same day at 11:45 AM. This advertisement notice is also available on PPRA website at www.ppra.org.pk and WAPDA website www.wapda.gov.pk
- All the rights are reserved as per PPRA Rules-2004.

SECRETARY
Pakistan WAPDA Foundation
Haleem Plaza, 10-Temple Road, Lahore
Phone No. 042-99205069 FAX No. 042-99205068
E-Mail: materialmanagement.pwf@gmail.com

This notice is also available at PPRA Website: www.ppra.org.pk
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گیس کی فراہمی کیلئے کوشاں

بین الاقوامی توانائی کے بحران اور مقامی سطح پر گیس کی پیداوار میں کمی

لہذا! کھانا پکانے کے اوقات میں گیس فراہمی یقینی بنائی جائے گی

صبح 06:00 سے 09:00

شام 06:00 سے 09:00

دوپہر 12:00 سے 02:00

GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN PAKISTAN PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Sealed tenders on percentage rate basis(not on individual items) ore hereby invited for the works mentioned below from the approved PEC registered Contractors duly renewed for the current financial year 2022-23. Tender documents can be received from the office of the undersigned during office hours on any working day on payment of tender cost (Non-Refundable) up to 02-01-2023 with written request on letter pad accompanied with attested copy of CNIC. Income tax Registration Certificate as active taxpayer (filer) Tender will be issued to the proprietor of the Firm / Company or their legally authorized representatives having registered power of attorney (duly attested). The tenders in sealed cover should be received in the tender box kept in the office of undersigned on 03/01/2023 upto 2:00 PM and the respective tenders will be opened on the same day at 02:30 PM in the presence of contractors or their authorized representative, having registered power of attorney. The following instructions may be read and understood carefully in true letter and spirit, as in case of violation of any of these, the tender forms will not be issued, the documents under mentioned must be accompanied with the application, failing which no tender forms will be issued

- Terms & Conditions:-**
- No tender will be sold / issued on the date of opening of tenders.
 - No tender will be issued / received thorough post, telegraph or E-Mail.
 - According to PPRA Rule-25. Bid Security as stated below against each work in the shape of CDR/Call deposit shall be furnished from any scheduled Bank in the name of the Executive Engineer. Central Civil Division, Pak PWD. Bannu. No tender will be entertained without bid security as stated against each work or less amount.
 - Tenders can be purchased on the prescribed cost (Non-refundable) In Cash mentioned against the below noted works from the office of the undersigned during office hours upto 02/01/2023
 - All CDRs once received may be credited into the Government Account and will be refunded through Government Cheque.
 - 1st, 2nd, 3rd, lowest bidders CDR may be retained till acceptance of Tender.
 - The documents provided by the bidders if found ambiguous will be verified and in case of fake one. The firm will face immediate / appropriate penal action as per rules and law
 - Tender Notice is also available at PPRA website (www.ppra.org.pk)
 - Under Rule 33(1) of public Procurement Rules. 2004. The competent authority reserves the right to reject all bids or proposals at any time prior to the acceptance of bid or proposal.
 - The submission of tenders by the contractor implies that he is fully conversant with the site of work, scope of work and terms and conditions as laid down in the tender documents.

Note :- In case of any public holiday or surprise engagement of the underlined the schedule of closing and opening will be on 04-01-2023 on same time.

S#	Name of Work	N.I.T Amount	Earnest Money Bid Security amount	Period of Completion	Cost of Tender
1	Construction of PCC Road/Street at Various Village Upper and Lower (Currant District Kurram Phase-I)	42059708	850000/-	06 Months	2000/-
2(a)	Construction of PCC Road/Street at Various Village Upper and Lower Kurram District Kurram Phase-II	42059708	850000/-	06 Months	2000/-
(b)	Construction of PCC Road/Street at Various Village Upper and Lower Kurram District Kurram	42059708	850000/-	06 Months	2000/-
3(a)	Construction of PCC Road/Street at Various Village Upper and Lower Kurram District Kurram Phase-III	42059708	850000/-	06 Months	2000/-
(b)	Construction of PCC Road/Street at Various Village Upper and Lower Kurram District Kurram	33176789	670000/-	06 Months	2000/-
4	Installation of Hand Pumps at Various Villages Lower and Upper Kurram District Kurram	19448793	400000/-	06 Months	2000/-
5	Construction of RCC Surface Water Tank and Pipe Line (DWSS) at Various Villages Upper and Lower Kurram District Kurram	44091804	900000/-	06 Months	2000/-
6	Installation of Hand Pump at Various Places All FR.s of New Merged tribal areas Ex-FATA	36899952	750000/-	06 Months	2000/-
7	Construction of PCC Road/Street at various villages Various Places of Tehsil Miral and the following villages North Waziristan Tribal District (NWTD) i) Isson Village (ii) Hasokhel village Bazar (iii) Hurmug Village (iv) Massaki Village (v) Mubarak shahi Village (vi) Makikhel Edak (vii) Muhammad jan kot Miral	42330081	860000/-	06 Months	2000/-

(Noor Zada Khan Wazir)
Executive Engineer Central
Civil Division Pak PWD, Bannu



PESHAWAR: Bishop of Pakistan Hamfree Sarfaraz, Peter along with other community members presenting bouquet to KP Governor Ghulam Ali before meeting. — F.P. photo

Imran politics revolves around accusations, says Muqam

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Adviser to the Prime Minister for Political and Public Affairs and National Heritage, Engr Amir Muqam here Thursday said politics of Pakistan Tahrir Insaf Chairman, Imran Khan was revolving around accusations and character assassination of the political opponents.

He said all the election promises of Imran were proved as pack of lies. Addressing a big public gathering to welcome new entrants into Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz here, Amir Muqam said that Imran had made tall promises in the last general election to construct five million houses for poor, provide jobs to one million youth and convert PM House into a university and that non of these promises were fulfilled by him despite his nine years long rule in KP and four years Government in Punjab and Centre.

Following successful no confidence motion against Imran Khan, he said that the PTI Chairman had leveled baseless allegations against political opponents and leadership of the state institutions for ulterior

motives. He said Imran did not like neutral and wanted to reach power corridors through backdoor by dragging state institutions into politics and that such ill attempts would not succeed any more.

Imran Khan was found guilty of corrupt practices in Tosha Khana and PTI Foreign funding cases, adding these high level cases exposed his anti corruption narrative. He said inspite of nine years rule in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and four years Government in Centre and Punjab, he said PTI has failed to deliver and address problems of masses and that Billion Trees Afforestation Project was also taken over by NAB.

He said that people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has started distance from Imran due to his politics of accusations poor governance, corrupt practices and were looking towards PML-N for political change. The employees of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government were protesting for their rights, payment of allowances, salaries and others incentives while social media influencers were recruited on handsome salaries by the PTI rulers for self-projection on the taxpayers money.

He said that Imran Khan has destroyed economy and social values. Due to Imran Khan's Government poor economic policies, he said value of dollar against rupee and loans burden were significantly increased. The country's would have been bankrupted if the Imran Khan's Government continued for few more days.

On the other hands, he said PML-N Government believed in practical work and speedy development of Pakistan. He said soon after the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif assumed the power had visited Shangla and announced a mega development package for people. The Prime Minister has led from the front during devastated flood situation and visited all the floods affected districts including KP where he personally inspected rescue, relief and rehabilitation operations. The Prime Minister also announced a mega relief package for floods victims under which financial assistance worth billions of rupees were provided in a transparent manner. Engr Amir Muqam said that people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa pinned high expectations from PML-N and would reject PTI in 2023 general election.

Delegation of Abasin column writers calls on Barrister Saif

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A delegation of Abasin Column Writers Association led by renowned businessman Zia-ul-Haq Sarhadi called on Special Assistant to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister on Information, Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif here on Thursday.

The delegation was comprised Abid Akhtar Hassan, Alamgeer Afridi, Roshan Khattak, Wasim Shahid, Sahibzada Talha and Munawar Shah. During meeting, the delegation suggested proposals to establish an effective relation between information department and column writers association.

Speaking on the occasion, Barrister Saif highlighted significance of writers and saying that column writers have always strived to inform government about public opinion and issues of common man. He also urged them to continue efforts for orientation of authorities aiming welfare of people.

He also inform the delegation about steps taken by provincial government for betterment of people and added that suggestions and proposals of column writers would be considered properly.

Nation awaits announcement of PTI chief: Bangash

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Higher Education, Kamran Kan Bangash has said that the nation is anxiously waiting from the announcement of Chairman Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) regarding dissolving the assemblies.

In a statement issued here on Thursday, he said that as soon as the PTI chief issues directives, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister will dissolve the assembly. Kamran Bangash said that the countrymen will never let the conspiracy of disqualifying Imran Khan to succeed.

He said that free and transparent elections were the only solution to ensure political and economic stability in the country. Spokesperson to CM KP, Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif said that amendments were get passed from incomplete assemblies to pave way for sheathing their corruption.

The only aim of the imported leaders was to conclude cases against them and to get their loans waived off, he added. The spokesman further stated that Imran Khan will soon return to assembly with 2/3 majority and will push the looters of national exchequer behind the bars.

QWP chief rejects Imran's demand for early elections

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Qaumi Watan Party (QWP) Chairman Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao on Thursday criticized the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leadership for spreading rumours that the country was facing default-like situation.

Speaking at a press conference in Abbottabad after chairing a meeting of the party office-bearers from Kohistan, he said that political stability for necessary to improve the economic situation of the country.

Rejecting the demand of the PTI leaders for the fresh elections, he said that the Pakistan Democratic Movement-led government would complete the remaining tenure and the election would take place in its due time. Aftab Sherpao

said that incumbent federal government had inherited a weak economy from the PTI government therefore the economic revival would now take time.

The QWP leader said PTI Chairman Imran Khan was bent on creating anarchy to make the country go bankrupt. He said that the former prime minister was responsible for the prevailing economic conditions, adding that he lacked the ability to govern and landed the country into a host of problems due to his incompetence.

He asked the PTI MNAs to return to the National Assembly and play their role in solving the problems of their electorate. He said that the PTI MNAs were not willing to tender resignation from the assembly as they were enjoying all perks and privileges and

were not appearing before the speaker to verify their resignations. Aftab Sherpao said the PTI chairman took U-turns on every issue and was changing his narrative on a daily basis. He said that he was now criticizing the ones, who helped bring him to power.

He said that Imran Khan strained the country's relations with the US, Saudi Arabia and China when he was the prime minister. He said that the PDM government was trying to restore the strained relations and was improving the country's image. Aftab Sherpao said it was Imran Khan, who violated the agreement with the International Monetary Fund when he was going to face the no-confidence motion to save his government, but it did not work.

Murder of advocate: KPBC observes strike

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bar Council (KPBC) has observed strike against murder of Ikram Khan Advocate along with his two sons in Swat and demanded passage Lawyer Protection Bill, on Thursday.

KPBC chairman Muhammad Ali Jadoon and Chairman Executive Committee Muhammad Ilyas Khan condemned murderer

of lawyer while demanded both provincial and federal governments to ensure legislation for protection of legal fraternity.

KPBC argued competent authorities to pass Lawyer Protection Bill to ensure security of lawyers because legal fraternity are facing continuous threats in performing their duties. KPBC argued district bar associations to arrange transport facilities for lawyers for participation in protest in front

of Parliament house announced by All Pakistan Lawyer Intra-provincial relation committee on 26th November.

Although, lawyer's strike has frustrated applicants and petitioners because hearings were adjourned without any proceedings while the applicants returned hopeless. The applicants requested both legal fraternity along with provincial and federal government should resolve the issue on permanent basis.

PEC, PEDO launch program for engineers

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Pakhtunkhwa Energy Development Organization (PEDO) and Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) have signed an agreement to start an internship program for fresh graduate engineers, said an official handout issued here on Thursday.

Under the agreement, PEC registered newly qualified engineers will be given one year training in PEDO and pay Rs.30,000 per month a stipend jointly. The main objective of the program is to eliminate unemployment in the skilled class and to introduce skilled and trained engineers in the development process, which will usher in a new era of development in the industrial sector as well as in other sectors.

In this regard, a special ceremony of signing the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between PEC and PEDO was held at PEDO House Peshawar.

During the ceremony, Chief Executive PEDO Engineer Naem Khan informed about the 32 years of achievements in the energy sector of PEDO, and said that PEDO is the most annual revenue generator for the province of more than 5 billion, which has completed 7 projects, from which a total of 161 MW of cheap electricity is being generated. While 7 more projects are in the final stages of completion, from which 224 MW will be generated, from which the province is expected to earn another 4 billion rupees.

In the next ten years, PEDO's income will be increased from Rs. 43 billion to 50 to 60 billion rupees. He declared PEDO as mini-Wapda and said that in a few years, PEDO will become the country's largest energy entity. Chairman, Pakistan Engineering Council Engr. Najeem Haroon said that the technical sector is important in the development of the country and said that only engineers can get the

country out of the current crisis. They cannot be ignored in any case.

Shopkeepers arrested

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: District administration Peshawar has arrested 42 shopkeepers during a crackdown on profiteers from various localities of the city on Thursday.

On the directives of the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Peshawar, Shafullah Khan, the officers of the district administration conducted raids on shopkeepers in bazaars in interior city, Kohat Road, Ring Road, Charsadda Road, Dilzak Road, G.T. Road, Pajagee Road, Bara Road, Pishakhara Road, Hayatabad, Arbab Road and other localities and arrested 42 shopkeepers for profiteering, lack of official price list, selling of under-weight roti and unhygienic conditions.

RPO orders indiscriminate crackdown against outlaws

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Regional Police Officer Malakand Sajjad Khan has ordered the Swat Police to prepare lists of elements involved in usurer, drug dealing, extortion and other social evils and take strict action against them. He further directed the district police to pay attention to improvement of the traffic system in the district. He assured to resolve the problems being faced to police.

The RPO said that Swat police have made immense sacrifices and expressed their courage and bravery during past situations, upon which, now the best law and order situation prevails in the region. He added police force shall perform all the responsibilities involved in their duties with sincerity and full devotion. He asked them to deal the masses with friendly behavior so that they feel a sense of respect in their hearts for their police.

He said that police should expect

ditione their operations against crime prevention, anti-social and peace harming elements and also mafias, involved in the heinous drug trade in the area so that the society could be made free from these evils. The RPO further said that the complainants, coming to the police stations, should also be treated with politeness and resolve their issues with their full satisfaction while service delivery must be improved in police stations. The RPO also assured to solve the problems being faced by police personnel and vowed to bring under consideration the promotion cases of the police.

RPO was addressing as a chief guest to the Police Darbar in Police Lines, at Kabul Swat on Thursday. The DPO Swat Shafullah Gandapur also spoke on this occasion. Earlier, on arrival to police line, DPO Swat Shafullah Gandapur and other senior officers of Swat Police welcomed the RPO, while a smart contingent of police presented him guard of honor.

On this occasion, he laid flowers at the martyrs' memorial and prayed for the soul of the martyrs of Swat Police.

Meanwhile, the RPO inaugurated the modern Anti-Car Lifting Cell(ACL) in police line and termed it as an important project to tackle car theft. The RPO also inspected the cell and learned about its various desks. Addressing the darbar, the RPO further said the police should show a polite and loving attitude towards the visitors and tourists coming to Swat while asked the police to extend their full cooperation to the DRC members to eradicate social problems and stressed upon the police, to focus on tracing of untraced cases. He directed to increase police mobile patrols and also stressed to register cases of theft and other cognizable crimes in a timely manner. The RPO distributed certificates of appreciation among the best performing Swat police officers and personnel.

Life of Katrina

Zarghona Khalil

TRANSGENDER are not novel to us, gender variance is older than we think and trans people are part of that legacy. But gender expression is stigmatized in our society, we overlook gender variances of society. Consciously or unconsciously we are being so dramatic towards third gender for eons now.

As saying that something is better than nothing so, for the very first-time transgender counted separately by numerators in Pakistan. Pakistan's transgender population according to the 2017 population census was 10,418 in which 913 were from KP, though some trans community members and organizations working for trans community rights claimed higher number as per according to them, there are about 35,000 to 50,000 trans in KP.

According to them there are loop holes in the 2017 census as it wasn't classified in further categories, and since it was the first time, it might be possible that there were many trans people that didn't want to come out and being identified; as for many trans genders the reaction isn't as positive when they reveal their gender identity to their families, friends and community. Widespread discrimination and stigma are the causes they face in each sector of life even they have no access to basic needs, social and economic opportunities. They are a marginalized segment of society with less education opportunities and lesser employment percentage. They have to struggle with getting approval and

acceptance from people around them. To top it all off, Trans community is facing a rampant sexual assault, gender base violence and gang rapes.

The trans community is assumed to earn money through dancing and begging. There are so many reasons that need to be unleashed, that force them to join a dancing profession. Disowned by family, abandoned by society, they have no choice left but to be a dancer and then go under a prostitution business. But this is not the end, there are many stories of forthright bravery and resilience that is an inspiration for many; and Katrina's story is one of them.

Being a youngest child in a family, he didn't know that his identity would be challenged in future not only from society but from his family too and unaware of that a road ahead would be littered with obstacles and strife. Katrina was born in KP as a boy where he has two sisters and two brothers, like any other child he got admitted in a school .From the very beginning, as he was growing up with his other siblings and his classmates; he and everyone around him could clearly observe differences in him and his inclination towards female fellows. He used to wear a makeup, dressed and act like girls as if it was imbibed in his soul. He used to play with dolls rather than tanks and trucks. In a society where gender roles are strictly classified between man and woman, third gender revelation was a taboo to society; a society where women are deprived of their basic rights, accepting transgender as a gender was a challenge.

As he was growing older, his

brothers started to scold him for his behavior changes and forced him to play football, cricket and do activities that are meant for men to do. Moreover, his class fellows started taunting him, but deep down he knew he would never be the person anymore that his brothers and society were trying to make him. As time was passing by his womanly instincts and feminine traits were appearing more openly and intensively; his fellows started to take advantage of him and bullied him that he could only study till second year. It was his mother and sisters that accepted his uniqueness but his brothers didn't accepted him. His mother supported him throughout this hard time. She was the one who take care of him, from admitting him in school to bringing him to madrasa to learn the primary lessons of religion and Quran, it was her who stand by his side strong and firm.

But the path is not always smooth; after his parents death, things started getting worse, due to society pressure, family negligence and hatred towards him, being at home he started to live an isolated life. He became a liability to his family and nobody cares about his existence, he came up to a point that he left his home.

Leaving a home wasn't an easy decision as he had no shelter and anyone to rely on, with heavy heart he approached Guru that is meant to be a patron in Tran's community. Guru accepted him, gave shelter and food to live on but on a condition of becoming a slave to guru, Katrina was now bound to do whatever she is told by her guru; otherwise she had to face the consequences of it. She started going

to events and dance parties and forced to do immoral activities. In music party's people used to humiliate her, touch her inappropriately, it was not new for her, but her self-respect and identity shattered each time she hear it. Besides that, after party she used to be forced by men to go with them and spent a night with them. She did not wanted to be in this smeared business but she was bound to do it.

Bearing all this humiliation, oppression and trauma for years, she decided to stand for herself as her inner voice didn't allow her to be quiet. As saying: Where there is will there is a way, she got the chance to attend an awareness seminar, on the rights of trans genders, where she met human rights activists and some government departments officials, Katrina got to know that she can also live a respectable and honorable life, have fundamental rights and can make choices of her own. She wanted to choose a profession of her choice rather than dancing which was forced by society and her poor conditions. She decided to become a voice of her community's unheard voices and become a change agent of society that has a ripple effect. She registered her organization named REST organization, where she started to teach sewing skills learning program and beautician course to her community, so that they can earn their bread and butter respectfully.

Till now she has trained 70 to 80 transgender. Government departments, some human rights organizations and especially SMEDA (Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority) helped her out in providing

equipment e.g. sewing machines to set up her small-scale industry but she has still lacking a raw material for making cloths, while the support from government and higher officials is vital for this marginalized community but there is still the need of support from government and other welfare organizations in respect to bring their business in the main stream.

Katrina said that, her community had to face hurdles, bullying, challenges as society has nonsufficient knowledge about this gender and don't know how to treat them, stigmatized and stereotyped by society, no body want to talk about it openly. Furthermore, Society's lack of awareness and lack of humanity, trans genders are unable to get proper education; the chances of getting high profile or even better jobs are minimum, that's why they are left behind in every walk of life. In the age where a child need family's support, attention, affection and love; we have been out casted, shunned and left out by our families; in the barbarous atmosphere and this way we have to entre in a horrendous guru /chela system.

Katrina fights with society to prove herself and became an inspiration for many; that want to choose a profession of their own choice. According to Katrina in dance profession and other immoral activities trans genders have no future, in their old age they live a horrible lives, get addicted to drugs and caught miserable diseases. She said that she want to incline her community towards positive activities as many of us want to get education and respectable jobs. Harassed, threaten, beaten, and killed

because of our gender is inhumane. Besides that we are not born just to Dance; we are more than that. We are the creation of God, we are not cursed and we are not a reason of shame to our families and society.

Furthermore, diversity is the main element of nature and any nation which actually makes it beautiful. We talk about inclusivity but ironically we are excluded by a huge segment of society. To grow and develop as a society we have to go side by side no matter what gender we are. Now is the time to stand up for ongoing injustices, hatred, inequality and bigotry. It's time to move forward, as there is still a long way to go to achieve equality and justice.

Recalling her childhood memories, Katrina said that she ought to be a pilot /an air hostess and travel the world but it could happen only , if society had let her completed her education .Now she wanted to do something for her community and to be remembered as a person that follows the footsteps of Abdul Sattar Edhi.

Katrina and her community do not want a special treatment; they ask for respect, equality and equity from society, to live a dignified life with integrity. They want acceptance from society and families as it's the family that have to decide whether we can afford to live on the old patterns or will we adopt a positive and healthy change to accept each other . As it is need of the day to rely more on a cerebral skills rather than questioning and shaming each other's physiology. If a man and female can do work; they can also do better work being a vital member of society.



In brief

Security enhanced F.P. Report

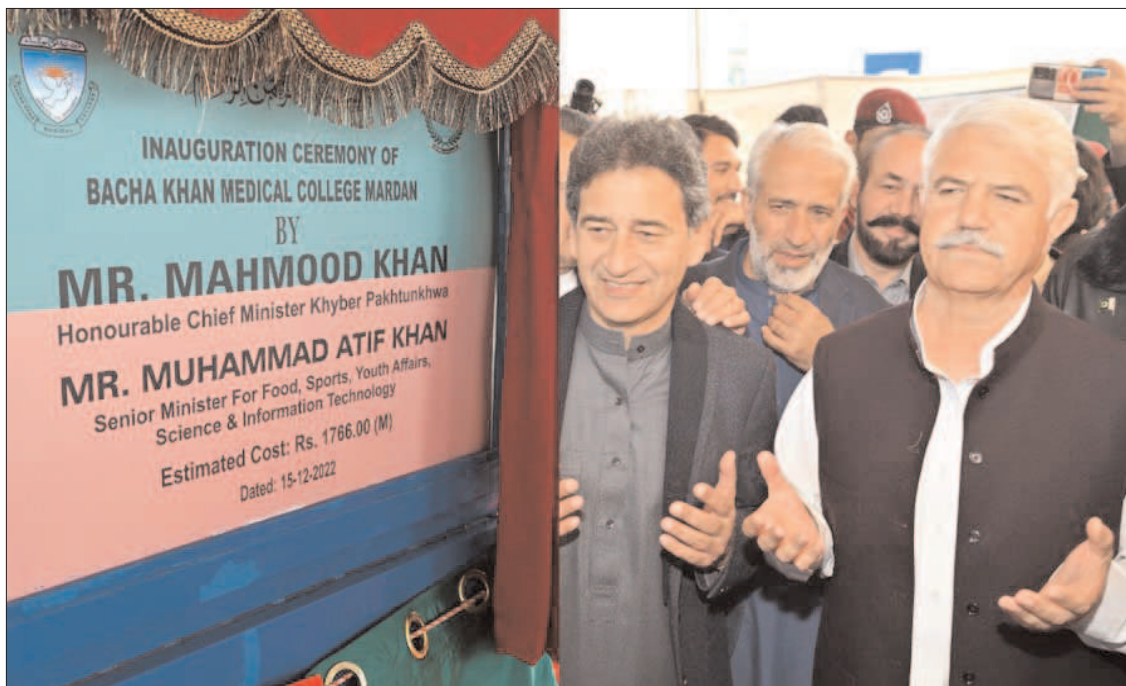
LAKKI MARWAT: The security of polio workers has been enhanced during the ongoing anti polio drive in Lakki Marwat district", said an official on Thursday. Talking to The Frontier Post, he said that around 1900 cops had been tasked with guarding vaccinators. The district health department has constituted 995 polio teams to vaccinate 193252 children under the age of five against the crippling disease. The official said that along with provision of foolproof security to polio workers, additional checking points had been established in the district to avert any untoward incident. He said that the cops' deployment at check posts and temporary checking points had also been increased. He said that elimination of polio virus and protection of children under the age of five from crippling disease was a national cause and along with vaccinators, policemen would fight the epidemic in the frontline. Meanwhile, DPO Ziauddin Ahmed along with SP investigation Murad Khan visited different areas to check security arrangements of the polio eradication campaign. Zia also administered anti-polio vaccine to several children and asked the vaccinators to perform their national duty without any fear as area police would provide them complete security. The police officials also visited the fixed centres established at hospitals and health units.

Langove concerned

QUETTA (PPI): Minister for Home and Tribal Affairs, Mir Zia-ullah Langove, while expressing concern over firing from Afghanistan's territory, has condemned attack on Pakistani citizens, according to a statement issued here on Thursday. Seeking report of the incident from Deputy Commissioner, Chaman, he issued directives that healthcare facilities be provided to the injured of the incident. He said that emergency had been imposed in all the government run hospitals of the district, adding that occurrence of such acts was an enemy with peace. He said, "Pak-Army knows defence of its border", adding that peace should not be considered as our weakness. Separately, Secretary Health Department, Saleh Muhammad Nasar imposed an emergency in all the hospitals of Quetta in compliance with the directives of Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo. According to Health Department's authorities, health team, comprising Surgeons, Orthopaedic Surgeons, Anesthesia Specialists, healthcare workers and medicines had been dispatched to Chaman.

Relatives appeal

LARKANA (PPI): Two abductees of Larkana could not be recovered by Kandhkot @ Kashmore police who were kidnapped two days ago from the limits of Ghouspur police station. They include Zahid Umrani and Sikander Umrani. In this connection their heirs Sharif Umrani, Haneef Umrani and others while addressing the newsmen at a local press club on Thursday along with Hafiz Bashir Ahmed Shaikh of Larkano Samagi Ittehad alleged that both the abductees were taken on 13th December by Asghar Shah and Asghar Ali Gaincho of Nasirabad on the pretext of hunting and after passage of 24 hours we contacted them which failed.



MARDAN: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan formally inaugurating Bacha Khan Medical College.

Govt girls' school celebrates Sindhi culture

F.P. Report

SUKKUR: It is no denying the fact that education is the tool that one can use to change the world; it is equally important for girls like boys. The newly appointment of Female Teachers through IBA Sukkur by Sindh government, which are highly professional and university graduates, are no less than blessing in disguise for Girl public schools run by Sindh Province.

They have given new life lines to Girls in their career that belongs to poor strata of society. Such highly educated young female teachers, having experience of advanced private schooling, have contributed a lot to the betterment of government Girls schools.

The performance of Government Girls Primary school, Qazi Mohalla, Shikarpur, Sindh, is exemplary for education department, Govt of Sindh. It includes the adoption of newly computerized paper pattern, modern method of conducting exams, proper attendance besides advancing teaching methodologies

and efficacious learning tactics.

Retrospectively, the events celebration particularly Sindhi Cultural Day by newly recruited teachers have also paved the way forward for confidence as well as capacity building in girl. History witnessed that girls have been limited to home chores. In rural areas, they have no access to education even the primary education is excluded.

In addition to it, a nation's culture resides in the hearts and in the soul of its people; the Sindhi Culture day is celebrated with traditional enthusiasm to highlight the centuries-old rich culture of Sindh in girls Primary School, Qazi Mohalla. On this occasion, girls are encouraged to wear Ajrak and Sindhi Topi and such day enables students recognize their identity as part of nationalism. Not last but not least, such industrious and adroit female teachers are indeed a great source of inspiration and keen mentorship. It goes without saying that they are ray of hope for those girls who live below the poverty line.

To sum up, the situation facing school education department, Sindh province especially girls primary schools calls for an extra ordinary measures. Even the situation is bleak; every dark cloud has a silver lining. Retrospectively, it is imperative to recognize that there is no magic bullet or simple answer. It is high time, the Competent authority takes measures and chalk out effective strategies for proving the basic and modern facilities including policy making on capacity based enrolment of girls students and prompt salary opening of newly recruited meritorious female teachers, which has been swept under the carpet despite passing of ample months.

It must include the ensuring of advanced training to meet the needs of govt girl's schools in letter and spirit instead of issuing new advertisements for recruiting teachers for short span of time that may leave rust on their hearts and soul, and get them lost their tempo of rendering their services with zeal and zest as a profession.

Construction works inspected

Hafiz Aziz-ur-Rehman

HAFIZABAD: In order to provide better healthcare facilities to the people at local level, the Punjab government is constructing new District Headquarter Hospital consisting of 400 beds with the cost of Rs. 10 billion and construction work on the project in full swings.

Deputy Commissioner Hafizabad Touqeer Ilyas Chahma visited the project to review pace of work and standard of material being

used in the project. Deputy Director Development Hafiz Mubashar-ul-Hassan and officers of buildings department were also accompanied by him.

DC directed the contractor and offices of buildings department to ensure use of quality material in completion of the project according to specification so that people of the area could get latest healthcare facilities at their doorsteps.

He said that this hospital would be equipped with

modern machinery and specialist doctors would also be appointed. He warned the contractor and offices concerned that no compromise would be made on quality of material and unnecessary delay in execution of this people welfare project.

Three killed in road mishaps: As many as three people including a minor girl was killed and another was injured in two separate road accidents in district Hafizabad.

Gomal Varsity highlights national, int'l cultures

F.P. Report

TANK: The Tank Sub-Campus of Gomal University on Wednesday organized a ceremony to highlight the national and international cultures here in the campus.

The ceremony was organized following the directions of Gomal University Vice Chancellor Dr Shakeeb Ullah and was attended by Social personalities of Tank including Fateh Sher Khan and Mauz Araein besides teachers of Tank Sub-campus and a number of students.

A beautiful and charming view of Pakistan was presented at the event which united all languages and cultures. The students displayed various stalls highlighting the culture of the different languages spoken in Pakistan and decorated them with cultural clothes. The students also recited poetry in different languages and entertained the participants.

Speaking on this occasion, Director of Tank Sub-campus Ehsan Ullah Danish said that the integration of cultures was one of the means of country's survival. "Under the flag of Pakistan we are all one and the languages and cultures in the country are its beauty," he said. He said the culture of all the languages spoken in Pakistan teaches love, affection, sincerity, good intentions and respect for other cultures and this was what makes Pakistan strong.

"Pakistan is like a beautiful garden in which flowers of every color are planted and they make this garden attractive and captivating with their fragrance and beauty," the director said. Fateh Sher Khan, a well-known socio-political personality of Tank, also addressed the ceremony.

PTI bankrupts KP in 9 years rule: JI

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Jamaat-i-Islami chief Sirajul Haq has said the Pakistan Tehreek Insaf has bankrupted the province as it is facing difficulty to manage the salary for its government employees. He was addressing a function at the government high school Kambat on the retirement of provincial chairman, All Government Employees Grand Alliance (AGEGA) Syed Muhammad Shah from services.

The former MNA Sahibzada Yaqub, JI district chief Izazul Mulk Afkari, tehsil chairman Samarbagh Syed Saeed Ahmad Bacha, DEO Lower Dir Muhammad Amin and others also spoke on the occasion.

The function was attended by leaders of various teachers' organizations, area elders and students. The speakers lauded the services of the retiring teachers' leader Muhammad Shah and said that he had several achievements for his community on his credit.

Sirajul Haq said that Syed Muhammad Shah Bacha had served all the civil servants of the country selflessly and without any discrimination. He said that due to his continuous efforts and selfless service, the salary of government employees of the province were increased by thousands of rupees. He paid tribute to the retiring teacher and expressed a hope that he would not hesitate to make any sacrifice to serve the humanity in the future.

Later addressing another gathering at Anwarabad and talking to the media the JI chief said the rigged election would never resolve the issues faced by the nation. He said that electoral reforms were necessary before holding the next general elections in the country. He said that a specific quota in the national assembly should be reserved for the overseas. He said that a total of 18.44 overseas had no right to vote. He said the JI was in the favour of

their voting.

The JI chief said that all the major political parties lacked democracy as none of them held intra-party elections. He said the PML-N, PPP, PTI and others were led by dictators. He said there was no difference in the policies of the PDM and PTI and they were alike. He said the PTI had been in power in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for the last ten years but still the people faced many problems. The gathering was also addressed by former MNA Sahibzada Yaqub Khan, former MPAs Saeed Gul, Izazul Mulk, JI overseas president Imtiaz Khan and others.

Smuggler convicted for imprisonment: The court of additional district judge at Chakdara sentenced an accused identified as Naimatullah resident of Koto Balambat three years simple imprisonment along with a fine of Rd 500,000 on his conviction in a case under section 9 (D) KP Control of Narcotic Substances Act, 2019 by the Balambat police station. The accused already in custody was sent to the Timgara district jail.

Meanwhile the Lower Dir police claimed to have arrested three persons allegedly involved in a murder case in the jurisdiction of Khall police station. The district police officer Ikramullah Khan while briefing local journalists said that one Amir Zada was brutally killed by unknown accused in a mountain at Danda Rabat on Dec. 10. The Khall police on the report of the deceased's son registered a case against unknown persons. The DPO said that an investigation team headed by DSP Timgara Pervez Khan was tasked to trace out the case. He said that within three days the accused Rehmat Zeb, Bahadar Khan and Alam Khan, all residents of Danda Rabat were arrested who confessed to the crime. He said the weapon used during the crime had also been recovered.

International conference of entrepreneurship kicks-off

Saqib Mushtaq

BAHAWALPUR: A three-day international conference on tourism, entrepreneurship and business research, organized by the Institute of Business, Management and Administrative Sciences, the Islamia University of Bahawalpur, has started today at the Baghdad-ul-Jeed Campus. 18 key speakers from UAE, Oman, France, Thailand and Pakistani universities are participating.

In the opening session of the conference, Vice Chancellor, the Islamia University of Bahawalpur Engr. Prof. Dr. Athar Mahboob said in his message that the participation of national and international delegates in the conference on tourism and entrepreneurship and business research is welcome. The theme of the conference is to examine the challenges and opportunities in light and dark aspects of the Covid-19 outbreak. From which business experts will focus on new research issues in tourism and busi-

ness. During the Covid-19 epidemic, new trends were seen at all levels all over the world, especially due to the lockdown, business affairs were badly affected. Meanwhile, the tourism industry around the world was also affected. It also had positive effects and people prepared themselves to face the unseen challenges of the future.

Especially in the field of tourism business, new possibilities have arisen. In this conference, business experts will surely inform the teachers and students about the business situation and trends of the post-Covid-19 world. Prof. Dr. Jawad Iqbal Dean Faculty of Management and Commerce has said that two events are being organized in the three-day conference, the first international conference in which a large number of national and international delegates are participating and the second event is the Young Entrepreneur Summit in which new business ideas are discussed. He said that more than 200 research

papers will be read in the conference. This conference will benefit our students who will increase their research skills by benefiting from the experts participating in the conference. Apart from this, Young Entrepreneur Summit was also organized. Our undergraduate students come up with new ideas, there is no limit to being a business student only, they can also include students from engineering, pharmacy, veterinary and other disciplines. Currently we have 112 teams registered from 40 universities across Pakistan. Judges from the industry and business field will examine the ideas of these students and the best performing students will be awarded cash prizes so that they can run a business based on their idea. The main objective of this summit is to work on industry development in Bahawalpur region. Our students have many new ideas. We want people to focus on their own business and start their own small and medium businesses.

Shab-e-Yalda end of the dark night, a historic Irani festival

Qeemia Raqibi

IRAN is one of the oldest countries in the world. Usually, being a country with centuries of history behind it means having lots of celebrations, ceremonies, and customs being held annually. The celebration of Yalda Night is one of them. Iranians have celebrated the longest night of the year for centuries, and on December 21 of each year, they have waited for the sun to come up again and celebrated the dawn of the first day of winter and welcomed the longer days, the presence of light and warmth for a minute more each day.

It has always been said that those who manage to maintain a relationship with the child within themselves will be happier in their lives. Experiencing ours may be long forgotten curiosity, and grave interest in learning new things can be still as joyful as it used to be to us when we were ourselves still young. Then why not accompanying an imaginary little boy who is following his heart, to learn more, and to know more about Iran and its old traditions and festivities?

Then please, imagine a child in the wonderland of cultures, see him traveling to Iran, and watch him as he passes through the gates of the traditional Iranian ceremonies. Look forward as he discovers exciting facts and fabulous stories. Accompany him on his journey; while he sits with people who celebrate life. Enjoy his experiences as if they are your own, fall in love, as he does, with every piece of history, tradition, and culture of Iran. Experience that joyful moment of getting together and living life as if it is a gift bestowed on all of us, as most Iranians do.

The first question popping

into the mind of the little boy may be, what does the name Yalda mean, and where does it come from? In the first and third centuries, there were some Syriac Christians who fled to Iran seeking shelter from religious persecutions. They brought their language and customs along with themselves. Among these customs and celebrations was the celebration of the birth of their prophet, Jesus Christ, on the 21st day of December and also the name Yalda, which they used to describe this day as it meant to give birth in their language. The common ground between Iranians celebrating the winter solstice and these Christians celebrating the birth of their Prophet made the use of the word Yalda common between Iranians as well to call their celebration as well while welcoming those Christians and their ceremonies and customs.

It is also worth mentioning that the word Yalda in Arabic means dark night, and as Persian and Arabic languages have many words and traditions common between them, this name may also be referring to the whole concept of this traditional Persian celebration.

The names Yalda and Chelleh are used interchangeably nowadays to refer to this special night of celebration. But what does Chelleh mean, and what does it stand for? Iranians have divided seasons into forty-day periods, and they all come with the name of different chellehs, meaning forty days. The first chelleh is in summer, but the remaining ones are in winter, and they go by the name of the big and the small Chelleh. The big Chelleh starts from the first day of Dey (the first month of winter in the Persian calendar) and continues for forty days, and is followed

by the small Chelleh which starts from the tenth to the thirtieth day of Bahman (the second month of winter in the Persian calendar) containing twenty nights and days which are added and thus create the second forty-day period, the small Chelleh.

Thus, Yalda Night and Shabeh Chelleh are the same, the celebration of the winter solstice by ancient Iranians, which is still celebrated by Iranians and also other countries who used to share this ancient civilization and festivities with Iranians such as Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, Iraqi Kurdistan, Tajikistan, Turkey and some places of Pakistan.

Our imaginary little boy is now in Tehran, at a home of Tehrani people on the last night of autumn, which would be the 21 of December in the Georgian calendar. He is anxiously waiting for an opportunity to ask questions, to know why they celebrate this night.

He is answered with smiles and happy faces, as Iranians love to share their culture and history, and also because Yalda is first and foremost a night of celebration. The ancient Iranians were followers of Zoroastrianism. In Zoroastrian beliefs, darkness is associated with evil. The night of the last day of autumn is considered to be the longest night of the year, even if in just a minute. To prevent evil to overcome, ancient Iranians would gather together in groups of friends and family to spend this longest night of the year together. They would stay awake till dawn and have fun. When the sun of the first day of winter rose, they would achieve the ultimate purpose of this festival: they celebrated the birth of the sun, the light, and warmth. And this is where the name Yalda meaning birth gives meaning to itself.

However, the celebration of

the Yalda night or Shabe Chelleh was never forgotten, even when Iranians were no longer Zoroastrians. In Iranian culture and tradition, life is precious. So Iranian people celebrate life in every chance they are given. In Iranian culture, darkness still connotes evil and loneliness, as it may connote in other cultures as well. On the other hand, the sun and light represent life and joy. This is why Iranians celebrate the victory of light on darkness.

At the house in Tehran, the doorbell does not stop ringing, and all the family members seem to be coming to the home of the elder of the family. It is explained to our boy that this is a custom. The family members and friends gather at the house of their elder and celebrate Yalda. Special arrangements are being held at home as well, a kind of heater is placed on the ground, there is a big table with short legs placed above it, and a vast red blanket covers the whole setting. The boy is told that it is called a Korsi. Korsi means a chair, but a massive chair! In the past, in the absence of modern-day equipment, Korsi was the solution for cold winter nights. Not all the houses have Korsi nowadays, but it is still a tradition to set up one in Yalda night to gather around and enjoy the warmth.

On top of the Korsi, the hosts are placing different dishes of fruits and nuts. It is one of the customs of this night, and the boy is told to eat fruits such as watermelon and pomegranate, and also sweet nuts. If one goes out in the days near Shabe Chelleh, he would see streets and bazaars set up with these fruits and nuts, selling and offering them to people who pass by.

As the night deepens, the doorbell finally stops ringing; all

the guests have arrived. They are sitting around the Korsi and eating watermelon or pomegranates. Some eat nuts. This is a night of chatter and laughter till dawn; they recall joyful memories and celebrate the chance of being together under one roof once again, enjoying each other's company.

Their conversation moves toward dinner. The boy is wondering if there is any particular food to be eaten on this night. He is told, as Iran is a big country, every city has something unique of its own to add to the ancient celebration of Yalda night, and of course, food is one of them. Mostly, Khoreshe Fesenjoon is served which is an Iranian chicken stew with walnuts and pomegranates. In the north of Iran, in the district of Gilan, Sabzi Polo Maahi is the dish of Yalda night, which is a dish of rice and chopped herbs, along with whitefish or smoked fish. In Shiraz the special dish of this night is Havij Polo, carrot rice mostly served with chicken and Persian roasted saffron, or Kalam Polo, which is a very famous Shirazi dish made with rice and cabbage. Each city in Iran celebrates this night eating the typical food in their town; however, what is interesting is that in most of the cities the main ingredients for Shabe Chelleh food are pomegranates or wallnuts. Like in Qazvin in which they eat Anar Polo (pomegranate rice) or Nardoone (pomegranates) Stew in Mazandaran.

The dominant color of the night is red. As our boy looks around, it is not only the pomegranates or the watermelon, which are red; most of the guests are also wearing the color. Red is considered to be the color of the crimson hues of dawn and glow of life. And the celebration

of Shabe Chelleh is the celebration of the victory of light over darkness. To magnify the importance of light, usually lots of candles and light decorations are used in houses and gardens on this night. In some places, the festival is held with fireworks.

Shams Al-din Mohammad Hafez Shirazi is one of the most famous Iranian poets of the fourteenth century. He is highly valued and much loved by Iranians. Almost all Iranians keep a copy of Hafez's book of poems called Divan at their homes.

You may be wondering, like our boy, why Hafez is so much loved and what does he do with the celebration of Shabe Chelleh? Well, the answer is quite easy. Most of the Iranians believe that Hafiz answers back if you ask him a question from the bottom of your heart, or wish something. During Shabeh Chelleh, when everyone has eaten their food, they would go one by one to the elder of the family, and he or she would do a Hafez Khaani for them. They would make a wish or ask a question and open the Divan, and the elder of the family would read Hafez's answer and interpret it for them.

In ancient Iran, once lived a goddess named Mithra. She was the goddess of light and brought warmth to lives. Yalda night celebration is believed to be a dedication to her, who brings light back into the people's lives. To live a minute of brightness more each day is a privilege ancient Iranians valued and is celebrated through centuries.

Experiencing an old nation's traditions in valuing life, togetherness, light, warmth, respect, and happiness is a joyful voyage not only for a little boy drowned in exotic experiences but also to us adults, immersed in everyday routines.



Migrants tell of mass kidnappings in Mexico before crossing into US

CIUDAD JUAREZ, Mexico (Reuters): Many of the hundreds of migrants who crossed the Rio Grande from Ciudad Juarez into El Paso this week were part of a group kidnapped in Mexico as they made their way to the United States, according to nine migrants interviewed by Reuters. Testimony from the nine migrants suggests there were multiple kidnappings across several days in the northern state of Durango, with people taken to at least two main locations and held against their will while ransoms were demanded.

The kidnappings are a stark reminder of the dangers faced by migrants as they travel across Mexico, crisscrossing areas rife with drug violence and weak rule of law. Most of the kidnapped migrants were Nicaraguans, who have been leaving their homeland in growing numbers to claim asylum and pursue better economic opportunities in the United States, encouraged by the knowledge they are unlikely to be immediately deported due to frosty relations between their government and Washington.

The incidents appear to comprise one of the biggest known mass kidnappings in Mexico in recent years, said Stephanie Leutert, an immigration expert at the University of Texas at Austin. Four migrants said people in police uniforms stopped the buses they were traveling in and attempted to extort them for between 200 pesos (\$10) and 5,000 pesos (\$255), before entire busloads were taken by armed men to nearby properties where they were held against their will.

Durango's state security office said it had not received complaints of state police officers involved in the kidnapping and that municipalities were responsible for their own officers. The Durango prosecutor's office said it had not opened an investigation because it had not received any complaints but confirmed rescues had taken place on Dec. 5 and 7. In one incident, Mexico's Migration Institute (INM) said that along with the Army and National Guard it had freed more than 250 people from a property in the Durango town of Ciudad Lerdo on Dec. 5. The National Guard confirmed the details in a separate statement.

In another incident, six migrants Reuters spoke to described being held



captive for several days. Two of them specified that they were rescued along with hundreds of other migrants by Mexican federal law enforcement on Dec. 7, and then began walking north on highways. Fernando Reverte, president of Mapimi, a municipality which the migrants passed through after their capture and release, said the group of kidnapped migrants totaled about 1,500. Mario Rizo, one of the migrants who said he was kidnapped, said he believed his bus was stopped in the area of the adjacent cities of Gomez Palacio and Lerdo by people in a municipal police patrol truck. Two other migrants also said they had seen people in municipal police uniforms during the kidnapping.

The head of the public safety unit in Gomez Palacio, Ivan Torres, confirmed at least 300 people had been rescued on Dec. 7 from a rural site in the area but that his officers had not been involved in the kidnapping. The Lerdo mayor's office did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Reuters could not verify the total number of people who were kidnapped in the region last week. Migrant estimates of the different incidents, combined with the INM figure, suggests it was over 1,000. Authorities have not announced anyone caught or charged with kidnapping.

Kidnappers rationed meager food and water, prioritizing women and children, the migrants told Reuters.

They said they spent chilly nights sleeping on floors without blankets in what appeared to be an event hall. Kidnappers yelled at them to stay quiet. "I sincerely felt I had reached the end ... that I wasn't going to survive," said Rizo, who is now in El Paso, Texas, on Dec. 7, according to Rizo, the kidnappers departed quickly after they appeared to spot authorities outside. The migrants broke down the building's front door, and found members of the National Guard, the Army and the INM outside.

The Army and INM did not respond to requests for comment about the Dec. 7 rescue, while the National Guard said it participated as it did on Dec. 5. Byron Montiel, a Nicaraguan migrant also now in El Paso, showed Reuters a receipt of a money transfer that he said a relative sent to the kidnappers, and text messages from a kidnapper to one of his relatives demanding money. The group of migrants had traveled to Mexico's northern border, where they formed a long queue alongside the border wall, in one of the largest attempted group crossings in recent years. Leutert said the incident was one example of what migrants went through in the long journey to reach the United States. "This kidnapping and others show the risks that migrants face in Mexico and all the different groups trying to make money off of them," she said.

Eritrean troops murdered my uncle: Tedros

TIGRAY (BBC): The head of the UN's public health body has accused Eritrean troops of killing his uncle in Ethiopia's war-torn Tigray region. Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, of the World Health Organization, said he was told more than 50 other people were arbitrarily killed in the same village. "I was not in good shape," admitted the still visibly shaken Ethiopian, whose family hails from Tigray.

Eritrea has so far made no public comments on the accusation. Speaking at WHO briefing in Geneva on the latest Covid-19 issues, Dr Tedros said: "On Saturday, I was informed that my uncle was murdered by the Eritrean army. I spoke to my mother, and she was really devastated because he was the youngest from their family. And he was almost the same age [as me]," said the 57-year-old WHO director general. He provided no details about the timing of the alleged attack or the location of the village. Dr Tedros also expressed hopes that a ceasefire agreement signed in November between the Ethiopian government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) "will hold and this madness will stop".

But Eritrean troops and forces from Ethiopia's neighbouring Amhara region were not party to the deal. The conflict in Tigray erupted in late 2020 when Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed ordered a military offensive against local forces in the country's northern region. He said he did so in response to an attack on a military base housing government troops. The escalation came after months of feuding between Mr Abiy's government and leaders of Tigray's dominant political party. The fighting devastated the populous country in the Horn of Africa, leaving thousands of people dead with 350,000 others living in famine conditions.

G7 agrees \$15.5b deal with Vietnam

BERLIN (AP): A group of nine rich industrialized nations approved a deal to provide Vietnam with \$15.5 billion to help the Southeast Asian nation move faster from coal power to renewable energy, cutting its climate-damaging pollution. The Group of Seven major economies, along with Norway and Denmark, said in a statement that the aim is to help Vietnam reduce its emissions to "net zero" by 2050, a goal which expert say needs to be met globally to cap global warming at 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit).

The Just Energy Transition Partnership with Vietnam is among a series of agreements that developing and rich nations are negotiating. The first such deal was signed with South Africa last year, and a similar agreement was reached with Indonesia last month. "Vietnam is a dynamic, emerging economy at the heart of Southeast Asia," British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said. "The investment we are making today means the country can cut its emissions while simultaneously creating new jobs and growth."

The U.K., Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States comprise the G-7. US climate envoy John Kerry, a veteran of the US war in Vietnam, had made Vietnam a focus of his climate work for the Biden administration. Kerry took repeated trips there to urge Vietnamese leaders to call off pending coal-fired power projects and to team up with wealthier nations on cleaner energy instead.

US President Joe Biden said the deal would help Vietnam "deliver long-term energy security," create opportunities for the country's population and advance "the fight against the global climate crisis." "Today's announcement is an important step, but there is still a long way to go," UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric said.

The \$15.5 billion of funding will come from public and private sources over the coming three to five years, much of it in the form of loans, according to the agreement.

China's COVID spike not due to lifting of restrictions

GENEVA (Reuters): COVID-19 infections were exploding in China well before the government's decision to abandon its strict "zero-COVID" policy, a World Health Organization director said, quashing suggestions that the sudden reversal caused a spike in cases. The comments by the WHO's emergencies director Mike Ryan came as he warned of the need to ramp up vaccinations in the world's No. 2 economy.

Speaking at a briefing with media, he said the virus was spreading "intensively" in the nation long before the lifting of restrictions. "There's a narrative at the moment that China lifted the restrictions and all of a sudden the disease is out of control," he said. "The disease was spreading intensively because I believe the control measures in themselves were not stopping the disease. And I believe China decided strategically that was not the best option anymore."

Beijing started pivoting away from its signature "zero-COVID" policy this month after protests against the economically damaging curbs championed by President Xi Jinping. The sudden loosening of restrictions has sparked long queues outside fever clinics in a worrying sign that a wave of infections is building, even though official tallies of new cases have trended lower recently as authorities eased back on testing. In its most recent COVID report for the week to Nov. 27, the WHO said China had reported increasing hospitalisations for four consecutive weeks.

"So the challenge that China and other countries still have is: are the people that need to be vaccinated, adequately vaccinated, with the right vaccines and the right number of doses and when was the last time those people had the vaccines," said Ryan. The elation in China that met the changes in policy allowing

people to live with the virus has quickly faded amid mounting concerns about surging infections because the population lacks "herd immunity" and has low vaccination rates among the elderly. WHO's senior epidemiologist Maria Van Kerkhove said the UN agency was providing technical advice to China and Ryan said there were open channels.

Among the first major announced deals in which a Western drugmaker will supply China with COVID therapies, China Meheco Group Co Ltd said it would import and distribute Pfizer's oral COVID-19 treatment Paxlovid. Earlier in the briefing, WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said he was "hopeful" that the pandemic, which has killed more than 6.6 million people since it emerged in Wuhan, China three years ago, will no longer be considered a global emergency some time next year.

US played over 'Hotel Rwanda' figure's detention

WASHINGTON (Reuters): Rwandan President Paul Kagame criticized the United States over the concerns it has raised in the case of Paul Rusesabagina, a US permanent resident jailed in Rwanda who was portrayed as a hero in the film "Hotel Rwanda."

Rusesabagina, 67, was sentenced last year to 25 years in prison on eight terrorism charges tied to an organization opposed to Kagame's rule. He has denied all the charges and refused to take part in the trial that he and his supporters have called a political sham. Kagame, who was in Washington for a US-Africa summit, questioned why Rwanda should release Rusesabagina because he is famous and a permanent resident of the United States. Kagame also questioned what his release would mean for 20 others tried with him.

"We will make it clear: There isn't anybody going to come from anywhere to bully us into something to do with our lives and we accept it," Kagame said at a

Semafor news website event. When asked if he would meet with US President Joe Biden, Kagame said he was not sure yet. The United States in May determined that Rusesabagina had been "wrongfully detained," citing a lack of fair trial guarantees during Rusesabagina's trial.

Asked whether US Secretary of State Antony Blinken's advocacy is helping or hurting Rusesabagina's case, Kagame said: "I think from what I am saying you can conclude." When asked about Kagame's comments, a US State Department spokesperson said Washington has been clear about its concerns related to Rusesabagina's trial and conviction, particularly the lack of fair trial guarantees, and continues to urge the government to address those concerns.

"The Department of State continues to engage the Government of Rwanda at high levels in Kigali and through their Ambassador in the United States on this

matter," the spokesperson said. "Given the variety of other issues on which we partner with the Government of Rwanda, we hope this matter is resolved soon." Rusesabagina, who was feted around the world after being portrayed by actor Don Cheadle in the 2004 film "Hotel Rwanda," is a vocal critic of Kagame.

Rusesabagina has acknowledged having a leadership role in the Rwanda Movement for Democratic Change (MRCD), a group opposed to Kagame's rule, but denied responsibility for violence carried out by its armed wing, the National Liberation Front (FLN). Twenty other defendants tried with him included Callixte Nsabimana, popularly known as Sankara, a spokesman for the FLN. He told the court that Rusesabagina was not a member of the armed wing. But judges said the two groups were indistinguishable, referring to them as the MRCD-FLN. Nsabimana was handed a sentence of 20 years.

UN blocks Myanmar mity from taking UN seat

UNITED NATIONS (AP): A key UN committee has again blocked Myanmar's military junta from taking the country's seat at the United Nations, two well-informed UN diplomats said. The General Assembly's credentials committee met and deferred action on the junta's request, the diplomats said, speaking on condition of anonymity before a formal announcement likely later this week.

The decision means that Kyaw Moe Tun, who was Myanmar's ambassador at the United Nations when the military ousted civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi on Feb. 1, 2021, will remain on the job. Last December, Myanmar's military rulers also failed in their effort to replace Tun, who remains a supporter of the previous government and the opposition National Unity Government, which opposes

es the junta.

Chris Gunness, director of the London-based Myanmar Accountability Project, welcomed the credentials committee's move, saying it has "great diplomatic and symbolic significance, at a time when the illegal coup leaders are attempting to gain international recognition." "General Min Aung Hlaing has inflicted on the people of Myanmar violence of a scale not seen in southeast Asia since Pol Pot unleashed the Khmer Rouge's reign of terror on Cambodia," Gunness said in a statement.

Damian Lilly, an Accountability Project official, urged the United Nations to ensure that Tun is afforded all UN rights and privileges and that the National Unity Government "is allowed to represent Myanmar in all UN bodies." "At present, there are glaring inconsistencies," he said, with Tun sitting in the 193-member General Assembly while Myanmar's seat at the UN Human Rights Council is empty. Lilly said the credentials committee's action "must pave the way to resolving these anomalies which are depriving 55 million people in Myanmar of the opportunity to be represented at the UN by the government which they elected by a landslide in 2020."

Suu Kyi, who was arrested when the military seized power from her elected government, has been sentenced to 26 years' imprisonment and faces additional charges. Rights groups and supporters of Suu Kyi say the charges against her are politically motivated and an attempt to discredit her and legitimize the military's seizure of power while preventing her from returning to politics.

Colombian govt calls on rebel group to suspend strike

BOGOTA (Reuters): Colombia's government called on the National Liberation Army (ELN) rebel group to suspend a so-called armed strike planned for the northwest of the country, after advocacy group Human Rights Watch warned the ELN may conduct a strike later this week. Armed strikes prohibit movement along roads and rivers in a specific region, confining people to their homes and preventing the supply of food, fuel and access to health or education services.

The government's request came two days after the first cycle of peace talks

with the ELN closed in Venezuela. The negotiations look to end the rebel group's part in Colombia's internal conflict, which has run for almost six decades and left at least 450,000 dead between 1985 and 2018. The two parties agreed to humanitarian relief in regions of the country where the ELN has a presence, to avoid recruitment of minors, forced confinement, and use of anti-personnel mines, among other issues.

"The call from the communities and the government is to stop the armed strike, not to carry it out, because it is planned to take

place in the next few days," Danilo Rueda, Colombia's high commissioner for peace, told journalists. Human Rights Watch said sources on the ground confirmed the threat of an armed strike by the ELN, which could start on Thursday in a large area of Colombia's Choco province. Talks between the ELN and the government of Juan Manuel Santos began in 2017 in Ecuador. They later moved to Cuba, but were called off in 2019 by Santos' successor, Ivan Duque, because the ELN refused to halt hostilities and killed 22 police cadets in a bombing.

Iranian hard-liner suggests closing key strait over protests

DUBAI (AP): A hard-line newspaper close to Iran's ruling clerics suggested authorities close the Strait of Hormuz, a crucial waterway for global energy supplies, in response to alleged foreign support for the nationwide protests gripping the country. The suggestion came from the editor-in-chief of the hardline Kayhan newspaper, who is appointed by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, in an editorial that could be seen as a trial balloon.

"Closing the Strait of Hormuz to Western countries' oil tankers and commercial vessels is Iran's legal right," Hossein Shariatmadari wrote. "We can even seize a part of their commercial cargo as compensation for the financial damage they have done to our country." It's not the first time Shariatmadari has proposed closing the strait, through which around one

third of all oil traded by sea passes.

The narrow waterway at the mouth of the Persian Gulf has seen a number of tense encounters over the years. Any attempt to close it would risk a major confrontation with the United States, which has pledged to ensure the free flow of commerce, and could roil international oil markets. The protests erupted in September following the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini, who had been detained by Iran's morality police for allegedly violating strict dress codes for women. The demonstrations rapidly spread across the country and mark one of the biggest challenges to Iran's theocracy since the 1979 revolution that brought it to power.

Iran has blamed the protests, and attacks on security forces, on foreign countries, without providing evidence. The protest-

ers deny any foreign agenda and say they are fed up after decades of social and political repression by leaders they view as corrupt and out of touch. Security forces have cracked down on the demonstrations, with rights groups accusing them of firing live ammunition, bird shot and tear gas at protesters, as well as beating and arresting them. At least 494 protesters have been killed since September and more than 18,000 have been arrested, according to Human Rights Activists in Iran, a group that has been closely monitoring the unrest. It says at least 62 security forces have been killed. Iranian authorities have given a far higher death toll for security personnel, blaming attacks on unnamed separatists and militants. Iran has executed two people convicted of violent crimes linked to the protests. One of them was publicly

hanged from a crane earlier this week in a warning to others.

The Supreme Court halted the execution of a third individual, Mahan Sedarat, according to Mizan, the official news agency of the judiciary. Earlier this month, Sedarat's family told the reformist newspaper Shargh that his death sentence had been confirmed. He was accused of wounding someone with a knife, acting against national security, setting a motorbike on fire and destroying a mobile phone. His family said he denied the charges. Like the other two, he was convicted of "moharebeh," a Farsi word meaning "waging war against God," which carries the death penalty. He was tried in Revolutionary Court, which typically holds closed-door trials and has come under heavy international criticism.

Native Hawaiians hit by missing and murdered scourge

HONOLULU (AP): The average profile of a missing child in Hawaii: 15 years old, female, from the island of Oahu and Native Hawaiian. That's according to a report released that says much more disaggregated racial and gender data is needed to combat the scourge of missing and murdered Native Hawaiian women.

Key findings of the report, the first of its kind released by a task force created by the state Legislature last year to investigate the issue, include that more than a quarter of missing girls in Hawaii are Native Hawaiian and that members of the US military play an outsized role in the sexual exploitation of children in the state.

Similar studies have shown that Indigenous women in Canada and the US mainland are murdered or go missing at rates disproportionate to their size of the population. While the disturbing trend held for Native Hawaiian girls, a comparable, reliable statistic for Native Hawaiian women eluded the task force because of lacking data, said Nikki Cristobal, the

report's principal investigator. The task force was created amid renewed calls for people to pay more attention to missing and killed Indigenous women and girls and other people of color after the 2021 disappearance of Gabby Petito, a white woman, triggered widespread national media coverage and extensive searches by law enforcement. Petito's body was later found in Wyoming.

One of the difficulties in addressing the issue, is that determining the true scale can be difficult because many cases have gone unreported or have not been well-documented or tracked. Public and private agencies also don't always collect statistics on race. And some data groups together Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders, making it nearly impossible to identify the degree to which

Hawaii's Indigenous people are affected. About 20% of the state's population is Native Hawaiian.

Several states formed similar panels after a groundbreaking report by the Urban Indian Health Institute found that of

more than 5,700 cases of missing and slain Indigenous girls in dozens of US cities in 2016, only 116 were recorded in a Justice Department database. Wyoming's task force determined that 710 Indigenous people disappeared in that state between 2011 and September 2020 and that Indigenous people made up 21% of homicide victims even though they make up only 3% of the population. In Minnesota, a task force led to the creation of a dedicated office to provide ongoing attention and leadership on the issue.

Agencies such as the state, police departments and the military need to do better at collecting and retaining disaggregated data, Cristobal said. "Native Hawaiian women and girls are displaced not only through violence, but also through data collection across departments and across islands," she said.

One of the more disturbing findings of the report was the role of servicemembers in the abuse of children. Publicly available data in 2022 showed that 38% of those

arrested for soliciting sex online from law enforcement posing as a 13-year-old during undercover operations were active-duty military personnel, the report said. In response to a request for comment on the findings, a Department of Defense duty officer said late in the day that the message was being forwarded to the right person.

Violence such as "selling and buying girls for sex on military bases, hotels, game rooms, massage parlors and in our own communities," impact Native Hawaiians at much higher rates than other populations, Cristobal said. The findings are startling but not new, said Khara Jabola-Carolus, executive director of the Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women and the task force's co-chair. "Instead, it vindicates and validates what Native Hawaiians, sex trafficking and gender-based violence service providers and feminist activists have been saying all along and have been told that they were exaggerating or manipulating facts or just simply providing an anecdote," she said.

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India’s secret war against Pakistan

MINISTER of the State for Foreign Affairs, Hina Rabbani Khar has said no country has used terrorism better for its benefit than India, which is playing on the back of the attention of the world on terrorism while portraying itself as a victim. According to her, Pakistan has shared a another dossier regarding Indian involvement in the Johar Town, Lahore terrorist attack with members of the UN Security Council. Pakistan also shared the evidence with all diplomatic missions based in Islamabad and planned to hand over the dossier to the UN Secretary-General, so the honorable Secretary General himself examine the undeniable and undisputable evidence and fulfilled his responsibility. Minister urged the international community especially the United Nations and the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) to hold India accountable for perpetrating terrorist activities inside Pakistan.

Pakistan had been one of the biggest victims of terrorism in the world, that sacrificed over 80,000 innocent lives, and sustaining enormous damage to its economy to fight and defeat terrorism, not on its soil but playing a crucial role in the success of the Global War on Terror (WoT) over the past two decades. Ironically, at the time when Pakistan was battling terrorism in Swat and North Waziristan, western darling India was sponsoring, financing, and fueling terrorism in Pakistan through its diplomatic missions and cover firms in border regions of Afghanistan and Iran. The arrest of a serving Indian Naval Commander Kulbhushan Jadhav from Balochistan is undeniable evidence of Indian involvement in terrorist activities inside Pakistan. The government of Pakistan had shared with the world, the irrefutable proof of New Delhi's sponsorship of terrorism in Pakistan multiple times, but the followers of Chanakya neither desisted their activities nor paused their propaganda.

Pakistan stressed the global community to take notice of such mass misconduct of New Delhi, which pretends as a victim of terrorism on one hand and supports terrorism on the other. Unfortunately, western nations prefer their economic interests and deliberately ignore India's nefarious role in the war against terrorism and gross violation of the human and religious rights of its minorities across Bharat.

Terrorism is a curse, while all its forms and manifestations are condemnable as this poses a serious threat to global peace and security. The Global Community must show through practical steps that efforts to counter terrorism are unbiased and nondiscriminatory and the international conscience cannot be held hostage to political and economic exigencies for a longer time. There is a dire need for the necessary reforms in the existing global Counter-Terrorism architecture for enhancing its effectiveness by encompassing an entire array of individuals, and entities as well as sponsoring states and institutions involved in the spread of terrorism so no one dares to use this evil for its benefit.

Pak-Tajik bilateral ties

PRIME Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday said that Pakistan wanted the establishment of energy, rail, and road connectivity with the diverse energy resources-rich Central Asian Republics (CARs) for the development and prosperity of the entire region. During a joint press stakeout with President of Tajikistan Emamoli Rahmon.

Pakistan and Tajikistan have enjoyed fraternal relations over the past three decades, while Pakistan had been the first country that established ties with Tajikistan after the Central Asian Nation got independence in 1991. Both nations enjoyed multifaceted relationships in diverse fields including trade and investment, defense and security, regional connectivity, etc. Both countries inked various MoUs to enhance their cooperation in diverse fields including Transit trade, drug trafficking, energy, regional connectivity, and science and technology.

Historically, Central Asian Republics, Afghanistan, and Pakistan are tightened in multiple bonds ranging from religion to history and economy to culture and tradition. Pakistan acts as a gateway for Afghanistan and Central Asia, while both western regions connect Pakistan with a huge Eurasian economic market. After the dissolution of the former Soviet Union, multiple energy and regional connectivity projects had been conceived by the CARs and Pakistan but all those dreams could not be realized because of an unending conflict in Afghanistan.

Quote of the day

We know now that government by organized money is just as dangerous as government by organized mob. — Franklin Delano Roosevelt, American President [1936-1945].

No big bang in the Balkans

Dimitar Bechev

THERE is always a Groundhog-Day feel to EU-Western Balkan summits. Once a year, the leaders of the region's six countries get together with their counterparts from the EU member states along with the heads of the European Council, Commission, and the European External Action Service. Wise words are spoken about the Western Balkans' European future. EU dignitaries talk political and economic reforms. The six leaders—representing Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia—nod in agreement. Then everyone goes home and it is business as usual.

Well, this year it is supposed to be different and the reason is obvious: the war in Ukraine. The military and political threat Russia poses has prompted the EU to up its game in what could be described, for the lack of a better term, as Wider Europe. Whether it is French President Emmanuel Macron's European Political Community, the

candidate status accorded to Ukraine and Moldova, or indeed the push for regional integration in the Western Balkans, there is a sense that the EU could and should do more with regard to its neighbors.

Former Yugoslavia, and in particular countries like Serbia or Bosnia and Herzegovina, look vulnerable to malign Russian influence. Bringing the region into Brussels' fold through extra money or more vigorous diplomacy has become a more pressing priority since February 24, 2022.

War overshadowed the gathering in one more way. It was unclear until the very last moment whether Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic would attend. He feared Belgrade's ties with Moscow, which Serbian leadership has adamantly refused to downgrade, would be put in jeopardy should he be made to condemn Putin's invasion.

Had Vucic cancelled, Bosnia would have been absent too, as Milorad Dodik, president of the Republika Srpska entity, would have blocked the country's participation. Ultimately, both Vucic and

Cvijanovic, the Serbian member of Bosnia's tripartite presidency, turned up.

Although formally only EU representatives signed the summit declaration condemning Russia in stark terms, the fact that they did so "in consultation with the Western Balkan leaders" implies that Serbia is on board. Whatever Vucic received in return for his attendance, clearly Brussels scored a diplomatic coup.

The 2022 summit was different also because for the first time it took place in a Western Balkan country, Albania. Usually, the annual get-togethers are hosted in EU member states with special ties to the region—such as Greece, which organized the 2003 summit in Thessaloniki, when the EU originally promised membership to the region, or last year's edition at the Brdo castle near Kranj, Slovenia.

The choice for Tirana signaled EU's commitment to the region. And certainly it was a feather in Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama's cap, at a time when he faces a protests by the country's

united opposition preparing to contest the governing Socialist Party's near-complete control of municipalities in next year's local polls.

Theatrics and symbolism aside, it is patently obvious that the EU cannot deliver the holy grail: speedy membership. Even a country like Montenegro, negotiating its accession for a decade now, is nowhere close. Serbia is bogged down in recurrent crises in Kosovo, despite the much-discussed proposal by France and Germany to settle the dispute once and for all. Albania has barely started talks and the EU requires North Macedonia to modify its constitution in order to begin opening policy chapters. Bosnia and Kosovo are even further behind. It is not a given that any of the six countries will be able to join by the close of this decade.

Acknowledging this political reality, the EU is scrambling to beef up its financial support and initiate policies aimed to boost integration irrespective of accession. The Commission has now

unveiled a €1 billion (\$1 billion) package for dealing with the fallout of the energy crisis. This is on top of the €9 billion (\$10 billion) available for economic recovery in the wake of the COVID-19 slump, build cross-border infrastructure, and underwrite the Western Balkans' alignment with the EU-driven green transition. One key outcome from the Tirana Summit was a deal between mobile operators from the EU and the region on abolishing roaming charges as of October 2023. It aims at boosting digitalization as well as regional integration.

Regional integration—branded as a stepping stone to accession rather than a diversion—seems to be the EU's focus at the moment.

With a summit it hosted back in October, Germany has revived the so-called Berlin Process. The buzzword is Common Regional Market (CRM), a scheme now taking shape thanks to three agreements on passport-free travel, the recognition of academic diplomas, and the recognition of professional qualifications respectively. The six countries signed these on

November 3 and there will certainly be more deals, perhaps in the area of energy.

Yet CRM cannot be a silver bullet. For one, the Western Balkans depend on trade and foreign direct investment from the EU to a much larger extent than on neighbors. And storm clouds are already gathering as economic downturn in the union is affecting the region directly.

On the political front, it is the accession track that will get most attention. At long last, the EU's General Affairs Council has agreed to grant Bosnia candidate status—a decision to be ratified by the European Council on December 15. On November 30, member states' ambassadors—COREPER II—decided to move forward with visa liberalisation for Kosovo, possibly from January 1, 2024. Kosovo has also just formally submitted a membership application.

In sum, there seems to be a fresh momentum in relations between the EU and the Western Balkans. Yet integration will proceed, as usual, incrementally. Big bang enlargements are a thing of the past.

‘Who will monitor the monitors’?

John O. McGinnis

ELON Musk's takeover of Twitter may be the most practically consequential event for free expression in decades. He is clearly committed to disseminating the widest possible range of views and has the technological acumen to do so in the most effective way. Unfortunately, while effective free expression relies both on technology and law, it also depends on the broader social culture, and his innovations and success are threatened by the decline in our culture of free expression.

That is very unfortunate, because never have technology and American law so much favored the free exchange of information. The internet has disintermediated and thus opened up ever more decentralized avenues for expression. One no longer needs an institution, like a radio station or newspaper, to publicize one's ideas or access the widest range of opinion and analysis.

When I was young, it was much harder to obtain that range. Three television networks rationed the news in half-hour programs with a remarkably similar whitebread view of the world. Newspapers offered more varied perspectives but still were limited in their pages of coverage. Magazines of opinion like National Review and The New Republic widened the national range of thought but appeared only twice a month and rarely engaged one another across the political divide.

The scarcity of offerings at the time even affected my career choices. On leaving college, I wanted to be an essayist, but thought that the prospect of landing a job at one of a small number of outlets was hopeless. I went to law school instead.

Contrast that world with ours. Sites like this one have allowed me and others to fulfill our youthful dreams. But more importantly for society, ideas and previously buried facts pour onto the internet by the hour. That information then reaches the audience in a convenient form, whether in postings, podcasts, or videos. But Twitter (and to a much lesser extent Facebook) still plays the

essential role of a clearinghouse, allowing short-form summaries of longer-form content. It also makes it easier for people of different views to quickly engage with one another. Twitter itself now also permits the expansion of the content that was previously delivered in 280-character bursts. These threads—a form of bullet points—have themselves become a vibrant new method of information exchange. For instance, a scholar of Chinese politics has been using these methods to illuminate what is going on behind the scenes in that totalitarian nation. Its distributed intelligence also gets out in front of legacy media: it has been describing the astounding latest advance in AI, ChatGPT, well in advance of major newspapers. And soon, it appears, we may not even need the threads.

Of course, Twitter permits the distribution of nonsense as well. But it also provides the tools for users to avoid people and messages they do not want to see. They can block those who want to follow and comment and their messages. They can mute those whose messages they would like to hear from less. Thus, while Twitter creates a forum for exchange, each of us customizes that forum. Nevertheless, for anyone who wishes, it allows them to get outside the ideological bubble that many would otherwise inhabit in their neighborhoods and workplaces.

I have focused only on information exchange about matters that affect politics and policy, but the internet and Twitter in particular also offer riches on science, the arts, and almost any other subject conceivable. The old information order catered mostly to people who shared interests in common with many others, because the narrow bandwidth of print and television made that kind of publication the only profitable avenue. But now it is much easier to gather a specialized audience cheaply. The result has been a cornucopia of information nuggets of every shade and function.

The technology associated with the internet benefits from a legal regime in the United States that has never

been more resistant to government censorship. Our law is absolutely clear that government cannot restrict speech outside of a very few categories such as fighting words, libel, and speech that presents a clear and present danger of leading to substantive evil like a riot. Sadly, even many supposedly free nations have far more speech-restrictive regimes. Europe is already threatening Musk, but technology permits Twitter to apply different rules in different places.

The Decline of Free Speech Culture

Nevertheless, our waning free speech culture obstructs the new age of information exchange. The great and good have greeted Musk's takeover by redoubling their call for Twitter and other avenues of exchange to prevent "disinformation." While that sentiment has not been translated into law as it has in Europe, it nevertheless hobbles Twitter, as Musk recognizes. Not all information people provide is true, but a core idea supporting free expression is that the assessments of truth, particularly about policy and politics, are best made in a decentralized manner. Even if we cannot be confident the people will sift the wheat from the chaff, a premise of the First Amendment is they are more likely to do so than some centralized authority, given the biases of those who control that authority.

Even though the First Amendment does not restrict private actors, the cultural concern about the danger of centralized authority does not disappear when an authority other than government makes the decisions in the form of content moderators. That danger becomes acute when Twitter or Facebook has substantial market power. Those who are banned from Twitter have few other avenues nearly as good to allow others to access their work on the internet. Consider this analogy: if elders of a small town four hundred years ago had enough power to persuade people to ostracize those with whom they disagree, free speech would not be effective even if the

state did not formally censor. That example shows that the exchange of ideas requires not only favorable law, but a favorable culture, one in which people widely accept the dissemination of ideas they dislike and even consider to be false. In such a culture, there is confidence that truth will win out in the long run.

Musk faces a culture increasingly hostile to this view. The mainstream media in particular has emphasized the danger that Musk's takeover will lead to a disinformation dystopia as he changes Twitter's monitoring process. That stance is not surprising when one considers that Twitter is a competitor of established institutions. If Musk succeeds in making Twitter an ever better boulevard for free and decentralized expression, legacy journalism is at risk, because it will be easier to find better experts and more vibrant and original opinion. Twitter is an engine of disintermediation, and institutions resist disintermediation for existential reasons.

Such hostility to upstart methods of communication has characterized legacy media's reaction to technological innovation in the past. After the French Revolution, for instance, there was an outpouring of new pamphlets on current events. But the Paris Book Guild reacted by petitioning the government to require that any book published in France receive the imprimatur of one of the publishers in the booksellers' guild.

We request, sir, that you glance over it and lend all your influence to our demands. From these abuses of the freedom countless persons who can barely read have established and maintain shops in every quarter of the capital, hanging over their door their name and the title of Bookseller, which they have no scruple about usurping. France will soon be infected by the sale of bad books if everyone is free to do business as a bookseller.

The media also has a political valence—to the left. Twitter on the other hand empowers people of all ideologies. Thus, just as

the mainstream media tends to favor restrictions on spending for political speech at election time because such funding can counteract its one-sided influence, so it is largely hostile to a forum that will disturb its power to set the national conversation.

Academics are almost uniformly on the left, which helps explain why a good number are threatening to ditch Twitter in favor of Mastodon, another site for information exchange. But like those celebrities who threaten to leave the nation when a candidate they oppose wins the presidency, the follow-through will likely be limited, because that site is technologically inferior and has a much more limited reach. One can also expect partisan attacks, like a recent one from the White House, because Twitter's power of disintermediation reduces the hold that left-leaning institutions like the mainstream press and academia have on the national conversation.

This political bias explains why the media has given little attention to the decision of Twitter's previous regime in 2020 to suppress any mention of Hunter Biden's laptop on the grounds that this was disinformation. The claims about the laptop and its contents have been verified. Worse still, it has been shown that among the reasons for the suppression was the undue credibility that apparently left-leaning Twitter monitors gave to guidance by the government. Moreover, Bari Weiss has recently shown that Twitter itself decided to mute a variety of conservative and other heterodox voices so that their messages would not get much attention. Managing the presence of tweets on the basis of their ideological content undermines Twitter's essential promise as a place of free exchange—where the people themselves do that kind of amplification and muting by their decisions on retweeting information.

These incidents underscore the danger of closed systems of monitoring for disinformation where the monitors have substantial market power. The aphorism quis custodiet ipsos

custodes? translates today as "who will monitor the monitors"? Who will make sure that monitors themselves are not victims of disinformation—perhaps willing victims if the disinformation accords with their preexisting biases? Biases can be powerful if monitors are drawn from an ideologically orthodox bubble of elite-university graduates.

Musk has an excellent plan for addressing this problem. Building on an initiative already in the works at Twitter called Community Notes, he is creating a structure where individuals outside the company can add context to surround tweets if they are false or misleading.

This approach is far better than having some designated monitors at Twitter suppress "disinformation." First, the method of referring information to a relevant community assesses whether that information is likely to be false in a more decentralized manner, countering the biases that a small group may have. Second, rather than eliminating the information, Community Notes provides context and additional information. It is better to combat disinformation with good information than with suppression, which does not eliminate the thought in the body politic, but merely sends it to lurk underground where serious refutation is less likely.

Most importantly, the premises of Musk's concept are more consistent with a free, democratic culture. The answer to bad speech is more speech. And the decision about whether the speech is false is best made not by a centralized group of experts, but by more decentralized mechanisms, even if experts may gain more influence by virtue of an authority that must be continually earned.

Elon Musk may well lose money from his buyout of Twitter. But no one is more likely to succeed in advancing our culture of free speech, because he has the resources, the technological expertise, and, above all, the impulses of a free, if eccentric, man. The friends of liberty should wish his venture every success.

‘Expensive pleasure’

David Narmania

CNN, citing sources, said that the US authorities want to supply Patriot anti-aircraft missile systems to Ukraine. Previously, the White House did not dare to do this. Is such a weapon capable of changing the balance of power on the battlefield - in the material of RIA Novosti.

Close the sky Back in November, the Pentagon announced that it was not going to send the Patriot to Kiev. Now, however, the American military department expressed itself less clearly: "So far, we have nothing to announce." As the channel notes, the decision must be approved by Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin and President Joe Biden.

The deliveries of air defense systems were also reported in France. Foreign

Minister Catherine Colonna did not specify what exactly they are talking about. However, at the end of November it became known that the Armed Forces of Ukraine had already received two Crotale anti-aircraft missile systems from Paris.

During a recent visit to Washington, Emmanuel Macron promised Biden to continue supporting Ukraine.

"Expensive Pleasure"

The British military portal Jane's claims that we are talking about just one Patriot PAC-3 battery with four launchers, each with eight missiles. As a rule, a command post, a radar station and loading vehicles are attached.

PAC-3 is the most modern modification, but it was also put into service in 2001. The probability of

hitting an aircraft with one shot is very high - 80-90 percent, tactical missiles - 60-80.

The target can move at speeds up to 1600 meters per second at an altitude of up to 15 kilometers and a distance of up to 20 kilometers.

"Thus, the West is trying to protect the energy system of Ukraine, which suffers significant losses from regular Russian strikes," Vladimir Kozin, corresponding member of the Russian Academy of Military Sciences, believes. And he recalls: after the incident in the Lubljana Voivodeship, Poland was armed with Patriots.

Of course, the gain is significant. But there are problems. The main one is

cost. Even older PAC-2 batteries cost a billion dollars, and each missile costs a million.

Back in 2017, this was vigorously discussed in the American media. At the US Army Association convention, General David Perkins spoke about the experience of using installations by "one of the closest allies."

"They shot down a quadcopter, which is sold on Amazon for \$ 200. The drone, of course, had no chance against the Patriot and its three million missiles. <...> But I'm not sure that this is reasonable from an economic point of view," he was indignant Officer.

Additional difficulties Retired General Mark Hertling points out that the

Patriot requires a very long training period.

"If there was no long-term secret training, then the SAMs will still not appear on the battlefield. It takes months for this," he wrote on Twitter.

He also dispelled the information circulated by the press that a team of "only three people" is needed to manage the complex.

"Three should sit only at the control panels," the military man clarified. "And for everything to work, dozens of well-trained air defense fighters are needed."

Consequences for the front

Experts note: American systems are able to protect individual facilities in Ukraine. However, completely closing the sky - which is what they want in

Kyiv - will not work.

"Based on the number of complexes we are talking about, it can be argued that this is more of a political move designed to demonstrate the determination of the West," explains Konstantin Sokolov, corresponding member of the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences and geopolitics expert.

In addition, in terms of technical parameters, American air defense systems are very close to the S-300. "And our troops know how to counteract such systems," he adds.

But the subtleties and differences remain to be learned in practice. There are precedents: Russian air defense was able to adapt even to the vaunted HIMARS, which in Kyiv are called "weapons of victory."

United States deploys an African front against Russia and China

WASHINGTON is hosting the second US-Africa summit in history. Everyone needs Africa - both as a pantry of minerals, and as a promising and last fast-growing market for goods and services, and as a potential world factory. What Europeans need more than anyone else is a stable Africa, otherwise the flow of refugees and migrants from the neighboring continent, which already has twice the population of Europe (and is expected to exceed three times by the middle of the

economies of independent countries themselves remained under the control of the West. In recent decades, there are more and more not Western states, but global corporations (however, this was already the case during all kinds of East India companies), but it didn't change the point. Africa depended on the West, whose goal was to build a single global humanity. And the place of Africa in it was quite understandable - a supplier of resources, labor and a sales market. In the 60-80s, the West was hindered by competition with the USSR: the

Petr Akopov

structure of its armed forces, military bases and the experience of numerous military interventions in the countries of the continent (including together with the Europeans), scares blacks with Russian and Chinese influence! Russia does not have a single base in Africa (negotiations are underway to build in Sudan), China has one in Djibouti, and recently our military advisers have been operating in a couple of countries in French Africa. That is, the scale of our military presence on the continent is

problems which will eventually lead to destabilization, if not already." Even half a century ago, such horror stories did not really affect Africans, although at that time Washington also focused on the "communist threat" to Africa, turning it into a battlefield with the USSR - many African countries understood that they needed cooperation with Moscow to strengthen their own independence. Now the situation has become even more difficult for the collective West: not only it has money and technology, it is not even so much it. African countries

continent) and all-African integration will still gain momentum. And the role and importance of Russia and China in this will only increase, because over the six decades of relations (if we take only Black Africa) with our countries, Africans have realized that the Russians and the Chinese are reliable partners interested in strengthening their states.

The West is retreating in Africa and that is why it is increasingly betting on the demonization of Moscow and Beijing. The recent remark of Josep Borrell is very indicative in this

The reason for American concern is that huge Chinese investments, as well as tying the trade of African countries to the Middle Kingdom, are dangerous in themselves, of course, but under Western control over local elites, they are quite reversible. Not everywhere (there are countries in which China's position is very strong, durable and unshakable), but in a considerable number of countries. But Chinese investments and infrastructure projects in conjunction with Russian military-technical assistance, personnel training, military experts and economic projects are already an impenetrable wall.

century), will become an increasing problem for the aging Old World.

Therefore, all serious powers are fighting for influence on Africa and the sympathy of Africans - the USA, Great Britain, the EU, China, Russia, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, India, Japan, even Brazil and South Korea. Everyone offers African countries various goods, projects, investments, humanitarian aid and training - such an interest flatters African vanity, but at the same time has little effect on the state of affairs in the countries of the Black Continent.

Most of them are still highly unstable, poor (even those who have been rained out by petrodollars) and torn apart by internal contradictions (and some also by conflicts with neighbors). Who is to blame? Those who for centuries pumped out wealth from Africa, and then gave them independence along arbitrarily cut borders, and often purely formal? Yes, Europe's fault is undeniable, no matter how much she resents the corruption and savagery of local elites now, these elites are largely trained and educated under European influence (and this is not only about training at the Sorbonne or at the Sandhurst military academy), but the

country was seriously present in Africa and many countries of the Black Continent were guided by Moscow. But then Russia left, evaporated, leaving only islands of influence associated with large arms contracts and partly oil production. But instead of Russia, since the 1990s, China has been rapidly increasing its influence, and as a result, a situation that is completely new for the West has developed by now, in which the question "who lost Africa?" will soon arise.

Yes, this was already discussed in the mid-70s, when Marxist partisans oriented towards Moscow came to power in the former Portuguese colonies of Angola and Mozambique. But now there is neither the USSR nor the socialist camp, and in these countries capitalism, and Africa is still slipping out of the hands of the West. Who is guilty? In his opinion, all the same who, in general, does not allow the West to live on a global scale are China and Russia.

Therefore, at the summit in Washington, African leaders are frightened by the destabilizing influence of China and Russia, countering it with American plans to help Africa. A country that has a separate African command in the

incomparable with the Western one, but the threat of destabilization, of course, comes from the Russians and the Chinese.

The reason for American concern is that huge Chinese investments, as well as tying the trade of African countries to the Middle Kingdom, are dangerous in themselves, of course, but under Western control over local elites, they are quite reversible. Not everywhere (there are countries in which China's position is very strong, durable and unshakable), but in a considerable number of countries. But Chinese investments and infrastructure projects in conjunction with Russian military-technical assistance, personnel training, military experts and economic projects are already an impenetrable wall. With which the West does not understand at all what to do, and what in West Africa, in Central, in East.

So we have to scare Africans with the fact that Russia "continues to impose cheap weapons" and deploys "mercenaries all over the continent", China is preparing a debt loop for them, and in general Moscow and Beijing "are not always transparent in terms of what they are doing, and this creates

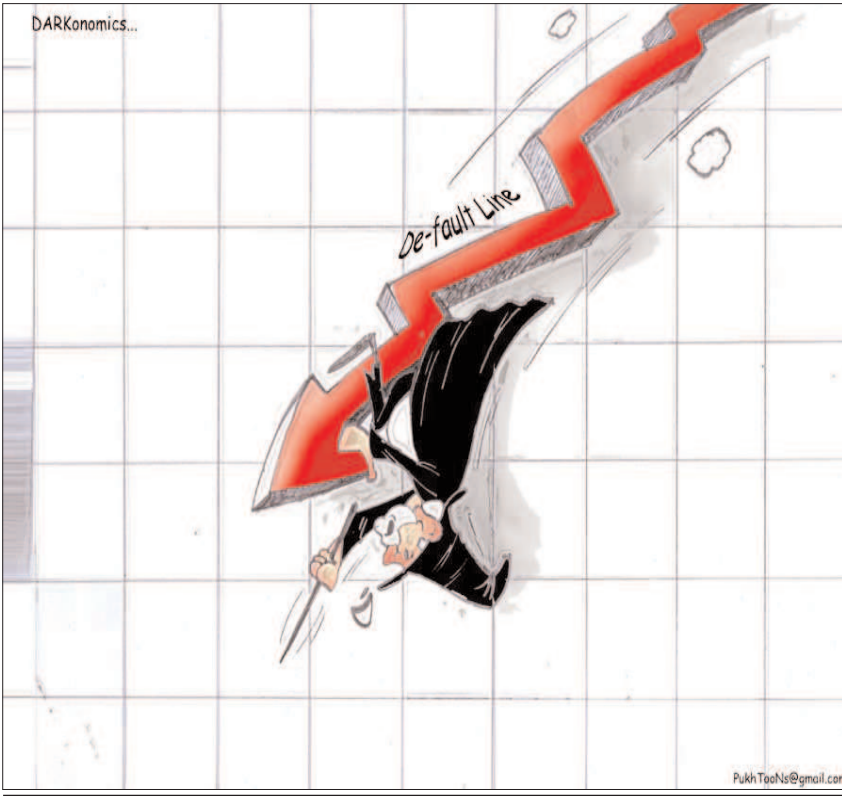
can take them not only from Moscow and Beijing (whose importance for them already exceeds not only American, but sometimes Western as a whole), but also from Turkey, India, Brazil or South Korea. And these countries - even those of them who are military ally of the United States, like the Turks and Koreans - are playing their own game in Africa, pursuing their own interests. Therefore, by diversifying their ties and playing on the contradictions between the great powers, Africans get the opportunity to conduct a truly independent policy and strengthen real sovereignty. pursue their own interests. Therefore, by diversifying their ties and playing on the contradictions between the great powers, Africans get the opportunity to conduct a truly independent policy and strengthen real sovereignty.

Yes, it is difficult for them, but the processes of both regional (at the level of individual parts of the

sense: the head of European diplomacy was indignant that "Russia shifts the blame, distorts reality and finds its audience in certain parts of the world".

"I saw on TV these African young people on the streets of Bamako with posters: "Putin, thank you! You saved the Donbass and now you will save us!" It's shocking! It can be assumed that these people don't know where the Donbass is, maybe they don't even know who Putin is. But they are mobilizing in the streets."

Putin has already responded to Borrell, recalling that "there is practically no African country that would not have received our political, informational, economic, and sometimes military support" and "in Africa they know what Russia is, where Russia, in Africa, they know the role that Russia played in the course of liberation from colonialism." But the process of real decolonization of Africa is far from over, and, unlike the West's dream of a mythical "decolonization of Russia", it has excellent prospects. Thanks to the same Russia, which has enough strength not only to resolve issues of its own security and restore its territorial unity.



Let's make a short scientific and technical stop

IN the modern world, the media have the power to not only influence, but sometimes even transform tangible reality. How this happens in practice, we could see with our own eyes the other day, when the US Department of Energy announced that American physicists had successfully solved the fundamental problem of nuclear fusion and obtained a practically unlimited source of energy. Washington functionaries triumphantly reported that the scientific team of the American experimental thermonuclear reactor NIF for the first time in history was able to reach the so-called energy zero, that is, when carrying out fusion, release more energy than it does when compressing a capsule with thermonuclear fuel using lasers.

The statement exploded on the news horizon worse than a hydrogen bomb, scattering shrapnel of thousands of publications, the main leitmotif of which was: it was the Americans, as representatives of the most progressive scientific nation, who created an endless and, most importantly, completely clean source of energy. Naturally, somewhere implicitly, and where openly, this was tied to the inevitable collapse of Russia as a world hydrocarbon egg-pod.

It is characteristic that while the general public, as far as possible from understanding the physics of the described processes, was jubilant, the scientific community ignored this revolutionary achievement - and not at all because of burning envy of American successes.

Bearing in mind that we are read by a wide range of people, many of whom saw a physics textbook for the last time at school, let's make a short scientific and technical stop.

In popular science publications, the process of thermonuclear fusion is very fond of comparing with a fair amount of poetry with the creation of a man-made Sun. It should be recognized that in this case the comparison, if not entirely correct, is at least really related to the celestial body.

Even our cave ancestors understood that the Sun is very hot, but only the scientific and technological revolution (that is, the development of optics and the expansion of the boundaries of knowledge in astronomy) made it possible at first to observe, and later to understand the physical processes occurring on the surface of a star, without which the origin of life in our solar system would be impossible. For the first time, the principle of thermonuclear fusion was understood and described by scientists almost a hundred years ago - in the 30s of the last century. Realizing the fantastic prospects for taming solar energy, without exaggeration, the entire scientific community of that time rushed to look for a solution, which is typical, discarding any disagreements.

It gave results. The basic difference between controlled ther-

Sergey Savchuk

monuclear fusion (CTF) and the usual chain reaction is that energy is released not as a result of fission, but, on the contrary, when two atomic nuclei merge. At the same time, they categorically do not want to connect under normal conditions, since a force of mutual electrical repulsion acts between them. Specifically, on the Sun, it is leveled by the monstrous force of gravity, which simultaneously prevents the nuclei from flying apart and, figuratively speaking, flattens them together.

Having understood the mechanics of the process, scientific thought began to move forward rapidly. In particular, the realization came that it is possible to provoke a similar reaction on Earth only in a small enclosed space, and instead of gravity, but pressure and temperatures above 100 million degrees Celsius must be used to overcome repulsion. Already in the early 50s, the Americans proposed the concept of a stellarator - a reactor made on the principle of a magnetic trap capable of holding plasma inside. The Soviet Union responded with the fundamental work of Oleg Lavrentiev, as well as the work of Academicians Artsimovich, Sakharov and Tamm. It was this scientific group that, on the basis of the Kurchatov Institute, was able to for the first time in the world to obtain high-temperature thermonuclear plasma. They also designed and built tokamaks - toroidal (ring) chambers with a magnetic field, which reliably held the plasma.

As a result of many years of research and experience, it was understood that in order to recreate the surface conditions of our star in the reactors of the future, it is necessary to use a mixture of heavy isotopes of hydrogen, deuterium and tritium. And then the Cold War began - and physicists, driven by political will, again dispersed to their closed laboratories, sharing their developments at international meetings in a very limited way.

But that was only half the trouble. Somewhere in the late 80s, it became clear that humanity hit a physical ceiling on the strength of materials, which did not allow copying solar fusion, moreover, the energy costs for synthesis significantly exceeded the amount of energy released. There have also been difficulties in making the heat loss and energy release comparable, but the biggest success achieved with modern tokamaks still makes fusion unprofitable.

Figuratively speaking, for a variety of reasons, the scientific locomotive of thermonuclear fusion, which flew like an unstoppable ram in the first decades, by our time has significantly reduced its speed and is slowly rolling, accompanied by physical and technological problems.

The Americans claim to have achieved a positive energy yield, generating about three megajoules of energy from fusion, when

the previous record with lasers was two megajoules. It should be noted that, in general, no one denies this fact, although the relevant expert groups have yet to verify the reliability of the conclusions and calculations.

We, like any layman on the planet, should be interested in a completely different aspect, or rather, the transfer of the results of experience into practice and its industrial scaling. And with this there are just great difficulties, and there is not a bit of envy or gloating.

Any scientific experiment or invention can be considered successful only if it has been successfully repeated by an outside player. May such familiarity be forgiven us, but if you invented a juicer and proudly demonstrate a full glass of the purest healthy drink, then your superiority and merit will be recognized only after your neighbor makes and successfully tests a similar device according to your method. And if the output is not juice, but fruit porridge, then you will most likely be obstructed. At least until someone else proves the veracity and applicability of your technology.

We repeat: we do not deny the results of American scientists, but the world community and the economy, convulsively swallowing millions of tons of oil and billions of cubic meters of gas with a parched throat, is like a dead poltice.

In order for good, clean and cheap thermonuclear heat to step into every home, a one-time laboratory result must overcome three "oceans". The first is the stage of scientific research (R&D), that is, the development of a concept and practical confirmation of its applicability. The essence of the second is research and development work (R&D). At this stage, the theory turns into tangible toroids, lasers, gases, and so on. And the last one is a feasibility study (feasibility study) - perhaps the most unpleasant, since in this segment, theorists and practitioners from science must prove not only the usefulness of their achievements, but also that they will not punch a gaping hole in the budget of a company or state.

Using the proposed scheme, let's say that the Americans are certainly great, but their fusion boat is good if it crossed the first ocean. It will be another ten or fifty years before a reliable and efficient fusion reaction takes place in the wombs of the next generation of reactors.

Perhaps the Americans will be able to repeat their experience, but there is also a chance that they will remember the meaning of the word fail. It is possible that Russia or China will be able to repeat or even exceed the declared parameters.

Terrible number of conditions, agree. Therefore, we continue to economically use hydrocarbons, to believe in the power of human genius and the irresistibility of scientific progress.

The 'invisible prime minister'

AMONG the unsent parcels and letters, a fox wanders in search of something edible. In a snow-covered dead end, trains frozen without movement freeze. Photographs-images of the "winter of discontent" that has come in England. Greeting cards are recommended to be passed from hand to hand: it is more reliable this way, because the royal mail is on strike. It is still not worth using the railway transport and in no case get sick: nurses and ambulance workers are going to strike in December. While shivering from the cold - heating bills are now indecently high - of course, one should remember that Vladimir Putin is to blame for everything. This is the logic of the British Cabinet's statements. Systemic crisis in London refuse to recognize.

The chair of the Prime Minister of Great Britain this year is like a catapult: the new owner will not have time to get comfortable, as right there - a crack! - and he is thrown out of the saddle. The lucky ones land with a golden parachute in the form of several hundred thousand dollars in lecture fees (Boris Johnson), but there is also just an inglorious flight to nowhere (Liz Truss). Rishi Sunak is no exception - he also twirled in the cabinet samsara: before he had time to properly heat the seat, it stirred anxiously, causing a feeling of discomfort.

Yesterday Sunak set out to commit an act that in British conservative circles should be presented as a feat. The government has prepared a plan to combat illegal migrants storming the British coast in rubber boats. "We will end the

Strait crisis," Sunak said. He threatens violators with a strengthening of the coast guard: a new unit of 700 people will be formed, equipped with "the latest technology, including drones, to detect small boats." By the end of next year, they promised to put an end to the dusty cases of illegal immigrants: in 2021, the migration authorities were able to sort out only four percent of them. Migrants from expensive hotels will be moved to empty summer camps, military barracks and sent to Rwanda as soon as the legal proceedings related to this controversial project are completed. Sunak also intends to deport illegal Albanians to their homeland ("Albania is a safe and prosperous country") and generally legislate the norm - "if you arrived in Britain illegally, then you cannot stay here."

Unfortunately, on the day Sunak announced the program of decisive action, a catastrophe occurred in the English Channel. At about three in the morning, one of the rubber boats with migrants - overcrowded as always - began to deflate and go under water. Four people died, more than forty, fortunately, managed to be saved. What happened can be interpreted as a bad sign, since it coincided with the announcement of the upcoming reform. On the other hand, the tragedy can be perceived as another wake-up call - the need to act so that people do not die.

The problem is that repressive measures alone cannot solve the problem of illegal migration. Sunak's talk of a "prosperous and secure Albania" that "smells sweet" of NATO membership runs counter to British journalists' reports

Alexander Khabarov

of empty Albanian villages, poverty and unemployment. Efforts to push migrants into hastily-built camps ended this year with a diphtheria outbreak in overcrowded barracks at a former military airfield in Kent.. The migrants who got out of there told terrible stories about how they slept side by side and ate expired food. Litigation over the project to send illegal immigrants to Rwanda will drag on for a long time - and it is likely that the accelerated deportation scheme will not work, to put it mildly, in the foreseeable future. And most importantly, for the majority of migrants striving to get into Britain at any cost today, there are no "safe and legal routes", so their choice is small: a rubber boat or a container on a truck trailer.

The topic of migration is a traditional irritant in relations between the population of the island and the Cabinet of Ministers. But now the positional war between the trade unions and the government is much more urgent. The strikers are demanding higher wages in line with inflation, the ministers say that it is impossible to saturate the economy with money now - the pound will depreciate even more. In the game "who blinks first" is still a draw. The disadvantaged British are the losers. The national health care system is increasingly plunging into crisis: over 100,000 vacancies, doctors are working hard, millions of patients are waiting for their turn for treatment for months. The revolt raised by the nurses has no precedent - there has never been such a thing in British history. And there is

no one to replace them - the army can only provide drivers, it is useless to seek medical help from them. "

The government of Sunak promises repressive measures here as well. There is a chance to pass a bill through parliament that would significantly restrict the right to organize strikes in vital areas. This was done in early December in the United States, where the House of Representatives of Congress banned railroad workers from striking by law. By taking such a step, the government risks playing along with union-linked opposition Labor. Polls already show that they would win an absolute majority of seats in parliament if the general elections were held now.

A third force loomed on the horizon again: one of the main propagandists of Brexit, Nigel Farage, gathered to "squeeze out" the voices of the dissatisfied. He has already announced that he intends to add momentum to the Reform UK party he created. Something similar was observed on the eve of the referendum on leaving the European Union: after the crisis of 2008, the anger of the British switched to a united Europe - they put their indignation at the falling standard of living into the Brexit vote. It is not known what to convert the current discontent into: they have already parted ways with the European Union, they are tired of Ukraine, in the confrontation with Russia there are only losses, unless the sanctioned oil is poured somewhere far into the sea and on the sly.

In the British press, Sunak is called the "invisible prime minister". Not because he is hiding from the public, but because it is

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100-index witnesses bearish trend, loses 557 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bearish trend on Thursday, losing 557.86 points, a negative change of 1.34 percent, closing at 41,179.76 against 41,737.62 points on the previous day.

A total of 245,017,196 shares were traded during the day as compared to 146,710,701 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 7.595 billion against Rs 3.910 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 330 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 67 of them recorded gains and 249 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 14 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were Bank Al-Falah with 41,170,025 shares at Rs 30.69 per

share, WorldCall Telecom with 18,586,497 shares at Rs 1.29 per share and K-Electric Ltd with 10,055,000 shares at Rs 2.46 per share.

Bhanero Textile witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 79.72 per share price, closing at Rs 1142.72, whereas the runner-up was Pak Services with a Rs 70.83 rise in its per share price to Rs 1350.

Unilever Foods witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 1000 per share closing at Rs 24000 followed by Rafhan Maize with a Rs 360 decline to close at Rs 8700.

Rupee gains 01 paisa against dollar

The exchange rate of the Pakistan rupee appreciated by 01 paisa against the US dollar in the interbank trading on Thursday and closed at Rs 224.70 against the

previous day's closing of Rs 224.71.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of dollar in the open market were recorded at Rs 231.7 and Rs 234 respectively.

The price of the euro was increased by 41 paisa and closed at Rs 239.12 against the previous day's closing of Rs 238.71, according to State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese Yen remained unchanged to close at Rs1.65, whereas an increase of 37 paisa was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs 278.02 as compared to its last closing of Rs 277.65.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and Saudi Riyal remained unchanged to close at Rs

61.17 and Rs 59.76 respectively.

Gold price up by Rs500 per tola

The prices of per tola 24 karat gold increased by Rs 500 to Rs 171,400 on Thursday against its sale at Rs 170,900 during the previous day.

The rates of 10 gram 24 karat gold also increased by Rs 429 to Rs 146,948 from Rs 146,519 whereas as the price of ten gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs 134,702 from Rs 134,309, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association said.

The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained unchanged at Rs 1990 and Rs 1706.10 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$ 30 to \$1878 compared to its sale at \$1808, the association reported.



MULTAN: Labourers busy in unloading sacks of vegetable at vegetable market.

CC CTO assures full support

ISLAMABAD (APP): Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry on Thursday said that the business community was facing many tax issues and urged the Corporate Tax Office to set up its facilitation desk in ICCI to address them.

He said this while talking to Dr Nasir Khan, Chief Commissioner, Corporate Tax Office (CTO), Islamabad during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI).

Muhammad Asghar Khan Niazi Commissioner Audit Zone, Mohy ud Din Ismail Commissioner Enforcement Zone and Hasham Malik Deputy Commissioner CTO were also present at the occasion.

He said, "The business community is the wealth creator of the country and urged the FBR to treat it with respect and dignity instead of taking measures that create harassment in taxpayers."

Faad Waheed said that FBR should address flaws in the tax system and focus on broadening the tax base instead of a vertical tax approach, which is putting more burden on the existing taxpayers.

He urged to revise Sec-7E of Income Tax as tax on deemed income has created problems for the taxpayers.

He said, "The tax on rental income is up to 35 percent, which is very high and urged to reduced as high taxes always promote tax evasion."

He assured that ICCI would like to work in close liaison with CTO to facilitate the business community in tax matters.

Speaking at the occasion, Chief Commissioner, Corporate Tax Office (CTO), Islamabad Dr Nasir Khan said, "The business community is playing a key role in the economic development of the country and assured that he would extend full facilitation and support to resolve hardships of taxpayers."

He announced to set up a Facilitation Desk of CTO in the premises of ICCI to address the tax issues of the business community. He also desired to set up a hotline between his office and ICCI to ensure quick response on the problems of taxpayers.

Dr Nasir Khan said, "The tax system is being simplified to facilitate the taxpayers and enhance tax compliance."

He said that a separate meeting with the pharmaceutical sector would be held to address tax issues.

He further assured that he would try to arrange a meeting of the representatives of industries with Chairman FBR to discuss their policy related tax issues.

PSQCA and TAJIKSTANDART sign agreement

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Pakistan Standards & Quality Control Authority (PSQCA) and its Tajik counterpart Agency of Standardization metrology, certification and trade inspection (TAJIKSTANDART) signed agreement during visit of high level delegation led by Emomali Rahmon, President of Tajikistan in Pakistan.

Zainul Abidin Director General, PSQCA and his Tajik counterpart (TAJIKSTANDART) signed bilateral agreement. It is important to mention here that both the organization are the member of international community i.e. Inter-

national Organization of Standardization (ISO), International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), International Organization of Legal Metrology (OIML) and Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries (SMIC).

As per Policy of Federal Government and personal efforts of Federal Minister for Science & Technology Mr. Agha Hassan Baloch Agreement was signed. The aim of the Agreement is to strengthen bilateral cooperation between the two countries in the fields of standardization, conformity assessment (testing, inspection, certification etc.), metrology, calibration and

other related activities, with the common aim of learning from each other's experience for mutual benefit and for facilitating mutual trade. This Agreement will encourage both countries to harmonize their standards and conformity assessment procedures with respect to products, processes and services.

Business community from both side can get useful technical information about standards, conformity assessment procedures applicable to product in either country. This Agreement will be helpful to remove technical barriers between two countries, indeed.

HABIBMETRO Sirat wins IRBA Excellence Award



F.P. Report

KARACHI: HABIBMETRO Sirat received the IRBA Excellence Award (Islamic Banking Strategy for Global Growth 2022) at the Islamic Retail Banking Awards ceremony held in Jakarta earlier this week. This award recognizes HABIBMETRO Sirat as the only financial brand of Pakistani origin to be exported internationally to several countries, including the UAE, UK and South Africa.

The Islamic Retail Banking Awards (IRBA), organized by the Cambridge IFA, have been recognizing institutional and individual success stories in global Islamic retail banking since 2015. The awards programme is based on the Cambridge IFA effi-

ciency model and involves meticulous analysis of Islamic retail banking efficiencies and performances of Islamic banking institutions around the world.

In addition to the IRBA Excellence Award, HABIBMETRO's Head of Marketing & Corporate Communications, Ms. Sheeza Ahmed, also received the WOMANI Professional Award at the awards ceremony. WOMANI, a list of the Most Influential Women in Islamic Business and Finance, is arranged by the Cambridge IFA.

Commenting on the recognition, Mr. Mohsin Ali Nathani, President & CEO, HABIBMETRO said, "We are honoured to receive the IRBA Excellence Award 2022 for our global strategy.

We owe this recognition to our clients whose patronage gives us the opportunity to grow our Islamic Banking business, and our employees whose efforts enable us to achieve our aspirations. We are grateful to our respected Shariah Board Members, our Corporate Governance and Shariah Compliance functions that allow us to continue offering high-quality Shariah-compliant products across all spectrums. We aim to continue to provide our customers with differentiated and advanced Shariah-compliant offerings in view of their evolving needs and in line with State Bank of Pakistan's vision and strategic plan for Islamic banking."

HABIBMETRO has been providing Shariah-compliant banking services

to its customers since 2004. HABIBMETRO Sirat, the Islamic banking brand of HABIBMETRO Bank, was launched in 2014 and has since then won several awards including Best Islamic Banking Window for Global Expansion and Best Islamic Banking Brand of the Year at the Global Islamic Finance Awards 2020 and 2021. HABIBMETRO Sirat provides Islamic banking services through 60 dedicated Islamic banking branches and 242 Islamic banking windows across Pakistan.

HABIBMETRO Bank is a subsidiary of Habib Bank AG Zurich, which operates in 10 countries across four continents. HABIBMETRO Bank has a network of 498 branches in 198 cities across Pakistan.

3rd aeroponic greenhouse for production of virus free seed potatoes established

ISLAMABAD (APP): The third latest aeroponic greenhouse for production of virus free seed potatoes has been established at National Agricultural Research Center (NARC).

The greenhouse was developed in collaboration with the Korean Program on International Agricultural (KOPIA).

Minister for National Food Security and Research, Chaudhry Tariq Bashir Cheema, Ambassador of South Korea, Suh Sangpyo, Chairman, PARC Dr. Ghulam Muhammad Ali and Dr Cho Gyoung-rae, Director, KOPIA Pakistan Center inaugurated the house.

Addressing the ceremony Tariq Basheer Cheema said the government was grateful to the Korean government for the transfer of latest aeroponics technology to Pakistan and training of sci-

entists.

He said that heavy rains and floods in the country have caused a loss of 30 billion US dollars to Pakistan's agriculture. Agriculture is the guarantee of prosperity in Pakistan. The agriculture is the guarantee of prosperity in Pakistan, but the sector is facing numerous challenges such as supply of quality seeds and climate change, he added.

It is that potato is fourth most important and cash-generating crop, but due to the lack of good quality seeds, it is facing problems like reduction in production, he said adding that in Pakistan, potatoes are cultivated on an area of 300,000 hectares, while 20,000 tons of potato seeds are imported into Pakistan every year.

On this occasion, Korean Ambassador said that Pakistan and Korea are promoting cooperation in the

field of agriculture and the transfer of aeroponics technology to Pakistan through the Korean Program on International Agriculture is also a link in this chain.

In order to ensure food security, large quantities of agricultural commodities have to be imported, for which valuable foreign exchange is spent, the aeroponic seed potato technology project is important for Pakistan and by eliminating the import of potato seeds through this project. This will be a step towards self-reliance in local potato seed production.

Dr. Ghulam Muhammad Ali, Chairman PARC said that in collaboration with the Korean government technical cooperation flag-ship project, potato seed production through aeroponic technology, post-harvest reduction in aflatoxin in chili and quality fodder pro-

duction for livestock are being implemented successfully in the country.

Dr. Ali, while talking about the project of potato seed through aeroponic technology, said that eight billion rupees are being spent annually on the import of potato seed in Pakistan. While only one percent of potato seed is produced locally.

He said that with the help of aeroponic technology, Pakistan will become self-sufficient in the production of potato seeds in the next few years and valuable foreign exchange can be saved.

On the occasion, the Director of Korean Program on International Agricultural in Pakistan, Dr. Chugyank Ray, gave a detailed briefing and said that state of the art 3rd aeroponic greenhouse has been setup in record thirty-six days with 290,00 US dollars at NARC.

US Fed downshifts campaign to tame inflation but still 'some ways to go'

WASHINGTON (AFP/APP): The Federal Reserve moderated its all-out campaign to cool US inflation Wednesday, lifting the benchmark lending rate by a half percentage point though warning there is still "some ways to go."

America's central bank has taken aggressive moves to ease demand in the world's biggest economy, hiking rates seven times this year with interest-sensitive sectors like housing already reeling from tightening policy.

Its latest increase takes the rate to 4.25-4.50 per-

cent, the highest since 2007. But officials signaled that their battle to cool the US economy is not yet over.

In a statement, the Fed's policy-setting Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) said it "anticipates that ongoing increases in the target range will be appropriate" to reach a stance restrictive enough to rein in inflation.

A quarterly forecast released with Wednesday's decision also saw policymakers downgrade US economic growth to 0.5 percent in 2023, just narrowly avoiding a contraction.

They also raised their unemployment and inflation estimates for next year. "Fifty basis points is still a historically large increase, and we still have some ways to go," Fed Chair Jerome Powell told reporters in a press briefing after the rate announcement, and markets slumped on the central bank's signals.

In their projections, policymakers expect rates would land higher than expected at 5.1 percent next year, according to a median forecast. "I wouldn't see us con-

sidering rate cuts until the committee is confident that inflation is moving down to two percent in a sustained way," Powell said.

While consumer inflation eased in October and November, Powell said "it will take substantially more evidence to give confidence that inflation is on a sustained downward path."

Households have been squeezed by red-hot prices, with conditions worsened by surging food and energy costs after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and fallout from China's zero-Covid measures.

To make borrowing more expensive, the Fed has raised interest rates seven times including four bumper 0.75-point increases. Asked if a "soft landing" for the economy remains achievable, Powell said this would be more likely if lower inflation readings persist.

Nancy Vanden Houten of Oxford Economics said: "The projections don't explicitly call for a recession, although a rise in the unemployment rate by as much as the Fed now forecasts is consistent with a recession."

The Fed lifted its median jobless rate forecast to 4.6 percent on Wednesday.

But Powell said: "I don't think anyone knows whether we're going to have a recession or not, and if we do, whether it's going to be a deep one or not."

"The new forecasts are more hawkish than we expected," said economist Ian Shepherdson of Pantheon Macroeconomics, referring to the higher inflation and unemployment rate expectations, and lower GDP growth projection.

"If policymakers implement all the hikes they now

expect, they will have done too much," he cautioned.

Analysts have warned that further tightening by the Fed risks cooling the economy at a time when it is already under pressure heading into 2023.

The latest increase suggests the Fed has "moved to phase two of its rate hiking cycle," said Rubela Farooqi of High Frequency Economics in a note.

This means it is shifting from its more aggressive path to "a slower pace of rate increases until rates are in a sufficiently restrictive stance," she said.

Powell added Wednesday that the Fed's focus now is "on moving our policy stance to one that is restrictive enough to ensure a return of inflation to our two percent goal over time."

Consumer inflation came in at 7.1 percent year-on-year in November, according to government figures. "We think that we'll have to maintain a restrictive stance of policy for some time," Powell said.

"Historical experience cautions strongly against prematurely loosening policy," he added.



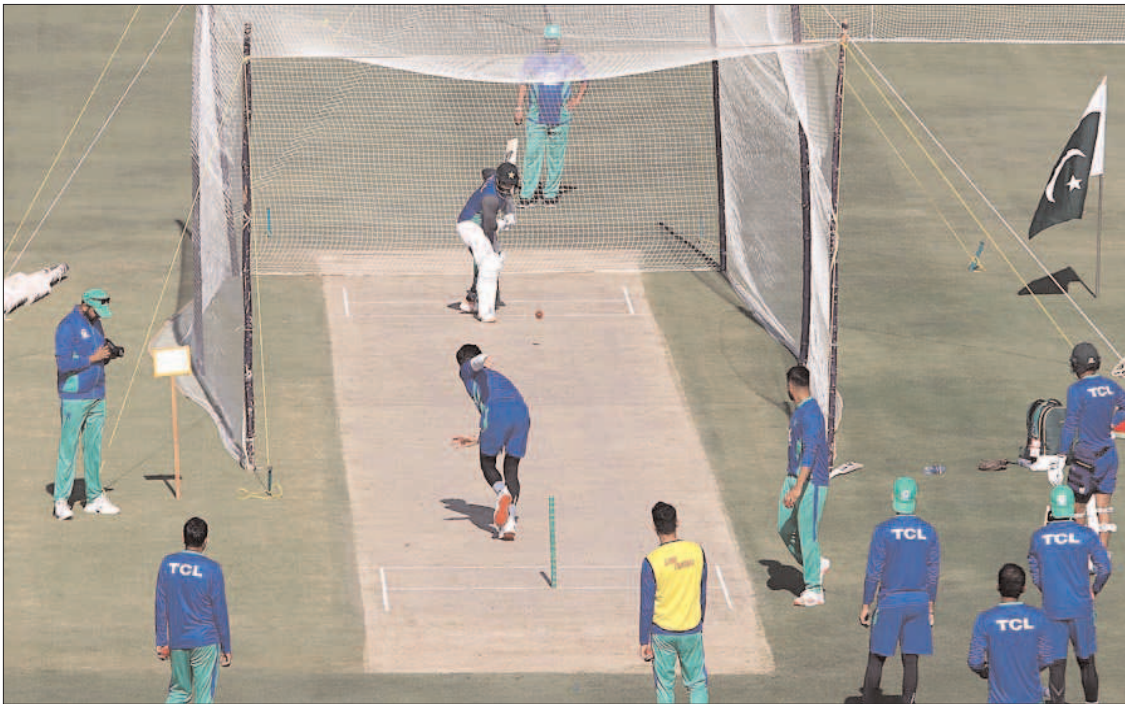
In brief

Becker released from prison

LONDON (Agencies): Former Wimbledon champion Boris Becker has been released from prison after serving eight months of his sentence for hiding £2.5m worth of assets and loans to avoid paying debts. The 55-year-old German was jailed for two and a half years in April after being found guilty of four charges under the Insolvency Act. He was released from prison on Thursday morning. The BBC understands Becker will be deported from the United Kingdom. A Home Office spokesperson told BBC Sport: "Any foreign national who is convicted of a crime and given a prison sentence is considered for deportation at the earliest opportunity." Becker qualifies for automatic deportation as a foreign national who does not have British citizenship and received a custodial sentence of more than 12 months. Becker has lived in the UK since 2012, having retired from playing in 1999. He won six Grand Slam singles title, including three at Wimbledon, during his 15-year career. He was declared bankrupt in June 2017 over an unpaid loan of more than £3m on his estate in Mallorca, Spain. Becker went on trial earlier this year having been accused of hiding millions of pounds worth of assets to avoid paying his debts. He was ultimately found guilty of four charges relating to his bankruptcy but was acquitted of a further 20. It was reported that Becker was initially held at Wandsworth Prison in south-west London before being moved to Huntercombe Prison in May.

EU legal advisor backs UEFA

LUXEMBOURG (Agencies): The European Court of Justice's top legal advisor said on Thursday that football governing bodies UEFA and FIFA had acted within the law when they threatened to expel clubs or players who joined a proposed Super League. The opinion of Advocate General Athanasios Rantos is not binding on the court, which is examining a complaint from the company that planned to run the new league, but it will be influential and taken as a sign of the direction the case is taking. "EU competition rules do not prohibit FIFA, UEFA, their member federations or their national leagues from issuing threats of sanctions against clubs affiliated to those federations when those clubs participate in a project to set up a new competition," he wrote. The court's final decision is not expected until early next year, but the decision will be a relief for the world's biggest football associations and the existing national European leagues wary of allowing some of their richest clubs to break away. The legal opinion was immediately welcomed by FIFA and the Spanish La Liga as well as lobby groups representing European football clubs, leagues and supporters. FIFA said it was happy Rantos had said it could "approve any new football competitions", that he had said it could impose sanctions and it "had exclusive rights to market" its international competitions. FIFA also welcomed his recognition of "the special nature of sport, including the pyramid structure, which preserves the nature of sporting merit and open competitions accessible to all, as well as the principles of promotion and relegation, competitive balance, and financial solidarity."



KARACHI: Pakistan cricket team players attend a practice session ahead of the Third Test match.

Pakistan facing first-ever home whitewash against rampant England

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Injury-hit Pakistan face the dread of a first-ever series whitewash at home when they meet a rampant England in the third and final Test in Karachi from Saturday.

The Babar Azam-led home team have run into an England side in fine form, thriving with an aggressive approach that has earned them eight wins from their past nine Tests.

On their first Test tour of Pakistan since 2005, England won the first match by 74 runs in Rawalpindi before pulling off a tough 26-run win in the second that finished in Multan on Monday.

Pakistan's problems are compounded by injuries to their three main fast bowlers, with world-class spearhead Shaheen Shah Afridi ruled out with a knee injury even before the start of the series.

Replacement Haris Rauf hurt his right quadriceps during the first Test, while Naseem Shah has not recovered from a shoulder injury sustained before the second Test. Under-pressure Azam put on a brave face Thursday despite facing a clean sweep.

"We missed out on crucial chances in both the matches, which cost us," said Azam. "But the boys are

eager to bounce back and we enjoy a good record in Karachi, so I am pretty sure that we will bounce back."

England's victory in Multan was hard-earned because they were defending a 355-run target on a pitch that helped spinners on the first two days but slowed down on the third and fourth.

Built on 'Bazball' Express pacer Mark Wood grabbed 4-65, including the crucial wickets of Saud Shakeel (94) and Mohammad Nawaz (45), after the home team needed 157 for victory on the fourth day.

The win gave England their first series victory in Pakistan for 22 years, although they haven't toured since 2005 because of security issues. Although they have dismissed Pakistan in every innings so far, England's victories have been built on their aggressive batting — dubbed "Bazball" after the nickname of new coach Brendan McCullum. Setting big targets has given the bowlers time to dismiss the opposition and, while it is working so far, skipper Ben Stokes is being realistic.

"Coming to the subcontinent, it's always a tough place to come and win," Stokes said after the Multan victory. "One thing we do is we stay in the moment. Basically just always stay in

the moment." With the series wrapped up and another spin-friendly pitch likely at Karachi's National Stadium, England may bring in exciting, uncapped 18-year-old leg-spinner Rehan Ahmed for Will Jacks.

Pakistan are considering bringing back former captain Sarfaraz Ahmed to add experience to a faltering batting line-up, while bowler Mohammad Wasim Junior may debut in place of Mohammad Ali, who was wicketless in Multan.

England's only 3-0 clean sweep in the subcontinent came against Sri Lanka in 2018, while Pakistan have never lost every match of a series at home against anyone.

Teams Pakistan: Babar Azam (captain), Imam-ul-Haq, Abdullah Shafique, Azhar Ali, Shan Masood, Saud Shakeel, Agha Salman, Sarfaraz Ahmed, Mohammad Rizwan, Mohammad Nawaz, Faheem Ashraf, Mohammad Wasim Junior, Mohammad Ali, Zahid Mahmood, Abrar Ahmed, Nauman Ali

England: Ben Stokes (captain), James Anderson, Harry Brook, Zak Crawley, Ben Duckett, Ben Foakes, Will Jacks, Keaton Jennings, Jack Leach, Jamie Overton, Ollie Pope, Ollie Robinson, Joe Root, Mark Wood, Rehan Ahmed.

Coca-Cola Lahore Open Polo C'ship Diamond Paints/Sheikhoo, Remounts record victories



LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): Diamond Paints/Sheikhoo Steel and Remounts recorded convincing victories in the Coca-Cola Lahore Open Polo Championship 2022 matches played here at Lahore Polo Club on Thursday.

Nicolas Antinori excelled in Diamond Paints/Sheikhoo Steel's 7-4 triumph over Zacky Farms/Kalabagh in the first match of the day.

Argentinian player Nicolas Antinori was the hero of the day as he fired in fabulous four goals while Omar Asjad Malhi banged in a beautiful brace and Osman Aziz Anwar converted one goal from the winning side. Raja Jalal Arsalan also fought well for Zacky Farms/Kalabagh and hammered impressive three goals while Maisam Haider Baloch contributed with one goal.

The match started on high pace as both the sides matches matched fire-with-fire and thrashed in two goals each to take 2-0 lead. The second chukker saw Diamond Paints/Sheikhoo showing

their class and taking a slight 4-3 lead and then completely dominating the third chukker by hammering a hat-trick to gain a healthy 7-3 lead.

Zacky Farm/Kalabagh though converted one in the fourth and last chukker yet it proved too little too late for them as Diamond Paints/Sheikhoo Steel won the encounter by 7-4. Jhon Fisher and Hamza Mawaz Khan officiated the match as field umpires.

Remounts dominated the second match of the day by outsmarting Platinum Homes with a good margin of 10-6, thanks to Raja Temur Nadeem for fabulous five-goal contribution. The other key contributors from the winning side were Imran Shah and Sawar Naeem, who banged in a brace each while Major Haseeb Minhas (R) scored one goal.

From team Platinum Homes, Amirreza Behboudi though played excellent polo and smashed in all the six goals yet, his efforts proved futile in the end as his team had to face 6-10 defeat at the hands of Remounts.

Remounts dominated the match right from the word go as they first took 3-0 lead by the end of the first chukker and then maintained their supremacy in the second chukker as by hammering another hat-trick of goals against two by Platinum Homes to enhance their lead to 6-2.

The third chukker was evenly poised as both the sides added two goals each in their tally, with Remounts still enjoying 8-4 lead.

The fourth and last chukker was identical to the third one as once again, both the teams converted a brace each with Remounts emerging as winners with a margin of 10-6. Jhon Fisher and Manuel Carranza supervised the match as field umpires.

Today (Friday), two more matches will be contested. The first match of the day will be played at 2:00 pm between Barry's/DS Polo and Newage Cables/Master Paints while the second match of the day will take place at 3:00 pm between Diamond Paints and Master Paints Black here at the Lahore Polo Club ground.

Saudi Arabia set to host first F1 race of 2024 season

RIYADH (Agencies): Saudi Arabia looks set to host the opening race of the 2024 Formula 1 season, in a change from previous plans for it to be held in Australia.

The news emerged in a statement from the Victorian state government announcing a two-year contract extension for the Australian Grand Prix until 2037.

The statement said Melbourne's Albert Park track would host the opening race at least four times during the contract term, but Saudi Arabia would do so in 2024 "out of respect for Ramadan". Bahrain, which borders Saudi Arabia, has become the default opening race of the season since the pandemic disrupted the shape of the calendar in 2020. It held its race on 20 March this year.

But Ramadan, the Muslim holy month, is due to start on 11 March in 2024, as opposed to 2 April this year. As a result, F1 had been planning to move the start of the season back to Melbourne, which had been the usual opening event pre-Covid. F1 was unable to confirm that Saudi Arabia would start the 2024 season.

It said in a statement: "Formula 1 has not released any details of future calendars. The 2024 calendar will be confirmed in the usual way later in the year."

However, BBC Sport has been told that, while F1 chairman Stefano Domenicali is still working through plans for the first part of the 2024 season, the Saudi event on the Jeddah street circuit is on course to be the opening race.

No explanation for the change from the original plan to hold it in Australia has been provided. Nor is it clear why, if it is possible to hold a grand prix in the Middle East to start the season before Ramadan in 2024, it would be in Saudi Arabia and not Bahrain.

There will be speculation that Saudi Arabia - which already pays one of the largest hosting fees for its event - has paid an additional fee to secure the prestige of hosting the first race. But a source close to the situation insisted that was not the case. Earlier this year Saudi Arabia rejected F1's proposal to host a 'sprint' event in 2023 because organisers balked at the extra money involved.

Williamson steps down, Southee to lead Kiwis Test side on tour of Pakistan

CHRISTCHURCH (Agencies): Veteran pacer Tim Southee will lead the side instead of Kane Williamson in a surprise change of guards in the New Zealand Test team as the Black Caps named their squad for the upcoming two-game Test series against Pakistan.

Southee took the reigns of the Test side as New Zealand on Thursday announced their Test championship-winning captain Williamson was stepping from his role. Williamson, undoubtedly, remained one of the most successful captains of New Zealand as he compiled a record 22 wins, 10

losses and eight draws out of 40 games under his captaincy reigning over six. He guided New Zealand to victory last year in the inaugural World Test Championship.

The 34-year-old Southee's first assignment as skipper will be a two-game away series in Pakistan commencing on December 26, for which New Zealand named a relatively young squad.

Southee will be out of the service of fellow quicks Trent Boult and Kyle Jamieson, while uncapped Blair Tuckner has been included in the 15-member squad. The first Test of the two-match

series will commence on December 26 at the National Bank Cricket Arena in Karachi and the second will be played in Multan from January 3.

The two teams will then face each other in three ODIs to be played on 10, 12 and 14 January in Karachi.

New Zealand Test squad for Pakistan: Tim Southee (c), Michael Bracewell, Tom Blundell (wk), Devon Conway, Matt Henry, Tom Latham, Daryl Mitchell, Henry Nicholls, Ajaz Patel, Glenn Phillips, Ish Sodhi, Blair Tuckner, Neil Wagner, Kane Williamson, Will Young.

Argentina near full-strength for World Cup final against France

DOHA (Reuters): Argentina made a statement in their 3-0 World Cup semi-final win over Croatia and will head into Sunday's showpiece with two players back from suspension and Angel Di Maria fit and ready to face France.

Defenders Gonzalo Montiel and Marcos Acuna missed the semi-final as they were suspended after accumulating two yellow cards.

Left back Acuna was the biggest loss for Argentina in that game as he has been a critical part of coach Lionel Scaloni's set-up during the tournament, playing in all of their previous five games and starting four times.

In their quarter-final against the Netherlands, he was arguably one of Argentina's best players, winning nine of his 13

duels, completing 100% of his dribbles and earning the penalty from which Lionel Messi scored their second goal.

He could be critical if Argentina are to control that side of the pitch, where France have Ousmane Dembele in great form.

Montiel has been a squad player but he was also critical in their win over the Dutch, converting in the penalty shootout, which Argentina won 4-3.

The third piece of the puzzle that could be key to Argentina's success against France is midfielder Di Maria, who was left on the bench for the whole of the semi-final against Croatia as Argentina cruised home having taken a first-half lead.

Di Maria, who has been recovering from a thigh injury suffered against

Poland in the group stage, has played only nine minutes in Argentina's last three matches. Yet he is expected to be fit and ready to go in Sunday's final.

The 34-year-old was Argentina's hero in last year's Copa America final against bitter rivals Brazil, scoring the goal that earned them their first major title in 28 years.

He and Messi are the only two Argentina players who were also in the squad that lost the 2014 World Cup final against Germany in Brazil.

Di Maria, who missed that match more than eight years ago due to injury, will get a second chance to get his hands on the most sought-after prize in world football and should be fresh for the final as Argentina go in search of a third World Cup title.

Nadal, Swiatek named ITF world champions after stellar 2022 season

LONDON (Reuters): Rafa Nadal was crowned the ITF world champion for the fifth time in his career while top-ranked Iga Swiatek won the women's award after a superb 2022 season, the International Tennis Federation (ITF) said on Thursday.

World number two Nadal fought back from two sets down to defeat Daniil Medvedev in January's Australian Open final to capture his 21st Grand Slam trophy, before sealing a record-extending 14th French Open title in June for his 22nd major.

The Spaniard joins his friend and recently-retired rival Roger Federer as a five-times ITF world champion behind Pete Sampras (6) and 2021 winner Novak Djokovic (7).

"I'm very happy to be named ITF World

Champion for the fifth time," the 36-year-old Nadal, who also bagged the award in 2008, 2010, 2017 and 2019, said in a statement.

"When I first won the award... I wouldn't have expected to still be playing at such a high level 14 years later. It was special to win the Australian Open for a second time, and of course to win Roland Garros."

"I'm grateful for the support of my team and my fans around the world and I'm already looking forward to the 2023 season."

Swiatek went on a 37-match winning run and won the French and U.S. Opens as well as titles at Doha, Indian Wells, Miami, Stuttgart, Rome and San Diego. She won 67 matches overall and topped the list of finals reached and trophies won.

The 21-year-old, who was also named WTA Player of the Year, said major awards in a "big year" showed how far she had come.

"I appreciate it and I want to thank the ITF," Swiatek, who is the first Polish singles player to win the ITF award, said.

"It wouldn't have happened without my team, my family, and my fans from Poland and all over the world. Consider it our joint award for amazing adventure on court in 2022."

In the men's doubles category, American Rajeev Ram and Briton Joe Salisbury won the award for the first time, while Czech duo Barbora Krejickova and Katerina Siniakova took the women's doubles honour for the third time.

Inter-college girls chuck ball tournament has concluded

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The inter-college girls chuck ball tournament has concluded.

In the final match, City Girls Degree College Gulbahar won the Frontier College for Women Kohra Champion Trophy. The President of the Sports Committee, Government Girls Degree College Zaryab Colony, organized by Higher Education Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The teams of Girls College Gulbahar, Girls College Zaryab Colony, Girls College Hayatabad, Girls College Nahaqi and Frontier College participated in the semi-finals of the Chuck Ball tournament played at Frontier College Peshawar in connection with the Girls Inter-College Games organized under the leadership of Principal



Madam Naa Begum.

The teams of Frontier College for Women and Government City Girls Degree College Gulbahar have qualified for the finals.

In the final match, a fierce competition was seen between the two teams. Samedda, Lababa, Kiran,

Shamaila Hadi, Mehek Asif and Zainab played a key role in the success of their team by showing their best game.

In the tournament, Muhammad Jalal and Shariq Ahmed performed the umpiring duties. For this tournament, Girls College Zaryab Kalon The

Director Sports Miss Ruhina Tabasim made the best arrangements.

Due to which the competition ended in a peaceful environment. Due to non-availability of this facility in Zariab Colony College, the tournament was played in Frontier College.



In brief

13 dead, 1,158 injured in road mishaps

LAHORE (APP): At least 13 people were killed and 1,158 injured in 1,103 accidents in Punjab during the last 24 hours. According to Rescue 1122, 582 drivers, 33 underage drivers, 131 pedestrians and 458 passengers were among the victims of the road traffic crashes. The statistics showed that 254 accidents were reported in Lahore which affected 279 people, placing the provincial capital top of the list followed by 98 Faisalabad with 103 victims and third Multan with 72 accidents and 72 victims. According to data, 966 motorcycles, 85 rickshaws, 116 cars, 19 vans, eightbuses, 25 trucks and 101 other vehicles besides slow-moving carts were involved in the accidents.

CDA chief for expediting development work

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Capital Development Authority Captain (R) Muhammad Usman Younis, after reviewing the development works in new sectors on Thursday, expressed displeasure over the slow pace of work in Sector E-12. He issued instructions that the development activities on the tenders issued in Sector E-12 should be expedited to ensure immediate possession to the allottees. In this regard, he further said that in order to solve the long-standing problem of the residents on an emergency basis due to the proportion of population in the city, the desired results are not being achieved. He issued instructions that the speed of work on the ongoing projects in Sector E-12 should be accelerated and he should be informed on a daily basis about it. He further directed that all out efforts should be made to speed up development work in Sector E-12.

CTD arrests alleged terrorist

RAWALPINDI (PPI) The Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) Thursday arrested an alleged terrorist Muhammad Akmal from Rawalpindi. The CTD spokesperson stated that huge amounts of explosives, four detonators and safety fuses were recovered from the possession of held accused. It was also stated that the alleged perpetrator Akmal was wanted in the Civil Lines Rawalpindi Suicide Bombing back in 2009 in which 36 people were killed. The arrested culprit admitted his involvement in the 2009 suicide bombing case. It was also disclosed that two of his facilitators and fellows are rotting in prison after detention from the Military Court.

Around 48,139 PLWs screened

RAWALPINDI (APP): As many as 48,139 pregnant and lactating women (PLWs) were screened for malnutrition during a week-long nutrition drive, which concluded on December 12. District Health Nutrition Officer, Dr Aamir Sheikh, told APP that 26,881 pregnant and 21,258 lactating mothers were screened, and after identification of signs of malnourishment, folic acid tablets were given to 10,098 pregnant and 3,514 lactating women. He added that counselling was also provided to 74,464 pregnant and 2,579 lactating mothers. Dr Amir further stated that contraceptives were also provided to 9,550 eligible couples. The health officer informed that around 6,759 health sessions were conducted in which 38,005 women, including 24,166 PLWs and 3,293 others participated.



ISLAMABAD: Türkiye Ambassador Mehmet Paçacı called on Federal Minister of Railways Khawaja Saad Rafique. —INP Photo

Sanjrani for establishing Pak-Tajik joint ministerial commission

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani said on Thursday that the establishment of Pak-Tajik joint ministerial commission and joint business councils was the need of the hour as vast opportunities for cooperation in diversified fields existed between the two countries.

Talking to President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon here, the chairman emphasized the role of connectivity in the fast-changing regional scenario. He stressed enhancing Pak-Tajik cooperation in the fields of energy, industry, defense, economy and tourism.

"Pakistan and Tajikistan has embarked upon a journey of cooperation through various projects which will surely strengthen the economic and geopolitical standing of both Pakistan and Tajikistan thus serving as engine for regional integration and connectivity between Pakistan and Central Asia," he said.

Both the dignitaries discussed bilateral relations, and issues of mutu-

al interest, including the regional situation in detail during the meeting.

The chairman Senate said that Pakistan and Tajikistan had long-standing fraternal ties and the visit of the Tajik President was a source of happiness for the people and government of Pakistan.

He said the Central Asian States should take full advantage of Gwadar port and Pakistan was ready to facilitate CARs for the initiation of trade activities from the Gwadar and Karachi Port. The chairman Senate underlined that Pakistan was keen on the early completion of the CASA 1000 project and wanted to promote trade and economic ties with Central Asian countries.

Tajik President Emomali Rahmon remarked that he wished to further enhance relations with Pakistan as his government attached a special importance to its relations with Pakistan.

Senate Chairman Sadiq Sanjrani pointed out that Pakistan was the first country to recognize Tajikistan after its independence.

"Tajikistan is a gateway to other Central Asian states as well as Europe," he added. The exchange of parliamentary delegations between the two countries should be increased and the Joint Economic Commission would play an important role in increasing social, cultural, economic, technical and political cooperation.

The chairman added that Pakistan was willing to create trade opportunities with Tajikistan under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project. He said that cooperation between Pakistan and Tajikistan in the energy sector is need of the hour and timely completion of projects is essential to meet South Asia's future energy needs.

Chairman Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani said that by enhancing people to people contact, regional cooperation could be strengthened. "Relations between Pakistan and Tajikistan are based on mutual respect," he said. Secretary Senate Mohammad Qasim Samad Khan was also present during the meeting.

First Lady for promoting differently abled persons in every sphere of life

ISLAMABAD (PPI): First Lady Begum Samina Arif Alvi has emphasized the need for practical measures to eliminate discriminatory attitude towards differently abled people and promote their social and financial inclusion in every sphere of the life.

She was talking to the office bearers of the Hum Mashal-e-Rah (HMR) Foundation after visiting its project Maskan in Nasheman here on Thursday. Social Welfare and Bait-ul-Mal Department is also collaborating in the project.

Begum Samina Alvi called for joint efforts from all stakeholders for bringing positive change in people's behavior towards differently abled persons in society and promoting their inclusion and accessibility in the practical fields.

She urged people to not disrespect or ridicule such persons but encourage and support their participation in educational, social and economic activities.

She appreciated the collaboration of the social welfare department and non-governmental organization (NGOs) for empowerment of special children as it was the need of the hour.

Public and private organizations were working together for their facilitation, education and protection of their rights, she remarked.

She mentioned that there was a dire need to focus on equipping the special children with market oriented technical and vocational skills and professional training so that they instead of relying on others could be able to earn their livelihood and become productive part of society and play their due role in development and prosperity of the country.

She said more than 10 percent of Pakistan's population comprised of persons with disabilities, and needed to be turned into active and productive members of society by imparting education and skills as per requirements of the market and industries. She urged on promotion of policies aimed at inclusion of differently abled persons.

She said that besides tradition education, focus on equipping the special children with market oriented technical and vocational skills and professional training was needed to enable them to be productive part of the society by utilizing their

capabilities and play due role in development and prosperity of the country.

The First Lady was of the view that it was essential for sustainable development of the country that inclusiveness must be promoted and participation of differently abled persons be ensured in all social, economic and political activities as a huge segment of the population of Pakistan was facing disability in different forms.

She stressed upon the print, electronic and social media to spread awareness and promote the idea of inclusion of differently abled persons and avoid use of inappropriate language against them.

Earlier, HMR Chairperson Amnah Aftab briefed the First Lady about working, performance, training courses and initiatives taken for rehabilitation of special children.

"We are working towards accessibility of persons with disabilities in public places such as buildings, metros, railway stations, bus stations, markets, and washrooms to make their movement easy and accessible," she explained.

Action expedites against violators

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Keeping in view the safety of the citizens and road safety rules, the Islamabad Capital Police expedited strict action against wrong turn and other traffic rules violators and issued 29,720 fine tickets over wrong turn violations during the ongoing year.

Following the special direction of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Dr Akbar Nasir Khan, special squads have been formed, which will be deployed exclusively on all major highways of Islamabad like Expressway, Srinagar Highway, Margalla Road, IJP Road, Murree Road, 7th Avenue and 9th Avenue.

In this regard, orders have been issued to the Zonal DSPs to intensify the action under their supervision. Special awareness campaigns have also been launched on the dangers and harms of wrong turn and other traffic violations. Special broadcasts have also been aired on radio FM 92.4 through which the public can be informed about the disadvantages of wrong turn while driving.

On this occasion, he said that strict action against traffic rules, specifically wrong turn violators, would be taken. Drivers will be not only challenged but also prosecuted in police stations as per law.

India persistently involved in terror activities against Pakistan: Ashrafi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister's Special Representative for Interfaith Harmony and Middle East Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi on Thursday severely condemned the persistent involvement of India in terrorist activities against Pakistan.

He, in an exclusive talk with APP, said Pakistan had presented solid evidence of Indian terrorism in Pakistan before the world on many an occasion. Ashrafi, who is also the chairman of Pakistan Ulema Council, said India was robbing the peace of Pakistan for the last twenty years via Afghanistan.

After the arrival of Afghan Taliban in power, there were certain enemy forces that wanted to sabotage the relations of both countries, he added.

He termed the attack on Pakistan's ambassador in Kabul and the situation at Chaman border 'sorry state of affairs', adding that Pakistan was resolving all issues with Afghanistan through dialogue and reconciliation would continue with the same spirit in the future.

To a query, Ashrafi said Pakistan and Afghanistan relations were strong as it

was hosting around three million Afghan refugees for many years. Those who were plotting to spoil the Pak-Afghan ties would not meet their ulterior motives anyway, he added.

He said Pakistan's peace policy had been acknowledged by the whole world as more than 80,000 Pakistanis had sacrificed their precious lives besides bearing financial loss of almost 68 billion dollars in the war on terror in ten years.

He said in last two days, the interior and foreign affairs ministers had presented evidence of India's subversive intentions against Pakistan and urged the world to take immediate steps against India's terrorism and extremist thinking.

Ashrafi said the stance of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) on the issue of Kashmir and Palestine was very much clear. He said the visit of the OIC secretary general to Pakistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir was a clear-cut expression of support to Pakistan's stand on the Kashmir issue and solidarity with Kashmiris.

He appealed to the OIC, the United Nations and the

world human rights watchdogs to play their part in stopping India's subversive intentions.

Responding to the question, Ashrafi said the Islamic world and as well as other countries world like to invest in Pakistan. "Our brother Islamic countries are always standing with Pakistan in difficult situations," he added.

He said it was the responsibility of the political and religious leadership of Pakistan to bring political stability in the country and resolve political issues through table talks.

He said Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief's campaign against the former army chief was condemnable as General (Retd) Bajwa was a benefactor of Imran Khan and his government.

He said the Pakistan Ulema Council supported the negotiation efforts of the president and urged the PTI leadership to bridge the gap for political stability in the country. He further said the issue of elections could be settled down only through the negotiation process with the political parties in power.

Imran to be charged under Articles 62, 63: Talal

ISLAMABAD (PPI) Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Talal Chaudhry said on Thursday that former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan kept his daughter's name hidden in details provided to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) back in 2004 despite being a member of the National Assembly (MNA) and now Article 62 and 63 of the constitution will be applied on him.

Talking to media in Islamabad on Thursday, he said that a lot of things would be recovered when raid is carried out at Bani Gala. Taking a jibe at the former PM, Chaudhry said that a man who kept his daughter's name hidden can keep anything hidden, adding that he [Imran Khan] would have been stoned, had this been a state of Madina.

The PML-N leader further said that no case against Imran Khan would be made on political basis

as stabilising economy is government's top priority but revealing the details pertaining to Toshakhana is also necessary.

He said the elections will be held after deciding the rules of the game but Charter of Economy will have to be given top priority.

Chaudhry went on to say that the general elections will be held in October next year, adding that the institutions are working with in their ambit and no one will be facilitated.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Higher Education Commission Dr Mukhtar Ahmad awarding degree to gold medalist student in convocation of Capital University of Science and Technology held on Thursday.

Over 988 graduates awarded degrees at CUST Convocation

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Convocation for Graduates of 2022 of Capital University of Science and Technology (CUST) was held at Convention Centre Islamabad wherein 988 graduates were awarded degrees.

The BBA, MBA, BS, MS, and PhD graduates in the fields of Management Sciences, Electrical Engineering, Civil Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Computer Engineering, Engineering Management, Project Management, Computer Science, Software Engineering, Biosciences, Biotechnology, and Microbiology were awarded degrees.

The chief guest of the occasion Dr Mukhtar Ahmed said education plays a vital role in the economic development of a country. It raises the productivity and efficiency of individuals and thus produces skilled manpower that is capable of leading the economy toward the path of sustainable economic development.

In the convocation, 22 graduates were awarded PhD degrees, including six in Management Sciences, four each in Engineering and Computing, and eight in the field of Mathematics.

He said education raises the productivity and efficiency of individuals and thus produces skilled manpower that is capable of leading the economy toward the path of sustainable economic development.

Earlier CUST Vice Chancellor Dr M Mansoor Ahmed welcomed the graduating students for their presence on this memorable and happy occasion and declared this event as a significant milestone in their lives.

He said education raises the productivity and efficiency of individuals and thus produces skilled manpower that is capable of leading the economy toward the path of sustainable economic development.

In the convocation, 22 graduates were awarded PhD degrees, including six in Management Sciences, four each in Engineering and Computing, and eight in the field of Mathematics.

The PhD graduates included Ahmed Ali Qureshi, Muhammad Nadeem, Syeda Hina Zaidi, Sana Iqbal, Hassan Zada, and Sanobar Shaheen in Management Sciences; Muhammad Anis Chaudhry and Muhammad Naem in Electrical Engineering; Erum Aamir and Muhammad Hassan in Civil Engineering; Qamar-uz-Zaman, Samreen Ayaz, Muhammad Rizwan and Said Nabi in Computer Science; and Faisar Mehmood, Muhammad Sohail Ashraf, Muhammad Anwar, Touqeer Nawaz, Hazrat Bilal, Umair Farooq and Malik Zia Ullah Bashir in the field of Mathematics.

Moreover, 32 gold, 20 silver, and 17 bronze medals were awarded to the graduates who stood 1st, 2nd, and 3rd in their respective degree programmes.

The 'Jinnah Gold Medal' was also awarded to an overall best graduate of the convocation, Adeer Khan of BS Civil Engineering programme, on his overall distinguished performance in curricular and extracurricular activities.

Shah Mahmood Qureshi writes to NA speaker to verify resignations

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Former foreign minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Vice-Chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi has penned down a letter to National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, urging him to verify the remaining resignations of party lawmakers.

According to details, the former federal minister wrote a letter to NA Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, noting that party MNAs can return to National Assembly for verification of their resignations.

In the letter, Shah Mahmood Qureshi pointed out that 123 PTI MNAs submitted written resignations to former Deputy Speaker Qasim Suri on April 11, 2022. "The lawmakers had submitted resignations as per

constitution and assembly rules", the letter added.

"The resignations were accepted by the then Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly on April 13, 2022," it noted, adding that Secretary National Assembly Mr Tahir Hussain had also issued a notification in this regard.

The PTI vice-Chairman regretted that the incumbent government has not followed the orders passed from former deputy speaker. "Later, only 11 resignations were accepted illegally on July 28," it stated, alleging: "You [Raja Pervaiz] have used the position to give political advantage to the government."

"We once again formally request you [Raja Pervaiz] to verify the remaining resignations without any

delay," Shah Mahmood Qureshi said, hoping that the speaker will not delay the matter any further.

Earlier in the day, it was reported that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) decided to write a letter to National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf to seek time for lawmakers' resignations.

It is pertinent to mention here that NA Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf had said that he will not accept the resignations if he finds lawmakers facing any kind of pressure.

NA Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf said in a statement that the dissolution of the assembly before the completion of the tenure will not strengthen democracy. He added that the option of backdoor talks is always available for all stakeholders.

Deputy PM hold meeting

KABUL (Agencies): The Islamic Emirate Deputy Prime Minister, in a meeting with the elders of Khawaja Bahauddin Takhar district, pledge addressing their problems. Deputy PM Kabir, met with several elders and influential people of the Khawaja Bahauddin district of Takhar Province, according to the statement. The elders of Takhar announced their support and cooperation for the stability and consolidation of the Islamic system and raised some of the problems of their people.

The Frontier Post

AFGHANISTAN

Jamadi-ul-Awwal 21, 1444 — Friday, December 16, 2022

Hanafi arrives in Samangan

SAMANGAN (Agencies): The Deputy Prime Minister Mawlawi Abdul Salam Hanafi, has arrived in the city of Aybak, the center of Samangan on his trip to the north, to meet with the representatives of the people. The head of the Government Information and Media Center, Inamullah Samangani, said the purpose of their visits is to assess national development projects and said that Mawlawi Abdul Salam Hanafi will discuss the problems, complaints, suggestions, actions, and opinions of the people.

Majority of displaced populations in Afghanistan women

KABUL (TOLONews): The UN Women in Afghanistan said that “women make-up the majority of the displaced populations in Afghanistan. The inability to exercise property rights or seek legal help means women in informal settlements live every day in fear of being evicted.”

“Women and girls are affected by negative coping mechanisms due to lack of food. Women are forced to sell their assets to buy food,

or, in most extreme cases, families have to sell their girls for marriage,” UN women in Afghanistan said on Twitter.

TOLONews’ reached out to vulnerable women who are struggling to meet basic needs. Shah Jan said that she was forced to sell several house items to make ends meet.

“We have sold the home belongings. We had an old carpet and we sold it to provide for our expenses. We

have food for lunch, we are worried about dinner,” she said.

“We have no wood for heating, no coal. We call on the government to provide us with aid,” said Hameeda, a vulnerable woman.

The World Food Program in Afghanistan (WFP) said that it has been providing assistance to women across the country. “Afghan women are currently faced with an economic crisis and a lack of jobs.

20 men in southern Afghanistan received lashes publicly

HELMAND (Khaama Press): 20 people were publicly flogged in the southern Afghan province of Helmand for alleged theft, adultery, and other offenses, local authorities said.

The lashings allegedly took place at the sports stadium in Lashkar Gah, the provincial capital of southern Helmand, according to Mohammad Qasim Riyaz, a spokesperson for the governor’s office.

According to Riyaz, each man received between 35 and 39 lashings, and the penalties were administered in front of locals, elders, and government officials in the province. He further said that several of the convicts also received prison sentences.

Since assuming control of the country in August 2021, Afghanistan’s new rulers have implemented strict laws that adhere to their version of Sharia, or Islamic law.

This comes after the first public execution in Afghanistan for retribution, which sparked outrage and the request for an immediate halt from countries and international organizations, including the United Nations.

According to Zabiullah Mujahid, the top government spokesman, the victim’s father carried out the execution in front of a large crowd of onlookers in western Farah province while using an assault weapon.

Jeremy Lawrence, the spokesperson for the UN Human Rights Council office, condemned the Afghan government’s action as “deeply disturbing” and asked it to “act swiftly to prohibit [the] use of the death penalty in its entirety.”

ing these classes and asked the government to reopen schools for girls.

“We need educated women, we need female doctors, especially in our province,” said Jamaullah, an Uruzgan resident.

“They have to put attention on girls’ education above grade six and build schools in the districts so that they are not deprived of education,” said Ahmad Jawed Khapalwak, a civil activist.

As a result of the war in previous years, 32 schools were destroyed in Uruzgan.

dents who studied in these classes asked officials to establish schools for them.

“UNICEF provided these classes for us, and we study our lessons here,” said Matihullah, a student.

“We don’t have schools here and we study here... and I am in third class,” said Zabiullah, a student.

“We asked for the reopening of our schools so we can go to our schools and study,” said Hadia, a student.

Meanwhile, some Uruzgan residents welcomed UNICEF’s provid-

UN provides classes for 35,000 students



URUZGAN (TOLONews): Officials of the education department in Uruzgan said that UNICEF in the past year held one thousand classes for girls and boys in the province.

They added that with these classes 35,000 students have been provided with educational opportunities in this province. “Foreign institutions have made nearly one thousand classes in this province,” said Khirullah Haqnuma, head of the education department in Uruzgan.

Meanwhile, some stu-

Balkh disabled girls want their special schools reopened

MAZAR-I-SHARIF (Pajhwok): A number of physically-challenged girls in northern Balkh province urge the government to reopen their specific schools above sixth grade.

Karimi Faizi, a 10th grade student of a special school for disabled girls,

told Pajhwok Afghan News the government ordered their special schools above sixth grade closed two months ago without any obvious reason.

“All girls reserve the right to study, I pursued my school until 10th grade to reach my ambitions, so the

government should not ignore our desires,” she added.

Tamana Noori, a student of 11th grade of a special school for disabled girls, told Pajhwok that in the past four years, she also learned painting various pictures with her own

hands.

She and some other girls urged the government to reopen their special schools.

Samira Balkhi, a teacher, told Pajhwok that the government had closed their school without any reason.

She added: “They only said that girls above sixth grade and their teachers should not come to this school. They provided no reason.”

Maulvi Jan Mohammad Hekmat, director of disabled affairs, told Pajhwok that he was talking to provincial officials about reopening of the special school for disabled girls.

He assured that the problem would be solved.

Girl’s schools above sixth grade have been closed since one and a half years across the country.

The government says the closure of girls’ schools above sixth grade is temporary and it is working on a plan in this regard.



Afghan refugees’ needs addressed at quadrilateral meeting in Iran

KABUL (TOLONews): Abdul Mutalib Haqqani, a spokesman for the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation, said that at the “Quadrilateral Meeting” officials from Kabul, representatives of Iran, Pakistan, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, discussed the need to avoid bad behavior against Afghan refugees.

In the past year, various reports have been published about the bad behavior against Afghan refugees in neighboring countries.

“Regarding those Afghan refugees that want to return to the country, in this meeting, the creation of a mechanism for their voluntary return was also discussed,” said Abdul Mutalib Haqqani, a spokesman for the Ministry of Refugee and Repatriation.

“The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has to make a plan for reestablishing immigrants’ employment and livelihoods,” said Tariq Farhadi, a political analyst. Meanwhile, the deputy



spokesman for the Islamic Emirate said that those who went abroad need to return and build their country.

“The Islamic Emirate asked those who went to other countries to come back to their country and build their country,” said Bilal Karimi, deputy spokesman for the Islamic Emirate.

Some analysts believe that if work opportunities are provided for the young they will return to their country.

“Those refugees that return to their country should have work so that they do not have to leave the country again,” said Idris Mohammad Zazai, a political analyst.

“Since the last changes in the country, the young generation leaves the country to Iran and Pakistan,” said Asifa Stanikzai, a refugee rights activist in Iran.

Afghan immigrants in regional countries, especially Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey, are living in difficult conditions.

Islamic Emirate member Mutasim Agha Jan returns to Afghanistan

KABUL (TOLONews): A famous member of the Islamic Emirate, Mutasim Agha Jan, who was working as finance minister during the first rule of the Islamic Emirate, has returned to Afghanistan.

Agha Jan returned with acting Minister of Defense Mawlawi Mohammad Yaqoob Mujahid, who was on an official visit to the UAE.

During the former government, Mutasim Agha Jan was considered the

head of the political committee of the Islamic Emirate. Agha Jan was also engaged in talks between the Islamic Emirate and the former republican government.

“I was a Taliban, I am a Taliban and I will be a Taliban,” he said.

Agha Jan worked as finance minister in the first round of the Islamic Emirate’s rule and was one of the senior members of the Quetta Shura of the Taliban’s leadership until

2010. Agha Jan has been living in the UAE.

Agha Jan is from Kandahar province and was one of the close figures to the founder of the Islamic Emirate, Mullah Mohammad Omar Mujahid.

“May Allah give us brotherhood and intimacy to give our hands to each other and be supportive of each other instead of being enemies,” Agha Jan said.

“His return will strength-

en unity among the Taliban. If he is provided with a professional mission or post, he has good capability and ability,” said Asif Nang, a political analyst.

“He (Agha Jan) has faced disputes and was forced to leave the front. He is still now an influential figure and the Taliban leaders respect him. I believe his return will benefit the Afghans, the Islamic Emirate and the country,” said Hassan Haqyar, a political analyst.

Needy family received food aid in Logar

KABUL (Agencies): Local officials of the Rural Rehabilitation and Development Department of Logar, announced the distribution of food aid to 3,400 needy families in two districts of this province.

The series of aid for the needy from the World Food Programme for 3400 needy and deserving families in Charkh and Khushi districts is the result of the coordination and cooperation of the Department of Rural Rehabilitation and Development said.

The local officials of the Department of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock of Jawzjan say that they have commissioned an agricultural irrigation canal with a length of 835 meters in the village of Ali Abad, Faiz Abad District.

The canal was built at a cost of more than 12 million afghanis and the canal is able to irrigate more than 800 hectares of farmland.

In other news, Local officials of Balkh distributed chemical fertilizers and in another measure, 106 tons of food have been distributed in the Kaldar district of this province.

MoI pledges to take strict security measures



KABUL (TOLONews): After the attack on the hotel in Kabul, in which Chinese nationals were injured, the Ministry of Interior Affairs said it is taking strict security measures to ensure the security of diplomatic institutions.

According to the spokesman of the Interior Ministry, security measures will be increased in diplomatic areas.

“To avoid terrorist attacks, the Ministry of Interior is taking strict security measures in diplomatic areas,” said Abdul Nafi Takoor, spokesman for the Ministry of Interior Affairs.

In the last several months, there have been attacks on diplomatic institutions such as the Pakistan embassy in Kabul. The most recent attack injured

Chinese nationals.

“They don’t want Afghanistan to have good relations with other countries,” said Hekmatullah Hekmat, a military analyst.

“If the Taliban want to avoid these kinds of attacks, they have to maintain balance in their political interactions with foreign countries,” said Asadullah Nadeem, a military analyst.

MoF reports increase in export revenue of Afghan products

KABUL (Khaama Press): The Ministry of Finance (MoF) said the country witnessed increase in exports and imports of Afghan products through air corridors more recently.

This came a time the current leadership since the takeover last August continue to explore ways on how to stabilize and improve the economy in the Afghanistan.

Ahmad Wali Haqmal, a spokesman for the MoF, said that Afghanistan imported commodities worth 7.8 billion Afs over the past 15 months, as TOLONews reported.

According to Haqmal, more than 4.3 billion Afghani worth of commodities has been imported into Afghanistan in over a year, making around 950 million Afghanis in revenue.

“Within the past 15 months, commodities worth 7.8 billion Afs have been imported to Afghanistan via air corridor,” he said, as local media

quoted. “The Finance Ministry made 950 million in revenue from it.”

Highlighting on the types of goods exported via the air corridors, the Ministry of Industry and Commerce (MoIC) said that the commodities included carpets, pine nuts, and handmade crafts – products Afghanistan is known for.

A spokesman for the MoIC, Ahundzada Abdul Salam Jawad, said the exports have been made to China and India.

“Over the past eight months, our exports have been to China and India via air corridor,” he said, as local media quoted.

“We have had around 600 tons of exports via air corridor to China. We had around 200 tons of exports to India via a private airline company and also to other countries via Dubai, UAE,” he elaborated.

Meanwhile, Afghan traders expressed hope for the future of

Afghan products in the international markets, saying exporting local product to Asian and European countries will help grow Afghanistan economy.

“The air corridor is one of the main parts of business. More exports via air corridor to India, China and the Gulf countries, as well as the EU and US, will benefit us,” said Zalmai Azimi, a trader.

Based on the statistics of the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, more than 5,000 tons of pine nuts have been exported via air corridor in the year 1400.

In Afghanistan, exports account for around 20 percent of GDP. Afghanistan main exports are carpets and rugs (45 percent of total exports); dried fruits (31 percent) and medicinal plants (12 percent).

Main export partners are Pakistan (48 percent of total exports), India (19 percent) and Russia (9 percent). Others include: Iran, Iraq and Turkey.



Strong Navy vital for safety, security of country

F.P. Report

LAHORE: The President said that Pakistan Navy was playing a commendable role to safeguard and protect Pakistan's naval and maritime interests, despite resource constraints in a challenging maritime security paradigm and overall security situation.

He also appreciated Pakistan Navy's role in the flood victims during recent global climate induced super climates, providing them medical services and relief supplies.

The President expressed these views while addressing the Closing Ceremony of the 5th Maritime Security Workshop 2022 (MARSEW-5) held at Pakistan Navy War College, Lahore. President Dr Arif Alvi graced the ceremony as Chief Guest. Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Muhammad Amdad Khan Niazi, was also present on the occasion. The Closing Ceremony was attended by civil and military dignitaries.

Speaking at the Closing Ceremony, the President said that regional countries, including Pakistan were facing challenges due to changing regional and

global situation, new alliances in the making, and readjustment of priorities and preferences in multiple domains including in the maritime domain which necessitate the country to remain alert and adjust itself in the emerging situation with dignity, honour and preserving its sovereignty in decision making.

The President underlined the need to enhance the pace of decision-making, taking right and timely decisions and their implementation on timeline basis to remain abreast with rest of the world in all sectors including the global maritime security environment to fully harness the potential of Pakistan's human, natural and maritime resources.

The President highlighted that the strong economy was a must for gaining regional and international recognition and maintaining right balance to tread with dignity and respect in the international relations therefore, he added, it was imperative to explore new avenues to raise our productivity in all sectors including developing quality and productive human resource, upscaling our business, trade, investment,

industrialization and powering our work processes with digitalization and infusing of artificial intelligence, investing in quantum computer research and development to sustain reasonable economy outlook and to improve it on perpetual basis.

He added Pakistan did not have time on its side. It needs to take tangible steps in all pillars of the state. The Parliament needs to spend time and energy to make laws to bring reforms and to create ease for accelerated development and progress, he said. The government needs to take right decisions at the right time and bureaucracy should accelerate the implementation of the decisions with well-thought-out KPIs and following a definite timeline which, he said, will help us in overcoming our financial and economic decisions and lead the country towards progress and prosperity. We should promote and encourage a system which has no space for corruption and corrupt practices, is efficient, effective and productive and capable of moving and aligning itself with the fast moving and rapidly progressing world, he said.

The President said that although Pakistan was the 5th largest country in terms of population, however, this huge human resource was not being fully utilized as over 20 million children were out of school, women were not part of the productive economic cycle due to cultural and social taboos, and enrolment rate in the higher education was only 9% as compared to 23% in the neighbouring countries. He called for enhancing the number of skilled graduates and training human resources to fully develop Pakistan's maritime sector and develop it to its fullest potential.

The President highlighted the need to adopt sustainable fishing and maritime practices to safeguard Pakistan's precious marine resources, including fish, marine flora and fauna and ecosystem. He called for using eco-friendly boats, internationally approved fishing nets and best practices and bringing in technology and expertise to catch, preserve and export marine products by maintaining internationally accepted standards and processes and promoting and encouraging sea route linkages with rest of the

world for promoting trade business.

He said that unfortunately we could not fully exploit the sea resources with prudence as a result we had far less exports as compared to other countries with similar maritime resources and coastline.

The President also underscored the need to implement the United Nations resolutions, especially on the Jammu and Kashmir Dispute for peace and stability in the Indian Ocean Region.

He added that India's belligerence and self-proffered role as the aspiring hegemon in the region

would create instability in the region.

The President applauded Pakistan Navy and appreciated the successful conduct of 5th series of the workshop.

Earlier, during the welcome note, Commandant Pakistan Navy War College, Rear Admiral Javed Iqbal, presented various activities of MARSEW, dilated on benefits achieved by the participants and envisaged role of Maritime Centre of Excellence (Think Tank at PN War College) in promoting Blue Economy and policies concerning maritime domain.

The theme for this year

maritime security workshop was "Secure Seas-Prosperous Pakistan" and the workshop was conducted in two phases. In first phase, academic discourse on security dynamics in Indian Ocean Region, challenges and opportunities in Pakistan maritime sector, Blue Economy and its contributions toward Pakistan economic prosperity, development of Gwadar Port within CPEC were dilated up.

During the second phase, the workshop participants visited Naval Headquarters Islamabad, various Pakistan Navy installations at Karachi,

Coastal and Creeks Area for orientation and familiarization. The participants boarded PN Ship for sea trip and witnessed various naval exercises and procedures at sea. Other familiarization visits to maritime organizations included Karachi Shipyard and Engineering Works, Pakistan Maritime Security Agency, Karachi Port Trust and Pakistan National Shipping Corporation, besides field visit to Gwadar Port and Jinnah Naval Base Omara.

President Dr Arif Alvi also awarded the certificates to the participants of MARSEW-5.



LAHORE: President Dr. Arif Alvi addressing concluding session of 5th Maritime Security Workshop 22 at Navy War College.



Taliban admn, Myanmar junta not allowed into UN for now

NEW YORK (INP): A decision on whether the Afghan Taliban administration and the Myanmar junta can send a United Nations (UN) ambassador to New York has been postponed for a second time, but could be reconsidered in the next nine months, according to a UN credentials committee report.

The 193-member UN General Assembly (UNGA) is on Friday due to approve the report, which also deferred a decision on rival claims to Libya's UN seat. The nine-member UN credentials committee includes Russia, China and the United States. The deferment of the decisions leaves the current envoys in the seats for their countries, diplomats said.

Competing claims were again made for the seats of Myanmar and Afghanistan with the Taliban administration and Myanmar's junta pitted against envoys of the governments they ousted last year. UN acceptance of the Taliban administration or Myanmar's junta would be a step toward the international recognition sought by both.

A rival claim was also made this year for Libya's UN seat — currently held by the Government of National Unity in Tripoli — by a "Government of National Stability" led by Fathi Bashagha and backed by a parliament in the country's east.

The UN credentials committee met on December 12 and agreed, without a vote, to "postpone its consideration of the credentials" for Myanmar, Afghanistan and Libya "and to revert to consideration of these credentials at a future time in the seventy-seventh session," which ends mid-September next year.

CJ BHC condemns unnecessary delay in delivering justice

QUETTA (APP): Chief Justice Balochistan High Court Justice Naeem AKhtar Afghan has condemned the culture of unnecessary adjournments and strikes in strong terms.

"It takes two years to complete the case that could otherwise be completed in 30 days," he said while addressing a ceremony held in honour of the judges of the Supreme Court and High Court here at the High Court Bar Room on Thursday.

Judges of the Supreme Court, High Court, office bearers of the bar association and bar council, and lawyers in large number

attended the ceremony.

The Chief Justice Balochistan High Court said the prevailing culture of strikes and unnecessary adjournments in courts has badly affected the process of delivering speedy justice to the plaintiff.

"By law, I am responsible for every nook and corner of the judicial system," he said and deplored that on account of unnecessary strikes and agitation, the majority of the cases in the civil and criminal courts are facing unwanted pendency.

He urged the lawyers community to opt for the token strike and other

options for their demands and token of protest so that petitioners could get speedy justice.

"Lawyers must prepare case before they appear before the honourable bench," he said, adding that the best preparations of the lawyer help judges make a fair judgment that finally benefits the petitioner.

"It is not the politics, but the performance that makes the credential of any legal practitioner," Chief Justice Balochistan High Court remarked.

He called upon legal practitioners to follow values and honesty as required by this profession.

Pakistani diplomat to return to Afghanistan

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistani diplomat Ubaidur Rehman Nizamani, who escaped unhurt in Kabul attack, would return to Afghanistan after complete security assurance from the interim government of Taliban, said Foreign Office spokesperson Muntaz Zahra Baloch.

Nizamani returned to Pakistan after an assassination attempt on him in the Afghan capital earlier this month. A security official was injured in the incident and he is recovering at a hospital in Peshawar.

In a weekly media briefing, Ms Baloch said Chargé d'affaires Nizamani was still in Pakistan and would leave once the consultation process was complete. She described the recent visit of State Minister for Foreign Affairs Hina Rabbani Khar to Kabul "very successful that provided the opportunity to convey Pakistan's concerns". "We hope that

the assurances given to us [by the Afghan authorities] will be fulfilled," she said.

She said peace in South Asia had become hostage to India's hegemonic designs that included terrorist activities inside Pakistan and the unabated hostilities carried out in the occupied Kashmir. India's hegemonic policies were an "impediment to regional cooperation," she said.

The spokesperson strongly rejected the recent statement of the Indian External Affairs Ministry that raised objection to the visit of Organization of Islamic Cooperations (OIC) Hissein Ibrahim Taha to Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), calling him a "mouthpiece of Pakistan". The remarks reflect "callousness and disregard" towards inter-state relations and are against the concept of mutual respect, she stressed.

Instead of criticism, she

said India should pay heed to the state terrorism in India-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK) and take steps for the implementation of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions. She said the Jammu and Kashmir dispute was one of the oldest on the United Nations' agenda that remained unresolved due to India's negative approach.

The OIC secretary general during his visit to the Line of Control in AJK last week met the victims of cross-border shelling, who shared with him the details of their sufferings.

Ms Baloch said OIC Secretary-General's visit to AJK carried special significance as it came three years after India's illegal and unilateral actions in the occupied Kashmir. The secretary general will share his findings in the next Council of Foreign Ministers' meeting.

Sheikh Rasheed lambasts govt

LAHORE (INP): Former interior minister and Awami Muslim League (AML) Chief Sheikh Rasheed has lambasted the incumbent government over issues related to economy and border security.

The former federal minister expressed these remarks while talking to journalists after meeting former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan at his residence in Lahore's Zaman Park.

Sheikh Rasheed noted that Imran Khan will announce the date for dissolution of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) assemblies on December 17 at 08:00pm, adding that the whole nation stands by the former premier.

Lambasting the incumbent government, Rasheed claimed that the present rulers made amendments to National Accountability Ordinance (NAO) for 'personal gains', as he urged the Supreme Court to put the names — those who amended the NAB ordinance — on Exit Control List (ECL).

He claimed that the ruling coalition's ultimate goal was to knock out Imran Khan technically. "The security situation on the border is getting worse," he said while referring to the shelling by Afghan forces on Pakistani civilians.

"The incumbent government is not serious about solving the country's problems", he alleged, adding that political instability means death to the country.

Sheikh Rasheed reiterated that the only solution to the country's issues was 'transparent and immediate elections', adding that if the government wasn't serious about elections, then they were not willing for negotiations.

Moonis vows to support Imran's decision

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q) leader Moonis Elahi called on former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan and vowed to support his decision to dissolve assemblies.

According to details, the PML-Q leader called on Imran Khan at the latter's residence in Lahore's Zaman Park. During the meeting, matters related to current political situation came under discussion.

Sources said that Moonis Elahi conveyed Punjab Chief Minister Pervaiz Elahi's message to the former premier, expressing confidence in the decision.

"We will break the Punjab assembly on your [Imran] call," sources said, quoting the PML-Q leader. The two leaders also held consultation over the future policies regarding the next elections.

President, CM review provision of facilities to differently-abled persons

LAHORE (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi and Chief Minister Punjab Chaudhry Parwez Elahi co-chaired a meeting at CMO to review facilities for differently-abled persons on Thursday.

It was decided to coordinate with NADRA for the registration of differently-abled persons.

President Arif Alvi maintained that the collection of accurate data on blind and differently-abled people was important, adding that if there was accurate data, the welfare work of special people could be further improved.

He directed appointing separate teachers for the training of special people in normal schools, saying that special children had special

abilities which could be brought out through training. Ramps in markets and commercial areas should be erected to accommodate special people, he added and noted that implementation of a 5% job quota would provide relief to the special people as they had brought laurels home in different fields. He also appreciated effective measures taken by the Punjab government for disabled people under the leadership of Parwez Elahi.

The CM noted that he created a separate department for disabled people in 2003 while setting up 170 institutions and free transport for special students. The Punjab government had fixed a 5% job quota for disabled people and

increased conveyance allowance for blind and other disabled employees in all institutions of Punjab. The government was also allocating separate seats for disabled people in new buses, he said.

Secretary Social Welfare gave a briefing to the President regarding rehabilitation, training, registration and provision of facilities to special persons.

Provincial Minister for Social Welfare Ghazanfar Abbas Chhina, former federal minister Moonis Elahi, Hussain Elahi MNA, Chief Secretary Abdullah Khan Sumbal, Principal Secretary Muhammad Khan Bhatti, secretary specialized healthcare and medical education and others attended the meeting.

SC orders to impose Police Order 2002

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Thursday ordered the governments of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces to impose Police Order 2002 in a case against transfers and postings of police officers on political grounds.

The court also stopped the provincial governments from transferring the police officers before the time mentioned in the law. The top court said that it was compulsory to write the reasons if the transfer before time was necessary and no officer would be removed from the post without the advice of a senior officer.

Chief Justice of Pakistan Umar Ata Bandial remarked that police officers shouldn't be transferred on the recommendation of MPAs. District police officer (DPO) and city police officer (CPO)

couldn't be removed before three years in accordance with the law, he observed, adding that the law didn't prohibit transfers before time but the legal procedure should be followed.

The chief justice remarked that there was an impression that the government had been using police departments for political gains. The investigation officers should be at a distance from other police affairs as per the law, he said, adding that even the IOs should be given separate cadres.

The CJP observed that there was no expertise in the police regarding the investigation. The weak evidence used to be produced during the trial which benefits the accused, he added.

The court said the FIR regarding the attack on former prime minister Imran Khan was not being regis-

tered due to political interference and then this court had to give directions.

The apex court remarked why not the same formula of good governance should be applied in Sindh and Balochistan provinces as well.

The SC also sought report from provincial governments regarding the transfers of police officials during the last ten years.

The CJP remarked whether the Punjab government would act as per the law itself or this court should issue an order in this regard. He remarked that the public was facing hardships due to increasing crime and insecurity.

Advocate General Punjab argued that the transfers of the police officers were being made after consultation. The court then adjourned further hearing of the case till the second week of January.

KP CM visits Mardan, inaugurates completed uplift schemes

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan visited district Mardan where he inaugurated recently completed developmental projects and performed the groundbreaking for various others.

The Chief Minister formally inaugurated Bacha Khan Medical College which has been completed at a cost of Rs 1.84 Billion. 1250 students are currently enrolled in the college.

Similarly, the chief minister inaugurated the newly completed mega park "Zamung Park" in District Mardan which has been completed at a total cost of Rs 400 million. Zamung Park has been established over an area of 400 kanals of land and has multiple recreational facilities including Water Slides, Children Play Area, Electronic Dinosaurs etc.

Addressing the inaugural ceremony of the projects, the

Chief Minister said that his government believes in investment on human capital and is taking pragmatic steps towards this effect. However, the imported federal government has gone all out in its futile attempts to sabotage the ongoing development process in the province, Mahmood Khan added.

"No matter how hard the imported rulers try, they will never succeed in their nefarious ambitions" the Chief Minister said and made it clear that PTI will form government with overwhelming majority in the upcoming general elections.

The chief minister on the occasion formally laid the foundation stone of the project regarding rehabilitation of existing sewerage system and establishment of a new Sewage Treatment Plant in district Mardan which would be completed at an estimated cost of Rs 8.3 Billion. He also performed the groundbreaking of a mega project regarding

establishment of Integrated Solid Waste Management System with an estimated cost of Rs 3.8 Billion. Both the projects are being implemented under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Cities Improvement Project (KP-CIP) which is aimed at streamlining the municipal services in major cities of the province.

Moreover, the chief minister laid the foundation stone for dualization of 19 Km long road from Katlang main bazar to Chungli, which will incur a cost of Rs 3.3 billion.

The Chief Minister said KP-CIP is a fully funded project under which a number of sub-projects have been launched in the divisional headquarters. He said that the KP-CIP on completion will change the overall look of the major cities of the province.

The chief minister maintained that the provincial government is making direct investment in the

human capital through its people friendly projects like health card, kisan card and education card.

Criticizing the indifferent attitude of the incumbent imported government at the center, the chief minister maintained that every possible effort is being made to sabotage the development process in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The budgeted share of the province is being withheld. He said that the arrears of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with center have reached Rs 189 Billion as of December.

Speaking with media persons, the Chief Minister said that developmental projects worth Rs 43 Billion have been reflected in the provincial annual development program for district Mardan. He said that the provincial government has planned sustainable development model keeping in view the needs and requirements of various districts.